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Free Pan-Asian Arts Festival in Orinda, Memorial Day weekend

By Sora O'Doherty



I Made Cat courtesy of Gamelan Sekar Jaya
Photo provided

From lion dances to fashion shows, from cooking demonstrations to Japanese anime film, music, art, dance and, of course, food trucks, the Pan-Asian Arts Festival should have something to interest everyone in the family. Sponsored jointly by Orinda Rotary and the Orinda Library, the festival will run for a day and a half in venues in and around the Library and the Community Center. The festival will open with a ribbon cutting and a colorful Chinese lion dance. All events will be free to the public, and printed programs with the schedule of events and floor plans of the community center and library showing where each event will take place will be provided.

The festival is the highlight of Weylin Eng's year as president of the Orinda Rotary. Rotary member Robert Parker was instrumental in the planning, which has taken months. Each Rotary president has a theme for their year, and Eng's theme has been diversity.

"Rotary International is very cosmopolitan," he commented, and the local chapter has members who are German, Lebanese, Fijian, Korean, Filipino, Chinese and Vietnamese. Eng recalls that his daughter, Aimee Eng, when she had just finished her master's degree at Stanford organized a Pan-Asian festival in 2005 as part of the San Francisco Cherry Blossom Festival. The single-afternoon event was attended by 300 to 400 people. For this festival, Eng's daughter selected the film to be shown. Many years ago the Diablo Valley Chinese Cultural Association held a festival at Acalanes High School.

A few festival highlights, subject to change

Saturday, May 26

10 a.m. - Ribbon cutting, Lower Plaza

10:15 a.m. - "White Crane" Lion Dance, Lower Plaza

11 a.m. - HipHop-Natyam "Bollywood" dancers, tabla Indian music, OCC Founders Room; henna hand painting, Upper Plaza

Noon - Food Trucks, Parking Lot

Noon - Japanese animation film: "A Letter to Momo"; Library Gallery Room (2 hours)

1 p.m. - Mau Tamari'I A Tiare Polynesian Dancers, Library Auditorium

2 p.m. - Filipino Music w/ Manny Tuazon & Willie Santamaria, Library Auditorium

2:30 p.m. - Martial arts demonstration, East-West BokFuDo, OCC Founders Room

Sunday, May 27

1 p.m. - Balinese dance and interactive workshop, Gamelan Sekar Jaya, Lower Plaza

1:45 p.m. - Tai Chi Master Demonstration, OCC Founders Room

3 p.m. - Taiko Drumming Ensemble, Eden Aoba, Lower Plaza

For a full schedule of events, go to www.friendsoftheorindalibrary.com.

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