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The process of hanging and lighting the fish Oct. 1 at JPG@TheBank in Lafayette took 12 hours.

Photo Pippa Fisher

Something fishy going on at Lafayette art gallery

By Pippa Fisher

An aquarium has been installed high above the pop-up art gallery in downtown Lafayette, for those who look up as they pass by.

No less than 73 colorful fish are 'swimming' up in the glass tower of the old World Savings Bank, that is now home to Jennifer Perlmutter's gallery, known as JPG@TheBank.

Not real fish, of course, but instead brightly painted and decorated, sturdy cardboard aquatic life moving gently in the breeze, their motion quite mesmerizing.

And, proving that artists walk amongst us and that art indeed belongs to the community, these art

creations were all made by members of the public, from kindergartners on up, including some adults.

It was the idea of Ken Hughes, a structural engineer who has his office above the old Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery opposite Diablo Foods. Perlmutter describes him as an artist. Hughes says the idea came to him as he sat at the traffic lights leaving the Safeway parking lot, looking at the building. Inspired partly by the large fish displayed outside the gallery, but perhaps more by the entry tower that he says resembles a goldfish bowl, he and Perlmutter set about recruiting artists for the project.

Perlmutter says COVID-19 was a factor in not having a huge response initially. "So Ken had a driveway party with friends one Sunday and we re-

cruited a few gallery friends and painted over a weekend," says Perlmutter, "and now the tank is full!"

Hughes says that he wanted to let people express themselves so gave very few directions other than that the fish should be between 18- and 36-inches long. "We wanted to include all the work and we want everyone to see their work," he explains.

It took Hughes eight hours to hang the fish on Oct. 1, and another four to set up the LED strip lighting.

"I'm thrilled with it," says Perlmutter. "It's another thing to bring added beauty and levity to your day – through all the smoke and pandemic, we find a reason to smile!"

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Lack of consensus on school reopening causes angst for OUSD Board

By Sora O'Doherty

Teachers expressed their concerns at the first of two Orinda Union School District board meetings on Oct. 5 to consider returning to physical in-school teaching. The first meeting was designed to review results of a survey asking parents for commitment to either have their children return to school or to continue distance learning, with a second meeting scheduled for Oct. 14 slated to review the results of a teacher and staff survey. Although the results of the parents' survey indicated a strong desire for a return to school, the teachers have considerable doubt and concern, while school board members expressed their anxiety at having to make such a difficult decision.

Parents and guardians were sent a survey Sept. 29 asking them to commit to one of three options: to continue with a current teacher regardless of the model of instruction; to return to school for in-person instruction in the hybrid model; or to continue distance

learning for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. For the return to in-person schooling, there was a choice between as soon as possible, or after Winter Break. The survey was modified on Oct. 1 to add another return date option, March 2021, following flu season.

The survey results were broken down into elementary and middle school parent/guardians, with 1,467 elementary respondents, and 596 middle school respondents. Over 50% of elementary respondents favored returning to school with a hybrid model and nearly 80% of those preferred an immediate return to school. Over 80% of OIS parent respondents preferred the hybrid model, with nearly 18% favoring continued distance learning.

During public comments, several commenters complained about the survey methodology and interpretation. Januna Rudani said that, in fact, 75% of parents at each school wanted students to return to full-time in-school education. Rudani said that

distance learning is not working, and that it is possible to safely bring children back to school and urged the board to do so by mid-October. Speakers varied over the spectrum of opinions, some urging that safety be the first priority, others arguing that children need to be back in school and can be, safely.

Teacher Terry Schrittwieser, Glorietta teacher of the year for 2019, said that she was very concerned to see so many who want to return to school as soon as possible. She said that it will be a lot of work for teachers, like

starting the school year all over again. She also questioned what would happen in the event of an exposure.

Board president Cara Hoxie suggested that it should be easier to transition between hybrid and distance learning for when students need to be quarantined. Susheel Daswani suggested a conduct pledge, where parents would pledge to take all precautions to assure that their children are not infected, such as agreeing not to eat at restaurants.

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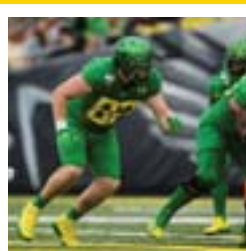
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