



## Orinda Roadrunners Hit the Trail

By Andrea A. Firth



Orinda Roadrunners on the Bay Area Ridge Trail

Photo provided

Dial the Orinda Roadrunner Hotline anytime 24/7 and you will hear the deep, anchor-like voice of Jerry Wendt listing the meeting spots for the group—that is the coffee shops throughout Lamorinda where this crew of runners gets “fired up” to hit the trail on weekday and weekend mornings. “We sometimes describe ourselves as coffee drinkers with a running problem,” says Wendt, one of the co-founders of the 34 year-old running club.

In addition to scheduled runs six days a week—Monday is the day of rest in their case—this crew of dedicated runners takes on a running goal each year. For example, about ten years ago the group ran every street in Orinda over the course of several outings. “In the early days, we did mostly street running,” explains John Fazel, another longtime Roadrunner. “But over time we have transitioned to become the Lamorinda trail junkies.” So it fits that this year’s running goal is to traverse the 300 miles of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. In six- to nine-mile segments, members will do all, most, or some of the trail legs by running or hiking. And after completing each segment, they meet for—coffee, of course.

Both Wendt and Fazel are no strangers to the roads and trails of the Bay Area and beyond. Wendt has run 35 marathons including the original Olympic marathon course in Greece, which he navigated with group of Roadrunner pals (all with their shoes on). Fazel has taken his running to the ultra-level having completed a 100-mile endurance race between Squaw Valley and Auburn climbing 18,000 vertical feet in the process. And he has done it more than once and in less than 30 hours. “My longest stop during the race was for eight minutes to eat,” he notes. “That’s really fast food.” Currently Fazel has plans to run his last leg of the American Discovery Trail, a 6,800-mile cross-country adventure run that extends between San Francisco and Lewes, Delaware.

Wendt and Fazel’s extensive running resumes are not meant to scare the average runner away from joining the Roadrunner outings. Weekday runs start at 5:45 am and are about three to five miles in length. “A few

of the members meet at 5:30 am for coffee before starting,” states Wendt. “They get two cups out of the deal.” Weekend runs start at 7:30 am and rotate between trails in Orinda, Moraga, and Lafayette. “On the weekends, we typically run four to six miles and sometimes up to nine. Some of us run, some hike, and we all drink coffee,” he adds.

“We really encourage everyone to come out to join us,” invites Fazel. “It’s like an extended family. And the older we get, the faster we were,” he adds with a smile. Orinda Roadrunner Hotline:

(925) 937-2046,  
[www.orindarunners.org](http://www.orindarunners.org).

