

Without Air – a thought-provoking drama from Hungary opens in Orinda

By Sophie Braccini

"Without Air" is opening in Orinda Theater on Aug. 16 and is scheduled to run for at least a week. It is a film for all audiences that will leave people with long lasting memories.

Movie making is political; it can work to support self-gratifying nationalistic pride or it can tear apart the dominant narrative. This is what this courageous movie is all about. In Viktor Orbán's Hungary that has made anti-LGBTQ rhetoric a staple of its politics, "Without Air" shows how a high-school literature teacher, Ana, can see her whole future unravel due to a controversy over a film she recommends to her class.

The film depicts the progressive ostracization of the teacher, whether because of fear, or because of opinions, or conformism. One after another, the school's administration, the city, and the parents fall in line against her. Let us not kid ourselves, every teacher that has tried at some point, in any country, to stray from politi-

cal correctness must have felt at some level, a similar type of pressure.

"You are paid to teach values, to impart the right standards," is what a popular literature teacher hears from the ethics board after she recommends to her senior high school students to watch Agnieszka Holland's film "Total Eclipse" about the lives of French poets Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Verlaine, at the end of a class on symbolism. But an influential and very conservative parent finds it unacceptable -- the two poets had a homosexual relationship -- and he files a complaint against her.

Initially, the incident is downplayed by the school's director, who appreciates Ana for her successful work over the years. "A parent considers that you have crossed the red line," she tells Ana, "but I have done it for years and it's never been a problem. Is it one for you?" Little by little Ana's professional surrounding reveals itself in a way she would not have anticipated.

Some are jealous and hateful, other afraid for their standing; most are so prudent they become cowards.

In a Nov. 13 2023 interview with CineEuropa, director Katalin Moldovai said that her film's scenario is based on a true story that took place in Romania where she grew up among the local Hungarian minority. She decided that it would be a good topic for a film because of its hidden depths. "I wanted most of all to deal with this fear that courses through the entire film because I think that in Romania, in Hungary, and in Eastern Europe in general, we lived for a long time under a communist dictatorship and its influence on society doesn't fade away so easily. When events such as those shown in the film happen, there's a tendency to recreate that atmosphere, to reproduce it," she said. Of course, the topic of freedom of expression is not confined to Eastern Europe.

The character of Ana, played by a very believable Agnes Krasznahorkai, is well developed and other issues are tackled as the narrative unfolds. Ana's partner has emigrated to another country to find a better job and in his self-centered way of trying to convince her to join him, he totally misses her difficulties. She is also in charge of an aging mother who is slowly losing her cognitive abilities.

Moldovai explains that the scenario of the movie was written in 2019, before Viktor Orbán's 2021 law that censors any LGBT+ positive content in movies, books or public advertise-

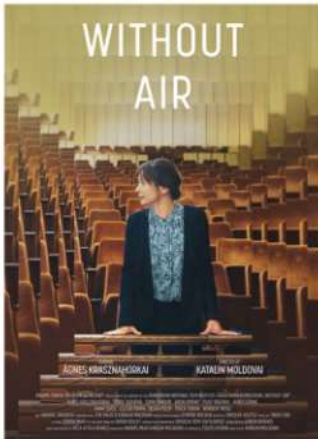


Photos provided

ments. The law also restricts sex education in school, forbidding any information thought to encourage gender change or homosexuality. She adds that it is

now even more complicated for teachers to know what to say and how to say it. She believes that it leads to a form of self-censorship. The film is appro-

prate for adults and teenagers, and it could spark interesting conversations. It opens on Aug 16; for hours and tickets, go to www.orindamovies.com/



Letters to the editor

Public Roads: Who Pays?

In the August issue of the Orinda News, Daniel Gutu objected to the public funding of maintaining the 30 miles of residential streets that are currently maintained by the residents living on those streets. He called that a "gift" to these 1,500 Orinda families.

In 2017, his road was repaired by the city of Orinda. It had a PCI of 9 (a failed street) before the repair and a PCI of 100 (a new street) after the repair. It was literally rebuilt.

This cost the city about \$110,000 which was paid for with interest (an additional \$50,000) by all of the property owners in Orinda based on the assessed value of their property.

Since the assessed value of homes on private roads represents 25% of Orinda's property tax base, residents living on private roads paid 25% of the cost to repair Mr. Gutu's street

(\$40,000), a gift shared by Mr. Gutu and his nine neighbors.

So I ask - who is gifting whom?
Bob Daoro
Orinda

Vote No on Sales Tax

The arguments that Lafayette needs a sales tax do not present the full picture. A big chunk of the alleged need is the assertion that there are "unfunded mandates" from the state. But the state constitution requires that all state mandates be funded, unless a fee can be charged, such as to a developer. See art. XIII B, section 6(a) and Govt. Code Section 17556(d). Indeed, there is an entire state agency -- the Commission on State Mandates -- whose function is to hear and decide claims by cities for reimbursement. If a test claim is approved, the Commission adopts parameters for other affected cities to claim reimbursement.

The City Council asserts that compliance with conditions in its stormwater discharge permit is an unfunded mandate. But in a case decided in 2022, the court of appeal upheld a ruling by the Commission that most costs incurred by cities to satisfy conditions the state imposed on their stormwater discharge permits were reimbursable from the state. The parameters, however, have not yet been issued.

Another alleged unfunded mandate is staff time for compliance with state housing mandates. However, either impact fees can be charged to housing developers, or if not, a claim should be filed with the Commission.

Lafayette should assert its rights under the California Constitution to cause the state to fund the mandates, or charge appropriate impact fees to developers, instead of imposing an increase in sales tax.
Nick Waranoff
Orinda

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters must be factually accurate. Lamorinda Weekly reserves the right to refuse publishing a letter submission. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com.

In Memory

Ned Allen Herrington

April 13, 1943 - July 6, 2024



Ned Allen Herrington passed away on July 6, 2024, with his wife, Carolyn, by his side. His life will not be defined by his last few years with Alzheimer's, but by his humor, his vitality, his wit, his intelligence, his integrity, and his ease in making relationships.

Ned graduated from the Ohio State University in an accelerated program that earned his undergraduate and his doctorate degree in Dentistry in 6 years. He served as president of his Psi Omega dental fraternity. After graduation, he joined the Air Force as a dentist and his first assignment was at an oral surgery internship in Texas. He was then transferred to McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento, CA, where his father, Lt. Colonel Charles Herrington, was also stationed. There he met his bride of 54 years.

Finishing his duty in the Air Force, Ned moved with Carolyn to Campbell, CA, in 1970 for him to work as an associate for Dr. John Hughes for 3 years before setting up practice in Lafayette, CA, in 1973. Lafayette was a small town then, where a group of dentists walked down the street to have lunch together almost every day. Those friendships were a lifelong treasure for him. Ned practiced dentistry for 40 years, enjoying his staff, his patients, and his colleagues. The last eight years before retirement, he shared his practice with his son, Matthew. It was a privilege for both of them.

Ned's best achievement was being a wonderful father to his three children, Matt, Amy, and Todd, and grandfather to six grandchildren, Michael, Charlotte, Molly, Evelyn, Faith, and Sylvia. They enjoyed boating, camping, waterskiing, golf, snow skiing, and swimming together. His epitaph will be "Ned Herrington was a good and loving man, humble, wise, and a lot of fun." To know Ned was to love his smile, his laugh, and the twinkle in his eye. He will be greatly missed, but his legacy lives on in the example he gave of a life well lived.

In addition to his wife, children, and grandchildren, Ned is survived by his brother, Michael Herrington, and his sister, Catherine Fisher. He was preceded in death by his mother, Ruth Herrington, and father, Charles Herrington, and twin grandchildren, Lillian and Bridget Herrington.

A funeral Mass was held at St. Isidore Catholic Church in Danville, CA, on August 7, 2024. For those who wish, the family would appreciate donations to the Alzheimer's Association in lieu of flowers.

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 200 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations or Remembrances" in the subject line.

Public Safety

Emergency response: 911
Emergency: 24 Hours
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours
925-284-5010
Nixle: Text your zip code to 888777 or www.nixle.com
Lafayette Police Department: 3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd. 925-283-3680
Chief of Police, Ben Alldritt: 925-299-3221
Police Department Tip Line: 945-497ip@gmail.com
Police Department Traffic Issues: 945-497traffic@gmail.com
Moraga Police Department: 329 Rheem Blvd., 925-888-7055
Chief of Police, Jon King ext. 7049
Orinda Police Department: 22 Orinda Way 925-254-6820
Chief of Police, Ryan Sullivan: 925-254-6820
Orindatip@cityoforinda.org

Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report July 21 - Aug. 3

Alarms 47
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 17
Traffic 158
Suspicious Circumstances 9
Suspicious Subject 30
Suspicious Vehicle 8
Service to Citizen 30
Patrol Req./Security Check 15
Public/School Assembly Check 1
Supplemental Report 12
Vacation House Check 17
Welfare Check 17
Ordinance Violation 2
Vehicle violations
Auto Burglary 1200 Block Quandt Rd. (2)
10 Block White Oak Dr. (2)
Brook St./Moraga Rd. (3)
3200 Block Sweet Dr.
3500 Block Brook St.
3600 Block Happy Valley Ln.
1100 Block Nogaies St.
200 Block Lafayette Cir.
Dui Misd 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
Lafayette Cir./Mt. Diablo Blvd. 3400 Block School St.
Pleasant Hill Rd./Deer Hill Rd. Tc - Minor Injuries Mt. Diablo Blvd./Carol Ln. Tc - Property Damage 3500 Block Golden Gate Wy 151 St./Deer Hill Rd. Camino Diablo/Stanley Blvd.

Other criminal activity

Fraud Credit Card 3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Panhandling 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
Petty Theft 3200 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)
3400 Block Silver Springs Rd.
Petty Theft From Veh 3900 Block S Peardale Dr.
1200 Block Quandt Ct.
Shoplift 3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (17)
Vehicle Theft Moraga Rd./Acalanes Ave. Nuisance to the Community Disturbance-domestic 800 Block Acalanes Rd.
Disturbing The Peace 3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Loud Music 1200 Block Del Arroyo Ct.
Loud Noise 900 Block Dewing Ave. Moraga Rd./Rosedale Ave. Loud Party 900 Block Dewing Ave. Public Nuisance El Curtola Blvd./Eb Sr 24 El Curtola Blvd./Wb Sr 24 Topper Ln./St Marys Rd. 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 4Th St./Moraga Blvd. Vandalism 3100 Block Kingsley Pl 3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. 20 Block Diablo Cir. 900 Block S Thompson Rd. 3400 Block Monroe Ave.

Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report July 23 - Aug. 5

Alarms 12
911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 11
Traffic 65
Suspicious Circumstances 2
Suspicious Subject 3
Suspicious Vehicle 2
Service to Citizen 25
Patrol Req./Security Check 17
Public/School Assembly Check 4
Supplemental Report 7
Vacation House Check 0
Welfare Check 3
Ordinance Violation 0
Vehicle violations
Accident Injury 90 Block Laird Dr.
Auto Burglary Paseo Bernal/Alta Mesa Dr.

Excessive Speed

Moraga Way/Lastwood Dr., Ori Moraga Rd./Lucas Dr. (3)
St Marys College St Mary Rd./Rheem Blvd. Moraga Rd./Donald Dr. (4)
Moraga Rd Ifo Commons Park Moraga Rd./Corliss Dr. (3)
Ascot Dr./Moraga Rd. Moraga Rd./Alta Mesa Dr. (2)
Moraga Rd./Via Granada 1400 Block Moraga Rd. Moraga Rd./Buckingham Dr. Moraga Way/St. Andrews Dr. (3)
Campolindo Dr./Moraga Rd. Rheem Blvd./Chaldia Way Moraga Rd./Woodford Dr. Ifo Rd./Rheem Blvd. Ifo Sta 42 Camino Pablo/Rimer Dr. Moraga Way Ifo Station 41 Seven Eleven Plot (2) Ifo 711 Plot
Reckless Driving Moraga Rd./St Marys Rd. Camino Pablo/Sanders Ranch Rd. Rheem Blvd./St Marys Rd. Tc - Property Damage 2000 Block Ascot Dr. 10 Block Wandell Dr. Shoplift Not Available Petty Theft From Veh 1000 Block Sanders Dr. 10 Block Wandell Dr. Shoplift Cvs Nuisance to the Community Disturbing The Peace Canyon Rd./Sanders Dr. 30 Block Woodside Dr. Loud Music School St./Hazelwood Pl. Natalie Dr./Lennelle Ct. 3900 Block Paseo Grande Camino Ricardo/Ashbrook Pl. Loud Noise Not Available Loud Party School St./Hazelwood Pl. Birchwood Dr./Fernwood Dr. 60 Block Warrick Dr. (2) Public Nuisance 1400 Block Moraga Rd. Other Animal Cruelty Safetyway Barking Dog Tharp Dr./Redfield Pl. Mentally Ill Commit Not Available Trespass 300 Block Rheem Blvd.



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report will be back