

LOCAL GUEST SPEAKERS / AUTHOR

Guest Speaker Series of Local High School Graduates Hosted by SIR

By CHARLEEN EARLEY
Editor-in-Chief

When Bill Wadsworth began putting together a speaker series for the Sons in Retirement (SIR), Lamorinda Branch 174, he didn't realize a theme, which he now calls, "Local High School Grads Make Good in the World," would evolve.

Given that he's part of the SIR committee that arranges speakers, he immediately thought of Nicolle Devenish Wallace, a nationally known political analyst and anchor of MSNBC news and politics program, *Deadline: White House*.

"I had been thinking of Nicolle Wallace because she graduated from Miramonte near the time my two sons were there," said Wadsworth. "I located her speaking representative on the Internet and sent in a request for a pro-bono Zoom presentation via their online form."

A few days later and to his surprise, she said yes.

Wallace spoke on June 9 about what she called "News of the day, politics and covering politics and a White House after working in politics and a White House."

Whenever she gives talks, Wallace hopes attendees are blunt and honest with their interaction with her.

"I usually take more away from the viewers than they take away from me," said Wallace, who was born and raised in Orinda and graduated from Miramonte in 1990.

SIR's Aug. 11 speaker is Tia Wallace Kratter, who, hopefully, will be in person by then.

Kratter is a 1975 Campolindo High School graduate. She's also an accomplished artist and one of the first employees at Pixar where she was a Shader Art Direc-

tor for 20 years, working on such films as *Monster's Inc.*, *A Bug's Life* and many more.

She will share a behind-the-scenes glimpse of how great animated films are created.

Currently a Visual Development Artist for Disney, Kratter was born on the Island of Kwajalein (far out in the Pacific) and raised in Orinda.

She spoke about her part in the creative process.

"A visual development artist works with the art team to help create the look and feel of a particular film," she said. "It can take a year or two or three to come up with the visual language for an animated film, but this is truly the fun part of working on a project. One gets to research, explore and create a whole new world."

She hopes attendees will have a greater appreciation of films after her talk.

"I'll want them to get a deeper insight into what it takes to make memorable, heartfelt and lasting films — ones that your grandchildren are probably watching incessantly!" she said. "As much as I'd like to say it's the great art that makes the movie, it's really the story that is paramount to creating truly memorable films."

Creating a theme of local high school graduates making good in the world, was not what Wadsworth planned, but he's happy it turned out that way.

"I think it's important to hear these stories because Lamorinda is home to most of our SIR members and many have children and grandchildren in the area that they influence," said Wadsworth. "I also believe that the foundation of our community will be stronger if we each remind ourselves that it does 'take a village.' And just because those of us in SIR are in our 70s or older, we

still have a responsibility to work to ensure that our youth are effectively educated and gain the tools to make a significant difference through their work."

Their first speaker in April was Sara Lamson Nathan, an Acalanes High School graduate and currently CEO and President of Amigos de Las Americas, an international non-profit that empowers youth to become lifelong leaders who share responsibility for global community.

SIR is a nonprofit, public benefit organization with a mission to improve the lives of its members through fun activities, events and making new friendships. It is open to retired or semi-retired men, regardless of age, race, color or religion.

SIR has roughly 13,000 members with-in 120 branches; local branch 174 has about 125 members. Wadsworth said he joined in 2015 "primarily to have a group to play golf with a couple of times a month."

While speaker events are only open to SIR members and their guests, anyone interested may contact Wadsworth directly at wadsy1@aol.com to get the link to a recording of any presentation.



COURTESY OF TIA WALLACE KRATTER
Fall speaker, **Tia Wallace Kratter**, who might speak in-person instead of Zoom, will share a behind-the-scenes glimpse of how great animated films are created. Kratter was one of the first employees at Pixar.

For more information about SIR, visit www.branch174.sirinc2.org.

Charleen Earley can be reached at editor@theorindanews.com.

Tubach's Latest Novel is Multi-Layered with Comedy and Suspense

By CHARLEEN EARLEY
Editor-in-Chief

Orinda resident Sally Patterson Tubach had her second novel published last year, this one titled *The Grande Dame and Her Twin: A Comedy of Errors*. So far, she has garnered rave reviews from readers from across the globe.

"A splendid world opened up in this story. I felt completely drawn into a vortex, not of hate and destruction, but a fire of love and transformation. What an artistic creation! The magic wand held up at the end is superb, a surprise. The reader can find great originality, thoughtfulness and allegory in this book," wrote Trudi Frei, of *USA/Switzerland*, paired with her five-star review on Amazon.com.

Tubach said the inspiration for this book came from learning about the Holocaust back in high school.

"I wondered how a culture that produced a Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and enlightened writers such as Lessing, Schiller and Goethe, could also produce an Adolf Hit-

ler, World War II and the Holocaust," said Tubach, who studied German at UCLA, in Göttingen and Munich and later earned a Ph.D. in German Literature at UC Berkeley.

Born in Santa Monica, raised in Potrero Canyon in Pacific Palisades, Tubach said she's lived in Orinda since 1976, "when I married my husband and became step-mother to his two children whose mother had died."

Semi-retired, Tubach is a part-time freelance writer. Her husband Frederic Tubach is a retired UC Berkeley professor. Together, they have lived abroad and traveled frequently over the years.

Tubach hoped *The Grande and Dame Hitler's Twin: A Comedy of Errors*, published Oct. 19, 2020, during the pandemic, would offer a healthy, mental break for readers.

"It is a comedy of errors, so I hope that my cast of quirky characters and their comic missteps and misunderstandings will amuse and make readers laugh," she said. "Some readers have said it provided

[SEE TUBACH page 23]

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BARBARA KOBSAR



It's summertime and sweet corn is waiting at your local farmer's market – ready to eat fresh, add to salads or pop on the grill.

Sweet corn is harvested young before the sugar has a chance to turn into starch. Supersweet varieties (yellow, white and bicolor) produce and retain natural sugars for an enhanced sweet flavor.

Dent or field corn, another type of corn left on the cob to dry, then gets sold as a grain to feed livestock, or gets processed into flour, cornmeal, starch and oil. Flint corn, also called Indian corn or calico corn, is harder than dent corn and boasts a wide range of colors. It's prized for a high nutrient value. When dried, it's used for corn meal, hominy and polenta.

Back to the sweet corn of summer! Choose ears of corn with green, moist, snug fitting husks. End silk should be golden brown and dry, the ears full and plump and the stem end moist. Cobs coming to market on ice offer the sweetest, freshest flavor!

Many stands display a freshly husked cob of corn on top of the pile to give shoppers a visual "taste." What to look for? Plump looking kernels in tight rows that come all the way up to the ear's top. White varieties tend to outsell yellow varieties, but the choice is yours!

Grill or roast fresh corn for the most flavor and more convenience when serving a crowd. If you want plump and extra juicy corn on the cob, try microwaving, steaming or boiling.

Shop the farmers market for all the ingredients to make this delicious Corn Salad, a quick and easy make-ahead:

FRESH CORN SALAD

- 2 cobs fresh corn, kernels sliced off
- 1 firm tomato, seeded and chopped OR 1 cup cherry tomatoes cut in half
- 1 small cucumber, diced
- 1 tablespoon fresh cilantro or parsley, chopped
- 1 – 2 tablespoons chopped green onion

Dressing: Combine 3 tablespoons olive oil, 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice, 1 small



BARBARA KOBSAR

Sweet corn is in abundance and waiting at your local farmer's market, ready to eat fresh, add to salads or pop on the grill.

jalapeno (seeded and minced), ¼ teaspoon salt and 3 tablespoons Cottage Kitchen Red Pepper Jelly.

Combine salad ingredients. Mix in dressing. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Serves 4.

The Orinda market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in Orinda Village. More information is available at www.cccfm.org, [facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket](https://www.facebook.com/OrindaFarmersMarket) and [Instagram at OrindaFarmersMarket](https://www.instagram.com/OrindaFarmersMarket), or call the market hotline: 925.431.8361.

Barbara Kobsar sells her Cottage Kitchen jams and jellies at the JAM STAND at the Saturday Orinda market and at the Walnut Creek market Sunday. She is also president of the CCCFM (Contra Costa Certified Farmers Market) Association Board of Directors.

Barbara Kobsar can be reached at Barbara@cotkitchen.com.

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2020 due to the pandemic. This year, with limited access, it sold out immediately. Fortunately, given post-COVID-19 technology, there is a first ever, virtual tour available, providing an in-depth look at every floral design, filled with behind-the-scenes details. It's free for museum members and

\$10 for the public.

The return of Bouquets to Art 2021 was welcomed by all who enjoy novel creativity and floral displays. Visit <https://deyoung.famsf.org/bouquets-to-art> for more information.

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a welcome diversion from the anxieties of the pandemic and the troubled state of the world. But beyond escapism, and since I come down on the side of "nurture" in the "nurture verses nature" debate, I hope that readers will challenge their assumptions about the genetic determination of human behavior and about identity politics."

Tubach addresses the cognitive dissonance some readers might experience in seeing the words "Hitler's Twin" and "Comedy" in the same title sentence.

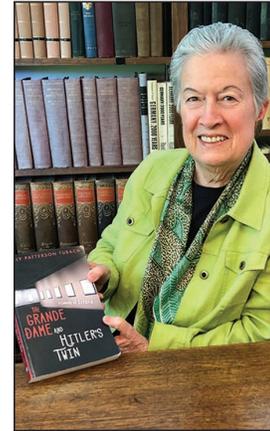
"One of the women in my Berkeley writers critique group outright objected to that juxtaposition while I was still writing the story," said Tubach. "I answered this objection by saying that since I had to use a singular trick of science fiction to bring Hitler's twin into existence in our times and in a San Francisco setting, the novel is a mixed genre that is part fantastical tale – almost a modern fairy tale or speculative tale."

Research for her novel, she said, required collaborations on two books concerned with WWII and the Holocaust. Travel factored into her research as well.

"Extended stays in Germany – and France, where we owned a vacation house in the Languedoc and I have Hitler's twin raised – provided the requisite background to tackle this story that takes place primarily in San Francisco but incorporates numerous side trips to Europe," she said.

Not your typical writer who adheres to strict and disciplined writing routines, "probably because of our busy, stimulating home life and travels," Tubach said when she finds time to write, it's at her home office computer.

"I usually begin by standing at the computer for a couple of hours and later sitting on a sofa with my laptop on my lap," she said. "Late afternoon is my best time. Most days I produce more words writing emails than in my creative writing!"



HERLINDE SPAHR

Long-time Orinda resident, Sally Tubach, is author of her newest novel, *The Grande Dame and Hitler's Twin: A Comedy of Errors*, which was recently published by Wipf & Stock in Eugene, Oregon.

Ultimately, Tubach has high hopes her book will enlighten others.

"I hope readers will be moved by a variety of elements, such as its poignant and sensitive look at aging, its sprinkling of magical realism, its satirical look at commercialism in art and literature, its suspense and the complexity of the plot," she said. "I also hope it encourages thoughtful awareness about the emerging, anti-democratic and authoritarian tendencies in our domestic and global politics."

Her book is available at Amazon.com and on the publisher's (Wipf and Stock) website. It can also be ordered at any bookstore including Orinda Books.

Charleen Earley can be reached at editor@theorindanews.com.

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