

OROVILLE 2021

OUR TOWN

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Our Town – The State Theatre

BY JIM MOLL

While the curtain has not gone up on live performances at Oroville's historic State Theatre in over a year, there will be much to be seen when patrons are allowed inside again.

Earlier this month, the City of Oroville completed the sale and transfer of ownership of the theatre to the State Theatre Arts Guild (STAGE). The transfer culminated months of negotiations which will protect the city's interests and insure the financial grant covenants that exist on the building. STAGE is the successor to a group of local citizens who organized and raised funds in the 1970's to construct a performing arts center in Oroville. When the United Artists group closed the State theatre in the 1980's, the city purchased it, in part using funds raised by the performing arts center group.

In 2014, the city turned over the day to day operation of the theatre to STAGE which resulted in savings to the city in excess of \$100,000 annually. Since then, STAGE and the City have worked together to secure funding from the State Water Contractors and Oroville Redevelopment Funds. Major funding has also come from the local community as well as contributions of time, talent and treasure by local contractors and suppliers. Volunteer hours and donations from businesses have totaled several hundred thousand dollars.

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Most recently, a significant gift from local residents Stan and Jeanne Hall allowed STAGE to buy five magnificent chandeliers for the main lobby. Through the generosity of local arts underwriter Bonnie Huntington in a matching fundraising drive known as “Bonnie’s Blessing”, the State Theatre Arts Guild (STAGE) was able to purchase five additional chandeliers for the upstairs mezzanine. These replicas match the original lighting fixtures that adorned the theatre lobby when the theatre opened in 1928.

Restoration work in the lobby included sconces that matched the chandelier design and a complete renovation and restoration of the lobby drinking fountain. Bay Area restoration artist Beate Bruhl continued her restoration of the artwork on the lobby ceiling which had been painted over decades ago. Her painstaking efforts in previous years uncovered a mural on the theatre staircase near the entrance. Her work has been funded by the Oroville Arts Commission and a generous donation from the Chamberlain family of Oroville.

Work continues on the monumental effort to complete the installation of a working theatre organ. More than 1,200 pipes have been installed along with upgrades to the blower air supply and ducting system. When the theatre reopens, audiences will be treated to organ performances and silent movies accompanied by the mighty Wurlitzer. The State Theatre will be one of less than 250 theatres in the country with an authentic operating movie organ.

On the roof and out of sight, work to install and upgrade the solar array has been completed. The roof, which often leaked in even light rainfall, has been covered and resealed eliminating the potential for water damage inside the building. Insulation in the attic will also help keep the building cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

STAGE operations at the theatre are community funded through annual membership drives and renewals. STAGE is a charitable, nonprofit 501©3 organization. The group also counts on an army of volunteers to help with cleaning, staffing, organizing and production oversight. If you are interested in helping out at the theatre or contributing to STAGE, you can contact Jim Moll, STAGE President, at 530-370-1273. Membership renewals and donations can be mailed to STAGE, P.O. Box 2388, Oroville 95965

The theatre was heralded as the “Jewel of the Downtown” when it opened in 1928. STAGE members refer to it as the “Miracle on Myers”. The spectacular marquee, installed and dedicated in the Fall of 2019, helps underscore the theatre as the anchor and “Crown Jewel of Downtown Oroville”.






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MAYOR

As the Mayor of Oroville, I am proud to call this community my home. In this community I have built my business and raised my family, but 2020 has been a year unlike any the City of Oroville has seen before. A year full of challenges that have compelled local governments, community members, and business owners alike to work together to lift each other up. Even in these unrepresented times I have seen our City adapt to the ongoing changes and I am confident in our future.

Chuck Reynolds, Mayor of Oroville



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Explore More with the #HikeButteCA Pass

EXPLORE BUTTE COUNTY

With spring just around the corner and social distancing measures in mind, Orovillians eager to get out and about are undoubtedly looking to the great outdoors for activities, like hiking, to enjoy close to home—and we at Explore Butte County have created a great pass to help you do just that.

The #HikeButteCA Pass is a digital pass featuring a curated list of 35 amazing local hikes, including 10 in Oroville. The pass allows users to track progress and the chance to win limited-edition prizes—the more hikes completed, the more swag hikers earn along with more entries into the quarterly grand prize drawing, featuring a hotel stay and other goodies. And with the hikes categorized by difficulty, ranging from one

mile to over 15, and featuring a variety of terrain, the pass is made for community members of all ages, abilities, and hiking experience to lace up and explore Butte County trails!

The #HikeButteCA Pass and tracking program offers helpful hike descriptions, best time of year to visit, driving directions to the suggested parking areas, links to trail maps, game check-in location information, and much more. Those new to hiking, wanting a few tips and/or wanting to see a glimpse of the hikes available can also check out our “Butte County Hiking 101” page on the website or additional videos on our YouTube channel.

“We are thrilled to be one of the first in the region to ‘gamify’ hiking in an effort to showcase our truly amazing

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HIKE

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outdoor offerings,” said Carolyn Denero, Explore Butte County Executive Director. “Keep in mind, our carefully curated list of hikes is just the beginning of adventures that await in Butte County—now would be the time to plan your wildflower and waterfall hike for the spring, following the Phantom Falls hike information. The majestic beauty of all will simply take your breath away!”

In addition to the Phantom Falls hike, the other featured Oroville trails are: Dan Beebe Trail, Feather River Trail, Hollow Falls, Kelly Ridge Point, Lime Saddle Memorial Park Trail, Loafer Creek Loop Trail, Many Waterfalls Cross-Country Loop, Rattlesnake Hill Trail, and Thermalito Diversion Pool Trail. After you’ve explored the local trails, we encourage you to experience those in Chico, Paradise, Gridley, and in the high country.

Whatever your hiking experience, we know you’ll find something fun and new with the #HikeButteCA Pass! We love seeing your adventures, so make sure to use #HikeButteCA on Instagram or tag us on Facebook and Twitter for your chance to be featured!

For more information about #HikeButteCA, please visit www.ExploreButteCounty.com/hike-butte-ca

For more information about hiking available in Butte County, please visit www.explorebuttecounty.com/explore/outdoor.

For more information about Explore Butte County in general and suggested places to visit, shop and/or to pick up picnics and food-to-go, please visit www.explorebuttecounty.com or follow on social media – Facebook at www.facebook.com/explorebutteca and @ExploreButteCountyCA on Instagram and @ExploreButteCA on Twitter. Also, a comprehensive and downloadable travel guide (beneficial for locals, too) is available at www.explorebuttecounty.com/more/visitor-guide.



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YEAR-ROUND EVENTS

The community of Oroville has a variety of festivals year round. Each of these festivals offer family friendly activities and unique attractions. Whether you want to come up for a day of water activities or bundle up and meet Santa Claus, Oroville has something for everyone.

First Saturday of April – Wildflower Festival

The flowers are in full bloom during the springtime in Oroville, and the Feather River Recreation and Park District wants to share the beauty with you. The Wildflower Festival takes place at scenic Riverbend Park. To add to the color of this festival, there will be a “Spring Into Color 5K” that runs throughout the park.

In the parking lots and pavilions there will be a variety of vendors selling homemade and natural crafts. There will also be a beer and wine garden for the adults attending this event. Families can enjoy the water and have fun on the different play structures throughout the park.

The Saturday Before Mother’s Day in May – Feather Fiesta Days

Feather Fiesta Days covers a ten day period where various organizations are throwing celebrations ending with the big festival finale. This is our hometown celebration that takes place throughout the Greater Oroville Area. The event kicks off with Downtown Oroville’s annual First Friday Margarita & Salsa Mix Off. Then throughout the ten day period there will be a rib cook off, restaurant specials, a beer fest, car shows, a kiddie parade, and so much more.

The Exchange Club of Oroville will kick off the festivities with their 101st Feather Fiesta Days Parade. Throughout the day Downtown Oroville will be hosting a street fair with vendors and food. The City of Oroville Docent’s will have their Craft Faire in Sank Park, and the Oro Dam Cruisers will be hosting their annual Gold Rush Car Show. There will be plenty of activities for kids and adults.

May through September – Farmers Markets

Every year in mid-May Oroville Hospital and the Chico Farmers Market host weekly farmers markets where you can buy delicious local produce and hand-made products. The Oroville Hospital Farmers Market is held every Wednesday at the Dove’s Landing Parking lot. The Saturday Farmers Market will be held either in Historic Downtown Oroville or at Riverbend Park.

June – Olive Festival

The Butte County Historical Society hosts this annual festival celebrating a valuable Oroville resource: the olives. Olives play a large part in the history of Oroville and you can learn all about them during the free tours of the Ehmann Home, “The House That Olives Built”. There will also be olive themed crafts and olive tastings.

July 4 – Fireworks at the Forebay

The Fireworks at the Forebay is a spectacle to be held to celebrate Independence Day. Several organizations come together to put on this event so there is something for everyone to enjoy. If



you want to rent water equipment to watch the fireworks on the Forebay, make sure to contact the Forebay Aquatic Center prior to the event. The Forebay Aquatic Center also has seating areas to enjoy a nice family picnic on.

California State Parks will be helping out at the Thermalito Afterbay. This area in Oroville is perfect to take your own boat on and relax while watching the show. Lastly, the Feather River Recreation and Park District will have the Nelson Sports Complex open with plenty of activities for families.

Fourth Saturday of September – Salmon Festival

The Salmon Festival is another staple festival to the Oroville Area celebrating the return of the salmon to the Feather River. The Feather River Fish Hatchery provides tours and a salmon viewing platform all day long. Here you will learn everything there is to know about the fish that swim in the Feather River.

In downtown Oroville there will be the Salmon Court up on the levee and the Downtown Oroville Street Fair below it. There will be plenty of food, vendors, activities and live entertainment to keep you and your friends entertained all day.

Want to get the celebration started early? On Friday, September 25 the Feather River Nature Center hosts the Salmon Festival Dinner. Tickets are sold in advance at the Oroville Area Chamber of Commerce’s office and online.

December – Tree Lighting and Parade of Lights

In December, Downtown Oroville provides two amazing holiday events. The Annual Tree Lighting takes place in the beginning of December with specials at the downtown shops and free pictures with Santa after he lights the tree.

The following weekend brings the Parade of Lights. Organizations throughout the Oroville Area come in floats that shine up

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EVENTS

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the night with their lights. Kids enjoy candy given out by walkers in the parade and the joy of a variety of floats.

March – Arbor Day Festival

Once spring is upon us the Oroville Botanic Garden and Education Center puts on their Annual Arbor Day Festival. This festival celebrates the magnificent trees of Oroville and includes a tree circus. There are also educational activities for all ages, food, and raffle prizes.

January – Restaurant Week

We team up with Explore Butte County every January to present Restaurant Week. Local restaurants participate by offering a special during this event. This is a great opportunity to go out and try new cuisine throughout Butte County.

Last Weekend of February – Museum Weekend

This is another partnership event with Explore Butte County. During this weekend local museums around the county offer free tours throughout the day. In Oroville this includes the Chinese Temple, Bolt's Antique Tool Museum, the Pioneer Museum, the Lott Home, and the Feather River Nature Center. Take advantage of this weekend to enrich yourself with local history stories.

First Fridays

This year long celebration is hosted by the Downtown Oroville Business Association and brings a special event to the Historic Downtown area every First Friday of the month. These include food and music themed events and are almost always paired with the downtown stores offering specials or discounts. You can keep up with downtown events at DowntownOroville.com.

You can keep up on all of these events by heading to Visit-Oroville.com or by contacting the Oroville Chamber Area of Commerce at (530) 538-2542, info@orovillechamber.com.



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The Axiom Youth Center

The Axiom is a nonprofit youth center in downtown Oroville for Junior High and high school students.

Who knew that when the Axiom Youth Center opened in 2007, it would become a source of security and consistency for the teens throughout a pandemic. Our students have had fluctuating schedules, unclear expectations, and changes at every corner.

Luckily the Axiom has not only stayed open but expanded hours to maximize opportunities for students to gain support, resources and build meaningful connections with adults that want what is best for them.

When students are at Axiom, they're not just having a good time playing video games or pool; they're building a foundation of skills that will benefit them for their entire lives. Many young people struggle with isolation, feelings of being alone, and fears of being different or not fitting in. At Axiom, students develop a network of caring adults that advocate for them and push them to be their best selves. And they are experiencing safety, security, and mentorship opportunities, and skill development.

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YOUTH

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Axiom is not just providing for the emotional and spiritual needs of teens, but because of you, we're providing physical support too. Each day at Axiom, students can have two free meals and healthy snacks. We have a complete clothing closet for teens to get anything from personal care products to jackets and shoes or clothes for an interview or special occasions.

This year, we expanded our hours to include time for students to do their online schooling so that students can come in the morning, do their schoolwork, and then transition to recreational time in the afternoon. The morning school hours provide students with needed internet access, supervision, school support, and technology to give them a chance for success. We've had students who were previously doing homework in their school's parking lot or outside of the library to access the internet until they found out about Axiom morning school hours.

Current hours:

8:15-12 School Distance Learning - Monday through Thursday

During distance learning, students have access to reliable internet and technology. Also, students will receive incentives for staying on track and completing assignments.

12-5 Regular Recreational Axiom Hours - Monday through Friday

During Axiom Regular Hours, students can enjoy or volunteer in the student-run cafe, play board games or video games, engage in activities like «Among Us in Real Life» or weekly challenges.

The Axiom Youth Center is located at 1420 Myers Street in downtown Oroville.

Axiom is primarily operated through donations and volunteers. If you're interested in partnering with us to become a donor or support students by volunteering, send us an email at info@theaxiom.org or go to www.theaxiom.org.

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What's good about Oroville Our Town 2021 Email Submissions

"Walk along the River levee and enjoy the sites; the "O", the fish, birds and the snow-capped mountains. Memories of being up on a ladder at the Municipal Auditorium training with OFD, basketball games, the Crystal Balls, Feather Fiesta days, events at the State Theater, going into the lobby of the Oroville Inn for my first elevator ride at 7-year-old, Montgomery Wards, where my father bought me my first rifle. My grandchildren are 4th generation to attend the OUSH. We have many resources, wineries, olives, oranges and people. I love living in my town." ~ **Stanton Starkey**

"Growing up in a small town has to be the best thing about Oroville. I have lived here all my life, attended five schools throughout the Oroville area and attended school with so many wonderful people. I can say I probably know just about everyone in town. I love going to the local store and seeing someone and knowing their name, saying hello, and asking how their family is or going to the post office and hearing someone say Hey Tonya How are you? What's nice is everyone knows everyone so if someone needs a helping hand just pick up the phone and call, I call that

friendship and Home and that is what Oroville is, a small town and a place I have called home for over 50 years." ~ **Tonya Paul**

"1. Oroville elementary school teachers GENUINELY CARE about their students. They have integrity and they are kind.

2. Every person I've met here appreciates living here. It's part of why I wanted to move here.

3. Lot of open space. Traffic is nothing compared to cities; it's easy to get around, and beautiful when you drive out of downtown."

~ **Paul Griffin Hunt**

"Having moved to Oroville from Houston Texas, I especially enjoy the small-town vibe, away from the hustle and bustle of a large city. The more relaxed pace of Oroville is a welcome change, in addition to being a more budget-friendly place to live compared to other cities in northern Califor-

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ABOUT OROVILLE

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nia. I absolutely enjoy the hiking trails and of course the lake. The proximity to the ocean and Lake Tahoe is also a plus.” ~ **Michaela Herbert**

“I love the outdoors. Oroville offers hiking, biking, canoeing, and kayaking. Paddling the Feather River in town reminds me the best cities in the world are often built near rivers. Kayaking through the bird sanctuary we see herons, egrets, many duck species, Canada geese and raptors. Yes, there are some rapids, so even experienced paddlers have a bit of excitement on ‘the big left turn’ as it’s called. I’ve personally fished a few people and a lot of gear out of those white waters. We find beautiful Riverbend Park is the perfect place to ‘take out’ and load the ‘yaks.” ~ **Diane Monson**

“The beauty of the natural world surrounding us, and the beauty of community members. Folks that have been here awhile get it.” ~ **Shyla Cook**

“My husband John and I love the Feather River flowing through our town of Oroville and the walking path makes it easy to take a beautiful stroll during all our seasons.” ~ **Heather and John Gray**

In the last few years, a lot of buzz has been generating about Oroville amongst developers. The City of Oroville prides itself in being business friendly and supports both new and existing businesses. Oroville recently opened its second Starbucks. Several commercial sites are under review or have broken ground. The Oroville Hospital expansion project and Maverik fueling station are beginning to take shape now. Soon Oroville we see the groundbreaking of a 4-story hotel near Oro Dam and Feather River Blvd. Oroville has recently seen an increase in housing following the Camp Fire and North Complex Fire. Building plans are under review for over 300 units and another 97 unit subdivision is pending annexation. ~ **Jordan Daley**, City of Oroville

“I love Oroville. Moved from the bay area 13 years ago now. Oroville is in one of seven bioregions on earth listed for the highest amounts of

biodiversity. What’s left of the natural ecosystems of Oroville is so beautiful. My highest regard for any place is the potential of the land to create abundant regenerating living systems that can benefit all life. From these land-based systems comes the true richness of culture. With this comes food abundance, we have an amazing local food movement with so many independent producers here locally. Our box program has around 50 regenerative farmers / producers all from Oroville.” ~ **Matthew Trumm**, Owner/ Educator / Consultant: Treetop Permaculture ; Founder, The Camp Fire Restoration Project, Ecosystem Restoration Camp “Paradise”; Owner / Founder, The Co-Op-a-Box Program

“Unity of Oroville! The best church in Oroville, oh heck, the best Church in THE WORLD! lol, Because it is all of you, all of us, together as a community. A community of people that want to do good! Want to live a good life, with morals and love. This community wants to give back to their community directly, to help our greater community. Has anyone ever noticed that Unity is in Community? But, I love Oroville, the people, the natural surroundings, the arts that are all around. The fresh produce at many different farms in our area. We are small but large, we take care of ours in Oroville.” ~ **Nancy Rivera**

“What I love about Oroville: Opportunity to be involved in the arts... acting, music, dance, visual arts; natural beauty abounds; so many wonderful friends; true community spirit.” ~ **Katy Ryan**

“Great hiking, water sports, year-round gardening, but the best part is the people. I moved to Oroville in June, 1973. Over the next 30 years I raised two children, numerous goats, chickens and vegetables, ran an automotive repair business, helped start Birdcage Theater, taught middle school Language arts, yoga, and belly dancing; divorced and worked overseas for twenty years. In June of 2018 I retired and returned to my empty house, echoing with twenty years of renters,

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ABOUT OROVILLE

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needing lots of work. I united with old friends and neighbors, most of whom had been here for decades. They fed me, housed me, helped me clean up the property, falling trees, burning brush, fencing gardens, building raised beds, irrigation systems, hauling manure. They helped me find the best tradesmen to paint and repair inside and outside, replaced windows, reroof, install solar collectors, and even build a chicken house. It's wonderful to be surrounded by the same people I left twenty years ago. To be welcomed and supported and cared for. I'm glad to be here to enjoy the lake, hikes, gardens and good people."

~ Bonita Malone



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Our Town – Downtown Oroville

BY JIM MOLL

Downtown Oroville is alive and well!

The Downtown Business Association members are planning activities around a “return to normal” while keeping in mind social distancing and safe practices.

First Fridays are back!

One of our community’s favorite events happens on the First Friday of the month.

On March 5th, downtown Oroville businesses resumed the First Friday event with an “Around the World” celebration. The event offered locals the opportunity to “travel” the world all within our charming downtown with each business representing a different country and culture of the world.

Friday, April 2nd – Welcome Spring with Downtown Oroville!

Participating shops stay open late, showcasing new arrivals, offering “spring cleaning” deals and light refreshments. Select

eateries will have special menu items and unique Spring cocktails. Live music will be found inside Union Restaurant and on the corner of Bird and Huntoon streets. Dancers will be performing throughout the evening, and Joe’s Lunch To Go will be parked outside Gold City Vintage!

May 7th Drive-in Movie showing Disney/Pixar Cars

The Drive-in offers fun for the whole family! Last year, amid the pandemic, downtown Oroville began hosting Drive-in movies on the levee at the Municipal Auditorium. Last year, we also celebrated everything from graduations to Christmas, all at the Drive-In.

We’re all missing the Feather Fiesta Days Gold Rush Car show, so instead, we’re gathering our families, starting our engines, and headed to the drive-in to watch CARS! This family film will be a joy for anyone. Watch the Downtown Oroville Website and Social Media for ticket announcements.

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DOWNTOWN

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Friday, June 4th Lei'd Back Luau.

Get your coconuts downtown for the First Friday Lei'd Back Luau. Select businesses will be serving an array of Hawaiian Delights. So if you enjoy fruity Mai Tais & mouth-watering pulled pork, or if you just want to escape to the Islands for a few hours, you definitely don't want to miss this event!

First Fridays are just the start of activities in Downtown Oroville. There are some terrific Special Events upcoming this spring.

April 17th - Downtown Oroville Farm to Table

Join us for a very special evening of dining in Downtown Oroville. Celebrate local farms and restaurants at our Spring Farm to Table dinner. Held in the beautiful outdoor setting of Historic Downtown Oroville, chefs from our local restaurants will prepare this multi-course dinner. This lovely evening under the stars will feature locally sourced food, live music, beer, and wine. Your ticket includes one complimentary glass, one drink ticket, and a 3-course meal.

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There are a limited number of tickets available. Don't miss it!

Saturday, May 8th- Salsa and Margarita Taste-Off

Typically, this week is Feather Fiesta Days in Oroville. Activities are limited for this year's celebration, but downtown Oroville is still planning a fun activity: a Saturday stroll and shopping. You can visit participating businesses to sample and vote for the best salsa and margarita.

At the end of the day, vote for your favorite salsa and margarita and enter to win prizes.

May 21st- Drive In- Spider Man-Into the Spider-Verse

In partnership with Butte County Office of Education (BCOE), Downtown Oroville businesses will show *Spider Man-Into the Spider-Verse* on the levee. Before the film, BCOE will be showing a short video regarding teen Tobacco prevention.

The evening will be fun, informative and a great way to bring families together.

Monthly First Saturday History Walk

Join local historian Daniel Ballard for a historical stroll through Downtown Oroville. The walking tours take place at 6 p.m. on the first Saturday of each month following the First Friday events. All tours start at the Oroville Municipal Auditorium.

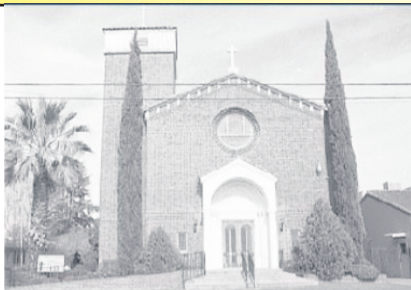
Each tour guides you through the unique history and charm of our downtown exploring the figures, scandals, and buildings that make Oroville unique. Ballard has different variations of the route planned, so each tour will be a bit different.

You can find more details and an event list at <https://www.downtownoroville.com/downtown-oroville-2021-events-list/>

There's lots to see and do in downtown Oroville. And lots more being planned. Plan a visit soon.



Oroville Church Directory



St. Thomas The Apostle Catholic Church

1330 Bird Street, Oroville • (530) 533-0262

Rev. Godwin Xavier

Saturday Mass • English 5:30pm & Spanish 7pm

Sunday Mass • 8:15am & 10:30am, in Challenge 12:30pm

Confession Saturdays 4pm • Daily Mass 8:30am

Schedule subject to change • Please check our website or call

www.oroillecatholic.org • Established 1857



Evangelical Free Church (EFC) Oroville



3785 Olive Highway, Oroville, Ca. 95966

office@evfreeoroville.com

530-533-6866

www.evfreeoroville.com

Pastor Gregg A. Hensel

Youth Pastor Brian Bell



First Congregational Church (UCC) of Oroville

Our Town's Oldest Church (1856)

Welcomes our newest residents. Pastor Roy Fisher

Worship 9:30am Sunday at Bird & Oak Streets

1715 Bird Street • 533-2483 • Hours: 9:30am-12pm



New and Improved Access Will Greet Boaters at Lake Oroville

Lake Oroville is a boating destination for thousands every year, offering recreational opportunities on the water year-round. This summer, boaters will find three new boating facilities constructed by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) at the Lake Oroville State Recreation Area in Butte County.

The new facilities include a two-stage boat launch facility — Loafer Point — in the Loafer Creek Recreation Area, and long-awaited improvements at the Bidwell Canyon Boat Ramp area. These projects are part of DWR's accelerated push to improve boater access to Lake Oroville, including during low-water periods. Due to dry conditions the last couple of years in California, DWR has taken advantage of lower lake elevations to build and improve boat ramp and parking facilities.

The new Loafer Point facility has two separate boat ramp areas. Stage I provides three new boat launch lanes for use when the lake is full (900 feet elevation) down to 805 feet elevation. Stage II provides six boat launch lanes when the lake is between 805 feet elevation and 707 feet elevation. During this year's fall and winter months, the Stage II ramp will be extended even lower to provide enhanced low-water launch opportunities.

Loafer Point also provides lighted parking areas for vehicles and boat trailers, a new restroom facility, and easy access to Loafer Creek Recreation Area's many trails, campgrounds, swimming beaches, and nearby Bidwell Marina and store, making it a full-service recreation destination. Boaters will also appreciate Loafer Point's immediate

See **DWR**, Page 27



access to the wide-open waters of Lake Oroville — there are no marina ‘slow speed zones’ to navigate.

Improving low-water access facilities is weather dependent. In wet years when lake levels are high, the facilities are underwater and are only briefly used in the fall before winter precipitation starts filling the reservoir again.

DWR has worked on the Bidwell Canyon Boat Ramp for the last three years when lake levels were low, allowing for construction. The ramp’s mid-level Stage II, which offers access to Lake Oroville when lake levels are between 700- and 750-foot elevation, has expanded from three to five paved boat lanes, adding two new boarding float lanes, and a permanent concrete parking lot for 96 vehicles and trailers.

Boaters at Lake Oroville can look forward to continuing their enjoyment of water skiing, tubing, fishing, or just relaxing on the water as DWR continues to invest in enhanced recreation opportunities on Lake Oroville.

For current information about boating facilities and the many recreation activities available around Lake Oroville, including hiking, mountain biking, equestrian trails and facilities, and other places of interest, visit www.LakeOroville.net.



The Union

BY JIM MOLL

The corner of Montgomery and Myers Streets in downtown Oroville has gone through variety of incarnations over the past few decades.

The latest incarnation is the most exciting!

Originally the corner was the site of the Union Hotel which was destroyed by fire in 1944.

The site was later converted to a bus transfer station but larger busses made the location unsuitable.

Adjacent to the transfer station was a restaurant which operated under a variety of names since the 1990's: C.L. and Harry's, Vino, Vino, the River and finally Miner's Alley.

Enter Brian and Sandy Wong, brother and sister restaurateurs known for operating Tong Fong Low in Oroville and Chico.

Brian and his designer, Michael Trolinder, were having a cup of coffee across the street discussing possible future projects when Trolinder suggested to Brian he consider revamping Miner's Alley. The property included the now vacant bus transfer station.

Brian said he and Sandy purchased the location in hopes that another restaurant owner would take over the operation. Potential operators were put off by the significant upgrades that would be needed, so Brian and Sandy decided to take on the project.

Brian said the historic building needed major plumbing, electrical, kitchen as well as heating and air conditioning upgrades. He and Sandy also decided to open the west wall of the building adding floor to ceiling windows.

They also covered the patio area just outside the building and created an outdoor dining area capable of accommodating up to 200 people. The former bus transfer station is a beer garden and can be reserved for private gatherings.

There is a stage for live music performances every Friday and Saturday night.

Brian and Sandy decided on the name "Union" to recognize the historic location and because "union" also means a coming

together of people and systems in a relaxed and comfortable setting. Brian said they want "Union" to be a place where people come together and celebrate: birthdays, weddings, reunions and anniversaries.

The menu is best described as "California Cuisine" — reflecting the many taste influences found in California, including Asian, Mexican and American. Union also features a full service bar — both inside the restaurant and in the outdoor dining area — plus a wide selection of craft beers.

Brian said there's more work planned for the location, but Union remains open. Future construction will take place during non-meal hours and on Mondays and Tuesdays when the restaurant is closed.

The corner of Bird and Myers has been transformed.

Union: a downtown venue with an historic foundation and a setting and location without peer.





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Circle Drive Citrus Growing

BY JIM MOLL

Butte County was once a thriving citrus colony in the late 1890's and early 1900's. At the time, there were more than ten commercial packing houses locally to process the fruit.

There were more than 5,000 acres of citrus in and around Oroville, but a severe freeze wiped out most of the industry in 1932.

Among the survivors were the Mother Orange Tree in Oroville, which was California's first citrus tree planted in 1856. The Mother Orange Tree has survived relocation from the old Bidwell Bar Bridge, floods, freezing and fire and is now a protected California historical landmark.

One of the other surviving orchards celebrated its 88th anniversary this year on Circle Drive in Oroville. Originally planted by Leo and Bess Sinkey in 1931, then replanted after the freeze, the orchard was rebranded in 2017 by the Papa family as Papa Citrus.

Orange groves locally are family owned and operated. There are approximately 75 acres of navel orange orchards on Circle Drive owned and operated by four families: Bert and Bonnie King, Caroline Murad and Bill and Toni Reid, and Leland and Chelsea Papa. The Reids also grow mandarins as do Scott and Holly Perkins at the nearby Tri-L Mandarin Ranch.

The area around Circle Drive is covered in sweet orange blossom perfume in the early spring. The fruit ripens throughout the summer and is harvested between November and February, depending on the sugar content of the fruit and the needs of local and regional packing houses.

While traditional operations pick and ship to packing houses well south of Oroville, Papa Citrus has broken new ground with shipments to the fresh food industry and to Raley's in the Bay Area. They also began mail order shipping of oranges in 2019 to 30 states plus Sweden and Canada.

In 2020, their online sales more than quadrupled and domestic and international distribution doubled.

Shipping small boxes is one thing. But when food distributors in South Korea contacted Papa Citrus in 2019 and ordered 40,000 pounds of oranges, shipping became a new challenge. The fruit would spend three weeks on a freighter at sea before reaching Korea. The success of that first shipment led to a visit by a representative of the South Korean food company who then contracted for sole distribution of Papa's Citrus in Asia.

2021 orders for Asia totaled 290,000 pounds! Some of that fruit is still at sea, while others are being distributed in Japan, China, the Philippines and all U.S. Military bases in South Korea.

Lee Papa's vision for the future is to restore the citrus industry in Oroville. He has broken ground for a commercial packing house on his property to help pack Oroville oranges for delivery and distribution throughout the world.

Orange groves on Circle Drive are thriving. The tradition continues with a new family looking forward.

Could this be the second great Oroville Gold Rush?
Stay tuned.



Lake Oroville

State Recreation Areas Activities Map





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