

WRITERS

# Local Author Christine Sunderland Releases New Novel, *The Fire Trail*

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

Author Christina Sunderland grew up in Orinda and Lafayette in the 1950s, graduating from Acalanes High School in 1965. Her father, Rev. Carl Thomas, was a founding pastor of Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church. "What a wonderful community to grow up in, a great experience," says Sunderland. She graduated from San Francisco State University cum laude with a B.A. in English Literature and now lives in Alamo and works in Berkeley as the managing editor of an Anglican publishing house.

Sunderland has a keen interest in history, the ability of one individual to change events, and the power of belief. In her



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Author **Christine Sunderland**, who grew up in Orinda, will read from her suspense story *The Fire Trail* at Orinda Books on Sept. 17 from 3-5 p.m.

stories she strives to bring to life the effect of the past on the present, the puzzle of perception and the mystery of time. Her latest novel, *The Fire Trail* (ELECTIO Publishing, 2016), is a suspense tale that unfolds via a love story containing elements of key cultural crises she observes in American culture. Issues she focuses on include threats to free speech, freedom of religion, the rise in terrorism and crime, as well as her thoughts on the sexual revolution.

The main characters in *The Fire Trail* are U.C. Berkeley grad students Jessica Thierry and Zachary Aguilar. Jessica walks the fire trail in the Berkeley hills and witnesses a shocking event. As Zachary falls for her, he tries to keep her safe from danger. Zachary's mother, Anna, is the steward at Comerford House Museum. Jessica meets Anna when she visits the site to research her history dissertation. Father Nate is an Armenian priest who is the caretaker for Comerford's historic chapel. Lurking in the background is the sickening fear that violence could be repeated as Jessica and Zachary walk the fire trail.

In researching her story line, Sunderland discovered the Presentation Sisters (a Catholic women's religious order founded in 1775 in Ireland) had a pivotal role in Berkeley's early educational history. They founded St. Joseph Convent in 1878 and went on to offer free education to the poor. Today's Sisters were a great help to her research.

Sunderland will read from her new novel at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square (925-254-7606) on Saturday, Sept. 17 from 3 to 5 p.m. *The Fire Trail* is carried by Orinda Books, Rakestraw Books in Danville, Amazon and the Berkeley Historical Society. Author proceeds from all her novels are given to charities including Children's Hospital of Oakland. Visit [www.Christine-Sunderland.com](http://www.Christine-Sunderland.com) for more information.

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member of the board for the Ferrari Club of America, Pacific Region (FCAPR), I help recruit members to attend," said Peggs. "I include advertisements for the event in our FCAPR newsletter and website. I live in Orinda and enjoy supporting charities benefiting our residents."

Peggs likes the Orinda car show because, "there is a great variety of cars from classics, muscle cars, exotics and motorcycles. It's not too big and not too small." One of the benefits of attending the car show is meeting with vehicle owners. "The event attracts a lot of folks from the East Bay who are interested in seeing the cars as well as

asking questions," said Peggs.

The weekend kicks off on Sept. 9 with a pre-party dinner at the Orinda Country Club produced by Orinda Rotary. The main event of the car show is Sept. 10 in Orinda Village starting at 10 a.m. and taking over the streets around Orinda Motors. The rolling exhibit of Ferraris will be arriving at 1 p.m.

Founded by Chip Herman and presented by Orinda Motors, the Orinda Classic Car Show is not to be missed. "The show would not happen without Chip's leadership," said Peggs.

Registration is still open. To register, visit [www.orindacarshow.com/bring-your-classic-to-the-show](http://www.orindacarshow.com/bring-your-classic-to-the-show). For more information, visit [www.orindacarshow.com](http://www.orindacarshow.com).



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(L-R) **Megan Lewis, Veronika Pisten, Charlotte Houston** and **Loryn Nieto** will be seniors this fall at Miramonte High School

# Writing Program Helps Teen and Tween Girls Find Their Voice

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

Loryn Nieto, a 17-year-old student, says the Intuitive Writing Project has affected her in many amazing ways. "I've learned to be true to myself and to know my worth," says Nieto. "As a teenage girl, things can be pretty tough and confusing. This class teaches you how to get clarity through writing."

Elizabeth Perlman, who founded the program in Orinda in 2013, says that outcome is what she strives for. Perlman started the program as a non-profit and has developed a 12-week module for high school girls to "find their voice."

"The Intuitive Writing Project facilitates

curriculum-based empowerment programs for teenage girls," explains Perlman. "We teach leadership from the inside out, creating a safe space for girls to tell their story, speak their truth and realize the value of their own intuitive voice. Through the experience of writing, sharing and connecting with their peers, girls develop their confidence and discover their strengths."

Perlman says that during her teens and beyond she felt pressure to conform to those around her. It took her many years to find her unique strengths and value herself. She wants to pass along how it came about — through writing. "We focus on creative writing. Girls tell me this is the only place they feel safe to be themselves and that

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