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Sunset Magic and Meaning

JoanAnn Radu-Sinaiko is forever chasing sunsets; and when she catches them, the results are photographic images full of magic and meaning. She also captures quintessential Alameda happenings—the annual 4th of July Parade and Sand Castle building contest—in her lens. But, it is what she recently did with her colorful photos that is enchanting and remarkable: Radu-Sinaiko put the beauty of Alameda evenings and events on the pages of the official 2007 Alameda, California Calendar, creating a testimony to the natural wonders available right outside Alamedans' front doors, and to the healing power of connecting with nature's splendors.



For Radu-Sinaiko, a native Bay Area resident, the road to accomplished photographer was long and, at times, torturous. In her early 20s a life-threatening, ultimately life-changing, East Coast car accident sidelined Radu-Sinaiko and led to a reprioritizing of long held dreams. Misfortune “awakened my irrepresible spirit,” she says. Returning to San Francisco, she pursued careers ranging from massage therapist to cab driver, and found true love with her radio taxi dispatcher, husband Andy Sinaiko.

After moving to Alameda, another physical setback sent Radu-Sinaiko to the beach for recovery R&R. It was there “a sunset met me,” she says. “It was breathtaking and right out my back door. It was a date with destiny.” Camera in hand, she pursued fiery twilights and composed calendar pages that she assembled published in 2005 and 2007. Proceeds from calendar sales have been donated to the Chipman Middle School Drumline Cadet Corp; East Bay Brain Injury Support Group; Friends of Kim's, benefiting typhoon victims in Vietnam, and others.

Purchase calendars, and enjoy a revolving exhibit of Radu-Sinaiko's stirring photos, at Café Central and online at www.alamedasunsets.org. The Web site features a map pinpointing top sunset viewing spots in Alameda. Both fundraising and fun raising motivate Radu-Sinaiko who says, “Alameda is the sunset capital of the Bay Area.” She hopes her work will inspire those facing challenges to relish the “simple joy” and easy access Alameda offers to the living radiance of coastal evenings.

—Noelle Robbins