



Eugene O'Neill commemorative sculpture

DANVILLE: ARTS AND CULTURE

Dig Deeper into Danville | by JAMIE MENAKER

MORNING

One of the most enjoyable Saturday morning activities is hitting up the Danville Farmers' Market (*Railroad and Prospect Avenues, www.pcfma.com*) for fresh local produce, flowers, and pastries. Browse the selections from local growers, and ask as many questions as you'd like about the growing process and where your food is coming from. Grab something to go, and check out some of the Danville art galleries. In downtown Danville, the Kevin Milligan Gallery (*408 Hartz Ave., (925) 309-4648*), features a collection of paintings, photography, and sculptures; Art on the Lane (*122 E. Prospect Lane, www.bdaviesart.com*) displays Barbara Davies' urban landscape paintings of Paris, Rome, and the countryside of Provence. Davies also offers youth and adult painting classes in the summertime. Link2 Fine Art (*730 Camino Ramon, Ste. 196, www.link2fineart.com*), in the Rose Garden Center, showcases the artwork of Tri-Valley artists and hosts weekly jam sessions, art classes, and live demonstrations of artists at work.

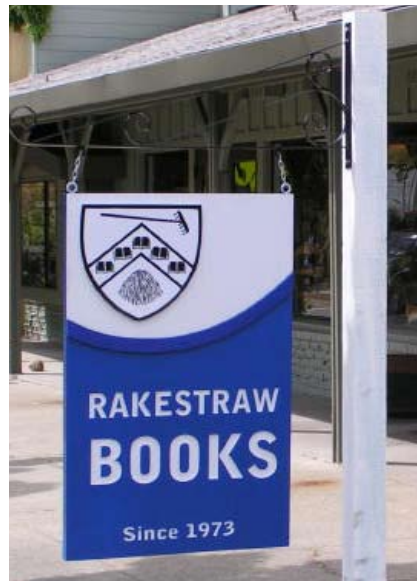
MIDDAY

With such a busy day in progress, grab a gourmet sandwich, kettle chips, and some house-made salads from Domenico's Delicatessen or a panini from its neighboring sister store, Domenico's Gelateria (*682 Hartz Ave., www.domenicosdeli.com*). Eat at the deli or across the street at the expansive grass area in front of the Danville Library (*400 Front St., www.cclib.org*) for a picnic lunch. Once you've satisfied your taste buds, stroll through the park across from the library to view the monument dedicated to Eugene O'Neill, the only American to win a Nobel Prize for Literature. O'Neill lived in Danville for the latter part of his life, and is commemorated with an eight-foot tall bronze sculpture of lines from his famous play "Long Day's Journey Into Night." Around the sculpture are eight pedestals topped with the open pages of a playbill, photos, and information about the author and his plays. Upon entering the library, look for upcoming book groups and speakers, check out the display of documents from our nation's founding, or peruse the almost 80,000 titles on the shelves. »



AFTERNOON

Eugene O’Neill created some of his most memorable plays from within the Danville home he shared with his wife. Now a national historic site, O’Neill’s former home was coined the Tao House due to his interest in Eastern thought and religions and his wife’s interest in oriental décor (www.nps.gov/euon, www.eugeneoneill.org). Free guided tours of the Eugene O’Neill Foundation Tao House are available by reservation, as well as artistic and educational programs available throughout the year. An annual festival celebrating O’Neill’s life and work (www.ci.danville.ca.us) is also held each September in Danville. If you’re a history buff, let Danville’s past come to life at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley (*Railroad and Prospect Avenues*, www.museumsrn.org). The museum is housed in a restored Southern Pacific railroad depot from 1891. You will find on permanent display a collection of items from the San Ramon Valley’s history, an exhibit of the Town’s former rail line, The San Ramon Branch Line, as well as rotating exhibits throughout the year. Another way to fit some culture into a Danville afternoon is to take a walk through the streets of downtown during one of the many arts and crafts festivals held throughout the year. In this outdoor setting, you’ll find an incredible variety of handmade art and craft items for sale and can chat with local artisans about their work (www.ci.danville.ca.us).



EVENING

For dinner, explore the cuisine of other cultures. At Thai House (*254 Rose Ave.*, www.thaihousedanville.net) dine on curries, pad Thai as spicy or as mild as you choose, or sip a sweet Thai iced tea. Try Masala Indian Fusion (*499 San Ramon Valley Rd.*, www.masalaIndianfusion.com) for naan breads, chicken tikka masala, kababs, and a host of vegetarian-friendly Indian entrees. For evening entertainment, scope out any upcoming events at independently-owned Rakestraw Books (*522 Hartz Ave.*, www.rakestrawbooks.com). The bookstore itself doesn’t generally stay open late, but owner Michael Barnard occasionally hosts select evenings for author readings or signings. Past featured authors at Rakestraw have included local author Michael Chabon, Captain Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger, and Alicia Silverstone. Another nighttime diversion is the Village Theatre (*233 Front St.*, www.villagetheatreshows.com), which showcases local theatre, plays, musicals, and more from Bay Area actors. The theater is also home to the Village Theatre Art Gallery, which features traveling exhibitions like “Peanuts At Bat”, an exhibit on loan from Santa Rosa’s Charles Shultz Museum.

