

THE ORINDA NEWS

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November 2006

Road Repair at Forefront of November Election in Orinda

By CHRIS LAVIN
Staff Writer

Election Day is fast approaching when Orinda voters will decide for or against Measure Q, a bond measure that would provide money to repair roads and drainage pipes, as well as upgrade water lines used to fight fires.

And while almost everyone agrees that repairs to some of Orinda's 92 miles of roads are badly needed, not all believe that a bond measure – with its subsequent line-item on future property tax bills – is the right way to pay for them.

If passed by the two-thirds majority required on November 7, Measure Q would authorize the city to issue a \$59.1 million bond in order to hire crews to get repairs underway immediately, before damaged roads crumble further. And there is no use fixing the roads, supporters say, unless you

needed to be done physically," said Clyde Vaughn, a retired chemical engineer and reliable fixture at Orinda City Council meetings. "But when it came to financing, they didn't look into other possibilities."

At issue is the way to pay for the repairs. Issuing a bond will result in an additional \$160 per year on property tax bills for a house that is assessed at \$500,000. Haigh emphasizes that this is the assessed value – not a home's actual worth on the market today – and may be tax-deductible for homeowners who itemize their tax returns. Coincidentally, and thanks to Proposition 13, the average home in Orinda is assessed at \$500,000, Haigh said. "New homeowners would be paying more," he added. "They will be paying for the roads they are using."

The City of Orinda only began collecting property taxes when it incorporated in 1985 and, currently, has approximately \$9 million in reserves. The city's \$9 million annual budget cannot cover city expenses and the costs of repairs to roads and drains that were already in disrepair when Orinda inherited them from the county, Haigh explained.

Vaughn and his fellow opponents, however, believe that enough money already exists in the coffers of the city and the fire district that, if re-designated, could go a long way toward making the needed road and drainage repairs without floating a bond. For instance, Vaughn said, the annual property tax allotment from the proposed Montanera development in Gateway Valley could bring an Orinda fire district \$2 million, if it had its own district, rather than sharing it with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. "This just goes into a

[SEE BOND page 10]



SALLY HOGARTY

Animated audience members discuss Measure Q during a break at the Orinda Association forum.

repair the old, faulty drainage pipes beneath them at the same time.

"It just makes sense," said Art Haigh, a retired accountant and chairman of the infrastructure committee that spent two years studying what needed to be fixed, and how much it would cost.

Even opponents to the measure do not quibble with the committee's findings.

"The committee did a good job on what

OA Forum Attracts Standing Room Only Crowds



SALLY HOGARTY

City council candidates (L-R) Robert Jungbluth, Laura Abrams, Tom McCormick, Sue Severson, and Amy Worth answer questions at the Orinda Association Forum in October.

Searching for the Right College

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

It was standing room only in Miramonte's theater when several hundred parents of high school students attended Lloyd Thacker's presentation on the college admissions process. Thacker, whose book *College Unranked: Ending the College Admissions Frenzy* presents 20 essays by admissions officers, is an outspoken critic of a college admissions process that seemingly has been taken over by salesmen. College testing and placement services, guidebooks, and college ranking services, together, have grown to a billion dollar industry that Thacker says fuels much of the getting-into-college anxiety.

A former admissions officer and college placement counselor, himself, Thacker has gone on to found The Education Conservancy, a nonprofit organization whose goal is to bring sanity back to the college admissions process. Working with college presidents and deans, high schools, and students, the Education Conservancy is central to many of the discussions that will, hopefully, bring about productive change. His group has been featured on NPR's "All Things Considered," CNN, and CBS News, as well as in leading national newspapers. Currently, the Education Conservancy is working with the producers of "60 Minutes" on a segment spotlighting the college admissions practices.

According to Thacker, who was at the high school as part of Miramonte's Stressed Out Students initiative, a lot has changed since the current generation of parents applied to college. "Chill out" may have been their parents' mantra, but today's high school students are more likely to be stressed out. A number of factors led to this change in mood, not the least of which is the increased competition to get into one of the top-ranked – or brand name – colleges and universities.

There's no shortage of advice for high school students trying to navigate the

college admissions process. Browse the shelves of any bookstore and you'll find titles ranging from *A is for Admissions* to *Winning the College Admissions Game*. It's the very notion that students could, or should, game the system that Thacker and a growing chorus of others in higher education find most damaging. That admission to a brand-name college is considered a prize to be won, they say, is creating undue anxiety among students and is denigrating to the true value of an education.

Miramonte senior Nick Radoff concedes that he, like many of his friends, is feeling the pressure of looming college application deadlines. "I'm stressed, but I think it's normal to feel some stress over college. I'm not over the top with it, but I do worry about getting into the school I want." Radoff says that he has a "long list" of colleges that he's considering, but he hopes to narrow it down

[SEE COLLEGE page 6]

Orinda Schools Top State API

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

Orinda Union School District (OUSD) teachers, administrators, and staff had reason to celebrate last month when the state released the results from the 2005-06 STAR tests showing the Orinda School District earning the highest API (Academic Performance Index) score in the state. "The API results are an affirmation of all that we've been doing as a district to strengthen our academic programs," said OUSD's Superintendent Frank Brunetti. "Our teachers, principals, staff, and district office employees have worked hard these past six years to realign our strategic priorities and now we're seeing the results."

While Orinda's schools have routinely been among the top performing schools in the state, Brunetti says that the district's ascent to the top of the state's API is no accident but the result of a strategic focus put into place in 2000. "We've operated under a philosophy of raising the floor and lifting the ceiling to provide opportunities for all students to reach their potential," he explains. "These are very bright and capable students, and we owe it to each and

[SEE API page 10]

November Orinda Dog



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Judy and Chet Martine's golden-samoyed mix, Andy, is this month's Orinda dog. As the Chinese Year of the Dog nears its end, so will this monthly feature on Orinda's faithful canine companions. For more local dogs, see page 2.

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YEAR OF THE ORINDA DOG



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
JoAnne and Carl Frudden's Darcey enjoys keeping watch over the neighbor's yard.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Kipper may be small, but according to his owners, the **Sninskys**, he's a real go-getter.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
 The **Ratner** family's dog **Opus** was well taken care of while they were on vacation, but he still missed them lots.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Alaska, an **Australian Shepherd**, enjoys a good bath by owner **Tom Lavin**.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jake is one lucky dog. He was rescued from the Fremont Animal Shelter by the **Novak** family.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
 With a brother in Orinda and a sister in Lafayette, **Bill and Hilary Hickman's** Brittany spaniel **Charlie** can have a family reunion anytime he wants.

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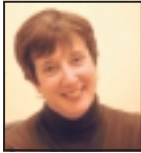
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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President

Re-invest in Orinda!

Kate Wiley



No, we're not asking for that kind of investment, we're looking for citizens who want to invest their time, talents, energies, and passion to projects and issues affecting all Orindans today. The Orinda Association (OA) board is a small, hands-on, active group of Orindans who want to have an impact on current and future issues in Orinda. We work on a variety of projects including environmental, civic, and philanthropic. As a board member, you choose your area of interest in service; it could be community information through public forums, community unity with the 4th of July parade, helping our seniors and youth through our volunteer programs, involvement in disaster preparedness, or an overall interest in keeping the OA a strong, vital, important community organization just as it has been since 1946, impacting, forming, changing, and preserving the current and future shape of Orinda.

To demonstrate the kind of commitment our board members show, half of our current board members have been actively serving for over eight years! So we're looking for new board members to join us, to share with us your new ideas, energy, and enthusiasm. Check out our new website at www.orindaassociation.org to get an idea of the range of projects we're involved

The Orinda Association

The Orinda Association is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to:

- Maintaining and improving the quality of life in Orinda;
- Promoting awareness and discussion of issues that are important to the community;
- Encouraging and recognizing volunteer efforts to enhance the beauty, character, and security of Orinda.

P.O. Box 97
24 Orinda Way (Lower Level Library)
Orinda, California 94563
Phone: 254-0800 Fax: 254-8312
www.orindaassociation.org

OFFICERS

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Vice-President/Secretary	Tony Ratner
Treasurer	Jim Luini
Membership	Mark Roberts
OPSAC Representative	Bill Waterman
Co-Chairs July 4th Parade	Lisa Alward
	Cindy Powell
Grants	Cathy Reaves

in. We meet the second Monday of each month at 7:15 p.m. in the May Room, lower level of the library. Your initial involvement can be as little or as great as you like. We welcome your fresh ideas, energy, and commitment. Contact us today at 254-0800 or e-mail oa@orindaassociation.org.

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Classic Car Show Benefits OA



Eartha Newsong and Kate Wiley of the Orinda Association accept a check for \$3,300 from Chip Herman, representing early proceeds from the Classic Car show held at Orinda Motors. The check, plus additional funds still coming in from the event, will benefit the OA and City of Orinda's Senior Ride Program.

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Important Issues on Ballot This November

This October marked the 15th anniversary of the Oakland Hills firestorm. For many, that tragic event still seems like yesterday. The Orinda community was the beneficiary of several families who relocated to Orinda when they lost everything in that horrible fire. I still remember evacuating and wondering if my family would have a home when we returned. Luckily, our home survived but many of my friends were not as fortunate.

This inauspicious anniversary makes the upcoming November election even more significant with Measure Q, the bond measure to fix Orinda's most traveled roads, replace old water lines, and upgrade the city's most deficient fire hydrants, on the ballot.

By the plethora of letters to the editor, it is obvious that local residents feel strongly for and against this bond measure. In all my years as editor, and before that, assistant editor of *The Orinda News*, I have never received such an avalanche of opinions from our readers. I would like to thank them for taking the time to put their words to paper, and I hope you will read them.

Since this is a monthly community newspaper and this November issue is the only opportunity for residents to express their thoughts, I have increased the size of the paper to 32 pages and included all the letters that arrived by the deadline.

The Orinda News, which is published by



the Orinda Association (OA), has also been asked to endorse a yes vote on Measure Q. While the OA, as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, is allowed to support measures but not candidates, I have always felt strongly that papers should not endorse any measures or advise voters on candidates running for office. Who are we to tell you how to vote?

That being said, I do know that Orinda's roads are some of the worst in the area. In

a recent report on poor road quality by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Orinda ranked number 100 out of 100 cities in the region. Clearly, something must be done. The roads will only get worse and cost more in the future to repair. Even if the road where you live is not on the list for repairs, the major thoroughfares you travel to get to your home are slated for improvements. The same can be said for fire hydrants. The one by your house may meet standards, but

if the one several blocks away is not, you run the risk of a fire in that neighborhood engulfing your house as well. Should the city have appropriated more of its funds in the past to fix these problems? Regardless of your answer, that is the past. The poor roads and inadequate water pipes and fire hydrants are a reality now.

Is Measure Q the answer to these problems? Only you can decide. Be sure and vote on November 7.

Letters to the Editor

SOS Small Shops

When a second Starbucks arrived in Orinda, I sighed for our local coffee shops. But when I read a third may open in Safeway and that Peet's was opening across from Royal Grounds, I decided a letter was in order. (Kudos to Caffé Teatro for surviving the tribulations at Theatre Square and making a go on the other side of town.) We need a bakery or lunch spot, not another coffeehouse.

What we all love about Orinda is our village ambiance, with Orinda Theatre on one side and the library and community center on the other; convivial restaurants, Gepetto's and Siam Orchid to name just two; the Medicine Shoppe and McCaulous - all places where people know us by name. Seifert's Floral gave me free advice and even a specialty item (available only to florists) last month when I made a bouquet for a friend's wedding. I love asking the women at Orinda Books what they are reading this month.

The point is that this cozy and convenient ensemble of shops and eateries is not possible, if we encourage large chains (is Wal-Marts next?) in Orinda, instead of patronizing and encouraging our village businesses. Small stores are closing all over the country. Maybe Orinda will resist the trend. I hope so - if we do, we will be the

exception. If we want to retain the charm we need to uphold our city codes and invest our time, dollars and foot power.

— Cinda MacKinnon

BirdHaus a Great Event

Never in my 38 years of living in Orinda have I had so much fun at a community event as I did at Orinda Idol. My hat's off to all of the finalists that participated and a big thank you to Petra Michel and the Orinda Arts Council for sponsoring and organizing such a great event. I look forward to the 2nd Annual Orinda Idol next year.

— Mike Vigo

Orinda Arts Council Weekend

Congratulations and many thanks are due to the Orinda Arts Council for bringing two outstanding events to our community in mid-September.

The BirdHaus benefit auction and gala was a smashing success with over 200 people attending and having a wonderful time checking out dozens of creative habitats for our winged friends. Arts in our schools, as well as the Mt. Diablo chapter of Habitat for Humanity, will be the fortunate recipients of the funds raised.

At least 1000 people rotated in and out of the Orinda Theatre viewing some or all of the Orinda Idol contestants. The

whistles, whoops, and cheers supporting all the finalists ranging from kindergartners to high school students were a treat to hear. It was a truly exciting event.

On behalf of all Orindans, I want to thank the many volunteers from our community who made these events so successful. Petra Michel, Nancy Daniels, and Susan Garell deserve special mention. We should all hope that we see art celebrations like this every year.

— Bill Judge

NO on Proposition 90, the Taxpayer Trap!

There's a dangerous initiative on the November ballot that's disguised as a simple measure to protect our homes from eminent domain. The measure also contains (way in the back-in fine print) a clause that says that if the state or a local government adopts any regulation that diminishes the value of someone's property or business, the government has to pay compensation to the owner.

This would mean that if in response to public concerns about traffic or other impacts of a proposed development the city were to reduce the density or require the developer to construct an alternate access road, the city would have to pay for the developer's lost profits! If a business near your home was polluting with excess noise or noxious fumes and the city passed an ordinance restricting those activities, the

city would have to compensate the business owner. Even development restrictions approved by the voters would require payment to developers!

If Prop. 90 passes, the public will no longer have the right to a quality environment. Developers and big business will have the right to pollute and despoil our communities unless we pay them not to! Cities and counties will be forced to choose between protecting their residents and paying ruinous judgments to developers.

The proponents say that the measure would prevent government from taking your house or small business and turning the property over to a private developer to build a Wal-Mart. That may be true but what they don't mention is that this initiative would also make it nearly impossible for a community to stop a developer from building a Wal-Mart next door to your house!

I urge everyone to read this measure carefully. The eminent domain protection is just a Trojan horse for the real agenda of gutting California's planning and environmental laws. These laws have been developed over nearly a century to balance the public interest and property rights and to protect us from the negative impacts of development and business activities. Please vote no on Prop. 90.

— Fred Smith
[SEE LETTERS page 22]

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Letters to the Editor are printed on a space-available basis and should be no longer than 400 words. They must include the writer's first and last name, signature and telephone number.

Send letters to: Editor, *The Orinda News*, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, fax them to 254-8312 or email to news@orindaassociation.org. **Letters to the Editor for December/January are due November 6.**

For display advertising rates call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or send email to aspen@hobbitsforhire.com. The deadline for the February issue is January 2, 2007.

POLICE / CITY MANAGER



POLICE BLOTTER

Compiled by Haleh Williams-Cain,
Orinda Police Department
September 2006

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 53 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 8 incidents in the areas of Brookwood Rd., Valley Dr., Las Vegas Rd., El Gavilan, Camino Sobrante, Orchard Rd., and Bates Blvd.

Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 4 incidents in the areas of Brookwood Rd., Las Vegas Rd., El Toyonal, and Bated Blvd.

All Other Petty Thefts: 3 incidents in the areas of Orinda Way, El Gavilan, and Acacia Dr.

Grand Theft From Vehicle (theft of more than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 3 incidents in the areas of El Gavilan and Loma Vista Dr.

All Other Grand Thefts: 1 incident in the area of Bear Creek Rd.

Vehicle Theft: No reported incidents.

Residential Burglary: 7 incidents in the areas of Glorietta Blvd., Lost Valley Dr., Bobolink Rd., Underhill Rd., Canon Dr., and Donald Dr.

Commercial Burglary: No reported incidents.

Vandalism: 4 incidents in the areas of Orinda Way, Moraga Way, Via Las Cruces, and Don Gabriel Way.

Identity Theft: 4 incidents in the areas of Robert Rd., Via Hermosa, Los Conejos, and Rheem Blvd.

Credit Card Fraud/Forgery: No reported incidents.

Special Notes: False Alarms - A municipal ordinance requires that the

City of Orinda bill alarm subscribers with more than two false alarms in any 90-day period, or eight in any 12-month period, for the cost of a police response. Effective March 9, 2006, the fee for each excessive false alarm is \$240. Orinda Police respond to an average of over 2000 false alarms each year. This means that patrol officers spend valuable patrol time responding to false alarm calls instead of utilizing the time for other police work. Additionally, officers attempting to respond quickly increase their chances of becoming involved in traffic accidents, creating a hazard for officers and citizens alike. Alarm systems are a valuable asset to crime detection and crime prevention. The City of Orinda is trying to promote the effective and proper use of alarm systems. You can reduce the likelihood of additional false alarms (and associated fees) if you:

- Familiarize all residents/employees with proper operation of the alarm system;
- Have your alarm tested and inspected by your alarm company on a regular basis;
- In the event of an accidental activation of your alarm, immediately contact your alarm company. This will terminate any further action by the police.

Through cooperative efforts, the city can reduce the number of false alarms and improve police services to the citizens of Orinda.

City Manager Reflects on First Year

By JANET KEETER
Orinda City Manager

The past year has not only been a whirlwind of activities and challenges, but also an eye-opener for me – a year that has flown by with barely a glance backwards. I was first attracted to this job by the beauty and high standards that make Orinda so unique. Orinda is a community of caring citizens, willing to not only speak their minds, but to also roll up their sleeves and get involved in finding solutions to problems.

The quote that comes to mind when I reflect on this past year is from Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, its the only thing that ever has.” This quote is indicative of the citizenry of Orinda and what I have found to be an amazing dedication by residents to make this community the best that it can be.

My introduction to Orinda’s volunteerism began on my first day, August 1, 2005 when I attended the monthly Mayor’s Liaison meeting. I was introduced to a cadre of 20 plus community representatives from local garden clubs, service clubs, school officials, churches, and safety representatives, to name a few. Soon thereafter I became more acquainted with city committees and commissions such as the Orinda Public Safety Advisory Commission (OPSAC), Infrastructure Committee, Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

What has become quite apparent to me over the past year is that the City of Orinda cannot “go it alone.” The organization relies heavily on volunteers to supplement what this lean staff can accomplish, which in and of itself is quite a bit.

[SEE CITY MANAGER page 6]



SALLY HOGARTY
City Manager Janet Keeter completes her first year on the job.



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COLLEGE / CITY MANAGER

◆ COLLEGE from page 1

to about seven to which he'll apply. "The biggest stress factor now is getting everything together. My parents aren't putting as much pressure on me as some, but they're definitely concerned."

While Radoff acknowledges that he wants to attend a good school, he hasn't bought into the hype of college rankings. "The idea of a great college is often based on prestige. But there's more to it than that. I want to find a school that can give me a good education and prestige doesn't necessarily mean a school is the best choice."

Radooff's mother, Cindy Boyko, says that it's been hard to find the right balance between caring and getting overly involved. "I used to think that there were only a few great schools out there," she says. "But as Nick has been getting information from schools, and we delve a little deeper into what they have to offer, you find that there are a lot of good schools out there with great programs. It certainly takes a lot of the pressure away."

It's the very focus on the so-called brand

name schools that is at the heart of Thacker's critique of the college admissions process – and he's not alone. Ironically, the admissions frenzy today may have been spawned in the mid-1980s when colleges started seeing a decline in admissions. After a surge in students fueled by returning veterans and the baby boom generation, changing demographics foretold a drop in college applicants.

Then, in 1983, *US News & World Report* published its first ranking of colleges and universities. A perennial top-seller, the magazine's annual edition of "America's Best Colleges," measures data points ranging from alumni giving to a college's acceptance rate. The *US News* measures became increasingly important to both families of prospective students and the colleges themselves. A growing number of critics, however, charge that the things *US News* measures may reflect variables such as a school's wealth or admissions rate but not the quality of learning.

One result of the changing demographics and the increased focus on rankings such as those done by *US News & World Report* is that colleges began marketing their

programs more heavily. The actual number of seats in college classrooms hasn't changed markedly, but the number of applications has grown. The effect has inflated some school's selectivity measure (i.e., produced a lower acceptance rate). And this, Thacker says, has become a vicious cycle with more and more students applying to the same handful of colleges.

According to Barbara Aronson, Miramonte's college and career center advisor, over the past five years, 97 to 99 percent of the school's graduates have gone on to college, with roughly 85 percent attending four-year schools and 15 percent heading to two-year programs. "Many students apply to eight to 10 colleges plus four or five UC campuses," Aronson says. As this year's seniors begin their college search, Aronson urges students to first, and foremost, consider who they are. "They need to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and likes and dislikes as they try to find a good fit."

Ariel Chin has identified 17 colleges that she's interested in and hopes to apply to ten schools. "I'm feeling stressed because I feel like I'm always behind," Chin says. "I haven't narrowed down my list of colleges yet, and I need to get that information to my teachers and counselor a month before the application deadlines so they can write letters of recommendation. With rolling admissions and

different deadlines, it's a lot to keep track of."

Chin has gone to visit several schools and has found the campus visits to be helpful in getting the feel of a school's atmosphere. "I really like the bigger schools with strong athletic programs and school spirit. I'm looking at several Big 10 and Pac 10 schools, but I also like some of the smaller liberal arts schools." When visiting college campuses, Chin recommends looking at the dorms, learning about student activities, and trying to decide if the location is one where you'll be happy.

In his book, Thacker provides a number of suggestions for students, parents, and college admissions officers that can make college decision-making more effective. He urges students to resist taking standardized tests such as the SAT more than twice and to apply to no more than four to six schools. Additionally, he reminds students to make the most of their high school years by remaining curious, spontaneous, and allowing for some downtime. Thacker's advice to parents includes allowing the student to own the application process and avoid living vicariously through your student. The best words of wisdom might be found in the section on parents' advice to others: "There is no such thing as 'the one perfect college'" and "What you discovered is often better than what you planned."




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◆ CITY MANAGER from page 5

The city employs 36, full-time equivalent staff and contracts with the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department for police services, bringing the total number of staff to 50, full-time equivalent employees. The staffing level has remained relatively the same since the city incorporated in 1985. This dedicated workforce serves 17,500 residents, 7,200 parcels, 92 miles of public roads, 27 miles of public storm drains, and does this all on an annual budget of \$9.6 million. The city's budget is comprised primarily of revenues generated from property taxes (\$3,105,000), fees for services such as parks and recreation programs and planning and building inspections (\$3,022,110), and sales taxes (\$932,000), with the remainder coming from assorted mandates and grants. To put revenues and expenditures into perspective, police services alone cost \$3,245,000. The city's underlying rating of "AA," it's healthy reserve in the event of unforeseen and unbudgeted necessities, and modest budget increases over the years were all indications to me of a conservative financial approach to running the city.

What did surprise me was the substantial difference between Orinda's assessed value vs. market value of homes and how that

equates to city revenues. In a study recently completed by the city's financial advisors, Stone & Youngberg, the median Orinda residence has an assessed value of \$458,427. The City of Orinda receives 7 percent of 1 percent of the assessed value, equating to approximately \$340 annually for a home assessed at \$458,427.

The issues that have become my top priorities over the past year, and will continue to be top priorities until accomplished, include infrastructure improvements; enhanced communication with the public; Pine Grove residential development; developing the former library site for senior, affordable housing to meet state-mandated requirements; and downtown revitalization. In addition, disaster preparedness, the Orinda Gateway project, and siting a maintenance and corporation yard are active priorities. Some would say that these are daunting challenges, but in the spirit of optimism, I see the priorities as opportunities to build upon what is already a great community. I am fortunate to work with such an exceptionally talented staff and look forward to great things happening in Orinda's future.

One of the questions I ask myself is, "How long will it be before I am no longer called 'the new city manager?'"

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SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

Bontemps, Phillips, Sorenson, West Seek Seats on OUSD School Board

The five members of the Orinda Union School District (OUSD) board of trustees are elected volunteers who set policy and make budget decisions for Orinda's four elementary schools and one intermediate school.

Riki Sorenson and Pam West are running for re-election and Jack Bontemps and Wayne Phillips are seeking their first term on the school board. The editorial committee of *The Orinda News* asked the four candidates the following questions:

1. Why are you running for a seat on the Orinda Union School District board of trustees and what relevant experience do you bring?
2. What will be the biggest challenges facing the Orinda schools in the next four years, and how would you suggest addressing these?
3. There's much in the news about high-stakes testing and the increasing pressure on students. What are your thoughts on this subject?
4. If the sale of the former Pine Grove School site stays on track, the district will receive \$25 million. How should that money be used?
5. What do you foresee as the facilities needs of our schools within the next ten years, and how would you suggest addressing these needs?



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jack Bontemps

Qualifications

I am running because I can think of no better way to make a contribution to my community than by supporting its greatest assets – our schools. As a chemical engineer for Chevron, I gained extensive experience in fiscal management, strategic planning, information technology, logistics, and personnel matters. My service on Orinda Rotary's board includes initiating a district-wide teacher recognition program, as well as a Rotary/school partnership to develop the Kids 'n Kreeks science curriculum at each Orinda school.

As president of the Orinda Parks and Recreation Foundation, I led an OUSD task force to develop a long-range plan for the Wagner Ranch Nature Area and served also on the district's maintenance yard relocation committee. For the past six years, I have served on the Lawrence Hall of Science advisory board working with staff to bring hands-on science curricula to students nationwide.

Biggest Challenges

Our school district needs to continue to implement the strategic plan emphasizing math, literacy, science, and technology. Success will depend on the involvement of all community stakeholders in achieving annual objectives – parents, students, teachers, and district administration.

A large challenge coming up will be updating the district's master facilities plan and reviewing future needs, including identifying major replacements to 50-60 year old buildings. Teacher methods have evolved over past decades, demanding facilities that support modern techniques.

Several district projects need to be completed:

- a. The final Pulte purchase and building agreements of the Pine Grove site.
- b. The corporation maintenance yard will be relocated on a new site, to be determined by relative economics of identified choices.
- c. A replacement for the existing OUSD office will be built on the Pine Grove site. It will be important to continue to strengthen OUSD communications with our community, especially concerning educational strategies and measured successes. We will continually express appreciation of community financial support and enormous

volunteerism at all schools.

High Stakes Testing

OUSD has established education strategies to improve learning processes and student skills. Curriculum, teaching methods, teacher hiring and development, technology, incorporation of music and visual arts along with core subjects are all addressed in annual objectives. These efforts coupled with parent support and hundreds of volunteers in school activities have yielded increased improvement in student education. It is worthwhile to occasionally measure student skill development over time. Such measures are good indicators of success in our education process. OUSD does not "teach the tests." Focus is on student learning. Not only do recent academic performance index (API) test scores place Orinda's elementary schools highest in California, but equally important is that scores have been improving – one measure that the process is working.

Pine Grove Funds

An endowment fund should be established, which conservatively, should yield about \$1.5 million annually. This revenue stream can be applied to identified specific projects and equipment needs, relieving the district's general fund. Expenses covered by endowment earnings can be directed to major maintenance equipment, facility infrastructure, technology, preventive maintenance, and more, easing the pressure on tax payers and contributors.

Future Facility Needs

As mentioned above, OUSD school facilities are 50-60 years old, and in some ways, inadequate to fully support teachers and today's teaching methods. Renewed facilities will include modern libraries of digital media and access – elementary searches for information beyond school walls, technology infrastructure, presentation media replacing "black" and "white" boards, visual presentations of the

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graphics behind mathematics and science, proven student software aids for personal agendas, capturing thoughts, writing essays, and presenting summaries to others. Remodeled and new classrooms need to be well lighted, encourage group interaction, comfortable and energy efficient.

During the next several years, the district master facilities plan will be updated reviewing future needs. Architectural reviews will be needed to identify improvements; some major repairs, others replacements. Revenue sources may include additional state funds for classroom "modernizations." Ultimately, schools will need major funds from sources such as community supported bonds.



SALLY HOGARTY

Wayne Phillips

Qualifications

Good schools increase the value of my property here in Orinda. Paying attention to business and trying to improve my own bottom line is why I'm offering my experience and skills. One of the benefits that I get (for living in an area with really good schools) is having really good

neighbors. Another is that as the really good students grow up, they'll also become really good neighbors.

As a former English, Spanish, and French teacher (and student), as a scientist and retailer, as a theatergoer, musician, and art appreciator, my eye sees a very broad swathe of the community. My educational background (MBA, in particular) should be very appropriate.

I bring professional business experience to apply to the real problems that face any organization, but especially one as large, as expensive, and as complex to run as a school district. I want to ensure that sound business practices continue in the district's affairs.

Biggest Challenges

Orinda will have a few more students and higher home costs. Ensuring that we don't end up importing teachers, because they can't afford local home costs, is the one area

[SEE PHILLIPS page 8]

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SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

◆ PHILLIPS from page 7

that I think needs a mental shift on the part of the trustees. I intend to recruit within the community, both for applicants and for affordable housing to share with new teachers that might not otherwise want (or be able) to teach here. We have a hugely educated "civilian" population that has been tapped only if, and because, they are parents and not because of their skills and educational background. I will be constantly listening for needs that may be met within the community, and I intend to take a strong role in making sure that happens.

■ High Stakes Testing

Students have always felt pressured, and these times are no different. The only way to consistently measure high standards is through testing. Orinda need not be afraid of testing - no matter how high the stakes, but in reality, the stakes are no higher here than anywhere!

■ Pine Grove Funds

I'd like to say that the district needs to involve students in research, research, and more research. Not just "technology/computers" (which, by the way, is presently being used only at a very low level in the district) but chemistry, biology, and sociology. It would pay huge dividends to

start integrating (and implementing) home technology with school technology to improve communication among teachers, students, staff, parents, students, and the community for matters like school work, grades, and test scores.

Unfortunately, funds from the sale of Pine Grove will probably be restricted to very narrow, specific uses - rebuilding or upkeep of existing schools, paying off existing mortgages. In short, a fund that may only be used for buildings and grounds. It may depend on how the Pine Grove property was originally acquired and any agreements made at that time.

■ Future Facility Needs

Standard wear and tear, that the present staff already knows how to deal with, may cost even more than \$25 million per school.

The Pine Grove \$25 million may well go here.



SALLY HOGARTY

Riki Sorenson

■ Qualifications

I have three children attending schools in the Orinda Union School District (OUSD), and have been actively involved as a volunteer since my oldest was in kindergarten; he is now a 7th grader. I have served on the school board since 2002 and have developed a thorough understanding of this exceptional school district. Though many districts have struggled through lean

years of state revenue, OUSD, with the financial support of Orindans, has excelled and improved through an intense strategic effort. I have been actively engaged in this strategic effort and hope to continue as we confront future challenges. My training is in engineering and education, so I bring a scientific and technical perspective to the board; as a former teacher, I am empathetic to the demands we place upon our talented faculty.

■ Biggest Challenges

Our first challenge is to complete the sale of the Pine Grove property and find a home for the city/school district corporation yards. We can only accomplish both with the active support and cooperation of the city council. We hope to have it!

OUSD relies heavily upon volunteer dollars from our funding partners: EFO and parents clubs. Their work is exhausting, but vital, to OUSD's ability to provide a well-rounded education that includes art, music, library, and computers. We must work collaboratively to ensure we maximize the use of these precious dollars.

Academically, OUSD has achieved the pinnacle of success, being recently identified as the highest scoring (API) elementary district in California. That does not mean it cannot improve... not by working harder, but by working smarter. For example, the district's emphasis in language arts has empowered faculty to rethink how they teach writing. Teachers are energized as they find better ways to reach kids.

■ High Stakes Testing

In elementary and intermediate school, the pressure of testing should not be on students, but on teachers and administrators. When our kids excel on these assessments, it is because teachers have worked diligently and innovatively to teach the rigorous state standards. As a board, the data we obtain from the testing provide us with critical information that allows us to better focus our resources in strategically improving instruction. When a teacher's students do not excel in a particular area, the administration identifies support remedies to help that teacher. For the teachers, there is pressure, but there is also validation when students do well. This year, with the state's highest API, our teachers and administrators can point to the result and say "We Did That!" I am thrilled for them because they earned it!

■ Pine Grove Funds

It is unfortunate that the Pine Grove sales process has dragged on for so long, as the school district has lost millions in potential interest due to delays. I feel the Pine Grove money should be carefully invested in an interest-bearing fund, with only the interest directed toward district expenses. In fact, the state requires that the principal could only be spent on facilities. By preserving the principal, revenue generated can be applied to the district's on-going operational expenses in perpetuity.

A sound strategy for the use of interest earned from the principal could include not only investment in facility improvements, but short-term academic support programs,

or technology. Given the globalization of our world and the omnipresence of computers, we must prepare our kids for this radically evolving world. The money should not be invested in staff compensation.

■ Future Facility Needs

OUSD facilities symbolize the grossly inadequate state funding given to schools. California invests billions in new prisons every year, but barely subsidizes its school facilities. District staff work very hard to keep facilities clean and safe, and despite a shoe-string budget, they do remarkably well.

In a perfect world we could scrap our school sites and build modern, efficient, safe, state-of-the-art buildings. Given the reality that state funding will never underwrite such an endeavor, we should at least provide our schools with information technology centers (combined library and computer), and updated multi-purpose facilities (Del Rey and Sleepy Hollow). Once the District Master Facilities Plan is revised, the district must consider all income sources, including Pine Grove money, to fund identified improvements.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pam West

■ Qualifications

Since 1982, my four children have attended public schools in Orinda. During this time, I have served on parent club boards, on the district's strategic planning committee, and am now on the board of trustees for the Orinda Union School District.


I am seeking re-election because of my appreciation of the job, experience, and commitment to several long-term projects.

During my tenure, OUSD has made significant strides in delivering excellence in education to the children of Orinda using its strategic plan, maintaining a highly qualified teaching staff with a high level of employee satisfaction, sustaining a long-term planning commitment, and carefully budgeting scarce resources. Using my MBA background, I have operated my own businesses for the past 26 years. This level of experience has helped me to make prudent decisions about such issues as fiscal management, long-term planning, employee and public relations, and site development and construction.

■ Biggest Challenges

The Orinda Union School District is [SEE WEST page 9]

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◆ WEST from page 8

number one in California with the highest Academic Performance Index rating. However, success does not mean that we can become complacent. Excellence is an ongoing challenge requiring constant maintenance and improvement.

I will continue to ensure the implementation and assessment of our strategic plan, the cornerstone of our success. Each year the strategic plan, along with several other district priorities, is evaluated. Achievements and opportunities for improvement are highlighted using the famous Baldrige criteria, and then goals are established for the coming years.

Maintaining our status as number one with limited resources and declining enrollment will be a definite challenge in the coming years. This community has always been a tremendous help to the district through its volunteer and funding efforts. I intend to nurture this vitally important partnership by fostering the trust this community deserves. The Orinda Union School District will continue to be a district we can all be proud of.

■ High Stakes Testing

I have had children in the Orinda schools for the past 24 years. During that time, tremendous changes have taken place in both the social and academic arenas of children and young adults. They face a more competitive, stressful environment today than they ever have in the past. I will ensure that your children attend a school where learning is a priority, yet each individual child is important. I believe that children deserve not only the best education possible, but individual attention and nurturing.

The district's goal cannot be to teach to the test, but to teach to the child. Through differentiation, excellent teachers with extended support, and a highly rated

curriculum, we can address the academic needs of all children. Each child should be able to achieve his or her individual academic best.

■ Pine Grove Funds

The \$25 million realized from the sale of the Pine Grove site is an endowment that will produce sustainable income for the district. Although the initial proceeds cannot be used for general fund expenses, the revenue generated from the endowment can.

This revenue must be judiciously apportioned in a carefully determined manner. Part of the OUSD 2006-07 strategic plan calls for the district to establish a Pine Grove revenue committee that will be comprised of community members, parents, teachers, administration, and board members. This group will make recommendations to the board about how the Pine Grove funds will be used. Careful, long-term planning will ensure that these valuable dollars will not be squandered away within a few years.

■ Future Facility Needs

During the past several years the Orinda Union School District has been completing the "modernization" of our schools based on the Master Facility Plan (MFP) that was approved in June 2000. That project is nearly completed and it is time to address our current needs.

I have advocated for analysis of the condition our schools, and the district is now in the process of updating its overall MFP. I am committed to ensuring that our schools are well equipped, safe and functional, as well as to improving our technological capabilities as part of our strategic plan in the future. If called upon, I am willing to campaign hard to get the needed majority approval to pass a bond measure.

Orindans Join the Peace Corps



Shana Valla (center) with other language teachers at a school in the Ukrainian town of Crimea. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

■ No heat, no AC, no hot water, bad food, and the experience of a lifetime

By Heidi Donner
Contributing Writer

Most Orinda kids have it figured out pretty well – go to a good high school (Miramonte), work hard, go to a good college, graduate, get a good job or maybe go to graduate school to get an even better job. But a few break away from that mold as they graduate from college and take on a very different challenge. Some serve in the military to protect our country. Some go into the Peace Corps to represent our country by making a difference in people's lives, often one life at a time.

Shana Valla and Greg Mandelman are [See CORPS page 20]



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"I have had the great privilege of knowing Riki for thirty years and think of her as the "Renaissance Woman" - she does everything well, with determination and enthusiasm, and ultimately with great success. From starting in basketball locally and at Stanford, to teaching physics, to serving with distinction on the OUSD Board, Riki can and does it all. I wholeheartedly endorse her re-election to the school board."

Sue Severson, Orinda Citizen of the Year

"We are fortunate to have such a dedicated volunteer who provides outstanding leadership to our school community. I fully endorse Riki."

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API / BOND

◆ API from page 1

every one of them to provide the knowledge and tools they will need as they continue on as learners and, eventually, take their place as the leaders of tomorrow. Our students today will be working with technology tomorrow that doesn't even exist yet, and finding answers to questions



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that we haven't even begun to ask."

Brunetti says that, while his staff is justifiably proud of their students' performance, he hopes that the entire Orinda community shares in their pride. "Much of what we're doing today is a direct result of the investment the Orinda community has made in our schools through their support of the parcel tax, which has allowed us to hire and retain the best teachers, and their continuing support of Parents' Clubs and the Educational Foundation of Orinda. In addition to improved teacher compensation and smaller class sizes, these funds provide classes such as art, music, physical education, and computers, as well as library services and elective courses at OIS.

"Without local support, our schools would be nothing more than 30 kids in a classroom with one teacher and no programs that broaden and enrich a student's education," says Brunetti. "Cutbacks in state funding have eliminated many of the enrichment programs that were commonplace in the 1970s when California's schools were the envy of the nation. Fortunately for us, Orinda has worked to maintain the quality and richness of its programs and our students are showing that this investment is paying off," says Brunetti.

The API is the cornerstone of the state's schools accountability initiative. The API scores are based on student test results on

the STAR (Standardized Testing and Reporting), an academic standards-based test, and the nationally norm-referenced CAT/6 test. The STAR test aims to measure students' mastery of specific academic standards in core subject areas. API scores range from 200 to 1000 points; Orinda's score of 962 represents a 14 point increase over the previous year.

Standardized testing has garnered much media attention since the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation in 2001. The federal legislation came two years after the state enacted its own California Public Schools Accountability Act, which identified more rigorous academic standards and set a goal of having all students proficient at meeting these standards. "The academic standards we're working with define very clearly what students need to learn. The standards are integrated and connected throughout the curriculum and reinforced so that student learning is of a high quality and solid," says Brunetti. "The move to standards-based instruction has enabled teachers to better focus their efforts, collaborate, and build a program of very effective learning, whereas before the introduction of standards, teachers worked as independent practitioners teaching what they thought was important. They may have been good teachers, but you saw big gaps in student learning."

According to Brunetti, Orinda's API results show that over 90 percent of the district's students are proficient or above at mastering the standards. "There are schools in Contra Costa County where the proficiency rate is between 30 and 40 percent and that's just not acceptable," he says. "We're fortunate in Orinda to have excellent, dedicated teachers, principals, support staff, and administrators all working together to provide outstanding learning opportunities for students. We just keep working to improve the level of learning for all students and provide opportunities to expand their learning."

◆ BOND from page 1

common pot now," Vaughn said. He also said that new city offices were not needed, and should be put up for sale or lease to pay for infrastructure repairs. "If we go through that amount (saved through city and fire district cut-backs), then I would be in favor of a bond," Vaughn said.

Based on the infrastructure committee's recommendations, if the measure does pass, the city will contribute an additional \$500,000 per year for the next five years from its reserves and East Bay MUD and the fire district will contribute \$3.4 million to replace inadequate pipes under the roads that are to be repaired.

While the Orinda citizens' infrastructure committee estimated that fixing all of the roads, drainage systems, and water pipes in need of repair would cost \$143 million, a professionally conducted poll showed that going for the whole amount would mean death at the ballot box.

"That's how we arrived at that (\$59.1 million) number," said Alex Evans, president of Evans/McDonough Co., a marketing and research company that had nothing to do with the poll. While acknowledging that Measure Q funds will not be sufficient to repair all of Orinda's roads, the city council has placed priority on the most heavily traveled roads (i.e., those with 500 car trips per day or more). The council also moved to set aside \$3 million from Measure Q, should it pass, to improve pedestrian and bike access near schools.

In the coming days, Orinda voters are bound to see more signs and information tables throughout town, a supporting campaign paid for by residents of Orinda who have been "very generous," Evans said. Haigh is adamant. "If we don't fix it," he said, "It won't get done."

For more information on the bond measure, go to www.fixorindaroads.com or the city website at www.ci.orinda.ca.us.



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REPAIR THE ROADS & INFRASTRUCTURE

BOB JUNGBLUTH

FOR ORINDA CITY COUNCIL



This election is about more than issues. It's about asking why voters were not given an opportunity to support funding a new city hall? It's about asking why the old library was not retrofitted to support city offices? It's about asking why we have not attracted any new business to downtown? And, mostly, it's about asking why our infrastructure has been neglected for 20 plus years?

This election is about leadership, focus and commitment!

As the founder of a marketing and public relations consulting practice, I have had the opportunity to work with many elected officials and governing bodies. This experience has given me an understanding of how to work with the people in this field. It has helped me to develop the leadership skills necessary to focus a diverse organization toward achieving a goal. It has made me appreciate the importance of reaching agreement when prioritizing a group's objectives. It has also instilled a commitment to fiscal responsibility and a budget.

PRIORITY SPENDING OF TAX DOLLARS

BETWEEN THE LINES / FISH

Between the Lines

Hooked on English Novels

Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



It may have been excessive exposure to *Swallows and Amazons* at an early age, followed up when I was a teenager with liberal doses of Daphne Du Maurier — and Georgette Heyer saw me through young motherhood — but whatever the cause, I'm hooked on English novels. My addiction has done odd things to my vocabulary (don't hand me the wrench, I want the spanner) but it has given me endless hours of pleasure. Many local readers agree. This fall, a British invasion at Orinda Books was greeted enthusiastically at two author appearances when Philippa Gregory and Jacqueline Winspear, both very good British writers, discussed their books. Although Gregory was born in South Africa and Winspear relocated to the States in 1990, their fiction is thoroughly rooted in the British Isles — Winspear's in the years immediately following the First World War while Gregory's most popular books have been her Tudor novels.

To my delight, in mid-October a new novel by Kate Atkinson, *One Good Turn*, arrived at Orinda Books. Atkinson may be my current favorite living British author — one who has never disappointed me. Each of her five novels and her one short story collection has had what I consider the attributes that spell reading pleasure: identifiable characters (at least someone who provides you, the reader, with a way into the story); a lively story line; a fine use of language; a generous dash of humor; and, perhaps most importantly, a depth of feeling that I find moving.

And I am not alone! *One Good Turn* is the October Booksense #1 Pick — selected each month by independent booksellers throughout the country and *New York Times* reviewer, Janet Maslin, recommended it on "Good Morning America," agreeing with those indy booksellers from Vermont to California.

In *One Good Turn*, Atkinson brings back Jackson Brodie, her protagonist from *Case Histories* (2004), a character who was obviously too good to set aside after one novel. Brodie is a former soldier, a policeman turned private investigator, and in *One Good Turn*, rather restlessly retired. He is a bemused spectator when a thug, apparently compelled by road rage, attacks an unsuspecting driver and is felled by a

laptop computer thrown by a Milquetoasty detective-story writer. All this, with the Edinburgh Festival in the background, is only the beginning of Brodie's new adventure.

Intricate plotting is a hallmark of Atkinson's novels. She won the Britain's Whitbread Award for the Best Book of the Year in 1995 for *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, a many layered account of an ordinary family's life written with extraordinary passion. She followed that up with *Human Croquet*, where touches of Wonderland as well as *Moby Dick* (the first line is "Call me Isabel") decorate a family saga that is part mystery and part fairy tale. *Emotionally Weird* came next — Atkinson used her own college, Dundee University, as the setting, enrolling as students some wildly funny characters—talk about *tartan noir*! Touches of magic and fantasy enlivened these three novels, as well as her short story collection, *Not the End of the World*, where metamorphoses straight out of Ovid dance in and out of everyday life.

Atkinson was an only child who found her playmates in books and was raised on the grimmest of fairy tales followed by *Alice in Wonderland*, which may explain a taste for the bizarre that nudges its way into all of her fiction. She says that writing books is the best adult playground in the world, as there are no barriers to creativity — it's a world over which the author has total control.

Critics have correctly applied words like "offbeat," "playful," and "poignant" to her work. Jacqueline Carey, in a 2004 *New York Times* review of *Case Histories* said, "Her humor — and she is a very funny writer — is the sort that comes from being able to see the way happiness and sadness can emerge from the same situation. Her reach is certainly long enough to touch cruelty and grief, but it also extends far in the opposite direction — all the way to joy."

We're entering the gift-giving season and certainly Kate Atkinson's new novel, *One Good Turn* ought to top many wish lists. It will titillate crime novel aficionados as well as readers of "literary fiction," and of course, those anglophiliac readers like me who would love to gobble up almost everything that those talented Brits have to offer.

Fish Holding Court at Orinda Books



DIANE HURST

The Mayor of Village Square, as Fish was often called, passed away in September. Frequent shoppers at Village Square will remember the community cat as he strolled from shop to shop, taking comfort at Orinda Books. Fish adopted Village Square as his home after the 1991 Oakland Hills fire. Injured in the fire, but still able to find his way over the hills, Fish was a local hero of sorts, even inspiring a line of note cards by local photographer Diane Hurst. People wishing to make a donation in Fish's memory can send a check to the Contra Costa Humane Society, 609 Gregory Lane, Suite 140, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523. Donations can also be left at Orinda Books.



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From the Desk of Tom McCormick

To My Orinda Neighbors;

I am writing to ask for your vote for Orinda City Council.

We are very happy to have chosen Orinda to settle and raise our four children. We have lived in Orinda for 11 years and our children are now fourth generation Orindans. Orinda is a tight knit community that works hard to be vibrant, have the best schools in the state, and to provide a safe environment for its children and neighbors.

As your City Council member, I will work hard to find solutions to problems so our roads are repaired and maintained before new City Council offices are built; our local economy thrives so necessary goods and services are provided; the remodeling process becomes friendly, supportive, and objective so homeowners enjoy their improvements; and our schools are supported and promoted by the City Council.

In the past, I have watched as our roads have deteriorated and our city's basic foundation has been ignored. I now realize that if I want Orinda to be a better place, not just for ourselves, but for future generations, then I need to take an active role and be in a position of direct access to solve the city's problems.

I am grateful for the overwhelming support I have received and encouraged by the large numbers of people who have taken the time to endorse me. I am also proud to be one of two candidates to have the support of the entire OUSD School Board.

If you believe, like I do, that it is time for a fresh prospective and innovative solutions to the issues we face in our community, then I ask you to vote for me on November 7th.

Sincerely,
 Tom McCormick

Elect
Tom McCormick
 ORINDA CITY COUNCIL

OUT AND ABOUT / JUNIOR LEAGUE

Out and About Pat Rudebusch



Perhaps it's the election season. A recent fundraising appeal captured my attention more than usual. It was from **Project Second Chance**, an organization associated with the Contra Costa County Library system that helps adults improve their reading, writing, and spelling skills. Since 1984, volunteers with the organization have helped over 4,000 people gain the confidence and independence that is attained through literacy. Two hundred people this year alone benefited from Project Second Chance.

The letter from **Susan Lynn**, Project Second Chance's director, chronicled a list of accomplishments of the group's students: 31 individuals read their first book, 20 learned to write checks to pay bills, 16 can now follow written medical directions, 11 people passed the written driver's license test all thanks to Project Second Chance. And then, right there at the end of the list of accomplishments was the startling fact that six of the group's students were able to vote for the first time.

If you're reading this column, chances are good that you never gave literacy a second thought. We take our ability to read for granted. Unfortunately, many Americans take their right to vote for granted, as well. But for some living right here in Contra Costa County, illiteracy stands between

them and the most fundamental of American freedoms: the right to vote.

Project Second Chance is sustained through donations and volunteer tutors. Last month, **Ron Shoop** from Random House returned to the Orinda Library to share his book recommendations for book clubs and holiday gift giving. The annual event, co-sponsored by **The Friends of the Orinda Library and Orinda Books**, benefited Project Second Chance.

Shoop's recommendations, which are all available at Orinda Books, included *Never Have Your Dog Stuffed* by Alan Alda; *Rules for Old Men Waiting* by Peter Pouncey; *Pomegranate Soup* by Marsha Mahran; *A Sudden Country* by Karen Fischer; *Sky Burial*, by Xinran; *Lost in the Forest* by Sue Miller; *Can't Wait to Get to Heaven* by Fannie Flagg; *Love in the Present Tense* by Katherine Ryan Hyde; and *The Glass Books of the Dream Eaters* by Gordon Dahlquist.

If you're looking for a gift this holiday season, consider the gift of a good read and a contribution to Project Second Chance. Literacy is too important to be taken for granted; so is the right to vote.

For more information on Project Second Chance visit the website at www.ccclib.org/psc/psc.html or call 925-927-3250. And if you don't know where to vote, go to www.cocovote.us.

Junior League's "Artful Living Tour" Features Orinda Homes

By DANA YOUNG
Contributing Writer

Have you ever wanted to sneak a peek inside someone else's home? Chances are, if you went ahead and snuck into their home, you'd be arrested.

This year, the Junior League of Oakland-East Bay, Inc. (JLOEB) is giving people the opportunity to catch more than a glimpse into some of the East Bay's most distinctive and architecturally interesting homes. And, not only is it legal, but it benefits JLOEB's charitable endeavors.

The third annual "Artful Living Home Tour" will open the doors of five incredible Orinda residences. Called the "gem of the East Bay," Orinda not only offers a convenient place to live, but its charming neighborhoods and top-ranked schools make it a fantastic place to live.

The tour is unique and educational – focusing on integral perspectives of architectural style, landscape design, interior design, and furnishings.

Most important, the ticket is worth the price of admission as it gives people the thrill of exploring some of the most beautiful and interesting homes in the area while supporting the League's continued efforts on behalf of children. All proceeds from the "Artful Living Home Tour" benefit children at risk.

Prior to unveiling the uniquely-designed homes, the JLOEB will host a kick-off party on Thursday, November 2, from 6:30 – 9



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
This beautiful fountain leads visitors to one of the five gorgeous Orinda homes on display during the home tour.

p.m. at Orchard Nursery in Lafayette. The "Artful Living Home Tour" takes place Nov. 3 and 4 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$35 per person in advance and \$40 on the days of the event. Participants will check in at Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, 433 Moraga Way, in Orinda.

For more information, call (925) 284-3740 or go online to www.jloeb.org. Tickets can also be purchased at the Hen House, 20 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette, (925) 962-1776.

Local Family Makes Special Hospice Facility
A Reality for Patients Needing Acute Care

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

In numerous national surveys, 85 percent of Americans said they wanted to die at home surrounded by family, friends, pets, and familiar routines. Hospices throughout the area meet this wish by providing compassionate, comprehensive care at either the patient's own home, a skilled nursing, or assisted living facility.

However, some patients experience periods of acute symptoms that cannot be accommodated at home. Hospitalization was the only alternative until a local family lent its support for a hospice inpatient facility. George and Sue Bruns were the

primary benefactors of the new facility named in memory of their son George H. Bruns, III. The couple are also major contributors to California Shakespeare Theater where the group's performance venue is also named for their son.

Located in Alamo, the Bruns House is operated by Hospice and Palliative Care of Contra Costa and features six private bedrooms, an open kitchen and living areas, and lovely gardens. Services are designed to help patients enjoy the privacy and quiet that cannot be achieved in a hospital while they benefit from the intensive, around-the-clock care that cannot be provided at home. For more information, call (925) 887-5678 or go online to www.hospicecc.org.

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The Sabbath Has Kept the Jews detail

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Artist's Talk: "Beth Grossman's Tabernacle and Chagall's influence" 2 p.m.
Reception: 3 - 4:30 p.m.

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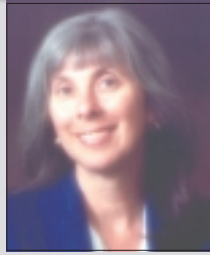
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Thank you to our former and current Orinda City Council members and their families for years of hard work and dedicated public service in the 21 years since incorporation.

Dick Heggie	Gregg Wheatland
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Kids Helping Kids

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

Twenty-three students of Lamorinda Martial Arts took part in the studio's kick-a-thon for St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. Participants employed three of the most efficient taekwon do kicking techniques – dolryo chagi or round kick; ahp chagi or front kick; and yahp chagi, or side kick – as they tried to accomplish the most kicks within an hour. Altogether, students kicked their way to raising approximately \$5,000 from sponsors who pledged either a per-kick amount or a flat contribution. The internationally acclaimed St. Jude's was founded by the late actor Danny Thomas and is known both for its pioneering research in pediatric cancer and other life-threatening pediatric diseases as well as its policy of treating any child, regardless of the parent's ability to pay.

For the past five years, Lamorinda



Seven-year-old Samantha Schulman was one of the youngest students to participate in the kick-a-thon.

Martial Arts has taught taekwon do to students of all ages. Currently, the studio has approximately 160 students between the ages of four and 54 enrolled in its classes. For more information, visit the website at www.tkdlmas.com.

Blake Spahr Leaves Rich Legacy

by SALLY TURBACH
Contributing Writer

Following a long illness, Orinda resident, Professor Blake Lee Spahr, died peacefully in the presence of his wife on September 29. An emeritus professor of German at UCB, he had a long and distinguished career as teacher and internationally known editor and scholar of German baroque and comparative Arthurian literature. He was 82.

Born in Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1924, as a young boy, Spahr traded his pocket knife for a German grammar text and began to teach himself German. Already in third

grade he knew what he wanted to be — a professor of German. In an ironic twist of fate, he served in the U.S. Army Air Corps as a navigator in a B-17 bomber, and flew 35 combat missions over Europe between mid-August 1944 and the end of that year.

Spahr chaired both the UC Berkeley German Department and the Comparative Literature Department during the turbulent 60s, and helped institute the Dutch language and literature program at the university. In 1992, Spahr received the UC Berkeley Citation, and in 2000, he received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from his alma mater, Dickinson College. Perhaps most remarkable, was the rare combination of two of the awards Spahr received — both the Air Medal from the U.S. government for fighting the Germans in WWII, and in 1985 the Bundesverdienstkreuz, Erste Klasse from the Federal Republic of Germany, Germany's highest civilian honor, for his contributions to German culture.

After his retirement in 1993, Spahr continued his interest in the arts as an exacting editor, enthusiastic reader, theatergoer and French horn player in the Oakland Community Orchestra. He will be missed by his many friends and colleagues in Europe and America for his sense of humor and talent for telling jokes and staging practical jokes. He is survived by his wife, Herlinde Baeckelms Spahr, and his stepdaughter, Amelia Schaller, of Zürich, Switzerland.

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CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Abrams, Jungbluth, McCormick, Severson, Worth Seek Seats on the Orinda City Council

The five members of Orinda's City Council are elected volunteers who set policy, give direction to city staff, and make budget decisions. Besides attending twice-monthly council meetings, each councilmember serves on several committees. They also interact with the levels of government between the city and the state on issues such as transportation, smart growth, and traffic.

Laura Abrams and Amy Worth are running for re-election and Robert Jungbluth, Tom McCormick, and Sue Severson are seeking their first term on the city council. The editorial committee of *The Orinda News* asked the five candidates the following questions:

1. What qualifications and/or relevant experience would you bring to the position?
2. What do you see as the city's top priorities over the next four years and what opportunities should be pursued to meet these goals?
3. Downtown redevelopment has been a topic of discussion for the past several years. Still, Phair's has been vacant for over six years and Theatre Square has been a revolving door for many businesses. What role can the city play in attracting and supporting businesses that serve the needs of residents?
4. Measure Q, if passed, will provide funding for approximately one-third of the infrastructure repairs needed as identified by the infrastructure committee. How should the city council address the remaining infrastructure problems?
5. California cities are required to more actively address the growing need for housing. What do you think Orinda's opportunities and responsibilities are to answer the call for Smart Growth?



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Laura Abrams

Qualifications

I began volunteering in 1982 as co-

director of the Friends of The Orinda Theatre. The friends saved our landmark theater from the wrecking ball. I was elected to the city council and served as mayor and councilmember. I have a masters in business administration with an emphasis in finance, which has helped me work prudently to maintain our reserves and manage our financial resources so that Orinda has earned the much envied AAA insured bond rating. We have leveraged our assets working co-operatively with other agencies. The Wagner Ranch gymnasium was built jointly with city and Orinda Union School District funds. The new Orinda Library was financed jointly with the Friends of The Library that raised \$5.5 million. I have served on the garbage franchising agency, keeping rates low while increasing recycling. I worked to bring the Farmers' Market to Orinda. I believe in consensus building and cooperative decision making.

Top Priorities

The top priority is passing Measure Q and fixing our roads, drains, and water pipes. This is a matter of public safety. We need hydrant pressure to suppress fires. Our children deserve safe routes to schools. We need roads that safety personnel can travel over swiftly to save lives! Other priorities are downtown revitalization, reviewing our general plan, and developing a traffic safety plan to educate drivers and create a process for neighbors to address traffic issues within their own neighborhoods. We must continue to outreach to the community to prepare our citizens individually, by neighborhood and citywide to deal with emergencies and regional disasters. Challenges include continuing to work with the neighborhoods affected by the planned expansion of the EBMUD filter plant. As a member of Fourth Bore Caldecott Tunnel Study committee, I have worked to minimize the noise and traffic impacts on Orinda during construction and final design.

Downtown Revitalization

I currently work alongside John Phair on the downtown revitalization review team. We have completed publicly held interviews of planning firms and are visiting target cities exploring the positive changes other cities have made to their downtowns to attract new businesses. I am excited about working with other property owners, and the Chamber of Commerce to kick off this public process starting with workshops where all Orindans would be invited to come, share their views, and talk about what goods and services will be supported in our downtown. I have also worked for the last two years on the Theatre Square subcommittee with the goal of increasing the number and variety of businesses in Theatre Square. I have met with the new

owners of Theatre Square who share the same goals and have expressed interest in working collaboratively with the theater owner, the chamber, and the city to revitalize the Crossroads.

Infrastructure Repairs

In addition to Measure Q, which will provide \$59.1 million, the funding package includes \$2.5 million from the city's reserves, \$3.4 million from the fire district, and \$1.5 million in favorable financing from EBMUD. This brings Orinda's fire hydrants needed water flow, fixes failing public storm drains, and repairs public roads that have 500 or more car trips per day. The city already spends roughly \$3 million or one-third of our annual budget on infrastructure. Measure Q would free up that city money to be spent on public residential roads with less than 500 car trips per day. The city has been, and I will continue to be, actively seeking our share of the scarce federal and state grant dollars for road repairs. I would also move to establish a road fund account where the city annually deposits any revenue received over budget to be set aside for large infrastructure repairs.

Smart Growth

Orinda is almost built out with high property values making it difficult to meet state housing mandates. State funding will become increasingly dependent on compliance with these unfunded mandates. I serve on the committee to address this issue. One opportunity for our city to fill the need for additional housing is to encourage "in-law units." We are currently revising the second unit ordinance to help more home owners come into compliance with these zoning requirements. We are working with the school district on the Pine [SEE ABRAMS page 16]

Please join with us in supporting

AMY WORTH

for ORINDA CITY COUNCIL

Join those who have endorsed Amy Worth for Orinda City Council

<p>Elected officials</p> <p>Ellen Tauscher, Member of Congress Tom Torlakson, State Senator Richard Rainey, Former State Senator Loni Hancock, Assemblymember Mark DeSantis, Contra Costa County Supervisor Laura Abrams, Orinda City Councilmember Joyce Hawkins, Former Mayor and Orinda City Councilmember Dick Heggie, Former Mayor and Orinda Councilmember Bill Judge, Mayor and Orinda City Councilmember Bobbie Landers, Former Mayor and Orinda Councilmember Sue Rainey, Walnut Creek Councilmember Victoria Smith, Orinda City Councilmember Allan Tabot, Former Mayor and Orinda Councilmember Geegg Wheatland, Former Mayor and Orinda City Councilmember Laura Hoffmeister, Concord City Councilmember Julie Pierce, Clayton City Councilmember Don Tatzin, Lafayette City Councilmember Gail Murray, BART Director Dan Richards, Former BART Director</p>	<p>John Coleman, EBMUD Board Member Katie Foullkes, EBMUD Board Member Gene Gottfried, Mossgro-Orinda Fire District Director Pete Wilson, Mossgro-Orinda Fire District Director John Wyro, Mossgro-Orinda Fire District Director Maria Alegria, President, League of California Cities Don Freitas, Chair, Contra Costa Transportation Authority Tomi Van de Broeke, Contra Costa Community College Trustee Glenn Alper, OUSD Trustee Cassandra Foth, Former OUSD Trustee Nancy Kalble, Former OUSD Trustee Linda Landau, OUSD Trustee Jean Lyford, Former OUSD Trustee Karen Murphy, Former OUSD Trustee Pat Rudebusch, OUSD Trustee Riki Sorenson, OUSD Trustee Pam West, OUSD Trustee</p> <p>Neighbors and Friends</p> <p>Harriet Ainsworth David Anderson Sandy and Dave Anderson</p>	<p>Sandy Barnett Lynn and Jason Baskett Russ and Mary Bekton Joyce Blair Jack and Barbara Bontemps Severin Borenstein Carol Brosn Lawrence Burde Glenn and Ann Christofferson Cookie and Carol Cooke Barbara and Marc Coesi Lance and Mary Jo Cordes Ira Cowles Catherine Cutler Sis and Tom Curtis Marybeth and Bill Darusmont Bill and Barbara Denny Ronnie and Clive Devenish Pat and Peter Dinkelpiel Rob and Finola Fellner D.D. and Paul Felton Sue Fox JoAnne Fradden Shannon and Glen Fuller Pete and Carolyn Giers Paula Goodwin</p>
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A partial list, to see all of Amy's endorsements visit www.AmyWorthforOrinda.org

Paid for by donations to Friends to Elect Amy Worth • ID#084211 • P.O. Box 1808, Orinda, CA 94563

Learn more about Amy Worth at www.AmyWorthforOrinda.org

FRIENDS TO ELECT
AMY WORTH

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

◆ ABRAMS from page 15

Grove development which is on line for 80 homes, eight of them affordable housing. Gateway, which is underway, will provide about 240 new homes. The Gateway developer is buying the old library from the city for \$2.5 million to donate that site for building senior housing. As Orinda's downtown properties are redeveloped, we may have the opportunity, where appropriate, for second or third story housing over retail.



SALLY HOGARTY

Robert Jungbluth

■ Qualifications

As the founder of Strategic Concepts, a public relations and marketing consulting practice, I have had the opportunity to work with many elected officials and governing bodies. This experience has given me an understanding of how to work with the people in this field. It has helped me to develop the leadership skills necessary to focus a diverse organization toward achieving a goal. It has made me appreciate the importance of reaching agreement when prioritizing a group's objectives. It has also instilled a commitment to fiscal responsibility and a budget. While Orinda faces some daunting issues, chief among them the infrastructure, this election is about more than issues. It's about leadership, focus, and commitment.

■ Top Priorities

I see infrastructure repair as our most important priority. Obviously, the infrastructure issues are not going away whether Measure Q passes, or not. If it passes, it will only address about one-third of the problem. If it does not pass, the issue remains. We must pursue making infrastructure the top priority. That is a start. Beyond that, we must make sure that funding from sources outside the normal channels and budgets are applied to road and drainage repairs. We must also find existing monies that could be spent on the roads. This requires budget reviews and fiscal restraint. And, that is the key to successfully addressing all issues, not just roads.

■ Downtown Revitalization

We must use existing resources, like the Chamber of Commerce and other businesses in town to help determine what niche markets our downtown could fill, and what local contributions could be made to bringing new business to town. But it starts with understanding and accepting that the marketplace is defining what businesses will, in fact, serve the community. Once that is determined, then we can decide what actions can be taken such as making minor adjustments to the zoning codes in order to accommodate those businesses. This strategy helps to promote all businesses in Orinda.

■ Infrastructure Repairs

It starts with fiscal responsibility. Then recognizing the priority, staying focused on the goal, and finally committing the appropriate resources. Sources of income from past projects have rarely been applied to infrastructure. Sources of income from future projects must be. We must also recognize that we will have a great deal of time if Measure Q passes from the start of the repairs to the end. In that time, we must redirect unused maintenance funds from roads that have been repaired to roads that

are not scheduled for repairs under bond monies. The bigger question, that most do not want to contemplate, is what happens if the measure fails? I would still employ the same strategy to make repairs.

■ Smart Growth

Smart Growth is easy to support, when you consider the alternative. But smart growth is going to mean something different to each community. If smart growth means congested apartments and small condos, then I am opposed. That is not consistent with the semi-rural plan Orinda has adopted. Smart growth for Orinda is maintaining what we have, and allowing a limited expansion of appropriate housing as the need arises, much like the Gateway and Pine Grove developments.



TERRY RIGGINS

Tom McCormick

■ Qualifications

My background and experience as an attorney, business person, and Orinda volunteer will make me an excellent city councilmember.

I am a practicing attorney in Orinda, working with businesses and entrepreneurial clients. I advise on corporate, legal, financial, and strategic matters. I have acted as an officer, director, and general counsel to many start-up and emerging businesses.

I have also participated in an officer or

director role in a number of companies ranging in size up to \$225 million per year in revenue. For the most part, my experience is in privately held and "family" run businesses.

I have been active in Orinda by serving on the Orinda Association and OBA boards and volunteered for the Educational Foundation of Orinda and our schools. I am also actively involved with our four children and their activities.

I have also been involved in a number of non-profit public benefit companies such as the Alameda County Food Bank and been on the board of VIP Mentors, Inc. for 23 years, a statewide group that mentors at-risk youth.

■ Top Priorities

1. Fix roads. Proper fiscal prioritizing and planning in order to repair the city's roads and infrastructure. New ideas are necessary to plan how to repair and maintain Orinda's roads and infrastructure. The estimated cost to repair is more than \$154 million, and the requested infrastructure bond will pay for only 38 percent of the problem, if it passes. This means we need to find almost \$100 million, which will take new ideas and serious planning.

2. Support schools. I am a consistent supporter of Orinda schools. We should actively help the school district achieve its highest and best price for the Pine Grove site, for the benefit of our schools and children. A major reason people move to Orinda is the high quality schools; therefore, the city should promote the schools.

3. Reform zoning laws that interfere with businesses. I will work toward attracting new businesses and customers by modifying existing zoning laws that promote businesses so they can provide more goods, services, and choices to Orinda citizens. One plan I have is to incorporate the Shakespeare Festival into the city landscape such that visitors to the festival

[SEE MCCORMICK page 17]

Sue Severson for Orinda City Council

"I heartily endorse Sue Severson for election to the Orinda City Council. Our 2004 Citizen of the Year, Sue has given distinguished service to our community, especially to our schools. She has the qualities of leadership that assure she will be a great asset to our city's governance."

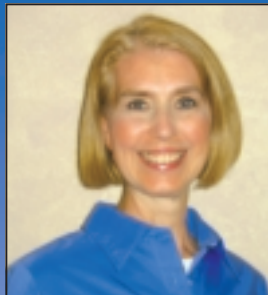
Dick Heggie, Orinda's First Mayor

"Orinda's children benefit each day from Sue's decade long commitment to our schools. Her forward-thinking, sensible approach to problem solving will have an immediate impact in getting our city council on a better track. I strongly support Sue's candidacy!"

Riki Sorenson, President, Orinda Union School District Board

"In working with Sue, I have found her to be very bright, conscientious, thoroughly on top of the issues, and always respectful of others in the process. She is a consensus builder and excellent problem solver. I endorse her candidacy for the City Council with great enthusiasm!"

Steven Glazer, Mayor Pro Tem, Orinda City Council



Join the over 500 Orinda leaders and endorsers who are voting Sue Severson for City Council.

SUE CLARK SEVERSON

My approach throughout more than twenty years of volunteer public service has been to maintain a respectful attitude, to foster open and responsive communication, and to focus on fiscally prudent practices for our tax dollars.

My promise is to help establish priorities to best allocate scarce resources through diligent fact gathering, thoughtful study of all options, inclusion of all interested parties, and decisions made with a fair and open mind.

Sue Severson
 Miramonte Parents' Club President, 2006-2007
 Orinda Citizen of the Year, 2004
 Orinda Union School District Board, 1993-2002
 Orinda Disaster Preparedness Committee, 1990-1993

- Orinda City Council:**
 Victoria Smith
 Amy Worth
- Former City Council and Mayors:**
 Aldo Guidotti
 Bobbie Landers
 Allan Tabor
- Orinda School Board:**
 Glenn Alper
 Linda Landau
 Pat Rudebusch
 Pam West
- Acalanes School Board:**
 Vanessa Crews, president
- Aaker, Kay
 Ainsworth, Harriet
 Akin, Paul & Christy
 Albo, Bob & Sarah
 Anderson, David & Nancy
 Kaible
 Andrews, Bob & Pam
 Rhodes
 Armon, Steve & Joyce
 Atard, Paul & Tamara
 Axelsson, Karen & Phillip
 LeBoit
 Bains, Ravi & Erica
 Barber, Brad & Cindy
 Barber, Tom & Carol Ann
 Barker, Jeanne
 Barrows, Cathie & Doug
 Barth, Neil & Gene

- Bartlett, Rich & Glenda
 Bates, Brent & Jennifer
 Bennett, Jay & Susan
 Benney, Dorothea
 Bennhoff, Lucia & John
 Berkowitz, Fred & Sasha
 Rabsey
 Bitzer, Kelly & Jim
 Bontemps, Jack & Barbara
 Bluford, Peter & Nancy
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 Cassiel, Steve
 Chaconas, Ted & Cecile
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 Douglass, Gordon
 Dowell, Jeanne
 Duncan, Jeff & Anna

- Dyson, Lyman
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 Harwood, Steve & Tish
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 Hirahara, Carl & Tak
 Hofinga, Tyler & Beth
 Holland, Jeff & Alison
 Honens, Dexter & Kelly
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 Hyde, Jane & Nicholas
 Jorgens, Craig & Lisa
 Kankor, Bob & Sheyla
 Karplus, Elizabeth "Betty"
 Kirchberg, Jim & Julie
 Klevan, Leonard & Cecilia
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 Liu, Doug & Lorie
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 Marin, Carol
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 Matthews, April
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 Mein, Eric & Kerry
 Metzner, Aliza & Peter
 Montgomery, Robert & Joan
 Moran, Paul & Laura
 Morrison, Anna & Philip
 Nelson, Jack & Ellen
 Lavis, Tracie

- Nicholson, Cindy & Chris
 Nishioki, Gary & Sheila
 Nye, Gary & Ann
 O'Connell-Nye
 O'Melveny, Brian & Julie
 Oshima, Diane
 Palmer, Richard & Carolyn
 Pang, Elena
 Pavey, Kent & Ina
 Pease, Janet & Norm
 Penskar, Carol
 Purcell, Brian & Kim
 Quist, Jim & Bonnie
 Rains, Darryl & Jana
 Ramsey, Diane & Bruce
 Ratto, Paul & Virginia
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 Romak, Kevin & Susan
 Romberg, Wayne & Gail
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 Kieckhafer

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 Traxler
 Simon, Dave & Kathy
 Simonsen, Al
 Solit, Mark & Maria
 Sorenson, Lee & Ann
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 Spurrer, Ida & Lon
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 Sueska, Tom & Carol
 Swimmer, Mark & Kristi
 Doberentz
 Swinton, Mark & Lorree
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 Tague, Anna
 Talbot, Lucy & Al
 Taylor, Matt & Nancy
 Tom, William & Stephanie
 Townsend, James B.

- Trumbo, Rita
 Tuttle, Mark & Marcie
 Ullman, Bev & Bert
 Urban, Ted
 Vann, Rich & Robin
 Viadro, Chris & Julianne
 Weerts, Richard & Jeri
 Wendt, Sheila
 Wharton, Kurt & Jill
 Whitley, Mark & Danusia
 Zarada
 Wildrick, Paul & Sonna
 Williams, Brandt & Amy
 Wirtz, Kimberly & Brian
 Wisser, Charles & Jane
 Wolfe, John & Kim
 Wolfum, Tom & Kathy
 Wu, Norm & Marinda
 Wyro, John
 Yaich, Bran & Kathy
 Yasuda, Art & Remi
 Yee, Wes & Kathy
 Zischke, Midge
 Zuercher, Jane & Mark

Partial list of endorsers.

Filed for by committee to elect Sue Severson for City Council ID #1288709.

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

◆ **McCORMICK** from page 16

will also visit Orinda shops and restaurants. 4. Make residential remodeling objective and easier. I will support updating the residential remodeling permitting process to make it more objective and less difficult to navigate. The process should be an easy and fun process, not one that is subjective and dreaded.

■ **Downtown Revitalization**

I will work to reform zoning laws that interfere with local businesses. I will work toward attracting new businesses and customers by modifying existing zoning laws that promote businesses so they can provide more goods, services, and choices to Orinda citizens.

One plan is to help Safeway expand. A second is to incorporate the Shakespeare Festival into the city landscape such that visitors to the festival will also visit Orinda shops and restaurants. A third is to modify the requirement that only "retail" businesses can occupy any ground floor space in Orinda. A fourth plan is to allow businesses in the old Phair's building that are precluded by existing zoning laws.

■ **Infrastructure Repairs**

It will take (a) proper fiscal prioritizing and planning, and (b) new ideas to increase revenue and cut costs in order to find the money to repair Orinda's roads and infrastructure. The estimated cost to repair is more than \$154 million and the requested infrastructure bond of \$59 million will pay for only 38 percent of the problem, if it passes. This means we need to find almost \$100 million to repair our roads and infrastructure.

Clearly the method employed by the incumbents to spend all money on new buildings and then plead to the people to pass an infrastructure bond is not sufficient. We will now need to set clear priorities in

spending, do everything we can to increase revenue to Orinda and cut operating cost, while maintaining necessary services and safety. Increases in revenue can be accomplished through updating zoning laws to help businesses and citizens. Cutting costs can be obtained through coordinating some services with neighboring cities to obtain economies of scale.

■ **Smart Growth**

Smart growth in Orinda can be accomplished by allowing higher density growth in areas that do not harm the friendly neighborhoods of Orinda. There are areas left in Orinda where senior housing would be desirable and would also support local businesses.

The best and fastest way to encourage smart growth is to modify existing zoning laws that either prohibit, limit, or discourage smart growth. With such changes, people who own property will seek to add space for seniors and potentially students that find living in a secure environment inviting.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

■ **Sue Severson**

■ **Qualifications**

My husband and I are 28-year Orinda residents raising our five children in this

uniquely wonderful community. I have enjoyed working with parents and community members in various civic and educational endeavors, including nine years school board service, parents' clubs leadership positions (currently serving as Miramonte Parents' Club president), successful efforts to resume school bus service for our families, and working on the disaster preparedness committee. I know first-hand of the progress achievable through collaboration, open communication and consensus building and believe I can offer experience, fiscal responsibility, and cooperative decision making to the Orinda City Council.

■ **Top Priorities**

Road and drain repairs must receive the highest priority from city government. Every day we experience unsafe pavement conditions that endanger pedestrians, bikers, and drivers. We must get ahead of our infrastructure problems rather than reacting after our roads and drains are in their current critical state. The keys to making the improvements are a combination of Measure Q funding, greater allocation of the city budget to infrastructure, and a serious effort at building tax revenues. Closely related to infrastructure challenges is the need to improve the building and remodeling approval process, to make it less stressful and more efficient for homeowners and businesses. From the city council and planning commission, we need consistent and understandable building guidelines, greater conformity and clarity on city and county construction regulations, and a more cooperative, facilitating approach in working with homeowners.

■ **Downtown Revitalization**

We have all witnessed the constant turnover in small businesses in Orinda, and in the process we have gained a deserved reputation as being unfriendly to business.

City government needs to enable and facilitate entrepreneurs who are willing to invest their resources in establishing local businesses. We should start by reducing restrictive regulations on downtown businesses, by campaigning for our residents to buy from Orinda merchants, and by inviting "outsiders" to shop and use services here. Business growth will both improve our quality of life and augment tax revenues. At the council and commission level, we need to be much more pro-business and attentive to attracting and retaining businesses.

■ **Infrastructure Repairs**

[SEE SEVERSON page 18]

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CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

◆ SEVERSON from page 17

I support Measure Q and will work to ensure that funds raised for road and drain repair go exactly where they are intended. It is critical for the city council to establish priorities and a strategic focus so use of our tax dollars is maximized and leveraged to accomplish the most good with limited resources. While on the surface it appears that Measure Q funds will take us less than half the way "home" on infrastructure amelioration, it does provide ample money to address the highest priority needs and all the funds we can practically put to work over the next four to five years. During that time, the city must carve out incremental funds from the existing budget, add to the annual road funding amounts, seek grants from state and federal sources, and simultaneously facilitate business growth to augment tax revenues.

■ Smart Growth

Orinda's limited geographic footprint precludes substantial new housing growth, but we have opportunities to address affordable housing as suggested by Smart Growth. Unfortunately, past city councils have taken us in the opposite direction.

The Gateway area and Pine Grove are the two large-scale building sites available presently. Montanera ultimately hurdled many obstacles placed in its path by the city, but we lost a decade in the process, and are waiting to see the promised development of affordable housing at the old library. With Gateway decided, it is imperative that Pine Grove be designed and developed properly and expeditiously, as the only near-term option for higher density, affordable housing. Sadly, we are witnessing the city council's typical slow-moving, obstructionist approach to Pine Grove, with the city's demands threatening cancellation of the development. Minimally, the city council should reduce roadblocks to Pine Grove, not create them.

We need new vision and leadership on the council.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Amy Worth

■ Qualifications

I have served as a community volunteer in Orinda for 24 years and have worked with people from all parts of our community to enhance the quality of life in Orinda.

Through my experience as chair of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, chair of the Contra Costa Library Commission, chair of the Contra Costa Mayors Conference and boardmember of the Miramonte, OIS and Sleepy Hollow Parents Clubs, I have worked to improve Orinda and to represent Orinda's interests in regional issues. As co-chair of the successful Measure J campaign, I worked to secure funds to build the Caldecott Tunnel fourth bore, maintain the Lamorinda school bus program, and repair and maintain local streets and roads.

With careful fiscal management of Orinda's resources, we have achieved an outstanding credit rating and improved city services. I worked to increase library hours and construct the new Orinda Library.

■ Top Priorities

The top priority for Orinda is to use our limited resources in the most effective manner to maintain and enhance the quality

of life in Orinda. Right now, the repair of our streets and roads and upgrading our water systems to improve community-wide fire safety must be our highest priority. With voter approval of Measure Q, we can undertake our community's most urgently needed road, drain, and water pipe repairs and upgrades.

Through continued, careful management of our city's resources, we can provide the level of police, public works, planning, and parks and recreation services that our residents want. Orinda should continue to work cooperatively with Lafayette and Moraga to combine resources to deliver important services in an economical manner such as the joint contracting for a tri-city disaster preparedness coordinator. Protection of our local tax revenue from the state will also continue to be a top priority.

■ Downtown Revitalization

Orinda's downtown offers much to residents and retail customers – but can offer much more. The Orinda Theatre, excellent restaurants, retail shops, and services contribute to our community's vitality. This coming year, we will undertake a community-wide process to develop a downtown plan to enhance existing retail services and provide the kind of downtown that our community wants. Through zoning enhancements, we can provide property owners incentives to renovate buildings, redevelop underutilized building sites, and develop new retail services to create a vital, engaging downtown.

The city must work closely with the new Theatre Square owners making improvements to ensure that it becomes a vital retail and entertainment center for our community. With its historic Orinda Theatre, surrounding restaurants, and retail shops that provide goods and services for residents of all ages, Theatre Square can become a lively retail and business center contributing to the vitality of the Orinda Crossroads.

■ Infrastructure Repairs

Measure Q is specifically intended to address Orinda's most urgent infrastructure needs. Developed by a citizen committee of transportation, engineering, and finance professionals, it is a comprehensive plan to solve the community's most critical infrastructure needs. Combined with additional city, fire district, and East Bay MUD resources, it provides essential financing for urgently needed improvements to the community's fire safety system and the repair and renovation of our aging drains, streets, and roads.

During the first nine years, major roads and drains will be repaired. The required water pipe and fire flow improvements will be completed. Residential streets will be re-paved with the annual funds that the city receives from the Measure C transportation program and garbage franchise fees. Orinda must seek regional, state, and federal transportation funds to provide additional repairs. Measure Q will ensure that Orinda can successfully compete for these additional funds.

■ Smart Growth

The sale of Pine Grove will accomplish two important goals for Orinda. First, it will directly benefit one of our community's greatest assets: our excellent schools. Second, it will provide much needed additional housing options and recreation for residents of all ages that are close to downtown and the regional transportation network.

Working cooperatively with the school district and the developer, the city must help create a development, within walking distance to BART, that will result in an attractive neighborhood which will be an enhancement to our entire community. Working closely with the Association of Bay Area Governments, Orinda will ensure that the housing developed meet the state's housing priorities will reflect the character of our community and the housing needs of our residents.

Join us in Supporting Laura Abrams for Re-Election to the Orinda City Council.



Congresswoman, Ellen Tauscher
State Senator, Tom Torlakson
Assembly Member, Loni Hancock
Contra Costa County Supervisor, Mark Desaulniers
Bill Judge, Mayor; Councilmember City of Orinda, 2003-current
Amy Worth, Mayor; Councilmember City of Orinda, 1998-current
Victoria Smith, Councilmember City of Orinda, 2004-current
Dick Heggie, Mayor; Councilmember City of Orinda 1985-1992
Joyce Hawkins, Mayor; Councilmember City of Orinda, 1992-2004;
Orinda Union School Board Member 8 years
Allan Tabor, Mayor; Councilmember City of Orinda, 1994-2003
Gregg Wheatland, Mayor; Councilmember City of Orinda, 1992-2004
John Wyro, Orinda Union School District Board Member, 4 years;
Orinda Moraga Fire District Board
Karen Murphy, Former Orinda Union School District Board Member
Jean Lyford, Orinda Union School District Board, 1993-1997
Lynn Olson, Orinda Union School District Board Member, 8 years
Dr. Gene Gottfried, Orinda Moraga Fire District Board Member
Pete Wilson, Orinda Moraga Fire District Board Member
Terry Murphy, Chair Planning Commission
Beth Nevins, Chair, Parks and Rec. Commission
Dr. Pete Geirs, Citizen of the Year
JoAlice Canterbury, Citizen of the Year
Randy Hollerschau, Citizen of the Year
Carl Weber, Volunteer of the Year
Claire Roberts, Former OA President
Don Tatzin, Lafayette City Council
Carol Federighi, Lafayette City Council
Sue Rainey, Walnut Creek City Council

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Pheyl Hoffstetter
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Tara Wheatland
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Wilson
Jeffrey Wolk
Lam and Winnie Wong
Irene Yee
Debbie Young
Partial list of endorsers.

Endorsed By The Sierra Club and The League of Conservation Voters of the East Bay

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1995-present
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Association Bay Area Governments
Hazardous Waste Allocations Facility Committee
Representative Caldecott Tunnel Study Committee
Orinda Public Works Aesthetic Review Committee
New Orinda Library Council Sub-Committee
Montanera Art and Garden Center Sub-Committee
Initiated Orinda Farmer's Market, Board Member
Downtown Revitalization Review Team
Theatre Square Council Sub-Committee

Community Involvement and Awards

Orinda Park Pool Renovation Committee
Co-Director Friends of the Orinda Theatre 1982-1994
1989 Volunteer of The Year Friends of the Orinda Theatre
1989 Resolution County Board of Supervisors For The Orinda Theatre Preservation and Restoration

After this election, the majority vote on the council will be newly elected. We are a small city with big issues. EBUD is planning an expansion of the filter plant that could dramatically effect both North and South Orinda neighborhoods. The Orinda General Plan, the blueprint for the city, adopted during incorporation 21 years ago, is up for review. Gateway is under construction with Pine Grove to follow. The long awaited construction of the fourth bore of the Caldecott is in the preliminary environmental review stages to identify possible impacts on Orinda during construction and final design. Unfunded state mandates and scarce transportation funds continue to challenge all cities. Volunteer resident experts have worked the last two years inspecting Orinda's roads, drains, and water pipes resulting in Measure Q, the plan to rebuild Orinda's aging infrastructure. These are some of the issues that I have been working on as your elected representative. I am asking for your vote to continue that effort.

Thank you, Laura Abrams

"When issues affecting our street and neighborhood came before the City Council, Laura Abrams came to our rescue. She dedicated her time and attention to us, and we were extremely impressed with her professionalism and integrity. We are some of many Orinda residents who are fortunate to have her running for re-election to the City Council. Please vote for her!"

Allison and John Banisadr

"I can say without reservation that if it were not for Laura's efforts over a nine year period, the Orinda Theatre would not be standing today."

Nina Horn, Co-Director, Friends of the Orinda Theatre

"Laura's passion is making sure that each Orindan has a voice in our community. Laura reaches out to include the entire community in fixing problems and planning for the future."

Joyce Hawkins, former Mayor

"Thanks to Laura's hard work, Orinda's triple A insured bond rating is the envy of our neighbors. Laura has a proven track record in maintaining Orinda's financial resources."

Victoria Smith, Councilwoman

HOLIDAY SALES

Matador Marketplace Provides Convenient Holiday Shopping

■ Annual event open to the public, November 10-11

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

Miramonte High School will open its doors for the 33rd annual Matador Marketplace on November 10 and 11 offering hundreds of handcrafted items with proceeds benefiting each of the high school classes as well as various clubs and sports teams. According to Ina Pavey, co-chair of this year's event, Matador Marketplace is the single largest fundraising event at the high school and, as such, has grown to a virtual shopping bazaar offering a wide selection of items, many of which can't be found anywhere else.

"If you're looking for gifts for the holidays, whether that be Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah, or simply unique hostess gifts, Matador Marketplace is the place to find them," says Pavey. "Marketplace has grown tremendously over the years. If you haven't been in for a while, stop by – you'll be surprised at what you can find." As much as the marketplace has grown, some things, like the ever-popular



Grace Kaplane (L) helps Miramonte students create one-of-a-kind cooper garden trellises.

apricot pepper jelly, remain the same. Vanessa Crews, whose four children have all graduated from Miramonte, introduced the fabled apricot pepper jelly to the marketplace in 1994. She estimates that she and fellow Miramonte mom Jan Coe have made roughly 10,000 jars of the not-too-sweet, not-too-spicy condiment over the years. Crews' secret recipe has been passed down to the class of 2008, and the jelly is available only at Matador Marketplace.

While some traditions remain, each entering class brings fresh new ideas and talents to keep the marketplace current and

full of surprises. Renee Bareno, an Orinda artist and mother of a Miramonte freshman, sells her work at galleries around the Bay but for one weekend, shoppers will be able to purchase an original Bareno at a fraction of the price. Bareno and other talented parents attending her workshops have created original works on canvas specifically for the marketplace, albeit canvas floor cloths as opposed to paintings to hang on the wall. Still, Bareno says that working on projects for the annual fundraiser has been a fun and rewarding way to support her daughter's school.

Grace Kaplan, a well-known and much-admired fiber artist, has taught her craft to students at Del Rey School and customers at Infknit Possibilities across from Theatre Square. Kaplan has also made items and led workshops for Matador Marketplace for the past five years. As a mother of a Miramonte sophomore, Kaplan and others will be making several knitted items, including scarves, shawls, and fingerless gloves, as well as beaded jewelry, purses and tote bags, and copper trellises. Always the teacher, Kaplan has led workshops for sophomore students on making wire and beaded baskets, which also will be for sale.

"It's great to get the kids involved," she says. "I love to be generous with my time so I hold ongoing workshops to share what I know with others. I'm a real believer in slowing down the pace of life and taking the time to appreciate the joy of handmade items."

If slowing down a bit this holiday season is on your to-do list, a trip to Matador Marketplace might be just the ticket. With ample parking, no traffic, and a wide assortment of beautiful items for gift giving or home decorating, you may find yourself wishing that all of your holiday shopping could be this easy. "The marketplace is a no-hassle, great place to shop, catch up with old friends, and even grab a bite of lunch – and it's open to all," Pavey says. Matador Marketplace will open Saturday with a special preview sale from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and on Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission to the preview sale is \$10. There is no admission charge for Sunday's event. For more information, go online to www.miramonteparents.com.



Shoppers at last year's Holiday Bazaar ponder the many choices available.

OCCA Holiday Bazaar Set for November 4 and 5

By MOYA STONE
Staff Writer

Get out your holiday shopping lists; it's time again for the Orinda Community Center Auxiliary Holiday Bazaar, Saturday, November 4, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, November 5, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Orinda Community Center located at 26 Orinda Way.

This year marks the 31st anniversary for the Holiday Bazaar, which has become a shopping tradition for many Orinda

residents. Sponsored by the Orinda Community Center Auxiliary, the Bazaar attracts approximately 2000 attendees each year and raises a majority of OCCA's annual budget. With the monies raised from the Bazaar, OCCA is able to sponsor other community events such as the Halloween Parade for toddlers, the Spring Egg Hunt for toddlers, and the Concerts-in-the-Park summer series. The OCCA also contributes to special projects for the Community Center including the refurbishing of the Community Center kitchen, landscaping

near the tennis courts, and the festive lights that decorate the Community Center during the holidays.

With over 50 vendors participating from around the Bay Area and Northern California, shoppers will have an array of art and handmade crafts to tantalize them, from jewelry to soaps to holiday decorations. Also available will be food, a raffle of items donated by local businesses, musical entertainment, and childcare. For more information, call the Orinda Community Center at 254-2445.

Vote For Pamela West, Orinda Union School District Board

If elected I will maintain educational excellence by:

- Providing a world class curriculum
- Fully implementing the OUSD strategic plan
- Maintaining programs at the highest levels
- Striving for continued teacher satisfaction
- Serving on the Legislative Council
- Working to maintain equalization funding
- Securing Pine Grove funding
- Satisfactorily relocating the maintenance facility
- Aligning and balancing the budget
- Making sure that every child receives the best education possible

Orinda Union School District Board

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Glenn Alper, Vice-President, Orinda Union School District Board
Linda Landau, Orinda Union School District Board
Pat Rudebusch, Orinda Union School District Board
Jim Farrell, Orinda Union School District Board, 1998-2002

Acalanes Union School District

Vanessa Crews, President, Acalanes Union School Board

Orinda City Council Members

Bobbie Landers, Mayor & Council Member 1985-1994
Aldo P. Guidotti, Mayor & Council Member 1985-1994
Bill Judge, Mayor, City of Orinda
Steve Glazer, Mayor Pro Tem, Orinda City Council
Victoria Smith, Orinda City Council
Amy Worth, Orinda City Council

Orinda Citizens of the Year

Jan Coe, Orinda Citizen of the Year, 1997
Sue Severson, Orinda Citizen of the Year, 2004

Parent Club Presidents

Cathie Barrows, Sleepy Hollow
Trish Cetrone, Sleepy Hollow
Lynn Goodman, Wagner Ranch
Tracie Nelson, Wagner Ranch
Jennifer Lavis, OIS
Janet Riley, OIS
Karen Derr Gilbert, EFO



The West Family

"I have seen first hand Pam West's many contributions to maintaining and enhancing the educational excellence in our schools. We have many dedicated parent volunteers making a huge difference for our schools. Pam is among the very best, and I strongly support her re-election to the school board."
—Steve Glazer, Mayor Pro Tem, Orinda City Council

"Pam is a dedicated leader who has worked successfully to build community partnerships to maintain the excellence of Orinda's schools. She brings an extensive business background to the management of the school district has worked closely with the City of Orinda and community groups to ensure the school district's fiscal stability and prosperity."
—Amy Worth, Orinda City Councilmember

"In my role as EFO President, I have had the opportunity to work with Pam on a number of school-related issues. Pam brings a wealth of experience and a thoughtful perspective to her role on the school board, developed during her many years

of service and contribution to our community. Pam seeks to educate herself thoroughly on issues including listening to all involved constituents and applies a methodical, pragmatic approach to problem-solving."
—Karen Derr Gilbert, President, Educational Foundation of Orinda

"Pamela West is a vital member of the Orinda Union School Board who works tirelessly to bring the highest quality educational experience to all Orinda children. She thoroughly understands how to make K-8 education work at the highest level and possesses exceptional knowledge about critical budget and financial issues. Pam is dedicated to working together to come up with the best solutions for the challenging issues facing Orinda schools. I urge you to re-elect Pam West!"
— Glenn Alper, Vice President, Orinda Union School District Board

"Pam West has been an excellent school board member for

the last four years. Pam's thoroughness and attention to detail makes sure that nothing is overlooked. She is very focused on keeping our district on track with our strategic plan, which has yielded such good results over the last six years. Pam's experience in the real estate sector has been invaluable in dealing with the ongoing issues surrounding the development of the Pine Grove site. Please join me in making sure Pam's experience and efforts continue to benefit our students for four more years."
—Linda Landau, Orinda Union School Board

"Pamela West has served Orinda – and our schools – with the highest degree of professionalism. She approaches every challenge with respect, thoroughness, fiscal responsibility and, above all, an unwavering commitment to doing what's best for children. It's been an honor to serve with her on the Orinda school board, and I wholeheartedly support her bid for a second term."
—Pat Rudebusch, Orinda Union School District Trustee

PEACE CORPS

◆ CORPS from page 9

two of the latter. Valla graduated from Miramonte, class of 1998, then went to UCLA where she graduated with a degree in English. Mandelman took his Miramonte diploma in 1999, and then attended UC Santa Barbara. It was at that point, as most of their Orinda peers were getting their first job, they took a very different route. They joined the Peace Corps.

That took Valla to the Ukraine, where she lived with a family that had very little, including no heat and little hot water in the icy winters. Valla worked as a teacher, helping Ukrainians learn English in a program called TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language).

Mandelman ended up in Bangladesh, where he and his new wife and Peace Corps partner Mariah trained and worked for eleven months, then were quickly evacuated from the country when it was learned that

a radical Bangladeshi group was beginning to target Peace Corps volunteers (although none were hurt).

That was disappointing. But Mandelman says that even in the short time there, it was an “incredible experience.”

“I proved that I could do pretty much anything I wanted if I put my mind to it. I also learned a great deal about what it means to be an American in a world where America isn’t what it used to be,” he says. “I gained insight into how the world is changing, what life is like for a vast majority of the world’s population, and the challenges that America and the rest of the world have ahead of them.”

And, Mandelman and his wife are hungry to do it again. They plan to rejoin the Peace Corps after a career, raising a family, and retiring. “It was a truly amazing experience, and we can’t wait to do it again,” he adds.

Valla, back in the U.S. and completing a master’s degree in education policy at Columbia University in New York, feels her Peace Corps experience was exceptional, and recommends that others consider the same course.

“Overall, despite the difficult times,” Valla says as she reflects on her two years



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Ukrainian students from Shana Valla’s class learn about Halloween traditions in a special holiday party.

in the Peace Corps, “I wouldn’t change what I did. I ended up really liking both my students and the other English teachers at my school. I felt that, even if just a little bit, I helped Ukrainians see that there’s more to America than Britney Spears or George Bush.”

Valla spent her Peace Corps time teaching at a school in the Crimea. Mixing with the local teachers as well as with Peace Corps volunteers, she had to adjust to a lifestyle very different from the one she grew up with in Orinda.

“Ukrainian teachers live on \$40 a month, and somehow, despite their difficult lives, they have such a rich and warm culture,” says Valla.

They also had to learn very different languages. Russian is spoken in that part of the Ukraine and Valla soon became fluent in it. Mandelman learned Bangladeshi, which is spoken by 220 million people, almost none living in the U.S.

A challenge: living in a non-climate-controlled environment

As winter approached, Valla began her training in Crimea, which is about as far north as the Dakotas. “We didn’t have hot water or heat, so I was always cold. Because of the cold temperatures, there also were very few fresh vegetables, so I ate a lot of potatoes, carrots, beets, and onions.”

Mandelman, on the other hand, stepped into the non-air-conditioned tropics: “We met our host family at the local community center, which was a cement building with ceiling fans and no air conditioning. It was at least 100 degrees out, and the humidity was probably around 95 percent. My wife and I were dying from the heat.”

Compounding Valla’s challenge, at the outset “we lived with host families; it was approaching winter and I was lonely. My host mother wasn’t the happiest woman, and it deeply affected me.”

But as she adjusted, Valla learned to value the people and her contribution to them. Valla came away from the experience with “a sense of understanding of what it is like to live in most of the world and an appreciation for people in Ukraine trying to make their lives better.

“Also, I will never, ever, fail to recognize how wonderful it is every time I turn on the faucet! Not only does water come out, but it’s also always hot. In the Ukraine, I

had water only six hours a day and only sometimes was it hot!” Valla identifies another lasting benefit derived from her experience – the other American volunteers she met and worked with in the Peace Corps. She says simply but emphatically, “After sharing the Peace Corps experience, they’re friends for life!”

Valla first thought about the Peace Corps after September 11, during her senior year in college. “I was so disturbed that people could hate our country so much. I wanted the opportunity to go somewhere outside of Europe and other developed countries, to help me understand perceptions of the U.S., and to try to build understanding.”

First she wanted to go to Latin America to teach English, but the Peace Corps doesn’t have a TEFL program there. So she asked for Eastern Europe and ended up in the same region where her grandparents were born and grew up before they came to the United States.

What advice does Valla have for Orinda students who might be considering the Peace Corps? “Do it!” Valla says emphatically. “I have friends now, in their mid-twenties, who wish they could do it but are afraid of the two-year commitment.

“So, do it before you have the time to be scared that you’ll be missing something back here. I swear, it may be the hardest thing you’ve ever done, but you won’t regret it,” she adds.

Now, armed with her graduate degree, Valla plans to take on a new but similar challenge, “to work in the field of education policy to try to make our system of education more equitable.” With the Peace Corps and Crimea behind her, Shana Valla is well equipped to make a difference in the world.

Other Miramonte graduates who have recently served or are now serving in the Peace Corps include brother and sister Helen and Dave Hoppock, Jaime Litten, David Parker, and Katie Windle.

The Peace Corps began in 1960 when then senator and presidential candidate John F. Kennedy challenged students during a speech at the University of Michigan to consider postponing their own careers after graduation to live and work in developing countries in order to make a real difference in peoples’ lives. From those remarks developed an agency of the federal government that brings together the best of the American spirit: the selflessness of volunteerism with the generosity, ingenuity, and work ethic that has made America great.

Since that time, more than 182,000 Peace Corps Volunteers of all ages and all backgrounds have been placed in 138 countries to work on a wide range of projects. Today’s Peace Corps members may work in information technology, education, agriculture, business development, and the newest program, the president’s emergency plan for AIDS Relief.

To receive an application or to learn more about the Peace Corps, go to their website: www.peacecorps.gov.

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Miramonte Presents *The Laramie Project*

■ Powerful and controversial production set for November 15 - 17

By LANA OLMER
Staff Writer

Miramonte High School drama students will present *The Laramie Project*, written by Moises Kaufman, as the fall drama production. The play will be performed in the school's auditorium on November 15 - 17 at 7:30 p.m. Miramonte drama teacher Heather Cousins, who is directing the play, says that it is based on the true story of a teenage boy who was murdered because of his sexual orientation in 1998 in Laramie, Wyoming, and on the reactions of those living in the small town where it occurred.

"I'm really excited that we're doing *The Laramie Project* this year as our fall play. It delivers a message that goes past the issues of homosexuality and into the issues regarding hate and acceptance. I think it's important for our society to see this show.

I know it will make a difference," says Miramonte drama student Wing Sum Doud.

Cousins seconds Doud's opinion: "The students at Miramonte have a growing interest in the importance of diversity and acceptance whether it involves a particular minority, ethnic group, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation." Cousins goes on to explain how her students realize that theater can have an impact on society by showing that intolerance and hate crimes are not acceptable. "The students have an opportunity to experience what it was like in Laramie as they play multi-roles," she adds.

According to Cousins, the show is based on real life testimonials that took place after the murder of Matthew Shepherd. "It is a balanced look at how a community handles violence and how it tries to understand how something so horrible could take place in its community. It reminds me of a modern day *Our Town*," she continues.

Tickets to *The Laramie Project* can be purchased in advance by calling the school at (925) 280-3930 or at the door on the night of the performance.



SALLY HOGARTY

Miramonte drama students rehearse *The Laramie Project*, which will be performed at the school November 15 - 17.

The 50s Are Back in OIS Production of *Grease* Running November 3 - 5

By PETRA MICHEL
STAFF WRITER

With the 50th birthday celebrations at Miramonte High School just over, Orinda Intermediate School's (OIS) newest musical endeavor, *Grease*, brings back the teenage life style of the 1950s once more. While *Grease* is a parody of the 50s, the story is ageless. Teen issues, such as being popular or not, living up to your own image, or sweet innocence contrasted with adult behavior, has not changed very much over the past half century. And any adult who went to high school, once faked an ID card to buy beer, or cruised in town in an old custom car, will empathize as well.

In the tradition at The Bulldog Theater Company, the musical is performed by two casts with a total of six shows. However, the *Grease* casts are exceptionally large. This fall's director, Shari Oret, and producer Aubyn Severson decided not to cut any student who auditioned for a role in *Grease*, resulting in a record number of students participating in either the Lightnin' or the Rockin' cast. Shari has entertained the Bay Area with musical theater productions for over 25 years and has shared her love of the theater arts by teaching children for over a decade. Though this is her first time directing a musical play at OIS, she is used to working with students and takes the whirlwind of activities during the rehearsals in her stride.

The after-school drama program at OIS has increased its emphasis over the past two years on training and developing students

in all aspects of the performing arts, and part of each rehearsal focuses on vocal training and physical acting skills. The student technical crew also contributes significantly to preparing for the show, including creating the sets, props, and costumes. The students themselves also run the show, working backstage, and controlling the lights and sound, with minimal assistance from parents.

Parents also share their unique talents in all aspects of the production. A few parents of the cast and crew are serving on the executive committee that directly supports the producer and director, the rest of the parents are assigned to a sub-committee, including set construction, props, costumes, make-up, music/sound effects, backstage help, lighting, sound, publicity, ticket sales, and event staff. With all this support, The Bulldog Theatre Company once again creates a high-quality product that the students and community can really be proud of. Come and see for yourself the first week in November, the Lightnin' Cast opens on November 2, the Rockin' Cast follows on November 3.

What: The Bulldog Theater Company Fall 2006 Musical: *Grease*
When: Thursday, November 2, 5 p.m.; Friday, November 3, 5 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Saturday, November 4, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Sunday, November 5, 3 p.m.
Where: Orinda Intermediate School, Multi Purpose Room
How: Tickets available at the door.

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LETTERS

◆ LETTERS from page 4

Jack Bontemps for School Board

Mr. Bontemps is a longtime resident of Orinda. He has been on the Parks and Recreation Foundation for many years and active in school district projects and committees for more than five years. Bringing to the board this familiarity with district issues, he is already "up to speed" and able to immediately and constructively contribute to this community.

— Dr. Paul (Pete) Giers

Reward Success: Re-elect Pam West

The Orinda Union School District now ranks #1 in California in academic performance and has managed to maintain its arts, music, and science programs as well. This is a huge accomplishment given the fact that we are at the very bottom in state funding. A few years ago our teacher salaries were so low we were having difficulty retaining qualified teachers. The board worked hard to improve teacher compensation and now we are not only able to retain our teachers, but also attract talented new people into the district.

As a member of the Orinda School Board, Pam West has worked tirelessly to develop an atmosphere of openness and cooperation among the administration, teachers, and parents. There is a real spirit of collaboration among all the groups which has resulted in outstanding programs at every school in the district. Pam has also worked hard to keep our district on a sound financial footing and to implement the district's strategic plan.

Excellent schools are the foundation on which our community is built. I urge you to re-elect Pam West for the continued success of our terrific Orinda schools.

— Paul Attard

Severson for City Council

Sue Severson is an excellent choice for Orinda City Council. In her nine years on the Orinda Union School District Board, Sue consistently balanced the unique needs of Orinda schools with sound fiscal management. As a result, the school district, one of the lowest funded by the state and with aging buildings, is on relatively solid footing and with a curriculum and management much stronger than before her tenure. It may be the best elementary district in the state and is certainly in the top ten.

Sue is open, accessible, experienced, knowledgeable, and fiscally careful. She will work effectively with all parties to get the Pine Grove project back on track for the benefit of the city, the schools, and the community. She has hands-on experience with civic planning, transportation, and infrastructure issues.

Please join me in voting for Sue Severson for Orinda City Council!

— Carol Penskar

Can Count on Severson

I have known Sue since we moved to Orinda 12 years ago – our daughters are in the same grade. During those years, I can't think of a time when Sue wasn't leading a major initiative for our schools or our community. She was always recognized as a leader, and I knew I could count on Sue for clear-minded, impartial thinking about any issue that arose.

After all of her duties as school board member, parent's club president, parcel tax chairperson, and I'm sure many more roles I'm not even aware of, I was absolutely delighted to hear that Sue was willing to take on yet another leadership role for our community. We are truly fortunate that Sue has decided to once again share her talents with Orinda, and I urge everybody to jump at the opportunity to vote for Sue for city council member.

— Pam Rhodes

A Talented Leader

We both grew up in Orinda and have been thankful that it continues to be a great place to live and raise our family. Orinda is currently facing big challenges as the infrastructure ages and our roads deteriorate. We need leaders who can prioritize the many needs of our community and allocate resources in a way that will best serve all the residents of Orinda.

We are thrilled that Sue Severson has stepped forward as a candidate for Orinda City Council. We appreciated Sue's strong leadership in guiding the Orinda School District through very tough financial times and her tremendous contributions in getting the school funding measures passed. Sue fought hard to keep our schools on a sound financial footing. We know that she will bring the same thoughtful, diligent approach to prioritizing the needs of Orinda and will work to use our limited resources wisely. I know that Sue will consider the needs of all residents as she strives to ensure that Orinda remains a truly remarkable place to live. Please join us in supporting Sue Severson for Orinda City Council.

— Rick & Nancy Booth

Thank You, Orinda City Council and Planning Commission

When issues affecting our street and neighborhood came before the Orinda Planning Commission and City Council, we were extremely impressed with the time, expertise, and professionalism that the planning commissioners and councilmembers thoughtlessly devote to our city on a volunteer basis. After seeing the process first-hand, we feel that all Orinda residents owe these individuals a wealth of gratitude for their dedication to our city.

We were very sad to hear that Bill Judge, mayor and city councilmember, is retiring from his city council "retirement job" because he is such an intelligent, dedicated, witty, and articulate leader with deep roots in Orinda. We are very fortunate for the time that he served and realize that he deserves a true retirement; we wish him and his family the best.

We were delighted to hear that both Laura Abrams and Amy Worth are running for re-election to the city council. We are honored that they are willing to continue serving our

city...please re-elect these truly exceptional leaders!

— Allison and John Banisadr

Time for a Change

It is time for change on the Orinda City Council. The city council has failed to properly plan or prioritize city projects or apply any fiscal responsibility to city spending. The city council has proven it cannot exercise fiscal common sense by:

1. Spending more than \$12,500,000 on new city council offices when the roads and infrastructure are failing under our feet;
2. Using zoning laws to strangle businesses that are needed to provide goods and services;
3. Using zoning laws that make the home remodeling process so restrictive and onerous that few want to upgrade their homes;
4. Taking out a \$9.8 million loan, without a voter approval, to build their new city council offices;
5. Letting our roads and infrastructure get so bad that the city estimates it will cost more than \$154 million to repair them;
6. Requesting \$59.1 million for an infrastructure bond, because that is what the pollsters say may pass, which will repair only 38 percent of the problem;
7. Failing to use the \$10 million received from the Gateway developer in 1996 on roads when the cost to repair was substantially less;
8. Allowing the city to build city council offices and libraries without the same public review process the city council requires of citizens; and
9. Causing our schools to lose more than \$4.5 million on the Pine Grove site.

The Orinda City Council is harming our town and schools. Tom McCormick is a businessperson with experience in set priorities for our tax payer dollars. It is time for change; for proper planning and priorities, fiscal responsibility, and support of our schools, vote for Tom McCormick.

— Daniel Worthington

Support McCormick

In 2002, my husband and I moved to Orinda for the schools and the tight-knit community. In 2004, my husband's job took us from Orinda; we were able to return in 2006. While I am thrilled to be back, I am dismayed to find that many of the problems the city faced before I left still sit unresolved, and in some instances, made worse. What has the city council been doing for the last two years? My questions:

How could it be that the Pine Grove project, lauded to bring needed revenue to the schools and for the city, had not only stalled but is now on the verge of being cancelled?

How do the long term city council [SEE LETTERS 2 page 23]

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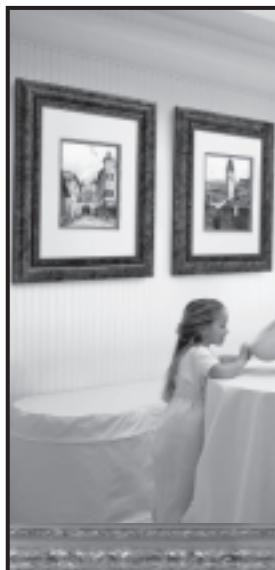
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LETTERS

◆ LETTERS 2 from page 22

members justify the fact we are faced with a \$154 million bill to fix our roads? Why weren't solutions to the infrastructure problem passed years ago before it became a \$154 million+ problem?!

And why, in the face of all these challenging fiscal decisions, did the city council quickly approve for themselves the construction of new city council offices at a taxpayer cost of more than \$12.5 million?

We now have an opportunity to get rid of the "deadwood" on the city council and elect qualified people who have the ability to properly prioritize and plan to limit fiscal waste. Tom McCormick is a candidate for Orinda City Council. I know a great deal about Tom's background, family, qualifications, and character. I have the utmost confidence that Tom McCormick is the most qualified candidate to address the issues and bring solutions to our most pressing problems. He has the support of Steve Glazer, the only current city councilmember who is able to effectively address the problems facing our community.

I urge everyone to vote on November 7 for Tom McCormick for Orinda City Council. It is definitely time for a change!

— Christina Niehaus

Support McCormick and Severson

We would like to encourage support for both Tom McCormick and Sue Severson for Orinda City Council this November. Orinda is a special place, but there are many important issues facing our city right now – from a failing infrastructure, lack of support for local businesses, an infamous residential remodel/building process and lack of decisiveness with regard to the sale of the OUSD property at Pine Grove. We have every confidence that both Tom McCormick and Sue Severson are very qualified candidates and will tackle the issues facing Orinda.

Please vote for Tom McCormick and Sue Severson this November.

-- Carol Ann and Tom Barber

Severson for City Council

Orinda is a community fortunate to have many talented citizens who commit their time and energies toward making this one of California's best communities to live in. Sue Severson, a candidate for the Orinda City Council is one of these citizens. Sue has tirelessly supported measures to improve our schools. As an Orinda school board member and Miramonte Parents' Club president, Sue has helped set the foundation for a district that is now the best in the state. Sue was also an early leader on disaster preparedness efforts for the city.

To show our appreciation, in 2004 the community voted her Citizen of the Year.

My husband and I have lived here for over 28 years, and we can not think of another city we would rather live in. We remember how excited we were when, through a grass roots effort, Orinda became a city. That was 21 years ago and Orinda is showing her age, especially the roads. Just as the schools needed financial help, now the city is faced with some tough financial issues. I think that Sue Severson is someone with the knowledge, dedication, and sincerity who can help our community resolve these issues, so Orinda can continue to be a great place to live. Fellow Orindans please join me in supporting Sue Severson for City Council. Thank you.

— Caroline Callaway

Time for New Leadership

We have a chance to elect three new members to the Orinda City Council this year. The time has come for new leadership in our town. We finally have a bond issue on the ballot (Q) to repair our streets that should have been done by the council 15 years ago. Our streets are the worst in the whole county. There are pot holes, cracks, and sinking pavement. A temporary rusty steel wall on Camino Pablo, at the entrance to our city from San Pablo Dam Road, and temporary steel plates on Camino Sobrante that have been there for months.

About two years ago, I asked a three-term councilwoman why our streets are in such poor condition, my answer was "We don't have the money." When it came to selling the old library, she was one of those who voted to use it for a homeless shelter and our streets just got worse, and it still has not been sold. What little money that has been spent on streets was not used on heavy traffic ones, but on the smaller ones and cul de sacs.

Over the past 12 years, the priorities of the council have changed, they seem to have forgotten what city government is all about. The first priority is the best safety and infrastructure we can afford, not new buildings and social issues. We have a city hall (that is running way over budget) that was not voted on by the people of Orinda. Our old library would have been a shelter for the homeless if the people had not stormed the council meeting with threats of recall. The Gateway project was on the drawing board since I moved here 20 years ago. How many tax dollars could have been used from this project for streets if the council could have been more effective. I have never seen a main business street of any town designed as crooked and hard to drive and park as Orinda Way. These are just some of the problems that have not been addressed by our councilmembers that have been there for two terms or more. I

think it is time we have some fresh new ideas and independent members who are not part of the old guard. As a former councilman from another city, I firmly believe in the two-term limit that we had. It makes good sense.

Vote yes on Q and vote for a new council.

— Gary Dubnoff

Support McCormick

We strongly encourage Orindans to support Tom McCormick for Orinda City Council this November. Our city is currently facing many serious issues including city roads that are un-navigable, an unfriendly climate towards current and prospective businesses, a planning commission with a most hostile residential building/remodel process, and lack of decisiveness with regard to the sale of the Orinda Unified School District property at Pine Grove. While our current city government has skirted many of these issues, it is astonishing that a new city hall could move effortlessly through the planning process thereby denying the citizens of Orinda a voting opportunity to approve the \$10+ million expenditure and the loan required to fund the project.

We think it is time to infuse new ideas and solutions into our city government. We have every confidence that Tom McCormick is the most qualified candidate to tackle these important issues. Tom brings with him a solid business and legal background in addition to his extensive community activism that will make him uniquely qualified to meet the challenges facing Orinda. Please vote for Tom McCormick this November.

— Lucy and Al Talbot

Re-elect Laura Abrams

Please join me in re-electing Laura Abrams to the Orinda City Council.

I have served with Laura for the last two years and have found Laura's experience and knowledge of Orinda vital, particularly

with a new city manager and now a new city attorney. Laura's fiscal experience and responsibility are key as we move forward with a major project to fix Orinda's roads. Laura has worked tirelessly to save the Orinda Theatre and revitalize Theatre Square and the downtown areas, including serving with me now on the Downtown Revitalization Sub-committee. Laura wants to attract new businesses, restaurants, and services to Orinda.

What has always impressed me the most about Laura is her passion for helping Orinda residents, both individually and in all of the neighborhoods, to resolve issues. For example, Laura has worked very hard with the Lost Valley neighborhood to resolve the PG&E transformer noise issue, and has worked hand-in-glove with the Manzanita neighborhood to scrutinize EBMUD's plan to expand the Orinda filter plant. Laura is proactive and always concerned, from traffic safety problems to implementing safe routes to schools.

Let's support Laura Abrams in working to maintain and improve the quality of life in Orinda.

— Victoria Smith

[SEE LETTERS 3 page 24]

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LETTERS

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Measure Q Fair to Seniors

Earlier this year, the finance sub-committee of the Orinda citizens' infrastructure committee held an open meeting that I attended as an invited guest and an interested citizen of Orinda. Before going to the city council and the city's voters, the sub-committee wanted another independent group of citizens to review their findings and make recommendations. I was impressed by the thoroughness of their report and left the meeting convinced that the city lacked the resources to fix our roads without going to the voters with a general obligation bond (now known as Measure Q).

A complete copy of the report can be found on the City of Orinda's website, www.ci.orinda.ca.us, and I think once you have read it, you will be impressed by the

work completed by our fellow citizens.

One thing that particularly impressed me was the concern the committee showed to senior citizens, because the tax is determined by assessed value not market value, senior citizens are likely on average to pay less. Although I have not reached the ranks of senior citizen yet, I think this is fair given the years of contributions those long-term Orinda citizens have given to make our city such a special place. The younger generation can carry more of an obligation to keep Orinda the kind of place we all enjoy living in.

A lot of thought went into Measure Q and many various options were considered. I am convinced that this is our best hope to fix our roads, drains, and water lines in the most cost-efficient manner. This November 7, I'll be voting yes on Measure Q, and I hope you will consider doing the same.

— Eric Scaff

McCormick for City Council

We are writing in support of Tom McCormick for Orinda City Council. The existing city council is comprised of several second and third-term council members who are seriously out of touch with what the majority of Orinda residents want for their community. Moreover, in addition to their disconnectedness, the city council has operated in a shroud of secrecy for many years, with little accountability to the public. In addition to advancing their own agenda, councilmembers have refused to take strong leadership positions many times, and it is the council's collective ineffectual governance that has eroded much of Orinda. Physically, Orinda riddled with potholes, does not possess an adequate emergency plan, and the infrastructure (from sewers to water-pressure) is dilapidated. It is time for a change in the constellation of the council. Please join us this fall in supporting Tom McCormick for Orinda City Council.

— Neil Gilbert and Bekki Van Voorhis-Gilbert

Support New Candidates and Measure Q

I have enjoyed my first 21 months on the city council and feel that I'm doing my best to advance the goals that generated my candidacy: careful stewardship of taxpayer dollars, openness in government, greater support for the schools, sensible and balanced rules for home remodels, improved public safety, and greater city focus on improving our roads.

If you have been following our local council affairs, you know that there has been some encouraging progress on a few of these matters but much more work needs to be done. That is why I'm writing to enthusiastically endorse Tom McCormick and Sue Severson for Orinda City Council and urge a yes vote on Measure Q.

Tom McCormick, along with his wife Stacy, are wonderful parent volunteers and civic boosters. Tom's legal and business background makes him well qualified to focus on city problems regarding finance, infrastructure, and local business growth. He has four children in Orinda public schools and shares our passion for better city-school relations. He has been recognized for his many contributions ranging from coaching Orinda baseball to mentoring troubled youths.

Sue Severson is one of the most gracious and generous citizen leaders we have in Orinda. From her two terms on the school board, to her leadership of our schools community campaign to her current position as head of the Miramonte Parents Club, Sue is an extraordinary civic leader. She and her husband Ralph have set such a wonderful example of giving back to the community and I'm thrilled that she has offered to serve on the council.

Finally, Measure Q is a thoughtful plan to fix our roads, drains, and water pipes. Not everyone agrees that the city has set appropriate spending priorities in the past or used the available funds for road repairs in a sensible manner. But I can say unequivocally that this a smart, fiscally prudent plan, and it has my full support.

Please consider joining me in supporting Tom McCormick and Sue Severson and voting yes on Measure Q.

— Steve Glazer

Form Orinda Fire District

Measure Q on the November Orinda ballot is a bond for roads, drains, and water pipes. It will cost Orindans \$120 million. The roads do need to be repaired. The question is: How should we pay for it?

We could tax ourselves for the next 32 years with an annual tax rising to \$601 in 2014 for a house having an assessed value

of \$1 million. Alternatively, we could withdraw from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) and form our own Orinda Fire District. To get an idea of the savings which this would make possible, consider the following: The average cost of wages and benefits for all permanent fire district employees is over \$200,000 per permanent employee per year. Keep in mind that a college degree is not required for either firefighters or paramedics. Furthermore, most firefighters have their own businesses on the side (since they work two days on and have four days off this is very feasible). Firefighters at age 50 with 30 years service can retire with pensions of 90 percent of their highest salary, and pensions increase with inflation. As a consequence, in the long run we will have two complete staffs, one working and one retired. Retirement at age 50 cannot be justified in Orinda or Moraga as a safety measure for firefighters, since we have no high-rise buildings and very few fires. Almost all activity is ambulance-related, which is not strenuous.

To get an idea of the savings possible from having an Orinda Fire District, consider that Orindans pay approximately \$9 million in property taxes and Moragans pay approximately \$5 million to the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. Since Orinda and Moraga are supposed to be equal partners, this comparison indicates that if Orindans have their own fire district paying reasonable wages and benefits, Orindans should be able to reduce fire district costs to Moraga's \$5 million. This would free an annual \$4 million in property taxes for upgrading Orinda roads. Another \$2 million will be available from the new property taxes from the new Pine Grove and Montanera developments in Orinda. If we sell the new Orinda city offices and put the city offices in the old library, another \$600,000 is available. Altogether the available money is \$6,600,000 each year. This is as much as can be economically spent in a year.

Don't be misled by claims that Orinda has three fire stations and Moraga only two. Orinda's three fire stations have a staff of nine firefighters while Moraga's two stations have a staff of 8. Also, Moraga has a dedicated ambulance and Orinda does not.

— Clyde Vaughn

Nay-sayers Have Facts Wrong

I was chagrined to note that letter writers in the September *Orinda News* were the same nay-sayers who always oppose any proposal put forth by the city. I am writing because their letters are so full of [SEE LETTERS 4 page 26]

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MIRAMONTE HIGH SCHOOL

Miramonte Hosts Public Speaking Tournament

By ARIEL GLAZER
Student Writer

Miramonte High School's highly accomplished public speaking team hosted the first congressional tournament of the school year on September 30. Numerous schools from across Northern California came to Miramonte to debate five state or national issues.

The competing students were divided into two separate chambers, the house and the senate. New students began in the house whereas more experienced students competed in the senate. Students debated a variety of important issues facing our nation today including legislation to create a federal funding database accessible online, to protect anonymous sources, to raise the federal minimum wage to eight dollars, to donate one billion dollars to help reconstruct Lebanon, and to reduce carbon emission levels in California.

Students who placed in the top three spots in the house were able to move to the senate. Miramonte students Chelsea DeVries, Anthony Galarza, Jared Hein, Madison Houseworth, Jake Huhn, Raymond Lau, Celia Rosas, Anirudh Sapru, and Kurt Spindler were awarded first place in the house while Kate Marie Engberg, Lisa Gilbert, Cheryl Hori, John Martello, Phoebe B. Schmidt, and Clara Tsao received second place, and Patrick Cook was given third place in his house chamber.

In the senate, Miramonte's Nico Kirk-Giannini, Alina Hasanain, Meredith Madnick, and Pierre Thompson placed first with Lana Olmer receiving second place, and Alia Fite, Eva Imber, Ali Karol, Jordan Moshe, and Christina Pabst placing third. Each section of the house and senate had a presiding officer that facilitated the debate. In the house, Jusneet Beasley, Cheryl Hori, Madison Houseworth, and Eric Obeysekere were awarded the best presiding officers and Quinn Casey, Rachel Davis, Nico Kirk-Giannini, and Tony Wang were the best presiding officers in the senate.

Miramonte High School has a strong history of sending many students to state and national tournaments in both congress and individual events.

At a previous national tournament in Dallas, Texas, Jessica Copper and Nico Kirk-Giannini competed in the final round in the house of the national congress tournament and were ranked ninth and seventh in the nation. Charlie Sprague competed in the final round in senate and was a winning presiding officer in the preliminary rounds. Alina Hasanain and Tony Wang also advanced in secondary events.

Miramonte public speakers now turn their attention towards upcoming congress, debate, and individual event tournaments where they hope to continue to receive outstanding rankings and placements during the academic year.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Students from Miramonte's public speaking team display some of the many awards they have garnered.

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LETTERS

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misrepresentations, I could not remain silent.

Clyde Vaughn complains about the \$17 million cost of the new city offices, but neglects to mention that this expense is spread out in mortgage payments over 30 years. He also neglects to mention that the city was told to vacate its temporary trailers on the Pine Grove property, that there is no available space in the city, and that rent would cost more than mortgage payments over that time span. Then he throws in the red herring of the old library site having been promised as the space for these offices. But, he neglects to mention that the council later discovered that the old building was prohibitively expensive to bring up to code for offices and wasn't a large enough space anyway. The council, after several public hearings on the subject, decided to pursue the current project. This decision had the added bonus of making the old library site available for senior housing.

Janet Maiorana brings up the fire district's pensions. While these may be out

of line in her opinion, the city has nothing to say about them. She says the fire district should have spent money on water pipes, but these pipes are actually the responsibility of EBMUD. Since EBMUD now has a policy of repairing pipes only when they break, we ignore the situation at our own peril. There is a reason the insurance industry has classified Orinda a "high fire danger" area. The fire flow tax she mentions has been spent retrofitting and re-building fire stations — so that the buildings will not collapse during an earthquake. It has also been spent expanding paramedic and ambulance service to Orinda, an important goal since 75 percent of the calls to the fire district are medical emergencies.

Bottom line, even if the City of Orinda had spent every cent of its budget since incorporation, there wouldn't have been enough to repair our infrastructure. And, even if Mr. Townsend were correct in his assertions that the city has squandered our tax money on "social programs," what good does that do us now? The all-volunteer infrastructure committee worked independently for two years, conducted

numerous public forums, and has devised the best possible solution. Please read the information at www.fixorindaroads.com. Support Measure Q in November.

— Ellen Dale

Measure Q: Yes Or No

If you will vote yes: you agree with the plan to issue a bond to improve roads, drains, and water pipes; you agree with the plan to provide a one-time fix to these infrastructure problems; you agree that Orinda has a crisis situation which is fixable by spending millions without any accountability indicated.

If you will vote no: you agree to vote against Measure Q because it throws good money after bad; you agree it lumps three problems together and asks for a lump-sum solution; you agree Orinda's roads are in despicable condition due to obvious neglect by the elected officials over many years; you agree it will take years to restore the roads; you agree to encourage a plan to reduce the bond amount to meet fiscal levels; you agree to support the idea that drains and water deficiencies would be fixable in like manner; you agree to recommend that Measure Q be rejected, thereby, forcing elected officials to spend our money more prudently; you agree that our elected officials must rethink this spending proposal so it becomes tolerable financially.

— Howard Rogers

Oakland Fire Survivor Says Yes on Measure Q

I remember the 1991 Oakland/Berkeley Hills fire like it was yesterday. At the time, I was living with my newborn son and husband in Berkeley, and it was one of the scariest days of my life. Soon thereafter, we moved to Orinda and I was stunned to learn that many of Orinda's fire hydrants might not have enough water to fight a fire -- the kind of fire that ravaged the Oakland Hills unchecked was possible in Orinda. So, I supported Measure N back in 2002. Unfortunately, despite the fact that over 60 percent voted for the measure, it fell just short of the two-thirds required for success.

This year, a group of citizens came together and, at their urging, the city put Measure Q, a general obligation bond measure to fix Orinda's roads, drains, and water lines on the ballot. I fully support Measure Q and I am writing to urge all Orindans to vote YES on November 7.

— Kitty Gupitill

Need Measure Q

The City of Orinda has a pressing infrastructure problem — deteriorating roads, failing drains, and insufficient water flow to fight fires in many areas. I am an

MIT educated engineer and was a member of a volunteer citizens' committee that spent two years developing a solution to this growing problem. Only after exhausting all other possibilities did we recommend a bond measure, now called Measure Q that will appear on the November ballot. Some will argue the city should change its priorities and fund the problem within existing and future revenues. None of us wanted additional taxes, but we discovered the problem is simply too large for the city's projected budget. In the first nine years of the program, we will need to spend an average of about \$6 million per year to get ahead of this growing infrastructure problem. There is no way a city with an annual budget of \$9 to \$10 million can rearrange its priorities to fund this amount. Furthermore, the longer we wait the more our roads deteriorate while the cost to repair increases. We need action now to avoid an even larger bill later! Please vote yes on Orinda's Measure Q!

— Dennis Fay

Solution to Horrible Roads

Orinda neighbors, at last a practical solution to the horrendous state of our city's roads! Prepared by a citizens' committee of experts in finance, engineering and public policy, and carefully crafted after a two-year study, Measure Q — Fix Orinda Roads — will be on the ballot on November 7.

A "Yes" vote on Measure Q will repair our roadways, fix the drainage beneath our streets where many water pipes provide insufficient water to put out a house fire, and bring the city's worst water lines and fire hydrants up to today's fire standards.

Our roads, drains, and water pipes are our city's most important infrastructure, yet Orinda's pavement condition was ranked last of 100 cities in the region by the Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

The sooner we act, the cheaper the fix. Don't be fooled by opposition mentioning costs. Measure Q creates financial safeguards, annual audits, and a citizens' oversight committee, and insures that all money will be spent on fixing roads, drains, and water lines. Measure Q allows us to start solving the problem instead of just complaining about it.


Our schools are the finest, our homes are of great value; surely our roads can be brought to the same standards. Let's fix Orinda roads with a "yes" vote on Measure Q!

--Maria Eberle

Aging Infrastructure

We live in a great town: fine schools, lovely weather, many parks; but we have

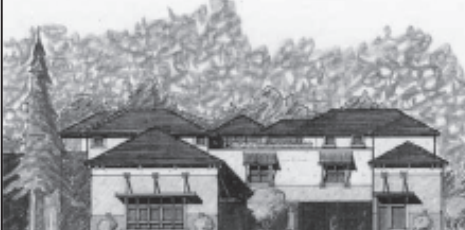
[SEE LETTERS 5 page 29]



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WAY TO GROW

Way to Grow in Orinda

Wishing for a water feature? - Pondering a pond?

Steve & Cathy Lambert



Water features are an increasingly popular addition to many suburban landscapes. A water feature can add a graceful, natural focal point to your garden while inviting more wildlife such as birds, frogs, ladybugs, and dragonflies to visit. Children are also drawn to and fascinated by water. Our son Walker and his friends spend hours along the shore of our own backyard creek, floating boats, skipping stones, catching frogs, tadpoles, minnows, and the occasional crawfish.

Another benefit of adding water to your garden is the calming, almost hypnotic effect of water. Water catches your eye as it reflects the movement and color of the surrounding plants and fills your ears with its soothing songs. In our yard, we have several water features including: a blue, bubbling pot with yellow water lilies; two fountains; and a horse trough full of water plants and fish with an antique water pump flowing into it. This fall, we plan to finally add a pond and waterfall.

Our focus for this article is on water gardens in the form of ponds and waterfalls. Back in 1993, we had the good fortune to meet Greg Wittstock at a national landscaping trade show. Wittstock, who calls himself "the pond guy," was introducing his company, Aquascape Designs, and his revolutionary pond products and pond building techniques. Since that time, we have used these products exclusively and believe his building methods are the best available.

When people add a pond to their garden, they want it to appear as if nature put it there. There is nothing natural or even good looking about a pond built with a concrete bottom and sides. A rubber liner is the best method for containing the water in your pond, however, a ring of flat stone around the perimeter to hold down the edges of an exposed, black liner doesn't look "nature made" at all.

The Aquascape approach to pond building looks far more natural than any other method we've seen. The pond and waterfall, which cycles the water in and out of the pond, are both lined with a 45-millimeter black liner, which is then completely covered by varying sizes of rocks and gravel. Aquascape uses a box-style skimmer with a submersible pump in the bottom which is easy to hide at the pond's edge. The filters are located in another submersible box that can be hidden in the waterfall.

The key to installing and enjoying a low-maintenance water garden is to build and maintain it as a balanced ecosystem just as Mother Nature would. This requires a good circulation/filtration system to keep the

water flowing and a balanced ratio of fish to plants. The fish and plants both create and compete for the ecosystem's nutrients that will starve any algae out of your pond. It's important to recognize that the presence of fish actually reduces your pond maintenance. The fish contribute to the balance by consuming plant nutrients and bugs and excreting waste nutrients.

A sufficient amount of rocks is also necessary to help reduce algae growth. Lastly, you'll need to add beneficial bacteria (a powder based additive) to your pond on a regular basis. Many pond enthusiasts believe that a UV sterilizer is required to keep your pond balanced, but if you follow Aquascape's balanced ecosystem as outlined above, a UV sterilizer is not needed.

When considering a pond, many of the concerns we hear from our clients revolve around fish and the fear of loosing them. However, the varieties of fish that most people put in their pond are very hardy. Koi, for instance, have been known to be passed down from generation to generation in Japan. Both koi and goldfish are extremely adept at finding their own food. In fact, people over-feeding their fish is a much more common occurrence than pond fish dying from starvation.

Pond owners also worry about loosing their pond fish to predators like raccoons, herons, and snakes. If your pond is built with relatively straight sides and the depth is at least 20 inches, raccoons are not a problem because raccoons are waders, not swimmers. As for heron, they are the biggest threat to pond fish in Orinda. Heron can spot a fish meal from 200 feet in the air. Your best defense from having a heron fly off with your fish is using a decoy and/or motion controlled sprinklers. You can also protect your fish from heron by building some rock ledges into your pond which provides your fish with a place to hide from their prey. Snakes fortunately are not a problem as there are no fish eating snakes in our area.

Another big concern people have about ponds is that they will draw mosquitoes. A stagnant pond with no fish will draw mosquitoes and other bugs, as well. A pond with moving water, however, makes it difficult for mosquitoes to breed and the few that do come to visit your pond will become instant fish food.

The first step when planning to add a pond to your garden is to determine your priorities. Will it be a home for goldfish or koi or is your main desire to add the beauty of water plants to your garden? Most people opt for both fish and plant life in their ponds. Perhaps all you really want is to add

the soothing sound of flowing water.

If your pond plan includes fish, avoid the number one mistake of making your pond too small. The best water gardens include both fish and plants and are relatively shallow - no more than 30 inches deep. Koi ponds are a little more demanding as they require a minimum of 1000 gallons of water. We make koi ponds at least four feet deep.

Some koi enthusiasts will protest that a pond built with a rock and gravel base, as recommend in the Aquascape method, is unhealthy for the fish. There have been several studies conducted on this topic, and none have shown a gravel bed of less than two inches to be detrimental to koi health. In nature, koi are bottom feeders who root around in the gravel and mud with their whiskers for food. It has been our experience that koi in gravel-less ponds often make it a challenge to have healthy plant material because the fish will uproot the plants by turning over their containers. We have also observed that koi in a sterile pond without a gravel base appear to be bored and listless.

If you desire to simply add the sound of flowing water to your garden with as little maintenance as possible, then a pond-less waterfall would be a great option. Pond-less waterfalls work well where space is limited. Some beautiful bog plants can be grown in this type of water feature as well.

The second step in planning your pond is to decide where it will be placed. Ponds do not thrive in extreme amounts of shade or sun. If the water gets too warm, you will have problems controlling algae. If your pond is in too much shade, your water plants won't grow. Although it's best to choose an area with some existing shade, adding new plants in and around your pond can help increase the shade to an appropriate level. If you must build your pond in full sun, it's important to cover at least two-thirds of the surface water with pond plants. Another factor in determining your pond's location is the species of any nearby trees. Oak, pine, and redwood leaves all release tannins in water which will result in tea colored pond water.

A water garden could be the perfect replacement for that perpetually brown patch of grass, those ugly shrubs or that high maintenance tree you've been grumbling about. Adding a pond will bring more color, life, and movement to your garden and it will draw you and the kids out of the house and into the yard.

If you have an interest in attending a hands-on pond building seminar, call 254-4797 or email gardenlights@comcast.net.

For more information on koi, check out Dr. Johnson's website at www.mynewpond.com and for more information on Aquascape designs go to www.aquascape.com.



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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

- 2 **Orinda Intermediate School**, production of *Grease*, 5 p.m., also 11/3 (5 p.m. and 8 p.m.), 11/4 (3 p.m. and 7 p.m.), and 11/5 (3 p.m.). Tickets at door.
- 3 **Junior League's "Artful Living Tour"** featuring five distinctive Orinda homes, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., benefits children at risk, (925) 284-3740.
- 4 **Farmers' Market**, intersection of Avenida de Orinda and Orinda Way, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., also 11/11, and 11/18 with cooking demonstrations by Lesley Stiles from 10 a.m. to noon.
- Community Center Auxiliary**, Holiday Bazaar, Community Center, Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., also Sunday, Nov. 5 at 11 a.m. – 5 p.m., 254-2445, booth application at www.ci.orinda.ca.us.
- 10 **Miramonte High School**, Matador Market Place, holiday shopping from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m., also 11/11 from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- 11 **Miramonte High School**, production of *The Laramie Project*, 7:30 p.m., also 11/16-17 at 7:30 p.m., (925) 280-3930.
- Pacific Chamber Symphony**, Mozart program, Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 8 p.m., (925) 931-3444.
- 14 **St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**, Lecture/Discussion: Growth of the Asian Economy and Its Impact on Global Energy Use, 7:30 p.m., 66 St. Stephen's Drive, www.ststephenorinda.org.
- 16 **Lamorinda Moms Club** annual preschool fair, Oakwood Athletic Club, Lafayette, 7 – 9 p.m., (925) 939-3937.
- 17 **Aesthetics** art exhibit featuring artist Lori Beth Katz, opening reception 6 – 8 p.m., show continues through 1/13 at Aesthetics in Theatre Square, 253-1471.
- 21 **Orinda Senior Village**, 10 artists exhibit their works through 12/31, Orinda Library Gallery, opening reception 11/21 from 6 – 7:30 p.m.
- Orinda Books**, Orinda Owls discuss Beth Gutcheon's *Leeway Cottage*, 7 p.m., 254-7606.
- Orinda Books**, World Affairs book group, discusses *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War* by James L. Delvin, led by Daisy Daymond, (925) 935-1565.

DECEMBER

- 1 **St. Stephens 11th annual Messiah Sing**, 7:30 p.m., www.ststephenorinda.org.
- 3 **WomenSing, Welcome Yule!**, holiday concert, 4 p.m., Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, (925) 974-9169, repeats 12/6, 8 p.m., First Congregational Church, Berkeley.

NOVEMBER AT THE LIBRARY

- ADULTS**
- 1 **Book Group**, 7 p.m. *Thank You for Smoking* by Christopher Buckley.
 - 2 **Friends of the Orinda Library** book sale, 10 a.m., also 11/9, 11/16, and 11/30.
- CHILDREN**
- 7 **Toddler Lapsit**, Stories, songs and bounces for infants to children age three and their caregivers, 10 a.m., repeats 10:30 a.m., also November 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, and 29.
 - 16 **Book Bingo!**, celebrate National Library Week with a game featuring favorite literary characters, ages 7 and up, 3 p.m.
 - 18 **Saturday Morning Live!**, family storytime for children ages three to five, 10:30 a.m., Picture Book Alcove, also November 25.

For more information on library programs, call 254-2184.

NOVEMBER CLUB MEETINGS

- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**, Postino's in Lafayette, 7 a.m. every Friday, 254-0440, ext.463.
- Orinda Lions Club**, Europa Restaurant, 64 Moraga Way, every Tuesday at 12:15 p.m., 254-0482.
- Orinda Rotary**, Community Center, every Wednesday at noon, 254-5537.
- Orinda Association**, Orinda Library, May Room, second Monday, 7:30 p.m., 254-0800.
- Orinda Historical Society**, third Wednesday of the month, OHS Museum, 3 to 5 p.m., 254-1353.
- Orinda/Tábor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation**, fourth Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.

CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE
NOVEMBER

- Acalanes Union High School District**
First and third Wednesdays, district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette, 7:30 p.m.
- City Council**
First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.ci.Orinda.ca.us.
- Historic Landmarks Committee**
Fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, public is welcome, for information, please call 788-7323..
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District**
Third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.
- Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**
Second Monday, 4 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road, www.orinda.k12.ca.us.
- Planning Commission**
Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, 253-4210.
- Parks and Recreation Commission**
Second Wednesday, 7 p.m., Community Center, room 7, 254-2445.

CALENDAR BY LYNDA LEONARD
Send calendar items to chrislavin@earthlink.net

November Concert and Senior Art Exhibit



Orinda resident Lawrence Kohl (center) conducts the Pacific Chamber Symphony. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Talented local residents will provide exciting opportunities for arts lovers this November. The Pacific Chamber Symphony will perform at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC) on November 11 at 8 p.m. Conducted by Orinda resident Lawrence Kohl, the group will play *Sinfonia Concertant for Violin, Viola, Cello, and Orchestra*, *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, and Mozart's *Symphony #41, "Jupiter"* as well as German dance music. LOPC is located at 49 Knox Drive in Lafayette. Call (925) 931-3444 for ticket

reservations. For those who prefer the visual arts, be sure and visit the Orinda Library Gallery. Ten artists from the Orinda Senior Village will be exhibiting their works from November 21 through December 31. Art work will include three-dimensional forms as well as paintings. Many of those exhibiting have been practicing artists and/or teachers for many years while others have taken up art later in life. A reception with the artists takes place on November 21 from 6 - 7:30 p.m.



Anabelle Cilman shows one of her paintings that will be on display at the Orinda Senior Village Artists exhibit. SALLY HOGARTY




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"Caterpillar Soup combines gentle lyricism, dry humor, and radiant spirituality. Strelkoff's vast emotional range could melt granite."
— *Los Angeles Times*

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Art Exhibit at Aesthetics in Theatre Square



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
 Sheila McNulty of Aesthetics is currently displaying a solo exhibit of work on recycled material by artist Renee Bareno through November 11. The above work is called "Thank-you Ma'am," a 2006 oil painting on recycled canvas. Aesthetics, located in Theatre Square, is open Tuesdays - Fridays from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Saturdays 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.



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Chamber's Corner

Next Big Event!

Mark your calendars for the Chamber and the Hospice of Contra Costa Foundation's annual tree of lights ceremony. This year's festivities take place on Saturday, December 9, at 4:30 p.m. in the Orinda Village parking lot. Mayor Bill Judge will greet participants before turning on the 1400 lights in the centuries-old oak tree. Each light on the tree represents the life of a loved one who is being honored or remembered.

Music will be provided by the terrific choruses from the various Orinda elementary schools. Hot cider, popcorn, and cookies will be served. And, don't forget, the arrival of that very special guest, Santa Claus, aboard a fire truck ready to take pictures and hear the wishes of the children.

For more information, contact the chamber at 254-3909.

Orinda's Chamber Welcomes Its Newest Board Member

Herb Hofvendahl of "Simple Reverse Mortgage Solutions" has joined our ever-growing board of directors. Herb is a prominent member of Orinda's business community and comes to us with fresh ideas and great insights as to how to help promote our local business community. Welcome, Herb!

Farewell and Thanks!

The Orinda Chamber would like to say "thanks" to resigning board members, Cindi Girgis of "Hilton House" and to Gail Woznak, Orinda's branch manager of the Bank of Walnut Creek. Both Cindi and Gail worked tirelessly to support the chamber's efforts and they will be sorely missed. Thanks to both of you!

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 254-4212



BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 32

of '84). Dan is married to Renie and they live in Moraga, where Dan coaches their three boys in LMYA soccer and MBA baseball. "My previous job required a lot of travel. I made a decision to work closer to home so I could be closer to my family, and as a result, we can spend more time together," he says.

In addition to coaching, Dan serves as a Cub Scout master and is highly involved with Young Life Christian Youth Outreach. He was past master counselor of Orinda De Moloy, a Masonic youth organization for young men.

The Gannett family has a long history of civic involvement that includes Jean serving as president of Moraga Soroptomist in 1988 and on the Orinda Rotary Board. Next year, Jean will serve as the community outreach chair for the East Bay Financial Planning Association Board. "Our family approaches things by being involved in community service organizations. We look for ways to help others. It is very important to us," adds Dan.

Working with families over time includes ongoing business relationships with several generations of a family. "We can help connect our client with the necessary resources he or she needs in order to meet financial and living needs. This may involve partnering with a network of advisors such as an attorney or a CPA. We enjoy helping people realize their financial goals," says Jean, who is a certified financial planner.

For more information please call Jean Gannett or Daniel J Gannett at 254-7766.

Long Running Family Affair Salon

On November 3, sisters Toni Mayell and

Charlotte Peebles, along with their father, Mario Sison, celebrate the 25-year anniversary since the establishment of the Sison Salon in Orinda. Located at 134 Village Square, between the Orinda Pet Food and Supply and the Orinda Frame Shop, Sison Salon is a bright and cheery place. Windows the length of the shop allow an abundance of sunlight that is reflected by the mirrors inside.

"My mother thought it would be nice to have a family business, and I give her credit for coming up with the idea," says Toni Mayell. "My dad Mario has been in the hair styling business for 40 years, and prior to our starting Sison Salon, he was in a partnership with the Coiffure Hut, also located in Orinda," she adds. The father/daughters or sisters/father (depending on your point of view) partnership has enjoyed success over the years, and the trio continue today, with Charlotte and Toni each having over 30 years of experience in the business.

Toni Mayell is a graduate of the Vidal Sassoon Training Center in San Francisco, and her sister Charlotte received her training at the Universal Hair Dressers School in Walnut Creek. "We appreciate our clientele and enjoy doing hairstyles for three generations of Orindans. I have grandmothers, mothers, and daughters that are regular clients, and in some cases, there are a few clients I have had since I was in beauty school," smiles Toni. The shop is known for specializing in color and perms, with haircuts starting at \$50. Mario Sison continues to cut hair and create hairstyles on Mondays and Tuesdays by appointment.

Sison Salon is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 254-0234.

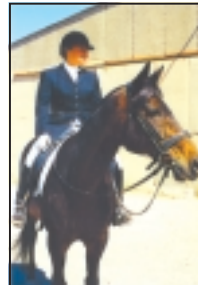


VALERIE HOTZ

Sisters Tony Mayell (L) and Charlotte Peebles and their father Mario Sison celebrate the 25th anniversary of the family salon.

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Morrison's Jewelers

Morrison's Jewelers was established on Shattuck Avenue in Berkeley in 1923 by William Morrison, and today this fine jewelry family-owned business is managed by a fourth generation family member, David Berryhill.

Located in the Crossroads at 35 Moraga Way, Morrison's shiny, floor-to-ceiling glass window stretches the entire length of the storefront, displaying a variety of fine jewelry and gift items. This past summer Berryhill oversaw the remodel of the premises that included refurbished glass display cases, new countertops, exquisite dark gray carpet, and striking faux Venetian plaster paint for the walls named "American Clay."

"We realized about half of our business was from Lamorinda. My father, Matthew Berryhill, and I decided to move the business here in 1994. We place an emphasis on old-world personal service and offer quality repair and custom design jewelry," says Berryhill, who grew up in Moraga (Campolindo class of '85), as did his wife, Monica (Campolindo class of '87). The couple has an 8-year-old daughter Kylie and 6-year-old son Bryan. They live in Dublin where Monica teaches autistic students at Dublin Elementary School.

Morrison's carries today's top jewelry

designers such as Toby Palmeroy and Michael Sugarman, as well as Swiss Army watches. "The general public is more brand conscious today than ever before. We have changed our inventory over the past few years to include much more contemporary styles. Often, customers come in looking for a brand name and each designer has a special niche. For instance, Toby Palmeroy is ecologically conscious. He buys all reconstituted gold from a refiner. In effect, there is no fresh gold (which requires strip mining) in any of his jewelry. Elma Gil is known for invisible set jewelry," explains Berryhill.

Personal service is a key element of Morrison's custom design jewelry. "This is really our specialty. We have three goldsmiths on our premises, Gregg Tysland,



David Berryhill of Morrison's Jewelers.

Nick Tutino, and Jeremy Stoller. Jeremy is also a graduate gemologist, and he is extremely knowledgeable about minerals. Our goldsmiths work with each customer's vision. After putting together ideas of what a customer wants, the goldsmith sketches the design. Next during the design process, the goldsmith carves a wax model of the piece and once a customer approves the design it is then cast," explains Berryhill. The staff also includes Lisa Soule and Inger Thorsen, who offer superior customer sales service.

In addition to fine jewelry, Morrison's carries enduring gifts for the very special people in your life, including silver bowls, crystal pieces, silver spoons, and cups for baby, gold and silver cuff links, money clips, and business card cases. You may choose from hand or machine engraving that is done on the premises.

A longtime member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, Morrison's Jewelers has been a proud sponsor of the Orinda Film Festival in years past. If you are like a lot of people who enjoy getting their shopping done early so they can enjoy the holiday season, drop by Morrison's soon. Morrison's is open Tuesdays through Fridays 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. David Berryhill can be reached at 253-9227.

Gannetts Keeping It All in the Family

Jean Gannett, CFP, registered principal of Associate Securities Corp. has been in the personal financial planning business since 1987. Recently her son, Daniel J Gannett, joined the firm as a registered representative. In addition to offering personal financial planning services, the firm specializes in financial planning for small businesses and is located at 18 Orinda Way, sharing offices with estate planning attorney Robert McNair.

"We have clients in many states and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jean Gannett and her son Daniel offer personal and business financial planning.

countries. Our background in business gives us experience to advise businesses. We focus on three factors that include personal wealth management, business-based wealth management, and insurance products that contribute to the first two. We help people determine their own financial goals, and we also offer suggestions and methods to help them achieve their goals," explains Jean.

In a profession that is highly regulated, both Jean and Dan have passed a battery of examinations in order to get the required licenses to sell securities, mutual funds, real estate, and various insurance products including health and life insurance. Daniel J. Gannett has a strong background in corporate event management and has been focusing on marketing since joining the firm as a partner this past summer.

Jean Gannett is married to Henry J Gannett, owner of Park Place Real Estate and Mortgage. Henry is a registered principal with Associate Securities Corp. and helps out from time to time. The couple moved to Orinda in 1980, and both of their children graduated from Miramonte High School (Sherie, class of '83 and Dan, class

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