

THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
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Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

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Winter Storms Create Havoc for Residents



This Jeep on Overhill Road was hit by a large pine tree during the January storms, which also downed electric lines. The Orinda Fire Department, Orinda Police Department, and the city's Public Works Department put in long hours dealing with flooding, fallen trees, and power outages.

JANE RUDEBUSCH

Slide Area Forces District to Scrap Facility Plans

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

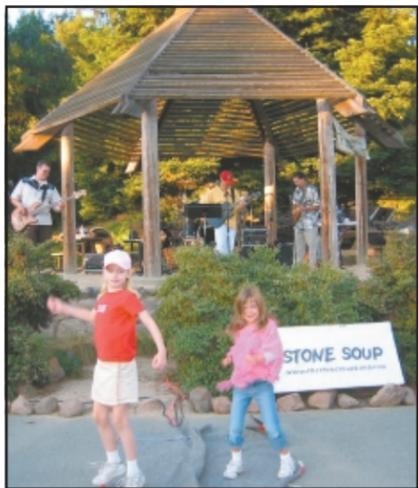
The City of Orinda and the Orinda Union School District are back to square one as the two entities look for a location to house their maintenance operations. On a preliminary visit to the site, geologists discovered that soil conditions and the potential for landslides made construction there hazardous. City and school officials immediately dropped their plans to locate the yard just off Camino Pablo near the Highway 24 westbound ramp.

The discovery by geologists that the chosen site – known as the DeLaveaga

property – for the district's maintenance facility sits at the bottom of a slide zone was a hard blow to plans that have been inching their way toward fruition for years. Hefty public debate has surrounded the seemingly mundane issue at dozens of school board and Orinda City Council meetings – everyone knows the district must have a place to park and service its vehicles, but the factors taken into consideration have been numerous. They include the cost of building a facility, its convenience of location, and whether an unsightly conglomeration of cars and trucks can be seen from the road.

[SEE SLIDE page 16]

Community Center Auxiliary Looking for Volunteers



SALLY HOGARTY

The above **Concert-in-The-Park** featuring Stone Soup is just one of the many events sponsored by the Community Center Auxiliary.

By VICTORIA BUSTAMANTE PURDY
Staff Writer

Thanks to an energetic bunch of women known as the Orinda Community Center Auxiliary (OCCA), Orinda residents are able to enjoy many fun-filled events. From the Spring Egg Hunt and Halloween parade (for children five and under) to the Concerts-in-the-Park series and the Annual Holiday Bazaar in November, these tireless community members help to make Orinda

a better place to live. Planning and implementing all of these activities, however, takes a lot of volunteers. At this time, the OCCA is encouraging local residents (men and women) to join in, have fun, and help their community in a positive manner.

As an added volunteer group of the Park and Recreation Department, the OCCA uses funds raised to improve the community center. Cooking classes can be enjoyed, with a modern twist at the center, thanks to

[SEE AUXILIARY page 6]

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Bringing the Campaign Home

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

“All politics is local.” Any good student of politics understands the truth behind the late Senator Tip O’Neil’s now-famous phrase. And it’s not surprising to find local residents working hard on behalf of this year’s presidential candidates in preparation for this month’s presidential primary.

When Robert and Joni Schwarts hosted a fundraiser at their home for Senator Hillary Clinton last summer, over 75 people came to meet the senator. Raising more than \$200,000 in one evening, the Clinton event that was co-hosted by the Schwarts and Tim and Leslie O’Brien, was the most high profile event to hit Orinda this campaign season.

Of course, campaigns are not won by money alone, and this year’s crop of contenders – perhaps more than any in recent memory – will turn to the grassroots to build support. And it’s at the grassroots level where you will find Orindans Nancy Taylor and Carolyn Phinney.

Taylor is serving as a coalition captain for Rudy Giuliani’s campaign. As a member of Lamorinda Republican Women Federated (LRWF), Taylor stays on top of

issues through the Republican Women’s events and speakers programs. The Lamorinda group, which was founded in 1950 and lists over 100 active members, is committed to electing Republican candidates and promoting the party’s philosophy on both national and local issues. Still, Taylor describes LRWF as a low-key group that comes together to stay on top of the issues.

“Everyone is really different. The Republican Party is very eclectic,” Taylor says. “We have people who are social conservatives and others who are less conservative on social issues but very committed to fiscal conservatism – the Reaganomics people. We’re a very multi-faceted party.”

“The immigration issue gets played up a lot in the press,” Taylor continues. “It’s a very controversial and sensitive issue. But at its core, it’s about fairness and that can be very personal.”

If the Republican Party is eclectic, as Taylor describes, she says that they share common ground in the belief that less government is better and that government should let people do what they do best. Raising taxes runs counter to those values.

Taylor is a relative newcomer to political [SEE CAMPAIGN page 4]

Focus on Teen Drunken Driving

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

The numbers are downright scary: Car crashes remain the No. 1 cause of death for people between the ages of 15 and 20 in this country. And while Orinda has been lucky in not having any youth fatalities in recent memory, the Lamorinda area as a whole has not been so fortunate.

According to the Orinda Police Department, one of the main problems with teen-age driving here is home parties where alcohol is served. Some of those parties, of course, occur when parents are away.

“There are a surprising number of parents who are home,” said Nate McCormack, a detective who heads up the community policing program at the Orinda Police Department.

Some parents believe that if their children are going to drink, they should do it under adult supervision. “That’s not necessarily a smart approach,” McCormack said. Alcohol only exacerbates a situation in which the driver is inexperienced, he said.

City officials are studying a change to the city ordinance that prohibits underage drinking in private residences when four or more teens are drinking. That number may come down to two.

But such ordinances don’t have a lot of bite. Insurance companies, not parents, are the responsible parties for damages incurred by teen drivers. Parents can be



CHRIS LAVIN

Detective Nate McCormack works closely with citizens and students in his role as community liaison.

charged with delinquency of a minor “only if they know about it,” McCormack said.

As of January 1, two new laws went into effect in California that may help stem the problem of inexperienced drivers: Motorists under the age of 18 are not allowed to use a cell phone while driving, and any driver involved in a crash that kills someone may now be charged with second degree murder instead of involuntary manslaughter, which carries a maximum prison term of 10 years. Anyone convicted on a murder charge could spend considerably more time in jail.

In the Acalanes Union School District, administrators are thinking about a stand- [SEE DRIVING page 4]

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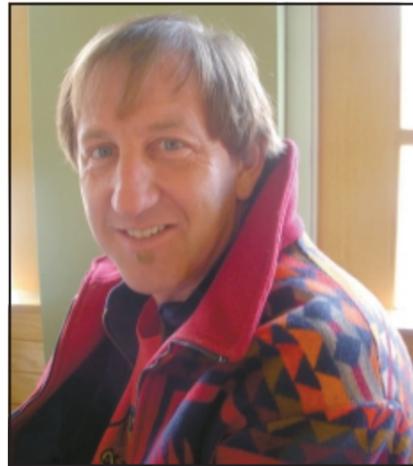
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How Do You Like the Art in Orinda's Outdoor Spaces?

Compiled and photographed by BARBARA BOSTER



"I like the size of the sculptures. It enhances the area."

– Danny Katz



"I love the sculptures because they are organic in regards to the materials, shapes, and designs. I find the openness interesting and the birdhouses whimsical. My only suggestion would be to divide the groupings. Instead of the groups of four, divide the groups of three leaving the fourth to segue into the next grouping."

– Deborah Roundtree

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"They are generally interesting. The trio of sculptures that hedge the water fountain run-off give it a courtyard feeling; however, the others are a bit random and oversized for the space."

– Paul Hollerbach



"They are too dominant for the space; however, they are interesting pieces of art."

– Patrick Kuhner

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Orinda Woman's Club Applications Now Available for Festival of Trees 2008 Beneficiaries

The Orinda Woman's Club is currently welcoming applications for major beneficiaries for their 2008 Festival of Trees fundraising event to be held in November. Application deadline is March 4, 2008. Applicants must conform to the following guidelines:

- The population served must be Contra Costa and/or Alameda Counties;

- The organization must benefit Families, Women, and/or Children;
- Funds must go directly to the applying organization's constituents;
- Revenue of the applying organization may not exceed \$750,000 annually.

To obtain an application, contact: Barbara Woolmington-Smith, at babswool@comcast.net.

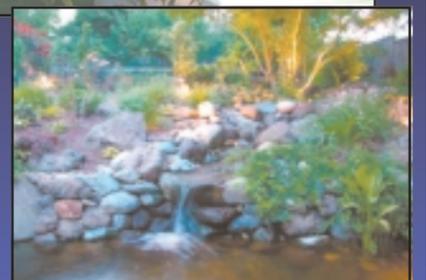
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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

**A Message From the OA Presidents
Fourth of July in February? You Bet!**



Kate Wiley and Jim Luini

The committee planning the 25th anniversary of Orinda's July 4th parade and celebration has been eating, sleeping, and breathing Independence Day since last September in an effort to create the most spectacular event ever. We are excited to reinstate the logo design competition. The competition, organized by the **Orinda Arts Council**, began in mid-January and is open to all Orinda students, K-12. Submittals are due February 14 and can be dropped off at the OA office or at school. Designs will be judged, and finalists' designs will be on display in the Orinda Library Art Gallery, beginning in mid-March. The winning designs will be recreated on com-memorative T-shirts, straw hats, note cards, and posters on sale in Orinda stores in June.

We are very happy to announce that our

lead sponsor for the event this year is **Orinda Motors!** Not only has Orinda Motors committed to be the lead sponsor, John Vanek of Orinda Motors is working with our committee to bring more exotic cars into the parade, new events to the park following the parade, and a mini exotic car show that will be a part of our **new July 2 event at Orinda Theatre Square.** The July 2 event will include a wine tasting and auction, and will be the kick-off event for another new joint venture with the **Orinda Chamber of Commerce's "taste of Orinda" program.** More details to follow in coming issues.

It's not too early to talk to your club, school, or neighborhood about creating a special float this year, or having a booth in the park. This year we are planning to provide each booth participant with a 10'x10' canopy, table, and chairs. Remember the heat last July 4th? Everyone will have shade this year, and the new booths will create a cohesive, festival look. Get involved. Call 254-0800.

★ July 4th Wish List ★

- **Pick-up trucks** to use for musicians in the parade.
- **Flatbed** or large trucks for floats.
- **Car trailers** for floats.
- **Sound system** to borrow for July 4th.

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.

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

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Making a Difference in The Presidential Primary – We Can Do It

For the first time since 1968, California will play a prominent role in a presidential primary. Analysts have predicted that candidates will wage a “knock down, drag out fight” for California voters on February 5. By now, you’ve probably already received at least one phone call, many mail solicitations, and possibly e-mail blasts. Some campaigns have even vowed to go door-to-door to convince voters. It’s an exciting and slightly terrifying experience being one of the 22 states that will go to the polls on Super Tuesday.

Pollsters have been speculating that California voters will turn out in record numbers. That has certainly been the case with the Iowa caucus and the vote in New Hampshire. Both states noted record turnouts and an increase in new voters at the polls. If this year’s slate of candidates couldn’t get the vote out, I’m not sure what could. Who would have predicted that there would be both an African-American and a woman running for president on the same ballot? And, would anyone have ever predicted that a former first lady would be

running for the ultimate office in the country?

It will be interesting to see how California’s earlier election date will affect the turnout in Orinda. In the presidential primary of 2000, 8,540 voters out of 12,196 registered in Orinda went to the polls. This represented a 70 percent turnout – already a very high percentage for an election not nearly as interesting. Moraga, at 72.7 percent, showed the highest turnout for a city in Contra Costa County.

Orinda’s local political organizations have been very busy holding fundraisers and raising awareness for their particular candidate. In our little rural enclave, we have a coalition captain for Rudy Giuliani, a precinct captain and volunteer coordinator for Senator Barack Obama, and a local resident who hosted Senator Hillary Clinton, herself, at a major fundraiser in Orinda last summer. For more information on local activities, see Pat Rudebusch’s story on page 1. And remember to vote on February 5. Let’s make Moraga take second place this time!

— Sally Hogarty, Editor

◆ CAMPAIGN from page 1

campaigns, but she says that she’s drawn to Giuliani’s campaign because of the fiscal issues our country is facing. Taylor looks to Giuliani’s track record in New York as proof that he has the management and leadership skills to address the nation’s challenges. Moreover, she cites her high level of respect for some of the people who are advising the former New York City mayor, in particular, one of Giuliani’s economic advisors happens to be a business associate of her husband’s.

On the Democratic side, Carolyn Phinney is working as a precinct captain and co-chair (along with Kathy Klein of Lafayette) of the committee charged with recruiting local volunteers for Senator Barack Obama’s presidential campaign. Phinney is not new to political campaigning, having worked in the trenches for the past 20 years. Still, she senses a wave of enthusiasm for Obama that goes well beyond the typical excitement of a political campaign. Phinney was drawn to the Obama campaign because, she says, “I trust his integrity. I’m tired of Washington being owned by big money. I trust that he [Obama] is not unscrupulous.”

Change certainly has emerged as an important theme in this year’s campaign with both Beltway veterans and relative newcomers to the national scene claiming to be agents for change. Phinney agrees that voters are looking for a change, but she says that she’s drawn to the senator from Illinois because “his experience is much more

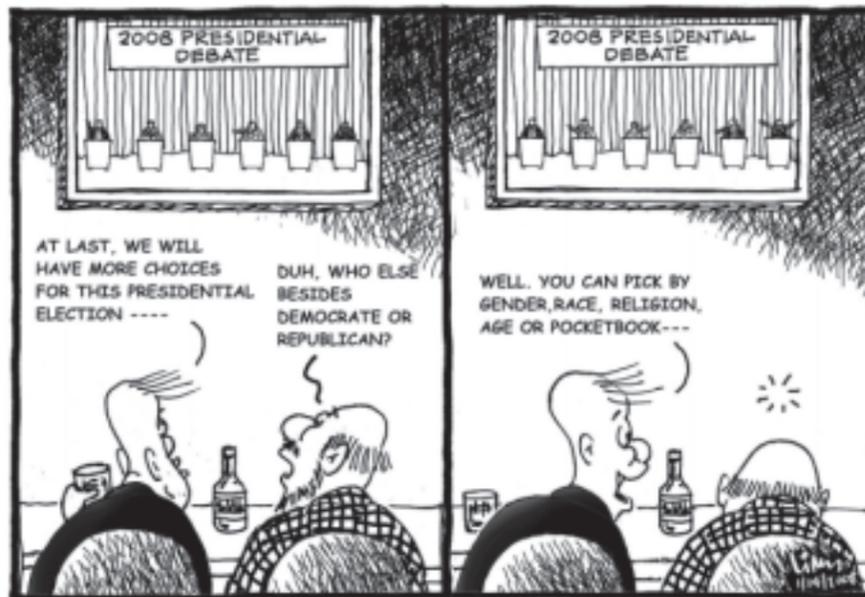
germane to what we need today.” In particular, she notes Obama’s experience working in Chicago to bridge economic and social divides by bringing people together around a common purpose.

“I read Obama’s autobiography, *Dreams of My Father*, and just thought ‘wow!’ I’m so impressed with the depth and complexity of his thought process,” Phinney continues. “I admire the richness of his roots and then what he did with it. He didn’t take the easy route after graduating from Columbia’s law school.”

Phinney believes that voters will be looking for a candidate who can bridge the growing divide both here at home and internationally. And, she feels that voters are tired of the partisan politics that paralyze government. “When I talk to my Democratic and Republican friends, we agree on 60 percent of the issues. I think we’re all tired of political fighting that prevents our elected leaders from getting to work on the 60 percent that we all agree on.”

Phinney’s characterization of Democrats in Lamorinda as “socially progressive and fiscally conservative” is not that far from Taylor’s draw to the Republican Party. Phinney and Taylor agree on another point: California voters will play a pivotal role in selecting both the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates.

“California may lead the nation in picking a leader who can reach the vast middle of voters,” Phinney says. The pundits agree. This maybe one of the elections where one will not want to sit on the sidelines.



Make a Difference – Vote on February 5

◆ DRIVING from page 1

alone class on the dangers of drinking, including drinking and driving.

While Orinda does not keep individual statistics on teen driving citations, the city presents unique challenges for any driver – no streetlights illuminate city streets, hundreds of blind curves cover the map, deer abound, and now it’s the rainy season.

“People – everyone, not just teen-agers – may think they are driving at a safe speed, but they’re going way too fast,” McCormack said. “You can’t see around curves.”

According to the National Transportation Safety Commission, persons 16 to 20 years of age had the highest fatality and injury rates per 100,000 people.

“They don’t have the experience,” McCormack said. They have not reacted to emergency situations before so their first reaction may be inappropriate. Of those involved in crashes, 24 percent of young males involved in fatal crashes had been drinking at the time of the crash, compared with 12 percent of females.

The commission reported that in 2005, 39 percent of all fatal crashes involved alcohol, and the rate of alcohol involvement in fatal crashes is more than three times higher at night than during the day. And the Centers for Disease Control recently released a study showing that, during a 30-day period, 28.5 percent of all high school students nationwide had ridden one or more times in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol.

“When you add friends into the mix, it can get really dangerous,” McCormack said.

For more information about teen drinking, hosting parties, or talking to your teen-ager about alcohol, visit www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/forms/ and click on Healthy Choices for Teens.

Letter to the Editor

My Favorite City Sold Me Out!

I have lived in Orinda for over 30 years and love Orinda. I’m a volunteer in Orinda. I even bought the house next door as a second home in Orinda for my children to own and live in when they mature.

I am appalled and devastated about what our City Fathers have allowed to happen to my two beautiful homes in Orinda.

I bought these two homes because of the spectacular views, even though some PG&E power towers were in the view at the time of purchase. However in the last month, nine new 400-foot towers were installed, that now dominate my view. This totally ruined my view from all my decks to the point, that I don’t even like going outside!

Now to rub extra salt in the wound, I tried to explain my shock to the city planner and

[SEE LETTER page 6]

Corrections

In the January issue of *The Orinda News* it was inadvertently reported that the Friends of the Orinda Creeks had received a grant of \$4,500 from the City of Orinda. The actual amount was \$2,750.

Also in the January issue on the Volunteer of the Year article, Gene Gottfried was listed as having been in charge of clinical medicine at UCSF. He was in charge of laboratory medicine. It was also noted in the article that the Rescue One Foundation came into existence in 1997 when Orinda and Moraga merged their fire departments. The Rescue One Foundation, however, had been in existence through the Moraga Fire Department since 1977.

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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 the March issue are due February 5, 2008.

For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or send email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the April issue is February 18, 2008.

SOLAR / POLICE

Interest in Solar Homes Sparks Workshops

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

The growing interest in having the sun's power replace the incoming electricity in private homes has inspired a local man to offer an information seminar this month in Orinda.

Mario Feusier, a real estate agent, is EcoBroker certified, meaning that he has taken classes and received certification in green energy, largely because so many of his clients began requesting information about solar power and other alternative energy sources for their own homes or homes they were wishing to buy.

"Everyone's concerned about their carbon footprint now," Feusier said.

He has targeted February 23 for the information seminar, and depending on the number of people interested, it could be held either at Orinda City Hall or at the Orinda Country Club. The starting time has yet to be set.

"We'll be going over what the energy savings may be, the benefits of solar energy, costs – all those things," Feusier said.

In California, where 150,000 new homes are built each year, the interest in solar is not just personal. Gov. Schwarzenegger has sponsored mandates that require half of all new homes built by 2012 to be solar-powered.

"It's estimated that 10 percent of all new home buyers would choose solar if it were offered," Feusier said.

Costs for setting up a system vary, but it's not cheap. On average, it costs about \$35,000 to install a system that would take care of a private home's energy needs, but state rebates can pay back up to a third of that amount. Information on rebate programs will also be covered in the seminar, Feusier said, as well as formulas to calculate how much money a family could save over time. Things like the size of the house, its location, and how much



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Mario Feusier offers workshops on solar homes.

energy a family uses must all be considered.

Going solar does not necessarily mean "getting off the grid." Incoming electricity might supplement the solar power generated, and eventually – if enough energy is generated by the sun – it would not only fuel the home but go back out into the grid, essentially causing the power meter to run backwards. Power companies are required to buy back extra power generated by home systems.

Feusier works with Borrego Solar, a Berkeley company that has provided solar systems for 27 years. He will not be selling systems or anything else at the seminar, however, because it will be purely informational.

For information about this month's solar seminar, contact Feusier at jrfeusier@aol.com, or call him at (925) 212-4514.



POLICE BLOTTER

December 2007

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 65 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 4 incidents in the areas of El Gavilan, Orchard Rd., La Espiral, and Via Floreado.

Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 3 incidents in the areas of Camino Pablo, Sleepy Hollow Ln., and Moraga Way.

All Other Petty Thefts: 5 incidents in the areas of Orinda Way, Lost Valley Dr., Diablo View Dr., and Glorietta Blvd.

Grand Theft From Vehicle (theft of more than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): No reported incidents.

All Other Grand Thefts: 2 incidents in the areas of Miner Rd. and

Dalewood Dr.

Vehicle Theft: 1 incident in the area of Orinda Way.

Residential Burglary: 7 incidents in the areas of Southwood Dr., Stanton Ct., Ardith Dr., Orchard Rd., Coral Dr., Sycamore Rd., and Bates Blvd.

Commercial Burglary: 2 incidents in the areas of Orinda Way and Theatre Sq.

Vandalism: 4 incidents in the areas of Via Floreado, Oak Rd., Claremont Ave., and Glorietta Blvd.

Identity Theft: 2 incidents in the areas of Miner Rd. and Meadow View Rd.

Credit Card Fraud/Forgery: 3 incidents in the area of Moraga Way, Marston Rd., and Redcoach Ln.

– Compiled by Haleh Allen, Staff Writer

Church of Santa Maria Adult Formation/Education Series

Catholicism 101: An intro to an adult renewed understanding of the Catholic Faith. February 11, 18, 25, March 3, 10, 17

Parenting with Love and Logic: Understanding Cognitive, Social, Emotional, and Spiritual Development. February 7, 14, 21, 28, March 5, 12

Scripture Series: The Gospel of Mark - February 13, 20, 27, March 5, 12, 19

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IN MEMORIAM

◆ AUXILIARY from page 1

the OCCA's purchase of items such as the above-counter mirror, which is ideal for following along with the instructor's every move. Funds have been used to purchase needed items for the community center, such as, card tables for the bridge classes, a life-saving AED heart defibrillator, tot lot playground equipment, a sound system for the Concerts-in-the-Park, kindergym equipment, holiday lights on top of the community center and so much more. The Holiday Bazaar, which takes place the first weekend in November, helps raise money that the OCCA then puts back into the community center, where residents and non-residents of all ages can enjoy a variety of classes and camps.

"The OCCA is something I am proud of, and I am honored to be the president of this dynamic group," said Shannon Fuller.

Current members include: Corinna Anthenien, treasurer; Susan Stephan, secretary; and volunteer members Seanna Allen, Annette O'Donnell-Butner, Gayle Maroney, Jennifer Vigo, Jennifer Robb, Nina Chabra, and Julie Whitsitt.

Linda Dezzani, a member of the Park and Recreation Commission and the Community Center director said, "The group has the spirit that helps bring everything and everyone together in a positive manner, thereby benefiting the City of Orinda."

OCCA meetings take place on the first Monday of the month at the Orinda Community Center from 7 -8:30 p.m. Childcare is provided at no fee for members. For more information on joining the OCCA, contact Fuller at skfuller@silcon.com. For more information on community center classes, go online to www.ci.orinda.ca.us.

In Memoriam

Long-time Orinda resident **Gene Miller** died peacefully on December 9 at the age of 86. He was active in the Orinda Chamber of Commerce and the Orinda Lion's Club, often assisting with distributing visual aids for that organization. Suffering from macular degeneration, himself, Miller knew the importance of these aids first-hand. He is survived by his wife of 25 years Marian Powers-Miller, five children, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. A celebration of his life will take place **February 8** from 2 - 5 p.m. at the Veteran's Memorial Building in Lafayette. The family has asked that in lieu of flowers, people donate to Guide Dogs for the Blind and the Lion's Club.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

◆ LETTER from page 4

I was told, "Well, this will help Gateway Valley development look better by relocating these massive towers." I am thinking, "I have been paying property taxes for all these years on two homes, which have now lost significant enjoyment and value because of these towers. And I am giving this up, without any chance to discuss it, for future Orinda residents who have not yet paid any property taxes?"

The planner then tells me I could have gone to the meetings about this issue and that it has been all over the papers. I read all of the papers in Orinda. Not once did I see a request for input or notice of a public meeting. I did read recently that the City of Orinda received \$185,000 from Gateway

developers, which is not much for this homeowner to cheer about since I have lost at least three times that amount in home price devaluation.

I am very hurt and frustrated with a feeling of betrayal by a city that insists on story poles for making a slight change to the height of your home, a city that insists on homeowners sending letters to all the local neighbors about small home improvements in consideration of keeping up neighborhood appearance. But, the City of Orinda evidently feels free to approve these monster towers in my backyard without any notice. Shame on you! The City of Orinda makes the rules that we citizens must abide by, but they, the rule makers, don't follow them. Shame on you!

— Ed Revelli

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AWARDS

Three Longtime Orindans Get Awards from Historical Society

BY DOROTHY BOWEN
Staff Writer

For the first time, the Orinda Historical Society (OHS) gave awards to three members for their contributions to Orinda's history and their work toward the society's goals. All of them have lived in Orinda longer than the OHS has been in existence.

The Orinda Historical Society was organized in 1969. Helen Vurek has lived here since 1939, Charles Blue since 1949,

John Holmgren, 86, was a longtime editor of the California State Automobile Association's monthly *Motorland* magazine and was a daily host of a CBS travel show. He made an extraordinary contribution to the public's awareness of California and geography, said Lucy Hupp Williams, who presented the awards on behalf of OHS. Holmgren has long been involved locally in giving travel talks, leading tours to historic sites, and volunteering with the OHS.



(L-R) Award recipients John Holmgren, Helen Vurek, and Charles Blue with Orinda Historical Society president Lucy Hupp Williams.

and John Holmgren since 1950.

Vurek, 97, is a longtime community volunteer and activist. She was one of the founders of the WPA childcare program at Orinda Park Pool and helped establish Orinda Dramateurs and the Democratic Club. For decades she worked at the Orinda Post Office, beginning when it was located in Phairs.

Blue, 92, helped establish the Orinda Fire District, was active in the development of the Orinda Community Church, and was a charter member of the OHS when it was established in 1969. He was chairman of the fire district for more than 20 years, as well as a volunteer fireman.

Guest speaker for the dinner was Joe Cleary, also a longtime Orindan, who talked and showed slides about the making of his Mother of Rivers statue that is standing at the mouth of the Mississippi River in front of the Port Commission Building in New Orleans.

In spite of Hurricane Katrina, the 30-foot monument is still standing, high and dry. The statue took about two years to complete and cost about \$1 million. Cleary, who was profiled in the December issue of *The Orinda News*, told of how a chance meeting at a show of his work in San Francisco led to his being chosen to create the statue representing the river.

Resident Receives Audubon Award

Amelia Wilson was presented with the Elsie Roemer Conservation Award by Elizabeth Murcock, Golden Gate Audubon executive director.

Wilson received the award for her dedication to preserving the environment through her work with Save Open Space - Gateway Valley. Thanks to the efforts of Save Open Space and other concerned agencies and groups, the Gateway Valley residential development now boasts 974 acres of open space.



CHARLES DENSON

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Welcome to our new column dealing with home repairs, remodeling, and general construction. It is written by Janice Gatlin, a local, licensed general contractor and owner of Always The Best Repairs and Construction.

All of us, whether we rent or own our homes, need some help with projects from time to time. Where do we find the right people, and how do we choose whom to hire? What are the differences between handymen and contractors?

Let's start with the differences between handymen and contractors. While a contractor can call himself or herself a handyman, an unlicensed handyman cannot call himself or herself a contractor. How do you tell who is a contractor when looking at advertisements, websites, or business cards? The law requires that all contractors list their license number, along with their name, on all printed materials. California State Contractor's License Board (CSLB) numbers are at least six, and no more than eight digits (the vast majority are only six) and may have a letter or letter/number designation in front or back such as B or C-1. These designations are printed optionally and designate which type of work the contractor is licensed to do.

The key difference between a person who is a handyman and a person who is a licensed contractor is that the handyman is unlicensed and his/her work is unregulated by the state. It's possible that a handyman

may have as much knowledge and experience as a contractor, however, because s/he is unlicensed, the following points should be noted:

- 1) S/he has not taken and passed the state mandated tests to demonstrate competence in construction and business law;
- 2) S/he isn't required to have the extensive, documented experience that a licensed contractor must have to become licensed;
- 3) S/he is not governed by the laws and regulations of the CSLB. So, if you have any problems with their work, the CSLB cannot help you resolve them;
- 4) It is illegal for an unlicensed person to perform any work, including landscaping, painting, or any other trade if the job is valued above \$500, including labor and materials. Furthermore, the \$500 threshold is for the total cost of the work, not part of a larger project such as a bath remodel. If an unlicensed person even offers to perform the work, s/he is in violation. Owner-builders (the homeowner her/himself) are not limited as to the extent of work they do on their own homes;
- 5) The CSLB cannot provide you any information such as previous problems with clients, workmen's compensation status, or name and address of the owner of the company for handymen;
- 6) S/he is not required to carry the \$12,500 bond that licensed contractors must hold.

You can go on-line to www.cslb.ca.gov or call 1-800-321-2752 to verify that the contractor license is active, belongs to that person, and to learn other valuable information about that contractor. Licenses cannot be shared between companies or individuals.

Next time, we'll talk about the different license designations and the differences between large, medium, and small handyman and construction companies.

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Sally Hogarty



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My 8-year-old granddaughter was fascinated by the many experiments she could perform in the discovery educational center and with having her photo taken in a space vehicle.

While the center has many fascinating exhibits and hands-on educational activities, its new permanent exhibition, Beyond Blastoff: Surviving in Space, is especially interesting. This latest exhibit opened in November with a lively reception and the cool jazz of a local band (appropriately named the Mad Scientists) as well as an "astronaut" walking around in an incredibly cumbersome spacesuit.

Although the band is gone, such items as a Sokul spacesuit worn during launch and landing, an Orlan EVA suit with built-in life support systems for working outside the space station, some "yummy" looking astronaut food, and a Mir Space Station toilet remain.

One of my favorite exhibits is the Russian Soyuz 7K-OK reentry module. Built prior to 1971, this early model accommodates three cosmonauts during take-off and reentry. I must admit I became slightly claustrophobic just looking inside. I can't imagine what it must be like to travel in such a confined space at speeds of up to 17,500 miles per hour. The module is displayed so that visitors can walk around it, look through the hatch, and explore various details using a computer kiosk featuring panoramic photography. Did you know that the reentry module can return from the International Space Station (ISS) in just 3.5 hours? Amazing.

Visitors can get a taste of what it must be like for astronauts to do their various jobs in space by laying on a rolling sled in the microgravity trainer that simulates trying to manipulate objects in a weightless environment. According to docents, an astronaut must be locked into place to perform even simple tasks, otherwise he/she could end up spinning in circles when trying to turn a simple lever.

You can also email yourself a photo



An astronaut looks back at Earth from the space capsule. COURTESY OF NASA

souvenir of your own weightlessness at the photo stage area. Here visitors have their pictures taken while jumping in front of a backdrop of the ISS Destiny module.

Other hands-on activities include using exercise machines similar to the resistive exercise device used by astronauts on the ISS that helps those in space combat bone and muscle deterioration, listening to radio transmissions of ham radio and mission control communications with the astronauts on the ISS, using a computer kiosk to track the ISS orbit, and looking at the Earth from the window of the space station or seeing the moon or Mars from a spacecraft.

According to exhibits manager Tamara Schwarz, the new exhibit goes beyond the glamour of space travel and shows its more pragmatic side. "Space travel is incredibly exciting and results in discoveries that benefit humanity on Earth, but it also contains uncomfortable conditions, hygienic challenges, and a grueling workload. Schwarz also elaborated on the challenge of washing your hair without

[SEE BACKYARD page 18]

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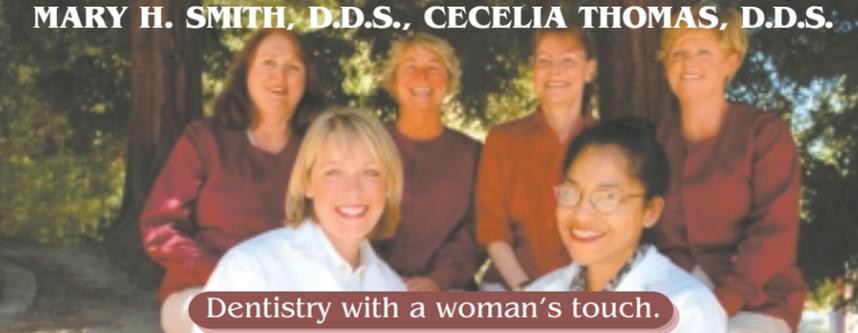
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Way to Grow in Orinda
A Rose, is a Rose, is a Rose...
Or is it?

Steve & Cathy Lambert



Since we began writing our garden column for *The Orinda News* in 2005, we have dedicated the February article to America's favorite flower, the rose. The well-known saying; a rose, is a rose, is a rose . . . may be true but to those of us who know and love roses it seems to be a bit of an understatement.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Excelenz von Shubert is an eye-catcher with its full, double blooms in colors ranging from violet to purple.

There is an abundance of classifications, varieties, and species of roses far beyond the commonly known classic hybrid tea or floribunda roses. These include the Carpet Rose, China Rose, Rosa glauca, Oregon Damask/Hybrid Musk, and Shrub roses, to name a few.

One of the easiest roses to plant and grow is the Carpet Rose. Some may say this rose is over-planted and over-used but we say, where else can you find a quick-spreading shrub that's covered with blossoms almost year-round? It's no wonder this type of rose is so popular.

low hedge.

Since their introduction, new varieties of Flower Carpet Roses have been released nearly every year. There are now six colors available including coral, red, apple blossom, white, pink, and yellow. For an incredible color combination, try planting the bright pink Flower Carpet Rose with Salvia "Victoria" and/or purple-leaved Chinese fringe plant (*Loropetalum rubrum* in Sizzling Pink.)

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For a larger show of almost year-round color, try one of the China Roses. Our favorite of the China Roses is the Butterfly rose (*Rosa Mutabilis*). We still had a few blooms on our China Rose in mid-December after many frosty mornings. This spectacular rose got its name from the multitude of blooms which go through a myriad of color changes as if the bush is

Flower Carpet Roses will grow well in any sunny location. They need no special care or feeding aside from moderate watering and occasional hard pruning. Although it's not to our taste, we've even seen these roses successfully pruned into a

[SEE ROSES page 18]

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VISUAL ARTS

Orinda Artists Exhibit at Walnut Creek Gallery



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Eighteen Orinda artists will show their works in the Valley Art Gallery's upcoming exhibit "From the Mountains to the Sea." Running February 12 - March 13 at the Walnut Creek gallery, the show highlights the classical impressionist plein air painter **Ruth Beeve**. An internationally recognized artist, Beeve has shown her work at many major galleries including the Forbes Galleries in New York. Shown above is Orinda artist **Judith Feins'** painting "Elk." A special reception with the artists takes place February 10 from 3 - 6 p.m. For more information, go online to www.valleyartgallery.org.

Art Teachers Show at Orinda Library Gallery



Since January 13, the Orinda Library Gallery has been graced with the accumulated talent of 12 artists who teach in Orinda. The show, featuring Marianne Brown, **Dorothy Cutright Davis** (shown left with Orinda Arts Council member **Susan Mautner**), Andrew Denman, Joan Dougherty, Bonnie Bryan Fitch, Anne Marie Glover, Pam Glover, Marilyn Hajjar, Terry McBriarty, Shirley Rencher Miller, Norm Nicholson, and Catherine Waters. The show closes February 12.

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A Cappella Choir Seeks Singers from Orinda



SALLY HOGARTY
Orinda resident Betsy Blakeslee rehearses the Town Hall Singers for an upcoming performance in Lafayette. The a cappella community chorus is looking for new members. No audition is necessary. The group includes teens, adults, and seniors and both men and women.

By **SALLY HOGARTY**
Editor

The Town Hall Singers, Lamorinda's only teen/adult community chorus, is looking for new members. No audition is necessary to join this fun group that sings a rousing repertoire of foot-stomping, hand-clapping songs in several languages. The men and women in the group run the age gambit from teens through seniors.

harmony, and rhythm, including body percussion to some of the songs. "I draw from barbershop quartet, Bobby McFerrin, African-American songs, and world music and adapt the pieces to the abilities of the singers," says Blakeslee.

New members will be accepted through February 10. Rehearsals are only two to three Sunday evenings each month with performance opportunities. To register, call (925) 262-1159 or visit www.thtc.org/education/chorus.html.

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SALLY HOGARTY

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BETWEEN THE LINES

Between the Lines

Titles to Look Forward To

Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



Every year at Orinda Books, we ask ourselves why some terrific novels that we have been lucky enough to receive advance-reading copies of have publication dates in January and February, too late for holiday giving. I asked Wendy Sheanin, Simon & Schuster's senior marketing manager, this question and she said, "We believe that many book buyers and great readers receive money or gift cards and want to purchase books after the holidays. We want to offer them new choices when they are shopping for themselves...January is also a good time to introduce books that might otherwise get lost among the heavy hitters of the fall season."

Among the titles we're excited about this month is one by Geraldine Brooks, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *March*. Her new novel *People of the Book* (Viking \$24.95) is based on the true story of the Sarajevo Haggadah from its 15th century beginning in Spain to its perilous survival in war-torn Sarajevo. We've also been looking forward to *The Commoner* by John Burnham Schwartz (Nan A. Talese \$24.95), fine fiction drawing on the life of Empress Michiko of Japan, the first commoner to marry into the imperial family; *An Incomplete Revenge* by Jacqueline Winspear (Henry Holt \$24—February 19), a new outing with one of Orinda Book's favorite sleuths, Maisie Dobbs; and *Change of Heart* by Jodi Picoult (Atria \$26.95—March 4). Picoult, never one to shy away from timely issues, dissects both organized religion and the death penalty in her new novel.

We also wonder about the current proliferation of doctors who write. When they turn from fibulas to fabrication, physicians have been noteworthy producers of fine books. Josh Spanogle, a featured author at the Stanford Women's Club Books on Review program in January, is one in a long line of literary doctors — Anton Chekhov and Conan Doyle are a couple of notables — who found the pen mightier than the scalpel. Spanogle wrote his latest novel *Flawless* (Bantam \$6.99—March 25) while he was at Stanford Medical School.

Other recent best-selling author/doctors are Ethan Canin and Khaled Hosseini. Canin (*The Palace Thief* and *Emperor of the Air*) graduated from Stanford, tried writing, considered himself a failure, and went to Harvard Medical School where he

graduated with an MD. He attempted to combine both careers but now has left medicine and teaches at the Iowa Writers Workshop. Hosseini wrote *The Kite Runner* after he graduated from UCSD and was completing his residency in internal medicine in Los Angeles. Michael Crichton and Robin Cook are two other wildly successful writers who put their medical training to effective use as background for their bestselling thrillers.

Another acclaimed medic/author is Daniel Mason, who graduated from UCSF in 2004 and wrote *The Piano Tuner*, an international success, while he was in medical school. His *A Far Country* (Vintage \$13.95—March 11) is a perceptive and incredibly moving novel about the effects of war and poverty on one young girl in an unnamed Latin American country. Mason credits his medical training for encouraging "a specificity in language" that doctors learn when they communicate with each other. He adds that "medicine also introduces one to the body in all its intimacies and all its failings...certain scenes in *A Far Country*, particularly the horrible details of what happens to someone who is starving, come from medicine. I wanted to treat hunger not as something abstract or political, but something physically real."

In the realm of non-fiction, we continue to be grateful to those doctors who give us a better understanding of the issues that confront contemporary medicine in their essays. Atul Gawande's *Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance* (Picador \$14) offers an honest firsthand account of his own life as a surgeon and is just out in paperback and Jerome Groopman, a professor at Harvard Medical School, unravels the mystery of how doctors figure out the best treatments — or fail to do so — in *How Doctor's Think* (Mariner \$15.95 — March 12).

This month Orinda Books will host discussions and book-signings with three noted authors whose books have just been released in paperback. Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* is a monumental epic of contemporary India, weaving together the story of a Sikh policeman and Mumbai's most wanted gangster. Daniel Alarcon will discuss and sign copies of *Lost City Radio*, his much praised debut novel, a timely exploration of the impact of war on society. Jessica Inclin will talk about her new novel, *Being With Him*. This very successful local author will share some of her trade secrets.

See the Calendar on page 17 for details.

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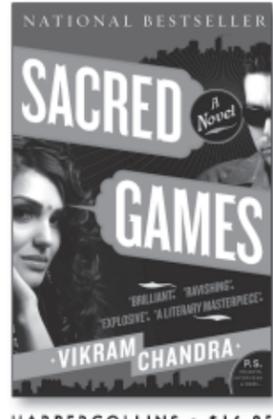
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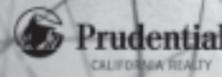
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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Stop Me If You Think You've Heard This One Before

When in America, Do as the Romans Do

Andra Lim



Whenever I talk to adults I don't know very well, I am reminded of interrogation scenes in movies. There is a white room with a table and two chairs. The FBI agent sits in one chair; the serial killer/rapist/member of the Mafia sits in the other.

"We're not leaving here until you tell me what *really* happened on February 17, 1991," says the agent. "Now tell me: what sports do you play? What college do you want to go to? What classes are you taking? What's your favorite subject? What language are you taking?"

The agent is unperturbed by the answers to the first few questions, occasionally adding, "how fun!" or "that's wonderful!" But the answer to this last question is unexpected, and the agent fires off

questions with astonishing rapidity, sensing a breakthrough.

"Why are you taking Latin? Isn't it a dead language? What's the point? I need to know: *Why are you taking Latin?*"

In the past few months, I have read countless articles citing countless studies that have one fundamental message: American kids, from kindergartners to high school seniors, are stupider than ever before.

"In short, it is nothing less than a tidal wave of dumb. ... The worst part: It's not the kids' fault. They're only the victims of a horribly failed educational system," wrote *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Mark Morford.

What can stop this "tidal wave of dumb?"

As Lucius Annaeus Seneca said, "*Diligentia maximum etiam mediocris ingeni subsidium*" – diligence is a very great help even to a mediocre intelligence. And translating Latin is nothing if not a study in diligence.

In Latin, all nouns are declined, meaning that a noun is spelled differently depending on its use in a sentence. Thus, the words in Latin sentences are often ordered in a seemingly jumbled-up fashion, with the verb last, the subject in the middle, and various adjectives, ablative absolutes, participles, and gerundives everywhere else. Translating is like piecing together a verbal jigsaw puzzle, and it ultimately improves your knowledge of grammar, exercises your brain, and makes you a better writer.

In 2007, the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) released a study titled "To Read

"Diligence is a very great help even to a mediocre intelligence."

– *Lucius Annaeus Seneca*

or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence." One of the major findings of the study was that elementary school students read outside of what they are required to for school, and, therefore, their reading scores have improved. On the other hand, middle and high school students spend hardly any time reading for pleasure, and their reading scores have plummeted.

Not coincidentally, middle school is when we started reading books as a class. While the English class books for high

school students display an unhealthy obsession with existentialism, the books for middle school students are flat-out boring. No wonder kids above the age of 10 have stopped reading – the books you read in school can easily make you believe that books that are relevant, entertaining, and thought-provoking no longer exist.

As a correspondent on *The Daily Show*, Steve Carell once said, "I enjoy people and the things they do. And seeing people doing things is, for me, an explosive combination."

In middle school, reading about Scout and Atticus doing things was, for me, far from exciting. But reading about the Romans and the things they did is an explosive combination no matter what age you are.

Learning about Roman mythology and history is an integral part of Latin class. On my first day of Latin at Miramonte, we learned about the birth of Venus, a story involving castration and father-son rivalry. Since then, we've learned about the battle between two sets of male triplets that decided the outcome of the war between Rome and Alba Longa, a man who cut off his hand to display his bravery and love for his country, and power-hungry Tullia, who ran over her father with her chariot multiple times. These stories do not bore you or depress you. Instead, they do something English class books rarely do: They make you want to know more.

Encouraging the study of Latin may help put America's academics back on track by teaching students about grammar, enriching their knowledge of history, and restoring in them a love of reading. In 2002, students who took Latin had a higher average score on the verbal portion of the SAT than students who took French, German, or Spanish. The average score of Latin students was 666, while the average score of Spanish students was 581.

Furthermore, I know quite a few people originally taking Spanish or French who decided to take Latin as a second language, but I don't know anyone originally in Latin who also takes Spanish or French. When you love the language you're taking, why take another?

I strongly urge Orinda Intermediate School students entering Miramonte next fall to choose Latin as their foreign language. After all, *sola bona lingua est mortua lingua*. The only good language is a dead language.

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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Sister to Sister Coming Soon

By KSENIJA SOSTER-OLMER
Staff Writer

The ninth annual Sister to Sister Summit takes place on Saturday, March 15, at Acalanes High School in Lafayette. This innovative forum for middle school girls, facilitated by high school girls under the guidance of American Association of University Women (AAUW) volunteers, provides a safe and supportive environment to discuss such high stress topics as body image, developing self-confidence, boyfriends, alcohol and drugs, and dealing with peer pressure. "We are very lucky this year to have substantial financial support from the Orinda Rotary and Moraga Kiwanis," says summit co-chair and AAUW member Eddy Schwartz.

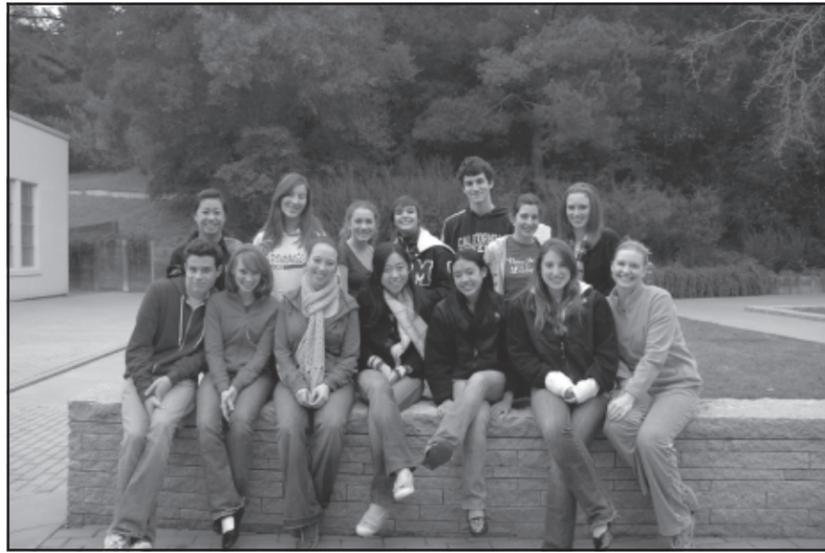
All middle school girls in the school district will receive information on the summit by mail as well as at school mini summits. Participants must register by March 7. Additional brochures can be obtained online at www.aauwoml.org.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Girls from last year's summit work on an art project.

Orinda Teens Active in City Blood Drive



SALLY HOGARTY

Teen Program coordinator Jenny Hudson (seated far right) and the Teen Advisory Council take a break from their preparations for the February 2 blood drive.

An Orinda teen's battle with lupus was the impetus for other teens to become involved with the City of Orinda's annual blood drive, which takes place this year on February 2 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Orinda Community Center

. This time of the year is typically when local blood banks run low so the advisory council encourages everyone to donate. Contributions will go to the Blood Banks of the Pacific. For more information, call 254-4225.

EFO Supports Miramonte Drama Productions



ROBIN LUKE

The Miramonte Drama Department did it again this fall with a wonderful production of *Nicholas Nickleby*. Students Naveed Kermaninejad, and Kelsey Bergman are captured here in a dramatic moment. As the largest voluntary funding source at Miramonte, the Educational Foundation of Orinda has increased its support of drama this year by \$10,000.



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Youth. It's a time when we're filled with energy, opinions, and ideas for change. Paradoxically, young adults have a poor track record of bringing their youthful ideals to the voting booth. The 2008 presidential election may buck that trend – only time will tell. A group of Orinda high school students, however, will be studying this year's election with an intensity that few of their parents can match. They are members of the **Junior States of America**.

Junior States of America, or JSA as they refer to it, is a national, nonpartisan political organization for high school students who are interested in government and politics. Since its founding in 1934, JSA has been the premiere organization for involving students who share an interest in public affairs, law, international concerns, and domestic issues. Whether through their local high school chapter, or at the state and national level, JSA members come together to debate issues, develop policy, and stoke their search for knowledge and experience in government.

Becca Sachs, an Orinda junior attending College Prep High School, has been involved in her school's JSA chapter since freshman year. She credits her eighth-grade teacher at OIS, Mrs. Risso, for sparking her interest in government. "I first became interested in politics during the 2004 election year when Mrs. Risso encouraged us to debate the issues in class. Those classroom discussions really built my awareness of what that election was about and how important it is to understand the issues," Sachs says.

Sachs attended a JSA summer program at Georgetown University last year. That experience further fueled her passion for government. "This past summer, at the JSA summer school, we not only got to talk with students from other chapters from across the country, but we also had the opportunity to talk with leaders in government," she continues. "Karl Rove and Dennis Kucinich were two leaders who spent time with us. We also met William Perry, the former secretary of defense under President Clinton."

"The 2008 election is particularly exciting because there's no incumbent running for president," Sachs adds. "This election will determine the future of America with issues ranging from national security to health care being top priorities. At JSA, we're trying to get high school kids excited about the election and politics, in general."

Katie Evans a freshman at Miramonte, her brother **Bo Evans**, and cousin **Megan**

Guptill have started a JSA chapter at their school this year. With a wide-open presidential election, Katie sees this as an exciting time for Miramonte students to join the political debates. "We meet every Wednesday at lunchtime in room 264, and every Miramonte student is welcome to join," Katie says. "We discuss the candidates and issues that concern us – issues such as abortion, gay rights, and the war. We're also going to work on getting Miramonte students who have turned 18 to register to vote."

For Evans, bringing JSA to high school may be an extension of dinnertime conversations. She says that she's been involved with JSA since third grade because of her dad, **Alex Evans**, who serves on the board of the Junior Statesmen Foundation. She recalls an early trip to Washington, D.C. with her dad to attend a JSA event honoring Senator Joe Biden. Today, she says that her sights are set on a career in government: "I'd like to be Chief Justice some day."

Alex Evans dates his involvement in JSA to his own high school days when he testified on Prop. 13 in Sacramento and argued for changes to state law that would provide a smoking area for students on high school campuses ("OK, not all ideas are good," he now concedes with a smile) and reducing the number of years high school students are required to take physical education. "The point is, that JSA provides a terrific venue for teens to learn about government and get involved in the process," Evans says. "There aren't a lot of high school students who have this passion for government and civics education and JSA brings those who share these interests together to build upon that enthusiasm. JSA can build a lifetime involvement in participating in government and politics. And getting people involved in government and politics is a good thing."

As any JSA member would tell you, getting out to vote is just the first step, albeit a very important one.

◆ **SLIDE** from page 1

City and school district officials hope to combine their fleets with a joint maintenance facility, but the sizes of available parcels is a challenge. In the mean time, with construction some time off, district officials are looking at interim locations, according to OUSD Trustee Pam West. The current joint maintenance facility is located at the former Pine Grove Elementary School, slated to become a residential development in the near future.

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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 2 **Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church** First Friday Forum, 1:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Speaker: Peter Darbee, chairman and chief executive officer of PG&E., on "Climate Change: The Time is Now." Refreshments at 1 p.m., 254-4906.
- 5 **Orinda Books**, Author Discussion, 4 p.m., with Vikram Chandra signing copies of *Sacred Games*, just out in paperback, 254-7606.
- 7 **Friends of the Orinda Library** Booksale, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., sorting room and bookshop. Bookshop will be open until 6 p.m.
- 9 **Santa Maria Parish Annual Crab Feed**, 6 p.m. at parish hall. Dinner includes shrimp cocktail, salad, pizza bread, crab, garlic bread, dessert, and coffee, with a no-host bar. Cost is \$35 per person, or \$15 for children 12 and younger. For tickets, call 254-2426.
- 12 **Orinda Books** Author Discussion, 4 p.m., with Daniel Alarcon signing copies of *Lost City Radio*, just out in paperback, 254-7606.
- 13 **Orinda Rotary**, noon, Orinda Community Center, with talk by Dan Lawrence on Four Way Speech Contest at Miramonte High School, 254-5537.
- 14 **Orinda Books** Author Discussion, 4 p.m., with Jessica Inclan signing copies of her new novel, *Being With Him*, 254-7606.
Orinda Arts Council art deadline, July 4th Celebration Logo Contest. See article on Page 3.
- 20 **Orinda Rotary**, noon, Orinda Community Center, with talk by Glenn Rudebusch, senior vice president at Federal Reserve Bank, on the role and operations of the Federal Reserve, 254-5537.
- 23 **Solar Seminar**, time and place to be announced. Information for homeowners about solar power will be disseminated and discussed. Call (925) 212-4514 or e-mail jrfeusier@aol.com.
- 27 **Orinda Rotary**, noon, Orinda Community Center, with Jim Williams, partner of Texas Pacific Partners, speaking about private equity firms, 254-5537.

AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless specified.

- 5 **Toddler Lapsit**, 10 a.m., Gallery Room, repeats at 10:30 a.m. Songs, stories and bounces for children up to 3 years of age and their caregivers. Repeats on February 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, and 27.
- Peek-a-boo Storytime**, 10 a.m., Toddler Alcove, new program for pre-walkers to 12 months. Stories, songs, rhymes, and rhythm just for caregiver and baby. Those with older siblings are welcome to join the Toddler Lapsit. Repeats 12, 19, and 26.
- 9 **Saturday Morning Live!** 11 a.m., Toddler Alcove. Family story time for 3- to 5-year-olds. Repeats 16, and 23.

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

CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

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.

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, no noon meeting February 6, otherwise see calendar above.

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.

Orinda Woman's Club

Second Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. to noon; call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881.

CALENDAR BY CHRIS LAVIN

Send calendar items to chrislavin@earthlink.net

Climate Change Subject of Friday Forum

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

Peter Darbee, the chairman, chief executive officer, and president of PG&E Corp., will speak on "Climate Change: The Time is Now" at the First Friday Forum on February 2 at 1:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Refreshments will be served at 1 p.m.

"We believe that the challenge of global warming is among the greatest threats mankind has ever faced," explains Darbee. "We've thrown our company's weight behind state laws designed to fight climate change."

Darbee is active on the national level and is a frequent visitor to Capitol Hill where he pushes for a nationwide system to limit the greenhouse gas emissions blamed for heating the planet.

"The United States is the world's largest energy user and the largest emitter of greenhouse gases. It also has the world's wealthiest and most innovative economy. No other country bears a greater capacity to lead the global response on climate change," Darbee said.

Darbee joined PG&E in 1999 as senior vice president and chief financial officer. Prior to that, he held high-ranking positions at Advanced Fibre Communications, Inc., Pacific Bell, and Goldman Sachs, where he was vice president and co-head of the company's energy and telecommunications group.

A graduate of Dartmouth College, with an MBA from the Amos Tuck School of Business, Darbee also completed the Nuclear Reactor Technology Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"With climate change as one of the top issues in current public policy debates, the February 2 First Friday Forum offers a unique opportunity to learn and to have questions answered," says Caroline Giers, chair of the forum committee. She also announces that Tom Vacar, Consumer



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Peter Darbee, CEO of PG&E will speak on February 2.

Editor of KTVU/Fox2, will speak at the First Friday Forum on March 7 about "Consumer Rights from Energy Prices to ID Theft."

For further information, contact the church at (925) 283-8722.



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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 20

tailored suits for the professional wardrobe are available in fabrics such as gray flannel, as well as casual wear made of the finest cottons, and jeans. Not only is there quality in the tailoring, design, and stitching of these pieces, but the finest fabrics are incorporated, as well.

"In addition to beautiful cashmere sweaters, there are some more reasonably priced items in cotton or wool," says Sulyman, who began her fashion career in sales at a large corporation. After rearing four children in Orinda, she decided to open her own store 11 years ago. She owns a similar boutique, Danielle's, on Fillmore Street in San Francisco, which her daughter Danielle Sulyman, manages.

The jewelry selection is outstanding with many exotic pieces. One Peruvian opal drop earring set with 18-karat gold beads is especially attractive. There is an abundance of semi-precious stones and sterling silver. Some of the pieces are made locally, with European and Israeli designed items. Distinctive belts (a favorite is an intricate silver belt that is truly a work of art) and Peruvian baby alpaca and vicuna scarves make great accessories.

"I always go for quality, especially the way an item is made and the material used. Quality and fashion sense at the same time is important. Some items are hand stitched and, of course, they will cost more. The hand-loomed sweaters, made with expensive yarns, are of very fine quality," says Sulyman. The majority of her customers are repeat clients. "They do not mind the price, because they know what they get is classic and will not fall apart because of the care with which it was made," she explains.

In the lingerie department you will find the Cosabella line and silky soft pajamas. The footless tights that are a favorite these days are in stock, along with hosiery and a variety of colorful socks.

Sulyman offers personal wardrobe consulting services. "With many of my customers, it is true that I know about 90 percent of their wardrobe," she says. "Some customers have asked me to come to their homes to check on their wardrobe needs and to advise them as to what they need to discard, and what should be replaced. I train my sales associates to be truthful and honest with our customers. We want them to feel good about themselves, and the right fit is very important to looking good," says Sulyman.

B.B. Gear is a member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. It is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and closed Sunday. For more information, please call 254-6111.

I Talk Dog

Denise Collins has 14 years of experience as a dog behavior training expert, and last year, established her own dog training business, I Talk Dog, here in Orinda. "I like to go into people's homes and help them understand why their dogs do what they do. I also train the dog, although often it is something in the owner's behavior that is creating problems with the dog. I assist owners in understanding their dog's language, and I help them understand why the behavior is happening and what they can do to correct it," says Collins.

Collins works with all breeds, from Great Danes to Chihuahuas, and offers several different training programs. The first critical period is at 8 to 12 weeks of age when a puppy needs to socialize and investigate its environment. House training



Denise Collins with one of her clients.

occurs within this time frame. Collins highly recommends crate training. "Dogs view the crate as their den and under no circumstance will a dog ever foul its own den. This is the best method for house training a puppy," explains Collins.

When a puppy reaches four to six-months of age Collins likes to begin leash and manners training. "A six-foot leash is all that is necessary because a dog must be either beside or behind a human in order for the human to maintain the leadership position. Dogs know only two positions - leader or follower - and they do not like being the leader. I always encourage use of

a six-foot leash in order for humans to maintain the leadership role that is so essential," says Collins. It is important to continually reinforce manners training through the first two years of a puppy's life.

"I am very excited to offer a two-week boarding school training at my home in Orinda. During these training sessions, I teach the dog to come when called both on and off leash, to follow the commands of sit, down, stay, and walk (on loose leash), and to pay attention to you on command. At the end of two weeks, I spend 90 minutes to teach the owner what I have taught the dog in order to reinforce and maintain consistent behavior for the dog," explains Collins.

There is a "drop and train" option available. This involves teaching leash manners during two to three-hour classes

over a period of five consecutive days. Lastly, Collins will come to the owner's home for a one-hour session once a week for four weeks.

"Another service I offer is to help choose a pet for you and your family. I have often seen people select an animal on impulse instead of taking the breed into consideration. For example, a border collie needs a job and a mental challenge, so that breed is appropriate for certain circumstances," she says.

Collins is married to David Collins, a painting contractor. The couple has lived in Orinda for 14 years and their sons, Tyler and Brody, are Miramonte High School graduates. For more information about I Talk Dog, visit the website at www.italkdog.com, call Denise Collins at 285-9194, or email denise@italkdog.com.



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