

THE ORINDA NEWS

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Special Election to Decide Fate of Measure B for Schools

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

Voters are dropping their ballots in the mail this month or will be going to the polls in person on March 3 on Measure B, which if passed will raise parcel taxes by \$124 per year to maintain programs in the Orinda Union School District (OUSD). Facing minimum cuts of \$1.3 million over two years, schools have already pared budgets, and advocates of the measure believe Orinda has no choice but to ask the voters for help, even during an economic recession.

"It's astounding what's happening to the schools," said Soreya Evans, whose 5-year-

old, Cole, is in kindergarten at Wagner Ranch Elementary School, one of four elementary schools in the system, which also includes Orinda Intermediate School. "How can we have a fighting chance in this world if we keep doing this to the schools and keep making (state budget) cuts?"

The State of California, now facing a \$40 billion shortfall, has continually cut funding for schools for almost a decade. Last year OUSD took a \$600,000 cut, so the district pared programs and raised money to balance the books. This year, the state has proposed another \$700,000 cut for OUSD, bringing the total cut to \$1.3 million – an outrageous amount, according to Riki Sorenson, president of the OUSD

school board. "And that might be a best-case scenario," she said.

"All we can do is move forward with a plan that will mitigate that damage," said Sorenson, who sits on the steering committee for the measure. "These are dramatic cuts."

Measure B will add \$124 annually to property tax bills. No exemption for senior citizens is included in the measure, however the state has a program that allows qualified senior citizens to delay paying property taxes until they move or sell their homes. A complete exemption exists for families of one to four people whose income is \$43,000 or less.

The tax will go toward keeping class sizes low, for maintaining current programs, and for math and literacy support. Orinda teacher salaries are on par with the average for the state, but could slip with further cuts, advocates of the measure say.

The biggest challenge for the Yes on B campaign is the timing: Supporters are asking for a tax increase during an economic recession. Orinda voters have historically supported school measures, the last being passed in 2003, and Measure B also will need to garner two-thirds of the vote to pass. If passed, OUSD will get an additional \$800,000 per year, which will allow district officials to maintain basic programs. The campaign is targeting "every voter," said Steve Glazer, an Orinda city councilmember and also a member of the steering committee to pass the measure. Parents of students in Orinda schools, who comprise about 30 percent of the electorate, he said, are among the targeted groups.

Because the March 3 contest is not a regularly scheduled election, the district will have to pay for it, whether or not the measure passes. The Contra Costa County Department of Elections estimates that the election will cost about \$7 per vote, although the final cost will depend on how many votes are cast by mail and how many are made in person. Mailed votes cost about 50 cents less than votes made in person, according to Candy Lopez, deputy director of the department of elections.

"They always estimate high," Glazer said. In Orinda, more than half of the voters typically cast their ballots by mail for the November 2008 election, and the county estimate for the cost of the election is \$84,000, based on the turnout for the November 2008 election.

Opponents to the measure say they would like to see measurable improvements with a tax increase, and a blanket exemption

[SEE ELECTION page 8]



SALLY HOGARTY

Mayor Sue Severson

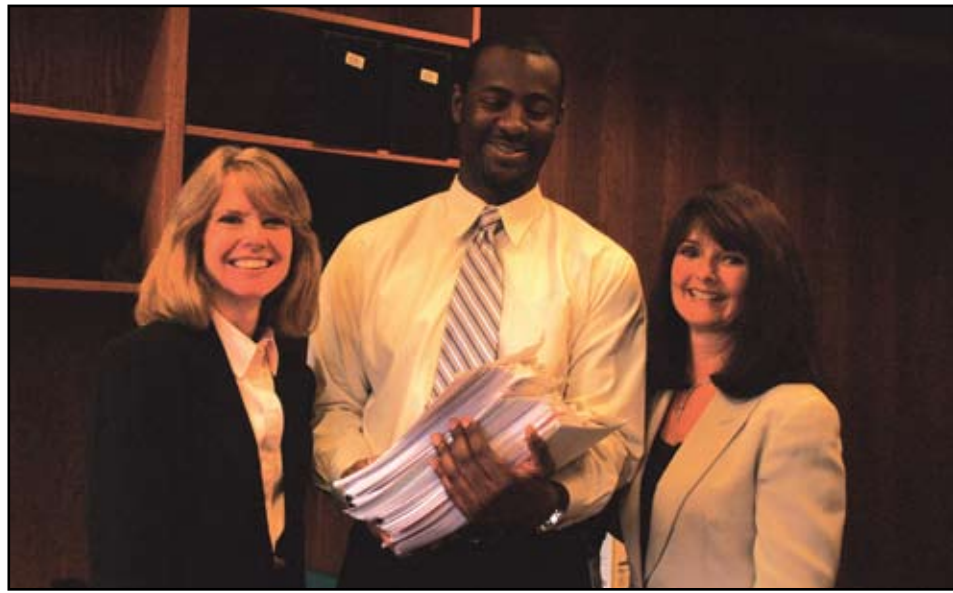
Orinda's New Mayor

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

An Orinda Union School Board Member for nine years, Mayor Severson was elected to the Orinda City Council in November of 2006 and looks forward to making 2009 a year of action. "For the past few years, we've had committees like the Infrastructure Task Force and the Budget Enhancement Task Force working to find solutions to the challenges in Orinda. This year we hope to implement some of their ideas," she says.

One of Severson's top challenges will be the city's crumbling infrastructure. "Instead of giving us money, the state keeps taking it away," she says. "We have to look at grants and to ourselves to fix the problem." The mayor also noted that Orinda needs to "look at ways to reduce expenses, attract new businesses, and increase revenue. "Thanks to prudent management by our city staff and the city council, Orinda is in much better shape than some cities," she adds. The city council is currently looking into the city's contract with the County Sheriff's department, which supplies police officers to Orinda. "We're seeing if it would be more cost effective to have our own police force,"

[SEE MAYOR page 14]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Las Trampas Creek Council of PTAs, representing 27 K-12 schools in six districts from Contra Costa County, delivered over 11,000 letters to the governor and state legislators on January 8. Frustrated over the current budget stalemate, the letter writing campaign urged law makers to adequately fund California's schools. Shown above Orinda parent **Michelle Leighton** (L) and OUSD board member **Pam West** (R) delivering letters to **Caliph Assagai**, Assemblywoman Skinner's Education liaison.

Teen Center Takes Shape

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

A plan for a center that will be a hub for Orinda teenagers to mentor, learn and entertain themselves has progressed, and could open as early as this spring. While many details still have to be worked out, the proposed venue is in the basement of Europa Hofbrau Deli and Pub on Moraga Way. A separate entrance in the back would be dedicated to the center.

"When it gets dark there really is no place to meet up," said Vivian Nguyen, a teen who spoke on behalf of the center at a public meeting January 7 at the Orinda Community Center. "When people do meet up, lots of times there is drinking and drugs involved."

The Lamorinda Teen Center, based in Orinda but open to middle school and high school students from Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, would serve in multiple capacities, with study tables and a recreational area, and provide a safe and healthy environment run by teens with adult supervision. Teens are also running the committees – an opportunity to learn how to run a business and a successful non-profit, supporters say.

The finance committee has set a goal to raise \$500,000 to get the center open. Of that, \$200,000 would be targeted for operating expenses for the first year. Admission to the center would be nominal, maybe even



CHRIS LAVIN

Teens take to the podium at a special meeting about the proposed teen center which will be in the basement of Europa Deli.

\$1, or memberships will be available, some of the teens at the meeting said. Some food service is planned, along with movie nights and a stage for live music.

"My dream is to have it open by this summer," said Tom McCormick, an Orinda city councilmember, Orinda's vice mayor, and the driving force behind the effort to create the center. Responding to some suggestions from the public meeting, which

[SEE TEAM page 8]

IN THIS ISSUE

	Page
News	
Garbage Rates	5
Police Blotter	5
About Town	
Authors	7
Community Center	15
Schools/Students	1, 11, 13
Visual Arts	2
Backyard Getaways	9
Between the Lines	6
Business Buzz	20
Calendar	17
Classified	18
Cooking Well	12
Editorial	4
Home Sweet Home	14
Orinda Association	3
Way to Grow	10

**OA Members check
page 3 for your
February discounts!**

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The Fab Five at Library Gallery in February

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, February 2 through Sunday, March 2 at the Orinda Library Gallery, where recent works from five wonderful artists -- Melissa Adkison, Michael Stehr, Arturo Maimoni, Lesley Jensen, and Ellen Sachtshale -- will be shown. There will be a reception for the artists on Friday, February 6 from 4:30 p.m. until 6 p.m.

Melissa Adkison renders large flowers in watercolor and uses gouache (opaque watercolors) for her landscapes, portraits and scenes from Mexico and other lands. Famous for creating drama using watercolor, Adkison plays with the contrast between lights and darks which gives her flowers a startling realistic feel. Adkison lives in Novato and teaches beginning and intermediate watercolor classes at the Margaret Todd Center and leads workshops on creating drama in watercolor and working in gouache at Marin MOCA, both in Novato. For more on this talented artist, go to www.theartistmelissa.com.

Arturo Maimoni considers himself a landscape photographer but has been an art-lover all his life. He began developing and printing black and white film as a teenager and keeps up-to-date by taking art and photography classes of all kinds including dark room techniques, drawing and painting. Not big on manipulating digital files, he relies more on the subject matter he is drawn to photograph to speak for itself. Over time, he has discovered what starts as an ordinary print often reveals some hidden pattern, figure, shadow or other intriguing anomaly he wasn't consciously aware of in the moment.

Lesley Jensen is a full-time teacher of ceramics at College Park High School in

Pleasant Hill as well as a teacher at Civic Arts in Walnut Creek. Her favorite ceramics are wheel thrown with different kinds of firings. Teaching and experimenting with alternative firings such as pit firing at the beach, raku, and high fire sustain her interest. Ideas from the past, such as Greek and Hittite pottery, show up in her work. She has a garden vessel series, thrown and then altered with no hand building. She says she "is just in love with the wheel." She considers herself lucky to have been hired by the late Rick Frudden, devoted teacher of 3D Art at Miramonte High School. Because of him, she became a ceramics teacher at Mt. Diablo High School in Concord, where she taught for nine years. "Rick was my connection to the art world; I miss him terribly," says Jensen.

Michael Stehr became an oil painter via the circuitous route of earning a degree in Art History at Stanford. Discovering Camille Corot, an early 19th century painter who is sometimes called the forefather of Impressionism, fueled his love of painting. As for subject matter, his work is fairly traditional -- landscapes and cityscapes, some with figures in them (see www.michaelstehr.com). Stylistically, he wants the artist's hand to be visible as in brush strokes and the material to be tangible. "My objective in my paintings is to create a momentary place where someone can take a deep breath -- through color and composition, and rest for a moment.

Ellen Sachtshale has been working with ceramics since she was 14-years-old, teaching at Walnut Creek Arts for 10 years, and selling her own works for 15 years. For Sachtshale, creating ceramic vessels is a way of communicating, a form of expression which encompasses what day-to-day life does not; plus, it feels good.

[SEE GALLERY page 18]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

(left) Melissa Adkison's watercolor painting "Veils of Color" and (right) Lesley Jensen's ceramic vase.

Annual Rummage Sale Benefiting Oakland Museum Opens During February

By DOROTHY BOWEN
Staff Writer

While the preview sale of the annual White Elephant Sale (WES) has come and gone, shoppers need not despair. For the first time, the annual sale to benefit the Oakland Museum will be open throughout the month of February, with the main sale still happening the first week of March.

The huge warehouse at 333 Lancaster St. on the Oakland Estuary will be open to receive donations and welcome shoppers every day throughout February, Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The sale started January 28, with the popular preview sale held on January 25. The new February hours include Presidents Day, February 16.

Every donor may shop to her heart's content. The only downside is that the customer must pay sales tax of 10 percent.

On the other hand, admission is free, as it is at the main White Elephant Sale March 6 and 7, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

According to Orinda volunteers, donations are consistent in the various departments. "We have tons of things in the art department," says Anne Chan, a longtime volunteer. Of special interest are artifacts from Africa and the Middle East, masks, statues and vases, she says.

Other Orinda volunteers in the art department include Lindy Tipton, Pam and Alan Hall, and Margaret Holland. Other volunteers include Carolyn Sheaff and Lisa Lenahan in the furniture department, and Lenahan's mother, who used to have an antique shop in Orinda.

As usual, the WES is a prime destination for finding first editions, heirloom brooches, vintage tuxedos and household appliances.

For more information, call 510-536-6800, or visit www.whiteelephantsale.org.



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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President
Climate of Change

Barnaby Beck



I would like to thank all of those who placed my name into consideration and voted for me for the great honor of being the next president of the Orinda Association. Unlike the other president-elect, Barack Obama, I didn't have to fight off bitter attacks on my character, a grueling two-year battle, and the surprising resurgence of the youth vote. I will not have the country weighing in on my choice of pets, where my daughters go to school, and what rooms I pick in my new house. I already have a nice home, my oldest daughter, Courtney, goes to UC Santa Cruz, Brittany attends Miramonte High School, and the family pet is a Brittany Spaniel named Sidney. We will not have to worry what designer dress my wife Karen wears because she prefers pants and comfy sweaters and sheds the lime-light.

Orinda will not have to tax its already tight budget on my fancy inauguration with millions of friends, family and well wishers. I will spend a decidedly low-key evening

with a small group of friends and family. I don't need Secret Service protection, and I don't have one of those gas-guzzling armored limousines and support vehicles that presidents seem to favor. I don't have an outside agenda to consider since I didn't spend any money or take any contributions to get this job. I will not have to jet around the country to meet other members of other associations and will be able to concentrate my time and resources on the causes that mean the most to me, to the Orinda board, and to the residents of Orinda. In short, I have a much easier path, a lot fewer people to please, and a job that comes with much less pressure.

I have what I believe is a great vision for the Orinda Association and how it interacts with all the readers of our paper and everyone who attends our events. Over the next several months, I will be sharing that vision with all of you, and I hope the path that we choose shall serve us well as we move forward in this "climate of change."

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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Hold On to Your Heart and Other Valuables This Valentine's Day

We have a new President of the United States with a new economic stimulus plan, and it can't go into effect too soon. The current recession has resulted in almost depression-era loss of jobs with the mortgage debacle adding record numbers of foreclosures. The economic situation has also hit Orinda. Not only have residents lost jobs and seen the value of their stocks plummet, they have also become the victims of crime.

Orinda's average residential burglary rate of four homes per month jumped to 10 in September. While the Orinda Police Department's diligent work resulted in the capture of the perpetrators, other crimes occurred. In October, La Cocina Restaurant and Village Pizza were both robbed at gunpoint while the employees cleaned up after closing. On January 3, a man handed a note to a teller at First Republic Bank demanding money and saying that he had a gun.

Two days later, a lone assailant followed a young man from BART and robbed him at gunpoint as he walked down the alleyway behind Casa Orinda.

This doesn't mean that crime is rampant in Orinda or that the Orinda Police are not doing their jobs. What it does mean is that people need to be more aware of their surroundings and take additional precautions. Be careful out there! Have a safe and happy Valentine's Day.



Letters to the Editor

Insist on Better Sports Safety

We want to encourage Orinda parents to take a stronger position in insisting that sports teams in our community increase their emphasis on safety. As many know, our oldest son suffered a critical head injury playing Miramonte baseball last spring. While sports have inherent dangers and accidents occur, many injuries can be prevented. Our son was seriously hurt by a teammate throwing a ball without a clear target between innings. Additionally, only one coach was present, who didn't see what happened. As a result, our son was not taken out of the game nor was there a call for medical assistance. If we hadn't been at the game to take our son to the best trauma center in the area, he could have died. It is clear from this incident that our sports programs need better supervision, safety training, and emergency procedures.

We have been immersed in sports for 10 years, and our sons have played multiple sports in OYA, OBA and the schools. We've been involved in coaching and on the board of directors. Still, we didn't realize how little emphasis Orinda's programs put on preventing head injuries until it happened to us.

Orinda prides itself on supporting our kids. We as parents aren't meeting that goal unless we insist that kids be taught that sports equipment mixed with carelessness or horseplay can result in serious injury.

We want to emphasize our appreciation for the support we received from the community and the school after our son was injured. The Miramonte community, in particular, has been extremely understanding and helpful.

However, we hope that our experience never happens to another Orinda child. Ask your coaches what they are teaching the kids about sports safety. What are the rules about throwing balls and swinging equipment? Don't just fill out the medical form; find out the real emergency plan. If your coach needs help supervising the kids, volunteer to help out. You will be protecting all of our kids.

– Dennis and Darlene Gee

Be A Good Neighbor

As you know the early mornings and evenings are black now, and things on the road are very difficult to see, especially our garbage and recycling cans. Would you please consider securing reflectors on your cans so we can better see them? Thank you so much. Grateful motorist and neighbor.

– Anne Lagache

Support for New Mayor

Thank you to Ken Brunt for informing *Orinda News* readers of Sue Severson's position on Prop 8. As a strong supporter of Prop 8 and a longtime Orinda resident, I am excited we have a new leader in this city who supports traditional and wholesome family values. I encourage Sue and all other citizens who support traditional marriage to remain publicly supportive on this issue. Ken goes on to label advocates of traditional marriage as extreme and out of touch. Last time I checked, this was the second time California voters have rejected the concept of gay marriage. Good luck Sue and save me a yard sign and bumper sticker for your re-election campaign.

– Ryan Bird

Severson Not Out-of-Touch

In the last issue, Ken Brunt published a letter in which he cited the "value of diversity" in Orinda, and then proceeded to slam former Orinda Citizen of the Year Sue Severson for her support of Proposition 8. Brunt criticizes what he calls her "extreme, out-of-touch political views."

It is Mr. Brunt who is "extreme" and "out of touch." He purports to "value diversity" while scolding Severson for her views. Apparently to Mr. Brunt, "diversity" means only those opinions identical to his own.

Mr. Brunt misinterprets Orinda. This is not a single issue politics town. Wonderful people like the Seversons make this a great place to live through their contributions of time, money, and talent to the library, the schools, and the city. Orindans of all political views strive together to give us one of the top communities and top public school districts in the state. Fortunately, Orinda voters know this and understand that the application of Brunt's litmus test of views on a single issue would impoverish Orinda

considerably.

– Carol Penskar

Underpaid Teachers: Obama and Orinda

Grossly underpaid teachers is the main problem facing the Orinda Union School District. The district is losing excellent teachers to other districts, where pay is higher. In a front page article (*Orinda News*, January 2009), Chris Lavin reported that supporters of a \$124 parcel (property) tax increase in Orinda are concerned about "retaining Orinda teachers' salaries."

The district's board of trustees could have done something about this salary problem when the board put the tax increase on the March 2009 ballot. Sadly, the school board merely decided to ask Orinda's voters for more tax dollars and forgot about trying to reform the district's pay schedule for teachers.

President Barack Obama, whose calls for change I greatly admire, wants to reform America's public education system. It's too bad that the Orinda school board did not follow Obama's line of thinking.

The school board should have, in exchange for a parcel tax increase, offered Orinda's teachers a deal. The deal should have provided teachers with an annual salary of about \$130,000 in exchange for giving up tenure. Instead, the board, using its traditional, conservative approach to education, only asked for more tax money and refused to change the district's rigidly orthodox pay system.

In a recent telephone conversation with me, Ms. Pat Rudebusch, a member of the Orinda school board (and one of the assistant editors of *The Orinda News*), expressed openness to new approaches to paying Orinda's teachers.

Because the Orinda school board missed an opportunity to improve teachers' pay, Orinda residents should vote against the parcel tax increase. Let the board rethink its teacher-compensation system before asking voters for more money.

– Richard S. Colman

Quality Schools Essential

Orinda voters have an opportunity to take an important stand to protect the qual-

ity of their schools this March by voting for Measure B, the parcel tax measure that will benefit the community's elementary and intermediate schools.

There's no doubt that Miramonte is one of the highest performing high schools in California due to the excellent preparation that our students receive in the Orinda Union School District. The quality education that students receive in elementary and intermediate school allows the Miramonte teachers to take students to the next level of academic achievement.

Without a doubt, the investment in K-8 education in Orinda is critical to student success in high school. Our elementary and high schools may be governed by different school districts, but we share the same challenges and serve the same population. This community values a high quality, public education and does what is necessary to fund it. In the face of unprecedented state budget cuts to education, local funding is now more important than ever to provide students with the education that they need and, more importantly, deserve.

–Jim Negri, Superintendent
Acalanes Union High School District

Proposed Orinda School Tax Flawed

This parcel tax goes on forever, and any tax should not go on forever. Eventually California will increase state funding to Orinda schools. Even if this parcel tax is not needed, it will go on forever.

It is not fair for the Orinda School Board to give seniors the impression there is a senior exemption when it appears the qualification requirements are so stringent only 60 or 70 Orindans will qualify.

The official document does not provide full disclosure of the requirements to qualify for a senior exemption.

According to the Orinda School District Business Office (but missing in documents for voters), the property owner must have an income of no more than \$43,050. The school district is not using the median income of Orindans in their calculations. Instead, the school district is using the lower median income of the county.

[SEE LETTERS page 8]

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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 email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the April issue is February 16, 2008.

GARBAGE / POLICE

Garbage Rates Likely to Rise March 1

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

Orindans probably will see an increase in their garbage collection fees starting March 1, because the Orinda City Council is scheduled to vote on a rate increase at the end of January. Potential votes from councilmembers counted before press time showed the measure likely to pass.

Bills will increase by an estimated 8.5 percent, from the current \$25.23 per month for a 32-gallon container, to about \$27 per month. Allied Waste, Orinda's garbage company, sends out bills quarterly, so they will go from \$75.69 to \$82. Some homes in Orinda subscribe for the 20-gallon, so-called "mini cart," and those rates will go from \$21.87 per month to \$23.75, or from about \$65 to \$71 quarterly.

The Orinda City Council will vote on the increase at its regular meeting January 27. "For the last 12 years, we've been subsidized by other areas of the county," said Orinda City Council Member Victoria Smith, who also sits on the board of the Central Costa County Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA).

Different areas of the county pay different rates, according to the contract signed by the legislative boards that govern individual communities. Orinda's rate is the highest in the immediate area, where rates range from \$15 per month in Walnut Creek, \$16.35 per month in Danville, and about \$19 in Moraga and Lafayette. Collections are made weekly. The increase in Orinda will come on top of an increase in 2008 that raised rates 14.7 percent.

"For years, surpluses and shortfalls had always been allocated to allow for fluctuations in the cost of waste disposal throughout the Central County," Smith said. "For the last 12 years, it's been subsidized." Commercial rates have been subsidizing residential customers, as well, she added.

Because needs of communities differ and the density of debris boxes varies, costs for supplying the service to a particular community vary. "It's disheartening," Smith said about Orinda. "Our terrain is such that we need to use smaller trucks, and our deteriorating roads has been a problem. ... Walnut Creek has big, wide streets that can take larger garbage trucks, which is more cost effective. We have to use the small trucks so that they can go more quickly up and down our narrow streets."

Officials at CCCSWA take a community's needs into consideration, and then make recommendations about the costs for residential and commercial customers. "The bean counters tell you what your rate



SALLY HOGARTY

One of Allied Waste's smaller trucks.

is going to be," Smith said.

According to a customer service representative at Allied Waste, customers can save money by going to the small, 20-gallon container. The company recommends the 20-gallon for single persons, and the 32-gallon for two or more. Conservation and vigorous recycling, however, may allow larger households to make due with the smaller container.

Commercial rates also will be raised an estimated 8.5 percent. The 64-gallon cart will go from \$50.47 to about \$55, while the 96-gallon cart rate will be raised from the current \$75.70 to about \$82 per month.

Notice of Opportunity To Serve On a City Of Orinda Commission or Committee

The City of Orinda is seeking applications from resident volunteers to serve on the following :

- Planning Commission (2)
- Parks & Recreation Commission (3)
- Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission (3)
- Public Safety Advisory Commission (3)
- Finance Advisory Committee (3)
- Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (4)
- Public Works Aesthetic Review Committee (1)

Statement of Interest forms are available from the city clerk's office, 22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563. Telephone: 925-253-4221. Application forms may also be downloaded from the city's website at www.cityoforinda.org. Completed Statement of Interest forms should be submitted to the city clerk's office by Monday, February 9, 2009 at 5 p.m. Qualified applicants will be invited to interview before a council-appointed subcommittee prior to appointment by the full city council.



POLICE BLOTTER

December 2008

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 138 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 2 incidents.

Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 1 incident.

Petty Theft From Building: 2 incidents.

All Other Petty Thefts: 2 incidents.

Grand Theft from Vehicle: 1 incident.

Grand Theft Other: 4 incidents.

Stolen Vehicle: 1 incident.

Residential Burglary: 7 incidents.

Commercial Burglary: 1 incident.
Vandalism: 4 incidents.

Arrests

Stolen Vehicle: 1

Warrant Arrests: 5

Parole Violation: 1

Possession of Burglary Tools: 1

Commercial Burglary: 1

Drunk in Public: 2

Forgery: 1

Battery : 1

Petty Theft from Building: 1

Driving Under the Influence: 8

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving, Orinda Police Department

Special Note: Help keep Orinda safe. Always lock your car and remove valuables or lock them in the trunk. When leaving your home, even for short periods of time, lock your doors and set the alarm. If walking after dark, be aware of your surroundings and walk in well-lit areas whenever possible.



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Between the Lines

Great Escapes – Get Lost in a Good Book!

Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



The holidays have come and gone. We've read those heavy and timely books — Paul Krugman's *The Return of Depression Economics*; *Snowball*, that excellent biography of Warren Buffett by Alice Schroeder; Michael Lewis's *Panic: The Story of Modern Financial Insanity*; Nassim Taleb's *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable* (he saw it all coming — we should have been listening); and Malcolm Gladwell's *The Outliers: The Story of Success* (this one was not heavy but entertainingly informative.) And we've inaugurated a new president — a reading president at that — who has, as *Salon's* Laura Miller puts it, "the taste for serious fiction that is rare in the American male." Our 45th president lists both Herman Melville and Toni Morrison among his favorite authors.

Publishers, even in their current shrinking mode, take winter days as optimum opportunities for offering fine new fiction, and even though Barack Obama, in his first hundred days, may not be able to take advantage of any of these enticing titles, some in hardcover and some new in paperback editions, we, with less heavy responsibilities, can escape with a clear conscience to the wonderland of books.

Here are some of our favorites:

Abraham Verghese, another one of those amazing literary doctors (Ethan Canin, Daniel Mason, Khaled Hosseini, et al) has written two much lauded memoirs, *My Own Country: A Doctor's Story* and *The Tennis Partner: A Story of Friendship and Loss*. He has now turned his hand to fiction and written a superb first novel, *Cutting for Stone*, which again draws on his own life experience — his family's roots in Southern India, his own childhood and medical training in Ethiopia, and his years as a "foreign medical graduate or FMG" in the United States. Summarizing *Cutting for Stone* gives little hint of the richness, humor and color in this brilliant novel. It is the story of the childhood and young adulthood of twins Marion and Shiva Stone, whose mother, a nun, died at their birth in Addis Ababa, and whose father, a brilliant but eccentric British surgeon, disappeared after assisting in their delivery. It is Orinda

Books' "must read" recommendation for the winter months.

Pictures at an Exhibition by Sara Houghteling is a debut novel being published in mid-February. Houghteling takes the reader to Paris where, in the immediate aftermath of World War II, a young French-Jewish man struggles to recover both his art dealer family's lost masterpieces, looted by the Nazis during the occupation, and his own lost love. This is riveting reading according to Orinda Books' premier book guru, Janet Boreta.

Post-World War II Paris and Ethiopia are only two of the backdrops for our winter storybook escapes. Contemporary Nigeria, where competition for petro-resources devastates rural communities, is the background for *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave. Little Bee is a Nigerian girl who becomes an asylum-seeker in Britain. Dickens couldn't do better justice than Cleave has to Little Bee's incarceration in a horrific detention center. Her life intersects with that of British magazine editor Sarah Summers, both in Africa and then again in London. Their stories, jointly told, are both comic and devastatingly tragic.

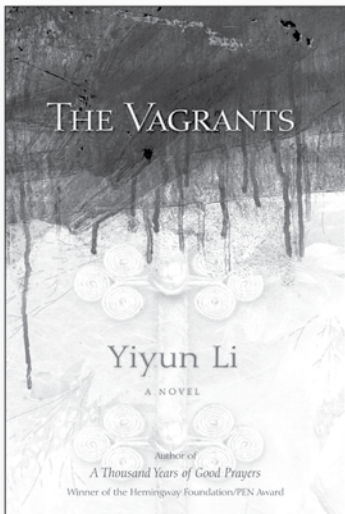
Maisie Dobbs and Molly Murphy, two of our favorite sleuths, have new adventures for us to read this spring. In *Among the Mad*, Jacqueline Winspear's Maisie Dobbs is enrolled as a special assistant in Scotland Yard's elite Special Branch. This series just keeps getting better and better. And in another period mystery, *In a Gilded Cage*, Rhys Bowen's Molly Murphy again solves an intriguing crime in turn-of-the-century New York. Her book is due in mid-March.

But if you're a reader who prefers legal thrillers, you will be overjoyed with John Grisham's newest novel, out at the end of January. Since *The Firm*, Grisham has entertained the world with his taut and timely books. *The Associate* again places a naïve young lawyer, with a secret in his past, in a giant law firm where dangerous schemes could send him to prison or get him killed. Vintage Grisham!

Some of last year's best reads in hardcover are now out in paperback. Two of our favorites that should engage local book

[SEE READ page 18

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AUTHORS

Orinda Resident's New Book Proves Silence is Never Golden

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Questions from her then 7-year-old son William led literary historian and biographer Inez Hollander-Lake on a journey that would unlock family secrets and create concern in her far-away homeland. It all began with Inez's love of Indonesian food.

"Every time a new restaurant opened in the Bay Area, we'd pack up the family and try it out," says the Orinda resident. When William began asking why they went to so many Indonesian restaurants Inez explained that her family had once had a coffee and rubber estate in Java, Indonesia – then known as the Dutch East Indies. Growing up in Holland, Inez developed a love of the cuisine, which was plentiful in her native country. As William asked more questions about the plantation and the relatives who lived there, Inez realized she knew very little about this important part of her family tree.

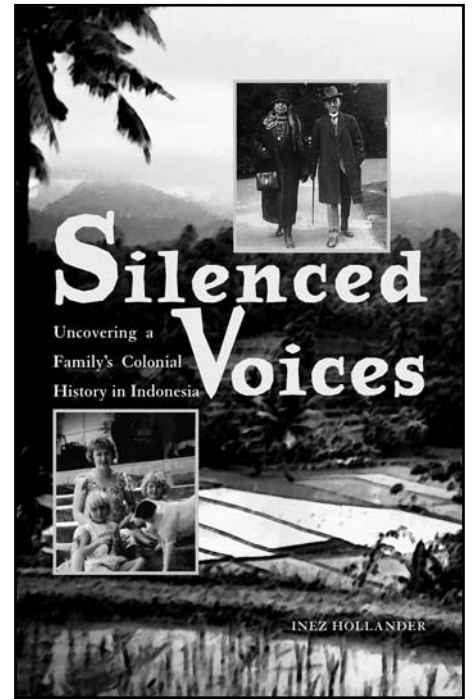
So began a long journey of discovery that would result in an amazing book that not only unlocks family secrets but a country's shame. "I knew something horrible had happened during World War II to our family, but no one would talk about it," she explains. Inez knew that her great aunt and uncle, Fré and Peddy Francken, and their three children, daughters Wilhelmina and Johanna, and son Harry, ran the plantation called Kali Jompo in the Dutch colony.

When World War II broke out, Holland found itself fighting the war on two fronts – in Holland and in Indonesia. When the Japanese invaded Indonesia, Inez's great uncle, Peddy Francken, was arrested by the secret police, tortured and died in prison. His wife, two daughters and son stayed on the rural plantation, at times protected from the Japanese by the very Indonesian workers the Japanese were attempting to liberate. "The Dutch and the Indonesians have a very

complicated relationship," says Inez. "It's similar to what America experienced in the south with slave holders. In many cases, the Indonesians were more like family than workers and, in some cases, the Dutch owner would marry an Indonesian woman and produce mixed-race children."

Following the war, there was a power vacuum as the Japanese left and the Dutch were returning from concentration camps. Indonesian freedom fighters roamed the streets determined to keep their country from falling back into Dutch rule. "It was sort of like a Dutch Vietnam with many mistakes on both sides," says Inez. It was during this revolutionary period that Inez's family suffered their greatest losses – losses that her great aunt and surviving cousin, Harry, would not speak about.

"I was told by other family members not to contact my cousin – that he was still so traumatized by events that my questions would cause more harm," she explains. Not wanting to cause him any more distress but feeling the need to at least open the door, Inez wrote her cousin a letter. She immediately had a response. "Harry, now in his 60s, was eager to talk with me," says Inez. "He had bottled up these horrible events



SALLY HOGARTY

Inez Hollander-Lake will sign copies of her latest book, *Silenced Voices*, on January 31 at 1 p.m. at Orinda Books.

Former Orindan Fires Inspirational Spark through Writing

By FRAN MILLER
Staff Writer

Former Orinda resident Elizabeth Ellison believes in the power of an influential teacher. The Brea-based novelist attributes her literary start to Miss Hansen, her third grade instructor at Glorietta Elementary School, who inspired Ellison and instilled in her a love of writing.

"I remember writing a lot in Miss Hansen's class and I remember I loved it; she was such a positive influence," says Ellison. "I saved my third grade papers, and recently found one piece in which I expressed that I wanted to be a writer when I grew up. I

have to admit I don't remember composing that, but I guess you could say I followed my dream."

Ellison and Barbara Hansen, now Barbara Doyle, were recently reunited at an Orinda Books book-signing event for Ellison's first novel, *Flight*. Set in Orinda where Ellison spent three formative and happy years, *Flight* is the story of ninth grader Evan who cannot read. Evan's parents are unwilling to admit that their son is illiterate, because they fear appearing less than perfect, and they don't want their son negatively labeled. Evan manages to

[SEE FLIGHT page 16]

and not even told his wife or children what happened to him."

Harry helped Inez piece together her family's fascinating relationship with Indonesia and the harrowing experiences

[SEE SILENCE page 16]



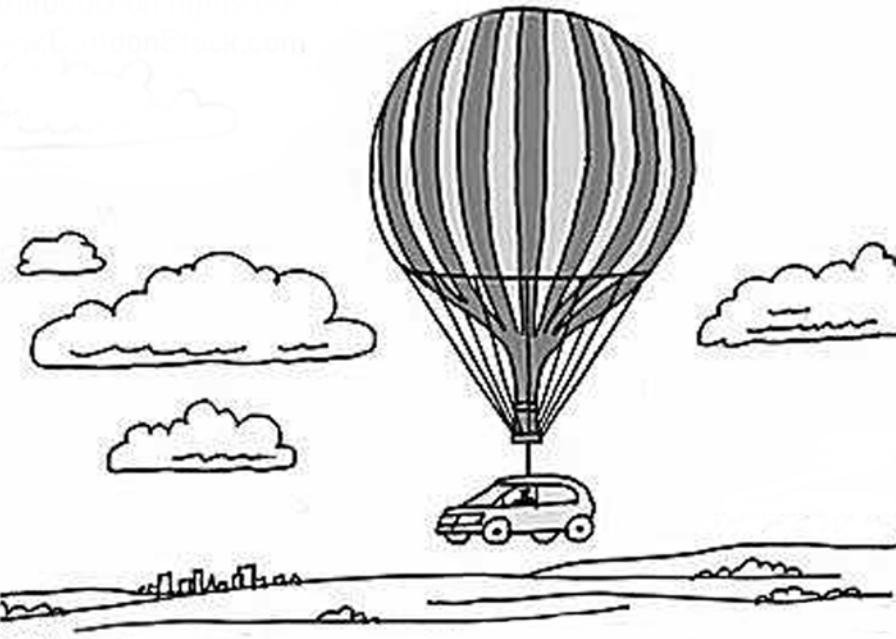
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CONTINUATIONS

◆ TEEN from page 1

attracted about 100 people, McCormick said that teens don't want to meet in a place like the Orinda Community Center or a church fellowship hall. "I think we're kind of fortunate to have found a place like 'The Dungeon,'" one of the nicknames for Europa's basement, McCormick said.

A benefit the center will have if housed at Europa is its proximity to BART and County Connection bus service. Some at the meeting expressed concerns that parking would become a problem, but

McCormick said he thought such concerns unfounded.

Orinda teenagers conducted polls to research what Lamorinda teens do for recreation now and what they would like to do. Of those polled, 46 percent said they had used alcohol or drugs within the last 30 days, 83 percent listed "hanging out" as their favorite after-school activity, 67 percent requested a center to listen to live bands, 40 percent wanted recreational game tables, and 19 percent were interested in movie nights.

Steering committees are being formed to

help shape the purpose and the uses of the center. McCormick thanked local architects Rick Kattenburg and George Miers, who have prepared preliminary plans at no cost, and local builder Tom Stevens, who has agreed to build out the Teen Center at his cost. The Europa basement is now being used for storage, and no formal agreement has been signed with Europa's owners. The basement area is about 1,500 square feet. Ideas for using the space include study tables, audio-visual equipment, and something highly requested by teens polled by the steering committees: Ping-pong and pool tables.

"Our plan is to have parents and teens on the Board of Directors and every committee

so teens are mentored to understand and operate the Teen Center," McCormick said. "This is a great project where teens get to learn about business and how to operate a Teen Center for their benefit."

McCormick noted that the mission is to create "a Lamorinda Teen Center that promotes mentoring and learning, and offers recreational, entertainment and social options in a safe and healthy environment. We need the community's input and support."

To get involved with the Teen Center, especially with committees to establish operational and financial plans, email McCormick at Tom@McCormickBusiness.com.

◆ ELECTION from page 1

for senior citizens. "My main objection to what is being called Measure B, the \$124 per year property tax increase, is that the proposed tax increase contains a very stingy exemption for senior citizens. I don't know anyone who can exist on \$43,000 a year," said Orinda resident Richard Colman, referring to the ceiling on the current exemption. "The Orinda school district should have done what the Acalanes [Unified School] district did, which was offer an exemption to any senior citizen."

Colman believes that most parcel taxes should be converted to income taxes. "I find there is an inconsistency when there is not property tax on such things as clothing, furniture and appliances, and we don't have taxes on those things. But we tax [real estate] property. We should eliminate the property tax altogether and go to an income tax," Colman said. "Orinda wants to tax senior citizens who might be in a very weak financial position. They may live in a house that is worth a lot, but they don't have a lot in stocks or in their savings account. The stock market is bad, and many of these people are living on a fixed income. There should have been a blanket exemption."

Given the state of the economy, the funding situation for schools is unlikely to improve anytime soon. Unemployment is

rising, so projected tax revenues – including taxes from retail and restaurant sales, gasoline and income – the school funding situation is not likely to improve anytime soon.

Voters in the Evans family of Wagner Ranch Elementary, who are not directly involved in the campaign, are planning to vote for it. Their family chooses to live in Orinda Soreya Evans said, because of the schools: "We will support it simply to keep the level of education high."

Glazer, for one, thinks the sentiment of the Evans family will prevail: "It is our hope that even in these difficult times that our community will recognize the value of the Orinda schools and will support the measure."

◆ LETTERS from page 4

Few seniors will qualify for an exemption by using the lower county median income. The senior exemption should be based on the age of 65 and or the median income of Orinda property owners since it is Orindans who will pay this tax.

This school tax proposal is flawed because the tax should have an ending date, and voters should have full disclosure on specifics of the tax.

– Vincent Maiorana




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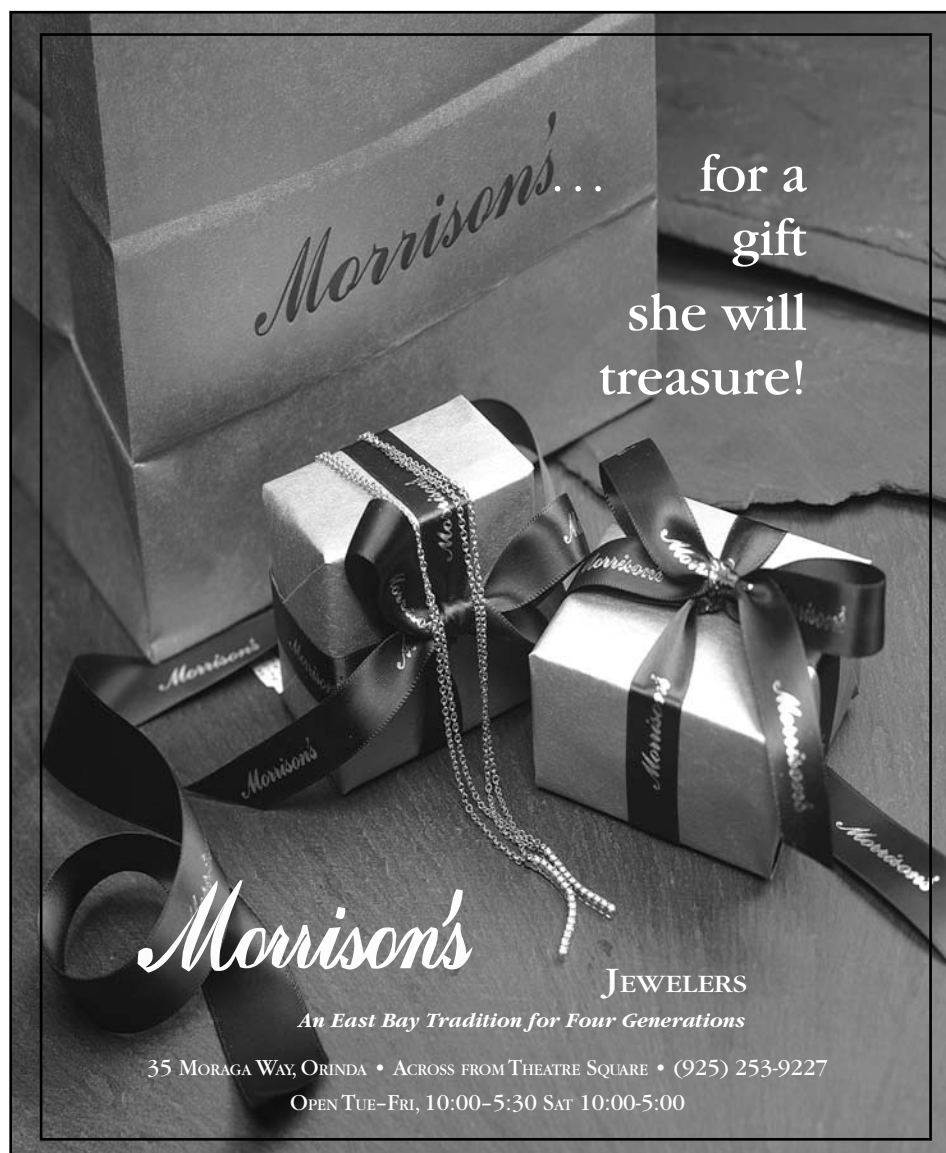
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Your drive will take you through Petaluma to Highway 1 via the town of Bodega Bay. Sea Ranch is between Jenner and Gualala. Rooms are available at the Sea Ranch Lodge, but our preference is renting a house. There are various rental agencies you may access on line, including Ocean View Properties, Beach Rentals, and Sea Ranch Escapes. My friend, Janet Goven, who has gone to Sea Ranch with a group of UC Davis college friends for many years offers, this advice: "Get a Sea Ranch map that has all the units and property numbers listed so one can see exactly where a house is located. This helps me because I need three close together. Agencies usually categorize houses as to ocean side, ocean view, meadow, hillside or forest, with ocean side generally the most expensive. We like to be near one of the three recreation centers in order to use the tennis courts."

We took our adult children for a three-day weekend in one house with sleeping accommodations for all eight of us. This place, as can often be the case, cost less than some of the more expensive lodge rooms and also offered a huge living/dining

room, a well-equipped kitchen, TV room, three bathrooms, a spa, bikes to ride and an expansive view of the ocean. It was enjoyable to share the cooking, spending as much time as we wished at the dining table savoring our meals with no feeling of being rushed as can be the case in restaurants.

Sea Ranch has 25 miles of trails, so no need to go elsewhere to walk unless you wish to do so. We did drive to Bowling Ball Beach, so called because of an area of round rocks in the shallow surf. Accessible at low tide from Schooner Beach, take the Southern Trail from the lot after you park at Schooner Gulch State Beach at State 1 and Schooner Gulch Road. It's three miles south of Point Arena. There's good tide-pooling there.

Our favorite walk was to the Sea Ranch Chapel. Designed by internationally renowned San Diego artist and architect, James T. Hubbell, it received the 1985 "Special Award for Excellence in Craftsmanship" from the California Council of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). A fanciful building, it was constructed from local stone. The soaring cedar roof is accented with copper and crowned with a bronze spire, echoing a nearby windswept tree. A graceful plaster roof, resembling the petals of a flower, crowns the interior space. Mosaic flooring and stained glass windows echoing the natural shapes of the sea and forest complete the chapel.

Great care has been taken throughout the area to harmonize the buildings with, and not be injurious to, the landscape. The overall plan requires that homes, mostly all built of gray, weathered wood, be designed and sited to blend with all structures into the natural setting and minimize the visual



BOBBIE DODSON

Sea Ranch offers unlimited views of the rugged Northern California coast.

as well as physical impact upon the landscape. Sea Ranch has drawn great attention in the American press and in architectural journals throughout the world. In 1991, Architect Charles Moore was presented with the Gold Medal Award of the AIA, architecture's highest honor. The award jury noted that Sea Ranch is profoundly conscious of the natural drama of its coast site and has formed an alliance of architecture and nature that has inspired and

captivated a generation of architects.

Indeed, there is a feeling of peacefulness as one hikes on trails through the development. It is interesting to observe the many different styles of homes which meld into a continuity of community.

If you do find a need to leave this peace and quiet, there are grocery stores and several boutiques and art studios in Gualala where Pangaea (707-884-9669) and St.

[SEE SEA RANCH page 18]

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WAY TO GROW

Way to Grow in Orinda
Hardscape - What's Underfoot in Your Garden?



Steve & Cathy Lambert

At first glance, "hardscape" might sound like trying to landscape during hard economic times – but really this article is about the "hard" surface areas of a well-designed garden. Hardscape is a term coined to represent anything in the garden that is hard: concrete, rock, stone, brick, pavers, or anything that is not part of the softscape, such as plant materials, dirt and mulch.

This article will focus on the underfoot elements of hardscape design, meaning materials used primarily for walkways, patios and driveways – particularly paving materials. Like plants, the right paving materials can add interest to your garden through your choice of color, texture, and

pattern.

Widely available paving materials fall into two very broad categories: quarried stone and composite materials. Quarried stone, such as slate and flagstone, is dug or excavated then shaped by splitting, cutting, or crushing. Composite materials such as brick, pavers and concrete are mixed materials that are poured, shaped, worked and then fired or allowed to dry. In our area, there are hundreds of materials and processes to choose from. We hope the following information will help make your hardscape choices a little less hard.

Concrete has long been the most common paving material and is often the right choice, especially if your budget is tight.



Stamped textures and color additives make this concrete outdoor kitchen area a work of art. STEVE LAMBERT

Although concrete is often very utilitarian, and styles and finishes come in and out of fashion, with today's options of stamp textures and color additives, properly installed concrete can be a visual marvel.

There's a huge range of textured mats available to create distinctive looks – from forest floors (complete with fossil impressions) to flagstone patterns. Some of the newest mats we've used include a windswept beach with the occasional shells scattered about, as well as a Mexican tile texture.

Another popular hardscape element for clients with young children has been a circular concrete tricycle path that runs around a lawn or play area, creating a safe raceway space. For our own backyard trike path, we used concrete colored to resemble hardened earth and then we pressed in real leaves and grasses to add texture. Then, just for a fun kid factor, we pressed in dinosaur bone fossils using wooded 3-D puzzle pieces and dino footprints running across the path using a hand made clay three-toed dinosaur foot mold.

For really distinctive designs using concrete, there are now several companies (the Concrete Colorist) that specialize in unique faux finishes, mosaic tile patterns and more.

The cost of poured concrete is inconsistent when compared to other paving materials because so much of the ultimate expense varies with the labor and materials required to build forms and install the reinforcement necessary to make the concrete sound. Some good comparative questions to ask include how thick will the concrete be when poured, how much base rock and steel will be used, what size steel will be used and how far apart will it be placed?

Another question: What type of expansion joints will be used and how far apart will they be placed?

Concrete Pavers were once frowned upon by designers for their inept attempts at simulating brick or stone. But modern pavers have shapes and textures that give a paving project a rugged, old-world look. However, pavers have the added advantage of being more forgiving than concrete.

When comparing bids for paver installation, it is important to ask the following: How much and what type of base will you use? Four to eight inches of base gravel is what we recommend, depending on soil type. What type of edge restraint will you use? Some contractors install rebar and concrete along the edge, (this is the best restraint method) while others mix cement into the base (the second best method), and some use plastic edging (not recommended).

Stone, historically the longest used paving material, has proven itself to be enduring and elegant. It offers an enormous range of colors, shapes and sizes. From irregularly shaped Arizona flagstone for an informal look to precision-cut geometric patterns for a formal patio, there is a stone for every garden. All this comes with a price. Stone can be expensive to purchase and install. Even the most common of stone options installed on top of concrete usually runs around twice the cost of concrete or pavers. The most expensive stone we've installed is an Antiqued Jerusalem Limestone which cost more than \$65 a foot for the material alone. Cost aside, for a truly lavish look, stone is our preferred paving material.

While comparing masonry bids for stone [SEE GROW page 18]

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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

This 6th grader at Orinda Intermediate School shows an insight beyond her years in this thoughtful cartoon.

Sister to Sister Summit Bridges Middle School and High School

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

Are you a girl attending middle school in Orinda or one nearby? Would you like to talk to other girls about what you think and text about the most? Are you willing to wear a cute T-shirt and show up from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.? That willingness and \$30 is all it takes to sign up for the 10th annual Sister to Sister Summit (S2S) on March 7 this year at the Orinda Intermediate School. The annual event is sponsored by the Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette branch of the AAUW and was developed by Valarie Burgess to "give girls a voice about issues that affect them." What started with a handful of AAUW women and a few

their younger "sisters." AAUW members contact the local middle schools and visit each one to explain what S2S is all about, and show a DVD about the summit. There's a lot of activity packed into the big day, including movement, music, small discussion groups, lunch (pizza and salad), a question and answer panel, and more. In addition, there's an opening and closing ceremony based on sisterhood, and pride as a girl.

Some MSG don't have sisters to ask about what happens in high school and they're concerned about what's coming up. For them, S2S is a "mythbuster" because they get answers to their questions from peers who have recently gone through what they are going through. The discussion groups have various topics such as:

case a girl brings up an issue she wants to develop in-depth.

"I loved the balloon popping game," said one participant from last year. "It broke down the invisible barrier between us younger girls and the older girls." Another

[SEE SUMMIT page 15]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Girls from last year's Sister to Sister Summit enjoy a dance break.

girls has grown to include participation by over 100 middle school girls – a testament to the fact that this event is truly "by girls for girls."

The summit provides a safe environment for middle school girls (MSG) to explore their middle school experiences and what to expect transitioning into high school; For the high school girls (HSG) who volunteer, it's a chance to both contribute and lead

body image, peer pressure, relationships – including parents, boys, best friends; harassment and safety issues. MSG chose their first, second and third preferences for group topics and usually are assigned to groups that are grade-specific. Sixth grade to 8th grade is a huge developmental gap, so the 6th graders are grouped together so they are more comfortable. There is always a psychologist on the premises in



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MAGGIE

Margaret, an avid cyclist, suffered extensive injuries when hit by a car. After several surgeries, she transferred to our care and received intensive medical and rehabilitation services to help regain her ability to care for herself. Margaret is now back home.



ROGER

Roger had a double knee replacement. After the surgery, he needed physical rehabilitation before returning home. We helped him regain strength and endurance. Roger is home and golfing with his friends and family.

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Chef Charles Vollmar

I am often asked for my personal definition of eating well or “healthfully.” Certainly working with food, developing recipes, and working with families, hospitals, wellness centers and health clubs, I should have all the answers and the prescription for eating optimally. The answer is that I don’t have a universal answer that will work for everyone. We all have different tastes, expectations, cultures, food histories, habits, restrictions and medical recommendations that have an impact on what we eat and what we can’t or shouldn’t eat. My philosophy is simple: eat more real, whole, micronutrient-dense food, eat healthy fats, increase fiber and reduce sugar and refined, highly processed foods. Easier said than done, I know. But with simple parameters, increased awareness, and goals to make better choices – you can make consistent, lasting changes.

First, let’s determine why it is important to eat properly -- not just every so often, or when we are trying to shed a few pounds, or because we have been diagnosed with a condition that requires a significant change in lifestyle. Eating well has to be something we decide to do for ourselves, to influence our loved ones and choose as an element that adds meaning and fullness to our lives. Eating well doesn’t mean that we deny ourselves the foods that provide pleasure and comfort; denial often leads to inappropriate choices and unhealthy portions. Eating well promotes balance and self-improvement, is a lifelong challenge, and every new day provides us with opportunities to make better choices.

Of all my core beliefs and recommendations, there is one element that tops my list: Over-emphasize vegetables. We all need to eat more micronutrient-rich vegetables (dark, rich, bright colors, leafy greens.) We have all heard it before, but it is true. A consistent intake of a variety of high-quality vegetables will result in significant positive metabolic effects. For many of us, depending on our upbringing, this suggestion takes the most emotional and physical effort, but the end result is unsurpassed. Vegetables are high in phytonutrients: plant-based compounds that are not required to sustain life, but do provide health-promoting qualities and reduce our susceptibility to chronic degenerative diseases. Vegetables



CHARLES VOLLMAR

Wilted greens with roasted Shiitake mushrooms and walnuts makes for a healthy and appetizing dish.

are high in fiber, which may lower cholesterol, reduce potential risks of cancer, heart disease and obesity. Vegetables also are low on the glycemic index, which means less sugar and lower insulin levels. And, if that’s not enough, vegetables are low in calories, which means you can enjoy as much as you like!

We need vegetables when we are young to promote proper growth and development. It is proven that an introduction to a full spectrum of vegetables at an early age, including where they come from and how to prepare them properly, have everything to do with a child’s perception and either like or dislike of vegetables in general. A solid foundation and appreciation for vegetables at a young age has a significant impact on selection and consumption of them as adults. As young adults and as we approach middle age, we need their complex compounds to provide necessary mental acuteness and energy and to maintain proper weight. As we age, our systems thrive on high-quality foods to help retard the onset of, or potential for, chronic disease. Apart from exercise, consistent intake of quality plant-based foods is essential to quality of life.

When planning and shopping for meals,
[SEE COOKING page 18]

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–Leslie O'Brien

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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Orinda Kitchens Tour Benefits Miramonte

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

Uncertain times lead people to seek comforts close to home. And there's no better place than the kitchen to seek that comfort. Later this month, Miramonte High School's junior class invites residents to visit six stunning Orinda kitchens on the Orinda Heart of the Home Kitchen Tour. The Valentine's Day-themed event will be held on February 11 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Each of the kitchens featured has been recently remodeled, and each reflects a distinct style. The tour includes several European-inspired decors including a Tuscan-style kitchen with a separate outdoor serving area that overlooks a vineyard; a traditional English-style kitchen that has taken advantage of creative storage opportunities; and an open, European kitchen with beautiful stonework designed by Orinda architect Steven Kubitschek.

Those drawn to American style will appreciate the 1930's Art Deco home with an updated kitchen that remains true to the original style yet uses contemporary Italian cabinets. Another home features

an American country-style kitchen with a copper sink and stove hood. And, the classic California ranch-style prevalent in Orinda receives a makeover that respects the home's original style, yet incorporates the needs of a young family.

"We were looking for a fundraiser that would tie into the current nesting trend to stay close to home," says Lisa Jorgens, junior class parent advisor. "With the economy being a little soft, we wanted to find a creative way to raise money that would be community-based and fun."

Tickets for the event are \$25 and can be purchased in advance at McDonnell's Nursery, Orinda Books, Entourage Day Spa, Lazy K Gifts, and the Allison McCrady Gallery. A silent auction featuring four of Allison McCrady's paintings will also be held on the day of the tour, with 50 percent of the proceeds donated to the class. Jorgens adds that Miramonte students are creating a raffle basket that includes items and services donated by students.

And, if touring these great kitchens makes you hungry, stop by Shelby's or LaCocina for lunch. Both restaurants have agreed to donate 15 percent of the lunch tab that day when diners show their kitchen tour ticket stub.



PAT RUDEBUSCH

The kitchen of Jane and Nick Hyde is among six newly remodeled kitchens to be featured in the Orinda Heart of the Home Kitchen Tour on Wednesday, February 11.

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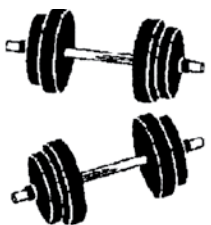
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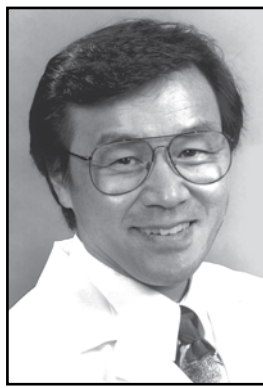
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In these tougher economic times, major remodeling projects aren't in many folks' budgets. There are, however, a number of projects that you can do yourself.

Interior painting will create the biggest change for the lowest cost. Most people can do an excellent job of painting with a bit of patience. Buy the best quality paint and make sure it's a "one-coat-guarantee." If you're going to stay in your house for at least five years, then choosing any color that suits your fancy is fine. But if you're going to sell before that, try to stay with fairly neutral colors that will complement any furnishings.

Repainting your exterior trim or front door can dramatically change both the look and the freshness of your home. The exterior trim and door generally require more preparation than interior painting, but if you're willing to do a bit of sanding and filling and maybe a bit of carpentry repairs before you start, it's well worth the effort.

Another fairly inexpensive project that can produce dramatic change is the addition of crown molding, chair rail, bead board and other types of interior trim work. Even if you decide to hire a carpenter for the installation, you can paint the trim yourself.

Deck cleaning or refinishing will also enhance your home's appearance and add to the longevity of the deck. Whether your deck is painted, unfinished, oiled, sealed or stained, refinishing is something most folks can do with a bit of patience and a little reading beforehand.

Other projects to consider are: replacing finish plumbing fixtures (such as faucets), replacing indoor or outdoor light fixtures, replacing bath accessories such as towel bars, replacing heat registers (covers for the ducts on the floors or ceilings), replacing door hardware or replacing cabinet knobs and pulls. Even if you need to hire help for any of these items, they all are fairly inexpensive projects.

You may also want to consider changing the façade material on your fireplace (such as facing brick with marble, granite or ce-

ramic tile) or changing the trim around your windows and doors. Both of these projects produce dramatic results, though will probably require some professional help.

For the very patient and adventurous, adding tile to a floor is an excellent project. The tile saw can be rented and because tile is cut and laid out before it is permanently installed, most potential mistakes can be avoided. If you've no experience with installing tile, you'll want to read a good book on the subject or take a class. Tile work can bring great beauty and creativity to an otherwise plain room.

If you do decide to consider tile work, check out some tile stores and see what remnants they have. That is, most stores have small amounts (but often enough for your project) of tile left over that they sell at a great discount because of the small quantity. Bear in mind that you will typically need to purchase at least 15 percent more than the square footage of your project because tiles will have to be cut to fit the contours of your area. Most tile shops are also happy to help you with the planning and selection process if you bring a drawing with measurements of your space.

A major remodeling project isn't required to enhance the beauty and value of your home. Many great results can be achieved through your own creativity and patient efforts.


Janice Gatlin is the owner of Always... the Best Home Repairs. She can be reached at 925-254-9545.

◆ **MAYOR** from page 1

explains Severson.

Energized and optimistic despite the many challenges ahead, Severson expressed excitement over the bike and trail master plan being developed, the city's new website, which allows residents to register online for Park and Recreation courses, and to the new Orinda in Action project.

Severson can be reached at sseverson@cityoforinda.org.

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Looking for something fun to do? Try a class through the Orinda Community Center or participate in the Orinda Youth Association (OYA). Popular instructor Tomaz Trench offers **Monday night salsa** instruction at 7 p.m. for beginners and at 8 p.m. for intermediate dancers. No partner required. For the young actor in your family, Judy Berlin offers **Kids on Camera TV/Film Acting** beginning March 1. Call 254-2445 to find out about these classes and much, much more.

OYA has added a girls' spring soccer program for pre-kindergarten and kindergartners. The teams will be small with no goalies to encourage more scoring. Registration begins March 2. Call Jerry Johnston at 253-4204.

– Sally Hogarty, Editor



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bridget Mendler is one of the students from Kids on Camera who has gone on to professional jobs.

◆ SUMMIT from page 11

participant added, "The realization that I was not the only girl with problems was very therapeutic by itself."

In September, the facilitator leadership team begins training the HSG in how to handle the summit discussion groups covering topics such as deep listening skills and subject matter. The team pays close attention to what the HSG say, and evaluates feedback from the year before so that each year the summit is fresh and down-to-earth. The HSG learn about allies and teamwork and, because they started as MSG attendees, build on their experience each year they are involved. "When I finally got to high school, I recognized some of the girls from the summit," said one HSG. "It really helped break down the intimidation factor of being a freshman." Another high school facilitator commented: "Helping younger girls see the beauty in themselves that has been dormant feels great; and encouraging them to not let their fear keep them from going out for what they are really interested in – clubs, sports teams, homecoming or other high school activities."

HSG develop leadership skills that blossom over time, and they take those skills with them as they move on to college – giving them a unique jump start into the world beyond high school.

The adult women on the team – who are a combination of counselors, teachers, Girl Scout leaders and moms – coach the HSG in planning the summit and then assist them in putting the plan into action. From September through the winter, they meet each month where experts in the field of adolescent development provide custom training for the event including role playing exercises and other presentations.

On the morning of the summit, a free discussion group is held for parents of girls attending the event where a panel of parenting and counseling experts answer their

questions. Some questions pop up every year, such as, "How do we know when there's too much academic pressure," and "What can we do when friendships break up?" The hour-long discussion includes a lot of humor, which is considered a survival tool for parents with girls in these age groups.

The girls participate in two discussion groups, one in the morning and one in the afternoon – adults are not involved, but are available. There is also a team panel where the MSG get to ask the HSG questions; honesty and openness is stressed. The day's activities are varied enough so that whether a girl is shy or outgoing, athletic or a geek, popular or unpopular, scholastic or struggling, there's a place for her and other girls at S2S, to help them find their way to their very own unique self.

Over 60 incredible volunteers including high school facilitators, adult committee members, and others contribute to keeping S2S up-to-date, relevant and fun. This year's adult steering committee includes Valarie Burgess, Mary Holzheimer, Mary Ann McCloud, Ksenija Olmer, and Tricia Vaughan. The facilitator leadership team includes Danielle Booth, Anna Eames, Sarah Gilson, Leilah Gobir, Kelsey Hansen, Katharine Holzheimer, Amber Kanwer, Keely Kuhn, Sylvia Marton, Naya Olmer, Samia Shamroukh, Hannah Waldschmidt, Helen Wang, and Becky Ware.

Thanks to S2S sponsors – Moraga Kiwanis and Village Realty – the AAUW was able to expand to over 100 girls in 2008.

This year's theme is: It's a jungle out there, stick with your sisters! There are some scholarships available for the \$30 registration fee, which includes lunch, gifts and a T-shirt. The deadline to sign up for this year's summit is Saturday, February 28. If you would like to support this AAUW event or register to participate, call Mary Holzheimer at 925-942-0102.

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CONTINUATIONS

◆ SILENCE from page 7

that followed World War II. Inez contacted every relative and family friend she could to verify information. "It was very hard at times to access various documents and archives," recalls Inez. "There were many things the Dutch government did not want the world to know when I first started my research." In fact, the first version of her book, written in Dutch, was banned in Holland. "The Dutch and Indonesian governments had sort of a gentleman's agreement not to look too closely at this part of their shared history. The Indonesians didn't really want people to know the atrocities committed against the Dutch during the revolution, and the Dutch didn't want the poor treatment of many Indonesians by

Dutch colonialists during their rule to get out."

Undeterred, Inez continued work on the book, finally attracting the interest of Ohio University Press. Before agreeing to expand the book and let it be published, Inez wanted the permission of the cousin whose courage made the book possible. "It really became Harry's story, and I wanted to be sure I had told it truthfully." Harry not only approved the book, he told Inez that she had saved his life. "I've had three special guardians in my life - my older sister, the man who saved my life during the revolution, and you, because you really see me," he said. "I've felt invisible for so long. Now, things seem more bearable."

Silenced Voices is much more than a family memoir. Inez not only comes to grips

with her family's past but also attempts to understand the difficult relationship the Dutch had with Indonesia. For the most part, stories like Inez's family's have been, if not entirely silenced, at least only whispered about in Holland, where the society has remained uncomfortable with its previous colonial empire.

Inez, who teaches Dutch at UC Berkeley, feels that the current generation is more objective about what happened during the war and that they want to know the truth. "I've had many students from Indonesia take my class at UC," says Inez. "I had been afraid that they would look harshly upon Holland, but they have all assured me that, aside from

the dark history we had, the two countries are still in a strange way connected."

Silenced Voices is currently available in English and, thanks to a change of policy by the Dutch government, will be available in Dutch this spring. "There now seems some readiness to face what happened," says Inez, who wishes she had asked more questions of her father before his death two years ago. "It's important that these stories come out. Like Holocaust victims, people need to tell their stories, to acknowledge what happened, and to move on."

Inez Hollander-Lake lives in Orinda with her husband, Jonathan, children 13-year-old William, and 11-year-old Caroline.

◆ FLIGHT from page 7

get by with coping strategies, and it is not until his concerned younger sister confides in a trusted neighbor that Evan gets the help

says Ellison. She was particularly captivated with the equal treatment provided to her severely disabled brother, Jim, by the administration at Glorietta Elementary. "My brother had cerebral palsy," says El-



Elizabeth Ellison reading from her book *Flight* at Sleepy Hollow Elementary School.

he so needs.

"*Flight* was inspired by my various roles as student, sister and teacher," says Ellison. "The message is that we all need to 'take flight' from whatever might be holding us back in life. At the end of the book, there is definitely a sense of hope for Evan and his future. I hope that those who read *Flight* feel this sense of hope with whatever issues they may be facing in their own lives."

Ellison recounts a letter she received from a learning disabled student who appreciated being able to relate to Evan's character. "That really meant a lot to me," says Ellison. "To touch someone with words that I wrote is to me what writing is all about. In regard to *Flight*, I believe all of us can identify with Evan on some level."

Ellison's family moved a great deal when she was younger, and she remembers her Orinda years fondly. "It was 1976 to 1980. Orinda was simply a nice place to be a kid,"

Ellison. "He blossomed at Glorietta due to their acceptance of him as just another kid who deserved a quality education. It was a thrilling time, because not many students with these same disabilities accomplished what my brother was able to accomplish." *Flight* is dedicated to Ellison's beloved brother who passed away 10 years ago.

Ellison moved to the south after her time in Orinda, graduating from UC Santa Cruz in 1993 with a bachelor's in comparative literature, and from Cal State Fullerton in 2002 with a master's in literature with a fiction writing emphasis. She now teaches eighth grade language arts. "It is a real challenge to teach something as personal as writing," says Ellison. "When working with my students, I try to encourage and gently nudge them to strive for more...to take flight, if you will. Just as Miss Hansen did with me."

Flight is available at Orinda Books.



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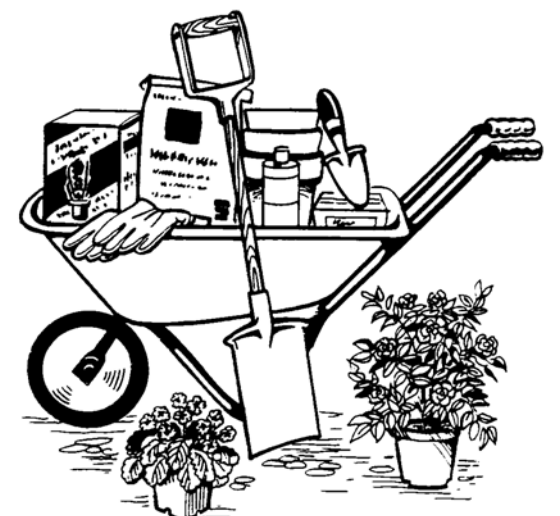
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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 1 **Beachcomber Singles Casual Dinner**, 6:30 p.m., Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive. Guest speaker follows on "10 Steps to Find Your True Love." Cost: \$7. www.beachcombersingles.org or call Jerry, 510-799-2207.
- 2 **Orinda in Action Committee** informational meeting, 10 a.m., Sarge Littlehald Community Room at City Hall. Looking for projects and volunteers to increase safety and enjoyment of community. Orindainaction@gmail.com.
- 3 **Beachcomber Singles Group Discussion**, 7 p.m., Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive. Conversation to share personal experiences. david.lehrer@sbcglobal.net.
Lamorinda Rotary, McAvoy Lane, Mark Twain impersonator, noon, Postino's Restaurant, 3565 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Joint meeting with Orinda Rotary. 254-2222. Lane also performs at Orinda Intermediate School and Miramonte High School the same day.
Friends of Moraga Adobe, 7:30 p.m. Founders' organization meeting to save the building. All interested in historical preservation are welcome. Call 254-8260 for location.
First Friday Forum, 1 p.m., Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Professor Jasmina Vujic, head of the Department of Nuclear Engineering at University of California, Berkeley, will discuss the State of Nuclear Energy, 925-283-8722.
- 7 **Beachcomber Singles Valentine's Dance**, 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., Orinda Masonic Temple. Jerry, 510-799-2207.
Miramonte High School Four-Way Speech Contest, throughout day, 925-376-4423.
Orinda Books Author Appearance, 3 p.m. Yiyun Li will discuss and sign copies of her novel, *The Vagrants*, 254-7606.
Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting and program. All interested in peace through understanding and getting to know world neighbors are welcome. Visiting student for 2009-2010 will be selected. Call 254-8260.
- 11 **Miramonte Kitchen Tour**, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (see story page 13).
- 15 **Beachcomber Singles Valentine's Dance**, 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., Orinda Masonic Temple. Jerry, 510-799-2207.
- 18 **School Lobbying Trip to Sacramento**, bus leaves Orinda at 7:30 a.m., returns at 4:30 p.m. Will include session with elected officials on school funding, a briefing, and tour. Call 254-9514 for reservations.
- 28 **Chamber of Commerce Mixer**, The Orinda House, 5:30 to 7 p.m., Sponsored by NorCal Publishing. Publisher of the Orinda Chamber Directories, 254-3909.

AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified.

Children's Events

- 2 **Knitting for Beginners**, 4-5 p.m., for ages 8 and up. Register at Information Desk. Repeats February 9 and 16.
- 3 **Peek-a-Boo Story Time**, 11:30 a.m. Songs, nursery rhymes and bounces for infants to 1-year-olds. Babies with older siblings are welcome at Toddler Lapsit. Drop-in. Repeats February 10, 17 and 24.
Toddler Lapsit, 10 a.m. Stories, songs and fingerplays for 1- to 3-year-olds. No registration, but please attend no more than one story time per week. Repeats at 10:30 a.m. Also February 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24 and 25.
- 5 **Friends of the Library Book Sale**, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., bookshop and sorting room, Orinda Library. Bookshop open until 6 p.m. 254-1358.
- 7 **Saturday Morning Live!** 11 a.m. Family story time for 3- to 5-year-olds. Also February 14, 21 and 28.
- 8 **Origami Workshop**, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Drop-in program welcomes all ages and skill levels. Also February 15 and 22.

For Adults

- 17 **Kaplan SAT 10-Question Challenge**, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Event covers SAT format and question types from each section of the test. Students will try 10 tough questions and learn 10 winning strategies from a Kaplan expert. Space limited. To register go to www.kaptest.com/college or call 1-800-KAPTEST. Registration Code is: SKBK9010.
- 18 **Berkeley Repertory Theatre Docent Talk**, 7-8 p.m. A docent from the theater talks about the current production of *In the Next Room*, also known as the "Vibrator Play," by Sarah Ruhl. Located in the Gallery Room.
- 24 **India Rising: A Fireside Chat**, 7 p.m. Humanities West's George Hammond offers a sneak peak of their upcoming program, "India Rising: Tradition Meets Modernity."

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

MEETINGS:

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.
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**, Orinda Library, May Room, fourth Wednesday, 8 a.m., 253-1997.
- City Council**, first and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.cityoforinda.org.
- Historic Landmarks Committee**, fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, public is welcome, for information, call 925-788-7323.
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District**, third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.
- Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**, OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road, 4 p.m.
- 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

- Diablo Star Chapter #214**, Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 p.m., Orinda Masonic Center. Contact Karen Seaborn, 925-689-0995.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**, Postino's in Lafayette, 7 a.m. every Friday, 254-0440, ext.463.
- Orinda Rotary**, Community Center, every Wednesday at noon, 254-2222.
- 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 Job's Daughters**, first and third Monday, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 925-283-7176.
- Orinda/Tabor (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 Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon; call 254-3881.

CALENDAR BY CHRIS LAVIN

Send calendar items to chrislavin@earthlink.net

Is Nuclear Energy the Way of the Future?

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

As the United States seeks energy independence, environmentalist and co-founder of Greenpeace, Patrick Moore, hails nuclear energy as the solution. He says, "Nuclear energy is the only non-greenhouse-gas-emitting power source that can effectively replace fossil fuels and satisfy global demand."

At the February 6 meeting of First Friday Forum, Professor Jasmina Vujic, head of the Department of Nuclear Engineering at University of California, Berkeley, will discuss The State of Nuclear Energy. It will be held in the Fellowship Hall of the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC), 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette, at 1:30 p.m.

Vujic says, "This country has neglected nuclear energy for the last 20 or 30 years, but it will be the way of the future. We are now going through a nuclear renaissance with exciting growth in three areas of long-term strategic importance: energy security and independence, homeland security and non-proliferation, and nuclear medicine, imaging and cancer therapy."

The *New York Times* reports that according to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 21 companies say they will seek permission to build 34 nuclear power plants from New York to Texas. Factories are springing up in Indiana and Louisiana to build reactor parts. Currently, the United States has 104 commercial reactors in operation.

"I will answer questions dealing with the concerns over safety and waste disposal and how they can be addressed successfully, and any other questions the audience may have," Vujic says. "As to nuclear waste, much of it can be recycled. For example, plants in France, where 77 percent of the electricity comes from nuclear power, and in China, Russia, and the United Kingdom – use this approach," she explains.

Well qualified to present scientific evi-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Professor Jasmina Vujic, head of UC Berkeley's Department of Nuclear Engineering, will speak on the state of nuclear energy at the next First Friday Forum.

dence for her conclusions, Jasmina Vujic is the first woman to head the nuclear engineering department of a top 10 school in the nation. Her career started at the Nuclear Science Institute, Vinca, in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1977. In 1989, after obtaining her doctorate from the University of Michigan, she joined the staff at Argonne National Laboratory. She joined the Nuclear Engineering Department at UC Berkeley in 1992. In addition, Dr. Vujic is director of the Davis Etcheverry Computing Facility and director of the Advanced Nuclear Engineering Computing Laboratory. She is an internationally recognized expert in the advanced method development for reactor analysis and design, as well as for medical applications of radiation.

The public is welcome to attend this timely seminar. Refreshments will be served at 1 p.m. with the lecture at 1:30 p.m. For further information, contact LOPC at 925-283-8722.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 20

sick visits on weekends. In addition to excellent patient care and speedy recoveries, the ultimate consequence of this service is fewer emergency room visits. For working parents, patients can be seen as late as 6 p.m. The real kicker here is the delicious café latte served during those early morning appointments.

Another very thoughtful service provided is the dispensing of prescription medications. No more taking a prescription to the local pharmacy only to wait 30 minutes with a feverish and unhappy baby in tow. Dr. Lewis and Dr. Bar-Din maintain a supply of the top 25 prescribed medications. In addition, minor procedures can be performed in the office. An Alta Bates Medical Group' patient satisfaction poll recently rated Dr. Lewis No. 1 out of a list of 60 pediatricians.

A pediatrician by day and a producer at night, Dr. Lewis spends his free time in local theater. Most recently he produced *The Wiz* in Oakland, staging 22 performances there. Currently, he is working with city officials in Richmond with a goal of bringing a production to their city this year. He and his wife Barbara, who is a school nurse, have four adult children.

Dr. Bar-Din, an East Bay native, is a resident of Orinda. She has three daughters, the youngest of whom, Maia Kurland, is a junior at Miramonte High School. Dr. Bar-Din has been practicing medicine for 15 years. She is accepting new patients at this time. As a result of both pediatricians working part-time, someone is always available to see a patient.

For more information about Dr. Lewis and Dr. Bar-Din, call 253-1199.

The Content Bureau Rocks

Eight years ago Orindan Stacy Crinks founded a writing business - otherwise known as a copywriting agency - The Content Bureau and has been enjoying 50 percent growth a year ever since. The firm writes every marketing material imaginable for large technology and financial services companies and relies on repeat business from satisfied clients for continued growth. Available services include creating advertisements, articles, brochures, case studies, direct marketing materials, newsletters, manuals, speeches, website material, white papers - you name it and The Content Bureau will produce it brilliantly and under deadline.

"With every project I have at least one writer, editor and copyeditor collaborating to produce great results for our clients. Everything we write as a company helps our clients sell their products to prospective buyers. We write a lot of customer case studies around why our client's products help their customers do business," explains Crinks, who is also a wife and mother of three. Her talented virtual team includes mostly mothers and "three rock star dads"



SALLY HOGARTY
Stacy Crinks runs the thriving Content Bureau

who collaborate across several time zones for their satisfied clients that include, Microsoft, PayPal, Autodesk and a myriad of others.

Crinks is a graduate of UC Berkeley. She earned an MBA at the Wharton School of Business and a master's degree in International Affairs at the University of Pennsylvania. "I love learning and enjoy going to school," she says with a smile. Crinks began her career in Paris with the French ad agency, Publicis. She is married to Paul Crinks, chief executive officer of International Asset Systems, a transportation technology company. The couple has three daughters. Abigail is a student at Del Rey School, Anna attends the Nurtury preschool and Eva just celebrated her second birthday.

In addition to serving well-established corporations, The Content Bureau recently wrote the website content for Amyris Biotechnologies, an alternative fuel company in Emeryville. However, most of their business centers around large companies that need marketing materials on a regular basis.

When not managing her home and ever-expanding business enterprise, Crinks enjoys practicing yoga. "I recently started working out at the Dailey Method in Lafayette. It is a yoga, Pilates and dance workout all in one that concentrates on core strengthening." A major priority for Crinks is volunteering in her children's classroom, which is something she is happily able to do on a regular basis.

For more information about The Content Bureau, visit the website at www.contentbureau.com or email Stacy Crinks at stacy@contentbureau.com.

Siam Orchid Adds Location

If you have enjoyed the delicious Thai food at Siam Orchid on Orinda Way, you'll be thrilled to know that a second location has been added. Spice opened in December at the old Nut Tree location off of Highway 80 in Vacaville. Now you can take a break on your way to Sacramento or skiing in Tahoe and have the restaurant's popular ginger salad or coconut soup. Brothers Sompong and Nicky Phunmongkol are

now dividing their time between the two restaurants. "We offer most of the same items at both places," says Sompong. "It is fun to see our Orinda customers when they

stop by the new restaurant. One customer recently came by with his entire family." Spice is located at 1679 Monte Vista Ave., #108, Vacaville, CA, 707-455-7150.



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Critters `n Clay™ Is A Child's Delight

Hilary Ford brings her creative art program to Orinda schools this spring, beginning with Glorietta School this month and traveling on to Del Rey and Wagner Ranch in April. Critters `n Clay™ evolved about 16 years ago when Ford, who holds a bachelor's degree in art education from the State University of New York at New Paltz, first

began teaching children's clay classes at local community centers. Her own ceramics have been sold at the Oakland Museum Collector's Gallery, the Banaker Gallery in San Francisco, Valley Arts, and the Bedford Gallery in Walnut Creek.

Ford's brainchild integrates science, clay sculpture and literature into a four-week curriculum. Each week students learn about a different animal, then sculpt it out of clay with step-by-step instruction from Ford. They wind up the course with a children's

book about the animals after firing and glazing the creatures. Through this process a child's fine motor and listening skills are enhanced.

"Each child creates his or her own animal. Together as a class we work on the ears, tail, head and legs at the same time, but in the end every animal is unique according to the individual student's personality. I find each child puts his own personality

and Maggie, who is in marketing. When not managing her business, Ford plays tennis, and enjoys gardening and running.

When asked what she does for a living, Hilary Ford will tell you she does happy work.

"I love what I do because it is something I created entirely on my own and I have been able to make a business out of what I love doing. My class puts a smile on people's faces."

For more information about Critters `n Clay™, visit the website, www.crittersnclay.com or email Ford at crittersnclay@hotmail.com.



VALERIE HOTZ

Hilary Ford displays some of the fun critters her students have created.

into the critter." The result is 20 different versions of "the animal of the day," which may be a tiger, frog, elephant, bear, pig or anything else Ford dreams up. A Critters `n Clay™ sculpture makes a unique gift for special people, although Ford has discovered some students are not eager to part with their creation.

"I tend to stick with mammals, but have been known to incorporate turtles, lizards and crocodiles," smiles Ford. "We never have the same class twice, with the result that many students take the class over and over. Each class is intriguing and different in its own way."

After earning her degree, Ford worked for Merrill Lynch for several years. She is married to Jim Ford, a mechanical engineer in the printing industry. The couple has two adult children, Dan, a clinical pharmacist

Dr. Samuel Lewis and Dr. Dorit Bar-Din Open Orinda Office

This pediatric practice is a throw-back to the bygone days when the family doctor was fully accessible to his patients, including Saturday mornings. Previously associated with East Bay Pediatrics in Orinda for 20 years, Dr. Lewis relocated his practice to Lafayette in 2001 and returned to Orinda this past fall, joining up with Dr. Dorit Bar-Din in the process. Their practice is located at 15 Altarinda Road.

The sign over the entry says much, "Dream some, Love a lot. Laugh some, Live a lot."

The waiting room is comfortably equipped with an array of toys and a soothing aquarium. Light mint green walls provide a backdrop for art that includes Mary Cassatt prints. "We are a small, classic mom and pop operation. Although both of us work part-time, we are always avail-



VALERIE HOTZ

Pediatricians Dr. Samuel Lewis and Dr. Dorit Bar-Din.

able to see our patients and take their calls. Merrilee Willer, who manages the office, is an amazing person. She has a photographic memory, knows everyone and every patient's name," says Dr. Lewis.

Several features set this pediatric practice apart from the others. For instance, seven months out of the year, from October 1 to April 30, a drop-in clinic is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. This arrangement works brilliantly to cover the

[SEE BUZZ page 19]



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RECIPE / LIBRARY GALLERY

◆ RECIPE from page 18

Wilted Greens with Roasted Shiitake Mushrooms and Walnuts

When selecting greens, look for crisp young leaves with a rich green color – avoid those with yellow, flabby or pitted leaves or those with thick, fibrous stems. Dark leafy greens are an excellent source of Vitamins A, K and C, thiamine and riboflavin.

- 1/2-pound (about 15) shiitake mushrooms, stems removed and caps cut into 1/2-inch strips
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 4 cups leafy greens, (about 2 bunches of choice (Swiss chard, kale – green, red or Tuscan, collard)
- 2 cups baby or curly spinach
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes or to taste

- 2 tablespoons vinegar (Balsamic or sweet Muscat)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup toasted walnuts, coarsely chopped

- To roast the shiitake mushrooms: Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a sheet pan with foil and place the sliced mushrooms evenly on the pan. Using a pastry brush, lightly dab each mushroom with olive oil and season lightly with salt and pepper. Roast in the oven for 10 – 12 minutes or until mushrooms are browned and slightly crisp, but still tender. Remove from oven and set aside.

- Wash and dry the greens well. Remove the ribs and stems from the greens and discard. Hand-tear or cut the greens into 1-inch pieces. Leave the spinach leaves whole.

- In a large skillet or wok, heat the remaining olive oil over medium-high heat.

Add the sliced onion and sauté until soft, one minute or so. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes and sauté until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the cut greens. Using tongs, toss the greens with the onion and garlic, drawing them up from the bottom until lightly coated with the oil. Reduce the heat to medium, and continue to turn the greens until soft, 2 - 3 minutes. Fold in the whole spinach. Sprinkle the greens with the vinegar and season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.

- Remove greens to a serving dish, and top with the roasted mushrooms and chopped walnuts. Serve immediately. Serves 4 - 6

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For comments, questions or suggestions contact the Chef, via email: charlie@epicureanexchange.com or visit www.epicureanexchange.com for more information on programs and classes.



CHARLES VOLLMAR

Wilted greens with roasted Shiitake mushrooms and walnuts makes for a healthy and appetizing dish.

More Photos of the Fab Five at Library Gallery in February



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Artist **Melissa Adkison** used the gouache (opaque watercolors) method to create her work "Ophelia."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Melissa Adkison "Velvet Gerbers"



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Blessing Bowl by **Ellen Sachtschale**.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Vases by ceramacist **Lesley Jensen**.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Blessing Bowl by **Ellen Sachtschale**

VOTE! March 3