

THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
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Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

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March 2010

A Sign of Progress at Wilder Development



SALLY HOGARTY

Gateway Boulevard was recently renamed Wilder. Local signage now reflects the change.

By BILL RAYNOLDS
Staff Writer

There's recently been a noticeable change as you drive through the Caldecott Tunnel, and it's not due to the construction of the fourth bore. The Gateway exit signs now read: Wilder Road. It's a small, but significant, step in the realization of a dream development that was conceived more than 20 years ago.

Many of you recall that dream in its original form. It was a grand, some might say grandiose, idea to transform the area on the Western edge of Orinda in a very dramatic way. The more ambitious aspects of that dream have been shed in a lengthy process of metamorphosis. We've seen the Gateway egg stage, the Montanera caterpillar stage, and now eagerly anticipate the emergence of a butterfly with the strange but intriguing name of Wilder.

Of course, some may have grown tired of waiting and taken a more cynical attitude toward the dream's ultimate unfolding. But the size of the original plan, ultimately ensuring that the butterfly would never get off the ground, has been pared down to a realistic level. The original development's

plan included much more acreage and construction, an 18-hole golf course, and even an access road to Moraga. What will emerge is a 231-acre developed site with 245 homes in what is essentially a large cul-de-sac. An additional 1300+ acres will be open space.

Still, some may say, "I'll believe it when I see it, didn't they recently go bankrupt or something?" Jason Keadjian and Michael Olson of Brooks Street, Wilder's development company, confirmed that Wilder was not immune to the real estate and general economic issues of which we're all aware and that the project was indeed recently in receivership (a court action to protect the assets of creditors). After the lender, Merrill Lynch Mortgage Lending, filed a notice in early 2009 to protect its interest in the project, several months of negotiations led to a settlement. San Francisco-based Farallon Capital Management, L.L.C, which has had an interest in the Wilder project for 10 years, purchased the note from Merrill and has assumed total responsibility for the financing. As a result, the project is now debt-free. Key to the successful resolution of the issue was the level of commitment

[SEE WILDER page 6]

No Surprises in Mayor's State of the City Address

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

At a luncheon jointly sponsored by the Orinda Rotary and the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, Mayor Tom McCormick reviewed the past year and looked ahead to 2010.

The Mayor spoke of decreasing revenues and increasing expenses. "An opinion poll did not show enough support for a parcel tax or a raise in sales tax," said McCormick. "What we need is a more vibrant economy. We need to support local businesses which will result in additional sales tax revenue."

[SEE MAYOR page 4]

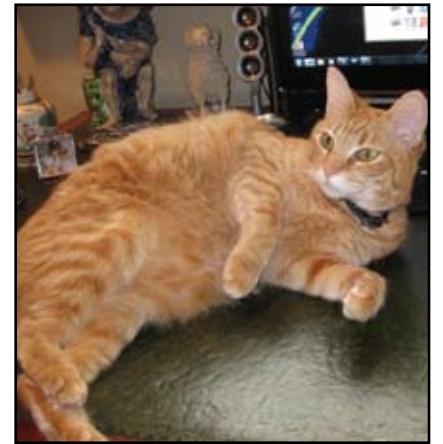


SALLY HOGARTY

Mayor Tom McCormick delivered the annual State of the City address at a joint luncheon of Orinda Rotary Club and the Orinda Chamber of Commerce.

Orinda's March "Tiger" of the Month

Abigail "Abby" Sciuto, named after the character on the NCIS television show, gives her age as one and one-half years. According to her family (Barnaby and Karen Beck), she loves to stalk her two siblings – a Brittany Spaniel named Sydney and a West Highland White Terrier by the name of Ned. Preferring to hunt indoors, she keeps in fighting shape by swatting at passing insects that go past her favorite window. Chasing socks is another favorite exercise which keeps her reflexes alert for any unsuspecting flies that wander into Barnaby's office. To have your "tiger" considered for publication, email a photo and information to news@orindaassociation.org.



BARNABY BECK

Always on the alert, Abby spots a pesky fly.

Sparks Fly at Fire District Board Meeting

By MAGGIE SHARPE
Staff Writer

A new and vocal group has joined the debate – some might say battle – over the future of the Moraga Orinda Fire Department (MOFD).

Several members of OrindaCARES (Orinda Citizens Against Reducing Emergency Services) spoke at the February 3 MOFD Board meeting at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church, which was attended by more than 100 people.

"I believe it would be a life-threatening decision to dissolve MOFD," said Orinda CARES member Tamara Attard, whose family is currently living in a hotel due to a recent fire at their house. Attard said her house nearly burned down. "MOFD prevented the fire from spreading," she said. "They saved my daughter's bunnies and the rest of the house."

The February 3 meeting began with a heated two hour discussion between the MOFD board and F.A.I.R. (Fire and Infrastructure Renewal), during which the antagonism between the two groups was tangible.

F.A.I.R., a group of about 80 citizens from Orinda and Moraga, proposes to dissolve MOFD and contract with Contra Costa County (ConFire) for fire services

and with American Medical Response (AMR) for ambulance service. The group says this would result in a huge cost savings from a fire district that is way overfunded. That savings, says F.A.I.R., could be used for badly needed infrastructure repairs, such as roads and water pipes.

The meeting focused on 30 questions that the board posed to F.A.I.R. about its proposal, which was originally presented to the Orinda City Council in January. Most of the concerns were about potential decline

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Mockingbird's Scout Speaks at Orinda Theater

By MAGGIE SHARPE
Staff Writer

When actress Mary Badham was nominated for an Academy Award for her role as Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, she said she was “terrified.”

“I was terrified that I’d win and have to go on stage, with all these people who have wonderful things to say,” said Badham, who was just 10 years old at the time. Badham was talking to a more affable audience after a sold-out screening of *Mockingbird* at the Orinda Theater on Feb. 13, sponsored by the California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF).

Now in her mid-50s, “Scout” is still very much the charming tomboy who won our hearts in the 1962 dramatization of Harper Lee’s novel about racism in a small town in Alabama.

The movie stars Gregory Peck as Scout’s father Atticus Finch, a lawyer who defends a black man unfairly accused of raping a white woman.

Badham talked about how different it was when she was growing up in the South.



JIM KNOWLES

Mary Badham signed photos and books after a special showing of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, in which she played Scout.

“During that period in Alabama if a black man even looked a white woman in the eye, he could be strung from the nearest tree – and nobody would think much of it,” she said.

The actress says she was “blessed” to work with Peck, who kept in touch with her over the years. “He was very dear, very sweet, and a marvelous parent. He would pick up the phone and call and chitchat,” said Badham.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest



VALERIE HOTZ

Louis Fletcher with fellow *Cuckoo’s Nest* actress Mimi Sarkisian at the February screening.

By VALERIE HOTZ
Staff Writer

The California Independent Film Festival’s (CAIFF) Classics Series recently welcomed Saul Zaentz, Louise Fletcher, Mimi Sarkisian and Michael Berryman to the Orinda Theater on a memorable rainy, wintery evening. It represented their first reunion 35 years after creating *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, the film version of Ken Kesey’s novel.

After the screening and before the question and answer session began, CAIFF presented Louise Fletcher with a Star to be installed in Orinda’s Theatre Square in her

honor, memorializing her incredible and unforgettable portrayal of the icy Nurse Ratched.

“The producers gave us the greatest gift possible. We filmed in an unused wing of a working state mental hospital in Salem, Oregon, so it was a very realistic setting to start.” During her acceptance speech at the 1975 Oscar’s ceremony, Fletcher thanked Saul Zaentz, Michael Douglas and all the actors who made being in a mental institution just like being in a mental institution.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CAIFF welcomes Rita Moreno for a special screening of *West Side Story* March 13 at 7 p.m. Tickets are available online at www.caiff.org or at the Orinda Theater Box Office.

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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

Orinda Association's Award Banquet Was a Real Hoot!



JILL GELSTER

The Orinda Country Club was filled to the brim with dignitaries and local residents congratulating **Volunteer of the Year winner Terry Murphy** and **William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award winner Jenny Papka**. Shown above are **Murphy (L)** with **Assemblymember Nancy Skinner (C)** and **Papka**. But the real hit of the evening was Papka's **Eurasian Eagle Owl**. The very impressive bird had everyone fascinated with his dignified bearing and oh-so-intelligent eyes. Murphy was honored for his over 29 years of volunteerism in many capacities including the Design Review Board and the Planning Commission. Papka received the environmental award for her lifetime of work rescuing and rehabilitating wild animals.

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A Message From the OA President

Things We Take for Granted

Mark Roberts

I wonder how many people are unaware of the fact that you're supposed to turn on your vehicle's headlights whenever you turn on the windshield wipers, day or night. It's a state law that's been on the books for over three years. The reason is to make your vehicle more easily visible to other drivers when rain reduces overall visibility.

The value of this law was driven home to me recently when I was driving on Highway 24 during a downpour in the middle of the day. With the rain coming down and all

that water being thrown back up by tires, I noticed how difficult it was to see the rear ends of vehicles in front of me that didn't have their taillights on. It was as if two-ton metal ghosts were suddenly appearing out of the mist ahead of me – and I wanted to avoid close encounters of any kind.

So please reduce the chances of getting involved in a collision by turning on your headlights whenever rain causes you to turn on your windshield wipers. It's the truly bright thing to do!

[SEE PRESIDENT page 8]

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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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EDITORIAL

Letters to the Editor

Efficiency at a Price

I would like to address the issue of efficiency that Mr. Zimmerman brings up in his recent letter to *The Orinda News'* January edition. I agree that leaf blowers are more efficient in terms of time than rakes and brooms, but what is the cost to the health of humans and pets? There are many things in the world that would be more efficient and make life easier. For example, we could change the law and allow teenagers to get their licenses earlier, so that parents would not have to spend hours driving them to activities and sitting in school traffic. We could also let them drive at night or with other kids in the car; that would certainly be more efficient, but in the interest of safety and logic, there are laws against these things.

Mr. Zimmerman recommends that we should just ask our neighbors to stop the leaf blowing or gardeners, but that is a lot easier said than done. Of the 14 houses on my street, at least 10 of them use leaf blowers or have gardeners who use leaf blowers. I am in the minority and do not want to alienate our family by being the only one to speak up and complain. Not everyone is friendly with all their neighbors. Moreover, much of the leaf blower noise and pollution occurs at homes that are not near to mine. Because of the topography of Orinda, I can hear leaf blowers all day, but I can't necessarily pinpoint exactly where they are being used. When I am out running, I can't very well knock on the door of someone who is not my neighbor, to ask them to stop using a leaf blower. I would be knocking on doors all day.

Last, yes, we have a noise ordinance in Orinda, but no one obeys it. On New Year's day, I was up on Crestview Drive, walking my dog, and I could hear two separate leaf blower offences. (Any use of gas powered maintenance equipment is illegal on this holiday.) They were somewhere down in the Glorietta area, and by the time I walked down the hill, and back to my phone, the offenders had gone.

Certainly, if we are truly interested in "efficiency," maybe we should just cut down all the trees in Orinda, so then no one will have to deal with any leaves. And the ultimate "efficient" thing to do to save resources, time, and the environment is to have fewer children. Yet no one says, 'I'm not going to have kids, because it is not efficient.'

Let us rethink what is efficient and focus on what is healthy for our bodies and our psyche.

— Amanda Ferguson

Other Communities Ban Leaf Blowers

Do the inhabitants of Tiburon, Carmel, Berkeley, Piedmont, Mill Valley, and Los

Angeles know something that Orindans do not? The answer is a resounding "yes." They have banned leaf blowers in their communities.

These citizens realize that leaf blowers stir up major pollutants which are then inhaled into our lungs. Not only is this detrimental to the people who do this kind of work, but also a major health concern for everyone, especially children.

Please encourage our city councilmembers to consider and support a ban on leaf blowers. An excellent idea for our health and the quality of life in Orinda.

— Liz Boyle

Leaf Blowers in Orinda

I believe it is a basic flaw among many people, that they have lost the ability to mind their own business. I saw three letters to the editor in the Feb. 2010 issue on this subject with which I disagree. One writer complained of the noise. She also complained of the particulate matter injected into the air by leaf blowers, blaming this as the cause of her respiratory problems. This is nonsense. Perhaps she has not heard of wind. We have a lot of wind in Orinda. We also have pollen – from trees and plants. However much particulate matter comes from leaf blowers, it is insignificant compared to that from dust and pollen, driven by wind.

Another writer suggests allowing him to use his own leaf blower, but banning gardener's from using leaf blowers. Another suggests allowing electric blowers only.

My home has over 7,000 sq. ft. of decks and driveway, surrounded and overhung by oak trees. I use a high powered back pack gas powered leaf blower to blow off the leaves once a week. An electric leaf blower will not work for me. There can not be any possible legal justification for allowing homeowners to use leaf blowers when they are banned for use by gardener's.

Too many people in our society have this impulse to control the actions of others which are really none of their business. They invent imaginary injuries to support the many things they want banned. A free people should resist these impulses.

—Henry R. Pinney

Vote No on AUHD Parcel Tax

Grab your wallet: the Acalanes Union High School District wants another tax increase. In 2008, the district proposed extending an existing tax for 17 years. In 2009, the district supported making a temporary \$189 parcel tax permanent.

On Feb. 2, the district's board of directors voted to put a special tax measure on the ballot in May. The measure, if passed, will, beginning July 1, levy a special \$112 annual property (parcel) tax for five years. To pass, the ballot measure will need a two-thirds vote.

The proposed tax comes at a time when 12.3 percent of Californians are unem-

ployed. The last time the unemployment rate was in this range in California was in 1940. For Orinda residents, the proposed tax is an untimely burden. Here is a list of other tax and fee hikes since June 2008: library tax up 44 percent; elementary school tax up 32 percent; garbage rates up 25 percent; water rates up 8 percent; sewer fees

up 4 percent; and local sales tax up from 8.25 percent to 9.25 percent.

And new fees are coming. Garbage rates and bridge tolls are going up. Orinda residents are being clobbered by tax hikes. Voters should soundly reject the proposed \$112 Acalanes parcel tax.

— Richard S. Colman

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◆ MAYOR from page 1

McCormick pointed to the Planning Process Review Task Force's recommendations to change the building height limit in order to have residences above retail to help achieve this goal. "Creating living spaces downtown will increase the demand for local businesses and provide housing for our growing population of retired residents who don't want to remain in their current homes."

McCormick summarized items of importance for 2010: hiring a new police chief (Chief Bill French retires March 30); reviewing a police services study to see how services could be maintained at a

lower price (police services are currently 32 percent of the city's budget); reviewing Moraga Orinda Fire District services and costs (the city is now part of a Tri-agency committee composed of MOFD, the Town of Moraga and Orinda); continue looking for ways to cut the city budget; find additional sources of funds to fix roads, fire-flow water pipes, and drainage issues (\$7 million, a combination of grants and city money, has been spent in the last three years); develop opportunities for youth; continue looking for ways to revitalize downtown; and continue to enhance the city's communications.

"We have many challenges, but they are not insurmountable," McCormick said.

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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.

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CAR TIME / CHAMBER

CAR TIME

Should the Government Control Your Tire Pressure?

by JOHN VANEK



Do we need regulations to make us keep proper air in our vehicle's tires? Believe it or not there are currently programs proposed in California that will regulate having your tire pressures checked. Is this a responsible government reaction to a real issue or is big brother stepping on our personal freedom?

Why is this tire pressure issue so important and who is behind this new movement? Studies have shown that running tires with too little air pressure is not uncommon. It's been estimated that about one out of every four vehicles on the road is running on under-inflated tires. This also means that one out of every four drivers is needlessly sacrificing their vehicle's fuel economy and handling, and reducing their tires' durability and tread life. Maintaining the correct tire pressure for a vehicle is an important factor in how much load its tires can safely carry. The correct pressure will carry the weight without a problem. Too little tire pressure will eventually cause catastrophic tire failure.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) recognized the relationship between poor fuel mileage and low tire pressure many years ago. Now the State of California (through AB32 Greenhouse Gas Initiative) has given CARB the task of implementing a program that mandates a tire pressure program for consumers. This new regulation requires consumers to prove that they performed a tire check and inflate service within the last 30 days, provide supporting documentation or agree to perform a tire pressure check and inflation

service within the next seven days. All of which must be documented on the repair shop invoice, which is unnecessary and, frankly, over the top. The customer should have the right to decline the check and inflate service. It is unclear as to whether the service provider must check inflation of vehicle tires while the tire is "hot" or wait for a period of time and check when the tire is "cold." This concern has been raised in prior correspondence and at the Air Resources Board workshops. It still has not been adequately addressed. The regulation, as drafted, will create another layer of unnecessary administrative paper work and confusion for both the repair shop and the customer. The Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) has regulatory oversight of the automotive repair shops in the state and the expertise to properly oversee the enforcement of this proposed regulation rather than CARB. When you get an agency like CARB, which has nobody on its board with any real world experience involved, the situation could get ugly.

If your vehicle has routine oil change services, your tire pressures will get checked regularly. Another paper trail and regulations for automotive repair shops equals additional costs for the consumer in the long run.

There is new technology that is growing in popularity that utilizes nitrogen in the tires instead of compressed air. The molecules in nitrogen do not permeate through rubber like compressed air resulting in maintaining tire pressures longer. The use

[SEE CARS page 16]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The new Chamber of Commerce board happily serves the community of Orinda. (front row - L-R) **Dina Zapanta**, First Republic Bank; **Susan Martin**, Prudential California Realty; **Keith Miller**, Pacific Union Int'l Real Estate; **Bob Roult**, Diversified Capital Funding (middle row) **Sylvia Deaton**, Merrill Lynch; **Sue Breedlove**, Breedlove Insurance Services; **A.J. Nisen**, Bank of America Home Loans (back row) **Rick Kattenburg**, Kattenburg Architects; **Patti Camras**, Coldwell Banker Real Estate; **Candy Kattenburg**, executive director of the chamber.

Comedy and Champagne Live at the Orinda! on March 5

By SUZAN LORRAINE
Contributing Writer

Have you had much to laugh about lately? Want to feel your ribs bouncing and your jaw stretching again? Join the Orinda Chamber of Commerce on Friday, March 5 at the Orinda Theater for a laugh a minute! The event showcases five highly acclaimed masters of comedy - Ed Tracey, Larry "Bubbles" Brown, Dan St. Paul, Mark Pitta, and Johnny Steele.

The award winning comedians - who have been specially picked to tickle Orinda's funny bone - have entertained across the nation (and especially in the Bay Area scene) and on high visibility TV shows such as Letterman and Johnny Carson. Their topics cover everything from corporate politics to baseball to immigration - nothing is sacred.

ing is sacred.

"Live at the Orinda!" is the brainstorm of Rick Kattenburg, Orinda Chamber board member and past president. The champagne-splashed evening of laughter is a jointly planned effort with Tommy T's Comedy House of Pleasanton and the Lamorinda Film and Entertainment Foundation.

"We wanted to do something different than the usual wine and cheese mixer to support our local non-profit groups," said Kattenburg. "What could be more fun than a night of comedy and champagne in our beautiful Orinda Theater?"

Pre-show activities, beginning at 7 p.m., include video clips and sponsors' slides as well as libations being served under the marquee and in the lobby. The use of a

[SEE COMEDY page 16]

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◆ WILDER from page 1

to the project from essentially all parties, an acknowledgment of Wilder's unique inherent value, and something that's rare in this type of action - no change in primary investor (Farallon), or developer (Brooks Street).

"The financial restructuring is great news for the project, the buyers - really the entire community," said Keadjian, spokesperson for Brooks Street. "The savings achieved as a result are being passed on to the buyer. Financially, Wilder is in great shape, and we are looking forward to beginning construction of our first homes later this year."

Wilder's project manager, Michael Olson, who has spent more than a decade meeting with residents, local politicians, regulatory agencies and environmentalists, says he sees 2010 as the year that the neighborhood will begin to take shape. "Seeing is believing, and this is the year that the community will start to believe that Wilder is a reality," Olson said.

Olson believes that those who initially raised concerns about the project's potential impacts have helped design a community that is environmentally sensitive - approximately 1,300 acres of Wilder will be dedicated to open space. "Their efforts resulted in many modifications to the

original proposal, reflecting the intention to maintain or enhance the area's natural beauty, the public's access to it, as well as preserving the habitat for potentially threatened local wildlife," Olson said. He added, "we are grateful for their contribution to the process."

Skeptics may say, "OK, but what's really been done the last few years?" Well, last year the grading process that began in 2006, a major undertaking, was finally completed. The Planning Commission has approved Wilder's residential architecture, and the majority of underground utilities along Wilder Road, the project's thoroughfare have been installed. Deposits are now being accepted on seven initial parcels, and these lots will be ready for home construction in late spring.

Orinda residents are understandably eager to see progress for many reasons. Ultimately, five ball fields designed for baseball and soccer will be built by the developer, owned by the City of Orinda, and operated by the Parks and Recreation Department. Construction of the first two

fields, which are lighted, all-weather turf ball fields designed for baseball and soccer, is scheduled to begin this summer.

Another publicly available facility is the proposed Art & Garden Center, with its terraced gardens, special exhibits, and gardening classes. Add to that the integration of trails and paths that weave through the natural landscape and connect to existing Orinda trails, and there's likely to be something to look forward to for just about everyone.

Also, work is scheduled to begin this summer on the Quarry House, a large hacienda designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, which will serve as a gathering place featuring an Olympic-style pool. Local competitive swimmers will definitely be looking forward to its completion. So, it's been a long process, but although caterpillars don't move very fast, they have the ability to transform into something beautiful and inspiring, as they ultimately take wing. I think we're all eager to see the result of that transformation. Perhaps it will exceed some of our wilder imaginings.

--- Advertisement ---

What Does This Mean?

By EVAN CORSTORPHINE
 Portable CIO

We're asked interesting questions almost every day. And, we don't always have the answers. The key to helping people is the ability to research a problem and quickly sort through data to find the right answers. Research is an integral part of our job.

One example is the person who called with a strange screen problem on her laptop. She left the laptop open on her table, and when she came back, her cat was sprawled across the keyboard, and apparently pressed some keys in the process. As a result of the mysterious key strokes, the entire screen image had been re-oriented 90 degrees. If she wanted to use her computer like this, she had to lay the computer on its side to read the screen properly!

We typed in "screen displaying sideways" on Google and found many others had experienced the same problem. The answer was to press the Control, Alt, and up-arrow keys simultaneously. This toggles the monitor between orientations. Problem solved.

Another problem occurred when my iPhone wouldn't shut off. I typed in the search bar "force shutdown iphone." *Voila!* Holding down the power and home keys for ten seconds did the trick.

Last week, a customer had a PC that was displaying the blue-screen-of-death (BSOD) when they turned it on. It said "Missing or corrupt NTFS.sys" error on the screen, along with other numbers and codes that don't make much sense if you're not a Microsoft engineer. By typing the exact error message into Google, we came up with a plethora of avenues to research.

Ten years ago, we couldn't do this. The information wasn't there, and it was a simple matter of whether we personally had seen this error before or had run across it during a certification course

When we're stumped, the first place we look is the search engines. Search engines use different algorithms to gather results so they don't usually produce the same results. As a result, it pays to visit the three biggies, Google, Yahoo and now, Bing. The way an inquiry is phrased makes a difference to the search engine, so it's important to condense the basic elements of your problem into a meaningful chunk. For general errors, choose several key words to research your problem. To research a specific error message, you can type in the whole error message to get pointed in the right direction.

The web is a tremendous resource. It allows us to tap into the minds of millions of others and to learn vicariously from their mistakes and successes. There are thousands of websites dedicated to accumulating information to aid troubleshooting broken computers. We subscribe to one called Experts Exchange, (www.experts-exchange.com). It's a paid service and often helps us solve some of the more arcane problems we see.

In summary, our effective use of available resources is part of how we are able to quickly and effectively solve your problems. These same resources are available to you. I encourage you to do a little research when you have a problem. You may find the solution you need without calling for help. When you get really stumped, call the friendly staff at Portable CIO; info@theportablecio.com, or 925-552-7953.




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POLICE

Police Chief Bill French Retires at End of March

By FRAN MILLER
Staff Writer

After 26 years with the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office, and 39 months as Orinda's police chief, Bill French will retire at the end of March. A 1978 graduate of Campolindo High School and a Lamorinda native, French resides in the Bay-Delta region with his wife and two high school age children. For now, he plans to do a little fishing, work on household projects, help coach his son's baseball team and volunteer in his home community.

French, 49, came to the job in 2007 and immediately placed an emphasis on crime prevention, making Orinda inhospitable for burglars and robbers. "Our department sent a clear message that it was not ok to enter Orinda to commit crimes," says French.

He is proud of many accomplishments, including his department's commitment to alcohol education and to its zero tolerance policy. "We've worked hard to open dialogue between the schools, parents and the overall community," says French. "We have everything to gain by dialoguing on this issue and everything to lose by ignoring it."

And he is proud of his department as a whole. "I'm very happy with the caliber



FRAN MILLER
Police Chief Bill French retires March 30 after 26 years on the job.

of our personnel, and I leave the city of Orinda in very good hands," says French, whose fine reputation and high standards have drawn quality officers, all of whom will remain on staff.

French helped build working relationships with neighboring police departments, and agencies such as the FBI and the Secret Service. "While working on cases with these groups, our professionalism has helped us to establish great credibility," says French.

French says he will definitely miss the



POLICE BLOTTER

January 2010

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 82 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Assault with a Deadly Weapon: 1 assault reported on Sundown Terrace.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 3 incidents were reported on Moraga Way, Irwin Way and Alta Vista.

Commercial Burglary: 1 incident reported on Altarinda Road.

Residential Burglary: 2 incidents reported on Overhill Rd. and Dale Ct.

Grand Theft (theft of more than \$400 value): 2 incidents reported on Alta Vista and on Lombardy Ln.

Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 1 incident was reported on Loma Vista Dr.

Petty Theft - All Other: 2 incidents reported on Moraga Way and Meadow Ln.

Stolen Vehicle: 1 stolen vehicle was

reported on El Toyonal.

Vandalism: 5 incidents reported, 2 on Tahos Rd., 1 on Oakwood Rd., and 2 on Estates Dr.

Arrests

Alcohol - Drunk in public: 7 arrests were made at Orinda Way, Camino Sobrante, Moraga Way, Theatre Square and Orinda Way at Santa Maria Way.

Driving Under the Influence: 1 arrest was made on Orinda Way.

Indecent Exposure: 1 arrest was made at Theatre Square.

Other - Felony: 1 arrest was made on Moraga Way.

Warrant Arrests: 7 arrests were made on Camino Pablo, Moraga Way, Camino Pablo at Manzanita Dr., Camino Pablo at Camino Sobrante, Camino Pablo at Orinda Way, and 2 on Gateway Blvd.

- Compiled by Jeanette Irving, Orinda Police Department

community and people of Orinda.

"I feel strongly about people contributing to their communities, and Orinda is a

model for community involvement," says French. "To end my career here is very satisfying."

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HEALTH

◆ **PRESIDENT** from page 3

Speaking of laws on the books, the law requiring the use of hands-free devices by drivers talking on mobile phones has been around for more than a year and a half now. Compliance was good for awhile but seems to be on the wane.

I was walking down Vashell Way – the one-way alley behind Casa Orinda – and came across a gentleman who was trying to back out of a tight parking space. We all know that can be a challenging task – and he was trying to do it with only one hand. Why? Because he was holding his cell phone to his head with his other hand. We made eye contact, and I was tempted to remind him of the hands-free law. I didn't do so only because I knew that man didn't need any more distractions at the moment – for his safety and mine.


If you've detected a theme in this col-

umn, give yourself a gold star. One of my volunteer commitments is serving as a member of the Orinda Traffic Safety Advisory Committee. We meet generally on the third Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Sarge Littlehale Community Room on the upper level of City Hall. Members of the public are welcome to express their concerns about traffic safety in their neighborhoods, and to learn what they, their neighbors and the city can do to address their concerns. My fellow committee members and I can't create solutions overnight but we can help you understand and start the process.

What are things that make you wonder – about traffic safety or other topics in Orinda? I'd like to hear from you. Please email me at Mark@orindaassociation.org. In the meantime, whenever you're behind the wheel and on the road, let's be careful out there.

BALANCED LIVING

Being Mindful of Stress



Andrea Colombu

When life happens, stress is usually there as well. It's not that life is innately stressful, but that we often make it that way.

Aside from the unavoidable stress created by traumatic experiences, much of our stress is lifestyle induced. In its pure and simple form, life just is. What we do with life, how we deal with it is what really counts.

Once again, the rich wisdom of the East provides us with an immensely useful and profoundly impactful approach to life by offering a practice to help us manage the unpredictability of life and our stressful life styles. That practice is known as mindfulness.

In its most formal definition, mindfulness practice simply means to deliberately pay attention to the unfolding of life's events, without judgment and with the intention of being present with what is happening. With this deliberate process of minding what is happening for us, even when we do not like it, we create an opportunity to slow things down, observe them carefully without kneejerk reactions, which makes space for other choices we can make to help our situation.

Stress reduction begins by first noticing the presence of stress in our lives and then intentionally breaking old unhealthy stress coping patterns. Lastly, and most importantly, be aware of the causes of stress.

This mindful reframing process helps us reduce stress and change our lives because with regular practice it begins to literally rewire our neuropsychology – hence literally changing our brain as scientifically proven by the astonishing finding of neuroplastic-

ity. Our brain changes with experience – which experiences would you like to have to help you change your life?

Although mindfulness practice finds its origins in spiritual traditions like Buddhism and Hinduism, its effectiveness and usefulness not only transcends religious boundaries, but it also passes the skeptical test of the scientific world.

Mindful Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programs created by the Stress Reduction Clinic, founded by Jon Kabat-Zinn over 30 years ago at the University of Massachusetts, have been validated by the science and medical communities as an instrumental means for stress reduction. Numerous documented scientific studies of psychological and physiological disorders have shown reduction in anxiety, depression, binge eating, hypertension and sleep deprivation when the clinic's stress reduction techniques have been applied. They have also recorded an increase in immune system response, better digestion, and a sense of wellbeing – all critical for dealing with such things as cancer and addiction.

I have been practicing mindfulness in many aspects of my life for years and can personally attest for its inestimable benefits. Because of its efficacy, accessibility and practicality, I have begun introducing mindfulness practice as the foundation for a series of stress reduction classes. As you may find out, beginning mindfulness practice is fairly easy but it requires good initial instruction, patience and diligence in order to show all of its benefits.

If we pay very close attention, life truly happens only in the present moment. And the present moment is perfect as it is. What makes it difficult and stressful is our conditioned tendency to not be present, to be either worried about the future or distracted by memories of the past. Mindfulness helps us center our experience in the moment and opens us up to the fullness of life. We may not have a choice over what life throws on our path, but we have choice over how we walk that path. Until next time, be well and blessings!

For more information, questions and comments, contact Andrea Colombu at info@informaorinda.com or colombuthery.com



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The following is a list of Orinda Association (OA) members as of February 11, 2010. Thanks to their contributions, the OA offers *The Orinda News* to all residents and businesses free of charge, produces the annual 4th of July parade and festivities, hosts forums of public interest, honors local volunteers and environmentalists, runs the Seniors Around Town program, and coordinates the Volunteer Center. Thank you!

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The Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program supplies volunteer drivers to take seniors to various appointments. Here driver **Gun Bolin** helps **Grace Werlin** into the car.

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JILL GELSTER
The Orinda Association's annual volunteer and environmental awards dinner is always a big hit. This year Jenny Papka won the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental award - shown here with her Eurasian Eagle Owl.

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[SEE MEMBERS page 11]

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◆ MEMBERS from page 10



SALLY HOGARTY

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by Sheena
and The Living Lean Program (925-360-7051)

7th Annual Student Visual Arts Competition at Orinda Library Gallery in March



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Erin Cherry won second place in last year's competition with her photograph entitled "Winter Fairy Tale."

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The Orinda Arts Council is excited to announce this year's competition exhibition which runs from March 5 - 30 with an artists reception on Wednesday, March 10 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. – light refreshments and music will be included. At the reception, student winners will be awarded cash prizes in first (\$300), second (\$200) and third place (\$100) as well as honorable mention (\$25) in three categories – 2D, 3D and photography. Between 160 and 200 entries are anticipated from local high school students.

CC Klevan, committee chair and OAC member since 1998 said, "I take my hat off to the kids – first for delivering a gallery quality piece of art, and second I congratulate them for learning how to submit art. This year, we are following the Orinda Library Gallery rules just like the professional artists." Judging will take place March 2 - 5 with winners' teachers contacted in advance and invited to attend the reception and award ceremony.


What does it take to make this event a success? Klevan's response, "This year we tried online registration at www.orindaartscouncil.org thanks to Aubyn Severson's genius coding. Once the kids register online, we get automatic emails showing they've registered; next the info downloads into Excel spreadsheets. We've also taken care of gallery labels, judges' forms, check-in procedures and correspondence regarding picking up artwork once the show is over." Other OAC Visual Arts Competition committee members who have contributed to the months of work required to guarantee success include Nancy Daniels

(past president), Susan Mautner, Gwen Burns and Susan Garell (OAC president). Garell is working with the National Charity League mother and daughter volunteers to help with the delivery and installation of student art. Maggie Boscoe, curator of the gallery, helped recruit judges.

OAC Visual Art Competition (VAC) teachers from AUSD schools who work hard to make the event possible include: Karen Carbone, Susan Lane, Deb Taylor, Robert Porter, and Bear Begelman from Acalanes High School; Deborah Hovey-Lacour, Jill Langston and Justin Seligman from Campolindo High School; and Rosemary Jensen, Gavin Kermode, Susan McCauley and Stan Heard from Miramonte High School.

Conscientious VAC teachers from local private schools include Karen Sanford from the Athenian School; Michelle Avery and Jeff Key from Head-Royce School; Kristin Lamoureux from Holden High School; Noel Williams from the Orinda Academy; Aram Muksain and Gillian Bailey from Bentley School; and Gretchen Garlinghouse and Christina Williams from The College Preparatory School.

The Orinda Arts Council is celebrating its 60th year in 2010. Not only does OAC fund the Visual Arts Competition but it has also inaugurated and funded various OUSD visual and performing arts programs including the Arts Integration Program at the Orinda Intermediate School and the annual Orinda Idol. Watch for upcoming news about their 60th Gala celebration and other events celebrating 60 years of dedication to art in our schools and community. To volunteer, email them at oac@bluestar.com.




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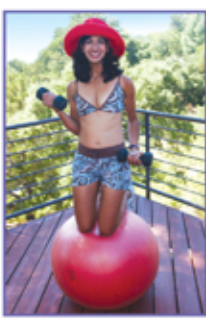
I was 45 and nothing I did seemed to make a difference in my overall fitness level. I had low energy, was having trouble sleeping and felt run down and dissatisfied with the way I looked in my clothes. Even when I tried to do the things that had worked to get me in shape in the past, it didn't seem to matter. Then I saw an article about Living Lean and it seemed different than anything I had ever tried. Sheena spent time devising an eating and exercise plan that would help me meet my goals. I began to see results in a couple of weeks and even though I've had some bumps along the way, I've learned that nothing is irreversible and that by focusing on my plan, I can always keep moving forward. I am stronger than I've ever been with more energy. The trainers are incredibly motivating, the classes are great fun.


Michelle Foster

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★ HIGHLIGHT #3

SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Marching to the Beat of a Different Drum

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY
Contributing Writer

The sound of drums descends into the parking lot at Holden High School, as a young man repeats a rhythm. Teacher Jennifer Polse Payne's face lights up as she brags about the student populace at Holden High School. "We tend to get a lot of artsy kids. They are so talented, it's amazing."

She passes through Holden's corridors, lined with impressive art projects and homework assignments, and enters a room filled with couches and murals. One wall is filled with guitars and amps. The room is a commons area where students meet weekly to discuss school business, celebrate student and teacher achievements, and learn how to "positively express emotions."

"The social and emotional growth of a being is as important as the academic," she says. "The school feels like a home to them. It truly feels like a community." All students are required to put in an hour each

week caring for their school – for instance emptying trash, working with mulch containers or recycling. "Kids learn quickly that this is their space," she adds.

Payne, who is a certified marriage and family therapist, works as lead counselor at Holden and also teaches social relations. She is impassioned about the three students who have recently graduated from Holden: Brianna McFarland, Robert Griffin Hall, and Emma Harwayne.

According to Payne, students that enter the school graduate "a completely different person. They have self esteem, and awareness." Quite often the youth has not been served well by traditional educational venues. She points out that students learn an awareness, which teaches the ability "to advocate for themselves; to love and respect themselves for exactly who they are."

"Students don't stop learning at the end of the school day," Payne stresses, adding that many earn credit for work they complete through independent learning.



KRISTIN LAMOUREUX

Robert Griffin Hall, Emma Harwayne and Brianna McFarland graduated in February from Holden High School.

Students intern and explore what life will be like after they leave high school, by working with professionals in an array of areas.

Juniors and seniors participate in "Pas-

sion Projects" in which they explore the world outside of Holden and complete 60 hours engaged in a personalized project. Payne sites examples of various forms of

[SEE HOLDEN page 16]

A Gathering of Girls Celebrating Friendship and Sisterhood



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Girls from last year's Sister-to-Sister summit have fun with their roses and gift bags.

By KSENIJA SOSTER OLMER
Staff Writer

The first generation of girls who attended the inaugural Sister-to-Sister Summit 11 years ago is now all grown up. While some of the issues and discussion group titles have changed to reflect the new 21st century reality of a middle school girl's life, the day is still pretty much the same – shyness giving way to exuberance, girls chatting and giggling in small discussion groups, playing fun group games or scribbling down their secret hopes and fears. During the busy day, high school facilitators mentor their younger "sisters." New

friendships grow and a new awareness of what makes every girl special blossoms.

This year's summit will be held Saturday, March 20, from 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. on the beautiful campus of Bentley School in Lafayette. Middle school girls and their parents are well advised to register early as the event was sold out last year with a whopping 125 girls from all the local schools as well as Walnut Creek and as far away as Fremont. The deadline is March 12 and there is no on-site registration.

The theme for this year is Carnival and the choices for discussion groups are Magic Mirrors (Body Image), Clowning Around (Friendships and Cliques), Tunnel of Love


(Relationships), Poisonous Darts (Bullying and Harassment), Walking the Tightrope (Stress and Pressure), and The Big Top (Family Issues). The girls can choose two groups and attention is paid so that the younger girls fit in with their peers. There are also two separate high school panels for 6th and 7-8th graders, who oftentimes already have a lot of questions for their high school "sisters" about the upcoming transition to the new school.

Thanks to the generous support of Lamorinda and Walnut Creek AAUW members and community groups and businesses, the registration fee remains \$30 for the day, which includes lunch, snacks, T-shirts and

gift bags. Some scholarships are available.

The day is planned and led by carefully selected and well trained high school facilitators, who are positive role models, guided by a team of adult women volunteers. Sister-to-Sister Summit is a unique opportunity for middle school girls to talk about what is going on in their lives. Through activities, presentations and small discussion groups, they learn to make healthier choices, develop leadership skills, and become more supportive of each other.

Registration forms are available at all middle schools as well as online at www.aauwml.org/Sistertosister.html.




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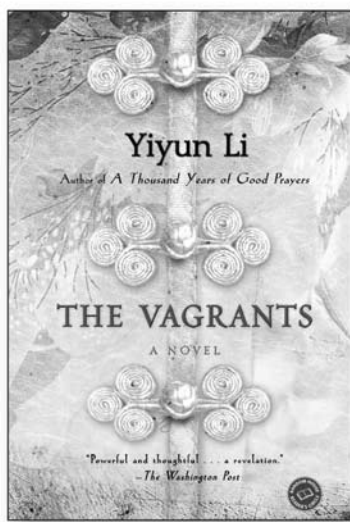
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Yiyun Li
Author of A Thousand Years of Good Prayers

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Auditions Scheduled for Orinda Starlight Village Players 2010 Season

By SUZAN LORRAINE
Contributing Writer

The Orinda Starlight Village Players (OrSVP) theater group is holding auditions for the 2010 season. The shows selected for this season and their run dates are:

- *A Murder is Announced* by Agatha

Christie – Director: Suzan Lorraine - June 4 through 26.

- *Kindly Keep It Covered* by Dave Freeman - Director: Geotty Chapple - July 16 through August 7.

- *Wind in the Willows* by Charlotte E. Meyer adapted from the classic story by Kenneth Grahame - Director: John Butterfield - August 27 through September 25.

OrSVP holds one set of auditions to cover the entire season's offerings, so be sure to add the dates to your calendar. Auditions are held at the Orinda Community Center, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda.

April 1 – Thursday – 6:30 p.m.

April 6 – Tuesday – 6:30 p.m.

April 11 – Sunday – TBD if needed.

Come join the fun at OrSVP in it's 29th season of performing theater in the park! For more details, call 925-528-9225.



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Enterprising Miramonte Juniors Publish Slick Photo Magazine

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

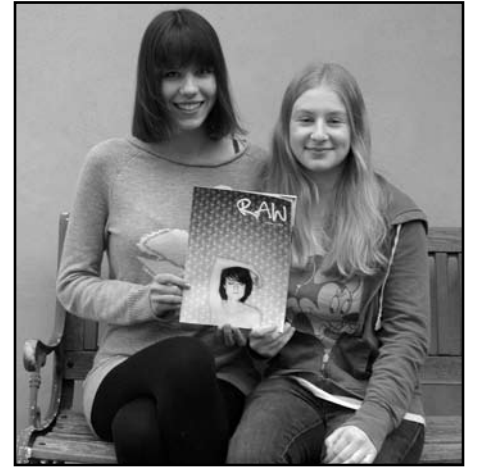
A trip to the East Coast to tour colleges turned into a mini career for two Miramonte juniors. Melissa Chenok and long-time friend Erin Cherry were staying with Chenok's grandmother, Ann Chernow, in Connecticut. "We were basically bored," recalls Chenok "so we decided to put together a magazine."

Both amateur photographers, the girls decided to make it a photo magazine with a few relevant articles. They posted their idea on the photo-sharing site www.flickr.com and sent emails out to others in the photo-sharing community and within a few hours, had 300 potential subscribers. "It was amazing," says Cherry. "We had responses from all over the world."

The first issue of *Raw* debuted in January. It featured young Swedish photographer Annette Pehrson and included photographers from around the world in the 36 page issue. They also scored with a feature article on Larry Silver, a well-known professional photographer with over 50 years experience, who just happened to be a friend of Chenok's grandmother (also an artist). Silver is known for his black and white photos of body builders at Muscle Beach, California and, most recently, for his photographic exposition "China Through a Foreigner's Eyes."

Chenok and Cherry, who have known each other since the fourth grade, both like taking portraits and fashion photography. While they both use digital, they think film delivers a better quality and plan on setting up their own darkroom in the near future.

While the first issue includes a few photos from the young publishers, they don't want the magazine to be about them. "At least half of our contributors and subscribers are from outside the United States,"



SALLY HOGARTY
Erin Cherry (L) and Melissa Chenok show off the first issue of their new magazine *Raw*.

says Cherry. "We want the magazine to be about them." Besides, the girls are too busy dealing with international copyright laws, printing and mailing logistics, and coordinating photographers and writers. "We have learned so much about publishing," says Chenok. "It's really a lot of work."

Thanks to online pal John Troxel of Chicago (who writes a question and answer column for *Raw*) the young entrepreneurs learned about MagCloud, an online printer. The print-on-demand company enables people to publish magazines without a big upfront cost and lots of publications sitting around. Publishers just upload a PDF and MagCloud takes care of the printing order by order.

"The first issue was the hardest," says Chenok. "But now we know what to expect." Issue number 2, which should be available in late February or early March, will feature a 16-year-old photographer and include an interview with Gap photographer Brian Fessenden.

"It's definitely a bit overwhelming at times," adds Cherry. "But we're getting it done and having fun."

Celebrating Everything Spanish at Spanish Fiesta



PAT RUDEBUSCH
(L-R) **Glorietta students Rebecca Weston, Katie Partington, Christine Partington, and Blake Sharp** performed in the third annual Spanish Fiesta at Wagner Ranch School. The annual event showcases students from each of Orinda's elementary schools who are enrolled in an after-school Spanish language program.



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LOCAL RESIDENTS

Local Resident Celebrates Her 100th Birthday

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY
Contributing Writer

When Helen and George Vurek moved to Orinda in 1939, things were much different. Two years prior, the Caldecott Tunnel had been completed. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was President. And, there were less than 1,000 people living in the town.

As Helen Vurek celebrated her 100th birthday on February 5, surrounded by over 80 members of her family and friends, Orinda's population has swelled to over 18,000.

"100? Whoa!" she chuckles, her voice full of wonder. "100? I've been waiting for that birthday for 100 years."

Her spirit is contagious, her mind sharp, and her sense of humor astounding. She is animated, quick to laugh, and energetic. One is instantly at home in her presence. She refers to the room as her "vista." And says that her view of the canyon below her hilltop home, makes her think that she is "fortunate," adding that the vista "seems to make my life more interesting."

Her son, Jerry and his wife Ruth live next door. The Centenarian bends forward to whisper that her only child is "75 years old and I'm not going to let him forget it. The pair gets out to lunch several times a week,

and often stops in Orinda Books to visit with Ginger, the bookstore cat. She also makes an annual pilgrimage to the Cabrillo Music Festival in Santa Cruz, something she has done since the first festival over 45 years ago.

Her son adds that in her younger years, Vurek volunteered for many area service organizations. Besides working as a volunteer at Kaiser and at the Orinda Library bookstore, she served as president of the Contra Costa Tuberculosis and Health Association, which later became the organization known as the American Lung Association.

"I hope our generation appreciates the amount of work the new generation is doing," she said. People are "more aware of what goes on in the world and have more freedom to change things." She points out that "the younger generation learns to tolerate us as they take care of us." She also speaks passionately of "finding the good in people that nobody else can," and the importance of not walking "past and ignoring" people.

After stints at several department stores, she had a career working at the Orinda Post office from 1940-1962. "We knew everyone," she says of the people in the post office, and it is easy to imagine the positive effect she had on her customers. "And we



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Helen Vurek (L) celebrates her 100th birthday with friend Miyako Kodaira from Tokyo, Japan.

knew everything about everyone," she adds with a smile. For her work in Orinda, she received a 2007 award from the Orinda Historical Society for being an Orinda pioneer, and her "lasting contribution to the history of Orinda and her ongoing support of the goals of the Orinda Historical Society."

Artwork from around the world surrounds the petite, animated lady. She and her husband George, who was a craftsman, and worked as a metal pattern maker, were avid travelers, and journeyed extensively through Indonesia, Canada, Asia, Mexico, Africa, Afghanistan and Europe. The walls of her home are filled with artifacts, photography, and art from around the globe. She admiringly recalls her husband's ability with language, and said that knowledge

helped them make "all sorts of friends" around the world.

But, when asked her favorite place to visit, she pauses, smiles solemnly and gestures: "home."

Getting to Know Your Daughter Page By Page

By GLORIA BURKE
Contributing Writer

You may think you know all there is to know about your adult daughter, and she may think the same about you, but try writing a children's chapter book together. You will soon discover that amid the familiar landscape of inevitable garden-variety ups and downs that are part of your long lived, emotionally alive duo, a whole host of delightful and not so delightful surprises await you.

For instance, I marveled at my daughter Katherine's ease and effectiveness at challenging various passages I wrote, sometimes the very ones I was particularly taken with. "It's wonderfully written," she would say. "But do you really think it adds anything to the story?" And then, more gently, "Why don't we file it away for now?" Here read, "That way, whenever you feel ready, you can throw it away yourself."

A pitch perfect example of "daughter



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Katherine (L) and Gloria Burke learned much about each other while co-authoring a children's book.

mothering" if ever I heard one. But, after all, my daughter is herself a mother.

Undaunted by the 800 miles that separated us, and armed with a rough outline of how the story would unfold, as well as sketches of the main characters (my daughter's artwork), we plunged right in.

Soon a consistent division of labor de-

[SEE WRITING page 16]

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◆ **WRITING** from page 15

veloped. One of us would write the outline of a chapter, email it, call at the appointed time, and read it out from her computer screen, while the other followed along on hers. Changes were discussed. Some were adopted, some not. The amended text would then be subjected to further revisions.

On we went weaving our words together, creating a story neither of us could have written alone, trying to maintain our unique voices in the process. So seamless did our work together become, that soon it was impossible to remember who had contributed what.

Before we knew it, it was time to stop for the day. "I can't talk tomorrow. How

about Thursday at 11 a.m.?" Eventually we would arrive at the third and final version of the chapter. Now it was time to draft the outline of the next chapter, and repeat the entire process again.

Our long distance arrangement of two laptops, two speakerphones, and frequent emails succeeded in erasing the miles between us. As we continued to pursue our shared goal of story telling, our ease and frankness with each other increased more and more. As a result, we became more adept at constructively confronting the usual prickly patches and long-standing irritations inevitable in all mother daughter relationships, and our appreciation and respect for one another grew.

There were many stops and starts along the way: babies, sad but expected parent/

grandparent deaths, a move, a retirement, remodels and vacations. Prospective young readers grew up, and new ones appeared. Through it all, we kept on writing.

Finally, our book, *Finding Mr. Ness*, was finished. But, although we both felt a strong sense of accomplishment at its completion, we were surprised to discover we were in no way ready to end the growing enjoyment we had experienced as a writing team.

"Let's brainstorm about the next book," she'd say. "Do you think we should write a series?" I'd add. "How about *The Taliana Travelers*?"

Katherine Burke and Gloria Burke live in Seattle and Orinda respectively. Finding Mr. Ness, the first book in The Taliana Travelers series is now available at Orinda Books as well as Amazon.com.

◆ **CARS** from page 5

of nitrogen is growing but not known much by consumers here in the United States. It is much more common in Europe. Even Nascar race cars use nitrogen inflation.

I believe the answer is spending more energy and money on consumer awareness. Develop television and radio commercials on the subject, educate through Internet social websites and news talk shows. Pass out free tire pressure gauges during sporting events. I believe this tire pressure situation is a real problem. I do not believe that government intervention is the answer. Please keep your tires properly inflated, and we can stay clear of this whole mess.

◆ **HOLDEN** from page 13

student work in visual arts, composition, construction and design, and volunteering with area organizations like ARF (Animal Rescue Foundation). Besides traditional core curriculum (science, history, math, English), students are also required to complete a semester of life skills – explor-

◆ **COMEDY** from page 5

live feed being projected on a screen will ensure that everyone in the 750-seat theater has the best possible view.

"This event offers fun-loving people of our East Bay communities the opportunity to share an evening of relaxing laughter while discovering all the charms of Orinda," said Sue Breedlove, Orinda Chamber president. "We expect this will become an annual event."

Local non-profit groups, such as the Educational Foundation of Orinda (EFO), will receive a portion of "Live at the Orinda!" proceeds from the event. In addition,

individuals and companies can sponsor a local non-profit organization for \$100 by contacting the Orinda Chamber of Commerce at www.orindachamber.org

Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door for attendees 17 and older. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the show starts at 8 p.m. A special pre-sale is underway offering tickets to local residents. Tickets are available at the Orinda Chamber website, the First Republic Bank (224 Brookwood Road), or The Framemaker (19 Orinda Way). For more information, contact the Orinda Chamber of Commerce at 254-3909 or at www.orindachamber.org.

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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

MARCH

- 4 **Orinda Books** presents *Sisters in Crime* – Rhys Bowen, Penny Warner, Cara Black and Diana Orgain who will discuss their latest mystery novels at 4 p.m. And, Elaine Beale will discuss *Another Life Altogether* at 6 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 5 **First Friday Forum**, Innovation or Die: The Future of Print Journalism, 1:30 p.m. Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette.
Ambassador Warren Clark, career diplomat and now executive director of Churches for Middle East Peace, will speak at Orinda Community Church, 7 p.m. Call 254-4906.
Orinda Chamber of Commerce and CAIFF Comedy Night, Orinda Theater, 7 p.m. Award winning comedians and champagne reception, 254-3909.
- 6 **Friends of the Library** Book Sale, bookshop and sorting room, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call 254-2184.
Orinda Books presents author Yiyun Li who will discuss *The Vagrants*, about life in China in the 1970s, 276 Village Square, 3 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 7 **The Orinda Arts Council and the Pacific Chamber Symphony** special benefit concert, 4:30-6:30 p.m., featuring Maestro Lawrence Kohl and San Francisco Symphony Orchestra's first violinist, Victor Romasevich. Contact 925-519-3858 or gwenburnes1@hotmail.com.
- 10 **Orinda Historical Society**, New Images of Old Orinda, presented by Connie de Laveaga Stoops and features newly discovered photographs by Orinda pioneer E.I. de Laveaga from post-earthquake San Francisco and Orinda, 1906-1909, Fellowship Hall, Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, 7 p.m. Free 254-1353.
- 13 **California Independent Film Festival** presents *West Side Story*, screening of the film starring Rita Moreno (who will be in attendance), 7:30 p.m., Orinda Theater. General admission \$20; seniors/students \$15. Tickets at box office or www.caiff.org.
- 20 **Orinda Books** presents author Christine Scharmer who will discuss *Raising Mario Twice: How Love Can Transform a Life After a Tragic Event*, 3 p.m. 254-7606.
Cal Shakes hosts its 15th annual gala fundraiser, La Dolce Vita, Four Seasons Hotel, 757 Market St., San Francisco, 6 p.m. For tickets call 510-548-3422, ext. 125, email events@calshakes.org or visit calshakes.org.
Sister-to-Sister Summit, Bentley School in Lafayette, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., register online at www.aauwoml.org/sistertostister.html.

AT THE LIBRARY

- All events are free unless otherwise specified. Note: the library will be closed on Wednesday, March 31.
- 2 **Toddler Lapsit**, stories, songs and finger plays for 1- to 3-year-olds and their caregivers, Gallery Room, 10 and 10:30 a.m. No registration required but attendance limited to once per week. Also March 3, 9 and 10.
Peek-A-Boo Time, stories, songs, rhymes and rhythms for newborns to 1-year-olds (pre-walkers) and their caregivers, Gallery Room, 11:30 a.m. Also March 9.
- 6 **Saturday Morning Live!** Family story time for 3- to 5-year-olds, Picture Book area, 11 a.m. Also March 13, 20 and 27.
Origami for Fun, learn to fold animals and figures. All skill levels welcome, suitable for those 8 years and older, parents help children less than 7 years, Tutoring Room, 2:30 to 4 p.m. Also March 13, 20 and 27.
- 8 **The Amazing Life of Birds** with Bay Area native Gary Walters who will present a sideshow of birds from Central America and our own backyard, 7 to 8 p.m.
- 10 **Drawing Class for Young Children**. Geanie Choy leads a creative drawing class for K through 2nd-graders, Tutoring Room. Sign-ups start at 3 p.m., class at 4 p.m.
Paws to Read for 1st- through 5th-graders. Sign up for a 25-minute reading session with temperament-tested dogs, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Register at the library. Also March 17 and 24.
- 13 **Weekend Paws to Read** for 1st- through 5th-graders. Sign up for a 25-minute reading session with temperament-tested dogs, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Register at the library. Also March 27.
- 16 **Tell It: Tales for Preschoolers**, a storyteller tells traditional myths and legends about Irish Fairies, adapted for 3- to 5-year-olds, Tutoring Room, 1 p.m.
- 17 **Berkeley Repertory Theatre Docent Program** features a presentation on their current production, *Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West*, 7 to 8 p.m., Library Fireside.
- 25 **Storytelling for Adults**, presented by Contra Costa Tale Spinners. Share your own stories or just enjoy listening, Gallery Room, 7 to 9 p.m.

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

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.
- Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe**. Third Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda www.moragaadobe.org
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**. Fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library. Call 253-1997.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**. Every Friday, 7 a.m., Postino's in Lafayette 254-0440, ext.463.
- Montelindo Garden Club**. Third Friday of the month, September through May, 9 a.m., at Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way. Guest speaker on March 19 is Patrice Hanlon from Heather Farms. Visit www.montelindogarden.com or email montelindogarden@aol.com.
- Orinda Rotary**. Every Wednesday at noon, Community Center, 254-2222.
- Orinda Association**. Second Monday, 7:15 p.m., Orinda Library, May Room, 254-0800.
- Orinda Hiking Club**. Hike every Wednesday, 9 a.m., old library parking lot on Irwin Way. Call Steve at 253-0131 or visit www.orindahiking.org.
- Orinda Historical Society**. Third Wednesday of the month, 3 to 5 p.m., OHS Museum, 254-1353.
- Orinda Job's Daughters**. First and third Monday, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 925-283-7176.
- Orinda Juniors** community service group. First Tuesday of the month, September to June, 7 p.m. Contact Diane Petek and Ann Sullivan at orinda.juniors@yahoo.com for location.
- Orinda/Tábor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation**. Fourth Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.
- Orinda Teen Advisory Council**. Second Wednesday of the month, 4 p.m., Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. For information, email orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com.
- Orinda Woman's Club**. Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon; call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881.
- Second Wednesday Book Group** 3 p.m. Will discuss *The Bridge on the Drina* by Ivo Andric, Orinda Books, 276 Village Square. Call 254-7606.
- World Affairs Book Group**. Bimonthly, 3 p.m. Will discuss *Power Rules: How Commonsense Can Rescue American Foreign Policy* by Leslie Gelb, Orinda Books, 276 Village Square. Call 254-7606.

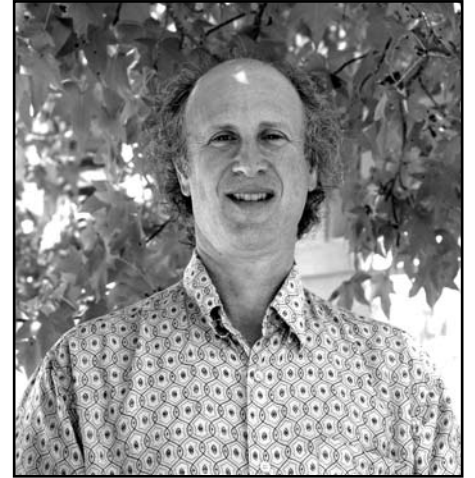
Send calendar items to Maggie Sharpe at m.sharpe66@gmail.com

Orinda Arts Council and Pacific Chamber Symphony Present Benefit Concert

By JANE GREENTHAL
Contributing Writer

On March 7, 2010, the Orinda Arts Council will host Maestro Lawrence Kohl and a trio of musicians from the Pacific Chamber Symphony at a private home in Orinda to benefit the two non-profit organizations in furthering their missions to support and advocate the performing arts in our schools and community.

Limited to 50 guests, the private concert will provide donors with a rare opportunity to hear Maestro Kohl's personal music selections. Guests will receive a detailed program and a discussion of the compositions to be performed. A selection of fine wines and food will be served. Donations are requested at \$85 per person or \$150 per couple. Individuals donating at a minimum of \$150 per person or \$250 per couple will receive an exclusive benefit package that includes prime seating for Pacific Chamber Symphony concerts, invitations to attend rehearsals and any pre- and post-concerts dinners or similar events, a one-year membership to the Orinda Arts Council (or upgraded to next level if already a member), and more.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Maestro Lawrence Kohl will perform at joint benefit.

Featured musicians include Victor Romasevich, a first violinist with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Music selections will include the Tchaikovsky's *Duet for Violin and Piano*, Schumann's *Fantasy Pieces for Clarinet and Piano*, and Mihaud's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano*. For more event information, please contact Gwen McNeilus at 925-519-3858.

The Future of Print Journalism is First Friday Topic

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

Innovation or Die: The Future of Print Journalism is the subject to be presented at the First Friday Forum, March 5, 1:30 p.m. in the sanctuary at Lafayette-Orinda



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Journalist Richard Koci-Hernandez speaks at next First Friday Forum.

Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette, by Richard Koci-Hernandez. This is a free event.

Koci-Hernandez is the Ford Foundation Fellow at the UC Berkeley School of Journalism where his project is to develop digital news sites for under-served communities.

Prior to this appointment, he was a photographer at the *San Jose Mercury News* where his work earned him two nominations for the Pulitzer Prize, and he was the recipient of the James K. Batten Knight Ridder Excellence Award. *Newsweek*, *Time*, *USA Today* and the *New York Times* have also featured his photographs.

Koci-Hernandez has taught multimedia workshops at Stanford University and the National Press Photographers Association and lectured at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Stanford University. He graduated from San Francisco State where he has been a guest instructor.

The lecturer will discuss the demise of newspapers throughout the country and why this has significance for all of us. He says, "As journalism goes through a significant and massive period of transition, the people's watchdog is in peril. If you care about journalism and believe it has a critical role to play in our society, then you must engage in the dialogue on the future of journalism. We can be sure that over the next 12 months, no one will suddenly work out how to fix the business model. I believe this leaves room for the community to help guide and rebuild local journalism. We've got to start somewhere; why not with a conversation?"

Come to engage in this conversation on March 5. Refreshments will be served in Fellowship Hall at 1 p.m. For further information, call 925-283-8722 or click on www.lopc.org.

MEETINGS:

CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

- Acalanes Union High School District**. First and third Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette.
- 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. Call 925-788-7323.
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**. Fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library. Call 253-1997.
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District**. Third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.
- Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**. Third Wednesday, 4 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road.
- Planning Commission**. Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, 253-4210.

BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 20

Some clients have seen results after just two treatments.

Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) uses sound, light and other methods to treat symptoms resulting from a traumatic life event such as an accident, abuse or other psychological insult. It is useful for treating anxiety disorders and depression and specifically for integrating trauma. "When we are traumatized, the language area of our brain shuts down. Through EMDR a person's lifelong habits can be reorganized," explains Smith.

Not many people are doing what Dr. Smith is doing, and she is eager to teach others. "I have an internship program and offer a low fee (\$50) neurofeedback clinic. It is based on the clinical model and involves a technician in training and sometimes a student as well," she says.

The Advanced Therapy Center offers a Breakthrough Weight Loss and Maintenance Group, which meets on a weekly basis for three consecutive months. The group addresses the psychological and physiological issues that often interfere with effective weight loss, examines the new science of weight loss, and engages in group process and support to help get through the hurdles that have undermined progress in the past. It involves a maximum of 12 individuals and the monthly fee is \$150. "I am very excited about the group. Members have the opportunity to participate in a pilot study of the impact of LENS Neurofeedback on weight loss," says Smith.

Dr. Candia Smith has been an Orinda resident for 20 years. Her son, Henry, and daughter, Anne, both graduated from Miramonte High School and are pursuing careers in the arts. Henry is a musician, and Anne is an artist. Dr. Smith stays in shape by practicing Pilates and dancing. "One of my favorite things to do is to go dancing

on a Hornblower Yacht cruise around the Bay," she says with a smile.

Advanced Therapy Center is a member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. For more information, visit the website at www.advancedtherapycenter.org or call Dr. Smith at 925-254-7823.



VALERIE HOTZ

Aimee Johnson joined JJ Professional Services after a long career with World Airways.

JJ Professional Services Provides Productivity and Satisfaction

Established in 1982, this technical recruitment firm provides temporary help in several sectors including architectural, engineering (all disciplines), information technology, construction, and several others. Centrally located at 12 Orinda Way, Suite C, the office has gorgeous views of the picturesque oak tree-studded Orinda hills, and the bells of nearby Santa Maria Church regularly chime to mark the hour.

Principal Aimee Johnson, joined the JJ Professional Services in the late 1980's, after more than 20 years with World Airways, most of which she served managing personnel as director of in flight service. Originally from Tonsberg, Norway, Johnson has been a Moraga resident for the past 40 years.

"We have been in the business a long time and people within the industry know us. It is interesting how much the business has changed. Today, if we are looking for

a specific discipline of engineer for a client, we use the Internet. Access is so much broader now," says Johnson. The firm helps clients reduce administrative overhead by offering payroll services. JJ Professional Services carries the individual on its payroll, deducts taxes, provides insurance coverage and issues a W-2 at year's end. Temp-to-Direct is offered when a client wants to hire someone, but prefers to try the individual out to ensure a proper fit before offering a direct position.

Because the firm has an extensive database and referrals, it also provides executive search services. The impressive client list includes Soha Engineers, Bayer Corporation, America Sugar Refining, Novartis, Chevron, Genentech, Stanford Hospital, Kennedy Jenks, Silverman Light and CH2M Hill, to name a few. "We help our clients secure qualified personnel and have flexibility to do other things in addition to architectural and engineering placement, such as manufacturing and environmental/Geo-Tech placement," says Johnson.

Occasionally Johnson journeys back to Norway to see old friends. Her son, Ste-

phen, is a 2004 graduate of Miramonte High School. He earned his B.S. in neuroscience at UC San Diego in 2008. A neurofeedback expert, he works at a drug and alcohol center in San Diego.

With over 30 years of experience in the field, Johnson's colleagues at JJ Professional Services, Kathy Flodder and Lou Traci assist in managing the firm, which is a member of the Better Business Bureau and the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. For more information, call 925-254-3011 or send an email to jjps@value.net.

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California Independent Film Festival Moves To Orinda

Originally established in Berkeley in 1997, the California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF) has been relocated to the Orinda Theater thanks to president and founder Derek Zemrak and his program and promotions director Beau Behan. Previously, the annual festival had taken place in

Livermore. Last December, CAIFF kicked off a monthly classics series beginning with Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*, followed by *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and last month's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Tickets are available for the March 13 screening of *West Side Story*. Rita Moreno will attend, participating in a question and answer session after the show. "She has everything. Moreno is the only person to have received a Tony, Grammy, Emmy and an Oscar," says Beau Behan.

Presently, Behan is gearing up for the four days of nonstop movie mania slated for April 22-25. "CAIFF is honoring Richard Dreyfuss with a Lifetime Achievement Award on April 24 at the Blackhawk Museum in Danville," says Behan. "His numerous outstanding contributions to the industry, including his devotion to music and art, as well his contributions to civic organizations are phenomenal."

The presentation of Dreyfuss' Lifetime Achievement Award takes place at the Gala event beginning at 7 p.m. on Saturday, April 25. This event was scheduled and booked prior to the festival's committing to its new home in Orinda. Orinda's own Chloe Pang will perform a classical piano piece from the film *The Competition* in honor of Mr. Dreyfuss. "Richard Dreyfuss is a very warm person, and people are thrilled to meet him. *Mr. Holland's Opus* will be screened at the festival," adds Behan.

Behan has always been involved in CAIFF, but this year he stepped up to be the

program and promotions director. His background is in information technology. While at college, he majored in mathematics and computers, but admits he has always loved watching movies. As program director, he is responsible for ensuring films get to the screening committee and all criteria are met in order for a film to be considered a finalist for an award. "I answer questions from filmmakers when they enter their films in the festival and organize the screening schedule for the festival," explains Behan. This year, Orinda filmmakers Julio Rubio and Ramona Maramonte's first independent film, *Six Sex Scenes and a Funeral* will be



LEILANIE PHOTOGRAPHY

Beau Behan keeps CAIFF running smoothly.

screened Friday, April 23.

Another aspect of Behan's role is scouting films by attending other film festivals. "We have two sister film festivals, the Sapporo International Film Festival that takes place in October of every year and the Monaco International Film Festival. Films are screened 24 hours a day for five days at Sapporo. We are trying to expand to include more partners in Australia and also in Europe. Behan attends other film festivals including Sundance, Mill Valley, Los Angeles, and Sonoma.

For more information about the California Independent Film Festival, including becoming a member and purchasing tickets for films, please visit the website at www.caiff.org.

Advanced Therapy Center-When it's Time to Change Your Life

The Advanced Therapy Center provides psychological diagnosis and therapy based on a holistic and integrated approach to healing. With more than 25 years of clinical experience, founding director Dr. Candia Smith works with clients to reach the heart of their challenges with individually tailored treatments and psychotherapy. The Advanced Therapy Center is conveniently located at 61 Moraga Way, #6, above Peet's Coffee & Tea.

Dr. Smith is a licensed psychologist who earned a doctorate in mental health from UC San Francisco and a master of science in health and medical sciences from UC Berkeley. Dr. Smith's credentials include certifications from the EMDR International Association, the American Psychological Association for proficiency in treating alcohol and other psychoactive substance abuse, as well as advanced training in LENS Neurofeedback.

"I was trained in the psychoanalytical model as a doctor of mental health, and I use advanced technologies and techniques, specifically Low Energy Neurofeedback System (LENS) and Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) to achieve what are often outstanding results," explains Smith.

LENS Neurofeedback is a breakthrough methodology that employs an extremely low voltage EEG (electroencephalogram) device to read brain waves. "This enables me to design an individually tailored feedback treatment for a client that encourages flexibility and healing of cognitive function. LENS, which is approved by the Food and Drug Administration, can help the brain release patterns caused by trauma," says Smith. Smith maintains potential benefits of neurofeedback include achieving improved sleep and energy level, enhanced attention span and focus, optimized cognitive performance and motor skills, diminished hyperactivity and reactivity, decreased anxiety, depression and mood swings, all attained without medication. "Neurofeedback helps the brain release old patterns and to learn a new way of relax-



VALERIE HOTZ

Dr. Candia Smith runs Advanced Therapy Center.

ing," adds Smith.

Treatment time varies with each individual circumstance, as many variables are involved such as nutrition, genetics and environmental factors. Typically, Dr. Smith begins by seeing a client three times a week in order to determine the course of treatment and once a week thereafter.

[SEE BUZZ page 19]

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