

THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
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City Council Considers New Bond Measure

By CHRIS LAVIN
Staff Writer

Measure Q may have died at the ballot box last November, but in the words of Mark Twain, "the reports of (its) death have been greatly exaggerated."

And while it won't be a "Measure Q" any more, supporters for the bond measure to fix roads and drains have already regrouped to get a similar measure back in front of voters before the end of the year. "This isn't over yet," said Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer, who supported the measure and cites the repairs as one of the most immediately critical issues facing the city.

Measure Q would have authorized the city to issue a \$59.1 million bond to fix roads and drainage pipes. While substantially more money is needed, given the dire conditions of so many of Orinda's 92 miles of roads, the Citizen Infrastructure

Committee arrived at that monetary figure because members, after studying polling results, did not believe a higher number would pass. As it turned out, Measure Q came up only 215 votes short of the two-thirds majority needed to pass.

Now, members of that committee and other supporters have already begun to regroup. In an open letter to the new city council released in December, committee members outlined three steps they recommend the council take immediately: first, the council should undertake a fresh review of the city's financial condition in order to convince skeptics of the measure that funds are needed; second, form a citizen's infrastructure commission, and finally, conduct a survey to find out why Measure Q lost. The final need is especially important, the letter stated, before asking another group of citizens to campaign for a new measure.

Councilmember Amy Worth said it was important to act quickly – the council will have to vote to put a similar measure on the ballot at one of its two City Council meetings in February in order to call a special election for the spring. Public meetings were held on January 25 and 31 to get local input.

Clyde Vaughn, a longtime vocal opponent of the bond measure, attended City Council meetings in January to voice his displeasure with the resurrection of the issue. He called once again for finding existing funds or reallocating fees to pay for road repairs.

Yet supporters of doing something to fix the roads before they get even worse outnumbered opponents. Former Mayor Bill Judge believes Orinda's roads are in

[SEE ROADS page 22]



CRISH BARTH

While Orinda residents are well aware of the effect the city's decaying streets have on cars, bicyclists and joggers are also at risk. Recently, Neil Barth, an experienced cyclist, hit a pothole on La Cuesta and went over the handlebars. She suffered cuts and bruises as well as a cracked rib.

South Orinda Schools Create Ivy Drive Issues

By MIKE MAHONEY
Contributing Writer

It's not uncommon for an early morning school commute to cause stress in a student or parent's daily routine. This sentiment rings true for those attempting to beat the 8 a.m. bell at Miramonte High School, and drastically more so for the South Orinda residents who live near the school.

As the Lamorinda population continues to grow, the residents of Ivy Drive and its many neighboring streets have watched their neighborhood become a local speedway for students and parents attempting to get to school on time. A south-bound commuter can bypass the daily gridlock of Moraga Way by illegally turning onto Ivy Drive and navigating through a residential neighborhood that ultimately ends in front of Miramonte's one and only entrance.

Further complicating the situation is the fact that Orinda Intermediate School is located within the Ivy Drive area, creating traffic jams as parents drop off and pick up their children.

The City of Orinda, as well as the Acalanes and Orinda Union School Districts, have acknowledged the problem and are participating in a subcommittee dedicated to solving the traffic problems, but many members of the area feel they are

not doing enough. Tim Silveira, both a resident of the Ivy Drive area and active member of the subcommittee, shares this sentiment. "The city won't do anything, nor will the school districts," said Silveira. "They won't do anything until they have to, until some child, elder, or resident gets killed by a car in our area."

Silveira is not the only Ivy area resident with a foreboding opinion. Roger James, an area resident since 1967, described the speeding students and drivers making

[SEE IVY page 16]

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SALLY HOGARTY

Chamber of Commerce members, Safeway personnel, and Orinda City Council members were out in force to welcome the newly remodeled Safeway in Orinda Village. The store now features expanded deli, fresh seafood, floral, and bakery departments as well as a Starbucks Cafe and a sushi bar with chef.

Gateway Valley Project Shuts Down for Winter

Project has new name and new complaints as initial grading began

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Montanera, the 245-home residential development project in Gateway Valley, has changed its name to Wilder. According to spokesperson Jason Keadjian, the name was chosen to better represent the natural aspects of the project. "The development is located in a beautiful rural setting with approximately 1,400 acres of open space. Calling it Wilder seemed more appropriate." Neighborhood trails will connect to regional trails allowing residents to hike or bike to nearby communities.

Grading for EVA Road

Initial grading for the project began in the spring of 2006. While some grading

projects caused little concern, the grading for the Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA) road at Brookside has some neighbors upset. "We expected some inconvenience in the short-term," says Bob Larson, one of four property owners bordering the EVA area. "But, we feel there has been a breakdown in communication with the developer and the City of Orinda." Larson, and other members of the Sunrise Hill Homeowners Association, attend City Council and Planning Commission meetings and have also met with the developer on numerous occasions during the past year. "We were told that the road would be in a slightly different location and that only a few trees would have to be removed," Larson explains. "But the road is much higher on the hill than we thought, and hundreds of trees have been removed. We thought it was to be a nature trail and an EVA road, but there isn't much nature left."

According to project manager Michael [SEE WILDER page 16]

Bill French Appointed Chief of Police

Bill French, Orinda's new Police Chief, began his law enforcement career in 1984 as a deputy sheriff for the Contra Costa Sheriff's office. His many assignments since then include serving in the detention division in Martinez, working a special enforcement team dealing with high crime areas, going undercover to enforce narcotics violations, and serving in the emergency services division. Chief French grew up in the Lamorinda area, and he attended Diablo Valley College and California State University, Hayward.

Former Police Chief Larry Gregg was promoted to the rank of captain and assigned to the Sheriff's Office in the inspection and control division.



HALEH ALLEN

Police Chief Bill French

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Hilton House Honored by City



VALERIE HOTZ

Cyndi Girgis, owner of Hilton House, was recognized by the City of Orinda as an "Outstanding Local Small Business" at the store's annual open house. Girgis (C) was presented with a proclamation by City Councilmember **Victoria Smith** (R). The resale furniture and home accessories shop has seen steady growth during its five years in business.

Orinda Woman's Club Accepting Applications for Funding

The Orinda Woman's Club is currently taking applications for major beneficiaries of their November Festival of Trees fundraising event. The application deadline is March 2, 2007. Applicants must conform to the OWC mission statement as follows: the population served must be Contra Costa and/or Alameda Counties; the organization must benefit families, women, and/or children; funds must go directly to the applying organization's constituents; and revenue of the applying organization may not exceed \$750,000 annually.

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Carol Ann Read Breast Health Center Kicks Off Completion Campaign

By JESSE WATERS
Contributing Writer

The new Oakland-based Carol Ann Read Breast Health Center kicked off its completion campaign with a fundraiser at Peter Read's home in Orinda. The Read family are major supporters of the new center named for Peter's late wife Carol, who died of breast cancer in 1997. The comprehensive center will centralize services under one roof with groundbreaking slated for late February and completion by the end of 2007. The facility will be located at the Providence Pavilion on Oakland's famous "Pill Hill," 3100 Summit Street.

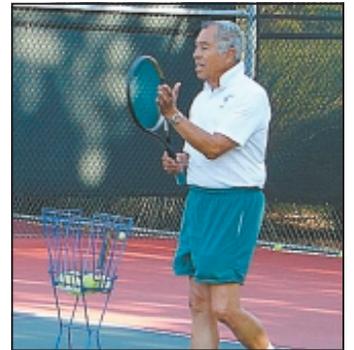


CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Peter Read welcomes Sherry Dumke to his Orinda home for the kick-off of the completion campaign for the new Carol Ann Read Breast Health Center.

Tennis Coach Honored at Surprise Celebration

Not much has surprised coach John Rodriques during his 19-year tenure coaching the boys' and girls' tennis teams at Miramonte High School. His students and their parents, however, gave him quite a surprise on November 15 when they held a party in his honor. The occasion also marked the ribbon cutting and grand opening of Miramonte's new tennis facility – a fitting farewell for a wonderful coach that has led many teams to award-winning seasons during his two decades at the school.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Coach John Rodriquez.



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Youth Sports Programs

The Orinda Community Center is taking registrations through March 23 for the following programs:

- Teen snowboard and ski trips for students in grades 6 - 12. Trip fee includes lift ticket, bus transportation with movies, adult supervision, continental breakfast, and post-skiing snacks.
- OYA's Jr. High Girls' Volleyball. Season runs April 17 - May 29.
- OYA's Jr. High Girls' Lacrosse. Saturday-only practices starting April 14 through June 2.
- OYA's Girls' Spring Soccer for grades 1 to 8 starting April 22.

Contact Jerry Johnston at 253-4204 or email jjohnston@ci.orinda.ca.us.

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President

Fit for the New Year

Kate Wiley



Was the focus of your New Year's resolutions to be healthier, fit, and better prepared for anything? If so, we have lots of ideas to accomplish that goal in this issue. The OA board is getting in shape for another event-filled year with our annual 4th of July parade, public forums, volunteer opportunities, and services for seniors. Steve and April Meagher, our newest board members, will help bring new ideas and energy to these time-honored traditions. And always in great form, Jim Luini, our new co-president of the board, brings years of experience to every operation of the OA. We are grateful to his many years of service and many more to come. The health of the OA as a nonprofit is in great shape too. Our membership is growing and committed to

supporting our programs which benefit all of the community.

In the area of preparedness, it's not just the impending earthquake we need to prepare for. As we've all heard about in the past few months, many people get caught unprepared due to the severity of unexpected storms, so having a kit in every car you drive is a necessity. The OA is offering two different styles and price points for Red Cross designed disaster preparedness kits that you can purchase for each vehicle and for every member of your family. The backpack style, three-day, adult kit includes the basics in first aid and comfort (a blanket, rain poncho, work gloves, mask, etc.) as well as a radio and flashlight for \$65, payable to the OA. The second option is a "ready-to-go" emergency kit in a smaller duffel bag containing much of the same as above for \$48. Information and order forms are available on our website (www.orindaassociation.org) and by calling the OA office at 254-0800. Orinda's True Value Hardware store also has a basic survival kit available for \$13.

New OA Board Members



SALLY HOGARTY

April and Steve Meagher recently joined the OA board. April had previously worked on the OA's 4th of July committee. Steve became interested in the OA when he attended a CERT (Certified Emergency Response Training) class which included several board members. "I was amazed at how a small number of people put on so many wonderful events," he recalls. Steve, who was raised in Orinda and is a physical therapist, has lots of ideas for future OA events and has already designed an Orinda T-shirt. April, who works for McMillan, McGraw Hill Publishing, feels the OA is a great social outlet for residents and a way to "share a sense of community. Steve was adamant that we raise our daughter (2-year-old Bridget) in Orinda and be actively involved with the community."

Orinda Association Board Meeting
February 11, 2007 at 7:30 p.m.

The Orinda Association

The Orinda Association is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to:

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

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

OFFICERS

Co-Presidents	Jim Luini, Kate Wiley
Secretary	Tony Ratner
Treasurer	Bill Waterman
Membership	Mark Roberts
Chair July 4th Parade	Cindy Powell
Grants	Kate Wiley

Are You New to Orinda?

THE ORINDA NEWCOMERS CLUB

is a social club that provides opportunities for new families to get acquainted with the community. We want to help you build friendships and put down roots! We sponsor regular activities that include:

Winddowns: adult cocktail parties at various members' homes. Guests bring a favorite appetizer and the ensuing buffet and conversations are a treat.

Family Oriented Events/Playgroups: These popular events include once-a-month Saturday play-groups, usually at The Orinda Park, as well as our annual Holiday Party.

For The Girls: join us for hikes, book discussions and ladies coffees/luncheons.

Call the Hotline (925) 941-4967 for membership information or email ldarwinobrien@yahoo.com.

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2007 – Truly a New Year for Orinda

As the New Year gets under way, it will be one of new faces for the City of Orinda. Following the promotion of Larry Gregg and his subsequent re-assignment to the Sheriff's Office, Orinda welcomed new Police Chief Bill French on January 1. The retirement of Fire Chief Jim Johnston led to the appointment of Pete Nowicki as the top firefighter in the Moraga-Orinda Fire District this past September with Nowicki filling two vacant battalion chief positions in early January. A new community services officer was also hired by the police department, and a new lawyer has been advising the city on a multitude of topics.

In addition to all the changes in the city staff, the Orinda City Council also has two new faces: Tom McCormick and Sue

Severson. Meanwhile, the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Public Safety Advisory Committee are trying to fill vacancies which will bring more new faces on board. Just what does this mean to Orinda? Will it be business as usual or will things be just a bit different? We will be asking these fresh faces what they bring to the job and what their priorities are in the March issue of *The Orinda News*.

By the way, *The Orinda News* has a new face of its own. Chris Lavin, a former editor with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, is now our calendar and page editor. Lavin replaces associate editor Lynda Leonard, who will be devoting her time to finishing a short story collection.



Letters to the Editor

Safeway Serves Community

As mayor of Orinda, I want to take this opportunity to thank Safeway for doing an outstanding job with the remodeling of their store in our city.

While many cities have multiple grocery stores, Orinda has only one. Over the years, it had grown tired, not just architecturally, but in their product offerings. About 18 months ago, executives from Safeway agreed to meet with area residents to hear their concerns and to plan for a change. A number of meetings were held and around 40 residents came to express their views. Now as the dust is swept away, we can see an outstanding result.

The interior of the store is 99 percent new. The organic vegetables have gone from about a dozen types to in excess of 60. The offerings in the dairy and flower sections have been expanded. Personal help is now provided for both fish and meats. For families on the go, they now have fresh hot soups, specially prepared sushi, and an upgraded deli. The one thing that has stayed the same is the helpful and friendly staff.

Safeway is a great partner in our community. From supporting local schools through the eScrip program to working with organizations throughout the county to help those in need, Safeway shows time and again that they are responsive to the needs of customers and communities.

When Orinda residents shop locally, they help support local city services, such as road repairs, through sales tax contributions. I certainly hope that residents and visitors to our city will shop at the new Orinda Safeway.

– Mayor Steve Glazer

Aggressive Campaign Offensive

Like Steve Cohn and Sue Littlehale (and, I suspect, more than a few other residents), I was offended by the aggressive, highly personalized campaign which was waged by insurgent city council candidates Tom McCormick and Sue Severson against

Laura Abrams and unnamed other incumbents. (McCormick seemed to relish the "mad as hell" role. Severson, while much more demure, enthusiastically endorsed and promoted McCormick's candidacy, making it clear that he spoke for her as well as himself.) Though I've lived here since 1995, I haven't followed local politics very closely. However, I wouldn't have been surprised if, in fact, Abrams and other long-serving councilmembers had become complacent or self-serving. Unfortunately, the "throw the rascals out" campaign which was waged by McCormick and Severson and their supporters was short on facts and heavy with innuendos, thereby telling me much more about them than about the people they were seeking to displace. They would be wise to explain why they believed that the kind of campaign that they ran was necessary for their purposes and appropriate for this type of community.

– Seth Knoepler

City Should Keep Promises

I was disappointed to find that *The Orinda News* did not cover the City Council and Measure Q election results. It seems obvious that the Orinda Association did not agree with the opinion of the voters. Orinda voted for fiscal responsibility. Measure Q was not passed because the voters of Orinda did not trust four members of the City Council, as constituted on Election Day, to spend the bond money. As a 66 year resident of Orinda, I agree with the voters.

The new "City Hall" should be put up for sale to the highest bidder and the city government moved to the old Orinda Library. Keep the promises made.

When Orinda incorporated many years ago, there was a promise of no new taxes. Those of us who knew the roads and infrastructure could not hold up without expensive repairs did not vote to incorporate. I believe in the will of the people. If the City of Orinda can not subsist on its own, then disincorporate.

— M.J. Boynton

Thanks for Defeating Bond

I wish to thank the small group of helpers who worked very hard and successfully in defeating Measure Q. Without their help, we could not have done the job. I also thank all of those who voted no on Measure Q.

Measure Q, the \$120 million bond tax for infrastructure upgrades, lost and it wasn't even close. Measure Q was supported by all of the City Council members and candidates, all the Moraga-Orinda Fire board members, all the Orinda School Board members, all the directors of the Orinda Association, as well as the *Contra Costa Times*. The proponents of Measure Q spent over \$67,000 trying to get it passed. The opponents of Q spent only \$400. Each yes vote on Q cost \$14; each no vote cost 14 cents. Measure Q would have needed 892 additional yes votes to have passed.

This election shows that Orindans make their decisions on the facts and Orindans can't be bought.

We can only hope that the Orinda City Council has learned its lesson and will sell the expensive new city offices and put this money into road repair. Also that the council will move forward in putting on a future ballot the formation of the Orinda Fire District. With prudent use of our fire district income and the demise of exorbitant raises and benefits for employees, there will be plenty of money for infrastructure upgrades.

– Clyde Vaughn

Integrity of City Government in Doubt

It doesn't help to hear the mayor and others indulge in ad hominem shots against Mr. Vaughn, who led the opposition. Long may this 85-year-old gentleman continue his vigilance in service of Orinda.

Measure Q and the incumbents failed because many Orindans no longer have confidence in the competence or the integrity of their city government. The road

condition has been deteriorating for some time – it's not some sudden emergency we just found out about. Each year, Orinda gets \$800,000 from Measure C, garbage fees, and other sources dedicated to road repairs. What happened to that money? From the report of the roads subcommittee: "The average PCI (Pavement Condition Index) for the City of Orinda is 46, while the average PCI for all cities in Contra Costa County is 68. Sixty-three percent of the roads in Orinda are in poor or very poor condition, PCI 49 or below."

Ordinance 06-03 says: "The estimated cost of the municipal improvements includes legal and all other fees incidental to or connected with the authorization, issuance, and sale of the proposed bonds." Note the word "authorization." Evidently there were parasites expecting a big commission or fee if Measure Q passed. The enthusiasm of the Measure Q proponents, therefore, somehow rang hollow. As for the "watchdog committee" that was to guard against embezzlement of bond money, the ordinance provides that they will all be appointed by the City Council.

Slick yard signs and mail-outs could not overcome door-to-door leaflets and the loss of public trust over the last six years. The \$10 million Gateway Fund dedicated by Resolution 82-94 disappeared, then the old library (zoned public use property, like the Park next to it) became the dumpsite for Gateway's affordable housing obligation, then the City Hall was built without public approval or a source of funds to pay for it.

The \$620,000 for 30 years that will have to be paid for the city hall cannot be covered with the existing break-even budget (\$69,602 surplus in 2005), especially if the \$800,000 road money will no longer be misappropriated. So Measure Q would have been the only way to pay for the city hall and cover the hole in the Gateway Fund. And to continue the spending binge (\$2 million in "consulting fees" for city hall). There must now be a radical change to restore public trust. Bravo, Mr. Vaughn.

— Wilmot McCutchen

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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, 2007.**

For display advertising rates call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or send email to aspen@hobbitsforhire.com. The deadline for the April issue is February 19.

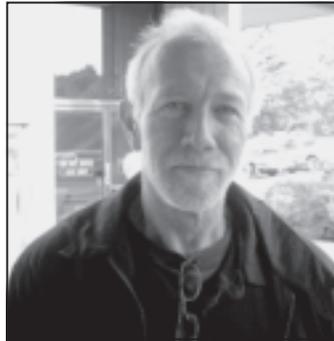
ROADS / POLICE BLOTTER

How do we fix our roads in Orinda?

Photos by Barbara Boster



"I'm waiting for the next initiative. I'm sure it will pass then."
-- Alexander Gailas



"They shouldn't have built the city office. They should have used all that money for our roads."
-- Larry Wilson



"The roads in Orinda are embarrassing. Unfortunately, our streets and roads are not up to the standards of our community. They are just getting worse. We need to get Measure Q passed to at least start fixing some of the major thoroughfares."
-- Sandy Kassis



"I find it incredibly galling that our elected officials tell us that Orinda roads are deteriorating rapidly, and if we all kick-in a couple hundred bucks, we can fix them. While, at the same time, they are building a new, overblown (and over-budget) city hall. It's kind of like a homeless guy with no clothes asking for help and going out and buying himself a \$90 Nordstrom tie. What's the solution? Sell or lease the new city hall site and move our elected officials into more appropriate and affordable office space."
-- Andrew Moran

Our photo question/answer feature appears periodically. If you have a question you would like to see answered, email Barbara Boster at bboster1@comcast.net



POLICE BLOTTER

Compiled by Haleh Allen
Orinda Police Department

December 2006

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 83 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 9 incidents in the areas of Moraga Way, La Cintilla, La Espiral, Las Aromas, Charles Hill Cir., Bates Ct., Honey Hill Rd., and Charles Hill Rd.

Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 5 incidents in the areas of Moraga Way, Tahos Rd., Hartford Rd., and Juniper Dr.

All Other Petty Thefts: 4 incidents in the areas of Moraga Way, Village Square, and Camino Don Miguel.

Grand Theft From Vehicle (theft of more than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 3 incidents in the areas of Orchard Rd., Orinda Way, and Moraga Way.

All Other Grand Thefts: 3 incidents

Note: Please remember to lock your car and to store valuables where they cannot be seen.

in the areas of Village View Ct., Monte Veda Dr., and Camino Sobrante.

Vehicle Theft: 5 incidents in the areas of Brookwood Rd., Las Cascadas, Orindawoods Dr., Valencia Rd., and Camino Pablo.

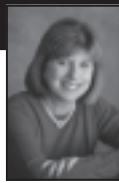
Residential Burglary: 2 incidents in the areas of Camino Sobrante and Bates Blvd.

Commercial Burglary: 1 incident in the area of Theatre Square.

Vandalism: 12 incidents in the areas of Lucille Way, Davis Rd., El Gavilan, Estabueno, Sundown Terr., Muth Dr., Manzanita Dr., Glorietta Blvd., Lost Valley Dr., Orchard Rd., Camino Pablo, and Davis Rd.

Identity Theft: 4 incidents in the areas of Vida Descansada, Village View Ct., Charles Hill Rd., and Tahos Rd.

Credit Card Fraud/Forgery: No reported incidents.



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Orinda's New Mayor Sets Priorities

By CHRIS LAVIN
Staff Writer

It's not a seat he ever really expected to be sitting in. He will not call it "hot." Instead, new Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer has a keen eye on specific projects to improve Orinda, but he does not expect to take them on by himself. "Everyone on the council has things he or she wants to accomplish," Glazer said. "I'm looking forward to working together with everyone of them to help them achieve their goals."

Glazer, who went through a contentious city council race two years ago, has since found himself on the losing side of a fair number of 4-1 votes. Yet he officially replaced Bill Judge as mayor in December, and began his one-year term three weeks before Christmas.

Without question, he says, roads and drains are the most pressing problems facing Orindans. Yet he seems to take the defeat last November of Measure Q, which he supported, in stride. The measure would have permitted the city to sell bonds to raise \$59.1 million to begin targeting the worst spots in the city's infrastructure – and more importantly, bad spots before they get worse and require more money to fix.

"This is no surrender," Glazer said of November's defeat. Supporters of using bonds to fix the roads are re-evaluating the measure – and Glazer sees a sizable role for himself to be in educating people about how best to spend the money.

"Some people will see a road getting repaired and say, 'That road's not that bad,'" Glazer said. "But what they need to understand is that if some of these roads that aren't as bad as others don't get fixed, it will cost four to five times as much to fix them. We need to avoid that because it's not a smart way to spend the limited funds available for road and drainage repairs."

Glazer considers another priority to be just as important to the community, if not more: Emergency preparedness. His conversation becomes more animated when he talks about the urgency of citizens getting prepared for a big earthquake – and fast. "You've got to be ready for it to happen tomorrow," he emphasizes.

And he would like to see an emergency preparedness kit, available through the Orinda Association, in every home in the city, with no exceptions. Even that isn't enough, he said – he highly recommends that even more citizens complete training to join California Emergency Response Teams (CERT).

"It's not just you being prepared," he said. "You're going to have your neighbor on your doorstep."

Glazer cites estimates of 300,000 people being homeless in the Bay Area when a large earthquake hits. "People just don't have a sense of the magnitude," he said. He also doesn't like this idea of a meager three-day supply of water and food. With Orinda's winding and narrow roads, once

[SEE MAYOR page 10]



SALLY HOGARTY

On December 18 a large number of elected officials, dignitaries, and local residents gathered to honor out-going City Councilmembers Laura Abrams and Bill Judge. "It's bittersweet to honor and say good-bye to two people who have done so much for their community," said East Bay MUD board member Katie Foulkes. Her sentiments were echoed by over a dozen speakers, including representatives for Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher and Assemblywoman Loni Hancock and newly elected Assemblyman Mark DeSaunier, who presented plaques and tributes. City Councilmember Amy Worth estimated that Abrams attended over 300 meetings during her 12 years on the council.



PAT RUDEBUSCH

City Clerk Michele Olsen swears in re-elected City Councilmember Amy Worth (C) and new Councilmembers Sue Severson and Tom McCormick.

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

Paper Dolls Tell Stories of African-Americans Who Helped Settle the West

■ Orinda resident has work on display at Smithsonian through April

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

Leslie Darwin O'Brien was doing post-production work on a public television documentary depicting the lives of African-Americans who helped settle California's Central Valley when she was overcome by tears. "I was transcribing tapes and listening to the story of Nancy Gooch, a former slave who was brought to California by the Missouri family who owned her. She had to leave her then two-year-old son behind until she was able to earn enough money as a laundress to buy him and move him out to California. My oldest son was two at the time, and I was overcome with emotion at the thought of having to leave your children behind until you could buy them back. I knew then that I had to do something to make sure that the stories of the African-Americans who played such an important role in helping to settle California had their stories told."

Thus was born "Heroes of the West: African-Americans Who Helped Shape History," a collection of paper dolls depicting the lives of four of the individuals profiled in the public television documentary. "It's been a labor of love," Darwin says. "The project is self-financed, and I'm looking to get the dolls into the hands of children who can learn from these remarkable characters in our history." Paper dolls, she says, support kinesthetic learning; and, this mother of three sons says that the dolls reinforce valuable lessons for both boys and girls.

The four African-American figures in O'Brien's set include Colonel Allen Allensworth, a man who escaped from slavery during the Civil War and went on to become the highest ranking African-American in the Army during his time; James Pierson Beckwith, a mountain man and trailblazer who discovered the lowest route through the Sierra Nevadas, a route that proved to be safer than the more popular Donner Pass; Nancy Gooch, who went from slavery to landowner and whose family ended up owning 80 acres near Coloma; and Mary Ellen Pleasant, who was known as the Mother of Civil Rights in California and who brought about the end to racial discrimination on California's street cars in 1868.

Rather than being relegated to historical obscurity, O'Brien says that their stories need to be told today because these four

individuals, each in his or her own way, overcame adversity and fought for freedom and justice. Their stories are getting a wide audience this winter as O'Brien's paper dolls are on display at the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum in Washington, D.C. until April 29. O'Brien's dolls complement the museum's exhibit, "Two Hundred Years of Black Paper Dolls: The Collection of Arabella Grayson." Grayson, O'Brien says, began collecting paper dolls just over ten years ago when she received one as a gift shortly after



PAT RUDEBUSCH

Leslie Darwin O'Brien designed a collection of paper dolls depicting the lives of African-Americans who helped shape history. The collection is currently on exhibit at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

earning her master's degree from Mills College. Today, Grayson's collection numbers over 300 and provides a snapshot of attitudes toward African-Americans throughout history and, needless to say, that picture is not always flattering.

One of the earliest African-American paper dolls depicted a character from Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. With unkempt braids and three shabby dresses, the Topsy doll was used to promote the book. Several decades later, black paper dolls were still depicting African-Americans as servants or savages. A so-called Mammy paper doll was even included as a prize in boxes of Cracker Jacks. With few exceptions, it wasn't until the 1960's that paper dolls showing African-Americans as positive role models began to appear. Even then, none had shown prominent African-Americans from our nation's history, that is, until O'Brien introduced her series in 2005.

As a native of Little Rock, Arkansas,

O'Brien has a unique perspective on the role of race in America. Vivacious, passionate, and articulate, she has no tolerance for prejudice or discrimination. A fourth generation descendent of Charles Darwin, O'Brien says that her famous ancestor wasn't a particularly good student in school, "...but he was a collector and a dreamer and a believer in possibilities. These are traits that continue to serve our family well today." O'Brien's paper doll

project may be a labor of love, but she has a dream, and the drive and determination, to bring the stories of California's early African-Americans to their rightful place in our state's illustrious history. It's best not to underestimate the influence of her dreaming – it's a proven family trait.

For more information on Heroes of the West or to order a set of O'Brien's paper dolls, visit her website at www.africanamericanpaperdolls.com.

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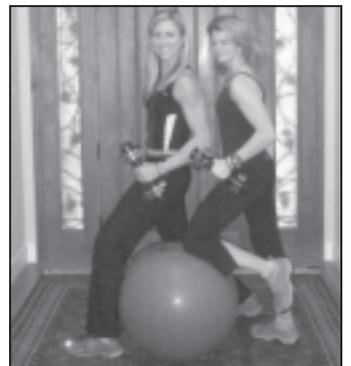
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Getting in Shape for 2007 and Beyond

By LINDA FOLEY and SALLY HOGARTY

While holiday parties may be a welcome treat, the added pounds and inches that accompany them are not. If you are one of the many determined to lose weight in 2007, there are plenty of local salons and trainers available to help. Curves in Theatre Square and InForma and the Orinda Community Center in the Village offer a wonderful array of classes and equipment to eliminate those extra inches. There are also several personal trainers, and even one yoga instructor, who can help you get into shape and enjoy your chosen sport with less injury.



Christy Dalton and Melissa Aycocock demonstrate one of their fitness exercises.

Fit Chix

While "fit" could be the middle name for many women in this town, Christy Dalton and Melissa Aycocock give it new dimensions. Hard dimensions, that is. They recently joined forces and created Fit Chix, an in-home personal training business, and they bring the gym to you.

The friends are nationally certified personal trainers who share 22 years of industry experience. Having completed multiple marathons, triathlons and other athletic events, the "Fit Chix," as they call themselves, understand the benefits and value of setting goals and achieving them.

Whether you are looking to jump start your former fitness routine, add new life to your current regimen, or simply want to work toward a firmer physique, Fit Chix pledges to work with all ability levels to

tailor the program to your needs, including sports-specific training, such as preparing for your first 5K. Fit Chix also can work you into a training group. Group training is a fun way to exercise because it increases the likelihood of staying motivated to achieve personal goals.

Fit Chix performs an initial free assessment of each client that includes health history, cardio, strength, and flexibility assessments to establish a baseline for future comparisons. Accommodating individual schedules, Fit Chix comes to your home armed with yoga mat, weights, bands, exercise ball, bottled water, and an infectious determination to make a better woman out of you. The reward for a workout well done is a total body stretch at the conclusion of the session.

One writer (Foley) has already put her body into the capable hands of Fit Chix and feels completely and happily "worked." Having been an athlete (of sorts) for many years and continuing her own workout regimen religiously, she did not get the best results. (The overcrowded gym, unavailable equipment for her time frame and omnipotent, cell phone conversations added to her disgruntlement.) Her personal goal is to return to fighting shape (after surgeries) and back into the cycling saddle. Meanwhile, she continues to work on her cardio at the gym while catching up with some of the townies.

To get in touch with Fit Chix, call 324-5032 or email melissaaycock@gmail.com.

Yoga Ski Workshop

The winter mantra for many local residents is "Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!" Rainy, chilly nights in the Bay Area often translate into new powder in Tahoe. Yoga instructor and avid skier Jeanne

[SEE YOGA page 9]



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FITNESS

◆ **YOGA** from page 8

Dowell, however, advises those taking off for the slopes to get into shape first. Dowell offers a special yoga strengthening and stretching workshop that focuses on legs, hamstrings, knees, quads, shoulders, spine, and hips. "For safe and fun skiing, you need to learn to strengthen, stretch, and relax your body," says Dowell, who formerly taught yoga at Squaw Valley for the U.S. Olympic Committee. The workshop also includes tips on dealing with high altitudes and cold weather. Call Dowell at 254-0183 or register through the Community Center at 254-2445.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jeanne Dowell has been a yoga instructor and avid skier for over 20 years.

Exercise Move of the Month



SALLY HOGARTY
Living Lean's Sheena Lakhotia has found a great way to put those cans of food to good use with the Food Can Russian Twist! Sit with your hands at chest level holding a can of food in each hand. Lean torso back slightly and bend your knees. Beginners leave heels on the ground while advanced can lift feet off the ground.



SALLY HOGARTY
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ORINDA / TABOR SISTER CITY FOUNDATION

◆ **MAYOR** from page 6

trees or electrical poles come down, “no one is coming in to rescue us. It’s going to be a long wait.”

Therefore Glazer has pledged to actively sell the emergency kits at every city council meeting – everyone – and to continue the city’s efforts to improve its own emergency response preparedness. He lauds the city’s new radio system that will allow Orinda departments to coordinate with Lafayette and Moraga units, among other improvements. “Every year we’re doing more,” he said. “It has to be a front-burner

issue all the time.”

Glazer is president of Glazer & Associates, a consulting company that has run political campaigns – including many for open space initiatives – in more than 25 states. He moved to Orinda with his wife and two daughters in 1996. They live in a house in the hills above Lake Cascade – and yes, he said, he has his emergency kit, and more, ready and waiting at home, although he found himself wondering the other day whether his daughters know how to turn off the gas.

So far on the council, Glazer has found conflicts between neighbors over planning and building issues to be the “most difficult” to deal with. There are sometimes wrenching conflicts between neighbors and homeowners that cause him to wince when he thinks about them, especially when so many of the disagreements could have been avoided if people talked to their neighbors about property redevelopment plans, first.

He believes the planning and zoning departments can do more to help people avoid conflicts before they start. It’s yet another area that he says he feels optimistic and certain that people will work together to improve.

Does he have any worries about the job? “Surviving this year,” he says with a laugh, then shakes his head. “No, honestly, I just want to do this job well.”

The Orinda House

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation will hold a fundraising concert featuring the Graffe Quartet on March 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the Orinda Community Church. Founded in 1997 at the Brno Conservatory in the Czech Republic, the quartet now ranks among the most promising ensembles of its generation. The group’s musical style ranges from classical to contemporary. Tickets can be purchased in advance (\$35 general and \$30 seniors/students) by sending a check to the Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation, P.O. Box 265, Orinda, CA 94564.

The Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation Encourages Understanding

■ **The Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation. What is it?**

By **BOBBIE LANDERS**
Contributing Writer

The Sister City International organization was established by President Dwight Eisenhower to encourage understanding between people. Under the auspices of that long-standing organization, Orinda established a sister city relationship with Tabor in the Czech Republic in 1995. A 20-member delegation traveled to Tabor to cement that pact in September of 1995 during Tabor’s midlevel festival called “The Meetings.” The people from Tabor returned Orinda’s visit the following July when 21 members of the Czech Republic then visited Orinda for the city’s annual 4th of July celebrations.

One hour south of Prague, Tabor has the same hilly terrain as Orinda. Streets are paved with cobblestones in the old town. The town of Tabor has been permanently inhabited since the Middle Ages and construction work has been going on continuously since the early Iron Age. Central to the town is a large reservoir, the first built in central Europe. Tabor was the center of the Hussite movement and a huge statue of General Ziska on his horse sits in the town square. Peter Zieshke of Orinda claims a family tie to the general and traveled to Tabor with that first delegation.

The O(rinda) K(lub) holds a competition every winter for senior high school students

from Tabor to have the opportunity to spend a semester at Miramonte High School. Contestants submit an autobiographical essay in English. The top five essays are chosen, and those contestants are invited to an English oral interview with members of the O.K., then the top selections are presented to the sister city foundation for final selection of the winning student. To date, we have had four Tabor students attend Miramonte. Our current visiting student is Michal Vasek, a senior, who is living with his host family, Kathy and John Fernbacher.

The association has also helped fund a visiting cardio-physician and an ophthalmologist studying at University of California, Berkeley. It has also sent one Miramonte student to Tabor and two Orinda teachers spent a school year living and teaching in Tabor.

To help fund the foundation, members sell Czech beer in a booth at the 4th of July celebration and depend on the generosity of the Orinda community to join it. You will find a membership envelope in this issue of *The Orinda News* for those who would like to support the efforts to raise awareness of another culture.

The foundation meets every month on the fourth Thursday at 7 p.m. and provides food, speakers, and information on the Czech Republic. The foundation also supplies travel information, and members are glad to supply history, introductions, and touring suggestions.

Landers is a board member on the Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation. For further information on the foundation, contact her at 254-8260.

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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

Orinda Association Thanks Members for Continued Support!

The following is a list of Orinda Association (OA) members as of December, 2006. 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, and coordinates the Volunteer Center. Thank you!

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In early December, HarperCollins announced in *Publishers Weekly* that it would be renovating the beloved “*Little House*” series that Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote in the 1930s and ‘40s. Garth Williams’ careful line drawings, beautifully colored, have been an integral part of these children’s classics for 50 years. The publisher stated that they would be replacing the Williams covers with photographic images and removing the artwork inside. Tara Weikum, HarperCollins Children’s Books editor, is quoted: “For readers who view historical novels as old-fashioned, this offers them an edition that dispels that notion and suggests that these books have all the great qualities of a novel set in contemporary times.”

Well! The response to this *PW* article from booksellers and librarians was explosive. Words like “travesty” were used; reference to the “New Coke” debacle was made; a fifth-grade teacher in Florida questioned whether anyone at HarperCollins had actually read the series, considering the almost teen-aged look of the young girl, pictured on the prototype of the “new” cover (Laura was seven on the banks of Plum Creek). A librarian in Indiana said simply “*Little House – Big Adventure? HarperCollins – Big Mistake!*”

All of which leads one to ponder the decision-making process that goes on in the publishing world when it comes to book covers and jackets — those often brightly colored marketing devices that make us consider purchasing a new novel, biography, or “how-to” book because something about its packaging catches our eye.

Book jackets were first introduced in the 1830s, under the humble title of “dust wrapper,” and were solely for the protection of leather or silk bindings. It wasn’t, however, until the early 20th century that wrappers morphed into jackets and, according to George Salter, a pioneer jacket designer, it was the birth of the blurb — that brief song of praise that decorates the back of most book jackets—that gave impetus in 1910 to the jacket as we know it. Ad copy found its way onto the flaps, and publishers recognized the jacket as the most effective way to get in touch with the reading public.

Book jackets became a field for design

professionals. Rules of thumb, determined by marketing conventions, were developed as design guidelines. One source quotes the “10-foot rule” that the title of the book should be readable from that distance or that in popular mass-market fiction the author’s name should take up at least one-third of the cover area.

A few book jacket designers have become legends, both for artistic and commercial reasons. Chip Kidd, described in *USA Today* as the closest thing to a rock star in graphic design today, has a collection of his work that boasts a blurb from John Updike saying, “In the intensity of his wish to use a jacket’s few square inches to arrest and intrigue the bookstore browser, he exploits every resource of modern printing.”

“Arrest and intrigue” are the key words. Among Chip Kidd’s most famous covers is the silhouette of T-Rex that adorns Michael Crichton’s “*Jurassic Park*,” he also created memorable covers for David Sedaris’ very funny books. There was considerable debate over whether briefs or boxers should be the cover image for “*Naked*,” boxers won out because briefs were determined to be too sexual. But, first and foremost, these covers all said, “Pick up this book!”

As booksellers, we are often delighted by the lively humor that enhances book jackets. In March, a new memoir by Pat Montandon, “*Oh, the Hell of It All*,” will wear on its jacket a clever spin on the cover art of last year’s bestseller, “*Oh, the Glory of It All*,” by her son, Sean Wilsey. For the Montandon book, the arresting black and white imagery of Wilsey’s book is changed into a multicolored explosion of balloons and confetti effectively symbolizing Pat’s party days.

You may not be able to tell a book by its cover, but in all likelihood, you will never pick up an unknown book unless its cover speaks to you. The decision-makers at HarperCollins may find that the focus group who determined that the “*Little House*” series needed a remake was out of touch with the librarians, teachers, and parents who make up the book-buying public, while the Chip Kidds of the design community will continue to lure us into new adventures in literature through the strength of their cover images. All of which makes the book world constantly interesting.

Young Orindans Support Children’s Hospital



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Orinda debutantes were recently presented at a festive winter ball at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco. Members of the Orinda Hill Branch of Children’s Hospital, the girls do a variety of charitable work at the hospital. The winter ball netted over \$210,000 for the hospital. Pictured (L-R) are: (front row) Morgan Gruye, Kirby O’Connell, Angelika Lintner, Chrissy Nichol, Kelly Thompson, and Jeanne Eckard; (second row) Ashley Stefan, Brianne Farrar, Kristen Thompson, Ellen Fehr, Emily Wiser, Holly Palmer, and Kristen Duffel.



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◆ **WILDER** from page 1
 Olson, the EVA was never meant to be a nature trail. "This is primarily a road for emergency access vehicles, but it does allow access to the trail system." Olson also notes that in earlier meetings with the homeowners' association members expressed distaste for the initial location of the EVA. "We agreed to move it further away from homes but that required going back to the city for approval which really

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slowed down the grading we had hoped to do last year," says Olson.

Olson notes that the additional time needed to gain approval for the new EVA location also postponed implementation of the landscape plan the developer and the homeowners' association had agreed upon. "We wanted to start planting before winter was upon us, but it didn't make sense since we still had more grading to do," explains Olson. "With the rains coming, we had to stop grading and build temporary retention basins to deal with the runoff and possible erosion." Olson acknowledges that the neighbors could easily be confused by the initial maps that didn't show the location of the EVA road in detail. "I also feel that I should have communicated more with the neighbors," Olson adds. "We are highly motivated to make this project work for everyone. Completing the grading and putting in the landscaping will be a priority this spring."

Larson also expressed concern that the EVA had not been approved by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and that the entrance off Brookside Drive might not be wide enough for fire department vehicles. According to Olson, the company has had on-going discussions with Fire Marshall Tanya Hoover, and he feels the road will meet the fire district's requirements when completed.

Another area of concern for Larson is the numerous cracks that have appeared in his garage and some of the floor tiles in his house. The developer sent a civil engineer to inspect the property. As of press time, the report had not been received by the developer. "We've had to hire our own lawyer and civil engineer," says Larson.

"The developer should have had someone inspect our property and install a vibration monitor prior to grading. Since that didn't happen, we've had to spend a lot of money essentially to prove that the cracks weren't there previously. We don't want to be complainers, but we don't feel that neither Planning Commission nor Planning Department has been on top of this."

◆ **IVY** from page 1
 illegal maneuvers as "a fatality waiting to happen."

The subcommittee tackling the Ivy Drive issue is still in its infancy. But subcommittee member and Orinda City Councilmember Amy Worth feels it can still produce results, even before money is allocated for projects such as Ivy area speed bumps, signage, and construction of a new Miramonte entrance.

"Our goal is to improve traffic flow while slowing down speeders," said Worth. "We can do this through enforcement, education and, finally, structural changes."

Working with the subcommittee, both Miramonte and OIS have informed students and parents about safe driving techniques for parking, pick-up, and drop-off. Orinda law enforcement has been made aware of the situation, as well

"We have an average of two officers on patrol in Orinda, sometimes three with a traffic monitor, and we can't always dedicate them to the same place at the same time," said former Orinda Chief of Police Larry Gregg.

The Orinda police who have participated in the Ivy Drive subcommittee have made an effort to increase their presence near Miramonte, although it may not be enough for a tangible change. An Ivy resident at the December subcommittee meeting suggested that the Moraga police offer their assistance to the situation. The City of Moraga has had a representative at the Ivy meetings, although its law enforcement officers have yet to get involved.

Large amounts of money and planning will be needed for the construction of another entrance to Miramonte. In the meantime, Ivy area resident and subcommittee member Carolyn Parodi hopes that the committee will do more than just discuss the issues.

"I am most interested, again, in the physical measures we can put in place today to make an immediate difference. While the committee will most likely be effective, I am concerned about the amount of time it will take to make a difference," said Parodi.

The Ivy Drive Subcommittee meets the first week of each month at 4 p.m. in the Mayor's conference room at the city offices, 14 Altarinda Road. Check the city website, www.ci.orinda.ca.us for exact date.


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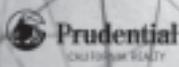
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WAY TO GROW

Way to Grow in Orinda
Rose Care Tips and Tricks – Getting the Most from Your Roses

Steve & Cathy Lambert



Last February, we wrote our first in a series of articles about roses. That article focused primarily on the different classifications of roses and how to choose the right rose for your Orinda garden. This article will provide you with some rose-care tips and tricks for getting the most from your roses.

We have planted all sorts of rose gardens for Orinda homeowners, from the very formal to a mixed perennial border with roses to just a few accent roses scattered throughout a yard. No matter the extent of your rose garden you should demand and expect the most from your roses. We believe a well-cared-for rose bush should provide you with arms-full of blooms as early and late in the year as the weather will allow. We have developed a diligent care and feeding schedule, and a few shortcuts, to achieve optimum bloom for your roses. Even the most novice gardeners should be able to follow these guidelines and achieve great results.

Choosing and Planting Your Roses

The most common way to purchase roses used to be in bare-root form. These are unpotted roses with the roots packed in a bag full of saw dust. Lately, these are becoming harder to find. More nurseries are potting their roses as soon as they arrive from the grower. If you prefer to buy your roses in bare-root form you can still do so at stores like Orchard Supply Hardware and Home Depot. You can also purchase bare-root roses through mail order catalogs or online through companies like Jackson & Perkins or Carlton Roses.

Whether you purchase your roses potted or bare-root always look for roses rated #1 Grade to get the best results. Choose roses with three to four thick stems. The stem thickness you want is comparable to that of a toddler-sized crayon.

Dig a hole about 16 to 18 inches wide, depending on the size of your root ball, and about 16 inches deep. Next, mix your soil amendment with some of the native soil that you just removed from the hole at a 50/50 ratio. We used to prepare our own special planting amendment for roses. Now you can purchase excellent quality, commercially prepared rose planting mixes at high-end nurseries like McDonnell's Nursery in Orinda or Orchard Nursery in Lafayette. Refill your hole about 1/3 of the way to the top with your 50/50 blend.

Before placing your rose in the hole, gently spread out the root ball shaking off some of the dirt with your fingers. You want to place your rose so that the bud union (the first branching-out of the stems above the root ball) is three inches above the dirt. Keep in mind that your soil mixture will compact a little after planting.

Mulching Your Roses

The most common reason that people use mulch is to help control weed growth. Mulching has many other benefits. It conserves water and provides valuable organic nutrients to the roots as water travels through the mulch. Mulching shades the soil from the sun and protects small feeder roots growing at or near the surface. Mulching also makes it easier to add granular fertilizers without disturbing the soil and roots.

We use and recommend my own mulch blend. This blend includes alfalfa (which adds alcohol tricontanol to the soil, providing shine to your rose leaves and helping new buds to break), chicken manure with a nitrogen rate of 1.5 percent, scoria (dust and small particles of red lava rock) which add valuable rock phosphates to the soil as it breaks down. Then top this mixture with a black fir bark. This mulch blend can be placed as high as four inches above the soil, but should not cover the bud union (graft). You can also purchase a store-bought rose amendment to use as your mulch, because it contains many of the same ingredients listed above.

Watering Your Roses

Although many rose experts recommend a drip system for watering your roses, we find that most roses don't respond well to drip irrigation. The main reason experts recommend drip versus overhead watering is because many of the diseases that could attack your roses prefer wet leaves. Our solution to this watering contradiction is to use low-angled spray heads and set your timer to water in the early morning. This watering practice provides an even source of water to the root zone while bringing with it fertilizers and organic nutrients. Watering early in the morning will also allow plenty of time for the leaves to dry.

Pruning Your Roses

More than any other landscape plant, roses require proper pruning. Whole

chapters in rose care guides have been dedicated to proper rose pruning. What follows are the key rules to remember when pruning your roses.

In our climate, dormant rose pruning should be done between Super Bowl Sunday and Valentine's Day. Remember – don't give your sweetheart a valentine until you've pruned your roses. Begin by removing all the unhealthy "dead" wood and then all the twiggy growth. Unless the bush has very few healthy canes, we recommend removing all growth with a diameter of less than a pencil's thickness. Also, remove all inward-facing buds. Next, remove the oldest cane at the bud union. This should encourage the shrub to produce several new canes. Examine the bush and choose four to seven strong, healthy canes and prune these by at least half of their length. Don't worry if you have fewer than four strong canes. Prune however many you have using this advice and your rose will re-grow many more strong canes.

We prune all our roses down to 12 to 18 inches in height. This harsh treatment is rewarded with armfuls of beautiful full blossoms upon the next bloom. Many hybrids demand this type of harsh pruning. These vigorous roses include: Brandy, Double Delight, Rio Samba, Peace, Ingrid Bergman, French Perfume, and others. Other roses, with less pruning, will be a good landscape-show rose as well. Lastly,

always cut 1/4 inch above an outward facing bud union (preferably after a second five-leaflet set) and cut at an angle not exceeding 45 degrees. Make sure the leaflet you cut above is outward facing, as this is where the new bud will form. Always remember the "pencil thickness" rule to avoid having a new rose stem form where its base is not strong enough to support it.

Fertilizing Your Roses

Let us begin with a general introduction on fertilizers and NPK. N (the first letter) stands for nitrogen, which is the most important growth stimulant. Nitrogen also helps in forming the chlorophyll and nutrient uptake. P (the second letter) stands for phosphorus, which stimulates root and flower formation. Phosphorus also aids plants in the conversion of starches to sugar. K (the third letter) is potassium or potash, which is important for the growth and development of stems and leaves, while also increasing the plant's resistance to disease.

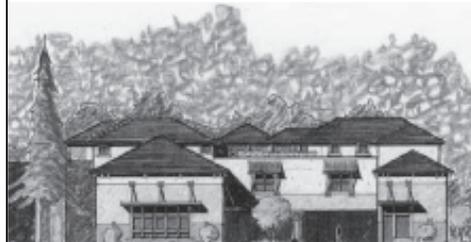
We ordinarily begin feeding our roses the first week in March. Fortunately, for those of us living in the East Bay, that's when the winter weather is usually behind us. You may find it helpful to make the following notations in your 2007 calendar.

March: During the first week of March, get your rose plants off to a quick start by [SEE GROW page 22]



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MIRAMONTE / HISTORICAL SOCIETY

School Days Past Viewed at Party for Orinda Historical Society

By DOROTHY BOWEN
Staff Writer

The past was present at the Orinda Historical Society's (OHS) holiday party. The past focused on Miramonte High School as seen through the eyes of those who were there at the beginning and the early years. Even the menu was a taste from the past, with wines from Michael Pozzan, son-in-law of Vasco Giannini, longtime owner of Black's Market and a community volunteer.

More than 90 guests watched the video about the high school created by Cheryl Davis' advanced communications class and

directed by Scott DeMunck and Tyler Pavey, who were present and pleased to see the reaction to their work. "Making a movie for a high school is one thing," said DeMunck, "but for an entire community is another, and to see the expressions of how happy and pleased they were. I couldn't have done it without Tyler."

"It's the first time we had taken hold of something that big," said Pavey. "It was try and try, try, try again. We got some great interviews."

They were the youngest guests and the oldest was Helen Vurek, who will be 97 in February. She was introduced by OHS President Lucy Hupp Williams, Vurek's neighbor, who went to high school at Acalanes before Miramonte opened in 1955.

Family groups at the party included OHS Vice President Erik Andersen and his parents, Harry and Jane; Dick and Betty Burkhalter and their children, Bruce and Barbara, who does the windows at the OHS museum; Carolyn Stokes and her son Craig; Paula Reese and her daughter, Carol; and Marge Rieger and her daughter Shelley. Special guest was Mary Ellen Jones, regional vice president of the California Historical Society as well as a member of OHS.

School board member Vanessa Crews recalled the reason Miramonte was built on the border of Moraga instead of at the first choice for a site, the Orinda Crossroads. EBMUD owned the 28 acres at the Crossroads and wanted \$4,000 an acre. The school board, Acalanes High School District at the time, thought it was unethical for one public agency to charge another so much. Instead, they paid developers, the Moraga Land Company, \$125,000 for 50 acres. "It was a real bargain," she said. It was also a real controversy. Parents asked why they were sending their children "out to the middle of nowhere."

Another decision entailed naming the new school. At the time, schools were named after notable persons, but the choice was more descriptive. In August 1954, the *Orinda Sun* reported that the name would be Miramonte. Miramonte means "view of the mountains."

Marty Schimbor, just named Acalanes High School District Teacher of the Year, told her students, "Journalism is the rough draft of history." She became a journalism teacher at the urging of principal Bran Yaich. When she protested that she had no training in that subject, he said, "You can read a newspaper, can't you?" When she was a high school student herself at Las Lomas in Walnut Creek, she saw Miramonte as "a lot of rich kids who partied



TERESA LONG
Miramonte student filmmakers, Scott DeMunck (L) and Tyler Pavey, made Miramonte's 50th anniversary video.

a lot." Nevertheless, she moved to Lafayette, where her own children went to school. She gave a collection of CDs of Miramonte's newspaper, the *Mirador*, to OHS.

Erik Andersen introduced Bran Yaich. "He was known as Colonel Yaich when I was at Miramonte," he said. "It was unique then and it is unique now," said Yaich, principal from 1965 to 1985. He recalled some figures from the past saying Bob Callan was "the right guy at the right time" along with Bob McKim, who created the Faculty Follies that brought parents and teachers together. He talked about facing problems like enforcing the no-drinking rules but said it led to a student body with a 3.5 GPA and football quarterbacks who went on to Stanford, Yale, and Cornell. "Everyone has a talent. That's what we're after. If they aren't successful in something, they are unhappy kids."

Three alumni revealed some of the lighter moments of their school days: Scott Fridell recalled learning to drive from Coach Phillips. "He was the scariest man I've ever been in a car with," Vicki Saputo remembered, "There was mud everywhere. One day a cow looked in the classroom window."

"We had to dress properly. It was daring to have skirts up to our knees," she said. Nancy Peterson remembered being head cheerleader. "I'd always wanted to do that. My dad was a cheerleader in high school and at Cal." There were sock hops at lunch time and even more daring, a street dance outside Pine Grove with music from car radios. Scott Fridell moved to Orinda from a blue collar neighborhood where nobody was expected to go to college. Because he wanted to fit in, he changed his plans. Returning to Orinda, he saw the Chevron gas station, Casa Orinda and the Orinda Theatre. "I used to work there," he said. Spurred on by a speech teacher, he went

[SEE HISTORICAL page 22]

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MIRAMONTE / OYA

Say What?!

Cheater, Cheater, Pumpkin (and Other Illicit Drugs) Eater

Lana Olmer



Having been accepted to Northwestern University (YES!), I now have the time to reflect on my high school experience. And from my lofty point of view, I see one common theme in my baggy-eyed, slouched-shoulder, sleepy, and irritable classmates: stress. Much has been discussed about teens' stress, especially at our wonderful, yet highly academic and competitive, Miramonte High School. Parents, counselors, and community members have gone to great lengths to make sure that students have somewhere to go, something to do, or someone to speak to in order to reduce or deal with stress. But with college acceptance more and more competitive, the pressure for the best SAT scores and the best grades means students are taking stress into their own hands.

I've already talked about partying as a way that teens try to escape from stress, but the subject I'm about to hit running doesn't happen away from teachers' and parents' watchful eyes, but rather right under their noses. The creativity of our student body isn't just shown in the legendary crafts class, AP art, or drama productions, but instead in the ingenious ways Miramonte students cheat. Yes, cheat sheets containing Spanish vocabulary shrunken down to 5 point font, Latin declensions written on fingernails, or wearing skirts on test days and writing the answers on the top of one's thighs have all been methods used to foil the test. I'm not here to decide whether the means are justified by the ends, but as a Miramonte student I know how the pressure can drive you to contemplate any way, any way at all, to get that A.

However, methods of getting a leg up on that tricky test aren't just creative, they're scientific as well. A common ADHD drug called Adderall is finding its way from

behind pharmaceutical counters and into Miramonte students' pockets. People suffering from Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder find Adderall's ability to give them the power to focus on and learn what would usually be uninteresting material an amazing learning aid. However, students who take Adderall who don't need it put themselves in danger of serious medical risks. I should know, being someone who lacks any sort of attention or learning disorder, and has taken Adderall before.

It was my sophomore year of high school, and I was stressed about my finals; my parents were telling me that this year really mattered for college, and God, I really wanted those A's. Listening to the advice of a friend, who had taken the amphetamine plenty of times before, I got a hold of a pill. It was that easy: I asked for it, and he gave it to me. I thought that the pill would make my IQ grow by leaps and bounds, but sitting in the classroom taking a two-hour final, the only thing that happened was I started to sweat — really badly. When I tell the story now, I usually include a disclaimer, "I was a stupid sophomore, I had no idea what I was doing." Which was true, and something I'm worried is true for the majority of kids who take the drug now. I had no idea what the side effects were, nor had I been given a prescription by a doctor, but I didn't care. For what it's worth, I got straight A's that semester.

Despite the threat of administrative consequences and bodily injury, students are fueled by pressure from parents, community members, themselves, and the cutthroat competition of college acceptance to cheat. We've begun valuing our grades over the quality of our education, which leaves me to wonder: When do we push our kids and ourselves too far?

Miramonte Benefit Helps Orphanage



KSENIA SOSTER-OLMER

On a recent cold winter morning, Miramonte students warmed up with fresh pastries and hot drinks donated by Peet's Coffee and Tea at a benefit breakfast run by the high school's Interact Club. Sponsored by the Orinda Rotary Club, Interact is one of the largest high school service organizations. Profits from the breakfast will go towards the purchase of vitamins for children at a Burmese orphanage. Interact Club members above are: (L-R) Lana Olmer, Stephanie Leetham, Natalie Niedzwiedz, Every Miller, and Kimi Abtahi.

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ORINDA IDOL

Lamorinda Community Abundant With Student Talent

By PETRA MICHEL
Staff Writer

Last September, people turned out in droves to see Orinda's first-ever Orinda Idol student singing competition on September 10 at the historic Orinda Theatre. In fact, event organizers estimated 400 to 700 attendees per performance. And it's no wonder with the level of local student talent. Student finalists from the competition continue to showcase their performing arts talent in the Lamorinda community.

Starting March 15, four student finalists will be found performing in Miramonte High School's production of Elton John's *Aida*. According to 10th grade performer Sarah Ames, "This is a contemporary love story – the music of which was written by

Elton John. It has a fascinating Egyptian theme. Our cast is very good, and we are very excited about the performance." Ames co-stars with other Orinda Idol finalists Kellyn Severson, Max Coleman, and Sui Gluskin. Ames performed Melissa Etheridge's "Come to My Window" at the Orinda Idol competition and said she had a great time doing it.

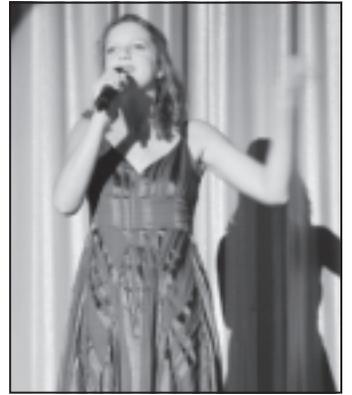
Other Orinda Idol finalists have also enjoyed performing in the community. Finalist Elliott Taylor sang "The National Anthem" at a San Francisco Giant's baseball game and middle school finalists Katie Marino and Neris Newton both starred as Sandy in Orinda Intermediate School's production of *Grease* with finalists Matthew Barber and Grace Hilty. Middle and high school finalists and winners also performed at Lafayette's Art and Wine

Festival last September, where more than 50,000 people from Lamorinda and surrounding Bay Area communities watched them perform.

Last year's Orinda Idol finalists were chosen from nearly 200 students who auditioned in spring 2006. Winners from the September finals are: (Kindergarten-Grade 2) Lauren Pejza; (Grades 3-5) Kacey Sorenson; (Middle School) Jacqueline Garell; and (High School) Elliott Taylor.

"At least 1,000 people rotated in and out of the Orinda Theatre to see the Idol contestants," said former Orinda City Councilmember Bill Judge. "The whistles, whoops, and cheers supporting the finalists were a treat to hear. It was a truly exciting event. I want to thank the many volunteers who made these events so successful."

Officials with the Orinda Arts Council



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jacqueline Garell became the middle school winner.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Elliott Taylor played and sang to win the high school division.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Young Lauren Pejza came out on top in the Kindergarten - Grade 2 division.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Kacey Sorenson won in the Grades 3-5 category.

say that the Orinda Idol event and the support from the community far exceeded expectations. The group is currently working with the City of Orinda and other local groups to sustain the enthusiasm for upcoming Orinda Idol events.

Depending on the availability of the Orinda Theatre, the next Orinda Idol will be on September 9, 2007, with auditions for all grades in late May or early June.



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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 3 **Orinda Hiking Club**, San Francisco Ferry Building to Sausalito and return by ferry, sturdy hiking boots required, meet 8:15 a.m., Orinda Community Center, (925) 376-9279. Repeats February 11.
- 6 **Miramonte High School Parent Leadership**, Presidential Dinner celebrating 50 years, 5 p.m. reception, 7 p.m. dinner for information contact Jan Coe at 254-7915.
- 9 **Circuit Workout**, benefit for St. Jude's Children's Hospital, Curves in Theatre Square. Hours 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Members and non-members welcome to complete a free circuit with donations going to the hospital. Call 254-4199.
- 7 **Orinda Hiking Club**, Strawberry Canyon in Berkeley, meet 9 a.m. at intersection of El Nido Ranch Road and Charles Hill Road in Orinda, (925) 376-8708.
- 10 **Orinda Hiking Club**, Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline, meet 8:15 a.m., Orinda Community Center, (925) 370-9729.
- 11 **Pacific Chamber Symphony** concert featuring Beethoven's *Leonore Overture No. 3*. Concert includes performances by two young Russian pianists in their Bay Area debut. Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, (925) 931-3444, www.civictartstickets.org.
- 15 **Orinda Hiking Club**, Street Stroll, Cypress Lawn Stained Glass, Colma, meet at 6:15 p.m., 254-8550.
- 17 **Orinda Rotary 3rd Annual Crab Feed**, Orinda Masonic Hall, 6 p.m. Proceeds support the Rotary-funded "Kids 'n Kreeks" program in Orinda schools. \$40, includes wine. Open to all. Call 254-2222 for reservations.
- CPR Class**, sponsored by Orinda-Moraga Fire District, 9 a.m. to noon at 1280 Moraga Way. Pre-registration required. (925) 258-4599.
- 24 **Orinda Hiking Club**, Mt. Wanda in Martinez, meet at 8:15 a.m., Orinda Community Center, (925) 229-2567.
- 25 **Piano Concert featuring Jon Nakamatsu**, 3 p.m., Orinda Community Church. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for students and seniors.
- Orinda Hiking Club**, White Hill and Cascade Canyon, Marin, meet at 8:15 a.m. at Orinda Community Center, (925) 377-5429.

AT THE LIBRARY

- 3 **Saturday Morning Live!** Family storytime at the Orinda Library for ages 3-5, 10:30 a.m. Also held on February 10, 17 and 24.
- 4 **Lunar New Year Program**, 3:30 p.m., Orinda Library Auditorium. Na Hula O' Moku'aina will perform dances from Hawaii and Tahiti. Event sponsored by the Eng family.
- 6 **Toddler Lapsit**, Orinda Library, 10 a.m. and repeats at 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs, and bounces for infants to 3 and their caregivers. Librarians recommend attending one storytime per week. Repeats February 7, 13, 14, 20 and 21.
- 7 **Paws to Read**, Orinda Library, 3:30 p.m. Sign up to read to a friendly dog, for grades 1-5. Repeats February 14 and 21. Sponsored by the Friends of the Orinda Library.
- 12 **Welcome in the Year of the Boar!** 2:30 p.m. at Orinda Library for ages 4 and up. Cuz'n Philbert and his potbellied pigs will share their love of reading and zest for life. Sponsored by the Friends of the Orinda Library.
- 22 **Story Swap**, 7 to 9 p.m. in Orinda Library Gallery Room.

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

CLUB MEETINGS

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

CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

Acalanes Union High School District

First and third Wednesdays, district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette, 7:30 p.m.

City Council

First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.ci.Orinda.ca.us.

Historic Landmarks Committee

Fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, public is welcome, for information, please call 788-7323.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.

Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees

Second Monday, 4 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road, www.orinda.k12.ca.us.

Planning Commission

Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, 253-4210.

Parks and Recreation Commission

Second Wednesday, 7 p.m., Community Center, room 7, 254-2445.

CALENDAR BY CHRIS LAVIN

Send calendar items to chrislavin@earthlink.net

Sister to Sister Summit Traveling Down the Road of Success



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
High School facilitators from last year included: (L-R) Miramonte students **Kelsey Casey**, **Mary Yeh**, and **Zoe Maltzer** and Las Lomas students **Danielle Villar** and **Sandra Vargas**.

By KSENIJA SOSTER OLMER
Staff Writer

Many parents will attest to the fact that it is difficult to reach the psyche of their teen and preteen girls. The suggestion that is so quickly poo-pooed when it comes from a parent is enthusiastically embraced when a day later a friend or a hip cousin suggests the very same thing.

Understanding this phenomenon well, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) has used it to its best advantage with the concept of the Sister to Sister Summit, a one-day conference for middle school girls that has been offered by the Lamorinda AAUW branch for eight years. Organizers believe that younger girls respond well to suggestions, support and words of wisdom from their slightly older "sisters" – or high school facilitators – who are trained to lead the day. The day focuses around two group discussions, chosen by the participants and facilitated by the high school girls. The topics that the girls can choose from when registering regard body image, peer pressure, relationships, harassment, mean girls, and Internet safety.

"With the proliferation of MySpace and similar online programs our high school facilitators thought it would be a good idea to add the session on Internet safety," says Edy Schwartz, co-chair of the event. "It is not just a question of safety but also of how you project yourself to others when you are using such mediums."

The upcoming Sister to Sister Summit will be held on March 10 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Our Savior's Lutheran Church at 1035 Carol Lane in Lafayette.

The older girls who are trained and lead the sessions know much about the problems of slightly younger girls: They experienced the same problems in middle school. They can remember well the challenges of friendship, cliques, academic, and social pressures. Many are happy to tell the girls that high school will be a better place and offer understanding and practical tips on how to deal with middle school issues. Many of the facilitators have, themselves, participated in Sister to Sister summits, and look forward to the time when they can take on a leadership role for a younger sister.

"Our program is getting well known in the Lamorinda area and beyond," says Valarie Burgess, co-chair of the event. "I have had moms call me in advance to make sure that nothing else is booked for their daughter the day of the summit, and this is the first year we had to turn away high school facilitator applicants. We have 45 girls from the four Acalanes District high schools and a special leadership team consisting of the more experienced girls. They are so wonderful, and clever with fresh new ideas. They are really taking ownership of the project, so we, adult women, need only take care of logistics."

And those logistics go beyond serving lunch to 145 exuberant girls. Facilitators

[SEE SISTER page 22]



The Committee for Lectures, Art and Music presents

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BUSINESS BUZZ



SALLY HOGARTY

Orinda Motors held a Classic Car show in September with proceeds benefiting the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program.

◆ BUZZ from page 24

kids and that is what we enjoy providing our customers," says Gendel. It is an eight-day a week job for Gendel and Connie King, and Orindans are lucky they love what they do.

You can give them a call at 254-6672. Sweet Dreams is open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Sunday 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Orinda Hardware at the Crossroads

Contra Costa native Bob Smith bought the True Value Orinda Hardware store from Johanna and Gary Hopper in October 2005. Smith's background is in music, specifically teaching music at Liberty High School in Brentwood. He was looking for a career change when the Hoppers asked if he was interested in being a small business owner. "I went to work here for one summer and ended up buying the whole shop," smiles Smith, who grew up in Brentwood and finds he thoroughly enjoys his new career. "We specialize in having a little of everything and, if by some chance, we don't have something a customer needs, we can special order," says Smith.

It is by no means your hardware store of yesterday. Orinda Hardware carries the obvious household repair items, such as nails, screws, paints, switch plates, and virtually all your hardware needs, but it also carries crock pots, coffee makers, and ice chests. In short, a whole myriad of items can be had at Orinda Hardware, including emergency supplies for your earthquake kit.

Bonnie Waxman, who worked with the Hoppers, is still on staff as the merchandising manager. "Bob Martin is our manager, and he and Bonnie do a great job," says Smith. "I like being associated with True Value. We have a co-op relationship that works very well," points out Smith.

Although the local hardware store has modernized and added more inventory,

some things don't change. Dads still bring their children in on a weekend jaunt to the hardware store, explaining what various tools and other items can do under the watchful eye of the mural on the back wall which captures an image of Orinda from bygone years.

You can't miss the extensive Lionel train set on display in the front window, facing Moraga Way. A full Lionel catalog is available at the store, which is an authorized Lionel dealer. Customers may buy the whole set or add pieces to an existing collection of boxcars. Another great feature of Orinda Hardware is the train clinic that takes place every Saturday morning from 9 a.m. to noon. Local model railroad consultant Ed Levinson conducts the clinic, offering his expertise to the public free of charge.

With 84,000 items in stock, it would



SALLY HOGARTY

Debbie Brown helps a customer at Orinda Hardware.

appear that Orinda Hardware has everything you need. If by some chance they don't, Bob Smith will find it for you promptly. "We can't carry everything, but, every week we order new products and will happily special order any item," says Smith.

Winter hours for Orinda Hardware are Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 254-5429 for more information or visit their web site at www.truevalue.com/orindahardware.

Orinda Motors Gives Back to Community

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

In 1922, E. I. De Laveaga opened a shop for the new motor vehicles that were slowly filling the streets of Orinda. While the name has changed over the years, many of the same families still have their cars serviced at Orinda's original garage where the philosophy of helping neighbors goes on.

Now owned by Allen and Terry Pennebaker, Orinda Motors not only supports the community by providing knowledgeable technicians to keep today's complex, computerized vehicles running smoothly, it also supports a myriad of local organizations. "We believe strongly in giving something back to this community that gives us so much," says Allen Pennebaker.

In September, Orinda Motors held a classic car show with proceeds benefiting the Orinda Association's (OA) Seniors Around Town Program. The company is

also an annual sponsor of the OA's 4th of July celebration. This past year, the company sponsored the popular opening day activities for the Orinda Baseball Association.

Orinda Motors also puts its water to work for local groups. During the spring and summer months, the service area is often taken over for car washes by youth groups.

Education is also important to Orinda Motors. To that end, they are planning a car care clinic in April. The free program includes demonstrations on how to maintain and care for today's vehicles.

Owning Orinda Motors has been a "dream come true" for Pennebaker. He began work in Orinda in 1972 at the Atlantic Richfield station then next door to Orinda Motors. He started taking mechanics classes and before long found himself working at Orinda Motors. By 1988, Pennebaker was managing the business, and in 1996 became the owner along with his wife Terry, who runs the business office.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

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Valerie Hotz



The Pharmacy That Is All About Your Health

After spending most of his career working for the big chain pharmacy stores, Alan Wong decided he wanted to get more personally involved with his customers. In September 2000, Wong opened The Medicine Shoppe in Orinda at 282 Village Square, adjacent to the wonderful old-fashioned diner, Village Inn Café.

"We offer exceptional personal, one-on-one service and are pleased to provide custom compounding for our customers," says Wong. The Medicine Shoppe stands out as the only pharmacy in the Lamorinda area that offers custom compounding to create medicines that are unavailable commercially.

"I really enjoy getting to know the people and their families. I am emotionally involved, and when something happens to someone, I take it very seriously," says Wong.

It is reciprocal, as customers have called him from Europe and asked, "What is this? Can I use it?" "So far I have been able to figure it out for them," smiles Wong.

The friendly atmosphere of The Medicine Shoppe makes going to pick up a prescription an enjoyable venture. Wong has tremendous knowledge and is extraordinarily helpful and generous with his time. On the subject of Medicare Part D prescription drug plans for senior citizens, Wong comments that most pharmacies have difficulty with the

program. "There are 48 plans in California alone, and each plan is very different from the others. We are all hoping it will be simplified. It is confusing for everyone involved," he says.

Cathy King is a pharmacy tech who has been assisting Wong for the past year. "I would not be able to do it without her," he adds. It is truly a family operation, with Alan's wife, Lily Wong, coming in on Saturdays to help out. The couple has been married 15 years. The Wongs serve the Orinda community with personal pharmacy services, as well as by carrying over-the-counter drugs and durable medical equipment such as walkers and wheelchairs. If what you need is not in stock, they can special order it for you and have it delivered within a day.

The Wongs also serve the Orinda community by supporting local public schools. They have been a member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce since the day The Medicine Shoppe opened in 2000 and Wong is an active member of the California Pharmacists Association.

You can reach Alan Wong at 254-1211. Store hours are Monday through Friday 10



SALLY HOGARTY
Evan Brooks and Connie King make working at Sweet Dreams child's play.

sweep the floor and stock the shelves. It was a joyful experience, and I am still talking about it."

The Sweet Dreams staff at Theatre Square is very helpful and full of good advice about the bountiful selection of toys. Manager Connie King has been with Gendel from the beginning. "Connie is fantastic. She is on a first-name basis with just about every youngster in Orinda. She is great," says Gendel.

The shop has a vibrant ambience that is geared to the customer, complete with a custom-painted dreamy mural. Children are encouraged to play with the toy train set that is located at the rear of the store. An incredible variety of imaginative toys is in stock, from traditional board games Scrabble, Monopoly, and Yahtzee, to Little People (an all-time classic), Hot Wheels, marbles, books, puzzles, kites, jumbo cardboard blocks, hula hoops, wiffle balls, stuffed animals, sidewalk chalk, and even an Antworks that can go into space.

If you need assistance, sales clerk Harry Bolles can guide you to the latest craze. "I am good friends with my coworkers, and we take the time to get to know the toys. We are usually very busy here," says Bolles. Orindan Ann Kunczynski is overflowing with praise about Sweet Dreams. "We come here for all our toys. It is truly a great toy store," she exclaims.

If you are looking for dress-up costumes, a bowling ball with pins, or simple plasticine modeling clay, Sweet Dreams has it all in stock. "One of our most special customer service items is free gift wrap. Saturday mornings between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. can be a pretty wild scene in here. Parents stumble in after a couple of cups of coffee on their way to the birthday party, and they always appreciate our custom giftwrap," adds Gendel.

He has seen it all in his 35 years of business. "Beanie Babies was probably the biggest craze to ever hit the scene. There is always a demand for stable, good toys for

[SEE BUZZ page 23]

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SALLY HOGARTY
Pharmacist Alan Wong mixes up one of the many compounds used by his customers.

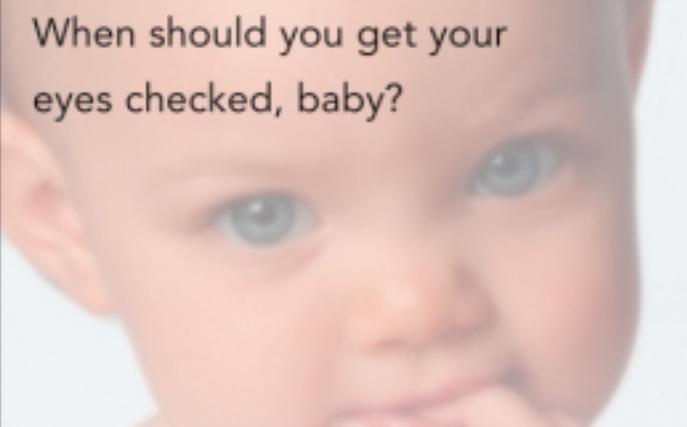
a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Medicine Shoppe is closed on Sunday.

Orinda Continues To Embrace Sweet Dreams

The delightfully charming, independent toy store, Sweet Dreams, opened in Theatre Square over 10 years ago and remains the place to go when your youngsters are hitting the Saturday morning birthday party circuit. Owner Gary Gendel opened his first Sweet Dreams on College Avenue in Berkeley 35 years ago. At that time the shop was limited to a rainbow array of candies and soon evolved into a full-fledged toy store.

Today Gendel caters to a third generation of youngsters. Recently, a woman in her mid-30s came into the shop and said, "You won't remember me, but I worked for you when I was 6-years-old. You told me I could

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