

THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
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SALLY HOGARTY

(L-R) City Manager Janet Keeter, Mayor Steve Glazer, and City Councilmembers Tom McCormick, Amy Worth, and Victoria Smith presented proclamations at the Orinda Association's annual awards dinner. The City Council is among the seven in 2007 to watch. For more photos on the OA awards dinner, see page 2.

Seven People/Groups to Watch in 2007

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

Singling out a handful of people as noteworthy is a flawed exercise, to be sure. No sooner will the ink dry on the paper than readers will have additions, omissions, and criticisms of such a list. Orinda is home to many, many people who have done amazing things and many more who will continue to leave their mark in the years ahead. Nevertheless, in the spirit of Barbara Walters and *Time* magazine, I present a list of seven people or groups to watch this coming year.

The Orinda City Council

In just two years, the Orinda City Council has seen more new faces take office than at any other time in the city's 21-year history. Whether due to incumbents stepping down or failed bids for reelection, new leadership has taken four of the five seats with voters giving a decisive victory to newcomers Steve Glazer and Victoria Smith in 2004 and Sue Severson and Tom McCormick this past November. Amy Worth, now in her

third term, is the sole incumbent winning reelection in the past two elections.

Deteriorating infrastructure, declining retail, onerous planning approval processes, and questionable city spending on a new office building were the big issues of the last two city elections. Voters may have gotten a new council, but the challenges remain the same. Despite a majority approval, Measure Q, the bond measure to raise funds for road and drain repair, failed to receive the required two-thirds vote. The roads continue to deteriorate and the new council is left with the challenge of finding the funds to do the most urgent infrastructure repairs. Retail space at Theatre Square continues to be on a downward spiral as yet another shop closed its doors last month, and on the Village side of town, storefronts, including the old Phair's, have remained vacant for yet another year.

Solutions to the city's most pressing challenges have eluded previous councils. Now, the new city council will have the opportunity to bring action to their

[SEE SEVEN page 7]

Orinda Needs To Prepare For The Inevitable

Orinda Public Safety Advisory Commission plans for 2007

By BILL WATERMAN
Orinda Association Board Member

Emergency preparedness and public safety in Orinda are critical priorities of the City Manager, the City Council, police and fire departments. Thus, in late 2004 the City Council established the Orinda Public Safety Advisory Commission (OPSAC), which began its work in March 2005.

OPSAC consists of nine volunteer residents with expertise in community outreach, planning, organization, engineering and medicine, partnered with the police and fire chiefs and the Orinda Association. Last year, OPSAC focused on organizing Neighborhood Safety Groups (NSG), and encouraging participation in CERT classes (Community Emergency Response Team, which consists of a 20-hour emergency training course).

In 2006, OPSAC helped 30 new neighborhoods begin their own NSG program. OPSAC also sponsored the emergency preparation meeting last September, and more than 75 Orinda residents attended CERT classes.

Goals for 2007

The commission has the following goals for this year:

- Help form 50 new NSGs;
- Enlist 100 residents to attend CERT classes;
- Create ongoing support programs for the NSGs, including a disaster drill;
- Work with a new tri-city Emergency Planner (shared with Moraga and Lafayette);
- Begin working with Orinda Union School District (OUSD) on emergency preparedness and CERT training for teachers;
- Begin working with Orinda Chamber of Commerce on preparedness.

[SEE PREPARE page 6]

Special Election in June to Consider Infrastructure Bond

By CHRIS LAVIN
SALLY HOGARTY

Only a handful of California's 482 cities do not have the same problem: How does a town fix its potholes and crumbling pavement when the property taxes go straight to the state, and only a portion returns?

Ironically, while Orinda boasts one of the highest income rates in the nation – median household income is \$132,500, compared to \$46,000 nationwide – road problems proliferate, and some fire hydrants are not sufficient to put out a house fire.

"We all know that this is the most pressing issue facing the city," says Mayor Steve Glazer. On that, supporters and opponents of a tax measure to fix the problem of roads and drains agree, but that is precisely where agreement ends. Measure Q went down to narrow defeat last November, which would have allowed the city to sell \$59.1 million in bonds to begin needed repairs to Orinda's 91 miles of roads, fix the corrugated metal drainage pipes that have collapsed or are approaching that state, and bring the water lines up to standards required by the fire department.

On June 5, voters will have another opportunity to voice their opinions. At the February 6 City Council meeting, the council agreed to put a new measure on the ballot to fix Orinda's aging infrastructure. The new bond measure will ask for \$58.6 million. According to the infrastructure committee, it would take approximately \$69.6 million to accomplish what Measure Q proposed doing on the November ballot. Construction and material costs have gone up in the interim and one entire construction

season has been lost. The City Council, however, did not feel they could go back to voters and ask for the additional funds. City Councilmember Tom McCormick was adamant that the city find a way to increase its contribution to the road problem. "We need to put more of a burden on the city since we're asking citizens to do so," he

[SEE BOND page 5]

Orinda House Jam Sessions



RICK KONLON

Fion Woods of the Diplomats was among the young musicians who performed recently at The Orinda House. Owner Ron Bonner has opened his restaurant on Sundays to allow these up-and-coming performers a venue for their talents. For more information, contact Bonner at 258-4445.

Marching into the 4th

The Orinda Association is seeking groups or individuals to organize and chair one or more of the following activities in the park following the July 4th parade.

- Games
- Food and Beverage booths
- Logistics in the park
- Decorations in the park
- Clean up in the park

Please see OA president's message on page 3 for more details.



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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

Orinda Association's Volunteer of the Year and Mott Award Dinner a Gala Affair



Nine members of the 14-member Infrastructure Committee were on hand to receive their award as Volunteers of the Year.

SALLY HOGARTY

On January 28, the Orinda Association held its annual Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Awards dinner. The gala affair, held at the Orinda Country Club, honored the 14-member Infrastructure Committee as Volunteers of the Year. The group, which consisted of civil engineers, financial experts, and communication professionals, worked for two years assessing the condition of Orinda's 91 miles of roads and 20 miles of storm drains. Maya Rappaport was chosen as the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award recipient for her tireless work on behalf of the environment and, in particular, her work with Friends of Orinda Creeks.



Maya Rappaport debuts the new Friends of the Orinda Creeks logo.

SALLY HOGARTY



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Art Haigh, on behalf of the Infrastructure Committee, accepts an award from Supervisor **Gayle Uilkema**.

SALLY HOGARTY



Maya Rappaport accepts the City of Orinda's congratulations from **Mayor Steve Glazer**.

SALLY HOGARTY



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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President

Orinda Celebrates CommUnity

Kate Wiley



Although I'm writing this in the first few days of February, there is a warm, soft breeze blowing, the sun is shining, and the temperature is in the 60s, which makes it so much easier to direct my thoughts toward summer. Yes, it's that time of year again when the OA begins planning in earnest for Orinda's annual 4th of July parade and celebration. This year's theme is "Orinda Celebrates CommUnity." In an effort to engage more community groups, local businesses, and individuals this year, we are looking for others to take on some of the events in the park following the parade. The 4th of July in Orinda is the culmination of work by dozens of volunteers, some of whom have worked for months, some just a few hours to make this annual event one to remember. This is an excellent opportunity for your organization to be a part of a 24-year-old tradition in Orinda, the only community-wide event that has something for everyone, young and old. This can be a fun and easy fundraiser for your organization. Take part, get involved, and give back. If your group is committed to hosting an event in the park, attend our March 12 meeting in the May Room, Orinda Library Plaza, at 7:30 p.m. The OA has a packet of information to get you started and see you through.

And speaking about involvement, our membership drive was so successful this year that we wanted to acknowledge and welcome our newest members, those who renewed just past our December deadline and those members who were omitted from our original list in error. We couldn't continue to offer the programs and services

of the OA without the generosity of our membership. The 4th of July parade, this monthly newspaper, and the Soccer 4 All Program are just a few examples.

Saturday, March 3, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. the OA, is partnering with Santa Maria Church to host a work party to inventory and assemble soccer uniform team sets for the Soccer 4 All program. This program has been providing uniforms and equipment to children all over the world for the past five years. These team sets go not only to Third World countries, but also benefit underfunded school programs in our own backyard. To volunteer, please call 254-0800 for more information. You can drop off uniforms or equipment at the OYA or OA offices, or at Santa Maria Church.

This leads me to a new service the OA is offering, Red Cross Disaster Preparedness kits for sale through the OA. The OA is not collecting any profit from the sale of these kits, we are offering them as a convenience to you and a reminder that each of us needs to be prepared for any type of disaster, not just a catastrophic earthquake. The kits can be purchased and picked up at the OA office located at the Orinda Library Plaza. We should all have one in every car we drive and one for every member of our family. They are basic kits that you can tailor to your family's needs such as adding diapers and formula, medications, prescriptions, favorite drinks or snacks, emergency phone numbers, and extra batteries. The next disaster could be during a casual trip to grandma's house in the mountains!

To purchase a kit, you can download a

form from our website and mail with your check to the OA, or drop by our office and take them home with you on the spot. We have two different styles to choose from, a backpack for \$65 and a duffel bag for \$48. For more information about hosting an event in the park this 4th of July, please call the OA office at 254-0800.

Additional OA Members

Here are our newest members, those who renewed just past our December deadline, and those who were inadvertently omitted from the list in the February issue of *The Orinda News*. Thank you so much for your support!

- Verda Alexander
- Deborah & Geoffrey Anderson
- Robert W. Arnett, Jr.
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- Leesa & Steve Danziger Evans
- Katharine & Alex Evans, Jr.
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- Margaret Polgar
- Dennis & Marie Rowland
- Ann & Stu Sharf
- Francis Watson, JR.
- Marc Weinstein
- Julie Whitsitt
- Peter Wilson
- Diane Wolfe

The Orinda Association

The Orinda Association is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to:

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

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Grants	Kate Wiley

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Letters to the Editor

Treat Residents Equally

I am both a resident and business owner in Orinda. While I understand the need for alternative funding sources to repair our crumbling roads and aging infrastructure, I believe that Measure Q was not entirely equitable. Why should more recent residents and those that have done extensive remodeling (both of whom generally have higher appraised values on their homes) be burdened with a disproportional share of the responsibility for these repairs? After all, the longer-term residents have actually contributed more to the current state of demise. Why not a flat parcel tax that treats all residents equally? (Perhaps a partial credit could be provided to seniors, to lessen the burden on those living on a fixed income and who are less likely to be making the frequent school runs.) The value of one's home has no bearing on the number of SUVs in one's driveway. Let everyone share equitably in a solution.

— Sandy Colen

Fix Our Roads

After reading the letters in opposition to the recent bond for improving roads and drains in Orinda, I feel compelled to write because these thoughts are so different from my own.

I have been a resident in Orinda for over 60 years and have seen Orinda go through many changes over these years. There has always been good support for our schools and community by the citizens. The current opposition to the effort to improve our roads and drains, as well as suggestions that the city dispose of the new city offices to pay for road improvements dismay me!

Although I too thought that the city would use the old library for their offices, I am confident that adequate analysis was done and found that location and space were not adequate to meet the needs of our community. It would have been foolish to try to make a space work and waste the money on remodeling the old library only to find that it could not be made to meet the city needs. I believe that our city servants deserve a functional as well as comfortable space to conduct city business. I could not be happier that the city has moved ahead with the development of this office space that should meet the needs of Orinda for the foreseeable future.

Nobody seems to argue that our roads do not need substantial work to bring them up to an acceptable standard. I have not had any involvement with the committee to bring Measure Q to the residents of Orinda, but after reviewing the measure, I was prepared to give it my affirmative vote. My thanks go to the many people that put this measure together and brought it to us in November. While it was gratifying that a majority of Orinda voters supported the measure, I found it very disappointing that it did not receive the necessary two-thirds majority required to pass.

It is my hope that the city will once again

bring this measure to the voters. I would encourage all Orinda citizens to support this measure. It is unfortunate that there is not some magic that will bring the funds necessary for this project without costing the Orinda citizens; but I for one, will certainly be supporting this measure again if given the chance.

The suggestion that the city employees are overpaid and savings from their wages could fund road repairs is beyond belief. And further suggestions that an oversight committee's function would be to protect the Orinda citizens from embezzlement is hard to understand. Certainly, an oversight committee might help set priorities, but to suggest that embezzlement of funds from a bond issue is something that we should take seriously is off my radar screen.

Orinda is far from a poor community, and certainly we should be able to support the basic infrastructure to keep it from deteriorating to Third World standards. I look forward to continuing to live in a city where the citizens will support the needs of our community. If given the chance to vote on this, or a similar measure in the future, I hope that every Orinda voter will support a measure to improve our roads and repair the necessary drains. You can be assured I will.

— Roger Hoyer

Aggressive Campaign Warrants Explanation

Call me a political neophyte, but I agree with Seth Knoepler's remarks about the offensive and aggressive campaign waged against long time Councilmember, Laura Abrams ("Aggressive Campaign Offensive," *Orinda News*, February, 2007). In the 30 years I've lived here, I don't recall such a negative and "heavy with innuendos" approach, and it struck me as totally out of character for our community.

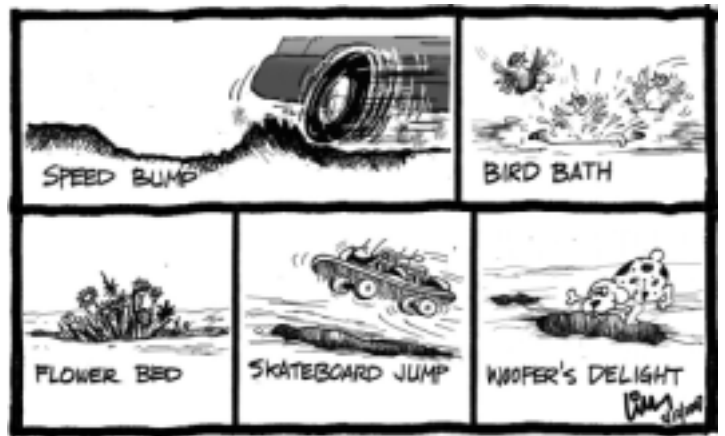
While it is time to look forward and focus on what is best for Orinda, I concur with Mr. Knoepler in asking for an explanation of why those responsible believed the kind of campaign they orchestrated was necessary for their purposes and appropriate for Orinda.

— Chris Kniel

Unfriendly Persuasion

Last month's *Orinda News* contained a letter from me complaining about the tactics that were used by new Councilmembers Tom McCormick and Sue Severson in their successful "throw the rascals out" campaign in last fall's election. A few days later I received at my unlisted home address the following unsigned letter, in an envelope with no return address:

"Here are some of the reasons. We have endured lies, deceit and arrogance and self serving decisions from some of the previous members. That's why we wanted to throw the rascals out. I am grateful that we had three candidates that we (sic) willing to do that. I wished the other candidate could have won. What do you suggest we do - congratulate them for irresponsibility? I



POTHOLES, POTHOLES, POTHOLES -----

don't think you realize the serious condition we are in because of their performance."

I don't know whether my secret correspondent – or Tom McCormick and Sue Severson, for that matter – were deceived or lied to by any of the present or former members of the council, or whether those councilmembers were, in fact, "arrogant" or made "self-serving" decisions. However, I'm unlikely to be persuaded by an unsubstantiated attack on the character of a public figure, especially one which is launched from behind a bulwark of anonymity or in a last minute campaign "hit piece" mailed directly to voters, against which an effective defense is virtually impossible. Though it's disturbing that someone would go to the trouble of discovering my home address so that they could send me, anonymously, an angry letter, in a democracy it is inevitable that some people will use the opportunities that it affords more responsibly than others. However, those who choose to run for public office should be held to a higher standard.

— Seth Knoepler

Diamonds Not Bloodless

As a former Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone - the setting for the recent movie *Blood Diamond* - I have followed the issue of contraband diamonds closely over the past decade.

While Congress and the United Nations have taken some measures to ensure that diamonds sold in this country are not mined using slaves and barbaric practices, these efforts have largely been influenced by the deBeer's corporation. That company has a mighty hold on the industry, and in fact shaped the world's reverence for the stones through a masterful, decades-long public relations campaign. Our country is home to its best customers.

I feel for the local jewelers who make every attempt to buy diamonds that are so-called "conflict-free." But I liken them to the earnest gas-station owner who wants to buy gasoline that doesn't originate in

the Middle East. It's simply impossible. Many of us at the moment must have gasoline, but do any of us really need diamonds? Ever?

Please, don't buy diamonds. Their sale is financing illicit arms sales, and - still - the cutting off of hands.

— Chris Lavin

Smash and Grab

Early Saturday morning I awoke to the sound of breaking glass. Someone had smashed the window of my car and had stolen my iPod, which had been carefully concealed in a console between the seats. The thief didn't bother with a pair of nice sunglasses that were right above the iPod, but opted to steal a cranberry hand knit scarf that my sister had made for me. Smash and grab, and they were gone.

A trip to Oakland, a deductible payment, a few hours of inconvenience, and my car was fine. I was not. My iPod was a photo iPod so, in addition to having music on it, it held hundreds of personal pictures. My iPod had also traveled the world with me. I was mad at the thief and mad at myself for leaving it in the car. I was so angry I made a poster and placed it on the fence in front of my house so anyone driving by would know that my car had been broken into.

What happened next scared the daylight out of me. It seems we have thieves who walk the streets of our quiet community looking for crimes of opportunity. Many neighbors stopped and spoke to me about their own garage door openers, cds, iPods, cell phones, computers, and other valuables being taken from their cars. Most thefts

[SEE LETTERS page10]

Correction: The Historical Society dinner article in the February issue incorrectly identified Nancy Peterson as a head cheerleader at Miramonte High School and her dad as a cheerleader in high school and at Cal. The Miramonte head cheerleader, whose dad was also a cheerleader, was Vicki Saputo.

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

BASEBALL FOR ALL

Recycle Your Used Baseball Gear: Baseball for All

By DAN HOLMES
Contributing Writer

Your left-over baseball uniforms and gear can now be dropped off, with or without excess soccer gear, at the Orinda Youth Association (OYA) office in the Orinda Community Center or at the Orinda Association (OA) office downstairs from the library, next to the parking garage. Baseball for All needs useable uniforms (hats, shirts, pants, socks, belts), cleats (baseball shoes), mitts, bats, balls, batting gloves, batting helmets, t-ball stands, and catchers' masks/helmets and pads.

Just in time for the spring baseball season, this new program is collecting and distributing used baseball gear to needy kids. Baseball for All follows in the footsteps of the OA's very successful Soccer 4 All program, which has accumulated and distributed thousands of soccer uniforms to local and foreign needy children. Oakland Boys and Girls Clubs are to be the first baseball recipients.

Central Self Storage in Lafayette has donated a storage space to get the program started. Thanks to Kate Wiley of the Orinda Association and Jerry Johnston of Orinda Youth Association for encouraging the idea and collecting gear and to the Orinda



DIANE LA LAY

Spencer Holmes shows off some of the baseball gear collected for the new Baseball for All program. The gear plus uniforms will be distributed to teams who cannot afford such items.

Baseball Association (OBA) for their cooperation. The OBA will collect uniforms and gear on opening day, March 10.

Volunteers of any age are needed to help sort uniforms. A couple of hours once or twice could make a big difference.

If you would like to donate uniforms or volunteer your time, email Dan Holmes at dholmes@yahoo.com; please put "Baseball" in the subject line.

◆ BOND from page 1

said. "We also need to ask the fire district to contribute more as well." To that end, the city has agreed to find additional monies in its budget, and John Wyro, a board member on the Moraga Orinda Fire District, said he would take the issue to his board.

Over the coming months, supporters of the measure will be evaluating how to pitch the measure to voters. Citing an online poll conducted recently with the intent of finding out why voters nixed Measure Q, Alex Evans, a member of the Infrastructure Committee that has studied the issue of deteriorating infrastructure and how to pay for it, noted most of the respondents who voted no said, in more ways than one, "that they don't like how the City Council is spending the money." Forty-eight percent, he said, "felt the city has the wrong spending priorities."

Vocal opponents of any measure to fix roads have named two main reasons they don't want to pay any more taxes: the construction of new city offices, and spending too much on salaries and pensions for firefighters. Retooling the city budget, they say, would cover the costs for roads without raising taxes. McCormick,

formerly a vocal opponent to the city's spending practices, now points out that he doesn't see another alternative: "When I became a councilmember, I asked to be on the budget committee. I really wanted to see if there was another way – besides a new tax – to pay for the roads. After a lot of number crunching, I realize that, while we can make the city cover a larger share of the cost, we cannot solve the problem without a bond measure." McCormick and other councilmembers felt that asking residents to pay slightly less and the city and fire district to pay more would help passage of a June bond. "We will also be forming the Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Committee prior to the election so that when people vote, they will already know who will be on the committee," McCormick adds.

According to the city staff report, the median value of a home in Orinda was \$458,424 (based on the 2005-06 secured assessment roll of the Contra Costa County Assessor) – far below the average sales price most homes in Orinda would bring if sold on the market today. Therefore, longtime homeowners would pay significantly less than recent buyers. The estimated cost per \$100,000 is approximately \$33.

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City of Orinda Supplemental Financial Contributions	
Projects Financed	Roads Storm Drains Water Supply
Bond Amount	\$58,600,000
City of Orinda Contribution (1)	\$2,500,000
East Bay Municipal Utility District (2)	\$1,200,000
Moraga-Orinda Fire District (3)	\$3,400,000
Pavement Management Program (4)	\$30,200,000
Subtotal	\$37,300,000
Bond Amount	\$58,600,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$95,900,000

(1) Reserve Draw Down Over a 5-Year Period \$500,000 per year from the City of Orinda
(2) Predicated on the EBMUD Rockridge Finance Model
(3) Moraga Orinda Fire District Contribution
(4) Predicated on the Annual \$910,150 Pavement Management Program Over a 33 year Period from the City of Orinda's Operating Budget.

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DIAMONDS

Are Diamonds a Girl's Best Friend?

By LINDA U. FOLEY
Contributing Writer

Blood Diamond is an action-packed movie decked out with fine actors and skillful photography but foremost, are its socio-political messages which rap on the viewer's sense of ethics and implied expectation to rise to action.

Set during the savage Civil War in 1999 in Sierra Leone, West Africa, this film focuses on the deeply entrenched corruption of the diamond trade on a global scale. Gems illicitly mined by their captives are smuggled by rebel groups to generate funds to finance their vicious war. Bloodshed and mayhem of staggering proportions pave the way for these diamonds before they find their way into First World countries.

This movie clearly says "buyer beware" of diamonds which may have originated

from a conflicted country, thus inadvertently supporting war efforts and human rights abuses. The easiest way to be sure that you are not purchasing a blood diamond from a conflicted country is to ask the jeweler whether the diamond has been sanctioned by the Kimberley Process.

Established in 2002, KPCS, the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme, is a process established to certify that diamonds have originated from a conflict-free source. The World Diamond Council has representation on the Kimberley Process working groups.

The KPCS is far from new to David Berryhill, owner of Morrison's Jewelers, a fourth generation business located in Orinda for the past 12 years. This jewelry enterprise worked with first-rate suppliers heading ethical standards even before the KPCS became official. At that time, the concern was not to support apartheid-riddled countries and conflict efforts.

The movie leaves the viewer with the impression that blood diamonds are a huge, illicit business when, according to Berryhill, "less than one percent of diamonds came to market from conflicted countries prior to the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme."

Furthermore, Berryhill adds, a preponderance of diamonds now comes from Canada despite the higher cost attributable to the higher pay scale. Morrison's suppliers also provide certificates guaranteeing that their



David Berryhill of Morrison's Jewelers.

diamonds are fair trade gemstones "or ethical diamonds" originating from responsible sources.

Among the many facts available online, Diamondfacts.org provides the following: In November 2006, 71 governments and the World Diamond Council agreed on measures to further strengthen the Kimberly Process. Currently, four diamond producing countries are not complying with all elements of the Kimberly Process. More than 99 percent of diamonds are now from conflict-free sources and traded under the U.N. mandated Kimberly Process.

Blood Diamond brought the abuses in the African diamond industry to a wider public. It is now the consumer's role to make intelligent choices that can have ramifications around the world.



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◆ PREPARE from page 1

Why We Need Neighborhood Safety Groups and CERT Training

In the event of a major earthquake, such as a magnitude 7.2 quake on the Hayward fault, other East Bay cities along the fault may sustain the greatest damage. These cities have larger populations than Orinda and many hazardous chemical facilities (refineries, chemical plants, etc.). Their critical industries and facilities include airports, the Port of Oakland, and the Bay Bridge, which will get first priority. Most of the federal, state, and local mutual aid resources will be directed there.

Therefore, Orinda may not receive much help for three to five days or longer. If the earthquake strikes at night, Orinda has only 20 fire fighters, six police officers, and two ambulances on duty. Even if the quake hits during the day, there are only 30 such first responders to take care of Orinda's 17,500 citizens, of which 18 percent are over 65 – that's 3,150 people alone. These 30 first responders will be called upon to put out fires caused by gas line breaks and downed power lines, control traffic when traffic lights are out, and rescue persons trapped in collapsed houses and downtown buildings. Orinda's police officers and firefighters will be stretched, so citizens need to take care of themselves during the first three to five days.

Neighborhood Safety Groups will be the first responders – to put out small fires, conduct light search and rescue, perform medical triage and first aid, and provide food, water, and shelter, for ourselves and our neighbors. To do this, some of our citizens need CERT training. Studies also show that survival rates for trapped victims decline rapidly with time: 99.3 percent survive if rescued in one hour, 81 percent in one day, 37 percent in two days, 34 percent in three days, 19 percent in four days, and seven percent in five days. We cannot wait three to five days to get help.

In addition, there are other benefits to forming an NSG. Mary Belden, a co-block captain of a recently formed group shares her recent experience: "We organized the Castlegate Neighborhood Safety Group in early 2006 after three burglaries in our

neighborhood over a 12-month period. We were certain that if we were organized and looking after each other we could prevent additional crimes from occurring and also get organized for a potential regional emergency. As a result of forming our NSG and the terrific communication from our members, we subsequently prevented one daytime robbery of a resident and two burglaries. The unexpected benefits of forming the NSG is the enhanced interaction and neighborhood spirit amongst the participants. We're having a lot of fun and enjoying getting to know each other better since we got organized!"

How To Start Your NSG / Get CERT Training

To start a Neighborhood Safety Group, check out the straightforward program OPSAC members have developed to assist with organizing and running your first meeting. A typical Neighborhood Safety Group consists of about 20 to 25 households. An OPSAC member will assist with organizing and running the initial meeting. To find out how to start a group, get written materials, and talk to an OPSAC member: e-mail OPSAC@ci.orinda.ca.us, call OPSAC co-chair Beccie Kunzman at 254-1849, call the Orinda Association at 254-0800, or visit the Orinda Association office to view a map of all organized neighborhoods (get more information at www.orindaassociation.org.)

Order your disaster kit. The Orinda Association is taking orders for Red Cross Disaster Kits. Two kits are available – a more complete backpack kit for \$65 and a smaller "ready to go" kit in a duffel bag for \$48, ideal for a car. Information and order forms are available on the Orinda Association website, above.

Sign up for CERT training. This year several CERT classes are scheduled for Lamorinda, and the next class begins in April. The course consists of 20 hours of classes, taught by Moraga-Orinda Fire District personnel and certified instructors, and is free. To get more information about upcoming CERT classes, call Ken Tom at 376-0533 or e-mail Ken at tkentom@aol.com, or call the Orinda Association at 254-0800.

SEVEN TO WATCH

◆ SEVEN from page 1

campaign promises. Whatever their solutions, one thing's clear: They will need the support of the voters as they move ahead.

Raúl Zamora, Miramonte High School Principal

Raúl Zamora is only the sixth principal in Miramonte High School's 51-year history. When he assumed leadership of the school this past year, he inherited a legacy of academic and athletic excellence. The awards and accolades bestowed upon Orinda's high school are too numerous to recount; yet, expectations remain as high – if not higher than ever. And therein lies one of Zamora's greatest challenges: how to keep performance high without placing undue pressure on students and teachers alike.

"One of the cautions I have is to not get away from the idea that college is important," Zamora says, referring to recent concern over unhealthy levels of stress,



HANNAH JACOBS

Miramonte principal Raúl Zamora.

heightened competition for acceptance to top colleges, and a growing call to help students address ways in which they can effectively manage the pressures to perform. "The pendulum swings from being very home-focused to looking to the school to answer these concerns. The key is in finding the balance between solutions at both home and school," he adds.

Zamora takes a balanced and positive approach when discussing this and other challenges of his job. His vision for the school is clear. He wants to build a stronger community at Miramonte. "There's a common thread between the faculty, administration, and community – we all are strongly interested in what's best for students," he says. Zamora sees his role as



PEG SKORPINKSI

Susan Marqusee, UC Berkeley Professor.

one of providing a structure in which the focus is on the positive, be that in the way staff meetings are conducted, or in the traditions students perpetuate. "This is a team effort. Everyone has to be ready to play. I hope that students, staff, and parents feel that I have an open-door policy. The second I think that I have all the answers is the point at which I have failed," Zamora said.

Susan Marqusee, UC Berkeley Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Susan Marqusee is the person who got me thinking about the many people in Orinda who are accomplishing great things. For over a dozen years, Marqusee has been my neighbor, Becca and Sarah's mom, and reliable car-pooler. While I knew that she was a biochemist at UC Berkeley, I never thought much about her professional life until I learned that she had an important piece of research published in *Science* magazine, arguably one of the most prestigious, peer-reviewed journals in science.

The groundbreaking research Marqusee is leading has to do with the protein folding problem. "Proteins are sequences of amino acids, and each sequence defines a particular structure or fold. Mutations occur when the wrong amino acid is put in the sequence. Alzheimer's is a classic example of protein folding gone wrong," she explains. "Think of the sequence of protein folding like origami; it needs to fold onto itself, and the sequence in which it folds matters in the outcome."

Marqusee, says that the protein-folding problem has been a fundamental hurdle in biology. But now, she and her colleagues have taken a huge step towards solving this problem. In essence, she figured out a way to watch a protein fold, one molecule at a time. "We've learned how to trap individual molecules using a laser trap. Once trapped, we are able to stretch and pull, or unfold it,

and then watch it relax to see how it refolds. If we are able to understand the sequence in protein folding, we can design drugs to inhibit the diseases related to misfolding."

Marqusee also is the associate director of QB3, the California Institute for Biomedical Research, which is a cooperative of leading scientists from three UC campuses. QB3 earned headlines last month when it, along with Lawrence Berkeley Labs and the University of Illinois, was awarded a \$500 million grant from the energy conglomerate BP, to develop new sources of energy. Marqusee served as the lead scientist for QB3's new facility in Berkeley, which is the largest research building on campus.

Nick Lopez, Miramonte Senior

There's no shortage of talent at Miramonte and singling out just one student is sure to fuel debate. Nevertheless, Nick Lopez is certainly someone to watch in the years ahead. Why? For starters, he's a great

[SEE LOPEZ page 8]

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SEVEN TO WATCH

◆ LOPEZ from page 7

role model. Hardworking, polite, affable, Lopez also happens to be a nationally ranked tennis player.

Having just turned 17, he's ranked 57th (boys 16) in the nation and sixth in Northern California (boys 18). As can be expected, this student athlete hopes to improve his national ranking this year and challenge himself academically. He's also developed a recent interest in video production and hopes to improve his skills in this area, too. "I've had a good time at Miramonte. The academics here are not only challenging but also engaging. I definitely feel as though it's prepared me for college."

This fall, Lopez will head off to UC Davis where he plans to study political science – and play tennis, of course. "I felt a real connection with the Davis tennis team," he explains. "The team has a number of All-American players. I also like the fact that Davis is very much a developing school. There is a lot of growth and opportunity on the campus." Whether on the tennis court or in a classroom, Lopez possesses a work ethic and talent that are sure to serve him



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Miramonte tennis star Nick Lopez.

well.

Terry Leach, President, Lamorinda Democratic Club; Health Care Advocate

Affordable health care is sure to top the list of domestic concerns for this season's crop of presidential hopefuls, and Terry Leach wants to make sure that politicians put rhetoric into action. A registered nurse, lawyer, and writer, Leach has brought her vast professional skills to bear on one of the nation's most vexing problems: affordable health care for all.

Currently, she is working with a group of primary care physicians and small business leaders interested in finding ways to make affordable health care more accessible. "By bringing coalitions together, we're creating the political will to find solutions to the health care crisis. The group I'm involved with now has come together to work on some very innovative approaches to bringing health care to the uninsured," she explains.

Leach is also about to take on what she describes as "a larger role in California and the nation working on behalf of the stem cell research effort." This comes right on the heels of her successful work as Lt. Governor John Garamendi's director of strategy during his recent election campaign. "The stem cell issue became a defining issue in the race for lieutenant governor," she says.

Leach hopes to bring her extensive experience with grassroots efforts, medical and legal backgrounds, and coalition building skills together to help set sound health care policy. "It's important for people of like minds to understand how policy and ideology intersect. I'm not an ideologue, but I see politics as a means to an end to drive good policy."

Erik Andersen, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Remedy Interactive

I don't know the number, but it's safe to say that a fair number of Orindans make their living in the computer industry. What makes Andersen noteworthy in this group is that, as director of strategic partnership for Sausalito-based Remedy Interactive, he looks for ways in which technology can be used to solve business problems – namely workplace injuries. His company has received awards from groups ranging from the San Francisco-based Women's Technology Cluster to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

When accepting the U.S. Department of Commerce award last fall, Andersen noted that particular honor validated his company's "contribution to injury prevention and risk management, and confirms that we're on the right track in delivering effective technology solutions

that help global companies maintain healthy employee work habits and environments."

Balancing career with civic pride, Andersen is a member of the City of Orinda's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee. The committee, which was formed last year, is charged with helping the city prioritize traffic safety projects. "We're developing a process to evaluate how problem areas can best be resolved," he explains. "Once you've identified a problem area, there's a whole toolbox of solutions for fixing the problems, things such as speed cushions and other traffic calming devices."

Orinda Arts Council

The Orinda Arts Council (OAC) has quietly worked to support the arts in the community and arts education in the schools since 1950 – quietly, that is, until last year when the organization took a quantum step to build community awareness of, and participation in, the arts. With *Birdhaus*, the public art display and auction, and Orinda Idol, the Arts Council had the town abuzz over the arts all last summer.

How do you follow up on two blockbuster events in the same year? You learn from the experience and build on your success, says acting OAC president Nancy Daniels. The exceedingly popular Orinda Idol will return this fall, with auditions taking place this spring. Like last year, contestants can be seen performing at various venues throughout the summer in preparation for the big event. *Birdhaus*, however, will take a hiatus this year, but the arts group intends to sponsor a similar event in 2008.

"The Arts Council has long championed arts education, believing it to be a cultural component of a well-rounded education," says Daniels. To that end the OAC will continue to sponsor its high school visual arts contest, which will be on display in the Orinda Library Gallery in mid-March. Daniels says that the group also is involved with the city's new public art committee, which is focused on getting more public art on display at venues around town. "*Birdhaus* was a real impetus for getting art on display around town," Daniels notes. Additionally, the OAC is looking to build alliances with working artists in Orinda.

The Orinda Arts Council is supported by membership contributions. Historically, being a member meant that you had to be actively involved by attending meetings and working on one of several committees. That structure has changed with time. While the group still relies on volunteers, anyone interested in supporting the arts can become a member with a relatively small donation.



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ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Family Tireless in Attempts to Go Green

By CHRIS LAVIN
Staff Writer

If you accidentally drive past Norman and Janet Pease's house and stop to ask for directions, some of the various dog-walkers along Mullholland Hill will tell you to turn around "then look for the solar panels." If you miss those, you may spy the spout for the natural gas pipe used to power one of the cars in the driveway or the electric cord that attaches to another car parked right next to it.

The Pease family has not simply gone green. They've been that way for a long time and are most undoubtedly one of the first families in Orinda to look up at the sun, rub their chins, and wonder how all that energy might be put to use in a household that requires electricity and transportation.

"Norman decided way back in the 1980s that he wanted to put up solar panels," said Janet, sitting in her living room overlooking hill views and their herd of llamas. The Peases are retired ranchers, and Janet used to teach third grade, to boot. They both know how to get their hands dirty.

They also had an eye on government rebates for "getting off the grid," with the added benefit of not receiving a monthly bill from Pacific Gas & Electric. But more than anything, they wanted to use existing energy from the sun, and natural gas instead of refined oil from the Middle East, to meet their needs.

Norman's eye was caught by the first electric car, offered by Honda with the advertising slogan, "Zero Gallons to the Mile." It hit home with his desire to drive without dipping into the limited oil supply, and he put in for one. The company even conducted interviews – after all, there was a limited supply of the experimental

vehicles, and they didn't want just anyone to have one. After visiting the Peases, Honda decided that with Norman being a pilot and his wife using the car as they saw its potential use throughout the country – to shop for groceries, pick up the children, and the dry cleaning – they liked her better. The Peases signed a lease, and Honda handed Janet the keys.

Even though it wasn't technically *his*, Norman was excited to have the car in the family. He bragged to his friend Bruce Horowitz, a local pediatrician, that he had an electric car. Horowitz's immediate response was sarcastic: "Oh, good for you. So you're burning coal in Arizona instead of oil from the Middle East to power your car in California."

This brought Norman Pease up short – he still laughs about it – and gave him a moments pause. Again, he looked to the sun.

The Peases began dreaming of harvesting enough solar power to charge the car. But then, for complicated reasons Pease attributes to machinations by the oil industry, one day a Honda representative arrived to fetch it back. To this day he remembers the re-possession of his Honda electric car with regret: "Everyone should see *'Who Killed the Electric Car,'*" he said recently. The Pease car was among the fleet of those in the 2006 award-winning documentary.

"I realized right off that it was right," Pease said of the film's initial impact, acclaimed nationally. "It's something everyone should see."

Despite the setback, the Peases didn't give up. In the 1980s and '90s, not nearly as much information about "going solar" was found on the Internet as it is today, and the almost overwhelming variety of options and changing technologies do not make for



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Norman and Janet Pease stand in front of their three alternative energy vehicles: a Toyota Prius, a natural gas-powered Honda Civic GX, and an electric Toyota RAV 4.

easy consumer choices even today. After some fits and starts, the Peases hooked up with Light Energy Systems of Concord. The Pease house is even on the cover of a company brochure now, and thanks to the advent of solar technology, Norman himself can type and search and order over the Internet as fast as any proficient 15-year-old.

The ultimate result of his efforts: a roof with just about every square inch covered by a photovoltaic cell, and under which Janet and Norman raised three children, Jordan, Nara, and Larissa Pease, all grown now and moved on, but not too far.

The solar panels that covered their roof ultimately cost them about \$70,000, and they got about \$30,000 back through a one-time rebate. Costs and rebates have changed since then, but they are still available, and the day that the electric meter started running backwards was the real high-five moment in the Pease household.

"The electric company didn't even know

how to handle it," Norman remembered. "They sent us a letter telling us that it was illegal to tamper with a meter."

Janet and Norman met way back in college in California. They moved to Orinda in the 1960s, about the time that Norman fell in love with buffalo. Janet laughs at his buffalo obsession, and seems to understand it. He still has a ranch up in Napa County and, as a pilot, flies there on his own to check up on things.

Living in Orinda and ranching in Napa has presented its challenges, including four remodels of the local living areas. Now the Peases have a modern, warm home with a view. Yet they have llamas to feed, and throughout the years, Norman has kept his eye on the news of green transportation. Right now he's one of the best local people to talk to about how to take a first or next step.

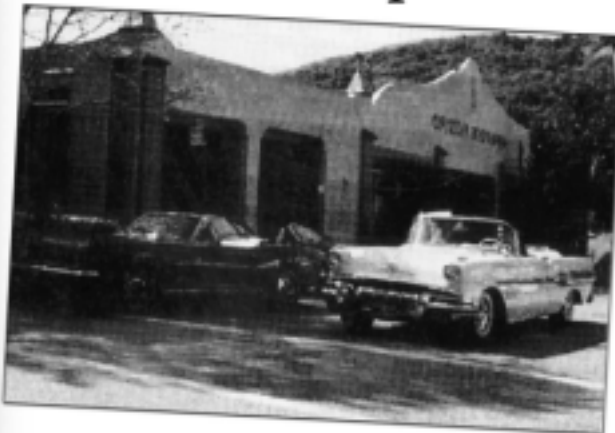
The Peases now have all their transportation needs (besides Norman's

[SEE GREEN page 22]

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Rough Roads and Your Suspension
by ALLEN PENNEBAKER

Well, we just got back from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. We rented a car part of the time we were there and used taxis the rest of the time. The highways in the Puerto Vallarta area are very nice — kind of like driving down San Pablo Dam Road. However, the few on or off ramps were very problematic. On the two we needed to use every day, we had to drive onto the shoulder as we were trying to merge on the highway (one of the few “freeway” type sections) to avoid the incredibly bad sections where the ramps met the lanes. The roads in the cities and towns were another story entirely. Most of them were made of cobblestones — not little ones, but fairly big ones with no asphalt or cement, and incredibly rough surfaces that rattled the vehicles violently and incessantly. Of course, they were pretty easy to fix, when needed. Just pry up a patch and lay new rocks in. No bulldozers, concrete saws, or patching materials. Every vehicle we drove or rode in had some type of serious suspension noise. Some bounced around so much you would think you were riding in a small boat on rough water.

Well, this got me to thinking about vehicle maintenance and Orinda’s roads. A friend who lives and works in Puerto Vallarta picked us up one day. The car, unusual for at least this part of Mexico, was a fairly modern American car. There was a terrible rattle from the front of the car on every bump in the road which, practically speaking, meant all of the time. He told me his mechanic had to order the parts because there were very few American car parts available — plenty of Nissan and VW parts but not many for American cars. He shouldn’t even have been driving the car, as the problem was just compounding itself. He would have been better off borrowing or renting a car until he got his parts. So much for NAFTA and keeping the North American economy contained. Oops, I digress again.

Well this got me thinking about Orinda. No, this is not a political piece about the recent bond failure. It is about the fact that, one way or another, Orinda needs to do something about its roads. They are in fact

getting worse and will end up costing more to repair the longer they are neglected, and we cannot just dig up the rocks, throw some dirt under them and put new ones back in. A vehicle is no different. In my friend’s case, he is going to do serious damage to some structural metal parts of his car if he keeps driving it the way it is. Similarly, the taxis I rode in (that felt like the boat) will also have other damage, more expensive to repair, due to ignoring the issue. To say nothing of being unsafe because of the compromised stability and steering control.

So, here are a couple of important points. Bad roads cause damage to vehicles. Ignored roads cost more to repair than the cost of maintaining them in the first place. Ignored vehicles cost more to repair than the cost of maintaining them in the first place. A damaged road is cheaper and safer to fix when first damaged than after being ignored for a length of time. A vehicle is cheaper (to say nothing of safer) to fix when the problem is new than when the problem has been ignored for a length of time. Repairs and maintenance cannot be ignored without eventually becoming very serious.

On another note: April is national Car Care Month. Look to this paper next month for information on what should be an exciting community event.

◆ **LETTERS** from page 4

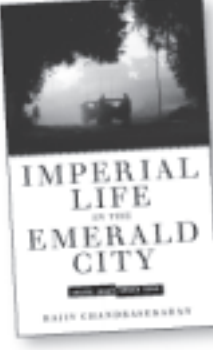

have gone unreported to the police because the doors had been left unlocked or the people felt stupid for leaving something of value in a car.

The result is unchecked, unreported crime. Does it come from an outside source? Is it someone locally who knows the streets? In either case, we need to take a pro-active stand against this type of crime. I implore you to never leave anything of value in your automobile. Always lock your doors and report any suspicious activity and all types of theft. Install security lights. Open your eyes and be conscious of your own neighborhood. We are all a part of Neighborhood Watch.

– K. Eastman

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ELDERCARE

Orinda Resident Eileen Nevitt: Professional Eldercare Manager

By MOYA STONE
Staff Writer

Orinda resident Eileen Nevitt knows first-hand the challenges of caring for an elderly family member. Not only does she work as a geriatric care manager for Eldercare Services, she is also caring for her own elderly mother, who now lives in an assisted-living facility.

Eldercare Services is one of a variety of companies that deal with transitioning an elderly family member into a facility or situation that can provide round-the-clock care for those who can no longer make wise decisions for themselves.

"We offer peace of mind by providing families professional guidance and support," says Nevitt. "I've had a client for five years whose only son lives in Switzerland. Being so far away, the family relies on me to provide continuity and quality control for my client's needs." As a licensed clinical social worker and a certified care manager, Nevitt has been working for Eldercare Services for more than 10 years.

Eldercare Services offers a combination of care management, care giving, and family education. Each Eldercare Services client is assigned a care manager who offers professional guidance to identify issues and explore options. The company also provides ongoing-care coordination and recommends suitable care facilities for placement. The care manager can be the main point-person for family members who live at a distance or a backup person allowing families to go on vacation. "Care managers have firsthand knowledge of clients and their families," says Nevitt. "In an emergency I'm able to act as a

surrogate." In addition, Eldercare Services has its own staff of hourly caregivers and live-in caregivers who are screened and supervised by the care managers. With an emphasis on education, Eldercare Services offers no-cost support groups and public speaking on issues of aging at local hospitals and assisted living centers.

"Many clients have come to us to set up long-term plans," says Nevitt. "This gives us the opportunity to follow clients and get to know their medical history, their family members, and what the appropriate choices are for them. That's what makes us unique."

Michael and Jane Buchanan chose Eldercare Services in 2000 for Michael's parents when they moved to the area from Maryland. "Eileen Nevitt and Eldercare have been an incredible support to our entire family," says Jane. Michael's father had Alzheimer's, and Eldercare helped them choose the right living place as well as appropriate health care. Later, Eldercare assisted the family when Michael's father passed away and his mother Bettie needed to choose another living situation. "Eileen works with us in any way we need and even in ways we don't know we need," says Jane. "She covers all the bases, serving as a backup for us when we go out of town and keeping us apprised of our choices."

Founded in 1989 by Linda Fodrini-Johnson, Eldercare Services is a growing business with offices in Walnut Creek and San Francisco and a care-management staff of 13. "People are living busy lives," says Nevitt, "and they want to partner with professionals because eldercare is not their area of expertise."

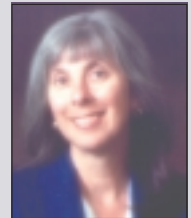
For more information about Eldercare Services, call (925) 937-2018, or visit their website at www.eldercareanswers.com.



SALLY HOGARTY

Eileen Nevitt (L) with one of her Eldercare clients, Bettie Buchanan, at the Orinda Convalescent Hospital's sunny garden room.

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Orinda City Staff and City Council Include Many New Faces

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

In the last few months, the City of Orinda has hired several new employees, many in positions of authority, to serve the residents. A contested City Council race also resulted in two first-time councilmembers. Who are these people and what are their priorities for Orinda? Find out by reading the following interviews.

City Councilmember Sue Severson

The 28-year Orinda resident began her first City Council term on December 5, 2006. Despite a somewhat contentious election, Severson says the council is working well together: "Everyone is very respectful and dedicated to solving problems in the community. It is truly a collaborative effort. We will never have enough money to meet all the needs so there are many difficult choices to be made."

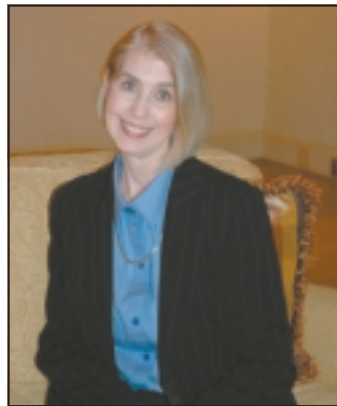
While noting the reality of such overwhelming problems as the

infrastructure, Severson feels the council is taking a very positive approach and is open to looking at new solutions. "For instance, we can't just throw Measure Q back on the ballot and call it something else. We really need to look at all the possible options," she explains. "We can't just sell the new city offices as has been suggested and use the money for roads. Because of the way the offices were financed, we don't even own the building," Severson adds.

In addition to infrastructure challenges, Severson lists improving the planning process for residents and developers and revitalizing the downtown area as important concerns. The new councilmember brings years of community service experience to her new position including nine years on the Orinda Union School Board and, currently, as president of the Miramonte Parents' Club.

City Councilmember Tom McCormick

A newly elected city councilmember, McCormick is a practicing attorney in



Sue Severson was recently elected to the Orinda City Council.

Orinda, working with businesses and entrepreneurial clients. He has also served on the Orinda Association and the Orinda Baseball Association boards.

Dealing with Orinda's decaying infrastructure, downtown revitalization, and zoning laws top the priority list for McCormick. "I have proposed a committee from the City Council that would deal with zoning and planning issues," McCormick explains. "It would be more user-friendly and would look into setting policy for the planning department that will allow them to operate more efficiently, more objectively." He also hopes to set up a new committee to deal with downtown revitalization. "We're waiting for the consultants' report right now, but I'd like to have the new committee made up of people interested in downtown instead of city planners," he adds.

McCormick also notes that the current sign ordinance makes it difficult for advertisers, such as those located in the back of Theatre Square, to advertise properly. He would like to see the zoning laws changed so that such businesses as real

estate and bank offices located on the ground floor along Moraga Way would have the option of re-locating to Theatre Square and other less visible ground floor space. "Right now, they are 'grandfathered' in. But, if they move, they have to go to second-floor offices." The current zoning ordinances restrict ground floor business to retail outlets only. "If these more service-oriented businesses were able to move to say Theatre Square, it would open up prime locations for new retail businesses," says McCormick.

After serving slightly more than two months as a city councilmember, McCormick says he is surprised by how much work is involved: "I'm now also aware of how much everyone on the council and on the city staff really care about what they are doing. They really want to do the best job possible for the entire city."

Police Chief Bill French

Orinda's new police chief is truly at home in Orinda. The 23-year police veteran grew up in Orinda (off Ivy Drive) and Moraga, where he graduated from Campolindo High School before attending Diablo Valley College and California State University, Hayward. "It was always a goal



Bill French is Orinda's new Police Chief.

of mine to come back and serve the community I grew up in," says French.

Married with a daughter in 6th grade and a son in 7th grade, French lists dealing with teen drug and alcohol use as his top priority. "Young people just don't realize the dire consequences of drinking and driving," he says. "I hope to bring back the 'Every 15 minute' program that Miramonte did a few years ago. I think it is very effective." French believes that parents are key to solving the problem and urges all parents to create good communications with their teenagers. "The kids really have to know they can call their parents if they've been drinking and get a safe ride home," he adds.

Disaster preparedness is also high on French's list of priorities: "We're working [SEE FRENCH page 13]

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Tom McCormick began his City Council term in December.

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◆ FRENCH from page 12

with the entire Lamorinda community on this. A consultant is currently studying how best to utilize our resources." French feels the new city offices with its emergency operations center will allow city staff to coordinate services much better in the event of a disaster. As the former watch commander of the county's emergency services, French is well-qualified for dealing with Orinda's disaster preparedness.

French also plans to look carefully at traffic enforcement, particularly around local schools, and to assess parking problems in downtown. He hopes to be able to have more patrol officers on foot, showing more visibility to deter crime as well as getting to know the residents.

With a limited number of police officers per shift, French utilizes volunteers whenever possible. "We have reserve officers who volunteer to work with the detectives and other volunteers who help with computer entry, paperwork, and



SALLY HOGARTY
Community Services Officer Nate McCormack.

fingerprinting," he explains. "We also have an explorer program where young people interested in law enforcement can help out."

Community Services Officer Nate McCormack

Originally from Southern California, McCormack easily adjusted to the Bay Area. "My job here in Orinda is so varied and interesting – sometimes I'm on a regular beat, other times I'm working on emergency preparedness, doing detective work, or dealing with the community and the schools," he explains. "I'm so impressed with the level of community involvement here."

One of McCormack's major concerns involves teen driving. "The road system here is just not designed for high speed driving. There are so many curves and deer can pop out at any time. The younger



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Osa Wolff became Orinda's City Attorney in December.

drivers often don't think about these things," says the California State University, Fullerton graduate. McCormack believes education is the key. He also runs the juvenile diversion program, which allows youthful offenders to do local community service rather than have formal charges applied to their records.

Disaster preparedness is also high on McCormack's list. He attends all the Orinda Public Safety Advisory Commission meetings and works with the schools on their disaster plans.

Orinda Crime Statistics

Crime Statistics Comparison

	2006	2005
Murder	0	0
Rape	0	2
Robbery	7	7
Assault	16	15
Theft	233	201
Auto Theft	23	29
Arson	0	0

City Attorney Osa Wolff

A partner with the law firm Shute, Mihaly and Weinberger, LLP, Wolff became Orinda's city attorney in November. Prior to that, she served as interim city attorney beginning in September 2006. Although new to the city attorney position, she has been working with the City of Orinda for several years as outside land use counsel in connection with the Wilder (former Montanera) project. "Clem Shute, Fran Layton and other members of my law firm have represented the City of Orinda for many years in connection with the Gateway Valley development. We are excited to be continuing and expanding our relationship with the city," says Wolff.

Wolff received her undergraduate degree

from Cornell University and earned her law degree from Boalt Hall School of Law, where she specialized in environmental law. Her areas of expertise include state and federal environmental law, administrative law, constitutional takings law, state planning, and zoning law.

An avid and lifelong equestrian, Wolff can often be found on weekends riding her horse on one of the East Bay Regional Parks' trails.

Fire Chief Pete Nowicki

With seven months under his belt, Fire Chief Pete Nowicki feels like an old hand. The San Francisco native proudly serves in a community he characterizes as "educated, caring and willing to assist you."

Now with the hiring of two new battalion chiefs and four entry-level firefighters, Nowicki believes the department can accomplish many of his goals. "We were fortunate to be able to hire two phenomenal guys," says Nowicki, who had over 70 applicants for the positions. "It was important to me to hire firefighters who were also paramedics, and we were able to do that." Right now the Moraga-Orinda Fire

District has 10 paramedics per shift, and Nowicki hopes to increase that by one or two. "If I could have 12 per shift, I would be able to fully staff the ambulance. It's my top priority."

Another priority for Nowicki is to utilize the Firewise program administered by Fire Marshall Tanya Hoover. Using hyperspectral imagery flyover technology, the program identifies various levels of fire risk throughout the community and at the property owner level. "People can access the Internet and find out the fire hazard danger in their neighborhood. The detailed maps also show the fuel in an area and should help with vegetation management," Nowicki explains. The chief is also working with the National Fire Protection Association on the district's accreditation: "Right now we are half-way through the process. It looks at how well we use our resources, our management style, standards of deployment. It's a top to bottom review." Looking into the future, Nowicki is involved with revamping the district's long-range plan and meeting with the Wilder developer on service needs for the new

[SEE NOWICKI page 14]

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CITY STAFF / GOVERNMENT

◆ NOWICKI from page 13

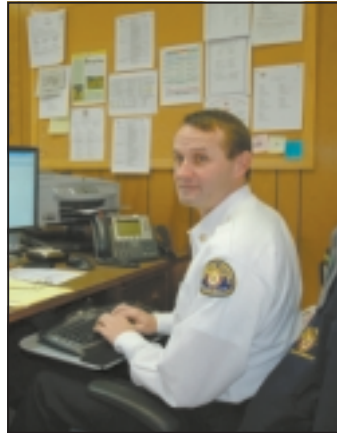
residential development in Gateway Valley.

A little-known yet very important part of the fire department's job involves testing and maintaining fire hydrants. "We don't put them in, but we have to be sure they are operating properly so that they will be there in an emergency," says Nowicki. "Making sure the threads are good, replacing outlets, checking water flow, that's all part of the job, and we're one of the few fire districts that does so."

Critics have maintained that the fire district overpays its firefighters. Nowicki, however, says that the pay scale is average – not the highest or lowest on the scale: "If we only paid the lowest possible salary, we'd basically be training people who would transfer to another district. We'd be little more than a farm team."

Battalion Chief Jeff Maxwell

On the job for a little over a month, Battalion Chief Jeff Maxwell already feels right at home. The Santa Cruz Mountains native sees a lot of similarity in the



Fire Chief Pete Nowicki commutes from San Francisco.

topography of his home town and Orinda and Canyon, which is also served by the MOFD. "I'm used to navigating narrow, winding roads with lots of vegetation. This area is surrounded by wild lands just like

Santa Cruz. I'm well aware of the threats."

Maxwell's father was a volunteer fireman for Santa Cruz County and started his sons in the department when they were teenagers. "I have 26 years in firefighting, 23 of it as a professional," Maxwell clarifies.

Prior to accepting the position in Orinda, Maxwell had been the fire captain for the City of Milpitas. After 20 years supervising an engine company for that city, the dedicated firefighter wanted new challenges. "I think it's time I put some of my expertise into project management rather than only hands-on work," he explains. And, he has certainly had plenty of hands-on work during his career. While serving the City of Milpitas, Maxwell also served as the fire chief of the Santa Cruz County Volunteer Fire Department, a position he continues to hold. He says it's a way to give back to his community. Maxwell has also been part of the Menlo Park Urban Search and Rescue team for the last nine years and traveled to the World Trade Center and Hurricane Katrina during those catastrophes. "Those were some tremendous experiences that I learned from and can apply to my job here," says



Battalion Chief Stephen Healy grew up in Walnut Creek.

here and the enthusiastic, involved people I have met. This is really a great organization," he adds. Maxwell is married and has two daughters, ages 9 and 11.

Battalion Chief Stephen Healy

Stephen Healy grew up in Walnut Creek and attended Monte Vista High in Danville. He began his firefighting career at Shaver Lake in the Sierra Nevada as a paramedic and received his BS degree from the national Fire Academy. After working as the fire captain for the City of Salinas since 1991, Healy is happy to be back home. "I left Salinas on December 24 and started with the MOFD on December 26. One entire day off in between jobs," he jokes. "My parents live in Alamo, and it's really nice for my wife and two sons (ages 6 and 16) to be able to see them more often," says Healy.

As battalion chief, Healy oversees the station captains. He is also in charge of equipment, safety, budgets, and is the training officer. "I love to teach so this is a great opportunity for me," he adds. A master instructor, who is also an instructor for Homeland Security in weapons of mass destruction, will teach such State Fire Marshall classes as fire command, fire management, incident command, and HAZMAT (hazardous materials) training. The classes he teaches lead to certificates necessary for firefighters to move up in command. He hopes to add a new course on large animal rescue. "I feel that is an important skill for firefighters in this area," he adds.

Positions to be Filled

In addition to the new faces listed above, the City of Orinda is currently seeking resident volunteers to serve on the Planning Commission (three vacancies), the Parks and Recreation Commission (two vacancies), and the Public Safety Advisory Commission (two vacancies). These positions had not been filled by press time.



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Jeff Maxwell is one of two new battalion chiefs for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

Maxwell.

As MOFD battalion chief, Maxwell supervises the other stations and responds to fires on his shift, but he will also be in charge of the facilities, fleet of vehicles, equipment, and information services. "I'm really excited by the variety of the work



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Linda-Marie Singer



A doctor of clinical hypnotherapy with a practice in Orinda, Linda-Marie Singer lost her battle with cancer in late November, 2006. Several months prior she had submitted this story. She loved her visit to Scotland and hoped to share her excitement with her fellow Orinda residents. We are happy to fulfill her wish in this issue as a tribute to a life well lived.

Stepping out of The Bonham hotel, I asked the first person I saw how to find Princes Street, the main street and principal shopping thoroughfare in Edinburgh. It turned out she was an "Edinburgher" and eager to point the way. Fortunately, I was

born Sir Walter Scott named it "mine own romantic town," while American writer Washington Irving called Edinburgh "the most picturesque place I have ever seen."

And it's easy to see why. The most regal of Scottish cities, Edinburgh is set on a series of volcanic hills with appealing vistas and distinct skyline dominated by the Edinburgh Castle. Home of the Scottish Parliament and Scotland's financial center, the city comprises two contrasting towns - Old Town and New Town linked by Princes Street Gardens. Walk around Old Town and you'll need a day or two to cover the Royal Mile, Edinburgh's busiest tourist Mecca with a succession of cobbled streets and

firing of the gun at one o'clock from the battlements of the castle and be sure to have your picture taken with one of the guards. Then wander next door to the Tartan Weaving Mill and Exhibition where you can see and hear the clattering weaving machines.

Speaking of pictures, if you haven't seen a live moving tableau of Edinburgh, your family will enjoy a peek at Camera Obscura & Outlook Tower (www.camera-obscura.co.uk). Going back to the 1800s with exhibitions of old photographs and holography, you'll see unique images of the city projected onto a viewing area from a giant pinhole camera. Looking for another family outing? The Brass Rubbing Centre contains replicas of ancient Pictish stones and rare medieval church brasses dating back to 1460. The fun part is tracing your own rubbings on paper. You may also want to visit St. Giles Cathedral (www.stgiles.net), renowned as the church of John Knox during the Reformation, and then take a leisurely stroll to the nearby Parliament House, the former home to the Parliament of Scotland. You'll also be

happy that you stopped into Gladstone's Land, the 17th century home of a prosperous Scottish merchant. Decorated in period style furnishings, the locale renders an impression of what life was like in Edinburgh's Old Town more than 300 years ago.

Of course, you're probably thinking about souvenir shopping, and you won't run out of boutiques along the Royal Mile. Featuring a medley of items ranging from kilts from every clan, there are also pottery plates of Scottish pipers, toffee and whisky cake, and of course Tartan suspenders, Tartan ties, and Tartan golf umbrellas. Anything else? How about a bagpipe refrigerator magnet that plays "Auld Lang Syne," a traditional Scottish tune?

But now for a "taste" of Scottish history, take a ride in a whiskey barrel at The Scottish Whisky Heritage Centre (www.whisky-heritage.co.uk) and learn about malt, grain, and blended whiskies. Strolling leisurely to the bottom of the Royal Mile you find one of Edinburgh's premier [SEE SCOTLAND page 22]



LINDA-MARIE SINGER

Scotland's number one tourist attraction, Edinburgh Castle, is home to the Crown Jewels and the Stone of Destiny.

right around the corner from the city's shops and boutiques, financial district, and a short walk to Edinburgh Castle.

In Edinburgh, it's not a matter of sightseeing, it's finding the time to see all the sites of this capital city that started out as a fort. Back in the 7th century when the English captured Castle Rock (today's Edinburgh Castle), they called the area Edien's burgh, burgh being an old word for fort. By the Middle Ages, the city became famous for making wool cloth, and in the 15th century it was Scotland's *de facto* capital.

A "Bonnie" destination, Queen Victoria found Edinburgh "enchanting." Native-

ancient stone buildings. A medieval town at the heart of a modern Scottish city, the mile-long thoroughfare is filled with a hubbub of museums, shops, and pubs. Maybe that's why travelers flock to this lively boulevard that connects Edinburgh Castle with the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the Queen's official residence in Scotland.

Starting at the top of the Royal Mile is Edinburgh Castle where Scottish kings ruled, lived and fought against their enemies. The number one tourist attraction in Scotland, Edinburgh Castle, is home to the Scottish Crown Jewels and Stone of Destiny, the traditional coronation stone of Scottish kings and queens. Listen for the

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FITNESS

BALANCED LIVING

Time to Reconnect

Andrea Colombu



How long has it been since you last dropped into your body for a visit? However strange this question may seem, the truth is, that for most of us, having a close connection with our body is not a common practice.

Generally speaking, we tend to live our lives more in our head than in our body. For most of us, this means that we are processing our everyday reality more from

an intellectual and rational perspective than from a more intuitive, felt-sense of how things are inside and outside of us. We like to believe that we are in the body and that we are in touch with it, but when it comes down to it, most of the time, the body is the last place where we can be found.

The reason for this behavior of ours is strongly due to the fact that over the centuries, during our long evolutionary

history, we have lost our sense of interconnection between body and mind. Slowly and systematically we have relinquished our belief in the innate sense of interconnected wisdom of the body-mind unity and adopted the dualistic belief that our bodies are separate from our minds. We have lost faith in our inner power and lost our ability to interconnect.

This centuries-old dualistic belief was originally sold to us very persuasively, and forcefully, by scientists, philosophers, and clergy who intended to help us become more "civilized," for to be civil was to be rational and not intuitive. Conveniently, though, these same "noble men" became the ones also to decide what was rational and acceptable and what was not. Although their intentions at the time were honorable and respectable, the outcome has been that dualistic views still largely dominate our lives, our world, and our consciousness.

Thanks to the resilience of the human spirit, however, things have been changing. In recent decades, proponents of a more integrative world view in the areas of science, psychology, philosophy, and mind-body medicine have finally been able to show us that indeed mind and body are intrinsically interconnected. Now more than ever it is imperative that we take advantage of these findings to help us live this precious

life in more balance and harmony.

The ways to do so are many. "Dropping" into the body for a visit once in awhile, preferably regularly, is one of them. This can be simple and yet challenging. It is simple because all you need is your body and your mind. It is challenging because, thanks to our frenetic lifestyle, we have greatly decreased our ability to inhabit the body with mindfulness, attention, and awareness. You can start by taking a few minutes a day: While sitting quietly by yourself, pay attention to your breath, follow it as it enters your body and as it leaves. Use your breath as a means to "drop" into your body and mindfully pay attention to how you feel; nothing more, nothing less. Just sit, breathe in, pay attention, breathe out and continue to pay attention. If you haven't guessed yet, this is a form of meditation; meditation on your self, both mind and body. Allow for at least 10 minutes of practice a day, and most importantly, be patient!

With time this practice will allow you to experience calmness and a closer sense of connection to your neglected body. It will serve many other essential purposes, as well, for your balance and well-being but I'll leave you to discover it for yourself. Until next time, practice breathing mindfully, and be well.

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PHOTOS BY SALLY HOGARTY

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FITNESS

Curves Brings Fun and Focus to Fitness to Theatre Square

■ March food drive benefits local food banks and new members

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

Pati MacDonald, owner of Curves exercise studio in Theatre Square wants you to know that it's not too late to make good on your fitness resolutions. "Most gyms offer special sign-ups in January when people are looking to lose extra holiday pounds. I've found that here, in Orinda, many people are still out of town...or we're still finishing off that box of See's candy in January." So, to accommodate busy people who may be late in addressing New Year's resolutions, MacDonald is offering a free sign-up – that's a \$149 value – to new members who bring in a bag of non-perishable food to donate to a local food bank.

MacDonald took over the Theatre Square Curves last year; she also owns a facility in San Diego. The unabashed devotee to the Curves workout is a personal trainer whose own success with the franchise's weight-loss and fitness routine fuels her commitment to helping women reach their physical goals. "I was Curves' first member in California," MacDonald says. "I've taught aerobics, I've taught the Curves 6-week Solution Weight Loss Program, and

I lost over 40 pounds myself at Curves." Curves is a women-only fitness facility that promotes a combination of strength training and cardiovascular workout through its 30-minute exercise circuit. "We call it the 'girl power half-hour,'" MacDonald enthuses. "We have fun here. Being all women makes the environment non-threatening."

Fun as it may be, MacDonald also emphasizes that the routine works. "Baylor University did a study of the Curves circuit and found the 30-minute workout here to be comparable to an hour-and-a-half workout at other gyms," she notes.

One mother of two young children, RJ, agrees with MacDonald's assessment. "It's a motivating, safe, happy environment," she says. "For such a short period of time, the workout is very effective." RJ says that she's lost pounds and inches while gaining muscle tone. "I love that it's an all women; I don't feel self-conscious at all when I come here. It's fun in an unexpected way. Here, there are no excuses for not working out. It's only 30 minutes; the location is great, and the parking is free."

"I came to Curves after my doctor told me to incorporate some resistance training into my exercise routine," RJ continues. Remembering the mother of a friend who is "incredibly fit" and belongs to Curves, she decided to give it a try herself.


MacDonald says that RJ is typical of many of her clients. "Our members range in ages from 19 to women in their 80s; yet,

each finds benefits in the circuit and we all support one another. Unlike many other gyms, MacDonald says that her facility is open all day, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays and from 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. Her studio also offers Pilates exercise classes on Monday and Wednesday evenings. MacDonald will also start teaching a six-week nutrition class in mid-March. She invites anyone interested in joining Curves to a free trial. Additionally, teens can piggyback off their mother's membership for just an additional \$10 per month.

Curves is located at 2 Theatre Square, behind the Orinda Theatre. For more information, call 254-4199 or email MacDonald at orindahascuves@yahoo.com.



PAT RUDEBUSCH
Pati MacDonald at Curves in Theatre Square helps local food banks.






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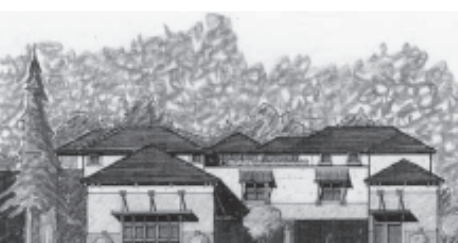
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Student Perspectives The Berkeley Syndrome

Grace Ho



The Berkeley Syndrome (TBS): when smart kids start to doubt their own smartness because there are simply too many other smart kids at Cal, and they get depressed over the fact that they're suddenly just "average" or even below (there are probably strains of this virus at other college campuses. I am sure there is a Stanford Syndrome as well, and a Harvard Syndrome, and so on).

I thought I was immune to this stuff because I received a good dose of Miramonte Vaccine during my high school years (going to Miramonte is generally quite effective at preventing TBS and other such diseases because there are many, many smart kids at Miramonte and usually you've

had several humbling experiences by the time you graduate), but no; I, Grace Ho, fell victim to TBS, and might I add that mine was a pretty severe case.

I am currently majoring in chemical biology at Berkeley. "What's chemical biology?" you ask. "Is it the same as biochemistry?" People ask me that a lot, and my father likes to complain that I don't clarify myself well enough. To avoid that particular rant of his, here I go! Chemical biology is a major offered through the College of Chemistry instead of the College of Letters and Sciences. Therefore, chemical biology is far more chem-oriented than biochemistry. In fact, the program I am following is almost identical to a pure

chemistry major's; I just have a few biology courses tacked on to the schedule to deserve the name.

To put it bluntly, general chemistry first semester was a struggle for me. Shall I attempt to be politically correct and say that I was "chemically challenged?" Oh, who am I kidding? Chem was extremely difficult for me, and I failed most of my exams. I will leave interpretation of the word "failed" open to you readers, but I assure you that "failed" here does *not* mean Grace Ho's normal definition of A- or B+.

I started off with bubbling optimism. "Never mind about the first midterm," I thought. "I'll just study harder next time!" As my scores sank lower and lower with each test, however, my confidence shattered. I berated myself even when my parents tried to be encouraging. I just couldn't believe that I was doing that badly. "Come on, you're Grace Ho! You can't be that lame."

As time wore on and things slid even further downhill, the horrible thought occurred to me. What if I actually was lame? What if I was *stupid*, and had been deluded all my life in thinking I was someone half intelligent?

I remember the evening I took my chem final. I had dinner together with a few classmates afterwards, and all of us rambled about how horrible the test was. It was easy to laugh sarcastically in the company of those who had suffered with you, but when I reached my dorm and found that I had the room to myself because my roommate was out studying, I suddenly felt very miserable. On impulse, I hit three on my phone and called my mother (three is my speed dial for her), even though I rarely call anyone just to talk.

After a long conversation about how bad the final was, I was silent at last. About to hang up, my mother asked, "Anything else you want to tell me?"

There was a long pause. I discovered that

I was choking on something and that I had started to blink furiously. "Umm... I guess..." Half a sob escaped from my throat in a kind of weird hiccup. "I'm just kinda depressed."

"Why...?"

The other half of the sob leaked out too, and then so did a lot of other sobs that had been growing in my chest over the past half hour. I poured out that I just felt ridiculously stupid among all these people, and I couldn't believe that for once in my life, I was below average at something academic. It didn't matter to me that everyone else at Berkeley is insanely smart and, therefore, the bar for average was higher than it had ever been; I had always remained confident that I would keep my good academic standing. Before I came here, my father used to tell me, "If you get into a top-tier school, everyone there will be smart. Imagine if you were in a class and everyone was as smart as you. If everyone was a Grace Ho, and you were fighting against yourself."

At the time, I definitely saw his point, but I still thought, "Well, everyone else might be a Grace Ho, but I am THE Grace Ho! I will prove myself to be better than 'regular' Grace Ho's in some way!"

Euphemistically speaking, one might have called my attitude confident. Or I might simply have been arrogant. If I was indeed arrogant, I assure you that I am now greatly humbled.

For me, however, one problem with being *that* extremely humble is that I start losing the will to fight. I start thinking that I am stupid beyond belief or possibility of improvement. Therefore, I had to regain a shred of my past confidence... and one day, clearing my email inbox of old messages, I came across the perfect morale booster.

The email was one from my father, titled "Brag Sheet." Attached was a document named "Grace." I clicked on it, [SEE PERSPECTIVES page 20]

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Orinda Arts Council Sponsors High School Art Contest

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

The Orinda Arts Council (OAC) is calling for entries to its fourth annual high school art contest. The annual event is just one of the many ways in which the Arts Council supports the visual and performing arts in local schools.

According to OAC board member Susan Mautner, the high school art contest has taken the place of the group's long-standing scholarship program for high school seniors. Moving to an annual contest, which is open to a greater number of students, has allowed the group to extend the impact of its programs. Awards are given in three categories: 2-D art, 3-D art, and photography.

Students wishing to enter artwork must

submit an application to the Arts Council by March 9; the actual artwork must be delivered to the Orinda Library Art Gallery on March 19. Entry forms and submission instructions can be picked up from the students' high school art teacher or at the Orinda Community Center, and forms are also available on the group's website at www.orindaartscouncil.org. A jury of local professional artists and educators will judge the works based on creativity, content, and the student's degree of expertise in his or her chosen media.

Awards will be announced at a reception for the artists on Sunday, March 25 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Orinda Library Art Gallery. The contest exhibit will be on display in the Orinda Library gallery from March 20 through mid-April. For more information, visit the OAC website.

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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Recent College Graduates



Jonathan Perlstein, who graduated from Miramonte High School in 2002, graduated from the University of Arizona this past December with a degree in liberal arts.



Ron Rawson, Jr., Miramonte High School class of 2002, graduated from the University of Arizona in December with a degree in regional development. He is shown here with his parents Ron and Kris.

Orinda Schools Receive Statewide Recognition

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

The Orinda Union School District (OUSD), which serves students in kindergarten through eighth grades, has received a silver award from the California Council for Excellence. The Orinda school district was one of 22 organizations in California to receive the coveted California Award for Performance Excellence (CAPE). The award recognizes the district's efforts toward implementing a world-class curriculum, aligning priorities and spending, and implementing a strategic plan that seeks to improve performance through data-based decision-making.

The California Council for Excellence emulates the Malcom Baldrige National Quality Program on the state level. To be considered, organizations must demonstrate continuous improvement and superior performance in seven key areas including leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, measurement/knowledge management, human resources, process management, and organization results. According to Denise Shields, chair of the CAPE Award, "The Baldrige Award at both the state and national level have the same criteria. The criteria are rigorous and organizations that apply are putting themselves through the most respected and demanding filter in the country. To win this award on any level is worthy of tremendous respect," said Shields.

The Orinda school district has used Baldrige criteria to guide strategic planning and decision making for the past six years. While historically among the top

performing elementary school districts in the state, OUSD has placed in the top three school districts in the past few years and recently emerged as the highest scoring district, tied with Hillsborough.

"We are appropriately proud of this recognition from the California Council for Excellence," said OUSD Superintendent Frank Brunetti. "This represents six years of hard work on the parts of our faculty, staff, administrators, and community leadership to bring the district's priorities and spending in line. The CAPE award reaffirms our strategic direction, but the true reward is seen in improved student performance. Across the board, we have aligned priorities and implemented data-driven decision processes to ensure that every student succeeds."

Each of the Orinda elementary schools, along with Miramonte High School, which is governed by the Acalanes Union High School District, were recognized also by the California Business for Education Excellence Foundation. The Orinda schools were named to the Foundation's Scholar Schools 2006 Honor Roll for their consistently high academic achievement. The foundation bases its awards on data from Just for the Kids - California, a free source of longitudinal student academic performance data. According to CBEE, the 206 schools on the Scholar Schools Honor Roll consistently raise academic achievement and close achievement gaps for all students. These schools are being recognized not only for their accomplishments, but so that other schools can learn the successful strategies or "best practices" of these Honor Roll schools.

Aida Musical Takes Miramonte Stage

By DOROTHY BOWEN
Contributing Writer

Love and death in ancient Egypt will be on stage at Miramonte High School Theater this month when students perform the musical *Aida*, by Elton John and Tim Rice, from March 15 through 24.

The Tony Award-winning musical incorporates rock, gospel, and soul with African influences.

Lest you be confused, this is not the opera by the same name, written by Giuseppe Verdi, that opened the new Cairo Grand Opera House in 1871. While based on that opera, this version won four Tony Awards in 2000 and ran for 1,852 performances on Broadway, the 29th longest running musical ever.

"The musical is not unlike *The Lion King*, another Disney theater production," said director Heather Cousins.

Aida will run for seven performances on the evenings of March 15-17 and March 22-24, with a matinee Sunday, March 18. The musical is being produced by a collaboration of the school's music and

[SEE AIDA page 22]

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OUT AND ABOUT / OAKLAND MUSEUM

Out and About

Pat Rudebusch



The unveiling of the **Ric Frudden Memorial Mural at Miramonte High School** was a homecoming of sorts for students, alumni, parents, and fellow art teachers who came together to pay tribute to Frudden's career and the 3-D art program that, for years, was synonymous with his name. The ceramic mural, which was created by Miramonte Class of 2006 alumna **Elyse Marr**, is on public display outside the school's crafts room. Frudden, a respected and inspiring teacher, was the heart and soul of Miramonte's 3-D art program for 18 years. Tragically, he died in 2007.

The popular 3-D art program continued after Frudden's death thanks to **Gavin Kurmode**, a former student of Frudden's. Kurmode recently received his teaching

credential and will continue the fine tradition of 3-D art at Miramonte. Kurmode thanked Marr for her dedication to helping fellow students and keeping the program afloat during the very difficult time of Frudden's illness. Miramonte seniors **Kelsey Harrison** and **Eva Imber**, both of whom have studied 3-D art for the past three years, spoke movingly of the positive influence both Kurmode and Marr have had on them as artists.

Special guests at the celebration included **Richard Gompf**, who taught 3-D art at the school for 34 years before retiring in 1994; retired biology teacher **Odie McCain**; former Miramonte principal **Dennis Regalado** and current principal **Raúl Zumora**; longtime Miramonte art teacher **Rosemary Jensen**; Marr's parents, **Doreen and Whitney Marr**; and Frudden's mother, **Jill Frudden**.

The Miramonte mural may be Marr's first public installation, but it certainly won't be her last. The Stanford University freshman is working on a project for the town of Locke, California. Located near the Delta, Locke is the last remaining rural Chinese town in America. Chinese villages that once sprung up along the Delta's shores have been engulfed by suburban sprawl. As Locke struggles to define what its future might hold, Marr hopes that the bronze and granite monument she is creating will pay tribute to the rich Chinese heritage of the town.

Now, under the leadership of Kurmode, a new generation of student artists can explore 3-D art.

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Centenarian's Estate Part of Museum's White Elephant

By DOROTHY BOWEN
Contributing Writer

When she died last summer at the age of 106, Grace Dafoe left the entire contents of her Piedmont home to the White Elephant Sale – the annual fundraiser for the Oakland Museum. She and her husband Hub were among the original founders of the museum, and were also avid travelers and collectors. Their possessions, including a gem and mineral collection and collectible books such as one with Dore engravings of Coldridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in a gold embossed theater cover, reflected their interests. Those items and many more will be included in this year's sale, which starts Saturday, March 3, at 9 a.m.

Besides the contents of the Dafoes' house (Grace had a sewing room "to die for," according to a museum spokesperson) other special items at this year's sale include costumes from the Oakland Ballet. The costumes will not include those from *The Nutcracker*, which was revived this past holiday season and may become an annual event. An assortment of art, books, clothing, shoes, jewelry, household goods, vintage furniture, linens, and appliances also will be available.

Run by the Museum's Women's Board, the sale began in 1955, and has since raised more than \$12 million. Since 2002, the sale has netted more than \$1 million each year.

Orindans are no strangers to the sale. Nearly 1,000 volunteers work throughout the year to make the sale a success, and they include Marianne Aude, who again heads the art department. Lisa Lenahan is in



DAVE DIERS
Orinda resident Anne Chan helps the White Elephant sale by dealing with publicity and working in the art department alongside other members of the Orinda Woman's Club.

charge of furniture, and Anne Chan is helping with publicity and works in the art department with other members of the Orinda Woman's Club: Pam Hall, Lindy Tipton, Margaret Holland-Luce and Nancy Oldham. Pauline Holst is in the music department. Other Orindans include Deborah Wentworth, Barbara Riley, Barbara Conley, and Carol Mapes.

The gigantic rummage sale is held at 333 Lancaster St., on the Oakland Estuary, near the Fruitvale BART station. A free shuttle will run from BART to the warehouse. Street parking is limited. Doors open at 9 a.m. March 3, and at 11 a.m. March 4. Doors close at 4 p.m. both days.

If you have items to donate to the sale, call (510) 839-5919. Arrangements can be made for pick up of large items.

◆ PERSPECTIVES from page 18

remembering what it was: the brag sheet was something the Miramonte counselors had asked all parents to fill out about their seniors, so writing recommendation letters for college applications would be easier. After all, who knows our strengths better than our parents do?

I read through all of it again, wanting to cry.

"Grace's most outstanding personality trait is her determination and persistence, which is unparalleled. We are impressed by her ability to sustain a high level of workload and maintain a pleasant and positive personality. Her ability to take stress and work is truly amazing. She sets ambitious goals and works relentlessly towards them. She is one of the most hard-working persons we know. She prefers challenging classes than easier ones and loves classes that develop her analytical thinking ability. Her first essay received a D, but she chose not to switch to an easier teacher. She remained positive and resilient. Clearly, she cared more about learning and less about the grade and this positive attitude really impressed us. She is an

outstanding young lady."

It killed me, feeling like I had failed to be that remarkable girl my parents described. I flashbacked. My father was typing away on the computer, and my mother was looking over his shoulder. "What do you think, Gracie?" My father asked, showing me his draft of the brag sheet.

I read, my grin spreading wider and wider. "I sound so... so... amazing!" My mother laughed, "It's not like we're lying... we really, honestly think you're everything we wrote."

Recalling my mother's words from more than a year ago, I realized with a quirky smile on my face that I have not changed; only my surroundings have. I am *still* Grace Ho, and I can *still* be that determined, persistent, and hardworking person my parents raved about if I choose to be. First semester was just the rocky beginning; there is so much left ahead of me to conquer, if I have the spirit to try.

My dad told me once, "You need to have a dream. Humans need dreams — a hope, a goal, something to work towards. If you have no dream, what's the point of living?"

I do have a dream. And my dream is to be... well, to be Grace Ho.



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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

MARCH

- 3 **Walkabout Sleepy Hollow Auction**, benefits elementary school, 5:30 p.m. at Claremont Hotel. Call Kim at (925) 258-6617.
- Teen Snowboard and Ski Trip** to Sierra-At-Tahoe, \$95 trip fee includes transportation, lift ticket, breakfast, and snacks. Trips repeat March 10 to Alpine, March 17 to Kirkwood, March 24 to Northstar and March 31 to Squaw. Call 253-4204 for reservations.
- 9 **Graffe String Quartet**, 7:30 p.m. at Orinda Community Church, sponsored by Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation. For information on the quartet, go to www.graffequartet.unas.cz. For the low-down on the concert, call 254-2979.
- 15 **Miramonte High School** presents the rock-opera *Aida*, through March 24. Tickets available online by clicking on tickets at www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/miramonte.
- 16 **Orinda Intermediate School**, World Premiere Concert, 7 p.m., the Concert, Bulldog, and Jazz Bands combine with the String Orchestra to perform their original compositions. Contact Gregg Mazmanian at 376-4402, ext. 141.
- 18 **Orinda Community Church Concert Series**, Montclair Women's Jazz Ensemble, 3 p.m., 254-4906.
- Santa Maria Church** concert featuring the Dan Damon Quartet in an evening of jazz classical and Lenten compositions, 4 p.m., 254-2426, ext. 301.
- 20 **Orinda Owls**, 7 p.m. at Orinda Books. Book reading and discussion of *March*, by Geraldine Brooks. This club welcomes new members.
- 22 **Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Meeting**, 8 a.m. at Shelby's restaurant in Theatre Square, sponsored by Sue Breedlove Insurance, 254-3909.
- 23 **Orinda Ovations Theater**, *The Sound of Music*, 6 p.m., Orinda Library Auditorium, sponsored by Kids 'N Dance. Tickets \$10 adults, \$7 children 10 and under. Repeats March 24 at 11:30 a.m., 1:15 p.m., and 3 p.m.
- 25 **WomenSing Concert**, "Singers of the Night," 3 p.m., St. Mary's Chapel, St. Mary's College. Reception follows. Tickets \$20 general, \$18 senior/student, \$10 youth 18 and under, (925) 974-9169. Repeats March 28, 8 p.m., First Congregational Church, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley.
- 29 **Spring Egg Hunt**, 11 a.m., Orinda Community Center Park, for children 5 and under. Admission \$5 and includes photo with the Easter Bunny. Sponsored by the Orinda Community Center Auxiliary. Rain cancels.
- Sisters in Crime**, author readings and signings at Orinda Books, featuring author Rhys Bowen with *In Dublin's Fair City*, and Cara Black with *Murder on the Ile St. Louis*. For more information, call 254-7606.
- EFO Celebration of the Arts**, student art show and concert, Orinda Intermediate School, 6:30 p.m.

AT THE LIBRARY

- 20 **Toddler Lapsit**, 10 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and bounces for infants to 3-year-olds and their caregivers. Repeats March 21, 27 and 28.
- 24 **Saturday Morning Live!** 11 a.m. Family story time for 3- to 5-year-olds. Library Toddler Alcove. Repeats March 31.

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/Tabor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation**, fourth Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.

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, 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., 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.

WomenSing Invited to Festival

■ Rehearsals under way for March concerts

By LYNDA LEONARD
Contributing Writer

WomenSing rejoices with exciting news! The 50-member auditioned chorus, under the direction of Martin Benvenuto, received early acceptance to the Cantonigròs International Choral Festival to be held in July. The festival takes place in the small mountain town of Cantonigròs, approximately 62 miles from Barcelona, Spain. In its 25th year, the festival is an important international meeting through music. The purpose of the festival is to develop cooperation and brotherhood between different cultures and people of the world. In addition to being an exhibition of choral art, the festival is a competition. Representing the United States, WomenSing will compete in two divisions: women's choir and folksong. Preceding the festival, WomenSing will perform in Cadaques and Barcelona.

Coincidentally, at the Sunday, March 25, concert at Saint Mary's College Chapel in Moraga, WomenSing will collaborate with Con Brio – a women's chorus that participated in the Cantonigròs festival where they won a gold medal in the women's choir division. The chorus is part of a family of international, award-winning choirs called the Columbia Choirs of Metropolitan Seattle and will be in the Bay Area in March on a concert tour. They will perform a 20-minute set, the repertoire not yet known, and accompany WomenSing in *Away From the Roll of the Sea*, by Allister MacGillivray, a Canadian songwriter, guitarist, folklorist, and record producer.

The March Concerts

The centerpiece of the March concert is Michael Head's haunting *Snowbirds*, with the title of the set and lyrics from a collection of Sri Ananda Acharya's poems. Acharya was born in Bengal in 1883, and as a young man renounced the world, taking the name Sri Ananda (holy joy) Acharya (teacher). His many philosophical books include *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. In his later years, he concentrated on poetry, and it is a line of his poetry that serves as title of the concert: Singers of the Night. English composer Head, says Benvenuto, "was known mostly as a composer and persuasive interpreter of his own songs. His music is melodically simple and harmonically conservative and falls somewhere between the popular ballad and the art song proper. His setting of



LYNDA LEONARD

WomenSing choral members rehearse for a Bread and Roses concert, an outreach program that brings music to those who otherwise cannot attend a live performance. Pictured (L-R) are Mary Wallace, Virginia Sykes, and Brooke Taylor.

Snowbirds, however, shows the solid backing of fastidious craftsmanship and a sophisticated harmonic palette." A solo baritone will join the chorus for this piece.

The concert includes Antonio Vivaldi's *Beatus Vir*, a psalm sung at Vespers, the evening service which consecrates the end of the day. A string quartet will accompany the chorus. Also included in the program, are Antonio Lotti's *Vere Languores Nostros* and Josef Rheinberger's *Regina Coeli*.

The featured composer of WomenSing's season, Andrew Carter, was born in 1939 into a Leicestershire family of tower and handbell ringers. Benvenuto notes that Carter is a prominent musician in the field of church music and has been commissioned by the Saint Olaf Choir in Minnesota and for the tercentenary celebrations of Wrens Saint Paul's Cathedral. His settings of poet William Blake's "The Tyger" and "Cradle Song" are part of *A Blake Triptych* to be performed. "The Tyger" is fiery as the tiger itself, and the latter is beguiling and soothing," says Benvenuto.

The March 25 concert, at 3 p.m., in the chapel at Saint Mary's College in Moraga will be followed by a reception. The Berkeley performance at the First Congregational Church, at 2345 Channing Way, begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20 general, \$18 senior/student, and \$10 youth ages 18 and under. Tickets are available at the door. To charge tickets in advance, call (925) 974-9169. For additional information about WomenSing, visit the website at www.womensing.org.



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CLASSIFIED

◆ SCOTLAND from page 15

sites - The Palace of Holyroodhouse (holyroodhouse@royalcollection.org.uk). Closely associated with Mary, Queen of Scots and her turbulent past, today it's the Queen's official residence in Scotland. But also it's a remarkable palace filled with an abundance of history: the Royal Apartments, the Great Gallery with more than eighty 17th century portraits of Scottish Monarchs, Palace Gardens, and Mary, Queen of Scots' bed chamber, the most famous room in Scotland. With time

left over, why not grab a picnic lunch and climb up Arthur's Seat near the Palace of Holyroodhouse? Reaching 800 feet, you'll catch breathtaking views for miles around the city including the Firth of Forth, an estuary or "firth" of Scotland's River Forth.

Now springing forth several hundred years to New Town, you will find one of the largest Georgian developments in the world, but don't let the name mislead you. New Town dates back to the 18th century with many of Edinburgh's art museums, galleries, and shops including the Royal Scottish Academy and The National Gallery of Scotland. On Princes Street, you'll recognize one of the most unrivaled attractions dating back to 1846: the 200-foot tall Sir Walter Scott Monument (www.cac.org.uk). Since then, millions of tourists have scaled the monument for commanding views of the city's center.

Perhaps, the most celebrated time to be in Edinburgh is in August when the city turns into one big holiday with "fringe benefits." Starting on the Esplanade of Edinburgh Castle, you can hear the bagpipes at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo (www.edintattoo.co.uk). Other events to take in include the Fringe Festival (www.edfringe.com), Edinburgh International Film Festival (http://www.eif.co.uk), Edinburgh Mela (www.edinburgh-mela.co.uk), Scotland's largest intercultural festival, and Edinburgh International Book Festival (www.edbookfest.co.uk), the biggest book festival in the world.

And yet one of the liveliest events not taking place in August is the Edinburgh International Fashion Festival (www.edinfashfest.com). Initiated for the first time last April, the happening showcased many of today's top Scottish designers. Of course, now may be the time to ask: Do people actually wear kilts and are they fashionable? The answer is yes! Today's Scotland is "dressed to kilt" as evidenced by those sizzling models that strutted down catwalks clad in silver mesh bodices and hot, radical kilts. Unlike the frenzied atmosphere of the more renowned shows, ticket holders to the Edinburgh International Fashion Festival were able to buy the latest trends straight off the runway at modest prices and attend lectures that featured top designers as well as rising stars. Maybe that's why Edinburgh is being called the new fashion nirvana.

According to Colin McDowell, the event's artistic director and senior fashion writer for the Sunday Times style section, "Edinburgh has been a destination city for tourists, and now it's time to think of it as a shopping destination as well."

For information on visiting Scotland, call (800) 462-2748 or go online to www.visitbritain.com. Fraser Gordon also has a fun, informative guide to the country. You can email him at scotlandia@hotmail.com.

◆ GREEN from page 9

plane) delivered by a fleet of three cars, all with HOV lane stickers that allow a single driver to take the fast lane during rush hours. One is a 2002 Toyota RAV 4 electric car, a Honda Civic GX powered by natural gas, and one of the first Toyota Prius cars. Besides the occasional trip to the mechanic for servicing the brakes or other basic maintenance, the Peases have said goodbye to the gasoline station.

For families interested in finding out more about electric cars Norman Pease recommends a Wikipedia site at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battery_electric_vehicle. He and Janet are also happy to meet with anyone interested in seeing what they have done to their home or to talk about what vehicle might be right for them. Norman can be contacted by e-mail at norm@pease.com.

◆ AIDA from page 19

drama departments, with 40 cast members and another 15 students backstage.

The musical tells of the Egyptian general, Rhadames, who falls in love with Aida, an Ethiopian princess who has been taken as a slave. The general is also loved by Amneris, an Egyptian princess. The musical comes to life when Amneris awakens in a modern American museum, and begins to tell her story to a visiting couple.

Be warned: Unhappy endings are not new on stage at Miramonte. Last year's musical was West Side Story, Leonard Bernstein's musical adaptation of the story of Romeo and Juliet, and in the fall the drama department did The Laramie Project, a play based on interviews about the murder of a young gay man in Wyoming.

Rehearsals began in November, averaging 12 hours a week. The role of Aida will be sung by Katie Behnke, Rhadames by Ben Wetzel, and Amneris by Sarah Ames.

Faculty involved in the show are John Schroder, instrumental music; Sarah Downs, choral music; Cassandra Montgomery, choreographer; and the drama department's Cousins.

Tickets are \$10 to \$20, and are available online at www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/miramonte/ or at the box office.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 24

Established in 1991, A.L.M.A. was originally located at One Camino Sobrante and has been at its present location since 2001. The entrance to A.L.M.A. includes a bubbling water fountain, which provides the soothing sound of running water, and a bistro table with two chairs, inviting relaxation during a hectic and harried week.

James Fiatarone graduated from University of California Berkeley and earned a doctorate in language and literature with an emphasis on the relationship between music and literature. His wife, Dina Eldred Fiatarone, holds a degree in literature and works part-time at the family enterprise, while at the same time caring for the couple's children. The Fiatarones have lived in Orinda since they were married, with the exception of a four-year stint in Milan, Italy, where James taught language at a university. The couple have five children; Carlo and Maria graduated from Miramonte High School. Jimmy is a senior and Annalisa a freshman at Miramonte. Gianni is in the fifth grade at Wagner Ranch School.

"Over the years, I have enjoyed seeing our students grow in their music, and now their younger siblings take lessons from us," says James. The Fiatarones are motivated to give back by arranging for their students to take their music into the world. This past winter, they organized a concert at the Orinda Convalescent Hospital and have donated instruments to a school and orphanage in Sierra Leone. "Our son Carlo graduated from the Third World Studies program at U.C. Davis and has been working at a school in Sierra Leone. This project was organized by Carlo, and he wants to continue doing more of the same," says James. A.L.M.A. also collects donations through the "Care-avan" program and delivers toys, instruments, clothes, computers, basically whatever is needed, to children in Mexico.

Currently, several hundred students are enrolled at A.L.M.A. In addition to lessons, a variety of instruments are available for rent or to purchase. They stock language and music books as well. For more information, call the Fiatarones at 254-



Physical Therapist Allen Ling works with a patient at his creek-side offices.

Chamber Luncheon Features Mayor and City Manager

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce January luncheon featured Mayor Steve Glazer and City Manager Janet Keeter. Glazer spoke about the need to improve Orinda's roads, to revitalize the downtown area, and to be prepared in an emergency. "The city turned 21-years-old this year," said Glazer. "Creating and funding a long-term infrastructure fix will be a clear sign that the city has reached a level of maturity to manage our own affairs." Glazer also noted that the Orinda

5056. Hours are Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Physical Therapy Innovations

Licensed physical therapist Allen Ling has been serving the rehabilitation needs of the East Bay for more than 17 years. He is a board-certified specialist in orthopedic physical therapy, specializing in jaw disorders, including TMJ, as well as aquatic therapy. Ling's practice, Physical Therapy Innovations (PTI) is located at 122 Camino Pablo.

"I was on the receiving end of my clinic's services in 2005 when I was diagnosed with a gastrointestinal stromal tumor. It is a rare form of tumor found in the gastrointestinal tract. There was not much on my mind except getting through each day," says Ling. After surgery and an experimental chemotherapy regime, it took several months for Ling to recover. "I attribute physical therapy, therapeutic massage, acupuncture, and Pilates-based exercises with therapists at my clinic as the key to my recovery," he adds. "I have been given a second chance at life; today there is no evidence of the cancer. I realize the importance of living in the moment and the preciousness of family and friends," observes Ling.

Medical doctors and patients refer about 95 percent of PTI's patients. Ling also works as a therapist for corporations such as Pixar and Natural Grocery. "Trust and respect are what we have earned over time. The PTI team now includes 11 experienced therapists, with varied specialties such as manual therapy, therapeutic massage, Pilates, body conditioning and functional retraining. Our patients range in age from very young children to adolescents to the elderly," says Ling.

PTI custom-designs the treatment according to the individual needs of the patient. "Educating our patient is our top priority, as well as correcting the problem and preventing a reoccurrence. The PTI practice is the leading authority for aquatic therapy in the East Bay," remarks Ling.

When you visit the PTI practice you will be greeted with warmth and enthusiasm. For more information, call Allen Ling at 254-6900.

Association (OA) is selling emergency supply kits put together by the American Red Cross. The kits can be purchased at the OA office located in the lower level of the Orinda Library. Call 254-0800 for more information.

Keeter reviewed the accomplishments and goals of Orinda's many nonprofit organizations, praising the groups for their dedicated volunteer service to the community.

The luncheon, which was held at the Orinda Country Club, was sponsored by East Bay MUD. Past Chamber of Commerce board members Brooks Stubblefield (Loard's Ice Cream), Cyndi Hilton-Girgis (Hilton House Home Consignments), Gail Woznak (First Republic Bank, formerly Bank of Walnut Creek), and Nancy Sprague (designer) were also honored for their service to the chamber and for promoting local businesses.



Mayor Steve Glazer discussed the many challenges facing Orinda in the coming year.



City Manager Janet Keeter spoke about Orinda's nonprofit organizations.

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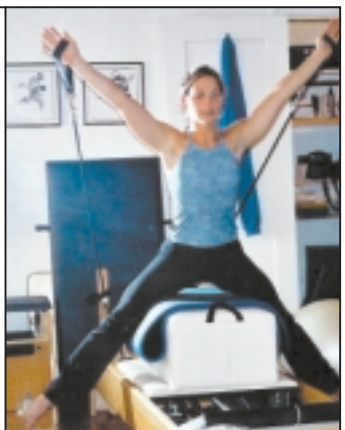


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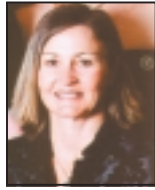


BUSINESS BUZZ

Business Buzz

Putting a Personal Face on the Face of Business

Valerie Hotz



To send items for consideration, email Hotz at v.hotz@att.net

One of the great things about Orinda is the small-town atmosphere coupled with the friendliness that pervades local businesses. In making the rounds from merchant to merchant, excellent customer service is foremost on their minds and it always stands out, most often in the smallest gesture.

During a recent severe cold snap, I escorted my mother into a local eatery at lunchtime. She is scheduled for hip replacement surgery and can barely walk but does so, albeit with great difficulty, and with the assistance of a cane. We were flabbergasted when the restaurant staff directed us to wait outside in the chill until a table became available. An elderly couple with room at their table remarked out loud, "Couldn't they wait inside?" Another gentleman who held the door for us added, "That is beyond the pale. I am going somewhere else." In business, as social relations, the little things often mean so much.

Across town at La Piazza a friend of mine enjoyed a fine meal, and when it came time to pay, she realized she had left her wallet at home. She was embarrassed to tell the waitress that she had no money and was relieved when the waitress responded,

"That is fine. Pay us the next time you come by." Reminded of humorist Art Buchwald's final column, I too think of a song lyric,

"What's it all about, Alfie?"

"Is it just for the moment we live?"

"What's it all about, when you sort it out Alfie?"

"Are we meant to take more than we give or "Are we meant to be kind?"

Quality Cleaning, Expert Alteration

Going the extra step with excellent customer service is what George and Anna Wahbeh, owners of Orinda Cleaners have been doing since they bought the business in 1985. George, a structural engineer and Anna, a medical technologist, are originally from Jerusalem and immigrated to the Bay Area by way of Sweden.

"A friend introduced us to the dry cleaning business. We had a difficult time



SALLY HOGARTY

George and Anna Wahbeh hold up their 1986 Chamber of Commerce plaque. The Wahbehs said that when they took over Orinda Cleaners, there were only two restaurants in town -- the Casa Orinda and Alex's (now The Orinda House).

finding a job in our fields, so I took six months of training classes at Laney College in Oakland. We bought Orinda Cleaners the same year the City of Orinda incorporated," says Anna. The company was first established in 1965.

Offering alterations and mending in addition to state-of-the-art dry cleaning service is what keeps their loyal customers coming back. Cleaning area rugs, comforters, leather apparel, and tablecloths are also featured services. Occupying approximately 1,000 square feet, Orinda Cleaners is located at 37 Moraga Way, near Morrison's Jewelers.

Just about every corner of the space is utilized. The Wahbehs do all dry cleaning on the premises with sophisticated equipment that is inspected every year by OSHA and the EPA. The permits are on display in the shop, along with vintage black and white photographs of San Franciscans dating from the late 1800s to the turn of the century. "I bought the photos because the people are dressed up so beautifully, and they date from an interesting time in San Francisco history,"

says Anna. In case you spill coffee on your tie on your way to work, there is a rack of new ties for sale to save the day for you. According to Wahbeh, if you spill red wine on your clothing, do not put salt or water on the stain. "Leave it alone and bring it in as soon as possible. Putting anything on the stain makes it harder to remove," she explains.

A friendly atmosphere where you are known on a first-name basis is what it is all about at Orinda Cleaners. "We support the local Orinda schools every year by donating to the school auctions. I enjoy keeping a friendly atmosphere and proficient service for our customers." The Orinda Cleaners has been a member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce since 1985. It is open Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact George or Anna Wahbeh at 254-5155.

Everything You Need In Language and Music

The Academy of Language and Music Arts (A.L.M.A.) is the brainchild of James Fiatarone, Ph.D., and his wife, Dina Eldred Fiatarone. It is located at 99 Brookwood Road, near the Crossroads. "We believe that language and music are not only very practical channels of communication with others, but also instruments with which we can create, modify, and perfect our self-image and self-portrait," says James.

Alma, in Latin, means "kind, nurturing, bountiful, and fruitful," as in "alma mater," or one's fostering mother. A.L.M.A. offers a variety of foreign language classes are available, as well as instrumental instruction, including piano, guitar,



PAT RUDEBUSCH

James and Dina Fiatarone operate the Academy of Language and Music Arts.

woodwinds, cello, and violin. Voice lessons are also available. Classes are 30 minutes in length and sold as a five-week block for \$100. "We try to keep the cost modest so people can do as much as they like," says Fiatarone. Classes may be scheduled Monday through Saturday at convenient times for students, including the evening hours.

[SEE BUZZ page 23]

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