

THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
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April 2007

Pine Grove Development Looking for Final Approval by Year's End

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

The residential development proposed for the former Pine Grove Intermediate School site moved closer to fruition in March when the developer, Pulte Homes, unveiled housing designs and a construction schedule for residents of Orindawoods. The informational meetings were designed to answer questions and concerns of Orindawoods homeowners, the closest residential neighbors to the new housing development on Altarinda Road.

Scaled down from the original 100 units proposed, the Pine Grove development now numbers 73 units, which includes a mix of one, two, and three-story single family houses and eight below-market rate duplexes. "It's been quite a balancing act trying to plan a smart growth community and finding the right mix of units with open space," says Pulte's Kim Diamond.

According to architect Allen Scales, there will be four different styles – Colonial, Cape Cod, Craftsman, and Monterey. "We are trying to fulfill the city's design guidelines by providing a meaningful mix and diversity of housing," says Scales. "The four we've selected really give a slice of Americana, and with the variety of colors and siding available, each house can be unique." The square footage will range from 1,540 for the duplexes to 2,600 for a three-story home.

Diamond noted that the site has presented many challenges. "The site is very steep in parts, and we didn't want a lot of retaining walls so we've really designed our homes to work with the existing grades as much as possible." To that end, some of the three-story homes appear to be two stories from the front with the garage on the lower grade behind the house. A series of smaller retaining walls will be used in areas that would warrant larger walls in order to keep as much of the natural topography as possible. "The housing development is bordered by the hillside, which provides acres of open space, and the city-owned

[SEE PINE GROVE page 10]



COURTESY OF PULTE HOMES
This craftsman style three-story home utilizes the site's natural topography allowing the home to appear to be two-stories from the front and three from the back.

School District Looks to Find Affordable Option for Maintenance Facility

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

The Orinda Union School District's (OUSD) plan to relocate its maintenance facility has run into a series of setbacks, starting with public opposition to its initial plan to install the new facility on a section of the 23-acre, district-owned property at the Wagner Ranch School site. The district has spent much of the past year pursuing locations that would not impinge on the Wagner Ranch site, much of which is used for the district's outdoor education programs.

The school district currently shares a maintenance facility with the City of Orinda on the former Pine Grove School property. Both entities will have to move their maintenance operations when Pulte Homes takes ownership of that site. The city, which leases space from OUSD, has said that it

wishes to continue to share a facility.

Several alternative sites were identified, but acquiring and/or building on them is proving to be more problematic than anticipated. "Our first choice in location was a parcel of land adjacent to the PG&E substation on Bear Creek Road," says superintendent Frank Brunetti. "We were close to an agreement with PG&E until a title report found that when PG&E purchased the land from East Bay MUD some 45 years ago, there was a clause that stated, should PG&E choose to sell it in the future, East Bay MUD could buy it back for \$40. East Bay MUD would not relinquish its right to repurchase the property."

PG&E's decision led the school district to look at a second available option, the DeLaveaga site, adjacent to the Highway 24 on-ramp heading west. "In working with the various agencies involved with our acquiring that site, we're finding that the parcel is riddled with easements, and we're not sure that all of them can be removed," Brunetti continues. "The site poses a series of other problems, as well, not the least of which is the escalating costs associated with building on the undeveloped parcel."

The school district had anticipated construction costs in the neighborhood of \$1 million to \$1.5 million. But, the topography of the DeLaveaga site and the groundwork to gain access has doubled the district's original projections. "At this point, we are not moving forward until we have reliable cost comparisons for building at DeLaveaga and, what is now our only remaining alternative, a section of the Wagner Ranch School property," Brunetti

[SEE MAINTENANCE page 10]

Mayor's Awards will Promote Good Design

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

Pride of homeownership is part of the American dream and Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer would like to encourage residents to extend that sense of pride to their surrounding neighborhood. "We are fortunate to live in an area of tremendous natural beauty," Glazer says. "As homeowners, we are stewards of the community and have a responsibility to preserve the city's character and livability."

It's with an eye toward nurturing a sense of community pride that Glazer has launched the Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Architecture, Landscape, and Environmental Design. The purpose, he says, is simply to recognize excellence in architecture, landscape design, and environmental sustainability projects that make an extraordinary contribution to the character and livability of Orinda neighborhoods. "The goal isn't to create a

[SEE DESIGN page 31]

Summer Camp Issue



SALLY HOGARTY
Children enjoy a game at the Orinda Community Center's camp last summer. See pages 14 - 20 for this year's listing of summer camps.

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Violinist Returns for Children's Performance



PAT RUDEBUSCH
Margot Schwartz returned to HappyTimes Preschool, where she was once a student, to perform for Astrid Flagg's current crop of preschoolers. Schwartz currently studies music at the Yale School of Music and was in town to perform with the East Bay Symphony. Schwartz, winner of the East Bay Symphony's Young Artist Competition, played a selection from Sibelius' *Violin Concerto*, which she has also performed at Oakland's Paramount Theater.

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BACKYARD GETAWAYS

**Backyard Getaways and Beyond
Burma — An Unknown
Destination**

Ksenija Soster Olmer



“Huh? Where is that?” was most people’s reaction when I mentioned that we were planning to travel to Myanmar for the holidays. Most have not heard of this new official name for Burma. Compared to its well-visited neighbors of China, India, Laos, and Thailand, Burma is quite isolated.

Burma’s obscurity was one of the biggest attractions for us, since we were hoping to find a country largely untouched by the tourist industry, like China was when we first visited 20 years ago. Yet, the main reason that Burma is visited by so few posed a dilemma for us, as well. Many feel that by visiting the country one supports its repressive military regime and we weighted the pros and cons very carefully. In the end, we followed the arguments of those who say that by bringing the outside world and dollars to the local population the isolation is chipped away and, perhaps, the repression lessened by potential witnesses from the West.

When we mentioned this to many Burmese whom we met, they all wholeheartedly agreed. The negative fallout of a dictatorial regime is lack of democratic freedoms, and the positive is the lack of crime on the streets. Compared to so many other Asian countries there were no visible pimps, prostitutes, or moneychangers hanging around the hotels. There were no beggars or sick and dying on the streets. Yes, people are poor, very poor, but not destitute, at least not in places accessible to us. Everyone was helpful, yet never pushy or subservient. Everybody and

everything was on time, be it a small airliner or the driver of our van. Steeped in Theravada Buddhist tradition, the Burmese are incredibly honorable and kind people.

In part, to support the new entrepreneurs and, in part, to make navigating the government bureaucracy a bit easier, we decided for the first time in our travels to enlist the assistance of a local travel agency. In a flurry of e-mail exchanges over the months of preparations we began a great working relationship and friendship with the agents. Not only did our agency arrange for our hard-to-get air tickets inside Burma, and government permits into Pa-O tribal territory, they also enriched immeasurably our experience by providing us with knowledgeable and excellent English-speaking guides and drivers. We must have had the best of the best; they were all college-educated architects, physicists, zoologists, and the like.

Rangoon = Yangon

Just like the name of the country itself, many of the geographical places have been changed from the old colonial names given by the British to the new names, sometimes recognizable and sometimes not. The famous Irrawady River is now Ayeyerwaddy and the capital is now called Yangon. Little has been left of the old colonial glory of Rangoon but a few dilapidated downtown mansions and a refurbished Strand Hotel. We couldn’t help but stop there for proper English tea and, as in many of the tourist places, we were the only ones. After tea, we snuck a peak



KSENIJA SOSTER OLMER

The temples in Burma are a feast for the eyes with many inlaid with gold and other precious metals and gem stones. Above, temples in Yangon (formerly known as Rangoon) are shown. Not in the photo is the famous Shwedagon Pagoda, the dome of which is covered in 60 tons of pure gold and crowned with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds.

into the famous Strand Bar, where military officers and perhaps an assistant superintendent in the Indian Imperial Police of the stature of a George Orwell character wet their whistles in their time.

Famous writers and Burma

Rudyard Kipling was quite taken by Rangoon’s most famous and holiest site, the Shwedagon Pagoda, which he called “a golden mystery...a beautiful winking wonder that blazed in the sun.” The 2,500-year-old pagoda is said to be the world’s richest golden stupa, its golden dome rising 323 feet above its base, covered in 60 tons of pure gold and a treasure trove of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and the like. We had saved the best for last, making sure we were at the site about an hour before the sunset. The anticipation had been

building throughout the day. As we drove around town to visit interesting sites, here and there we would catch a glimpse of the golden pagoda, enticing us to abandon our plans. But we resisted, first visiting a smaller Sule Pagoda, and then the giant Reclining Buddha with eyes made of glass. The glass workshop that fashioned them is nearby in a large compound strewn with tons of broken glass of all colors. As for the quality, it is a far cry from the famous glassblowing workshops in Venice, but the atmosphere is much more fascinating.

Our girls bought lacquer bangles and a jade Buddha, admired rubies and emeralds, and happily browsed the thousands of merchant stalls in the lively Scott Market (named after another literary Brit-explorer, Sir George Scott). The market is now

[SEE BURMA page 12]

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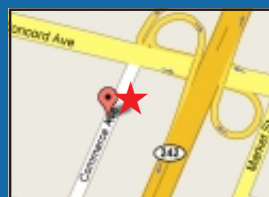
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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President

April is National Volunteer Month

Kate Wiley



April is National Volunteer Month. The Points of Light Foundation's 2007 theme is "Inspire by Example" because it truly reflects the power volunteers have to inspire the people they help, as well as, to inspire others to serve! Orinda is a community blessed with hundreds of dedicated volunteers inspiring by example every day in our schools, churches, and government. They are our children's coaches and leaders in scouting, and the fundraisers passionately asking us to support their worthy cause. Our great quality of life is a direct result of the selfless acts of these volunteers.

In January, Steve Glazer, our new mayor, asked each of the local non-profits in Orinda to prepare a single paragraph of its goals for 2007 and its accomplishments for 2006. The struggle for everyone in the room was

the constraint of one paragraph for each. Most groups just do their work passionately and silently, finding the rewards in doing, not in recognition. But we should notice and acknowledge their efforts. Have you ever wondered who plants the flowers in front of the post office? How our Orinda history is preserved? Who *does* put on the July 4th parade?

Take time to find out this month. The goals and accomplishments of many groups in Orinda can be found on the City of Orinda's website, www.ci.orinda.ca.us. Check out the individual websites of our local non-profits below. Support their fundraisers by attending their functions or mailing in your donations. Find out how you can help the organization that interests you. "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." –Aesop.

A list of Groups & their websites or phone numbers at the time of print.

Educational Foundation of Orinda	www.orindaefo.org
Friends of the Orinda Creeks	www.orindacreeks.org
Friends of the Orinda Library	www.ccc.lib.org/friends/ori.html
Hospice of Contra Costa	www.hospicecc.org
Miramonte Parents Club	www.miramonteparents.com
Montelindo Garden Club	www.montelindogarden.com
Orinda Arts Council	www.orindaartscouncil.org
Orinda Association	www.orindaassociation.org
Orinda Chamber of Commerce	www.orindachamber.org
Orinda Community Center Auxiliary	www.ci.orinda.ca.us/parksandrec/auxiliary
Orinda Garden Club	www.orindagardenclub.org
Orinda Historical Society	www.orindahistory.org
Orinda Woman's Club	rkunzman@phoenixdsl.com
Orinda Landmarks Committee	254-8473, www.orindahistory.org
Orinda Lions Club	www.lionseyeca-nv.org , 376-7799
Orinda Newcomers	www.newcomersclub.com/california
Orinda Rotary	254-2222
Orinda Union School District	www.orinda.k12.ca.us
Rescue One Foundation	925-258-4599
Tabor Sister City	www.ci.orinda.ca.us/pdf/Tabor-Sister-City.pdf



KATE WILEY

Soccer 4 All partnered with Santa Maria Church to create team sets for underfunded youth soccer programs in the Bay Area and around the world.

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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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New City Council Works Well Together

Following a somewhat contentious city council race in November, Orinda residents elected two new city councilmembers and re-elected a third. These three joined two relatively new councilmembers – new at least by Orinda standards.

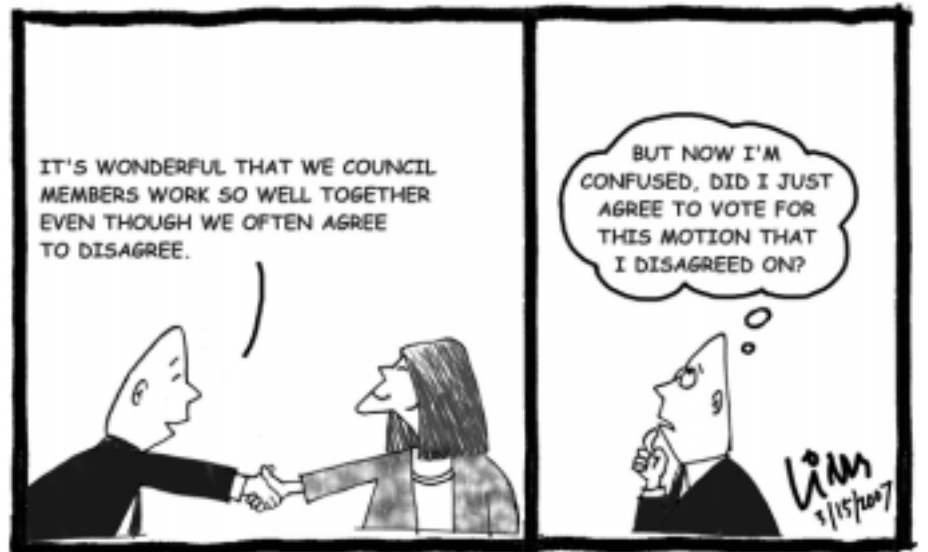
While disagreements on various agenda items are frequent, the expected fireworks between the new and returning city councilmembers have never materialized. Instead, the current city council's meetings have been marked by respectful disagreements and attempts at gaining consensus.

After close to 15 years attending Orinda City Council meetings, the respect, shown not only to fellow city councilmembers but also to those attending the meetings, is a refreshing change. Of course, the meetings

still tend to be lengthy and full of bureaucratic formalities, but the sense of humor, rather than sarcasm, permeating many of the meetings is a nice change.

Only time will tell how well this council will work together and how much they can accomplish. Some residents (see letter to editor on page 28) believe improvements still need to be made. But, at least this council is on the right track.

Corrections: In the March issue, **Ian Woods**, drummer for the band The Diplomats, was inadvertently listed as Fion Woods. Also, **Jonathan Perlstein** was listed as graduating from the University of Arizona with a degree in liberal arts. He graduated from the University of Arizona's arch rival, Arizona State University.



Orinda City Council Bond Wastes Tax Dollars

The council has resurrected the Measure Q Infrastructure Bond that was defeated on the November 2006 Ballot. It will cost taxpayers \$102,000 to put this 'Son of Q' on the June Ballot.

This bond should be defeated simply on the basis Orindans should not be asked to pay any more to upgrade EBMUD's water pipe capacity. Any upgrading should be funded from the existing fire district taxes. Orindans already pay enough for pipes:

1. We pay regular property taxes for the Fire District
2. We pay a special Orinda Fire Flow tax which was to cover pipes
3. We pay for pipes in our EBMUD bills
4. We would pay a \$410 tax for pipes with the 'Son of Q' Bond

The fire district has stated water pipe capacity upgrades are a low priority, and the fire district has not spent one dime of the taxes we have paid for pipe upgrades.

In 2013-14, Orindans will pay approximately \$19,248,099 in property taxes to the fire district. This \$19,248,099 increases annually with property assessment increases.

A NO vote should tell the city council and Fire District any pipe upgrades must come from existing fire district taxes.

Cynthia Vegh-Whisnant

Fix the Roads

Fix the roads or fix your car! We had to have a broken engine mount replaced: that was \$200. Then another car blew a tire that was in good shape, and we had to replace all four tires: another \$550. That car also needs new shocks. These were due to bad roads and potholes, according to the repair shops. Make no mistake, bad roads cost you money. I would much rather spend my money fixing the roads, and keep my car in good shape. The road bond would have cost us much less than these repairs.

I voted yes on Measure Q, and I'm going

to vote yes on the new bond measure too. Let's fix this problem!

– Jim Landau

Roads are Dangerous

Orinda has the distinction of being tied with Richmond for last place for the quality of our roads (rated 46 on a scale of 100). I'm proud of our community, and I've tried to do a lot over the years to help keep it a nice place to live. The roads are to the point where they're not only embarrassing, they're downright dangerous. I supported the last bond for road, pipe, and drainage repairs, and I'm going to support the next one as well. Let's make sure Orinda remains a place we can all be proud to call home.

– Dick Heggie
Orinda's first mayor

New Tax Unnecessary

The Orinda City Council will try again in June to ram an unnecessary \$120 million bond tax down our throats. This tax is unnecessary. Some of the available annual savings are: \$4 million by forming an Orinda Fire District; \$900,000 by having our own police force as Moraga does; \$600,000 new taxes from new Orinda developments.

The city council has agreed to none of the above savings, and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District is only guaranteeing one piddling \$89,000 contribution for water pipes, and this comes from a new 20 percent increase in our fire flow tax.

Although Orindans pay two-thirds of the fire district property taxes versus Moragans paying one-third, the district has never spent any money upgrading Orinda water pipes. Instead the district pays an average of over \$200,000 per year in wages and benefits to its permanent employees.

This bond will fix only 37 percent of Orinda's infrastructure. Expect more bonds in the future.

The overwhelming majority of Orinda

residential streets will get no bond money. Private roads will get no bond money.

This bond will result in an annual tax in 2014 of \$550 for a \$1 million assessed valuation home, \$1,100 for a \$2 million home, and \$1,650 for a \$3 million home.

Without our vote the city will spend \$18 million for new city offices. These offices should be sold, and the offices placed in the old library as we were promised. This would save \$600,000 annually.

It's time the city and fire district contributed their share.

— Clyde Vaughn

Caring for Your City

I'm pleased to read that voters will soon have another opportunity to address the issue of Orinda's deteriorating infrastructure. I understand that many people may have concerns about previous city council actions, but I'm not sure how a no vote on the proposed bond measure helps rectify those actions. To me, it's now a case of comparing costs. We can all estimate the bond's approximate cost per year, but how do we determine the costs of voting no? The increased wear and tear on our automobiles, and the negative impact on property values would be difficult enough, but how do we put a price tag on caring for our city? We each have to answer that question.

— Bill Reynolds

We Got Trouble

Although the ballot language of the new road bond says, "bond proceeds will only be spent to improve Orinda streets, storm drains, and water supply," another paragraph (Section 3 (b)) of the enabling ordinance (07-03) contradicts that promise: "The estimated cost of the municipal improvements includes legal and all other fees incidental to or connected with the authorization, issuance or sale of the proposed bonds ... and all other costs and expenses incidental to or connected with

the authorization ... of the bonds."

Note the word "authorization." Who will be getting these fees and costs for passing the ordinance and winning the bond election, how much will it be, and what will they do for the money? That's a mystery. Mayor Glazer, whose firm, Glazer and Associates, makes money off of political campaigns, approved this. What is promised in the ballot language is taken away in the fine print of the enabling ordinance.

We're getting hustled with the "ya got trouble" scam, just like in *The Music Man* — a bonanza for the promoter, and disappointment for the rubes. Our city council is not protecting us. The fine print of the Infrastructure Committee was not in vain, because now we know how negligent our city government has been, but the use of that work by parasites hoping for a contingent fee from passage of a bond is not right.

Orinda has a dismal history of road neglect and broken promises, so why should we have any confidence that any of the bond money will be spent on roads? We know that the promoters will get a cut off the top, and we have no way to pay for city hall other than by embezzling the road money. Like a panhandling junkie, bankrupt Orinda is begging for a bailout which will probably be spent on the City Hall, consultants, and further financial frolic.

The oversight promised on the ballot is illusory. According to Exhibit A of the enabling ordinance, there will be only a toothless advisory committee, like the Iraq Study Group, appointed by those they are supposed to oversee and report to. Impervious to public outrage, our arrogant and profligate tyrants will do whatever they please with the \$58.6 million. They are trying to sneak this election by without polling places, just absentee votes, so make sure to send in your ballot by mail.

— Wilmot McCutchen
[SEE LETTERS page 28]

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Letters to the Editor are printed on a space-available basis and should be no longer than 400 words. They must include the writer's first and last name, signature and telephone number.

Send letters to: Editor, *The Orinda News*, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, fax them to 254-8312 or email to news@orindaassociation.org. **Letters to the Editor for the May issue are due April 5, 2007.**

For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or send email to aspen@hobbitsforhire.com. The deadline for the June issue is April 16.

OVERSIGHT COMMISSION / POLICE BLOTTER

Notice of Opportunity to Serve On the Newly Created Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

By BETTY BLUBAUGH
Interim City Clerk

The City of Orinda is seeking applications from volunteer residents to serve on the city's newly created Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission.

In establishing the new commission, the Orinda City Council announced that the commission would play a critical role in monitoring and implementing infrastructure improvements called for in the city's bond measure, set to appear on the ballot in a special election on June 5, 2007. The new commission will be responsible for making recommendations to the city council and city manager related to infrastructure project priorities and scope; receiving and reviewing the annual independent audit of infrastructure bond expenditures; monitoring and serving in an advisory capacity to the council and city manager concerning how the annual improvements are implemented; reviewing how the bond proceeds are spent each year,

and reporting back to the public about whether funds have been spent for the purposes authorized by the voters.

The terms of office for the first seven commissioners will vary so that appointees' term expirations are staggered. After the first appointments, terms of office will be for three years. To be considered for appointment, interested candidates must be residents of the city. In addition, the city council will weigh the candidates' familiarity with and/or understanding of complex public works projects and budget/financial reporting documents when making the appointments.

Qualified applicants will be invited to be interviewed by either a council subcommittee or the full council prior to appointment by the full city council. Applications are available from the City Clerk's Office, P.O. Box 2000, 14 Altarinda Road, Orinda, CA 94563. Telephone: (925) 253-4220. Application forms may also be downloaded from the city's website at www.ci.orinda.ca.us. The deadline for completed applications is 4 p.m., April 10.

Pothole of the Month



PAT RUDEBUSCH

While perhaps not the most pitiful, this procession of patched-up potholes is particularly perilous given the steepness and degree of curves on Overhill Road. Do you have a favorite pothole? Send a photo to us at: news@orindaassociation.org for possible inclusion in next month's edition. Be sure and say where it is located and why you think it should be chosen for the Pothole of the Month.

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Previews International



POLICE BLOTTER

Compiled by Haleh Allen,
Orinda Police Department
January and February 2007

January

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 61 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 2 incidents in the areas of Las Vegas Rd. and Camino Sobrante.

Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 6 incidents in the areas of Donald Dr., Robert Rd., Meadow View Rd., Bates Blvd., Great Oak Cir., and Zander Dr.

All Other Petty Thefts: 5 incidents in the areas of Moraga Way, Camino Sobrante, Glorietta Ct., Irwin Way, and Valley View Dr.

Grand Theft From Vehicle (theft of more than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 3 incidents in the areas of Scenic Dr., Casa Vieja Pl., and Glorietta Blvd.

All Other Grand Thefts: No reported incidents.

Vehicle Theft: 1 incident in the area of Ardor Dr.

Residential Burglary: 7 incidents in the areas of Coral Dr., Corte Del Rey, Lloyd Ln., Scenic Dr., Tahos Rd., Bates Blvd., and Los Cerros.

Commercial Burglary: 1 incident in the area of Moraga Way.

Vandalism: 19 incidents in the areas of Coral Dr., Descanso Dr., St. Stephens Dr., Charles Hill Rd., Bates Blvd., Wanda Ln., Tahos Rd., Muth Dr., Casa Vieja, Dover Ct., Orinda Way, Orchard Rd., and Donald Dr.

Identity Theft: 5 incidents in the areas of St. Hill Rd, Rheem Blvd.,

Miner Rd., Ardith Rd., and Altarinda Rd.

Credit Card Fraud/Forgery: No reported incidents.

February

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 49 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 4 incidents in the areas of Orinda Way, Barbara Rd., Hidden Valley Rd., and La Plaza.

Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 4 incidents in the areas of Calvin Dr., Longridge Rd., La Espiral, and Lucille Way.

All Other Petty Thefts: 3 incidents in the areas of Camino Sobrante, Orinda Way, and Oriole Rd.

Grand Theft From Vehicle (theft of more than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 3 incidents in the areas of E. Altarinda Rd., Longridge Rd., and Diablo View Dr.

All Other Grand Thefts: 1 incident in the area of Moraga Way.

Vehicle Theft: 2 incidents in the areas of Robert Rd. and Lind Ct.

Residential Burglary: 3 incidents in the areas of Valley View Dr., Muth Dr., and Scenic Dr.

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

Vandalism: 4 incidents in the areas of Barbara Rd. and Moraga Way.

Identity Theft: 3 incidents in the areas of Dias Dorados, Irwin Way, and Moraga Way.

Credit Card Fraud/Forgery: None.



NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE ON THE NEWLY-CREATED CITY OF ORINDA

CITIZENS' INFRASTRUCTURE OVERSIGHT COMMISSION

The City of Orinda is seeking applications from **volunteer residents** to serve on the City's newly-created seven-member **Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission**. In establishing the new Commission, the Orinda City Council announced that the Commission would play a critical role in monitoring and implementing infrastructure improvements called for in the City's bond measure, set to appear on the ballot in a special election on June 5, 2007. When making appointments, in addition to being a resident of Orinda, the City Council will weigh the candidates' familiarity with and/or understanding of complex public works projects and budget/financial reporting documents when making the appointments.

Applications and background information about the duties for the new Commission are available from the City Clerk's Office, P.O. Box 2000, 14 Altarinda Road, Orinda, CA 94563. Telephone: (925) 253-4221 or may be downloaded from the City's website at www.ci.orinda.ca.us. Completed applications should be submitted to the City Clerk's Office by **4:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 10, 2007.**

Betty Blubaugh
Interim City Clerk

IN REMEMBRANCE

Miramonte High School Remembers Paul Yriberri

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

The Miramonte High School community lost a beloved teacher last month when Paul Yriberri passed away suddenly after suffering a heart attack. He was 58.

A 1966 graduate of Miramonte, Yriberri returned to his alma mater to build a career that spanned over 30 years. During his tenure, Yriberri was both an inspirational science teacher and multi-sport coach. Respected by students and colleagues alike, Yriberri engendered a love of learning in his students that extended beyond the classroom and, in several cases, spanned generations, as the children of some of his earliest students also became his students.

Several hundred students, faculty, friends, and family gathered on the school's quad for a celebration of Paul Yriberri's life. In accordance with his warm and relaxed spirit, the event was a way for those who were touched by his life to share memories of a man who was an extraordinary educator and respected colleague.

"Mr. Yriberri was one of a kind. His passion for teaching and genuine care for



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Paul Yriberri was a popular science teacher at Miramonte High School.

his students was unparalleled," Miramonte junior Katie Bilotti recalls. "His positive attitude was infectious and he will be forever missed and remembered."

"Paul was so selfless and giving to Miramonte students," said school board member Vanessa Crews. "As a teacher and a coach, his focus was on his students and athletes and how he could help them grow and be successful." Despite leading his teams to numerous titles, Crews says that he didn't keep score or tout his

[SEE YRIBERRI page 10]

Orinda Starlight Village Players Loses a Star

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Agatha Christie mysteries just won't be the same at the Orinda Starlight Village Players with the passing of Jim Kula. The talented thespian died on February 6, 2007.

A systems analyst and webmaster for Safeway Foods by day, Jim became Christie's clever Belgian detective Hercule Poirot by night, appearing in many of the author's plays produced by Starlight at the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater. "It was always a pleasure to work with Jim and to watch him on stage," says Starlight stage manager Jill Gelster. "He will be sorely missed."

Considered a "triple threat," Jim was not only an accomplished actor but also a talented singer and dancer. He taught dancing for the Fred Astaire Studios in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he met his future wife Carole. The couple went on to become national dance champions as well as a happily married duo.

"I met Jim through the Devil Mountain Chorus," recalls Al Eames. "We sang barbershop together for years and even started our own quartet which ended up performing in a production of *The Music Man* at the Leshner Center for the Arts." Eames credits Jim with helping the quartet



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Julie Rubio, Jim Kula, and Malcolm Cowler in one of the Starlight Players popular Agatha Christie murder mysteries.

land the role in the popular musical. "We really relied on his acting and dancing skills to help us out," he laughs. Eames refers to Jim as a "computer geek" with great social skills. "He was one of the happiest, most pleasant people to be around - very hardworking and conscientious and, above all, a good friend," Eames adds.

Jim's stage credits also include Contra Costa Musical Theater, Diablo Light Opera Company, Town Hall Theatre, and the men's chorus of the San Francisco Boys Chorus, where he performed along side his son, Chris.

Born on a farm in Fennville, Michigan, Jim attended De Paul University and the University of California at Berkeley. He served in the Air National Guard before starting his career in the developing field of computer programming and consulting. Jim, his brother, and his son Chris all shared the same birthday - April 7!

Donations can be made in his memory to the Pacific Boy Choir Academy, the group that sang the "Requiem" at his memorial service.

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IN REMEMBRANCE

Brilliant Engineer Leaves Lasting Legacy

By SARAH YANG
Contributing Writer

Richard Newton, professor and dean of the College of Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, a pioneer in electronic design automation and integrated circuit design, passed away on January 2, less than two months after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He was 55.

A visionary leader in the technology industry, Newton's eloquence and magnetism drew widespread attention to his ideas for the role engineering could play in tackling some of society's most difficult challenges, particularly those of developing



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Richard Newton's vision made engineering a prominent force in helping developing countries.

nations.

"Rich Newton was a man of incomparable vision," said UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau. "Dynamic and entrepreneurial, he understood the power of engineering and technology in entirely new ways, and he connected them to addressing society's toughest problems. This is an enormous loss for us at UC Berkeley, for California, and, indeed, for the international engineering community."

Richard Blum, San Francisco financier, philanthropist and vice chair of the UC Regents, credits Newton with helping develop the concept for the Richard C. Blum Center for Developing Economies, a major multidisciplinary campus initiative launched in April 2006 with a \$15 million gift from Blum. "It was his idea that we should use UC's innovative technologies to

help developing countries," said Blum.

Newton was born July 1, 1951, in Melbourne, Australia. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Melbourne in 1973 and 1975, respectively.

A fortuitous meeting in the early 1970s with Donald Pederson, UC Berkeley

"Rich was such a brilliant guy, we knew we couldn't let him get away," said Paul Gray.

professor emeritus of electrical engineering and computer sciences, started Newton's lifelong interest in electronic design automation (EDA). Pederson, who became Newton's mentor, recruited him to UC Berkeley.

"Newton was one of the major forces behind the development of the EDA field," said Paul Gray, professor of electrical engineering and former UC Berkeley executive vice chancellor and provost, who preceded Newton as dean of engineering. "The semiconductor industry wouldn't exist today if it weren't for these simulation tools."

In 1978, Newton earned his Ph.D. in electrical engineering and computer sciences from UC Berkeley. Newton was appointed to the engineering faculty later that year. "It is rare for a research university to hire its own grad students immediately following their graduate work, but Rich was such a brilliant guy, we knew we couldn't let him get away," said Gray.

Newton quickly scaled the academic ladder, going from assistant professor in 1978 to associate professor in 1982. In 1985, he was promoted to full professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences. Newton served as chair of the department from 1999 to 2000, and was dean of the College of Engineering and the Roy W. Carlson Professor of Engineering from 2000 until his death.

One of Newton's most prominent legacies is the UC Berkeley-based Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society (CITRIS), one of four California Institutes for Science and Innovation. Newton was the driving force behind the founding of CITRIS, established in 2001 to develop the next generation of technologies that will be critical to sustaining California's economic growth and global competitiveness and to solving society's most critical needs.

Newton is survived by his wife Petra Michel, an active member of the Orinda Arts Council, and their daughters Neris and Amrita.

Remembering a Generous Friend

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Catherine Roloff, a vibrant, beautiful young woman, passed away on February 15, 2007, at the age of 41. Although she had been battling cancer for over four years, she still managed to remain a positive force to her many friends and family, and even managed to appear in a play for the Galatean Players last year.

Catherine attended Del Rey Elementary, Orinda Intermediate, Miramonte High School, the University of Oregon, and San Francisco State University. At the time of her diagnosis, she was the director of Del Rey's Dolphin Club, the before/after school childcare program. It was very difficult for Catherine to leave her position at Del Rey. She truly loved the many children under her care. I remember how her face would light up when one of them would come into Caffe Teatro while we were having our weekly coffee group. She always remembered each name and something specific about each child.

While Catherine couldn't be with the children at Del Rey, she did spend time with children in her Orinda neighborhood not far from the elementary school. She loved to garden and to teach the children about the different native plants. She especially enjoyed spending time with her nephews Carter and Chase.

An accomplished actress, Catherine performed with Lafayette's Town Hall Theatre as well as OnStage Theatre and the Galatean Players, both in Pleasant Hill. While I so enjoyed sharing the stage with Catherine last year in Galatean's production of "Vagina Monologues," I will remember her most for her friendship and the support and advice she gave me when I was diagnosed with breast cancer a little over a year ago. As I recovered, she relapsed. But,



KATHY MCCARTY

Catherine Roloff managed Del Rey's Dolphin Club and appeared in local theater productions.

rather than dwell on the negative, she expressed nothing but delight and encouragement at my progress. I only wish she had been able to do the same.



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Nothing to Rent In 1948

By MARIE WAGNER KRENZ
Contributing Writer

In 1948 there were few Orinda apartments or guest cottages to rent, and those few were taken. As a new Acalanes teacher, fresh out of college, my options were limited. It was either commute to my San Francisco home or check out the lone billboard listing for an available room. I took that room and almost immediately regretted it. The landlady was elderly and pleasant enough, but she had cats who either had to be in or out, I can't remember which. The big problem was the bathtub. It had a ring almost etched into the enamel. I took one look and began to cry. For the next two weeks I commuted every day to the city. Why I didn't get out the Dutch Cleanser (no Comet in those days) and scrub it clean, I do not know.

Then a miracle happened. Helen, another new teacher and an acquaintance from college, invited me to share the room she had found. I leapt at the opportunity of human companionship and a clean bathtub, and the fun began. Our room was in the home of a fun-loving divorcee, and life there was never dull. She would sometimes be returning from a party as we were leaving for school, but she was a good person whom we enjoyed and appreciated.

The following year we moved up in the world and into a one-room guest house in

Walnut Creek. We painted designs on jelly glasses with nail polish and felt sophisticated and worldly as we entertained our friends. That guest house had no insulation and was fine in warm weather, but when the days grew cold, we froze. Dangerous as it might have been, we turned on all the burners of the stove and lit the oven as well. We were still cold, so it was time to move again.

This time we rented a small section of an eerie old mansion in Orinda whose owner was out of the country. We were finally warm, but frightened. The only telephone was out in the dark hallway of the main portion of the house, and when it rang we always went together for protection and to drive away the ghosts. Worse than our ghosts were the bats. When we heard them scabbling in the walls, I dragged the mattress off my bed and into Helen's room. I was uncomfortable but no longer afraid. On weekends, we each went to our family homes and the bright lights of San Francisco. One Sunday night we returned to find a spooky old railway lantern, lighted and on our doorstep. The next day at school, Helen stood near the cafeteria line and quickly identified the miscreants by their sheepish demeanors. We received half-hearted apologies and let it go at that.

We felt we had arrived when we took possession of a real apartment. We liked it [SEE 1948 page 22]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS
Helen Peterson Dygert (upper left) and Marie Wagner Krenz (lower right) were teachers at Acalanes High School in 1948. The middle photo shows them chaperoning a school dance.

Out and About Pat Rudebusch



The seas were alive with the sound of music earlier this year when members of the **Contra Costa Youth Orchestra (CCYO)**, under the direction of **Greg Mazmanian**, performed for passengers on Royal Caribbean's *Monarch of the Sea* cruise to Ensenada, Mexico. CCYO is a full orchestra that's membership is comprised of outstanding middle school and high school musicians.

Orinda Intermediate School students performing on the cruise were **Rose Abramson, David Beal, Ali Hasanain, Justin Duong, Bernard Kauffman and Alex Soloway**. They were joined by Miramonte High School students **Wendy Lau, Alexandra Harvey-Gurr, and Sunaina Kale**.

Mazmanian, who has served as CCYO's music director and conductor for the past 15 years, also teaches music at Orinda Intermediate School. "The cruise to Ensenada was a real adventure," Mazmanian says. "We performed in the central lobby area of the ship. It's a tremendous space surrounded by balconies

so the audience is literally all around you. It was a very exciting venue for the kids."

"It's important for students to have opportunities to perform," Mazmanian continues. "Performing in front of other people gives them a real sense of confidence and a greater comfort with being around other people. In this case, we were traveling with and performing for passengers on a cruise ship; last year, we performed at Disneyland." No matter the venue, Mazmanian sees performance as an opportunity for students to not only grow as musicians but to also develop interpersonal skills that will serve them well throughout life.

The Contra Costa Youth Orchestra rehearses weekly at Miramonte High School (thanks to the generosity of Miramonte music teacher **John Schroeder**, Mazmanian is quick to add.) Acceptance to the orchestra is by audition, which is usually held in the fall.

For information on CCYO, including future performances, visit the website at www.contracostayouthorchestra.com.

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Historical Society Offers Digitized Photographs of Orinda's Past

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

It may be hard to imagine now, but there was a time – not all that long ago – when a trolley ran up and down a road more or less where Highway 24 sits today. One was more likely to see kids on horseback than riding in the back of mom's car, and the closest thing to rush-hour traffic may have been when ranchers headed to Casa Orinda for a cold drink mid-cattle drive.

Those days may be fading memories for some, but the Orinda Historical Society aims to keep those images alive and available to all. The Historical Society is a repository for a wide variety of Orinda memorabilia and documents relating to the town's past. Among the Society's collections are thousands of old photos and documents illustrating Orinda's rural past and a town that was, literally, at a crossroads.

Glimpses of that past can be seen through old photos at several businesses in town, including Casa Orinda, Village Inn Café, and First Republic Bank. But now, thanks to a grant from the Orinda Rotary, which funded a scanner and other tools to digitize photos in the Historical Society's collection, anyone can own one of the historic images of Orinda.

According to Erik Andersen, vice president of the Orinda Historical Society, the Rotary grant has allowed the Society to offer prints of the digitized photos for sale on its website (www.orindahistory.org). Currently, 20 images depicting scenes from the 1930s to the early 1950s are available for purchase. The photos, which can be purchased in standard sizes from 4 x 6 inches to 16 x 20 inches, as well as in greeting card format, are popular with both businesses and individuals. "The photos



The Orinda Crossroads looked very different in 1924 as this farmer plowed his field adjacent to what is now Moraga Way. COURTESY OF THE ORINDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

depict Orinda's past, and people like to connect with the community in this way," Andersen says.

Of the Historical Society's current project of digitizing photos from its collection, Andersen says, "We've just scratched the surface. Of the thousands of documents in the collection, we've only digitized about 100." As a nonprofit organization, the Historical Society relies on volunteers to catalog the collections and Andersen invites anyone who is comfortable working with computers and handling images to help

with this project. What better way to bring the past into clearer focus than by bringing it into the digital age?

For more information, contact the Orinda Historical Society at 254-1353 or visit the

website at www.orindahistory.org. The Historical Society Museum, located on the ground level of the Orinda Library, is open Monday through Friday from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.



A rider stops at the California and Nevada Railroad stop in Orinda in 1890. COURTESY OF THE ORINDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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BETWEEN THE LINES

◆ PINE GROVE from page 1

playing fields,” adds landscape architect Tim Deacon. “It reflects the semi-rural character of Orinda, and we’ve incorporated that even more into the walkways and parks within the development.” Pulte hopes to encourage future residents of the development to not only use the residential walkways but to also walk to the nearby Orinda BART station. “We’re currently talking with the owners of the Pine Grove office building adjacent to the development about a possible pedestrian walkway from the houses and across the office building property to connect with the walkway to the station,” says Deacon.

The new construction project also took into account existing trees on the site. “We’ve had an arborist out identifying which trees were past their prime and which were hardy,” Deacon explains. Some trees may have to be transplanted, but he said that the mature pines that act as a buffer along Altarinda would stay with new trees also planted.

Residents of Orindawoods were concerned primarily with traffic during construction, potential traffic from the new residents, and parking. Diamond said that a traffic study was not yet completed and

◆ YRIBERRI from page 6

achievements; rather, his focus always stayed with his students. Yriberry served as the head coach for Miramonte’s varsity baseball teams from 1986 – 1997, as well as a defensive coordinator for the school’s football teams from 1992 – 2001.

Yriberry is survived by his wife, Jane, along with the couple’s children Renee and John. The family has established the Paul Yriberry Memorial Scholarship Fund at the high school. Those wishing to make a remembrance gift are asked to donate to the scholarship fund c/o Miramonte High School, 750 Moraga Way, Orinda, CA 94563.

would be available in the near future. Parking for residents will be in their two-car garages with limited guest parking on the streets. The ball fields will have parking directly off Altarinda with additional parking in the Orinda Union School District (OUSD) lot during the evenings and on weekends. Diamond mentioned that they were also looking into the possibility of using the Pine Grove office building parking lot for weekend games.

The draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is due in April. It will be available for public review for 45 days and will be available at city offices and on the city’s website at www.ci.orinda.ca.us. Pulte hopes to be able to begin demolition of the old school buildings and current OUSD offices in early 2008 and begin grading in April of that year.

◆ MAINTENANCE from page 1

adds.

According to Brunetti, the additional cost isn’t in acquiring the land but in the amount that would have to be spent on roadways and other improvements: “It’s a lot of money that is literally going into the ground,” he said. “Given the needs of our school facilities, most of which are over 50 years old, I can’t justify spending this much money on concrete and a steel building.”

Still, he’s optimistic that a reasonable solution can be found. “I’ve told our architect that he should design a building that he wouldn’t want to put his name on – that’s the budget we’re working with.” Regardless of where it’s located, Brunetti says that the facility will be shielded from view with trees. “We’re not going to leave Orinda with an eyesore,” he pledges.

“This has been a very long process, and we’ve tried to be responsive to concern over building at Wagner Ranch,” says Brunetti. “At the same time, I hear from others in town who are concerned that the DeLaveaga site will be cost-prohibitive. In the end, we’re dealing with public funds, and we must be fiscally prudent.”

Between the Lines

A Bookwallah Takes Passage to India

Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



In early 2007, readers were enthusiastically buying the much-anticipated novel *Sacred Games* by Vikram Chandra, despite the fact that it weighed in at almost 3 lbs. and is 928 pages long. It climbed high on the *San Francisco Chronicle* bestseller list the moment it went out on booksellers’ tables. One reviewer recommended a pillow between book and reader — it *is* that heavy. But only in poundage — readers are quickly caught up in this sweeping story of contemporary Mumbai (formerly Bombay). It’s a police procedural, a gangster novel, and it’s steeped in the vernacular of the mean streets of Mumbai. Chandra, who teaches creative writing at University of California, Berkeley, offers a magnificent adventure for all those who love the richness of language and relish total immersion in another world.

Chandra is one of a new crop of writers from India who has achieved international acclaim. Salman Rushdie has argued that the body of work produced by Indian writers writing in English has, over the last 50 years, far surpassed work written in any of the official languages of India. He suggests that the English of contemporary India, enriched and seasoned with the flavors of the sub-continent, is as integrally Indian as his own mother tongue, Urdu, which came to India with another set of conquerors, the Muslims, 1,000 years ago.

We can rejoice in the riches that Indian writers have given English speakers all over the world, despite attacks from Indian critics who had hoped to see the emergence of a body of literature in post-colonial India uncontaminated by the Raj. At Orinda Books, book groups have embraced titles by many of these authors — Bharati Mukherjee, Arundhati Roy, Sandra Singh Baldwin, and Amulya Malludi among them. And *The Inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai’s Mann-Booker Prize-winning novel, has been a top club choice this year.

Jhumpa Lahiri followed her Pulitzer Prize-winning short story collection, *An Interpreter of Maladies*, with a wonderful novel, *The Namesake*. The film version, directed by Mira Nair, has just opened at local theaters and Miramax is hoping that this story of the challenges of assimilation will capture the audiences that flocked to see Nair’s *Monsoon Wedding*.

One of the Orinda Books’ favorites in 2006 was *The Space Between Us*, Thrity

Umrigar’s moving story of mothers and daughters, class and caste, set, like Chandra’s, in contemporary Mumbai. Just out in paperback, it is certain to find an even larger audience of local readers. We are delighted that Umrigar will visit us in early July, when her new title, *If Today Be Sweet*, comes out. In this novel, a recently widowed woman must decide whether to remain in Ohio with her very Americanized son or return to India and her roots.

The incredible richness and diversity of India have been vividly depicted in the fine novels of Rohinton Mistry, whose *A Fine Balance* was almost too painful to read. Bajwa Rupa’s debut novel, *The Sari Shop*, brought dark comedy to a discerning look at class distinctions in Amritsar.

Lovers of historical fiction have been intrigued by *The Twentieth Wife* and *The Feast of Roses* by Indu Sundaresan, who tells the story of Mehrunnisa, born a penniless Persian exile, who weds the Mughal emperor and was the aunt of the woman who inspired the building of the Taj Mahal in 1585.

Chitra Bannerjee Divakaruni continues to delight us from her breakthrough short story collection, *Arranged Marriage*, to her most recent novel, *Queen of Dreams*. Her *The Conch Bearer* and *The Mirror of Fire and Dreaming* brought a taste of India to 9- to 12-year-olds.

Rushdie says that what began as a flow of good writing from Indian writers has become a flood—and my book list is caught up in it. But to end, I have to include my favorite novel of India — and a very fat favorite — Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy*. It’s a perfect bookend to *Sacred Games*, as Seth tops Chandra, even in paperback, weighing in at 2.13 lbs and 1,488 pages. He even has the wit to caution his readers with a poetic epigraph - “Buy me before good sense insists/You’ll strain your purse or strain your wrists.”

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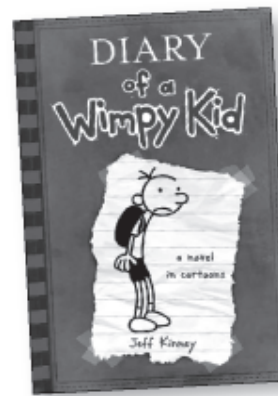
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The Little Author, Inc.: Innovative Orinda Couple Starts Unique Business

By MOYA STONE
Staff Writer

Most of us can remember our childhood artwork created at school – those Thanksgiving handprint turkeys, abstract finger paint masterpieces, one-of-a-kind crayon drawings. Our parents proudly displayed our works on the fridge and then what? Tucked them away in a drawer maybe? What do you do with your children's artwork? Well, imagine this: your child's artwork printed in a book!

Orinda residents Sharon and Maxton Beckwith flashed on the idea of printing children's original artwork and creating custom-made books. Having spent time drawing with their own two children, they recognized the need for a more permanent way to honor their children's creative expressions. In January 2006 they started The Little Author, Inc.™. "This company marries our personal passions for both drawing and children's books," says Maxton Beckwith.

The Little Author, Inc. receives your child's artwork through the post, scans it and prints it out in full color on high quality paper. You choose the layout and text via the company's website. For example, the bottom of a page might read: Horse drawn by Angela, age 6. Or if your child has written a story to accompany her pictures, that text can be added, as well. Each collection is then hand-bound into a regular size picture book with a full-color cover featuring your child's own drawing, a laminated protective book jacket also using a drawing, and even a title page. Other product options include: Little Treasures, which are smaller versions of the standard picture books with two cover options; note



The Beckwith family has created a unique business by turning children's drawings into very special books.

cards with your child's artwork; and a Gift Pack DVD, which works like a gift certificate, and explains the concept and process. The Gift Pack is currently sold at Red Wagon stores. The turn-around time is two to three weeks and all original artwork is returned.

A municipal bond broker for 10 years, Maxton was also writing and illustrating children's picture books on the side. "I was trying to find an agent, trying to get published, but it was taking longer than I thought, and it got frustrating," says Maxton. However, it did provide for him some familiarity with publishing and a taste for working with books.

After taking some time to discuss their business idea, the Beckwiths decided to go forward with it fulltime. Maxton quit his job and he and Sharon, who has a

background in marketing and sales, devoted six months to getting their new business up and running. "We knew we had something," says Maxton, "and we felt if we were going to do this we needed to commit."

Sharon says there were many things to figure out at first, including what's involved in setting up a website and how to bind a book. "A lot of thought went into each step," says Sharon. "What made it easier was that we were our own target customer. We knew, for example, that a busy mom was going to want to be able to get in and out of the website and easily pick up where she left off."

Prices for Little Author products vary, including \$12 for a set of note cards to \$68 for a book, with an option to add additional pages for 75 cents each.

The Little Author, Inc. has a nation-wide customer base and the company has done some school fundraising events in other states, but there are plans to speak to local schools as well. One customer from Georgia sent in her grandmother's original story that she wrote for her great-grandchildren, with their illustrations to go with the story and gave the book to her grandmother as a gift. "These books," says Sharon, "are something special that capture and store family treasures for years to come."

A segment on the Beckwiths and The Little Author, Inc. was on ABC Channel 7's "View of the Bay" in March. For more information visit: www.littleauthor.com, or call: 800-539-1788.

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

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

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

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

The Orinda Newcomers Club: Where Friendship and Community Matter.

Boalt Hall Dean to Speak at First Friday Forum

By BOBBIE DODSON
Contributing Writer

Dean Jesse Choper has chosen *The New Supreme Court: Liberal and Conservative Constitutional Decision Making* as his topic at the First Friday Forum on April 5 at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC) Fellowship Hall. The church is located at 49 Knox Drive in Lafayette. Refreshments will be served at 1 p.m. with the lecture beginning at 1:30 p.m.

Choper, an Earl Warren Professor of Public Law and former dean of Boalt Hall at UC Berkeley, notes his expertise is constitutional law, federalism, and U.S. Supreme Court decisions. Choper has commented on a wide array of issues for local, state, and national media ranging

from the search through Laci Peterson's house for evidence to the U.S. Supreme Court's tackling of the Pledge of Allegiance. He was recently interviewed at length on CBS *Evening News* about the Pledge of Allegiance case. He has appeared on the *NewsHour* and *Nightline* and has been quoted in such papers as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*.

This talk is one of a series at LOPC offered to the community free of charge. On May 4, Tom Deby, director of Heritage Resources for Kaiser Permanente, will speak on health care issues. Martha Saavedra, associate director of the Center for African Studies at UC Berkeley will discuss the Sudan Crisis on June 1.

For more information, phone (925) 283-8722.

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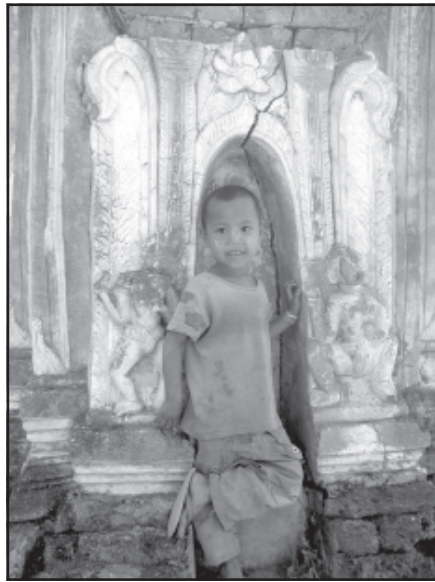
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BURMA

◆ BURMA from page 2

officially called Bogyoke Aung San Market, in honor of the most revered native son, national leader General Aung San, who was assassinated in 1947. He was also the father of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Prize winner and pro-democracy leader, who has been under house arrest for more than a decade. Passing the building where her father was assassinated by his political opponents, we started to explain to our girls the complicated history of the British, the Japanese, the Americans, and the Burmese during World War II and when we turned to our guide for confirmation of our facts, he said, "No, no, please continue, I love to listen to you, we weren't quite taught our history that way in school."

In the late afternoon, as the rays of the setting sun deepened the gleam of the golden spires, we strolled barefoot around the marble courtyard of Shwedagon Pagoda, one with the local crowd. Novice monks in orange robes, nuns in pink, the elderly, families, and young people stopped by before going home from work. There



LANA OLMER
Young boy poses in front of temple in Burma.

was a little girl helping her mother pour libations on carvings of animals, and an older nun in white robes meditating in front of one of the numerous golden statues of Buddha, but the atmosphere was far from heavy with religious fervor. It was light and happy, full of smiling faces and positive energy. As the sun set we reluctantly descended the long staircase, and as we emerged from the covered walkway, we looked back to see thousands of birds pour out of the pagoda like a river in the sky, meandering swiftly as the birds shifted in unison. The spectacle goes on for 40 minutes every evening, and the birds return at dawn.

Inle Lake

The main attraction on our trip was Inle Lake, known as the Venice of the East, and deservedly so. Inle Lake is just one of those spots on the globe where even well-traveled, been-there-done-that visitors' hearts skip a beat. Surrounded by a soft line of the green-brown Shan hills, edged by islands of reeds, palm trees, white stupas, and golden temples, the Inle Lake is home to the Intha people, the famous leg-rowing fishermen. It is quite fascinating to observe them precariously standing on one leg at

the stern of the flat bottom boat with the other leg wrapped around the oar, keeping the boat steady in place while their hands work diligently with the fishing nets, wrapped around a tall bamboo contraption. They are, as are most of the Burmese population, dressed in long, wrap-around skirts called longyi, and often wearing conical bamboo hats. Silhouetted against the sun and shimmering water, they provide front-page, picture-perfect opportunities, even for amateur photographers with dinky little digital cameras like ours. The Inthas are skillful at other endeavors as well, such as creating floating gardens with bamboo poles; and soil and aquatic vegetation, where crops of tasty tomatoes, vegetables and flowers are grown year round; or, building thousands of homes on stilts, clustered in about 20 small villages. Some specializing in silk weaving, paper making, or silversmithing. These villages are accessible only by canoes or motorized longboats such as we were using to explore the highways and byways on the lake. For the number of people living on the lake, around 100,000, there is not much traffic and the people we encountered went on their merry ways, ferrying the soil to their gardens or the crop to the market, drums of oil or sacks of rice to their villages or smiling and waving at kids on their way to school. Among the thatched-roofed houses on stilts, small children, born and raised on the water, paddled their boats on their own; women washed dishes or clothes crouching on the bottom stairs; and, fat black pigs grunted and squealed in their pig pens.

Markets

Most travelers head to Inle Lake to visit the so-called five-day markets. This system of rotating markets, every fifth day in a

different village, was established centuries ago by the Saophas, feudal lords of the Shan State for the sake of the tribes living in remote hillside villages. While some markets, especially the Ywama Floating Market, have to some extent deteriorated into tourist traps where there are more souvenir than vegetable sellers, one can still see and take wonderful pictures of Pa-O villagers in their traditional black pants and jackets with bright colored headdress and hand-woven shoulder bags. Taung Toe market on the way to Sanghar, the area just recently opened to tourists (with special permits and escort) is interesting for the wood sellers. The Indein Village is worth a visit as you can combine browsing at the market with a short hike through a bamboo forest to the pagoda where thousands of Shan stupas in different stages of disrepair sprout everywhere. But the best market we have discovered was just around the corner from our modest, yet new and sparkingly clean hotel on the edge of the lake in the small town of Nyaung Shwe. The best time to see all the action is right when it opens at dawn, about 6:30 a.m., when the sellers are just coming in to set up their wares.

Feeding the monks

Every day we were awakened by the prayers and the tinkling bells coming from the neighboring monastery. One chilly morning we decided to follow a line of barefoot, orange-clad monks with lacquer alms bowls down the streets of the little town. Out of the morning mist every now and then a figure of a woman would appear with a big pot of steaming rice, and quietly, respectfully serve each monk a ladle-full of their everyday staple.

Visit to the Orphanage

The highlight of our trip was a visit to an orphanage in Taunggyi, the capital of Shan state. Through our wonderful Rangoon agent, a Pa-O native, we had learned about an orphanage with 130 children taken care of by two spinster sisters, themselves orphaned as children. When traveling with our girls, we always try to show them real life, not just glittering monuments or fancy beach resorts. We also do not want to shield them from poverty or strife. With the help of friends, coworkers, and Girl Scout troops we collected 200 pounds of school supplies, vitamins, and toiletries. The members of my daughter's high school Interact club helped fundraise over \$1,000 with car washes, coffee sales, and the like. Since we arrived at the orphanage on Christmas Day and the orphanage happened to be Christian, it was as if Santa himself showed up with all the gifts.

Pre-trip reading: Amy Tan's, *Saving Fish from Drowning*, Amitav Gosh's *The Glass Palace*. Travel agency: www.fascinating-land-travels.com.



KSENIJA SOSTER OLMER
A local guide displays one of the many varieties of colorful flowers found throughout the Burmese countryside.

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SALLY HOGARTY

Jeff Joyce and Edward Estrada go over test results for a customer's car.

Orinda Motors Sponsors Free Car Care Inspections

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Motorists can learn more about the mysterious equipment under the hoods of their cars this April 28 as Orinda Motors sponsors a car care clinic. Part of National Car Care Month, the day's activities include a free visual inspection of your car followed by a clinic on car care and maintenance of your vehicle.

"These free inspections can disclose potential safety and operational problems," explains Orinda Motors manager Jeff Joyce. "Nine out of 10 vehicles going through the check lanes have at least one discrepancy with improper tire inflation often on the top of the list." Joyce notes that anti-freeze and coolant are often found to be low, which can make engines or transmissions vulnerable to damage.

"Beyond the effect that vehicle neglect can have on a car's safety and performance, a check lane discovery can help prevent a breakdown at a busy intersection or, even worse, on a deserted road far from home," Joyce adds.

Joyce also plans to have representatives of the California Highway Patrol at the event to demonstrate the correct way to install child-safety seats in cars.

Organized by Orinda Motors, additional sponsors include Goodyear Tires, Ray Bestos Brake Parts, and ANCO Wiper Blades. The April 28 car care event benefits the Contra Costa/Solano Food Banks. Participants are asked to bring canned food when they arrive for their free inspection.

"This is really an educational event that will help motorists take care of their costly investment," says Joyce. For more information, contact Joyce at 254-8989.

St. Stephen's Takes Steps to Address Global Warming

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

Global warming is sure to be one hot topic at Earth Day celebrations later this month. With the release of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report last February, stating that global warming is "unequivocal," even the most optimistic naysayers have to agree that, unless drastic steps are taken, the planet we call home is headed toward dramatic climate change. The question remains, what can be done?

Offering more than a prayer, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church has joined California Interfaith Power and Light (CIPL), a consortium of over 400 churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples throughout the state that have committed to protecting the earth's ecosystems, safeguarding public health, and ensuring sufficient, sustainable energy for all.

As part of CIPL, St. Stephen's is committing to reducing its carbon footprint, i.e., taking tangible steps to save precious natural resources. Among the group's "hot topics:" Going on a low carbon diet to lose 5000 pounds in 30 days. If it sounds a bit like science and religion meeting in the New Age, perhaps it is. But one thing is for certain, St. Stephen's and its partners in CIPL are committed to "caring for God's creation."

"It's our moral imperative," says parishioner Barbara Bisel. She, along with her husband Clark, has spearheaded the initiative at St. Stephen's. "As people of faith, we are called upon to be good stewards of the gifts God has given us." Bisel emphasizes that this is a responsibility that transcends all major religions. "As members of Interfaith Power and Light, we are working with faith-based groups across

the state and across the country to address what we believe to be the most pressing issue of our time."

Since its founding in 2001, CIPL has been instrumental in getting legislation passed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the state and in bringing attention to the global warming crisis. Nationwide, 20 states have formed Interfaith Power and Light organizations; although, California was the first.

CIPL leads by example, and the group estimates that, among its 400 plus member congregations in California, they will be able to cut greenhouse emissions in their houses of worship by 15 million pounds.

There are a number of simple steps to lightening your carbon load. The initial steps being taken by St. Stephen's can be embraced by any household in Orinda: things like using cloth towels and napkins instead of paper, replacing traditional light bulbs with energy-saving compact fluorescents, installing water-saving showerheads, and, of course, recycling.

"There's no question that the climate is changing and that human activity is responsible for this dangerous trend," Bisel says. "Interfaith Power and Light is well poised to make a meaningful contribution to addressing this problem. Roughly 65 percent of Americans are members of a church or synagogue, whereas only 14 percent participate in environmental organizations. In terms of numbers, alone, we can affect important changes."

St. Stephen's will celebrate Earth Day, April 22, with an exhibit of environmentally friendly alternatives to common household practices, ranging from less toxic cleaning products to home solar panels. The exhibit is open to all and will be held in the church courtyard 66 St. Stephens Dr. Orinda beginning at 11:30 a.m.

April is National Car Care Month!

"Be Car Care Aware" day is Saturday, April 28th

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MIRAMONTE SWIM CLUB



Coach Ali Lowry instructs a young swimmer.

JUSTIN LIANG

Miramonte Swim Club Celebrates 50 Years

By VALERIE HOTZ
Staff Writer

The Miramonte Swim Club (MSC) kicks off its 50th season this spring on May 14. Founded as a community-sponsored recreational swim club, it is operated through the Orinda Parks and Recreation Department and is the only public swim team in Orinda. Conveniently, the team holds practices and meets at the state-of-the-art Miramonte High School pool, although it is not affiliated with the high school program. "We are excited about the season, which is preceded by a stroke clinic that meets on Saturdays and Sundays for four weeks beginning on April 21," says Ken Tsuboi, co-president of the MSC.

Over the course of the season, which runs from May to August, swimmers have 75

sense of self-fulfillment that one carries throughout life," remarks Tsuboi.

In addition to learning swim strokes and the opportunity to compete, MSC hosts social activities in order to build friendships and promote team spirit. These events include pasta feeds, picnics, a bowling night, and date night. "We promote opportunity for all swimmers, regardless of ability. While we attempt to be competitive, we are most focused on promoting character and we provide an environment where youngsters can be good role models for others," elaborates Tsuboi. Over the past half century, MSC has served thousands of Orinda swimmers. "MSC continues to embody sportsmanship and character, which the S and the C in MSC represent. Just as Bob Campbell did 50 years ago, we continue to stress character, poise,

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Miramonte Swim Club

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Summer program registration will be held at Campolindo's Soda Pool on **Saturday April 28**; look for the flyers in your child's Friday folder in the Moraga elementary schools, or pick up a flyer and registration form at the Soda Pool!

Miramonte Swim Club is a non-profit corporation designed to provide recreational competitive swimming to all Lamorinda youth! Afternoon practices available! Summer program runs May 14 through August 5.

For more info, please call Randy Noah at: **925-253-5540** or visit our website at: **www.mscswim.org**.
Registration forms may be downloaded from the website.



Swimmers Megan Liang, Sara Lee, and Kelly Zhang take a break during a meet last summer.

JUSTIN LIANG

practices and 15 local meets. There are no initiation or buy-in fees. The cost for the first swimmer is \$450 and \$400 for the second swimmer. Families who sign up prior to March 31 receive a \$25 discount.

"Retired Miramonte High School chemistry teacher, Bob Campbell, was the very first coach of this community-based swim team. He infused the program with a philosophy that success in the pool requires many of the same attributes needed in the classroom: hard work, discipline, and poise. Campbell also believed that in both swimming and chemistry, achieving a level of mastery brought self-confidence and a

confidence, and sportsmanship," he adds. Miramonte High School and University of California-Santa Cruz graduate Daisuke "Dice" Watanabe coaches the team. Presently Watanabe also coaches the junior varsity team at Miramonte High School and he has worked closely with Orinda Aquatics.

For more information, visit the website at www.MSCswim.org. Registration forms are available on the website; in-person signups will take place April 28 from noon to 3 p.m. at the Soda Aquatic Center in Moraga. You may also email co-president Ken Tsuboi at Ken.Tsuboi@RCM.com.

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SUMMER CAMPS

Art, Science, and Sports – Summer Camps Offer Something for All

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

The carefree days of summer are brimming with opportunities for Orinda's youth to explore new activities and develop new interests. The array of summer camps and enrichment programs grows each year with offerings from art to zoology. Below is a sampling of summer programs in the area for students in pre-school through high school.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Carpentry Camp for grades K-6 is always a popular summer option.

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The following is a listing of some of the camps offered through the Orinda Community Center. A complete listing can be found on the city's website.

OK Camp "Orinda Kids Camp" for ages 3 1/2 - kindergarten; daily activities include crafts, music, games, hiking, and nature study presented in an enjoyable atmosphere; June 11 - 22, June 25 - July 6, July 9 - 20, or July 23 - Aug. 3; 9 - 11:30 a.m.

OK Corral offers supervised lunch and playtime in the Kindergym following OK Camp. Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.; sessions correspond with OK Camp.

Camp Orinda "Adventure Club" for ages 6 - 10 1/2 years; meets at the Wagner Ranch Gymnasium before setting off on adventures to such destinations as the Lafayette Reservoir, Adventure Playground, Waterworld, and the San Francisco Zoo; destinations vary by session; June 11 - 22, June 25 - July 6, July 9 - 20, July 23 - August 3, or August

6 - 10; 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (option for extended hours 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.).

Babysitting for Beginners Camp for ages 10 - 15; teaches the skills needed to be a trusted and responsible babysitter including child development, safety, bedtime strategies, and ways to make babysitting fun; participants also learn what to do in an emergency; June 25 - 28, 10 a.m. - noon.

Carpentry Camps for boys and girls entering grades K-6; campers use hammers, saws, drills, and other basic hand tools to make projects out of wood; projects may include making a boat, car, truck, bird feeder, doll, or doll-house; advanced students may make furniture, scooters, or skateboards; classes held throughout the summer, Mon. - Thurs. from 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. or 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Cooking Camps Busy Bee and Teen Cooking Camp; call for specific dates and times.

Dance, Yoga & Pilates Camp for ages 5 - 8 and 8 - 11; experience traditional and unique dance forms such as ballet, hip-hop, tap, jazz, and creative dance, as well as yoga and Pilates; younger ages also have arts & crafts; half-day camps offered August 6 - 10 or August 13 - 17.

Hawaiian Dance & Cultural Workshops for ages 5 - 8; teaches basic hula steps and Hawaiian dances; make hula skirts and leis, cooking and other island crafts; camp concludes with a *paina* party; June 19 - 23; 9 a.m. - noon.

Orinda Youth Association and the Orinda Community Center present the following sports-related camps:

Brown Water Polo Camp, for boys and girls entering grades 3 - 9; coached by Bill Brown, former Miramonte water polo coach and all-time winningest high school coach, and James Lathrop, current Miramonte water polo coach and former captain of the Cal team; camp will be held at the Miramonte High School pool for 2 1/2 hrs. each day (Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.); June 11 - 15, June 18 - 22, or June 25 - 29.

Challenger British Soccer

Mini-Soccer for ages 4 - 6; June 18 - 22 (9 - 10:30 a.m. or 10:30 a.m. - noon), June 25 - 29 (1 - 2:30 p.m. or 2:30 - 4 p.m.), July 9 - 13 or August 6 - 10 (9 - 10:30 a.m. or 10:30 - noon), August 13 - 17 (1 - 2:30 p.m. or 2:30 - 4 p.m.).

Skyhawks Sports

Mini-Hawk Soccer, Baseball & Basketball for ages 4 - 7, provides a no-pressure way for young children to explore various sports; low camper to coach ratio with well-trained staff; camps held at the city fields behind JFK 9:00 a.m. to noon; June 6 - 15, July 2 - 6 (no camp 7/4); July 16 - 20.

Multi-Sport for ages 5 - 11, teaches the fundamentals of soccer, baseball, football, and basketball; camp held at Orinda Intermediate School 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.; August 13 - 17.

Flag Football for ages 7 - 14, teaches basic skills such as catching, passing, and de-flagging as campers learn the traditions of flag football; camps held at the city fields behind JFK; June 25 - 29 (9 a.m. - noon), July 9 - 13 (1 - 4 p.m.), July 30 - August 3 (9 a.m. - noon).

Skyhawks Mini-Hawk Sports Camp for ages 4 - 7 years; promotes a philosophy of sports fun while introducing children to soccer, baseball, and flag football without the pressure of choosing one over the other; June 11 - 15, July 2 - 6, July 16 - 20; 9 a.m. - noon.

Skyhawks Flag Football Camp for ages 7 - 14 years; designed for beginning and intermediate players focusing on team play, sportsmanship, and individual skills; June 25 - 29 (9 a.m. - noon.), July 9 - 13 (1 - 4 p.m.), or July 30 - August 3 (9 a.m. - noon).

Soccer—Challenger British Soccer

Mini-Soccer for ages 4 - 6; whole and half-day soccer for ages 6 - 16; June 18 - 22, June 25 - 29, July 9 - 13, August 6 - 10, or August 13 - 17.

Tennis Camps & Clinics for ages 4 - 16; offered throughout the summer; morning and afternoon sessions available.

Multi-sport Camps (Call for detailed information.)

Basketball Camps (Call for detailed information.)

[SEE PARKS & REC page 16]

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SUMMER CAMPS

◆ PARKS & REC from page 15

The City of Orinda, Parks and Recreation Department in partnership with Kids'N Dance sponsors the following dance camps:

"Dora" Dance Camp for ages 3 1/2 – 5; 10 a.m. – noon, July 30 – August 3.

"Princess" Dance Camp for ages 3 – 5; 10 a.m. – noon, July 9 – 13 or August 20 – 24.

"Animal Rescuer" Dance Camp for ages 3 – 5; 10 a.m. – noon, July 16 – 20.

"Fairies & Unicorns" Dance Camp for ages 3 1/2 – 5; 10 a.m. – noon, July 18 – 22.

"Animation Favorites" Camp for ages 3 1/2 – 5; 10 a.m. – noon, August 13 – 17.

"Happy Feet" Tap Camp for ages 3 – 5; 10 a.m. – noon, June 25 – 29 or August 6 – 10.

Orinda Little Theater Camps:

Lion King for ages 4 – 8; 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., June 11 – 15.

Snow White for ages 4 – 8; 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., August 6 – 10.

Orinda Youth Theater Camps:

Wizard of Oz for ages 6 – 10; 1 – 3 p.m., June 18 – 29.

The Wiz for ages 9 – 14; 3:30 – 5:30 p.m., June 18 – 29.

Cinderella for ages 6 – 10; 1 – 3 p.m., July 9 – 20.

Bye Bye Birdie for ages 8 – 14; 3:30 – 5:30 p.m., July 9 – 20.

Little Mermaid for ages 6 – 10; 1 – 3 p.m., July 23 – August 3.

High School Musical for ages 8 – 14; 3:30 – 5:30 p.m., July 23 – August 3; 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., August 13 – 17.

Science & Engineering Camps co-sponsored with **Mad Science of Mt. Diablo** (Call the Community Center for specific dates & times):

Into the Garden for ages 3 1/2 – 5 1/2.

My First Lab for ages 3 1/2 – 5 1/2.

Flight Academy for ages 6 – 10.

Brains, Blood, and Bones: The Human Body for ages 6 – 10.

Survival! Predators & Prey for ages 6 – 10.

Crazy Chemistry for ages 6 – 10.

Secret Agent Camp for ages 6 – 10.

Mad Machines & Robots for ages 8 – 11.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Academy of Language & Music Arts (ALMA)

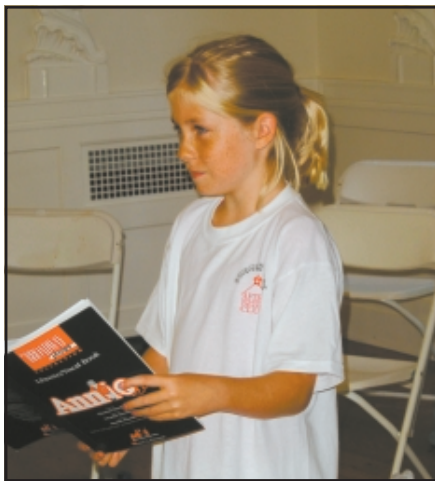
Dr. James Fiatarone, Director

99 Brookwood Road

Orinda, CA 94563

254-5056 or 254-5053

Offering private lessons in music, including guitar, piano, voice, strings, wind instruments, and percussion; also, private



RACHEL PERGAMIT

Emily Nichols rehearses a scene from last year's production of *Annie* at the Summer Drama Camp in Moraga.

and group lessons in foreign languages and English as a second language. Special summer music classes include Theory and Musicianship (ages 12 – 17 and adults); Guitar I (ages 6 – 11, 12 – 17, and adults); Intro to Guitar Ensemble (ages 12 – 17 and adults); Classical Guitar Ensemble (ages 12 – 17 and adults); Jazz Guitar Ensemble (ages 12 – 17 and adults); Rock Guitar Ensemble (ages 12 – 17 and adults); Band Ensemble (two levels); Jazz Combo (two levels); Improvisation Clinic; Strings Clinic; Percussion/Drum Clinic (two levels), and Vocal Ensemble.

California Shakespeare Theater

701 Heinz Street

Berkeley, CA 94710

510-548-3422 ext. 127

www.calshakes.org

Cal Shakes Summer Theater Camp helps students discover their artistic voices through a Shakespearean training program taught by performing artists. Two programs are offered; each runs 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., each culminating with a student performance. Campers will receive a free ticket to each of the Cal Shakes 2007 season main stage performances.

Five-Week Camp for ages 8 – 18; studying with Cal Shakes professional

actors and artists, students will learn all aspects of performance with morning classes in acting, improvisation, stage combat, voice, movement, and dialects; afternoons will be spent in rehearsal; June 25 – July 27 (no camp July 4). Classes for the five-week session will be held at the Orinda Community Center; student performance on July 27.

Two-Week Camp for ages 8 – 18; a condensed version of the five-week session for students new to the Cal Shakes summer camps or those unable to attend the longer session; offered at two locations, Fairmont Elementary School in El Cerrito or Holy Names High School in Oakland, July 30 – Aug. 10; student performance on Aug. 10.

Contra Costa Christian Theatre

St. Matthew's Church

399 Wiget Lane

Walnut Creek, CA

925-929-3200

www.ccchristiantheatre.org

Summer Theatre Camp for intermediate and high school students; campers will produce and perform in Walt Disney's *High School Musical*; campers can choose between the "tech track" where they will learn about set design, lighting, sound, and stage management, or "performer track" where they will audition for a part in the musical – auditions held prior to camp, all will be cast; July 16 – Aug. 12, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.; performances Aug. 10 and 11 at 7:30 p.m. and Aug. 11 and 12 at 2 p.m. at the Del Valle Theatre in Walnut Creek.

Saint Mary's College Hearst Art Gallery

1928 Saint Mary's Road

Moraga, CA 94575-5110

925-631-4069

www.stmarys-ca.edu/arts/art_gallery

Summer Art Camps and workshops will be offered through St. Mary's College Hearst Art Gallery; programs for older elementary, intermediate, and high school students, as well as parent-child workshops. For more information, visit the website.

Summer Drama Camp

P.O. Box 6145

Moraga, CA 94570

925-300-8337

www.afterschooldramaclub.com

Aladdin Jr. for grades 3 – 8; working with a professional director and choreographer, students will learn singing, dancing, and acting as they prepare for their stage production; July 9 – 27, 1 – 4 p.m.; performance at Moraga's Hacienda de las Flores on July 27 at 7 p.m.

[SEE ART CAMPS page 17]

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– Sheena Lakhotia
"Miss Susie provides a loving environment where children are accepted for themselves. Our daughter's self esteem and personality blossomed as a result of her experience in the program."
– Gia Vennes

– Sheena Lakhotia
"Miss Susie provides a loving environment where children are accepted for themselves. Our daughter's self esteem and personality blossomed as a result of her experience in the program."
– Gia Vennes

SUMMER CAMPS

◆ ART CAMPS from page 16

**Town Hall Kids
Town Hall Theatre
3535 School Street
Lafayette, CA 94549
925-283-1557
www.thtc.org**

Students learn all aspects of theater arts while developing their self-confidence and learn to work as part of a team; morning (9 a.m. – noon) and afternoon (1 – 4 p.m.) sessions available.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Oakland Strokes offer a special Summer Rowing Camp at the Oakland Estuary.

Rising Stars Storybook Fun; August 6 – 24; ages 3 – 5, Mon. and Wed., 10 – 11:15 a.m.; ages 5 – 7, Tues. and Thurs., 9:30 – 11:15 a.m.; meets at Lafayette United Methodist Church.

Bravo (Snow White) for ages 7 – 12; June 18 – July 6; performances on July 7 at 2 and 4 p.m.

Bravo (The Wizard of Oz) for ages 7 – 12; July 9 – 27; performances on July 28 at 2 and 4 p.m.

Bravo (Pinocchio) for ages 7 – 12; July 30 – August 17; performances on August 19 at 2 and 4 p.m.

Encore/Ovation for ages 12 and up; see website.

Teen Actors Guild for ages 14 and up; see website.

**Willows Theatre Company
1975 Diamond Blvd.
Concord, CA
925-798-1300
www.willowstheatre.org**

SummerStage: for students entering grades 7 – 13. For half of the day, campers receive instruction in acting, music, singing, movement, and dance followed by afternoon rehearsals. All campers will be cast in a show open to the public; casting is based on experience, skill level, and personal interest. This year's SummerStage show will be Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods*. Classes will be held June 18 – July 29 (location in Concord or Martinez TBD). Performances are July 24 – 29 at the Willows Theatre.

SummerStage Junior: for students entering grades 3 – 6. Taught by theater professionals with extensive experience working with kids, campers will receive instruction in acting, music, singing, movement, and dance. Afternoons will be spent in rehearsals (performance TBD); all campers will be cast. Classes will be held

at location not decided yet; dates and times are July 9 – August 4 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.; performances held on August 3 and 4 at the Willows Theatre.

SummerStage Mini: for students entering grades kindergarten – 2; teaches basics of stagecraft using theater games, improvisation, storytelling, voice, and movement training. Session A, June 25 – June 29; Session B, July 2 – 6; both sessions held at the Willows Theatre from 9 a.m. – noon.

**St. Mary's College
P.O. Box 5100
Moraga, CA 94575
(925) 631-4386
www.smgaels.com**

Saint Mary's College Athletic Summer Camp offers high-quality athletic instruction for students ages 7 – 18. Week-long programs (Sunday – Thursday) are offered in a wide variety of sports at various skill levels for boys and girls; campers may choose either the resident or day camp [SEE SPORTS CAMPS page 18]

SPORTS-RELATED

**Bottomley Farm
Bear Creek Road
Briones Valley, CA 94553
925-228-3766**

Summer Horse Lessons for all ages; provide an intensive learning experience focusing on dressage and natural horseman techniques as well as proper care of the animals and equipment; small classes limited to five students; all participants must supply their own properly fitted SEI or ASTM approved helmet and appropriate riding boots.

**Oakland Strokes
115 Embarcadero East
at Oakland Estuary
510-652-6445
www.oaklandstrokes.org**

Summer Rowing Camp is designed to introduce beginning rowers to the sport of crew. The camp provides training in rowing techniques, fitness, and teamwork. Participants must be 12 – 18 years old and capable of passing swimming tests; morning (9 a.m. – noon) and afternoon (1 – 4 p.m.) sessions.

Beginning Rowing, June 18 – 22, July 9 – 13, or August 13 – 17.

Continuing Rowing, Aug. 20 – 24, 4 – 6 p.m. (for those who have completed a beginning session).

Conditioning, August 27 – 31, 4 – 6 p.m. (for all levels).

**Jeff Pick's Baseball Academy
P.O. Box 684
Orinda, CA 94563
(925) 674-5765**

Baseball Camps for ages 6 – 12 providing instruction for all abilities. Hitting, infield and outfield play, defensive fundamentals, base running, and more.

Includes daily lunch and a tee shirt. Session I, July 23 – July 27; Session II, August 13 – August 17. Camp hours are 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. for both sessions.

**Rancho Del Lago
2331 Rancho Del Lago Road
Briones Valley, CA 94553
925-370-6439
www.ranchodelago.com**

Horse Camp for students learning to ride; campers will learn basic riding and horse care and create "horsey" arts & crafts projects; using Welsh ponies, techniques taught are basic to both English and Western styles of riding. Sessions are taught weekly throughout the summer; full day (9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) and half-day (9 a.m. – noon or 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.) sessions are available.



Camp Saklan

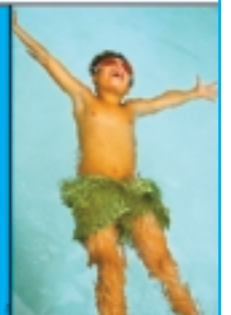
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Visit saklan.org for more info!

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June 11th through August 17th

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www.saklan.org



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SUMMER CAMPS

◆ SPORTS CAMPS from page 17

format.

All Sports boys ages 8 – 12, June 10 – 14; girls ages 8 – 12, June 7 – 21; co-ed ages 8 – 12, June 24 – 28.

Baseball boys ages 8 – 12, June 27 – 29 or July 9 – 11; ages 12 – 14, July 2 – 4 or July 16 – 18; high school, July 27 – 29.

Boys Basketball ages 8 – 14, June 10 – 14, June 24 – 28, July 21 – 22, or July 22 – 26; ages 6 – 13, July 2 – 6 (all day or mornings only); ages 12 – 14, July 2 – 4 or July 27 – 29.

Girls Basketball ages 10 – 16, June 10 –

14; ages 8 – 12, June 17 – 21 or July 8 – 12; mother/daughter (ages 8 – 14), July 7 – 8.

Golf: co-ed ages 9 – 15, July 15 – 19.

Lacrosse girls ages 8 – 14, June 24 – 27; boys ages 8 – 14, July 15 – 19; boys ages 14 – 18, July 22 – 26.

Boys Soccer ages 9 – 13, July 15 – 19; high school, July 27 – 29.

Girls Soccer ages 5 – 9, June 25 – 29 (mornings only); ages 9 – 14, June 25 – 29; ages 8 – 18, July 19 – 22 or July 22 – 25.

Softball: girls ages 11 – 18, July 9 – 12.

Tennis: co-ed tennis for ages 8 – 14, July

9 – 13, July 16 – 30, or July 23 – 27.

Volleyball: girls ages 13 – 18, July 6 – 8; ages 10 – 14, July 15 – 19; ages 15 – 18, July 29 – August 2.

OUTDOOR RECREATION AND NATURE

Deer Hill Ranch
3232 Deer Hill Road
Lafayette, CA 94549
283-1197

www.deerhillranch.org

Deer Hill Ranch offers children a unique opportunity to challenge themselves in a safe and natural setting while learning about the wonders of a ranch and nature. Weekly sessions beginning June 18 through August 24; morning (9 a.m. – 1 p.m.) and afternoon sessions (1:30 – 5:30 p.m.); no camp July 4. Maximum of 12 campers in each session.

Little Explorer's Camp for ages 5 – 6 1/2; campers take care of farm animals and learn about the principles of organic gardening and sustainable agriculture.

Junior Explorer's Camp for ages 7 – 9; campers take care of farm animals (morning feeding, pen cleaning, grooming, hand walking the ranch horses and picking their hooves, and other ranch chores) and become familiar with the principles of organic gardening and sustainable agriculture.

Ropes Course Adventure Camp: for ages 10 – 12; camp combines the teaching power of the farm environment with challenging group interactions, games, and a low and high ropes' course. Campers learn to trust the animals, themselves, and each other. Sessions: June 25 – June 29, July 16 – 20, July 30 – August 3; all sessions 1:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Lindsay Wildlife Museum
1931 First Avenue
Walnut Creek, CA 94597
925-627-2926
www.wildlife-museum.org

Wild Times Summer Science Camps introduces students to science and nature through animal interactions, games, and arts & crafts. Opportunities for older students (12 – 15) to help as camp counselors.

Dino-Mania ages 4 – 6; campers to meet some of today's living relatives of dinosaurs and explore ways in which scientists learn about past life on earth; June 25 – 29 or Aug. 6 – 10, 1 – 3:30 p.m.

Behind the Scenes ages 10 – 12; campers learn first-hand from museum staff what it's like to rehabilitate injured wildlife; July 9 – 13 or July 30 – Aug. 3, 1 – 4:30 p.m.

Animal Senses ages 6 – 9; each day, campers learn about a different animal



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Oakland Zoo offers a variety of camps for campers in grades pre-K through high school.

sense; July 16 – 20, 1 – 4:30 p.m.

Animal Habitats ages 6 – 9; from backyard habitats to the open seas, campers will learn about the various animal habitats; July 23 – 27, 1 – 4 p.m.

Oakland Zoo
P.O. Box 5238
Oakland, CA 94605
510-632-9525
www.oaklandzoo.org

The Oakland Zoo welcomes campers from grades pre-K to 12 for an exciting week of nature discovery and animal adventures. Through hands-on experiential learning, campers will build their understanding of animals and all of nature. Eight, one-week sessions beginning the weeks of June 18 through August 13 (unless noted otherwise); half-day and/or full-day sessions.

Mini Mammals age 4; campers take a mini-tour around the zoo and enjoy crafts, games, and science activities that are created especially for pre-school campers; 9 a.m. – noon.

Busy Beasts for students entering kindergarten; campers will spend the week exploring the zoo using their senses and learning how animals see, smell, hear, feel, and taste; 9 a.m. – noon or 1 – 4 p.m.

Furry Friends for students entering first grade; discover the variety of animals on the planet and why their body coverings are so important to their survival; 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Animal Adventures for students entering grades 2 – 3; campers will learn about various habitats – from rainforests to savannas – and how animals adapt to their surroundings; 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

[SEE ZOO page 19]



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SUMMER CAMPS

◆ ZOO from page 18

Curious Critters for students entering grades 2 – 3; from birds that fly to fish that swim, campers will learn how and why animals do the things they do; 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Eco-Explorers for students entering grades 4 – 5; campers will learn what it's like to be a zookeeper or scientist through zoo tours, science activities, and art projects; 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Animal Mythbusters for students entering grades 6 – 8; campers will work with zookeepers and staff to learn to discern fact from fiction in the animal kingdom; July 17 – 20, July 30 – Aug. 3, or Aug. 13 – 17, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Wildlife Survivor for students entering grades 6 – 8; campers will learn how to build a fire, create a shelter, use a compass, collect water and identify edible plants while exploring the outer reaches of the zoo; June 25 – 29, July 9 – 13, July 23 – 27, or July 30 – Aug. 3, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Zoo Crew for grades 9 – 12; for teens who have an interest in animals and nature and want to learn more about careers in zoo keeping, veterinary medicine, wildlife research, and more; this session offers fun-filled, hands-on experiences that change depending on opportunities presented; June 25 – 29, July 23 – 27, or Aug. 6 – 10, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Zoo Camp Teen Assistant for grades 9 – 12; teen assistants will help camp teachers with their classes; must enjoy working with children and animals; participants must fill out an application and attend training session; 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Roughing It Day Camp

P.O. Box 1266
Orinda, CA 94563
283-3795

www.RoughingIt.com

A traditional outdoor day camp located at the Lafayette Reservoir for ages 4 1/2 –

16 years. Four and eight week sessions build friendships, teamwork, skills, and confidence. Transportation provided from home and central pick-up spots. Extended day programs, Junior High Camper in Leadership Training and Junior Counselor programs also available. ACA accredited. Two four-week sessions, June 25 - July 20, and July 23 - August 17, or combine two sessions for an eight-week camp.

Roughing It Day Camp for grades pre-K – 2; features group activities in an outdoor environment, instruction in horseback riding, swimming, canoeing, kayaking, boating, fishing, sports, crafts, environmental education, outdoor adventure, rock climbing, and mountain biking.

Little Raccoons, an introductory two-week camp for young children not ready for the full-day camp experience; grades kindergarten – 2; June 25 – July 6, July 9 – 20, July 23 – August 3, August 6 – 17.

Roughing It Junior High Program for students entering grades 6 – 8; outdoor adventure, horseback riding, waterfront activities, and time to explore specific interests in a supportive environment designed to build teamwork and leadership skills.

Campers in Leadership Training for students entering grades 9 – 10; provides training and hands-on opportunities to assist camp counselors with younger campers.

Junior Counselors for grades 11 – 12; participate in a six-day, staff training program and help lead camp activities for younger campers.

Horse Day Camp for students entering grades 3 – 10; offers a complete horsemanship program for English riders from beginners to advanced levels; arena and trail riding as well as grooming; camp held at Moraga.

PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Campers at Roughing It have lots of activities to keep them busy.

Dorris Eaton School
1847 Newell Street
Walnut Creek, CA 94595
925-933-5225

www.dorriseaton.com

Dorris-Eaton offers a six-week summer program that balances education and recreation for elementary school-aged children as well as two, three-week sessions for preschool students. All classes are taught by Dorris-Eaton faculty.

Academic Enrichment for students entering grades kindergarten through grade six; classes are grade level-specific and provide a preview of the upcoming academic year; June 19 – July 28, 9 a.m. – noon; held at the school's Walnut Creek campus.

Mini Camp for students entering grades kindergarten through grade six; can be as an extension to the Academic Enrichment program or separately; hands-on science, arts & crafts, and cultural activities, as well as swimming are offered; students may enroll in Monday - Friday or Monday, Wednesday & Friday; June 19 – July 28, noon – 4 p.m.; extended care options available; held at the school's Walnut Creek

campus.

Preschool for students entering the school's pre-kindergarten or transitional kindergarten program in the fall; program is designed to enrich students' classroom and social skills as well as further develop their small and large motor skills; Session I June 19 – July 7, Session II July 10 – 28; both sessions are 9 a.m. – noon; students may sign up for both sessions; preschool sessions are held at the school's Alamo campus.

Galileo Educational Services
5237 College Avenue
Oakland, CA 94618
510-595-7293

www.campgalileo.com

Camp Galileo offers programs throughout the Bay Area, including the Bentley Upper School in Lafayette, for students entering kindergarten – grade 5; campers participate in art, science, and outdoor team-building activities; themed camps presented in three, weeklong sessions include: Medieval Arts & Ocean Explorers, African Art & Building Big, and Modern Masters & Invent It; campers are grouped by age (kindergarten, grades 1, 2, and 3 – 5), with age-appropriate activities presented in each of the themed camps. Camp Galileo partners with the deYoung Museum, the Tech Museum of Innovation, and Klutz toys to develop its programs. Weeklong programs run June 18 – July 30.

Holy Shepherd Church
433 Moraga Way
Orinda, CA 94563
925-254-3422

www.holyshepherd.org

Fun in the Sun for ages 2 1/2 to entering first grade; enjoy summertime activities in a small class environment; songs, games, cooking, arts & crafts, and water play; June 19 – August 11, 9 a.m. – noon with option for extended care until 2 p.m.

[SEE ORINDA ACADEMY page 20]



Sleepy Hollow Swim & Tennis Club

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Kevin Honey
Technical Adviser: **Ron Heidary**

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Stephen Squire

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E-mail: shstc@comcast.net • Website: www.GoLegends.org

CAMPS / SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

◆ ORINDA ACADEMY from page 19

Orinda Academy
19 Altarinda Road
Orinda, CA 94563
925-254-7553

www.orindaacademy.org

Orinda Academy offers fully accredited (W.A.S.C.) academic classes for high school students. Classes meet state requirements and are U.C. approved. Two sessions offered: June 18 – July 10 and July 12 – August 3 (no classes July 4 or 11).

Academic Courses offered for high school credit include Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2/Trigonometry, U.S. History, and English literature for students in grades 9 – 12; students may take two semester classes or one full-year class; Classes for both sessions are 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Basic Skills Review for junior high students; English & literature, and general math; classes for both sessions are 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

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www.saklan.org

Early Childhood Program for children entering preschool (must be three by June 1 and potty trained) or kindergarten, provides a theme-based program, educational and fun art activities, story telling, science and nature exploration, cooking projects, games and outdoor play; swim lessons will be offered at a Moraga pool. Sign up is by the day (three day minimum per week) or by the week, morning (8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.) or afternoon (12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.) or full day.

Elementary School-Age Program consists of both a morning and afternoon program. The morning program takes place in three sessions, each three weeks long. Sign-ups for the morning program are by the session only. Both programs can be combined to make a full day. Morning and afternoon snacks will be provided. Morning programs are highlighted below.

All the World's a Stage! focuses on drama including theater games and acting warm-ups, adaptation of story to script, original script writing, set design, costuming and theater production. Performance at the end of the session; June 12 – 30.

Science and Discovery focuses on

observing, classifying, predicting, communicating, measuring, experimenting, interpreting data, and hypothesizing within life science, physical science, and earth science; July 3 – 21.

Camp Creative focuses on studio arts and crafts. Students explore different mediums and dimensions of art from painting to clay and from flat to three-dimensional space; July 24 – August 11.

Elementary Afternoon Recreational Program is for elementary school-aged children attending Camp Saklan; program includes daily recreational swim at a local swim center followed by a choice of activities including a soccer clinic, softball, and Frisbee; 12:30 – 4:30 p.m.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students at Saint Mary's College Hearst Art Gallery enjoy a variety of art-related activities.



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Scholarship Awards Ceremony Slated for April 10

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

The Lamorinda chapter of the Association of University of Women will be holding its annual awards ceremony on April 10 at 7 p.m. at Saint Mary's College. The event recognizes young women who have achieved outstanding scholarship and provided service to the local and/or global community.

Winners will be chosen from the senior class at Miramonte, Campolindo, and Acalanes High Schools as well as Saint Mary's College. The event will also introduce the group's three middle school girls who have been chosen to attend the

summer Tech Trek science and math program at Mills College.

The keynote speaker for the April 10 event is Dr. Shawny Anderson, associate dean of Liberal Arts at Saint Mary's College. She will speak on "Bridges to the Bayou: Dire hurricane relief in New Orleans."

Anderson recently led a team of students on a strenuous month-long work/study project that worked with local agencies in New Orleans to help restore Katrina-ravaged parks. The public is invited to the scholarship awards ceremony and Dr. Anderson's talk.

For more information, contact Joy Elkinton-Walker at 254-8754.

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WAY TO GROW / CREEKS

Way to Grow in Orinda

Landscaping Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them.

Steve & Cathy Lambert



Recently, Steve gave a lecture to the Association of Professional Landscape Designers titled "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly." At the start of the lecture, Steve asked the 35 designers in attendance what they felt the percentage of quality landscapes were in our area. It didn't shock us to learn that these professionals rated the percentage of good Lamorinda landscapes to be only about 10-15 percent.

After some open floor discussion, we were able to attribute this dismal number to three common problems. The first problem mentioned was bad design or no design at all. The second issue was improper or sloppy installation techniques. The third reason given was bad maintenance or stewardship of the garden after installation.

This discussion was not based on matters of personal taste and style but on a true lack of proper execution. That's just wrong! As landscapers, designers, nursery, or pond center professionals, it's our responsibility to guide clients to make decisions that appeal to them visually and practically while following proper principles of installation, local city and county codes, and the physical limitations of the specific jobsite – not to mention making sure clients and/or their maintenance crews are informed of proper care instructions for all plant materials. Every day, we drive by jobs that just don't make any professional common sense.

Unfortunately, a lack of professional morals is widespread in the green industries. If someone advertises themselves to be an expert in their field, or even claims to be knowledgeable, prospective clients often just take their word for it and in turn, they get taken. The following are just a few unfortunate examples of some of the poor workmanship we have witnessed in our area.

Recently, Steve met with a homeowner who had just finished having some tree work done. Steve was sickened when he drove up to the home to see that several beautiful oak trees had been brutally topped like a military flat-top haircut — and all to achieve a better view. The client wanted the view but also loved the oaks and now, regrettably, they are ruined. The homeowners were happy with the results because (not being arborists) they didn't know any better. They were unaware that

pruning trees in this manner is like going in for a manicure and coming out with your hands cut off at the wrists. These trees should have been opened up and windowed out. This was not just a bad haircut that will eventually grow back. These trees will be forever handicapped. They will grow back in a way that will quickly re-block the view, overweight branches will crack, and thus allow a much greater risk for diseases to attack the tree. There are no "tree police" to protect homeowners from the unqualified charlatans out there who claim to know what they are doing when it comes to tree work.

Not too long ago we took over a job where the original landscaper had installed pop-up sprinklers standing 6 inches above the lawn. The same landscaper also planted right up against the driveway and walkways. This was not done in an effort to save the clients money. This homeowner was willing to pay for a quality job. This was simply a case of poor and unsafe installation techniques. There is no excuse for having any sprinklers standing where people can trip over them or plants overgrowing into walkways, unless you are looking for lawyers to come knocking.

Next door to a job we recently completed, we witnessed a contractor overplanting to a ridiculous level. Plants that grow 6 feet tall and wide were planted inches from plants that grow 5 feet tall by 15 feet wide! Real life gardens are not meant to be planted like a showplace garden that you might see at a home and garden show. Such show-place gardens are intentionally planted tightly to achieve a full, grown-in look for a five-day garden show. Sure, the client may have been happy with the "instant garden" look, and the installer happy about his fat wallet, but will the client be as happy one to two years from now when overcrowded plants die or have to be removed?

We are currently re-installing a pond installed by an unlicensed pond installer. This pond was a disaster. The water was green, the pump had to be cleaned every other day, the rocks on the top of the waterfall were completely different from those at the bottom, there was no filtration system, and the position of the pond was completely wrong for the shape and slope of the yard. This pond was installed by someone claiming to be a "greenwater"

[SEE PONDS page 22]

Landslide Restoration Uses Locally Native Plants

By MAYA RAPPAPORT
Contributing Writer

Ellie Samimi, a resident on Sunrise Hill Road in Orinda, broke new ground this year when she restored a landslide in her backyard using locally native plants.

The landslide occurred during an especially rainy period in the winter of 2005-2006, when many long-dormant landslides throughout Orinda became active. This landslide began at the footings of her deck and extended the length of her large backyard. Samimi had the repairs completed in September 2006.

Her landslide also extended to the top of a small creek. Therefore, in addition to the usual city permits, she had to observe the requirements of the city's creek protection ordinance. This ordinance, adopted in 2000, aims to preserve, protect, and enhance Orinda's creeks. Any construction or landscaping in a watercourse setback, or buffer zone, must be evaluated to identify ways in which the project can best protect and enhance creek resources. Although many projects can be re-designed to avoid

"The city's biologist has so much knowledge of, and passion for locally native plants. She gave me a list," says Ellie Samimi.

the setback, Samimi had no choice.

The City of Orinda's planning department encourages "creek friendly" landscaping in the setback, including the use of locally native plant materials on the steep streambanks. Locally native plants have grown from seeds of plants actually growing in this area. These plants are well-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Ellie Samimi stands beside some of the native plants she used to restore the banks along the creek in her back yard.

adapted to local soils and climate, and often require little water or other maintenance once established. They also provide other benefits such as wildlife habitat and genetic compatibility with nearby natural vegetation.

Samimi's landscape designer, Jill Salmon of Apache Gardens in Lafayette, worked with the city's biologist, Barbara Leitner, to develop a list of creek-friendly plant materials. Samimi loves colorful plantings, and the beautiful shapes of the native oaks. She chose coast live oaks, bunchgrasses, pink-flowering currants, California honeysuckle, and several others. Leitner said, "Mrs. Samimi is the first homeowner to landscape her setback entirely with locally native plant materials. As more of these materials become available, homeowners will have many options for creek-friendly plantings."

Samimi then worked with Friends of [SEE PLANTS page 22]

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CREEKS

◆ 1948 from page 8

so well that we kept it for another year. Summer was the problem. We didn't like paying rent when we wouldn't be there, so we sublet for a comparable amount. Our furniture had to go into storage, and because the movers charged by the hour, the two of us carried everything out to the sidewalk. We awaited the truck among lamps, chairs, and beds to save precious minutes of charge time.

We had the energy and enterprise to plan a lot of fun events. Each year we held a professional women's breakfast for half a dozen faculty friends. Breakfast was served at 6 o'clock, and guests were requested to wear hats and gloves. We drank tomato juice from silver cocktail glasses and danced the hula before leaving for school. That apartment was also notable for a most romantic reason. A friend I was dating

wanted Helen to meet a friend of his, so we arranged a little dinner party. I awoke that morning with a case of bronchitis, so bad I had to see a doctor. He told me to go to bed and stay there, but I explained the importance of the evening. He shrugged and gave me medications that included Dexedrine to stay awake. I felt miserable, but the party was a success as Helen met the man she is still married to 51 years later.

Nice places to live became increasingly more available after that, and we lived in a little more luxury. I had a frightful shock when after our joyful years together, Helen abandoned me to get married. It all turned out happily, because I was married myself a few months later. Helen and her husband moved to Lafayette, and my spouse and I bought a home in Orinda, and even though we have our own lives and families, we keep in close touch and still laugh over our shared memories.

◆ PONDS from page 21

expert." That's just wrong.

When the homeowner questioned the difference in rock materials used, they were told "the lower rocks are no longer available." Wrong! We were able to locate these stones at any of the four local rock yards. When they questioned the fact that their pond water was so green, they were told "it's natural and the way it should be." Wrong! A small amount of algae is fine, but no one wants a green, slimy, smelly pond in their yard and no one has to have one. There are great pond filtration systems and products available to keep your pond water clear. When the homeowner asked about a filtering system, they were told "that would cost thousands of additional dollars." Wrong, wrong, wrong. Many people are hesitant to install a pond because ponds are believed to have so many maintenance problems. However, the real problems begin with poor installation. When designed and installed properly with the correct filtration and pump systems, a pond can be enjoyed with very little maintenance.

We could give dozens of other examples of the horror stories we have come across in the business of landscaping, but we don't have enough time or space for that. What we will do is give you some information and ammunition to help you avoid the many common and costly pitfalls of landscape improvements.

Don't skimp on the design phase. Paying up front for a well-thought-out design will save you thousands of dollars and much heartache in the long run. Make sure you consider the size, shape, and style of your house when planning your landscape. Just yesterday we drove by a Tudor style home in Alamo planted with palm trees and a tropical style landscape. That's just wrong. A good designer will design with the style of your home in mind, picking up architectural details from your home, and repeating them in your landscape.

Shop for your contractor and/or designer by talking to their previous clients and viewing some of their work. Check references by phone, yes, but also ask to see one or more current jobs in the process of being installed. Talk to these clients to see if they are happy with the progress of the job. Look around to see if the job site is being kept clean. Talk to the neighbors, if possible, to see if they have been happy with the process. Also ask for client references who had their landscapes installed at least five or more years ago. These clients will be able to tell you how happy they are with the end result after the garden has grown in and they have lived with it for a few years. They may also be able to tell you about some things they would have done differently.

Don't get sticker shock. It's easy to

underestimate landscaping costs if you haven't priced them lately. If you have a friend or neighbor in your area who has recently completed a landscape project and you like what they've had done, ask for a ballpark of what they spent. Try to be realistic about the amount of money you can invest in your garden. Many well-established contractors will be willing to install a project in phases to make financing easier. Avoid the temptation to cut costs by cutting corners. Using poor quality materials in your garden almost always costs you more in replacement dollars. A perfect example, and one we see all too often, is the homeowners who think they are cutting costs by installing an inexpensive and, therefore, low quality, outdoor lighting system which within a few months needs to be replaced.

Never go with the low bidder unless you have been diligent about checking out the contractor or designer. In our experience, there is always a reason for one contractor bidding thousands of dollars less than another. Did they leave items out of their bid that will be added in later as "extras"? Are they using cut-rate materials? Is their field crew qualified and appropriately supervised in the field? Do they have the office personnel to handle your project?

Always check to make sure your potential contractor is properly licensed and insured. There are many unlicensed individuals out there who call themselves contractors. You can verify a license number by going to the State Licensing Board's website at www.cslb.ca.gov. On this website, you can also check to be sure that your contractor has a current workers compensation insurance policy in place. Be wary if you are told that they don't need workers comp insurance because "all of the crew on your project will be independent or sub-contractors." This is almost impossible to do on a large landscape job that requires many laborers, and it's usually a flat-out lie.

It is not a state requirement that your contractor has general liability insurance, but if they don't, you are taking a risk. You are completely within your rights to ask to see proof of insurance from a contractor. Just recently, an unlicensed contractor in Orinda drove one of his overloaded trucks into a house, causing 10's of thousands of dollars in damages. *If you have any questions about this topic or if you have a suggestion for a future topic for our "Way to Grow" column, email the Lamberts at gardenlights@comcast.net.*

Read
The Orinda News
online at
www.orindaassociation.org

◆ PLANTS from page 21

Orinda Creeks to locate sources of these plants. One plant she chose was a valley oak seedling whose mother is the beloved "Tree of Lights" in downtown Orinda.

Samimi was extremely pleased with the outcome of everyone's efforts to restore her landslide-ravaged yard. "The city's biologist has so much knowledge of, and passion for locally native plants. She gave me a list."

For more information about the creek protection ordinance, go to <http://municipalcodes.lexisnexis.com/codes/orinda/>, then click on Title 18 to review the requirements under Chapter 18.03 Watercourse Maintenance, Alteration and Protection.

Rappaport is president of Friends of Orinda Creeks. For more information about creek-friendly landscaping or other creek-related issues, contact Friends of Orinda Creeks at mayarapp@comcast.net.

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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Orinda Academy Performs Agatha Christie Classic

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Mystery and mayhem abound in the Orinda Academy Drama Group's production of Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*. The classic tale takes to the stage of the Orinda Library Theater on Friday and Saturday, April 27 and 28, at 7 p.m.

Written in 1939 as the world stood on the brink of World War II, Christie weaves an intricate whodunit that keeps everyone guessing. Ten people from varied backgrounds, each with dark secrets, have been invited to share a vacation house on Indian Island off the coast of England. Of course, a violent storm isolates the group from the mainland and, one by one, the guests turn up murdered. A seemingly innocent nursery rhyme hanging on the wall predicts the various methods by which the terrified guests will die.

The consummate writer, Christie explores themes of justice and guilt in her masterful script as she plants clues and strategic twists to intellectually engage her audience while also throwing them off the track.

Directed by Leigh Lightfoot and Nicole Santos, with set design by Misty Schachtell,



Cast members from Orinda Academy's *And Then There Were None* rehearse a scene. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

and lighting and sound design by Richard Woodruff, *And Then There Were None* features students Adrienne Batiste, Jacob Basri, Galen Borson, Danny Harmon, Alex

Helt, Sarah Jimison, Neil Livingston, Matt Loudon, John Oakley, and Kevin Varela O'Hara.

For tickets, \$10 to \$25, call 254-7553.

Young Brothers Perform at Leshar Center in *The Music Man*

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Aaron and Nathaniel Baum are spending a lot of time together lately. In addition to attending Sleepy Hollow Elementary School (Aaron in third grade and Nathaniel in fourth), the two will appear in *Diablo*

Light Opera Company's production of *The Music Man*. The popular musical runs March 30 - May 6 at the Leshar Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek.

The two brothers are both in the ensemble and Nathaniel also alternates in the role of Winthrop, who sings the showstopper, "Gary, Indiana."

Although fairly young in years, the brothers have already scored several performing credits. Aaron began performing at the age of six in Contra Costa Jewish Community Center's (JCC) summer theater program, where his roles have included the co-lead opposite Nathaniel in *Lemony Snickerdoodle*. In addition to the co-lead with his brother, Nathaniel has appeared in several JCC production as well as DLOC's Starstuck production of *Peter Non-Stick Pan* and *Princess and the Pizza*.



Aaron (L) and Nathaniel Baum can be seen in *The Music Man* at the Leshar Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek from March 30 - May 6. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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SCHOOLS/STUDENTS

Say What?!

The Opportunity Costs of Life

Lana Olmer



This may come as a surprise, but despite my constant barrage of criticism, I'm actually fond of Miramonte. When I pull up to 750 Moraga Way in the morning, fog encompassing the senior lawn, I awake from my still sleepy stupor to be enveloped in the warmth of Mr. Fitzgerald's first period psychology class. Fitz is one of those teachers who challenges your assumptions, and expects you to interpret information, not simply regurgitate it. He is one of the few teachers I have

encountered with the elusive ability to relate material to real life.

Unfortunately, most of Miramonte's students will never share my experience, because every class he teaches is an elective. The required courses are hardly as stimulating; many times, what I've learned hardly seems worth remembering, probably because it has no relevance to real life — you know, that whole thing we are supposed to deal with after graduation. So on behalf of myself, I wonder why we are never taught Life 101: how to pay bills, how to do taxes, how to change the oil in your car, or at least how often.

So I'm making the effort to apply the theoretical knowledge my school deems necessary for me to learn. The other day in economics, I learned about a very important principle in capitalism: opportunity costs. Every time we do one thing, we are missing out on something else. For example, when I buy a CD, its price may only be \$12.99, but its opportunity cost may be a portion of that cute bag I saw last week at Nordstrom. So, how do opportunity costs relate to school?

Sadly, the vast majority of classes that we spend our time in during school are those that are required, and that few students actually choose to take. It's pretty obvious that you can't really have a career (translation future) without going to college or at least graduating from high school. But do we really acquire enough useful skills or knowledge while sitting inside of a classroom instead of being outside and

experiencing the real world? In my limited experience, it seems to be during the activities that are optional that I learn the most world-worthy talents. Mock trial, public speaking, advanced communications/media, and WISE have taught me skills that have been far more useful than any I've learned in a required class, and they have been much more enjoyable. Mock trial has taught me to think on my feet, public speaking to voice my opinion eloquently, advanced communications/media to achieve my goals on my own, and WISE (Wise Independent Senior Experience, an optional English class) to learn independently outside of school, without parents or teachers arranging it for me. People say the best things in life are free. For me, the most valuable lessons haven't been learned reading a textbook or listening to a lecture, but by doing, experiencing, trying, failing, and succeeding — the very things we are missing out on, passively attending required courses.

Let's take it a step further, applying opportunity costs to life. In life we are faced with everyday decisions: Do I go out tonight or study? Do I work late tonight or make it home for dinner? Many people try to solve this dilemma by double booking their time: Overachieving students are trying to attend sport practices and club meetings during homework time and adults

are busy working during family vacation. It's a fact few people have the fortune to deny: School and work can so often get in the way of family and leisure time. Every night spent working late is one family dinner missed, and every weekend spent away from home to close that deal comes at a cost of 48 hours away from your spouse and/or children. However, overtime and weekends away are not looked upon as "the extra mile" but rather a necessity for a successful career. Which leads us to the greatest opportunity cost of all: work or family? Generations of women before mine fought for the ability to work as well as have a family, and it saddens me that now women and men have to fight for the ability to have a family as well as work. However, I see only one solution: a compromise. Maybe not working as much will cost you that nice car, bigger home, or promotion, but working so much will cost you just as much, if not more: spending time with your family and friends. Yes, work and school are necessary facets of life, but they aren't the only ones.

So tonight, come home from work early. Don't rewrite your Hamlet essay 14 times. Go have dinner with your family, watch the sunset at Grizzly Peak, catch up with friends and realize that all of those things are not refundable, returnable, or good for another date. Carpe freaking diem. You only have one life. Choose wisely.



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Wagner Ranch Round-Up



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Come on down and join the fun at this year's Wagner Ranch Round-Up scheduled for Saturday, April 28, from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. The Round-Up welcomes everyone to share in the fun, food, and festivities! There will be great music, terrific food, games, pony rides, a cake walk, inflatable amusements, and much more!

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STUDENTS/TEACHERS

Orinda's Zak Dychtwald Wins First Prize in Oratorical Contest

■ Next Stop: National Contest in Indianapolis

By MADDY DYCHTWALD
Contributing Writer

Who says teens don't know about the workings of our government and the Constitution? A junior at Miramonte High School, Zak Dychtwald, has won first prize in the state of California oratory contest sponsored by the American Legion, the largest veterans' group in the United States. To win he had to thoroughly research, write, and deliver an original and thought-provoking speech on the U.S. Constitution.

In his award-winning speech, he compared the various elements of the Constitution to the bones, muscles, nerves, brain, and heart of the human body. He also compared the crafting of the Constitution to the scripting

of the genetic code for an organism that could live, thrive and course-correct for centuries beyond its inception.

Throughout the competition, Dychtwald also had to speak extemporaneously on four separate amendments. "Speaking on your feet without notes was really a challenge," Dychtwald said. "Before this program, I really didn't know all that much about the Constitution. But in our school, it is really an honor to be chosen to participate in the American Legion Constitutional Oratory Contest. We have a long tradition of competing in this contest, and I wanted to represent Miramonte and the student body to the best of my ability."

Dychtwald will compete in the national competition in Indianapolis on April 13 against other state champions, as well as those from Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico.

In addition to his involvement in this tournament, Dychtwald is an honors student, next year's captain of the championship Miramonte water polo team, and active in a wide range of public speaking and community activities. He has already traveled to 10 foreign countries and last summer attended summer school at Cambridge University in England where he studied Euro-American relations.

The American Legion has sponsored the high school oratorical contest for 65 years to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution. Along the way, students who win are awarded scholarship money. "I intend to take the money that I've won from the statewide competition and donate it back to the public speaking program at Miramonte," Dychtwald said of the \$1,900 he has won. "Specifically, I'd like to be able to use my



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Zak Dychtwald received first prize in the State of California oratory contest sponsored by the American Legion.

winnings to buy new video-recording equipment so that all of the students can be helped to improve their communications skills."

Two Orinda Teachers Receive Special Recognition

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

Teachers tend to be a humble lot. Perhaps it comes from a career devoted to coaxing the best out of others. Still, the spotlight shone on two local teachers who recently earned special recognition for their work with students.

Yvonne Anast, a math teacher at Orinda Intermediate School (OIS), has been named the Orinda Union School District's Teacher of the Year. A teacher in the Orinda school district for 11 years, Anast was honored last month at the Association of California School Administrators regional awards dinner.

Anast began her teaching career in Orinda as a second grade teacher at Wagner Ranch School. She then taught fourth-fifth grade combination classes at Sleepy Hollow and also served for a year as one of the school district's math specialists. The move to OIS has allowed her to focus solely on teaching math. A popular and respected teacher, Anast says that she has enjoyed watching students, many of whom she taught in elementary school, progress through middle school. While she loves working with students of all ages, Anast says that she's enjoying her middle school students because they are at an age when they are learning important skills that will prepare them for high school and life. "A solid foundation in math is critical to future success," she says. "We're giving students today the foundation to be successful in jobs in the future that we can't even begin to predict today, such is the speed of learning and technology."

Michael Randall, OIS principal, describes Anast as a mentor, and collaborator. "Her passion for her subject, her vision for the math department, and her

desire for innovation in the area of technology make her an ideal member of any staff," Randall says.

"I am sure that all of us can reflect on our schooling and think of the many teachers we've had that filled our heads with knowledge and our minds with facts. I am also sure that each of us can reflect on our own education and remember that special teacher who touched our lives. Yvonne Anast is that type of teacher," continues Randall.

Miramonte High School's Marty Schimbor was named Outstanding Educator of the Year, representing a seven-county region of Northern California for the California League of High Schools. Schimbor has been an educator for 34 years, the last 18 of which have been at Miramonte. She has taught English, journalism, and Spanish. No matter the subject, Schimbor says that she wants to impart a love of learning and to help her students develop a worldly outlook and to be a good citizens of the world.

Schimbor encourages students to stretch as thinkers and as writers in her advanced placement English and journalism classes. Rather than teaching to passive learners, she says, "I want to give students the tools to teach themselves what they want to learn; how to think, write, and read critically."

When asked if students have changed over the three decades she's been teaching, Schimbor says, "The students are the same - kids are still kids." What has changed, she says, is the increased level of unhealthy influences in their lives. "There is much more out there in terms of unwholesome pressure to grow up so fast. In particular, she notes the pressure students feel to perform at increasingly high academic levels.



PAT RUDEBUSCH
OIS math teacher, Yvonne Anast, was named Orinda Teacher of the Year.

The classroom experience has changed, too, she believes. "The biggest change has been the introduction of technology and the Internet for doing research," she says. Like Anast, Schimbor is working to prepare her students for future success in a rapidly changing world.

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April is Jazz Appreciation Month

If you love the melodious sounds of the saxophone or the throbbing pulse of a stand-up bass (or electric for that matter), plan to spend part of the month of April at The Orinda House. The dinner house and nightclub will celebrate Jazz Appreciation Month with a series of "Jammin' at The House" performances.

Owner Ron Bonner actually started before April with a kick-off concert featuring the legendary Pete Escoveto, who brought the house down on March 24. "It was really something to have someone of his reputation playing right here in Orinda and in such an intimate setting that you were practically part of the music," says Bonner.

The series continues on Saturday afternoons through April with the following musicians scheduled:

April 7 – Bob Belanski's Specdrum with Pete Yellin (alto sax), Warren Gale

(trumpet), Jules Rowell (trombone), Terry Rodriguez (piano), Chuck Bennett (bass), and Bob Belanski (drums).

April 14 – Bob Belanski's Specdrum with Mad Duran (tenor sax), Eddie Duran (guitar), Warren Gale (trumpet), Jules Rowell (trombone), Terry Rodriguez (piano), Chuck Bennett (bass), and Bob Belanski (drums).

April 28 – Bob Belanski's Specdrum with Marshall Otwell (piano), Pete Yellin (alto sax), Warren Gale (trumpet), Jules Rowell (trombone), Chuck Bennett (bass), Rob Michaels (guitar), and Bob Belanski (drums).

The jam sessions take place on Saturdays from 3 – 5 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres will be available as well as a no host bar. The "Legends of Jazz" photo exhibit by award-winning jazz photographer, Rudolph J. Omania, will also be on display through the month.

For more information, call 258-4445.

Rachael Magidson Stocchi Performs at Orinda House

By VALERIE HOTZ
Staff Writer

A unique American genre born in New Orleans the latter part of the 19th century, jazz is known and appreciated around the world. It is rooted in the folk music of West Africa and Western music. From Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Billie Holliday, Blossom Deari, Stephan Grappeli, and Django Reinhard, jazz cuts across all cultures and ethnicities.

Incredibly, naturally gifted Orinda native jazz vocalist, Rachael Magidson Stocchi, recently performed at Ron Bonner's Orinda House Restaurant at the Crossroads. A member of the Miramonte Class of 1987, Stocchi studied economics and political science at U.C. Berkeley before embarking on a successful career as a jazz singer. "I discovered I could make more money performing than doing anything else. I am happy to be able to earn a living doing something I am very passionate about," says Stocchi.

Appearing with an East Bay ensemble, The Modest Orchestra, Stocchi demonstrated a fine vocal repertoire when singing "Born To Be Blue" and "He is Funny That Way." Members of the band include Lee Bloom on piano, Mike Waters on saxophone, Raoul Ramirez on drums, and Dan Seamans on upright bass. There was no indication from her fine performance that she had recently undergone surgery to remove a polyp from her vocal chords.

Jazz often defies any concrete definition. Even the origin of the term "jazz" is unclear. What is clear is that jazz musicians are able to communicate feelings and moods that escape traditional methods. Stocchi accomplishes this with seemingly great ease: "If you gotta ask, you'll never know," is how Louis Armstrong summed it up.

"I began my career in musical theater. When I was hired as a percussionist to perform African songs, I realized I really had a strong preference for jazz. Then I



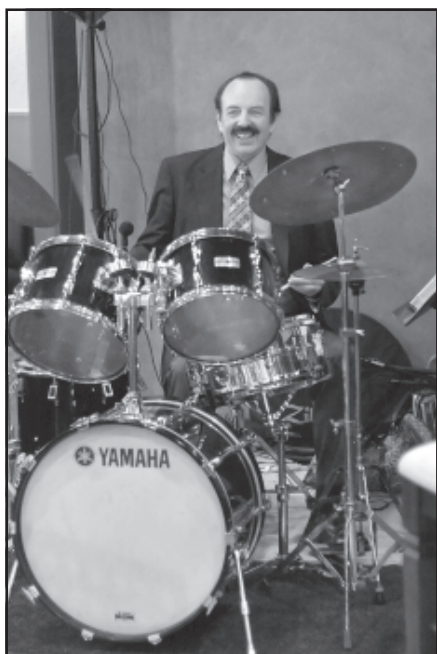
VALERIE HOTZ
Orinda native Rachael Magidson Stocchi showed off her jazz chops recently at The Orinda House.

accompanied a French singer on percussion and decided to take up the trumpet, which I really enjoy," says Stocchi. As a child, she enjoyed the benefit of piano lessons and learned to read music. That was as far as it went, though and the truth is, Stocchi is self-taught. "I have never had formal voice lessons. I have always enjoyed singing and music and taught myself how to play the trumpet," she explains.

A resident of Poitiers, France, Stocchi met her husband, Domenico Stocchi after high school graduation. She divides her time between France and California, singing in both French and English.

The Orinda House hosts live jazz performances at 7 p.m., Thursdays through Sundays, with weekly appearances by The Modest Orchestra. Ron Bonner is celebrating April as National Jazz Appreciation Month with a variety of performances. Be sure to stop by and enjoy a fine meal accompanied by great music.

You can order Rachael Magidson Stocchi's CD from her website. Entitled "West of the Moon," the CD was recorded with the Stocchi Jazz Band. For more details, visit the website at www.stochijazz.com or email Rachael at Stochijazz@yahoo.com.



RICHARD KONLON
Drummer Bob Belanski wails away at a recent concert at The Orinda House.



RICHARD KONLON
Sax player Pete Yellen (L) jams with 17-year-old Danny Brown (R). Richard Harris is in back.

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STARLIGHT PLAYERS / EXERCISE

Agatha Christie Murder Mystery Opens Starlight Season

BY DOROTHY BOWEN
Staff Writer

Sherlock Holmes' creator came to hate the great detective so much that he devised his death at the hands of arch villain Moriarty at Reichenbach Falls. Alas, his readers loved Holmes and wouldn't let him rest in peace, so Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had to resurrect him for still more stories.

Agatha Christie had similar feelings about her creation, Hercule Poirot. She came to find the Belgian detective "insufferable," she revealed in her diary, and she killed him off in a final novel, *Curtain*, to be published after her own death. However, she remained fond of Miss Marple, who was a character based on her own grandmother.

Starlight Players neatly sidesteps this orgy of character assassination by presenting *An Unexpected Guest* as its opening production. The 1958 murder mystery, co-written with Christie's long-time collaborator Charles Osborne, opens the Starlight Players summer season.

Although Christie's famous detective Poirot does not appear in the story, there are still plenty of twists and turns to keep

audiences on the edge of their seats. An unexpected stranger knocks on the door of the house to find a young woman holding a gun and her dead husband on the floor.

Now, most young men would turn and run away as fast as they could, but not Christie's hero who sets about trying to absolve the woman of any crime. Adding to the "fun" is the dead husband's mother, a mentally unstable half-brother, a handsome politician who lives next door, a nurse, and, of course, the butler. The show plays Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:30 p.m. from June 1 through June 23, Sunday, June 10 at 4 p.m., and Thursday, June 21, at 8 p.m. Charlotte Meyer will direct. All shows are held at the Orinda Community Park Amphitheater.

Second on stage will be a Christmas comedy, in July, with *My Three Angels*, by Sam and Bella Spewak. As a movie, it starred Humphrey Bogart, Peter Ustinov, and Basil Rathbone. The comedy is based on a French play, *La Cuisine Des Anges*, 1953, by Albert Husson.

My Three Angels will run July 13 through August 4, Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:30 p.m. with a Sunday, July 29, matinee and Thursday, August 2, at 8 p.m.

Orinda Starlight Village Players Auditions For: *My Three Angels*, *See How They Run*, and Agatha Christie's, *An Unexpected Guest* April 1 at 4 p.m. and Tuesday, April 3rd at 7p.m. Orinda Community Center and Outside Amphitheater 253-1191 or 254-5530 or email jill@aspenconsult.net.



Taylor Strand and Bill Chessman in last year's Agatha Christie mystery *Cards on the Table*.

The third and final play of the Starlight season will be *See How They Run* by Philip King, a farce that opens August 24 and runs through September 15 on Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:30 p.m. and Sunday, September 9, at 4 p.m. and Thursday, September 13, at 8 p.m.

No reservations are needed for Starlight shows, says director, Geotty Chapple, simply prompt appearance before showtime. For information, call 253-1191 or email jill@aspenconsult.net.

Exercise Move of the Month



If you want to tone up the back of those arms, try these tricep kickbacks with a lunge.

Place your right foot in front of your left. Stay on your back toe. Make sure your legs are far enough apart that when you bend your knees, your knees stay behind your toes. Hold a can of food (or dumbbells) in each hand, by your sides, elbows slightly bent. As you bend your knees into a lunge, coming vertically down, push the cans or weights back behind you. As you straighten your knees bring the weights back in towards your body. Try to keep your arms close to your body as you push behind you. You should feel this in the muscles in the back part of your upper arm. Perform six with the left foot back and six with the right foot back. Perform three sets of 12. For questions on the Move of the Month, call Sheena at (925) 360-7051.

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COMMUNITY CHORUS

Orinda Resident Betsy Blakeslee Launches Community Chorus




SALLY HOGARTY

Betsy Blakeslee leads her new Lamorinda chorus during a rehearsal for their April 11 concert.

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

★ The 4th of July Needs You! ★
The Orinda Association is looking for a few good volunteers to make this year's celebration better than ever. Call 254-0800 or email oa@orindaassociation.org.
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With a song in her heart, Orinda resident Betsy Blakeslee wants to teach the world to sing its way to perfect harmony. The musician, director, and teacher has brought her passion for song to venues as far flung as her private music students in Orinda to refugee camps in Bosnia. Along the way, she has led choruses performing at the United Nations Millennium Summit and the State of the World Forum, as well as local groups performing throughout the Bay Area.

"I have seen 30 children in a refugee camp in Bosnia cram elbow-to-elbow in a tiny foyer to sing," Blakeslee says. "And, I have seen heads of state soften when a multicultural choir of young people sang to them." She now hopes to bring the joy of song to both singers and audiences in Lamorinda by launching a community chorus that is open to teens and adults.

"I see this as being truly a community chorus," Blakeslee says. "There is no audition; we invite anyone who can carry a tune." The community chorus, which as yet is unnamed, rehearses about two or three Sunday evenings a month at the Town Hall Theatre in Lafayette.

The *cappella* group performs a variety of songs, including some written by

Blakeslee herself. "What makes my songs stand out, is their rhythmic line, usually in the alto, tenor, or bass," she explains. "I draw from barbershop quartet, Bobby McFerrin, ham bone, and world cultures, and adapt the pieces to the abilities of the singers. When a pretty melody and yummy harmony float above the rhythmic line, the piece is layered. The audience responds."

Her group will present their first concert at the Town Hall Theatre on April 11 at 7:30 p.m. According to Blakeslee, the program will feature songs in several languages, one piece based on a Mary Oliver poem and another that includes audience participation.

If you've been looking for an opportunity to take your song out of the shower and share it with an audience, check out Blakeslee's chorus. She will offer a free introductory *a cappella* class on April 22 to launch the spring/summer session. Rehearsals will be held on the second and fourth Sundays of the month from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., running April 22 – July 15.

For more information on joining the chorus, visit www.thc.org/education/chorus/html or call the Town Hall Theatre at 262-1159. For information on the April concert, call 283-1557.

ON THE CALENDAR

APRIL

- 1 **Orinda Starlight Village Players** Auditions For: *My Three Angels*, *See How They Run*, and Agatha Christie's, *An Unexpected Guest* at 4 p.m. and Tuesday, April 3 at 7 p.m. Orinda Community Center and Outside Amphitheater 253-1191 or 254-5530 or email jill@aspenconsult.net.
- 3 **Teen Ski and Snowboard Trip** to Sierra Tahoe, \$95 fee includes lift ticket and transportation. Repeats April 7 to Alpine Meadows, April 10 to Northstar, and April 14 to Sugarbowl. Sponsored by Orinda Youth Association. Call 253-4204 to register.
- 5 **Friends of the Library** used book sale, library parking garage, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- 10 **Lamorinda Association of AAUW** scholarship awards ceremony, 7 p.m., St. Mary's College, 254-8754.
- 14 **Rotary Luau**, 6 p.m. at St. Mary's College, Soda Center. Dinner and auction. Call 254-2222.
- 15 **Oakland East Bay Gay Men's Chorus**, 3 p.m., Orinda Community Church. Tickets \$20 general admission, \$15 for students and seniors. 254-4906.
- 17 **Orinda Owls**, reading and discussion of *Wickett's Remedy* by Myla Goldberg, 7 p.m. at Orinda Books.
- 21 **Earth Day Creek Cleanup**, 10 a.m. to noon, meet in parking lot behind 23 Orinda Way. Wear long sleeves and gloves, and bring garbage bags. Sponsored by Friends of Orinda Creeks. Call 253-1997 for more information.
- Author Conversation**, Pat Montandon will discuss and sign copies of her new memoir, *Oh the Hell of It All*, 3 p.m. at Orinda Books.
- 27 **Orinda Academy's** production of Agatha Christie's *And Then Their Were None*, 7 p.m., also 4/28. 254-7553.
- 28 **Wagner Ranch Round-up**, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., 258-0016.

AT THE LIBRARY

- 3 **Toddler Lapsit**, reading time for infants to 3-year-olds and their caregivers, 10 a.m. Repeats each Tuesday and Thursday.
- 7 **Saturday Morning Live!** Family story time ages 3-5 at 11 a.m. Repeats each Saturday.
- 24 **Author Conversation**, David Smethurst on his book *Tripoli*, the history of the four-year war between the Barbary pirate state of Tripoli and the United States, 7 p.m. Learn more about how this book was mostly written at the Orinda Library.

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

CLUB MEETINGS

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

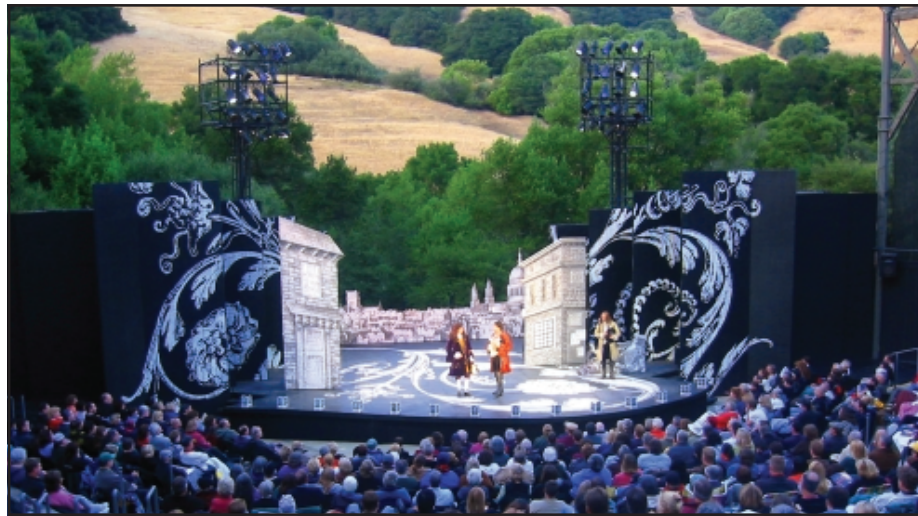
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- Acalanes Union High School District**
First and third Wednesdays, district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette, 7:30 p.m.
- City Council**
First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.ci.Orinda.ca.us.
- Historic Landmarks Committee**
Fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, public is welcome, for information, please call 788-7323..
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District**
Third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.
- Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**
Second Monday, 4 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road, www.orinda.k12.ca.us.
- Planning Commission**
Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, 253-4210.
- Parks and Recreation Commission**
Second Wednesday, 7 p.m., Community Center, room 7, 254-2445.

CALENDAR BY CHRIS LAVIN

Send calendar items to chrislavin@earthlink.net

Cal Shakes Collaborates with San Jose Rep to present *Triumph of Love*



Cal Shakes' audience enjoyed a performance of *Restoration Comedy* last summer. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BY DOROTHY BOWEN
Staff Writer

California Shakespeare Theater will collaborate with San Jose Repertory Theater to present *The Triumph of Love* by 18th century French playwright, Pierre Marivaux. Lillian Groag, associate artist at Cal Shakes, will adapt and direct the comedy in a new translation by Frederick Kluck for the premiere performance in Orinda.

The comedy will run August 8 to September 2 at Cal Shakes' Bruns Amphitheater, before moving to San Jose for a September 22 to October 14 run. Groag directed *The Tempest* last season for Cal Shakes and *Taming of the Shrew* (2000) and *Arms and the Man* by George Bernard Shaw (2003). Previously, she directed Moliere's *Scapin, the Cheat*, for Cal Shakes in 1998.

The Triumph of Love has been described as a 270-year-old gender-bending confection. An adaptation by Stephen Wadsworth played at Berkeley Rep some years back, and a movie version with Mira Sorvino, Ben Kingsley, and Fiona Shaw had a short run in 2001.

Love and War Season Opens with *Richard III*

The theme of love and war permeates Cal Shakes' 2007 season, which opens with *Richard III*, directed by Mark Rucker, on May 30. He directed *Romeo and Juliet* for Cal Shakes in 2001 and, more recently, *The Beard of Avon* at the American Conservatory Theatre.

The tragedy of *Richard III*, who schemed and slew his way to the crown only to trade his kingdom for a horse at the end of his reign, will open June 24.

Shaw's *Man and Superman* Next on Stage

Next at the Bruns will be *Man and Superman* by George Bernard Shaw, July 4 to July 29. It will include the *Don Juan in Hell* section which is left out in some productions and presented as a single show in others.

Jonathan Moscone will direct, having already accustomed Cal Shakes' audiences to marathon productions with *Nicholas Nickleby*. Unlike the Dickens' blockbuster, *Man and Superman* will be shown in a single sitting.

Love Triumphs in Third Show

The third show in the season, *The Triumph of Love*, combines the bawdy characters of Italian *Commedia del Arte* with the satirical antics of French farce. In this case, the target is the ideas of the Age of Reason when it comes to love. The plot centers on a prince raised by a philosopher and his scientist sister in a cerebral existence that sneers at passion. His guardians would never allow a beautiful woman on the premises, but, with clever disguises, love finds a way. Sound familiar? Not unlike some Shakespearean plots we have seen.

King Lear Ends Summer Season

The final play of the season will be *King Lear*, directed by Lisa Peterson. This will be a trip to the dark side for the associate artist at Cal Shakes who previously directed *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Winter's Tale*, and *Love's Labours Lost*. On the other hand, she recently directed Berthold Brecht's *Mother Courage* at Berkeley Rep.

The tragedy of dysfunctional family relationships will run September 19 through October 14. Call (510) 548-9666.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 32

access to 150 post office boxes. We feature a baby shower registry in the infants department," points out acting manager, Allan Flansburg. Sue Borgas has served in the Orinda store for many years and is well known for the enchanting animated Christmas windows that are on display in the Lafayette store every holiday season.

In addition to current fashions for women, juniors, men, boys, children, and babies, McCaulou's carries lingerie, loungewear, handbags, and casual gifts. For the Old Blues in town, there is an excellent selection of Cal merchandise. In fact, you will find Cal items in every McCaulou's Department Store because Oakland-native David McCaulou graduated from U.C. Berkeley in 1956.

"I have worked in retail since I was 14 years-old. Some people ask me, 'Why aren't you out playing golf?' I tell them I like playing store. This is what I enjoy the most," laughs McCaulou. "We are proud of the service we offer our community and pleased that so much of our management staff is local. Several managers graduated from Acalanes High School and have built their careers here. These are the ingredients," adds McCaulou.

Back in the early days, McCaulou met local illustrator Joe Cleary at the Sleepy Hollow Swim and Tennis Club where both were members. He hired Cleary to illustrate McCaulou's newspaper advertisements. "Joe is a talented, fine artist and a wonderful person," says McCaulou.

McCaulou's Department Stores has flourished as a family business. David's daughter Nancy is the children's wear buyer and his son, David, manages Bancroft Clothing, located across from Sather Gate in Berkeley. In addition, McCaulou owns Hollyhock, a stationary and greeting card store located near McCaulou's in Orinda, as well as Madison in Lafayette, which also specializes in fine stationary and greeting cards.

McCaulou's Department Store in Orinda is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information please call 254-3448.

◆ Corekinetics

With Pilates the rage these days, check out Corekinetics located at the Crossroads. A full-time faculty member at Diablo Valley College, Carolyn Mueller founded Corekinetics in 2000 and moved her studio to Orinda four years ago.

What is so special about this particular Pilates studio is that Carolyn Mueller is second generation Pilates. That is a shorthand way of saying Carolyn studied with Eve Gentry, who studied directly with founder Joseph Pilates himself. Mueller studied with Gentry, of Santa Fe, New

Mexico, for over a year and is extensively well trained in the Pilates method.

You will find Corekinetics at 50 Vashell Way, Suite 120. The studio features three Reformers and one Cadillac. "For those uninitiated, these terms may seem a bit odd. The Reformers are a very good work out system. You can exercise very effectively and safely. The Cadillac is mostly for rehabilitation after injury or surgery and makes you feel good," explains Mueller.

Joseph Pilates developed this equipment around 1900. "He was a genius and very much ahead of his time. He was a professional circus performer and he developed these exercises to strengthen his body. As he aged, people noticed how incredibly fit his body remained. Then, after World War I ended he was called on to help rehabilitate injured soldiers who were hospitalized. He used whatever was available, such as springs from mattresses and straps he found in the hospital. These all worked very well at the time and then later he built the Reformer and the Cadillac," says Mueller.

Pilates then went on to open his own studio and theater people, including professional dancers, became very interested in his exercise system. Bette Davis and Martha Graham became clients and the rest is history.

"I really like working in Orinda. I love the people here. We have a really good time," says Mueller, who earned a bachelor's degree in physical education from U.C. Davis and a master's degree in dance from Mills College. She teaches dance and Pilates at Diablo Valley College in the physical education, athletics, and dance department.

A session at Corekinetics is 55 minutes in length. At the initial session Mueller does an individual postural analysis and tailors subsequent exercises to the individual client's needs. Clients have the option of a private session at \$65 an hour, a session for two at \$40 an hour or a session for three at \$35 an hour.

Like any exercise regime, a commitment is necessary in order to achieve a measure of fitness. Mueller recommends three sessions a week for one hour each in order to be in good shape.

For more information please visit the web site at www.corekinetics.com or call Carolyn Mueller at (925) 708-3279.

◆ DESIGN from page 1

contest of who can build the biggest and brightest – that is not in keeping with the character of our city" he explains. "Still, whenever a homeowner takes on an improvement project, there is the opportunity to go the extra distance to make the project aesthetically pleasing in such a way as to add value to the neighborhood."

This, he suggests, can be done within the context of the city's general plan and respect for neighboring properties.

The award guidelines are structured to give preference to projects that take into consideration the surrounding neighborhood; for example, in the home architecture category, 50 percent of the judging is based on the relationship of the project's site and context. The judging criteria also focus on architectural expression, cost-effectiveness, and the environmental energy performance of the building.

Similarly, the award for landscape design encourages projects that complement the natural surroundings and protect or enhance homeowner privacy. The award for environmental sustainability aims to advance the use of recycled energy efficient materials as well as promote the environmental restoration, pollution prevention, and water conservation.

Projects completed within the past three years are eligible for consideration; up to three finalists may be recognized in each category. Applications should include a description explaining why the nomination meets the category criteria, and there is a \$100 per entry. Applications will accepted from March 1 to September 15, 2007.

Glazer acknowledges that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Still, he believes that there are design projects that, it can be generally agreed, add value to a neighborhood. An advisory panel of residents with experience in architecture, landscape, and environmentally sensitive design will be appointed to assist in the selection of award recipients.

Complete information, along with application guidelines and forms, can be found on the city's website: www.ci.orinda.ca.us.

◆ LETTERS 2 from page 28

ballot later this year. The same old "anti" people who opposed Measure Q (and always oppose everything) will be popping up again like mushrooms after the rain. It is important to remember that they apparently feel free to spread falsehoods, exaggerations, and misinformation. They always have in the past, and we can expect them to do it again. Opponents of a ballot measure aren't required to back their claims with facts!

We all know our roads, drains, and water pipes are in horrible shape. The real question is whether we want to pay less now, or more later, when the problem and the expense grow even larger. The naysayers have no realistic solution.

The Orinda road, drain, and water pipe plan was thoughtfully prepared and will receive my wholehearted support.

– Ellen Dale

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William Self & Associates

Downtown Orinda is home to one of the most respected cultural resource management firms in the United States, William Self & Associates (WSA). The firm's president and principal archeologist, William Self, served as senior scientist with Bechtel Corporation and was an environmental planner in the San Francisco

City Planning Department before striking out on his own 19 years ago.

In a \$300 million a year industry, William Self & Associates is involved in 15-20 different projects at any given time. The firm operates in numerous states, including Oregon, Washington, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Arizona, and California. Dr. James Allen, vice president in the firm, has been with WSA for 12 years. He is also an adjunct professor of archeology at Saint Mary's College.

Over the past 20 years, WSA has been involved in archeological excavation of early historic sites along the San Francisco waterfront that included recovery and analysis of Gold Rush-era sailing ships. "We are currently working on an historic homestead ranch in Petaluma that dates from the late 1800's and the Trans Bay project, a multi-transit facility to be constructed in San Francisco. This is a major, multi-year project. The current

six different states.

William Self & Associates is a longtime member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. For more information, please visit the website at www.williamself.com or call 253-9070. The Orinda office is located at 61d Avenida de Orinda, near Orinda Motors.

McCaulou's Is a Family Business

David McCaulou, founder of McCaulou's Department Stores, has been serving the needs of Lamorinda families for over 40 years. The first store was opened in Lafayette in 1964 and today there are 17 stores in Northern California, stretching as far north as Napa. The family business has grown substantially over the years and today retains over 600 employees. Catering to family needs, McCaulou's carries fashionable clothing for men, women, teens, and children, as well as casual gifts and greeting cards. Several locations include cosmetics and shoe departments as well.

Many changes have occurred over the past 40 years. "People continue to be interested in us and they keep coming back because we change with the times. We follow trends and stay on top of what is happening in the fashion world," says McCaulou. Staying on top means sending buyers to New York every month to monitor developments in women's fashions. The teen scene is heavily influenced by the West Coast surfer styles. This means McCaulou's buyers are constantly in Los Angeles.

"We offer superb personal service,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Archeologist William Self is involved in archeological excavation of historic sites throughout the western United States.

buildings located at the site are historic and will require extensive work," says Self.

The firm's projects can cover an incredibly wide array of subjects. The Bay Street Development Project in Emeryville was a 14-month project that involved pre-construction testing revealing more than 165 human burials by the Ohlone Native Americans at the Shellmound site. WSA prepared a technical report based on the data gathered during field analysis. The firm has worked with various Native American tribal representatives to excavate and analyze more than 600 prehistoric human burials prior to tribal reinterment.

"I literally started the company out of my bedroom. As more work came in I hired more people. We have grown to include 30 employees with an additional office in Tucson, Arizona. My wife, Marta, was a very successful business owner and she encouraged me," says a grateful Self. Marta Self worked as a city planner prior to establishing McGill, Martin & Self, an engineering and land planning company. "She is retired now and plays golf for a living," he laughs.

Marta and Bill Self met when both were students at the U.S. International University in London. The couple has been married 33 years. They moved to Orinda in 1984 and their son, Trevor, graduated from Miramonte High School before earning his bachelor's degree from Saint Mary's College. Trevor is now with the Tucson office of William Self & Associates. At the present time the firm has active projects in



PAT RUDEBUSCH

Allan Flansburg, Orinda McCaulou's current manager.

including free gift wrapping. That is one of the reasons our customers prefer to shop locally. Offering a lot of value is another reason our customers have remained loyal over the years," he adds.

Step into the Orinda McCaulou's, located in Orinda Village Square, near Orinda Books, and you will experience an enjoyable shopping event. "We are the only department store that also offers customers

[SEE BUZZ page 31]

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