

THE ORINDA NEWS

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Orinda Residents Will Decide Fate of Roads in Special June 5 Election

By CHRIS LAVIN
Staff Writer

After more than three years and thousands of man-hours of questions and debate, one of the biggest issues facing Orinda since its 1985 incorporation is about to be settled: How, and when, to fix the roads and drains falling apart beneath the tires of the thousands of cars that pummel the asphalt on a daily basis.

Measure E, the \$58 million bond measure put on the ballot to mend roads, drains, and water pipes, will live or die on June 5, the day of a special election created just for it. It needs two-thirds of the majority to pass.

But even if you happen to be reading this after the election has come and gone, the story behind the placement of the measure is one of tireless dedication of many volunteers who seem desperate for the measure to pass, and those who want and wanted more examination of funding



PAT RUDEBUSCH
This pothole at Hillcrest and Overhill shows the deterioration of the roadway and culvert.

alternatives.

If passed, the measure will permit Orinda to float a series of bonds that will be paid back by property tax owners on their annual bills. At the heart of the controversy over its passage – a similar measure failed last November – are two issues: Whether the city has been fiscally responsible for the past 20 years by not fixing the roads but spending money elsewhere, and whether the money cannot be raised in some way other than another line item on a tax bill.

“I think if it doesn’t pass for the second time, it will send a very clear message to city hall that they just have to find some other way to do it,” said Clyde Vaughn, a 32-year-resident who has been a steady and vocal opponent in his familiar native North Carolina drawl. “They’ll see they can’t just stick out their hands and say ‘gimme.’”

No one is saying the roads don’t need to be fixed. Many of Orinda’s 92 miles of roads are chassis-rattling, bolt-loosening obstacle courses. What is more, drainage ditches beneath the roads are crumbling, and water pipes supplying water to hydrants in several high-risk fire zones are weak. Measure E will provide funds to fix all three.

“One of the criticisms we hear is that EBMUD needs to fix the pipes,” Mayor Steve Glazer has said. “But their policy is they won’t fix it until it’s broken, not just when it’s falling apart.”

Of 49 “bad pipes” identified so far by the city, two have already collapsed – and been fixed by EBMUD, per that policy, said

John Wyro, president of the board of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. That brings the magic number to 47 to go, he said.

“What will happen (in a fire situation) is that we just won’t be able to fight a fire as effectively as we should,” he added.

Yet time and again, the measure’s opponents enumerate the areas where they think the city went wrong in the last decade: Putting \$5 million into the new library, commissioning new city hall offices, and building the Wagner Ranch school gymnasium, to name a few.

“Orinda would not have a Triple-A bond rating if we had been financially irresponsible,” said councilmember Amy Worth, who presided over many of the capital improvement projects. “And that rating is from independent bond raters who say this is a well-managed city.”

As for spending money on capital improvements, Worth echoes what other councilmembers, past and present, say: Every one of the projects had broad community support, and “none of those things would have touched the magnitude of the roads problem. We haven’t invested in infrastructure in this county since the 1950s.

“Anyone who questions spending on the library, well, I don’t understand it,” she said. “That was the most successful private fundraiser in the city’s history.”

As for the new city hall structure, Worth said, “we have to have a place to put the cops.” The office of emergency services will be housed in the new city hall, which needs to meet firm earthquake regulations, and the move will leave room for much-needed senior housing, she said, “right near BART, right near needed services.”

Some critics say, looking back over annual expenditures of the city budget, that the city spent only about \$30,000 one year on road fixes. “That’s because yes, there was one year when we didn’t spend the money because it was combined with the next year so we could get a bigger bang for the buck,” Worth said. “We spent twice that amount the following year.”

Another issue of contention has been a lack of identification for where and when work on the infrastructure needs to be done. Last November’s measure included language calling for 500-car-trips per day in order to get bond money for repairs, while the current measure makes no

[SEE MEASURE E page 5]

Orinda's City Hall Scheduled for June Opening



SALLY HOGARTY

After three years of planning and building, Orinda’s new city hall will open in June. City manager Janet Keeter says the building was designed with green certification in mind. In order to obtain the certification, the design must utilize the natural climate of the area to reduce heating and cooling costs, look at energy-efficient electrical systems, and use recycled products when possible. According to Keeter, recycled, shredded blue jeans have been used for insulation in the building. The new city hall will house the planning department, the Contra Costa County building department, city administrative offices, and police services. It will also include a public meeting space and serve as the city’s emergency response center.

Concerts-in-the-Park Return June 12



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A group of children enjoy dancing to the music of Stone Soup, a popular group from last year’s concerts that will return again this season.

The Orinda Community Center Auxiliary has once again put together a great line-up of free concerts for this summer season. The tireless volunteers encourage people to come early, bring a picnic dinner, and enjoy a fun night under the stars. Concerts are on Tuesday nights from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the Community Center Park. The first concert in July, however, will be Wednesday afternoon, July 4, at 11:30 a.m., immediately

following the 4th of July parade.

The following is this season’s line-up: June 12 - The Crisis (blues and rock); June 19 - Spirit of 29 (Dixieland jazz); June 26 - Stone Soup (classic rock); July 4 - Silver Spurs (country western); July 10 - Spazmatics (80s rock); July 17 - Pladdohg (Celtic rock); July 24 - Lady Kaye and the Kings of Swing (swing and jazz); July 31 - Cal Alumni Big Band (Big Band jazz); and Aug. 7 - Mixed Nuts (rock, disco, blues).

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GLORIA BROWN BROBECK

Gloria Brown Brobeck – An Inspiration to Her Friends and Family

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

A combination of Chinese and British heritage and good-old American know-how, Gloria Brown Brobeck exudes energy, enthusiasm, and a zest for life that belies her 86 years. Given her cheery disposition, one might assume that Gloria has had an easy life. Nothing could be further from the truth. This wife, mother, and nationally recognized artist has overcome personal tragedies, cancer, and even blindness and managed to keep her natural optimism in tact.



MADELINE YATES
"Mothers and Daughters" was painted by Gloria Brown Brobeck to help her cope with her grief following the death of her daughter Jennifer from breast cancer. Both mother and daughter suffered from the disease.

Gloria, who first called Orinda home in the early 1950s, was the seventh child of her British born mother and seafaring father. Her elder siblings were all born in Hong Kong, where her maternal grandfather, a member of the British Royal Army, was stationed. Gloria's mother Catherine married a dashing sea captain also based in the British colony. A malaria epidemic in 1898 took Catherine's parents, and when a similar epidemic struck in 1920, the determined mother moved her young family to Alameda, where two of her sisters lived. Soon, Gloria was born.

Nicknamed Yank (the only one in her

family without a British accent!), Gloria gravitated to art from an early age. "I was always drawing and couldn't wait until geography class so I could color," she recalls.

By 19, Gloria was doing ads for some of the small businesses that lined Alameda's quaint downtown. She soon caught the attention of Capwell's advertising department and began designing their ads as well. Not only would the former department store giant provide additional artistic experience for the burgeoning artist, it also introduced her to fellow employee Frank Brown, who would become her husband. When World War II broke out, Frank joined the Air Force and Gloria did her duty as a draftsman in the Richmond shipyards, which honed her artistic skills as well.

The young couple moved to Orinda in 1952 to raise their four daughters, and Gloria became the first in a long line of artists to rent the de Laveaga barn from Ned and Allison de Laveaga. The young artist continued to paint while raising her growing family, attending classes at the Orinda Community Center, and leading tours to museums and galleries.

Her artwork began to be noticed with critics saying her large-scale paintings showed "technical precision and an almost whimsical flair." In the 1960s, the *Oakland Tribune* described her as a "joyous celebrant of color and light." But her big break came in 1963 when the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC accepted her work entitled "Garden" into the 28th Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting. "It boosted me from unknown artist to known artist and opened doors that most likely would have stayed closed," she explains. Other shows followed and soon she became known as the "noted

abstract painter of Orinda."

An employment opportunity for her husband, allowed Gloria to experience the thrill and excitement of living in New York. "It was during the 70s, and we met so many famous people. I even had a studio in Carnegie Hall," says Gloria. "The ushers got to know me and would come to my studio at intermission and let me know if they had extra seats for whatever concert was playing. I saw so many 'half' concerts. It was very exciting."

After five years in New York, the couple moved to Carmel. Gloria's art career was in high gear, but the headaches that had begun in New York worsened, and Gloria's vision began to blur. Her daughter Catherine remembers her mother describing the headaches as "blinding." How prophetic that description would be.

At the age of 53, Gloria was diagnosed with acute glaucoma, a form of the disease that affects a small percentage of the population and can lead to blindness. "I couldn't believe that the doctors were talking about me," she recalls. "Me, who had been a painter all my life? All of the senses are important, but for a painter, the eyes are the most essential."

Gloria underwent several operations on both eyes for first the glaucoma and then for the resultant cataracts. For two years,



SALLY HOGARTY
Gloria Brown Brobeck poses in front of her painting "Garden," one of many that grace her new home in San Francisco.

she was completely blind. "It really shook my whole identity, because I'm a very visual person." Gloria, who loved color, found herself in an all-gray world. But, with her usual tenacity, she didn't sit around feeling sorry for herself. Although she had to drop out of her wonderful world of art, she used books on tape to keep her mind

[SEE BROBECK page 10]

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THE ORINDA ASSOCIATION

**A Message From the OA Presidents
On the Road to Independence**



Kate Wiley and Jim Luini

Whom do you believe? There are still unanswered questions in many residents' minds about Measure E. The OA's final attempt to clarify those most frequently asked questions appears in our section of FAQs found on page six. It is a complex and multifaceted issue and deserves your careful attention and knowledge. If you still have questions you can go to the City of Orinda website at www.ci.orinda.ca.us or the Measure E website www.fixorindaroads.com, or call the Measure E office at 254-2007.

Orinda Celebrates Community with an Old-fashioned July 4th

Hot dogs, sodas, cold beer, music, games, information, community parade – that's what Orinda's July 4th 2007 is going to look like. Sponsorship, booth and parade applications are available to download from our website, www.orindaassociation.org, and it's still not too late! Join the fun and festivities, participate in the parade, or enjoy it from the sidelines and bring the whole family. The schedule of events is listed on this page.

The 24th Annual July 4th Parade and Festivities

- 7:30 a.m. -10 a.m. Pancake Breakfast
- 7:55 a.m. Flag Raising Ceremony
- 8 a.m. Fun Run and Haley's Run for a Reason
- 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. Friends of Orinda Library Book Sale
- 10 a.m. Parade
- 11:30 a.m. -2 p.m. Food, Concert in the Park, Sponsored by the Orinda Community Center Auxiliary

We'd like to thank our sponsors without whom this wonderful event would not happen. At press time, our sponsors included:

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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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Walk. Run. Laugh. Remember

By SUZANNE TOM
Contributing Writer

Haley's 4th of July Run for a Reason is in its third year and boy is it taking off. This year, there are twice as many local sponsors who joined the commitment to raising awareness and money for the Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC) program.

Haley's 4th of July Run for a Reason is a five-mile run or two-mile family walk that kicks off Orinda's 4th of July festivities. Hundreds of participants come early to support the SUDC program and walk in memory of Haley Tom, one of Orinda's own toddlers who died seven years ago in her sleep at the age of 21 months. Since Haley was over one year, her death could not be considered SIDS. She belongs to a lesser known category SUDC for children over the age of 12 months.

In addition to Haley's run and walk, there will also be a Haley's 4th of July Run for a Reason event area by the tennis courts. There you will find Haley's second annual silent auction. Last year's silent auction raised almost \$3,300 in just a few hours. Home Depot will also be hosting its Kids' Workshop in honor of Haley. Kids can make their own wooden craft to take home - for free! Quenchers Smoothies will be selling smoothies and donating their proceeds to the SUDC program.

New this year will be a memory board located in Haley's event area. All bereaved parents and families are encouraged to bring a picture or write a message in memory of their child. Haley's 4th of July Run for a Reason would like to celebrate their lives

along with Haley's short but amazing life. You can also pre-order a special colored t-shirt in memory of your child. It will be waiting for you on the day of the event.

For the last two years, Haley's 4th of July Run for a Reason has raised more than \$40,000. Haley's parents still do not know the cause of her death. Countless other parents share a similar struggle.

For more information, please call Suzanne Tom at (925) 258-9097 or visit www.angelhaley.org. To find out more about the SUDC program, please visit www.sudc.org.

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Letters to the Editor

EDITOR'S NOTE: Orinda residents are known for being involved with their community, and we believe that their opinions should be covered as much as possible in *The Orinda News*. To that end, we have devoted almost four pages to the plethora of Letters to the Editor received on Measure E. This, however, was not enough space for all the letters received by the May 5 deadline. To ensure that the writers' voices are heard, we have added an additional page to our web edition of the paper. They can be found at www.orindaassociation.org, June issue, page 25.

Measure E Better Than Q

The Orinda City Council has looked hard at Measure Q since it failed last November, and made some good changes to it. These include making all public streets eligible for repairs (not just streets with more than 500 car trips a day), budgeting more city money for road repairs in addition to the bond money, as well as funds from EBMUD and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, and creating a permanent Citizens' oversight committee to decide which streets get repaired and to monitor the city's infrastructure so it won't get worse.

The new Measure E is better than Measure Q was. This is how the process is supposed to work — people listen to each other and come together to solve problems.

One of the reasons we moved to Orinda many years ago is that we felt it was a place with a strong sense of community. Now it's time for us to join together in that community and work to make needed improvements to our roads, streets, and drains. These are all issues that affect our safety and deserve our attention. Please vote yes on Measure E.

— Tom and Carol Sueoka

Potholes Keep Speed Down

As a resident of Orinda but for a few months, my entitlement for an opinion on Measures Q and E may be considered moot by many long-time residents. But I must agree that many of the roads in town are definitely in need of some repair. Miner Road, on which I live, is a prime example. And especially my short stretch of Miner Road, which begins at Honey Hill and ends at Diablo View Drive.

At little more than a half mile, the road is all hills and blind curves with no sidewalks and no shoulders. Walking my dog on Miner, as I do twice a day, has become a trial of listening intensely for oncoming vehicles and trying to get on the side of the road where we can be seen by them before they're right on top of us.

Frequently cars and trucks exceed the 25 MPH limit. Even that posted limit is way too fast for blind curves. My fear is that once Miner is resurfaced and all the dips

and potholes are gone this will inspire even faster passage by irresponsible drivers.

So please excuse this rather selfish no vote come June.

— J.S. Grogan

500 Trip Requirement Not in Measure E

If you live in Orinda, you might have received a flyer that says your street won't be repaired under Measure E if it has fewer than 500 car trips a day. This is just wrong.

Measure Q, the previous bond measure last November, had the 500-trip requirement. This has been eliminated in Measure E. All Orinda public roads will be eligible for repairs if Measure E passes. The city council made several good changes to Measure E, and this is one of them.

It's time to stop the politicizing of important safety issues in Orinda. Let's work together to make our community better, and pass Measure E.

— Rebecca Dahlberg

Open Letter to Orinda City Councilman Tom McCormick Regarding the Orinda Measure E Cover-Up Caper

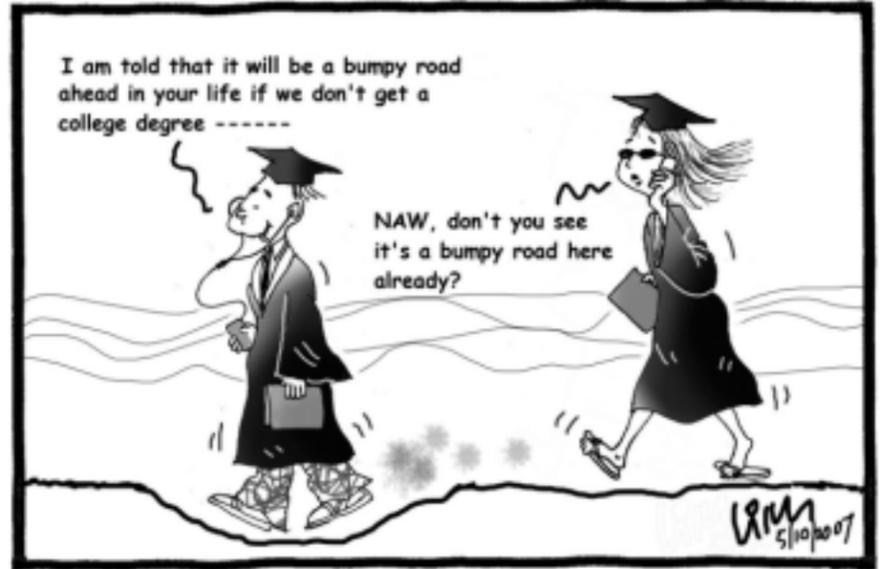
Now that the failure of the Orinda city attorney to clearly explain in his supposedly impartial analysis of Measure E that the bond funds would be used only on roads that have 500 vehicle daily trips and would in effect deny funds to 63 percent of the residential roads on which 80 percent of the property owners and voters live, there are several suggestions we would give that might help the city council out of the current embarrassing predicament of deceiving Orinda voters.

The reason we are writing to you is because with your legal background you realize that conflict of interest concerns arising from participating in election fraud can tarnish one's reputation beyond repair. Your election brochure stated "I will work to be a good representative who recognizes that every dollar spent is coming from you — taxpayers." This bond election deals with the taxpayer's dollars so it is fitting that our suggestions be taken seriously. We suggest the following:

1. Cancel the election and pay for the reprinting of the corrected ballots so they can be mailed on time. Or

2. Print an apology and a corrected explanation of the limitations of the use of the bond funds imposed by the 500 vehicle daily trips rule. This can be mailed along with the ballot and of course paid for by the city. Or

3. Issue a special edition of the Orinda Way (four weeks before the June election) in which an apology is given for the deceitful actions of the city council in this cover up and a clear explanation of the 500 vehicle daily role specifying that funds will only be used on the arterials and collectors roads as noted in Orinda infrastructure finance plan adopted by the city on



February 6, 2007.

We hope you will demonstrate your leadership ability and take our suggestions to heart.

— Richard J. Townsend

Measure E Bad For Senior Citizens

The most obnoxious aspect of Measure E, the \$120 million bond measure to fix Orinda's roads, is that it attacks senior citizens of modest means.

Measure E, if passed, will force homeowners whose dwellings have an assessed value of \$1 million to pay an extra \$530 annually in property tax. The tax on homes worth \$2 million will be double: \$1,060 per year. Homes in the \$1 million to \$2 million range are common in Orinda.

Most senior citizens live on modest, fixed incomes. These individuals should not be forced to flee their homes because of an outrageous property tax.

On June 5, Orinda voters will have a chance to vote on Measure E, which is labeled as a \$60 million bond measure. However, the real cost of the measure, after interest is paid, is double: \$120 million.

Orinda's roads do need repair. However, the supporters of Measure E have not devised a plan that is fair to senior citizens.

Voters should soundly reject Measure E. To fix Orinda's roads, there should be a new ballot measure that exempts elderly residents living on modest incomes.

— Richard S. Colman

Seniors Not Burdened by Measure E

A recent letter to the editor said that the Orinda road bond, Measure E, will be a heavy financial burden on seniors. The letter writer doesn't seem to understand how Proposition 13 works. One of its main aims was to stabilize and reduce the burden of taxes on retired people who are on fixed incomes.

In California, houses are assessed at their purchase price. The base assessed value

can only go up by 1 percent a year. When a house is remodeled, only the value of the addition is added to the assessment. So even if a house has a market value of over a million dollars, the assessed value may be only a small fraction of that. Seniors who have lived in Orinda for a long time do not have houses assessed at a million dollars, and will not be paying a large amount. Your assessed value is shown in the upper right section of your property tax bill. There's a chart on the www.fixorindaroads.com, in the Frequently Asked Question section, that lets you see how much Measure E would cost you based on your assessed value. It's a pretty good deal, compared to the cost of repairing your car every year, and will help keep Orinda an attractive place to live.

— John Turman

Can't Rely on Fire District

On page 12 of the voter's guide for Measure E, the \$120 million bond tax on the June 5 Orinda ballot, the guide lists a \$3,400,000 contribution by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District for the upgrading of Orinda water pipes.

At the March 21, 2007, meeting of the fire district board of directors Mr. John Wyro, the president of the board, said that the fire district would not guarantee any contribution and that the contribution for each future year would be decided by the board at that future time; and that if the board decided other needs were more important, there would be no contribution. This is in spite of the fact that the board will raise Orinda's fire flow tax by 20 percent, supposedly for the upgrading of Orinda water pipes.

Since the fire district board has never spent any money on Orinda water pipes, the board obviously considers Orinda water pipes a very low priority. With this in mind, the chances are excellent that in future years the board will find that other needs are more important and make no contribution.

At the March 17 fire board meeting, Mr. Wyro further stated that the City of Orinda

[SEE LETTERS page 16]

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

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For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or send email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the August issue is June 18.

FARMERS' MARKET / POLICE

Farmers' Market in New Location



SALLY HOGARTY

Members of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, city council, city staff, and farmers' market gathered together to open the summer market at its new location on Orinda Way in front of the Orinda Community Center.

◆ MEASURE E from page 1

distinction. A newly appointed Citizens' Oversight Commission will make recommendations to the city council on what needs to be fixed first.

And while federal funding has been secured by Orinda to make repairs to Moraga Way, volunteers such as Dennis Fay, executive director of Alameda Congestion Management Agency (who was involved with last year's campaign but not the current one) would like to see further thought go into the process for assigning construction crews.

"For instance, one of the questions I'm going to ask is, if you have money for Moraga Way, what kind of money could we use from the measure to fix it so that it doesn't have to be fixed again for a long time," Fay said. The clay soil throughout Orinda sometimes makes fixing sore spots more time-consuming and costly, he said.

As an example, he said one section of Moraga Way near Miramonte High School has lost its surface pavement, but the sub-

structure is fine. "That just needs to be paved," he said. But another area farther north near Glorietta has lost its base. "That needs to be dug out and replaced," he said. "And those are the kinds of questions I hope the staff is starting to think about."

Citizens' Oversight Commission

- Sandy Roadcap,**
term thru February 28, 2009
- Art Haigh,**
term thru February 28, 2010
- Kevin Coleman,**
term thru February 28, 2010
- Richard Nelson,**
term thru February 28, 2010
- Robert McCleary,**
term thru February 28, 2011
- Dennis Fay,**
term thru February 28, 2011

POLICE BLOTTER



Compiled by Haleh Allen,
Orinda Police Department
April 2007

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 62 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 5 incidents in the areas of Camino Sobrante, Overhill Rd., Estates Dr., and Valencia Rd.

Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 2 incidents in the areas of Bates Blvd. and Underhill Rd.

All Other Petty Thefts: 4 incidents in the areas of Theatre Square, Diablo View Dr., Oakwood Rd. and Camino Sobrante.

Grand Theft From Vehicle (theft of more than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 4 incidents in the areas of Camino Sobrante, Owl Hill Ct., Roselle Ln. and St. James Ct.

All Other Grand Thefts: 5 incidents in the areas of Camino Sobrante, Altarinda Rd., Theatre Square, and Lombardy Ln.

Vehicle Theft: 4 incidents in the areas of Woodland Rd., El Toyonal, Altarinda Rd. and Tara Rd.

Residential Burglary: 9 incidents in

the areas of Longridge Rd, Woodland Rd., Oak Rd., Underhill Rd., Brookwood Rd., Southwaite Ct., Claremont Ave., and Estates Dr.

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

Vandalism: 7 incidents in the areas of Coral Dr., Stein Way, Miner Rd., La Cuesta, Camino Sobrante, and Donna Maria Way.

Identity Theft: 6 incidents in the areas of Snowberry Ct., Monte Vista Rd., E Altarinda Dr., Haciendas Rd., Ellen Ct. and Valley View Ln.

Credit Card Fraud/Forgery: 2 incidents in the areas of Piedmont Ave. and Ridgegate Rd.

Special Note: Slow down Lamorinda! With three speed-related deaths in as many months, the police departments of Orinda, Moraga, and Lafayette joined forces to launch a speed crackdown. The 12-week program, which lasts until mid-July, will target certain streets in each of the three communities. First, trailers showing a driver's speed will be stationed on the streets. Next, traffic officers will issue tickets.

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Emissions Testing	Yes ✓	Some
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Trust - Always Get What You Pay For	Yes ✓	Some
Excellent Customer Service	Yes ✓	Some
Green Business	Yes ✓	1 (in CCC)
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Locally Owned/Family Business	Yes ✓	No
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Local Community Support and Involvement	Yes ✓	No



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MEASURE E QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for June Ballot Measure E

While there's little disagreement that Orinda's roads need repair, questions remain over how best to fix the problem. The city council has placed a measure on the June ballot asking voters to approve a \$58.6 million bond measure – Measure E – to help pay for infrastructure repairs. A similar measure failed to get the required two-thirds majority vote last fall.

While opinions vary and passions run high on both sides of the issue, certain questions seem to come up again and again. Below, are answers to the most frequently asked questions around Measure E. Answers have been compiled from information and documents presented at public meetings.

Q How does Measure E differ from Measure Q, which didn't pass last November?

A Both measures seek funding to repair Orinda's aging infrastructure, including roads, drains, and water pipes. And, both measures seek voter approval to issue bonds to raise the necessary funds.

The most significant differences are the amount, the criteria for road repair, and the oversight. Measure E seeks slightly less bond funding – \$58.6 million as opposed to \$66 million sought in Measure Q. Additionally, Measure E eliminated the stipulation that priority for repairs would go to those roads with 500 car trips per day or more and placed greater emphasis on the Citizens' Oversight Commission, which has been appointed to oversee the use of funds.

Q Is there a list of roads to be fixed and the order in which the repairs will be done?

A No. All major and public residential roads are eligible for funding. The Measure E Citizens' Oversight Commission will make recommendations to the city council. While the commission's recommendations are not binding, the city council has pledged to give highest consideration to its recommendations.

Q Why was bond financing chosen over a parcel tax?

A The city council-appointed oversight commission spent two years studying both the problems of Orinda's aging infrastructure and possible funding mechanisms for addressing the problem. That commission concluded that bonds were a preferable funding mechanism and the city council agreed with that recommendation.

This determination was made largely because bonds will provide more money up front, thus allowing the repairs to be completed in a more timely manner. Additionally, it would require a parcel tax in the range of \$575 per year for the next 33 years to generate the funds equivalent to the bond proposal and the road repairs would be spread out over 30 years.

For the homeowner, the biggest difference between a bond and a parcel tax is that bonds are taxed on the assessed value of property whereas parcel taxes are the same for everyone. Typically, bonds are used to finance large capital projects and parcel taxes provide annual tax revenue that can be applied to operational costs.

Finally, an independent poll conducted on behalf of the city found that voters were more likely to pass a bond measure than a parcel tax.

Q What controls will be put into place to assure that the funds are used for their intended purpose and that the work will be done on time and within budget?

A By law, Measure E funds can be used only for the measure's stated infrastructure repairs; money cannot be diverted to other city projects. The measure does not address specific controls on the scope of work, but it does call for the appointment of a Citizens' Oversight Commission to guide the city's decision-making and oversee the use of funds. The commission will hold public meetings, take public input, and post the minutes from

their meetings on the city's website.

Q Who is on the Citizens' Oversight Commission and how were they chosen?

A The city council has appointed six residents to serve on the Citizens' Oversight Commission; these individuals were selected from an applicant pool of 22. The oversight commission members are: Kevin Coleman, a partner with the accounting firm KPMG; Dennis Fay, an MIT-trained engineer and executive director of the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency; Art Haigh, a retired audit partner with PriceWaterhouse and chair of the city's infrastructure commission; Bob McCleary, a Stanford-trained engineer and executive director of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority; Richard Nelson, Ph.D., an economist and vice president of Wells Fargo Bank; and Sandy Roadcap, a Princeton and MIT-trained chemical engineer, former project and financial manager for Chevron, and self-employed software consultant.

Q Why did the city spend money on new offices instead of road repairs?

A The decision to build new offices was made because the city will have to vacate the temporary space the offices have occupied in trailers on the former Pine Grove School site. The school district, which owns that property, has entered into a sales agreement with Pulte Homes for that property. While the city had, at one time, considered relocating its offices to the old Orinda library, the decision to build new offices was based on a number of factors, the most notable being that the relatively low cost differential between renovating the old library (including seismic upgrading) and constructing a new facility, and the fact that the city must actively seek opportunities to provide more affordable housing in order to qualify for state transportation funds. Funds from the Gateway Valley project will be used to build affordable senior housing on the site of the old library. Additionally, with limited availability of commercial space to lease – and the premium rents on Orinda properties – the city council at the time determined that owning office space was more economical over the long run. While this issue continues to be debated, it's clear that any possible savings seen from renting or renovating the old library would not satisfy the infrastructure repairs.

Q Does Measure E include money for on-going maintenance of roads?

A No. Measure E funds are to repair

existing problems. The long-range plan for maintenance relies on money from the city's annual operating budget.

Q How much will Measure E cost me?

A The average cost of the bond measure is \$30 per \$100,000 of a property's assessed value. An average is used because the cost will vary over time; bonds will be issued in three phases in a timeframe that accommodates projects that can reasonably be undertaken at any given time. The first bond will cost homeowners \$19 per \$100,000 of assessed value; by 2013, after all three bonds have been issued, the cost increases to \$53 per \$100,000 of assessed value.

The owner of a property assessed at the average value of \$400,000 can expect to pay \$76 per year in the first five years; this amount will increase when a second bond is issued. While it's impossible to say with certainty what the interest rate on bonds will be in the future, it is estimated that the average homeowner will pay an overall average of \$120 per year over the life of the bonds. Longtime residents with an assessed value of \$200,000 can expect to pay an average of \$60 per year; conversely, residents with an assessed value of \$1 million will pay an average of \$300 per year.

Q Why is the city responsible for all of the infrastructure needs? Shouldn't EBMUD and the fire district share some of the costs to improve their pipes?

A The city is responsible for 92 miles of Orinda roadways, and, while EBMUD owns and operates the water lines, the agency only upgrades pipes when they fail; it is not responsible for maintaining the pipes to currently acceptable flow standards.

Measure E seeks to raise \$58.6 million toward a total "fix" of \$95.9 million. In addition to the Measure E bond money, the 33-year infrastructure funding plan calls for a \$1.2 million advance from EBMUD (based on the Rockridge model for water line upgrades), \$3.4 million from the Moraga Orinda Fire District, and \$30.2 million (or \$915,150 per year) of on-going city funding, and \$2.5 million over the next five years from the city's reserves.

The Letters to the Editor in this issue and on pg. 25 of our web edition (www.orindaassociation.org) raise additional questions. There are also two websites with information on Measure E: www.ci.orinda.ca.us and www.fixorindaroads.com.



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HELPING HURRICANE VICTIMS

Rebuilding Lives One Home at a Time

Orinda residents help victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

By BOBBIE DODSON
Contributing Writer

The pull on the heartstrings for the plight of the Hurricane Katrina and Rita survivors is strong for the team from Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC) that recently went back east for the second time.

Sixteen of the group's 24 members made the trip, and for three it was their third mission when the church has sent groups to help to clean up in New Orleans, build houses in Mississippi, and this time, to rebuild homes in Houma, Louisiana. Workers ranged in age from 27 to 78; 10 were Orindans.

Staying in the Good Earth Village under the auspices of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the group worked at four locations. Two were located at what is known as mobile homes, although in the south they are more commonly referred to as manufactured housing. Hundreds sit on individual lots. The local teams shingled roofs, painted eaves, made a porch, installed light fixtures, reinforced floors, painted interior ceilings and braced the new roofs. Engineers hope that by adding a roof, which is then anchored with large beams placed close to the house, their bases set in concrete, that the manufactured houses will survive future hurricanes.

When all the work is completed, the houses will be raised up on pillars of cement blocks about seven feet off the ground to further protect them if water surges through. One homeowner who met with the team had raised his own unit, four inches at a time, using jacks, to a height of eight feet.

At another home, the team had to step carefully as there were holes in the porch decking and also in the floors of some of the rooms. Volunteers tackled various repair jobs, including building a new porch floor – even though the family of five was in the house the entire time. While this created some negative aspects, volunteer Darlene James said, in the long run it was a positive because it offered the opportunity to become well-acquainted. "We grew to love each one

of them, and it was difficult to say goodbye. The love and support the family received seemed to mean as much, or more, than the material things we did."

Sally Wirthman said, "The camp leader, Lauren, told us to be careful not to judge others, but I found myself constantly making judgments on everything from the cleanliness of the house to what they fed their dog. Then I thought of Lauren's words and tried to remember that God loves all of his children equally and only He should be the judge."

"It's all about building bridges of friendship, understanding and hope among us," Nancy Brown added. "Also, it sends a message to the younger generation. It's love in action. My daughter was so proud of me for going a second time."

This author worked on a house that the owner said had 12 feet of water go through it. It had been taken down to the studs, with the outside walls and roof standing. As insulation went in, along with paneling, ceiling tiles, windows, cabinets, and bathroom fixtures, it began to look like a brand-new house.

Three workers from Detroit were there to finish the work of installing linoleum and painting the outside. The owner, Muriel, a 67-year-old widow, couldn't thank everyone enough. She's been out of her home for a year and a half and can't wait to live in it again. She'll also be near her neighbor friends and her favorite fishing hole.

Much remains to be done throughout the area, as well as in New Orleans, which we toured one day. There are still miles of unoccupied homes needing repair. Hundreds of FEMA trailers sit in front yards as home owners try to get the funds to make homes habitable again. Most of the dwellings in the 9th Ward have been torn down. A former resident told us he didn't think it would ever be rebuilt, and he pointed to where his home once stood. "I just hope the rest of the country doesn't forget about us," he said. "We still need so much help."

The Rev. John Weems, who led the LOPC group, summed up the trip, "It was a reminder that God is in charge. Future hurricanes will come to Louisiana just as earthquakes will occur in California. It is our response to these natural occurrences that counts. I pray that our presence in Houma is a reminder that Christ is present."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Orindans were part of the group helping rebuild houses. (back row standing L-R) Joan Breece, Maitland Demock, Vince Wirthman, Dick James, Conrad Breece, Darlene James, Kirsten Breece, (Sitting L-R) Sally Wirthman with the family who lives in the house Miss Mary, her two daughters, and two grandchildren.

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Between the Lines

Summer Reading –Some Suggestions for the Road

Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



Whether we are 6 or 60 (or even 76), one of the important things we do when packing a beach bag or a daypack for a summer adventure is to arm ourselves with reading material. For some, uninterrupted hours on a beach or a plane are signals to catch up on the world's finest literature, though for most, the idea of Proust co-mingling with sand fleas is somewhat contrarian.

A spirited discussion at Orinda Books recently highlighted a more lighthearted approach to vacation reading. One of our bookstore friends attests that there is nothing better than Sophie Kinsella's frothy and funny *Shopaholic* series. Start with *Confessions of a Shopaholic* and you will be unable to resist the further adventures of Becky Bloomwood, a London financial journalist who continually gives new meaning to the elasticity of credit card debt.

And if you haven't decided where your

summer paths will lead, Patricia Schultz, who gave us *1,000 Places to See Before You Die*, has turned her attention to this side of the world. *One Thousand Places to See in the U.S.A. and Canada Before You Die* (new this month) is a wonderful collection that takes the reader from gold-mining trails in Alaska to the shelly beaches of Sanibel Island.

And, no matter our age, our holidays do not always turn out quite the way we anticipate. In *Junie B. First Grader Aloha-ha-ha*, Barbara Park's lively youngster has a unique set of vacation problems when she travels to Hawaii. The 6-to-9-year old set will love Junie's misadventures on the plane or on land when a tropical bird gets tangled in her hair.

For the more mature (than Junie B.) among us, some fine new novels are just making their paperback appearances in May and June—just in time to make

splendid travel companions. Sara Gruen's *Water for Elephants*, finally made its paperback debut on May 1. This winning novel, set in a 1930s traveling circus, garnered praise everywhere. If you haven't read it—you must! And Julia Glass's (*Three Junes*) second novel, *The Whole World Over*, is a contemporary family story that takes the reader from New York to New Mexico in a tale of the tangled complexities of love. The paperback edition is due at Orinda Books on June 12.

If something slightly *noir* is to your taste, Alan Furst's fine World War II spy thriller, *The Foreign Correspondent*, is just out in paperback. Furst is a master at creating the atmosphere of Paris in 1938. Prepare to be totally engaged.

For non-fiction fans, Peter Hessler's *Oracle Bones: A Journey Through Time in China* finally has made it into paperback. His previous book, *River Town*, was the story of his two years as a teacher in Fuling, a city on the Yangtze. His new book is a further fascinating look at China and its people.

Among the new hardcover novels that will be excellent company on your travels, is one of the most highly anticipated books published this spring. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is the long-awaited second novel from Khaled Hosseini, whose *The Kite Runner* was a runaway bestseller. This time, his protagonists are women, but Afghanistan's turbulent contemporary history is again the setting in a painful and powerful narrative.

Or consider a return visit from Martin Cruz Smith's Russian sleuth, Arkady Renko. We first met him in *Gorky Park*, and

the adventures of this introspective detective have intrigued us from Russia to Havana Bay. Smith's new thriller is *Stalin's Ghost*, due on Orinda Books shelves in mid-June.

Best-selling author Ian McEwan (*Atonement*, *Saturday*) has a new book, *On Chesil Beach*, arriving at Orinda Books on June 5. Lovers of literary fiction will delight in McEwan's mastery in depicting the intersection of two lives in a marital drama gone sadly awry.

And, at home in Orinda Village, Orinda Books is hosting four notable author appearances in June and early July:

- On June 7 at 4 p.m., local author M. Allen Cunningham, who wrote *The Green Age of Asher Witherow*, will discuss and sign copies of his new novel, *Lost Son*, a powerful story of the life of Rainier Maria Rilke.

- On June 14 at 4 p.m. Orinda author, Carol Pogash, will introduce her new book, *Seduced by Madness: The True Story of the Susan Polk Murder Case*. Her book is the definitive story of a local tragedy.

- Amanda Ward, who wrote the very compelling *How To Be Lost*, will be on hand to read from her new novel, *Forgive Me*, on Tuesday, June 26 at 4 p.m.

- Thrity Umrigar will be at Orinda Books on Tuesday, July 3 at 2 p.m. to discuss her new novel, *If Today Be Sweet*. Her bestselling novel, *The Space Between Us*, just out in paperback, was a moving story of women's lives in contemporary Mumbai.

Happy trails and be sure to have a good book in your bag.

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Save the Dates: Orinda Library Revives Tuesday Evening Fireside Chat Series

By MOYA STONE
Staff Writer

On April 24 the Orinda Library kicked off a revival of the Fireside Chat series with local author David Smethurst, who discussed his new book *Tripoli: The United States' First War on Terror*. An informal event, a group of 20 people gathered by the fireplace in the periodical section of the library and settled in to hear Smethurst read from his book, and later discuss how he researched his subject, how he got published, and where he wrote the manuscript. "Right in this very building," said Smethurst.

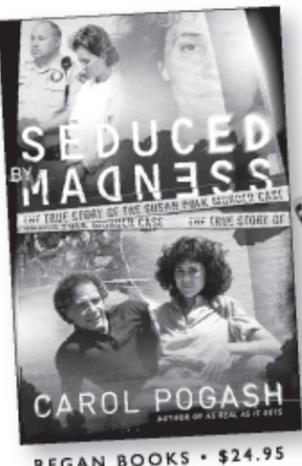
The brainchild of then adult services librarian Laura Martinengo, the first Fireside Chat Series started back in 2002. "It was partly an experiment to use the area by the fireplace and partly a way to do small programs in an intimate setting," says

library assistant Margot Abbott. Unfortunately, the first series petered out by the end of 2002. But new acting branch librarian, Caroline Gick, thought it was time to bring the series back. "This is a really nice way to showcase the library," said Gick.

The series will be a regular event held the last Tuesday of every month. The speakers will vary and include authors, professors, and other experts in their fields. "We're choosing different topics to appeal to a variety of people," said Gick. "We want to reach out to community members who may not be regular users of the library."

Orinda resident Rosemarie Weil attended the first Fireside Chat series and is happy to see it going again. "I think it's interesting and informative," said Weil, "and it is enlightening to hear how authors attack their subject."

[SEE LIBRARY page 10]



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THREE-QUARTER CENTURY / WOMAN'S CLUB

Eighth Annual Three-Quarter Century Club Luncheon

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Following an eight-year tradition of honoring Orinda residents 75 years old or older, the Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary and Prudential Real Estate will once again sponsor the annual luncheon. The event will take place June 21 at the Orinda Community Church. This year's featured speaker is Michael Muir, great-grandson of famed environmentalist John Muir.

Access Adventure

Michael Muir will primarily speak about his company, Access Adventure, which helps mobility challenged individuals enjoy outdoor activities. This unique program uses wheelchair-accessible horsedrawn carriages to provide open space recreation and wilderness access for people living with the challenges of a physical disability. The

program is open to people of all ages with compromised mobility, not just wheelchair users, and there is no charge to participate. "We focus on what is possible, not on what we have lost. The worst disability is a bad attitude," says Muir.

A lifelong horseman, Michael has lived with multiple sclerosis for more than 40 years. When he could no longer ride, he taught himself to drive the horses. Muir comments, "Even though I can't ride anymore...when I put the reins in my hands, we start that great communication between man and horse. It's the dance of life and I'm in it." Refusing to be daunted by the relentless course of his disease, Muir credits his life with horses and the ability to enjoy nature with keeping him active and strong. In 2001, he led an international group of horsemen and women with disabilities on a remarkable 3,000 mile, 10-month journey across America, driving



VALERIE HOTZ
Helen Veruk and Bob Holabird, both 96-years-of-age, were crowned Queen and King of last year's Three-Quarter Century Club luncheon.

wheelchair-accessible horsedrawn carriages from Mission San Diego in California all the way to Washington, DC. In 2003, he and Cindy Goff, a paraplegic horsewoman from Kentucky, drove a carriage, powered by Michael's horse Domino, from Indiana to the Gulf of Mexico along the same route John Muir traveled in 1867.

Three-Quarter Century Club founder John Fazel will once again be master of ceremonies for the June 21 luncheon, which is free to those 75 and over and \$10 for guests. In addition to a featured speaker, the luncheon will crown a king and queen and give awards for such designations as the oldest married couple, youngest 75-year-old, and more.

According to Fazel, there may be as many as 600 seniors over 75-years-old living in Orinda. To get the word out, he contacts churches, senior organizations, and puts notices in local newspapers. If you are an Orinda resident 75 years of age or older, or know someone who is, contact Fazel at (925) 324-2017.

Orinda Woman's Club Awards Scholarships to Deserving Women



SALLY HOGARTY

(front row L-R) Mary Plante, Manuela Heredia, Leticia Davis, La Victoria Thomas, Paula Gray, and Maria d'Amore (back row L-R) Daniella Poy-Wing, Krystal Dennis, Kristi Clontz, and Katrina Tuttle.

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

A festive May luncheon delivered more than good food to 11 deserving women who also received scholarships to further their education. The annual event, sponsored by the Orinda Woman's Club, awarded \$10,500 in scholarships to young women from the Independent Living Skills program, which provides a bridge for young people aging out of foster care, and Project Second Chance, which helps adult women improve their living situations. Many of the women plan to attend community colleges before transferring to four-year schools to

pursue degrees in either education or medicine. Two of the recipients, who have received several scholarships over the years from the Woman's Club, have already transferred to four-year institutions: Krystal Dennis graduates this June from UC Berkeley with a degree in business administration and Daniella Poy-Wing will graduate next year from Samuel Merritt School of Nursing with a B.S. degree in nursing.

Miramonte High School senior, Hannah Pickar, was also awarded a scholarship for her involvement in community work, extra-curricular activities, and for maintaining a high grade point average.



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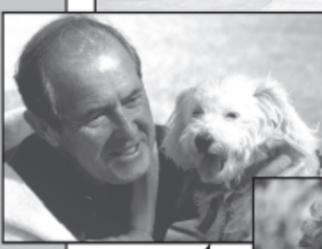
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GLORIA BROWN BROBECK

◆ BROBECK from page 2

sharp and developed her other senses. She became as independent as possible – taking the bus and walking the beach, counting steps in order to find her way back. She became very involved with the Lions Club and utilized their blind center where she learned Braille. Years later, she would do a painting of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan and incorporate Braille in the background. “I saw so many singular acts of courage from my new friends. They had so many more problems than I did. I took courage from them,” Gloria explains.

Two years later when the bandages were removed from her left eye, Gloria’s first vision was of the green leaves on her favorite oak tree. She cried. “It was too intense, almost unbelievable, and terribly, achingly beautiful.”

After almost eight years of struggling with her eye problems, Gloria finally returned to her first love. “I vowed to paint, paint, paint.” But things had changed. Gloria’s lack of depth perception (due to the limited use of her right eye) made it impossible for the artist to create her famed large, bold canvases. Gloria decided to try colored pencil drawings as she learned to cope with her visual limitations. Several of these drawings ended up in the Monterey Museum of Art. Gradually, she re-learned her craft: “It was a wonderful lesson in the human capacity to reinvent itself, the capacity to grow, to learn, to change.”

Her daughter Catherine describes her mother’s transition eloquently: “The process of learning to see again led to learning to paint again. My mother is proof that art is not as much a function of sight

as it is of vision. Ironically, her paintings became more free following her visual limitations.”

Excited by her return to the art world, Gloria rented an apartment in San Francisco and turned it into a studio. She was just getting her life back to normal when her husband Frank had a heart attack followed by a series of strokes. She nursed him for over a year until another heart attack and brain hemorrhage took his life at the age of 71. The family returned to the Orinda Community Church for Frank’s service. “The pastor, Frank Baldwin, was just wonderful,” recalls Gloria.

To cope with the loneliness of losing her husband of 47 years, Gloria attended a support group at Orinda Community Church. “I saw old friends I hadn’t seen for decades. It was a thread of continuity I needed,” she recalls. One former friend was Bill Brobeck, a gifted scientist at UC Berkeley. Gloria had known Bill’s wife several years before through her art classes at the Community Center. The renewed friendship eventually led to romance. He shared his knowledge of science, and she exposed him to the symphony, opera, and theater. “I think we balanced each other pretty well,” laughs Gloria.

Bill and Gloria married, and she found herself back in Orinda where she concentrated on her painting and turning the expansive yard at their Sleepy Hollow home into a colorful garden. She also became involved with the Orinda Historical Society, where she served as president in 2000, and gave tours of museums and gallery shows through the Community Center.

Bill’s optimistic personality proved an



MADELINE YATES
Gloria Brown Brobeck (center) is joined by two San Francisco painters at the opening of her recent show at the King Gallery in San Francisco.

invaluable asset when, just one year after their marriage, Gloria was diagnosed with Paget’s disease, a serious skin cancer that affects the breasts. In early 1990s, just a few short years after Gloria’s bout with cancer, her daughter Jennifer was diagnosed with breast cancer. Jennifer, who was a single mom with a young son, recovered and continued her work as a commercial artist. Five years later, however, Jennifer’s cancer returned. This time it was in her brain. As Jennifer battled her cancer, Bill had his own battle with Alzheimer’s disease. “It just seemed so unfair that Bill, with his brilliant mind, would develop this horrible illness,” adds Gloria. The wife and mother lost Bill in 1998, a grandson in a drowning accident in 2000, and Jennifer in 2001.

To help her through her grief, Gloria did a series of 12 paintings. To her surprise, the art spoke to others as well. Several of the paintings became part of the Cancer Fund of San Francisco’s show “The Art and Outrage of Breast Cancer.” The exhibit traveled across the United States, Europe, and ironically, to Hong Kong. One of the paintings, “Entrapment,” was included in a handbook for people with paralysis published by actor/activist Christopher Reeve.

As she worked through her grief, Gloria realized that her other children and grandchildren didn’t know much about their rich family history. As usual, Gloria

took action and began writing her memoirs. Aplytly entitled “Collage,” the book, graced with Gloria’s painting of her Alameda home on the cover, has lessons of courage and survival for all. Her daughter Catherine writes in the foreword of the book, “Triumph over adversity speaks to my mother’s character. She is a woman of substance, one who is not easily daunted. Her sight might have been impaired, but her sense of truth and form are still intact.”

Unfortunately, Gloria’s sight has continued to worsen making it impossible for her to drive. Determined not to lose her valued independence, Gloria sold her lovely Orinda home and moved to the Carlisle in San Francisco in September. At the Carlisle, she has a beautiful apartment and can easily walk to some of the galleries currently showing her work or catch public transportation to visit old friends in Orinda or to have her hair done by her long-time hairdresser Jan at Orinda’s Coiffeur Hut.

When asked about her sunny disposition and perseverance, she responds, “I believe in the goodness of people. I don’t like pretense or sham. After all, we only go around once and as the Cole Porter song says, ‘What a swell party it is!’”

◆ LIBRARY from page 8

Harold Mantle lives in Lafayette and saw a flier for the new series on one of his regular visits to the Orinda Library. “I was interested in this particular subject,” said Mantle. “I’d come again depending on the subject. If it’s quilting I might send my wife.”

Upcoming chats include a presentation by Dr. Beshara Doumani on Academic Freedom after September 11, and Dr. Jay Sordean from the Foundation for Wellness Professionals will speak about natural solutions to allergy problems.

The Fireside Chat Series continues the last Tuesday of every month, at 7 p.m. at the Orinda Library. The event is free and open to the public. For more information call 254-2184, or go to the website at www.contra-costa.lib.ca.us/locations/orinda.html.



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Watching the sun slide down to the horizon and then suddenly disappear as we leisurely sipped margaritas in the small fishing village of Playa Los Cocos, we anticipated days of leisure with little to do but move from the lounge chairs at the pool to a shell-collecting walk along the white sandy beach. Instead, days of adventure awaited us, quite different from our experiences in the large tourist towns of Mexico.

My daughters, daughter-in-law, and I had traveled to Playa Los Cocos, 120 miles north of Puerto Vallarta (PV), at the invitation of our Idaho friends, Bill and Felice Rogers. They purchased beachfront property there 10 years ago to escape the snowy winters, joining a sizable "gringo" population in the area. We stayed in the Casa Manana hotel, whose three-story buildings and pool are just steps away from the ocean. Rooms are very basic, but clean, have a patio or balcony, and the price is right at \$55 a night for two persons. There's a good restaurant on the premises run by the Austrian owner, Reinhard Pinbacher. They offer van service (\$100 for up to six passengers), or the bus from PV will drop you at their entrance (\$15).

For our first trip, we met with birding expert, Armando Santiago, to travel the inland waterway of La Tovar estuary. Up

over 300 species, 30 of which are endemic, within a 60-mile radius, this area draws birdwatchers from all over the world. Among those we sighted were the green heron, pilated woodpecker, bare-throated tiger heron, anhinga, ibis, and cormorant, along with crocodiles sunning along the shore lined with dense groves of mangrove trees.

Another day, we drove past Santa Cruz through lush, tropical forests where mangos, bananas and coffee are grown, for a steep hike to the foot of El Cora waterfall. The cascade drops 90 feet into a pristine pool. Our swim was bracingly refreshing after the descent and we were the only ones there to use the rope swing for a ride into the water.

Not being able to resist some shopping, we visited San Blas, 20 minutes away. A town of 12,000, it was here that the first mission was established by Father Junipero Serra in the 1700s. Once the most important shipyard on the Pacific coast, Spanish ships set sail from this port en route to the exploration of Alaska and the Californias. It has shops featuring Mexican wares as well as many good restaurants and some nice hotels. Ramadas (open air restaurants) line the beach. At Wala's, the shrimp empanadas were especially tasty. Another evening, we ate at Roger's favorite restaurant, Tony's, where dinner and drinks for six were just over \$70. For those wishing to stay where there is a little more action than at Playa Los Cocos, but still a low-keyed Mexican experience on a beautiful beach, San Blas might be a choice.

A drive of 30 miles up into the mountains took us to Tepic, the capital of the state of Nayarit, situated at an altitude of 2,700 feet. A graceful cathedral and fine government buildings anchor the town square. Of special interest, the Huchiol Indians, wearing their embroidered native costumes, sell their intricate bead work fashioned into such items as animals, picture frames, and jewelry.

A walk across the street from our hotel was an organic food-drying plant run by John and Christina Pucella. Some Lamorindans may remember Christina as she once worked at Petar's and the Seafood Grotto in Lafayette. Moving to Playa Los Cocos in 1972, she, with John, now ship dried mangos, bananas, and pineapple throughout the world. We enjoyed a tour



A Huchoil Indian fashions her intricate bead work into jewelry.

early to meet him at the boat dock at 7 a.m., we were on the first boat out, giving us the best opportunity to spot a wide variety of birds. Short, stocky, with a wealth of information garnered from 35 years of leading bird-watching tours, Armando is active in conservation efforts and joins in research projects with scientists from the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. With



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numerous benefits, including paid vacation. We wished there were more such businesses [SEE BACKYARD page 20]

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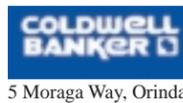


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EAGLE SCOUTS



CHRIS LASZCZ-DAVIS

The following Miramonte students were awarded their Eagle Scout designations at a Court of Honor ceremony on April 14. (front row L-R) Max Gompertz, Grant Davis, Brett Low (back row L-R) James McGurk, Nathan Levine, and Will Wu.

Miramonte Students Join Ranks of Eagle Scouts

By CHRIS LASZCZ-DAVIS and PAM BROWN
Contributing Writers

After seven years of steady progress through Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) and the hectic pace of high school, 10 Miramonte students, from Troop 233 and Troop 57, achieved the most difficult challenge in boy scouting – the Eagle award. The scouts received the coveted award during National Eagle Scout Court of Honor ceremonies on April 14 and May 15. Only about two out of 100 scouts achieve this Eagle rank. It is interesting to know that, of the leaders of this nation in business, religion, and politics, three out of four were Boy Scouts.

New Troop 233 Eagle Scouts are seniors Grant Davis, Max Gompertz, Nathan Levine, James McGurk, and William Wu. New Eagle Scouts from Troop 57 Scout are sophomores Andrew Brown Cherry and David Daniel Horstman, and seniors Brett Low, Daniel Robert Butterfield Seymour, and Max Mayeri. All 10 grew up together in Orinda, with their friendships and lives intertwined in classes, varsity sports, public speaking, camping, skiing, 70-mile Philmont outdoor adventures, off-roading, leadership roles and, in at least one situation (Grant Davis and Max Gompertz), starting up and running an active gardening/weed whacking business venture.

Andrew Brown Cherry installed nearly 1,000 backpack hooks outside the classrooms of OIS to achieve his award. Currently a sophomore at Miramonte High School, Cherry is the son of Pam Brown and Brian Cherry.

To earn his award, Grant Davis

constructed a sand pit (at the north end of Miramonte's football field) for Miramonte sports teams. The project was designed to improve leg strength, endurance, and agility. The sand pit, 8 feet wide by 75 feet long, is available to all Miramonte sports programs. More than 6.5 cubic yards of drainage rock and 8 cubic yards of sand were used in the project. The project was completed with the help of over 100 volunteer hours. Grant, a Miramonte varsity football starter and co-captain of the high school varsity lacrosse team, is heading off to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo after graduation, and will be majoring in construction engineering/construction management.

Max Gompertz's service project involved planning, organizing, and the carrying out of a walk-a-thon to raise funds for multiple sclerosis research. The event was held in Moraga. Max worked with the Town of Moraga and obtained permits from the East Bay Regional Park District for use of Moraga's trails and park. More than 80 people attended and more than \$9,000 was raised. Max is headed for the University of Colorado, Boulder after graduation and plans to major in biology.

David Daniel Horstman's Eagle service project involved constructing new benches for the kindergarten play yard at Del Rey School, his alma mater. A sophomore at Miramonte High School, David is the son of Nancy and Bill Horstman.

Nathan Levine's Eagle Scout project involved public service to support the American Red Cross and the US troops in Iraq. Nathan designed a project to collect and ship DVDs to entertain American

[SEE EAGLE page 15]



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PAM BROWN

Miramonte students Andrew Brown Cherry, David Daniel Horstman, and Daniel Robert Butterfield have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. Their Court of Honor took place on May 15.

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STUDENT AWARD WINNERS

Six Students Receive AAUW Awards



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

AAUW award winners include (L-R) **Brianna Hardy** (St. Mary's College), **Lauren Tyburski** (Acalanes High School), **Solana Olmer** (Miramonte High School), and **Jennifer Tao** (Campolindo High School).

By **JOY ELKINTON-WALKER**
Contributing Writer

The 40th Celebration of Excellence by the Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) took place at St. Mary's College in May. The program began with an inspirational presentation by Dr. Shawny Anderson, associate dean of liberal arts at St. Mary's.

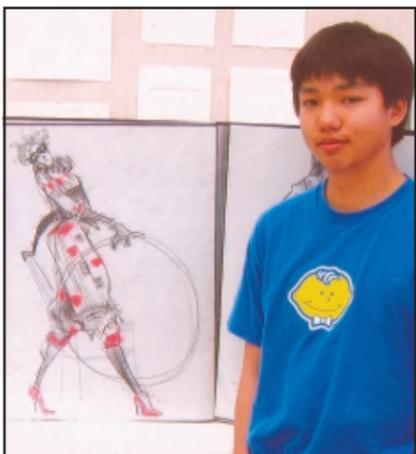
Anderson recounted the challenges that she and her team of students from St. Mary's experienced in month-long trips to New Orleans reconstructing Katrina-ravaged homes and neighborhoods. Two students told of their most vivid memories and a video was shown of one of the four trips they made. The lives of all who participated were changed by the experience, and the audience was impressed with the deep appreciation and spirit of hope. The message was that "each person

can do something to help alleviate a tragic circumstance."

The Outstanding Scholarship and Achievement Awards were presented to Lauren Tyburski from Acalanes High School, Jennifer Tao from Campolindo, Solana Olmer from Miramonte, and Brianna Hardy from St. Mary's College. The stories of their accomplishments in service to others in addition to superb academic records were inspiring. Each received a \$750 scholarship, a certificate, and their names recorded on a perpetual plaque that is displayed at each school.

An additional recognition was given to three middle-school girls who were selected to receive AAUW Tech Trek Awards for a week of math and science programs to be held this summer at Mills College. The three students are Sophia Aguilera from Orinda Intermediate, Jacqueline Miller from Joaquin Moraga, and Hana Wasserman from Stanley Intermediate.

Miramonte Artists Shine at 11th Annual Talent Showcase



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Miramonte Senior **Jeff Liu** hopes to pursue a career in animation.

By **PAT RUDEBUSCH**
Assistant Editor

The hottest ticket in town last month was the 11th Annual Visual and Performing Arts Talent Showcase at Miramonte High School. From ceramics and paintings to musical performances and dramatic interpretations, students entertained and impressed the event's attendees with their wide range of talents.

The evening started with a show of student artwork, some of which was included in a silent auction. Senior art student Jeff Liu, who recently won first prize at the Sun Valley Teen Art Competition, designed the program cover and poster art for the Talent Showcase. Liu, who hopes to pursue a career in animation, will continue his art studies next year at the

California Institute of Arts.

Other seniors in the advanced placement art class whose work was featured in the talent showcase are Andrea Bergen, Sheldon Silvera, and Jin Yu. Each of these students also placed in the Sun Valley Teen Art Competition. [SEE SHOWCASE page 15]

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Steve & Cathy Lambert

Although landscaping is often referred to as the “Green Industry,” an all green landscape can be monotonous and boring. Color is often the most prominent factor a homeowner or garden designer will consider when reinventing or sprucing up their landscape.

Good garden design involves knowing how to combine colors and textures so the final product is pleasing to the eye. It takes some practice and experience to develop an eye for color, but a good place to start is by studying an artist color wheel.

The colors on an artist’s wheel are arranged by their relationship to each other in progression like the colors in a rainbow starting with violet/red to red, orange/red to orange, yellow/orange to yellow and so on. Most color wheels only contain 12

colors, while in nature there are a seemingly endless numbers of shades and tones of these 12. Still, the color wheel is a good tool to train your eye on choosing and combining the colors you’ll use to paint your garden.

When choosing color combinations for your garden, you will want to select either harmonious or contrasting colors. Harmonious colors are found next to each other on the color wheel and share similar values (i.e. violet and blue or yellow and orange). Contrasting or complimentary colors are opposite each other on the color wheel and share no values or color wavelengths like red is to green or orange is to blue.

Advertising researchers have spent lots of time learning how to use colors to have



STEVE LAMBERT

Choosing colorful plants will help you “paint” your garden.

an impact on people’s moods subliminally. Why not apply this same technique in your garden design to create the feeling or atmosphere you want? Some colors, such as orange and red, called warm colors, make us feel, you guessed it, warmer. While others colors, such as blues and green, can achieve a feeling of coolness. If you plant compatible colors, such as pastels they create a peaceful mood. Monotonous colors (different shades of one or two colors) will create a calming sense, while strong and contrasting colors will induce energy and excitement. Strong colors catch the eye of the viewer and draw them in. One bright pot of geraniums at your front door will feel welcoming; however, too many bright colors scattered throughout your yard can cause confusion for the eye.

Some gardeners and homeowners have developed certain prejudices about colors. One recent client declared “I hate yellow” so we constantly teased her about all the yellow flowers we were planting in her landscape, while in reality, we did include some chartreuse and yellow-leafed plants in her garden. Ironically, these became her favorite plants. When developing your garden’s color palate it’s best to look at all colors as potentially good choices. The grouping of colors is what you need to choose most carefully. A magenta bloom may look fine planted near other flowers that are purple or pink but hideous when combined with blooms of red, orange, or yellow. It’s important to remember that many flowers’ bloom and color are often short lived, while the foliage, bark, and even seed heads may last much longer, adding an entirely different color and texture interest to your yard throughout the year.

Keep in mind that the color in your

garden is not just limited to the plant material. Be sure to consider your hardscape colors (rocks, colored concrete and retaining wall materials) and especially the color of your home. Consider how your plants will blend or contrast with their surroundings. For example, when selecting flowers to plant next to red bricks or a redwood fence, white or yellow flowers would be good choices where as red flowering plants would simply fade into their surroundings. Many gardeners plant their flower beds to accent the exterior color of their home. If your home is tan with green trim, a natural flower bed choice to compliment these colors would be red blossoms.

Dramatic color combinations will give your garden and home a distinctive look. Recently, we designed a garden for a terra cotta colored house. We planted white dogwoods, purple Iris ‘Ceasars Brother,’ Heuchera (a.k.a. ‘Crème Brule’) and yellow daylilies. These blooms popped against the earth-toned terra cotta walls where something like red poppies or azaleas would have been lost in their background. Shaded areas of the garden can be brightened by using light-colored annuals such as white, light pink, or pale blues. In the shade, dark colors tend to get swallowed up unless they are surrounded by a lighter color to provide them with some contrast.

For more information on garden color and color combinations, try; *The Encyclopedia of Planting Combinations* by Tony Lord, *Shocking Beauty* by Tomas Hobbes, and *The Garden Color Book* by Paul Williams. If you have questions on this topic or for suggestions on future “Way to Grow” articles, please feel free to email us at gardenlights@comcast.net.



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CONTINUATIONS

◆ SHOWCASE from page 13

Art Competition. Yu was also honored by the Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center in Walnut Creek for her prize winning work, *Agape*, which she entered in the Center's 10th Annual Peace Through Art and Writing Challenge. Yu will attend Stanford University in the fall, and Silvera plans to study graphic design at Cal State Long Beach.

The student art show also featured student work from the digital photography class and numerous pieces of ceramics and jewelry from the 3-D art classes. Guests attending the art show were able to bid on many of the works, including original pieces by 3-D art teacher Gavin Kermode.

The evening's entertainment continued with an array of live performances starting with a performance by Miramonte's Choral Artists, the school's elite choral group that just earned the highest rating of unanimous superior at the choral arts competition sponsored by the California Music Educators Association. The 26-member ensemble includes seniors Linden Bairey,

Alexina Clarke, Nora Downs, Crystal Frost, Erika Goeriz, Jack Henry, Jon Jordan, Andrew Kelley, Lindsey Nishioki, Kate O'Neill, Emily Sause, Kellyn Severson, Eric Wong, Tim Wong, Daniel Wung, Sean Zaki, and Hayley Zuercher. Bairey, Sause, Severson, and Zuecher also performed a moving *a capella* rendition of "Amazing Grace" and "Down in the Valley to Pray." Kellyn Severson, accompanied by her father Ralph Severson on piano, sang "Love You I Do" from the Broadway musical *Dreamgirls*.

Sause will be attending the University of Colorado in the fall, Severson will attend Brigham Young University, and Zuercher will continue to study music at the University of San Francisco. Henry, who also intends to continue his study of music, both as a performer and songwriter, performed his original work, "A Lonely September."

Other vocalists performing in the talent showcase were Jenny Leon and Ben Wetzel, singing a duet from the musical *Pajama Game*, "There Once Was a Man;" Katie Behnke performing "Wishing You Were



KSENIJA SOSTER OLMER

Sandra Maguire, who created the oral interpretation and public speaking program at Miramonte High School 22 years ago, was honored at the Visual Performing Arts Showcase.

Here" from *Phantom of the Opera*; and Suvi Gluskin, whose operatic voice defies her slight build, singing "Après un Rêve" by Gabriel Fauré.

Senior Aliyah Simcoff performed Claude Debussy's *Clair de Lune* on the piano. She will be attending University of Puget Sound this coming fall. Later that evening pianist Ben Yao performed Morton Gould's "Boogie Woogie Etude" with such flair that it was as if there were two of him at the keyboard, and violinist Carol Tsang performed the "Presto" from J. S. Bach's

Sonata No. 1 in G Minor.

The most original performance of the evening was a break dance routine performed by Josh Lee, Joao Cheong, and Brandon Chang. Proving art transcends time, the trio choreographed their hip hop, break dance moves to Pachelbel's *Canon in D*. Sarah Ames and Max Glickman, both sophomores, merged the classic art of mime with contemporary music by Hootie and the Blowfish.

The drama and public speaking departments were well represented by students performing monologs, humorous interpretations, and selected dramatic scenes. Senior Eva Imber recreated a one-woman adaptation of M.J. Travers' *Mary Poppins* where, in less than five minutes, she told the entire story of the Banks family and their extraordinary nanny. Imber will enroll in New York University's Tisch School of the Arts this coming fall.

Drew DiStefano brought David Sedaris's "Santaland Diaries" to life and Wing Sum Doud performed a moving monologue by David Drake, "The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me." DiStefano plans on attending UC Santa Cruz in the fall, and Doud will enroll in the theater arts program at UCLA. Andy Pomidor, who will also attend UC Santa Cruz, and Katie Leach, who will study nursing at UC San Diego, performed the opening scene from the student-theater *Goats of Denmark's* spring presentation of *Baby in the Bath Water*.

◆ EAGLE from page 12

soldiers. He contacted video stores requesting donations, held donation drives at various local video stores for public donations, and organized a neighborhood drive to collect DVDs. The project surpassed the expected goal, with emails from soldiers expressing their appreciation for being remembered. Nathan plans to major in general engineering at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo come fall 2007.

Scout Brett Low chose to re-design and repair the streetside sign of St. Mark's Church in Orinda. While keeping the structure of the sign intact, he replaced the existing lighting and re-designed it so an additional five feet of signage space was permanently added above the existing structure. Brett is heading off to sunny Hawaii (University of Hawaii, Manoa) to major in kinesiology come fall of 2007.

James McGurk constructed two retaining walls for the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church in Lafayette. He replaced a collapsed retaining wall (32 ft. x 3 ft.) to keep the hill below the church from slipping and replaced a rotten retaining wall (10 ft. x 3 ft.) to protect a fire hydrant near the church. James, a varsity cross-country star and noted public speaker, is heading off to college come fall 2007, and will be studying biology either at a UC campus or at Willamette University.

Daniel Robert Butterfield Seymour's Eagle service project restored a creekside area in Orinda, which included protecting native plants, clearing invasive species, and enhancing public access. Daniel will be attending Sonoma State University in the fall where he hopes to study science, math, and art.

For his Eagle project, Max Mayeri, who will be honored at a court of honor this summer, installed a windscreen and

distance markers at the new Miramonte baseball field. Currently captain of the Miramonte baseball team, Max has also played varsity football. He will attend Sonoma State in the fall.

And finally, William Wu chose to help the homeless with his Eagle Scout project. He led and organized neighborhood drives to collect donations for the homeless. He, along with scouts and other volunteers, collected over 100 large bags of warm clothing, appliances, nonperishable foods, toys, and other useful items that were solicited, collected, sorted, and transported to B.O.S.S. (Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency) – a nonprofit organization providing services for over 3,500 homeless people per year with programs to help change the root causes of poverty. Will is headed south to college this fall to study electrical engineering at either UCLA or USC, which he will decide upon shortly.

The scouts were honored at the Court of Honor at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, followed by a reception. In attendance were Orinda City Council members Steve Glazer and Sue Severson. Each scout received an Eagle Scout pin, neckerchief, plaque, certificate, and a congressional flag that has flown over the nation's capitol.

While the struggles have been many on this path to achieving the Eagle award, the memories, fun times, and thrill of accomplishment have made it all worthwhile. The Eagle Scout award means different things to different people, but at the end of the day, it holds each scout accountable to making a difference in all the lives he touches.



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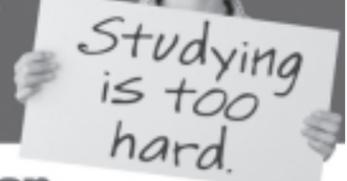
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

◆ LETTERS from page 4

also would not guarantee its contributions. The city lists two contributions: (1) \$2,500,000 from drawing down the city's reserve fund, and (2) \$30,200,000 contribution by a \$915,150 annual pavement management program for 33 years. The undependability of the city's promise of a yearly \$915,150 contribution is highlighted by the fact that the city's pavement management program was only \$107,532 in 2003/04 and only \$38,060 in

2004/05.

If the fire district and the city had wanted to guarantee their contributions, they would have written the contributions into the ballot measure. Since they did not do this, the citizens have to trust them. Frankly, I don't. With this in mind, please join me in voting no on Measure E. We should not approve a bond until the fire district and city guarantee their contributions.

– Clyde Vaughn

Fix Orinda's Roads!

After a 2 1/2 year study by the Orinda Infrastructure Committee, the following facts are clear: Orinda's roads rank dead last in Northern California. There is little federal, state, or county funding available to fix 92 miles of public roads in Orinda and the roads are so poor that it now costs five times as much to rebuild the roads as it would cost to treat a road in fair to good condition. Keeping our heads in the sand, or gravel, won't fix the problem; every year the costs will increase geometrically.

Measure E is an Orinda infrastructure financing plan that will spend over \$95,000,000 to fix the public roads, storm drains, and the water lines that put out house fires in Orinda. Part of the plan is a bond measure that will cost, on average, \$30 per \$100,000 of the value listed on the property tax bill. The decisions about which roads to repair first will be based upon recommendations by a citizens' oversight committee, but ultimately, the public roads that we all travel over to get our children to school, to get to the grocery store, the

library, BART, and the freeway, will be improved.

Bad roads cost us a lot of money in car repairs, but this cost pales by comparison to the consequence if police and paramedics can't reach us in an emergency, or fire fighters don't have water to put out a fire. Please vote yes on Measure E to keep Orinda safe and to maintain the value of our community.

– Victoria Smith, Mayor Pro-Tem

"E" for ... Embezzlement?

Measure E purports to be for road repairs, but it's really stealth financing for city hall. It's telling that city hall debt service is not in the budget, and that the Orrick firm, which sold us the fake lease (COP) financing plan, is also our legal counsel on Measure E. The city hall "debt" (\$9.8 million principal, payable over 30 years) is an unfunded liability looming over the city budget. It should have been financed by a municipal obligation bond because without a two-thirds citizen vote, the debt is unconstitutional. But our dishonest city council (over Steve Glazer's objection) chose to sneak this debt on us, without our two-thirds vote or even our consent, by pretending no bond vote is necessary because it's only a "lease" which we can cover with existing revenues.

That's false on both counts: (1) The city owns the land, but leases it out to a dummy corporation (OFFC) composed of city officials, which subleases it back to the city. Does that sound like a bona fide lease, or an Enron-style flim flam to mask economic reality? and (2) Orinda in the past three fiscal years has only once had an excess of revenues over expenditures exceeding half the required annual "lease" payments (for 30 years) of \$620,000. We can't afford it, and the only place to get the city hall debt service will be the road bond.

Given Orinda's record of failing to respect dedicated funds (Gateway Fund and road money, for example), we can't trust them with \$58.6 million. They can't even be trusted with the \$1.2 million they already get annually for roads – our pavement maintenance budget this year is only \$37,000, of which \$12,000 is for "consultant services." No matter how distinguished and honest the members of the oversight committee might be, they are only an advisory committee, appointed by the city council. Like the Iraq Study Group, their advice can and probably will be ignored. That is not an unreasonable fear, considering the following quote from Mayor Glazer criticizing his fellow councilmembers: "They also ignore expert independent advice about stretching our scarce road dollars." (*Contra Costa Sun*, March 17, 2006, p.6).

– William McCutchen

Orinda Bond Measure E is Unwarranted

Orinda will have bond Measure E on the June ballot. This bond will cost taxpayers \$58.6 million in principal, plus \$61 million wasted interest. The cost is huge but benefits are tiny. Only 50 of the 500 streets in Orinda qualify for bond money. There are no guarantees which 50 streets get bond money.

If 500 cars do not pass your house daily, you get no bond money to fix your road.

In 2014, homes assessed at \$1 million pay a bond tax of \$550, a \$2 million home pays \$1,100, and \$3 million pays \$1,650. Bond money will not fix 90 percent of Orinda's roads; expect more bonds and higher taxes.

Fortunately, solutions exist that cover all roads, drains, and pipes without new taxes.

A Cal Trans grant will repair Moraga Way. This grant is not contingent on bond money.

The city should use the annual pavement fund of \$915,159, the city reserve fund of \$500,000, and change the police department from county to city (like Moraga), which saves \$900,000 to fund a \$36,260,000 city revenue bond to be used for infrastructure. This solution enables the city to fix roads immediately without new taxes.

By forming our own Orinda fire district before 2014, Orinda will save \$4,680,606 annually for infrastructure. Orinda provides two-thirds of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District budget and Moraga provides only one-third. If we stopped subsidizing Moraga, and form our own fire district, Orinda would have an additional annual \$4,680,606 savings for infrastructure. The best part; taxpayers save \$120 million.

— Dennis Whisnant

Promote the Common Good

I've lived in Orinda for 40 years and taught German literature and folklore at Cal for almost as long. When I look at Orinda's sad roads and think about past flooding problems and lack of water pressure in a high fire-hazard zone, I think of Kenneth Galbraith's quote about America being a place of private splendor next to public squalor. Why are we so reluctant to take care of what is, after all, property that belongs to all of us?

The philosophical concept of a social contract says that we benefit from policies that promote the common good. This concept underlies services such as public education, police, and fire services, roads and so on. Taxes pay for these services that we can't provide for ourselves. We may not have children in school right now, but we continue to pay school taxes, because

[SEE LETTERS 2 page 18]



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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Say What?!

A Farewell Address

Lana Olmer



At 17, I hardly feel qualified to do a lot of things: paying for gas (mom and dad!), paying for college, working, performing surgery, or flying an airplane, but mostly, I don't feel ready to say goodbye. Goodbye to high school, goodbye to childhood friends, goodbye to the security of my family, my room, my car, my bathroom, my own bed, well, you get the picture. But that is what I will be doing this June: saying goodbye to all the things I have grown up with, and leaving them behind.

I have always gauged my life by the distance to some event in the future. When I was in 5th grade, it was my first junior high dance. When I was a freshman, it was my driver's license. When I was a junior, it was my first college acceptance. Now that I'm here, having gone to plenty of dances, driven and crashed my way through high school, and into college I have to find some way to look at the future. I've never really thought past high school: I can't see myself turning 18, then 19, and then, gasp, 20. It's hard for me to think about moving on when I feel like I just got here.

Even though I won't be leaving for Chicago until September, when I walk across that stage and grasp my high school diploma, I will be at the barrier between the start and the finish. Just as one part of my life ends, another begins. Choose any metaphor you like, chapters in a book, doors and windows, legs of the journey, it is still huge. I like to pretend that I know what's going on most of the time, but right now there is no faking it: I am totally clueless. I can't do my own laundry (Delicate? Hot water or cold? Why can't you mix the colors together? Why? Why?) and my cooking skills will provide me with an endless supply of Top Ramen and Cup-

O-Noodles but little else.

But, surprisingly enough, I'm not scared. In fact, I'm totally excited. I'm thrilled to encounter all of the new challenges: the blizzards, the tough professors, the insane amount of homework I'm sure to get, a new city, a new state, a whole new part of the country, and, most importantly, the fact that they don't even have Safeway in Illinois. Growing up in Orinda has taught me so much. The expectations have made me work hard and the high standards have made me strive harder. I've been taught to think critically, to question everything, and to always demand the best. I've met my best friends and grown up with them here, and I've met my mentors who pushed me and made me grow even more. Everything I have experienced here will continue to shape who I will become.

Things have changed. Some of the people I was once friends with I don't talk to anymore, and people I once didn't know past a first name have become some of my closest friends. Some people have changed beyond recognition: some for the better, and some for the worse. But we've all continued to grow and adapt as we've got older, and hopefully a little wiser. We've learned from each other and overcome challenges together, and when we stand together on graduation day, we won't see our differences, but rather all the things we have in common.

So, thank you, friends and teachers. And thank you, Mom and Dad. Thank you sisters. Thanks for the advice that I usually ignored but learned to follow later. Thank you for your trust. Thank you for your support and encouragement. Thank you for your tough love and high expectations. And thank you readers. Thank you for listening to what I had to say.

Cinderella at Wagner Ranch, June 1 and 2



PAT RUDEBUSCH

Will Talbot and Andie Tuemuler will portray the king and queen in Wagner Ranch Elementary School's production of *Cinderella*. The classic fairytale, with its heart-warming rags to riches story, takes place June 1 and 2 at the Wagner Ranch multi-purpose room. Veteran theater director and performer Ron Pickett directs.

Thanks to hard-working parent volunteers there will be lots of gorgeous costumes and beautiful sets. Two casts of students have been diligently learning lines to bring the characters to life. For tickets and additional information, call Wagner Ranch at 258-0016.

Miramonte Students Walk For A Cause

By ALI GABRIELLI, ALEX STEUER
AND KRISTINA CROCKER
Contributing Writers

On Saturday, April 21, to Sunday, April 22, 50 energetic Miramonte High School students joined forces to walk for 12 hours to raise money for the Invisible Children organization, which aids the children of Uganda.

In February of this year, the Invisible Children documentary was introduced to the Miramonte student body. Shocked and eager to make a difference, the student government class launched a campaign to help. In the months since the screening, students have worked hard to raise both money and awareness

about the genocide and child abductions in the war-torn region.

The most recent efforts put forth by the student coalition was a walk-a-thon, which took place in the Miramonte gym. Students took pledges from community members and were dedicated to walking all through the night. Students walked from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., and one student, Brooke Scully, walked a total of 27 miles — more than a marathon! The compassion to help children in need was inspiring and refreshing for these dedicated teens.

For more information about the Invisible Children organization and how to get involved, visit the website: www.invisiblechildren.com.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

◆ LETTERS 2 from page 16

having educated children is good for everyone. If we pay to have smooth roads, our cars will last longer and need fewer repairs. If our fire hydrants deliver enough water to put out a fire, it won't spread to more homes.

Look at countries that have no social contract, but operate on a tribal basis, or every man for himself. Where would you rather live?

Our community is ours. If you care about it, help care for it. Let's get started on fixing

our infrastructure problems with Measure E.

– Fritz Tubach

Let The Truth Out

In the April issue of *The Orinda News* there were four letters opposing the upcoming Measure E bond. The opposition is based on arguments that do not stand up to the light of day.

1) There are other sources of funds to cover the road repairs. Hundreds of hours have been spent by two city councils, the city staff, and the Infrastructure Committee, and all have concluded that the problem far outstrips any current or anticipated revenue sources. Measure E will only correct 40 percent of the problem so if there is waste maybe the energetic opponents to Measure E can help correct this and take on the remaining 60 percent of Orinda's infrastructure needs.

2) Water pipe upgrades, for fire prevention, should not be included in Measure E because someone else should pay for them. Maybe someone else should but so far no one has been able to talk that "someone else" into doing it. In 1991, just over the hill, 3,000 homes were destroyed and 25 people were killed in the Oakland Hills firestorm. Many of our fire hydrants don't have enough water coming out of them to put out one house fire, much less 3,000. Measure E commits \$9 million to

upgrade the worst of the worst. This is only 15 percent of the total bond measure and will cost the average homeowner six cents per day to pay back.

3) The city has ignored this problem for years, has wasted money on things like the new city hall, and is not to be trusted. Ignoring the problem in the past is certainly not grounds for continuing to ignore it. A city of 18,000 people needs city offices. Maybe they could have gone the "bare bones" route and saved \$2-3 million but that would have had no material impact on our \$150 million infrastructure problem. Additionally, being against a measure to improve our infrastructure because of what a past council did is nonsensical. An infrastructure oversight commission is being set up to insure appropriate focus on how monies are spent. If a voter still thinks that "embezzlement" and "payoffs" do and will occur (as one writer stated), then they should resist all efforts by the corrupt government.

I personally think that writer is wrong and that we have a lot of dedicated city employees and volunteers who are trying to correct a long-standing and deteriorating situation. They should be given the funds, via Measure E, to start solving the problem.

– Steve Cohn

priority via a bond measure." All perfectly legal but the city attorney failed to explain the 500 vehicle daily trip rule which is a very important factor, which any average voter must be aware of to adequately understand the measure.

We question the political implications of having the city attorney writing a would-be "impartial analysis" to expose the "cover up" that was intentionally put there by the same person.

So it is interesting to contemplate the deception employed and the serious conflict of interest involved by the city council and the city attorney especially in a multimillion dollar election issue.

— Edmund J. Coyne

Questions Need Answered

I was one of the 200 or so people who could have voted for Measure Q to put it over the top, but didn't because the concerns of the staunchly anti-Q folks kept pricking at me. And while I appreciate the fact that there has been turnover on the council and that the new members have tried to improve both the specifics of the bond measure and the climate of discussion, I still have questions:

- Why hasn't a list of streets to be repaired under Measure E been published?
- Why does the oversight committee have no authority? Given the lack of trust, it would seem shared control between entities that are accountable to different constituencies makes more sense.
- I find nothing in the text of Measure E controlling project management. It's basically just "give us the money and we'll fix the roads."

• Is anyone considering the bonus/penalty plan that was used in L.A. on the Santa Monica freeway (and will be used on the MacArthur maze repair)? This has proven to be an effective way of keeping contractors committed to good performance?

Nowhere have I found an analysis that would justify the type of bond financing that is being proposed. Give the public a comparison of how long it would take to make the proposed repairs using pay-as-you-go funding sources versus the bond measure. Are we talking about a 10-year vs. 30-year project? What do we gain in completion time by taking on \$60 million in debt?

Even if a bond measure is the best approach, the city will incur more interest expense than necessary. Issuing bonds in three separate lots begins to get at the problem but doesn't go far enough. Why not give the managing authority permission to issue bonds in smaller, more frequent lots? Why not put funds received from the

[SEE LETTERS 3 page 22]

Orinda Bond Measure E a Delightful Fraud

This Orinda bond Measure E is a perfect example of political incest where up front it will fulfill your desires (repair roads) then pull the old vanish in thin air trick.

We find the wording of the measure perfectly legal "report identifies over \$150 million of infrastructure improvements needs." The bond "will provide a portion of the needed fund to repair."

The measure refers to the report of the Orinda Infrastructure Committee, dated July 11, 2006 which is a very detailed and enlightening document that lists the high priority roads that will be repaired with the bond funds.

Let us uncover the "Cover Up." The roads in Orinda are; Collector – 30 streets; Residential – all the other streets. The report states that there is not enough money from the bond issue or from city tax funds to repair all Orinda roads so the \$58.6 million bond issue would cover only the roads with 500 average daily trips or more. That criteria would apply to just the arterial and collector streets.

The city attorney's impartial analysis of Measure E states that "on February 6, 2007, the city council adopted the Orinda Infrastructure Finance Plan which established that given the enormity of the city's infrastructure needs the city should focus on a program to address the highest

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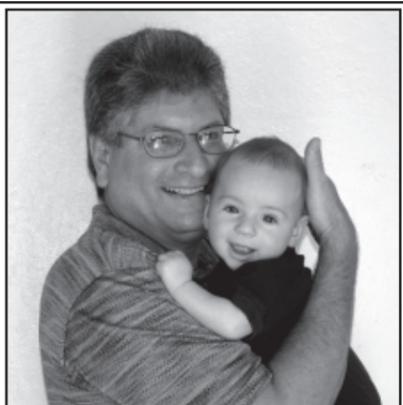
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CAL SHAKES / ORINDA STARLIGHT

The Bard Comes to Theatre Square

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

Getting tickets to a Cal Shakes performance just got easier. Last month, Cal Shakes opened a box office and retail outlet at Theatre Square – a move that some hope will be the first of many to bring more artistic ventures to Orinda. While Cal Shakes stages performances at the picturesque Bruns Amphitheater, just on the outskirts of town, the company has not had an Orinda address until the recent opening at Theatre Square.

The Cal Shakes box office includes an information kiosk promoting the company's upcoming events and retail sales area for Cal Shakes merchandise. Last-minute theatergoers will be able to buy tickets on the day of performance at half price (subject to availability).

The new venture was spearheaded by newly elected city councilmember Tom McCormick who, as part of his campaign platform, pledged to work toward downtown revitalization. "The first thing I promised to do was to bring Cal Shakes into the city's landscape," McCormick says. "It's an idea I began working on eight or nine years ago when I was on the Orinda Association board. We worked with the [then] owners of Theatre Square, Cal Shakes, and the Orinda Chamber of Commerce to put a box office in Theatre

Square and provide a bus that would transport Cal Shakes patrons to and from local restaurants before and after the performance." Although that plan never got off the ground, McCormick is pleased that the stars seem to be aligned this time around.

Cal Shakes was welcomed to Theatre Square at a ribbon-cutting ceremony that featured performances by Cal Shakes actors and Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) students under the direction of the company's teaching artist, Clive Worsley. For the past six years, Cal Shakes teaching artists have partnered with OIS to bring Shakespeare to the classroom, and recently, Worsley has directed several after-school productions at the middle school and high schools. Working through the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, wine for the evening was provided by BevMo and local restaurants provided the food. A special showing of *Shakespeare in Love* at the Orinda Theatre capped the evening's festivities.

McCormick says that Theatre Square will be working with Cal Shakes throughout the summer to bring similar events to town. He hopes, too, that the synergy of the city working together with Theatre Square, the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, and Cal Shakes will "create more opportunities for the residents of Orinda to become more familiar with Cal Shakes."

Richard III Opens Cal Shakes Season

By DOROTHY BOWEN
Staff Writer

How bad was Richard III, anyway? He's usually played as evil incarnate: In the movie, Ian McKellen, in a Nazi uniform, crashing a tank through a building. At Ashland, James Newcomb scuttling across the stage like a spider, using his crutches as a weapon. Richard says so himself in the soliloquy that opens the play: "Now is the winter of our discontent.....I am determined to prove a villain, And hate the idle pleasures of these days."

"Richard wasn't that much more evil than the other characters in the play," says Mark Rucker, who will direct *Richard III* for the opening of the Cal Shakes 2007 season.

Others have felt the same way, a group, Friends of Richard III, had Tallulah Bankhead, Helen Hayes, and Salvador Dali

[SEE RICHARD page 20]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Reg Rogers will play Richard III.

The Unexpected Guest at Orinda Starlight Village Players

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

The Orinda Starlight Village Players open their summer season June 1 with Agatha Christie's thriller *The Unexpected Guest*. This production marks the debut of Orinda resident Dee Moore with the local troupe. "I can't believe in all my years of performing that I had never auditioned for them before," she explains. Moore has previously performed with the Moraga Playhouse as well as doing commercial work through her agent in San Francisco.

The play is directed by long-time, resident Charlotte Meyer. Her son, Geotty Chapple will be assistant director and in the title role. The show runs Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m. through June 23 at the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater. There will also be a Sunday, June 10, performance at 4 p.m. and an 8 p.m. Thursday, June 21, show.

For information call 253-1191 or email jill@aspennconsult.net for reservations.



SALLY HOGARTY

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◆ **BACKYARD** from page 11

to employ Mexican workers.

Topping our list for adventure was visiting Isla Isabela. This required a 2:30 a.m. wake up call to again meet Armando. A 4 a.m. departure from San Blas meant we could return in early afternoon. Knowledgeable in the ways of the sea, he warned that the waves that came up in mid-afternoon might make it impossible to return from the island; thus, we'd have to spend the night there, where no accommodations were available. So, in the dark of night, and a bit apprehensive, we set out on the 30-mile trip in our 24-foot craft, which looked like an oversized rowboat with an outboard motor, but it did have a global positioning system.

The moon set and the sun rose. Seemingly we were alone, except for the occasional bird flying above or a glimpse of humpback whales. However, about two hours into the three-hour journey, we did gain a passenger. Armando spotted a juvenile frigatebird which had not learned the lesson that it shouldn't land on the water. These birds produce very little oil so their huge wings (adults can have a seven-foot wing span) become waterlogged. He plucked the struggling bird from the water. Our friend, Bill, a veterinarian, grasped it, then held its wings out wide to help them dry. The black-feathered youngster rode with us to shore, where Bill placed it on a

rock. Nearly an hour later, dried out, it flew away.

Many of its relatives were nesting in the small trees of Isla Isabela, which hosts thousands of birds and is a National Park nature preserve. Among the other residents are the brown and blue-footed boobies, brown noddies, bridled terns, and brown pelicans. The boobies, nesting on the ground, and frigatebirds were as tame as those I'd seen in the Galapagos. This one-mile-long island is often called "the small Galapagos." There are also turtles and iguanas. While snorkeling with us, Armando pointed out some 20 to 30 species of fish around the coral reefs.

There is much to do and see in Playa Los Cocos – between the early morning stroll on the beach and a swim in the comfortably warm sea to watching the fiery sunsets at twilight and hearing the ocean waves as you're lulled to sleep. Choose an adventure, or you may choose to do nothing at all except relax and enjoy this side of Mexico, off the regular tourist route.

If you go, many airlines fly into Puerto Vallarta.

Hotels: www.casa-manana.com or hotel@casa-manana.com; El Encanto Eco-Hotel and Retreat Center, Santa Cruz de Miramar, www.encantomexico.com; Hacienda Flamingoes, San Blas, reservaciones@sanblas.com.mx.

Bird expeditions: Armando Santiago www.birdingsanblas.com.

◆ **RICHARD** from page 19

as charter members.

"He's fascinating, the first great psychological study of evil in Shakespeare," says Rucker. "But all the characters are not so good. It's his turn to be on top.

"It's all about political power and the corruption of power," says Rucker.

He doesn't plan anything radical in the setting of the play, but believes in taking a modern approach. "It's like our own political situation. It's power seen as a drug," Rucker adds.

Others have compared the ghostly apparitions in the last act to our own climate of fear. "That's so true," Rucker agrees.

To play Richard, Rucker has cast Reg Rogers, "his favorite actor in the country" The New York based actor was at ACT for five years and works on Broadway and TV.

Other actors in the cast include James Carpenter and Dan Hiatt, both often at Cal Shakes.

One of the most chilling scenes in the play is where Richard courts Lady Anne over the casket of her father-in-law whom he has murdered. Susannah Schulman will play Lady Anne. Rucker has directed her since she was 18, when she was Juliet in

Romeo and Juliet at Cal Shakes in 2001. She has appeared at Cal Shakes many times in *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Seagull*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Harvard professor Marjorie Garber considers Clarence's speech in the Tower before he is murdered. "Methought what pain it was to drown" – a magnificent piece of poetry. Garber writes, "that anticipates later romances, *Pericles* and *The Tempest*, plays about shipwrecks, death, and loss."

"Richard is the walking hieroglyph of the unnatural, with his hunchback, his withered arm, and his limp," writes Garber.

But even his deformity may be literary tradition, not historical fact. Contemporary portraits do not bear it out. Of course, portraits of royalty are meant to flatter. For that matter, plays about royals are meant to show history in favor of the present. Shakespeare wrote *Richard III* in the reign of Elizabeth I. Richmond, who defeats Richard III on the field of battle, becomes Henry VII, first of the Tudors, father of Henry VIII, and grandfather of Elizabeth I. The play about Richard III shows the good guys won, and the bad guy deserved to lose.

For tickets, call (510) 548-9666 or visit the new ticket booth at Theatre Square.

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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

JUNE

- 1 **Orinda Starlight Village Players**, *The Unexpected Guest* through June 23, Orinda Community Center Amphitheater, 253-1191 or jill@aspenconsult.net.
- 3 **WomenSing**, *A Child of Our Time*, in collaboration with the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, First Congregational Church, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley, 4 p.m., reception follows, www.womensing.org, tickets in advance (925) 974-9169.
- Caffé Teatro** concert featuring David Moore, 1-3 p.m., Orinda Library Plaza.
- 8 **Orinda Academy** graduation, 5 - 7 p.m. 254-7553.
Miramonte High School graduation, 5:30 p.m.
- 9 **Orinda Optometric Vision Center**, free vision screening for children 11 years and younger, 254-5914.
Holden High School graduation, 2 - 5 p.m., Holden High School.
- 10 **Cypress String Quartet**, 3 p.m., Orinda performances at the Community Church. Reception to follow. Call 254-4906.
Caffé Teatro concert featuring Chris Estes, 1-3 p.m., Orinda Library Plaza.
- 12 **Orinda Community Center Auxiliary** concert featuring the blues/rock band The Crisis, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., Community Center Park.
- 15 **Orinda Christian Science Church**, Health and Healing--A Spiritual Approach Q&A, 7:30 p.m., Orinda Library Auditorium, christianscienceorinda.org.
- 17 **Caffé Teatro** concert featuring Fran Guidry, 1-3 p.m., Orinda Library Plaza.
- 19 **Orinda Community Center Auxiliary** concert featuring the Dixieland jazz of Spirit of 29, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., Community Center Park.
- 24 **Caffé Teatro** concert featuring Ace Batacan, 1-3 p.m., Orinda Library Plaza and June 29.
- 26 **Orinda Community Center Auxiliary** concert featuring the classic rock of Stone Soup, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., Community Center Park.

AT THE LIBRARY

- 2 **Author Discussion**, 2 p.m., with Dr. Donna Bee-Gates on her book, *I Want it Now! Navigating Childhood in a Materialist World*.
- 11 **Get a Clue@ Your Library!** Summer reading programs begin for all ages, including babies. Prizes available. Runs through August 20.
- 19 **Toddler Lapsit**, 10 a.m., repeats at 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs, and bounces for infants to 3-year-olds and their caregivers. Availability limited to one session a week. Repeats June 20, 26, and 27.
- 23 **Teens Solve the Mystery**, 2 p.m., "Death Gets a Red Card," an interactive mystery program. For middle and high school students.
Saturday Morning Live! 11 a.m., family storytime for ages 3 - 5. Also June 30.
- 25 **Puppet Show!** For all ages. 4:30 p.m.
Paws to Read, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Sign up to read to a friendly dog.
- 26 **Fireside Chat**, 7 to 8 p.m., with Dr. Beshara Doumani. UC Berkeley history professor, discussing his new book *Academic Freedom after September 11*.
- Paws to Read**, 4 to 5 p.m. Sign up to read to a friendly dog. For grades 1-5.
- 28 **Tale Spinners**, 7 to 9 p.m., presenting Story Swap for Adults. Professional and beginning storytellers sharing and listening to funny, sad, foolish, and wise stories.

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

CLUB MEETINGS

- Friends of Orinda Creeks**, Orinda Library, May Room, fourth Wednesday, 8 a.m., 253-1997.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**, Postino's in Lafayette, 7 a.m. every Friday, 254-0440, ext.463.
- Orinda Lions Club**, Europa Restaurant, 64 Moraga Way, every Tuesday at 12:15 p.m., 254-0482.
- Orinda Rotary**, Community Center, every Wednesday at noon, 254-5537.
- Orinda Association**, Orinda Library, May Room, second Monday, 7:30 p.m., 254-0800.
- Orinda Historical Society**, third Wednesday of the month, OHS Museum, 3 to 5 p.m., 254-1353.
- Orinda/Tábor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation**, fourth Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.

CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

- Acalanes Union High School District**
First and third Wednesdays, district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette, 7:30 p.m.
- City Council**
First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.ci.Orinda.ca.us.
- Historic Landmarks Committee**
Fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, public is welcome, for information, please call 788-7323.
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District**
Third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.
- Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**
Monday, June 4 and 18, 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

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Sunday Afternoon Music Series Comes to Caffé Teatro



SALLY HOGARTY

The Real Placebos, featuring (L-R) Raffi Minasian, Brandt Williams, and Steve Freeman, are among the bands playing at Caffé Teatro.

By PAT RUDEBUSCH

Assistant Editor

Sunday afternoons in the park will be more enjoyable this summer when Caffé Teatro, located below the Orinda Library, presents a live summer music series on the library plaza. Joe Cho, who, with his wife Jin Kim, has owned the coffee shop for the past four years, says that the idea for live music came from a customer. "I asked several other customers what they thought, and everyone liked the idea. People really enjoy the music," Cho said.

The line up of musicians, representing genres from classic Americana to pop, provides a melodic way to while away a Sunday afternoon. Other additions to Caffé Teatro include fresh cookies baked daily and freshly made grilled paninis. So grab a sandwich and a cup of tea and enjoy the sounds and sun of summer.

Scheduled performers include Ace Batacan, a finger-style guitarist born and raised in the Philippines whose early musical influences include Earl Klugh and James Taylor. A Bay Area resident, Batacan has studied with Tuck Andress of the jazz duo Tuck & Patti and is a member of the Chet Atkins Appreciation Society. David Moore is another finger-style guitarist who

will bring his sound to the library plaza.

Chris Estes, singer and guitarist, performs classic and contemporary rock including works by Dave Matthews, Ray Lamontagne, and John Mayer. Blues and ragtime influence the music of Steve Freeman and Brandt Williams of the Real Placebos, another local group scheduled to perform. A posting on the duo's website explains their name and the sound listeners can expect: "We really wanted to portray the true essence of the placebo effect: an innocuous substance introduced into a control group that is meant to relieve your symptoms without any after affects, after all, music is supposed to make you feel better!"

Those favoring an island sound will want to catch Fran Guidry when he brings his Hawaiian slack key guitar to Orinda. A former rock guitarist, Guidry says that he became a convert to Hawaiian music on his first visit to the islands. Kaleponi is the Hawaiian word for California and the name for Guidry's music. This Bay Area resident hopes to introduce more mainlanders to the music of Hawaii.

Each of these artists will perform on a rotating basis every Sunday from 1 - 3 p.m. throughout the summer. For a detailed schedule, visit Caffé Teatro.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 24

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A facial by Aurea includes a facial massage that releases tension and has the effect of firming and reducing wrinkles. "I incorporate lymphatic drainage with a face massage," explains Fonseca-Geen. A facial for a teen client is in the \$50 to \$60 range. In addition to facial treatments, waxing and eyelash and eyebrow tinting are available.

Clients praise her facial massage technique. It can best be described as not only deeply and fully relaxing, but at the same time the experience is very inspirational. All the tension that is stored in the head, neck, and shoulders is relieved as the result of Aurea's accomplished technique. Fonseca-Geen describes herself as a skin therapist and believes the health benefits of a facial massage are far reaching. "It gives a person an over-all feeling of wellness," she points out.

Fonseca-Geen is married to Rob Geen, who owns and operates R & A Dynasty Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning and the couple has two children. Since moving to Orinda in 1989, Fonseca-Geen has been an active volunteer in the public schools. In addition, she supports the public schools by contributing her service to the annual auctions. "I really like working so close to home at the Orinda Hair Studio where everyone is like family. We are a very close-knit group," she says.

For more information about The Orinda Hair Studio and to book an appointment, please call 254-5575. They are open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Gail Ann Vaishvila, Doctor of Chiropractic

Dr. Vaishvila has been studying nutrition and health for 35 years and within her chiropractic practice she offers that and nutritional counseling. Both services focus on determining the cause of either the pain or the general feeling of being unwell, and once the cause is identified, Vaishvila designs the treatment or diet regime. Her office is located at the Crossroads, within the Jade Clinic at 43 Moraga Way, Suite 205. Her office exudes a soothing, healing energy with light Pergo flooring and warm walls.

"In my chiropractic practice, patients come to me with pain, usually headache, backache, or carpal tunnel syndrome, and I make adjustments to make sure the spine functions normally to alleviate the discomfort. For example, when a nerve in the spine is compressed, a person's energy level is cut off. In my nutrition counseling, there are 50 separate tests I perform utilizing the Nutri-Spec Metabolic Balance Test in order to determine a person's individual biochemistry," says Vaishvila.

"Basically there are five different imbalances that are critical to optimal health. Once these metabolic imbalances are identified through the testing process and addressed with appropriate nutrition



VALERIE HOTZ

Chiropractor Gail Ann Vaishvila.

guidelines, then patients begin to experience the benefits that flow from correcting the imbalance. Increased energy levels are experienced and the aging process is minimized. Whatever symptoms a patient came in with actually disappears as we rebalance the chemistry," she adds. According to Vaishvila, since no two people have the same biochemistry, this customized approach is very important.

Vaishvila has spent a lifetime studying nutrition and biochemistry imbalances. "I want to treat the cause of the symptoms, not the symptoms. With this customized approach, once the imbalance is determined then I recommend supplements to correct it. The goal is to rebalance the chemistry and this is accomplished by changes in the diet," explains Vaishvila.

She goes on further to point out the critical role lifestyle and nutrition play in determining one's health. "People should avoid certain foods and certainly canola oil, polyunsaturated fats such as margarine, corn oil, and safflower oil should be avoided. Instead, substitute olive oil, butter, and coconut oil. The concept of saturated fat has been negative. However, recent research demonstrates saturated fats are better for you because of the fact that 54 percent of the human body is made up of saturated fat," points out Vaishvila. In addition, she stresses the avoidance of sugars and places an emphasis on taking in three meals a day that include protein.

Giving a comprehensive, holistic approach to getting people well is her mission. "I enjoy helping people get well, stay well and to help them nutritionally," she says. "I became a doctor to help people attain and enjoy good health. It is fantastic to see how Nutri-Spec helps people to return to great health. Simple things like diet and lifestyle are the key to optimum health," says Vaishvila.

Future educational seminars are in the works and a free newsletter is available. For more information please call Dr. Vaishvila directly at (925) 705-2330.

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Oh, Those Dirty Carpets

Experts say it is wise to clean your carpets twice a year and, with graduation parties this month, now might be a good time to call Rob Geen, owner and operator of R & A Dynasty Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning Service.

"In addition to providing excellent service with our truck-mounted steam cleaning system, I educate customers about how to maintain their carpets and upholstery. Spot cleaners that are available at the grocery store are usually the worst



Rob Geen of R&A Dynasty Carpet

thing you can do for your carpets. I enjoy educating people about how to get long life from the major investment they have made in their carpets," explains Geen.

Originally from Texas, Geen served in the United States Navy. Upon his discharge he went into the carpet cleaning business, and for the past 22 years has been providing excellent service to customers throughout the Bay Area. "Rob did a truly excellent job at our home. I was very pleased with the fact that, in spite of the age of our

carpets and the obvious wear and tear, he was able to lift so many spots," says Orinda resident Lauren Cuneo.

In addition to cleaning carpets and area rugs, R & A Dynasty provides expert cleaning of upholstered furniture. Utilizing a truck-mounted steam cleaning process, it usually takes three to eight hours for the area to dry, depending on how soiled the area is and the weather conditions. Convenient disposable cloth booties are provided in case the homeowner needs to walk on the damp carpet before it has completely dried. "Cleaning makes everyone feel good. I often see a bounce in my customer's step when I have completed a project," says Geen, who moved to Orinda in 1989. He is married to Aurea Fonseca-Geen and the couple has two children, Brittany, who is 15, and Danielle, who is 21.

Interestingly, Aurea hails from a tiny village in northeast Portugal near Fatima where her family lived without electricity or indoor plumbing. When she was 10 years old, her family immigrated to the Bay Area. "When I was growing up, my parents insisted we speak Portuguese at home, never English. At the time, I did not understand or appreciate why they insisted on speaking Portuguese, but today I am grateful to them," she says. Rob and Aurea enjoy playing on a co-ed softball team together and, in fact, originally met at a fitness gym. Both continue to enjoy staying fit by playing softball every week.

For more information and to schedule a cleaning, give Rob a call at (866) 888-2988. You may also visit the website at www.radynastycarpetcare.com, or e-mail Rob at Rob.Geen@sbcglobal.net.

One Stop Service at Orinda Hair Studio

No need to leave Orinda for your beauty regime. This gem offers many services that include manicure, massage, hair styling, and facials. Conveniently located at the Crossroads, 41 Moraga Way, it is tucked in beside Infiniknit Possibilities and the steps leading to the second floor of the building.

Owner and operator Hafiza Noor established the Orinda Hair Studio 12 years ago. Noor has recently remodeled the cozy setting with attractive Pergo flooring, abundant use of mirrors that make the space bright and cheerful, and modern furniture.

There are three hair stylists on site ready to assist you with either a new look or just a trim. Stylists and European-trained Zohre, Amy James and owner Hafiza Noor, are available to help you define the "new you." Kim Lam offers manicures and pedicures and is competitively priced. If relaxation and rejuvenation is what you are after, then check in with massage therapist Amber Largent.

European facial expert Aurea Fonseca-Geen performs facials at the Orinda Hair Studio on Mondays only, as the rest of the week she is at the Lafayette Park Hotel and Spa. When her best friend developed severe cystic acne at age 17, Fonseca-Geen saw the social consequences and it affected her deeply. She developed a passion for helping people achieve beautiful skin in as natural a way as possible. In order to carry out her mission, Fonseca-Geen became a licensed aesthetician.

"I firmly believe in healing skin as holistically as possible. When performing a European facial, I use products that exfoliate the skin and apply a soothing mask that is anti-inflammatory," says Fonseca-Geen, whose blue eyes sparkle as she explains her approach to maintaining



VALERIE HOTZ
Aurea Fonseca-Geen is a European facial expert at Orinda Hair Studio.

healthy and beautiful skin. She is such a believer in the natural approach to skin care that she discourages the use of antibiotics for acne. "I prefer to treat acne holistically, and I enjoy making people feel so good about their skin that they choose not to wear make-up," she adds.

According to Fonseca-Geen, the best skin-care regime includes daily use of cleanser, [SEE BUZZ page 23]

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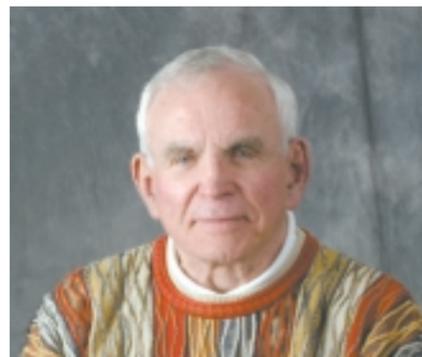
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

◆ LETTERS 4 from page 22

against a bond measure to fix the roads in Orinda. I have seen a lot of finger pointing, but I have never heard a credible solution to where the money could come from to fix the roads other than a bond measure for that specific purpose. I don't doubt that Orinda might have made some different budget choices in the past, but I don't believe the city has ever collected enough money to adequately fund the maintenance of our infrastructure. Our roads are in deplorable condition throughout the city. Under Measure E, all roads in Orinda except private roads will be eligible for repair. I believe that our roads are in such bad shape that if we don't begin major repairs now, they will become impossible to navigate and will be extremely dangerous for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

We need to stop pointing fingers and own up to the fact that we all allowed the roads to deteriorate and are all responsible for helping solve the problem. We can choose to take responsibility for the proper maintenance of our city and pass Measure E, or we can take the money and hand it over to the car repair shops when our cars are ruined by road hazards.

The time for finger pointing is over. I urge you to vote yes on Measure E and begin rebuilding our city.

– Nancy Booth

Roads Not Safe

My husband and I and our three young children recently moved to Orinda. We chose Orinda because of the first-rate schools and strong community spirit. We were disappointed that the road bond didn't pass in November. Our young family requires shuttling around town everyday. The roads are just not as safe as they should be. This is a serious safety issue, and for the sake of the children here, we need to take responsibility for this problem and fix it. We also know that better roads and drainage will help maintain home values, reduce wear on cars, and reduce flooding risk. This measure also funds water line repairs to provide firefighters with adequate water pressure, another necessity given the high fire hazard rating.

Some people want a parcel tax for this. However, there are only 7,000 parcels in Orinda. A \$300 parcel tax would raise about \$2 million per year for repairs, whereas the bond will raise almost \$60 million and will come in sooner, enabling faster repairs. Spending \$2 million a year would not make much progress, and unrepaid roads would continue to degrade.

We'd rather pay \$300 a year for a bond and get it done sooner. We also believe a large parcel tax would be burdensome for many retired residents. Younger families drive more than retired people, so it makes sense to us that we should pay our share to fix the roads. Please join me in supporting Measure E and vote yes in June.

– Denise Gant

Solution to Bad Roads

I live in Orinda and we have a problem. Our streets are deteriorating, storm drains are rotting, and some of our water pipes are too small to allow enough flow to fight fires. No one has suggested that we don't have this problem. There is a solution on the ballot in June called Measure E that would go a long way toward solving our problem and do so in a timely way. It will not solve the entire problem, but it is a major step in the right direction.

The opposition has generated numerous letters and, at least, three handouts trying to tell us that E is not the right solution. In each of the handouts, they spend half or more of the space finding fault with the fire district and suggesting that the district should be providing major funding to repair

our streets and drains. I understand that these people have a problem with the fire district, but we need to be clear on this. The Moraga-Orinda Fire District is our fire district, and their funds should be spent fighting fires and saving lives not fixing streets and drains!

Even if you add up all funding the opposition say they can find, it would not be enough to put a dent in the problem in my lifetime. We, the people, are Orinda. The streets and drains are ours, and we need a solution. What will happen to the value of our million dollar homes if we do nothing? In time, all of us will have to have a four-wheel drive vehicle just to get to the end of our driveways or private streets.

Join me in voting yes on Measure E.

– Terry J. Murphy

Measure E Is Not The Solution

Measure E bond tax (\$58.6 million principle and \$60 million wasted interest) will repair too few roads. Measure E does not identify criteria to determine which roads will get bond money. Will your road be repaired? Citizens should know specific criteria for fixing roads.

The Orinda infrastructure committee report uses the following criteria: "At a minimum, roads with 500 daily vehicle trips or more should be repaired." The infrastructure map shows 90 percent of Orinda's 500 roads would not meet the minimum standard for repair. We can expect more bond measures in the future.

There is a better financial solution for fixing our roads. The city council can purchase a \$36,260,000 city revenue bond that does not require new taxes by using money the council controls: \$915,159 from the city annual pavement fund; \$500,000 city reserve fund (replace in 2014 with \$600,000 new development taxes); \$900,000 savings by changing police dept. from county to city (use Moraga model); and \$2,315,159 to fund a \$36,260,000 city revenue bond requiring no new taxes.

This city revenue bond will allow road repairs to begin in the same time frame as a Measure E bond. A city revenue bond would require no new taxes.

In addition, Orinda could have \$4,68,606 annually in 2014 for infrastructure by forming our own Orinda fire district. This savings increases with annual assessment increases.

Other citizens have also offered solutions that do not require new taxes. Ask the council to spend our tax money as we intended. Please vote no on E.

– Vince Maiorana

Time to Act

Orinda's Infrastructure Committee, some very highly-qualified volunteers, spent over two years analyzing Orinda's infrastructure. Four new city council members in the last two years have also studied the issue in depth. They all came to the same conclusion: this is a serious problem that needs a serious solution.

Orinda has 92 miles of roads, and two-thirds of them are in bad shape. Old drains from the 1940s and 1950s are collapsing and need to be repaired. A number of areas in town are potential sites for disaster, as the water pressure isn't high enough to put out a house fire, and we could wind up with another Oakland Hills fire situation.

A parcel tax would take 30 years to raise the same amount of money as this bond, and it would be almost \$600 per parcel. This means that for most people in Orinda, the bond will cost less than a parcel tax would. A parcel tax would spread out the repairs over so long a period that roads would continue to fail, and we couldn't keep up.

Measure Q lost by only about 200 votes. Most people realize that important safety issues are involved in this decision. Funds from the new bond proposal, Measure E,

will be overseen by a citizens' committee and subject to audit. The money raised can only be spent on roads, water pipes, and drains, all of which are vital to our community's safety. Please join me in voting yes on Measure E in June.

– Wint Mather

How Do You Solve a Problem Like Orinda?

With what Orindians do best: gratitude and donations!

Rather than mortgage Orinda's future, how about taking care of our roads, by asking for donations from those that are here now and those that have been blessed by Orinda in the past. In tribute to those that are so inclined, perhaps an appropriate tribute might be to rename some of our major roads, such as Glorietta Boulevard to Leshner Lane, Miner Road to Long's Way, Moraga Way to Safe Way.

Let's work together for a peaceful ride into the future.

– C. Herman

Move Forward - Vote Yes

Nobody seems to disagree that Orinda's roads, drains, and fire lines are in dire need of repair and replacement. I understand and agree with some of the criticisms leveled against past city councils for not strategically addressing the city infrastructure and service needs and priorities. But the current city council stands in stark contrast to the past. The process to evaluate and inventory the city's streets, pipes, and water lines has been methodical and steadfast. The infrastructure committee made up of fellow Orindians are experts in the fields of engineering, finance, transportation, and government. The analyses and recommendations, presented in clear, substantiated and understandable reports released for public review and debate, saved the city hundreds of thousands in consultant costs. If only all major city projects followed such a process, we would not be so inclined to complain about past mistakes and decisions, and focus on how we can deal effectively with the challenges at hand. This city council has worked very hard and earned my trust. I am voting yes on Measure E. We need to move forward.

– Diane Oshima

Focus On Repair

I just read another round of letters to the editor in *The Orinda News*. One thing is clear from all the opinions for and against Measure E, that it is indisputable that Orinda's roads are in unacceptable condition. Instead of getting caught up again in hurling nasty personal insults and accusations against the city council members who take on the many thankless jobs none of the rest of us are willing to do, the focus needs to be on accomplishing the repair of our roads, drains, and water pipes. Those now on the city council who opposed Measure Q have come to recognize that there is no reasonable alternative to a bond measure and have now joined the Measure Q proponents in supporting Measure E. The voters in Orinda need to follow their lead and pass Measure E.

As Mayor Steve Glazer has pointed out, Measure E alone does not cover the cost of fixing all of Orinda's infrastructure problems – that cost is nearly double the fund that will be raised by Measure E. So, even if all of the funding ideas advanced by the opponents of the bond measure actually were feasible and implemented, the money from Measure E would still be needed. The proponents of these ideas and those critical of decisions made by our city council can make their views known by serving on or communicating with the Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight

Commission. In the meantime, Measure E funds will allow for the repairs to begin before we lose more ground. By defeating Measure Q, all that has been accomplished is the further deterioration of our roads and the loss of funds that could have gone to repairs that instead went to cover the cost of putting Measure E on the June ballot.

– Dana Dumas Sankary

Cost of Repairs Escalating

Orinda roads, drains, and water pipes need fixing, are getting worse, and the cost of repair is escalating.

After two years of study, numerous public hearings, and advice of municipal financial experts, it was determined the only feasible way to obtain the funds is by a bond issue. Estimated taxes would amount to an average \$30 per \$100,000 of assessed value, not market value, of a property. In addition, the city will provide additional funds from reserves and the city budget; EBMUD will provide additional money; the fire district will do the same.

All roads are eligible for repair. A Citizens' Oversight Commission, representative of the entire city, will hold public hearings to recommend which roads, drains, and water pipes be fixed and to make certain that the bond money is used only for those purposes, as required by the bond measure. In addition, an annual audit will review all projects to see that the requirement is met.

About three people, known to be perennial naysayers for any measure, are determined to sink Measure E by again alarming other voters with their misstatements. Their proposals are unrealistic and will not solve the infrastructure problems. Please go to www.fixorindaroads.com for answers to their claims.

While some residents are unhappy about actions of past city councils, the fact is that we have a new city council who, I believe, is determined to respond to city needs in a responsible, sensible way.

Let's not spite ourselves by voting against Measure E just to protest prior council actions. That will not repair the roads.

This may be our last opportunity to repair the infrastructure in Orinda to protect our property values and the safety of our homes.

Vote yes on Measure E!

– Jack D. Wickware

Improve Orinda's Roads

A road, drains, and water pipe bond will be on the ballot in Orinda in June. The decision by a public agency to put a measure on the ballot is not taken lightly. This one has been thoroughly studied by a new city council and has included measures for increased oversight. The original recommendations came from a volunteer committee of citizens who studied the infrastructure and financing issues for over two years.

The costs of road repairs have gone up 10 percent since the last election – time is money in this case. Waiting will only increase the costs further, and let roads, drains, and pipes get worse and worse.

Mistakes may have been made in the past, but that does not change the fact that work is needed to ensure safe transit, to provide adequate water flow to put out fires, and to stem the escalating costs of repairs caused by delay and further deterioration.

I agree with past letters on the unwritten social contract that binds us to a responsibility for the common good, the welfare of all. I also believe a public body enters into a contract with the citizens it serves and represents when it places any measure on the ballot. We can support Measure E with the assurance the funds will be overseen by a citizens' panel, and the spending will be audited. Let's improve Orinda!

– Cassandra Forth

[SEE LETTERS 5 page 26]

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What's up. With. Paper. Plate. Signs?

Along with "For Sale" signs, paper plates seem to be everywhere on Moraga Way this month. Drive from Peets to Miramonte and you will be invited—telephone pole by agonizingly tree-camouflaged telephone pole—to Senior Ball or someone's birthday party. You've seen these signs: one black capital letter on each plate. One word on each pole. You're driving, and you're reading, and you're telling yourself not to read because it's unsafe, and you're still reading, and you're getting awfully close to rear-ending the driver in front of you, but at this point you are sooooo close to finding out whose birthday it is that you keep reading....and then the plates suddenly disappear down a side street and you're left cursing the paper plate sign makers for defacing our pristine Orinda telephone poles (when really, you're just mad that you still can't figure out the meaning of that puzzling "Do Not Achieve Blast-Off" sign which has been up for months). Trash. The. Paper. Plate. Signs.

– Stacy Crinks

Infrastructure Dilapidated

I have to agree with Orinda's mayor 100 percent. The roads and infrastructure are dilapidated and in need of an extreme amount of work. I also agree that we need to move beyond the hand-wringing and finger pointing and get something done. However, I can't agree on the general obligation bond measure suggested to fix these problems.

First, we just vote no to the bond measure to alleviate this problem. As a city council, they should listen to their constituents. Please don't insult our intelligence by forcing another general obligation bond measure down our throats.

As a state, we currently pay more than \$75 billion in interest each year to outstanding bonds. Talk about mortgaging our children's future.

Secondly, the proposed measure puts the largest burden on the newest members of our community. New residents have utilized these roads and infrastructure far less than the long-time residents, yet they are expected to pay an unfair amount. Also, newer residents already pay a larger amount in property taxes toward the infrastructure.

A fair and equitable distribution of funds by all Orinda residents should be the focus instead of creating a class and income envy. All residents utilize the road evenly; therefore, all residents should pay the same amount. When I flush my toilet, it doesn't put more strain on the system than the man next door. When it rains, the storm drains flow the same for all residents, not a different amount for individual homeowners based on the value of their home.

It should not matter whether we have lived in Orinda for 40 years, four years, or four months, we all utilize these roads and services. I have no problem paying my fair share, however, I do have a problem paying for something that I "moved into" while others who "created the problem" are not willing to do the same.

While we agree that the roads are in great need of repairs, the council has agreed to place the burden on a select few, while others share little or no responsibility, even though they have been the residents who have benefited the most for the past 30 years.

The council needs to re-examine their options before going forward and spending even more tax money on another general obligation bond measure which, as written, will fail again.

– Randy De

Burden on New Homeowners

As a relatively new resident of Orinda, I was appalled to learn of the neglect in road maintenance by our elected and appointed city officials. I was further outraged to learn that the very same citizens who gayly tore up the pavement with their cars for decades and ignored the fact that their city government failed to maintain them, think it is a good idea to fund 90 percent of the new bond proposal from those who only recently purchased homes. This is, after all, what is proposed by the ad valorem nature of the funding mechanism which places nearly all the burden on homeowners who purchased in the last five years or so.

In reality, those residents who let the roads decay while their home equity soared to the moon are both the rightful parties to pay for the past usage and those most capable of footing the bill. Something like \$50 per year of residency ought to about do it and would not even be noticed by anyone with seven figure home equity. Otherwise, the most sensible solution is to simply buckle down, eliminate waste from our city budget, and begin the task of fixing the roads over the next 20-30 years out of our operating budget.

– Ben Sloan

Do Not Get Fleeced!

Is there something about "no" that our city council did not understand? Now, by turning about and placing Proposition E on a special ballot, at the cost of over \$100,000, do they hope to get a "yes" vote?

As an Orinda resident/homeowner for 54 years, I am appalled by the rebuttal statement in our Voter Information Pamphlet, in which the proponents state: "The opponents arguments are full of falsehoods, misrepresentations, and distorted claims." Unbelievable. These should have been enumerated, but weren't because they don't exist. And, also why are the election instructions also in Spanish for Orinda residents? This must have cost a lot for no reason. Why have a city council at all if this is their best effort?

I will be voting no and will erect a "Don't Get Fleeced, Vote no on E" sign in front of my home. I will hang a big sheep fleece on it. Please give me a short "beep" of approval as you drive by.

– R.M. "Andy" Andersen

VOTE JUNE 5