

THE ORINDA NEWS

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City Makes Hard Choices On Road Repairs

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

How do you fill a \$100 million hole with a million dollar budget? That's the challenge facing city officials as they attempt to address Orinda's deteriorating roads. A survey of Contra Costa County road conditions found what anyone dodging our pothole-ridden streets could tell you: Orindans are driving on roadways that are considered among the worst in the county.

Despite two efforts in the past year to pass an infrastructure bond, both of which earned support from a clear majority of voters but narrowly missed the two-thirds supermajority required in California, the city council remains charged with the task of stretching limited resources to repair our aging infrastructure.

Last month, the council approved awarding a contract to MCK Services of Concord for pavement repair projects to be undertaken in the 2007-08 fiscal year. The scope of work includes repairs to some of the city's most heavily used roads as well as those that can be nursed along with a simple slurry seal.

"We are using our available dollars to repair the roads most heavily traveled and those that give us the greatest financial efficiency," explains Mayor Steve Glazer.

"It's a type of road repair triage where we're assigning degrees of urgency to the repair work based on what will bring the greatest good with our limited dollars."

City engineers are relying on Street Saver, a pavement management software program developed by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, to help determine which roads should be repaired first. Street Saver is used by over 100 agencies in the Bay Area to guide prioritization of road repairs.

"It is more efficient to fix a mediocre road that is heavily traveled and perhaps not as costly but will benefit the most people. That's why the city recently did the slurry seal on Camino Pablo and El Nido Ranch, for example," explains Glazer. "It's an inexpensive fix that will help maintain the most heavily traveled roads. It's efficiency through proper maintenance. On the flip side, many residential roads that aren't as heavily traveled and faced with costlier repairs may not get repaired."

Ironically, the city is now forced to do precisely what some opponents to the previous bond measures claimed would happen should the measures have passed: fix the most heavily traveled while conditions on smaller residential streets deteriorate. The city has spent, on average, [SEE ROADS page 18]

Miramonte High School Prepares for Homecoming



DAVID MAYERI

Miramonte High School's football team celebrates homecoming on October 12 against Concord High School. The JV's play at 4:30 p.m. and the varsity at 7 p.m. Shown above is last year's team prior to a game against Concord.

Wilder Development Begins to Take Shape

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

It definitely takes some imagination to visualize where the custom-built homes, trail network, recreation center, and public ball fields will be constructed. But there is no denying that Gateway Valley is undergoing a transformation as grading work for the various roads and amenities in this 1,600 acre development goes full-speed ahead.

"We have approximately 30 percent of the grading done," said Wilder vice president Michael Olson during a tour of the site in late August. "It's great having people come out to the project and see what you've envisioned for years." Olson, who has been involved with the project for 10 years, has been the main liaison with community groups opposed to the



SALLY HOGARTY

While the grading along Quarry Hill looks more like a moonscape than a residential development, it will be transformed into a livable community of homes and a recreation center.

development, the city council, and the various governmental agencies concerned about the project's impact on the environment and endangered species. "It's been a long road, but I'm really pleased at how everybody worked together to make a final plan that we could all be proud of," he adds.

When completed, the development will include 245 homes, five public playing fields encompassing 27 acres, an extensive network of trails and paths that connect to existing trails in Orinda and to Robert Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve, and a recreation center built at the old rock quarry on the property. According to Wilder's promotional material, Quarry House will be the recreation and social heart of the new neighborhood. Built in the Spanish [SEE WILDER page 20]

City Council Looks to Improve Planning Process

■ 11-member task force appointed to make recommendations

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

A man's home is his castle...but not in my backyard. And therein lies the rub for residents looking to renovate their homes. Orinda's General Plan provides land use and home building guidelines; yet, disagreements inevitably arise when a homeowner's vision doesn't match that of neighbors or the city officials charged with preserving Orinda's character.

On average, the five-member, city council-appointed planning commission reviews 8-12 projects a year. If the planning commission denies a project, homeowners have the right to appeal the commission's decision to the city council. Often, by the time a project reaches the council, the situation involves neighbors against neighbors, creating the climate for what Mayor Steve Glazer describes as "some of the most difficult and painful decisions we have to make as a council."

The city's general plan spells out guidelines for nearly every aspect of developing property – from the size of a structure to the plants lining the driveway. The guidelines, however, are not entitlements. This distinction may be the single biggest factor driving homeowners who feel that the planning process is more subjective than objective to appeal planning decisions

A recent dispute over a project on [SEE PLANNING page 4]



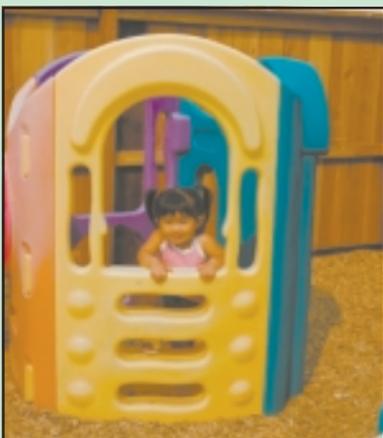
SALLY HOGARTY

Whether this Melody Lane property was located on a hillside or ridge line was one of the points of contention when the property owners applied for a permit to add an addition.

IN THIS ISSUE

	Page
News	
Caldecott Tunnel	6
Police Blotter	6
About Town	
Athletics	15
Breast Cancer Awareness Month	5
Historical Home	7
Performing and Visual Arts	2, 10, 21-22
Preschool Pull-out	11-13
Schools/Students	16-18
Seniors	19
Backyard Getaways	14
Between the Lines	9
Business Buzz	24
Calendar	22
Classified	20
Editorial	4
Orinda Association	3

Preschool Section



SALLY HOGARTY

Mina Wang plays at The Child Day School in Moraga. A special pull-out preschool section begins on page 11.

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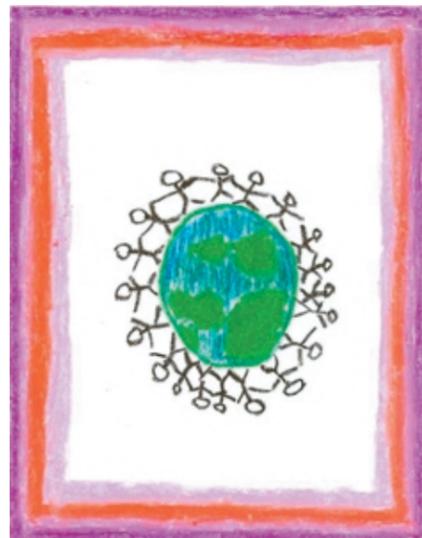
UNDERSTANDING THROUGH ART

Orinda Mom Brings Orinda and Iraqi School Children Together Through Art

By CHRIS LAVIN
Staff Writer

Most of us look at the war in Iraq with a feeling of despair. We can't really do anything, we tell ourselves, short of waiting for the next election.

But one Orinda mother, saddened especially by the exodus of children from their Iraqi homes into refugee camps in Jordan, is doing something about it. Lara Dutto has brought Project Farasha, a children's art exchange project, to Orinda and the rest of the East Bay. An Iraqi child creates a drawing or painting that is then exchanged for a drawing in response by a



COURTESY OF PROJECT FARASHA

Children around the world unite in this drawing by a Bay Area student.

Bay Area child. Both drawings are then exhibited side by side. More than 300 drawings from Iraqi children have already been completed.

"It's age-appropriate civic action," Dutto says. "It's wonderful to see how children

respond to each other."

Farasha, the Arabic word for butterfly, was chosen for the project because all children – anywhere in the world – love to watch butterflies. Dutto created the project after hearing of the work done by Claudia Lefko, of Massachusetts, who founded the Iraqi Children's Art Exchange, which serves as an umbrella for Project Farasha.

Given the language barrier, art is a universal tool to allow communication to happen," Dutto said. "Every child draws the same," she said.

There are several ways for people to participate. Forms can be downloaded from www.projectfarasha.com that give adults tips on how to talk to children about the war. It also includes a mail-in form to request an exchange kit that will include a piece of art from an Iraqi child, to which a Bay Area child may create a response. Some completed exchanges are featured on the site.

When a child in Iraq or a refugee camp receives the responsive artwork to his or her own, "the kids are imminently aware that someone cares about them," Dutto said. The program has been so successful that the original 300 or so drawings brought back from Iraq by Iraqi Children's Art Exchange have already received responses – sometimes as many as two or three. "We'd love to make more," Dutto said. Lefko has another trip to Jordan planned, from which she will bring back more art. "She may bring 50 pieces, she may bring 500," Dutto said.

Now Project Farasha is setting up workshops to be held at churches and schools to work on responsive pieces and murals that will be displayed in pediatric wards, orphanages, and other public places in the Middle East. Check the website for workshop dates; or Dutto encourages anyone with a public space – a school or a

church, for example – to contact the project to set up a workshop.

To raise money for the endeavour, Project Farasha has scheduled a fundraising gala and art auction at 6 p.m. October 13 at Periscope Cellars and Gallery in Emeryville. The \$75 tickets include food and wine, and proceeds will go to benefit the art exchange project. Artwork will be displayed and works from Bay Area artists auctioned. Interactive art projects will be demonstrated, as well. You can download a registration form at the website.

According to the United Nations, 50,000

people still flee Iraq each month. It estimates that almost two million people have left their homes since the war began, and half of those are children. Most are in refugee camps in neighboring countries. What is more, sanctions, lack of health care and electricity, and other complications caused by the war have resulted in a huge child mortality index, so that one in eight children dies before they reach the age of eight.

Ultimately, Dutto would like to see the project expand to nearby communities in California and the rest of the country.

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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

**A Message From the OA Presidents
National Pickled Pepper Month**



Kate Wiley and Jim Luini

After the summer months of swim team, sports camps, and family vacations, October finds most of us finally settled into our routines, some new, some old. Some of our kids have settled into the kindergarten classroom routine, others a new college scene. Wherever they, and we, are in life, October is one month which gives us a brief respite (before the hectic holiday season) to take a minute to celebrate awareness of issues and causes around us.

Did you know October was National Breast Cancer Awareness Month? It's also National Adopt a Dog Month, National Computer Learning Month, Car Care Month, Clock Month, Dessert Month, National Sarcastic Month, and specifically, October 9 is Moldy Cheese Day. One of OA's traditions is keeping Orindans aware of issues and causes, maybe not necessarily National Popcorn Poppin' Month, but awareness of the great projects and events presented by volunteers in this community. We want to thank Chip and Carolyn Herman and their volunteers and organizers of the **3rd Annual Orinda Classic Car Show**, who presented an incredible event, and whose proceeds in the amount of over \$7,000.00 were donated to the OA's *Senior Around Town* program. This invaluable service to our seniors wouldn't exist without the generosity of groups like the Classic Car show and the hundreds of hours provided by our volunteer drivers.

We'd also like you to be aware of Miramonte High School's student-run volunteer organization *Reach*, which communicates all volunteer activities available for students. Student volunteers help to make so many wonderful

community events happen, while learning invaluable lessons, and, hopefully, developing a lifelong passion for giving back. If your organization needs extra hands for an event, please contact them at miramonteREACH@aol.com for student volunteers.

October is also the month we ask you to look at those around you and nominate a deserving volunteer or group who has had a positive impact on our community for our annual **Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Awards**. A nomination form can be downloaded from our website, www.orindaassociation.org; or simply send in a letter with your nominations and the reasons supporting your nomination.

So now you know what to be aware of in October, but to really be in the know, why don't you consider joining the OA board of directors? We're looking for a few new board members. We meet the second Monday of the month at 7:15 p.m. We offer a variety of areas of interest serving Orinda. Call us at 254-0800 for more information, or join us at our next board meeting, Monday, October 8, which just happens to be "American Tag Day"- tag, you're it.

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www.orindaassociation.org

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Orinda Motors' Car Show Biggest Ever

The third annual charity car show featuring old and new hot rods became the most successful show ever when Orinda Motors raised over \$7,000 for the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program. A huge check - literally - was presented to the OA for the transportation program which provides rides to senior citizens.

Hundreds of visitors swarmed over the fastidious shape of the close to 100 vehicles, and some lucky fans even got to ride in the cars during a local parade through town.

Chip and Carolyn Herman, organizers of the event, said that they hope to make next year's show even bigger by taking over the old Phair's parking lot.

- Chris Lavin
Staff Writer



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Chip Herman presents the check to **Eartha Newsong** (L) and **Kate Wiley** of the Seniors Around Town program.

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October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

This year, approximately 178,000 women in the United States will hear the words we all dread – you have breast cancer. Two thousand men will also be diagnosed with the disease.

As a 23-month survivor, I can certainly attest to what those words do to your life and the lives of your loved ones. You and they will never be the same. I still remember my grown daughter taking me out to a very expensive restaurant and giving me my Christmas present three weeks early (a few days before my lumpectomy). She never said so, but it was evident she wasn't sure I'd be around by Christmas. Not only was I around for that Christmas, but, by the next one, I had completed my treatments and even had my own hair again!

Being diagnosed with any serious disease causes one to re-prioritize the important things in life. Suddenly that disagreement at the office or forgetting to pick up the cleaning doesn't seem so important. Sharing time with family and friends, taking that special vacation, or just finding time to read a favorite book moves to the top of the priority list.

I've often been asked what caused my breast cancer. I was the first person in my family to have cancer of any kind, and of the 23 risk factors listed for breast cancer, I only had two (see www.cms.komen.org). Medical science still does not know what causes breast cancer or who will get it. The disease most often strikes Caucasian women followed by African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and Native Americans.

Millions of dollars flow into research projects attempting to discover what part environmental factors play in the disease, as well as lifestyle and family history. The one thing doctors do know is that early detection and treatment are the keys to

survival.

Thanks to various educational campaigns, more women are doing self-exams and having a regular mammography exam. The treatment protocol constantly evolves as more effective surgeries and drug therapies are discovered. Not so long ago, hearing the words "You have breast cancer," meant it was time to put your life in order. Today, there are over two million breast cancer survivors living healthy, fulfilling lives. Now, that's cause for celebration!

– Sally Hogarty, Editor

Editor's Note:

It is the policy of *The Orinda News* to print unedited Letters to the Editor, thus allowing local residents to voice their opinions. When these opinions also include inaccurate facts, however, the paper strives to include an editor's note.

Unfortunately, this did not occur in the September issue. Several facts were misrepresented in two letters to the editor that we would like to correct at this time.

According to both letters, Mayor Steve Glazer voted to approve construction of the new city hall. The city council minutes of August 2, 2005, however, show that City Councilmember Glazer voted against construction of the new facility. The letters also stated that Measure E was based on the Infrastructure Committee report which limited road repair to streets having 500 car trips per day. Measure E did not include the 500 car trip criteria. One of the letters also stated that the mayor had no intention of cutting city expenses to augment road funds. The June 19 city council minutes, however, show the mayor voting to increase the road fund to \$1,228,000. The text for Measure E and city council minutes can be found on the city's website at www.ci.orinda.ca.us.

Letters to the Editor

Debunking Conspiracy Theories

We are writing in response to the letters from Clyde Vaughn, Vincent Maiorana, and Wilmot McCutchen in the September 2007 issue of *The Orinda News*.

We do not know these three gentlemen, but felt compelled to respond because we are tired of their continual dissemination of conspiracy theories and propaganda around Measure E. With the way the three dominate Orinda airwaves, one might be led to believe that their views are shared by most Orindans. While we can not speak for anyone but ourselves, we can tell you that they do not represent our points of view.

Unlike Messrs. Vaughn, Maiorana, and McCutchen, we wanted Measure E to pass so that Orinda's alligator-cracked, potholed, falling-off-the-side-of-the-hill roads would be repaired in our lifetimes. Given that Measure E received a 63.5 percent "yes" vote, we think it's safe to say that most of Orinda would have liked to see that as well. It looks like Messrs. Vaughn, Maiorana, and McCutchen are in the minority on this one.

But wait, perhaps there's still hope for a pot hole free Orinda! We could consider Mr. Maiorana's "common sense" proposal of "fix(ing) the roads with no new taxes." It sure sounds great except for one thing...it would mean cutting all other city services for ten years. No police, no planning, no parks. We would just dedicate the entire city budget to fix the roads for a decade. Not a pretty picture. Sorry, sir, but your plan just doesn't cut it.

Finally, we are incensed by both the implicit and explicit challenges of Mayor Steve Glazer's integrity. We are certainly in favor of any good, healthy debate, but we've come to a point where it is no longer in service of progress. When Mr. Vaughn rhetorically asks, "Can we trust Glazer on

anything?" we must take exception.

We know Steve Glazer well. He is a man of character and a man of his word. He is well-intentioned, community-oriented, thoughtful, and intelligent. He dedicates a significant amount of his time and energy to a thankless, unpaid position serving our community. So, we'll answer your question, Mr. Vaughn. "Can we trust Steve Glazer?"

The answer is yes, emphatically yes, and we take exception to anyone who suggests otherwise.

– Paul & Laura Moran

Sideline Attacks

I am disheartened by the constant mistruths that Mr. Vaughn and Mr. Maiorana continue to write and continue to be published in this paper. A simple quick check of the facts shows that Mayor Glazer was the only dissenting vote for the new city offices (with the old city council). While Mr. Glazer and the entire new city council continue to look for new ways to fund our decaying infrastructure Mr. Vaughn and Mr. Maiorana continue their campaign of misinformation and half truths. The many false statements that continue to spew forth do nothing but harm a young city that has roads and pipes that need to be repaired. The decisions that have occurred in the past are in the past. Mr. Vaughn and Mr. Maiorana seem to have a personal agenda to discredit Mr. Glazer and the former and current city council. By personally attacking our all volunteer city council they have created unnecessary and unwarranted fear, uncertainty and doubt with their constant barrage of half truths. Mr. Vaughn and Mr. Maiorana and their supporters have a choice. They can continue to sit on the sidelines and throw stones and create more problems or choose to work constructively toward positive solutions and help build a consensus for a workable plan.

– Brandt Williams

[SEE LETTERS page 20]

◆ PLANNING from page 1

Melody Lane illustrates this point. In a 3-2 vote last February, the planning commission denied permits for a proposed 2,581 sq. ft. detached garage with an exercise/storage room and workshop. According to the staff report, the denial was based on the design and location of the new structure. The combined house and garage elevation along the ridge of a hillside, the predicted visibility of the project from across the valley, and the slope of the site, were among the reasons cited for the denial.

While the project fit within the quantitative standards for the size of building on that particular lot, it became subjected to more restrictive standards to meet design review. At just over six acres, a literal interpretation of the design guidelines would allow for a 43,734 sq. ft. structure on the lot. Adding the proposed garage/gym/workshop to the existing home

would bring the total building floor area to just over 9,000 sq. ft. well within the quantitative guidelines for the lot's floor area ratio.

On appeal, the project was eventually approved with a 3-2 vote by the city council. But, even the council's discussion on the appeal brought out glaring differences of interpretation over not only whether the structure's size was appropriate but also on whether it was, in fact, on a ridge line.

You'd be hard-pressed to find someone in town who hasn't gone through the planning process or who doesn't know someone who has. Typically, because the best stories are the most dramatic stories, it's tales of woe that capture our attention and come to represent the public's perception of the planning process in Orinda. The planning process is so hotly debated that it became a major item in the recent city council election with both councilmembers (then candidates) Tom

McCormick and Sue Severson calling for changes to the process. Sensitive to the misunderstandings and disagreements over design review and planning approvals, in 2005 the city council took steps to make the permit approval process easier for projects that added less than 1,000 sq. ft.

Last month, the council went a step further by appointing an 11-member planning process review task force. The task force, which will meet over the next six months, is charged with reviewing the current process and coming back to the council with recommendations for streamlining planning and design review, providing more objectivity to the decision-making process, and making the planning process more responsive to property owners. "I've been pushing for this since being elected to the council," McCormick notes. "I'm happy to see that it's finally happening."

The task force is composed of representatives from different segments of

the community. They are: Ted Urban, a business property owner; Bruce Burrows, a developer and contractor; Peter Golze and Steve Kubitschek, both architecture and design professionals; Chris Kniel and Clark Wallace, as residents-at-large; Herb Hofvendahl, of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce; planning commissioners Terry Murphy and Dean Orr; and councilmembers Tom McCormick and Amy Worth.

While some neighboring communities, such as Piedmont, have taken a strictly prescriptive approach to planning, others have seemingly given little thought or attention to the matter. As councilmember Amy Worth describes, "We've always tried to maintain a balance that would give property owners some latitude to build what they want while at the same time protect Orinda's semi-rural character."

The task force meetings are open to the public; for a schedule of upcoming meetings go to www.ci.orinda.ca.us.

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

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

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BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Early Diagnosis and Treatment Keys to Successfully Fighting Breast Cancer

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

"I was trying on a new bathing suit for a vacation to Costa Rica when I discovered a lump in my breast," recalls Pati MacDonald. The owner of Curves fitness studio in Orinda's Theatre Square was shocked. She had always prided herself on eating healthy and being in good physical condition. She also had no family history of breast cancer. When MacDonald returned from her vacation, she made an appointment with her doctor, feeling fairly certain that the lump she had found was merely a cyst. It was not.

MacDonald, like the majority of woman diagnosed, had no family history of the disease. Although millions of dollars go into scientific research each year, the medical profession still does not know the precise causes of breast cancer or who will develop the disease. They do know that breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in woman and the leading cause of cancer deaths among women ages 40 to 59. Studies have also shown that the disease strikes Caucasian women the most followed by African-American, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Native American.

Who is at risk for breast cancer? All women. The two most significant risk factors are being female and getting older. The majority of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no other known risk factors. The Susan B. Komen Foundation has compiled a list of over 20 possible risk factors (www.cms.komen.org) that may contribute to breast cancer.

While the number of new cases of breast cancer has risen over the years, the number of deaths from the disease has declined. Researchers attribute the rise in cases to better screening procedures and self-exams that discover the cancer at an earlier stage when surgery and treatment procedures are more effective.

"When I was diagnosed with breast

cancer, my family and friends were shocked," says MacDonald. "They said 'if it happened to you, it can happen to anyone.' Several of my friends went right in for mammograms."

A single mom running her own business, MacDonald relied on her family, friends, and clients at Curves for support. "These ladies at Curves really carried me through. They would even come in and cover one of my shifts if I needed to rest," she adds. MacDonald, who had a lumpectomy followed by daily radiation, also found out that several of her clients were breast cancer survivors, and she found their experience and wisdom invaluable. "I am so thankful that I was at Curves and had these women here to help me."

MacDonald began as a customer of Curves in San Diego where she lost 43 lbs. "I've kept it off for 10 years," she boasts. Enticed by the friendliness and camaraderie of the Curves exercise philosophy, MacDonald bought her first franchise in San Diego (which she still owns) before moving to the Bay Area to be near her aging parents. "The Curves exercise routine is set up in a circle, which is very social," she explains. "You can get in a great workout utilizing all the muscle groups in 30 minutes and catch up on all the latest news at the same time." MacDonald, who is a personal trainer certified in senior fitness as well as childhood obesity, will modify workouts for each client based on an

[SEE CANCER page 8]



SALLY HOGARTY

Patrons of Curves in Theatre Square include several breast cancer survivors. (L-R) Irene Hilgers, Lyne Therien, owner Pati MacDonald (seven-month survivor), Kathy Kerr-Schocket (10-month survivor), Mary Irving (20-year survivor), and Rose Mazmanian.

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POLICE BLOTTER / CALDECOTT TUNNEL



POLICE BLOTTER

Compiled by Haleh Allen,
Orinda Police Department
August 2007

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 81 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 1 incident in the area of De Soto Ct. at St. Stephens Dr.

Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): No reported incidents.

All Other Petty Thefts: 6 incidents in the areas of Camino Sobrante, Altarinda Rd., La Espiral, and Dalewood Dr.

Grand Theft From Vehicle (theft of more than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 1 incident in the area of La Campana.

All Other Grand Thefts: 7 incidents in the areas of Sleepy Hollow Ln.,

Moraga Way, Brookwood Rd., Ivy Dr., La Cresta Rd., La Espiral, and Martha Rd.

Vehicle Theft: 2 incidents in the areas of Evans Pl. and Glorietta Blvd.

Residential Burglary: 2 incidents in the areas of Coral Dr. and Camino Pablo.

Commercial Burglary: 3 incidents in the areas of Camino Encinas and Davis Rd.

Vandalism: 6 incidents in the areas of Austin Ct., Moraga Way, Bryant Way, Theatre Square, Abbott Ct., and Orinda Way.

Identity Theft: 2 incidents in the areas of El Toyonal and Meadow Ln.

Credit Card Fraud/Forgery: 2 incidents in the areas of La Fond Ln. and Chapparral Pl.

Pine Grove EIR Comments Due October 21

The draft Environmental Impact Report is currently available through the City of Orinda. Public comments are due October 21. Demolition of the old Pine Grove school is tentatively scheduled for March 2008.

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Another Caldecott Bore on the Way

■ **Caldecott May Get Easier**

By CHRIS LAVIN
Staff Writer

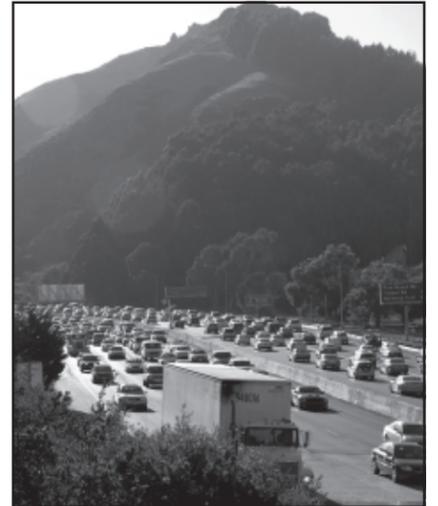
The anticipation coming home from Oakland by car on Highway 24 is universal: What will the backup look like when I round that last curve? The first woe (or whoa) is the backup; the second glance takes in how traffic is moving through the tunnel.

O.K., we can wait, you say. Let's tune to a different radio station, or put in an alternative CD. Breathe.

Now another bore is on the way, to be drilled and dug on the north side of the current tunnel. But will another cut through the mountain, amounting to another tunnel with two more lanes - scheduled to begin construction next spring - make a difference? Will our expectations change from trepidation on approaching the tunnel, either direction, to confidence that all traffic is moving smoothly?

Those are complicated questions for traffic officials who study congestion and the ways to ease it.

"Yes, it will help," said Dennis Fay, executive director of the Alameda Congestion Management Agency. "But nothing will change for the average commuter. ... Mainly it will probably help people coming from Alameda County during the week. I don't think people from Orinda are going to notice that much difference if they commute west in the morning."



SALLY HOGARTY
Traffic heading into Oakland during commute times bunches up as it merges from four to two lanes. A new bore may lighten that congestion.

"Where Orinda residents will notice a difference," Fay said, "is on the weekends, when the new bore will likely prevent backups from happening in either direction." Once the tunnel is completed - the California Transportation Agency estimates that won't be until 2013 - two bores will be dedicated to eastbound traffic, the other two to westbound. No more barriers, and no more switching tunnels.

The new Caldecott bore, which will cost \$350 million to build, is the latest big highway project in a string of projects since the Caldecott Tunnel opened in 1937. A pinch of the money, \$1 million, is coming from the federal government, but most of the cash is coming from local and state and funds, including bridge tolls and money from the major transportation bond proposal approved by voters last November. (See www.dot.ca.gov and search for [SEE CALDECOTT page 20])

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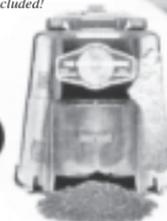
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HISTORIC HOUSE

Old Yellow House Still Standing After a Century on Moraga Way

■ What it Was and What it Wasn't - Now Revealed

By DOROTHY BOWEN
Staff Writer

When is a landmark not a landmark? What is a railroad station that never saw a train? What is a house that has not been a home since 1966? The answer to these questions: It's the Old Yellow House at 207 Moraga Way, and it's for sale. (Editor's note: *The house had been temporarily taken off the market at press time.*)

Ezra Nelson, who lives next door, was born in 1923 and grew up in the Old Yellow House. He recently took a few members of the Orinda Historical Society on a tour of the house and shared his reminiscences with them.

The house was built in 1894 for Captain Alexander Jenkins, who sailed with Samuel Merritt from Oakland to Alaska to get ice for Bay Area residents. He sold the property to Felix Fassio in 1915, and Fassio sold it to Manuel Vierra in 1918. It was bought two months later by Charles and Karen Nelson, who moved over from their cottage in Albany with their four children to escape the flu epidemic. Having lost a baby to illness, they didn't want to take any chances.

Charles, a sea captain, sold his ship to buy the Moraga Way house. Born in Sweden, he went to sea as a cabin boy and rose to become captain of his own ship. He sailed on whaling ships to Hawaii and was captain of a fishing schooner to Alaska and lumber ships up and down the California coast.

"Mama didn't like the wild tales of those days," Nelson recalled. Karen Nelson was born in Norway and came to America, settling in Buffalo, NY. She took the train across country to Oakland, where she worked as a housemaid.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of the Orinda Historical Society tour the Yellow House on Moraga Way.

"He didn't do any bragging on himself," says Nelson, "or tell us what his past life was like. We'd like to have known." Nelson's shipmate told his son that his father "was the best sailor I'd ever known."

No one knows why the house was painted the same yellow color used on many railroad stations, but it was never a station; although, the right-of-way for the California Nevada Railroad was nearby and graded all the way to Glorietta. Tracks were only laid as far as Bryant Station at Orinda Crossroads.

The house has four small bedrooms upstairs, two downstairs, and a parlor and kitchen. Original wallpaper lines the closet wall and newspapers under the old linoleum tell of RAF raids and Nazi advances in World War II, as well as the earlier Lindberg baby's kidnapping. There was no indoor plumbing until Nelson put a bathroom in the basement for his mother in 1947. The house has remained vacant for 41 years, after Mrs. Nelson died in 1966.

The teacher of Moraga Valley School, across the highway, boarded with the Nelsons in one of the downstairs rooms. The four Nelson children were the majority of students at the school until Orinda Union School opened in 1925. Charles Nelson was one of the last trustees of Moraga Valley School and the first of Orinda Union. He moved the flagpole from the old to the new school.

Ezra Nelson attended the new Orinda Union School and went on to Mt. Diablo High School, even though he was officially in the Richmond High School District. He had heard that Mt. Diablo was the better school. He got to school by riding his bike or hitching a ride to the Moraga train station

[SEE YELLOW HOUSE page 8]



HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTO

A young Ezra Nelson plays in the middle of Moraga Way in 1925.



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CONTINUATIONS

◆ **CANCER** from page 5

existing problem or because of a recent surgery. "I'm even more in tune with personalizing a workout after my surgery," she adds.

MacDonald also firmly believes that a positive attitude and the therapeutic abilities of laughter helped her cope with breast cancer: "A sense of humor is very important when battling disease of any kind, and laughter even burns calories." Doctors agree, citing that a positive outlook reduces stresses and facilitates recovery.

Now a seven-month survivor, MacDonald is going strong. The energetic entrepreneur has extended the hours at Curves to include evening Pilates and Yoga classes as well as having a special event one weekend each month. On October 6 from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., the Orinda Curves will host a fashion show. In recognition of October being Breast Cancer Awareness month, MacDonald will waive the usual \$149 sign-up fee during October with proof of a mammogram taken within the past year.

An estimated 178,480 new cases of breast cancer in American women and 2,030 new cases in American men will be diagnosed in 2007. Early detection and treatment are the keys to recovery. Regular mammograms and self-exams are the primary defense against this disease while researchers continue their studies on possible causes and the most effective treatments.

Many groups are doing comprehensive research on this disease. The Susan G. Komen Foundation funded a review of scientific research on environmental factors that may increase breast cancer risk. Led by the Silent Spring Institute, a unique, searchable online database details

information on over 200 chemicals that cause breast cancer in animals. For further information on the review, go to www.silentsprings.org. Additional information on breast cancer can be found through the National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4-CANCER or online at www.cancer.gov.

A local recycling center supports the fight against breast cancer with its program to reduce toxic chemicals put into the earth through cell phones, print cartridges, and other electronic waste. If released in our landfills, these materials could contaminate surrounding soil and groundwater. Studies have shown a link between cancer and the chemicals in our environment. The San Ramon company donates its profits to breast cancer organizations. If you cannot drive to San Ramon to drop off items, they have a mailing program and will even pick up larger items. For information, go to www.recycleforbreastcancer.org.

For those diagnosed with breast cancer, many support groups exist. The Wellness Community has one of the most comprehensive. More information on their programs can be obtained online at www.twc.bayarea.org or by calling (925) 933-0107.

◆ **YELLOW HOUSE** from page 7

and catching the Sacramento Northern line. Later, he could drive to high school – he got his driver's license when he was 13. After graduation, he worked as a machinist and later for the Orinda Post Office, where he stayed for 22 years, 1966 to 1989 before retiring.

Charles Nelson installed a telephone in the house and rode a Thor motorcycle to work at the Moore Shipyards in Oakland, until he quit to make a living as a stone

mason and builder. His work remains in the pillars across the street and the Sol Brae swimming pool. "He bought a new 1923 Model T Ford roadster and his motorcycle days were over," Ezra recalls.

Moraga Way was paved in 1922, but it was still narrow and even closer to the house with every improvement. Traffic was sparse enough to allow Ezra to play with his toy cars in the middle of the street. He remembers cattle drives along the road when the cattle had the right of way over the few cars. "Of course, that made me want to be a cowboy," he said. He and his pal, Bob Nordquist, across the street, climbed trees and swam in a pool made by the dammed-up creek. They explored the woods, fields, and creeks and often hiked over the hills to the Domingo Ranch, 400 acres in the present Gateway Valley, where the family kept cows, horses, goats, chickens, and pigs and offered "homey hospitality" to the two boys.

Moraga was covered with pear orchards owned by the Moraga Land Company. In the summer, men picked pears and women sorted them. Pay was \$2.05 a day, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., depending on the market price. The hills were covered with the hay fields of family farms owned by the Moraga Land Company. Ezra Nelson remembers riding home on the Sacramento Northern Railroad. When the train rounded the Valley Vista curve, the whole valley was spread out before him, covered with pear orchards in bloom. He remembers the swallows nesting under the eaves every spring. "Even though they made a mess, it was a welcome sight," he said.

He remembers the smell of bread baking and lamb stew coming from the wood stove, and the sound of rain on the roof, giving the family a sense of protection. Another frequent sound was the melodic cowbells

as the cows headed home.

The Old Yellow House is listed for sale for \$875,000 by Ezra Nelson's niece, who inherited it from her mother, Mabel Munster, Ezra's sister, who recently died. "The phone has been ringing off the hook," the listing agent says. "It won't sell overnight, but the owners are in no hurry."

Proposals have varied from moving the house to another lot in Moraga to restoring it on site. And, of course, there is always the possibility of teardown. It is listed in the booklet, *Historic Sites of Orinda*, but has never been made an official landmark.

The house would arguably meet enough of the criteria for a landmark as outlined by the City of Orinda to preserve, protect, perpetuate, enhance, and use historic landmarks. It was the home of immigrants who contributed to the growth of the area. The school teacher of the first school in Orinda boarded there. It was the home of the last trustee of the Moraga Valley School and the first of the Orinda Union School. And it has been a familiar feature of historic interest along Moraga Way since 1894.

The Landmark Committee approached the previous owner some years ago, but the elder Munster was not interested according to Ezra Nelson, her daughter, the present owner, is believed to be resistant as well. "I'm sure we could meet her concerns," says Kay Norman of the Landmarks Committee. A landmark building would have some restrictions attached, but a landmark site would not. However, either option requires the consent of the owner. "If the property is sold, we should try again," says Carl Weber, Landmark Committee chairman. "We would be crushed if it were torn down," says Norman.

Widgi Hastings took a video of the Yellow House tour and talk. It is available at the OHS Archives at the Orinda Library.

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BETWEEN THE LINES

Between the Lines

Politics and Prose: Some Enthusiasms

Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



A year ago, Melanie Kirkpatrick, in a *Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed piece, nominated what she considered the five best political novels: *The Prime Minister* by Anthony Trollope (1876); *Shelley's Heart* by Charles McCarty (1995); *Death of a Red Heroine* by Qiu Xiaolong (2000); *Darkness at Noon* by Arthur Koestler (1941); and *All the Kings Men* by Robert Penn Warren (1946). Bloggers responded with a plethora of suggestions that included George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *1984*, Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, and Alan Drury's *Advise and Consent*.

Writers who create political novels often use their authorial skills to highlight their own personal concerns about the state of their nation. Anthony Trollope, who had recently stood for Parliament and failed to win a seat, used the Palliser novels to vent his own frustration with contemporary political morality.

This is just what Richard North Patterson has done in his new novel, *The Race*, due on Orinda Books' shelves on October 30. As our current election campaign winds its interminable way to November 2008, a reader might be excused for pausing before entering a fictional political arena. Don't hesitate — *The Race* is a riveting thriller, in which Patterson takes on some incendiary issues: racism, religious fundamentalism, stem cell research, gay rights, and media monopolies, issues carved out of today's headlines. After some rather prosaic establishing chapters, readers follow the fortunes of Kerry Grace, handsome (think John Edwards) and charismatic Republican senator with the proverbial fire in his belly. Grace, a decorated Gulf War veteran (think John McCain), must contend with the extreme religious right, a corrupt primary in South Carolina, the shadow of his

brother, driven to suicide during his plebe year at West Point, a powerful media mogul (think Rupert Murdoch). Add to this a budding romance with a beautiful African-American actress and a political activist, whose occasional presence at his side in the campaign further inflames Grace's opponents.

Patterson has written about politics before. His excellent legal thrillers, all driven by contemporary issues of law and ethics, have alternated with novels on political themes. He says he interrupted work on his most recent novel about the Palestine-Israel crisis, *Exile* (just out in paperback) to write *The Race* because of his concerns about the political decision-making process now in play in the United States. Patterson's friendship with many political insiders who have experienced the brutal and bruising electoral process firsthand makes his narrative crackle with reality.

On the other side of the pond, writer Alan Bennett has taken a look at another form of governance, the monarchy. His gentle little fable, *The Uncommon Reader*, just out in September, suggests that one evening, when walking the corgis at Buckingham Palace, the Queen happens upon a mobile library, pulled up outside the staff quarters. The corgis bark, the Queen apologizes and, dutiful woman that she is, feels compelled to check out a book. Thus begins her reading life. The palace staff becomes alarmed when they sense that the royal duties are taking second place to the world of literature while the monarch feels that the world of fiction takes her further into the lives of her subjects than any number of Royal progresses.

The French president is dismayed when, on a state visit, he is queried about Jean

Genet. The Prime Minister, on his annual visit to Balmoral, finds himself neglected by Her Majesty as she has discovered Proust and let the guns go off without her so she can have some uninterrupted reading time.

Bennett, an essayist, playwright, and screenwriter (*The Madness of George III* and more recently, *The History Boys*) has a wonderful time with the goings on at the palace and in Her Majesty's government when the spectacles on the Royal nose are as often focused on books as on the dispatch boxes. The last chapter is not to be missed!

And if fictional explorations of

contemporary politics do not appeal, it will be hard to find a shrewder and more gripping analysis of the formative years of the republic than *American Creation: Triumphs and Tragedies at the Founding of the Republic* by Joseph Ellis, out at the end of October. Ellis, a Pulitzer and National Book Award winner for *American Sphinx* and *Founding Brothers*, highlights the emergence of the two-party system, then a novelty, as one of the most enduring legacies of the founding fathers. The foibles and follies of the founders make food for thought as we count down the next 365 days until the election.



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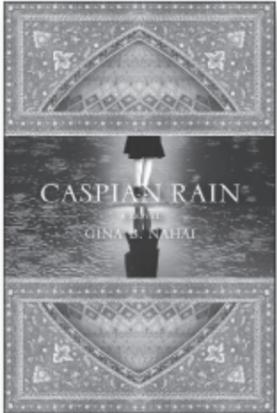
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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jocelyn Purcell took first place in the K-2nd grade division.



NERIS NEWTON
Amrita Newton won for grades 3-5.



PETRA MICHEL
Neris Newton was the first place winner for the middle school division.



PAT RUDEBUSCH
Ben Freeman won the high school division.

Orinda Idol is an annual program of the Orinda Arts Council to encourage and highlight the performing arts in our community. For more information on the organization or next year's Orinda Idol, go to www.orindaartscouncil.org.

Friends Annual Book Sale on October 6

By LAURA ABRAMS
 Contributing Writer

The Friends of the Orinda Library have always been ahead of the learning curve in its service to the community. The earliest organization to reduce, reuse, and recycle, its daily collect fine literature donated by residents, and then resell these items in their book store located just outside the entrance to the Orinda Library.

Once a year, they delight the community

with the Orinda Book Fair this year on Saturday October 6 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. located in the Orinda Library Plaza, upstairs in the Art Gallery hallway, and the Friends' bookshop. For the first time, attendees can even buy directly off the shelf of the sorting room! Thousands of great books will be available at discounted prices. Whether you like gardening, cooking, philosophy, or science fiction, the Friends will have selections of 26 different categories from which to choose.

As in previous years, the Orinda Farmers' Market, Orinda Arts Council, Cub Scouts, and the Orinda Community Church quilters will be participating.

Be sure to attend and don't forget this is a great time to clear off those book shelves at home to make room for your new purchases. All gently used books are welcome at the donation room at the entrance to the plaza from the library underground garage.

Donations will not be accepted from September 28 through October 8 in order to prepare for the sale.

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PRESCHOOLS

Lamorinda Preschools Offer Fun Variety for Students

Ah, the fretful time of finding a place for your small child to be cared for while you work, work out, or simply chill. The Lamorinda area offers a wide variety of preschool and pre- and post-school experiences. Pull out this section and keep it on hand for emergencies – or to plan for the rest of this year or next. Another good source is the Lamorinda Moms Club, which maintains a list of all local preschools at www.lamorindamomsclub.org.

Most schools will take new children during the year when openings become available. Contact the schools for more information.

Orinda

Fountainhead Montessori School
30 Santa Maria Way, Orinda, CA 94563
(925) 820-1343
7 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Prep/Toddler, Preschool, PreK, Kindergarten, Childcare (hourly)
Summer School
www.fountainheadmontessori.org

Happy Times Preschool

1 Ardor Drive, corner of Moraga Way, Orinda, CA 94563
(925) 254-2097
7 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Preschool and daycare, ages 2-6
Spanish classes offered, free of charge
www.happytimespreschool.net

Holy Shepherd Christian Preschool

433 Moraga Way, Orinda, CA 94563
(925) 254-3429
9 a.m. – noon
Toddler (age 2-3), Prekindergarten (ages 4-5), Extended care to 2 p.m. (monthly or hourly)
www.holyshepherd.org

St. John Preschool

501 Moraga Way, Orinda, CA 94563
(925) 254-4470



Chantal McNairy, Catie Mahlman, and Hannah Klein enjoy learning with blocks at The Orinda Preschool (TOPS).

7 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Preschool (ages 2-3 or 4-5), Jr. Kindergarten (ages 4+)
preschool@stjohnorinda.org

St. Mark's Nursery School
451 Moraga Way, Orinda, CA 94563
(925) 254-1364
9 a.m. to 2 p.m. M-Th,
9 a.m. – 12 noon Fri.
Age 3 (Tu/Th), age 4 (Mon/Wed/Fri)
Lunch Bunch (Daily to 2 p.m., all ages)

St. Stephen's Nursery School
66 St. Stephen's Dr., Orinda, CA 94563
(925) 254-3770
9 a.m. – noon, optional lunch bunch
Ages 2 – 4
www.ststephensorinda.org

The Orinda Preschool – TOPS
10 Irwin Way, Orinda, CA 94563
(925) 254-2551

8:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Preschool (ages 2-4), Lunch Bunch,

Playgroup (ages 3-5), Developmental kindergarten (age 5)
www.topsonline.org
topsonline@sbglobal.net

Lafayette

Center of Arts, Technology & Science
961 1st St, Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 283-4500
7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Before/after school care only for school-age children only.

Child Day School

1049 Stuart St., Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 284-7092
www.tcdschools.com
Ages 2 to 6, minimum 3 days per week
6:45 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.
Infant/Toddler (age 1-plus), Twos, Threes, Pre-K, summer care, Developmental kindergarten.
www.tcdschools.com

Creekside Toddlers

584 Glenside Drive, Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 299-1310
Ages 18 months to 3 years
[SEE PRESCHOOLS page 12]

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PRESCHOOLS

◆ PRESCHOOLS from page 11

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Diablo Valley Montessori School
3390 Deerhill Road, Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 283-6036

8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Infant/toddler (ages 3 months to 2 years),
Two's/Transition (2 - 3.5), Preschool/
Kindergarten (3-6 yr), Kindergarten
enrichment (5-6 yr), Extended Care (7:45
am - 6 pm for enrolled students), Summer
Program (age 3-6)
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First Steps Learning Center
3201 Stanley Blvd. Lafayette, CA 94549,
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French for Fun
3470 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite A115,
Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 283-9822
Usually applications are submitted in spring for fall sessions, but openings sometimes occur during the year. Call.
Age 2-5+, Toddler, Preschool, Pre-K, Kindergarten
madame@frenchforfun.com

Gan Ilan Preschool, Temple Isaiah
3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 284-8453
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.: Ages 2-4
8 a.m. to 5 p.m, Extended Care
ganilan@yahoo.com

Happy Days Learning Center
3205 Stanley Blvd., Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 932-8088
7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Age 2-5-plus, Pre-school, Kindergarten
Age 5-12, Before and after school care

Husky House Club
3855 Happy Valley Road, Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 283-7100
7 a.m to 6 p.m.
Ages 4.9 to 12 yr
Before and after school program/Summer Camp
www.Huskyhouseforkids.org

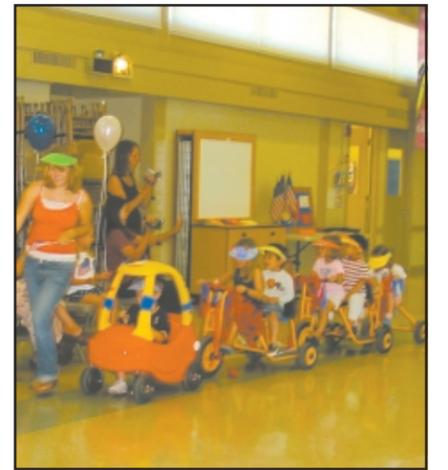
Joyful Beginnings Preschool
955 Moraga Rd., Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 284-1143
8:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.
Preschool and Pre-kindergarten age 2.7-6
Lunch Bunch (hourly)
joyfulbeginnings@sbcglobal.net

Merriewood Children's Center
561 Merriewood Dr., Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 284-2121
Toddler-parent class, Monday only

Preschool: age 2-3 (2 day), age 3-4 (3 day)
Pre-kindergarten: age 4-5 (4 or 5 days)
8:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.
www.Merriewood.org

Old Firehouse School
984 Moraga Road, Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 284-4321
7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Infants to Prekindergarten (4 months to age 5)

Seedlings
Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church
49 Knox Dr., Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 284-3870
www.lopc.org
9:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.
Infant/toddler, Preschool, Pre-K (ages 4 by 12/1), Extended care, ages 2-4



JILL GELSTER
Holy Shepherd Preschool celebrates 4th of July with an old fashioned parade.

Michael Lane Preschool
682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 284-7244
9 a.m. to 12 noon
Lunch 12 noon to 1 p.m.
Mixed age group, (2.9-5.6 yr)
stanselmshpreschool@mail.com

Tot Drop - Preschool by Appointment
500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 284-3999
[SEE PRESCHOOLS 2 page 13]

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PRESCHOOLS

◆ PRESCHOOLS 2 from page 12

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www.totdrop.com

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A division of the Meher Schools
999 Leland Dr., Lafayette, CA 94549
(925) 938-9958
7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Preschool, Pre-K, Kindergarten (also grades 1-5)
www.meher.schools.org

Moraga

Child Day School

372 Park St., Moraga, CA 94556
(925) 376-5110
6:45 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.
Infant/Toddler (age 1-plus), Ages 2-3, Pre-K, Summer care, developmental kindergarten.
www.tcdschools.com

Creative Playhouse

1350 Moraga Way, Moraga, CA 94556
(925) 377-8314
7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Young Preschool (2-3), Preschool (3-4), Pre-K (4-5)
Minimum 3 days per week

Fountainhead Montessori School

1450 Moraga Rd., Moraga, CA 94556
(925) 820-1343
7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Prep/toddler (2-3), Preschool (3-5), Pre-K/Kindergarten (4-6)
Child care (2-6) hourly
www.fountainheadmontessori.org

Growing Tree Preschool

1695 Canyon Rd., Moraga, CA 94556
(925) 376-8280
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tots (age 1.6+), Two's, Three's, Pre-K (4-5), Transitional kindergarten (4.11-6)

Moraga Bright Beginnings Christian Preschool

1689 School St., Moraga, CA 94556
(925) 376-2600
9 a.m. to 12 noon Preschool, 12 noon to 3 p.m. extended day, Three's (Age 2.6-3.8), Pre-kindergarten (Age 3.9 to 4.1), Developmental kindergarten (Age 4.9 - 5.5)
www.eastbaypreschools.com

Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church Nurture Preschool

10 Moraga Valley Ln., Moraga, CA 94556
(925) 376-4800 x248
9 a.m. to 12 noon Preschool (age 2 by December 1) to Pre-K (age 5 by March 1)
12 noon to 3 p.m. Extended care
www.Mypctoday.org

Mulberry Tree Preschool

1455 St. Mary's Rd., Moraga, CA 94556
(925) 376-1751
8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Variable schedule, age 2.5 to 5.6
Extended care available (hourly), 5 days/wk
www.mulberrytreepreschool@yahoo.com

Saklan Valley School

1678 School St., Moraga, CA 94556
(925) 376-7900 or (925) 376-9576
7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Extended Day, Preschool (age 2.9-4), Junior K (age 4-5),
www.saklan.org



SALLY HOGARTY

Jacqueline Kuhner (L) and Georgia Wink try to catch bubbles at Lafayette's Tot Drop.

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Beginning in 1983 with a swap in Ham Richmond, a suburb of London, to our thirteenth trade in Epron, a small town in the Normandy area of France, we've had outstanding experiences with this method of vacationing. And the advent of the Internet has made it simple. When we began, we were advised to mail 25 letters to potential exchangers, which often took weeks of waiting. Now, with the click of the "send" button, requests can be sent all over the world in an instant, with replies often received in a matter of hours.

How does one go about finding their dream vacation spot? A number of sites come up when you Google "house exchange." Any one of them could work for you. I can recommend the two we've used. They have been in business among the longest and have the largest number of listings, and boast excellent track records: HomeLink USA, at www.homelink-usa.com, (800) 638-3841, and Intervac USA Home Exchange, (800) 756-4663 or www.intervacusa.com.

Most all of them work on a similar format. There is a fee to register. Required information includes such things as the number who will be traveling; place, or places you would like to go; length of time; details of your own home such as number of bedrooms and bathrooms, one or two story; special amenities; and local and nearby attractions. We have a great advantage because San Francisco is a popular destination, and Orinda is listed under San Francisco. When we last looked for an exchange in a short time, we received more than 100 responses — many not from where we'd expressed an interest in going, but some sounded so enticing we were tempted to change our minds.

Once you have registered, people respond to your listing, and you begin your search, looking for the country or city to which you wish to travel. Then you check for those listed there who want to come to the United States, or California specifically. Compose an email which presents the details of your home and your area, information about yourselves, and when you'd like to travel. Send it to everyplace that piques your interest. We have always

exchanged cars along with the house - another money saver.

However, it isn't just the savings that make this a favorite way of travel. One becomes really immersed in the place, shopping for groceries, showing up at the local pub, or boulangerie on an ongoing basis; getting invited for meals and outings by family, neighbors, or friends of your host family.

It's a very rewarding and entirely different experience than journeying on a tour or staying in hotels when making a trip on your own. Also, it's given us the opportunity to invite another couple, or our children and grandchildren, to share the adventure.

People ask, "Don't you worry about complete strangers living in your home?" We haven't, and have had no problems. Josh Jaffe, owner of Intervac says, "The most important thing to completing a great home swap is to make every effort to get to know your exchange partner prior to the actual swap. Be open about the limits of the trade, and if it makes you feel more comfortable, we make home exchange agreement forms available."

We've never used these, but have found emailing back and forth can develop a real kinship before the exchange takes place. We have met all but one family with whom we exchanged, either inviting them here a day or two before we leave, or arriving at their home before they take off. Lasting friendships have been forged.

As far as getting the house ready,



Bobbie Dodson (R) exchanged her Orinda home for **Marie-Noelle's (L)** home in Epron, France (Normandy region). CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

knowing most travelers only bring one suitcase and a carry-on, you need only to clear out a small space in closets and drawers. Have a notebook available that explains how to use various appliances. Also, it's nice to have maps and brochures of places of interest — the things you'd provide for any visiting guest. It's good, if you've already left, to arrange for someone

to pick up your exchangers at the airport to bring them to your home to help them get settled.

Now is a good time to get started on next summer's vacation. While new listings, with pictures, appear all the time on the Internet, exchange services also print catalogs, that are available usually by the end of October or early November.

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ATHLETES / EXERCISE

Orinda Athletes Compete on World Stage



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The US team's eight man boat (second from bottom) ends strong to finish second in the inaugural race of the Olympic venue in Beijing.

By PAT RUDEBUSCH
Assistant Editor

Recent Miramonte graduates Alaizah Koorji and T.J. Laher competed this past summer in the FISA 2007 World Rowing Junior Championships held in Beijing, China. The two were among only 41 athletes nationwide to be selected for one of the coveted spots on the USRowing's 2007 Junior National Team. USRowing is the US Olympic Committee's sanctioned governing body for the sport.

Both Koorji and Laher began rowing with Oakland Strokes, a nonprofit junior's rowing club that draws from East Bay high schools. And, both rowers followed older siblings who rowed with Oakland Strokes.

Koorji, who is a slight 5'0," was a coxswain for Oakland Strokes who coxed the women's eight-person boat in Beijing. Being selected to represent the U.S. in Beijing was a culminating honor for her high school crew experience. Her boat finished third in Beijing. Other awards include winning the women's senior eight at the 2007 USRowing Club National Championships; earning gold medals in the in the women's junior eight, women's intermediate eight, and women's junior four at the 2006 USRowing National

Championships; finishing first in the junior women's B four and second in the junior women's eight at the 2005 USRowing National championships; and coming in first in the women's lightweight eight at the 2005 USRowing National Youth Invitational.

T.J. Laher started crew during his sophomore year in high school as a way to stay in condition for lacrosse. With older brother, Zach, on the Oakland Strokes team, crew was a familiar sport. He didn't expect, however, to be so taken with rowing that he would give up lacrosse. Since then, he's come in first in the men's intermediate eight and finished second in the men's senior eight at the 2007 USRowing Club National Championships; won gold (with his brother, Zack) in the junior men's four at the 2005 USRowing National Championships; placed first in the men's four at the 2005 USRowing National Youth Invitational; and won the men's eight and men's four 2005 CanAmMex Regatta.

At 6'6", T.J. has the height and strength typically associated with success in his chosen sport. Still, competition for one of the few spots on the Junior Nation Team was intense – and by invitation only. "It is a long and grueling summer of double [SEE ROWING page 16]

Move of the Month

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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Stop Me If You Think You've Heard This One Before

It's a Snickers Bar, Charlie Brown, and Ernest Hemingway

Andra Lim



Every Christmas we are reminded it's not about getting, it's about giving. Every Thanksgiving we are reminded it's not about turkey, it's about going around the table and saying one thing we're thankful for. Every Fourth of July we are reminded it's not about ESPN's hot dog eating contest, it's about America winning its independence.

The best thing about Halloween isn't getting eight pounds of Kit-Kat and

Snickers bars; it's that Halloween has no deeper meaning.

Even Charles Schultz, creator of *Peanuts*, couldn't think of anything consequential about Halloween. The *Charlie Brown Christmas* special revolves around the words true meaning; the Halloween special focuses on a creature called the Great Pumpkin.

It is a psychological fact that if someone is given a piece of paper with a black dot on it, they will try to find meaning in it. *Why is it there? Why is it black?* Think like Ernest Hemingway: The dot is meaningless and life is futile. Someone took a Sharpie and pressed it to a piece of paper. That's all there is to it.

In America, Halloween has no moral significance. It does not concern love, the gift of giving, freedom, or any other word on an inspirational poster. Nevertheless, it is basic human instinct to try to find significance in Halloween. It's the Hemingway mindset once again: Life is meaningless, Halloween is meaningless, and so you must create the meaning yourself.

Halloween is about people selflessly giving candy to children.

It's about children experiencing the

hardships of dressing up like a bottle of ketchup.

It's the one day when, if you pretend to be someone else, you get free candy for it, and not from the bowl at the front desk of a therapist's office.

No. The true meaning of Halloween, Charlie Brown, Ernest Hemingway, is eating free candy. But gorging yourself on sweets isn't meaningful and philosophical. Or is it?

Once in English class we were assigned a love poem. We were to write about something we'd do anything for, something we couldn't live without. Most people wrote about their grandmother, or the dog they'd had since they were five.

I chose to write about chocolate chip cookies after rejecting possible odes to Spiderman, sleeping, shoes, and the letter "s." I took this assignment very seriously, as did my classmate, who compared his mother to McDonald's French fries.

No matter how hard I tried, other than "I love chocolate chip cookies/Even more than I love Chewbacca the Wookiee," my affection for chocolate chip cookies could not be summed up in mere words. So I turned to philosophy and uncovered the true meaning of chocolate chip cookies. I

asserted that cookies, though held above even Play-Doh by pre-schoolers; were "Satan as a food item to middle-aged women."

"There must be someone for whom cookies are their/Alarm clock, the reason they get up every day," I reasoned. Was banishing cookies from one's life "worth looking like a million bucks?/Or is a million bucks what it feels like to eat a cookie?"

As Sir Mix-A-Lot said in his own philosophical ode to rear ends, "So *Cosmo* says you're fat? Well, I ain't down with that." Defy what the philosopher-me called "treadmill-shrine-builders," defy *Cosmo*, and eat that king-sized Butterfingers. Who cares if your actual fingers are now as thick as it?

Halloween is about accepting your appearance. Once you accept it, you will be free. Free to eat eight pounds of Kit-Kat and Snickers bars. As Morrissey put it, "some girls are bigger than others" and "some girls' mothers are bigger than other girls' mothers" and that's just the way it is. All you have to do is believe.

Are you happy, Ernest Hemingway? Charlie Brown? You have your meaning, the moral at the end of the story. Now let me eat my Three Musketeers bar in peace.

◆ ROWING from page 10

workouts and living away from home, for the honor to compete in three days of racing in China," Laher says. Rowers selected to try out for the national team had the opportunity to train for three weeks at the Olympic training facility in Lake Placid, New York and then, once selected, trained

near Princeton University for two weeks before leaving for Beijing.

"Rowing in an international event is a very different experience," Laher says. "I learned a lot about how other countries work in terms of their national teams. The Chinese rowers, for example, don't go to school after eighth grade; they just train together full-time as a team. The German team trains together for an entire year." The U.S. team, on the other hand, had only rowed together for a month before going to Beijing, a disadvantage, to be sure. Still, Laher and his boat placed fifth in the event.

"The level of competition was unlike anything I had seen before," he continues. "Every boat started hard and finished hard. Typically, you'll see boats start out hard or finish hard, but in Beijing, everyone's boat was giving 110 percent for the entire race."

In a sport known to require physical strength and endurance as well as absolute mental focus, it's tough to stay committed and reach the level that Koorji and Laher have attained. So why do they do it? "It's a fantastic accomplishment when you work hard and everything comes together," Laher explains. "Still, there are days when things are going badly and you'd rather be anywhere else but in the boat. In the end, you stay with it for those moments of exhilaration when you're doing the best you can and everything comes to together."

With their high school rowing days behind them, Koorji is now a coxswain at UCLA and Laher is rowing for UC Berkeley.

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STUDENTS

Writing Contest Winners

■ Describe strength over weakness

By DOROTHY BOWEN
Staff Writer

In past years, the submissions to the Poul Anderson Creative Writing Contest for Orinda high school students have been so dark, so full of angst, and told stories of drugs and suicide that the judges sometimes wondered if they should contact school counselors before they handed out prizes. This year, however, it seems that most entries have turned to the bright side. The submitted stories, poems, and essays are about failing, but trying again; about loss, but also about recovery. They are about obsessions overcome.

Eva Imber, a recent graduate of Miramonte High School, wrote a personal essay, "Unpleasantries," about failing an advanced-placement music exam and going ahead with music anyway. "I was really devastated," she recalls. "I was totally



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Eva Imber won for her personal essay "Unpleasantries."

upset. It's really important to deal with situations like that."

In spite of the setback she wrote about, she was accepted into Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, becoming one of only eight percent of applicants to be accepted. One of the funniest parts of the essay was her father's reaction. "There, there now, you can still become a nice...doctor, or lawyer, or investment banker," my father assures me later with relief as his mustache twitches excitedly. "I am not so excited," she responds as her essay continues: "The critics will expose

me: Your great-grandfather taught at Julliard for 28 years? A musician in the New York Philharmonic Orchestra? You say your grandmother had perfect pitch? Passed it on to you? And what did you do with it? You lost it. Failure."

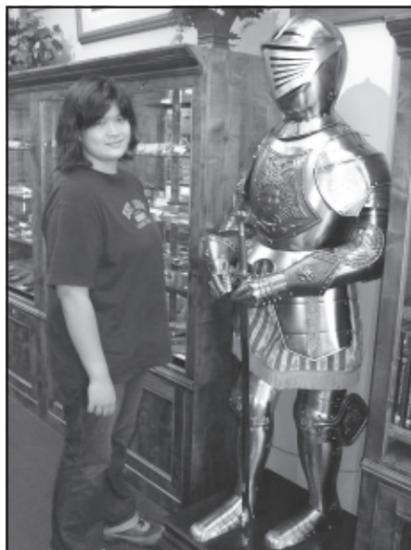
Imber's essay continues with: "No college would accept me. I would be a leper of higher society. I might as well pack up my belongings in a worn knapsack attached to a stick, a slightly bent, cowardly stick, because there were no confections left for me in this barren acreage. I would have to resign myself from the social circle and move to the People's Park. There I could unite with others against the system!"

Instead, she picked herself up and applied for, and won, internships at a recording studio and a music marketing company. She spent the summer working at Mr. Toad recording studio where she is helping to transfer Bill Graham archives, among other projects.

While at Miramonte, she won third prize in the Orinda Arts Council contest for a ceramic pig she made. "It took a year to complete, and it was definitely one of my favorites." She also won a public speaking award for her 10-minute condensation of the life of the Banks family from *Mary Poppins*. She has been participating in public speaking for all four years of high school and won second in the state contest.

In September, she began school at NYU. Her sister, who just graduated from Penn State, works at a bank in New York City. Four years ago, she won Miramonte's creative writing contest.

The winning poem, "Pandora's Box," was written in about 20 minutes, according to its author, **Cecelia Zoll**, of Miramonte High School. She was listening to "Affliction" by the band, AFI, (A Fire Inside.) But the title, "Pandora's Box," and the image of flying on wings that fall apart



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Cecilia Zoll, standing by a suit of armor, took top honors for her poem Pandora's Box.

are reminiscent of Icarus, a myth she remembers from her Latin class. The poem [SEE WRITERS page 18]



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CONTINUATIONS

◆ WRITERS from page 17

says, in part: "When you dream, you build wings, feather by feather, each piece made of hope and fantasies, all woven together. You can fly so high, so far, on those wings you build yourself, letting your heart feel the joy of the impossible made possible. But I, I live in both the sky and on the ground. Logic rules the earth, as Imagination rules the sky, and in your mind, in your heart, they both dwell. Eventually, Logic comes and whispers in my ear it's time to come home. But how do you come down when your heart is lighter than a feather? Each time I go up, I must come down eventually. And so, to go down again, I fall. I tear apart the feathers, one by one. To keep from losing myself in the clouds above, I fall. I rip the fantasies to shreds,

with the cold shards of reality, I shatter my own hopes, and watch them fade to a glittering dust on the wind. All this I do, to fall back to the earth below."

Zoll attended Orinda schools, including Glorietta and Sleepy Hollow elementary schools, Orinda Intermediate School and Miramonte High School, where she was a 10th grader when she wrote the poem last academic year. She has a younger brother and two older sisters, one at UCLA, and the other an environmental lawyer in Washington D.C. She spent last summer reading, drawing, and learning to play the guitar, as well as studying music theory.

In her winning short story, "Wish You Were Here," **Katharine Yu**, then a Miramonte ninth grader, uses the voice of a young man suffering from the loss of his girlfriend in an accident. He takes the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Katharine Yu's winning short story is entitled *Wish You Were Here*.

eventually scored the computer game. "It was the most chaotic release ever," he says. He had heard that people might be shot for their place in line. So, what if things escalated to the release of Play Station 8, he thought?

He wrote the story about a character who has dreamed of the release of Play Station 8 since it was announced in 2036. He stood in line for 19 days, only to be number 46. But things get worse. All the horrors of urban guerilla warfare are recounted: Clerks become suicide bombers, and the army is called to quell the riots with bombs. The scenes are straight out of a computer game with lots of action and destruction. But, although buried in 200 feet of rubble, the character succeeds in getting the game. Then he decides not to take it.

"But the whole experience had left him with a newfound respect for life," says Blackwell. "He had spent almost his entire existence inside, playing a simulation of life, pretending he was out in the real world doing something that actually mattered. His many near-death experiences over the last few days had taught him that. He put the box down and left it there for someone else to find. After all, it's only a game." That's how Blackwell himself felt after standing in line overnight. "It's a lot of work just to buy a computer game," he said

Blackwell was a 10th grader at Orinda Academy last year, where he has studied since 9th grade. He likes his classes in English, western civilization, French, biology, and art. He could live without algebra. He lives in Alameda.

Congratulations to this year's talented group of creative writers.

complete path from devastation to recovery with the help of the girlfriend's ghost.

The judges commented on how well the author handled the transitions from fantasy to reality. Yu says it's a work of imagination. Death and loss is not something she has personally experienced. Her father encouraged her to try writing and her mother heard of the contest when she was working in the Miramonte library. Science is Yu's favorite subject and she hopes to become a doctor. She spent the summer studying Mandarin at Diablo Valley College. She attended Glorietta Elementary School and OIS. She has an older brother, a senior at Miramonte.

Forrest Blackwell got the idea for his winning science fiction story when he was standing in line at Best Buy for a Play Station 3. He stood in line overnight and

◆ ROADS from page 1

just under \$800,000 for each of the past 5 years on road repairs; last June's Measure E sought \$58.6 million for infrastructure repairs.

At the June 19 city council meeting, \$1.2 million was approved for road work. Glazer says the 40 percent increase was achieved by realigning budget priorities. The council will also be looking to find another \$1.7 million from additional

efficiencies or city reserves in order to qualify for \$1 million in matching funds from the state to repair Moraga Way from Camino Encinas to the border of Moraga.

Glazer says that the council will also be considering instituting a pothole hotline to make it easier for residents to report potholes and get them repaired promptly. "A pothole repair is very different from pavement reconstruction," Glazer is quick to clarify. "We're looking for ways to stay on top of minor problems before they become too costly to fix while at the same time addressing the more serious needs. The advice from the transportation experts and budget analysts is to stay the course on the Street Saver Program."

Among the worst roads to be repaired are Glorietta Blvd., Oak Lane off of Miner Road, and Lombardy Lane from Tarry to Van Ripper. In total, 20 distinct projects will be undertaken, with work on Glorietta commencing first.

Repaving will be coordinated with special traffic conditions such as school bus routes and garbage collection dates. Residents can expect to see notices of upcoming roadwork with notices posted two weeks before work is to begin. For a complete list of projects to be undertaken check the city's website at www.ci.orinda.ca.us.

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MARY GRAF

Ninety-year old Mary Graf Remembers Orinda as a Sleepy Little Town

By EMILY WITT
Contributing Writer

Both native Orindans and long-time transplants have watched Orinda slowly change over the years while maintaining its unique personality. Some of those valuable residents carry within them bits and pieces of that history. Recently Mary Graf, a 60-year resident of Orinda who just celebrated her 90th year, talked of her life of more than half a century lived among our hills and valleys.

Graf settled in Sleepy Hollow with her husband Rudy, a professor at UC Berkeley, and her young children in 1950. She still possesses the same physical vitality and agility she must have possessed in those days, as well. Graf exudes openness, the kind one would find in a rural settlement where neighbors' homes were just far enough away from one another that an occasional visit between households was always welcome — a time before cell phones when television and even automobiles were a rarity. It was a simpler time, when neighborly chats were the highlight of one's week.

Ironically, because Graf grew to love Orinda fully, the town had not been her family's first choice. They had had their eye on a cottage in El Cerrito, but it was plucked up by a Nobel laureate who outbid them. Disappointed, the Grahs listened to their realtor, who convinced them that they could save money by buying a home in Orinda. Thus, they bought what became the Graf home in Sleepy Hollow. Their house was nestled among the surrounding, still vacant hills, marked by horse trails and indigenous foliage. Graf remembers that most of the surrounding land belonged to the Longs, of Long's Drugs fame.

Each morning, Rudy Graf caught a bus from Orinda to go to work at UC Berkeley to teach forestry. One day, Rudy brought home many redwood seedlings. There were virtually no redwood trees in Orinda at that time. He gave them to everyone in town who wanted to plant them on their

properties. Thus, Mary likes to report that Rudy Graf was responsible for foresting the Orinda hills and valleys with redwood groves 50 years ago.

When the Grahs moved their children here, there was no school nearby. The family's oldest two children started kindergarten at Orinda Union School (now the Community Center). Lobbying for a school to be built in Sleepy Hollow, Mary and her neighbors helped stop a developer



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Long-time Orinda resident Mary Graf at her 90th birthday party.

from adding more houses where Sleepy Hollow Elementary School now stands. Rudy later offered to landscape the neighborhood swimming pool area. As Mary tells it, Rudy hooked up a double bedspring to the back of their vintage auto. While he sat on the springs, Mary drove the car back and forth, over and over again, around the pool. Rudy's jerry-rigged "leveler" prepared the soil for planting, and the Grahs helped create the recreation area that is Sleepy Hollow Pool.

Mary demonstrated her civic-mindedness in more serious ways, as well. One of the founding members of the Orinda Council for Civic Unity in the late '50s, she lobbied for equal access for families of color to buy homes in Orinda. The Rumford Fair Housing Act was finally passed in 1963 by the California Legislature. Before the act

was passed, however, Mary encountered religious and business principals who were opposed to integrating the community. Confronted with vehement responses such as "Martin Luther King Jr. is the devil," by a number of local leaders, Mary courageously continued to obtain signatures for a covenant supporting fair housing in Orinda. She, along with a determined group of local citizens, helped contribute to the passing of the historic legislation, which was soon followed by the federal Civil Rights laws in the mid-'60s and the Fair Housing Act (Title VIII) in 1968.

For all of Mary and her late husband's

contributions to their community, Mary was extremely modest. Following this newspaper interview, she invited the reporter to join her and her gardener, whom she was treating to homemade leftovers from her 90th birthday celebration. Sitting in the breakfast nook in her bright yellow kitchen and chatting with the two of them, this reporter certainly felt at home.

This article is the first in a series based on interviews with Orindan Elders. If you know a long time resident or former resident whose stories should be preserved and shared, contact the writer at bwell94556@yahoo.com or leave a voice mail at (925) 217-2619.



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PACIFIC CHAMBER

Pacific Chamber Symphony Expands Offerings

By VALERIE HOTZ
Staff Writer

Orinda's Maestro Lawrence Kohl established Pacific Chamber Symphony (PCS) in San Leandro in 1988. The guiding principle was to focus on bringing a quality symphony to smaller communities within the Bay Area. Nineteen years later, PCS performs at a variety of venues including the new Performing Arts Center in Livermore, Fort Mason's Cowell Theatre, the Napa Valley Opera House, El Campanile Theatre in Antioch, and the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church.



Orinda resident Larry Kohl conducts the Pacific Chamber Symphony.

"This is our second year performing at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian, and we love the church, as well as the community. The acoustics are quite good. I am very pleased we are developing an audience of really interested people, and it is a pleasure to perform there," says Kohl, who is the conductor and as chief executive officer, manages the organization year-round. Kohl and his wife Isabelle moved to Orinda in 2001. Their daughter, Sofia, begins kindergarten this fall at Glorietta School.

From time to time, PCS commissions works from Bay Area composers. "On one occasion we did a work with Wayne Peterson, a Pulitzer Prize winning composer," says Kohl. "We were awarded a major grant from a foundation to work specifically with Peterson," he explains. "We also work in schools. Two years ago we did a quintet program in the Orinda elementary schools. Last year alone we went to 50 assemblies at 25 different schools," he says. The symphony's educational program has brought classical music to more than 200,000 children in the Bay Area.

Kohl grew up in the East Bay and began playing the clarinet in the 4th grade at a San Leandro public school. He went on to

study music in college, earning a master's degree in music at Dominican College, a master's degree in philosophy at San Jose State and rounded off his formal education doing doctoral work at the University of California in Los Angeles. "I studied conducting with Samuel Krachmalnick at UCLA. An incredibly accomplished conductor, he was the original conductor for Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*. He gave me a wonderful foundation," says Kohl.

The 2007-08 season includes three concerts at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, kicking off on Saturday October 13 with J.S. Bach's Six *Brandenburg Concertos*. Four of these concertos have a violin soloist. "We are fortunate to enjoy the exquisite artistry of Livia Sohn," says Kohl. Tickets are \$28 for adults and \$7 for students (through college). The concert begins at 8 p.m. Mozart and Bartok will be featured at the February 9 concert in Lafayette. On Saturday, April 26, it will be a night of Chopin and Saint-Saens, featuring French pianist Denis Pascal. For more information about the Pacific Chamber Symphony, please call (510) 352-3945 or visit the website at www.PacificChamberSymphony.org.

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ON THE CALENDAR

OCTOBER

- 4 **Orinda Youth Association** leagues basketball signups, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Repeats 10/9, 10 a.m. to noon; 10/11, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., and 10/17, 10 a.m. to noon. All ages. Call 253-4204.
- 6 **Friends of Orinda Library** annual book sale, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Library Plaza.
Orinda Books, Gina Nahai discusses her novel on contemporary Iran *Caspian Rain*, 1 p.m., Orinda Books, 254-7606.
- 13 **Project Farasha** Art Auction and Exhibit, (see article page 2), 6 p.m., Periscope Cellars and Gallery, Emeryville, www.projectfarasha.com.
Pacific Chamber Orchestra, 8 p.m., Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, with J.S. Bach's *Six Brandenburg Concertos*. Call (510) 352-3945 or www.PacificChamberSymphony.org for more information.
Del Rey School Pumpkin Patch, noon to 3 p.m.
Glorietta School Fun Fest, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- 20 **WomenSing**; Ninth Annual Gala & Auction with wine, food, entertainment; 7 p.m., Oakwood Athletic Club, Lafayette. Call (925) 974-9169.
Sleepy Hollow School Pumpkin Patch, 11 a.m.
- 23 **Miramonte High School**, fall concert, also 10/24, 280-3930.
Chamber of Commerce mixer, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., Park Place Advisors, 18 Orinda Way.
- 25 **Orinda Community Center Auxiliary** Halloween parade, 11 a.m. Meet at Community Center Park.
- 27 **Orinda Books**, Christine Sunderland discusses her novel *Pilgrimage*, 3 p.m., Orinda Books, 254-7606.
- 28 **Miramonte High School's** Marketplace, 3 - 7 p.m., Orinda Country Club, 280-3930.

AT THE LIBRARY

All events open to the public and are free unless otherwise marked.

- 2 **Toddler Lapsit**, stories, songs, and bounces for infants to 3-year-olds and their caregivers. 10 a.m., repeats at 10:30 a.m. Also October 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, and 24.
- 3 **Lamorinda Reads**, 7 p.m. Book discussion group for Thomas Steinbeck's *Down to a Soundless Sea*.
- 6 **Saturday Morning Live!** 11 a.m., family storytime for 3- to 5 year-olds in the Toddler Alcove.
- 11 **Author Appearance**, 4 p.m. Deborah Trotter will discuss and sign copies of her new children's book, *A Summer's Trade*.
Blue's Clues Storytime, 2 p.m. Register for a mystery storytime featuring the favorite dog of the preschool set. For ages 3-5, 2-2:30 p.m.
- 25 **Author Appearance**, 7 p.m. Ending date for Lamorinda Reads! For *Down to a Soundless Sea*, with Thomas Steinbeck speaking at the Orinda Library Auditorium. First come, first seated, doors open at 6:30 p.m.
- 30 Fireside Chat, 7 p.m.

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 - 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.
- Orinda Women's Club**, second Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m., 254-3881.

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 - 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 Public Safety Advisory Commission** meets the second Thursday of each month, 7pm, Community Room, City Hall.
- Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**
First Monday, 4 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road, www.orinda.k12.ca.us.
- Planning Commission**
Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, 253-4210.
- Parks and Recreation Commission**
Second Wednesday, 7 p.m., Community Center, room 7, 254-2445.

CALENDAR BY CHRIS LAVIN

Send calendar items to chrislavin@earthlink.net

WomenSing Goes to Spain



LYNDA LEONARD
WomenSingers point to posters describing the group's concerts in Spain on display in a Barcelona store window. (L-R) Anne Bailey, Gloria Kubitschek, Kristan Torres (in front) Patti Sax and Patty Murray.

By LYNDA LEONARD
Contributing Writer

Ten days and nights of exhilarating music making — such was WomenSing's experience in July when the chorus went on a concert tour to Barcelona, Spain, followed by participation in the 25th Annual International Music Festival of Cantonigròs in the foothills of the Pyrenees. "WomenSing rose to a new level of artistry for this trip," said artistic director Martín Benvenuto, "The gains were immeasurable."

A Monastery and a Church

The chorus performed in two extraordinary venues: the monastery of *Sant Pere de Rodes*, clinging to a mountainside at the edge of the Mediterranean Sea, and the *Santa Maria del Pi* church in Barcelona. *Sant Pere de Rodes*, now a museum, was a monastery for 900 years. Here WomenSing was invited to perform the opening concert for the 7th Annual Festival of Music of *Sant Pere de Rodes*. In the sanctuary, the columns, arches, and blocks of sparsely adorned stone tower high overhead, creating a sublime acoustic chamber. "I will not forget the exquisite sounds that I heard at the monastery and the confidence and boldness that I felt in the singing at *Santa Maria*," said Benvenuto. *Santa Maria* boasts the largest rose window in Spain and ranks second in size in all of Europe, the largest being the one in the cathedral at Chartres, France.

The beauty of Barcelona captivated singer Gloria Kubitschek. "It was gorgeous," she said, "combining the old and the new in architecture and art" into a seamless blend. She likened it to WomenSing's repertoire that includes the classics as well as the contemporary, marrying the old with the new, each

enhancing the other.

Cantonigròs: A Coming Together in Song

Participation in the 25th International Festival of Music in Cantonigròs (which also included folk dancing) was the heart of the trip. The small village of some 200 residents in the foothills of the Pyrenees hosted hundreds of people from around the world, coming together in song and dance. The road leading to Cantonigròs was lined with poles bearing the flags of the nations represented. As the only group from the United States, the Stars and Stripes flew for WomenSing. Thirty other countries were represented, with participants coming from such far away places as New Zealand, Taiwan, Ghana, Nepal, Venezuela, Russia, and Indonesia.

The chorus sang in two categories: female chorus and folk music. In the female chorus division, WomenSing sang *Amours*, by Miroslav Raichl (required); *Regina Coeli*, by Josef Rheinberger; and *Indian Singing*, by Ron Jeffers. For the folk music performance they sang Jeffers' arrangement of *Amazing Grace*, and Barbara Baker's arrangement of *Thou My Everlasting Portion*.

Soprano Kristan Torres noted that at the festival, WomenSing performed to an audience composed largely of experienced singers, different from those at home that include family and friends. Here she sensed a need to prove herself. Torres sang the solo part of the gospel song, *Thou My Everlasting Portion*. "The audience is an unknown; you don't know how it's going to respond," she said. The chorus received several standing ovations.

"We were solid, confident, willing to take risks, and performed well under pressure," said Benvenuto, who appreciated the opportunity to hear choirs from all over the world.



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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 24

builders, runners, rock climbers, swimmers, cyclists, and martial artists.

"It is challenging, rewarding and fun work. I see clients from all over the Bay Area. Some of my clients travel here from Holland and Australia to see me. I work with professional athletes, amateur athletes, as well as Olympians," adds Williams. In addition to his own practice, Williams has worked with orthopedic sports medical clinics and health clubs.

Williams and his wife, Amanda Schoenemann, moved to Orinda seven years ago. Schoenemann is a graphic designer. The couple has five children and seven grandchildren. Williams works by appointment only both in Orinda and Montclair. He is available in Orinda Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. Rates start at \$40 for a half hour massage, \$75 for an hour massage and \$110 for 90 minutes. For more information about HST Body Mobilization, please visit the website at www.bodymobilization.com or call (925) 258-0199.

Orinda Welcomes New Postmaster

Postmaster Crystal Jones arrived in July to take over her new duties at the Orinda Post Office, heralding from her previous assignment as Officer in Charge at the Moraga Post Office. "We have undergone the transition, and I am happy to be here. We love the business and always enjoy seeing customers," says Jones, who has been married to Eric Jones for 13 years. Eric is a police officer with the Veteran's Department. The couple has one daughter, Eriss, who is an 8th grader at North Hills Christian School in Vallejo. "Believe it or not the commute is only 35 minutes," says Jones.

Patrons may have noticed the new



New Orinda postmaster Crystal Jones.

Automated Postage Center (APC) that is situated within the lobby, just to the right as one enters the swinging doors. "We are encouraging customers to use the APC on a regular basis. In addition to the opportunity to purchase 41-cent first class stamps on a 24-hour basis, customers may also ship packages without having to wait in line. The APC accepts debit or credit cards only and packages must be no larger than 20x13x14. It is very easy to use. Just follow the onscreen prompts through each step. No perishable, potentially hazardous, liquid, or fragile materials are accepted. "We do not want other people's property to be damaged by such items," explains Jones. If shipping by Priority Mail or Express Mail, the packaging is free. However, if the free boxes are not the correct size, the Postal Service does sell various other dimensions to customers.

If customers prefer not to drive to the post office, universal service is available online. Go to the website at www.usps.com, set up an account with a meter company (the information is available on the website) and packages may be shipped from home. Just click and ship. Call the 800-telephone number to schedule a free pickup of your package.

In addition, when shipping by Priority Mail, delivery confirmation service is free of charge when a customer goes online to ship.

"U.S. Passport applications are by appointment, Monday - Friday, between 11:05 a.m. and 3:35 p.m. Please call 254-6240 to schedule an appointment. As an added convenience the required 2x2 photos can be taken at the Post Office. The fee for two photos is \$15. For specific information about the current length of time for processing passport applications, please contact the U.S. Department of State," says Jones.

"Another service we feature is a wide selection of Post Office box services. Rates differ, depending on the location of the city. At the Orinda Post Office, rates for a small box range from \$35 for 6 months and go up to \$326 for 6 months for the largest box, a size 5," explains Jones.

In addition to managing the Orinda Post Office, Jones enjoys running and reading a good book in her spare time. Her favorite genre is romance novels. With 22 years of service to the Postal Service, Crystal Jones brings a wealth of experience to her new post. For more information, please call 254-6240 or visit the website, www.usps.com.

Grand Opening for FedEx/Kinkos Store



PATTI CAMRAS

Mayor Steve Glazer, Kinko's manager Boom Anderson and Orinda Chamber of Commerce president Keith Miller cut the ribbon on the new store located in the Village across from Safeway.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

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Jamie Westdal Photography In Demand

Well-known Bay Area photographer Jamie Westdal is an Orinda institution. One of the original tenants at Theatre Square, in order to accommodate her growing list of customers, Westdal recently moved her studio next to Loard's Ice Cream at 232 Brookwood Road. "This is a beautiful space, with an abundance of light and plenty of room to welcome clients. I can more easily shoot large groups, and help my clients select from dozens of gorgeous custom-made frames for their portraits," says an exuberant Westdal.

The bright and spacious location has walls awash in vibrant Tricycle Red, with Pergo flooring and a Persian rug. Hanging over Westdal's workspace is a portrait of her late mother, Lucia Belvedere, taken when she was 2-years-old, circa 1915. "Both my parents were born in Italy. I am first generation American. I adore this photograph of my mother for many reasons. It inspires me when I realize that the families I photograph will treasure their portrait for generations to come, just as I



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jamie Westdal has been photographing Orinda residents for many years.

treasure this portrait of my mother," she says.

Westdal was given a camera at age 18 and has been taking photos ever since. "Everyone really enjoyed the photos I took, and I enjoyed making them. I always

carried a camera on my hip and had a darkroom when I was in college. I never dreamed I would make a living at it," smiles Westdal. Thirty years ago she was working as a clerk in the labor and delivery unit at Alta Bates Hospital and trying to decide if she wanted to be a nurse. Struck by the incredible beauty of the moment of birth, Westdal began taking birth photos for mothers who were delivering their babies. She soon opted for a career in photography over nursing school and carved a niche for herself as a birth photographer. When acclaimed preschool photographer William Overstreet retired, Westdal filled the void and stepped in to take candid photos of children at play in preschools throughout the entire Bay Area.

"I am known for expression. My strength is getting people to relax in front of the lens. When I go on location, I shoot pretty tight because it is very important to me that I capture the individual," says Westdal. "My daughter Claire and I are doing wedding photography, and I am enjoying it immensely," she adds. In addition to her signature black and white portraits, Jamie offers beautiful custom framing that is competitively priced. Clients may choose whether they prefer a digital portrait, color, or black and white format.

Jamie Westdal Photography has not raised rates in six years. The sitting fee remains \$350, and this includes one custom 8x10 portrait and a proof book. For growing families who return within the first 6 months of an initial sitting, the second sitting fee is half price. "I have been very privileged to work in this wonderful community and to provide such a fun and important service. I feel embraced ... and look forward to the next 10 years," says Westdal.

Westdal moved to Orinda in 1983 with her husband, Larry Westdal. He is a graphic designer. The couple has two daughters, Lauren and Claire, who are both Miramonte High School graduates. Lauren works in production at ABC News in San Francisco, and Claire is a wedding photographer. She also sells Yellow Page ads. For more

information about Jamie Westdal Photography, please visit the web site, www.jamiewestdal.com or give her a call at 254-9689.

HST Body Mobilization Offers Revitalizing Therapy

With nearly 30 years of experience in the field, Tyrone Williams is the owner of HST Body Mobilization and was the developer of this unique massage therapy that combines Swedish massage with Shiatsu, a Japanese form of accupressure. Located at the Crossroads and upstairs at 43 Moraga Way, Williams' clients are from all walks of life.

"Sports massage is my specialty. I work with athletes pre-event, post-event follow-up work, and also maintenance work.



VALERIE HOTZ

Tyrone Williams is the owner of HST Body Mobilization.

However, in addition I provide massage therapy to people who are recovering from injury and tailor treatment according to each individual's needs," explains Williams.

HST Body Mobilization's roots are taken from Swedish massage and many different modalities are involved. Swedish massage incorporates the use of oils and focuses on the circulatory system and Shiatsu works off the meridian system. The focus of Shiatsu is on opening up the energy pathways in the body. "We specialize in soft tissue injury care by utilizing several therapy systems including myofascial release, neuromuscular, deep tissue, sports massage, stretch, and trigger point."

Williams originally started doing massage when he was on the track team in high school. After graduating, he went directly into military service. It was while he was going to Laney College and working as a model that he sought treatment from Reoho Yamada, a well-known Bay Area Zen priest. "It was by chance, really. My chiropractor was out of town, and I saw an advertising flyer for Reoho Yamada. I made an appointment and began studying with him in San Francisco," says Williams. That was 30 years ago.

Today, Williams is the team sponsor and team therapist for Team Clif Bar for Cycling, a nonprofit. He has also been involved with the Bay Area Sports Massage Team, providing treatment for body

[SEE BUZZ page 23]

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