

THE ORINDA NEWS

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Orinda Library Tree



SALLY HOGARTY

Each year the Orinda Valley Garden Club spends countless hours collecting decorations and decorating the large Christmas tree that fills the Orinda Library with heart-warming scents.

PG&E Incentive Program Brings Big Savings to City Hall

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

At the November 5 city council meeting, PG&E presented the City of Orinda a rebate check for \$63,936. The money, awarded through the Savings By Design program, recognizes the energy-efficient systems in Orinda's new city hall. The building exceeds Title 24 standards by over 60 percent. Administered by the California Energy Commission, Title 24 governs all aspects of building construction, which includes energy efficiency measures. The standards are updated every three years to allow new energy efficiency technologies to be considered.

Under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission, the Savings By Design encourages energy efficient building design and construction for commercial, industrial, and agricultural customers. "The Orinda city hall sets a high standard for energy efficiency and indoor air quality for office buildings for the San



PAT RUDEBUSCH

PG&E presented the City of Orinda with a check for \$63,938. Pictured (bottom row L-R) PG&E executive manager for Area 2 Nichole Jordan, city councilmembers Sue Severson and Victoria Smith, Mayor Steve Glazer, city councilmember Amy Worth (top row L-R) PG&E account manager for Area 2 Adriane Gardner and city councilmember Tom McCormick.

Francisco Bay Area," says Glenn Friedman of Taylor Engineering, the mechanical engineering firm that designed the system.

Designed with the environment and energy conservation in mind, Orinda's city hall features automatic faucets, dual flushing toilets, and waterless urinals, which reduces the water usage by 30 percent from traditional office buildings of the same size. Energy usage was reduced through motion-sensor lights, optimized mechanical equipment, natural lighting, and cooling without the use of conventional air conditioning.

The building was also situated on the site to take advantage of outside breezes. Its narrow width also optimizes natural ventilation and allows for daylight penetration for heating. The majority of the materials used in the building come from recycled and natural products as well with 20 percent of these originating from within 500 miles of Orinda to reduce the use of

fossil fuels for transportation.

The design team on the project included Siegel and Strain Architects, Tipping Mar Associates (structural engineers), Taylor Engineering, AfterImage Space (electrical engineers), Merrill Morris Partners (landscape design), BKF Engineers (civil engineers), Davis Langdon (cost estimating), High Sun Engineering (energy consultants), and Bill Buchholz (specifications).

"We are pleased that the City of Orinda has been recognized and honored for our energy efficient project," said Mayor Steve Glazer. "This underscores the importance of designing systems that integrate energy efficiency while maintaining a pleasant work environment." Glazer noted that he hoped the recognition of city hall would prompt companies and individuals considering new construction or remodeling to incorporate energy efficient heating, cooling, and lighting systems.

Architecture Awards Attempt to Raise the Bar



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Undin residence, designed by Orinda architect William Simpson, is one of the finalists for the mayor's architecture award.

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

Even before Orinda was incorporated in 1985, the city had begun to attract bedroom families headed by affluent breadwinners or breadwinning couples who wanted what everyone seems to want in Orinda: good streets, good neighbors, good schools, and a decent selection of restaurants along with a movie or two. The rest would take care of itself. Right?

Affluence has grown, as well as services to attend it. Dry cleaning, take-out restaurants, groceries and drug stores all continue to serve while home prices have skyrocketed despite the national housing slump – so that all in all, the inevitable has happened. We find people who are retired from the industries living next to computer programmers, with "Brady Bunch" ranch homes living next to corrugated steel-covered skylights.

Tastes are different. One man's deck or kitchen is another one's anathema to that, and planning commission meetings have reflected the ire, at times, of differences in

opinion. What some people believe to be the perfect upgrade becomes another's man's eyesore.

[SEE AWARDS page 18]

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Tree Lighting Ceremony Takes Place December 8

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce and Hospice of the East Bay will once again sponsor the annual tree lighting festivities at the Orinda Village parking lot (by Bank of America) beginning at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 8.

Participants will enjoy choral music by local elementary and junior high school students before Mayor Steve Glazer turns on the 1,400 lights in the centuries-old oak tree. Each light represents the life of a loved one who is being honored or remembered. Cider, popcorn, and cookies will be served while youngsters wait to discuss their holiday wishes with the jolly old man in red.

For more information, call the Chamber of Commerce at 254-3909.



SALLY HOGARTY

A highlight of the annual tree lighting is a visit from Santa, who rides in on a red fire truck.

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BROWNIES / ORINDA ASSOCIATION / CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Former Orinda City Manager Bill Lindsay
Introduces Rev. Shumake at Chamber Breakfast

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Rev. Andre Shumake, an ordained Baptist minister, has a clear and unwavering vision for his community: enable each resident to become self-sufficient, productive citizens and to stop the violence that has plagued the East Bay community for years. As president of the Richmond Improvement Association (RCI), he and his staff strive to achieve these goals.

Under Rev. Shumake's leadership, the RCI's career center has emerged as a vibrant community hub and a strong symbol of hope and progress. Begun in 1999, the center saw its membership soar to over 500 community residents, many of whom had been homeless and on welfare. Over 300 of these participants were able to obtain full time employment enabling them to move from welfare to work. The center received a United States Department of Housing and Urban Development "Best Practices" award for the year 2000 for its implementation of the Marin County project. This program, in partnership with the North Richmond Missionary Baptist church, created employment opportunities for North Richmond residents in Marin County by providing roundtrip transportation to job sites in San Rafael.

The multi-faceted programs of the RCI include much more than employment and transportation. They have after-school tutoring programs, youth sports programs, transitional housing, and an innovative program dealing with inmates at San



Rev. Andre Shumake

ELLEN GAILING

Quentin prison. The latter program, the San Quentin T.R.U.S.T. (teaching responsibility utilizing sociological training) uses incarcerated men from Richmond to help solve some of the city's current problems. Several of the members of T.R.U.S.T. were former Richmond gang members who now work cooperatively together. The RCI, in partnership with the "Blessed are the Peacemakers" coalition, also sponsored the Richmond Black-on-Black Crime summit which called upon the people of Richmond to end street violence. A wealth of innovative, thoughtful, and challenging recommendations which addressed the root causes of street violence came out of the summit.

Former Orinda City Manager and current Richmond City Manager Bill Lindsay will introduce Rev. Shumake at the December 7 breakfast meeting. For reservations, contact Candy Kattenburg at 254-3909. This is a great opportunity to find out how your organization can help.

Save the Date!
The Orinda Association's annual Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental awards dinner takes place January 27 at 6 p.m. at The Orinda House. Winners of the award will be announced in the January issue of *The Orinda News*. Call 254-0800 for reservations.

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Brownie Troop 622 Distributes Free CFLs

PG&E gave the Sierra Club 250,000 compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) to distribute free of charge. The Sierra Club, in turn, enlisted the help of Girl Scout and Brownie troops. Each troop was given 500 CFLs to give away to their communities. Shown above is Brownie Troop 622, all second graders from Glorietta Elementary School, who gave away the bulbs in front of Theatre Square. (front row L-R) Amber Nathanson, Megan Tom, Lynn Wilder, Serena Meadows, Alex Shandolav (back row) Audrey Nathanson.

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This Holiday Season (and everyday) Shop Orinda!

It seems to come earlier and earlier every year. The holiday season, with the media's plea to buy, buy, buy, is already upon us. Soon holiday parties, gift buying, and holiday decorating will take up every available minute.

While Orinda residents are known for their generosity to a variety of charitable endeavors, I would ask Orindans to consider a lesser-known entity – Orinda businesses. These local merchants support a myriad of school car washes and fundraisers throughout the year. But, these community-spirited businesses also need your support. Without local customers, they cannot keep their companies in operation.

Rather than deal with freeway traffic and mall parking lots this holiday season, try a stroll down to the Orinda Village or Crossroads to see what great merchandise is available right here in town.

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce and the City of Orinda have partnered to make shopping locally even easier. For a modest purchase, local merchants will be giving away an attractive, reusable shopping bag

in which to carry your treasures. You can read more about Shop Orinda on page two.

Not only will local shoppers receive a planet-friendly shopping bag, they will help alleviate another local eyesore – the empty storefront. On the Village side, the empty Phair's Department store with its broken window is a testament to urban decay, while in Theatre Square the many vacant stores resemble a ghost town.

Of course, shopping locally will not solve all the problems encountered by Orinda businesses. New zoning regulations, creative marketing, and enticing appropriate businesses to meet the needs of local residents are also needed. If there is a type of business you feel is lacking in Orinda, be sure and tell the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Orinda. They need to know what the citizens of Orinda would support. After all, this is your town. Let the powers that be know what you think will make your community an even better place to live. And, don't forget to shop Orinda!

— Sally Hogarty, Editor



Letters to the Editor

Is This Art?

Your article about Orinda's "Art in Public Places" project was a pleasure to read. Efforts of the city, volunteers, and members of the Art in Public Places Commission certainly deserve much praise for their progress.

I'm writing to suggest inclusion of an existing art object in this program, though some may question its qualifications. The artistic structure referred to is well-known to those driving through North Orinda. It is located adjacent to the Sports Field alongside Camino Pablo: A large structure formed by steel columns that re-inforce a section of the road. It was, I believe, rather hastily constructed about three years ago during a particularly heavy rainy season to prevent part of Camino Pablo from being washed away.

Those heavy rains have long since stopped. The structure however, still stands. It is a highly visible site and easily qualifies as a landmark. For the first year or so after construction of this temporary structure I thought, "the city engineers are being cautious." Many more months went by and I thought, "They are awaiting for just the right moment to remove it some perfectly timed day when neither motorist, pedestrian, cyclist, or ball-player will be inconvenienced."

That expeditious moment has not yet arrived. Or, possibly may never arrive. So, why not let it be a more-or-less permanent structure and allow the city to justify the decision by designating it as bonafide Art in a Public Place. (You think Berkeley would have waited this long to reach that decision?)

Using criteria in your article, it certainly

seems to qualify: It is large, quite sturdy and already in a public place. The workmanship is boldly utilitarian and, in my non-professional judgement, appears artistic. Overall, you'd have to agree, it is expressive and in a certain way, awe-inspiring.

Liability, as discussed by our city attorney regarding potential damage to the art as well as costs for installation, does not appear to apply in this instance. Someone more knowledgeable in the law would need to consider any possible infringement of first amendment rights as a result of this art display. Also as to the true artistic value, I leave that determination to others, as well.

Many of us in North Orinda would be pleased to have this utilitarian structure officially designated "public art." Just thinking about it would be comforting as we drive by. For these reasons, I earnestly entreat the art commission to give the idea due consideration.

— Philip Morrison

P.S. And should it not qualify, would it be too much to request the good offices of the entire Art in Public Places Commission to lend their support in requesting the city to remove it?

Mayor's Record

Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer claims that he did not vote for the new city offices. Let's look at the record. At the April 19, 2005 city council meeting, Glazer proposed and then voted to put the new city offices out to bid with an allowable price range of \$5.9 to \$6.4 million. Obviously, he approved the new city offices with a price tag of \$6.4 million.

When the bids came back, the low bid was \$7.9 million and Glazer voted against this price. Obviously, Glazer had no problem with spending \$6.4 million for the

offices but now opposed a \$7.9 million price tag.

Nowhere does Glazer support putting the offices in the old library at a cost of only \$500,000 as we were promised when the new library was built.

Glazer claims that the roads to be repaired by Measure E would not be restricted to roads having 500 road trips per day. Glazer wrote the Argument in Favor of Measure E in the Voter Information Pamphlet. Glazer wrote that "It (Measure E) was created by a large panel of Orinda citizens who have special expertise in roads, transportation, engineering, and finance." Obviously, he was referring to the Orinda Infrastructure Committee. The Committee's final report states: "Use bond proceeds to repair the roads that everyone uses by focusing on roads with an average 500 daily trips." Glazer and the proponents of Measure E claimed that all Orinda roads would be "qualified" for road money. When you buy a lottery ticket you are qualified to win the lottery, but your chances of winning are microscopic. Glazer found out from the defeat of Measure Q that the 500 daily road trips was unpopular so it was not stated in Measure E. If the 500 daily road trips criterion was not used, what criterion was used? Was it flipping a coin to decide which roads were fixed? Obviously, the 500-car-trip criterion would be used; the Measure E proponents just didn't want to tell us.

Glazer claims that increasing the road budget to \$1,228,000 is an example of cutting Orinda's expenses. This is not a cut but instead is an increase of expenses. Glazer does not mention that Orinda spent only \$107,552 in its 2003/2004 road budget and a piddling \$38,060 in 2004/2005.

I again ask the question: Can we trust Glazer?

— Clyde Vaughn

Enough on Measure E

Mr. Vaughn, there you go again. You know I voted against the construction of city hall so now you switch gears and suggest that voting to get bids for the work is somehow an indictment. Keep in mind that requesting public bids is the same as asking for estimates for any work on your property. In this case, the bids came in over budget, and I voted against going forward.

I also find it unfortunate that you continue to beat a dead horse on your claim that the last road measure would have limited road repairs to streets with more than 500 car trips. I guess you must subscribe to the theory that if you repeat a lie over and over, it will be taken as a truth. There was no such restriction. In fact when the city council placed the measure on the ballot, you sat in the audience when the limitation was removed. The reference to Infrastructure Committee reports was for the purpose of describing the 18 months of exhaustive research and analysis that was done by more than two dozen Orinda citizens.

On a related topic, Mr. Vaughn suggested earlier this year that we could solve our road and drain problems by auctioning off street names to the highest bidder. I look forward to getting Mr. Vaughn's bid for Vaughn Way? I hope his financial contribution will repair more than a dead end.

— Steve Glazer

A Community-minded Restaurant

The Orinda House Restaurant is a good place to eat and a fun place to go. My recent visit prompted me to write and tell people they should visit the Orinda House. It has a new chef and the bar keeper is funny.

The Orinda House also supports our

[SEE LETTERS page 10]

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For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or send email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the February issue is December 17.

ROTARY / QUENCHERS

Orinda Rotary Committed to Helping Children



15th Annual Tom Fitch Fishing Day – Orinda veterinarian **Dr. Gerry Dzendzel** (L) performs surgery on the catfish caught by **Quinton Booker**. Rotary club president **Lance Cowles** watches. The annual outing, hosted by the Orinda Rotary Club, brings youngsters from the Oakland Boys and Girls Club to the San Pablo Reservoir for a day of fishing and a barbeque lunch. The event is named in honor of a Rotary member who loved to fish.



The Orinda Rotary Club presented new dictionaries to **Mr. Dow's** third grade class at Wagner Ranch Elementary School. Each year for the past 10 years, the club has given the books to students at Orinda schools. This year, they gave out over 275 dictionaries.

Quenchers Expands Hours and Menu

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Quenchers Smoothies has been called “the business that is never open,” but that is all about to change. Scot Gordon, president of Quenchers, has brought on two new partners, Nick Tan and Debbie Yang, to help expand the business that he and his wife, Ali, started five years ago.

The Gordon’s wholesale business, which involves supplying local schools with their healthy, fruit smoothies, had been taking up most of the family’s time thereby reducing the hours that the retail shop could be open.

Tan and the Gordons will soon be relocating the wholesale business with Yang managing the retail shop at 21 Orinda Way. Bringing in new partners to expand both sides of the business will help meet the demands of schools in the Bay Area as well as local residents. Quenchers can once again be open for full retail hours: Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

“We have been serving the Orinda and Moraga schools for some time now,” says Scot Gordon. “By the end of the year, we will also be serving Lafayette schools.”

Yang, who along with fiancée Nick Tan, recently returned from a six month trip to Asia. The former accountant with Sephora is anxious to begin her new duties as manager of retail operations.

“Our goal is to better serve our customers, and we believe it is necessary to expand our retail hours in order to do that,” Yang says. Yang encourages youngsters to come after school. New tables and chairs will soon be added so that they can have a place to do their homework.

The shop doesn’t just serve walk-in customers. You can call in advance to place a group order for pick up as well. This is a great option for business meetings, athletic



Debbie Yang will be running Quenchers retail store at 21 Orinda Way.

events, and parties.

“In addition to fresh fruit smoothies, Quenchers is also serving flavored hot chocolate and spiced hot apple cider for those looking for something to warm their stomachs on chilly days,” Yang adds.

Quenchers

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POLICE BLOTTER

Compiled by Haleh Allen
Staff Writer

October 2007

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 65 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 4 incidents in the areas of Camino Pablo, El Toyonal, and La Espiral.

Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 1 incident in the area of Brookside Rd.

All Other Petty Thefts: 6 incidents in the areas of Martha Rd., Orinda Way, Theatre Sq., and Stanton Ct.

Grand Theft From Vehicle (theft of more than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 3 incidents in the areas of

Camino Sobrante, El Gavilan, and Don Gabriel Way.

All Other Grand Thefts: 2 incidents in the areas of Camino Sobrante and Muth Dr.

Vehicle Theft: 1 incident in the area of Moraga Way.

Residential Burglary: 3 incidents in the areas of La Cresta Rd., Greenwood Ct., and Las Vegas Rd.

Commercial Burglary: No reported incidents.

Vandalism: No reported incidents.

Identity Theft: 1 incident in the area of Moraga Way.

Credit Card Fraud/Forgery: 1 incident in the area of Overhill Rd.

Pacific Gas and Electric Towers on Wilder Cause Concern

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

The tall white towers in the Gateway Valley can be seen from neighboring homes creating concern among homeowners. While residents bordering the vast Wilder development were aware that PG&E would be relocating the towers to accommodate the planned development, they were surprised by the noise involved during the relocation process and the visibility of the new towers.

"We held many public meetings about the power line relocation, but we didn't do a good job of letting the neighbors know when the construction would be starting," says Wilder spokesperson Jason Keadjian. "Since then, we've tried to respond to the neighbors and answer all their concerns."

One concern involved the noise level when helicopters were used to help in the relocation. Also causing unease among residents was the appearance of the towers, which currently appear white and stand out from the rest of the environment. "The towers are coated with a preservative that will weather over time and blend in more to the surroundings," Keadjian explains.

The extensive supplemental Environmental Impact Report (EIR) dedicates a section to the relocation of electric lines in the development. Due to environmental concerns and endangered species, the report restricts where the new lines can be located. According to Keadjian, the power line relocation project is 75 percent complete. He also noted that public hikes into the area lead by a naturalist will take place in January.

City of Orinda Looking for Commissioners

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

The City of Orinda is seeking applications from volunteer residents interested in serving on several committees and commissions. Interested applicants should download application and statement of interest forms from the city website at

www.ci.orinda.ca.us or by contacting the city clerk's office at 253-4221. The deadlines vary for each vacancy.

Budget and Finance Committee

Comprised of seven residents, the newly-created committee would review the city's proposed operating and capital budget and make recommendations to the city manager and the city council. Statement of interest forms are due by 5 p.m. on December 14.

Revenue Enhancement Task Force

Also newly-created, the task force would make recommendations to the city manager and city council on revenue enhancements to supplement current revenues. The enhancements could be used to provide funding for infrastructure challenges, downtown revitalization, walkways, and more. Statement of interest forms are due by 5 p.m. on December 14.

City Commissions and Committees

The following commissions have vacancies to fill: Planning Commission (2); Parks and Recreation Commission (2); Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (3); Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission (2); and the Public Safety Advisory Commission (3).

Statement of interest forms should be submitted by 5 p.m. on January 11. Qualified applicants will be interviewed by a council-appointed subcommittee prior to appointment by the full city council.

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MASONIC LODGE / MIRAMONTE

150th Anniversary of Orinda Masonic Lodge

By EMILY WITT
Staff Writer

Nestled on the hill behind the new Orinda city offices is the Orinda Masonic Lodge. Orinda's Lodge was originally founded in Alamo 150 years ago by a group of civic-minded, spiritually based men. Mason Larry Becker said that the Orinda Masonic Lodge will celebrate its 150th anniversary on December 16. To commemorate this achievement, the City of Orinda presented the lodge with a proclamation at the November 6 city council meeting.

Many people may not be aware of what it means to be a Mason and what they do for the communities in which they live. Masons believe in giving back to their communities by supporting numerous philanthropies. They primarily invest in children and local neighborhoods. Here in California, Masons provide free fingerprinting and photo identification for children of all ages. Their child ID sheet is extremely valuable if a child is abducted.

Another important contribution is the Masonic Student Assistance Program (MSAP). The purpose of the MSAP is to help educators identify at-risk students and provide guidance and scholarships so that students redirect their lives in positive ways. Several of these scholarships have been awarded to local students. Scholarship winners are selected on the basis of academic achievement and community service, as well as financial need. The public speaking program at Miramonte High School also has benefited from Masonic financial support. Masons helped establish our California public school system, and they actively support education today because only an educated citizenry can, through elections and public service, guarantee that our constitutional system of

liberties be preserved. Masons also sponsor an AT&T calling card program for soldiers in Iraq, where AT&T matches the Masonic donation, so that soldiers can call home for free.

Freemasonry can be traced back to Masonic Lodges in Scotland as early as the late 16th century, with clear references to their existence in England by the mid-17th century. The stonemasons of Medieval Europe, who built the great Gothic cathedrals, were the original Freemasons. Freemasonry was exported to North America by the 1730s. Thirteen of the 39 signers of the Declaration of Independence were Masons, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Paul Revere.

Other Masons have contributed immensely to history including Leonardo da Vinci and Amadeus Mozart. United States history has been shaped by Masons such as Davy Crockett, Mark Twain, Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole, John Wayne, Neil Armstrong, Gerald Ford, and more recently, Dave Thomas (of Wendy's Hamburgers fame). Thomas's nonprofit organization is the largest adoption program that helps orphaned children find loving families. Thomas, himself, was an orphan. The positive influence of Masons within Thomas' life most likely helped mold his enormous philanthropic spirit. California's most famous Mason may have been Earl Warren, former Governor of California and Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Under his watch, major legislation was enacted for the benefit of all Americans, regardless of race, religion, or economic status.

The website for the Orinda Masonic Lodge is www.orindalodge.org. To obtain more information about the youth and senior service programs available through the Orinda Masons, contact the lodge secretary, Richard Anderson, at 254-5211.



PAT RUDEBUSCH

Larry Becker (L) accepted a proclamation from Mayor Steve Glazer commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Orinda Masonic Lodge.

Miramonte Club Hopes to Help More in Kenya

Miramonte High School's ABE Club has a special wish list for their friends in Kenya. Members of the club, which stands for "A Better Education," have adopted the small village of Rukanga in the Kasigau region in southern Kenya. In addition to sending school supplies, library books, and raising money for scholarships, members have traveled to the remote village each summer to help build shelters, sponsor tournaments, and even teach in the school. The group has also filled their luggage with uniforms collected through the Orinda Association's Soccer-4-All program to take to the sports teams. The high school students hope to help the village's volleyball enthusiasts next with nets and uniforms.

If you can help with any of the following, please email the ABE Club at abeclub_miramonte@yahoo.com.

| | |
|---|--|
| adult soccer cleats | sets of kid's and adult volleyball team shirts |
| soccer uniforms and shorts (sets of 11) | adult track and court shoes |
| soccer balls | basketballs |
| volleyballs | bike jerseys (not necessarily team sets) |
| volleyball nets | |



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CHRISTMAS TREES

Christmas Tree Sales to Benefit Orinda Schools Through EFO

By GABRIELA MOZEE
Contributing Writer

It's the season to be supportive of the generous \$1.4 million dollar pledge the Educational Foundation of Orinda (EFO) has committed for the 2007-2008 school year. By shopping at the Orinda Christmas Tree Lot, you can help the organization meet that goal. Christmas tree lot operators and local residents Michael Kang and Barbara Cabellon will donate a portion of their proceeds directly to EFO. The lot is at 8 Altarinda Road next to the Orinda School District office. The grand opening took place on November 23, and the lot will stay open through December 24, from 11



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Michael Kang and Barbara Cabellon will once again open the Orinda christmas tree lot on Altarinda Road. Proceeds benefit the Educational Foundation of Orinda.

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Kang and Cabellon came up with the Orinda Christmas tree lot idea last year, when their daughter, Allegra Cabellon, was senior class president at Miramonte High School. They wanted to find creative ways to contribute to their community, and wondered why local residents had to go outside of Orinda to find their annual tree, thus supporting other cities' tree lots. Hence, the idea for Orinda's own Christmas tree lot was born. "Many worthy causes and organizations were considered, but we wanted one that would benefit the most people. Selecting EFO was the logical choice as it specifically helps all Orinda residents as a whole," says Kang.

Last year, Kang and Cabellon approached EFO's then president Karen Derr Gilbert at a back-to-school event to seek some direction. They were informed that very few Orinda businesses contributed to EFO. "EFO is more of an individual-based organization," explained Gilbert. The Orinda couple decided it was time to change that demographic. They entered into an agreement with EFO whereby the organization would help alert the community to the new enterprise while Kang and Cabellon handled the rest. At the end of the holiday season last year, 500 Christmas trees were sold and more than \$3,000 donated to EFO. They're hoping to do the same or better this second year with more awareness and participation from the community.

As Kang sees it, EFO is an organization that helps all Orindans, not only those who might have kids in the Orinda school system. "I realize that EFO is beneficial to everyone, not just the school system. EFO has pledged \$1.4 million dollars this 2007-2008 year to support education in Orinda." This pledge enables Orinda schools to hire teachers and retain programs such as library

education, music, art, and electives at OIS. It also fills classrooms with tools like computers, books, science supplies, art materials, video equipment, and musical instruments. Kang notes that "in communities such as Orinda, where the schools are at the top 10 percent in the state, a good school system increases the value of our community's real estate. A strong school system invites higher real estate prices. EFO helps our community's schools stay strong and healthy for all residents, regardless of whether you have a child or not in the educational system."

Kang says that his family found that the best thing about having a Christmas tree lot is meeting the families and children who come to choose and buy a tree. Since most Christmas trees are eight feet or taller, the kids excitedly run around them as if in a forest. "We initially had a tally to see which Orinda school's students visited the tree lot the most," recalls Kang. "At the end, all schools participated and helped to contribute to the success we had last year."

This year, the Orinda Christmas tree lot will have wreaths, garlands, and open tables so that each class in Miramonte can display and sell their goods at the tree lot every weekend. "We've been participating in the market place for the past six years and know the variety of products each class has," adds Kang. "We'll be happy to provide the space so that each weekend, all Miramonte classes have the opportunity to sell their products and continue with their fundraising efforts toward their graduation."

According to Kang, one of the most challenging aspects of the business is finding the right Christmas tree farmer. Having scheduled meetings with four different tree farmers in Oregon last year, undergoing serious flat tires, and having the

[SEE TREES page 25]

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In December, all our favorite magazines are full of “Up and Down the Avenue” holiday advice for gift-giving shoppers. An easier solution is to go up and down the aisles of your neighborhood bookstore (free gift wrap at ours!) where there is something for everyone and while one size doesn’t fit all — the shelves hold books for all sizes.

For the very youngest — who love to be read to — Olivia, Ian Falconer’s enchanting pig, is back as she prepares for the holiday season in *Olivia Helps With Christmas* (Atheneum \$18.99), perfect for 3- to 5-year-olds. Older sisters (8- to 12-year-olds) will enjoy *The Daring Book For Girls* by Andrea Buchanan (Collins \$24.95), a response to this year’s runaway bestseller, *The Dangerous Book for Boys*. Some of the things girls will learn are the secret to the perfect cartwheel, more about famous females in history, how to make friendship bracelets, and, the eternal mystery, “what boys are thinking?”

Henry, The Dog With No Tail by Jules Fieffer and his daughter Kate (Simon & Schuster \$16.99) is a wonderful read-aloud book for 3- to 6-year-olds. Henry wants only one thing...and you can guess what! And older children continue to look forward to each new edition of *The Guinness Book of World Records*. The new 2008 edition even glows in the dark.

Sports Illustrated continues its holiday tradition of producing a coffee table book for the sports-minded. Teens and their grown-ups will love *The Basketball Book* (Time, Inc. \$29.95), which celebrates the college and the professional game with stunning photography and essays.

Armchair sailors will feel the wind in the rigging when they explore *Fifty Places to Sail Before You Die* (Stewart, Tabori & Chang \$24.95) as Chris Santella continues his immensely popular “Fifty Places” series. And if it’s the rolling fairway rather than the roiling surf that entertains, in *Planet Golf* (Abrams \$60), Darius Oliver along with photographer David Scaletti takes golfers on a breathtaking tour around more than 130 of the world’s finest golf courses.

Holidays are always appropriate moments to give and receive new cookbooks. Two favorites this year are *The Art of Simple Food: Notes and Recipes from a Delicious Revolution* by Alice Waters

(Crown \$35), an invitation to readers to follow the Chez Panisse doctrine of preparing delicious seasonal meals all year long. And if you’ve ever enjoyed one of Citizen Cake’s incredibly exquisite desserts, you’ll want to gift a friend—or yourself—with *Elizabeth Falkner’s Demolition Desserts* (Ten Speed Press \$35). Her restaurant is one of the stars of Hayes Valley in San Francisco and her desserts defy description. Now she shares her secrets.

Alan Greenspan’s *The Age of Turbulence: Adventures in a New World* (Penguin \$35) and Jeffrey Toobin’s *The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court* (Doubleday \$27.95) marched rapidly onto the bestseller lists in early October and are sure to be welcome holiday gifts. And the waning days of December, when gift giving is past, are perfect times for tossing a log on the fire and curling up with a seriously fat book. Tim Jeal’s *Stanley: The Impossible Life of Africa’s Greatest Explorer* (Yale University \$38) has garnered great reviews and, for lovers of fine non-fiction, promises an unforgettable trip into the heart of darkness.

For history buffs, Rick Atkinson’s fine World War II trilogy continues with *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944* (Henry Holt \$35) while the Korean War is front and center in David Halberstam’s *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (Hyperion \$35).

And if your gift list includes those who like their history skillfully cloaked in fiction, consider *Rhett Butler’s People* (St. Martin’s Press \$27.95). Donald McCaig was fully authorized by the Margaret Mitchell estate to extend the story, both prequel and sequel, of America’s most beloved novel, *Gone With the Wind*. Colleen McCullough brings readers *Antony and Cleopatra* (Simon & Schuster \$26.95), a continuation of her “Masters of Rome” series, while Ken Follett tackles the 14th century in a follow-up to *Pillars of the Earth*, with *World Without End* (Penguin \$35).

Jan Karon fans will be thrilled to receive *Home to Holly Springs* (Penguin \$26.95) and to know that their favorite author is launching a new series about Father Tim. If your gift list includes friends who won’t go out on Thursdays at 9 p.m. because

Holiday Book Sale – December 6



SALLY HOGARTY

The Friends of the Orinda Library have a wonderful idea for holiday gifts -- books! They have a great supply of children's books, travel guides, how-to books, and much, much more. If you are looking for a new recipe to make that holiday meal extra special or arts and crafts ideas for the youngsters in your family, you'll find just the right book to help you at the annual Holiday Book Sale at the Orinda Library, December 6, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, call Millie Armer at 254-1428.

Grey’s Anatomy is on, they’ll be happy to get *Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures* by Vincent Lam (Weinstein \$23.95). Lam is a practicing ER physician in Canada and he delivers 12 interwoven stories that follow a group of young doctors as they move from the challenges of medical school to the intense world of emergency rooms,

evacuation missions, and terrifying new viruses.

It’s a far cry from *Olivia Helps With Christmas* to the ER in Toronto and we’ve only just skimmed the surface. One size doesn’t fit all *but* there is something for everybody at Orinda Books.

Happy holiday reading!



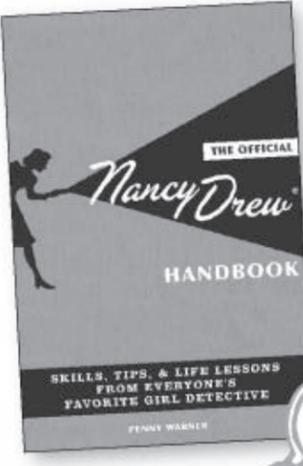
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CREEK RESTORATION

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ORINDA

◆ LETTERS from page 4

community. Owner Ron Bonner is holding youth dance parties on selected Sundays where local teenagers spin records and there is plenty of pizza and soft drinks available for a small cover charge. This type of community support is what makes Orinda a nice place to live.

Contact the Orinda House at www.OrindaHouse.com or at 258-4445 for more information about the teenager parties.

— Thomas T. McCormick

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.

Buehler Streamside Restoration Project

By JOHN ZENTNER
Contributing Writer

Like the proverbial journey of a thousand miles, the first steps in the restoration of San Pablo Creek in downtown Orinda have begun as the Friends of Orinda Creeks complete the first phase of the Buehler Streamside Restoration Site. The ultimate outcome is a completely restored creek meandering through what are now parking lots and concrete embankments, vegetated with native plants once found along Orinda's creeks. For now, however, the Friends have focused on restoring the creekbanks behind the Buehler building at 23 Orinda Way with the generous assistance of the Bodfish Preserve Fund, part of the Muir Heritage Land Trust, the Buehler Estate, donations from board members, the Restoration Trust, Los Robles Native Plants, and numerous Orinda volunteers.

Approximately five years ago, Friends founding members, Cinda MacKinnon, Maya Rappaport, and Toris Jaeger (all of whom have been honored by the Orinda Association with the Wm. Penn Mott Environmental award), began removing invasive weeds and replacing them with native trees and shrubs at the two open ends of San Pablo Creek in downtown Orinda Village. One planting area is behind the Chevron station and the other behind the Bank of America. Two years earlier, MacKinnon, Rappaport and others were also responsible for obtaining funding for a comprehensive San Pablo Creek restoration plan, which envisions restoring the creek to a more natural condition. Implementation of that plan is some way off in the future. In the meantime, the Friends have concentrated on restoring sections of the creek's banks to demonstrate the values and attractions of native riparian plantings.

Those efforts bore fruit this past year with a \$1,000 grant from the Bodfish Preserve Fund through the Muir Heritage Land Trust to clear dead pine trees, the non-native blackberries, poison oak, and German ivy from a larger section of creek banks behind the Buehler building at 19 Orinda Way. Access and work permissions were rapidly granted by the Buehlers and their estate manager.

Los Robles Native Plants contributed labor and equipment to help clear the site of dead trees and noxious vines and the city public works staff (thanks Mark Lowry) generously hauled or composted the remnant debris piles. On Earth Day, April



LESLEY DRUMMOND

Orinda City Councilmember volunteers help clean up San Pablo Creek during last year's Earth Day.

22, 2007, volunteers from throughout Orinda gathered to weed the slope, newly christened the Buehler Streamside Restoration Site, plant native trees and shrubs, and learn about creeks and native plants. Valley and coast live oaks, wild rose, golden currants, big-leaf maples, willows, cottonwoods, and dogwoods were all planted, watered and mulched in one morning, distributed broadly over the 4,500 sq. ft. site. Restoration Trust volunteers helped demonstrate planting and poison oak avoidance techniques and installed almost 300 ft. of drip irrigation to water the plants through the first few summers. Over the spring and summer, the plants grew significantly, aided by the relatively mild weather and a weeding and mulching day on September 30 sponsored by the Friends, which was attended by Orinda volunteers.

However, the work is not yet completed. The Friends will be hosting another planting day on December 22 to restore native understory species such as Santa Barbara sedge and creeping wild rye. Native plant materials will be consumed with relish (and we're not talking corn relish here), including acorn bread and Manzanita tea. So come on down to your creek and join the festivities on Saturday, December 22, from 10 a.m. to noon behind the Buehler building at 19 Orinda Way. Bring gloves and we'll supply refreshments, plants, and digging tools. Heavy rain cancels.

Friends of Orinda Creeks
Planting Day December 22
10 a.m. - noon
19 Orinda Way




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Bobbie Dodson



Cutting our Christmas tree at Apple Hill has become a family tradition. Usually we travel there the day after Thanksgiving. Following a day of cooking and feasting, it's great to get outside and tramp the hills.

My granddaughter Adi, now a senior at University of California - Berkeley, still looks forward to the yearly outing. She says, "The best part is all of us looking for the perfect tree for our house. When we've found just the right one, it gives me a real feeling of accomplishment, that 'you've done it' (and) now we're ready for the Christmas season. All during December when I see the tree, it seems like something very special because we cut it ourselves."

Apple Hill provides a full day of family fun. Start out early, because it takes a little more than two hours to arrive at the area.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Bobbie Dodson (L) and her daughter **Kathy Williamson** look for the perfect tree.

East of Placerville, the rolling hills are sprinkled with farms and fruit orchards. There are over 50 ranches listed in the Apple Hill Growers Association. To obtain a map of where to find them, check the web at applehill.com, or call (530) 644-7692 for your 2007 "Cider Press: The Official Guide to Apple Hill." The ranches are spread out a bit, so it's best to plan your route.

Recently, I talked with Rebecca Storamski of the Harris Tree Farm. This family has been on their property for seven generations and theirs was one of the original Christmas tree farms. The Harris Tree Farm is nestled in the middle of 150 acres of native forest in Pollock Pines at 2640 Blair Road and features 30 acres of Christmas trees and a fruit orchard. "It's a big operation as we plant from 800 to 1,000 trees each year. In a good year, we sell more than that," Storamski said.

Storamski's family has four generations of Christmas tree growers. Tree varieties include silver tip, white fir, Douglas fir, and a few cedar and sequoias. The price is expected to be from \$5 to \$6 a foot. For 75 cents, everything you need is supplied – from a measuring stick and saw to wrapping your tree with twine to tie it on your car.

"There is also a bake shop with our specialty: apple cider doughnuts. Visitors may take a nature walk and picnic in the orchard. Even your dog is welcome, but please bring a leash," she added.

Last year we cut trees at Roberts' Christmas Tree Farm, 5611 Gilmore Road in Pollack Pines. Jim Roberts says, "On our Gilmore Road farm we have white fir,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jessica Williamson poses with her father **Stephen Williamson** and a few friendly bears.

Douglas fir, Scotch pine, cedar, sequoia and a few silver tips. The price for any variety of tree is \$4 a foot, with a \$16 minimum on little trees and a \$32 maximum on the larger ones. We wrap the trees in netting for \$1 and provide twine, but recommend you bring along some strong rope to tie the tree on your vehicle. As far as keeping the tree fresh, we find just plain water, but plenty of it, is the key. Sometimes trees will keep their needles through April." It was interesting to learn that the Roberts family uses stump culture to renew their lot. "When trees are cut, we sometimes ask people to leave a couple of branches at the bottom. These keep living and eventually form a new, shapely tree," Roberts said. The family has a second tree farm at 2561 Mace Road in Camino. They, as most places, are open from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Able's Apple Acres, 2345 Carson Road, Placerville is another good stop, especially for children. On the weekends and holidays, they offer pony and horse rides from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and a hay maze that is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Many places sell a wide variety of food,

concentrating on those that are apple-based. We enjoy the apple fritters and always bring home a huge frozen apple pie for eating during the holiday season. Look for candied apples and apple butter, while apple cider is a perfect beverage on a cold day.

The Honey Bear Ranch, 2826 Barkley Road in Camino, is famous for its fudge shop, featuring 10 to 15 varieties. They also have two lunch specials every day, a 1/3 pound hamburger and a chicken strudel. Crafters are there on the weekends along with live music.

The web lists a large number of places that offer lunch. Almost all of the establishments have gift shops, so along with getting a fresh Christmas tree and food treats galore, families can get a head start with their holiday shopping when they visit Apple Hill.

When you go:

Driving on I-80 to Sacramento, stay left for US-50E toward Sacramento/South Lake Tahoe, taking exit 54-toward Cedar Grove and Apple Hill Drive. From there, choose a spot that interests you.

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WAY TO GROW

Way to Grow in Orinda

Beat the Winter Blahs

By Spending Time in Your Garden

Steve & Cathy Lambert



As northern California gardeners, we should consider ourselves lucky that we are able to work (or play) in our gardens pretty much year-round. Although it may be cold and muddy at times, the ground doesn't freeze, we don't have to shovel snow, and it's only a few times a year that we might have to cover our frost-tender plants to protect them. If you've ever lived on the East Coast, or know someone who has, you can appreciate our California gardening climate even more.

In our household, there's a feeling of excitement and anticipation on the day the first gardening catalogs arrive. But in California, planning next year's garden is just one of many winter gardening activities we can enjoy.

Planning – Winter is a great time to fantasize about what you can add to your garden to be enjoyed the following spring and summer. If you are planning some major changes or additions to your garden, winter is a great time to hire a landscape designer because most have more time in their schedule during the winter. By completing your plans during the winter, you will be ready to start construction in the spring, giving you all summer to enjoy

your new yard.

Pruning, Spraying, Deadheading – Although it may not be as much fun as planting, winter pruning, and general garden clean up is just as important to your garden's appearance come spring. The most important places to start pruning are your fruit trees, perennials, and roses (in that order) making sure to get rid of any diseased or dead plant material.

Last year was particularly bad for fire blight, a bacterial disease that winters-over in infected branches and old mummified apple and pear fruit. It is critical that you cut out all diseased wood and clean up all old fruit both from the tree and ground. The main way fire blight spreads is during late season rains when the trees start to bloom. The second way is through the use of contaminated tools. When pruning infected plant material of any kind it is important to spray your clippers with Lysol or another form of disinfectant after every few cuts so as not to infect the good wood.

Peach leaf curl is probably our second biggest disease problem. Last year we learned that the State of California Agricultural Department has moved its recommended first spraying for peach leaf



STEVE LAMBERT

Terra Cotta Yarrow and Feather Reed Grass are distinctive features of this drought-resistant garden.

curl (on both peach and nectarine trees) to before Christmas when the trees first lose their leaves. The more it rains the more you need to spray. Last year we sprayed three times and had no peach leaf curl. The year before (a much wetter year) we sprayed six times and still had bad curl.

Pruning Ornamental Grasses – As grasses are becoming a more prevalent plant choice in many gardens it's important to note proper pruning techniques to keep them healthy and looking their best. Don't prune your grasses back too early and miss out on how beautiful they look in the fall and winter as they turn from green to golden brown and catch that great low autumn sunlight. Last year, the Morning Light Japanese Silver grass on our front bank looked incredible on bright frosty mornings covered in ice crystals.

So when is the proper time to prune your grasses? That varies based on the amount of heavy winter rainfall we receive. We recommend that you wait until your grasses start looking "ratty" (i.e. when the blades and flower inflorescence start falling apart). Some garden maintenance companies don't understand proper care for ornamental grasses. We've seen beautiful clumps of grasses cut back in their prime, and even hedged into ugly lopsided balls or rows. Grasses, even evergreen grasses, need to be cut back once a year down to the ground in order to grow back in with their natural shape.

It's unfortunate, but many ornamental grasses are getting black-listed by several city planning departments, including Orinda, because grasses are considered to

be a fire hazard by fire departments. This is only true if they are not well maintained. Grasses that have never been pruned and contain dry/dead grass within the plant are a fire hazard; but healthy, well-pruned grasses are not. Since many grasses are drought tolerant, tough, and look great with native and Mediterranean plant material they should be encouraged by city planning, not banned.

If you haven't kept up with deadheading in your garden, now is a good time to begin by cutting back all old blooms and seed heads. You will get the best blooms next year from your lilacs and crepe myrtles if the old seedpods are removed now. Butterfly bushes (buddleias) will give you their largest blooms if cut back to 2 feet from the ground in the winter. Hydrangea blooms should also be cut back this time of year. E-mail us for a complete guide to pruning and deadheading your hydrangeas.

Some old flowers and seed heads can look great and add winter interest when left in your landscape a little longer. As we are writing this article, we're watching a dozen yellow breasted finches feasting on the black-eyed Susan seed heads outside our window

Dividing Perennials – If any of your perennials didn't perform well this year, or you want to increase your collection, winter is a great time to divide and/or move them. This winter we plan to divide our Morning Light (pale yellow) daylilies, Mood Indigo (dark blue) agapanthus, many different varieties of dahlias, several varieties of black-eyed Susans as well as some irises

[SEE LANDSCAPE page 25]

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ADOPT A FAMILY

Local Agencies Help Provide Holiday Gifts To Those In Need

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

“Towels. Did they really ask for towels as a Christmas present?” my daughter asked,” recalls Sue Nagle.

“She had taken towels for granted. Seeing them on the wish list for the family we’d been assigned in the Adopt a Family program was an eye-opener for her. The entire experience was an outstanding one for our family in every respect,” says the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC) member.

“Last year, we and the Fred Toth family chose to participate in this venture together by signing up at LOPC, which had agreed

to sponsor families who were clients of the Monument Crisis Center,” Nagle explains. “With four children in our ‘adopted’ family, we and the Toths each took two of the children to shop for. My husband, two daughters and I shopped together, taking pleasure in selecting gifts from the lists we’d been given. Kate loves little ones, so she enjoyed picking out clothes and toys for the 2-year-old. Then, we and the Toths got together for a gift wrapping party. We were especially pleased that we found a great price on bicycles, and purchased one for each of the 11- and 12-year-old boys.

Sara Luquin, of the Monument Crisis Center, says that there are 600 client families who will participate in the Adopt a Family program this year. “They fill out applications listing two things each one needs and two things they want,” says Luquin. “We start this process early in October so, for this year, almost all of our families are taken. However, we can use help in our warehouse getting things ready for delivery. Groups no larger than six are needed, and volunteers must be at least 14. Interested volunteers should contact Sara or Ginger at (925) 825-7751.

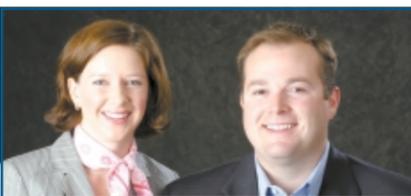
“This year LOPC hopes to adopt more than 100 families, and will also include families from West Oakland served by Elmhurst Presbyterian Church,” said John Weems, associate pastor. If Orindans would like to help this church effort, they could contact LOPC’s office at (925)283-8722.

The mission of the Monument Crisis Center is to provide food, nutrition education, resource and referral crisis services, and community advocacy to low-income, at-risk families, seniors, and individuals. Ongoing volunteer involvement includes donations, sorting and packing food boxes, and delivery of



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Toth and Nagle families spent time last year wrapping presents for families that they adopted.



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donations. They still have many families in need of adoption. Call (925) 825-7751.

Shelter, Inc. is another nonprofit organization that lends a helping hand to those in need. According to Theresita Ortiz of Shelter, Inc., more than 500 men, women and children, mostly families, will be assisted by the organization this year. “Our services help homeless and low-income Contra Costans obtain homes by providing three to 12 months of housing in combination with supportive assistance such as job training, educational services, health care and counseling,” she explains.

For the Adopt a Family program, in which Shelter, Inc. also participates, a case manager writes up the family’s circumstances and needs. Donors are then matched with the size family they want to help. A wish list is given to the donors; but, in essence, an entire Christmas is provided for the families in need.

Ortiz continues, “We never turn anyone away. So, often we have new clients a day or two before Christmas and we want to help them. . . Some groups, individuals or neighborhoods have gift drives so that we have a supply of items from which to choose for these last-minute requests. We

appreciate this assistance.”

The Bay Area Crisis Nursery offers support, at no cost, to families in stress or crisis by providing temporary care for children from birth to 11-years-of-age. Their Adopt a Child program provides gifts to all the families they have served during the year. “Although we may have only had one child in the family stay with us, we cover all the children in the family,” says Sandy Hathaway, program director. “Last year, we gave over 2,500 gifts to 415 children. Since these are often the only presents received, we like to supply five or six gifts – some necessities and some toys or games. Many of the gifts come to us from church or business groups that conduct special drives. We ask that they be delivered to us by December 15 and we need help wrapping gifts on December 8 and 22.”

For other volunteer opportunities during the holiday season, Orindans may get in touch with the Volunteer Center where such agencies as the Salvation Army and United Way list their needs.

“If it’s too late to adopt a family or child this year, I strongly suggest tucking away the information about these programs and

[SEE ADOPT page 25]



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Local Families' Holiday Traditions

-- Photography by BARBARA BOSTER



My favorite holiday tradition is Chinese New Year's Eve. Everyone brings a special type of food to share. We light fire crackers and thoroughly enjoy the day and each other as we look forward to much good luck and fortune in the New Year.

– Elaine "Jiao" Zheng



I love setting the table with my mom's heirloom sterling silver, Irish crystal, and fine china. It reminds me of the wonderful stories she would tell. I also pick flowers and evergreens for the table arrangement and put them in special vases that have been handed down from generation to generation -- each with their own special story.

– Finola Fellner

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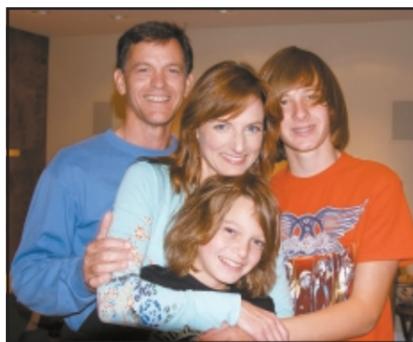
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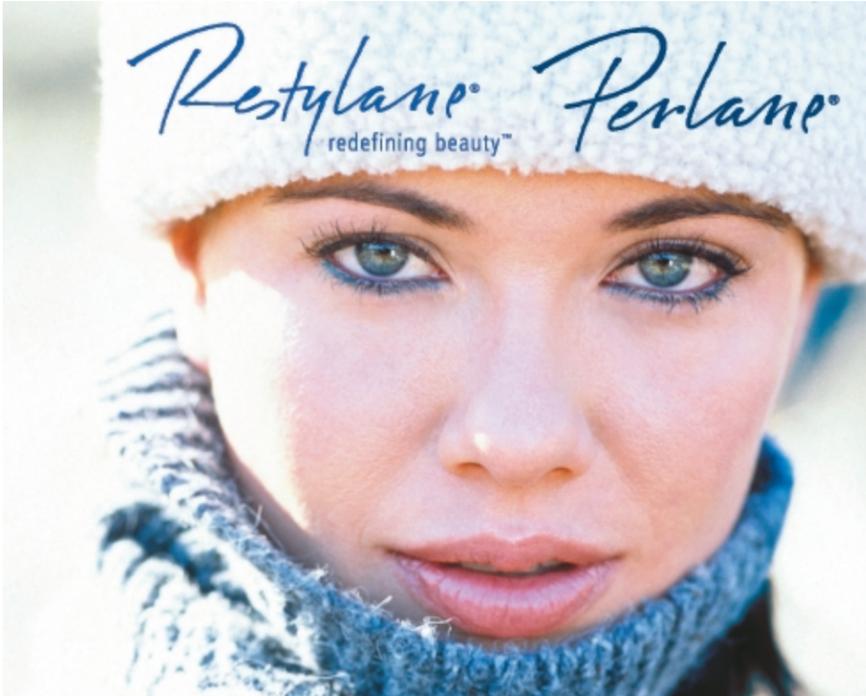
My family always collected Christmas ornaments. In fact, my husband Jon asked me to marry him on Christmas Eve 1981 by giving me a beautiful porcelain bride ornament. Now, whenever our family travels, we look for a special ornament as a souvenir. Sometimes, we have to improvise, but it has become a fun family excursion as we hunt for just the right ornament to represent our experience.

– Lisa Steele and family



We celebrate St. Nicholas Day (December 6) when St. Nicholas sneaks into the house while everyone is asleep and covers the breakfast table with Belgian chocolates, clementines, and toys. The children always take some of the treats to share with their class at school. They love to brag that they get chocolate for breakfast!

– Kathy Valcke



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KID ON THE STREET

Kid on the Street

■ What Do The Holidays Mean to You?

Compiled by CHRIS LAVIN

We've heard enough of what adults have to say about the holidays. What about the kids? *The Orinda News* decided to ask a few Orinda young people what they like most about this month.



Audrey (L) and Eva Spindler, ages 5 and 9, like spending time in Tahoe in the snow, but they also enjoy milking cows on their grandfather's farm in Oregon and gathering the eggs.



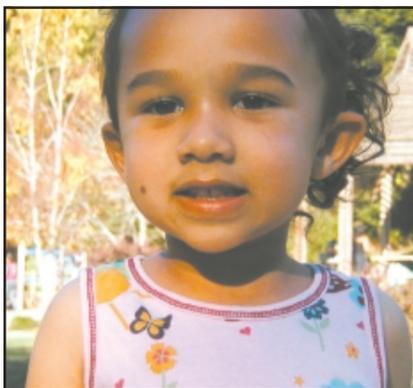
Cole Erny, age 6 says, "I like getting Army stuff for presents. We leave carrots or apples for the (rein)deer – they always leave the cores. But now we have a big diamond," he said, as his mom pulled out a replica stone larger than the Hope from her pocket, "for the Army guys to guard."



Otto Winter, age 4, dressed in his overalls that he had managed to put on all by himself that morning, it was entirely appropriate for Otto to say that "a tractor" might be under the tree come the end of the month. He also nodded that he likes Christmas trees and leaving treats for the reindeer.



Abigail (L) and Lauren Brotman ages 2 and 4, divide their time between Christmas and Hanukah. Both like the tree, menorah, and presents. Lauren especially likes having "lots of cousins" around while Abigail said her favorite thing is "My sister!"



Photos by Chris Lavin

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HEALTH AND FITNESS

Move of the Month

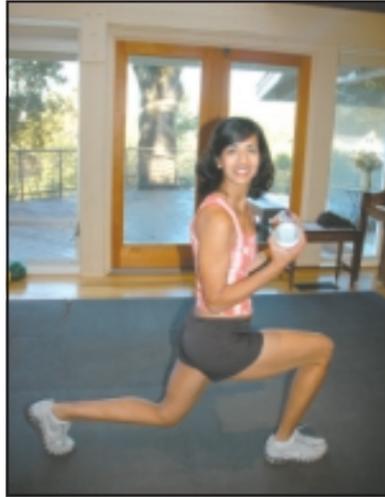
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Take a long stride forward with your right foot, allowing your left knee to drop and forming a right angle with your right knee. As you push yourself forward, curl the weights up simultaneously with both arms. Step forward with your left leg and uncurl the weights. Keep your back straight and your abs tight throughout the move. Do two sets of 15 reps. Each step is half of a rep.

Yoga—Holiday's Answer to Stress

By JEANNE DOWELL
Contributing Writer

Anne Frank wrote, "No one has become poor by giving." I'm quite sure she did not have material gifts in mind when she said this.

Giving of our time to one another is probably one of the greatest gifts we have to offer. More of us are time addicts. Go-go-push-push to get as much done in every hour and every minute as we can. Strive—be perfect—and do it all! We know the routine well and are addicted to this rush. We are tied to rockets going nowhere fast.

Holidays come along, and our hectic pace becomes even more so. Having just returned from a Morocco yoga and touring experience, I vowed that I would not get caught up with this time addiction again. Guess what? It didn't take me long, and that's why I'm writing about it for the winter holiday theme.

Once November begins, I feel this head rush of what's to come: days blend into one. What happened to my majestic, awesome, mysterious, exotic adventure in Morocco when every day began with 6 a.m. yoga and

the present was all there was? I lived totally present, and as a result, I loved everyone and everywhere I went. I was met with kindness, warmth, and love. The Muslim people were beyond generous with their time and care for us. It brought tears to my eyes. No rushing—just a giving of themselves.

Another common thread important to everyone I befriended was their desire for me to know the essential heart of the Koran. They expressed their concern about Westerners' perception of Muslims as fundamentalists. "We are not for the terrorists or suicide bombers. The Jihad was meant to be fighting the battle inside ourselves not against those who don't agree with us," was the sentiment I heard repeatedly. These human encounters were a direct experience of love and peace, and I will always remember its kindness.

But nothing lasts, and we must return to our destination. With holidays approaching, there is no other time of year when our emotional lives are up for grabs as much as now. Memories of the past come to mind—the loss of a loved one, sickness, and

[SEE YOGA page 17]

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— Amy Chen

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How Flexible Are You?

Andrea Colombu



I think you would agree that the comfort found in being able to move your body about fluidly, without restrictions and stiffness, is quite desirable. Indeed, having a flexible body has a direct impact on the quality of our everyday lives.

Flexibility helps increase our joints range of motion, which in return, increases fluidity of movement and helps us feel less stiff. In addition, flexibility helps increase muscular function and blood circulation, improves recovery from exercise, helps prevent cramping and injuries, and maintains muscles, tendons, ligaments, and joints. Being that flexibility is one of the three main pillars of a balanced and sound exercise program (the other two are cardiovascular endurance and muscle strength), and considering the benefits of a flexible body, it behooves us to make flexibility training a part of our daily exercise program. Increasing flexibility is possible for any one at any age. It takes time, diligence, and careful execution to prevent injuries; but, with some patience, improvements are guaranteed. If you'd like to increase your physical performance, feel better, and help prevent injuries, give stretching a chance. It will be worth the effort.

There is another important type of flexibility that deserves just as much if not greater attention: flexibility of mind. Just as the body will benefit from flexible joints, our mind, and for that matter our overall wellbeing, will benefit from flexible attitudes. Studies show that being flexible

and adaptable in our thinking reduces levels of anxiety and stress. Just as the lack of physical flexibility causes one's body to feel tight and stiff, lack of mental flexibility is restricting and can lead to anxiety and stressful living.

People who are adaptable to the unpredictability of life often lead a more joyful and less stressful life. If you think about it, it makes perfect sense. More flexibility; more fluidity. Less flexibility; less availability. Certainly, one may argue that less flexible beliefs provide a sense of greater security as they keep one within safe and known boundaries. On the other hand, building and protecting walls of thick and rigid beliefs can keep us isolated. What seems to protect us also limits us.

Look at Mother Nature, for example. She teaches us that flexibility is a virtue, not a weakness. In fact, even the strongest and most majestic oak trees occasionally break branches in powerful storms. On the other hand, a palm tree with its flexible trunk will bend to the ground in order to adapt to the wind.

Achieving balance in life requires flexibility of mind and body because life is constantly presenting us challenges. Holding on too tightly to our beliefs can cause unnecessary suffering and frustration. Since nothing in our lives remains the same for very long, striving to remain fixed in our ideas is a futile attempt to resist the inevitability of change. Follow Mother Nature's lead: be flexible in mind and body and enjoy life in its ever-changing state.

◆ YOGA from page 16

even happy memories can be painful because we no longer have them. These memories are all magnified and experienced at a deeper level at this time of year.

Yoga can be an antidote to this. First of all, the practice of yoga emphasizes the present. For many Westerners, yoga can be a great way to stretch, strengthen, and relax. For others, yoga can be a way of life. I tell my students, "Your yoga begins when you leave this room. The easy part is being here."

To be present is an art in itself. For two-and-a-half weeks in Morocco, I was able to live and practice this art, and it made such a difference in all that I did. Time stood still. There was a sense of peace and quietness in all I did.

Isn't this what we really want — to be peaceful, to feel quiet inside, and to be loved? It can't come about being tied to a

rocket and being on the go all the time. Give yourself and a friend the gift of yoga for the holidays — cut out other things on your list, but not yoga. It truly is a way of life. Your holidays will take on an entirely new glow, and so will you.

Local Tennis Enthusiasts Score Big in World Medical Tennis Society Tournament



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rollie and Clarice Odell pose with their German opponents **Monika Puncher** and **Hans Weber**.

By **BOBBIE DODSON**
Staff Writer

Orinda residents Clarice and Dr. Rollie Odell participated in the World Medical Tennis Society (WMTS) Tournament in San Diego recently. Rollie won the Men's 70 and over doubles final. In the Singles Open Division, he was pitted against an opponent from Germany who was in his 30s. This brought the United States the Nation Cup. Clarice reached the finals in three divisions in the 60 and over, Mixed, Singles, and Women's Doubles. Twenty-two countries were represented in the tournament, with 300 participants.

Rollie played these matches fresh from

winning the Washington State Outdoor and Indoor Men's Singles for players 70 and over.

Any tennis players in the medical profession who are interested in participating in these matches sponsored by the WMTS in future years may contact AMTA@mdtennis.org. Tournaments are held all over the world, each year in a different country. The Odells say it is a most enjoyable way to meet people from many countries. Clarice adds, "One sees the places visited in a different light when being entertained by members of the tennis fraternity. Each year it's been a wonderful experience making new foreign friends through our favorite sport."

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ARCHITECTURAL AWARDS / ORINDA WOMAN'S CLUB

◆ AWARDS from page 1

So this month, Orinda will award its first Mayor's Award for Excellence in Architecture, Landscape, and Environmental Sustainability to one of three finalists who have constructed something

1994, built by Jarvis Architects of Oakland, near the country club. It is not clearly visible from the road or by neighboring properties. The family wanted a Mediterranean or hacienda-style house, which the architects built complete with fountains, a pool and flooring and pavers to match. Inside, tiles and stucco with a fireplace continue the



This new home at 1 Dos Posos was designed by Jarvis Architects of Oakland.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

that accents the land and its environment. While the ultimate winner was not expected to be named until after press time, on December 4, any of the three finalists should be considered to be Orinda jewels.

theme. The entire project is up for the award.

The Bott Residence – New House - 1 Dos Posos

This is a new residence, completed in

Logan Residence - Expansion - 6 Beaconsfield Court

This family wanted to expand their 1,900-square-foot home to accommodate a growing family, but did not want to increase the footprint on the land, even though its one-acre lot might have accommodated it. Instead, designer Peter Golze of Berkeley added another story to increase the home to almost double its size. The family and designers attempted to make the redesign compatible with other ranch-style homes in the Ivy Drive neighborhood. They also concentrated on arts and crafts design accents throughout, including accented railings along staircases and an upstairs hallway bridge that connects bedrooms and study areas.

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Orinda Woman's Club Holds Gala Fundraiser



SALLY HOGARTY



SALLY HOGARTY

Over 600 attendees bought raffle tickets for gorgeous table top trees, gift baskets, wreaths, and exciting getaway packages at the annual Festival of Trees held at the San Ramon Marriott Hotel

in November. Once again, Helen Lyall Clothes for Women wowed the audience with her glamorous creations with Patrick James and Selix Formalwear providing the elegant men's clothing. Shown above: a silk plant designed wreath by **Wendy Spears** and Orinda Realtor **Patti Camras** modeling one of Lyall's evening fashions. The event benefited Orinda's Holden High School and Opportunity Junction, which helps people at risk develop economic self-sufficiency.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Berkeley architect Peter Golze designed this home at 6 Beaconsfield Court.

Undlin Residence – New House- 40 Barbara Road

Architect William Simpson had the challenge of building a new house on a small lot that respected the views, landscaping and properties of the neighbors, while providing views and comfort for the owners. He also had to work with a 4,000-square-foot lot and respect the

1,800-square-foot development limit for a single-family house. He came up with a multiple-story modern house covered with shake siding and complete with stone accents, decks, and retaining walls. Decks and entryways were located to respect those on either side and the back. An open floor plan added a spacious feeling. Residence pictured on page one.



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INVENTOR

Local Inventor Has Fun Being Socially Responsible

■ Former street artist invents device to make bicyclists safer

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY
Staff Writer

Inventor, artist, and businessman, Tom Kahan, is a man with a vision. He founded Futur Tek, a company that he says attempts to be a “socially and environmentally responsible business that believes in the triple bottom line — profits, people, and planet.”

According to Kahan, the company’s projects are aimed at making the world both a better and safer place. The company’s debut product, the Flecto Spinner, does just that. The Flecto Spinner is a highly reflective pinwheel, with a patented attachment device, that increases the visibility of bicycles and strollers.

Kahan credits his “father’s interest in inventions” as well as his own “tendency to think out of the box, uniquely combining things that others haven’t yet,” for inspiring him to a career as an inventor.

“When I hit 50, I got on a roll and invented the Line-Shortener and the Cool Car Curtain,” says Kahan.

A Jewish immigrant from Hungary, Kahan’s father, an amateur inventor and portrait photographer, “built a camera we called the Pizza Pie Special with a Leica lens and Polaroid back so he could show high quality proofs right there in the home,” Kahan says.

Kahan was a Berkeley street artist for seven years, making handmade, one-of-a-kind belts. He both tooled and sold the belts, and is particularly proud of setting a Telegraph Avenue January record for sales, in the “the worst time of the year,” for street



Tom Kahan shows how his invention works on a bicycle. PAM CHANG

vending.

When he stopped working on “the Avenue,” Kahan’s work as an inventor began. His first invention was the world’s first line of stick-anywhere flower vases. “When I hit 50, I got on a roll and invented the Line-Shortener, a retrofit to the shopping cart that reduced the lines by over half without reducing the cart’s volume,” Kahan said. After that, he designed a Cool Car Curtain that fits over all the windows in a car or mini truck to protect it from the heat of the sun.

He also has several products in what he calls the “idea pipeline,” including a bathtub liner and spice rack, which he claims will bring considerable improvements to what’s currently on the market.

Kahan explains that the process of inventing comes first with an idea, which originates with a premise of “wouldn’t it be nice if...” For instance, with his initial creation, the stick-anywhere flower vases, Kahan started with the simple premise “Wouldn’t it be nice if I could enjoy flowers while in my car?” Next comes prototyping the idea. Then, Kahan explains, he works on “...solving design and usage issues (sometimes in my garage) as they arise, ever improving and refining the idea. The fun part, is coming up with the names!”

Giving back to the community also is important to Kahan. “Once a year, on our birthday, Futur Tek will be donating 10 percent of that year’s profits to various environmental and children’s charities that the public votes on,” he says.

Mama Earth’s Mini Flags, small Earth flags with various global, environmental friendly messages, are Kahan’s next

project. The flags will use the same attachment device as the Flecto Spinner for easy attachment to a variety of things, including bikes, strollers, and wheelchairs. Kahan, who says he is currently expanding his company by seeking green, environmentally, and socially progressive investors who want to do well by doing good, believes the Mama Earth’s Mini Flags, like the wind powered Flecto Spinner will “help raise the global consciousness.”

There are several area retailers selling the Flecto Spinners; a complete list of stores is located on the company’s website: www.flectospinner.com.



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Local inventor Tom Kahan displays his Flecto Spinner. PAM CHANG

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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

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

English Class, Depression, and Queen

Andra Lim



Everything I've learned in English class so far is summed up in the following two sentences: There is no purpose in life. Go home and kill yourself.

This morbid maxim is not entirely the fault of my teachers. *The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter* is depressing no matter what environment you read it in. However, one of my teachers did like to turn off most of the lights in the room, so that when we were sitting in class, reading sentences such as,

"And then he put the plate in the sink, and placed the fork next to it, and washed his hands, and picked up a gun, and shot himself in the head," the level of light in the room matched the level of joy in the novel.

Or, if you will, the level of light in the room *symbolized* the level of joy in the novel.

Brave New World. A story about a futuristic society in which people

frequently use the word "pneumatic." In the end, one of the characters hangs himself.

The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter. The plot revolves around four loners, one of whom commits suicide.

Ordinary People. A boy recuperates from his attempted suicide and current depression; scenes involving X-acto knives and gushing blood are described in detail.

Romeo and Juliet. Suicide, yet again. Reading question: Which of the above books is the most depressing and why? Use the vocabulary words from lessons 13 and 14 in your answer.

Now let's see how the writers themselves turned out.

McCullers attempted suicide. Hemingway committed suicide. Salinger lives a hermitic life in the mountains. Shakespeare, Huxley, and Homer are all dead. Okay, it would be kind of creepy if they were still alive, but that does not change the morbid fact that they are still dead.

Reading question: Write an essay describing your own suicide (hanging self, shooting self, monoxide poisoning, or another way). Include a suicide note and obituary and be creative!

Now consider the fact that since 2005 11 school shootings have occurred. As the teacher from *The Incredibles* said, "Coincidence? I think not!"

In order to be as safe as possible, we need to buy new books, such as *Naked Pictures of Famous People* by Jon Stewart, and preferably sooner rather than later.

The first rule for picking new English class books is if there's a Spark Notes for it, we don't read it. Presumably, there are Spark Notes on all the books on the current reading list, which is the entire point of this rule.

The second rule for picking new English class books is if the author committed or attempted suicide, we don't read it.

The third rule for picking new English class books is if the author looks weird in

the picture on the back of the book, we don't read it.

While we wait for the new books to arrive, I suggest we analyze "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen instead of *Lord of the Flies*. Everybody already knows that the glasses symbolize intellect and the shell symbolizes democracy, but there's no Spark Notes to explain what "I see a little silhouette of a man, scaramouche, scaramouche, will you do the fandango" means.

We would actually end up learning more by listening to "Bohemian Rhapsody" than by reading *The Old Man and the Sea* because we would have to think about what every lyric meant, instead of looking it up on Spark Notes.

In fact, maybe we just shouldn't read books in English class at all. Maybe we should spend English listening to Queen. Who isn't inspired and uplifted by the soaring chorus of "We Are The Champions?" And generally speaking, inspired and uplifted people do not shoot their classmates.

But wait, you say. "Bohemian Rhapsody" itself is depressing. It talks about death, captivity, murder, and isolation. Here's the beautiful thing about "Bohemian Rhapsody:" if you're listening to Queen's Greatest Hits I, "Another One Bites The Dust" comes on next, and suddenly, instead of being depressed, you're bobbing your head to the irresistible beat.

Reading question: Write your own song imitating Queen's style. Extra credit if no one can tell what you're talking about.

A song is a book, only shorter and with catchy beats. Songs tell stories, albeit usually of bad break-ups, but stories nevertheless, and, as an added bonus, they rhyme.

Songs talk about everything that's wrong with society "White Man In Hammersmith Palais." Songs talk about suicide "A Minor Incident" and death "My Girlfriend's Dead." Songs contain symbolism "Brick." Songs, like books, cover a wide variety of topics, from the hopelessness of one's love life "Even Hitler Had A Girlfriend" to school shootings "I Don't Like Mondays" to monkeys "Code Monkey."

And then, after you listen to all those incredibly depressing songs, all you have to do is turn on "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go." Who needs Prozac when there's bouncy '80s pop music?

After all, Bruce Springsteen said it best: "We learned more from a three-minute record than we ever learned in school."

Reading question: What did Bruce Springsteen *really* mean? (Hint: Think about what the record and school symbolize. Is the fact that the record is three minutes long important?)

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GARDEN

Ruth Bancroft Garden Plant Sale

■ Gary Anderson volunteers at garden and learns what succulents work best in his Orinda garden.

By VALERIE HOTZ
Staff Writer

Internationally recognized and acclaimed, the Ruth Bancroft Garden is a hidden jewel of the East Bay that is located at 1552 Bancroft Road in Walnut Creek. Since its inception in 1972, the garden has focused on water conservation and is considered a "dry garden."

The three-acre site is situated on part of what was originally a 400-acre ranch planted in pears and walnuts. Hubert Howe Bancroft, a successful publisher and bookseller in San Francisco during the latter part of the 19th century, bought the ranch in the 1880s. Bancroft's grandson, Philip, and his wife Ruth, took over the ranch in 1940. Ruth Bancroft's passion for succulents resulted in her husband's gift of a three-acre site where she could plant her ever-expanding collection. At age 99, she continues to be actively involved with operations.

Pines, palo verde, mesquite, yuccas, palm, and oak trees dot the landscape. There are hundreds of genera, including African aloe, haworthias, and gasterias. More than 100 species are represented by just these three genera alone. Cacti from the American deserts are plentiful as well.

"Today, we have to think about how much water we use for landscape needs. When people visit the garden, they can see how many attractive options are available, and there is an opportunity to get educated about dry gardening," says Becky Rice, executive director of the Ruth Bancroft Garden.

"For instance, one of the plants that people have been especially attracted to is the agave potrerana plant. It takes 10 to 20 years to reach maturity. It flowers only once and then dies. The dramatic flower stalks grow 15 to 25 feet in height. We usually see yellow and yellow-green flower stalks, but this year a very rare species that was imported from Mexico has bloomed in a very dramatic pink. Ruth grew this agave potrerana for years and years and had no idea what color it would turn out to be," says Rice.

Aloe abounds at the garden. "If someone is really into aloe, we literally have tons. Aloe grows very large and beautiful red, orange, and yellow blossoms. It has healing properties and is very good for skin irritations," explains Rice.

Curator Brian Kemble hybridizes aloes at the garden. "Brian is a world expert on aloe. He has traveled extensively throughout South Africa and has helped to add to our collection over the years,"

comments Rice.

Once Orindan Gary Anderson discovered the exotic landscape, he became a dedicated volunteer who has served as a docent for the past five years. "I have a greenhouse and many succulents in my yard, and I enjoy providing self-guided tours. Ruth Bancroft has a great eye. I like plants as architecture and appreciate the variety of shapes and colors," he says. Every plant in the garden came from a one-gallon, and in some instances, a five-gallon container. "In 30 years, it has grown tremendously," says Anderson.

Rice encourages people to seek out succulents and other dry gardening choices as an ideal way to create a lush year-round green landscape. "The variety of textures, shapes, and forms of succulents may be planted in ways that allow them to dramatically play off each other. We do workshops that give people tips and very helpful information," she said. Workshops include topics such as designing with succulents, how to remove a lawn, and colorful gardens. The garden serves as an educational resource for the community and is an ideal destination for elementary, middle, and high school field trips. A college internship program is another attraction.

Rebecca Ines joined the staff this year as director of development. Ines is responsible for the annual festive fundraising dinner as well as other development projects. Curator Brian Kemble takes guests on walking tours of the garden. An especially popular tour is the one he conducts in October at harvest time when participants can learn about prickly pears, and other cacti; fruits, jelly palm fruits, pineapple guavas, pomegranates, and more. Another popular event is the fall plant sale which takes place in October each year. The Bancroft Garden also offers field trips for elementary, middle, and high school students as well as a college internship program. In addition, special programs are available for adults including a seminar series for horticulture and green industry professionals. A series of workshops co-sponsored by East Bay MUD and the Contra Costa Water District is currently being offered. The next workshop will be on April 12 at 11 a.m. on soils and slopes. Topics will include how to work with clay soil, how to build a healthy soil, composting, and appropriate



The Puya plant produces a lovely purple flower. VALERIE HOTZ



VALERIE HOTZ.

Bancroft Garden executive director Becky Rice and curator Brian Kemble stand among the many exotic plants available.

irrigation design for various soil types and slopes.

Local gardeners eagerly await the plant sales where excellent bargains are to be had. The spring plant sale will take place in April with plants available for purchase after each

tour. For a list of available plants, visit the website listed below.

The garden is wheelchair accessible. Parking is limited, so carpooling is encouraged. For more information or to sign-up for any of the workshops, call 944-9352 or visit the website at www.ruthbancroftgarden.org.

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HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

Holiday Happenings in the Houses of Worship

By **BOBBIE DODSON**
Staff Writer

There's music in the air. Now that it's the holiday season, most Orinda houses of worship are planning concerts and services featuring musical selections. At the venues mentioned below, the word is, "all are welcome to each and every event."

Start off the season by attending the popular "Messiah Sing!" at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church on Friday night, November 30, at 7:30 p.m. Musical scores will be available and members of the choir will be placed throughout the audience to help with the singing. If you want to practice a part there's a rehearsal on Wednesday, November 28, at 7 p.m.

On Saturday, December 1 at 5 p.m., guests at St. Mark's Methodist Church will have a Hanging of the Greens Family Celebration with a potluck dinner to follow.

Orinda Community Church will host an



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church will once again present its "Messiah Sing!" This year's audience sing-a-long takes place November 30 at 7 p.m.

Advent Celebration on December 2, the first Sunday of Advent, with a focus on family participation. There will be crafts to make, then a potluck supper and carol singing.

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church will hold an Advent Faire, also on December 2, from noon until 2 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Participants will make a festive wreath, and there will be crafts for preschool and elementary school-age children. A light lunch will be served in the Davies Room. Carol singing will be led by the children. Event coordinator Beth Hutson says, "This free family event is a great way to begin the Advent Season. Please make reservations by calling Audrey Joyce at 283-9990."

Friday night, December 7, features a Chanukah Family Shabbat at 6:30 p.m. at Temple Isaiah. After the worship service, there will be Oneg and Israeli dancing and a doughnut social. The next night, December 8, will feature a Concert Chanukah Celebration with singer Rick Recht, beginning at 7 p.m. Marianne Winig, adult program coordinator, says that this is a concert for all ages. She also invites seniors to the senior lunch program on December 5 with Michele Ritterman, Ph.D. as the speaker. Her topic will be *The Mysteries of Life Stages*. The luncheon will be in the adult lounge with a cost of \$8. Anyone interested in attending should call Winig at (925) 283-8575 by November 30 to to reserve a space. Winig also would like those interested to note that Temple Isaiah has two groups for Jewish singles, one for individuals 42 and younger, the other for those over 42. These groups will be planning activities to coincide with the Recht concert.

The Committee for Lectures, Art and Music (CLAM) at Saint Mary's College presents its annual Musical Celebration for Christmas on Saturday, December 8 at 8 p.m. in the beautiful Saint Mary's College Chapel.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Pacific Mozart Ensemble will perform classical works as well as traditional carols on December 8 at 8 p.m. in the Saint Mary's College Chapel. Call (925) 631-4381.

This year's concert features the rich vocals and passionate delivery of the Pacific Mozart Ensemble along with the infectious enthusiasm of Quartet San Francisco. This holiday performance includes the West Coast premiere of a new sacred work for chorus and string quartet by jazz great Dave Brubeck. The program also includes a stirring rendition of Cary Boyce's "Ave Maria" as well as "Christmas Motets" by Francis Poulenc and a selection of traditional holiday favorites. The Pacific Mozart Ensemble made its Carnegie Hall debut in November 2005 and was nominated for a Best Choral performance Grammy Award in 2006. Under the direction of Lynne Morrow, this outstanding ensemble has made three European tours and numerous recordings.

Reservations are a must for this popular event. Call the CLAM office at (925) 631-4381.

The Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC) plans a music concert on December 16 at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. Entitled "Fill Us With Your Light," it will feature the LOPC choir, directed by Dr. Julie Ford, with a baroque orchestra, Jubilate, performing Marc-Antoine Charpentier's *Messe de Minuit*. Also, a variety of Christmas choral music spanning the centuries by composers such as Tchesnokoff, Bruckner, and Cabrillo will be performed by the Chancel Choir, LOPC Chamber Singers, Gospel Choir, Moodswing with Jazz Combo, organist Jonathan Dimmock, and vocal soloist John Thomas. A new composition by LOPC's resident composer, Greg Murai, will be included. Admission is free, but tickets are

required because seating is limited. Contact the church office at (925) 283-8722 for ticket information.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Services

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, 433 Moraga Way, Orinda, 254-3422. December 24, 4 p.m., family-oriented, contemporary service with children's pageant; 6 p.m. blended service; 10 p.m. traditional candlelight service with choir and organ.

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette, 283-8722. December 24, 4 p.m., family service; 7 and 8:30 p.m., traditional service with choir and brass ensemble; 11 p.m., contemporary service with jazz ensemble.

Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda, 254-4906. December 24, 5 p.m. children's Christmas service; 9 p.m. traditional service with choir and singing.

Santa Maria Church, 20 Santa Maria Way, Orinda, 254-2426. December 24, children's mass at 3:30 p.m. in the sanctuary (when this is full, a children's mass will start at 3:45 in the Parish Hall); 6 p.m., mass; 10 p.m., lessons and carols; 10:30 p.m., "midnight mass." On December 25, mass is at 9 and 11 a.m.

St. Mark's Methodist Church, 451 Moraga Way, Orinda, 254-5965. December 24, Christmas pageant, 5 p.m.; Christmas Eve Communion, 11 p.m..

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephen's Drive, Orinda, CA 254-3770. December 24, 4 p.m. children's pageant and children's homily; candlelight Eucharist at 8 and 11 p.m. with music starting 20 minutes before the service. December 25, 10 a.m. Rite II Eucharist service.



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ARTISTS

Gerry Wallace's Pottery in Demand

■ Work featured at Orinda Books pottery sale on December 7

By VALERIE HOTZ
Staff Writer

By her own admission ceramic artist Gerry Wallace creates a very different kind of art with her pottery. "To begin with, clay is such a different medium. I enjoy telling stories in my pottery, and I believe my craft has improved since the days when I started," says Wallace. Her repertoire includes everything from detailed teapots to intricate and exotic shoes, unique and functional platters, serving bowls, lapel pins and bookmarks.

One just has to see each individual piece to understand the story. All creations bear a distinctive Gerry Wallace style that has collectors paying big prices for her work.

From a very early age, Wallace knew she wanted to be an artist. "I can distinctly remember drawings and paintings I did when I was in kindergarten and 1st grade. It was then that I knew I would be an artist," says Wallace. She went on to earn a bachelor's degree and a master of arts degree in art practice from U.C. Berkeley.

Today, her art is in demand. Wallace has a following of dedicated collectors who eagerly arrive early at a show or sale. She has won awards in Maryland, Ohio, Los Angeles, and as far away as China. "I use an electric kiln, and I throw better than I used to," says Wallace with a smile. Currently, her pottery is on display at the Valley Arts Gallery in Walnut Creek. The Craft Museum in San Francisco has invited Wallace to show her pottery, as well.

Wallace is married to real estate



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Ceramic artist Gerry Wallace tells stories with her pottery.

developer Clark Wallace. The couple originally met while students at U.C. Berkeley and, after marrying, they moved to Orinda in 1961. The couple has three grown children, Marshall Wallace, Wendy Thomas, and Tia Kratter.

Gerry Wallace pottery is featured at the local independent bookshop, Orinda Books. "Many years ago Orinda Books owner Janet Boreta built a display case in the window. This evolved into additionally hosting three sales a year in the shop," she says.

The next sale is slated for Friday, December 7, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. "My son-in-law, Paul Kratter, is a painter and his oil paintings will be available for purchase on December 7 as well," she adds. The Orinda Books pottery sale will feature functional ceramic pieces that make wonderful gifts for the upcoming holidays. If interested in collectors items, watch for announcements of shows and galleries that feature Gerry Wallace's work.

Historical Society Celebrates the Making of a Masterpiece at Its Holiday Dinner

BY DOROTHY BOWEN
Staff Writer

When Joe Cleary created the huge "Mother River" sculpture for New Orleans, he had no idea that it would be threatened by the very river it celebrated. "Mother River," however, survived Hurricane Katrina and is still standing in front of the Port Commission Building above the River Walk and the docks where cruise ships arrive.

Cleary will talk about the making of his New Orleans monument when he speaks



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Joe Cleary stands next to one of his signature large sculptures.

at the annual holiday dinner of the Orinda Historical Society on December 5 at the Orinda Community Church Fellowship Hall.

The making of the Mother River statue took two years. It took him from his Orinda studio to the Artworks Foundry in Berkeley where it was cast in bronze and sent by flatbed truck to New Orleans. He traveled to New Orleans for the opening ceremonies in 2001. When Hurricane Katrina battered New Orleans in 2005, Cleary says "I was worried, but it didn't get hurt. It was above the water line."

A smaller model of the statue, which measures seven feet tall, is still in his studio. The finished work is 30 feet tall and six feet wide. It weighs nine tons.

There has been some talk about making the statue the symbol of the resurrection of New Orleans following the ravages of the hurricane. "It's a poetic thing: The Mother rising from the water with her children," he adds.

Cleary, a longtime Orinda resident, studied art at California College of Arts and Crafts (CCAC), San Francisco State, Mills College, and the California Art Academy (CAA). His work has been shown at the Legion of Honor, the deYoung Museum, and the San Francisco Art Academy. His illustrations have appeared in many popular magazines including *Saturday Evening Post*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Boys Life* and *Playboy*. Cleary also has taught at CCAC, Mills, CAA, and the University of Utah.

The Orinda Historical Society's Holiday Dinner is open to all. A social hour begins at 6:30 p.m. with dinner at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$35. Call the Historical Society at 254-1353 for reservations or more information.

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Pat Rudebusch



Anonymous. We may not know who you are, but we owe you immeasurable thanks. Like jolly ol' St. Nick of lore, your generosity is spread for the benefit of all. You have helped build our library and keep books on the shelves though your donations to the **Friends of the Orinda Library**. You've brought music to our houses of worship and song to our schools by supporting our churches and temples as well as the **Educational Foundation of Orinda**.

Our city is safer because of your gifts to the **Moraga Orinda Fire District's Rescue One Foundation** and the **Orinda Police Department's K-9** unit. And, our streetscape is more pleasant thanks to your gifts to the **garden clubs**. Your support of the **Orinda Arts Council** has brought us gallery shows at the Orinda Library, arts in the schools, and art in public places.

You've helped build bridges to other cultures with your gifts to the **Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation** and kept us connected to our past with the **Orinda Historical Society**. And, you've helped spread the good works of organizations such as **Soccer-for-All**, the **Orinda Rotary**, **Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**, **Orinda Lions Club**, and **Children's Hospital Oakland Foundation**.

Residents young and old are on the move thanks to your gifts to the many **youth sports organizations** and **Orinda Seniors Around Town**. The **Orinda Association** keeps us informed and brings us together for communitywide celebrations and forums, thanks, in part, to your

contributions.

The biggest party in town, the **Fourth of July Parade and Celebration** (which is sponsored by the Orinda Association), marks its 25th anniversary this coming year. No doubt, your contributions will help make this, too, a memorable celebration of our nation's freedom. And, your support of the local chapter of the **Blue Star Moms** has helped this organization support U.S. troops both at home and overseas.

These are but a few of your local contributions. Undoubtedly, you've done much more to help those who are in need, to give our children a better future, and to allow each of us to take in the beauty of a public garden or work of art.

I can think of no finer way to express our collective gratitude for your generosity than to use you, the anonymous donors, as an example to inspire the giving spirit in others.

So, in this season of sharing, won't you join the anonymous donors who have shared their good fortune with others by making a contribution to a cause that resonates in your heart? Whether we wish to remain anonymous or not, through giving, we can express our thanks for what we have and what we've been given. Happy Holidays.

6th Annual Overhill Road Holiday Boutique
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Percentage of proceeds to benefit the American Red Cross.
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Poor Players Present Scenes from Shakespeare in Orinda



SALLY HOGARTY

(L-R) Ket Watters, Catherine Willis, and Alan Bodine rehearse a scene from *Henry IV*.

BY DOROTHY BOWEN
Staff Writer

Opportunities to see Shakespeare's plays abound in Orinda from the summer season at Cal Shakes to classes at the Orinda Community Center. Many other companies from Ashland to Santa Cruz also perform his works, but none is closer to the performances in Shakespeare's day than those presented as Shakespeare's *The Seventh Age*, arranged and directed by James Keller. *The Seventh Age* will be performed by the Poor Players on December 7 at the Orinda Community Center. What makes this production unique is that it will be performed without the benefit of lighting, amplified sound, elaborate costumes, or curtains. "The advantage of being poor players is the richness in other areas," says Keller. Keller is already well known in Orinda as a teacher

at the Orinda Community Center, where his classes include such authors as Homer, Vergil, and Dante. He also gives a series on classic film, "one of my great passions," he adds.

The production includes scenes from 11 of Shakespeare's plays as well as one sonnet, all woven together by song and dance from *As You Like It*. Keller will provide a short introduction to the performances presented by Catherine Willis, Elaine Pinto, Ket Watters, and Alan Bodine.

The Seventh Age
December 7, 7 p.m.
Orinda Community Center

Keller also has presented classes at the North Berkeley Senior Center for the

past 10 years.

Keller, an Australian by birth, began earning his own living at 15 and went to London at 18 to work in the theater as an actor and playwright. He's never stopped learning. "I've read my way through a number of libraries," he says. And, he believes, "the best teachers are glorified students." Teaching acting to amateurs is a new experience, something he never realized he could do. But he has found talent and determination in the cast.

He is also working on a program to be given at Berkeley City Club in May called "Iris and Her Girls." It will feature eight women and one man. Other plays he is planning to produce are *Unknown Soldier*, *The Hypochondriac*, based on Moliere's *Imaginary Invalid*, and *Gang of Grandmothers*, which combines the spirit of Aristophanes and Dostoevsky with the popular television show "I Love Lucy."

The Seventh Age performs on Friday, December 7 at 7 p.m. in the Founders Room at Orinda Community Center. Tickets, \$15, will be sold at the door. For more information, call (510) 663-5767.

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ON THE CALENDAR

DECEMBER

For Holiday Concerts and Christmas Eve church services, please see "Holiday Happenings" on page 22.

- 1 **Christmas Tree Sales**, 8 Altarinda Road, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily through Christmas Eve. Benefits Educational Foundation of Orinda.
- 2 **Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church** Advent Faire, noon until 2 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Call Audrey Joyce at (923) 283-9990 for more info.
- 5 **Orinda Rotary** Disaster Preparedness in the City of Orinda, discussion by Gene Gottfried, noon, Community Center.
- Orinda Historical Society** Holiday Dinner, open to all, at Orinda Community Church Fellowship Hall. Social hour begins at 6:30 p.m. with dinner at 7 p.m. Call the Historical Society at 254-1353 for reservations.
- 6 **Orinda Books** Author Discussion, 7 p.m. Penny Warner signs copies of *The Official Nancy Drew Handbook*. Special added attraction at this event will be Hannah Gruen's lemon bars.
- 7 **Chamber of Commerce** Breakfast, 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., Orinda Country Club. The Rev. Shumake of the Richmond Improvement Association will speak.
- Poor Players** presents *The Seventh Age*, at 7 p.m. in the Founders Room at Orinda Community Center. Tickets \$15 at the door. For more information, call (510) 663-5767.
- Orinda Books** Artist Exhibits, 10 a.m. onward with ceramic artist Gerry Wallace and painter Paul Kratter.
- Temple Isaiah** Chanukah Family Shabbat, 6:30 p.m. After worship service, there will be Oneg and Israeli dancing and a doughnut social. Continues December 8 with a Concert Chanukah Celebration and singer Rick Recht, beginning at 7 p.m. All ages.
- Kidz and Danz** presents *Wizard of Oz*, 5 p.m., at Orinda Auditorium. Repeats December 8 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are adults \$10, children \$7.
- High School Musical**, 7 p.m. at Orinda Auditorium, repeats December 8 at 12:30 p.m. Adult tickets \$10, children \$7.
- 8 **Hospice Tree of Lights** Lighting Ceremony, 4 p.m., Bank of America parking lot, 31 Orinda Way.
- 11 **Orinda Owls**, 7 p.m., Orinda Books. Reading and discussion of *Astrid and Veronika* by Linda Olsson.
- 16 **Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church** "Fill Us With Your Light" Choral and Orchestra Concert, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. Admission free, but tickets required because seating is limited. Contact the church office, (925) 283-8722, for ticket information.
- Kids 'N' Dance** presents "Nutty Nutcracker," 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., Orinda Auditorium. Tickets \$10 adults, \$5 children, call 925-284-7388.
- 19 **Orinda Rotary** "Overseas Travel Tips," by Carolyn Sheaf, former director of Bear Trek at University of California, noon, Community Center.
- 22 **Friends of the Orinda Creeks** Creek Restoration, 10 a.m. to noon. Focus is on planting native vegetation. Tastings of wild edible plants and acorn bread included. Boots and gloves required. Meet behind 23 Orinda Way. For further information, e-mail johnz@zentner.com or call (510) 622-8110.

CLUB MEETINGS

- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**, Postino's in Lafayette, 7 a.m. every Friday, 254-0440, ext.463.
- Orinda Lions Club**, Europa Restaurant, 64 Moraga Way, every Tuesday at 12:15 p.m., 254-0482.
- Orinda Rotary**, Community Center, every Wednesday at noon, 254-5537. (No meetings December 12 or 26.)
- Orinda Association**, Orinda Library, May Room, second Monday, 7:30 p.m., 254-0800.
- Orinda Historical Society**, third Wednesday of the month, OHS Museum, 3 to 5 p.m., 254-1353.
- Orinda/Tábor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation**, fourth Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.
- Orinda Woman's Club**, second Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. to noon; call Jean Barnhart, 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**
Second Monday, 4 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road, www.orinda.k12.ca.us.
- Planning Commission**
Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, 253-4210.
- Parks and Recreation Commission**
Second Wednesday, 7 p.m., Community Center, room 7, 254-2445.

CALENDAR BY CHRIS LAVIN

Send calendar items to chrislavin@earthlink.net

Two Young Orinda Actresses Featured in Favorite Children's Story

■ Lindsey Barrows and Elena Wasserman perform in musical adaptation of *The Velveteen Rabbit*

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Although they are only 9 and 11, Lindsey Barrows and Elena Wasserman are veteran performers in Caroline Altman's *Whiskers*, a musical adaptation of the childhood classic *The Velveteen Rabbit*. Barrows, a fourth grader at Sleepy Hollow, and Wasserman, a sixth grader at Orinda Intermediate School, have been in the production for three years.

The children's story takes place in the nursery of a large country house where the toys come alive when left alone. The one "person" in the play is the housekeeper, who often wonders why the "toys" seem to be in different places every time she enters. When the boy in the house becomes ill, the newest toy, a velveteen rabbit, decides to sacrifice himself in order to help the boy.

"For the first year, I was Holly Hobbit," recalls Barrows. "Then last year, I played one of the tin soldiers. I'm looking forward to whatever part they want me to play this year." Wasserman, a veteran of Wagner Ranch productions and, most recently, *Bye, Bye Birdie* at OIS, has played Holly Hobbit



JAY WASSERMAN
Elena Wasserman (R) as Holly Hobbit rehearses one of her songs while Melissa Wilson (Raggedy Ann minus her red wig for the rehearsal) reacts.

the past two years. "As far as I know, I'll be Holly again," she says.

Directed by Laura Means Berchdorf and produced by Galatean Players Ensemble Theatre, the show includes original music and dance numbers. The cast features professional adult performers as well as young children. Given the number of performances, the children are double cast. "I love working with the adults," says Wasserman. "They are serious about what they do but still know how to have fun." Wasserman, who hopes to one day have a career in theater, spent two weeks this summer at a film school in Hollywood. "We shot three short films on a Hollywood back lot," she explains. "It was very exciting."

Whiskers takes place December 14 - 20. The one-hour musical performs two to three times a day to accommodate the many elementary schools who make *Whiskers* an annual field trip. Evening performances are also scheduled. The production takes place at the Onstage Theatre in Pleasant Hill. Call (925) 676-5705, go online to www.galateanplayers.com, or email tickets@galateanplayers.com.



JAY WASSERMAN
Matt Davis as the soldier and Tosca Maltzman, Marina Katague, and Lindsey Barrows as his tin soldiers.

Whiskers
December 14-20
Onstage Theatre
(925) 676-5705

AT THE LIBRARY

December

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

For Kids at the Library:

- 4 **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 on December 5, 11, 12, 18 and 19.
- 5 **Paws to Read**, read to a friendly dog, 3:30 p.m., for grades 1 to 5. Sign up at the library. Repeats December 12.
- 8 **Saturday Morning Live!** 11 a.m., family storytime for 3- to 5-year-olds. Repeats December 15, 22.

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



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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 28

Salano at Mill's Restaurant.

"I learned nearly all of my recipes from Rigor," says Garcia with a measure of fondness. "Nino's Bay features Mediterranean cuisine and I highly recommend the braised lamb shanks and veal osso buco," adds Garcia, whose background includes a stint as the chef at Spiedo Restaurant in San Jose.

Nino's Bay is one of the few restaurants in town that has a full bar. "This is a great place to gather with friends to watch football games on the flat screen television. Margaritas, pina colodas, and a selection of beers are all within arm's reach," smiles Garcia.

Tony Garcia's wife, Maria, helps out at the restaurant in the evenings. The couple has three children, Vanessa, age 15, Natasha, age 12, and Anthony, age 5. "I would like to thank the people who have



SALLY HOGARTY
Nino's Bay owner/chef Tony Garcia (R) with his brother Merced.

been so supportive as we were opening the place and who continue to be supportive. We appreciate it so much. We really enjoy seeing our customers. We have some regulars and we like to have them feel like a family here. In fact, we are one big family in this area," says Garcia.

Catering and special events are available and it is a good idea to call Tony Garcia well in advance to plan the menu you want for your event. Nino's Bay is open for lunch Monday through Saturday, noon to 2 p.m. and for dinner, 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. On Sunday they are open noon to 3 p.m. For reservations call 253-1327.

A Personalized System of Health Management

This fall, Elizabeth Maier, M.D., moved her family medical practice to 15 Altarinda Road in Orinda. In addition to treating patients' illnesses, Dr. Maier's practice focuses on preventative medicine, as well as a constellation of integrative approaches

that includes herbal preparations and acupuncture.

Distinct from an internal medicine specialist, a family practitioner sees every member of a family and addresses all issues, including women's health. In contrast, an internist sees patients ages 18 and older and does not treat women's health issues, but instead refers those patients to specialists.

"My practice is unusual because I network with integrative medicine. Often, a patient does not want a pure allopathic approach. I try to help people not be dependent on medication. There are herbal preparations for pain management and sleep disorders that are effective," says Maier. Starting this month, Dr. Maier is offering acupuncture therapy to patients.

Originally from Minnesota, Maier earned her medical degree at the Mayo Clinic. She subsequently undertook a family practice residency at Harbour-UCLA Hospital in Los Angeles. "I think of a family practitioner as an advocate for patients' overall health. There is a strong emphasis on preventative medicine. Due to the fact that I am a sole practitioner and because of scheduling constraints, I do not take patients younger than 9 years of age," explains Maier, who provides a lot of urgent care involving early morning and late evening appointments.

Effective this past September, Dr. Maier has adopted a fee-for-service approach and does not accept or bill health insurance. "Most of my patients are reimbursed by their provider, with the patient handling all the billing issues," she adds.

In addition to acupuncture and herbal treatments, Dr. Maier works with a sports nutritionist. Another nutritionist with whom she networks does a lot of work around obesity and irritable bowel syndrome. "Many of my patients are teenagers with eating disorders. I have expertise in this area," she adds.

According to Maier what makes her family practice different from others is that patients prefer to take care of themselves. "My patients come to me to get guidance," she says. For more information about Maier's family practice, please call 253-9960.



SALLY HOGARTY
Elizabeth Maier, M.D. recently moved her family medical practice to Orinda.



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BUSINESS BUZZ

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“Our general rule is to bring character to

homes. We can take a California ranch-style home and transform it into a French Carriage house or a Craftsman home,” says Mark Bell. A full inventory of Omega Too selections may be viewed on the website. The showroom is located in Berkeley at 2204 San Pablo Avenue. “My wife and I job share our business, with one person handling the Internet and the other managing the showroom in Berkeley,” adds Bell.

Omega Too was established in Berkeley in 1991 as Omega Salvage. The original owners restored old items they found at salvage yards. Today, three blacksmiths work for the Bells to create fine reproductions and restore antique light fixtures. A carpenter in Oakland makes the



Local residents Vanessa and Mark Bell specialize in custom lighting, entry doors, and much more.

Craftsman-style entry doors, and the vintage sinks and bathtubs come from Sunrise in Oakland.

“Vanessa and I like to hunt for interesting pieces in our spare time. I have had success finding pieces at Chameleon in Berkeley. Recently, we have discovered finding old dressers and converting them into vanities,” says Bell. Every Sunday they scout out the antique flea market in Alameda.

The couple relocated to Orinda from British Columbia, where Mark was an art director for McLaren-McCann. “After four years in British Columbia we moved to Orinda for the family lifestyle, and it is wonderful,” smiles Bell. Vanessa and Mark have two children, Mason, age 7 and Brinly, 5. Both are students at Glorietta School. Mark can often be seen driving his 1951 cranberry red Chevrolet 3100 pick-up truck around town with Griffin, the family dog, beside him.

Expanding Omega Too to the Internet has increased business. The Bells have worked with clients as far away as Iowa, with many clients in Southern California. Coming up

this month is a “Customer Show and Tell” on the Omega Too website. This presentation will feature before and after photos from major projects. It will demonstrate the many creative possibilities available to homeowners. “Lighting is like lingerie,” says Vanessa Bell. “You use it to set the mood and highlight the best features.”

For more information about Omega Too please visit the website at www.omegato.com. The full catalogue is posted on the website. You may email Mark and Vanessa Bell at infor@omegato.com, or call (510) 843-3636. The Berkeley showroom is open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.

Nino's Bay Features Fresh Seafood

Orinda's only restaurant specializing in fresh seafood and European cuisine, Nino's Bay, opened its doors in Theatre Square this past summer. Offering a lunch as well as a dinner menu, appetizer selections include crab cakes, steamed clams, and fried calamari santorini, Caesar, spinach and mista salads, and a variety of sandwiches and pastas as well as chicken picatta and veal scaloppini. The dinner menu includes cioppino, braised lamb shanks, and, every weekend, a braised veal osso buco is prepared by owner/chef Tony Garcia.

“We offer fresh seafood so Orindans do not have to travel to San Francisco for excellent seafood,” says Garcia. Garcia has 22 years of experience as a chef. Most recently, he was the banquets and events chef at the Garden Hilton in Fairfield. A native of Mexico, Garcia grew up in San Jose and New Jersey. It was in New Jersey where he learned the restaurant business, most notably from an Italian named Rigor

[SEE BUZZ page 27]

May the magic of the season be with you now and through the coming year

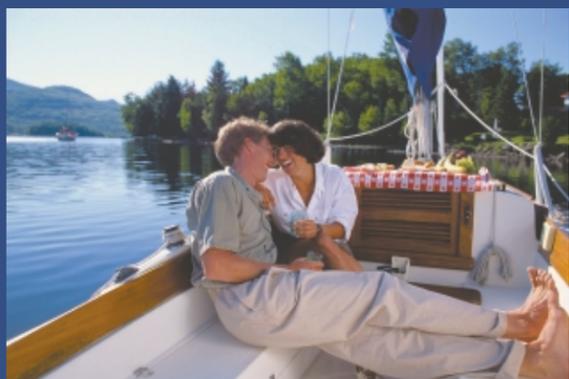
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