

# THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis  
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## City-Sponsored Community Promotions Program Criticized By Some Residents

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

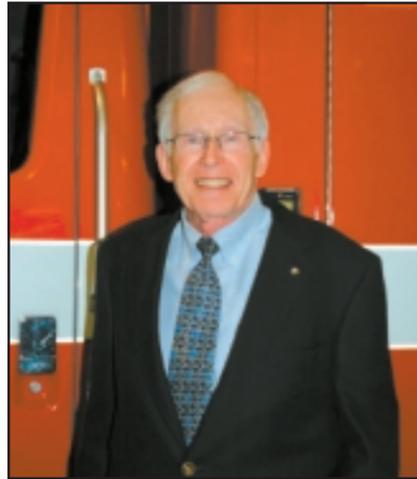
“Man/woman does not live by roads alone” could be the mantra for city officials as they go about conducting the business of Orinda and running into some criticism for spending money not directed at Orinda’s crumbling infrastructure. “While our roads are very important to us, Orinda is more than just roads,” says City Councilmember Amy Worth. “People come to Orinda to enjoy our beautiful library, to appreciate the new outdoor art, and much more.”

To that end, the city approved a community promotions program in June that partners with local organizations to provide funding for a project, facility, or program benefiting the city and the Orinda community. “The program really augments services that the city cannot provide and that we rely on local volunteer groups to initiate,” adds City Manager Janet Keeter.

With a limited budget of \$19,500, the program co-funded the following projects: Friends of the Orinda Creeks’ creek care program of weeding out non-native plants and planting native species to enhance the waterways in Orinda (\$4,500); the Orinda Arts Council’s Orinda Idol competition (\$1,340 in reduced rent for Community Center facilities); Orinda Historical Society for co-sponsorship of two historical programs (\$620); Orinda Chamber of Commerce for “Shop Orinda” campaign, which included environmentally friendly shopping bags, banners, and advertisements in local media to encourage buying from local merchants (\$10,000); and Orinda Junior Women’s Club’s creative writing contest for middle-school students (\$750).

According to Worth, the city has hundreds of organizations every year asking for funds: “The Community Promotions Fund, with its nine funding criteria, helps [SEE PROMOTIONS page 10]

## Gene Gottfried Named the Orinda Association’s Volunteer of the Year with Reg and Kathy Barrett Selected for the Mott Environmental Award



Gene Gottfried was named Volunteer of the Year.

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

Protecting Orinda’s environment resonates not only with this year’s William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental award winners but also with 2007’s Volunteer of the Year. All three have spent countless hours volunteering to make Orinda a better place to live.

### Dr. Eugene Gottfried

An unlikely garage break-in started Gottfried’s years of community service. “It was 1987 when my neighbor’s garage was broken into,” he recalls. “It made me so upset that I responded to a notice for a Neighborhood Watch meeting. Before I knew it, I was the block captain.” The Neighborhood Watch group soon encompassed 150 families and eventually broke into several groups with Gottfried as the coordinator. “Luckily, we were organized in time for the earthquake and Oakland Hills fire,” says Gottfried. “We had volunteers up on the ridge line watching the blaze and even fed the firefighters.”

Organizing groups of people was nothing new to the professor emeritus of laboratory medicine for UCSF and former head of clinical medicine at SF General. Soon after



Kathy and Reg Barrett were honored with the William Mott, Jr. Environmental Award.

Gottfried joined Neighborhood Watch, he became involved in the City of Orinda’s pilot emergency preparedness program. “Living two miles away from the city center in the El Toyonal neighborhood, I was concerned about communication in the event of a disaster,” explains Gottfried. Stopping by the fire department’s communication van during the OA’s 1996 4th of July celebration, Gottfried learned about ham radios. Before long, he had acquired his own ham radio license and is now a proud member of RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services) and ARES (American Radio Emergency Services). He has also been instrumental in readying the Sarge Littlehale Community

Room at city hall, designated as the emergency response center, with its own ham radio equipment.

As the City of Orinda grew and added more services, Gottfried increased his volunteer hours. Following the merger of the Orinda and Moraga fire districts in 1997, the Rescue One Foundation came into being to help raise funds for needed equipment. Gottfried became one of the first members and, in 2002, was elected to the Moraga Orinda Fire District board of directors. He is the MOFD’s representative on the city’s Public Safety Advisory Committee and a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training [SEE AWARD page 10]

## Art in the Park in Orinda

By VICTORIA BUSTAMANTE PURDY  
Contributing Writer

Thirteen sculptures are on loan for one year to the City of Orinda. “We have been working with Parks and Recreation director Todd Skinner who helped us design

the program,” said Art in Public Places commission member Ted Urban. Urban initiated the idea with the hopes of sparking interest in and promoting the arts [SEE ART page 22]



Willie, along with his owner Lida Urban talk to artist Jeff Downing about his ceramic dog sculptures on the library plaza. Downing tries to capture a playfulness in his pieces which are inspired by his own childhood.

## Fire Department Receives Funds From Wilder



Michael Olson, vice president of the Wilder development in Gateway Valley, presented a check for \$180,000 to Fire Chief Pete Nowicki. The money will be used to purchase an ambulance and other equipment necessary to protect the future residents of the housing development.

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## Art Teachers Show Their Work at Library Gallery

By DOROTHY BOWEN  
Staff Writer

The new art exhibit at the Orinda Library Gallery makes a lie out of the old saying: "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach." Twelve artists who teach in Orinda are showing their own work Sunday, January 13 to February 12 in a show at the Orinda Library Gallery sponsored by the Orinda Arts Council. An opening reception will be announced later. For information, call the library at 254-2184.

The artists are Marianne Brown, Dorothy Cutright Davis, Andrew Denman, Joan Dougherty, Bonnie Bryan Fitch, Anne Marie Glover, Pam Glover, Marilyn Hajjar, Terry McBriarty, Shirley Rencher Miller, Norm Nicholson, and Catherine Watters. They work in many media and in styles ranging from representational to abstract, with impressionistic and figurative in between.

Brown taught watercolor classes in Orinda for 30 years and is currently teaching at Hacienda de Las Flores in Moraga. She holds workshops in Orinda at Dorothy Davis' studio. Brown also is the author of *Watercolor by Design*.

Davis is the founder of the Lamorinda Arts Alliance, a cooperative group of more than 200 artists with galleries in Moraga and Lafayette. The group holds an annual Open Studio each fall. Davis teaches a portrait class at the Orinda Community Center, as well as private classes at her home studio. Her recent shows include a 60-year retrospective at the Orinda Library Gallery in 2004, as well as shows in Todos Santos and Mulege in Baja, California.

Denman is known as a painter of wildlife, but says his work has moved well beyond that genre to incorporate modern art elements and subjects that more traditional wildlife artists avoid. A graduate of Saint Mary's College, Moraga, he held his first



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
**Anne Marie Glover** (C) and her students in one of her popular watercolor classes at the Orinda Community Center.

show at the library when he was in high school. His work is shown at the Pacific Wildlife Gallery in Lafayette and has been seen at the Bedford and Hearst Galleries and the Oakland Museum, as well as at the Natural World Museum in San Francisco and the National Museum of Wildlife Art in Jackson, Wyoming.

Before she began working as an artist full time, Dougherty worked as a flight attendant and ticket agent for the airlines.

Traveling gave her an enormous backlog of subject matter, she says. Some of her best sources were people she observed at the Los Angeles Airport and the Hollywood Race Track, where she made sketches of early morning bettors. She has been teaching art for 20 years, including 11 years at the Orinda Community Center. "Not only do I love teaching people to return to what they did so well as children, but it also allows

[SEE WATERCOLOR page 16]

## Mary Frances Accessories Named One of Top 100 Women-Owned Businesses

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

Adding to her list of laurels, Mary Frances Shaffer's company, Mary Frances Accessories, was named one of the top 100 women-owned businesses in the Bay Area. Honored at a luncheon given by the San Francisco Chronicle, which sponsors the award, Shaffer said that the common denominator for success among the women gathered there seemed to be that they loved what they did, and they "hired the best."

"It was exciting to see all these successful women gathered in one room. We'd all broken through the glass ceiling. There are just so many more opportunities for women now than there were 20 years ago," she said.

Shaffer should know. She began her company 18 years ago in her living room. It's expanded to a \$13 million-a-year business with clients such as Oprah Winfrey, Jessica Simpson, Barbara Walters,

[SEE FRANCES page 18]



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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

**A Message From the OA Presidents  
It Takes a Village and a Crossroads!**



**Kate Wiley and Jim Luini**

Working in partnership with community groups, local businesses, and city departments is the Orinda Association's theme this year. Starting with the OA's annual Volunteer of the Year Award dinner and culminating with Orinda's 25th annual July 4th parade and celebration, we're excited about how our partnerships will create enhanced traditional events and programs.

Each January, we celebrate the accomplishments of special Orindans who have dedicated their time and talents to others. This year the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award goes to the husband and wife team of Kathy and Reginold Barrett, who have worked for years to improve our natural resources while educating youth and adults about current environmental issues. And, our Volunteer of the Year Award goes to Dr. Gene Gottfried, whose efforts regarding fire safety and education have greatly benefited Orinda.

In the spirit of promoting and supporting Orinda's causes and environmental issues, the OA is proud to promote another vital link to Orinda with the support of local business. We are pleased to announce the venue for this year's awards dinner will be at **The Orinda House**. A no-host bar with appetizers will be set up in the front of the restaurant beginning at 6 p.m. on Sunday, January 27, and a seated dinner and speaker program will begin around 6:30 p.m. Owner Ron Bonner's new chef, Rick St. John, has selected an amazing menu offering for the special evening. Seating is limited, so get your reservation to the OA in early.

Partnering really does makes us shine. This year we have partnered with a dozen local groups to create the best July 4th yet in honor of Orinda's 25th annual parade. The committee, working since September, is creating a week-long celebration beginning July 1. In addition to special events leading up to the 4th, this year's parade will have more music, more entertainment, better sound, and the park will have more food and drink choices, a select group of old-fashioned craft and food booths, our traditional nonprofit booths, and game booths for the kids, as well as our traditional live music in the park with two bands. Call us if you would like to join in the fun of planning this year's celebration, or start now to organize your neighborhood or club to build a special float for this silver anniversary parade. Or better yet, join forces with someone else, share the load and share the fun.

**Kate Wiley Honored**



SALLY HOGARTY

At the December 4 City Council meeting, Kate Wiley was presented the 2006 Ilene Lubkin Senior Transportation Volunteer award in recognition of her countless hours implementing and coordinating the Orinda Association's Senior Ride program. Wiley is shown here with Tighe Boyle, Assistant Senior Transportation Manager (L), and Earle Ormiston from the Advisory Council on Aging.



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Grants Kate Wiley

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## Shopping in Orinda More than a Slogan

Living in Orinda, it's pretty safe to assume that we all would like to see downtown businesses prosper and thrive. No one wants to see empty storefronts as they take an evening stroll.

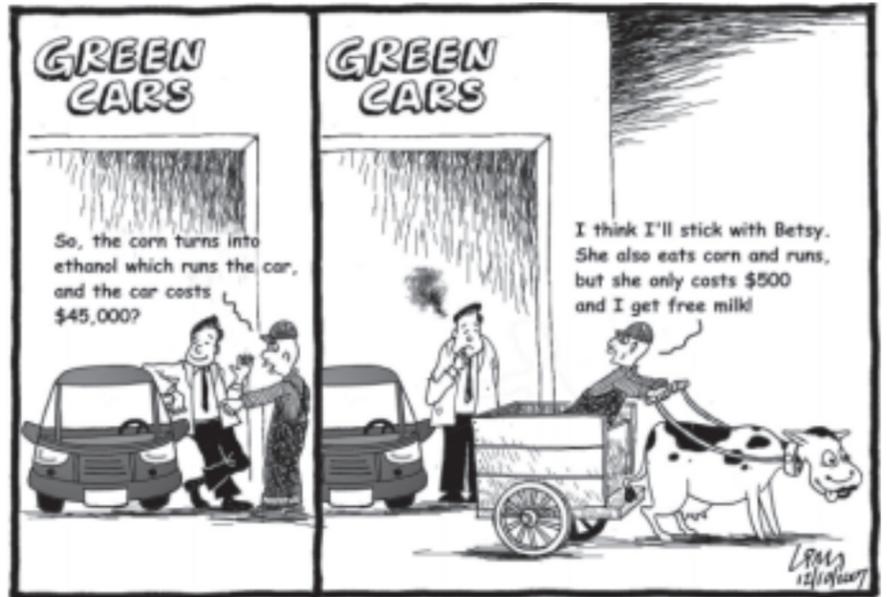
To that end, the new "Shop Orinda" program, for which the Chamber of Commerce received \$10,000 from the city to produce environmentally friendly, if not the prettiest shopping bags, is one way to tackle the effort. The Chamber threw in its own money to help pay for the bags and local advertisements to entice residents to purchase from local merchants. But it's only a superficial step toward the real thing.

Case in point: The Orinda House, the family restaurant on Moraga Way across from Nation's restaurant, owner Ron Bonner has been tearing his short hair out trying to run a successful dinner club for the past two years. He features some of the best jazz in the Bay Area. His restaurant was even named Best New Jazz Club by *Diablo Magazine* last year, thanks to his stellar weekend lineups. Yes, he's been through seven chefs in two years, and the

food has suffered. Yes, at times he has anticipated fewer diners and had a reduced wait-staff to deal with the night's clientele. This is the nature of many restaurants: They wax and wane. Now Bonner may have had enough. He recently got hit with an additional city permit he didn't expect, and has taken grief from some city officials for teen jazz nights he has introduced. If more people in Orinda would frequent his establishment, he would not have to worry so much about making his rent and having to turn cartwheels to make a dollar. And Bonner has high hopes for his new chef, Rick St. John, who he feels sure will meet customers' high expectations.

In Orinda, thriving businesses rustle up tax dollars that help keep the city going. Pennies add up; by running errands and buying locally what you might buy elsewhere, sales taxes stay here, and they might even end up filling a pot hole or two.

Restaurants are a tough business to make successful, but so is any business. Dealing with permits, parking, payroll, and challenges in location - you need an



algorithm and an MBA. But most importantly, you need customers.

It would be a shame to watch one of the area's finest jazz clubs roll up and die when it's right here - no tunnels and no bridges.

As the old mouthwash commercial used to say: Put your money where your mouth is. Shop Orinda.

— CHRIS LAVIN  
Assistant Editor

## Letters to the Editor

### Power Poles Ruin View of Hills

Our family lives in Orinda because we love the "semi rural" nature of our community. In the past few months, the beauty of our city landscape has diminished, and the hillside power poles add shock value to views of the formerly pristine hills.

When we moved to Orinda in 1999, we were told that all of the power poles in view at the time would be buried thanks to the fabulous Gateway Community development. This month I was told by people in our city offices that in 2004 our city council decided that this was not necessary and that they gave permission to build more power poles all along the ridgeline.

No one in our city is likely against electricity and the need for it in our homes. But perhaps we should question why our Orinda hillsides now bear a closer resemblance to a Third World country than a semi rural (supposedly environmentally friendly) location in America. People all over America have electricity, and somehow when I visit these other towns across the country, they do not have gigantic power poles to prove it.

The nice folks in the Orinda City Hall offices tell me that we are receiving playing fields and a plant area in exchange for the development (now called Wilder) and that there is nothing that can be done as this was passed in 2004. As a resident in 2004, I never received a notice in the mail saying the view from my house would be affected (as I understand I would if a neighbor wanted to build an addition that would potentially obstruct my view).

For those of you with homes that may

not look directly out at this view, you are sure to catch a glimpse of it on Highway 24 Westbound approaching downtown Orinda - just look up and to the left on the hillside.

— Susan Winchester

### Moraga Way Road Repairs

The City of Orinda is going to rebuild Moraga Way between downtown and the Town of Moraga during the 2008 summer. The city has been able to obtain grant money to pay for a good part of the work and so the work must be completed no later than early 2008 summer. There is less traffic on Moraga Way in the summer, so it is the best time to complete this much-needed project. During the work, Moraga Way will be reduced to one lane for part of the day.

At the same time in summer of 2008, East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) and the Town of Moraga are also planning to close Moraga Road between Moraga and Lafayette for about six weeks to do repairs to an EBMUD pipeline under Moraga Road. While Moraga Road is closed, their plan is to divert traffic to St. Mary's Road and toward Orinda on Moraga Way and Rheem Boulevard. The Orinda City Council was first told about EBMUD's and Moraga's plans during a Tri-City meeting on October 30, 2007.

The Orinda City Council has asked EBMUD and Moraga to change the dates that Moraga Road will be closed, and they have refused. The citizens of Orinda need to know about this potential problem. It is time for the local governments and agencies to work more closely together on projects with greater consideration for the concerns of citizens.

— Thomas T. McCormick

### Seniors Raise Funds For Homeless



ORINDA SENIOR VILLAGE RESIDENTS (shown above at Lafayette Reservoir) donated \$1,000 raised from walkathons, bake sales, and other fundraisers to the Interfaith Council's Winter Nights Shelter program and to Richmond's Bay Area Rescue Mission.



## POLICE BLOTTER

November 2007

**False Residential Alarms:** Officers responded to 67 false alarm calls throughout the city.

**Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle):** 1 incident in the area of Tarry Ln.

**Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle):** 3 incidents in the areas of Monte Vista Rd., Las Palomas, and Moraga Way.

**All Other Petty Thefts:** 2 incidents in the areas of Camino Sobrante and Ardith Drive.

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

area of Meadow View Rd.

**All Other Grand Thefts:** 2 incidents in the areas of Martha Rd. and Tarry Ln.

**Vehicle Theft:** No reported incidents.

**Residential Burglary:** 1 incident in the area of Brookside Rd.

**Commercial Burglary:** No reported incidents.

**Vandalism:** 3 incidents in the areas of Orinda Way, Harran Cir., and Alta Vista.

**Identity Theft:** 4 incidents in the areas of Irving Ln., Valley Ct., Altarinda Rd., and Monte Vista Rd.

**Credit Card Fraud/Forgery:** 1 incident in the area of Lombardy Ln.

— Compiled by Haleh Allen,  
Staff Writer

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

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

## MAYOR / LOOKING BACK

## Glazer's Final Meeting as Mayor



SALLY HOGARTY  
City Councilmembers "roasted" Mayor Steve Glazer (far right) at his final city council meeting on December 4. (L-R) Amy Worth, new Mayor Victoria Smith, new Mayor Pro Tem Sue Severson, Tom McCormick, City Clerk Michele Olsen, and Glazer.

## Local Architect Nets First Mayor's Award

By CHRIS LAVIN  
Assistant Editor

Orinda architect William Simpson's design of the Undlin residence at 40 Barbara Road has been awarded the first Mayor's Award for Excellence in Architecture, Landscape and Environmental Sustainability by a city committee.

Simpson was one of three finalists in the contest, which presented the challenge to build a new house, building or addition that would respect the landscape, neighbors' concerns and the environment. The brainchild of former Mayor Steve Glazer, the city instituted the award in an attempt to raise the bar on construction and to help mitigate hackle-raising in neighborhoods, where redesigns and new development are always sensitive issues.

The other finalists included Jarvis Architects of Oakland, who designed the Bott residence at 1 Dos Posos, and an expansion to the Logan residence at 6 Beaconsfield Court designed by Peter Golze of Berkeley.

On the Undlin property, Simpson faced 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. His result was an open floor plan and a multiple-story modern house covered with shake siding and stone accents, decks, and retaining walls.

The award, announced last month, will be awarded each year. Architects may contact the city for details on future submissions.



SALLY HOGARTY  
Long-time Orinda architect William Simpson accepts the first place award from Mayor Steve Glazer.

## Looking Back on the Seven to Watch in 2007

By PAT BRUDEBUSCH  
Assistant Editor

Last year at this time, we put forth the names of seven people or organizations that were apt to be noteworthy in 2007. Now, before we turn the spotlight to another set of Orindans, it's worth taking a look back at those who were predicted to capture our attention.

**Orinda City Council**

Voters in November, 2006 voiced desire for change in city politics as usual when two new faces were elected to the five-member governing board. The new council, while not always in agreement, appears to have reached a balance on how best to

address the challenges facing the city. To their credit, much headway has been made toward improving emergency preparedness efforts, public safety, and the planning approval process.

Many old challenges remain, however. Chief among them is the deteriorating condition of our infrastructure. Despite new faces on the council, a second attempt at passing a bond measure to raise funds to fix the problems failed to get the required two-thirds voter approval. And, storefronts on both sides of town remain empty, as does the building that housed the old library.

These issues didn't crop up overnight, and it may be unreasonable to expect quick answers to vexing problems. Still, if

[SEE 2007 page 18]



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**Winning Design**  
**40 Barbara Road**  
**Architect: William Simpson**  
**Homeowners:**  
**Jesse and Laura Undlin**



**Finalist's:**  
**1 Dos Posos,**  
**The Bott Residence,**  
**Jarvis Architects of**  
**Oakland**

**6 Beaconsfield Court**  
**Logan Residence,**  
**designer Peter Golze of**  
**Berkeley**

"This award recognizes homeowners and architects who design residential housing projects that showcase great architectural elements and enhance the character and semi-rural quality of our Orinda neighborhoods. Congratulations to the winner and finalists," Steven Glazer, Mayor 2007

Thanks to the following architects for submitting projects of distinction:

**Richard Bartlett, Oikos Architecture, Rick Kattenburg,**  
**Steven Kubitschek, Stanley Nielsen, Mark Hajjar.**

**Judging Panel: Bobbie Landers, former Mayor; Victoria Smith, Mayor Pro Tem;**  
**Terry Murphy, Planning Commission Chair; and Dean Orr, Planning Commissioner.**

# Day Care for Adults Saves Sanity

By **BOBBIE DODSON**  
Staff Writer

It is people like Janice Green who say it best. "My mother, who is in the beginning stage of Alzheimer's, loves the singing, and all the activities in the day care center at the Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church," Green says. "She really enjoys

getting out and socializing during the three days a week she attends. For me, it is wonderful to know she's happy and well taken care of, while my husband and I have free time to do errands, catch up on paper work, or just enjoy ourselves. My mother lives with us – so much of our time is devoted to her care. Some respite is truly needed and appreciated."

This is just what the founders of the program, Mary Moore and Linda Hudak, envisioned when they set out 11 years ago to fill the need for a facility in the Lamorinda area to serve those with Alzheimer's Disease or a related dementia.

"We first opened our doors one day a week, then two, and now we are up to four. Clients may come just once weekly, or up to all four days. With a total of 14 participants, we generally have 7 to 10 each day," Moore comments. "We've just selected a new name, the Lamorinda Adult Respite Center, or LARC, and have a fine new program director, Lisa Milburn. With her, Jack Richard, the activities director, and volunteers, there is almost a one to one ratio of staff to guests."

This is the main reason Emily Marley, administrator at Casa de Gracia sends two residents of her Orinda board and care facility to LARC. "They get such personalized attention plus a wide variety of activities, which helps supplement what we do at our place. Jack organizes activities in which everything moves along at a good pace, but doesn't overwhelm the



SALLY HOGARTY

Activity director Jack Richards helps Kay prepare her pumpkin pie.

participants."

Green also praises Richard. "He has a real talent for drawing the guests out and getting them to talk. People with these problems are often withdrawn, but he has them telling about 'the olden times' and what their lives were like then, as well as what's happening in the world today."

Although Milburn, who lives in Moraga, has only been at LARC for three months, she's having a positive impact on the program. A health educator, wife and mother of two daughters, she received her master's degree in public health from the University of California, Los Angeles and has worked at a variety of health-related organizations. She says, "It's an honor to be involved in this program. We see how much it helps the caregivers when they can drop their loved ones off in a place they know is safe, caring, and stimulating. We

consider each client special and make every effort to see that their particular needs are met."

With the program running from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the usual day is structured to include word games or current events after a beginning snack. Then there's exercise time, which can include yoga, chair dancing, or lifting small weights. Clients bring a bag lunch and, after eating, there is always entertainment. The activities offered range from banjo and accordion players to playing with pets brought in by the Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF). Additionally, games such as bingo help maintain cognitive skills. The day ends with another exercise session, then a final snack time.

Sometimes the center hosts a craft activity or cooking session. One of the favorite activities is when children from the church's preschool come in to interact with the seniors.

There is also an on-site caregiver's support group which meets the first and third Tuesday of each month from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Moore says that all of the money needed to offer these programs comes from client fees, grants, or donations. No funds come from state or federal funds; although, LARC is licensed by the state. The cost to the clients is \$38 a day, with the first day's visit free.

For an appointment to attend a free day, observe the program, or to enroll, call the Center at 254-3465 or email [larc@holyshepherd.org](mailto:larc@holyshepherd.org). Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church is located at 433 Moraga Way, Orinda.



SALLY HOGARTY

(L-R) Helen and Mary measure ingredients for a pumpkin pie.



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INTERNET PEN-PALS

# Compass KidZ: A New Business Emerges in Orinda

By PETRA MICHEL  
Staff Writer

Nancy Daniels, well-known in Orinda as the acting president of the Orinda Arts Council, has started yet another promising career. Her passion for travel and creating meaningful and relevant learning experiences has inspired the development of Compass KidZ, a kind of pen-pal experience through technology and the Internet.

In 2005, Nancy and her business partner Jennifer Apy had a vision to connect kids around the world in a meaningful, educational, and safe way. At the time, they didn't know what form it would take but wanted to base their enterprise around the use of the Internet in a safe, monitored way. When they founded their company, Compass KidZ™, they first envisioned it as an educational initiative to support classroom teachers in bringing contemporary cultures of the world into many areas of the curriculum. They wanted to encourage children to share and compare their lives with other kids, and in the process, cultivate appreciation for similarities, build respect for differences, and inspire reflection. After further exploration into what children ages 8 to 12 enjoy and how they play and interact, Daniels and Apy launched their first product last November: Compass KidZ Medallion Sets. Through collectable medallions, passport stories, and online activities, children around the world can communicate with each other and learn more about other cultures and countries.

One important landmark while developing their product was their introduction to iEARN, the International Education and Resource Network. Started in 1988, iEARN is the world's largest nonprofit global network that enables teachers and young people to use the Internet and other new technologies to collaborate on projects that enhance learning and make a difference in the world. They started to work with iEARN and developed a project where kids in classrooms contribute information about their day-to-day lives. As information accumulates, interesting, current snapshots begin to develop. The accrued data may be examined and analyzed cross-culturally within the classroom. This should encourage students to reflect on differences and similarities between Americans and others kids their age around the world.

Their original product idea for Compass KidZ Medallions coalesced after Daniels and Apy went to the annual global conference of iEARN in Cairo last July. There, they met young people and educators from more than 40 countries.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Nancy Daniels (R) and her business partner, Jennifer Apy, create learning experiences for children by bringing children from around the world together via the Internet.

Several countries, including Pakistan, Lebanon, The Netherlands, and Egypt had huge delegations. They encountered dozens of enthusiastic, bright, passionate young people who collaborate on projects such as HIV/AIDS awareness, the environment, and poverty during the school year online, and then convene for five days of sharing and having fun in a college campus setting in the Egyptian Sahara desert. Several of the Egyptian kids they met became the composite persona of Ahmed, the Compass KidZ Passport Ambassador.

The founders also had one touring day after the conference where they visited some of the Egyptian archeological sites. On their way to one of the pyramid sites, they drove through a poor village where they saw an image that validated the direction for Compass Kidz. In a garage on the dusty village road, they spied five boys huddled around a few computers. The boys were on the Internet accessing the rest of the world. Even from this remote corner of the world, these kids had some things in common with American children.

Thanks to Daniels and Apy, "tween"-aged kids can join a Treazure Quest, as they collect CKidZ Medallions highlighting the world's treasures such as important landmarks, world contributions, and vital aspects of world cultures today. On the newly launched website of Compass Kidz, they meet ambassadors who share what it is like to live in their countries today, and to learn about countries and cultures around the world. Then they join the PenPalZ Club to post their own profiles and comments. They even vote on which countries and medallions will come out next. With a highly monitored site, they may also express their opinions about their lives and communicate with children from different cultures.

CompassKidZ can be found at [www.compasskidz.com](http://www.compasskidz.com) or one may order the CKidZ Medallions from [www.learningtreegames.com](http://www.learningtreegames.com).

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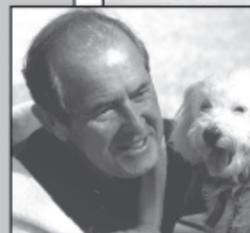
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SPEAKERS

# Montelindo Garden Club Offers Speakers' Series

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

The Montelindo Garden Club will launch a three-part speakers series this month with Richard Turner, editor of *Pacific Horticulture Magazine*, as the lead-off speaker. Each of the three events are open to the general public, free of charge, and held at the Orinda Community Church. According to Sandi Worthington, Montelindo's program chair, "We want as many gardeners as possible to enjoy these informative talks with our club members."

Turner, who will speak on January 18, has titled his talk, *Art and Architecture in the Garden: When Plants Are Not Enough*. He says, "In these times of increasing concerns about the use of water in our homes and gardens, it is appropriate to study the role that art and architecture in the garden can fill in providing year-round interest when plants aren't sufficient to hold our attention. For centuries, that has been the approach of gardeners around the Mediterranean where, in a similar climate to ours, gardens depend heavily upon non-living elements for their structure and their excitement."

Certainly, Turner has the credentials to speak on gardening topics. He studied architecture and landscape architecture at the University of Michigan "before escaping to California in order to garden year-round." He taught in UC Berkeley's Department of Landscape Architecture for six years and has served as the director of education for the Strybing Arboretum Society. Most recently, he was the executive director of the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek.

Editor of *Pacific Horticulture Magazine*, Turner has authored numerous books and articles, including acting as a contributing editor to the *Sunset Western Landscaping Book*. "I have a small, chemical-free San

Francisco garden that provides habitat for birds, butterflies, snakes, salamanders, and an occasional skunk," Turner says.

Next month, Jack Muir Laws will speak on *All About the Sierras*; his new book, *The Laws Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada* will be for sale after the program on February 15.

The lecture series ends with Rose Marie Nichols McGee discussing container gardening on March 21. She, too, has written a book, *The Bountiful Container*, which will be available for sale and signing.

The Montelindo Garden Club was established in 1970 and now has about 120 members "Our stated purpose is to stimulate knowledge and a love of gardening, encourage home and community beautification, improve knowledge of horticulture, and encourage civic planting and conservation programs."

Worthington explains. "We feel that offering this series, in which the community is encouraged to participate, truly relates to our goals. Although the events are free, we do ask that those planning to attend make a reservation."

Each of the lectures will begin at 10 a.m. with refreshments followed by the speaker at 10:30 a.m. The Orinda Community Church is located at 10 Irwin Way. For more information, call Sandi Worthington at (925) 284-5536 or email [montelindogarden@aol.com](mailto:montelindogarden@aol.com).

Richard Turner - January 18

•••••  
Rose Marie Nichols McGee -  
March 21



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Richard Turner (L), editor of *Pacific Horticulture Magazine*, will lead-off the Garden Club Speakers' Series on January 18. Shown here with Richie Steffen as they walk through a beautifully sculptured garden in Seattle.

## Well-known Economist Begins First Friday Forum Series



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Tapan Munroe, Ph.D. will speak about the economic outlook for 2008.

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

Tapan Munroe, Ph.D., well-known local economist, will be the first speaker in

this year's First Friday Forum series. The Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC) sponsors the lectures on the first Friday of every month, January through June. A wide variety of current event topics are covered by experts in their fields. The meetings are held in Fellowship Hall on the church grounds, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Refreshments are served at 1 p.m. and the lecture starts at 1:30 p.m.

On January 4, Munroe will cover the topic, Economic Outlook 2008 - What Lies Ahead? including such issues as The Housing Slump and the Sub Prime Crisis; Oil Prices - Implications of \$100 a Barrel Oil and The Declining Dollar - What Does it Mean for Us? After his presentation, there will be a question and answer period.

Munroe has served in a variety of positions in the field of finance, including chief economist for the Pacific Gas and

Electric Company; director of the Capital Corporation of the West, and president of the National Association of Business Economists. Currently a director and consultant with Law and Economics Group, LECG, LLC, a world-wide consulting firm with offices in eight countries headquartered in Emeryville. He works closely with several California Central Valley banks on issues relating to economic, financial, and business planning. Munroe has been a visiting scholar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University, adjunct professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and a professor and chair for the Department of Economics at the University of the Pacific in Stockton. He holds a doctorate degree in economics from the University of Colorado.

[SEE FORUM page 22]

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BACKYARD GETAWAYS

**Backyard Getaways and Beyond  
London on the Other  
Side of the Road**



**Moya Stone**

I was born and raised in San Francisco, but my heart belongs to London. The history, the architecture, the Tube — I can't get enough of it. I have long since hit all the usual tourist attractions such as Buckingham Palace, The Tower of London, and Madame Tussaud's. But if you want something different, here are some things to do on the other side of the road.

**Theater**

After treating yourself to at least one West End show, add some fringe. Fringe theater, that is. London Fringe theater is like off and off-off Broadway shows. These are often locally written scripts rife with cultural references presented above pubs located in the far corners of London, neighborhoods you might not otherwise visit. To see what's on, check the current copy of *Time Out* entertainment magazine, published every Thursday and available at newsstands and grocery stores.

**The BBC**

Are you addicted to British television programs? Can't get enough of BBC America? Go see where your favorite Brit programs develop and take a tour of the British Broadcasting Company's Television Centre. While providing some backstage scoop, two BBC employees will guide you past the BBC World newsroom, sets for television shows, and into working broadcast studios. Reservations are required. Go to the BBC website [www.bbc.co.uk/tours/tvc.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/tours/tvc.shtml) to book ahead of time or call when you arrive, 0870 603 0304. BBC Television Centre, Wood

Lane, London W12 7RJ. Tube Station — White City.

**BBC Audience**

Some television programs, and even more radio programs, including musical concerts and comedy shows, have live studio audiences. It's a great way to see quality entertainment for free and it's an experience in itself just to meet the local audience members. You might even get lucky, as I did, and be asked to participate and have your voice broadcast all across the British airwaves. Now that's a memory to bring home! To find out about upcoming opportunities go to: [www.bbc.co.uk/showsandtours](http://www.bbc.co.uk/showsandtours).

**St. Martin in the Fields**

When I need to escape the crowded streets, I pop into a church. One of my favorites is St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Built in 1726, St. Martin's rests in the heart of London in Trafalgar Square and was completely renovated in 2007. On Tuesdays and Fridays, St. Martin's offers free lunchtime concerts spotlighting young, up-and-coming classical musicians. In addition, they have evening concerts and jazz concerts in the crypt. [www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org/page/home/home.html](http://www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org/page/home/home.html). Trafalgar Square, Tube Stations — Charing Cross or Leicester Square.

**Ride the Canals**

Another pleasant respite from the crowds, at least in the autumn months, can be found on the Regents Canal. Float along on a boat from Camden Lock to Little Venice. The 50-minute ride starts at the famous Camden Lock Market and passes majestic homes, Regents Park, and the London Zoo, at which point you can get off, if you like. The end of the line is in the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Moya Stone enjoys the ambiance of Camden Lock on the Regent's Canal.

upscale neighborhood of Little Venice, a perfect spot for a quiet stroll to admire the elegant 18th century houses. Or you can do the reverse trip and plan for a bit of shopping at the famous Camden Lock Market. Service starts daily at 10 a.m. and runs every hour until 5 p.m. Schedule does vary according to season; call London Waterbus Company, 020 7482 2550. Camden Lock Place, London NW1 8 AF. Tube Stations — Warwick Avenue or Paddington.

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The beautiful architecture of London's Fortnum and Mason building houses a full-service department store, four restaurants, and several floors of food products from around the world.



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CONTINUATIONS

◆ **AWARD** from page 1

instructor. "Gene's hundreds of hours of community service make him the perfect choice for volunteer of the year," says Dick Burkhalter.

**Reginald and Katherine Barrett**

In both their professions and their volunteer endeavors, Reg and Kathy Barrett are committed to the role of environmental educators. For over 25 years, the Barretts have mentored students, teachers, and amateurs alike in the biological and horticultural sciences. Passionately committed to land preservation and

environmental education, they inspire those they meet with their intellectual knowledge and enthusiasm.

A professor of wildlife biology and management at U.C. Berkeley, Reg attempts to instill a sense of responsibility toward nature in his students and acquaintances. He has championed many important environmental causes over the years, the most recent involving California's National Parks as well as the Orinda School District's Wagner Ranch Nature Area (WRNA). An active member of the Friends of Wagner Ranch, Reg, along with his wife Kathy, can be found most weekends volunteering at the nature area. Reg has worked on several WRNA infrastructure projects.

Recognized as a leader in environmental education as well as the co-author of a recently published book on mathematics curriculum, Kathy works as the associate director for education at the U.C. Botanical Garden in Berkeley. Previously, she worked at the Lawrence Hall of Science where she was instrumental in developing a wide-range of programs to help students, teachers, and parents become better advocates of the earth. In addition to her volunteer work at WRNA, Kathy also works closely with Orinda parents and teachers on a math in the garden training program. She also helped launch the Growing Learning Communities program. Her assistance led to a district grant award of \$12,500 for the school garden programs. "I have worked with Reg and Kathy for several years and am continually impressed by their devotion to Orinda and its citizens," says fellow Friends of Wagner Ranch Nature Area member Christy Blackie-Taylor.

Gene Gottfried and Reg and Kathy Barrett will be honored by the Orinda



SALLY HOGARTY

**Students learn about native plants** at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area, an area in which this year's William Penn Mott, Jr. Award winners spend a great deal of time volunteering.

Association (OA) at a festive awards dinner on January 27 at The Orinda House. The evening begins with a cocktail reception at

6 p.m., followed by dinner and the awards ceremony. For reservations, call the OA at 254-0800.

◆ **PROMOTIONS** from page 1

us look more comprehensively at the needs of our community and to utilize our scarce resources more efficiently." Worth notes that Orinda is a very diverse community and the new program allows the city to acknowledge that diversity and support it. She also mentions that supporting local group activities is nothing new for Orinda. She points to the Orinda Association's annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration as one event the city has helped sponsor for many years. "The Community Promotions program is really leveraged money since we only contribute to groups that are at least matching the amount, and in many cases, putting in much more than the city," she explains.

As for the roads, the City of Orinda, with the help of state and federal grants, will pave Moraga Way from Camino Encinas south to Ivy Drive south, with rubberized asphalt during the summer of 2008. Unfortunately, the Town of Moraga and East Bay MUD also plan paving projects along Moraga Road at the same time. Having the two main arteries to Orinda and Moraga with restricted traffic at the same time would cause significant traffic delays. Orinda officials have asked Moraga and East Bay MUD to reassess their paving schedule. The matching grant Orinda was awarded through Cal Trans requires that work be completed by the summer of 2008.

For more information on the grant program, call 253-2440.



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PEOPLE TO WATCH

# People to Watch in 2008

By CHRIS LAVIN and  
PAT RUDEBUSCH  
Assistant Editors

Last year, *The Orinda News* published a list of people in the community who were bound to do good things in the coming year. The feature's popularity called for a return in 2008. While there are many, many people in town who do amazing things, the following folks caught our attention as People to Watch in 2008.

## Brad Barber – Children's Hospital Oakland Foundation

"This year promises to be the most important year for Children's Hospital since its founding in 1912," says Brad Barber as he describes plans to launch an ambitious campaign to raise over \$700 million to rebuild the Bay Area's premier treatment center for children. As senior vice president and chief development officer of Children's Hospital & Research Center Foundation,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Brad Barber of Children's Hospital.

Barber is charged with leading this important effort.

Children's Hospital Oakland is the oldest pediatric medical center on the West Coast and the only independent children's hospital in Northern California. The longest standing section of Children's, which is still in use today as administrative offices, was built of un-reinforced brick in 1927. Roughly every decade since, the facility has been added on to but the hospital must be rebuilt in order to meet the State of California's new seismic requirements for hospitals and the facility's growing needs.

The renowned hospital and its adjacent clinical facilities notwithstanding, Barber is quick to point to Children's reputation as "one of the most formidable pediatric research institutions in the world." The research arm receives approximately \$50

million a year from the National Institutes for Health – an amount greater than that received by UCSF's or Stanford's medical research operations. According to Barber, Children's Research Institute is best known for its work in hematology and oncology, but it also is at the forefront in sickle cell anemia and thalassemia research, both inherited blood diseases that, heretofore, had been fatal. Doctors are now able to affect cures for these blood diseases using bone marrow or cord blood transplants.

"Children's Hospital is a far better place than most people in the East Bay even understand," Barber continues. "Our pediatric residency program is 80 years old; we've trained more pediatricians than anyone else in the Bay Area." And, he explains that outcomes for children treated at a hospital that specializes solely in pediatrics are better than those treated at general hospitals. "Adult hospitals are set up for adults, but treating children is different. Everything from the blood pressure cuffs to the x-ray equipment is made specifically for the needs of neonates, newborns, and children. The equipment, staff training, the whole orientation is different."

If people in the East Bay take Children's for granted, Barber says it's because the organization is modest, almost self-effacing. Maybe that comes with the territory of doing great works for our most fragile members of society, but that's about to change as Barber and his staff launch a major capital campaign that will require both private and public dollars to reach its goal.

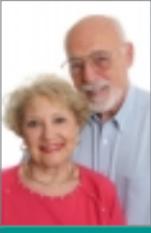
"This is one of the most rewarding things I've done in my professional life," says Barber, who spent 25 years working in institutional advancement for the University of California system before joining the staff at Children's just over a year ago. "Children's Hospital was founded in 1912, and we hope to have everything in place to begin rebuilding by the time we celebrate our 100th anniversary."

## Frank Darling – Volunteer

Some people retire to play golf. Frank Darling retired to get young people to play the guitar. Darling is president of the California Chapter of the nonprofit, Guitars Not Guns – and he does other things, too.

"I don't think I do that much," said [SEE DARLING page 12]

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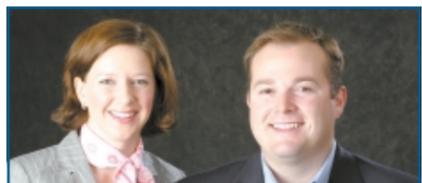
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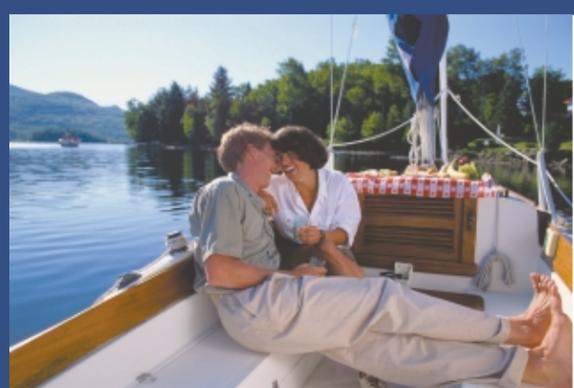
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◆ **DARLING** from page 11

Darling, who is retired from the paper industry. "But sometimes it feels like herding cats."

Darling has several cats. Guitars Not Guns – an organization Darling discovered when his wife picked up a brochure at a concert in Santa Cruz – provides free guitar lessons for at-risk and disadvantaged youth in 12 counties throughout the state. After eight free lessons, the student receives a free guitar. The idea behind the concept, Darling says, is that young people who get interested in music often have renewed interest in other school disciplines, including math. "They're not going to get music in school," Darling says. The trouble is finding instructors, students, a place for lessons, and transportation for the students to lessons. Thus, the term "herding cats."

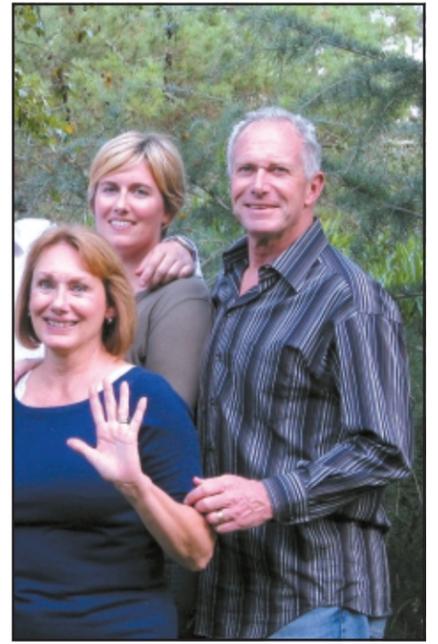
An active member of the Orinda Rotary, Darling also is a volunteer in California's Court Appointed Special Advocate system, which pairs him up with a foster child to help navigate him or her through the vast array of state services. He also is an account director with Taproot, a nonprofit

foundation that matches up volunteers with organizations. He is now working on a strategic planning process for the Meals on Wheels program.

**David Mayeri – Building Green**

When David Mayeri left his 34-year career in the entertainment industry in 2004, the phrase early retirement was not in his vocabulary. Never one to quit, Mayeri left ClearChannel Entertainment to take his professional life in a new direction. As chief operating officer for Bill Graham Presents (BGP), which was subsequently acquired by ClearChannel, Mayeri was in charge of running the company's west coast operations. This included, among other things, developing and managing facilities and concert venues operated by BGP. In that role, he guided the development of everything from 200 – 20,000 seat venues throughout the western region as well as the operations of popular Bay Area venues such as the Fillmore and Warfield.

"I loved working in the entertainment business," Mayeri says. "It was a great, exciting, and fulfilling job. But, during my last two years in the industry, the business



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
 (L-R) Rhonda, Alli and Frank Darling

dynamics and ownership changed in such a way that it was no longer where I wanted to be." Business dynamics aside, Mayeri says that his move to green building came about in a convergence of goals, interests, and experiences.

"I've always been interested in real estate development and had wanted to do a condominium project, specifically a green building. And, the time was right for me to go out on my own." Then, a major remodel of Mayeri's home in Orinda spurred his interest even more. "My wife, Yoni, is inherently green. We had wanted to do various green improvements during the remodel, but between the architect, contractor, and sub-contractors, we were either talked out of it or green options weren't offered. There was a general lack of understanding of green building practices among architects and contractors in 2003, but this is changing rapidly."

[SEE MAYERI page 13]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
 David Mayeri, a green builder.



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PEOPLE TO WATCH

◆ **MAYERI** from page 12

Today, Mayeri is a walking, talking, encyclopedia of knowledge on green building practices. He, and business partners Steve Meckfessel and Stu Kahn, also Orinda residents, is in the process of developing a 39-unit, mixed-use green condominium project on San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley. When completed sometime in 2010, the building will be LEED silver certified. LEED is an acronym for Leadership in Environmental Engineering and Design. The coveted LEED certification, which is based on a point system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, provides an independent, third-party verification that a building is “environmentally responsible, profitable, and a healthy place to live and work.”

Environmentally responsible, yes. But can green building be profitable? Mayeri maintains that trying to understand the economic value of going green requires looking at the big picture. “People who are building green want to improve air quality, use less natural resources,” he says. It’s a core belief. You either value it or you don’t.” As more homebuyers, and customers in general, start to demand environmentally responsible products, the cost will come down. “When you’re in a transition to meet a greater goal, there’s a cost,” Mayeri continues. “But the ultimate goal is to conserve natural resources. That greater good has some short term costs that have to be measured against long term goals.”

For now, Mayeri is focusing his energies on developing green projects in Berkeley. “Contrary to what people may believe about building in Berkeley, we have had great support from the city. From the very beginning, they embraced this project. Mayor Tom Bates, Councilman Darryl Moore, Deborah Sanderson in planning, and their respective staffs, have all helped move this project along.”

Our neighboring city on the other side of the hills is prime for green development because, as Mayeri describes, “Berkeley is a popular address and a lot of people who have green values want to move there.”

While he has no current plans to build green in Orinda, he sees enormous opportunity and responsibility for Orinda to develop green housing. Cities along the public transit corridor have a responsibility to develop housing within walking distance to BART,” Mayeri continues. “There’s a big glass wall around the Bay Area created by the high cost of housing. In places like Orinda, this barrier to entry is making it nearly impossible for people who were born and raised here to stay in Orinda as they establish their own careers and families.”

For those of us who are here, Mayeri says that there is a lot the average homeowner can do to make his or her home more environmentally responsible. For example, a recent energy audit of his own home found that 65 percent of the air traveling through his new HVAC heating ducts was escaping under the house. And that, he says, is typical for most homes. Sealing the leaks, however, has resulted in a mere 20 percent of air escaping. Similarly, Mayeri encourages homeowners looking to replace aging roofs to install a radiant barrier under the roofing material. At a cost of \$1 per sq. ft., the barrier can lower indoor temperatures by as much as 10–20 degrees on the hottest days of summer.

“There’s a lot of information out there for the homeowner looking to go green,” he says. “Start with [www.builditgreen.org](http://www.builditgreen.org) and [www.stopwaste.org](http://www.stopwaste.org), they’re fantastic Internet resources available to everyone.”

**Sheila Newton – Save the Children**

Sheila Newton doesn’t just love children, she respects and honors them. She’s devoted both her professional life and philanthropic work to ensuring that the world’s children are protected, nurtured,

and given the opportunity to thrive. A pediatric physician’s assistant by training, Newton knows how to marry her “protective mother” instinct with sound practice. Today, she brings her formidable skills to work as a delegate volunteer for Save the Children, a nonprofit group working to improve the lives of children in need both within the United States and in more than 110 countries worldwide.

Newton has been involved with Save the Children since she was a teen making contributions to the organization. Only recently, however, has her commitment gone beyond check writing and taken her into the field. Her own journey was marred by tragedy when, in 2001, her eldest son, Will, was killed in a senseless car accident in which he was a passenger. At the time, Will was a senior in high school, National Merit Scholar, and all-star baseball player who was accepted to UC Berkeley, and had a promising life ahead. Losing a child is any parent’s worst nightmare, and lesser souls wouldn’t be blamed for turning bitter. Instead, Sheila and her husband Turner founded the Will Newton Foundation with the goal of providing opportunities for

young adults to become actively involved in addressing the needs of women and children in crisis situations. “Putting together the Will Newton Foundation helped me focus my life and use it in a way that maximizes my potential and not diminish it,” Newton explains. “Now, Save the Children, for me, is the right thing to do at the right time.”

Doing the right thing at the right time is a theme that comes up again and again in conversations with Newton. “Physiologically, we’re all programmed to be compassionate,” she believes. “Sometimes we just need to be shown the right thing to do.”

This past year, “doing the right thing” brought Newton to Letcher County, Kentucky, an Appalachian Mountain community that is both home to a vast richness of American crafts and folklore on the one hand, and home to some of the most impoverished families in America. It’s an area that holds heartbreaking levels of poverty and where Save the Children has its deepest roots. The organization was founded in 1932 to help Appalachian

[SEE NEWTON page 14]

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PEOPLE TO WATCH

◆ NEWTON from page 13

children during the Great Depression. Recalling her trip to the region, Newton describes children living in deplorable conditions that are impossible to imagine existing in America today. Still, in the children, she sees glimpses of hope. "These are communities living in the shadows of defunct coal mining operations. The mining companies basically lopped off the top of the mountain, took the resources, and left the mountaintop dead. Where mining still exists, the coal truck drivers drive like Mad Max warriors. Children spend two hours each way getting to school on roads that are hair-raisingly scary." With few job prospects, parents often turn to drugs to pass the days, and methamphetamine is the drug of choice. Newton recalls finding small children strapped in car seats left alone in a trailer. Older kids often are kept home from school, in part, because once they finish high school, the welfare checks stop. Still, Newton says that once the non-cognitive barriers to learning are removed these children can "make the sharp u-turn that they have to take to break free of this cycle of poverty." "If they did a major raid in some of these areas, the county's social service agencies would be overwhelmed," she says. When Save the Children goes to a community such as the one Newton visited in Letcher

County, they are committed to staying there – for the children – until things get better. This is no fly in, feel good, and fly out organization. "This is a completely well-thought out, school-based program to bring about change. Ninety cents of every dollar contributed to Save the Children goes directly to programs." "You don't have to be a saint to do this work," Newton continues. "Once you get involved, you realize that these are our people. And seeing the conditions in which these children live should bring out a cries

of protest: 'How can we allow American children to live like this?'" While Newton plans to do more work one-on-one at the grassroots level with Save the Children this year, she also wants to raise awareness of the organization's work and encourage others to join her in helping Save the Children do just what its name says. "Everyone knows what they're supposed to do when such a need exists. Look at your own toolbox of skills. If you don't have the time to volunteer, donate." Few of us do all that we can to help others



Janet Boretta (center) and her staff with the store cat, Ginger (R) and patrons (L).

CHRIS LAVIN



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Carol Pogash won rave reviews for her book about the Susan Polk murder case entitled *Seduced by Madness*.

it here," Nielsen says. "That's why we stay."

**Carol Pogash - Writer**

Orinda journalist Carol Pogash received rave reviews in 2007 when William Morrow published *Seduced by Madness: The True Story of the Susan Polk Murder Case*. She brought home the infamous murder case in behind-the-scenes detail acclaimed coast to coast.

Now the regular contributor to *The New York Times* is wondering what to do next in the writing world. "I'm still thinking," she said.

Pogash has worked in various fields, from KQED television to reporting for the *Los Angeles Times* to writing for alternative weeklies to Internet publishing. She worked for the *San Francisco Progress* and the *Examiner* for 12 years. Her first book, published in 1994 with Randy Shilts, was *As Real as it Gets: The Life of a Hospital at the Center of the AIDS Epidemic* – it was an eye-opener for Pogash, and she may be leaning toward another true story in book form.

So although now she is not sure what the next stone will uncover, she is happy to look, she says.

**Orinda Arts Council Announces Design Competition**

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of Orinda's 4th of July celebration, the Orinda Arts Council and the Orinda Association will hold a design competition for students ages K-12.

Winning designs will be used for commemorative items sold prior to and during the 4th of July. Finalists' designs will also be displayed at the Orinda Library Gallery in the spring. The competition will be divided into two groups: K-6 and 6-12. Design specifications are currently being chosen. Look for specific criteria and submittal information in school newsletters as well as on the following websites: [www.orindaartscouncil.org](http://www.orindaartscouncil.org) and [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).



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in need. To us, Newton says, "...well then, do a fraction of what you should. Do the math. It all adds up. It's called doing the right thing at the right time," she concludes.

**Orinda Books**

For more than 30 years Orinda Books has been an oasis of at-home intellectual serenity through its staff-induced lecture series and up-to-date book selections. The independent bookstore is a stalwart of its kind everywhere.

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Owner Janet Boretta has kept the store going for 31 years, and so far has weathered the storms of large chains and on-line sales. Part of her success goes to the store's top-notch speaker series, featuring not only local authors, but national best-selling authors, due in large part to the work of store manager Maria Roden. But Nielsen also credits Boretta with knowing what to buy. "Those of us on staff are often amazed that a customer will come in for a new book, and Boretta has already gotten it," Nielsen said.

Josie Kelley buys the children's books, Dennis Forfa buys the music, Sandy Barrett buys more books, and Kathy Coad not only sells books but manages the new store cat, Ginger, named after Virginia Wolfe.

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Pondering a New Beginning

Andrea Colombu



Think about it: There are many new beginnings in our lives. Take a new day, for example. In and of itself, a day is a new beginning we are faced with and yet we often take this micro representation of our lifecycle for granted. In particular, we seem to give very little importance to the day's beginning. It goes by largely unnoticed and unacknowledged. As we start our new day, more often than not we fall prey to our frantically conditioned lifestyle and routinely rush into it without taking

time to think and feel much. Almost robotically, we jump on our own version of a gerbil's wheel. Sounds familiar, right? Perhaps redefining the way in which we start our day, pondering a new beginning by giving it its rightful importance and meaning, we might redefine our concept of day and create a more balanced perspective on life.

Let's start by saying that because life is a collection of events - such as days - it can be said that the way in which we spend a

day can be representative of the way in which we spend our life. Hence, taking time at the beginning of our day to ponder its meaning, those thoughts might be useful in reshaping not only our perception of it but that of life in general.

The way in which we welcome our day is indicative of how we welcome life. Indeed, if you think of a day as the microcosmic representation of your life, you may find that giving meaning to its beginning - as a precious new opportunity to celebrate and honor life - may change your entire experience of what it means to be alive and of what it means to be you. Pausing to ponder, to give thanks, to set and affirm the intentions for the day at its beginning, helps one get in touch with the part of the being that seeks meaning and harmony. In doing so we begin a day by being more present before charging into the day and getting lost in our everyday frenzy.

Taking a few minutes each morning, whether sitting or standing, perhaps in your favorite area at home or by a window looking out at the morning sky, breathing peacefully in and out, in silence and in peace, while pondering the new beginning and giving thanks and meaningful sense to your day and life, opens up a new dimension and helps set a balanced pattern and pace for the rest of the day. Although "life" will inevitably barge in and take your mind away from these delightful moments of peace, you may find that establishing this morning routine not only harmonizes your early day but it may also prompt you to check in with yourself as the day goes by and notice how you are doing and feeling. To complete the cycle you may even want to give a final few moments of time to yourself at the end of the day to check in and see how it went and how your new morning welcoming routine influenced your day.

Similarly, taking time now that we are at the beginning of a larger cycle of life, the

New Year, can also be very meaningful. Although purely symbolic and considered by many just a routine, the New Year's celebration is representative of a new life cycle and, as such, deserves attention and consideration. Giving meaning and importance to the beginning of life's events is a form of honoring life in general and life within.

Whether you ponder the new beginning of your new day or your New Year, consider this: as co-participants in the creation of our day, our year, and our life, it behooves us to pay homage to this role we take, whether knowingly or not, and give credit to our innate ability to help direct the course of our existence. Take a few minutes every morning and ponder that. I look forward to another year of sharing. Happy New Year, happy new day and many blessings!

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## ◆ WATERCOLOR from page 2

me to paint whatever and however I want without the constant worry about whether or not it will sell," she says.

Fitch has been painting for 20 years. She teaches several art groups in her garden cottage studio in Orinda, with a focus on impressionistic oil, colored pencil, and watercolor. Her groups have had shows at the Orindawoods Clubhouse and Fast Frame in Lafayette. Another painter/teacher, Terry McBriarty, gives classes at Fitch's studio.

Born in Shanghai, Pam Glover studied in China, Australia (where she was a fashion artist), and at the California College of Arts and Crafts, as well as four years with Lundy Siegriest. Her palette and bold brushwork are reminiscent of her famous precursors, the Society of Six, which included Lundy's father, Louis Siegriest. All of her paintings are done on location to catch the sun and shadow falling across the brilliant California landscapes. She leads *plein aire* painting classes through the Orinda Community Center.

Glover's daughter, Anne Marie Glover, is the fourth generation of the Society of Six painters. After living in Switzerland and France for 25 years, Anne Marie has returned to California and, like her mother, leads outdoor painting classes through the Orinda Community Center. She is represented by the Epperson Gallery in Crockett and has shown in the Martinez Creek Outdoor Art Exhibit and the Lamorinda Exhibit to Save Open Space.

A fourth generation Californian, Nicholson graduated from the Art Center

of Design in Pasadena and made a career that combined illustration and painting. He was invited by the U.S. Air Force to document President Kennedy's dedication of the Air Force Academy in 1963. He was also commissioned by the National Park Service for a series of paintings of western national parks. A recent show, "Color and Light of France" at Mondavi Winery, included his paintings of the Dordogne, Provence, and Burgundy. A past member of the faculties of the Academy of Art in San Francisco and the California College of Arts and Crafts, he gives a workshop in figure painting and drawing at the Orinda Community Center.

A graduate of Carnegie-Mellon University in painting, design and art education, Hajjar gives a class in life drawing with a live model at the Orinda Community Center for advanced and intermediate figurative artists. Her work will also be on display at the library in January.

**Shirley Rencher Miller teaches Japanese brush painting at Community Center.**

Born and raised in Paris, where her love of art and flowers began, Waters has been a botanical artist for 20 years. She shows her paintings in several juried exhibits each year and has illustrated five books, three in the United States and two in France. She teaches classes in Orinda and San Francisco and has served on the board of directors of the American Society of Botanical Artists from 2000 to 2006. For the past eight years, she has been leading tours in the Normandy countryside to gardens, chateaux, manors, and museums.

## Curing Leftover Holiday Stress From Within

By GABRIELA CHARVET  
Staff Writer

Around the holidays, I'm sure most of us were working ourselves into a frazzle hoping to bring Peace on Earth! The Cartier watch for Paul, the Anne Taylor scarf for mother, the home-made fudge for Melissa, the vegan dog biscuits for Chester ... and sometimes even flying long distances to distribute our presents, anything to let loved ones know how much we love and appreciate them in our lives.

Meanwhile, were we actually able to maintain ease in our thoughts, words, and actions during the holidays and with our dear ones so that peace could prevail? Usually we did not, because most of us hold on to the belief that peace is somehow supposed to happen after the running, the shopping, the cooking, the flying, the writing, the favors returned. Peace is always perceived as though it'll show up at the end of the tunnel, at the end of the event, and most hopefully at the end of life.

In reality, peace and ease go hand in hand. Whatever is happening without ease does not result in peace. Have you ever noticed that? Even if we have the best intentions as we're doing something, if we carry stress and resentment or negative emotion, whatever it is will not meet our expectations. Therefore, the moment-by-moment practice of peace is what we need to prioritize. We must practice *being* peace, together with its state of flowing, connection and tranquility. We can learn and practice to choose peace consciously with all our might and will, every second of the day.

Let's pretend you're sitting by a cozy fire, reading a good book, and sipping warm tea. This is an ideal setting... and how long do you actually allow it to last? It's not long before a thought pops in to stress you. Something like, "I should \_\_\_\_\_". Oops. Heaven is over. Peace has been dethroned by a thought that makes us restless at best, guilty, and depressed at worst.

This dance between feeling initially peaceful and, in time, falling into upset, or from feeling expanded into some sort of limitation, is what enlightened teachers call "the state of the ego." The ego, these teachers say, has claimed duality as its kingdom inside our minds and will not let us stay too long in happiness or any other state, for that matter. The ego's structure is, after all, like a pendulum that, in time, must swing back to the other side of any emotion with as much force as it swung into the initial mode. This pendulum is the ego's



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Gabriela Charvet demonstrates a calming yoga pose.

nature; it's how it operates and it usually wins every time.

When one eventually decides that his/her life is too much of a roller coaster of emotional ups and downs, elations and crashes, one usually yearns and seeks a new way of being. At some point, it becomes obvious that it's just too exhausting trying to go on as before. Furthermore, we find that the old egoic structure no longer works anyway, so we're forced many times into seeking a new way of being.

Ding ding ding. This is good. It's a wake-up call. Now what?

Well, when one lets the universe (i.e. God) know that it's ready for a change, the universe very efficiently finds the best possible way to help that individual. It could be through a flier in the mail, an article in the local newspaper, a book that falls off the library's shelf, a friend's advice, a yoga class, and so on. There are millions of ways to connect with a higher way of being, and the one that is best suited to a person's needs, culture, motivations, and willingness will appear. It's inevitable!

So arm yourself this New Year with new tools, much like a handyman travels everywhere with his tool kit. May you practice taking along several tools in the form of exercises that can help you return and remember peace. May you be established in it more and more each day. Explore which of the following works for you depending on the situation.

1. Stretching and gentle yoga – nothing nourishes the body and balances the mind as intentional and gentle movement. Take two minutes and just

[SEE PEACE page 18]

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## SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

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

*The Disadvantages of Being "Lucky"*

Andra Lim



In November, an article appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle* titled "The rich kids get richer." The article stated that wealthy kids have a distinct advantage in the college admissions process because they have access to college coaches, SAT prep courses, and other resources that can help pad their applications.

"Can the applications of two students be fairly evaluated when one received years of SAT prep and personalized coaching sessions and the other had no such luck?" writers Mitch Kapor and Freada Kapor Klein ask.

Many Orinda kids fall into this category of advantaged students whose academic achievements were reached with outside help, but seeing as the college admissions process gets more competitive every year, if you have the financial means to procure your child outside help, why not? However, in order to ensure fairness, some universities have undertaken a process called comprehensive view, in which

applicants' achievements are put into context.

"If two students from different schools have comparable high school transcripts and each took three advanced placement classes, it should matter that at one student's school this was the total number of AP courses offered, while in the other student's school, 25 AP classes were available," explain Kapor and Klein.

The fact that Orinda is a fairly wealthy community means that funds going toward making Miramonte High School an excellent school are available. Ironically, this excellence is the reason why, contrary to what Kapor and Klein say, the "lucky" Miramonte students have several disadvantages when applying to college. In the example above, assume that the three AP courses were taken during the same school year. The student who has a wide selection of AP courses but is taking a "mere" three is myself. The other student will be known as X.

In addition to my three AP courses (chemistry, calculus, U.S. history), I have four academic classes, which are likely much harder than the regular courses offered at X's school. In fact, some of my regular courses may require the same amount of work as the AP courses at X's school. While I have to work hard to maintain decent grades, X gets an A in English without reading a single book, an A in math even though he does his homework during English, and an A in U.S. history simply by showing up to class 90 percent of the time. Although X and I have identical grade point averages, the amount of work we put into achieving them differs greatly because of our contrasting academic environments.

There are Xs who truly are as smart or smarter than the student with 25 AP courses to choose from. There are also Xs who would be as smart as that student if they had received an equal education. However, based on the conversations I've had with Miramonte graduates now attending college, the consensus is that college is far easier than high school for them, but students from schools like the one X attends struggle because they are not used to such a competitive environment.

One other aspect of Miramonte places its students at a disadvantage: pressure. While X might be lying on his couch watching TV, I am attempting to study for the three tests I have the next day, downing energy drinks in order to stay awake. My attempts prove to be futile, because although the average on each of the tests is a C, one

student (who happens to be taking five AP courses and is acing all of them) ruins the curve with a perfect score. Meanwhile, X fabricates every single piece of supporting evidence in his history in-class essay – and gets an A+ on it.

There's the old Orinda saying that in our school system, a B is average. This aphorism succinctly sums up the academic pressure many students are under: pressure to get good grades, to participate in extracurricular activities, to do well on the PSAT, SATs, SAT IIs, and AP exams. In other words, pressure to get into a good college.

The California definition of a "good" college is a University of California branch. The Orinda definition of a "good" college is Cal.

Besides Cal, the only colleges that seem to be acknowledged at Miramonte are colleges in the U.C. posse, and not all 10 are acknowledged. When foreign exchange students return home from Orinda and their friends ask them about American colleges, I wouldn't be surprised if they said, "There are six colleges in America: Berkeley, Los Angeles, Davis, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and San Diego."

The U.C.s receive so much attention because they are, after all, great schools and close to home. Nevertheless, this attention not only creates pressure but also implies that California State branches and other non-Ivy League schools are inferior.

Kapor and Klein call the type of kids found in Orinda wealthy and lucky. Wealthy? Sure. Lucky? It's debatable.

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## EFO in The Most Likely Places

By GABRIELA MOZEE and  
PAT RUDEBUSCH  
Staff Writers

Libraries. They're as basic to education as pen and paper. Yet, few schools in California are able to keep their shelves filled with up-to-date materials and staff their libraries with credentialed librarians. Thanks to local support both from the school parcel taxes and the Educational Foundation of Orinda (EFO) Orinda's students have access to school library services that are commonplace in other states.

At each of Orinda's elementary schools and Orinda Intermediate School, EFO supports school libraries by providing the

funding to hire librarians. And, as the dissemination of information is increasingly electronic, school librarians are working hand-in-hand with classroom teachers and computer teachers to help students gain the research skills they will need in the 21st century.

At Miramonte High School, EFO provides funds for a multitude of reference materials including journal subscriptions and access to on-line databases. The Miramonte library, which contains over 20,000 volumes, circulates between 40 and 50 books per day. The number of books on the shelves is only half the story. Students also routinely access many of the same on-line databases that they will be using in college. Thanks to EFO Miramonte is able to maintain over \$10,000 worth of subscriptions to academic databases in subjects ranging from ancient history to modern science.

School libraries are just one of the academic programs EFO supports in our schools. This year, the foundation will contribute over \$1.4 million to support education in Orinda, with roughly \$510,000 earmarked for Miramonte and just under \$900,000 for the elementary and middle schools.

To meet this goal of \$1.4 million, EFO relies on the generosity of parents of current students as well as members of the community-at-large and local businesses. Anyone interested in supporting Orinda's schools is invited to visit the EFO website at [www.orindaefo.org](http://www.orindaefo.org). Contributions can also be made in honor of an alumnus, a special teacher, or coach.



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CONTINUATIONS

◆ 2007 from page 5

nothing else, this city council has extended ample opportunities for public input, including the formation of new committees and commissions to make recommendations on improvements to traffic, the planning process, and city beautification.

**Orinda Arts Council**

Fresh off the success of BirdHaus, the Orinda Arts Council moved on to spearhead the art in public places campaign that has brought what they hope to be a revolving display of outdoor sculpture. Think of it as BirdHaus grown up and visit the library plaza to see the latest installation of work by prominent sculptures – all of which is available for purchase should you want to add a piece to your own collection or donate it to your favorite public space.

The popular Orinda Idol contest came back for a second year to showcase the talents of Orinda's school-aged performers. And, the group continues to provide support to the arts programs in the schools, organize art shows in the Library Gallery, and sponsor an art contest for Orinda high school students. Not a bad list of activities for an all-volunteer organization.

**Raúl Zamora, Miramonte Principal**

It's been called "the toughest job in town," where the expectations of parents and aspirations of students reach full boil. When Raúl Zamora assumed the helm of Miramonte High School, he stepped into the cockpit of one of the highest performing high schools in the state and, according to a recent US News & World Reports survey, the nation. The stress of such an environment was starting to take its toll, so Zamora set out to build a stronger school community that would come together to meet the growing demands and expectations placed upon students and faculties, alike.

There were hiccups, to be sure, as Zamora had to deal with a bevy of issues during his first year – from the appropriateness of "freak dancing" at school functions to the very sudden and unexpected death of a favorite teacher. But, throughout it all, Zamora demonstrated integrity, reason, and an unwavering commitment to "making Miramonte an even better place."

**Nick Lopez, UC Davis Student**

Last year, Nick Lopez was finishing his high school tennis career in grand style.

This year, he's a freshman at UC Davis where he has proven to be a valuable addition to the Aggie tennis lineup. Among his freshman year achievements was progressing to the semifinals in doubles and to the finals in singles at UC Berkeley's Chandler Cup Tournament. Chances are good that we'll be watching Lopez on the courts for years to come.

**Susan Marqusee, U.C. Berkeley Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**

As the associate director of QB3, the California Institute for Biomedical Research, Marqusee has been the lead scientist in designing the Institute's newest facility – Stanley Hall. The \$165 million state-of-the-art facility opened last September and is the largest research facility on the Berkeley campus. Stanley Hall is designed in such a manner as to break down traditional barriers between the sciences, thus inviting more interdisciplinary research. Much in the way that Marqusee's own research draws upon various life sciences to address increasingly complex problems, Stanley Hall could someday be the place in which the sciences come together to bring breakthroughs in

medicine, and to develop alternative sources of energy.

**Erik Andersen, Vice President of Strategic Partnerships, Remedy Interactive**

Erik Andersen's professional life may orbit in the world of large, multinational corporations as they seek ways to curtail workplace injuries and their resulting workman's comp costs, but this Orinda native's heart is never far from home. This past year, Anderson served on the city council's newly formed Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, which recently submitted its traffic calming recommendations to the council. The thorough set of guidelines cover everything from designing public awareness campaigns to suggestions for improved bicycle and pedestrian access.

Additionally, as vice president of the Orinda Historical Society, Andersen has seen renewed interest in our town's past as his group sponsored sell-out events celebrating Orinda's heritage including the 75th anniversary of Casa Orinda, and the Historical Society's annual holiday dinner featuring noted artist and sculptor Joe Cleary.

◆ FRANCES from page 2

Queen Noor of Jordan, and Elizabeth Taylor. While she began designing jewelry, Shaffer came into her own when she switched to handbags and found her niche in making them of elegant fabrics, embellished with beads, buttons, ruffles, chains, flowers, feathers, and sequins. Women collect the purses to display as pieces of art. The Mary Frances Purse Club has collectors from all over the world who might own 40 or 50 of her handbags.

Seemingly constantly creating, Shaffer turns out some 250 new designs a year. While each design is her own brain child,

others help with the drawing and execution of putting all the elements together. The handbags are made in the Philippines, where she employs 700 workers.

Chosen as one of the Bay Area's top five Women to Watch by *Diablo Magazine* in 2007, Shaffer also was designated Accessory Designer of the Year at the prestigious Dallas Fashion Awards in 2004. *Inc. Magazine* included her in its list of the 500 fastest growing private companies in America in 2005 and 2006.

An Orinda resident, Frances says that she's strongly supported by her husband, Ron, who is a stay-at-home dad caring for their 9-year-old son, Gabe. "I travel many places in the world to obtain materials and oversee production so it's very important that we take care of each other in this way," Shaffer explains. "Not only am I a designer, but I need to have business skills and be on top of this side of the company. I've built Mary Frances Accessories all from my own

revenue without getting loans or lines of credit. Along the way, I've hired people with expertise who help me. I've learned I can't do it all myself. Still, it's a fast-paced, very full life."

As to the future, Shaffer says, "I see the foreign market as the biggest growing sector, especially Europe and Asia. I've started doing fashion shows in Paris, Milan, and England. From the very beginning, I felt like there was a place for me overseas because I found nothing remotely like my style in those places," she explains.

"I feel positive about 2008 and love the direction fashion is going – feminine, with a put-together look. I think each woman should have her own style and doesn't have to be brand conscious," Shaffer continues. "Create your unique style. I love couture designs. Though I don't wear that kind of clothes, I watch them closely to obtain ideas. Right now I'm working on more useable daytime bags, but they'll still be embellished, which is my trademark. I have to stay light on my feet and constantly change."

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◆ PEACE from page 16

breathe, allowing the body to stretch in ways that it knows it wants and needs. No stress, no hurry. Simply move with the breath and allow yourself to stretch into a comfortable place. If it begins to hurt, you've overdone it. At first, it can be a trick to find a calm, soothing pace that will expand and relax or uplift you, but with practice and awareness, it's actually very possible and delicious.

2. Get a piece of paper and a pencil or pen and begin jotting down those things that are upsetting or exciting you — since either one of these extremes can take away your peace and balance. As you write the issue, you'll find that by putting it down on paper, you've unloaded a heavy burden and can think more clearly. So, carry a beautiful and small enough journal or notebook along and

keep it handy throughout the day.

3. Saying "thank you" internally as soon as you're faced with a difficult situation can keep you from spiraling down into deeper depression or obsession. As soon as you begin to feel irritated, frustrated, ill, or upset, become conscious and send blessings and gratitude for the opportunity. Once you've stopped yourself from going deeper into emotional chaos, begin by feeling inside your body the uncomfortable vibration or pain that the situation brought. Embrace the pain, the shock, the discomfort much as you would your own child. You will notice that by giving it your attention and tenderness, it begins to dissipate until it disappears, leaving you in a state of neutrality. Once you have reached this state of neutrality, often times called "a witness," you will be

[SEE YOGA page 19]



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UKULELE CLASSES

Ukulele Music and Classes Make a Grand Comeback

By CHRIS LAVIN  
Assistant Editor

Some of us who remember Tiny Tim tiptoeing through the tulips on late-night talk show programs likely shudder to think of ukulele music. If you are too young to remember Tiny Tim, spare yourself, and don't ask.

But in a somewhat bizarre turn of cultural events, it seems that ukulele music is becoming popular again – the music is quite good, and apparently it's even more fun to play.

"Ukes are really making a comeback," said Ed Johnson, a Contra Costa County player of the washtub, who performs in a band that features an electric ukulele. "It used to be that all sheet music came with ukulele cords at the bottom, they were so popular."

Therefore, some Orindans have found themselves at the forefront of the trend, because ukulele classes at the Orinda Community Center have proved highly popular, as well as classes in the steel drum. A dozen aspiring players took the first uke classes, with an equal number in a sister class on the steel drums.

"We're offering both through the winter and spring," said Linda Dezzani, who oversees continuing education courses at the center.

That could not be happier news for some of the students.

"It just makes you laugh," said Kandy Petersen, who took the class for the first time this year. "You can't get around a ukulele and not have a good time."

While students are required to bring their own ukulele, the instructors scoff at the idea that it must be a "good" ukulele. Starting instruments start at around \$30. Even a \$10 souvenir brought back from Hawaii will do.

"Mike can do amazing things with any ukulele," Petersen said, referring to Michael DaSilva, who sometimes comes from his



SALLY HOGARTY

Allen Dodge's ukulele class has a popular following. Shown here (L-R) are John Parr, Kandy Petersen, Lewis Giles, Michael DaSilva, Pam Elder (standing) Jeff Carr and Dodge.

shop in Berkeley to give instructor Al Dodge a hand. "He'll put new strings on a cheap ukulele, and some of them are capable of amazing music."

"Ukuleles have only four strings, so learning to play is easy," DaSilva says. DaSilva is a luthier, meaning he makes stringed musical instruments. A visit to his shop on Eighth Street in Berkeley is an experience in itself, with a wide variety of interesting people hanging about, sometimes jamming, all of whom will gladly talk about the instruments to anyone willing to listen.

"Ukuleles are simply great," DaSilva says. He spent many years as a software engineer, including stints at large companies and several at dot-com start-ups that eventually floated downriver. So DaSilva decided to follow his heart, and pluck some strings. "I have met friends for life, now, through this. I can't say that about my years in the tech industry."

The OCC classes are open to aspiring

musicians across the board – you don't have to know how to read music, or have any experience whatsoever. More experienced students will sit next to newcomers to show them cords and plucking techniques, and everyone ends up having a good time. Instructors promise relative mastery of a couple of songs in just a couple of weeks.

"It's so great that this class is right in Orinda," Petersen says. "You have got to come down. Tell everyone to join up. They will have such a good time."

For more information on the ukulele and other classes offered by the Orinda Community Center, go to [www.ci.orinda.ca.us](http://www.ci.orinda.ca.us) or call 254-2445.

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◆ YOGA from page 18

able to respond to the situation with a balanced state of mind and clarity.

4. Every day take time to do an activity you love, not one that needs to be done or accomplished. Choose one that will bring you joy and ease. As you become familiar with this feeling of joy and ease, try to expand it into new ways of handling your other activities during the day. Joy and ease are the parents of creativity; the more you stay in this state, the more you'll be able to accomplish with a sense of wonder, not with stress.

5. Choose and play music that enlivens and touches your heart. Notice what the words are saying: Is this true for you right now, at this stage of your life? Are you listening to rhythms and lyrics that nourish and support who you want to become? Does the music take you to a lighter and more loving heart space?

Hopefully, you will find that one or more of these "tools" will work for you.

*Gabriela Charvet has been studying spirituality for more than 23 years. She is a Reiki, yogafit, and vibronics practitioner and facilitator. She can be reached at (925) 255-3046 or online at [gcharvet@yahoo.com](mailto:gcharvet@yahoo.com).*

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OUT AND ABOUT / LAMORINDA READS

*Out and About* Pat Rudebusch



The holiday season may be over, but the spirit of giving is one that Orindans carry throughout the year. Last month, a group of Orinda high school students got together to put on a cabaret/talent show at the Rheem Theater. Billed as **Performers for Progress**, the show was, in fact, a fundraiser for Haiti Medical Mission of Wisconsin. As one of many medical mission groups serving underprivileged populations throughout the world, the volunteers working with Haiti Medical Mission find themselves serving people living in poverty conditions that seem unfathomable in the 21st century.

Thiotte, Haiti, and its immediate neighbors, is home to 45,000 people and is served by Haiti Medical Mission. To say the population is poor is an understatement in the extreme. With no running water and meager supplies of food, malnutrition, respiratory illnesses, and dysentery are common problems.

Miramonte seniors **Madeline Vann** and

**Emmilyn Kowaleski** came up with the idea of presenting the talent show/fundraiser and invited many of their friends in local high school theater to take part. Haiti Medical Mission was chosen as the beneficiary because Kowaleski's father, a local physician, has friends who are involved with the volunteer organization.

In addition to Vann and Kowaleski, students lending their talents to the endeavor were: **Alli Adey, Sarah Ames, Nick Baefsky, Kelsey Bergman, Kat Brentano, Max Coleman, Nick Delahaye, Irene Farrimond, Lauren Fischer, Ben Freeman, Caitlyn Gaustad, Suvi Gluskin, Alex Hadas, Alina Hasanain, Clayton Hughes, Kelsi Kane, John Lee, Anna Lekas-Miller, Jenny Leon, Emily Leong, Anna London, George McCleave, Helen Mead, Tommy Miers, Spencer O'Karma, Morgan Pavey, Greg Powell, Kara Piganelli, Sarah Rhoades, Katie Reid, Katie Rich, Keith Riley, Corey Ruzicano, Kate Schauer, Basia Suroz,**

**Arielle Swernoff, Rob Taylor, John Townsend, Ty Thorpe, Remy Vale, Karen Valencia-Resnick, Nicola Vann, Brent Watson, Ben Wetzel, and Laura Weston.**

Their talents netted over \$2,000 for the Haiti Medical Mission. Vann reports that contributions continue to come in, even after the performance, and she invites others interested in donating to this worthy cause to contact her at maddie@auctio.com.

On another note, it was reported last

month that **OIS sixth graders** once again set a record raising funds for UNICEF. This year's sixth grade class collected over \$7,200, as part of the Trick or Treat for UNICEF program.

The students' efforts qualified for a matching grant, bringing the total contribution to just over \$14,000. And, thanks to **Kirsten Upshaw at Mechanics Bank**, the students didn't have to count the mountain of coins by hand!

Lamorinda Reads Program Takes Next Step

BY DOROTHY BOWEN  
Staff Writer

Sons of famous men don't always have happy stories about their childhoods. Daughters of famous women don't do much better. Think *Mommy Dearest*. But Thomas Steinbeck, son of the Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winning author, John Steinbeck, was nothing but upbeat about his memories of his father.

The younger Steinbeck spoke at the Orinda Library in October as the crowning event of the first Lamorinda Reads program that selected his book, *Down to a Soundless Sea*.

Now, this month, librarians from the three communities will meet to select the next book for the program. They will look for a local connection and an author who might be available to participate in the program, as Steinbeck did. The libraries buy several hundred copies and make half available in local coffee shops for free to people who might not frequent the libraries, "to entice them to read," said Caroline Gick, Orinda librarian. Steinbeck's book circulated 4.8 times in two months, Gick said – a formidable rate. Funding was provided, in part, by Friends of the Orinda Library.

At his talk, Steinbeck read from a memoir he is writing about his famous dad. "My father was one of the funniest people I ever knew – delightful to know," he said. The beginning takes him from his birth in New York City to his early childhood in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where he lived while his father was a war correspondent in Sicily during World War II. His father chose to leave his family in Mexico because that country was not at war, there was no food rationing and living was relatively cheap. He hired a "pistol packing nanny" for his family to avoid the danger of kidnapping. Steinbeck, the son, told story after story about the "nanny" shooting turkeys to demonstrate his skills, and the theft of



CAROLINE GICK  
Linda Waldroup, Moraga Library's senior branch librarian, poses with author **Thomas Steinbeck** at the Orinda Library gallery.

Steinbeck's blonde baby curls to decorate the new statue of the baby Jesus in the local church.

Novels are easier to write than short stories, he said. *Down to a Soundless Sea* took 25 years to write, he said. However, he was also a screenwriter and a teacher at the time of his writing.

All the stories are true, he said, set in Monterey and Big Sur, and honed by the tellers over the years. The style is curiously old-fashioned, perhaps because he read about 6,000 letters from his grandparents' era when letter writing was an art form. The title might describe the ocean crashing silently against the cliffs at Big Sur, but in fact, it comes from a quote from Coleridge, "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan a stately pleasure dome decree/ Where Aleph the sacred river ran,/ Through caverns measureless by man/ Down to the sunless sea." He was following family tradition. Many of his father's book titles are also references: *Grapes of Wrath* from the Bible, *Winter of Our Discontent* from *Richard III* and *Travels With Charley* from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels With a Donkey*. When he was growing up, the children had to give a quotation along with a request to pass the salt. Xanadu was for passing the pepper. "You really had to want it," he said.

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## CALENDAR

## ON THE CALENDAR

## JANUARY

- 4 **Diablo Valley College** E-Waste Disposal and Recycling Event through January 6, 321 Golf Club Rd., Pleasant Hill, go to [www.noewaste.com](http://www.noewaste.com) for hours and acceptable items.  
**First Friday Forum Series**, with economist Tapan Munroe, "Economic Outlook 2008," 1:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall, Orinda Community Church (925) 283-8722.  
**St. Stephen's Annual** Messiah Sing Rescheduled (due to power outage on original date). 7:30 p.m. Admission free; Donations benefit the Food Bank. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephen's Drive, 254-3770.
- 8 **Sports registrations** for baseball, softball, Incrediball and T-ball programs, 10 a.m. to noon at Orinda Community Center. Continues January 10, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.; January 14, 10 a.m. to noon, and January 17, 10 a.m. to noon. Call Jerry Johnston at 253-4204 or email [jjohnston@ci.orinda.ca.us](mailto:jjohnston@ci.orinda.ca.us)
- 9 **Temple Isaiah's Monthly Senior Lunch**, noon. Featured speaker is University of California, Berkeley historian Professor Emeritus Leon Litwack. Call 283-8575 for reservations.
- 13 **Orinda Arts Council** Art Show, featuring works by 11 Orinda teachers, Orinda Library Gallery. Call the library for details, 254-2184. Continues through February 12.
- 18 **Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Festival Choir and Temple Isaiah Shir Chadesh Choir**, performance to honor Martin Luther King, Jr., 8 p.m., Temple Isaiah, 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.  
**Montelindo Garden Club** Horticulture Talk, with Richard Turner, editor of Pacific Horticulture Magazine, 10:30 a.m., Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way. Free.
- 20 **Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Festival Choir and Temple Isaiah Shir Chadesh Choir**, performances to honor Martin Luther King, Jr., 9 a.m. LOPC, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Repeats at 11 a.m.
- 26 **Delta Wires**, jazz band, 7:30 p.m., The Orinda House, 65 Moraga Way.
- 27 **Orinda Association's Annual Awards Dinner**, 6 p.m., The Orinda House, 65 Moraga Way. Call 254-0800 for reservations.

## AT THE LIBRARY

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

- 9 **Traveling with Children**, tips from Shelly Rivoli, author of *Travels with Baby*, 10:30 a.m. Children may attend a preschool story time in an adjoining room.
- 15 **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 January 16, 17, 22, 23, 29, and 30.
- 19 **Saturday Morning Live!** Family storytime for 3- to 5- year-olds in the Toddler Alcove. Also January 26.
- 24 **Story Swap for Adults**, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., for professional and beginner storytellers. Sponsored by Contra Costa Tale Spinners and the Orinda Library.
- 29 **Fireside Chat**, 7 p.m.

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

## CLUB MEETINGS

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

## Historic Landmarks Committee

Fourth Tuesday, 3 – 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, public is welcome, for information, 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, 7 p.m., 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](http://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](mailto:chrislavin@earthlink.net)

## Church and Temple Raise Voices, Literally

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

So, you thought for great choral works, the time passed. Not so. Now it's Martin Luther King's turn, in multiple languages, as the musical talents of two local houses of worship combine forces in celebration of Dr. King's birthday, which happens to coincide with the celebration of the exodus of the Jews from in Egypt.

The Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian (LOPC) Festival Choir and Temple Isaiah Shir Chadesh Choir will combine forces to sing four special choral works at worship services later this month to honor Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. Dr. Julie Ford, music director at LOPC, says that the performances will draw upon spiritual and gospel styles, and LOPC's resident composer, Greg Murai, will compose a special piece for the events. Friday, January 18 at 8 p.m. is the date for the Temple Isaiah concert, while LOPC's performance will take place on Sunday, January 20, at both the 9 and 11 a.m. services. Everyone is cordially invited to attend.

"These collaborations help us project the notion of faith communities working together to affirm values we share," says Rabbi Roberto Graetz of Temple Isaiah.

Last year, our people sang in Latin and the LOPC people sang in Hebrew and, all together, shared words in English. It was uplifting. Music is a territory where much dialogue can take place."

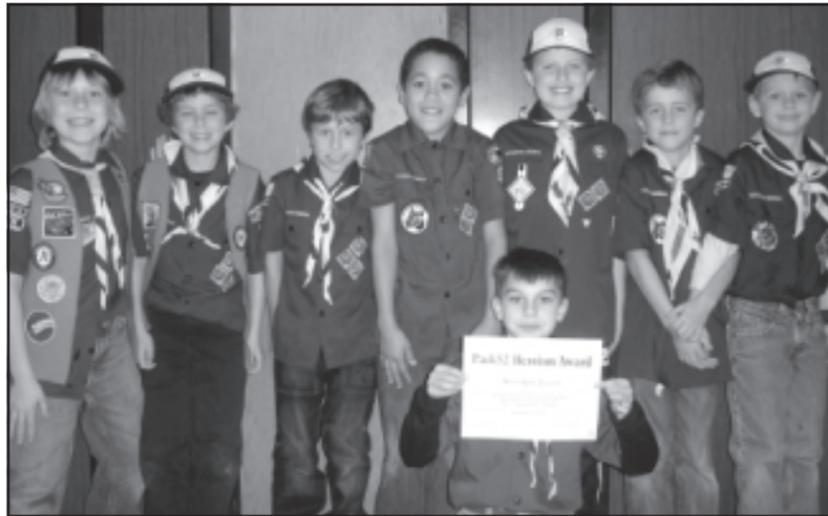
Dr. Peter Whitelock, LOPC's senior pastor, agrees. "We and Temple Isaiah have a long history of working together in reaching out to those in need throughout the East Bay. It seems natural for us to have an annual combined choral event as a way of connecting."

Cantor Leigh Korn of Temple Isaiah comments, "I'm really looking forward to our third collaboration this year. It happens that on the Jewish calendar we are reading about the Israelites' exodus from slavery in Egypt the same weekend as Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday weekend. The confluence of events provides a great inspiration to do a program of gospel music and spirituals."

All agree that the celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday offers an ideal opportunity to actively demonstrate a commitment to equality and justice for all through music at the joint worship services.

Temple Isaiah is at 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette; (925) 283-8575. Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church is at 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette; (925) 283-8722.

## Cub Scout Receives Heroism Award



GARY PETERSON

**Darby Petersen** (kneeling), a third grader at Del Rey Elementary School and a member of Cub Scout Pack 52, received a heroism award for his quick action this past summer. It was during a boating trip that Petersen noticed a friend had fallen into the water and was having trouble staying afloat, the Cub Scout checked his own flotation vest, jumped in the water, and swam his friend to the shore.

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## BUSINESS BUZZ

## ◆ BUZZ from page 24

Impressionist artists, along with photos of adorable, huggable puppies. The front window displays an interesting collection of antique irons and sewing machines from Turkey, Ireland, Italy, Korea, England, and France. Edelweiss is located at 72 Moraga



VALERIE HOTZ

Owner Kilja Kim (standing) and seamstress Xiaoling Zheng take pride in satisfying their customers' needs at Edelweiss Tailoring and Cleaners.

Way, next to Maya Mexican Grill.

At the age of 51 owner Kilja Kim decided to go into business for herself. Previous to buying this establishment, Kim had been a homemaker with outstanding sewing skills. She made all of her daughter's clothes, and as a result of this expertise, Kim decided to offer tailoring and alteration services to her customers.

The name Edelweiss has a very sentimental meaning for Kilja Kim. While living in Switzerland, she was on an outing with friends when she found the flower growing in a field. "I decided to pick it and was told that no one can pick the Edelweiss because it is the national flower of Switzerland. It is the symbol of good luck. Then, many years later when I started the business, my daughter suggested the name. I knew it was right," explains Kim.

"When I was new in the business I often argued with customers, which I very quickly learned was not a wise thing to do," laughs Kim. "I remember a woman who came in with two alterations that I could not do for her. In one case she wanted me to replace the zipper in a pair of trousers and in the second she wanted a skirt shortened with double stitches as the hem. I told her I could not do either," says Kim. "She said to me, 'You can't do either one? Then what can you do?'" adds Kim with a big laugh. "In spite of this she came back and was a very good customer for 10 years."

In addition to taking care of all dry cleaning needs, Edelweiss features tailoring services that include alterations for men and women, as well as making tablecloths, chair cushions, and duvet covers. According to

Kim, "Anything our customers want, we will create."

"I am so happy with this business. Just recently two bridesmaids' dresses came in the shop on a Wednesday and the customers needed them by Friday morning. I stayed up until 3 a.m. Thursday morning in order to finish the work and make the deadline," says Kim. She and her husband, Soon Kim, have lived in Moraga for 23 years, so she does not have far to drive after long days.

Xiaoling Zheng has nearly 30 years of experience as a seamstress in China and works as Kim's assistant at Edelweiss. "Customers are very happy with our cleaning and alterations," says Kim. She goes the extra mile, often working 12-hour days to satisfy customers' needs.

Edelweiss Tailoring and Cleaners is a member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. Hours are Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, 7 a.m. to noon. You may reach Kilja Kim at 253-0337.

#### **Suzi Mate, Personal Hair Stylist of the Stars**

Incredibly talented hair stylist Suzi Mate has recently joined the Orinda Hair Studio, bringing 24 years of experience as a precision cutter and a lifetime of great stories to share. Located in the Crossroads at 41 Moraga Way, near Bank of the West, the Orinda Hair Studio is a full service salon. In addition to offering Nail Care by Kim, and professional massage therapy with Bethany Hyatt, there is a licensed esthetician, Aurea Fonseca-Geen and two other hair stylists, Amy Mauldin and salon owner Afiza Noor.

Mate began her career in Chicago in 1982 with Vidal Sassoon Salon and was so accomplished that she was recruited to educate instructors in the Sassoon methodology in the United States and Europe. In fact, she was the first American transferred overseas to teach. "When you are young, sometimes you do not know how good you have it," laughs Mate. After teaching at the Vidal Sassoon Academy in



VALERIE HOTZ

Talented hairstylist Suzi Mate brings 24 years of experience to Orinda Hair Studio.

London, Mate went on to anchor the Rodeo Drive shop in Beverly Hills. That is where she became the personal stylist to members of Vidal Sassoon's family, Beverly, Catia, and Eden Sassoon.

"I think of a hair style as art on the head. A good shape complements a woman's face. Many people will spend a lot of money on fashion and not give any thought to their hairstyle. This is a big mistake. It is definitely worthwhile to invest in a great hairstyle," says Mate.

Watching Mate cut and style a client, one can see that this is an inborn talent. "My mom would make us go to church every Sunday. I must have been 8 years old when I began studying the hair growth pattern on the churchgoers sitting in front of me. Then, after communion, I would change seats with my mom and study the hair growth pattern on those people, too," she smiles. "When I was 12 years old I got a Dorothy Hamill wedge-cut and that did it. I immediately went straight to a beauty supply shop and bought my first pair of scissors," continues Mate.

Suzi Mate calls this inborn talent brain

balance. She is ambidextrous and claims this skill enables her to cut hair with incredible precision. "I can also write with both hands. When I was in high school, I did not know I was dyslexic, but I was great at cutting hair. It involves sacred geometry and a lot of defined angles. People at my high school would line up after P.E. class for me to cut their hair and that is when I decided to go to beauty school," says Mate.

As a high-end stylist, Mate has enjoyed world travel. She was working in Germany when the Berlin Wall came down in 1989. "That was a great experience," she adds. Additionally, she was selected as the stylist for the 1984 Olympic Gymnastic team's "Looking Good Tour, 1985" and among other appointments, she was the stylist for the Jenny Jones Show.

Mate is an Orinda resident, having recently moved here from Boulder, Colorado. She is available Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Whether you are interested in an entirely new look or would like to simply trim your current style, call Mate for an appointment at 254-5575 or (650) 387-6329.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

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Valerie Hotz



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### Sacsies Embrace Your Shoes From Closet to Suitcase and Back Again

Sheena Shastri has been in the travel business since 1981. She took a break to start her family and recently began traveling again, only to become extremely frustrated with the lack of appropriate shoe bags for traveling businesswomen. "I began researching shoe bags and discovered there

were absolutely no shoe bags that I liked for packing my own shoes, so I made a list of what I wanted and set about having them made," explains Shastri, who creates the designs and then out-sources the manufacturing to another company.

What was born was Sacsies, a very elegant and functional line of coordinated shoe bags, available online at www.sacsies.com. Shastri's design features include a cylinder shape and soft sides that are great for storage and easily packed into

a suitcase. The fabric is light and breathable, often with mesh sides, allowing air to circulate for maximum ventilation, and the bags are easily closed with Velcro.

Shastri says that she created Sacsies for the woman who has everything, including a designer shoe wardrobe, and wants only the best. These are very fun. They come in an eye-catching assortment of bright, coordinated fabrics that will make your closet come alive with fun kiwi greens, hot pinks, reds, and aqua blues. For the more conservative, there is always basic black.

"What I like is the soft-side feature, which enables easy packing and conforms to any shape within the suitcase," explains Shastri. "Most shoe bags are bulky and have no personality or design feature to them. In addition to making the chore of packing much easier," she adds. Sacsies easily accommodate a size 9 shoe with a 4-inch heel. Shastri has thought of everything. The Sacsies flat bag comes in a larger size and accommodates boots.

Originally from Tanzania in East Africa, Shastri came to San Francisco when she was 12 years old. Her husband, Jay Shastri, is a police officer in San Francisco. The couple moved to Orinda five years ago and has three children, Kiran, and Anjalie, both students at Orinda Intermediate School and Nikhil, a second grader at Del Rey School.

These days, Shastri is working part-time as a travel agent and traveling to attend her children's sporting events in various parts of the state. Sacsies come in handy during her travels. "It is an item most women would enjoy receiving as a gift because they often think they don't need a shoe bag. However, they are essential, especially when one is involved in a lot of business travel. I started this home-based web



VALERIE HOTZ

Sheena Shastri started her speciality shoe bags after becoming frustrated with trying to pack her shoes during her many business trips.

business this past year, and I am very excited about Sacsies," adds Shastri.

Bags are affordably priced, ranging from \$20 for solid mesh bags to \$25 for styles that include patterned fabrics. Larger, square-shaped Sacsies for boots are priced at \$25. For more information about Sacsies, visit the website at www.sacsies.com or send an email to Sheena Shastri at info@sacsies.com.

### Edelweiss Tailoring and Cleaners

This classic tailoring and dry cleaning establishment is nearly a museum piece in itself. Stepping inside Edelweiss, one is immediately put at ease by the classical music playing in the background. Every visible inch of wall space is covered with framed prints of classic paintings by

[SEE BUZZ page 23]

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