

THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
Volume 23, Number 5

The Orinda Association, Publisher
Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

12 Issues Annually
May 2008

Developers Explain Housing Plans for Orinda Grove and Gateway Valley



COURTESY OF PULTE HOMES

Pulte Homes plans a variety of housing styles to mirror the various types of homes in Orinda. The roughly 14-acre site will have 65 single-family homes and eight duplex homes in a village atmosphere.

By **SALLY HOGARTY**
Editor

At a recent Chamber of Commerce luncheon, Kim Diamond, senior manager of land acquisition for Pulte Homes, and Michael Olson, vice president of the Wilder development in Gateway Valley, discussed their respective developments.

Orinda Grove Waiting for EIR Approval
Diamond used a Power Point

**OA Members
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presentation to show the roughly 14-acre, mixed-use housing development at the former site of Pine Grove Elementary School on Altarinda Road. The new development, known as Orinda Grove, will feature 65 detached single-family and eight duplex homes in a village atmosphere. The duplex homes are considered affordable housing priced in the mid \$300,000s. The development includes one-, two-, and three-story homes in a variety of styles ranging from 1,500 to 2,600 square feet. Heavily landscaped *paseo* areas will give a more park-like feel to the development, which also includes open space, public playing fields, and the Orinda Union School District offices. "The development is pedestrian-oriented with lots of paths throughout," Diamond said. "It is a short 10-minute walk to downtown Orinda and to the BART

station." Diamond noted that the developer was in discussions with Orinda Woods to share the neighboring development's shuttle bus to BART.

Orinda Grove has been undergoing a rigorous Environmental Impact Review (EIR) and hopes to have Orinda Planning Commission approval in the next month. They plan to begin work on the site in late summer or early fall with the first homes completed in 2009. Diamond also said that they were in discussion with the Orinda Convalescent Hospital across the street from the proposed development to address traffic and parking concerns. For further information on Orinda Grove, call Diamond at 925-249-3268.

Wilder Development Begins Lot Sales

Thirty miles of trails that connect with other East Bay trails will be one of the features in the 1,600-acre Gateway Valley project. Housing will be built on 200 acres with the remaining 1,400 acres used as open space and water detention facilities by East

Bay Regional Parks District and East Bay Municipal Utilities District. The City of Orinda will own five public ball fields and two "tot" lots, with parking for 300 cars, and the art and garden center.

Olson also used a Power Point presentation to give a virtual tour of the property, including the 245 luxury homes and private swim club with an Olympic-size pool. "The swim club is in the area of the old quarry and will be named Quarry House," said Olson. "Parents of swim team members will be happy to hear that it will have the Colorado timing system so that parents will no longer have to manually time races." He also said that the water detention basins would be landscaped and be an attractive component of the development.

Robert Hidey Architects is designing the high-end homes. The City of Orinda approved the first four residential design plans this past December. "The designs emulate Orinda's architectural

[SEE WILDER page 6]

Schools Watch the Sky for Signs of Falling

■ **Parents Step Up to Face Likely Budget Cuts**

By **CHRIS LAVIN**
Assistant Editor

The word from the district last December was ominous: Orinda Union School District warned its school communities that the state's dire financial straits could mean its own budget faced cuts of up to \$1 million. At the Acalanes Union High School District, the news seems even worse, with projections of cuts standing out at \$2.75 million.

"This is absolutely the worst I've seen," said Jim Negri, superintendent of the Acalanes district, who has been through at least five budget crises before. "Maybe not in total dollar volume (projections), but the state has used up its tricks. In past years, it has moved money, or moved the dates it needed to pay us. Now they can't do anything else."

At the elementary school level, word of cuts galvanized the parents groups at all four elementary schools for one very common reason – all the schools feed into Orinda Intermediate School (OIS), and it's in everyone's interest to have all the elementary school students prepared for middle school. So the parents at Del Rey,

Glorietta, Sleepy Hollow, Wagner Ranch, and OIS went to the district with a message: Tell us before you cut programs, services or personnel, and they would try to pull some rabbits from hats.

"The parents clubs have been given the opportunity to partner with the district in providing monetary assistance to avoid cuts to programs and staff," said Yoshiko Negebauer, co-president of the Del Rey parents club. "While we may not know the

[SEE BUDGET page 6]

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COURTESY OF WILDER

An artist's rendering of one of the proposed luxury homes to be built on 200 acres in the 1,600 acre Gateway Valley.

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Sally Hogarty

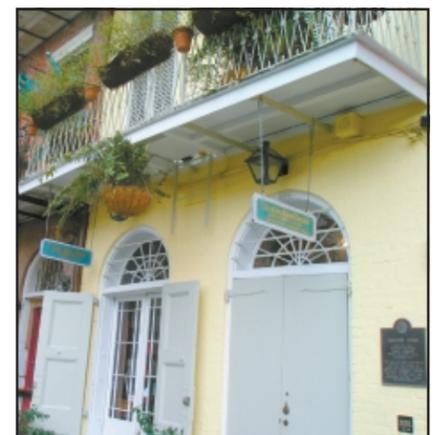
If your hectic schedule has you constantly on your cell phone while keying away at your laptop, and casting furtive glances at your watch, it may be time to fly on down to New Orleans for a definite change of pace. Residents of this delightful city have their own sense of time and having a good time usually outweighs being on time!

A rich "gumbo" of many cultures, New Orleans boasts a mix of French, Spanish, Irish, Italian, African, Native American, and Jewish influences. Cajuns, originally from French-speaking Canada, add their culture to the mix as well. The spicy, aromatic food and rich mixture of music and traditions reflects the many cultures that call New Orleans home.

I recently returned from my first trip to the Big Easy and certainly hope to return. Although I wasn't there during Mardi Gras, there was still plenty of action along Bourbon Street with cool jazz or blues emanating from most night spots – spots that will gladly sell you a drink in a "go cup" to consume as you walk down the street. The piano bar at Pat O'Brien's is a hoot and the House of Blues on Decatur Street has good food as well as great music. Outside of the French Quarter, try New Orleans' version of the Fillmore Auditorium – Tipitina's. It's basically an old two-level barn where bands like the Neville Brothers plus new (sometimes pretty crazy) groups perform. For a unique musical experience, try Vaughan's. Located in a residential neighborhood, the homey environment attracts people of all ages who

like good music and maybe even a ping-pong game in the back room. If trumpet player extraordinaire Kermit Ruffins is playing (as he often does on Thursday nights), you can also expect some tasty barbecue. Ruffins generally brings his bar-b-que along when he plays, and he seems to enjoy cooking as much as playing. Be sure and call ahead to see if live music is on the calendar and be prepared to stay late.

There is so much to see and do in New Orleans that my brief five days barely scratched the surface. Downtown is a study in contrasts. Within two blocks you can encounter a glittery casino, tall office buildings, couture shopping, and burned out buildings – a reminder of the destruction of Hurricane Katrina. While there are still signs of devastation, the majority of the city, especially the downtown area and French Quarter which were spared major flooding, is open for business and eager to welcome back the tourist trade.



SALLY HOGARTY
 Pirate's Alley in the French Quarter is home to the William Faulkner bookstore, a building in which the acclaimed author once lived.

My husband and I stayed downtown at the Hampton Inn and Suites, directly across from the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. Close to wonderful restaurants and shopping, it also provided an invigorating walk to the French District. My favorite way to start the day was to go along the Riverwalk enjoying the graceful paddlewheel boats and outdoor art to the famous Café Du Monde. Here I indulged in sugary *beignets* (a French doughnut with lots of powdered sugar) and the café's wonderful chicory café au lait. I must admit that I managed to return to Café Du Monde

[SEE BACKYARD page 16]



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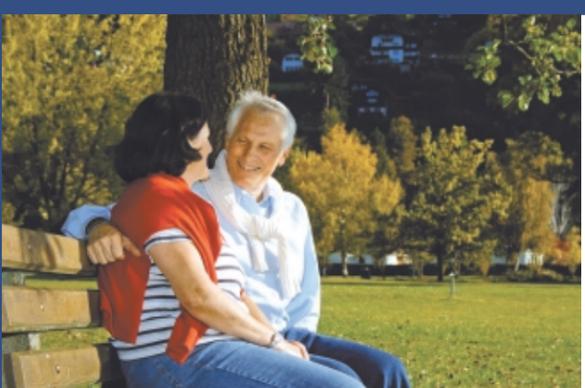
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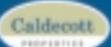
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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

Have Fun and Get Involved with the Fourth of July Now

By BARBARA BONTEMPS
Contributing Writer

Planning continues apace for Orinda's 25th Anniversary 4th of July celebration. With two months to go, the Orinda Association's Independence Day Committee has lined up a fabulous array of activities and entertainment prior to and during the big event. Here are just some of the exciting things the committee has arranged for your enjoyment:

Run for A Reason

Kicking off the morning will be the 4th annual Haley's Run for Reason. At 21 months in May of 2000, little Haley Tom went to sleep and never woke up. Her death was attributed to the lesser known Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC) – a syndrome similar to Sudden Infant Death, but characterized by its occurrence in older toddlers. In the years since her death, the Run for a Reason has raised \$60,000 for education and research into the prevention of SUDC.

The run, which begins at 8 a.m., is a family-friendly five-mile run or two-mile walk and is sponsored by Bay Area Development, La Piazza restaurant, Oakwood Athletic Club, Basics Environmental, and locally owned Lamborn Winery. Additional support is provided by Quenchers Smoothies, Golden Gate Litho, JC Paper, and the Orinda Roadrunners. This year the run will be followed by a silent auction in the park. To register for the run or to make a donation, visit www.angelhaley.org or call Suzanne

Tom at 258-9097.

Animals on Parade

Former mayor and Orinda's 4th of July celebration originator, Bobbie Landers, has always recruited willing animal (and human) participants for the parade, and this year will be extra special. The Contra Costa County Sheriff Department's Search and Rescue Equestrian and Canine Units will be featured, as will long-time dog obedience instructor Loretta Dillinger, with her "Canine Good Citizens." Joining Dillinger will be new obedience instructor Bonnie Brown, showing off some of her

newer students. As always, the four-horse hitch will recall Orinda's earlier frontier days.

Music, Music, Music

This year's multi-day celebration includes lots of toe tapping, foot-stompin', boogie down, and sing-along music, starting with the Concert in the Park on July 1. First up is the Silver Spur Band, part of the Community Center Auxiliary's summer concert series. They are a perennial favorite with Tuesday night picnickers, and their country-western sounds will have everyone doing the Texas two-step. Next up at the July 2 "Reach for the Stars" gala at Theatre Square is the Bob Claire Orchestra, a dynamic full-blown band with horns, bass, rhythm section, keyboards, and vocalists. They will bring just the right note of sophistication to what is sure to be an elegant evening of wine and music.

Finally, on the July 4th itself, there will be multiple musical offerings, including Orinda's one and only, first-ever-in-the-nation All Volunteer Pick-up Marching Band. The band reaches a milestone this year, when its long-time esteemed leader Mo Levich hands the baton over to new conductor and Miramonte graduate, Tom Carter. Mo, who has led the band since its [SEE CELEBRATE page 18]



SALLY HOGARTY
A young celebrant took advantage of last year's face painting booth.

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- Maintaining and improving the quality of life in Orinda;
- Promoting awareness and discussion of issues that are important to the community;
- Encouraging and recognizing volunteer efforts to enhance the beauty, character, and security of Orinda.

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Could This Happen in Orinda?

Houses with windows shattered, doors hanging askew, garbage strewn about, and desperate men lurking in the shadows – images of a poverty-ravaged city in a third-world country? No, unfortunately much closer to home, New Orleans, Louisiana on August 30, 2005, the day after Hurricane Katrina changed the face of the city forever.

On a recent trip to the home of blues and jazz, I heard story after story from local residents that made me feel embarrassed for our country and its inability to care for its citizens. “I live in Algiers on the West Bank and managed to ride out the storm,” said Roosevelt Owens, our bell captain at the Hampton Suites. “Then the National Guard came and said we had to evacuate.” An Amish family in Boston offered to share their home with Owens and his wife and daughter – a stay that would last 13 months.

While it is laudable that many families opened their homes to refugees from New Orleans, why did it take so long for electricity and safe water to be available? While in Boston, Mr. Roosevelt, as he is known, also had to contend with a very different prejudice. He had worked for the Hampton for seven years and been in the hotel industry for 14, yet even with sterling recommendations, prospective employers turned him down again and again when they heard he was from New Orleans. “They wanted someone more long-term, and we had no idea how long we’d be staying,” he

adds. When he finally was allowed to return home, Owens, like many residents, found that his house had been looted.

Our taxi driver, who took us through the hardest-hit sections of New Orleans, was one of the fortunate ones. He had to evacuate as well but, thanks to his speedy insurance company, was able to rebuild and move back in within a year. Many of his neighbors are still waiting to settle insurance claims.

Could this happen in Orinda? If the “big one” hit on the Hayward fault, would local residents face mandatory evacuation? Would it take months for water, power, and sewage to be back on line? Would our insurance companies respond quickly to claims? True, our city, county, and state governments do not have the reputation of corruption that has tainted the Big Easy but have we become complacent since the firestorm in the East Bay Hills? Do we have family emergency plans and disaster preparedness kits complete with food and medications? Are our representatives at the various stages of government looking at long-range safety precautions and emergency response systems?

The City of Orinda has a Public Safety Commission that meets monthly (go to www.ci.orinda.ca.us/meetings). The commission addresses a number of concerns including neighborhood safety, emergency response, and medical training. The Orinda Association (254-0800) sells



This is one of many homes in the 9th ward destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and the resulting flood. The “x” marks what agency went through the home and when. The zeros mean that no bodies were found either human or animal.

disaster preparedness kits. These are a start but having a plan and communicating it to every member of your household is also essential. A contact person outside of the Bay Area that family members can call when separated should be designated. When helping a bicyclist who had taken a bad fall and was incoherent, I learned another important lesson in an emergency – programming your cell phone with

numbers listed as “home,” “mother,” or “husband.” Fortunately, the cyclist had an entry labeled “mom,” and we were able to let her know what had happened and where her son would be taken.

As the weather turns warm, it is easy to be lulled into thinking a disaster couldn’t happen here. But it could and it will. The question is: Will we be ready?

– Sally Hogarty, Editor

Letters to the Editor

A Citizen’s View of Orinda Library’s Measure E

We have great expectations of the Orinda Library, where nearly half of the residents hold library cards and 5,000 people visit the Orinda Library each month, and yes there is a future for the Orinda Library in the Internet age. All across the country, Americans say that public libraries will continue to play a vital role in their communities. In Orinda, there is a feeling that the Orinda Library, like education and safety, is central to a healthy community, and especially among those who are most engaged in their community, the voters, volunteers, seniors, teenagers and other contributors. The Orinda Library is a pillar in the community and that actually helps to keep property values increasing. By passing Measure E, the citizens of Orinda will be saying that “yes — we care.”

We use the Orinda Library as a civic and cultural center, places where neighborhood groups hold meetings and residents gather for special events, from gallery shows to speakers to free musical performances.

As Orinda looks ahead in the information age with rapidly changing technology, we see the Orinda Library as an information powerhouse. This is not just an appealing vision for tomorrow, but one that we are

fortunate to enjoy today. We do not want our Orinda Library to lose its roots — supporting reading, childhood literacy and lifelong learning and helping to meet the greater expectations of Orinda citizens of the 21st century. Measure E will help to ensure that the Orinda Library programs and services are continued. Vote yes on Measure E.

— Bill Knickerbocker

Cornerstone of Community

It doesn’t get much better than taking a walk through the park with my four-year-old son to Caffé Teatro, drinking cocoa together, and then snuggling on the steps in the children’s section of the Orinda Library reading a good book. Just like the great schools and the hilly terrain, the Orinda Library has become a cornerstone of our community. Please vote “yes” on Measure E to keep it that way.

— Amy Campbell

No New Taxes

A tax increase will be on the June 2008 Orinda ballot. This tax proposal will increase the Orinda Library Tax to \$39 per year. There is no justification for such a tax increase. The library tax income in the fiscal 06-07 year was \$206,000, which is 12 percent more than the cost of keeping the library open 60 hours per week. The

library tax reserve is \$187,000. Obviously, no tax increase is needed.

The proposed tax increase is 44 percent. Did you get a 44 percent raise last year?

Everyone in Orinda is not rich. There is no exception in this tax increase for seniors or low income residents. Many retired residents are facing difficult economic times, with rampant inflation in gasoline and food costs and investment income dropping like a rock. Recently, the garbage collection tax increased 14.7 percent.

We are in difficult economic times, which will only get worse. Instead of increasing taxes, the Orinda City Council should be cutting expenses. The council has not done this. If we pass this unnecessary tax, it will only encourage the city council to raise other taxes instead of controlling expenses. The city council has spent \$42,000 on a poll for this tax and the cost of this election at a time when city income is declining.

Any tax should have a sunset or lifetime. This tax will go on forever.

This tax will not be the end of the demand for more taxes for the new library; it is only the beginning. If this tax increase passes, look forward to a series of future library tax increases as the city tries to shift more and more of the library building utility costs onto the Orinda taxpayers. This wasteful tax illustrates the tendency to never be satisfied but to always demand more.

Send a message to the city council: No more unnecessary taxes. Please vote no on

the library tax increase.

Note your polling place on your sample ballot. It may not be your normal polling place.

– Clyde Vaughn

Usual Nay Sayers

Measure E, this June’s ballot measure in support of the Orinda Library has drawn only one opponent, Clyde Vaughn. Most of you are familiar with Clyde as he is opposed to everything every time.

In his ballot argument against Measure E and in his rebuttal to the argument in favor, Clyde relies on a common and oh too familiar approach used by opponents — throw everything you can think of against the measure and maybe, just maybe, enough people will fall for it that it will be defeated. It’s a form of “you can fool some of the people some of the time” logic that is frustrating for those of us trying to get something done, and it is completely disingenuous.

Ah, the luxury of being on the “no” side.

For example, Clyde complains that the measure is too expensive and will contribute to a recession. The current library measure costs \$27/year and the new one adds \$12 to that to cover the cost of inflation and utilities but insures that the library continues the current hours and programs for at least another decade.

What’s Clyde’s alternative? The current

[SEE LETTERS page 8]

The Orinda News prints 9,000 copies and is published 12 times a year by The Orinda Association. The office is located at 24 Orinda Way (lower level of the Library). All rights reserved. The publication is sent out by direct mail (Permit #4, Orinda Post Office) and distributed to key locations throughout the city.

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 Printing Folger Graphics

THE ORINDA NEWS

A Publication of
 The Orinda Association
 Mailing Address
 P.O. Box 97
 Orinda, California 94563
 Telephone: 925 254-0800
 Fax: 925 254-8312
www.orindanews.org



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Send letters to: Editor, *The Orinda News*, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, fax them to 254-8312, or email to news@orindaassociation.org. Letters to the Editor for the June issue are due May 5, 2008.

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FRIDAY FORUMS / NEW ORLEANS

May's Friday Forum Answers Questions about Hospice

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

As parents and friends become older or begin to succumb to disease, the hospice network offers a stay-at-home alternative to nursing homes and hospitals.

Dr. Donna Foliart is an expert in hospice care, and she will share her expertise and her own concerns at the First Friday Forum (FFF), when she presents "Compassion in Actions: End of Life and Hospice Care," at 1:30 p.m. on May 2, at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Refreshments will be served at 1 p.m.

Foliart's talk will cover specifics: who is eligible for hospice, the services provided, and how care is given. During the question and answer period, the audience may query on other issues. She says, "It is my hope that all of us who have been touched by the loss of a loved one, or who might be in years to come, will receive the information and resources to be better prepared."

Hospice of the East Bay (formerly called Hospice and Palliative Care of Contra Costa) began caring for patients in 1977. Over the past 31 years, their team of professionals has worked to meet the needs of more than 12,500 patients and their family members. Their care focuses on ensuring physical, emotional, and spiritual comfort at the end of life.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Dr. Donna Foliart discusses hospice care on May 2.

The agency is an independently operated, not-for-profit group, and cares for all medically qualified patients, regardless of their ability to pay. In 2004, they opened Bruns House, the only inpatient Hospice facility in the East Bay. They also offer two specialized programs. "Anna's Program" meets the emotional and practical needs of women who have recurrent breast cancer. Their "Comfort for Kids" in-home program of hospice and palliative care for children is the only such program in Northern California, serving children from Contra Costa, Alameda, and Southern Solano counties.

Foliart is a graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles, and received her [SEE FORUM page 10]

Dowell Spreads Healing Techniques to Women of New Orleans

By MARINA LI
Contributing Writer

If New Orleans has needed anything in the past few years, it's peace with rebuilding. Jeanne Dowell, an Orinda resident and yoga instructor, has helped to do that.

Dowell was one of 30 yoga instructors to volunteer her services for the V-Days' 10th anniversary in April. V-Days is a non-profit organization that distributes funds to grassroots national and international organizations working to stop violence against women and girls, and the organization has been growing. Started by playwright and performer Eve Ensler, the organization spans 81 countries through Europe, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and all of North America.

The group brings together experienced, certified yoga teachers who have worked with traumatized populations and people needing special care, then offers free classes, chair yoga, breathing and general body awareness to help the victims recover.

Dowell, a Mills College instructor, was inspired to submit her application when two of her students told her of their life-

changing experiences through helping people affected by Hurricane Katrina. As luck would have it, Dowell received an e-mail around the same time from Karma-Krew, a yoga-based non-profit charitable organization asking for volunteers for an April 9 event. Karma-Krew, whose personal mantra is "do good things," believes that being of service to others is the catalyst for one's own transformation.

V-Days was held at the infamous New Orleans Superdome, where thousands of people sought refuge following Katrina. The sports center became transformed into a place of beauty, creativity, a center of healing, caring, and learning. Activities ranged from massage to yoga classes to physical, spiritual, and emotional workshops, lectures, artistic performances and drama. It also served as a place where V-Day activists from around the world could meet, network, and connect with each other as well as with the women of New Orleans.

The event culminated in a fundraising event attended by celebrities and musicians including Oprah Winfrey, Ellen DeGeneres, Jane Fonda, Ashley Judd, Glenn Close, Peter Buffett, and more.

Santa Maria Church Offers Practical and Spiritual Classes

Santa Maria Catholic Church has ongoing classes for members of the local community. You do not need to be a parish member to attend. Although classes began in April, participants can start attending at any time.

The Wonder Years? Living with and Relating to Your Teen examines common challenges, effective communication, and more. Through June 5 with facilitator Jeff Sloan, M.S.

Basic Principles for Making a Good Marriage Even Better examines many familiar relationship ruts and pitfalls while striving for mutual connectedness. Through June 11 with facilitator Jeff Sloan, M.S.

Thomas Merton: Spiritual Master offers insight into the paradoxes of life. The first of an eight-part series, the class focuses on listening rather than thinking and how to approach different points of view by looking at the deeper underlying values and issues. Through June 10 with facilitator Msgr. Ted Kraus.

The Gospel of Mark explores key themes and story lines of Mark's narrative as the implications of discipleship become abundantly clear. Through May 7 with facilitator Rev. Thomas Bonacci.

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CONTINUATIONS

◆ **BUDGET** from page 1

exact impact of the budget cuts to our district for several months, this open dialogue between the district and parents clubs has helped us educate our parent population on the importance of their contributions to our schools as well as the Education Foundation of Orinda (EFO)."

Negebauer points out what districts and parents groups are waiting for: the precise impact of the cuts, which won't be known for several months. She says she is proud that the parents groups have all come together to work on the problem, which remains a moving target. While all state departments have been asked to estimate the impact of 10 percent cuts across the board, it does not necessarily mean that schools will be able to cut that much. And some school programs are so bare-boned they could be axed altogether should they get hit with 10 percent cuts, while other programs face loss of federal funding should the state's cash input fall below a certain amount. "Take special education, for instance," said Negri, of Acalanes. "If

special education is cut, then we'll lose federal funding, and that just can't happen. There would be no program."

At OUSD, where the school board has been dealing with projections of the sky falling for months now, members passed a resolution opposing Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's budget proposal and potential evisceration of Proposition 98, approved by voters in 1989, which demanded at least minimum school funding.

The projected loss, however, is something that parents and schools cannot ignore, OUSD Superintendent Joe Jaconette wrote to parents. "The state budget crisis may be one of the worst in years and the state revenue decline could get worse before it improves," he said. "With that said, these are the most severe cuts proposed to California education in at least a decade."

That means a \$65,000 to \$90,000 cut for the remainder of this calendar year, and up to \$1 million less state funding for the 2008-2009 school year, he said. Until the extent of the cuts are known, though, "we are continuing to be careful in spending, conserving our savings, focusing only on high priority spending, and looking at ways to both reduce expenditures and enhance revenue," he continued.

Besides planning to cut funds, the state has already delayed making payments to schools necessary to meet payrolls and other expenses. "It used to be that the state would delay the September and April payments," Negri said. "Now for June, July, and August, they won't pay us until September." That forces school districts to borrow money to keep afloat, and districts with good bond ratings pay more to borrow that money. "But you have to have a good bond rating," Negri said, "in case you need to float a bond." Therefore, districts in good standing face a Catch-22 situation. Negri said Acalanes is considering asking voters



KASIA KESSLER

Orinda Union School Board Members (L-R) **Michelle Leighton, Pamela West, and Ana Ramirez** delivered 1,656 letters to **Senator Tom Torlakson** (center). The Las Trampas Council of PTAs, representing students, parents, and community members in Orinda, Lafayette, Moraga, and Walnut Creek, delivered a total of 14,096 letters to state representatives in Sacramento including Assemblymembers Loni Hancock, Guy Houston, Sandre Swanson, Gene Mullin, and Martin Garrick. The legislators were told that the Governor's proposed budget is unacceptable, particularly the across-the-board cuts in education and education funding. The delegation stressed the need for reform so that California's children can be the best-educated in the country.

to approve an education bond in November.

Areas targeted for cuts at Acalanes are service employees – resulting in classrooms cleaned every other day instead of daily, Negri said, with the exception of bathrooms, labs, and special education rooms. Grounds-keeping will be reduced, he said, so he's shoring himself up for the inevitable calls from school neighbors complaining about growing weeds, and some repairs will be left undone. The district is likely to lose its receptionist, he said, "but she's not really a receptionist. She does so much more than that. She's really our accounts-payable person."

While the districts and parents await a final determination from Sacramento, the Acalanes district has requested that parents groups attempt to make up the shortfall to the tune of \$1 million, or \$250,000 per school. The district also has identified 46 positions – not all of them full-time and some taken care of by leaves, resignations, and retirements – to be cut, a method being employed throughout all Orinda schools.

In response to the possible shortfalls, the Education Foundation of Orinda recently

met and came up with its largest goal in history: \$1.6 million for the Orinda schools, which includes more than \$580,000 for Miramonte, \$1.29 million for Orinda Union School District, and asks that parents contribute \$550 per child, which is up \$100 from previous years. "It's a lot," said Janet Riley, president of the foundation.

As parents and school boards continue to meet regarding the potential cuts, political opinions often come to the foreground. Negri has two pet peeves. The first is term limits. "There just isn't any institutional memory anymore," Negri said, and as an example cited one case in which a state legislator asked during a budget meeting what was meant by ADA (average daily attendance). "At least he had the courage to ask," Negri said. The other is budgeting by mandate. Whenever voters approve an expenditure for a particular interest or group, money from the general fund must, by law, be applied to that before the rest of the pie can be divvied up. "In a budget crisis like this, we need general funds," Negri said, "not ear-marked funds."

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◆ **WILDER** from page 1

characteristics, forms, and details, but with a modern layout," said Hidey. "The emphasis is on casual and informal living with large great rooms and open family spaces as opposed to the separate formal living room and traditional dining room." Prospective residents can choose from a variety of unique designs by Hidey or use their own architect, who would go through an internal design review at Wilder as well as the City of Orinda's design review

procedure.

The average lot size at Wilder is one-half acre with some lots almost a full acre. Grading began last summer and will continue through 2008. By the fall of 2008, the developer hopes to begin building, with the first residents moving in by mid 2010. Lot sales are now beginning. Two local real estate agents, Gerry Bakalian and Sherri Pope, head the sales team. For more information, contact them at 254-9900. To see more of the development, go to www.orindawilder.com.

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WRITER / ARTISTS

From the Mouth of a Child – A New Book

■ Orinda student publishes first book

By KATHRYN G. McCARTY
Staff Writer

It's the story of a grub. At 7 years of age, Grace Zaboski, grub aficionado, has the distinction of being the youngest HarperCollins author to ever collaborate on a picture book. The first-grader partnered with her father Dave and Orinda residents Ken and Maddy Dychtwald to create *Gideon's Dream: A Tale of New Beginnings*.

Enlisting the youngster as a story-teller and "senior editor" was a coup, according to renowned authors Deepak Chopra, and Jack Canfield.

Chopra calls the book "An inspiring journey of transformation for both children and adults." Canfield echoes his sentiments, claiming that *Gideon's Dream* "has the feel of a classic already."

As co-founders of the company Age Wave, the Dychtwalds have been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* and have

appeared on *Good Morning America*. The pair deliver keynote speeches to more than 150,000 business leaders every year on themes of continued personal growth and metamorphosis. While Ken has authored 13 other titles, and Maddy one other book, this is their first children's book together.

According to Maddy, the Dychtwalds' goal was to craft a children's book that created "a timeless parable in the vein of Aesop."

The story is simple. While going through the motions of his monotonous life, Gideon, a grub, discovers flight when the leaf he is working on obeys the voice of the autumn wind, and breaks free of its tree. Gideon is scared, but his fear gives way to sheer joy. Having experienced the exhilaration of flying, Gideon cannot stop dreaming about soaring through the air again after he lands.

"Ken and I were inspired to write this book because we wanted to create a story our children would love that pertained to the idea that it's never too late to live your dreams," says Maddy, who points out that "most kids have this feeling that life sort of ends at 35 or 40 or maybe not even an age, but once they hit adulthood, that their



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Grace Zaboski (upper left) at 7 years of age is HarperCollins' youngest author. Shown here with (L-R) Maddy and Ken Dychtwald and her father Dave Zaboski.

choices become limited." She wanted to open the door to illustrate how a person can manifest his or her dreams, regardless of age.

The metamorphosis of Gideon can be seen as a metaphor for the changes humans encounter at all stages of life. From entering school through graduation, to career and marriage, we are constantly in transition from one phase of our life to another. According to Maddy, *Gideon's Dream* is an inspirational tale that "shows that growth and change are forever a part of life."

Illustrator Dave Zaboski, whose Disney animation credits include *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *Pocahontas*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Hercules*, *The Emperor's New Groove*, *Fantasia 2000*, and *Tarzan*, says, "The idea that we want to be responsible myth-makers for our kids is a really powerful thought."

While schools might have the responsibility of educating children through

textbooks, Zaboski explains that "how we impart information to our kids is through stories. And so, having a 7-year-old around the house, it's important what stories she gets that help her become a master in her life of whatever it is that she chooses."

"Art reflects our planet, our culture," Zaboski writes in his artist's statement at davezaboski.com. "In art, we see a bit of ourselves reflected back at us."

Zaboski created many visuals, some of which Grace rejected along the way. He kept drawing until the child recognized the perfect character, smiled and said, "that's Gideon."

"Character creation is part science, part experience, and part having a 7-year-old girl looking over your shoulder," said Zaboski. "Gideon was created with a little bit of science, a little bit of experience, and a lot of input from Grace."

Clad in purple fairy wings, Grace adds, "I love Gideon because he makes me feel like all my dreams can come true, too."

Artspace Orinda Invites You to Meet the Artists

By BARBARA BONTEMPS
Contributing Writer

In case you missed the first time, you still have a chance to meet the artists who created the outdoor sculptures on display throughout downtown Orinda.

The second "Meet the Artists" lecture in conjunction with the year-long "Artspace Orinda" outdoor sculpture exhibition will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 17, at the Orinda Community Center. The lecture series is designed to give interested community members an opportunity to meet the sculptors featured in the exhibition, to view a presentation about their work, and to discuss the creative process involved in developing their pieces. Artists participating in the next lecture include Patricia Bengtson-Jones, Kati Casida, and Bill Wareham.

Patricia Bengtson-Jones

Local artist Patricia Bengtson-Jones originally studied painting at San Jose State University but was soon attracted to sculpture as a way of expressing her fascination with the past and its connection to the present. After obtaining her master's degree, the well-traveled Bengtson-Jones began using concepts of prehistoric monumental stone sites and myths from her



SALLY HOGARTY
Patricia Bengtson-Jones and her monumental stones which are displayed in the garden area on the upper level of the library between the Community Center and the Library Auditorium.

own Nordic culture to inform her work. Her sculptures are constructed of marble, stone, and/or glass in her Berkeley studio – which is a converted former brewery. The monolithic forms she creates are stacked and layered to denote times past. These she inscribes with hieroglyphics or "personal signs" and they frequently appear to be rising from the earth in much the same way as ancient ruins.

[SEE ART page 18]

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LETTERS

◆ LETTERS from page 4

measure is set to expire next year meaning the library would have to reduce its hours and its services drastically. If Clyde had his way during this recession, a service that is provided free to all Orinda residents would be diminished, undoubtedly costing us more to replace than \$39/year!

Clyde also complains that the measure included a reserve fund for the library. Should the library not have a reserve fund? Should a measure be placed on the ballot annually to cover only that year's costs? That's just financially reckless behavior, but Clyde's arguments don't have to make sense when taken as a whole as he is just trying to stoke an emotion, make you angry, and get you to vote no.

Clyde doesn't want you to think. I do.

I don't think you will fall for Clyde's litany of hokey. I think Orinda's voters are smart enough to do their own research and will come to their own conclusions. Doing so will lead you to value the Orinda Library and to the recognition that what we get for the cost is a tremendous value.

Think about it for yourself. Visit the library. Place the extra \$12/year in context of the benefit, and I think you will come to the same conclusion that I did.

I'm voting yes on Measure E to keep the Orinda Library open 60 hours a week and

available for students, seniors, and for people like you and me.

— Alex P. Evans

Library Offers Something for Everyone

What I love most about the Orinda Library is that it offers something for everyone in my family. My husband and I are amazed by its selection of all the most current print and audio books, and we check out more than our fair share regularly. As my children have grown from toddlers singing "Skinna Marinky Dinky Dink, Skinna Marinky Do" at Toddler Lapsit to elementary school students writing book reports, we have always found great books and a comfortable environment. I will gladly vote "yes" on Measure E to provide additional funding to support keeping the library open 60 hours a week and continuing its excellence in our community.

— Maureen Brown

Keep Library Open

Almost seven years ago, the community of Orinda came together for the opening of the new Orinda Library. Through countless volunteer hours, donations from so many throughout our community of time, talent, and money—we built our new library and then, through the additional generosity of Orindans voting to pass Measure H, our library opened for 60 hours a week. No longer would the community depend on the generosity of some to adopt an hour (making a donation equal to the cost of keeping the library open an hour). Orindans voted to make this wonderful resource — our library — available every day.

On June 3, we will be able to continue our commitment.

Through their careful study over the past few months, the Friends of the Orinda Library and the city have proposed increasing the parcel tax to \$39. Vote Yes on Measure E to keep our library open the 60 hours a week that we have come to count on. Vote Yes to keep our library open everyday.

— Carol Brown

My First Vote for the Library

This June, I'll be voting in my first election, and it seems appropriate that my first vote will be in support of the Orinda Library. I've always enjoyed spending time at the library. It's a very comfortable and peaceful environment where I've spent

many hours studying and doing homework. I like having it available to me seven days a week, and I feel very fortunate to live in a community that supports this resource. I know some think that the Internet will take the place of books and libraries; but as a student today, I can say with certainty that electronic media is just one tool. Whether information is online or in print, the public library will always remain a primary resource for me.

In this election, I will be voting for Measure E, and I hope others do the same.

— Katherine Rudebusch

Library a Bargain

In Orinda, we are very fortunate to have our outstanding library, used by 94 percent of the population. The very reasonable parcel tax, which we will have the privilege to vote on in June, is a true bargain.

The very modest increase of \$12 a year is less than four lattes in a year, not a month, but a whole year! I encourage all Orinda residents to vote yes.

As senior citizens, we firmly support this small parcel tax increase. Our library is truly one of our most valuable assets, and we will vote yes and continue to enjoy the library, and the expanded hours certainly benefit all of us. A real bargain for seniors.

— Mary and Andy Franklin

Measure E A Good Thing

As an avid reader and book club member, I really appreciate the Orinda Library. Its varied selection of books, audiobooks, CDs, and DVDs provides many hours of enjoyment and education for my family and me. Because it is open 60 hours/seven days a week, I can pop in to browse during the evenings or bring my kids in after school and on weekends to study and use the computers. If the current parcel tax is not renewed with a \$12/year increase for inflation, the library will stay open only 35 hours a week and will not be able to add the books and other media our community needs. Please vote yes on Measure E so our community library can maintain its current hours and excellent selection of books and other materials.

— Susie Epstein

Yes on Measure E

For the past four years, my son and I have paid a visit to the Orinda Public Library every week — reading books together on the little sofa in the kids' area. He is now in kindergarten at Wagner Ranch and is an eager reader who loves books. His sisters, who attend Orinda Intermediate School, also use the library frequently. For them, it is a safe place to meet friends for study groups and one of the only places where they can find copies of their textbooks on hand for homework so they don't have to carry heavy loads in their backpacks. For me, a stay-at-home mom, our library is a wonderful retreat to occasionally find some quiet peaceful time after my husband

returns from work. There is nothing quite like a clean, well-lit place with the freedom to browse through countless books in the evening. I always bring something home for my husband — an old film or a book he always meant to read. If Orinda residents do not pass Measure E, all of these things will no longer be available to us. There is no other place in town which offers so much for so many people.

— Barbara E.M. Sullivan
Orinda Junior Women's Club

What Library Means

What does the Orinda Public Library mean to me? It's a quiet office where I can write for my small freelance business. It's free access to hundreds of thousands of books, magazines, and newspapers to satisfy my obsession with information. It's a cozy, sunlit nook for my children to nurture their love of literature. It's my son's entire kindergarten class sitting quietly on colorful pillows listening to stories. What does the Orinda Library mean to me? It means a whole lot more than \$39 per year! Vote Yes on Measure E, and keep our wonderful Orinda Library open 60 hours per week providing the same resources and services our community cherishes.

— Lisa Rodriguez

Orinda Library – An Incredible Value!

Measure E renews the parcel tax for the Orinda Library and increases it from the current \$27 tax to \$39 to keep up with rising costs. The parcel tax will allow the Orinda Library to maintain its excellent level of service and update materials. When I consider the hundreds of dollars our family has saved just this past year by obtaining books from the library instead of purchasing them, I realize what an incredible value we are getting for our \$39. I urge every voter in Orinda to vote yes on Measure E and keep our library going strong!

— Nancy Booth

No Ending Date for Measure E

The proponents of the proposed Orinda Library Tax neglect to mention that Measure E has no ending date. This tax goes on in perpetuity. Because Measure E has no ending date, the voters' oversight authority is removed. Voters have no influence if this tax is misspent.

It is difficult enough to insure tax money is spent as the voters intend. Without an ending date, there is every opportunity for money to be spent forever as the politicians or administrators desire and not as voters intend. This tax should be renewed every five years so the voters have oversight.

I will vote no in June for this Orinda Bond Measure, which goes on forever because there is no ending date or voter oversight for this tax.

— Bruce Nicolai



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COMMUNITY CENTER CLASSES

Community Classes Improve Quality of Life

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY
Staff Writer

From adult softball leagues to flower arranging to salsa dancing and dog obedience classes, city recreation programs across the state are witnessing an increase in attendance and diversity of classes — for many good reasons.

According to a state survey of Chamber of Commerce members, 95 percent of responding business leaders believe recreation programs improve the quality of life in the community. Eighty percent agreed that rec programs increase nearby property values and help reduce crime while 60 percent said their decision to locate their businesses in a location was



SALLY HOGARTY
Painting instructor and artist Dorothy Davis (L) works with student Krista Stegman.

partially based on community recreation programs.

Catering to citizens of all ages, from toddlers to the elderly, the City of Orinda's recreation programs are busy year-round. They cost anywhere from about \$75 per series of classes into the hundreds, depending on the class.

The Bay Area has a plethora of recreation programs as well as community colleges which cater to people interested in expanding their skills. Orinda resident and art teacher Dorothy Davis is interested in the various reasons people take classes. "Is it because they are changing careers and re-training or are they doing it for fun? Or trying to improve their financial status?" she asks. Davis sees a lot of diversity in her students, who come from all walks of life.

Davis' philosophy is that classes help students develop creative solutions in order to solve problems. "There is a fundamental value in continuing to learn," she says.

Another benefit of recreation classes is that students get to interact with teachers who "have a lot of different styles. Some are cut and dry teachers that stick to a lesson plan, while others cater to the individual needs of a class," she said. Students can find someone who matches their "learning style."

Teachers in the Orinda program range from practicing professionals to retired educators from colleges across the nation to published authors and lecturers.

"We offer programs that reflect the diversity of our area, engaging the community in positive ways for personal growth," says recreation manager Linda Dezzani, adding that the programs help develop both the body and mind. "From studies in literature and writing to basketball and dance, our program offers a variety of opportunity. We offer quality programs that are very unique."

Alison Owens, director of Six Sigma for an upscale convention hotel, can barely list all the classes she's taken, almost 30 in all. From glass fusing to golf, kickboxing, and language classes, Owens keeps busy.

"In some cases, I chose classes to develop potential new career skills and explore other paths (TV production, life coaching, income tax preparation). Other times, it's just something that caught my eye and I wanted to try (knitting, sushi making) or had always longed to do."

While not every class was to her liking, Owens said she "always enjoys learning new things. I am not afraid, though, to drop the class if it isn't what I expected or I'm just not enjoying it. Otherwise, what's the point?" She enjoys the fact that unlike university courses, recreational classes are "much more relaxed. You get to dabble in something and test the waters. The money outlay is usually not too much, so if you don't like it, you can stop and start another class later."

The time factor is also important to Owens, who says that, as opposed to university classes, there is not such a commitment of time. Still, with "the demands of a full-time work and social life, it can be hard to carve out two and a half to three hours a week to take something fun."

Artist Cherry Benzie seeks out classes related to art and writing in order to "keep improving skills and be with others sharing the same interests." She has studied in Orinda, in Lafayette at Acalanes adult education and through private teachers. She enjoys the diversity of offerings and she and her husband take classes in which they share a common interest.

Next on Owens' list: piano, pole dancing, emotional freedom technique, and trapeze

(which she considers a good workout). Metalwork or glass blowing are also on her to-do list.

Owens, who displays a lively sense of humor, said there are other reasons she has for taking classes. "I always walk into the class thinking I'll meet the man of my dreams. However, I think the man of my

"There is a fundamental value in continuing to learn," says instructor Dorothy Davis.

dreams must already know everything, otherwise, wouldn't he be in class, too?"

For more information about what classes are up for grabs, visit www.ci.orinda.ca.us/parksandrec, where the catalog is available in PDF format, or call 254-2445. Free printed catalogs are available at the Community Center and the library.

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POLICE BLOTTER

March 2008

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 105 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 3 incidents.

Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 2 incidents.

All Other Petty Thefts: 5 incidents.

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

All Other Grand Thefts: 2 incidents.

Vehicle Theft: 1 incident.

Residential Burglary: 5 incidents.

Commercial Burglary: 3 incidents.

Vandalism: 2 incidents.

Identity Theft: No reported incidents.

Credit Card Fraud/Forgery: No reported incidents.

Arrests

Possession of Narcotics: 2

Possession of Dangerous Drugs: 1

Possession of a Destructive Device: 1

Warrant Arrest: 7

Driving Under the Influence: 2

Domestic Battery: 1

Commercial Burglary: 1

— Compiled by Jeanette Irving,
Orinda Police Department

◆ **FORUM** from page 5

doctorate degree from the University of California, San Francisco. She served a one-year term on the board of directors of the California State Hospice and Palliative Care Association and a two-year term on the board of trustees of the California

Hospice Foundation, chairing the research committee.

“I hope many will attend so when a critical need arises from a medical problem in their family, they know what help hospice can give to patient and family members alike,” Giers said. For further information call 925-283-8722.

Garden Club Goes Native



SALLY HOGARTY

Orinda Jr. Garden Club members replace non-native plants with drought resistant natives. The group is one of several garden clubs in Orinda that keep our public areas looking beautiful.

By **KIM LARSEN**
Contributing Writer

Mindful of individual and collective impacts on our natural resources, the Orinda Jr. Garden Club took a bold step recently and installed a nearly 100 percent California Native Plant garden in the circle median across from Theatre Square. The club removed water thirsty, non-native plants and created a wonderful ornamental garden that conserves water, does not require chemical fertilizers to enhance the health of plants, and provides a diverse wildlife habitat.

The group's goal was to create a garden that would not only be lovely to look at but also be environmentally conscious. They wanted plants that required little to no irrigation, no chemical fertilizers or pesticides, were low maintenance, and would attract wildlife. To achieve these goals they planted nearly all California Native Plants. It certainly was a group

effort from beginning to end. Garden Club member Lucy Talbot was even able to enlist the help of her son home from college on spring break to do most of the heavy lifting and digging.

Friends of the Orinda Library Book Sale

May 1, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Sorting Room (in garage)
Book Shop (second floor)

The Friends of the Orinda Library will hold their monthly sale on May 1. This is a wonderful opportunity to pick up books for all members of the family at very reasonable prices, and help the Orinda Library at the same time. Don't forget graduation is coming up. That perfect present might be a book!



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FARMERS' MARKET



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Farmers' Market Returns May 3



BARBARA KOBSAR

The weekly Orinda Farmers' Market is back for another season starting Saturday, May 3, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., in front of the Orinda Community Center. "It looks like we're off to another fantastic start," says on-site manager Janice Faust. Growers and vendors will be ready with their just-picked produce and specialty foods for shoppers who appreciate the best there is to make anything from the very easy to the most elaborate meals. Direct from farm-to-fork!



BARBARA KOBSAR
Peter Medina of Medina Farms in Watsonville displays his ripe, red strawberries that will be available at Orinda's Farmers' Market.

Our focus for this issue is the strawberry and avocado – but other top picks for May include artichoke, asparagus, cherries, cilantro, fava beans, green garlic, peas, radishes, rhubarb, spring greens, and spring onions.

Markets are all about buying local, in-season fruits and vegetables. The first flush of California strawberries begins in February and continues through the heavy rains in October or November.

Several growers at the market offer baskets and flats of strawberries. Each week I like to check out varieties – several appear during the season and each offers its own benefits. Camarossa is an all-time favorite for its luscious red color and full-bodied flavor. Seascapes are easy to find at the markets over the season – deep red color and sweet flavor lure me in. Diamante strawberries keep well, and I like their bright sheen. I'm particularly partial to Chandler strawberries – an old-fashioned variety.

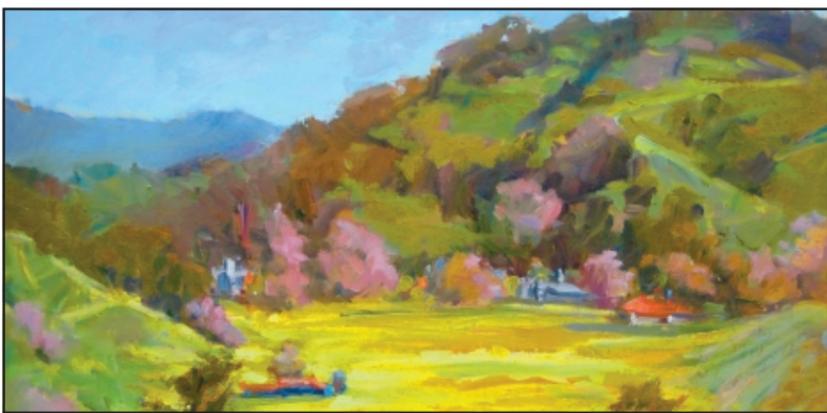
Whatever strawberry I choose for my market basket, it must greet me with an intense aroma and fresh green caps. The size of a strawberry does not affect its flavor. My best advice is to ask the grower behind the stands about what you're buying and what to expect.

My fool-proof method for storing strawberries never wavers. Place unwashed berries in a single layer between paper towels in a moisture-proof container. Refrigerate for 4 to 5 days if necessary.

To prepare strawberries, wash just before using. Water breaks down strawberries quickly – just like the rain – so wash fast and gently in a sink of cool water and scoop them out with your hands to place in a strainer. Hull by removing caps and any tough core with the point of a paring knife or strawberry huller, although I find this gadget challenging and not worth the trouble. Serve whole or sliced. A sprinkle of sugar helps bring out the juices.

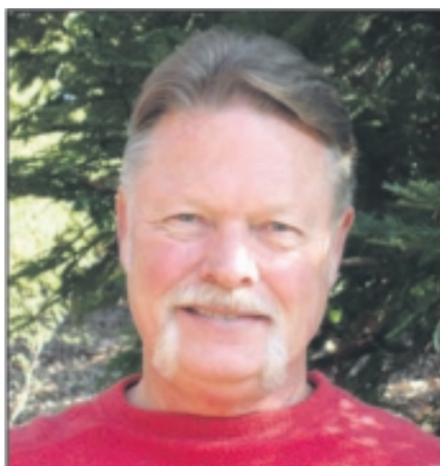
[SEE MARKET page 19]

Orinda Library Gallery Show Features East Bay Fine Artists



MARY LOU CORREIA

Members of the East Bay Fine Artists group (including **Mary Lou Correia's** pastel above) are exhibiting a selection of watercolor, oil, acrylic, and pastel paintings at the Orinda Library Gallery through May 16. The 14-member group has dedicated the show to former president of the group and founder of Gallery Concord, **Karen Mason**.



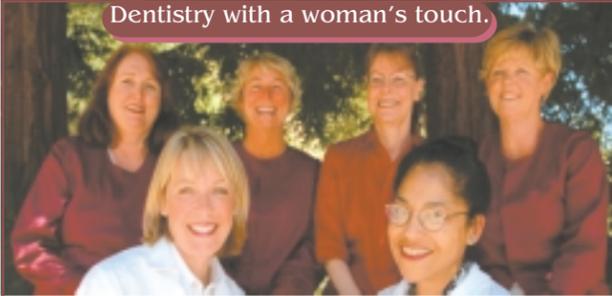
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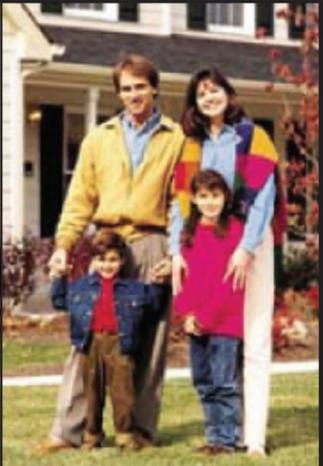


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STUDENT ART

Student Artists Receive Cash Prizes in Competition

By GWEN BURNES
Contributing Writer

This year's Student Visual Arts Competition, juried at the Orinda Library, featured nearly 200 works of art and photographs. The Orinda Arts Council recognized the artistic talents of high school students in Lamorinda with cash prizes and honorable mention.

A panel of nationally known artists and instructors selected this year's winners, who were announced April 18 at an awards party. The exhibit had opened March 24.

The Orinda Arts Council organized the show, which included a hands-on art night focusing on families. It also awarded cash prizes for first, second, and third place finishes.

The council's members wish to thank students, teachers, judges, Orinda Arts Council volunteers, and members of the community who participated and made the event possible.



NANCY DANIELS

Emily Krakoff, a Miramonte senior, won second place with her 3-D art work entitled "House."

2008 Visual Arts Competition Winners:

Photography

1st Place (\$350): **Olivia Moore**, "Chez," Grade 10, Miramonte High School.

2nd Place (\$250): **Andrew Moore**, "Save the World," Grade 11, Miramonte High School.

3rd Place (\$150): **Matt Roe**, "The Baths," Grade 11, Miramonte High School.

Honorable Mention: **Eliot Tang-Smith**, "New Orleans Stairway," Grade 12, Bentley High School. **Alyxa Wenning**, "Sidewalk Closed," Grade 12, Miramonte High School. **Sowmya Murali**, "In Silent Prayer," Grade 11, Miramonte High School. **Michael Gyory**, Untitled, Grade 12, Bentley High School. **Megan Smith**, "Ahead of the Competition," Grade 12, Miramonte High School. **Molly Turrentine**, "Black+White Analog," Grade 12, Bentley High School.

2-D

1st Place (\$350): **Brianna Roberts**, "Woman Resting Chin on Shoulder," Grade 11, Bentley High School.

2nd Place (\$250): **Alexis Daniels**, "Subway," Grade 12, Head Royce School.

3rd Place (\$150): **Nick Kelly**, "Skateboard City," Grade 11, Acalanes High School.

Honorable Mention: **Julia Wong**, "Miyai," Grade 10, Bentley High School. **Eden Castro**, "Kanaloa's Daughter," Grade 12, Orinda Academy. **Julia Cone**, "Vibrant Tomatoes," Grade 12, Campolindo High School. **Ted Weerts**, Untitled, Grade 12, Miramonte High School. **Kate Steffy**, Untitled, Grade 11, Campolindo High School. **Katie O'Brien**, "Crashing Waves," Grade 12, Miramonte High School. **Neggin Afsari**, "Zinat & Abraham," Grade 12, Campolindo High School. **Tina Curiel**, "Track Practice Cancelled," Grade 10, Campolindo High School.

3-D

1st Place (\$350): **Anna London**, "Uprooted," Grade 12, Miramonte High School.

2nd Place (\$250): **Emily Krakoff**, "House," Grade 12, Miramonte High School.

3rd Place (\$150): **Stark Pister**, "Pardusaureum," Grade 11, Miramonte High School.

Honorable Mention: **Glenn Launer**, "A Major Award!" Grade 12, Miramonte High School. **Devon Lindsley**, "Flow," Grade 12, Miramonte High School. **Megan Isaacs**, "Meditation Chair," Grade 12, Miramonte High School. **Michael Nohr**, "Good to be King," Grade 11, Miramonte High School.

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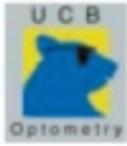
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A BROTHER'S TRIBUTE

My Greatest Achievement Began with a Heartbreak

By VINCENT LIANG
Contributing Writer

It was a hot day in the middle of August, but to me it felt like Christmas. No snow, no tree, but I was getting a toy none of Santa's elves could make: a baby sister. This new present named Megan was the best I could ask for – something that could never get lost or break in half. With a younger sibling, I had more responsibility, more power, and, best of all, more fun. I made the most of my next six years as an older brother, feeling blessed to be so lucky to have someone to share memories and moments with every day.

Then, disaster struck. One morning, Megan began complaining about soreness in her legs, and suspected that jumping and playing at a spring celebration at her school the night before to be the cause. The day after that, she was clinging to the walls of our hallway just to walk to breakfast. Weeks later, she lay in a hospital bed, hooked up to an IV machine, receiving drugs that made her hair fall out and her nails go dark. Two years later, she had lost a leg.

And where do I fit in all of this? For me, the time was a period of confusion. My little sister – my only sister – was dying. I didn't even hear the word "cancer" until my cousin told me, and that was after Megan's first week in the hospital. When I saw she couldn't run, jump, or even laugh like she used to, I saw the word. When I heard the

screams of pain at night as Megan received multiple shots at home, I heard it. While I rode the Muni for the first time to visit my sister after she had surgery to remove half of her left leg, I realized it. My once invincible toy was broken, and there was little I could do about it.

Before all of this happened, my sister had begun to swim. Once she turned 6, as is almost natural in this community, my parents put her on a swim team, at Miramonte Swim Club, the club I swam for. I felt excited to have my own sister swimming on the same team. Fast forward two years, and this excitement had faded to nothing. Megan had just finished her chemotherapy, was recovering, and trying to get back to a normal life. I lost all hope for reliving those years of running around, playing hide and seek in the closets, or even enjoying a simple board game. My sister's life now rested on a walker and a prosthetic leg, and there was no way she could be as active as she used to be. However, at a swim meet on a gloomy and cloudy weekend, I found a glimmer of hope.

Her name was Mikhaila. She was like any other 16-year-old girl swimming the 100-yard backstroke, but she had only one leg. And she was fast. She was a Paralympian and an inspiration. In her, my parents saw my sister's future. I, on the other hand, was skeptical. I thought it impossible that my sister, who had barely checked out of the hospital, could begin

[SEE MEGAN page 22]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Megan Liang (L), shown here with her brother Vincent, overcame great physical challenges to learn to swim again.

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ORPHANAGE

The Hungry Duckling Feeds Orphans

By IAN HEETDERKS
Staff Writer

Throughout their long career of traveling the world, from Africa to Asia to Latin America, the Olmer family has often made a point of seeking out impoverished communities in the countries they travel to and working toward their improvement. "It deepens the understanding of the world and gives our daughters an opportunity to reach out to other children," says Ksenija Soster Olmer.

A recent trip to Burma proved no exception, where a local guide referred them to a Christian orphanage in dire need of aid. The orphanage receives no government funding, and relies solely upon charitable contributions to pay for their food and public school fees. "These kids endure a day-to-day struggle. They don't even know where their next meal will be coming from, yet they enthusiastically spend their afternoons in a makeshift classroom in the orphanage with dirt floor and cracked blackboard learning English

words," describes Olmer. What food they have, rice and a few vegetables, is cooked in the oil drums that constitute the kitchen, which squat a stone's throw away from the four toilets that service 130 kids. A pre-trip campaign to raise donated goods and money supplied the orphanage with toiletries, school supplies, food, and other necessities, and the response from the children was understandably enthusiastic. "It was like Christmas for these kids, to be getting toothbrushes, chewing gum and stickers." Additional money was also utilized to build a water tank to supply clean water, and to pay the children's school fees for the year. The Olmers soon heard of another Buddhist orphanage nearby, in even worse shape than the first, for which they managed to raise similar donations. Two other Orinda families visited the orphanages each of the following two years, and brought in monies for warm clothes, vitamins, and medicines as well as materials for the construction of a septic tank and new bathrooms.

However, a new wave of thought



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Young residents of a Buddhist orphanage in Burma.

concerning charitable works gave the Olmers pause. Although the initial benefits of charity are obvious, it can have the unintended but still dangerous effect of fostering attitudes of dependence and complacency in the people it helps. Olmer says that she readily recognizes the importance of supplying immediate aid to those in immediate need, but sustained charity would teach the orphans "only how to hold out their hands, rather than learn to help themselves." With this in mind, Olmer remembered the two chickens and single pig dwelling in the orphanage's yard. Although nominally useful for food, pigs require too much food themselves. Chickens, meanwhile, are unsanitary and unhygienic. However, she did recall an ancient practice still prevalent in Asia: keeping large flocks of ducks, a popular form of sustainable agriculture. Ducks are natural followers, and an entire flock of 200 ducks can be easily herded by a single

young boy to a rice paddy, where they feed on the snails and bugs that threaten rice. Meanwhile, the duck herder would be free to attend school, paid for in part by the revenue for his services, only having to return in the evening to herd the ducks back home.

In order to allow the orphans to partake in this ancient tradition, the Olmers founded the Hungry Duckling, a website committed to buying them their own ducklings. Ducks would provide eggs for food and income, with the added benefit of clean and simple upkeep. Once the orphanage's flock is well-supplied, plans are in place to build a rice paddy to provide more food and another saleable commodity. Most importantly, every duck and row of rice would bolster the orphans' understanding of how to survive on their own, instead of breeding a dependence on charity. Thus, the Olmers' project does not "ask for money, but rather for an investment."

With the help of the Lantern Projects, an organization started by Gail Anderson Uilkema, a former superintendent of schools, tax-deductible donations to the Hungry Duckling may be made through its website, <http://thehungryduckling.googlepages.com>. A donation of \$10 is enough to buy a duck. Orinda Books lent its enthusiastic support to the project in March. A table was erected in the store featuring children's books, many of them about ducklings, as well as information about the Hungry Duckling. Furthermore, the bookstore donated 10

[SEE BURMA page 18]

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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Two Miramonte Students Named "Climate Champions"

By ELIZABETH FREEMAN
Contributing Writer

While only 15 students concerned about climate change were chosen from throughout the state for a major award from the state air board and the British Council, two turned out to be from Miramonte High School: Devin Finzer and Patrick Ouziel.

Air Resources Board chairman Mary Nichols and the British Council introduced California's 15 high school "Climate Champions" this spring during a rooftop ceremony at the Cal EPA Building in Sacramento.

Based on a similar program started in the United Kingdom, the California Climate Champions will educate peers, fellow students, and communities on the impact of climate change and suggest steps they can take at the individual level to reduce their carbon emissions. Typical measures include energy efficiency steps at home, recycling, and encouraging carpooling and public transit.

"These amazing, inspirational teens have

rightfully accepted global warming as the challenge of their generation, and they want to lead the charge on solutions," said Nichols. "While ARB will take care of the regulatory approach to cutting California's greenhouse gas emissions, we'll be counting on the champions to help affect change household to household."

ARB and British Council staff interviewed more than two dozen high school students – and reviewed many more applications – in selecting the 15 teenagers. The judges selected the winners based on their knowledge of the topic, their enthusiasm to affect change, and their communications skills.

Finzer and Ouziel will join the 13 other California Climate Champions to participate in a "climate camp" this summer and engage in an online peer network to share ideas and encourage others to get involved.

Over the course of the next year, each of the champions will develop and follow through with a project to raise awareness about climate change in their own schools or communities.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Patrick Ouziel (L) and Devin Finzer were chosen to participate in a project to raise awareness of climate changes and global warming.

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Anna Waddill, Alex Hadas, Jordan Meyers, Madeline Vann, James Vale, and Tommy Meyers of the Miramonte Concert Choir performed at the Educational Foundation of Orinda's Celebration of the Arts. The annual fundraiser contributes funding for the visual and performing arts at Orinda's four elementary schools as well as Orinda Intermediate School and Miramonte High School.

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

Why are we so obsessed with American Idol?

Andra Lim



Why do 30 million people tune in every week to watch *American Idol*? Why, when "American Idol" is Googled, do 25 million results pop up, whereas when "war in Iraq" is typed in, only 10 million results pop up? Is *American Idol* more important than an ongoing conflict that has resulted in thousands of deaths?

Apparently, yes.

American Idol makes us feel as if we have a say, as if our vote counts. It's like a presidential election with a theme song. Americans across the nation cast their votes. Sometimes the voting system is faulty (busy phone lines/Florida incident 2000). Sometimes the wrong person wins (Taylor Hicks/the current president). But there is always, always, a juicy scandal (Corey Clark and Paula Abdul "affair"/Alberto Gonzales' dismissal of U.S. attorneys).

Unlike regular TV shows, where we have no control over what happens, we are the *only* ones who decide who stays and who goes on *Idol*. Power is addictive, and with *Idol*, we have the power to either ruin or keep afloat the dreams and hopes of 12 people. *American Idol* makes each and every one of us demigods.

American Idol is what we have in common. Not our Founding Fathers, not

the Constitutional Convention, but whether Chris Daughtry should have gotten eliminated and did you hear what Simon said to that one girl? Last spring break, I was standing in an elevator in Mexico with a woman and her two teenaged sons. After a few silent seconds, the woman asked, "Did you hear that Sanjaya's still in on *American Idol*?" I recalled out loud that Gina was eliminated the past week and the conversation flowed from there.

"Apparently, Sanjaya's predicted to come in second," she said.

The son wearing a plain white shirt grunted.

The muttering son wearing a World of Warcraft sweatshirt, "I don't watch that crap."

World of Warcraft son does have a point. It's hard to watch *Idol* without realizing that it's completely shallow and commercialized, and that maybe we should be participating in more intellectually stimulating activities, such as reading a book. But reading books takes brainpower, processing what the characters do and say, predicting the ending, and trying to figure out the symbolism, whereas in order to watch *Idol*, you need the same brainpower as, say, a worm.

[SEE IDOL page 18]

Orinda Junior Women's Club Announces Winners of Youth Ink

By LISA RODRIGUEZ
Contributing Writer

Open to all sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students who live or attend school in Orinda, Youth Ink received 60 submissions to the annual writing contest. A panel of local professional writers, Melissa Manlove, Scott Ostler, Yvonne Prinz, and Ginger Wadsworth, selected the following students for special recognition: First Place of \$250: **Lauren Dahlberg-Seeth**, OIS, Grade 8, for "The Walls Are Mine;" Second Place of \$125: **Tamar McCollom**, OIS, Grade 8, for "The Importance in Insignificance;" and Third Place of \$75: **Hanne Andersen**, Julia Morgan School for Girls, Grade 8, for "My Favorite Place."

The following individuals were selected by the judges to receive an honorable mention. Each will be awarded with a \$25 gift certificate: **Miriam Griswold**, OIS, Grade 8, for "Sleeping Playground;" **Allison**

Light, OIS, Grade 8, for "Somewhere Over the Rainbow;" **Margot Mai**, OIS, Grade 6, for "Cooking with My Mother;" **Marina Mai**, OIS, Grade 8, for "The Studio;" **Lillian Malmberg**, OIS, Grade 7, "The Club;" **Evan McAvenia**, OIS, Grade 6 for "Bed;" **Kelly Noah**, OIS, Grade 8, for "From Where I Stand;" **Sarah Sachs**, OIS, Grade 8, for "The Day U Left;" **Ashley See**, St. Perpetua, Grade 8, for "Blackberries with Sugar on Top;" and **Michelle Wu**, OIS, Grade 6, for "The Perfect Place for Me."

"This year's Youth Ink entries had distinctive voices and celebrated youth, protested the encroachment of suburbia on nature, articulated fear and loss of a loved one, and celebrated the safety and realness of family life in contrast to the social pressures at school," said Maureen Brown, president of the Orinda Junior Women's Club. "We are pleased Youth Ink was the catalyst for these talented young writers to share their thoughts."

◆ BACKYARD from page 2

in the evening and sometimes in the middle of the afternoon. Not only was the coffee delicious (they offer decaf and are open 24/7), the street musicians added greatly to the ambiance. Two musicians – playing violin and guitar – were particularly enjoyable.

If you find that you need a little more sustenance than doughnuts and coffee, there are so many wonderful restaurants that it will make your head spin. For traditional New Orleans' cuisine, try Mother's Restaurant. A legend around town, Mother's serves 90,000 pounds of jambalaya, a quarter of a million biscuits, and a spicy 1,500 gallons of Creole mustard each year. For over 22 years, Miss Oda Mae Peters ran the kitchen. Miss Peters may have passed on, but her legacy continues, not only in the menu, but also in the presence of her five nieces and great nieces who work there today. I must admit I tried most of the local delicacies and went back for seconds on the bread pudding in brandy sauce. Other famous New Orleans foods to be savored at Mother's include the po'boy and mofaletta sandwich, and crawfish etouffee.

For an elegant, not to mention superb meal, try Emeril's in the warehouse district. Owned by the famous chef Emeril Lagasse, the restaurant boasts Southern favorites as well as unique creations including oyster crusted Atlantic salmon and tuna bacon wrapped asparagus. Also a plus was the very friendly, accommodating wait staff — from the manager down to the bus boy —

all eager to answer our questions and to share information about their city.

This most walkable of cities also has streetcar service (most of it is back in service since Katrina) and taxis in case you want to conserve your energy for eating and dancing. If walking, be sure to carry a map. The street names can be a little confusing especially when they change at Canal Street. The reason for the name change is that in the 1800s New Orleans was really two separate cities – the French Quarter on one side of Canal Street, and the "American sector" on the uptown side. Each had its own government and laws and street names. The French and Americans would meet on the Canal Street median, known as "neutral ground," to conduct business.

If you prefer tours, New Orleans offers a plethora including voodoo and haunted mortuary ghost tours. I went on a walking tour that included several museums – the downtown area features a World War II Museum as well as a Children's Museum – and the city's oldest cemetery. For a tour of the city from the water, a Mississippi cruise is just the ticket. Several ornate paddle wheelers will take you on mid-day or dinner cruises. And to experience the city's fine architecture, a tour of the garden district with its historic neighborhoods and graceful mansions is a must.

But, the most memorable aspect of New Orleans for me is its people. A friendly, fun-loving, and resilient population (who else would live in a city below sea level), residents of New Orleans know how to slow down, take off that wrist watch, and enjoy life.



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YOUTH GROUP / GLORIETTA

Santa Maria Youth Lend Helping Hands

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

Helping Christopher Rodriguez, the 10-year-old who was paralyzed from the waist down when a stray bullet hit him while at his first piano lesson, caught the attention of the junior high youth at Santa Maria Church. Together, with the Women's Guild at the Orinda church, they organized a bake sale on a recent weekend which netted \$2,360 for the Christopher Rodriguez Fund.

Gail Gabriel, coordinator of the youth group, explains, "The kids really identified with Christopher, who is just a bit younger than they, and the fact that he can't walk now and how difficult that must be for him. So, they baked the cakes with parents help." It became a family parish project with many participating. One fifth grade boy brought brownies he'd just taken out of the oven. Parishioners donated money, too.

"Everyone has been interested in Christopher's progress and expressed happiness that he was able to leave Children's Hospital March 4, says Gabriel. "However, he's still in a lot of pain and needs a wheelchair to get around. We all talked about how this occurred just over the hill from Orinda, and how it might happen to anyone. It was a project we could 'touch and feel;' one that tugged at our heartstrings."

Both the junior and senior high groups participate monthly in Sandwiches on

Sunday.

The youngsters choose from items to bring such as a pound of meat, loaf of bread, bag of fruit, or boxed juice drinks. They gather, pack lunches, then take BART to the Civic Center station and individually hand out the lunches to the homeless. They also collect socks, hats, and other warm items during the winter. "Again, it's a hands-on project that brings a powerful awareness of the homeless problem that is so close to home," Gabriel says.

Further afield, the senior high group, under the direction of Carlo Fiatarone, just returned from a week in Leon in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico. The 10 high school and four college students, along with two adults, stayed at a mission site operated by the Salesian Order, where 60 homeless boys live.

They performed work such as painting the boys' houses and the wall which goes around the campus. On that wall, they helped with a mural one of the mission boys had designed, which included a cross with the words, Santa Maria Church. Donations of new packages of shirts, socks and underwear, plus a donation of \$1,000 with the aid of the church's Social Justice Committee, provided more help for the boys.

"The best part of the trip was our interaction with the boys, who ranged in age from 10 to 15 years old. Teaching them English, playing in the playground, and eating with them formed strong bonds.



CARLO FIATARONE

Savannah Olivier (R), a 15-year-old Miramonte freshman, plays music with residents at the Catholic mission site for street children in Leon, Mexico.

There were many tears when we left," Fiatarone recalls.

Annalisa Fiatarone, the group leader's sister, vividly remembers one boy with whom she talked. "When I asked him about his mother he pointed to the sky and said 'Cielo' meaning heaven. Then, he said his dad had abandoned the family. He began using drugs when he was 12 because he felt so left out. Now, he's getting a fresh start with people who care and he's happier.

It's hard for me to imagine living a life like his," she says.

Certainly stories like this helped the Santa Maria youth become more appreciative of what they have, realizing that many of these kids have nothing, yet they said they never heard any boy complain about his circumstances. "The journey helped give our group a new perspective," Fiatarone explains. "I wanted them to experience something more than a fun-time spring break, something on which they could look back and talk about in the context of their faith. I feel this goal was accomplished."

Glorietta Presents *Willy Wonka, Jr.* May 2-3



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Director Ron Pickett teaches his Oompa Loompas to lunge walk with "choo choo" arms during a rehearsal of *Willy Wonka, Jr.* The show takes place May 2 (4 p.m. and 7 p.m.) and May 3 (3 p.m. and 7 p.m.) at Glorietta Elementary School. Two casts of 34 students each alternate performances along with eight tech-crew members and a small orchestra.

As Glorietta music teacher, a vocal coach, professional actor, and amazingly talented director, Pickett knows how to empower children and tap into their creative potential. This is Pickett's 10th production at the school. Tickets are \$5-10 and can be reserved at willywonkatix@yahoo.com or at the door.

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CONTINUATIONS

◆ **IDOL** from page 16

American Idol brings us all together. Have we rallied to end the war in Iraq? Not really, unless you count bumper stickers and blogging. But fans of Howard Stern's radio show decided to rally together to keep Sanjaya Malakar, who once sported seven ponytails fashioned into a fauxhawk ("I presume there was no mirror in your dressing room," said Simon) in the competition for weeks.

American Idol is America's practice run at rallying together because right now, outside of *Idol*, we're doing a pretty poor job of it. In the coming years, we the people will have to unite to fight global warming and other major issues that arise. The Sorting Hat in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* relayed the same message: Unite or die.

And if an inane television show can unite us, there's more than a fair chance that a problem that could eventually submerge Lower Manhattan could do the same.

Even presidential candidates recognize the impact *Idol* could have on the future of our society. According to the San Diego

Union Tribune, on a radio show on WOKQ-FM, a caller asked Senator Hillary Clinton what America could do about Sanjaya Malakar.

Clinton, knowing the controversy this question covered, played it safe, answering the question without really answering the question.

"That's the best question I've been asked in a long time," Clinton said. "Well, you know, people can vote for whomever they want. That's true in my election, and it's true on *American Idol*."

Barack Obama also got involved, launching his presidential exploratory committee the day of *Idol's* season premiere.

Even House Speaker Nancy Pelosi acknowledged *Idol*. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Pelosi addressed the Sanjaya issue in an appearance on NBC's *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno*, where she apologized for being late, saying she had to cast a critical vote – for Sanjaya.

But, in the end, we keep tuning in because it's a) fun watching people make complete fools of themselves and b) fun watching Simon insult said fools.

◆ **CELEBRATE** from page 3

inception, will still be playing cornet alongside all of the other Lamorindans who enjoy dusting off their instruments once a year to bravely lead the way in the parade.

Other music highlights include members of the East Bay Banjo Club – who previously represented Orinda on their tour to the Czech Republic on behalf of the Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation. They will be bringing their happy music to the Library Plaza after the parade, as will the Grace Woods Trio. Inside the Community Park, the Wall of Blues will entertain the crowd as they browse the food and beverage, arts and crafts, and other booths.

Arts and Crafts on Display

For the first time, our Independence Day revelry will stretch beyond the park and into the Library Plaza, where festive tents will feature arts and crafts vendors. Among them will be Christina Shook Photography, who specializes in creative storytelling and lifestyle photography, Carmel Dewies Blore, whose landscape paintings capture the vibrant color and beauty of Lamorinda, and Hats by Deb, whose creative headwear

includes beautifully jeweled visors and caps.

Something Special for the Kids – and Grown-ups, Too

For the younger set, Orinda Motors will be bringing a Hot Wheels speedway to the Community Park for wannabe NASCAR enthusiasts to race against one another for fun and prizes. Outside in the Community Center parking area, their "Parade of Classic Cars" will be on display after they roll through the parade. This mini-version of Orinda Motor's annual Classic Car Show is sure to delight both young and old.

Opportunities Abound

There are still many opportunities for community members to become involved in Orinda's 25th Anniversary Independence Day celebration. Booth space is still available for arts and crafts vendors and for non-profit community organizations. Sponsorships can be had for the "Reach for the Stars" gala, for games and activities in the park, for entertainment, and for the city-wide 4th of July banners. For information visit the Orinda Association website at www.orindaassociation.org.



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◆ **ART** from page 7

Kati Casida

Another Bay Area artist with a Nordic heritage, Kati Casida grew up on a remote farm in Wisconsin. The idea of making large-scale sculptures came to her during summer school in Norway when she was invited to visit Ørnulf Bast, a famous artist, at his studio near Oslo. He had heavy cranes that pulled and lifted huge blocks of marble into place and emerging from these were remarkable figures. This experience, along with a modern dance class taken at the University of Wisconsin, in which she learned how to "cut through space," and her interest in Matisse's book *Jazz*, served to set her path. Casida's large, brightly colored ribbons of steel are fluidity exemplified and are featured in many public art spaces.

Bill Wareham

From his earliest years as a fine arts student at University of California Berkeley, Wareham has used surplus materials to create new life for old things. A recipient of many awards and honors, one of the most unique recognitions he has received has been being named as the Artist in Residence for the San Francisco Recycling Center. Under Wareham's

creative hands, sections of rusted coil springs, crumpled hot water heater tanks, twisted angle iron, a discarded bumper section and other auto parts are shaped into dynamic and colorful geometric abstractions. "There is so much activity ... so much history in these things," says Wareham. That they become something new and beautiful testifies to his ability to transform the mundane into the remarkable.

The lectures are free to the community and refreshments will be served. For more information contact the Community Center at 254-2445.

◆ **BURMA** from page 14

percent of the special selection's March sales.

"So many people have been asking about a visit to the orphanages that I am thinking about organizing a special voluntourism trip to Burma at the end of next year," says Olmer. The trip would incorporate cultural highlights as well as continue the Olmer family's tradition of charity work by paying visits to orphanages, bringing in supplies, and especially training local volunteers to teach English and the basics of hygiene and health. Interested readers can email Ksenija directly at Xenija@aol.com.

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AROUND THE TOWN

Upcoming Plant Sale to Support the Bret C. Harte Young Directors Fund

By IAN HEETDERKS
Staff Writer

Spring has arrived in all its splendor, bringing the opportunity to enliven flagging gardens with some fresh plant life, or just find a great gift in time for Mother's Day. In order to fulfill local Orindans' plant needs, Orinda residents Greg and Lee Bressette are holding their 3rd annual plant sale at their home, 73 Coral Drive, Orinda, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 3. A tempting variety of plants will be available for sale, for inside as well as outside the home. The Bressettes are ready to supply any spring project, from beautifying surrounding landscape, to starting or enriching a garden, or even simply sprucing up the home and kitchen with some flowers and herbs.

The plant sale also benefits a local charity organization. Three years ago, a young Orindan named Bret Harte was killed in a

car accident. An aspiring director, Harte was involved extensively with the Berkeley Repertory Theater, as well as other local theaters. To honor his memory, his parents established an internship through Berkeley Rep called the Bret C. Harte Young Directors Fund. The internship is dedicated to helping youth similar to Bret, who share his energy and passion for theater. The fund is supported entirely by the generosity of the Berkeley Rep and other donors. Currently, a \$100,000 goal has been set to fund an endowment in Bret's name, \$60,000 of which has so far been raised. All proceeds from the plant sale go directly to the fund, so it is a great way to support a very worthy charity. "People are going to buy plants anyway," says Lee, "so they might as well support a local cause at the same time."

More information on the Bret C. Harte Fund, as well as the plant sale, can be found at www.bretchartefund.org.

◆ MARKET from page 11

Strawberry-serving ideas are endless, and the fruit is good for you, too. Eight medium-size strawberries contain 140 per cent of the USDA recommended daily allowance for Vitamin C. They're a good source of folic acid, they're fat-free, and low in calories. Leave the caps on and let the kids dip them in their favorite yogurt, or slice them over cereal. Add them to fruit or green salads for flavor and color, enjoy them with rhubarb in a pie, or the ever-popular strawberry shortcake.

May is the month to celebrate avocados – Cinco de Mayo is the No. 1 consumption day of the year for one of my favorite fruits. The Hass variety is the best for making guacamole because of its creamy flesh, but if the mood strikes to make a luscious salad, wait for a few months when the summertime Reed avocado will be the perfect partner.

Avocados reach full maturity only after they are off the tree. This ability to remain on the tree without affecting the quality conveniently extends the season – most arrive at market still firm and unbruised. Choose those that are heavy for their size and allow them to ripen uncovered, at room temperature, for three to five days. To speed up this process, put the avocados in a loosely closed brown paper bag with an apple. The natural ethylene gas emitted by the apple ripens the avocado quicker. Ripe avocados yield to gentle palm pressure. The pebbly skin of Hass turns from green to almost black while the Reed variety keeps its green skin. Ripe avocados may be stored

in the refrigerator — but for no more than a few days.

Once the yellow-green flesh of avocados is exposed to air it darkens quickly, so cut just before serving or sprinkle exposed surfaces with a squeeze of lemon or lime.

For more information, go to www.ccfm.org or call the market hotline at 925-431-8361.

Barbara Kobsar may be reached at cotkitchen@aol.com



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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bret Harte, who was an active member of the Orinda Village Starlight Players, died in a car accident three years ago.

Orinda Senior Village Walkathon

The residents of Orinda Senior Village will have its annual walkathon fundraiser on May 3. Money raised is used to provide outings for these active senior residents of our community. It also is used throughout the year for various entertainment and celebrations that take place at the village, located across from the Orinda Community Church.

Anyone interested in supporting these dedicated walkers may contact Eartha Newsong at 925-258-9855. Donations can also be mailed to Orinda Senior Village Association, 20 Irwin Way, Orinda, CA 94563. Please put "walkathon" in the memo line of your check.

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AROUND THE TOWN

HOME SWEET HOME

Insider Tips from a Contractor

Part 1: Our Favorite Clients

Janice Gatlin



In this two-article series, you'll get the inside scoop from one contractor's point of view.

It's not always obvious, but we contractors are interviewing you as a prospective client while you're interviewing us. Surprised? Well, we're all people, and there are as many "bad" clients as there are "bad" contractors. We want some of the same things: we want to know that we can trust you, that we're going to have a good rapport, and that you'll feel like you got what you paid for.

Referrals are the best because we've worked for someone you know so there is already some level of trust. Clients should always check references so that they feel good about who they're working with and

confident about the results.

Contractors look for clients who are clear on what they want done. Don't be shy about asking for input on the technical ways to approach a project from your contractor. But the design and aesthetic choices need to be yours or your designer's. It's also important that clients know what finish materials they want to use or, at least, narrow the choices of materials to three so that your contractor can provide an accurate bid. Your choice of materials has a great impact on labor costs.

Clients should understand that construction is not a science. Homes have quirks: things are out of square, even in new homes. Older homes have settled, some things are out of code and previous work may have been done by others. It's a process of discovery and some surprises.

It also helps when clients don't change their minds mid-project. Contractors plan jobs carefully in stages, particularly if it involves helpers. Disrupting that flow usually makes the project take longer, which means higher labor costs.

Everything works much smoother if clients trust their contractor's ability. If you don't trust the contractor you're interviewing for any reason, don't hire him or her. Projects rarely go well when there

Move of the Month

Karate Kid "Wax on, Wax off"



SALLY HOGARTY

Targets shoulders, back, triceps, core, and glutes.

Start in push up position (hands under shoulders, back straight, abs engaged) with a towel under each palm. Keep body still, circle right arm clockwise (wax on) and then counter clockwise (wax off). Repeat on the left. Perform 3 sets of 16, each rep on each hand is counted as one.

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is a lack of trust. Trust really becomes important when something unexpected arises. That's when the client and contractor have to work well together to solve the problem.

Being flexible and understanding that there are usually several ways of accomplishing any given thing will make your project go smoother. Different contractors have different approaches, usually equally valid. Feel free to ask why each proposes a certain approach. Be sure to tell your contractor if you have a concern or question. Things in construction are best dealt with as they happen, not after.

The biggest secret? More than anything,

contractors love clients who appreciate the hard work and pride that they exhibit in their work. Just like you, contractors aren't perfect and not every thing they do is perfect. But they strive for that end and your appreciation and recognition makes you their favorite client.

Next time, you'll learn the answers to questions like: why didn't the guy who came to look at my project ever give me a bid?

Janice Gatlin is a local, licensed general contractor and owner of *Always the Best Home Repairs and Construction* www.ATBRemodel.com. She can be reached at 925-254-9545.

One Special Guitar Will Make a Difference to Underprivileged Youth

The number 100 Handle guitar, the last of the numbered limited edition guitars from XOX Audio Tools, is being auctioned to the most generous bidder with all proceeds donated to Guitars Not Guns (GNG).

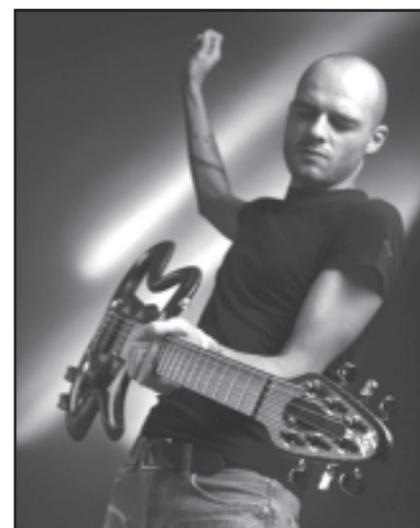
Founded by Orinda resident Frank Darling, GNG is a non-profit organization that provides free guitars and free lessons to foster children, at-risk youth, and other deserving children. This music program is an alternative to violence.

"We were so impressed with GNG that we had to contribute," explains Peter Solomon, Director of XOX.

As of April 21 the innovative, award-winning guitar has been displayed on eBay. It will be auctioned on May 1, 2008.

For more information on GNG, go to www.guitarsnotguns.org or call Darling at 925-330-4425.

—Sally Hogarty, Editor



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The 100 Handle guitar will be auctioned to benefit Guitars Not Guns.

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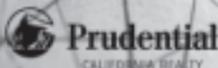
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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

MAY

- 1 **Friends of the Orinda Library** Spring Book Sale, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Orinda Library sorting room and bookshop, 254-2184.
Orinda Youth Association Fall Soccer Registration, 10 a.m. to noon, separate boys and girls divisions from pre-K to 8th grade. Also, 5/6 and 5/10, 253-4204.
- 2 **First Friday Forum**, 1:30 p.m., Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Speaker is Dr. Donna Foliart, an expert in hospice care, 283-8722.
- 3 **Bret C. Harte Young Directors Fund**, Annual Spring Plant Sale, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 73 Coral Drive. All proceeds fund Berkeley Repertory Theatre's artistic internship, www.BretCHarteFund.org.
- 7 **Rotary Pilot Talk**, noon, Orinda Community Center, with John Piggott, who will discuss his father/son air show performance at San Francisco Fleet Week, 254-3151.
- 8 **Orinda Books Author Appearance**, 4 p.m., Donna Foote will discuss and sign copies of *Relentless Pursuit: A Year in the Trenches with Teach for America*, 254-7606.
- 10 **Orinda Rotary** Frank Isola Field Day for Orinda students, 9 a.m., Del Rey Elementary School. Call your own school office for details.
- 12 **Orinda Books Author Appearance**, 4 p.m., Marjorie Price will discuss and sign copies of *A Gift from Brittany*, 254-7606.
- 14 **Rotary Presentation**, noon, Orinda Community Center, with Horst Rademacher, writer of "Travels with Horst," 254-2222.
- 16 **Cal Shakes Theatre Square Mixer**, 5:30 p.m., Theatre Square, outside. 510-548-3422.
- 17 **Meet the Artists**, 3 to 5 p.m., Orinda Community Center. A lecture in conjunction with the year-long Artspace Orinda outdoor sculpture exhibition, 254-2445.
Orinda Books Author Appearance, 1 p.m., Colette O'Brien will discuss *Time and Transformation: A Novel of Mayan Mysticism*, 254-2606.
Lamorinda Arts Alliance Spring Open Studios, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., also 5/18. Artists, including several Orinda artists, open their homes/studios for demonstrations. Email JoAnn Lieberman at olabambola@sbcglobal.net for exact locations.
- 20 **Orinda Books World Affairs Book Group**, 3 p.m., for discussion of *In Spite of the Gods: The Rise of Modern India* by Edward Luce, 254-2606.
Orinda Books Page by Page Book Group, 7 p.m. Read and discuss *All the King's Men* by Robert Penn Warren, 254-2606.
Orinda Books Orinda Owls, 7 p.m. Read and discuss *Lost City Radio* by Daniel Alarcon, 254-2606.
- 21 **Rotary Presentation**, noon, Orinda Community Center, with Ken Woznak, "From the Ground Up: 51 Years in the Construction Business, 254-2222.
- 28 **California Shakespeare Festival**, *Pericles*, through 6/22. For information visit www.calshakes.org or call 510-548-3422. For tickets, 510-548-9666.
Rotary Presentation, noon, Orinda Community Center, with James Hale, "Native American Cultural Pre-History of Contra Costa County," 254-2222.
- 30 **Orinda Village Starlight Players**, Agatha Christie mystery *Murder on the Nile*, 8:30 p.m., Orinda Community Center Amphitheater, Fridays and Saturdays through 6/28, 253-1191.
- 31 **WomenSing**, Elemental Quartet, 8 p.m., Trinity Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek, featuring Jeffers' *Indian Singing*. Also June 1, 4 p.m., First Congregational Church, Berkeley, 925-974-9169 or www.womensing.org.

AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless specified.

- 3 **Saturday Morning Live!** 11 a.m., Toddler Alcove. Family story time for 3- to 5-year-olds. Repeats 5/10 and 5/17.
- 6 **Peek-a-boo Time**, 10 a.m., Library Tutoring Room. Stories, songs, rhymes and rhythms for babies (0-12 months). Repeats 5/13.
Toddler Lapsit, 10 a.m., Gallery Room. Bounces, stories, songs for children up to 3 years old. Repeats at 10:30 a.m. Also, 5/7, 5/13, and 5/14.
Fireside Chat, 7 p.m., with Berkeley Rep on their upcoming production of *Figaro*.
- 16 **Bookmaking for Babies**, 10 a.m., main library, workshop for making a simple ABC book out of everyday materials.
- 17 **Yuyi Morales**, an author illustrator, 1 p.m., titles include *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*, written by Kathleen Krull and, most recently, *Little Night Nochecita*.
Make a Mini-Book, 2 p.m., drop-in program for children first grade and up.
- 18 **Joey Altman**, 11 a.m., the local chef and host of a KRON-TV show, Bay Cafe, has written *Without Reservations: How to Make Bold, Creative, Flavorful Food at Home*.
Reading Festival Reception, 1 p.m., read *Family Garden* to celebrate the First Annual Reading Festival, called "Relax, Recharge, Rethink - READ!"
- 21 **Meet the Author**, 7 p.m., Kelly Corrigan will discuss her *New York Times* best selling book, *The Middle Place*, which chronicles her family's struggle with cancer.
- 22 **Story Swap for Adults**, 7 p.m.

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

CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

Acalanes Union High School District

First and third Wednesdays, district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette, 7:30 p.m.

City Council

First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.ci.Orinda.ca.us.

Historic Landmarks Committee

Fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, public is welcome, for information, 788-7323.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.

Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees

Second Monday, 4 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road, www.orinda.k12.ca.us.

Planning Commission

Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, 253-4210.

Parks and Recreation Commission

Second Wednesday, 7 p.m., Community Center, room 7, 254-2445.

CALENDAR BY CHRIS LAVIN

Send calendar items to chrislavin@earthlink.net

Earth, Water, Fire, Air, a WomenSing Concert

By LYNDA LEONARD

Contributing Writer

In their May and June concerts, WomenSing presents *Elemental Quartet*, an exploration of Earth, Water, Fire and Air and their intersection with music, featuring Ron Jeffers' powerfully ritualistic *Indian Singing*, the mystical flow of Holst's *Hymn to the Waters*, Elgar's fiery love song, *My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land*, and popular airs of all time.

WomenSing is pleased to introduce the River of Words (ROW) project at their final concert of the season. WomenSing will be partnering with ROW for the 2008-2009 season's Young Composer's Project.

Using poetry from the ROW collection, WomenSing will commission two Orinda student composers, Ryan Harper and Jack Henry. Their new works will be performed in June 2009.

Harper and Henry were students at Miramonte High School when they participated in a master class with internationally acclaimed composer Libby Larsen. The event was part of a daylong workshop presented by WomenSing in 2006. Larsen will participate in WomenSing's project by mentoring the student composers.

Founded by Robert Hass (former Poet Laureate of the United States) and writer Pamela Michael, ROW has conducted training workshops for educators since 1995, helping them to incorporate observation-based nature exploration and the arts into their work with young people. Each year, in affiliation with The Library of Congress Center for the Book, River of Words conducts an international poetry and art contest for youth. Millions of people around the world see the results of this competition. An exhibit of the artwork will be shown at WomenSing's concerts.

The two performances occur Saturday, May 31, at 8 p.m., Trinity Lutheran Church, and Sunday, June 1, at 4 p.m., First Congregational Church, Berkeley. Tickets are \$25 for premium seating, \$20 general, \$18 senior, and \$10 student/youth 18 and



LYNDA LEONARD

WomenSing members (L-R) Sarajane Houghton, Alison Beck, Kristan Torres, and Jonne Dale gather after their recent performance at St. Mary's College.

under. They are available online at womensing.org, by calling 925-974-9169, or at the door.

Orinda Library Reading Festival

The Orinda Library will join the first county-wide reading festival this month, with more than 50 authors speaking at free events at all 25 libraries over the course of the May 16-17 weekend.

"We're very excited," said Gick, adding that Orinda's own events will include "Bookmaking for Babies," a session for making simple ABC books out of everyday materials, a talk with children's illustrator Yuyi Morales, a workshop on creating a blank mini-book, and an author talk and signing by Joey Altman, local chef and host of a KRON television program, about his new book, *Without Reservations: How to Make Bold, Creative, Flavorful Food at Home*.

Gick recommends checking out the county-wide schedule of author events at www.ccclib.org/reads. Orinda's events, including the library's opening reception May 18, can be found in the calendar listing in this issue.

— Chris Lavin

CLUB MEETINGS

Friends of the Orinda Creeks

Orinda Library, May Room, fourth Wednesday, 8 a.m., 253-1997.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary,

Postino's in Lafayette, 7 a.m. every Friday, 254-0440, ext.463.

Orinda Job's Daughters

Orinda Masonic Center, 9 Altarinda Road, first and third Mondays at 7 p.m. Call Nicki Wandesforde (925) 283-7176 or email nickichef@comcast.net.

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 (see calendar), 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., call 254-8260 for location.

Orinda Woman's Club

Second Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. to noon; call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881.



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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 24

Creek Road, Brown-Cali also offers private lessons.

“The moment you put hands on a puppy, the training has begun. As soon as you bring a puppy home, typically around seven weeks of age, the bond is being established and behavior is being learned,” advises Brown-Cali. “Overall training success depends on the dog’s individual personality and the human’s personality,” she adds.

A wide variety of classes are offered and these include Puppy Head Start, Beginning Obedience, Intermediate Obedience, City Savvy and Tricks Class. A Canine Good Citizen class is another option.

Prior to starting Dog Dynamics, Brown-Cali worked as a legal assistant and volunteered her skills with the Contra Costa County Sheriff Search and Rescue, the California Office of Emergency Services, and California Rescue Dog Association. She has also been a field instructor for Paws with a Cause. “I learn something new from every dog I work with. It is never boring and I also learn a lot from my clients as well. It is a pleasure to work with the public and witness the progression,” says Brown-Cali, who has two dogs herself, Quill and Jet.

At Paws With a Cause, Brown-Cali trained service dogs to assist clients with a disability. “A service dog may travel anywhere in public to help its owner. A service dog is different from a therapy dog, which is trained to be calm and relaxed under different circumstances, such as visiting individuals in hospitals,” says Brown-Cali.

“I love my job, and I am happy to be teaching classes in Orinda. I am looking forward to meeting more people and helping them train their dog,” she adds. For more information about Dog Dynamics, visit the website at www.dogdynamics.org or give Bonnie Brown-Cali a call at 925-229-8200.



JAY YAMADA
Debbie Chinn is the managing director of California Shakespeare Theatre.

Debbie Chinn Begins Seventh Season as Managing Director of Cal Shakes

The California Shakespeare Theatre community includes artists, audience, students, board members, and staff. Its influence continues to be far reaching. Today, third generation patrons attend productions at the Bruns Amphitheater, the Artistic Learning program and New Works, New Communities as well as make significant contributions. Under the direction of managing director Debbie Chinn and artistic director Jonathan Moscone, Cal Shakes operates year-round to bring classics to the stage and to engage young students in the arts.

As managing director, Chinn oversees marketing, budgeting, fundraising operations, public relations, personnel and board development, as well as strategic planning. Prior to joining Cal Shakes, she was volunteer council director at the San Francisco Symphony and directed fundraising and community outreach at the American Conservatory Theatre.

“Fully one-third of California students

do not graduate from high school. We know for a fact that kids who study arts have a higher graduation rate. At Cal Shakes, we want to dispel the myth that art is luxury and fluff. Part of our mission is to strengthen communities by taking theater arts to public schools,” says Chinn. “Providing an artistic outlet and inlet – it runs both ways – is a unique and powerful way to engage a community. Those of us who benefited from a compulsory arts education in middle school and high school understand its relevance. One of the many benefits of arts learning is developing a connection to another human being,” she

says. Chinn also points out that arts integration in schools teaches kids to focus better.

Oakland students developed an adaptation of *Hamlet*, telling their story in their voice. Similarly, students in Salinas created an adaptation of John Steinbeck’s *Pastures of Heaven*, transforming classic literature into a script for a stage production. The Artistic Learning program is a critical resource, especially at the current time when heavy cutbacks in public education funding are being implemented. Cal Shakes continues its enduring relationship with [SEE CHINN page 22]





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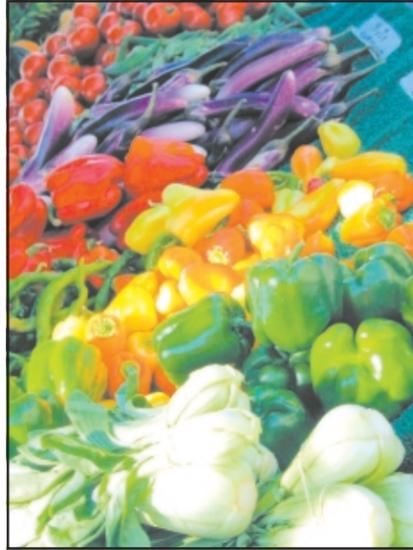
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Delicious Fare at Contra Costa Certified Farmers' Market

The abundance of fresh cherries at the Farmers' Market this weekend might bring to mind Nancy Sinatra singing Lee Hazelwood's lyrics, "Strawberries, cherries, and an angel's kiss in spring, my summer wine is really made from all these things." Sweet and juicy California-grown cherries and apples, as well as lettuce, mushrooms, asparagus, carrots, and tomatoes are just some of the crops that will fill Orinda Way (in front of the Community Center Park) this Saturday and every Saturday through November 15, from 9

a.m. to 1 p.m.

As the seasons transition from spring to summer to fall, you will be guaranteed delightfully fresh fruits and vegetables at this reputable Farmers' Market, which has been operating in Orinda for 11 years. "You are always buying local, California grown produce when you shop at the Farmers' Market. California-grown is the new organic market, since our state is the most self-regulated state in the nation," says Jessie Neu, one of the original founders of the Contra Costa Certified Farmers' Market. "We set the bar for a lot of things. For instance, Periquat is not sprayed in California, but it is used in other countries," explains Neu. "When you buy produce at Costco, you are buying fruits and



BARBARA KOBSAR

Colorful vegetables abound at the Farmers' Market.

vegetables grown in Chile, Costa Rica, or Mexico and those countries do not have the same standards as California."

The Contra Costa Certified Farmers' Market was established 26 years ago when a group of master gardeners at Diablo Valley College formed the 501 (C) 4 nonprofit corporation. At that time, Neu was growing herbs and became actively involved with the organization of the nonprofit. A volunteer advisory board manages it. "Our farmers enjoy a good customer base here in Orinda that is very loyal. Unfortunately, we are losing agricultural ground in Brentwood to urban development. Those of us living in the cities are lucky to have farmers travel from Fresno, Dinuba, Stockton, Sebastopol, Apple Hill, and Brentwood to deliver fresh produce which has been picked the day before. Farmers drive up on Saturday morning and often participate at double markets on Saturday," says Neu.

For the first time ever, non-agricultural

vendors will be at the Farmers' Market. Featured items include Caribbean Tomatoes, Scream Sorbet, and tofu produced from organic soybeans by Hodo Soy Beanery of San Jose. In the past, individuals have been able to successfully launch their business at the Farmers' Market. Many Orinda institutions participate in the Farmers' Market, including the Orinda Arts Council, Wagner Ranch School, as well as the City of Orinda. The Contra Costa Certified Farmers' Market is a member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce.

For more information, please visit the website at www.cccfm.org.

Dog Dynamics New Attraction at the Orinda Community Center

Bonnie Brown-Cali has 17 years of experience as a dog trainer and just this year brought her expertise to the Orinda community by offering group obedience classes through the Orinda Community Center. Living fairly locally just off Bear

[SEE BUZZ page 23]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bonnie Brown-Cali with one of her students.

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