

THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
Volume 23, Number 9

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

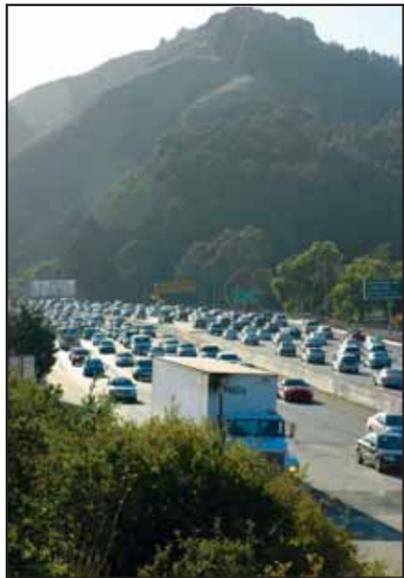
12 Issues Annually
September 2008

New Caldecott Bore Not a Done Deal

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

What seemed like a sure thing – a fourth bore for the Caldecott Tunnel – was thrown into doubt over the summer when legislators in Sacramento started thinking about borrowing money from the state gasoline tax in order to close its huge budget gap. Now that money is in question, along with long-term funding for Orinda’s only bus line.

Back in 2002, voters approved Proposition 42, which called for using the state’s portion of the gasoline tax for transit projects. One of the main projects locally is an additional bore for the Caldecott, and construction was supposed to begin next summer. However, the proposition also included a provision that allows the governor to “borrow” the funds if he declares a financial emergency. The state is still trying



SALLY HOGARTY
Congestion leading to and from the Caldecott Tunnel may not ease if funding is pulled on the proposed fourth bore.

to figure out how to close the little matter of a \$15 billion funding gap.

“The tunnel is very important for Orinda,” said Orinda Councilmember Amy Worth. “We will really benefit from it.” Worth said that anyone who commutes from Orinda gets caught in the reverse backup at the Caldecott. “That reverse commute would go away.”

While the state would have to pay the gas tax money back in three years, construction costs by that time will be more expensive, to say nothing of the additional costs in gasoline and car expenses for Orinda commuters who often get bottled up going through or coming back through the tunnel. The current price tag for a new tunnel is estimated to be \$420 million, and would take four to five years to complete.

The Caldecott isn’t the only transit project in jeopardy. If the state pilfers the gas tax money, even temporarily, the Bay Area would lose a projected \$75 million for public transportation systems, just as gas prices are driving more people to it. Orinda has a bus route that divides into two (servicing both Moraga and Orinda), but that route

[SEE CALDECOTT page 4]

Local Artist’s “Tears on the Hill”



ROBERT WAHRHAFTIG

Orinda’s Robert Wahrhaftig was so moved by the crosses across from the Lafayette BART station that he did the above mixed-media art work. Entitled “Tears on the Hill,” it captures the crosses commemorating those who have died in Iraq. As the presidential race heats up, the on-going war will be in the headlines more and more. Copies of Wahrhaftig’s work are available at the Moraga Art Gallery in Rheem with proceeds going to the United Service Organization (USO).

Nagging Money Woes Have Schools Waiting and Watching

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

School has opened for yet another year in Orinda, but like a dark cloud, projected shortfalls in the state budget still threaten to disrupt programs and services at schools throughout the Orinda and Acalanes districts. And while the state has still not approved a final budget, local administrators have taken no chances and have cut everywhere they could, like battening down

the hatches before a storm.

“We have had some adjustments in staffing,” said Jerry Bucci, director of business services for Orinda Union School District (OUSD). No pink slips were issued, but the district took advantage of staff attrition to tighten its payroll, mainly in the maintenance and operations budgets.

That wasn’t the case at Miramonte High School, which suffered from the Acalanes Union High School District’s elimination of more than 20 positions last March in preparation for the budget cuts. Of eight teachers who received layoff notices, all but one has been brought back because attrition, retirements or leaves reopened some spaces in the tight budget. Positions for two maintenance workers, several custodians, four administrative technicians, and three instructional aids for special education have still not been restored.

“We’re in a wait and watch,” said Acalanes Superintendent Jim Negri.

In addition to the expected cuts, officials have taken a look at all budget items and tried to tighten as enrollment steadily declines. The decline meets OUSD’s pro-

[SEE BUDGET page 20]

Three Residents Running for Orinda City Council

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

While the nation considers the election of a new president, Orinda residents will also have to decide on who will represent them in local government.

Two of the five city council positions become available this December as the four-year terms of Mayor Victoria Smith and Councilmember Steve Glazer come to a close. Both Smith and Glazer have decided to run for re-election. Also vying for the city council positions is 18-year resident Robert Larsen.

Larsen, who has attended city council meetings in the past to protect the interests of residents in the Sunrise Hill area when construction on the Wilder property threatened to impact the neighborhood, would like to improve the business climate in Orinda, invigorate communications between citizens and city hall, and improve the city’s roads and infrastructure.

Mayor Smith feels she still has more to

[SEE ELECTION page 4]

Wendy Sparks New Principal at Glorietta Elementary School



SALLY HOGARTY

Wendy Sparks is the new principal at Glorietta Elementary School.

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Walking into Wendy Sparks’ office is an oasis of tranquility as the new Glorietta Elementary School principal reads herself for the start of the school year. A serenity fountain gently gurgles while soothing music plays, belying the hectic schedule of a new administrator.

Sparks may be new to Glorietta, but she brings with her 33 years of educational experience. She has been with the San Ra-

[SEE GLORIETTA page 20]

OA Members check page 3 for your September discounts!

IN THIS ISSUE

	Page
News	
Police Blotter	6
Water Conservation Program	5
About Town	
Classic Car Show	3
Festival of Trees	8
Local Authors	7
Restaurant Guide	11-14
Schools/Students	17
Visual/Performing Arts	2-3, 19, 21
Backyard Getaways	10
Balanced Living	18
Business Buzz	22
Calendar	21
Classified	20
Editorial	4
Home Sweet Home	6
Itch to Stitch	9
Orinda Association	3

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Third Annual Orinda Idol Competition in September at Orinda Theatre

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Finalists to sing at The Orinda House August 31 at 6 p.m.

After a busy summer of entertaining at numerous events, the 32 individual Orinda Idol finalists and 10 groups will

compete for the coveted title in their category on September 7 at the Orinda Theatre.

Contestants compete within their age group with the winner determined by a combination of popular vote and judges' decision. Voting forms will be handed out to audience members as they enter the theater. Only audience members who stay for all contestants in a particular category will be



A group of Orinda Idol finalists sang the "National Anthem" at the 4th of July festivities this year. SALLY HOGARTY

allowed to vote.

Divided into grade levels, the schedule for the day is: K-2 (winning prize \$200) and grades 3-5 (winning prize \$300), 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; grades 6-8 (winning prize \$500), 1 – 2 p.m.; grades 9-12 (winning prize \$750), 2:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., and groups (winning prize \$750), 4-5:15 p.m. Winners will be announced at 5:45 p.m.

Sponsored by the Orinda Arts Council (OAC), the singing contest serves as a showcase for talented young singers from Orinda with the teen and group categories

open to students in Lamorinda. Teacher, performer, and producer Claire Yarrington of California Theatre Arts has been working with the singers to ready them for the competition. Orinda Intermediate School has partnered with the OAC this year to provide sound equipment and operators along with Leo's Audio.

The September 7 competition will feature emcees Diane Dwyer from NBC 11, Anna Werner from CBS 5, and Leslie Brinkley from ABC 7. For a complete listing of finalists, go to www.orindaartscouncil.org.

Mixed Media Show Currently at Orinda Library Gallery

The Oakland Art Association is presenting a group show representing a variety of media through September 17 at the Orinda Library Gallery. Featuring

paintings, drawings, photography, collage, monoprints and etchings by artists throughout the Bay Area, the show began August 17. Many of the works will also be for sale.

— Sally Hogarty, Editor



Yin Marsh's painting "Kumquats" will be on display through September 17. YIN MARSH

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MAGGIE

Margaret, an avid cyclist, suffered extensive injuries when hit by a car. After several surgeries, she transferred to our care and received intensive medical and rehabilitation services to help regain her ability to care for herself. Margaret is now back home.

ROGER

Roger had a double knee replacement. After the surgery, he needed physical rehabilitation before returning home. We helped him regain strength and endurance. Roger is home and golfing with his friends and family.



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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

Orinda Classic Car Show Benefits OA Program



SALLY HOGARTY

Classic Car Show Organizer Chip Herman drove his 1966 K-code Mustang in the 4th of July parade this year.

■ Proceeds from show support senior ride program

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Calling all car lovers. The fourth annual Orinda classic car show takes place on September 6 at Orinda Motors on Orinda Way. Over 100 pristine cars will be displayed during the event with Boy Scout Troops #233 and #57 providing hamburgers and sausages and Loard's Ice Cream supplying lots of delicious treats. A DJ and the jazz band Young at Heart will also be on hand to entertain. "The car show will be even bigger than last year," says Orinda Motors John Vanek. "We will be closing off more of Orinda Way in order to display the cars."

Admission is free to the general public with car owners paying a \$50 entry fee for their cars. The entry fee goes to the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program. A boon for local seniors, the ride program provides free transportation from screened volunteer drivers to various ap-
[SEE CAR SHOW page 18]

The Orinda Association

The Orinda Association is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to:

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

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www.orindaassociation.org

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July 4th	Cindy Powell
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Quilt Travels Across The Country

Orinda resident Chris Boersma's quilt did a lot of traveling this summer as a featured exhibition in a number of quilt festivals across the country. Selected for the prestigious Lowell Quilt Festival in Massachusetts in August, her creation "Jellies: Fantasies" displays those mysterious underwater beauties in all their glory.



CHRIS BOERSMA

Close-up showing detail of quilt.



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EDITORIAL

Does Racial Profiling Exist Here in Orinda?

I recently received a letter from a visitor to our city who vows never to return to Orinda for business or pleasure due to his treatment by police and local merchants on July 8.

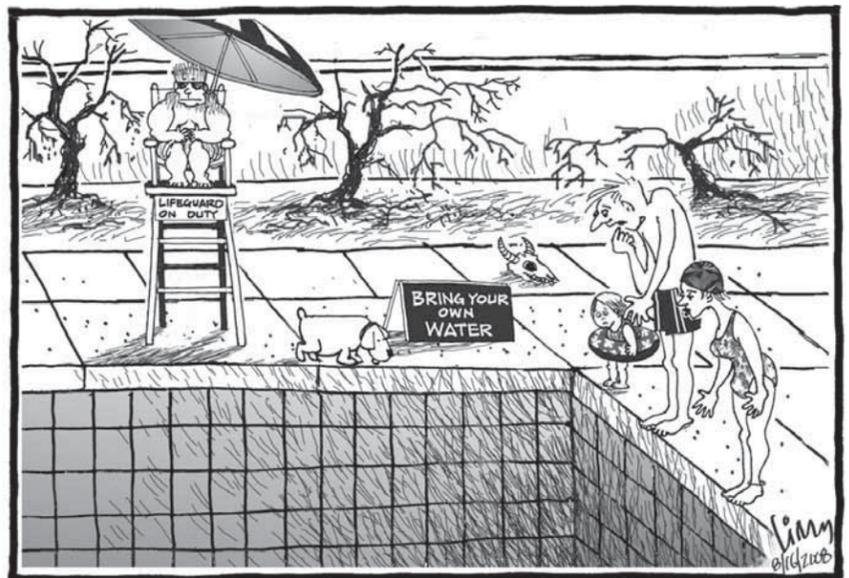
The writer, an African-American male, came to Orinda to reorganize old items and add new ones at Longs Drug Store for his employer, Southern Wine and Spirits. When the store manager told him they weren't ready for him, the gentleman spent some time walking around town and sitting in his car. When he decided to do some banking at Wells Fargo, his problems began.

He entered the bank looking for the on-line banking area. When he found it, he did his business and left. Bank employees, however, only saw him looking around the bank. An armed robbery had taken place at Orinda's Bank of America just a few days prior. The perpetrators were also African-American males. The Wells

Fargo employees called the Orinda police who subsequently detained the gentleman. When his identity and purpose for being in Orinda were verified, he was let go. He was stopped again later in the day during a work break when employees of First Republic Bank called police to report a suspicious character.

While the gentleman notes he was treated courteously by the Orinda police, he also felt humiliated by the questioning and has, subsequently, filed a complaint with the police department. According to Police Chief Bill French, the police department was obligated to respond to the calls from the banks, especially in light of the recent armed robbery, but he is looking into his department's procedures to be sure the man was treated properly.

Unfortunately, Orinda has a small number of African-Americans living in its boundaries, making black residents and



visitors alike stand out. If the robbery suspects had been young white males wearing baseball caps, would residents or visitors to Orinda matching that description have

received similar treatment? It is a question we should constantly ask ourselves to ensure that racial profiling does not take place in the community.

Letter to the Editor

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

I feel compelled to write after seeing two letters in the August edition. One writer complains bitterly that all of Moraga Way wasn't paved this summer, and calls it "unconscionable." Perhaps if he had worked to help pass one of the two road bonds, there would be money. The city obtained a large federal grant and pulled money from its reserve fund to do this paving (\$1.5 million in Orinda money), but it wasn't enough to do all of Moraga Way. A call or email to a city councilmember or the city manager would have told him that the remaining portion would have cost another half-million dollars, which the city doesn't have. Orinda spends about a million dollars a year on road repairs. The rest of Moraga Way will eventually be fixed, but it would happen sooner if we had dedicated road funding.

Another writer, who has fought tooth and nail against nearly every project the city has tried to do, offers advice on how to get potholes fixed. (If this is important to him, shouldn't he have supported the road bond measures instead of mounting a campaign against them?) His advice consists of telling Orinda residents to go yell at our unpaid city council. Does this magically produce more money to fix roads? Does it make them more inclined to listen to him? As a human being and a former elected official (Orinda school board), I can tell you that yelling at someone is not a good way to gain their cooperation. It's the catch-more-flies-with-vinegar approach, and it doesn't work.

Let's see if we can get our public discourse back to a higher, friendlier, more productive level. Orinda deserves no less.

— Linda Landau

◆ CALDECOTT from page 1

could be in jeopardy, as well.

"When we get cuts, we have to look at all the services," said Rick Ramacier, the general manager for the County Connection bus service that serves Orinda and Contra Costa County. Therefore, cuts could not come at a worse time, he said. "With the rising price of gas and the concern about global warming, there is a growing demand for transit."

Ramacier says that ridership has increased along with gas prices, and points to studies that show an average Bay Area

family can save about \$8,000 per year by switching to public transit, and that doesn't include the price of the car or truck.

"It just makes sense," he said about making the switch to transit, at least for part of the commute. County Connection is open to suggestions about new routes or stops, but that won't make a big difference if funding is cut. "It's the worst time they [state legislators] can cut funding," he said.

Even if legislators choose not to use the gasoline tax money, continued budget woes and a decline in the economy promise that budgets for construction or transit will

not be flush for the foreseeable future. Therefore, both the Caldecott and public transit will have to wait to see which way the political winds blow to ensure better service for riders and drivers.

"Until people make a fundamental change in the way they think about travel, it's going to be hard to get the funding that public transit needs to be viable alternative to slipping into the driver's seat," Ramacier said.

As of press time, the state budget had still not been approved and was more than a month overdue.

◆ ELECTION from page 1

accomplish: "In addition to developing a comprehensive solution to repair our roads, I will work to revitalize our downtown area, to attract restaurants, shops and businesses that serve our community. As a councilmember, I will listen and I will implement policies that benefit all of Orinda."

"My goal in the coming years is to work with residents and the council to craft a fair and successful road improvement measure," says Councilmember Glazer. Priorities for Glazer include public safety/emergency preparedness, improvements in the planning/design review process, and increased transparency in government decision-making.

The three remaining members of the city council (Mayor Pro Tem Sue Severson, Thomas McCormick, and Amy Worth) serve until December 2010.

The November issue of *The Orinda News* will include detailed interviews with the three candidates in an effort to inform Orinda residents of candidates' views. If a local resident would like to submit a question for consideration in the interview, email news@orindaassociation.org.

Orinda Night Out a Fun Success



Many local neighborhoods participated in Orinda's first Night Out Against Crime. The national event heightens awareness of and participation in local anti-crime efforts and provides a forum for neighbors to get to know one another. More than 50 people, four fire engines, two police cars, and City Councilmember Amy Worth turned out at Diane and Tim Millette's Orchard Road home (above) for the August 5 event.

DIANE MILLETTE

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

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

For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the December issue is October 15, 2008.

PSYCHIATRY / WATER CONSERVATION

Orindan Pioneers Work in Emergency Psychiatry

By IAN HEETDERKS
Staff Writer

Emergency psychiatry is a relatively new subset of psychiatry, because it has only been recognized as a medical specialty for the past 50 years. It is distinguished from regular psychiatry by the speed at which doctors operate. Much like ER doctors, emergency psychiatrists work at rapid speed in order to provide prompt care to patients in urgent need of attention. This includes patients at risk of suicide, diagnosed with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, or suffering from drug addiction. Thus, not all patients are committed to emergency psychiatric care voluntarily, and many pose a significant risk to the doctors

trying to treat them.

Orinda resident Dr. Scott Zeller is a prominent practitioner of emergency psychiatry. He works at Alameda County Medical Center, which houses a dedicated emergency psychiatric ward open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In recognition of his expertise, Zeller was recently appointed president-elect of the American Association for Emergency Psychiatry. Following this appointment, he was approached by the Lippincott Publishing Company to become a co-editor of a definitive textbook on emergency psychiatry, titled *Emergency Psychiatry: Principles and Practice*. Although emergency psychiatric training is required during medical residency, a handful of pocket guides and handbooks served as the only written reference materials concerning emergency psychiatry.

As Zeller described, "This textbook is therefore the first attempt to turn emergency psychiatry into an actual discipline, to serve as a sort of canon for the profession."

Zeller collaborated with three other doctors in editing the book: Avrim Fishkind of Texas, Jon Berlin of Wisconsin, and Rachel Glick of Michigan. The four editors first worked together to devise the structure of the book, the material it would cover, and the authors they would approach for contributions. The final product has 45 chapters written by 54 authors; Zeller co-wrote or wrote seven chapters, and edited 12. The text addresses general principles of emergency psychiatry, treatment methods, special topics (such as treating pregnant patients), and cultural issues. Patients, as well as patient policy advocates, contributed writings to the final section.



Orinda resident Dr. Scott Zeller collaborated with three other doctors on the book *Emergency Psychiatry*, which addresses basic principles and practices of the profession.



City Clerk Michele Olsen (center) gives out water-saving devices to **Robin Ludmer** (L) and **Joan Samuelson**.

City and EBMUD Partner to Help Residents Save Water

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Following several years of decreased rainfall and a hot, dry summer, East Bay

Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) has mandated a 19 percent water reduction per household. To help ease the flow, the City of Orinda has formed a partnership with [SEE EBMUD page 20]



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POLICE BLOTTER / HOME SWEET HOME



POLICE BLOTTER

July 2008

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 70 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Armed Robbery: 1 incident.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 2 incident.

Domestic Violence: 1 incident.

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

All Other Petty Thefts: 2 incidents.

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

All Other Grand Thefts: 5 incidents.

Vehicle Theft: 2 incidents.

Residential Burglary: 4 incidents.

Commercial Burglary: 1 incident.

Arrests

Recovered Stolen Vehicles: 3

Possession of Narcotics: 1

Possession of Dangerous Drugs: 1

Warrant Arrest: 7

Driving Under the Influence: 3

Battery: 1

Domestic Battery: 1

Evading Police: 1

Forgery: 1

Receiving Stolen Property: 2

Petty Theft: 1

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving,
Orinda Police Department

HOME SWEET HOME

Summertime Maintenance – Tips for the Interior

Janice Gatlin



Each year, remove and replace all the caulking (the rubbery white or clear material) around your bath tub (where it meets the shower walls) and around your sinks. With just a little practice and patience this is an easy job. We've had countless construction jobs, ranging into the thousands of dollars that resulted simply from water leaking down behind the tub/shower walls and causing extensive dry-rot. Replacing the caulking can often prevent these damages.

Check for gaps between your shower head arm and the shower wall or the spigot and/or water controls and the shower walls. If there are gaps, this is another area where water can get behind the walls. If the gaps are small, caulking can fill them, if they're larger, you may want to have a plumber look at adjusting the position of these items.

Check the condition of and, if needed, change your heater/air conditioner filter. There are several types of filters, some

are good for as long as six months, but the most common type should be changed monthly. Not only will a clean filter keep your home air cleaner, but it will reduce your energy costs and reduce the stress on your heating and air conditioning system. These filters are very easy to replace. Take out the old, find the size (written on the perimeter) and pick up a new one at your local hardware store.

Check the operation of your windows. Now is a good time to clean the tracks of dirt and debris. If the operating mechanisms are not working well, you might want to have them checked out. Also check to be sure you don't have any broken seals if you have double pane windows, which typically show up as condensation between the panes.

Check your exterior doors for proper closure and be sure you don't have a draft under or around the doors. Doors can be adjusted. Threshold and/or weather stripping can also be changed or added.

If you have a wood-burning fireplace, the interior of the chimney should be checked yearly. Buildup of partially burned materials in the chimney can be a fire hazard. Companies who specialize in chimney cleaning can assist you with cleaning if needed.

Check the trap in your stove hood vent. There are several types of traps, some are thick metal filters; others are small bowl like containers. Most all can be cleaned in the dishwasher or by hand. Clean filters will help your stove hood work much better and reduce kitchen odors as well.

Replace your smoke detector batteries. These should be changed yearly, including the new hard-wired smoke detectors, which have a battery as back up.

Check under all your sinks to make sure there is no leaking plumbing.

Check around your heater and water heater. There should not be any items resting against these, on top of them or blocking the air flow around them. If your units are in a closet, make sure it is free of all other items.

Janice Gatlin is the local owner of Always the Best Home Repairs and a partner in a real estate firm that specializes in selling bank-foreclosed properties.

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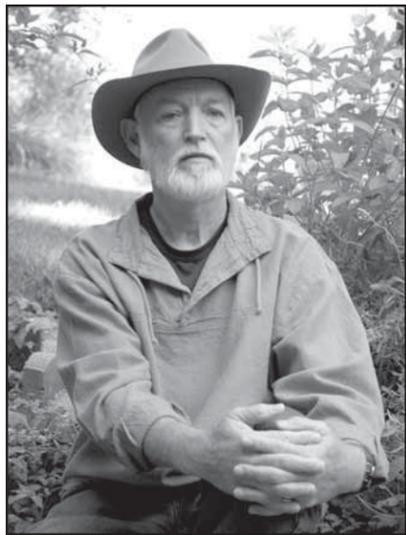
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LOCAL AUTHORS MONTH

It's Local Authors' Month at Orinda Books

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

Something that has consistently surprised the event planners at Orinda Books is the number of local authors whose books keep coming onto their shelves. Therefore,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Charles Entrekin, author of *Red Mountain: Birmingham Alabama, 1965*.

they have decided that September should be local authors' month, and they have planned accordingly.

"We're dazzled by the number of local authors," said bookseller Marian Nielsen. "We have an incredible number of talented people here."

Nielsen said that it's easy for a bookstore to get a crowd for an author who has appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, but it turns out that the store's book signing sessions for local authors tend to be just as, if not more, popular with their customers. "I think there are lots of people who think

they have a book in them, and they like to come and see what might be possible," Nielsen said.

The Schedule for the Month

Tuesday, September 2, 4 p.m., Lloyd Lofthouse will discuss and sign copies of his new novel, *My Splendid Concubine*.

Tuesday, September 9, 3 p.m., Bettery Iverson will discuss and sign copies of her new book, *Journeys to Survival*.

Saturday, September 6, 3 p.m., Laura Shumaker will discuss and sign copies of her new book, *A Regular Guy: Growing Up With Autism*.

Thursday, September 11, 4 p.m., Dana Whittaker will discuss and sign copies of her new book, *Transforming Lives \$40 at a Time: Women + Finance: Upending the Status Quo*.

Saturday, September 13, 3 p.m., Laurel Anne Hill will discuss and sign copies of her new science fiction novel, *Heroes Arise*.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Laurel Anne Hill, author of *Heroes Arise*.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dana Whittaker, author of *Transforming Lives \$40 at a Time*.

Saturday, September 20, 1 p.m., Michael McAlister will discuss and sign copies of *Awake in This Life: a Guide for Those Climbing the Mountain of Spirit*.

Saturday, September 27, 3 p.m., Charles Entrekin will discuss and sign copies of *Red Mountain: Birmingham Alabama, 1965*.

For further information on any of the above discussions, call Orinda Books at 254-7606.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lloyd Lofthouse, author of *My Splendid Concubine*.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Laura Shumaker, author of *A Regular Guy: Growing Up With Autism*.

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Festival of Trees in New Location This Year

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

The exquisite Blackhawk Museum, which displays historically significant and artistically inspired automobiles, will serve as the location for this year's Festival of Trees, slated for November 18. The popular fundraiser hosted by the Orinda Woman's Club will continue to include beautifully displayed table top trees, gift baskets, and other raffle items as well as a fashion show featuring women's clothing by Helen Lyall of Vallejo and men's fashions by Jos A Bank Clothiers in Lafayette. The luncheon itself will be held in the museum's elegant automotive dining room, where diners will be surrounded by one-of-a-kind automobiles.

Proceeds from the event benefit local charities, including: The Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa County, an education and resource center promoting child safety and community awareness; and The Monument Crisis Center, which provides assistance to at-risk families, children, seniors and individuals.

The Blackhawk Museum is located at



SALLY HOGARTY

While the Festival of Trees may be changing locations, some things -- like local resident **Mary Ann Aude** (above) modeling **Helen Lyall's** fashions -- will remain the same.

3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle in Danville. The doors open at 10:30 a.m. for the raffle preview and cocktails, with luncheon served at 11:45 a.m. followed by the fashion show. Tickets are \$85. Call 925-963-6356 for reservations.

The Importance of Renter's Insurance

By IAN HEETDERKS
Staff Writer

This fall, as students leave home either to start or continue their college educations, they have, of course, a million things to worry about as they strive to excel. However, one important item that no college student should be without often goes overlooked: renter's insurance.

Renter's insurance is both affordable and important, yet every year students move into new dorms and apartments without any coverage. Although it can often seem like students own nothing of real value that needs to be protected, the costs of replacing an entire apartment's worth of possessions would quickly become staggering. Although landlords insure their buildings against damage, they are not responsible for tenants' possessions.

A typical renter's insurance policy costs \$317 per year or \$26 per month. Such a policy not only provides coverage for personal property, but also protects against liability and medical bills incurred by a guest who is injured in the apartment.

If for no other reason, renter's insurance is important simply to protect tenants from their landlord's insurance company. If a tenant causes significant damage to a rental property (e.g., starts a fire, floods the

kitchen), the landlord's insurance company will issue money to repair the damage and, if the apartment is rendered unlivable, compensate the landlord for the lost rent. If the tenant has renter's insurance, then the two insurance companies would work the matter out themselves. However, an uninsured tenant would be held responsible by the insurance company for all the money they spent. In a process called "subrogation," the insurance company would sue the tenant in order to recoup its losses, which could easily amount to tens of thousands of dollars. Keeping that in mind, suddenly a few hundred dollars a year isn't so expensive.

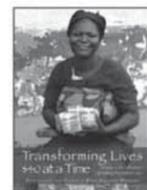
As with any other type of insurance, there are different levels of coverage to suit different people. Of course, there is also the risk that some agents may not have their clients' best interests at heart. For example, some are paid on commission, so their main concern maybe their commission rather than the client's needs. The most effective way people can protect themselves is to prepare thoroughly when meeting with an insurance agent. Go prepared with questions and make sure they are answered to your satisfaction. Provided you find the policy that works best for you, renter's insurance could prove to be one of your most important purchases all year.

Orinda Books Celebrates Local Authors This September!

*Proceeds will benefit organizations whose clients are featured in the book.



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ITCH TO STITCH

Itch to Stitch

Drab to Fab - Revamp Those Plain Curtains into Glamorous Draperies

Doreen Leong



In this issue, we welcome our new columnist, Orinda resident Doreen Leong. The owner of Leong Interiors — a custom window coverings and soft furnishing design and fabrication studio in Berkeley — Leong will share her expertise every other month with The Orinda News readers.

Here are two easy projects to make those off-the-shelf curtains look fabulous without paying the high-end custom price. When purchasing draperies, be sure to look for panels that are already lined and interlined. This helps to insulate the draperies and allows them to hang more luxuriously.

The following projects focus on decorating the “leading edge” of the draperies. The leading edge is the vertical edge of the drapery panel where it is pulled closed. This is often the main focal point of the drapery panel and can be embellished to create a high-end, decorator look.

The Greek Key

Add a contrast band of fabric and decorative trim to enhance your draperies. Here are the materials you will need to transform your draperies. Items listed are for one pair of stationary draperies measuring 95 inches long with a contrasting leading edge band and trim:

- Two store-bought drapery panels at 95” long
- Three yards of 54” wide decorator contrasting fabric
- Six yards of decorative trim
- Polyester thread
- Yardstick or clear ruler
- Fusible web tape (try Heat ‘n Bond fusible web)
- Iron

- Large, flat working surface
- Ironing board
- Sewing machine
- Hand sewing needles
- Straight pins
- Fabric marker

- Step 1. Cut your pieces.
- a. Cut two lengths of contrast fabric for the leading edge band – finished size 3” wide by 95” long. Cut size 12” wide by 98” long each.
 - b. Cut two lengths of decorative trim at 98” long each.

Step 2. Prepare and attach the leading edge contrast fabric or “contrast band” to the drapery panels.

- a. Prepare the two cut contrast bands by ironing in quarters. On the wrong side of the fabric, first iron in half then into quarters lengthwise (FIGURE A, see page 16).
- b. Placing the contrast band onto the drapery panel. Open the contrast band, leaving the outer edges folded toward the center. Lay the edge of the drapery panel to the fold of the contrast band; center the contrast band lengthwise (FIGURE B, see page 16).
- c. Align and fold the top and bottom edges of the contrast band to the edges of the drapery panel. To secure the contrast band to the drapery panel; leave the front side of the contrast band open, iron on fusible web tape to the outer edge. Remove the paper backing of the fusible web tape; re-fold and iron the contrast band to the right side of the drapery panel. Sew an edge stitch lengthwise along the front side of the contrast band without stitching through to the back side (FIGURE B, see page 16).
- d. Attach the back side of the contrast band to the back side of the drapery panel by hand or by using fusible web tape (FIG-



DOREEN LEONG
The Greek Key adds a contrasting fabric to enrich drapes.



DOREEN LEONG
The Braided Edge doesn't require any sewing, just some white fabric glue.

- URE C, see page 16).
- Repeat steps b-d for the other drapery panel.
- Step 3. Adding the trim.

Center and place the decorative trim lengthwise on the leading edge of drapery panel next to the contrast band. Fold top panel next to the contrast band. Fold top [SEE SEWING page 16]

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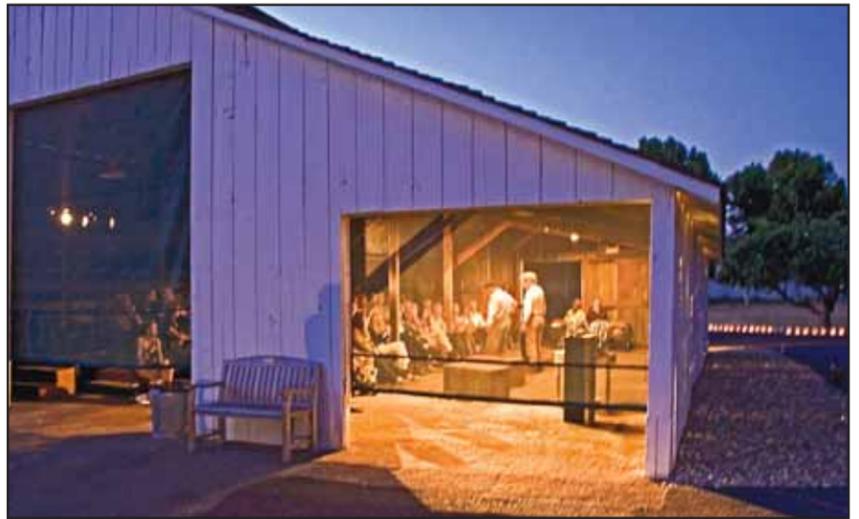
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Playwright Is Practically Next Door

Elana O'Loskey



Some plays stand the test of time and then there's Eugene O'Neill – ever revealing us to ourselves. Perhaps Sinclair Lewis said it best: "O'Neill has done nothing much in the American drama save to transform it utterly in 10 or 12 years from a false world of neat and competent trickery to a world of splendor, fear and greatness." It has also been said that there is an O'Neill play being performed somewhere in the world every five minutes – whether it's Japan, Russia or Timbuktu – and that's universal. If you don't already know what *The Iceman Cometh*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Hughie*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, and *A Touch of the Poet* refer to, you soon will — for they were all hatched atop Las Trampas ridge.

Find out what it's all about at Tao House: Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site. It's just a hop, skip and a jump south in Danville. You could start a fine fall morning by grabbing your favorite cuppa and walking the O'Neill Commemorative in Front Street Park, across the street from the Danville Library at 400 Front Street. The centerpiece is a 9-foot bronze sculpture featuring a quote from *Long Day's Journey into Night*. "Playbills" mounted on bronze pedestals flank the sculpture, recounting the highlights of O'Neill's life and career. The focus is on the years spent at Tao House, his residence in the Las Trampas hills outside Danville, where he and his wife Carlotta lived from 1937 to 1944. Then continue your walking tour over to Hartz Avenue,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Productions at Danville's Tao House are often performed in the "old barn" located on the picturesque property.

just around the corner, for an early lunch in one of the many restaurants boasting alfresco seating.

Of course, you will have already booked your free tour (Wednesday through Sunday at 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.) of Tao House in advance by calling the National Park Service at 925-838-0249 or going online at www.nps.gov/euon. A comfortable van that you meet at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, 205 Railroad Avenue in Danville, shuttles you to the 13-acre hilltop aerie.

Once on the ridge, the view is breathtaking. The quiet descends, and you are on a ranch far away from modern life. Fung shui elements can be found in the layout and design of the house. The meandering path hides the good-luck-red front door from sharp energy, while indoors, the blue ceiling symbolizing heaven and the brown floors symbolizing earth ensure that while you're at Tao House you walk "between heaven and earth."

The late Lafayette physician Clifford Feiler related in a 1979 interview that: "Eugene O'Neill first came to Lafayette and rented E.K. Wood's home on Charles Hill. This is now a very beautiful residential development. The original home is still there overlooking Mt. Diablo. It was one of the first homes that had a swimming pool. He rented that for a while, and I believe that's how he became enamored of this area." Dr. Feiler was the O'Neill family physician from 1939 to 1944 – he describes O'Neill as "an extremely interesting conversationalist." He added that O'Neill "had the kindest eyes, the saddest looking face and expression. He was really an overwhelming personality. He was a tremendous guy. Calm, a peaceful sort of a person." See www.eugeneoneill.org/html/FeilerInterview.pdf for the entire interview, which was provided by the Lafayette Historical Society. It seems as if the O'Neills fell in love with this area just as most of us did.

More History

Eugene O'Neill wrote lead roles for African-American actors and inter-racial

couples in the segregated society and theater of the 1920s. Some of his plays were made into movies continuing this tradition. In 1933, *The Emperor Jones* reprised Paul Robeson's brilliant stage performances of the O'Neill play in America and England on screen; he was so brilliant that the Library of Congress selected it for preservation in the National Film Registry. (See www.loc.gov/film/titles.html.) It's not hard to imagine Ingrid Bergman or W. Somerset Maugham, who visited Tao House, listening to jazz on the robust player piano named "Rosie" in the O'Neill dining room. Over the years, many famous names have visited to assist the Foundation including Katharine Hepburn, Sam Shepard, Jason Robards, Cherry Jones, Kiera Chaplin (O'Neill's great-granddaughter, whose



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Kiera Chaplin, granddaughter of Charlie Chaplin and Eugene O'Neill's daughter Oona O'Neill Chaplin, poses next to the Eugene O'Neill commemorative artwork in Front Street Park in downtown Danville.

father is Eugene Chaplin) and Ric Burns of PBS fame who produced *American Experience: Eugene O'Neill: A Ric Burns* [SEE BACKYARD page 16]

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ORINDA RESTAURANTS

Your Guide to Orinda's Bevy of Restaurants



SALLY HOGARTY

Casa Orinda has long been known for its hearty food (especially the fried chicken!) and cowboy ambience.

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

Here is our comprehensive annual list of the restaurants that call Orinda home. So pull out this section and keep it handy for those take-out nights – or for lunch – or for when you are up for simply going out while craving good old American cooking or something zestier, without the clean-up. Don't forget that you can call ahead to most, and they'll have your order waiting.

AMERICAN / CALIFORNIAN CUISINE

Casa Orinda
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254-2981

Perhaps Orinda's most famous eating establishment, Casa Orinda offers a colorful atmosphere (and history) as well as classic home cooking. This is the restaurant that used to have a giant neon cowboy on the roof. Specializes in basic fare, including steaks, chicken and mashed potatoes. All the recipes use local Orinda honey, when needed. Consistent fare is their business, so you won't be disappointed.

The Orinda House
65 Moraga Way
258-8399

The winner of Best Jazz in the East Bay by *Diablo Magazine*, The Orinda House offers jazz superior to programs found in many San Francisco establishments. Owner Ron Bonner works hard to book top-end acts for diners to listen to while eating American and some fusion cuisine. Minors are permitted as long as they don't sit at the bar. If you haven't been there, check it out.

Shelby's
2 Theatre Square
254-9688

This Orinda institution is run by local folks who whip up eclectic California cuisine using the freshest ingredients around. The menu changes daily, with indoor and outdoor seating. Shelby's has lots of regular customers, which is usually a good sign that something yummy is going on. They are also now serving breakfast.



SALLY HOGARTY

The Orinda House offers a wide variety of food plus hot blues and cool jazz. Check out the website at www.orindahouse.com for a listing of current performers.

Nation's Giant Hamburgers
76 Moraga Way
254-8888

Fast-food joints have nothing on these big, juicy burgers – and they'll do it just as fast and for takeout, too. Don't forget their pies, by the whole or the slice, especially the coconut cream.

CAFES

If you're looking for a quick takeout coffee or croissant, look no farther:

Caffé Teatro
2 Theatre Square, under the library
253-0508

This café now sports public art sculpture just outside the door, so sipping that coffee [SEE CAFES page 12]

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ORINDA RESTAURANTS

◆ **CAFES** from page 11
is even easier. This café is just below the Orinda Library and offers wireless access. Fresh pastries are available, as well as made-to-order and ready-to-go sandwiches and salads.

Geppetto's Cafe
87 Orinda Way
253-9894

This place is often crowded at lunch for a reason. The traditional umbrellas outside offer a respite while putting you front and center by the sidewalk. It's a nice place to eat alone, with a friend, or with your chil-



SALLY HOGARTY

Caffé Teatro now serves delicious homemade sandwiches and gelato.

dren. Pick up a free copy of a local publication, and sit down awhile – with a turkey sandwich or a ham and brie delight.

Peet's Coffee and Tea
63 Moraga Way
258-9328

Peet's not only offers great coffee but also an amazing variety of teas, such as jasmine that smells as if it's right off the vine, and delicious pastries. Two hours of free wireless are included with each purchase.

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2 Theatre Square
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253-0447

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SALLY HOGARTY

Starbucks in Theatre Square offers popular outdoor as well as indoor seating.

Village Inn Cafe
204 Village Square
254-6080

This diner-style storefront is just what the doctor ordered for sitting down with friends over fresh hot coffee in standard diner cups (a necessity) and a plate of eggs. Or order a sandwich. Service is friendly.



SALLY HOGARTY

Customers can now sip their favorite beverage and surf the Internet at **Peet's Coffee and Tea**.

If you're not familiar, Hsiangs might be a bit hard to find. It's across from Pine Grove Business Park. There is plenty of parking, and the food doesn't disappoint. The chef is known for his sauces. Great for takeout or enjoy the restaurant's quiet, relaxing atmosphere with lots of delicious menu suggestions.

Szechwan Chinese Restaurant
79 Orinda Way
254-2020

Eat in or order in advance to pick it up. Szechwan's food is as spicy as you tell them to make it, and offers everything you would expect. They'll modify your order, too, if you like.



SALLY HOGARTY

Hsiang's customers enjoy a delicious lunch surrounded by a lovely, soothing atmosphere.

CHINESE

Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine
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DELICATESSENS

Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub
64 Moraga Way
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Grab a menu, make an order at the bar, and sit at your favorite table. This popular spot is great for a quick, hot sandwich get-away or to simply stop in a stool and have a brew while taking a meal. The cornbeef is to die for.

[SEE DELI page 13]

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ORINDA RESTAURANTS

◆ DELI from page 12

Kasper's Hot Dogs
2 Theatre Square
253-0766

If you have to have a hot dog, you have to have a hot dog. And even if you're not in the mood for a hot dog, Kasper's will fill your belly without complaint, because there are alternatives to the usual. Try one. Have sauerkraut?

Orinda Deli
19 F Orinda Way
254-1990

For a quick sandwich on the go, this is the place. But then, they can do it so much better, by dressing it up with any meat you

253-9191

Good food combine with a friendly staff and a cozy atmosphere at this local favorite. It features brick-oven pizzas and done-to-order pastas, with a basket of fresh bread if you eat in. Movie nights are busy, so plan ahead. It's a good place for either kids and parents or a date night.

Village Pizza
19 Orinda Way
254-1200

You don't have to go for the pizza even if the kids want you to. You can have a burger, or ribs, a healthy dose of Italian fare, or mix it all up on the table so that everyone can have a bite. The informal atmosphere is a comfortable one for just about anyone.

Zamboni's Pizza
1 Camino Sobrante
254-2800

If you're on a budget, this is a great place for lunch or dinner. It's a small restaurant with a casual atmosphere that offers fast (and large!) pizza by the slice. You can eat in, take out, or they deliver.

JAPANESE

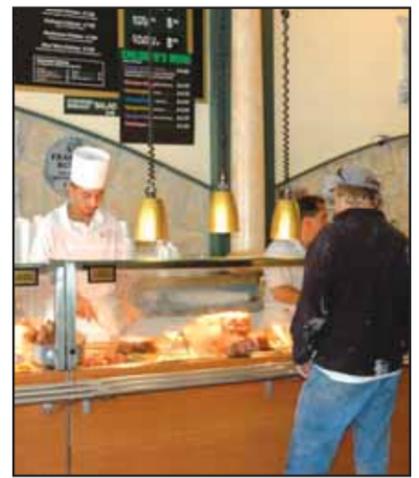
Hanazen Japanese Sushi
87 Orinda Way
254-3611

A wonderfully intimate restaurant with all the traditional dishes and a great sushi bar. Chef Kenji Horikawa prepares every dish himself while his wife Coco, who holds a sake sommelier license, serves the guests. With only 18 seats in the entire restaurant, reservations are a must!

Niwa Restaurant
1 Camino Sobrante
254-1606

When it's difficult to decide between Chinese or Japanese food, consider this unique restaurant next to Starbucks. Whether it's custom-made sushi or Chinese egg rolls (a favorite with kids.), you'll find something to please everyone.

Serika Restaurant
2 Theatre Square
254-7086



SALLY HOGARTY
Europa Deli offers a wide variety of choice, quick service, and even a playroom for the kids.

If you want sushi and relaxation at the same time, this is your place. The chef will provide you with plenty of information about the freshest fish, and the elegant atmosphere will melt away the day's stress. Children are always welcome and will find plenty of kid-friendly food.

Yu Sushi
19 Moraga Way
253-8399

As a small store-front operation, you might think you're getting fast-food sushi, but that is far from the case. The sushi [SEE JAPANESE page 14]



Patrons enjoy the good pizza and other Italian specialties at **Village Pizza**.

SALLY HOGARTY

desire. Don't forget the cheese, the crisp lettuce, and the in-season tomatoes.

Subway
2 Theatre Square
258-0470

This well-known chain arrived last year and is always good for a sandwich on the run. Don't forget they carry soup, too. If you aren't aware of it, you can get a small or large sandwich – they come by the inch, and you pick the bread – and it's made right under your nose. Go for the extra sub dressing.

HAWAIIAN

Lava Pit
2 Theatre Square
253-1338

Aloha! This place has it all: A wonderful interior that smells of barbecue, but they also deliver and cater. Mixed plates are available, so if you can't decide between the tuna and the prawns, you can have both.

ITALIAN

La Piazza
15 Moraga Way

SUSHI
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S.F. Chronicle 1/4/2002



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ORINDA RESTAURANTS

◆ **JAPANESE** from page 13
is fresh, and the staff fast and accurate, making this a great place to eat in before a movie across the street or for takeout.

MEDITERRANEAN

Petra Café
2 Theatre Square No. 105
254-5290

Last year this restaurant was called



SALLY HOGARTY

The name may have changed to **Petra**, but the food is still great. Visit them right next to the Orinda Theatre.

Aleko's, but now it's Petra — but with the same owner and same good food. It gets top marks on the Internet from its fans and makes the most of its tiny interior and casual out-side tables. The traditional lamb pita is a favorite, and you can ask for extra sauce. Petra also offers quite a few vegetarian options. Check out the Greek Salad Wrap.

MEXICAN

La Cocina Mexicana
23 Orinda Way
258-9987

Bring on the chips! This family-friendly restaurant offers traditional fare. Dine in or takeout. The food fills the car with all the right flavors, too. No "American burritos" here.

Maya
74 Moraga Way
258-9049

OK, so one of the specialties is mole, and if you're a fan of the spicy chocolate sauce, you'll know what a great flavor awaits. If you've never had it, you had better take the plunge. Maya offers all the traditional



SALLY HOGARTY

La Cocina serves up entrees as colorful as its surroundings.

Mexican dishes based on family recipes.

MIDDLE EASTERN

Turquoise
70 Moraga Way
(No Phone Listed by Press Time)

Specializing in Middle Eastern fare, this new restaurant opens in the old Royal Grounds space. Due to open its doors in September, Turquoise will specialize in barbecue as well as falafel and chicken dishes with vegetarian yogurts.

THAI

Baan Thai
99 Orinda Way
253-0989

Thai food was made to be eaten on a regular basis, and it's even nicer when there are festive tablecloths and orchids all around. The curries are made to your order of hotness, as well as the soups. Make sure to try the brown rice with your order.

Siam Orchid
23 Orinda Way No. F
253-1975

The ginger salad remains one of the most popular dishes at this favorite Orinda restaurant. It not only boasts ginger, but mango, lime, all the yummy fresh Thai ingredients that get loaded into your bowl at the noodle stands in Bangkok. This is complete fare straight from Thailand, with all fresh California ingredients. Equally best if you take in or take out, and if you're order isn't ready, you can sit at the elegant bar and wait.



SALLY HOGARTY

Maya features fast, delicious Mexican food on the crossroads side of Orinda while **La Cocina** takes care of customers in the village.

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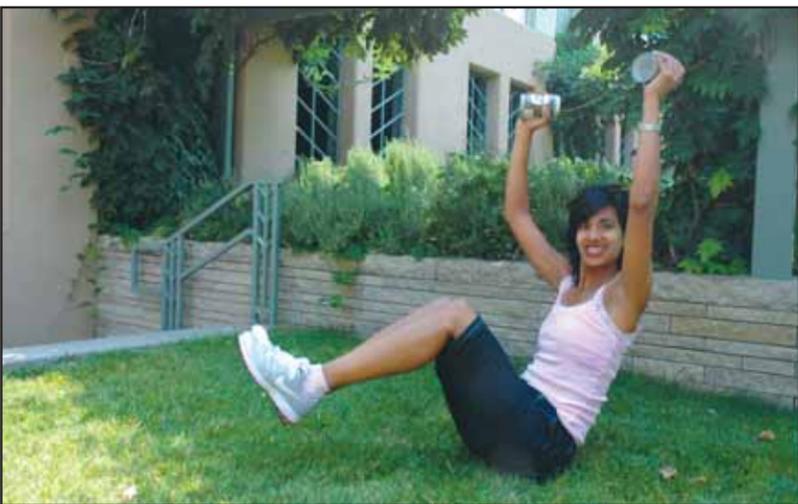
FITNESS

Move of the Month

Knee Up and Can Overhead Press



Sit on mat with knees bent and feet on floor. Hold food cans near shoulders with elbows by sides, palms in.



Lean back slightly and extend arms overhead as you lift feet a few inches off floor and bring knees to chest.

SALLY HOGARTY

— Courtesy of Living Lean, 925-360-7051

Helping Special Students Live Active Lives



PAMELA CHANG

Sixteen-year-old **Matthew Chang** (L) and special education teacher **Andrew Verducci** learn non-contact boxing moves and more in a class for special needs students.

By IAN HEETDERKS
Staff Writer

Andrew Verducci, an Orinda resident for the past five years, started working in the special education program at Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) a couple years ago. One of his most noteworthy achievements so far has been his work incorporating his students into OIS's sports program. Two students, one with Down

syndrome and the other autistic, joined the basketball team with Verducci's help. They had a significant impact on the OIS student body by demonstrating that they were more than capable of interacting with regular needs kids.

"It was so great to see," Verducci said of the program, "because the students were together, not separated." Two more students, both with Down syndrome, have [SEE MP page 18]

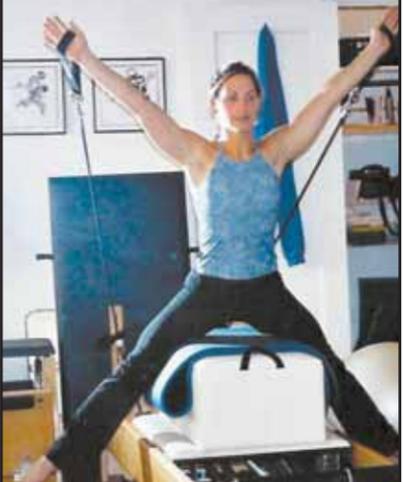


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Jane Cygan, (70 years young)



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Junior quarterback Grant Noel feels that chiropractic gives him better flexibility and range of motion. "Just getting my back adjusted and loose helps with my trunk mobility as far as twisting and throwing."

With the success and testimonials of the football team, other athletes have also begun chiropractic. Mike Gentry, the assistant athletic director for athletic performance, summed it up by saying, "I see chiropractic as having two functions from my perspective. It helps our athletes return to competition faster if they have sustained some injuries, and secondly, it seems to be preventative, in the sense that it keeps our athletes more mobile and flexible and feeling better."

As more athletes discover the benefits of chiropractic care not only for injuries but additionally for increased performance, more athletes and teams are using chiropractic to gain an important edge.

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CONTINUATIONS

◆ **BACKYARD** from page 10

Film, in 2006

Lest you think Tao House is a stuffy museum of times long past, here are some current activities designed to foster O'Neill's creative legacy:

One hundred and sixteen students from 19 East Bay high schools attended 2008 Student Days, a program offering professional training by authorities in drama, art, photography and writing to the students.

Artist Days at Tao House, now in its 11th year, offer artists a place to create works of art for extended periods of time twice a year. The former O'Neill estate borders the Las Trampas open space with spectacular views of the San Ramon Valley, Las Trampas Ridge and Mt. Diablo. The program is sponsored by the Eugene O'Neill Foundation in partnership with the National Park Service.

In 1996, the Eugene O'Neill (EON) foundation initiated the Playwrights' Theatre, a series of staged readings of plays in the Old Barn at Tao House. Prominent Bay Area directors and Equity actors take part. The name of the series honors O'Neill's Playwrights' Theatre, formed in 1916 in New York City by the Provincetown Players who committed themselves to fostering American playwrights.

The EON Festival, September 18-21, celebrates the O'Neill-Robeson connection. Perhaps the most famous African-American performing artist of the early 20th century, Paul Robeson rose to prominence during the Harlem Renaissance. Robeson braved

death threats to star in O'Neill's *All God's Chillun Got Wings* in 1924, which features an interracial romance. Later that year, Robeson played the lead role of O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* on the London stage. Robeson spoke and wrote 20 languages, was a Rhodes Scholar, and a four-star athlete. For more info about Paul Robeson, see www.paulrobesonfoundation.org.

So, why not investigate this fascinating site in the Las Trampas hills and learn more about American Theater, then and now? Or take some younger folk who think acting only occurs in movies to see what dramatic theater is all about. It's practically in your backyard. For more information, go to www.eugeneoneill.org/events.

Eugene O'Neill Festival

September 18 - 21 — Danville

All God's Chillun Got Wings, performance in the Village Theatre, 233 Front Street, 9/18 at 7:30 p.m., 9/19-9/20 at 8 p.m., 9/21 at 2:30 p.m.

Exhibit of Paul Robeson memorabilia, photos and documents, 9/18-21, 1-7 p.m., Pioneer Art Gallery, 524 Hartz Ave.

Walking tour of downtown Danville, 9/20, 10 a.m., begins at O'Neill Commemorative in Front Street Park, across from library.

Informal Open House at Tao House and the O'Neill National Historic Site, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., bus departs periodically from the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, 205 Railroad Ave.

Film screening of *The Emperor Jones* starring Paul Robeson, 9/20, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Village Theatre, 233 Front Street

O'Neill 101, overview of O'Neill's impact on American Theatre by Dan Cawthon, 9/20, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m., Danville Town Meeting Hall, 201 Front Street.

◆ **SEWING** from page 9

and bottom edges of trim to align with edges of drapery panel. Secure with pins then sew trim on by machine or by hand (FIGURE D).

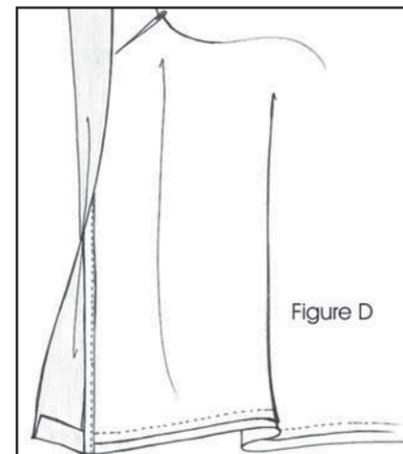
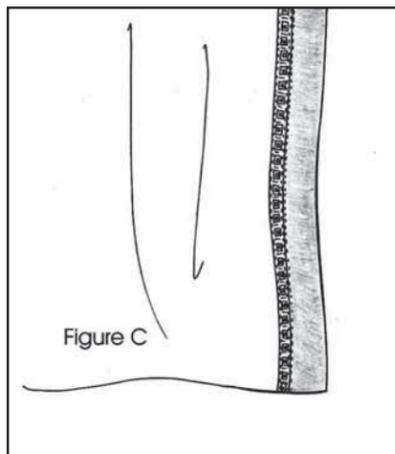
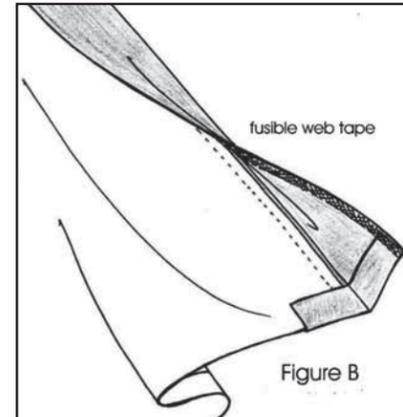
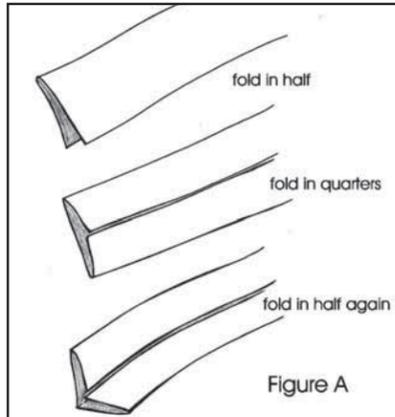
Step 4. Installation.

Now it's time to hang your beautiful

Just use some white fabric glue and your imagination!

Materials and Supplies

2 store-bought drapery panels at 95" long
6 yards of decorative trim
1 pair of drapery tiebacks (optional)



draperies. For a high-end look, hang them on elegant wood or wrought iron drapery hardware.

The Braided Edge

This is a quick and easy way to spruce up your draperies. No sewing required!

Yardstick or clear ruler
White fabric glue (try Aleene's Tacky Glue)

Iron
Large, flat working surface
Ironing board
Straight pins
Fabric marker

Step 1. Cut the trim
Cut two lengths of decorative braided trim at 98" long each.

Step 2. Attaching the trim
Lay your drapery panel down on the work table and mark 1" in from the leading edge of the panel. Place the trim along the mark and fold top and bottom edges of trim to align with edges of drapery panel; secure with pins. Carefully glue down the trim and let dry overnight.

Step 3. Installation.
Now it's time to hang those gorgeous draperies. And for that added "wow" factor, simply pull back your draperies with a decorative tie-back cord or tassel.

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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Mandarin Chinese Offered at Holy Shepherd Preschool

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

Preschoolers learning Mandarin Chinese? Indeed they are at Holy Shepherd Christian Preschool, and they are reveling in it.

"I can't tell you how happy her grandparents were when Marisa said to them in Mandarin, 'I love you grandma and grandpa,'" says Christi Chow. "My daughter loves it even more than regular school. I feel it's always good to learn another language and the younger the better." Chow was instrumental in bringing the program to the preschool.

Children must be enrolled in the preschool to attend the Mandarin classes, which are free and held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:30 p.m. to 1:50 p.m. They are offered to mature 4-year olds. Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church is located at 433 Moraga Way in Orinda.

Cooper's mom, Eileen Alford, says, "He's normally not one to sit in the classroom setting, but he wants to be in the Mandarin class every time. I think it's the right teacher and the right amount of time.

His brother is from Guatemala, so Cooper thinks it's neat that now he can say things in a different language, too."

Chow explains that it's not always easy to teach a second language at home. "They seem to learn better with their peers." She adds, "They have started Mandarin at Miramonte, and it's also taught at Acalanes." To find out more about other Mandarin language classes you may contact her at 253-8853 or email orinda.mandarin@gmail.com.

Preschool director and teacher Susie Koeper thinks the language class is an excellent addition to their school. She's also proud of their Zoo-phonics program. "It fully involves the child's eyes, ear, mouth and body as they learn phonemic awareness, the alphabet and how to read and spell/write. Kids learn sounds and how to sound out words. It's fun, too, as they learn phonics through animal's names."

At the school for 13 years, Koeper stresses that they keep classes small. Art, stories and music are a part of each day. "We're also delighted that our children interact with the Lamorinda Adult Respite Center (LARC) participants, another offering at



(L-R) Instructor Julie McCormack, her daughter Erin, and students Dylan, Annaluna, preschool director Susie Koeper, Cooper, and Jonas.

the church," she said. "The children sometimes bake cookies to take to them, sing songs, and spend time getting acquainted. Some LARC guests don't have grandchildren nearby so it's a treat for them to have youngsters around."

The Holy Shepherd Christian Preschool offers classes for 2- to 3-year-olds on Tues-

days and Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon. Three-and-a-half and 4-year olds may join in classes Monday through Friday or Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 9 a.m. to noon. Extended Day, from noon to 2 p.m., is also an option. For further information, call the preschool at 254-3429.

TOPS Earns National NAEYC Accreditation

■ Program among first in nation to complete more rigorous accreditation process

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

The Orinda Preschool (TOPS) recently earned accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – becoming one of the first early childhood programs to do so.

"We're proud to have earned the mark of quality from NAEYC and to be recognized for our commitment to reaching the highest professional standards," says Lorraine O'Kane, Director of TOPS. "NAEYC accreditation lets families in our community know that children in our program are getting the best care and early learning experiences possible."

In order to achieve the prestigious accreditation, TOPS went through an extensive self-study process, measuring the program and its services against the 10 new NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and more than 400 related accreditation criteria. NAEYC assessors visited the Orinda campus to ensure that the program meets the designated standards



A young man at TOPS shows his artistic skill.

and may make unannounced visits during the next five years.

More than 11,000 programs, serving one million young children, are currently accredited by NAEYC. "The new NAEYC accreditation system raises the bar for preschools, child care centers, and other early childhood programs," says Mark Ginsberg, Ph.D., executive director of NAEYC. As of September 2006, the Association's revised program standards and criteria have introduced a new level of quality, accountability, and service for parents and children in child care programs. The new standards reflect the latest research and best practices in early childhood education and development.

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BALANCED LIVING

◆ CAR SHOW from page 3

pointments in surrounding communities. "We will also have a parade of cars at the end of the day and the public can ride in the car of their choice by paying a \$25 donation to the senior ride program," explains Vanek. Last year, the classic car show raised more than \$7,000 for Seniors Around Town.

In addition to the car show, this year's festivities include "Dancing with the Cars" on September 5. The dinner/dance and raffle takes place at Concord's Buchanan Air Field in an empty airplane hangar called "The Boy's Club." Owned by Orinda resident Doug Johnson, the hangar will be filled with his private collection of classic cars.

For information on the dinner/dance, call Chip Herman at 510-918-7686 or go to www.orindamotors.com.



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◆ MP from page 15

since joined the team as well.

Inspired by the enthusiasm of his students, last November Verducci founded We Believe Every Bit Helps, a group dedicated to organizing monthly activities for special needs children, such as basketball games and other fun events.

After the director of special education in Orinda, Robin Reeves, awarded him a commendation in recognition of his services to local children, Verducci was approached by Adam Feierstein, another Orindan, who had read about his award in the Contra Costa Times. He enlisted Verducci's help in founding another organization committed to helping special students maintain active lives: MP Fitness for Life, which focuses on teaching non-contact boxing to combined classes of special and regular needs children. Verducci and Feierstein have since promoted their program in 19 area schools, educating parents and students. Their goal for the program is to soon have 500 students enrolled.

"What's really important about the program," Verducci explained, "is that it teaches about more than physical fitness. We also use key words of the day, such as 'commitment,' to teach life lessons." Through his programs, Verducci hopes to both enrich the lives of special needs children, and open people's eyes to the importance of allowing them to interact fully with their fellow students. "My son Matthew is an avid fan," says Pamela Chang, whose son has autism. "He looks forward to Mondays and Wednesdays when he can work out with Adam and Andrew. These are his best days of the week." For more information about MP Fitness for Life, visit the website at www.mpfitnessforlife.com, email to mpfitnessforlife@gmail.com, or call Adam Feierstein at 510-439-6494.



Listen to your gut!

Andrea Colombu



Ever do that? Listen to your gut? Well, if you do, you are paying attention to your inner wisdom – you are listening to your second brain known as the enteric nervous system. The so-called "gut feeling," "butterflies in the stomach," "weebe-geebees" and other gut-promoted sensations are not the result of faulty imagination – they are as real and as important as any sensation produced by our brain. Because of its reporting accuracy, messages from the gut should be considered essential for the maintenance of healthy and balanced living.

With a network of more than 100 million neurons, more than what the spinal cord contains, this cluster of neurons and neurotransmitters located in the sheaths of tissue lining the esophagus, stomach, small intestine and colon, contains cells like those found in our brain. Because of its complex circuitry, this system is capable of many different autonomous functions. Experts in the field of neurogastroenterology consider this network to act independently from the brain. It can literally learn and memorize different functions and experiences, such as immunological responses and traumatic events. It can also send signals of distress, fear, anxiety, excitement, love and happiness. In other words, it can be said that our gut has a mind of its own that mirrors the functions of the brain. In its own unique way, it can deliver messages to the rest of the body as to what it is sensing and

experiencing by producing what we know as "gut feelings."

In light of these new scientific evidences, gut-listening may finally receive long overdue credence and validity. However, actual listening needs to take place in order to utilize its benefits. Not listening to our gut in fact may cost us our health, both physical and emotional. Physically we know that many gastrointestinal disorders like colitis, ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome originate from problems within the gut's brain. However, these are not just caused by physiological malfunctions.

Our emotions have a big role in our physical health. Emotions that are not openly addressed can literally get stored in our gut and other parts of the body. Prolonged residence of ignored, unexplored and suppressed experiences in our body, such as anxiety, fear and stress, can be manifested in physiological dysfunctions. Most of them are experienced by our gut brain which in response sends out distress signals. Upset stomach, indigestion, nausea, constipation, "butterfly feelings" and other unpleasant sensations are also distress signals. Ignoring them can be very detrimental to our health. So, it can be said that our physical health and emotional wellbeing are intrinsically interconnected. Our gut is just as important as our brain.

Listening to our gut and relying in its inner resources can help us lead a healthy and fulfilling life. Physical sensation of emotional nature felt by the gut can upset the brain and the rest of the body or can help us rebalance our emotional wellbeing. The choice is ours. Do we ignore the intelligence of our gut? Or do we acknowledge its wisdom and listen to its messages? Our body, once again, proves to be truly magnificent. Its innate wisdom and intelligence are often discredited, much to our disservice. Appreciation for our inner wisdom is necessary for our survival at any given point in time in our life. Currently more than ever this nature-given wisdom is especially necessary in order to face a world more and more afflicted by turmoil. When in physical or emotional distress and your gut sends you messages, listen to it, pay attention and acknowledge its meaning. Then gently breathe with it and allow its sensation to slowly dissipate. Once calm, use the intuitional information received to help restore balance and wellbeing. Listen to your gut, trust what it senses and help change your life. Until next time, be well and many blessings.

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CALIFORNIA SHAKESPEARE

Twelfth Night Final Play for Cal Shakes' Season

By DOROTHY BOWEN
Staff Writer

In Shakespeare's time, women's roles were played by boys, as most fans know. And in that tradition, Director Mark Rucker has cast a young man to play the heroine of *Twelfth Night* in the production that closes the Cal Shakes summer season. But he isn't slavishly following the tradition or making a point of gender-blind casting, he says. Rucker auditioned both men and women for the double role of Viola/Sebastian, the brother and sister shipwrecked on the shores of Illyria. And, he says, Alex Morf, graduate of ACT, was the best for the part.

Morf had played the younger brother in *The Rainmaker* at ACT. Likewise, he chose Sharon Lockwood to play the unfortunate Malvolio, "because she is simply the best actor for the part with the steward's cool, rigid, uniform quality."

Rucker has done gender-bending casting before, when he cast a woman as Egeus, Hermia's father, in *Midsummer Night's Dream* in Ashland in a production set in the '60s complete with a yellow VW bus decorated with daisies carrying the "rude mechanicals."

He plans to take a modern approach to *Twelfth Night* and portray a made-up world with different elements from different times. He was inspired by the play's title.

"We don't really celebrate *Twelfth Night* anymore, but it was the end of the holiday season," Rucker explains. "Duke Orsino (Stephen Barker Turner) and Olivia {Dana Morgan Green} are the power figures, the highest aristocrats. Everyone else in the play is either related to them or working for them. They are deeply self-involved, rich people. Orsino is pining away for Olivia, who is mourning her long-dead brother. But the party is over. Everyone is tired and drunk. It's time to go home."

Into this milieu come Viola and Sebastian, who are shipwrecked on the shore and lost to each other. Viola, like Shakespeare's heroines before and after, disguises herself as a boy to seek employment with the Duke. The Duke hires her to woo Olivia, who falls in love with Viola/Sebastian, instead. But Viola falls in love with the Duke.

While these couples overcome the obstacles of gender that prevent the fulfillment of their attraction, members of Olivia's



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Alex Morf plays the double role of Viola/Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*. The dual role is traditionally played by a woman.

household, Toby Belch (Andy Murray), Andrew Aguecheek (Dan Hiatt), and Maria (Catherine Castellanos), conspire to play mean tricks on the officious Malvolio.

"They go way too far," Rucker admits, "in a wild bender of cruelty. But I think contemporary audiences are ready to embrace many things at once," he says, "Histories and tragedies have comedy in them." Another edgy scene comes near the end of the play when Duke Orsino appears ready to kill Sebastian/Viola. "That's because he doesn't realize he's in love with him/her," adds Rucker.

Fortunately, the real Sebastian appears and Viola reveals her identity. The Duke marries her, and Olivia marries Sebastian. If this pairing off seems a tad arbitrary, Rucker says, "Olivia and Sebastian don't even know each other, and they get married. A lot of deception is involved. It makes you wonder what's going to happen when the play ends."

Rucker will next direct Tom Stoppard's *Rough Crossing* for Yale Repertory Theater. He directed *Richard III* for Cal Shakes last season and *Romeo and Juliet* before that.

Twelfth Night begins with previews September 10 and continues through October 5 at Bruns Amphitheater. Call 510-548-9666 for tickets.

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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 3 **Orinda Rotary**, noon, Community Center. Stu Eberhardt, pilot and owner of one of the few remaining flying P-51s, will speak. Call 254-2222.
- 4 **Friends of the Orinda Library** Booksale, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., bookshop and sorting room. Call 254-1358.
- 5 **"Dancing with the Cars,"** 6 p.m., at "The Boy's Club" at Buchanan Field in Concord, a benefit preceding the annual Orinda Motors' Classic Car Show. Tickets \$100. Call Chip Herman at 510-918-7686.
- Orinda Starlight Village Players** *A Bedfull of Foreigners*, 8:30 p.m., Orinda Community Park. Final play in the season. Tickets \$15 for adults, \$7.50 for students and seniors. Through September 27 on Friday and Saturday evenings, Sunday, September 21 at 4 p.m. and Thursday, September 25 at 8 p.m. Call 253-1191 for information.
- 6 **Orinda Motors' Classic Car Show**, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Orinda Motors, 63 Orinda Way. Admission free. Parade of cars ends the show at 2 p.m. Call 254-2012.
- Orinda Rotary**, noon, Community Center. District Gov. Jim Campbell and his wife Linda will speak. Call 254-2222.
- Second Wednesday Book Group**, Orinda Books, 3 p.m. Reading and discussion of *The Gathering* by Anne Enright. Call 254-7606.
- 10 **Orinda Chamber of Commerce Mixer**, 5:30 p.m. Tri-Valley mixer at Stratford at Countrywood, hors d'oeuvres prepared by executive chef Saul Ramirez. Call 254-3909.
- California Shakespeare Twelfth Night**, 8 p.m., Bruns Amphitheater. Continues through October 5. Call 510-548-9666 for tickets or visit www.calshakes.org for matinee and evening times.
- 16 **Orinda Owls**, Orinda Books, 7 p.m. Reading and discussion of *Ines of My Soul*, by Isabel Allende. Get ready for October 21, when the group will read *The Whole World Over*, by Julia Glass. Call 254-7606.
- World Affairs Book Group**, 3 p.m., Orinda Books. Reading and discussion of *Blue Gold: The Fight to Stop Corporate Theft of the World's Water*, by Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke. Call Daisy Daymond, group leader, at 925-935-1565.
- 17 **Orinda Rotary**, noon, Community Center. Jim Edgar, president of the Northern California chapter of the Audubon Society, will speak on Wagner Ranch Nature Area. Call 254-2222.
- 24 **Orinda Rotary**, noon, Community Center. Jack McAboy will speak about an Oakland Rotary chapter's first 100 years. Call 254-2222.
- 25 **Chamber of Commerce Mixer**, 5:30 p.m., at historic deLaveaga estate, shuttle service from the library. Call 254-3909.
- 30 **Chamber of Commerce** presents the first annual Orinda Restaurant Tour, 5 - 8 p.m., meet at Theatre Square for wine before embarking on your tour of local restaurants. For more information on participating restaurants, contact the Chamber at 254-3909

AT THE LIBRARY

All events at the Orinda Library are free unless otherwise noted. For questions about any program, call 254-2184.

- 9 **Peek-a-boo Time**, 10:15 a.m. Stories, rhymes and rhythms for newborns to 1-year-olds (pre-walkers). Babies and caretakers only; those with older siblings can attend Toddler Lapsit. Also September 16, 23, 30.
- Toddler Lapsit**, 10 a.m. Stories, songs, and rhymes for 1- to 3-year-olds and their caregivers. Repeats at 10:30 a.m. Please attend up to one Lapsit a week. Also on September 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30.
- 13 **Saturday Morning Live!** 11 a.m. Family story time for 3- to 5 year-olds. In the Picturebook corner. Also September 20, 27
- 17 **Geriatric Care Talk**, 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., Gallery Room. Ronda Darling, geriatric care manager for Eldercare Services, presents "Independence vs. Risk: How does a Family Evaluate When an Elder is at Risk if Living Alone?"

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

MEETINGS

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.
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**, Orinda Library, May Room, fourth Wednesday, 8 a.m., 253-1997.
- City Council**, first and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.cityoforinda.org.
- Historic Landmarks Committee**, fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, public is welcome, for information, call 925-788-7323.
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**, fourth Wednesday, 8 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library. Call 253-1997.
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District**, third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.
- Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**, OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road, 4 p.m.
- 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.

- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**, Postino's in Lafayette, 7 a.m. every Friday, 254-0440, ext.463.
- Orinda Rotary**, Community Center, every Wednesday at noon, 254-2222.
- 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 Job's Daughters**, first and third Monday, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 925-283-7176.

CALENDAR BY CHRIS LAVIN

Send calendar items to chrislavin@earthlink.net

Strange Bedfellows for Finale of Orinda Starlight Village Players



DAVE DIERKS

Cast members rehearse the final Starlight show for this season. (top) **Al Guaraglia**, (2nd row) **Sonya Kurden-Karaim**, **Malcolm Cowler**, and **Julia Scharlach**. **Geotty Chapple** (lower right) directs and (far right) actor **Kelly Hansen**. Not shown performers Nolan Mecham and Bill Hatteroff.

By DOROTHY BOWEN
Staff Writer

A funny, fast-paced farce, *A Bedfull of Foreigners*, will be the final play in the Orinda Village Starlight Players' (ORSVP) season at the park. A longtime Starlight star, Malcolm Cowler, saw the comedy in Singapore and thought it would be perfect for the theater troupe. When members read it, they agreed.

Geotty Chapple, whose forte is fast-paced, funny farces – such as Alan Ayckbourn's *Taking Steps* some seasons back – will direct. "It's a combination of *What the Bellhop Saw* and TV's *Fawlty Towers*," he says. The story involves two British couples, a British businessman, his German wife, his French mistress, and a French cabaret dancer, who check into a hotel in a small French village during the annual Saint Wolfgang Festival. Saint Wolfgang was a priest wrongly accused of treason and sentenced to be burned at the stake. The villagers substituted a dummy for the bonfire and every year thereafter, they reenact the burning of St. Wolfgang's doppelganger.

The comedy has been called a bawdy farce and a strip tease. Although the action calls for a naked lady dangling from the hotel window on a rope tied to the radiator, the nudity and the danger will be an illusion, Chapple says. "The sword scenes in the current production, *I Hate Hamlet*, are far more dangerous," he says. The lady will wear flesh-colored leotards and the rope tricks will be safe. "It's sexy without being sexual," he says.

Festival-goers will sport costumes of monks, nuns and guardsmen that will be

supplied from Starlight's storage from past productions. The hotel porter will probably wear coveralls and carry a bag of wrenches. Although the play was first performed in 1973 and ran 18 months in London, the comedy will require no updating. "No issues involve current events. We want to forget them for awhile," says Chapple.

The playwright, David Freeman, wrote material for Benny Hill in the 1950s and also more than 200 sitcoms for TV.

The cast includes: Malcolm Cowler now in his 26th season with ORSVP, last seen in *See How They Run*; Kelly Hanson, who appeared in last year's *My Three Angels*; and Al Guaraglia, who was the lead in *See How They Run* and the rich Mr. Bucket in *Taking Steps*. A young comedienne, Julia Scharlach, will play Simone, the cabaret dancer, and debuting for ORSVP is Noel Meacham, as the porter. Rounding out the cast are Sohnya Kreide-Karaim and Mark Lemyre.

Audiences are building for the outdoor amphitheater in Orinda Community Park, where Starlight has performed since experiencing a low during library construction and a spate of bad weather during the weekends. They now average about 30 viewers a night. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$7.50 for students and seniors. Reservations are not necessary for the show's performances, which will be held from September 5 through September 27 on Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:30 p.m., and Sunday, September 21 at 4 p.m., and Thursday, September 25 at 8 p.m. Call 253-1191 or email jill@aspenconsult.net for information.



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Sixto Santiago Joins Village Barber

With 42 years of experience, Sixto Santiago knows a thing or two about cutting hair. His Orinda roots date back to the late 1960s. Fresh out of San Francisco Barber College, Sixto cut men's hair at Orinda Barber Shop, located in the Crossroads across from the Orinda Theatre. In 1972 — when Donald Rheem was still alive, he likes to point out — a shop came up for sale in the Rheem Shopping Center and Sixto went into business for himself. Today he has come full circle, returning to Orinda and joining Village Barber, at 122 Village

Square, on the lower level.

"In the old days there was a barber union that regulated prices, required owners to pay a percentage of earnings to barbers, and the union dictated shops would be open Monday through Friday only. The barber industry basically had a few styles of cuts, the Flat Top, Flat Top with Fenders, medium haircut, and a light trim. The barber union made some poor investments with members' pensions and it dissolved in the early 1970s. At that time, many barbers left the business for better paying construction jobs," explains Sixto.

It was just about that time, in the early 1970s, that long hair became the fashion for men. Sixto discovered that women were ad-



Sixto Santiago (L) cuts a customer's hair at Village Barber. The new barber has more than 42 years experience.

ept at cutting long hair, so he hired women and taught them how to use clippers, as well. "Mom would call up with instructions and say, 'Johnny's coming in for a haircut. Be sure you cut it short.' Well, then Johnny would walk through the door at 6 feet in height and you bet Johnny got his hair cut any way he liked it," laughs Sixto. "Very few boys had short hair then, which is unlike today, where we have about 30 percent of the kids who want short hair."

Throughout his 35 years of business in Moraga, Sixto gave back to the community in many ways, including cutting hair for Campolindo High School's Grad Night for 12 years and supporting Saint Mary's College.

Originally established in 1959 and currently owned by Eric Zamora, Village Barber is a blast from the past. Walk in on a weekday afternoon in late summer and early fall and you are likely to hear a Giants game on the radio. Magazine racks are adorned with Sports Illustrated (and you may sneak a peak at the girlie magazines, too). Village Barber supports Miramonte High School Football and Sleepy Hollow School's Odyssey of the Mind program. Although the barber union is extinct, you still experience the flavor of the good ol' days at Village Barber.

Sixto enjoys fishing, playing golf, and traveling to Mexico once a year. "I spend a lot of my spare time with my grandkids and attending their baseball and basketball games." He is the father of Greg, an elementary school principal and Anne, an accountant. "My former wife, Joan, and I had a foster son who faced some serious challenges and today my daughter Anne is rearing her son and our foster son's own son. He is, in fact, our foster grandson. This keeps us fairly busy," he adds. Sixto is available Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5:40 p.m. To make an appointment, call 254-6911.

Bellissima Consulting

Alexandria Hilton is an inspired expert in the field of coaching and consulting. Hilton established Bellissima Consulting in Orinda 14 years ago, focusing on personal and organizational transition coaching.

Her work evolved into executive leadership coaching and consulting and today she travels internationally as a trusted advisor to CEOs and other senior executives of Fortune 500 companies in global leadership development and organizational transitions. Clients include executives from IBM, ChevronTexaco, Genentech, Mervyn's, Boeing, Safeway and nonprofits such as Kaiser Foundation Hospital and Consumer's Union.

"I work with expatriates sent abroad by American companies to do business in another culture. I work with these expats and their teams who may be comprised of people from different countries. I help them understand, communicate and work together," explains Hilton. It is very important to understand how Americans are perceived by other nationalities and how to effectively communicate across borders with respect, clarity and honoring the customs of that country," she adds.



Alexandria Hilton of Bellissima Consulting.

Country and company culture are the key to Hilton's work. "I enjoy coaching people who are coping with several variables, a company culture, a distinct country culture, and then there is their own individual training and background that they bring to the business situation," explains Hilton, who is adept at understanding an individual team, their industry expertise, what the team is responsible for and their targeted business

[SEE BUZZ page 23]

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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 22

objectives. In addition to cross-cultural issues, Hilton coaches local entrepreneurs and small business owners, serving as a business partner to think strategically of growing the business, marketing, staff development, expansion and reorganization.

Hilton is originally from Southern California. She earned a bachelor of arts degree in English at California State University-Long Beach and a master's degree in Consciousness Studies at John F. Kennedy University. She was awarded a Master Coach Certification, the highest internationally recognized coaching certification.

Hilton lives in Orinda with her husband, Dick Ferrington, an executive and leadership coach, consultant and author. Hilton's daughter, Aislinn Sterling, a 2007 Miramonte High School graduate, is a sophomore at the University of California-Santa Cruz.

A guiding principle for Alexandria Hilton is giving back to her community. She grew up holding the value that everyone is here for a purpose and recognized early on that giving to others enriched her own life experience. This path led Hilton to coauthor with Joy Macci, Ph.D., *Enjoy: The Luxury of Life, Your Secret Keys to Global Giving*

now and to give whatever you have to give — be it time, talent or money — at a higher level. In keeping true to values, 25 percent of the net proceeds from book sales will go to charities benefiting families, women and children, and the environment.

Community service has always been important to Hilton. She has mentored graduate level coaches-in-training as a core faculty member at John F. Kennedy University. "I am so grateful to Orinda and its strong community spirit. There is so much support for families and for our children here. One of the reasons I moved to Orinda was the sense of community that endures," says Hilton.

For more information about Bellissima Consulting and Hilton's upcoming book, *Enjoy: The Luxury of Life, Your Secret Keys to Global Giving and World Wealth*, visit www.bellissimaconsulting.com or call 253-0444.

La Cocina Mexicana Is All in the Family

Selene Sem has been an insider at La Cocina Mexicana, located at 23 Orinda Way, since her sister, Shannan Tagg, built the restaurant a few years back. "I helped her open it up and saw things I wanted to add. When I bought the place from Shan-



(L-R) **La Cocina** owners **Amandor Solis** and his wife **Selene Sem** with employees **Brenda Luna** and **Jorge Garcia**.

and *World Wealth*, to be published by Life Success Publishing later this fall.

The authors' premise is that contributing to others in a way that taps one's own talents, financial resources, values and passions is one of the biggest secret keys to inner wealth, the wealth of the heart and soul. "When we learn to give, we start to live," she says. They have profiled individuals and businesses, including nonprofits, devoted to having a portion of their profits donated to philanthropy. Some of these individuals include Angelina Jolie, Audrey Hepburn, Andrew Carnegie, Mahatma Gandhi and Princess Diana. The idea is to take action

nan in 2005, I made some adjustments with the menu. For instance, we do not deep fry anything with the exception of chips and carnitas," says Sem. Produce and meats are delivered fresh daily.

Friday and Saturday nights you will often notice a line of patrons waiting outside for a table. Inside, the warm earth-tone tile floor complements the heavy Mexican chairs with woven rush seats. There are two rows of tables that seat a capacity of 35 guests. The lighting is subtle and soothing. Families and singles alike are attracted to the hearty authentic Mexican food served here. The menu selections range from homemade

Garden Lights Wins Landscape Awards



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Orinda's **Steve Lambert** of Garden Lights Landscape Development received eight top honors at this year's "Beautification Awards" presented by the California Landscape Contractors Association, including "Best of the Best" for large design for the Bluford residence (above) in Orinda, four first place awards, and three achievement awards.

soups served with cornbread, a la carte plates of tacos, taquitos, quesadillas and burritos to a wide selection of entrees.

"If you like mole, it is our major specialty. A very popular dish with our guests is Camarones a la Diabla. It is very rich, very hot and very traditional. It is a bit spicy, but you can ask for mild if that is your preference," says Sem. Chicken enchiladas prepared with pulled chicken is another favorite. The staff at La Cocina has been the same since it opened. Jorge Garcia is the chef and Brenda Luna puts everything together with Jorge.

"Brenda often knows the orders of our regular guests. She will correct things if there has been a miscommunication. I would not be where I am today without Jorge, Brenda, our waiters, waitresses, busboys and busgirls," says Sem, who likes to hire locally and promote them from bus staff to wait staff as they gain experience.

Selene Sem is married to Amador Solis. Solis previously played minor league baseball in Canada and was working as a baseball coach when Sem asked Solis for his help at La Cocina. "Being pregnant with our first child, I knew I would need his help." Previously, Sem owned and managed New York Minute Deli, located on the campus of San Francisco State University.

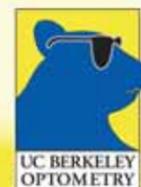
La Cocina does a lot of catering, including preparing hot lunches for five local schools, Orinda Intermediate, Del Rey, Glorietta, Camino Pablo and Los Perales during the school year. The restaurant is open Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. It is closed on Sunday so the employees can have a day off, but is available for private parties that day.

For phone-in orders, call 925-258-9987. La Cocina takes reservations.

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The OA Board (Barnaby Beck, Jim Luini, April and Steve Meagher, Cindy Powell, Bill Waterman and Kate Wiley) would like to thank the following community groups for their support and participation:

- Orinda Arts Council
- Orinda Chamber of Commerce
- Orinda Rotary
- Orinda/Tabor Sister City
- OPSAC
- Ham Radio Operators
- City of Orinda
- Orinda Parks and Recreation Department
- Orinda Public Works Department
- Orinda Police Department
- Boy Scout Troop 237
- Roadrunners Fun Run and Pancake Breakfast
- Haley's Run for a Reason

Thank you to the following individual stars, who along with their volunteers, made it all happen:

- Susan Meyer:** Chairman of "Reach for the Stars" Gala and Decorations Chairman. Responsible for the new street banners throughout Orinda and decorations in the Park, Community Center and Library Plaza.
- Suzanne Tom:** Chairman of all activities pre and post parade July 4th, including all booths, games, entertainment and chairman of Haley's Run for a Reason.
- Ina Pavey:** Chairman of all food and beverage booths
- Kim Wolfe:** Chairman of all vendor and non-profit booths
- John Vanek:** Orinda Motors' two car shows (July 2 and July 4).
- Nancy Daniels:** designed new street banners, co-chaired all school design competition for July 4th with the Orinda Arts Council

- Petra Michael:** Orinda Idol finalists singing national anthem and participating in the parade.
- Cindy Powell:** Chairman for all musical groups in pre-parade, parade, and post parade.
- Sylvia Deaton:** Chairman of corporate sponsorships.
- Bobbie Landers and Merrily Taylor:** Equestrian entrants in the parade.
- JoAlice Canterbury and Valerie Hotz:** Volunteer Co-chairs.
- Barbara Bontemps:** Publicity Chair
- Travis Wiley:** Volunteer extraordinaire!
- Steve Harwood:** Master of Ceremonies of July 2 event, MC of July 4
- Bill Cosden:** Parade Announcer, July 4 Theater side
- Tina Ross:** Parade Lineup Co-chair
- Allison McCrady:** Artists for July 2 Stars Event