

THE ORINDA NEWS

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

12 Issues Annually
October 2008

Have you Seen this Car?



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

This 1929 Packard Phaeton was once owned by renowned architect Bernard Maybeck before he sold it to an Orinda farmer. Find out more on page 19.

Five More Housing Designs Approved for Wilder Development



SALLY HOGARTY

Grading on the Wilder project is well underway. Some of the new sites border the Sunrise Hill neighborhood.

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

The Orinda Planning Commission recently approved five additional housing plans for the Wilder development, bringing the total plans approved to nine. A total of 18 designs will be presented to the commission over the next several months for the luxury homes on the 1,600-acre development off Gateway Boulevard. The newest approved plans are for lots 46 – 50 with a lot size ranging from 15,333 square feet to 23,740. Lots 51-54 were previously approved.

Housing designs are by Robert Hidey Architects. While plans are going through the planning commission, the developer, Orinda Gateway, LLC, has already been grading sites for the long-awaited residential development. Approximately 100 of the 245 sites have been graded. As each of the 18 proposed housing plans comes up for review before the planning commission, commissioners are given a tour of the sites and which housing plan is proposed for each site.

“When prospective buyers look at a site, they will be given the approved building plans for that lot,” says spokesperson Jason Keadjian. “They can use the approved plans [SEE WILDER page 20]”

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OA Hosts Forum on October 16

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Meet the candidates for Orinda City Council at a special forum hosted by the Orinda Association on October 16 from 7 – 8:30 p.m. in the Orinda Library Auditorium.

Three people are running for two vacancies in the November 4 election. Current Mayor Victoria Smith and Councilmember Steve Glazer hope to be re-elected with Robert Larsen also vying for one of the council seats. Smith and Glazer began serving as councilmembers in 2004. Larsen is an 18-year resident of Orinda running for his first political office in Orinda. All

three candidates list Orinda’s crumbling infrastructure as a top priority as well as attracting more businesses to the area.

The League of Women Voters will moderate the panel discussion. Candidates will answer questions submitted by the audience. The Orinda Association suggests that questions be submitted in advance to the OA via email (oa@orindaassociation.org) or by mail (P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563). Cards will also be available on October 16 for audience members to fill out and submit.

For further information, contact the OA at 254-0800 or send an email to the above address.

Car Show Raises Over \$15,000 for Senior Ride Program

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

The third annual Classic Car Show was a rousing success with a record amount of money raised for the Orinda Association’s Seniors Around Town. The program pairs volunteer drivers with seniors in need of transportation to doctor’s appointments, shopping and more.

Organized by Chip and Carolyn Herman and sponsored by Orinda Motors, the September 6 show featured 120 cars ranging from a 1912 Hudson to a 2009 Nissan GTR. “Our first car show in 2005 had 22 cars and raised \$1,600,” says John Vanek of Orinda Motors, who along with Chip Herman conceived of the event. “It’s just amazing how it has grown every year.” To [SEE SENIORS page 2]



JOHN VANEK

Chip Herman presents Eartha Newsong and Kate Wiley from the Orinda Association’s Seniors Around Town program with a check for \$15,000.

Developer Selected for Old Library Site

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

A selection panel appointed to review potential developers for an affordable senior housing project at the old library site has completed its seven-month analysis. Consisting of Mayor Victoria Smith, Councilmember Amy Worth, Planning Commissioner Richard Westin, former developer and affordable housing advocate Marti Buxton, and Pastor Frank Baldwin of Orinda Community Church, the panel will recommend to the city council at its October 7 meeting that it retain Eden Housing to develop and manage the senior housing project.

The group reviewed proposals from 10 developers, did eight site visits to existing projects, and extensive interviews with four developers before choosing Eden. “Although we were incredibly impressed with a number of the developers, we ultimately decided that Eden was our recom-

mendation based upon the quality of their existing developments in the East Bay, their experience and track record in obtaining federal, state, county and investor financing in order to build the development, and the level of on-going service and care that they will provide to the resident seniors following move-in,” says Mayor Smith. “We also appreciate the fact that one of the Eden Project Managers is an Orinda resident, Woody Karp, and we felt that his knowledge of our city and his obvious dedication to building a quality project that he himself will see and be proud of every day, is a real plus.”

A complete staff report on the selection process will be available at the October 7 city council meeting.

OA Members check page 3 for your October discounts!

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Congratulations Orinda Idols



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mayor Victoria Smith congratulates Orinda Idol contestants **Ryan Ford, Amanda Bovoso** and **Anastasia Belinsky**. Winners in the popular event, which took place September 6 and 7 at the Orinda Theatre include: K-2: **Jackie Patton** (Glorietta); 3-5: **Jocelyn Purcell** (Sleepy Hollow); Middle School: **Katie Marino** (OIS); High School: **Sarah Ames** (Miramonte); Groups: Suvi & Max Duet (**Suvi Gluskin and Max Tzannes**) (Miramonte) Audience Award: **Katie Marino**

◆ SENIORS from page 1

enable the growth this year, the Hermans put together a group of marketing experts and car enthusiasts, Friends of the Classic Car Show, to get the word out and help organize the various activities. "We are so grateful for all the hard work done by the Friends and Orinda Motors," says OA co-president Kate Wiley. "They not only raised an incredible sum of money for the program, they spread awareness of its existence, which resulted in new drivers signing up to help our seniors."

This year several cars from the show were previewed at Theatre Square during

the OA's Reach for the Stars event on July 2 and several more were driven in the 4th of July parade as well as displayed at the park.

A dinner/dance on September 5 kicked off the September car show. Held at the Boy's Club Hangar at Buchanan Air Field, the event featured Orinda resident Doug Johnson's private collection of classic cars.

"We are so grateful to the Hermans and to Orinda Motors," says Senior Ride coordinator Eartha Newsong. "In our wildest dreams we never expected to receive such a wonderful donation. It will go a long way towards serving our seniors."



JOHN VANEK

One hundred and twenty classic cars lined Orinda Way and filled the Orinda Motors' garage for the Third Annual Classic Car Show.

**The Second Golden Age of Dutch Art:
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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA Presidents Membership Just Got Easier!

Kate Wiley and Jim Luini



Your membership support is critical to maintaining and continuing to meet the changing needs in Orinda. With your support, we have provided a volunteer center for the past seven years which offers a variety of programs and volunteer opportunities benefiting all generations of Orinda residents. Our two most popular programs are Seniors Around Town, an all-volunteer transportation program providing door-to-door transportation for doctors' appointments, errands or social events for senior residents, and Soccer 4 All, a youth soccer donation program providing under-funded youth around the world and the Bay Area with team uniforms and equipment. Our annual Volunteer of the Year Awards dinner recognizes the outstanding efforts of those whose work has benefited the community and our environment. Your membership support also helped to make our 25th An-

niversary July 4th parade a historic success. We continue our policy of providing public forums on local issues with our October 16 panel of candidates for city council. And, of course, you also receive our outstanding local paper *The Orinda News* free of charge. But to help make your membership rewards go even further, your membership now gives you monthly discounts at Orinda retailers. This past year the following businesses offered our members special deals: Subway, Fed Ex Kinkos, Treible Stationer, Petra Café, Entourage Spa & Salon and AJ Nails, with Shelby's our featured retailer this month.

And now, we are very pleased to offer one more benefit to our members and future members – the convenience of paying your membership on-line with a with a credit card effective November 1. Simply log onto our website at www.orindaassociation.org, click on the "Join Us" tab and fill in the quick and easy payment form. Of course, if the Internet is not your constant companion, we gratefully accept your membership via post or by credit card over the phone. Please call us at 254-0800 with any questions or for additional information about any of our programs, and thank you for being a member and supporter of the Orinda Association.

Now Accepting Nominations for

Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Awards
Download a form from our website www.orindaassociation.org or send us your nomination by fax (254-8312) or to P.O. Box 97, Orinda, 94563.

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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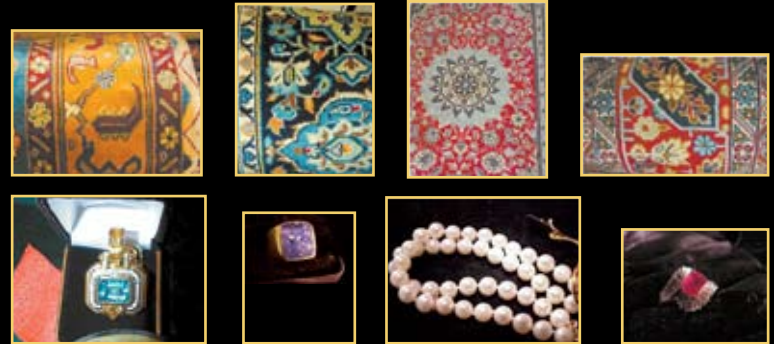
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Orinda Community Center Auxiliary's 33rd Annual Holiday Bazaar



This is the Orinda Community Center's largest fundraising event. Over 60 vendors from near and far. 100% of the proceeds benefit the Orinda Community Center parks and programs.

Saturday, November 1st 10:00 - 4:30 pm
Sunday, November 2nd 11:00 - 4:30pm

Orinda Community Center 26 Orinda Way

~ Raffle Prizes and Silent Auction ~

~ Children's Art Drop Off ~

While you shop, drop-off your child, ages 3-8, in the art room
\$5.00 per child, per hour. Saturday 11:00 - 3:00 and Sunday 12:00 - 3:00

~ Entertainment ~

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Items for the Home • Handcrafted Note cards
and much more!

OCCA is the sponsor of the annual Concerts-in-the-Park, Halloween Parade, Spring Egg Hunt and this Holiday Bazaar.
For more information, please call the Orinda Community Center at 925-254-2445 or go to <http://old.ci.orinda.ca.us/parksandrec/auxiliary.html>



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Corrections:

On page 3 of the September issue, the quilt by Chris Boersma should have been listed as Chris Boersma Smith, and the quilt's complete title is "Jellies: Fantasies of Their Creators."

In the restaurant guide, the address for Caffé Teatro was incorrect. The correct address is 26 Orinda Way. Also in the restaurant guide, Shelby's fax number was listed instead of the phone number, which is 254-9687.

Letters to the Editor

Thank You for Editorial

This magazine [*The Orinda News*] is a real asset to our community. It provides a link to all of us when we are such an insular community. I was shocked and saddened by your editorial asking about racial profiling. I don't think there is any question that we suffer from a paranoia in Orinda about the "other side of the tunnel." I can remember when I tried to get a trail approved along Miner Road and citizens complained in Sleepy Hollow that it would invite rapists into our community from BART. I can remember when we tried to reach out to the homeless with our vacant old library and were told that it would threaten our children's safety. I can remember so many times driving down Camino Pablo and seeing motorists pulled over who were mostly black or brown. Why didn't those employees in Wells Fargo Bank or Mechanic's Bank simply walk out and introduce themselves and find out quickly that the person they saw as a threat to their community, only because of his dark skin, was someone just like them, trying to do business in a safe community on a fine sunny day.

Obviously, we are not a diverse community. Our lives are so separated from those who seem different from us that we've been driven to think in terms of fear during eight years of war that we cannot reach out past that cloak of darkness. And now we face a historical election that could have profound impacts on our nation – a chance to put these fears behind us and come together – to reach out or pull back for another generation.

– Ted Urban

Editor Owes Apology

The recent editorial suggesting there may be racial profiling in Orinda should be of concern to all Orinda. Before the proverbial rush to judgment, let us first analyze what was written.

We are told that Wells Fargo Orinda was recently robbed by one or more black males undoubtedly leading to a rising state of apprehension and fear among employees.

We are further told that a black male was detained by Orinda police after being called by Wells Fargo employees.

Even according to the usual unbiased

editorial we expect from *The Orinda News*, the black male acknowledges he was treated "courteously" by police – so reasonable minds are left to wonder.

Where is the sense of shame and community outrage felt by the editor? Complicating our understanding of the facts, we are still further told that employees of a separate bank later that day telephoned the police to complain of "suspicious" conduct by the same man. Unfortunately, it is impossible to sort that out without more facts.

There is simply no evidence the Orinda police engaged in racial profiling and a retraction and apology by the editor is in order.

– David Hammond

Overtaxed Orinda

In an era of rampant inflation, Orinda voters should reject a costly local ballot measure. Voters must also make candidates running for the Orinda City Council promise to be more fiscally prudent. The council has not been careful with money.

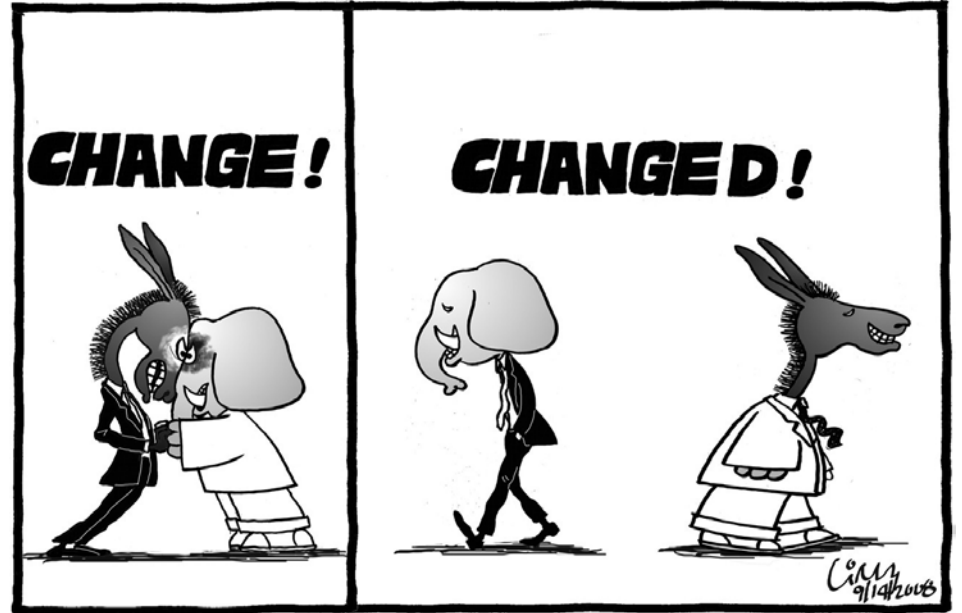
In the Orinda area, gasoline prices are now double what they were in January 2007. Paying more for gasoline is the functional equivalent of a tax increase. Measure E, from the Acalanes Union High School District, will, if enacted, allow the district to issue \$93 million in bonds. Bonds are not free. Anyone looking at his or her most recent property tax bill will see three Acalanes bond fees already on the bill.

Measure E offers no exemptions for low- or moderate-income senior citizens. Voters should reject Measure E.

The Orinda City Council supported putting a 44 percent increase in the library parcel tax on the June 2008 ballot. Voters passed the tax. Supporting this tax were Councilmembers Victoria Smith and Steve Glazer, both of whom are seeking re-election in November. The tax should have contained an exemption for low-income residents, especially low-income senior citizens. There was no such exemption. Moreover, the tax, unlike its predecessor tax, has no expiration date.

On March 1, garbage-collection fees for Orinda went up by 14.7 percent, three times the rate of inflation. Councilmember Smith is a member of the board of directors of the Contra Costa County Solid Waste Authority, the agency that sets fees for garbage collection. Smith failed to take any action to lower garbage-collection fees. If Smith had been more enterprising, Orindans might not be paying so much for rubbish pick-up.

In late 2007, Smith and Glazer supported legislation for bringing "affordable" housing to Orinda. Smith and Glazer were in favor of utilizing a potential buyer's income as a means of determining affordability. Smith and Glazer ignored the pleas of their fellow councilmember, Amy Worth, who argued that eligibility for such housing should be based on two criteria: a buyer's



income and assets.

If Smith and Glazer want to be re-elected, they must promise that they will be fiscally prudent. They must also promise that they will not impose higher taxes on senior citizens living on modest incomes.

– Richard S. Colman

Preparing for Disaster

I recently attended a presentation by the engineer Tom Chan, a member of the Orinda Public Safety Advisory Commission. The Orinda Chamber of Commerce sponsored this update on disaster preparedness. It was very informative for merchants and small businesses.

As a physician with a Masters in Public Health from U.C. Berkeley, I support disaster preparedness in Orinda. A list of volunteer physicians, nurses and crisis counselors should be established. A major earthquake on the Hayward Fault will likely disable Highway 24 for one to four weeks according to Mr. Chan. There will be injuries. There may not be access to hospitals and emergency facilities for some time after a Big Quake. We must be prepared to take care of ourselves. A clinician roster, a cache of medical supplies, and designated triage sites should be established expeditiously.

Orindans and other Contra Costa County residents need a flu vaccination program. One hundred million people died in the Pandemic of 1918 when the world's population was far less than today. The Centers for Disease Control have forecast millions will die or become disabled should Avian flu hit the North American continent, and we are unprepared. Better to be safe than sorry. A program for vaccinating our older residents, those with respiratory conditions, and public safety officers should be established now. The flu season is approaching.

Our community through active planning should pledge that mismanagement of a disaster like Katrina will never happen in Orinda, Lamorinda or Contra Costa County.

– Dr. Bob Larsen

Re-elect Glazer and Smith

I would like to encourage all Orinda citizens to re-elect Steve Glazer and Victoria Smith. The Orinda City Council has come a long way in the last four years and we need to make sure that the council stays on the right track. With great progress coming in so many different areas – road improvements despite very limited funding, transparency in government, public safety and emergency preparedness, and vastly improved relationships with stakeholders – it would be a huge mistake to interfere with the process at this critical point. We all owe a debt of gratitude to our volunteers on the city council for their long hours and excellent work. Please cast your votes for Steve Glazer and Victoria Smith in the upcoming election!

– Glenn Alper

Support Steve Glazer

I want to encourage my friends and neighbors in Orinda to join with me in supporting Steve Glazer's re-election to the city council.

Steve's first two years on the council were particularly challenging because many of his common sense ideas were rejected by the old establishment. He wanted better feedback from residents through customer surveys, criteria for road repairs so the major streets were given a higher priority than cul-de-sacs, greater transparency in government decision-making, tighter fiscal controls on spending and the curtailing of sole source contracts. I am happy to see that in his last two years on the newly configured council he was able to accomplish all of these reforms.

There is now a lot of positive momentum and civic pride in Orinda, and we congratulate Steve and the new city council for leading the way. Thank you, Steve!

– Charles "Chip" Wisner

Glazer Helped Revitalize Safeway

I have lived in Orinda for over 13 years. Supporting local businesses is and always has been a high priority for me. But over the years, the quality of our local Safeway really suffered, both in variety and quality

[SEE LETTERS page 6]

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

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

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

LEAD IN TOYS / POLICE BLOTTER

Check Toys this Holiday Season

■ Unsafe levels of lead paint continue to find their way into children's products

By CHRIS VIADRO
Contributing Writer

In the summer of 2007, news of lead paint in toys hit the media with a number of high profile recalls. Mattel, Inc./Fisher-Price recalled 9 million toys due to unsafe lead levels. The recall encompassed Sesame Street, Polly Pocket, Dora the Explorer, and many other toy lines. At about the same time, RC2 Corp. recalled a million and half toys from the Thomas & Friends series for the same reason.

Despite the press' spotlight (or perhaps because of it), there have been more than 100 recalls of a wide variety of children's toys that contain unsafe levels of lead in the last year. While no individual recall has approached Mattel's in size, the number of recalled product units continues to be in the millions in the aggregate. Many of the offending products were children's

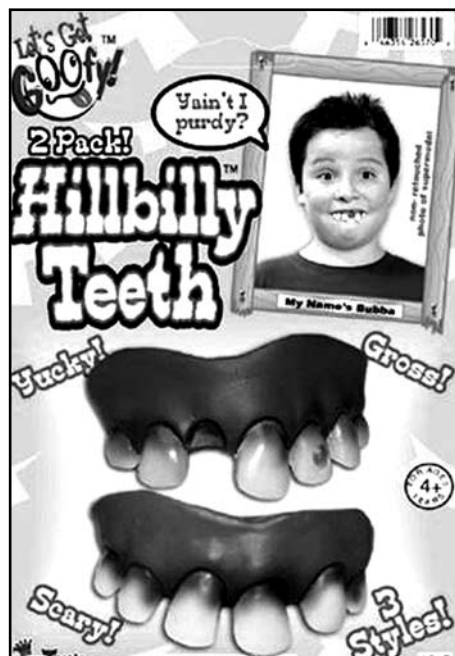


CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Popular children's jewelry items can contain unsafe levels of lead paint.

jewelry from a variety of manufacturers and distributors (e.g., Makit & Bakit Jewelry and Suncatcher Sets).

Unfortunately, the presence of lead in toys is not limited to a narrow band of children's products. Rather, recalls were issued on a myriad of other products: art sets, board games, puzzles, candle charms, aluminum water bottles, Cub Scouts totem badges, Riddell racing helmets, Rawlings batting helmets, bobble heads, Halloween teeth, Northern Tool and Equipment red wagons, FGX International Sunglasses, Disney Tinker Bell wands, and Pirates of the Caribbean sleeping bags. The foregoing is a very short list of the overall number of recalled products. Eighty percent of the toys



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lead paint on these fake teeth make them a less than ideal toy.

that are sold in the United States are made in China as were the vast majority of those recalled for lead paint issues.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, childhood lead poisoning remains a major environmental health problem in the United States. While other sources of lead (such as old chipping paint) are generally a greater concern, toys can present a problem because babies and young children often put their hands and other objects in their mouths. Lead presents a greater problem for children because their growing bodies more readily absorb lead. Additionally, young brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to its damaging effects. The EPA reports that lead exposure can result in behavior and learning problems, slowed growth, hearing problems and headaches among other problems.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has tested home lead test kits and found them to be unreliable for detecting lead in toys. Consumers with a concern about a particular product should go to the Consumer Product Safety Commission website for details about and photographs of specific recalled products (www.cpsc.gov). Finally, Congress is working on an overhaul of the nation's consumer product safety laws; proponents are aiming for a total ban of lead in children's toys.

Christopher A. Viadro, Esq. has a catastrophic personal injury practice with The Veen Firm, P.C., in San Francisco.



POLICE BLOTTER

August 2008

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 148 false alarm calls throughout the city.

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

Domestic Violence: 2 incidents.

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

All Other Petty Thefts: 1 incident.

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

All Other Grand Thefts: 2 incidents.

Homicide Attempt: 1 incident.

Vehicle Theft: 1 incident.

Residential Burglary: 5 incidents.
Commercial Burglary: 2 incidents.

Vandalism: 5 incidents.

Arrests

Recovered Stolen Vehicles: 1

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

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Food Services in Jeopardy

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

The high cost of food and the higher cost of fuel has added to the prices of school lunch programs, most of which are running in the red throughout Contra Costa County, including in Orinda.

"It's a serious problem," said Acalanes Union School District Superintendent Jim Negri. "We're not sure what we're going to do about it."

A food service task force surveyed staff, parents and students late last year, and the results, shared with school district staff in August, showed that serving a hot lunch is high priority for all students. But running a school lunch program serving more than 1,000 per cafeteria in the district is costly.

"It's not a restaurant, it's a private industry," said Diane Deschler, a food services director with the district. "One of the biggest challenges of the school lunch program is that funding sources, money from the state and the USDA, is small, and they aren't following any sort of yearly increases. So when costs go up, there just isn't enough for the budget."

Costs of lunches vary by the school, but hover around \$3 per lunch per student. A recent survey done by the *New York Times* showed that 27 percent of all food bought and sold in the country gets thrown out. But waste is only part of the problem,

Deschler said.

"The cost of labor is huge," she said. And Negri added that because many school lunch staff belong to a union, labor costs are not going to go anywhere but up. And not only has the cost of food risen more than 10 percent in the past year, transportation costs for getting it from the market to the schools have also gone up.

"Plus we have state and federal restrictions governing the program that keep our hands tied, so there isn't a lot we can do," Negri said. For example, when the state of California legislated that sodas could no longer be sold in school cafeterias – a decision largely accepted as a good one – revenues for some school lunch programs went down by as much as 20 percent in some schools.

"Soda was a big money-maker," Negri said.

And while schools such as Orinda Intermediate School have large numbers of parent volunteers to administer lunch programs, thereby keeping labor costs down, "the high schools can't do that," Negri said, because of staff and union agreements.

"The school lunch can be a really good thing, but it's gotten a really bad rep. The people who are involved in food service really care about what they are serving. They are dedicated and work really hard," Deschler said. "There can be a way you can serve good food, but costs are high."





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◆ LETTERS from page 4

of products, as well as general appearance, especially compared to nearby competitors. I, like many others, began to do more and more of my food shopping outside of my town (Diablo Foods, Whole Foods, Costco).

During Steve Glazer's first year on the city council, he sent me and many other Orinda residents an email saying he had heard of my concern about the condition and product offerings at our local Safeway and asked if I wanted to be involved in a meeting with company executives to request improvements. I readily accepted the opportunity to voice my concerns and was very impressed with the willingness to hear feedback from a variety of community members.

I was pleased to attend several meetings organized by Steve with Safeway executives, planners and architects who committed to working with us to make changes to improve the situation. The company had indicated that they had received a less than

open arms reception in previous years but was willing to take another try and appreciated the offers of help from Councilman Glazer and the residents in attendance.

Well, we all know how this story ends. I was amazed at how quickly Safeway responded and how efficient and speedy the remodeling process went. While Safeway still does not meet all my needs, it is a vast improvement, and I make every attempt to shop there as much as I can.

This is only one of a number of reasons that I will vote for Steve Glazer for Orinda City Council. He took a long-standing problem and brought effective and immediate results. I encourage my friends and all Orinda residents who know of his hard work on our behalf to do likewise.

– Dvora Citron

Editor's Note: Letters to the Editor for the November issue are due October 5. Letters are printed on a space available basis. For the November issue, letters not able to be printed in the paper will be posted on-line.

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LAMORINDA READS

Lamorinda Reads Returns to Area Libraries

By MOYA STONE
Staff Writer

On your mark, get set, read! It's time for the second annual community reading program, Lamorinda Reads, October 13 to November 12. This year librarians from Orinda, Moraga, and Lafayette libraries have chosen the book, *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America*, by local author Firoozeh Dumas.

Lamorinda Reads is patterned after the successful One City One Book, a reading program that has swept the country since its inception in 1998. The idea is that community members read the same book and throughout several weeks participate in various events, discussions, and presentations sponsored by local libraries.

The event last year was a big success with dozens of community members reading *Down to a Soundless Sea*, a collection of short stories by Thomas Steinbeck, son of the acclaimed California author John Steinbeck. Discussions and special events were scheduled at all three area libraries, attracting young and old readers alike.

This year's author, Dumas, was 7 years old when she emigrated from Iran with her family. The family lived in Whittier, California for two years, returned to Iran, and then two years later came back to the United States to stay. Dumas attended University of California-Berkeley, where she met her future husband.

Funny in Farsi is Dumas' first book, inspired by the stories her father told of growing up in Iran. Published in 2003, the book quickly hit the *San Francisco Chronicle's* Best Sellers List and was a finalist for the prestigious Thurber Prize for American Humor. Dumas is the first Middle Eastern woman ever to receive this honor.



SALLY HOGARTY
Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America by local author Firoozeh Dumas has been selected as the book for this year's Lamorinda Reads program.

Events are planned at the three libraries and include book discussions, Persian dance lessons, henna tattooing, and a Middle Eastern percussion performance for kids. The Lamorinda Reads grand finale will welcome Dumas for a reception and discussion of her book on November 12, at 7 p.m. at the Orinda Library auditorium.

Each library will have 240 copies of the book for circulation. The Orinda Book Store and the Lafayette Book Store will have copies for sale. For more information and a listing of events, go to www.cclib.org, or visit one of the participating libraries.

Lamorinda Reads!

Book Talks - October 28, 7p.m. - Orinda Library; Wednesday, October 29, 7p.m. - Lafayette Library; November 5, 2 p.m. - Moraga Library.

Art in the Library - Persian Art from the Hourian Fine Art Galleries - Orinda Library Art Gallery - November; **Paintings by Sam Nejadi** - Morgaga Library - October; **Paintings by Katayoon Zandvakili** - Morgaga Library - November; Art inspired by *Funny in Farsi* from the Lafayette Gallery - Lafayette Library - October

Lamorinda Reads! Events - October 13, 7 p.m. - *The Forgotten Refugees* at the Lafayette Library - Presented by Joe Shamash from JIMENA

October 15, 7p.m. - **Movie Night** at the Orinda Library
Enjoy an Oscar-nominated Iranian film and Persian snacks!

October 15, 7p.m. - **Pakistan** at the Orinda Library

Presented by Neil Joeck, Fellow at the Center for Global Security Research
October 16, 4 p.m. - **Middle Eastern Percussion on Fire** at the Orinda Library
Musical performance for kids from nationally acclaimed performer Mary Ellen Donald.

October 18, 2 p.m. - **Henna Tattoo** at the Lafayette Library
Tattoo yourself at a Henna Lounge Workshop

October 20, 7 p.m. - **So you think you can (Persian) dance?** at the Orinda Library
Persian dance instruction with the Sharhrzad Dance Academy.

October 23, 2 p.m. - **Women in Contemporary Iran** at the Moraga Library
Presented by Mehry Astaneh, Political Science PhD from University of Tehran.

October 23, 7 p.m. - **Story Telling** at the Orinda Library

Share the witty and wise stories of Hodja Nasrudine with the Tale Spinners.

November 1, 2 p.m. - **So you think you can (Persian) dance?** at the Moraga Library
Persian dance instruction with the Sharhrzad Dance Academy.

November 6, 3 -5 p.m. - **Where in the World is Waldo? - Kid's Multicultural Fair** at the Moraga Library

November 6, 7 p.m. - **So you think you can (Persian) dance?** at the Lafayette Library
Persian dance instruction with the Sharhrzad Dance Academy.

November 8, 1 p.m. - **An Afternoon Poetry Reading** at the Moraga Library

Pushcart Prizewinner, Kat Zandvakili, presents one woman's artistic quest to shed the old myths and reveal her true self.

November 12, 7 p.m. - **An Evening With The Author** at the Orinda Library Auditorium.
Firoozeh Dumas visits Lamorinda for an author talk to celebrate Lamorinda Reads! 2008.



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Local Motorists Duped by Dishonesty and Deception

Greater Bay Area franchise chain stores were recently investigated by the State of California for repair fraud. It turns out that many automotive repair facilities were recently accused by the Bureau of Automotive Repair following numerous motorist complaints. Over 100 alleged violations were filed, including the selling of unneeded services, making misleading statements, and false advertising. This includes many cases in which frustrated consumers received brake repairs at prices that were grossly inflated over the advertised "Brake Special" prices. Many motorists are enticed by the low cost advertised by these types of businesses. In reality, as alleged by these complaints, the motorist almost never gets the repairs at the advertised

price. The fact is that these types of shops can make no profit if work is done as advertised. These same types of shops work with quotas and commissions, that lead to trouble for consumers. Unfortunately, this is a recipe for greed to come in to play and the consumer pays the price.

These practices are hurting motorists as well as the hard working and honest repair shops. Consumers should not settle for unethical business practices. There are plenty of independent, family owned, automotive repair businesses in the Bay Area that are honest, well trained and reliable. However, they will not be found by shopping for the cheapest "Brake Special" price at some franchised chain store.



"It turns out that the \$59.95 brake special does not apply to cars manufactured in Kentucky."

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BETWEEN THE LINES

Between the Lines

Island Fever

Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



Patrick O'Brian once wrote that his novels were primarily set aboard ship because it was so interesting to put a group of people in a small wooden box, send the box out to sea, and see what happens. Islands offer a little more space than His Majesty's ships in the 18th century but they too continue to attract authors as they provide nicely enclosed spaces in which writers can set their characters down and watch them interact.

The island of Guernsey—one of the Channel Islands that belong to the United Kingdom, but closer to the French coast than they are to England—is the setting for *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, a surprise bestseller of the late

summer season, by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. Shaffer, who had worked as an editor, a librarian, and in local bookstores (Book Passage among them), talked for years about writing a book set on the island of Guernsey. Finally, at the urging of friends, *The G.L. & P.P.P.S.* emerged. This charming novel that takes place in 1946 is told in letters to and from Juliet Ashton, a young writer who had written a popular newspaper column about London during WWII. Juliet is searching for a subject for a new book and thinks she may have found it in the stories that emerge when she begins a correspondence with a Guernsey farmer. There is some of the flavor of 84 Charing Cross Road, the engaging 1970s story about

the 20-year correspondence between a New York writer and a London bookseller, in Shaffer's book. The letters that flow between Juliet and various islanders share literary comments as well as their stories — some comic, others heart-breaking — of Guernsey during the German occupation.

Sadly, Mary Ann Shaffer did not live to see the runaway success of her one and only novel. She died of pancreatic cancer in February. She had asked her niece, Annie Barrows, a writer herself—*The Ivy & Bean* series—who lives in Berkeley, to help in the final editing process. The result of their collaboration is a novel that has already endeared itself to readers throughout the country.

Shaffer is not alone in finding the German occupation of Guernsey an intriguing story. Eight years ago, Tim Binding wrote a fine mystery, *Lying With the Enemy*, that took place on Guernsey during the German occupation, and again dealt with the issues of collaboration or subtle resistance, as well as a possible romance between the occupied and the occupiers, and ultimately the issues of survival.

And Elizabeth George used Guernsey as the setting for *A Place of Hiding*, where the plot wheels begin to spin when a wealthy financier is murdered before he can build the museum he had planned to honor the Guernsey resistance during the Nazi occupation.

Maybe Agatha Christie put it all in motion when she wrote *And Then There Were None* (*Ten Little Indians*)—possibly her most famous mystery—and situated it on an island off the coast of Devon. Certainly having your cast of characters free of all outside interference makes an island locale desirable and the detective's work more fun. Chief Inspector Adam Dalgliesh, in P.D. James' capable hands, had an island adventure of his own in her most recent novel, *The Lighthouse*, set just off the coast of Cornwall. P.D. James fans will be happy to know that Dalgliesh will appear again on November 18 in *The Private Patient*, set, however, not on an island but in a nursing

home in deepest Dorset.

There are more bookish treats (no tricks) in store in October for young and old alike. Nelson DeMille has written a follow-up to *The Gold Coast*, which Orinda Books readers are still enjoying. The new adventure is *The Gate House*, set again on Long Island — we're not leaving islands behind yet — where the rich Mafioso rub elbows with the just plain rich. And *When Will There Be Good News*, Kate Atkinson's new Jackson Brodie adventure—Great Britain is indeed an island kingdom — made its welcome appearance at the end of September.

Off the islands and into fantasyland, teens are delighted to see Christopher Paolini's hero, Eragon, the last of the Dragon Riders, and Sapphira, fly forth to new adventures in *Brisingr* this fall. There's one more to come in Paolini's *Eldest* series, but Cornelia Funke is completing her *Inkheart* trilogy with *Inkdeath*, due in October. Funke's series is an ingenious literary fantasy where characters in books come to life, sometimes with dreadful consequences, and "real life" people can find themselves imprisoned in a fictional world. Talk about stories within stories!

What we all need is an "island in time" to read the literary treats that these creative writers offer us.



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BOOK FAIR / ROADS

Book Fair Brings Lots of Hidden Treasures

By BARBARA BONTEMPS
Contributing Writer

Now in its 45th year, the Friends of the Orinda Library's (FOL) annual Book Fair will offer gently used and collectible books for sale on Saturday, October 4 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Library Plaza. The fair offers a treasure trove of books from every genre – children's books, mysteries, cookbooks, how-to books, best sellers (fiction and non-fiction), as well as an assortment of videos and CDs – and is a favorite for book lovers throughout the East Bay. Proceeds from the fair, combined with those from the Library Book Shop and monthly sales, fund the purchase of new acquisitions for the library's collections.

In addition to terrific book bargains, the fair also features a variety of items and activities sponsored by other Orinda community groups. The Orinda Garden Club will offer an array of plants for sale, while hand-made quilts and other crafts from members of Orinda's Community Church will also be on display. There will be face painting and a "book walk" (i.e. a cake walk with books as the prize) for the



SALLY HOGARTY
Shoppers at a past book fair had plenty to choose from with books on every subject.

kids in attendance, along with other fun and games.

"The fair is really a wonderful community-wide event," says Pam Pulley, president of the FOL board. "It has something for everyone – and it is so gratifying to know that all these wonderful books can continue being enjoyed." Veteran bibliophiles have learned that the greatest selections are found early in the day, so plan to be there when the fair begins for the widest selection.

For more information about the book fair, visit the library's website at <http://contracosta.lib.ca.us/friends/ori.html>.

Drivers on Moraga Way Finally Get Smoother Ride

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

The potholes and crumbling pavement along Moraga Way are now history, and the City of Orinda celebrated last month with a ribbon cutting to welcome in a more quiet, smooth ride for drivers and cyclists.

"People are impressed that traffic is so quiet," said Mayor Victoria Smith. The cushy ride is thanks to the used car and truck tires that were shredded and incorporated into the paving materials, she said. If one stands on it, a bit of a bounce can be felt even by the human body.

The paving project stretches for 3.2 miles, from Camino Encinas south to the city limits at Ivy Drive. "This was completed on time and within budget, and you can't say that too often about most public works projects," Smith said.

Much of the work was done through the night, enabling commuters and other

drivers to keep to their schedules as much as possible, said Janice Carey, the city engineer who headed up the project. Some of that work needed to be done at night because the rubberized asphalt needs cooler temperatures to harden.

"We had to wait for the weather," Carey said. "If the forecast called for cooler temperatures, we adjusted the schedule."

The project, officially called the Moraga Way Pavement Rehabilitation Project, employed Bay Cities Paving and Grading, with construction management provided by Vali Cooper and Associates, Inc. The cost of \$1.14 million dollars was provided by traffic impact fees, a grant from California Integrated Waste Management that pays for reusing tires, Proposition 1B funds, and funds from the city's general reserve. While the final cost has not been tallied, the city's capital improvement plan identified almost \$3 million for the design, administration, [SEE PAVING page 18]



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BACKYARDS GETAWAYS

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Ksenija Soster Olmer

The purpose of this long-overdue article from your favorite Slovenian writer is not to extol the virtues and beauty of her home country but to, for once and for all, clarify in American minds the distinction between Slovenia and Slovakia.

Slovenia is a tiny little country (fewer than 8,000 square miles with only 2 million people) tucked under the Alps with neighboring Austria to the north, Italy to the west, Hungary to the east and Croatia to the south. Slovakia is the divorced half of the former Czechoslovakia.

Despite its size, Slovenia has won quite some bragging rights. In the last Olympics, Slovenia's 62 athletes brought home five medals, putting her in third place for the

ranking of medals per capita. This is not surprising; Slovenes are quite athletic -- it is mandatory for every child in elementary school not only to learn the 3 Rs (and consequently bring the country's literacy rate to 99.7 percent, the fifth top place in the world) but to attend a week of swimming lessons in a camp at the Adriatic Sea and a week of skiing lessons in the Alps. Slovenia has also been named as one of the least corrupt countries of the former communist block and, according to some Internet travel sites, the safest country to travel in and the third safest to invest in. So much for not extolling the virtues!

Best move on to beauty. So much and so varied is the palette of the breathtaking



KSENIJA SOSTER-OLMER

A castle dating back to 1111 sits in the middle of the Alpine Lake Bled, a favorite among tourists.

places and sights of natural and man-made marvels: the snow capped peaks of the Julian Alps rising from the green meadows; clear blue-green lakes with swans and fairytale castles; undulating hills dotted with white mediaeval churches rising above checkered fields in green rainbow colors; underground caves with fantastic karst (a type of landscape formed by soluble rocks) formations; old cobbled streets with farmers' markets; Renaissance palaces; thermal waters; vineyards ablaze in fall colors; lush woods filled with an abundance of chestnuts, mushrooms, blueberries, raspberries and, above all, the intoxicating smell of wild strawberries.

In the cities, you will find a thoroughly modern standard of living with glass skyscrapers and business centers, air-conditioned public transportation, and five-star restaurants and casinos. But with just a short hop and skip (forget the jump) you'll encounter right outside the cities quaint ethnic villages with wooden balconies spilling flowers from the window boxes, cottage gardens where all vegetables are

organic, home-made sausages, honey and chicken eggs whose yolks are orange like the setting sun. On a short drive or a hike in the mountains, you will often come across centuries-old methods of cutting grass with a scythe and transporting hay with a horse cart.

People are helpful, interested and educated. They speak at least one foreign language -- English if not also German and Italian. They really do like Americans, and our U.S. presidents know this and frequently make stops on their visits to Europe. Slovenians are quite hospitable, and if you are lucky to be invited into a Slovenian home, you will have to drink and eat until bursting. Ditto if you eat in a pub, where large quantities of meat and potatoes are a staple diet. Culinary-wise Slovenia tends to lean toward Central Europe with soups, meats, dumplings and yeast cakes. As you move to the edges of the country, you can taste the influence of its neighbors, especially Italians with their pizzas, pastas and gnocchi. Fresh river trout and sea food and, for the more adventuresome, game (deer, boar and bear) are widely available. There are a few specialties that I have to sample on every visit to my home country; surprisingly, they are pretty much all desserts. Luckily, most of them are a lot less sweet than your typical American brownie or chocolate cake, and they use good quality ingredients such as butter, farmer's cheese, walnuts, hazelnuts, poppy seed, raisins, and even tarragon.

Stay for awhile, but if you have to pick just three destinations, here are my top choices:

A stroll Through the Old Town of the capital Ljubljana (Don't try to pronounce that, you might tangle, if not break, your tongue).

It is a miniature version of Prague's Old Town sans hordes of tourists and hawkers. Going back five millenniums you can see well-preserved walls of the Roman town of Emona. Walk the pedestrian zone on the

[SEE BACKYARD page 20]



KSENIJA SOSTER-OLMER

Tourists and residents alike enjoy the sights in the capital city of Ljubljana.

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AROUND THE TOWN

Orinda Masons Support Historical Society



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tom Kilgallen, Master of the Orinda Masonic Lodge #122, presents Lucy Hupp-Williams (C), the president of the Orinda Historical Society, and Historical Society archivist Susan Ross with a donation of \$500. Kilgallen remarked that Historical Society's effort to collect and preserve our local heritage "is a worthy cause and one that the Orinda Masons gladly support." For more information on the Historical Society, call 254-1353. For more information on the Orinda Masonic Lodge, call 254-5211 or visit www.orindalodge.org.

Taking Care of Feral Cats



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

This cute little kitten is one of the many cats helped by Outcast Cat Help, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping communities humanely control and care for the stray and feral cat population. A "no kill" organization, Outcast traps, neuters and returns cats to their environment and finds homes for socialized felines. They also provide emergency medical care to cats with no known owners. If you would like to volunteer or donate, call 925-788-0356 or email outcastcathelp@gmail.com.

Wedding Announcement



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Noah Simons, 1998 Miramonte High School graduate, married Kimberly Jo Cooper this summer. The medical doctor and his bride now live in San Francisco but parents, Dr. and Mrs. James Simons still reside in Orinda.

Saving Gas and Having Fun



SALLY HOGARTY

These two Orinda residents have found a way to beat the high cost of fuel on their electric Segway units.

Halloween Carnivals

October is the time for Halloween carnivals, and all of Orinda's elementary schools have them. Del Rey will hold its carnival on October 11 from noon to 3 p.m., Sleepy Hollow will open its pumpkin patch from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Glorietta's Funfest will be held October 18 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., while Wagner Ranch will hold its Monster Mash from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. See the calendar on page 21 for details and contact numbers.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Corinne and Julie Whitsitt at last year's Monster Mash.

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"As part of the school district's partnership with the city, Victoria and I have worked together to deliver important services to our students and their families in Orinda. I look forward to working with her over the next four years." **Vanessa Crews, Board Member, Acalanes Union High School District**

"Victoria has worked tirelessly to find solutions to improve Orinda's infrastructure, to build consensus to fix our roads, and to improve emergency preparedness in Orinda." **John Wyro, Board Member, Moraga-Orinda Fire District**

"Victoria is committed to improving Orinda's roads, bike paths, walkways and trails. She is a strong advocate on the City Council for recreational spaces!" **Shannon Fuller, Orinda Parks and Recreation Commissioner**

"Victoria's support for business in Orinda is outstanding! She really shares our goal to bring more shops and services to Orinda." **Janet Boreta, Orinda Books**



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Mark DeSaulnier, Assembly
 Member 11th District &
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 Member 14th District Elect
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Community Organizations
 Operating Engineers, Local 1,
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 (Partial List; full list on website)

Orinda Resident Exhibits at Valley Art Gallery



JIMMY LU

"A Little Creek Named Adagio" is a 24" x 36" oil on linen.

Orinda resident Jimmy Lu is the featured artist at the Valley Art Gallery in Walnut Creek. The show, entitled "New Visions," features over 300 paintings as well as fine crafts and jewelry by a number of Bay Area artists. The show continues at Valley Art Gallery, a nonprofit gallery located at 1661 Botelho Drive, Suite 110 in Walnut Creek. The gallery allows patrons to "live" with an art piece before committing to a purchase by arranging low-cost rentals that can be applied to the purchase price. For more information, call 925-935-4311 or go online to www.valleyartgallery.org.



Seasoned Shopper

Produce Reflects Fall Colors



BARBARA KOBSAR

The Orinda farmers market is in the right place at the right time, as the saying goes. With the Slow Food Movement (www.slowfood.com) embracing every community and locavores stepping up to the plate to eat only fresh, seasonal and locally grown produce it appears like we're headed in the right direction – straight to the weekly farmers market on Orinda Way every Saturday.

Fall is knocking on the door and gradually filling the stands with beautiful produce that reflects the colors of the season. Persimmons, pomegranates and peppers boast vibrant shades of orange and red, pears sport a soft golden hue and bunches of green, red and purple grapes beckon me in to buy my weekly supply. Several varieties of apples ideal for snacking and baking are also at the peak of their perfection during the next few months – Fuji, Gala, Red Romes and Granny Smith to name a few.

Bartlett pears are one of my favorite fruits – especially when the smooth texture offers an intense flavor. There's still time during October to pick up some of these delectable Bartletts at a few market stands (Alhambra Valley and McKeown Farms) before moving on to other varieties of European type pears.

Bartletts are a type of European pear, characterized by the "bell" shape, soft to semi-soft flesh, and yellow to red skin color. Dry farm Bartlett pears from Alhambra Valley Farms are the epitome of a great pear. "Dry farm practices produce intense-flavored fruit," says Darryl Pereira from Alhambra Valley Farms. "But the trees need training. The roots grow deep to find water because that's always been the practice on our farm," he says.

"The key to dry farming is cultivation," Pereira says. The soil is turned about 1 inch deeper each time to bring the moisture up to the surface.

All Bartletts (like other European type pears such as Bosc, Comice and Anjou) are picked mature but firm and need to be left on the kitchen counter for a few days to ripen up. I enjoy all pears fresh and eaten out-of-hand, but Bosc and Anjou are particularly good choices for poaching, baking or using in pies since they hold their shape.

To speed up the ripening process, I'll

place European-type pears in a loosely closed paper bag for two to five days. Once ripe (I check them daily), the stem end yields slightly to gentle thumb pressure and they become very fragrant. Ripe pears store in the refrigerator in a plastic bag for three to four days.

There's no waiting to enjoy bunches of grapes – the only decision is choosing the variety. They're picked ripe and ready to eat.

Grapes come in three basic colors – green, red or blue black. Seedless green Thompson and Red Flame remain the most popular but there are others to check out at the markets. Fantasy Seedless is a blue-black, sweet oval-shaped grape with pale green flesh and a mellow flavor. The large, sweet, red, seeded Red Globe stores well and other seeded varieties such as Muscat and Tokay remind me of a good old-fashioned grape.

I carefully scrutinize the color of the grapes when choosing a bunch for my basket. Green grapes are the sweetest when yellow-green in color. Red varieties are ripe when all the berries are predominantly red. Blue-blacks are best when grapes have a deep, rich color. Fresh grapes sport a dusty bloom which is produced by cells in or near the surface that forms a natural weather proofing and prevents the skin from cracking.

Grapes remain fresh for several days when stored at a temperature just above 32 degrees with fairly high humidity. In household refrigerators where temperatures are a little higher, grapes hold for three or four days, unwashed in a plastic bag. Wash just before serving.

The Orinda farmers' market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in front of the Community Park and Rite Aid and remains open through November 15. For more information, visit the website at www.cccfm.org or call the market hotline at 925-431-8361.

Barbara Kobsar can be reached at cotkitchen@aol.com

PEAR CRISP

4 large Bartlett pears
2 tablespoons orange or lemon juice

[SEE SHOPPER page 18]

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WAY TO GROW

Way to Grow in Orinda
Do's and Don'ts For Your Best Hydrangeas

Steve & Cathy Lambert



Of all the gardening questions we're asked, questions about pruning and proper care of landscape plants far outnumber the rest. This article on hydrangeas is the second in our series of plant-care articles written to provide you with the knowledge you need to get the most from your landscape plants. Our first plant care article ran in February's *Orinda News* and was titled *Rose Care Tips and Tricks*. If you missed it, you can find a copy online at www.orindaassociation.org/onlineedition.htm.

Unfortunately few homes come with a landscape manual and most maintenance companies train their employees only on how to mow, blow and go. Some landscape maintenance employees have limited knowledge of pruning and fertilizing but it's often very general and not species specific. For this reason, it's important that homeowners who care about the investment in their garden have some basic knowledge of how to care for their plants.

We decided to write about hydrangeas care because they're one of the plants we're asked about frequently and because we're coming up on the months when pruning usually occurs. The No. 1 question or complaint we hear about hydrangeas is "they aren't blooming," or "what can I do to increase their blooms?" The answer lies almost entirely within the nuance of proper pruning.

There's lots of conflicting advice out there about when and how to prune your hydrangeas. Our garden has 15 varieties of hydrangeas, and we've been testing the timing and techniques of pruning them for the past 10 years. Through this experimentation, we can provide advice to help cut through the confusion.

The most familiar types of hydrangeas are the Oakleaf, Smooth and Tree Hydrangeas (those with white or pale green flowers) and the Bigleaf hydrangeas, which include Mophead, and Lace Caps varieties (these come in many shades of blue, pink, purple and wine).

The white or pale green flowering varieties are easy to prune because these hydrangeas bloom on new wood and they can be cut back by as much as a two thirds in the winter or early spring. In our Orinda climate, you can trim back again

after the first flowers fade to get another run of blooms in the late summer through fall. This pruning schedule keeps our pale flowering hydrangeas in continuous bloom from June through November.

Bigleafs such as the Mopheads and Lace Caps all bloom on old wood, or last year's growth, hence the lack of early blooms when they are cut back heavily in the fall. If you have any of these bright flowering hydrangea varieties in your garden, be sure you stop yourself or your maintenance crew from the typical, uneducated practice of pruning all hydrangeas back by two thirds or more when they begin to lose their leaves. This practice, when used on these "old wood blooming" hydrangeas cuts off most of next year's blooms, especially the spring blooms. If you were to cut open the little buds at the end of these hydrangeas branches and look at them with a magnifying glass, you would see something resembling a small head of broccoli. These are next spring and summer blooms so don't cut them all off in the fall.

In Orinda, it is best to wait to prune your deeply colored hydrangeas until the new growth greens up nicely in the spring. Prune off the obvious dead branch tips and there should be nice big fat buds visible on the healthy green growth below.

Not all of these big fat buds will produce flowers. When they open, some will have flower buds, others will reveal themselves to be non-flowering vegetative buds. If the flowering ones aren't high enough on the plant when the buds begin to open, remove the non-blooming wood above and around them to improve the display of your blooms. When these spring or summer flowers begin to fade, you can then cut the plant back safely, up to a quarter of its total size, without risking its health or the following year's blooms. If the plant is getting too large for its spot, the best time to shape or cut it back is also after its first spring bloom.

You might even want to consider cutting off the first run of flowers while they're nice and fresh. Enjoy these spring blooms in your home as a cut flower, (tip: crush the stem ends of your cut hydrangeas and they will last much longer in a vase) then feed the plants and wait for a second run of blooms to appear. We leave the last run of



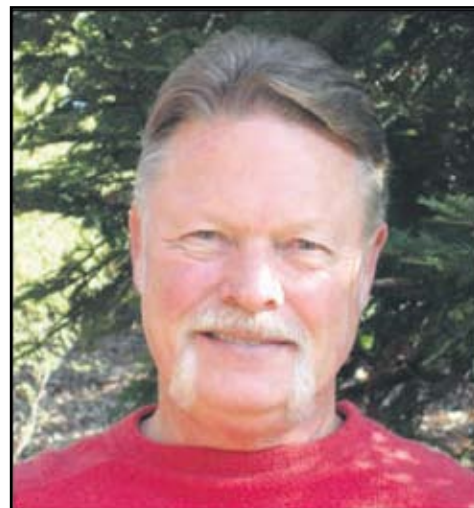
Hydrangeas come in many colors that often depend upon the type of soil they are planted in. Above is a Pink Mophead.

summer blooms on our bigleaf hydrangeas to protect the plant through the winter while the dried flower heads add some winter interest to our garden.

It's important to note that most hydrangeas don't need pruning at all. That is, if you have ample space for very large plants. When provided with plenty of room to grow, hydrangeas can become huge magnificent shrubs like those seen in Golden Gate Park. Most of us, however, don't have

that much space.

Since hydrangeas are often sold in nurseries, garden centers, and even supermarkets when they are in full bloom they frequently are planted in the wrong spot because people just don't realize that they will get much, much bigger. Most varieties of hydrangeas are not dwarfs and should be given plenty of room to grow. Fortunately, even the biggest specimen is easy to trans- [SEE HYDRANGEA page 18]



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FITNESS / HOME SWEET HOME

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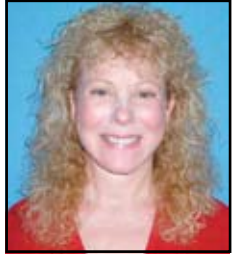
Lunge and Raise

This exercise will shape your thighs, glutes, shoulders and back.

With a can in each hand place one foot, as far as comfortably possible, in front of the other. Keeping the upper body vertical, dip the lowerbody down until the back knee is about one inch from the floor. Keep your hands by your side. Lift the cans into a front shoulder raise with palms parallel to the thighs- until your arms are at shoulder level. Then move your arms out to the sides into a lateral position, keeping them at shoulder level. Step up into a standing position and repeat with the other leg.

Courtesy of Living Lean, 925-360-7051

HOME SWEET HOME
Bank Owned Properties —
Behind the Scenes



Janice Gatlin

I get a lot of questions these days in my capacity as real estate brokerage partner specializing in foreclosed properties, about what goes on behind the scenes with bank-owned properties (called REOs, short for Real Estate Owned). These are properties that were foreclosed upon and the bank now owns them.

A couple months ago in this column we discussed some points on buying bank-owned properties. But in this column, we're going to discuss how these properties ended up back in the bank's hands and what they do with them after they have them.

It would seem obvious that an REO is simply a property that was foreclosed. But there are many steps before that.

When a person defaults for the first time on his or her mortgage, the bank sends someone out to the property to do a property valuation called a BPO (Broker's Price Opinion). This is what they call an exterior BPO, meaning that it's done simply from looking at the outside of the property from the street, by looking at the MLS (multiple listing service) for comparable properties and researching sources for the property itself such as the title information and previous listings on the MLS from previous sales.

The bank takes this information, combined with the information about the owner's mortgage, past payment history, value of the property, and present market conditions and starts to form a plan for the property while it also contacts the owner to see what may be done to prevent the foreclosure.

This process continues with several more BPOs being done over the next three to nine months by several different people, ongoing discussions with the homeowner, and internal bank procedures. Eventually, the bank may decide that it must foreclose.

If there is an occupant in the property after the bank forecloses, the bank will often offer 'Cash for Keys' (CFK) to help the person move out more quickly and

avoid an eviction. CFK is an offer of cash to move out in a certain time (usually two to four weeks) in exchange for the occupant removing all personal property, leaving the property "broom clean" and turning over the keys. If a person refuses CFK or sometimes for other reasons (such as not being able to contact the person for example), then an eviction will take place.

Once the property is vacant, those of us who specialize in REOs go into action. Within 24-48 hours, we have to re-key the property, ascertain all physical elements, turn on the utilities, and put it in our own name, determine any liens from a Homeowner's Association or utilities that weren't paid, make sure the property is secure from vandalism, and start an interior BPO.

Meanwhile, the bank is again hiring others to do yet more BPOs and, sometimes, a full appraisal, as well. When all of the data is in, the bank makes a decision about how much to sell the property for, and it's then offered for sale through a real estate brokerage in much the same way any other property is marketed.

One point that confuses a lot of folks: An REO is not a short sale. A short sale is when the bank agrees to allow the existing owner (long before foreclosure) to sell the property for a set amount that is "short" of the balance of the mortgage, specifically to prevent foreclosure. Short sales are often tenuous, do not succeed, and may take as long as eight months to complete. REOs are usually much faster than even standard real estate sales, sell at lower prices, and close escrow faster.

I'm frequently asked: "How much money does the bank need to get out of this property?" The answer is that I have never seen an REO that yielded the bank a profit or even a break-even on the outstanding mortgage. If there were equity in the property, the owner likely would not have lost the home in the first place. The least amount I've personally seen as a loss on a

[SEE HOMES page 16]



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marty lenzi

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—Marty Lenzi



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Virginia Tech's football team's Head Coach Frank Beamer took the "Hokies" to a Big East Conference championship where they finished number 2 in the Associated Press. Some of the credit for their physical health and recovery from injuries is attributed to chiropractic care.

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."

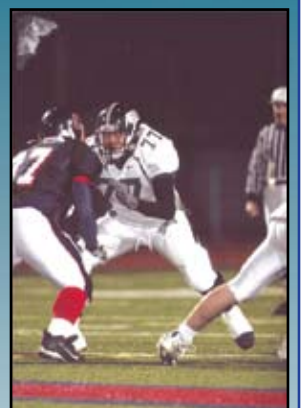
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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Miramonte Welcomes New Cheer Coach

By DEBORAH PENRY
Contributing Writer

The Miramonte Matadors Cheer Team welcomes Rebecca George as their new coach for the 2008-2009 season. George succeeds Cassandra Montgomery, who coached the team for the past four years.

George joined the Miramonte biology faculty last year, moving to the East Bay from San Jose where she taught biology and earth science at Branham High School. "Miramonte is an amazing school and a phenomenal place to work," George says. "The students are hard-working, dedicated, and respectful, which makes my job a lot easier!"

A dancer for 27 years, George brings extensive dance and cheer experience to Miramonte. She has studied a number of styles of dance including jazz, tap, ballet, modern, hip-hop and African. As a student at Colorado State University, she choreographed, directed and performed pieces with the Dance Program. In high school, she was a member of cheer teams that won national titles in National Cheerleaders Association (NCA) competitions, and she was named All-American in both her junior and senior years. As a high school coach, she led the Branham High School cheer team to nationals where they achieved a third place finish.

George's energy and enthusiasm for teaching and coaching are evident. "Mrs. George is working hard to bring our team to a higher level," says senior Amy Robertson. Senior Kameryn Peyla agrees, "Mrs. George has helped each of us improve dramatically. She constantly tells us 'I'm extremely proud of you all.'" Raúl Zamora, principal of Miramonte High School, sums up, "Mrs. George met our cheerleaders with great enthusiasm. Both in and out of the

classroom, her motivation and initiative sets a positive standard for Miramonte."

George is definitely proud of the Miramonte team's dedication and desire to improve. "Every girl on the team is devoted to improving the squad and showing the school and the community what they can do," she says. The team just returned from NCA cheer camp at UC Santa Cruz where they impressed everyone with their hard work and positive attitude and were encouraged to consider competition. They were recognized as the most improved squad and were awarded the Herkie Award, which is given to the team that best exemplifies all aspects of cheerleading. "I am really excited for this year!" says senior Brenna Casey. "Our squad has really come together."

This year one of the team's goals is to participate in an NCA regional "Game Day" competition this coming March. "Long term I would love to build the Miramonte cheer team into a larger, competitive team that has the respect of the school and the community," George says. In addition to teaching general biology and coaching the cheer team this coming year, George will also be teaching a new dance class that she developed as an addition to Miramonte's strong Visual and Performing Arts curriculum. The goal of the class is to expose students to a wide variety of dance genres from hip-hop to ballet. Students will learn techniques relevant to various styles of dance, but they will also focus on dance and movement as an art form. "Dance is truly an expression of emotion," George says. "If a student has feelings, he or she can dance!"

George encourages everyone in the community to come out and support the Miramonte sports teams and to see the cheer team perform. Continuing a tradition begun under their previous coach, Cassandra



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Coach Rebecca George (back row center) and members of Miramonte's cheer team.

Montgomery, the Miramonte cheerleaders will be holding their annual Kids' Cheer Camp after school on November 4, 6, and 7, 2008. The Kids' Camp is a fundraiser for the team, and it helps to foster community involvement in Miramonte. Everyone from kindergarten through 8th grade who is interested in learning to cheer is invited to participate. Kids will practice with the cheer team on November 4 and 6, and then they will cheer on the sidelines and perform at half time at a varsity football game on November 7th. "Kids Camp is really fun!" says Rebecca Weston, a 4th grader from

Glorietta. "I like learning cheers, and it is fun to dance on the football field in front of everyone." For more information about Miramonte's Kids' Cheer Camp and a registration form, email miramontecher@earthlink.net or http://bbweb.acalanes.k12.ca.us/bbcswebdav/xid-903603_2.

"I am truly ecstatic about working with the Miramonte cheer team this year," George says. "The girls have accomplished so much in such a short amount of time, and I am incredibly proud of their achievements thus far. I am very much looking forward to a fun and productive year."



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

The Merits of Diablo Valley College



Andra Lim

Diablo Valley College (DVC) and Joan Jett have one trait in common: a bad reputation.

DVC is a community college in proximity to the wrong community, thanks to the Orinda Bubble, which has propagated the negativity associated with DVC.

Take a two-year college and plant it only 15 miles away from a town where success via going to a well-known university is the

only acceptable life path and you get the condescension that defines the way the latter world wrongfully views the former.

DVC has never ranked on *U.S. News & World Report's* list of the top 100 public schools, and to do so would defy its entire purpose. DVC is not supposed to have low admission rates and high SAT ranges; it is supposed to help students transfer to four-year colleges.

In that sense, DVC is a great school. Its transfer rate, which is the highest of all California community colleges, is 67 percent above the national average, according to its website.

Furthermore, DVC is affordable. A year at Northwestern University costs approximately 79 times as much as DVC, Amherst College 78 times, and University of California-Berkeley 36 times, according to College Board.

But high transfer rates and affordability cannot compete with the prestige of big-name schools, and in a town that places so much emphasis on going to a good college, DVC gets shunted to the side and labeled as the school for those much less than gifted. And, thus, the viciously twisted standards of Orinda have resulted in the undesired connotations carried by those three letters.

Even despite the fact that UC Berkeley is the only school attended by more 2008 Miramonte graduates than DVC, it remains a stark symbol of academic failure.

Every year, Miramonte's newspaper and yearbook print a list of the colleges the se-

niors will be attending. A friend of mine, convinced she would be rejected by every college she applied to except for DVC, asked me this question: "Do I put myself down as undecided or undergo the humiliation of having my name emblazoned under the 'Diablo Valley College' banner?"

Another friend was listing his preferred colleges and at the end of the list he added, "If I can get in." "Well, there's always DVC," someone pointed out. "Not. An. Option," he stated emphatically.

I've always wondered how it must feel to hear your peers denounce DVC for four years and then announce to them that's the school you'll be attending in the fall.

I know what it feels like to be on the other side, the mortified bearer of hollow congratulations.

As for the schools so many people place so much faith in, research has shown that a degree from one of these institutions of higher education is no guarantee of success.

"A full quarter of the Harvard class of 1958 was out of work or on welfare in 1994, and the story was the same at other Ivies," wrote Loren Pope, former education editor for *The New York Times*, in the book *Colleges That Change Lives*.

Pope also mentioned a University of Pennsylvania alumna whose "Ivy degree gave her no edge in the search for the first job" and who ended up working as a secretary. There was also Pope's lawyer friend who quit Harvard, reasoning: "I was being taught by students; six of them couldn't speak English. Faculty were unavailable; they didn't have office hours. My roommate quit after one semester."

The Orinda Bubble's effects are far-reaching and include both this unfair attitude and the embarrassment some Miramonte students going there must face.

To come clean of the condescension would require a complete retooling of this town's ideals. I'm not holding my breath.

and sold all around the world to investors. You may own some of these mortgages if your mutual fund purchased them directly or invested in companies (such as banks and insurance companies) who purchased them. The originating bank, therefore, doesn't have the power to refinance that loan and create a loss for its investors.

Janice Gatlin is the local owner of Always the Best Home Repairs & Remodeling and Partner of Truckee Mountain Properties, a Real Estate Brokerage specializing in the sales of REOs. She can be reached at 925-254-9545.

◆ **HOMES** from page 14
property (difference between sale's price and mortgage) is \$30,000. The most is over \$1 million. Ultimately, the banks selling these properties are held accountable to their investors and must sell the properties for the highest market value to minimize the loss.

Another common question: Why don't the banks just refinance these loans at a lower rate to prevent the foreclosures? Answer: Because few banks hold the actual mortgage, only the deed of trust. Mortgages are typically resold on the "secondary market" usually "bundled" with many mortgages into a package or bond offering

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ORINDA YOUTH ASSOCIATION / PARKS & RECREATION

OYA Launches Basketball Season

By CHRIS LAVIN
Assistant Editor

Fall brings with it basketball, and the Orinda Youth Association's basketball program will begin taking registrations this month at the Community Center.

The league is divided into three categories, including the instructional league for pre-kindergarten through second grade, a section for third- to eighth-graders, and another division for high school.

For the smallest kids, games will be on Saturdays at Sleepy Hollow Elementary School, starting January 10. The fee is \$135 for Orinda residents, and \$148 for non-residents.

The third- to eighth-graders will be divided into separate boys and girls divisions for the third and fourth, fifth and sixth, and seventh and eighth grades. The playing season runs from early January to early March, and the fee is \$170 for Orinda residents and \$187 for non-residents.

The high school league is a recreational league playing only in Orinda, with teams comprised of students from Miramonte High School. Players form and coach their own teams. Registration for this league starts October 13, with the season running from early January to mid-March. Games will be held on Saturday afternoons. The



TOM BOYDEN

Two young players wait their turn in last year's pre-kindergarten program.

fee is \$170 per player. Forms are available in the school office and at the Orinda Community Center.

Registration at the community center for all leagues will be as follows:

Thursday, October 2, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Tuesday, October 7, 10 a.m. to noon.

Thursday, October 9, 10 a.m. to noon.

Wednesday, October 15, 10 a.m. to noon.

For more information call 253-4204.

Orinda Parks and Rec Offers Alternatives for Special Events

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

When planning that birthday party, 50th anniversary celebration, or other special event, have you considered the facilities available through the Parks and Recreation department right here in Orinda? It's a great way to keep money in town and have a convenient venue for your celebration.

The Orinda Community Center and library offers a variety of meeting rooms, auditoriums, and even a theater with a stage as well as sound and lighting systems that can accommodate from 10 – 240 people. For more information, call 253-4208 or email cantrim@cityoforinda.org.

For larger events or athletic practices and games, check out Wagner Ranch gym. Located at Wagner Ranch Elementary School, the gym has a full-sized basketball court, two smaller cross-courts, and two digital scoreboards. There is also a performance stage and a full kitchen. Call 253-4216 or

email tboyden@cityoforinda.org.

Those interested in an outdoor facility should look at the Orinda Community Center Park, which includes an amphitheater, the 12-acre Orinda Oaks Park, Orinda Sports Field, and Pine Grove Fields. For more information on the parks, call 253-4208 or email cantrim@cityoforinda.org. For information on the sports fields, call 253-4209 or email jbc@cityoforinda.org.

Orinda Holiday Bazaar
November 1 – 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
November 2 – 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Orinda Community Center

It's almost here. The Orinda Community Center Auxiliary's 29th Annual Holiday Bazaar. Over 80 exhibitors, plus carolers, magicians, and holiday music. Child art classes available while parents shop.

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◆ **SHOPPER** from page 12

- 1/2 cup brown sugar
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- 3/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/3 cup melted butter

Peel, core and slice the pears (between one quarter and one half inch thick) into a lightly greased 8" x 8" baking dish. Sprinkle with juice and lightly mix together. Mix dry ingredients together in a separate bowl. Combine with butter.

Sprinkle crumb mixture over pears. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes or until pears are tender and topping is golden brown. Serve with ice cream or frozen yogurt. Serves 6.

◆ **PAVING** from page 9

and construction of the project.

To be exact, 162,667 tires were used for the project – tires that would otherwise end up in landfills. The technology is called RAC, for rubberized asphalt concrete, which mixed crumb rubber with concrete and adhesive materials. By using RAC, the sound of cars traveling over roads is reduced by five to eight decibels, city officials say.

As an artery, Moraga Way is one of the most highly traveled roads in Orinda. That made repaving a specific challenge, Carey said. "We tried to reduce the inconvenience as much as possible. I think we succeeded in that," she said. City officials also had to coordinate the repaving work with plumbing work performed by EBMUD, as well as other utilities.

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◆ **HYDRANGEA** from page 13

plant, especially when dormant.

Colored blooming hydrangeas are unique in the plant world in that you can manipulate the color and depth of color of their blooms. A neutral to alkaline soil will produce pink flowers while a more acidic soil will produce blue blooms. Studies have shown that the amount of aluminum in the soil is actually more important in determining the color of the bloom, but aluminum absorption into the plant is blocked by alkaline soils. Most soil in Orinda is neutral or slightly acidic with a small amount of aluminum, leading most old-fashioned Mopheads in our area to naturally bloom blue. Therefore it is not uncommon to see a pink hydrangea in our neighborhood slowly turn to blue.

To keep them pink or change their color to pink can be difficult. Your best bet is to try adding lime around the drip line of your shrub several times a year and use a high phosphorus fertilizer. This becomes tedious after a couple of years so science has come up with a better alternative. The "always pink" hydrangeas are bred to block the plant's ability to take up aluminum and keeps them from getting the blues. Try Forever Pink for a darker pink bloom, or for a dwarf variety try Pink 'n Pretty or the very Dwarf Pia.

Hydrangeas can be picky about their location. They're one of those plants that appreciates living on the edge of sun and shade. Hydrangeas prefer morning sun and afternoon shade. The white and light green varieties can handle more sun than those with blue, pink or wine-colored blooms.

Some of our Annabelle (light green) hydrangeas are in full sun and are always in bloom. No hydrangea however, will

thrive or flower in heavy shade, nor do they tolerate extremely hot temperatures well. When the thermometer reaches the 90- to 100-degree range, give your hydrangeas some afternoon watering (just a sprinkling) to increase their humidity level. Some of our favorite hydrangeas include hydrangea paniculata; Limelight with lime green to white cone flowers; Unique, with giant white cone flowers on 4- to 6-foot stems (all Hyd Pans.); Pink Diamond, much like Unique but with a pink cast to the blooms (Hyd. Arborescens); White Dome, a smooth hydrangea with huge 4- to 9-inch blooms (Hyd. Quercifolia); Snow Queen, an Oakleaf hydrangea that lives up to its name with cone-shaped white blooms and 12-inch wide oak-shaped leaves that turn a gorgeous burgundy fall color. Several of these leaves are displayed under our Cinderella pumpkin fall flower arrangement every year on our Thanksgiving table. This favorite has the added bonus of peeling cinnamon colored bark. There is also a dwarf variety available called Spikes Dwarf.

Among our top picks for blue bloomers are hydrangea macrophylla Bluewave, which has huge 8- to 10-inch true, blue blooms held high above its foliage shia is tightly packed with light blue and white blooms. Nigra' blooms with a blue-mauve flower held by a striking blue/black stem. (All Hyd. macs.) Lemon Wave is the only lace cap type hydrangea we grow, and we grow it mostly for its beautiful yellow and green foliage. This is a great choice to brighten up a shady border.

For more information on caring for your hydrangeas or to suggest a topic for a future "Way to Grow" article email us at GardenLights@comcast.net.

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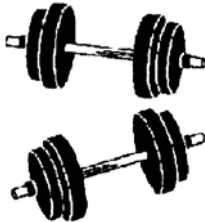
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HISTORICAL CAR

Showboat: A Car with a History

■ Car's owner looking for Orinda farmer who purchased vehicle from Bernard Maybeck

By IAN HEETDERKS
Staff Writer

When Vermont native George Schuetz bought his 1929 Packard Phaeton in New Orleans in June, he knew he was buying a piece of automotive history. Phaetons in good working condition have become extremely rare, and it took Schuetz some determined hunting before he eventually found one on the online auction site eBay.

After making the trek to the home of the owner, a man named Jimmy Gueydan who lives in New Orleans, Schuetz bought the car on the spot. Although initially he had

the Los Feliz section of Los Angeles.

Schuetz's interest was piqued, and he wanted to confirm that he did in fact own Maybeck's former car. To do so, he visited another previous owner, Raymond Hudacheck, who lived 100 miles from New Orleans in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. Hudacheck was able to be of great help to Schuetz, providing him a photo of the Phaeton as it was either being dropped off at or picked up from the home of an Orinda farmer. It is thought that the Orinda farmer, whose farm was on Bear Creek Road, bought the car from Maybeck in the early 1950's, and later went on to sell it to Hudacheck. After 50 years, however, Hudacheck cannot recall the Orinda farmer's name.

Schuetz conclusively confirmed that the Packard did in fact belong to Maybeck by



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Showboat, the 1931 Packard with Annie White Maybeck and her twin daughters, Jacamina and Kerna.

been interested solely in the car itself, he became interested in its history, as well, when Gueydan reasserted what he had hinted at in his eBay ad: The car's original owner was the famous Berkeley architect Bernard Maybeck.

The Packard was given to Maybeck by Earle C. Anthony, who throughout much of the early 20th century was a pioneering businessman and the central supplier of Packards in California. The car served as partial payment for Maybeck's architectural services. Maybeck designed Packard showrooms in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Oakland, as well as Anthony's mansion in

getting in touch with Maybeck's granddaughters. They recognized the car from Hudacheck's photo, and recalled driving in it with Maybeck when they were young. They also shared with Schuetz that they had nicknamed the car "Showboat," most likely because of its size. However, they also were unable to name the Orinda farmer.

Schuetz is hoping someone in the Orinda community will recognize the car and be able to provide him with the name of the Orinda farmer. Readers with any new information on it are asked to contact George Schuetz at 802-457-4444, or through e-mail at george41@sover.net.

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Terry Riggins Photography - Offers stunning natural light photography. Specializes in portrature for children, including high school seniors, adults & families of all ages and professional headshots (adults & kids). 925-253-1965 terryrigginsphotography.com

Vacation Rentals

HAWAII

Aloha-Hawaii, Big Island 3BR/3BA Brand new! 510-681-4294. www.maunalanigolfvilla.com

Big Island Of Hawaii Lovely Beach House, 3BR/2BA Kohala Coast. 510-527-2009 HaleLea.com.

PALM SPRINGS

Marriott Desert Springs. 2BR/2BA Villa Thanksgiving week. 11/23-30/08. 925-377-5673.

TAHOE

North Lake Tahoe - Carnelian Bay 4 BR/4 BA, 3000 sq. ft. Sleeps 12. Rentourtaohouse.com. 253-9550.

Comfortable & nice Westshore cabin 3bed/2bath sleeps 8 or 2 families. Great location, peek-lake views. www.HomeAtTahoma.com 925-253-3115

Wanted

I Buy 1950's Furniture. Danish modern, Herman Miller, Knoll wanted. 1 item or entire estate! Call Rick at 510-219-9644. Courteous house calls.

WILDER from page 1

or retain their own architect and go through the development's design and review process followed by the City of Orinda's design and review."

While extensive grading continues, Wilder Vice President Michael Olson assures residents that no dirt is taken off the property. "We are required to leave all the dirt in the development so it is used as fill elsewhere on the property."

The only buildings that now exist on the 1,600-acre development are the pump station and the Ranch House, which is scheduled for completion sometime in October. "The Ranch House will be used as our sales

office," explains Keadjian. "We will have an open house celebrating the opening of the Ranch House later this fall. When we no longer need it for sales, it will be deeded over to the city."

The development is now progressing from grading the sites for homes to installing erosion control in preparation for the upcoming winter months. "This is a large site, so erosion control is a significant effort," Keadjian says. "We will also continue to deal with storm water run-off, sewers and utilities."

When the construction season opens next year, the developer will begin work on the Quarry House. Located on the former rock quarry that helped build Highway 24, the

private recreational facility will be a focal point of the development by housing a fitness center, multi-purpose room, pavilion, kitchen, and an eight-lane competitive size swimming pool with an electronic timing system and solar heating. Construction on the Quarry House and first residential homes will take place in the spring of 2009.

The sales office is now scheduling appointments with prospective homeowners. More than 1,000 people have already expressed interest. To schedule an appointment, call Jerry Dakalian or Sherri Pope at 254-9900. For more information on the development and to see artist renderings of homes, go to www.orindawilder.com.

BACKYARD from page 10

cobbled streets with Renaissance fountains, old stone portals, and restored Baroque facades. Climb, or if you wish, take a funicular up to the tower of the medieval castle for a beautiful view of the city and, perhaps, a wedding. See the glistening roofs by the green river Ljubljanica, meandering slowly through the city separating the oldest part from the new by many elegant bridges. Descend and explore the big daily Farmers' Market (right next to the Cathedral) with its colorful umbrellas and variety of food and ethnic products. Have a delicious gelato by the Three Bridges, while observing the people meeting at the monument to the national poet and his muse. Or have a beer in the beer garden right across the square with jazz artists and students playing every day in the summer. Stroll along the lighted paths by the river to the outdoor Krizanke Summer Theatre and enjoy an international performance of opera or ballet.

Lake Bled

Just half an hour drive on the freeway north of the capital is the jewel of Slovenia - Lake Bled. Its unique setting is magical. The panorama of the small blue-green lake is edged by the distant peaks of the Alps and its highest mountain Triglav, the symbol of the country. In the middle of the lake is a small island accessible by traditional wooden boats or a swim for the sturdy. Ninety-nine steps on the island lead to a small church with old frescoes and a

wishing bell, gleefully rung by the visitors. The best view of the lake and surrounding villages is from the medieval castle perched on a hill by the edge of the lake. You can walk or bike on the path all around the lake, stopping to admire the families of white, long-necked swans or young rowers of Olympic fame. To replenish your energy sit on a terrace of one of the hotels, enjoy the romantic view, good coffee, and famous Bled kremshnite (custard slices). Bled is a starting point for many short or long hikes to the countryside, waterfalls, or mountains of the National Park. For the young and/or the daring, it is also a center for adrenaline-filled sports of river rafting, kayaking, cannoning or paragliding.

Postojna Caves

An hour south of the capitol is one of the more famous European wonders of the natural world -- the underground caves created by tiny drops of water over millions of years. Deep underground await thousands of stalactites and stalagmites of all sizes and colors to dazzle the visitor. Experienced guides take you to the most attractive ones on a 1.5-hour-long tour, part of it on an open electric train. It is exhilarating for young and old alike to zoom through black passages only to be greeted by dramatic lightning revealing pillars and curtains of calcite formations. Concerts are performed in the underground cavern, in a concert hall with fantastic acoustics that holds 10,000 visitors. Back up in the sun,

make a short detour to visit Predjamski grad, a romantic white castle built into the rock in a hidden valley that was occupied in the middle ages by a robber baron. For horse lovers, a stop at Lipica stud farm nearby, where the famous Lipizzaner horses of the Vienna High School of Dressage are bred, is a must. From there you might want to continue just a little way on for a swim in the Adriatic Sea or a lunch in one of the pretty squares.

There are a variety of accommodations available to tourists, all substantially cheaper than in, say, Prague or Paris. You can, of course, book a five-star hotel with a golf course and a spa, but you can also stay on a working farm, a B&B or even a refurbished old prison. You can stay at the converted residency of the former Yugoslav president Tito (now a Relais & Chateaux) or in an old castle on a small river island. There are plenty of campgrounds, RV parks, and family hotels with special programs for children.

You can easily make Slovenia your base for exploring some other better-known European destinations. It is only 186 miles across the whole country, so from the capitol it takes about three hours to drive to Venice and four to five hours to Vienna. You can also head down to the Croatian Islands or to Budapest in Hungary, but you might not have enough time left after you have explored all that Slovenia has to offer.

For Internet resources: try www.slovenia.info or www.bled.si.

2008 Publication Schedule

Table with Issue (November, December) and Deadline (October 5, November 5)

Orinda News classified ads ...

Your ad in The Orinda News reaches 9,000 households and businesses in Orinda!

Ad rates are \$5 per line (\$10 minimum)

There are 32 spaces per line. Count each letter, punctuation mark, and space between words.

Categories

- For Sale Cars Musical Instruments Sports Equipment Miscellaneous Help Wanted Household Services Caregivers Domestic House-Sitting Instruction Music Lessons Tutors Miscellaneous Pets Pet Care Rentals Services Vacation Rentals/ Home Exchanges Wanted

Name _____ Category _____

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Write your ad in the boxes below with one letter, space or punctuation mark in each box. Cost is \$5 per line: \$10 minimum.

Grid of boxes for writing ad content

Enclose your check payable to The Orinda Association and mail to Orinda News, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563. We reserve the right to reject any ad. Classified ads must be prepaid. Your cancelled check is your receipt.

CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

OCTOBER

- 1 **Orinda Rotary**, noon, Orinda Community Center, with Jim Allan, nautical anthropologist of San Francisco Cityfront. 254-3131.
- 2 **Orinda Books**. Author Appearance, 4 p.m., Paula Boswell will discuss and sign copies of her new book, *No Ordinary Life: The True Story of a Dutch Girl and an American Marine*. 254-7606.
- 4 **Friends of Orinda Library Book Fair** will offer gently used and collectible books for sale from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Library Plaza.
- 8 **Orinda Rotary**, noon, Orinda Community Center, with Suzanne Schumacher on teaching art to the royal princesses in Saudi Arabia. 254-3131.
- 11 **Oakland Rotary and Oakland Boys and Girls Clubs** Tom Fitch Fishing Outing, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., San Pablo Reservoir. 254-3131.
Del Rey Elementary Halloween Festival, noon to 3 p.m., 25 El Camino Moraga. 258-3099.
- 14 **Orinda Books**. Author Appearance, 4 p.m., 276 Village Square. Judy Pochini will discuss and sign copies of *The Frittata Affair: Adventures in Four-Star Dining at Home*. 254-7606.
- 15 **Orinda Rotary**, noon, Orinda Community Center, with Lisa Summerlin speaking on Cake Decorating 101 in a Central American Prison. 254-3131.
- 17 **Life Line Screening**, for potential strokes, Orinda Masonic Center, pre-registration required. 1-800-324-1851.
Montelindo Garden Club Meeting, 9 a.m., Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way. Speaker at 10 a.m., featuring Andrew Baxter of the San Leandro Dahlia Society. Visit www.montelindogarden.com for more information.
- 18 **Glorietta Elementary School Annual Halloween Funfest**, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Glorietta School, 15 Martha Drive. Carnival games, prizes, bake sale, raffle, an obstacle course, and more. 254-8770.
Sleepy Hollow Elementary Pumpkin Patch, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., 20 Washington Lane. 254-8155.
- 21 **Friends of Tabor Dinner**, 6 p.m., Orinda Country Club. Members, friends and all interested Orinda residents or not are invited. Speaker will be George Breslauer, vice chancellor and provost of UC Berkeley. Cost is \$40 for members, \$45 for others, and must be purchased in advance. 254-8260.
- 24 **Jennifer Berezan**, with a spiral dance, 7 p.m., Masonic Center, 9 Altarinda Road. Visit www.edgeofwonder.com.
- 25 **WomenSing's 10th Annual Gala and Auction**, 7 p.m., Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Join the Divas for "Now That's Jazz!" with a taste of New Orleans, a jazz ensemble and silent auction. Tickets \$65. For information, call 925-974-9169, or visit www.womensing.org.
Wagner Elementary School's Halloween celebration, "Monster Mash," 6:30-8:30 p.m., 350 Camino Pablo. Cost \$10. 254-6850.
- 28 **Chamber of Commerce Luncheon**, City Representative will discuss results of Planning Process Review Task Force and its impact on businesses, noon, Orinda Country Club, 254-3909.

AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified.

- 1 **Toddler Lapsit**, 10 a.m., Gallery Room. Stories, songs and finger-plays for 1- to 3-year olds and their caregivers. Please attend one story time a week. Repeats at 10:30 a.m. Also October 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, and 22.
- 4 **Paws Story Time** 11 a.m., Picture Book Area. Family story time with a special guest. Come listen to stories and meet a friendly Paws to Read dog. For ages 3 to 5.
- 7 **Peek-a-Boo Time**, 10:15 a.m., tutoring room. Story time for newborn to 12 months (pre-walkers) and their caretakers only. Those with older siblings are welcome to attend Toddler Lapsit. Also October 14 and 21.
- 11 **Saturday Morning Live!** 11 a.m., Family Alcove. Family story-time for 3- to 5-year-olds. In the Picture book area. Also October 18 and 25.
- 14 **Fireside Chat** "Benjamin Franklin and the Invention of America," with George Hammond, 7 p.m.
- 15 **Lamorinda Reads! Movie Night**, 7-9 p.m. Enjoy an Oscar-nominated Iranian film and Persian snacks!
- 16 **Music Demonstration**, 4 p.m. "Mideast Percussion on Fire," with Mary Ellen Donald demonstrating different instruments. For ages 5 and up. in the library.
- 20 **"So You Think You Can Persian Dance,"** 7 p.m. Basic introduction to Persian dancing with guidance provided by staff of the Shahrzad Dance Academy. Ages 10 through adults. Located in the Gallery Room.
- 28 **"Funny in Farsi,"** 7 p.m., discussion of book by the same title.

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.

Bentley Graduate Postpones College to Perform With Berkeley Rep

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Ben Freeman had his life all planned out. After middle school, he would attend high school, graduate, leave for college, graduate, and then begin a career. But that all changed when his drama teacher at Bentley, Winter Mead, sent out an audition notice for a workshop reading of a new work by Itamar Moses, titled *Yellowjackets*. Freeman and many of his fellow students showed up for this story of Berkeley High School students who are thrown into a volatile controversy thanks to an insensitive story by the school paper. Freeman was offered the role of the editor-in-chief.

The high school senior worked on the reading, kept up his studies, and was accepted at Brown University for the fall of 2008. But Freeman's life became more complicated when Berkeley Rep artistic director Tony Taccone decided to include *Yellowjackets* in the main stage season and asked Freeman to continue his role. "I was very conflicted," Freeman recalls. Freeman eventually decided that the experience working with a professional company would be worth the sacrifice.

"It's been slightly surreal," says Freeman. "Just to work with these people and a theater of this caliber has been great. It's been very exhausting but exhilarating as well." During previews, which began in late August, Freeman would rehearse four to five hours each day, often receiving new lines or having old lines deleted. They would rehearse the new material, have a dinner break, and then come back and perform that night. One of the hardest parts for Freeman was watching his friends leave for college while he stayed in Orinda. "I've been so busy with the show I haven't had time to really process my emotions, but I know that will come," he says. Luckily for Freeman, several of his friends have also deferred their freshman year at Brown so he won't be starting alone next year. "While the opportunity with Berkeley Rep has been unbelievable, I'm really looking forward to school next year," says Freeman. "I'm listed as a theater arts major right now, but I could see changing to English or history. To catch



MOLLY TAYLOR

Orinda's Ben Freeman is featured in Berkeley Rep's current production, *Yellowjackets*.

this rising young talent in his professional debut (show continues through October 12), call Berkeley Rep at 510-647-2959.

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CALENDAR BY CHRIS LAVIN

Send calendar items to chrislavin@earthlink.net

BUSINESS BUZZ

Business Buzz

Putting a Personal Face on the Face of Business

Valerie Hotz



Hediyeh Means Gift in Farsi, Turkish and Arabic

Sherry Sadighpour is beginning her fourth year as proprietor of this charming gift boutique featuring an amazing assortment of gifts collected from all over the world. It's in Theatre Square at Suite 112. Hediyeh is adjacent to B.B. Gear.

The discerning bearer of gifts will be delighted to discover exotic items that are reasonably priced. Choices run the gamut from paintings by Ray Azimi, the Original Taxi Wallet (this company is located in Lafayette) to adorable themed bunny rabbit or duck baby booties by Goody Goody.

"Anything can be a gift, really," says Sadighpour. "I am able to offer international gifts which include French jewelry, handmade dishes from Turkey, pewter jewelry from Turkey, Italian jewelry and hand-painted porcelain by Franz," she adds. Hediyeh is a specialist in Arthur Court and is the only local shop that carries the beautiful horse motif designs of this collection. Other selections include large bowls, serving dishes, baby spoons with a rocking horse design, and napkin holders created out of aluminum. The Arthur Court catalogue is kept handy by Sadighpour for additional browsing.

A closer look reveals an intriguing selection of floral hairpins, felt hats by Scala and Stacy Adams, handmade vegetable glycerin soaps, shea butter soap imported from France, photo frames, wool rugs from Afghanistan and one of my favorites, handmade collage earrings by San Francisco

artist Doezigiz. These very unique, attractive and delicate pierced earrings are made from wood, paper, pearls, stones, coins and beads -- a definite must-see and perfect for the fashionista on your list.

Prior to establishing this exotic gift boutique, Sadighpour was a data analyst and consultant in the healthcare industry. Originally from Iran, she came to the United States in January 1979, just as the revolution was heating up. She also was a data entry operator at Chevron for 13 years. She is passionate about bringing exotic and affordable gifts to her customers. For those who enjoy completing their holiday shop-



VALERIE HOTZ
Sherry Sadighpour owns Hediyeh in Theatre Square.

ping before Thanksgiving, be sure to drop by Hediyeh with your shopping list. You will enjoy the quality jewelry pieces available here, as well as the attractive line of roomy handbags that are always in stock.

Hediyeh is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and closed Sunday. For more information, please call Sadighpour at 254-2594.

Orinda Physical Therapy Relocates to 1 Bates Blvd.

Originally established here in 1958 by his father, Henry S. Low, Jr., locals have received the benefit of care at Orinda Physical Therapy for more than 50 years. Sheldon Low, P.T., joined his father's practice in 1980 and took it over in 1985. Since that time he has been joined by his wife, Mary Russell, P.T. You could call it a real family affair at Orinda Physical Therapy. Valerie Edmond serves as administrative assistant.

Located at 12 Camino Encinas for the past 45 years, the practice has moved to 1 Bates Blvd, Suite 100. Keep your eyes peeled when looking for the new location, the grand opening of which is this month. It is the first office to your left side as you enter the driveway leading to the parking area.

"Our job is to tune-up patients as quickly as possible, correcting problems and providing optimal functioning. To that end, we treat each patient directly and work on each patient at least 30 minutes each visit. We do not sacrifice treatment time in order to put patients on a machine, which is often the case in other physical therapy practices. As our new clinic is built out, it will include a gym with machines and we will recommend machine work when it is appropriate," says Low. Physical therapy is typically covered under most insurance policies.

People of all ages visit Low and Russell for treatment. With the advent of year-round children's sports programs and children concentrating on one sport only, year in and year out, Low has seen an increase in sports-related injuries among children and teenagers. "I have 10-year-old patients who run two miles after soccer practice. If they are not running correctly, it is easy for problems to develop. I have seen knee injuries in kids due to overuse and also from not stretching properly." Low points out that most people do not stretch like they need to both before and after exercise. "Elasticity of soft tissue gets less with age, and we need to stretch longer and more often. I like to encourage patients to stretch whenever they get a chance throughout the day, such as when watching television or standing in the kitchen. Tight hamstrings



VALERIE HOTZ
Valerie Edmond and Sheldon Low of Orinda Physical Therapy.

affect the knee greatly, so extra stretching will help. In addition, loose hamstrings can help minimize back problems," he says.

Low is amiable and enjoys chatting with patients, providing pointers on how to care for muscles, joints and ligaments. "We give our patients an education while we work on them. One guy came to the office just to tell me that due to treatment he can now hit the golf ball 30 yards farther than he did 10 to 15 years ago," he says with a laugh. Obviously Low is pleased with such progress.

For more information about Orinda Physical Therapy, please call 254-8755.

Curves – A Total Body Workout in 30 Minutes

Orinda women enjoy the luxury of working out at a Curves location conveniently located in Theatre Square and owned by Pati MacDonald, who is also the proprietor of the first Curves in San Diego. Extremely knowledgeable and incredibly fit, Patti is an enthusiastic supporter of women's health and fitness.

"Curves is an all-female club. The program is non-intimidating, and it is a fun workout that involves every major group of the body. Every medical journal reports 30 minutes of exercise daily is required to maintain fitness and that is exactly what we do at Curves," claims MacDonald. The Curves workout takes place on hydraulic resistance machines. No free weights are used. "As a result of not having to stop and adjust weights at each station, one is able to maintain a sustained heart rate for 30 minutes," she adds.

After rearing her two sons, Jeff and Matthew, in San Diego, MacDonald relocated to the East Bay to be closer to her elderly parents. In February 2007, she was trying on swim suits just before vacationing in Costa Rica, and discovered a lump in her breast. "Often lumps are harmless and I figured this was a cyst. It is critical to fol-

[SEE BUZZ page 23]

Is this too young to go to Cal?



Actually, it's just the right age to get an eye exam at the University of California Eye Center. And again at three years. And regularly after that. (We developed ways to test kids' eyes while they play!) We're part of the UC School of Optometry, and offer you Lasik surgery, contact lenses, and an Eyewear Center with a vast collection of designer frames, too. We take most insurance plans, and major credit cards. It's time for your whole family to go blue!



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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 22

low up immediately.” Further tests revealed a breast cancer diagnosis. MacDonald reacted swiftly and underwent a lumpectomy and radiation treatment.

“Doctors encourage women to perform self exams regularly in order to detect any changes that may have occurred. Doctors do not expect women to discover breast cancer, but rather to discover if there have been any changes. Early detection and subsequent treatment are important factors in surviving breast cancer,” explains MacDonald. She continues to be extremely grateful for all the support received from the Orinda community as she endured treat-

15, at 6 p.m. Refreshments will be served and a DVD featuring Olivia Newton-John discussing her own experience with breast cancer will be the focus. Newton-John is launching Liv Aid, a device designed to help women perform self exams with ease and confidence.

“Olivia Newton-John found a lump. She says she knew immediately something was wrong, but the mammogram showed no sign of cancer. She pushed her doctor for more testing. The needle biopsy was negative. She continued to push her doctor for more testing and a surgical biopsy came back positive for cancer. The lesson Newton-John teaches is to listen to your



VALERIE HOTZ

The group of women from Curves are from left to right: Curves afficianados (L-R) **Monique Fung, Rose Mazmanian, Pati MacDonald** (owner of Curves), **Merle Nishimura** and **Holly Wilke**.

ment. “The support I received from Curves members was phenomenal. They have been amazing,” says MacDonald.

With October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Curves is hosting a Girls-Night-In on Wednesday, October

own instincts. Listen to your body and get involved with preventative medicine,” says MacDonald.

To join Curves or to get more information about Girls-Night-In, please call Pati MacDonald at 254-4199.

Gail Woznak Moves to Mechanics Bank in Orinda

By HATTI HAMLIN
Contributing Writer

Well-known Orinda banker Gail Woznak has joined the Orinda office of Mechanics Bank as vice president and office manager. She is a familiar face in Orinda, having previously managed the First Republic Office, and before that, the Bank of Walnut Creek, which was acquired by First Republic in November of 2006.

“It’s nice to be at a bank that has a 103-year history of staying independent,” Woznak said. “I’m going back to my community banking roots, which is what I love the most about my job.”

During Woznak’s tenure as manager of the Bank of Walnut Creek in Orinda from 2001 to 2008, she helped double the office’s deposits to \$100 million. She helped transition the office through its first acquisition by First Republic and then through another buyout by Merrill Lynch in 2007. Before that, she was a personal banking officer at Wells Fargo Bank in Orinda.

Woznak has been active in a variety of community and business organizations since 1996. She is a member of the Orinda Woman’s Club and the Orinda Chamber of Commerce board of directors, serving as their treasurer. From 2005 to 2006, she served as president of the Orinda Rotary Club and before that as treasurer.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gail Woznak can now be found at Mechanics Bank.

For more than a century, Mechanics Bank has been committed to helping people build prosperous communities as a trusted financial partner. The \$2.7 billion independent bank is headquartered in Richmond, California.

Woznak and her husband moved to Orinda in 1969 where they raised their two children. The couple currently lives in Lafayette.

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