

# THE ORINDA NEWS

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Delivered to 9,000 Households and Businesses in Orinda

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July 2009

## City of Orinda Says No to Governor's Request for Property Taxes

By FRAN MILLER  
Staff Writer

It is referred to as "tax-jacking," and nearly 1100 California cities, including Orinda, are saying "enough is enough" to the state government's practice of raiding local coffers to cover state budget shortfalls.

Since 1992, state lawmakers have siphoned billions in local property tax revenues to support public schools. Through fiscal year 2007-2008, Orinda alone has paid the state \$3,007,312. The loss over the years has left the city in a precarious position, and the current economic downturn makes the city's situation even more tenuous.

And now, with the state once again in dire budget straits, the State Department of Finance is recommending that \$2 billion (8 percent) in local property taxes be "borrowed" to meet the state's budget shortfall – allowed by Proposition 1A which lets the state borrow \$2 billion from California cities twice during a ten year period, with repayment due within three years. For Orinda, this amounts to a loss of \$425,906.

In opposition to the state's proposal, the Orinda City Council, at its May 19 council meeting, passed a resolution declaring a state of severe fiscal hardship. The resolution was forwarded to the Governor's office and to the League of California Cities. Ninety-six other struggling California cities have also declared states of fiscal hardship, and the League of California Cities expects dozens more to follow suit. California cities are sending the message that they cannot afford to bail the state out of its chronic budget problem.

"Borrowing to solve the state budget is irresponsible, deepens the state's deficit and harms communities," states Orinda Mayor

[SEE BUDGET page 8]

## See 4th of July Schedule on Page 9



SALLY HOGARTY  
The Chamber of Commerce did last year's parade proud with its Statue of Liberty entry.

## School Board Juggling Additional State Cuts

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

As the 2008-9 school year drew to a close, the Orinda Union School District received word from the governor's office that \$500,000 for the current school year in expected state revenue would not materialize and that deeper cuts in the 2009-10 budget would also take place. The OUSD school board decided to take \$500,000 from reserves to cover this year's expenses and put together an even leaner budget for the upcoming academic year.

"The state cuts way exceed what we thought when we went for the parcel tax," said OUSD board president Riki Sorenson, who felt a new parcel tax would be needed within three years. "The word from the state is to expect early, mid-year, and late-year cuts for next year," said OUSD director of business services Jerry Bucci. "The state recommends that district's hold on to their reserves." According to Bucci, the board's goal was to keep 9 percent of its budget in reserve. They currently have 5 percent. They are mandated by the state to keep at least 3 percent in reserve. If they fall below that mark, the state could take over the district's finances.

"We've already made monumental changes. There is a limit to what we can reduce for next year. We're already past the deadline for letting teachers know that they might be let go," said board member Pam West.

The budget for the 2009-10 school year lists \$838,500 in cuts, which include reducing school supplies, eliminating a custodial position, eliminating the elementary librarian positions, the library assistant position, and a district library secretary position. Other eliminations include elementary computer teacher positions and reducing and/or restructuring district office staff. The most controversial of the cuts was the elimination of the environmental education staff position at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area (WRNA) currently held by

[SEE OUSD page 14]

## Family Pleads for Answers in Student's Death

By MAGGIE SHARPE  
Staff Writer

A letter to the Orinda community from Joe Loudon's mother, requesting that people come forward with information on the death of her 16-year-old son, has elicited dozens of emails and phone calls to the family and Orinda Police.

"The investigation is going well. We are

He added that his sister is "pumped up that moms in the Orinda community are outraged and want answers."

Loudon died on the night of Saturday, May 23, at a party on Hillcrest Drive in Orinda that was attended by about 50 people.

Although toxicology reports are still pending, it is believed that Loudon's death was alcohol-related, according to Orinda Police Chief Bill French. Partygoers found Loudon unconscious in the hallway of the home and called paramedics. He was taken to Kaiser in Walnut Creek, where he was pronounced dead before midnight.

In her June 3 letter addressed to the Orinda Community, Marianne Payne writes:

"Over the past week, I have been overwhelmed by generous offers of support from so many people – all or most have offered 'anything, anything I can do to help you, just ask.' I am now asking – pleading – for your help. I need information – and the Orinda Police need information – and we need answers about Joe's death."

Police Chief French said most of the emails and phone calls that they received

[SEE LOUDEN page 14]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Joe Loudon (L) and Manuelito, one of the boys he met while working at an orphanage in Mexico over spring break.

conducting more interviews this week," said Orinda Police Chief Bill French on June 8.

Thomas Payne, Loudon's uncle and godfather, says his sister Marianne is mourning her son, but she's also very frustrated.

"We need people who were at the party to come in and talk to the Orinda police," said Payne. "We need answers and closure to this thing."

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Lynda Leonard



The lure of a warm sunny day, a primordial call when we succumb to the sweet breath of spring and long to be outside. There is the urge to go on a picnic, laze on a lawn, walk in a garden, or simply be outdoors. Color and fragrance both soothe and excite. And we here in Orinda can satisfy all of these desires in one place, because we are blessed by the presence of a world-class botanical garden right here in our very own backyard.

Nestled in the Berkeley hills between the

Lawrence Hall of Science and Memorial Stadium, is a 34-acre botanical garden, home to plants from every continent in the world, except Antarctica: the UC Botanical Garden at Berkeley (UCBG). Established in 1890, the garden is a living museum where every turn in a path leads to discovery. The garden's notably diverse collection includes over 12,000 different kinds of plants and is home to many rare and endangered species, including approximately 200 from California and another 1,300 to 1,400 from

around the world. Nearly all specimens in the garden have been brought in from the wild. Detailed records are kept concerning their place of origin, thus enhancing their scientific and educational value considerably.

On a sunny day in March, UCBG Director Paul Licht took me on a tour, telling stories and revealing an intimate knowledge of the plants and ecosystems in this great garden. Immediately obvious is Licht's passion for his charges. A retired UC Berkeley professor of zoology, he has always been an avid gardener. Given this, UC did not let Licht retire for long before he was asked to become the director of the garden. Now, it seems that UCBG is his second home and he often pays a visit on days off to make sure that everything is in order.

The garden is arranged into nine major geographic regions: Mediterranean, Asia, Southern Africa, New World Desert, South America, Australasia (Australia, New Zealand, and high elevations of islands in the South Pacific), Mexico/Central America, Eastern North America, and California. Special collections include orchid, fern, and carnivorous plants; arid house, including Southern African and New World Desert areas; cycad and palms from every continent; old roses; food plants and other crops of the world; herbs; and Chinese medicinal herbs.



COURTESY OF UC BOTANICAL GARDEN  
 The 34-acre botanical garden includes a Japanese waterfall and pool.

In the Asia section, look for the spectacular spring flowering of the empress tree (*Paulownia glabrata*). Linger at the Japanese waterfall and pool. Look closely at the bottom of the pond and you will see newts that surface for air every 10 to 15 minutes. This is an important breeding ground for these creatures, native to upper Strawberry Canyon. Snakes like to swim in the pool, fishing for lunch, while hawks perch high in the trees, waiting for an opportunity to catch a snake. Examine the rocks and lantern. They were part of the Japanese exhibit at the 1939 San Francisco



COURTESY OF UC BOTANICAL GARDEN  
 Colorful flowers abound in the botanical garden where over 12,000 kinds of plants are displayed.

World's Fair and Exposition, and Japan sent stonemasons to California to prepare them for the exhibit. Not wanting to ship the stones back to Japan when the fair closed, the pool was donated to the garden. Feel the polish on the top of the rocks edged

[SEE GARDENS page 18]



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SENIOR SERVICES

## ComForcare Serves Orinda Alzheimer's Community

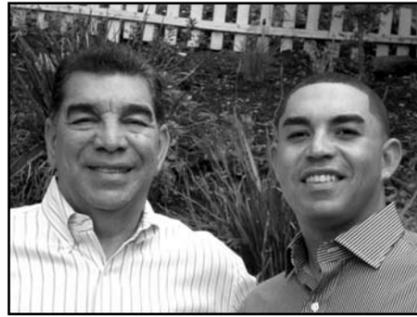
By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

When the McCalla family began researching where to obtain compassionate care for Vern McCalla's 87-year-old mother with Alzheimer's, they were surprised. Agencies they interviewed more or less provided baby-sitting services rather than caregivers with patient-centered training for this special needs population. The timing was right for the McCalla family to fill what they perceived as an important need in our community – assisting older adults to remain at home in a comfortable, familiar environment when illness, injury or age makes life more challenging.

Vern Sr. had just retired so together with his brother, his wife Francesca, and son Vern Jr., they researched the industry and decided upon a franchise with ComForcare. "The company had 10 years in the business and provided expertise in every area we needed," says Francesca. They have been

in business for a little over a year and feel that the experience, training and compliance information the franchise provided allowed them to hit the ground running. Things like proprietary software for their particular business, payroll, updated Certified Nursing Certificates, information about what the Veteran's Administration provides for patients, what folks can get at low cost from their insurance companies – the list goes on and on – all these resources saved them time.

Although they originally opened ComForcare in Lafayette, they realized after a while that it would be better for them to operate the business in Orinda, where they have lived since 1991. "It's funny," says Francesca, "The same moms who used to drive Vern Jr. on field trips in school are now asking us to provide care for their parents!" Vern Jr. is the CEO of ComForcare and has a passion for the business because his grandmother has always been an important part of his life. He holds the same



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
The McCalla family (Vern Sr. and Vern Jr.) started ComForcare in response to another family member.

standard for their clients' parents as he does for his own grandmother. Vern Jr. also has a sociology degree with a business minor [SEE CARE page 6]



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## Lamorinda Seniors Save Money Thanks To New Senior Helpers Discount Card

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

A new Lamorinda Senior Discount Card is available to local seniors thanks to Senior Helpers, an in-home care provider for seniors. The card entitles seniors to discounts of between 10-20 percent at select restaurants, clothing stores, auto repair shops and other Lamorinda businesses.

The card is free of charge to seniors 65 and older. A total of 30 businesses in the Lamorinda area are participating in the program at the start with additional businesses to be added.

"Seniors age 65 and older make up almost 20 percent of our population," says Kevin Reneau, the owner of Senior Helpers in Contra Costa and program founder. "My goal in starting the discount card was to provide a significant discount to our seniors while also giving a boost to local businesses."

Reneau says the business community's response to the program has been overwhelming. However to get the program up and running, he limited the initial participation to just 30 businesses, 10 each from the three Lamorinda cities.

"Whether it's 20 percent off an omelet at a restaurant or a discount on a new sweater or help with car repairs, our discount card [SEE DISCOUNTS page 6]



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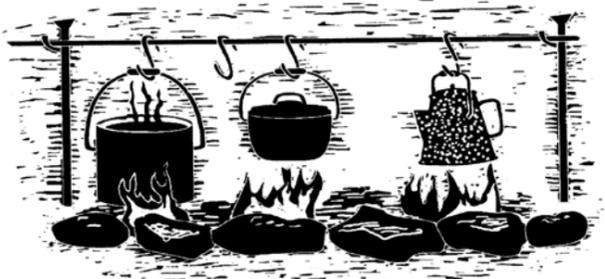
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## Even More Important to Celebrate This 4th of July After Trying Times

Between the housing and auto industry crisis, high unemployment, stock market woes, and the state budget crisis, 2009 has not been a particularly joyous year so far.

Businesses in Orinda have struggled as consumers have less to spend. Of course, that translates into less taxes for the City of Orinda. Add the Governor Schwarzenegger's decision to "borrow" property tax funds (the state is required to repay these funds within three years with interest) to help balance the state budget, and the city finds itself in a precarious position. At its May 19 meeting, the Orinda City Council declared a state of severe fiscal hardship. The declaration, which was sent to the Governor, does not have the power to stop the action. Since the early 1990s, the state has legally been able to siphon local property tax revenues from California cities. Through fiscal year 2007-8, Orinda has paid

the state \$3,007,312 – money that could go a long way towards improving Orinda's infrastructure problems.

The city is not the only one crying foul. The Orinda Union School District received notice in June that it would not receive \$500,000 in anticipated state revenue for the 2008-9 school year and that the district would see an 18 percent reduction in the amount of funding for 2009-10.

But thanks to the tenacity of local residents and their willingness to contribute both money and time, Orinda is in much better shape than many Bay Area cities. While the economy still has a long way to go, there are a few bright spots. Local realtors have noted a rise in home sales, some stocks have even gone up recently, and the unemployment rate is lowering slightly (at least at press time).

Given the difficulties many have faced this past year, it is even more important



to find those bright spots and to celebrate our victories and special occasions with our family and friends whenever possible. And what better way to celebrate than by going to a parade.

The Orinda Association has planned an old fashioned 4<sup>th</sup> of July where many of your neighbors and friends will be marching in the colorful parade. In fact, some years it seems as if everyone in town is in the parade. If you like to get up early,

join the Orinda Roadrunners for a pancake breakfast and/or participate in the Roadrunners' Fun Run. Following the parade, make your way to the Community Center Park where the Bob Claire Orchestra will play and where there will be lots of activities for the children. Bring your own picnic or purchase refreshments from the many vendors. For details on all the activities, go to pages 9 – 11. Happy Independence Day!

– Sally Hogarty, Editor

## Letters to the Editor

### Thoughtful Letter

Kat Holoch's thoughtful letter (June *The Orinda News*) makes a compelling argument for the need for senior apartments near BART. But she does not address why the planning commission seems to think the only way to do this is to raze the block containing Longs and Orinda Hardware, and replace it with a five-story monstrosity, effectively ruining our wonderful downtown. This location makes no sense!

The proper place for such a development would be just north of 24, on Orinda Way – which is much closer to BART than the hardware store. There is ample space there for such building, and there are already tall structures all around, so there would be no disruption of the neighborhood. Most importantly, the things a senior apartment-dweller would likely want access to – the library, community center, park, and only grocer in town – are very close. Putting seniors in the hardware store block instead would leave them isolated, a long walk with hills and stairs from these destinations.

Orinda City Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu has said in public meetings he'd like to see Orinda's downtown be "more like Palo Alto." The planning commission, dominated by developers, wants a 5-story behemoth instead of our friendly little neighborhood. And Ms. Holoch, who consults to developers, clearly seems to support this idea as well. What do the 17,000 Orindans not in the development industry think? We need to hear from them; I would imagine most might want Orinda to be like the town they live in now, not the Palo Alto or Pleasant Hill the developers envision.

– Scott Zeller

### It's Punahou not Punahoe

I loved the story about the lost Hawaiian bracelet found by Moraga Orinda firefighter Dan Johansen at Briones Reservoir. What a great lost and found story!

However, as a Punahou graduate (1984) I couldn't help but notice that you misspelled Punahou ("Punahoe"). The reason this deserves some attention is that President Barack Obama was a 1979 graduate of Punahou School in Honolulu.

– Maya Byrne McBride

### Bailout Wall Street Banksters But Terminate Teachers

As an Orinda resident for over 30 years and an American for more than 60, it is pathetically shameful to see what our government now characterized as "of the banks, by the banks and for the banks" has become. At the national level, Wall Street syndicates in partnership with the corrupted politicians who now control Washington to bailout the "banksters" and saddle the people and our children with tens of \$trillions (as in twelve zeros) of debt. At the local "Main Street" level, such as our Sleepy Hollow School, we terminate our outstanding and dedicated computer teacher, the Wagner Ranch nature area program and teacher, and our librarian—and deprive our children even more. Have we lost our senses? Enough is enough. We need to start taking back our destiny.

– Chris Kniel

## Orinda Resident Robert Bowen Griesche

Bob passed away on May 3 in the arms of Lillian, his wife of 65 years. Bob was born in Berkeley, the only child to Bessie and Gus Griesche. He attended schools in Berkeley and was proud of being an Eagle Scout.

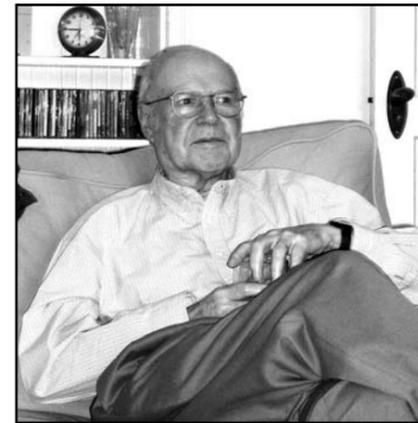
In 12th grade English class, he met Lillian Price and started walking her to class. They dated for five years while Bob attended Cal Berkeley, and while in ROTC at Cal he enlisted in the Army. Upon receiving his BS in Business Administration from Cal in 1943 as a corporal, Bob was accepted into Officer Candidate School (OCS). After Bob completed OCS, Lillian and he married in Berkeley in 1944. Lillian's father, Reverend James Allan Price was the minister, and he and Lillian's mother welcomed Bob into the large Price family.

Bob proudly served his country during WWII as a First Lieutenant Supply Officer and was stationed in the Philippines from 1944 to 1946.

Bob and Lillian lived in Berkeley and Concord when their three children were born. For many years, they lived in Bob's childhood home on Sonoma Avenue in Berkeley. During this time, Bob worked for Henningsen and Associates. He was active at North Congregational Church, and then First Congregational Church.

After building a home in Orinda in 1963, Bob worked for The Wood Products Industry Fund, commuting to Burlingame. The couple joined Orinda Community Church where Bob was an usher. His last job before retiring in 1987 was as a business manager for a law firm in Oakland.

Once retired, Bob enjoyed volunteer-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Robert Bowen Griesche

ing at Mended Hearts, where he served as treasurer for many years. He enjoyed swimming at Meadow Pool and took computer classes at Rossmoor. He loved to stay in touch via email.

Friends and family remember Bob as a sweet and generous gentleman who loved to tell jokes and work on his investments and spreadsheets. He was curious and detail oriented and would often surprise his family by knowing intricate details and far away locations. The family enjoyed many vacations including Berkeley Tuolumne Camp, annual summer trips to Lake Tahoe, a tour of East Coast historical sites, trips to visit newly born grandchildren, including visits to Germany.

Bob is survived by his wife of 65 years, Lillian, his three children Allene Pistorius, Anne Leahy Jones, and Robert Price Griesche; his four grandchildren Anne, Maria, Nick and Sara; and two great-grand children Theodore and Hanne.

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

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For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the September issue is July 18, 2009.

## ALCOHOL STATS / POLICE BLOTTER

# Statistics of Teen Alcohol Use in California

By MAGGIE SHARPE  
Staff Writer

“Nothing good happens when alcohol gets into the hands of minors,” says John Carr, the information officer with the State Department of Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC). “It’s hard on the families and friends when these tragedies happen.”

Carr says that during graduation season, it’s especially important to talk to minors about the dangers of underage drinking.

“For example, in 2007 (the last year for which ABC has statistics), 188 persons under the age of 21 died in alcohol-related car crashes in California,” says Carr. “Those were minors who were in a car, not necessarily behind the wheel.”

According to the California Healthy Kids Survey of the Acalanes School District, conducted in fall, 2007, 38 percent of 9th-graders had used alcohol at least once in their lives, while 66 percent of 11th-graders had used alcohol. Among 9th-graders, 22 percent had used alcohol in the past 30 days, while 43 percent of 11th-grader said they’d consumed alcohol in the past 30 days.

When surveyed on whether they’d been drunk or high on school property, 11 percent of 9th-graders answered yes, and 22 percent of 11th-graders said yes. Twenty-two percent of 9th-graders said they’d been very drunk or sick after drinking; that figure was 48 percent for the 11th-graders.

Some 12 percent of 9th-grade students said they had been binge drinking within the past 30 days, while 29 percent of 11th-graders said they’d been on a binge in the last 30 days.

Significantly, 95 percent of the 9th-graders and 95 percent of the 11th-graders reported feeling that frequent use of alcohol and other drugs is harmful.

Sean Slade, regional manager for the Healthy Kids Survey, which is supported by federal Title IV funds, says there is not a

significant difference between the Acalanes School District numbers and the state average in 9th grade, but by 11th-grade it’s a different story.

For example, 43 percent of 11th-graders in the Acalanes district reported drinking alcohol in the last 30 days, compared to the state average of 36 percent. Similarly, 48 percent of Acalanes 11th-graders said they’d been very drunk or sick from drinking in their lifetime, compared to the state average of 40 percent.

“Obviously something is happening between 9th and 11th grades,” says Slade.

He says that it is typical in affluent areas to have a slightly higher alcohol and marijuana use, but that students also report fewer safety concerns and incidents of harassment.

“We see a higher alcohol use in places like Berkeley and Marin, mainly because hypothetically students have more spare time, easier access and more money to spend,” says Slade.

ABC Director Steve Hardy encouraged communities across the country to participate in Operation Save a Teen in May, 2009.

“May is a month when families should be celebrating landmark events such as high school and college graduation and a wide variety of outdoor community events,” said Hardy in a statement. “Everyone needs to work together to keep those events from being marred by alcohol-related tragedies.”

For more information, visit the National Liquor Law Enforcement Association website at [www.nllea.org](http://www.nllea.org). For more information on the California Healthy Kids Survey, visit [www.californiahealthykids.org](http://www.californiahealthykids.org).



## POLICE BLOTTER

May 2009

**False Residential Alarms:** Officers responded to 127 false alarm calls throughout the city.

**Auto Burglary** (theft from a locked vehicle): 5 incidents reported at La Encinal, Theatre Square, California Ave., Monte Vista Rd. and Via Floreado.

**Petty Theft From Vehicle** (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 1 incident reported on Meadow View Rd.

**All Other Petty Thefts:** 2 incidents reported at Moraga Way and Camino Sobrante.

**Grand Theft – From Vehicle (theft of more than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle):** 1 incident reported on North Ln.

**Grand Theft Other:** 2 incidents reported on Vista Del Orinda and Donna Maria Way.

**Stolen Vehicle:** 2 incidents reported at Descanso and Bates Blvd. at Davis Rd.

**Armed Robbery:** 1 incident reported on Moraga Way.

**Residential Burglary:** 3 incidents reported on Culver Ct., Mossbridge Ln. and Haciendas Rd.

**Commercial Burglary:** 1 incident reported on Ivy Dr.

**Vandalism:** 3 incidents reported on Diablo View Dr., Las Vegas and Casa Vieja.

**Domestic Violence:** 1 incident was reported on Oak Rd.

### Arrests

**Alcohol – Drunk in Public:** 5 individuals were arrested on Camino Pablo, El Camino Moraga and 3 on Moraga Way.

**Recovered Stolen Vehicle:** 3 incidents reported on Dover Ct., Tahos Rd., and Orinda Way.

**Driving Under Influence – Misc.:** 3 arrests were made at Hwy 24 off-ramp EB at St Stephens, Lombardy at Sleepy Hollow, and Ivy Dr. at Moraga Way.

**Driving Under Influence – Misdemeanor:** 1 arrest was made on Glorietta Blvd.

**Misdemeanor:** 1 misdemeanor arrest made in the 100 block of Hillcrest Dr.

**Warrant Arrests:** 2 individuals were arrested on Camino Pablo at Santa Maria Way and Moraga Via.

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving,  
Orinda Police Department

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HOME SWEET HOME

◆ DISCOUNTS from page 3

provides a genuine savings for local seniors," says Reneau. "Judging from the response, the program will be expanding."

Participating businesses in Orinda include Shelby's Restaurant, Europa Hofbrau, Orinda Motors, Village Pizza, Orinda Books, Loard's Ice Cream, Dan at Penny Lane Hair Salon, Natural Life Nutrition, Hilton House Consignment, and McCue Photography.

Over 6,000 cards were printed and are being distributed to seniors through local senior centers, senior organizations, and senior living facilities along with all participating merchants. The cards are also available at the Senior Helpers offices at 1550 Viader Drive in Moraga.

For more information, contact Kevin Reneau at 925-376-9900, kreneau@seniorhelpers.com.

◆ CARE from page 3

from the University of Oregon.

The McCalla family offers several tiers of home care services throughout western Contra Costa County including bathing, grooming, meal preparation, medication reminders, safety supervision, personal assistance, senior transportation/errands, companionship, chore services/light housekeeping, and family respite. They meticulously screen, test and train each ComForcare employee. If not, the following shift is free – no catches, no strings. Stop by and say hello Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at 19 Orinda Way, Suite M, adjacent to the Chevron gas station and Village Pizza. Or give them a call at 925-258-9840 (phones are answered 24/7); check out their website at [http://wcontracosta.comforcare.com/Services\\_Franchise\\_Home.aspx](http://wcontracosta.comforcare.com/Services_Franchise_Home.aspx).

HOME SWEET HOME  
Summer Time, Fun Time



Janice Gatlin

Planning to stay home more this summer? Here are some great ideas to enhance your summer fun.

For everyday use as well as large gatherings, an outdoor kitchen is a terrific addition to any home. It will also add value to your property. Outdoor kitchens range from a simple bar-be-que surrounded by an appropriate counter surface, to a mini-kitchen with sink, cook surface and counter, up to a lavish design incorporating those elements. Appliances for outdoor use are specialized. Some are made to be built-in, others can be used in modular, stand-alone systems. Extend your outdoor living into the evening with a fire pit (check local regulations regarding wood burning pits), some soft, low-voltage lighting and propane heat lamps. Want to keep it green? Look for solar powered yard lighting.

For children, the backyard becomes a full playground with the addition of an activity set (swings, slide and climbing area) and a sand pit. Both of these are easy to assemble and provide hours of fun. Add to that an outdoor drinking fountain for those hot afternoons.

Create a relaxing, flowing oasis for yourself with a pond and waterfall feature. Ponds range from the most simple: dug into the ground and lined with hard or soft plastic liners with a small, prefabricated pump to create a waterfall, to more elaborate stone ponds and stone waterfalls. Enjoy wildlife photography? Bring it to your own backyard. To attract birds, there are many types of seed and suet feeders, but you can also plant landscaping that will attract wildlife.

Many bushes, trees and flowers provide natural sources of food such as fruit trees, nectar producing flowers, berry plants and trees which produce nuts.

If squirrels are bothering your bird feeder, check out some squirrel-proof feeders and baffles. If you'd like to attract more squirrels, provide a squirrel feeder or two. These come in many varieties from simple dried, corn-on-the-cob to little huts into which the squirrel can crawl. I have one that I love: it requires the squirrel to press a handle to release the food.

In addition to birds, you can attract a wide variety of butterflies by adding certain plantings. Some examples are Aster, Strawberry, Golden Rod, Sunflower, Ice Plant, Black-eyed Susan, Butterfly Bush, Cosmos and Privet.

Consider a kitchen garden this year. It doesn't take much room, you can use raised beds made of wood or carve out a sunny corner of your yard. Some great plants for small space gardens: tomatoes, squash, strawberries, bell peppers, miniature fruit trees and some melons. Herbs do very well in containers. A 2' long by 10" wide container should provide room for at least five different types of herbs. For irrigation, you can set up a simple drip system right from your faucet using a portable timer and drip tubing, running lines to each container or plant.

Create a shady area in your yard for those hot summer days by building a simple overhead trellis. Trellis' can be attached to your house or built as a free-standing structure. They can be covered by screen mesh or by vine-type summer plants such as grape, Bougainvillea, Clematis, and Moonflower.

There are many websites which provide extensive information for each of the ideas above. We are also happy to help with any of the construction or installation phases of your projects.

Janice Gatlin is the owner of Always the Best Home Repairs & Remodeling which has been serving Lamorinda for 28 years. She can be reached at 925-254-9545. [www.ATBremodel.com](http://www.ATBremodel.com)

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SEASONED SHOPPER



**Seasoned Shopper**  
Think Green in July

BARBARA KOBSAR

Think green, as well as red, white and blue in July when shopping at the Orinda farmers' market. Luscious red tomatoes, white nectarines and peaches, and buckets of blueberries are sure-pleasers, but the diverse displays of green produce are amazing.

Cucumbers are a warm weather, sun-loving vegetable and one of the coolest I know. They're about 96 percent water with the inside temperature capable of being up to 20 degrees cooler than the outside temperature. "Cool as a cucumber" as the saying goes! No surprise that this succulent fruit is associated with adding a crispness to summer salads, salsas and sandwiches.

All cucumbers boast a shiny, naturally waxy skin that helps hold in the moisture. Skin color ranges from green to almost white and may be smooth, ridged, rough or slightly spiny.

I don't hold a grudge towards the common place field, slicing or garden cucumber with their relatively tough, dark green skin, but there's so much more to peak my interest during the summer months.

Bins of new harvest pickling cucumbers cozy up to buckets of fresh dill for all of us pickle people, and slender, tender-skinned English cucumbers are renowned for the mild taste (and no after taste).

Other novelty members of this gourd family include lemon cucumbers, so named for their color and shape, not their flavor. Lemon "cucs" are mild tasting and show off an intricate pattern of flat edible seeds when sliced crosswise. Other notable varieties include the small, slim Japanese cucumbers and the long, light green and curving Armenian cucumbers that are technically a ribbed melon with a cucumber flavor.

Okra is a one-of-a-kind vegetable and

usually green (but may be whitish or reddish). I like to pick out the ridged, tapered pods of okra at the 2 to 4 inch size when they're at their prime. Okra is synonymous with the word gumbo but lends itself to the same methods of preparation as asparagus – simmering, sautéing, steaming, microwaving and marinating.

Whatever method I use for cooking okra, I like to leave it whole to maintain the crisp texture. It combines beautifully with other summer vegetables like tomatoes, onions and peppers. Once cut and cooked it releases a viscous substance that serves as a thickener – as in gumbos, soups and stews.

To prepare whole okra, wash well and remove any fuzz with a small brush. Trim off the stem end carefully to avoid piercing the pod and releasing the juices. Add to simmering water and cook 4 to 6 minutes

until just tender, or place in a microwave safe dish with 1 to 2 tablespoons water and microwave on high for 3 to 4 minutes.

Summer herbs bask in the sun from July to September. Revered for flavoring food and drink, herbs have a long history of medicinal uses, and show their decorative side in wreaths and bouquets.

One can never get enough fresh basil with its sweet spicy scent. Slivers of basil are a "must" with thick slices of vine ripened tomatoes, and a main ingredient in pesto. Large, green leaves of sweet or common basil are most prevalent, but I'm always happy when I discover purple opal basil at the markets and maybe even a sighting of lemon, cinnamon or anise flavored basil.

Cilantro (Chinese parsley) is the leaves of the coriander plant, which also produces the coriander seeds. As a member of the parsley family the leaves are lacy but flat, the flavor and aroma reminiscent but stronger than parsley, and an acquired taste for some. But fresh summer salsas just wouldn't be the same at my house without cilantro! Rosemary, sage and thyme are the grilling herbs of summer. Sprigs of each can be placed in between meats and vegetables on a skewer or set on the coals to smoke.

The Orinda Farmers' Market is open



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Lemon cucumbers are named because of their color and shape.

every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in front of the Community Park and Rite Aid. For more information and updates visit the website at [www.cccfm.org](http://www.cccfm.org) or call the market hotline at 925-431-8361.

Barbara Kobsar, the Seasoned Shopper, can be reached at [cotkitchen@aol.com](mailto:cotkitchen@aol.com).

[SEE SHOPPER page 18]

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◆ **BUDGET** from page 1

Sue Severson. "It's the practice of borrowing and the fact that the state isn't facing up to its obligations that has caused California to be in this fiscal mess. In addition, there are many state unfunded mandates and other state maneuvers that negatively impact our budget. Orinda is still waiting to be paid from previous state borrowing of local funds. It is unconscionable for the state to act so irresponsibly by overspending beyond its means, then rob local dollars from cities like Orinda that have prudently managed their limited resources. This creates havoc at the local level in our trying to deliver essential services and meet community expectations."

"We are hopeful that the governor hears the message that we already have a fiscal

problem in our community without it being exacerbated by the state," says Orinda City Manager Janet Keeter. "We are already projecting a shortfall fiscal year ending 2010 and a bigger shortfall fiscal year ending 2011 without the state take-away. We will be addressing the shortfalls through budget cuts. If the state proceeds to take-away property tax from the City of Orinda, then we will be forced to draw down from our reserves to offset the loss."

"These resolutions are part of a grass-roots effort to make clear the local impact of the state's borrowing," says Eric Figueroa, East Bay regional manager for The League of California Cities. The league recently launched [www.SaveYourCity.net](http://www.SaveYourCity.net), an interactive forum allowing mayors, city council members and concerned citizens to tell policy makers how communities will be devastated if forced by the state to bail it out of its budget deficit. Each uploaded video is automatically sent to the Governor and legislators. "More than 200 city officials, business and community leaders, and the public have already submitted video testimony," says Figueroa.

"The state needs to recognize that the effects of the economic downturn are wide spread and taking local property taxes during these tough economic times will further devastate our community and hurt everyone in our city," says Orinda Councilmember Victoria Smith. "Our city simply can't sustain the loss of any more property tax funds or be saddled with any more state mandates as they will only deepen the financial challenges facing our city."



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# Between the Lines

Inside Joe Btfsplk – or not!



Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books

As we enter the summer of 2009, there seems to be a lamentable lack of "tra-la," and a rather more delayed "bah-humbug," as a grouchy accompaniment to the commentary of financial gurus, doom-sayers and forecasters of further economic and societal disasters.

Perhaps it's time to take a break – no need to feel like Al Capp's Joe Btfsplk whose gray cloud followed him around. What better time then to move out from under that cloud and pick up some light and lively fiction, a few fabulous novels that are as sweet as chocolate, perhaps with a touch of cinnamon to give them a little edge!

A recent much-reported survey by the National Endowment for the Arts concluded that, for the first time since the survey began, adults are reading more literature, reversing 20 years of downward trends. Happily, young adults led this trend — thank you Harry Potter and the sexy vampires of the *Twilight* series. When you find out how much fun reading is when you're young, you open so many doors and windows that will delight you for the rest of your life!

Those of us who picked up the reading habit early consider deciding what to take along as summer reading is almost as important as remembering to pack the sunscreen and the water bottles. At Orinda Books, we have suggestions that are frothily provocative, or challenging and mind-opening, and sometimes both. One of our favorites in the frothy department is James Collins's *Beginner's Greek* a contemporary comedy of manners that charmed all of us at the bookstore in its hardcover edition last year. Two attractive young people meet on a transcontinental flight, feel an instant bond, but a phone number is lost — as is the potential for a very short book — boy does have to lose girl to give the story its spice. In Collins's spin on *Jane Austen*, the two potential lovers each marry someone else — will they ever find each other? Read and enjoy. It's great fun.

Another love story that captured so many readers in its hardcover edition, *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, is now out in paperback. This engaging novel will find even more fans this summer with its absorbing story that takes place during and after the German occupation of the island of Guernsey during WWII.

Michael Dirda, Pulitzer-prize winning book critic for *The Washington Post* in his 2007 collection *Classics for Pleasure* put in a plug for one of my personal guilty

pleasures, Georgette Heyer. Well-written, well-researched and indubitably romances – they have happy endings – these Austen-esque novels (written between the 30s and the 70s) continue to intrigue readers with their clever dialogue and beautifully drawn Regency settings. Some favorites, *The Nonesuch*, *Cotillion*, *Sylvester*, and *The Grand Sophy* have recently appeared in bright new editions. They are a total pleasure to read.

A recent *New York Times* article pointed out that, in a recession, what people want is that happy ending, which is perhaps why so many romance novels are outselling other books and giving a needed buoyancy to the book market. *Gone With the Wind* was published in 1936 and was certainly the popular literary highlight of those Depression years. Simon & Schuster is bringing out a fat historical novel, *East of the Sun* by Julia Gregson, in June in a paperback edition that they hope will capture some of those readers seeking escape from the news of the day. Set in India in the '20s as the Raj is beginning to crumble, it's a terrific read. British writer Gregson follows the fortunes of three young women travelling out from England as part of the "Fishing Fleet," the name given to the large group of English-women who sailed each year to India in the hope of finding husbands.

An American writer who takes us on lively literary escapes is Eleanor Lipman. Her intricate plots dance off the page yet her characters always seemed rooted in reality. *The Family Man*, her newest, introduces us to Henry, a divorced gay man and a successful attorney; Thalia, his now grown step-daughter; and Denise, Henry's ex-wife and Thalia's estranged mother. When Thalia and her complicated social life move into the basement of Henry's upper West Side townhouse, the fun begins.

But the ultimate escapist summer read may be Jane Green's *The Beach House*, just out in paperback, about a widow forced (by the demise of her portfolio) to rent out rooms in her Nantucket home. It's warm and witty . . . a little sand between the pages will only be appropriate.

So there are indeed reasons to hum songs of joy, sing "tra-la", and generally cheer up! Pack up some fiction in your old beach bag and smile, smile, smile!

**Summer Reading Program**  
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4TH OF JULY

# Enjoy An Old-Fashioned 4th of July at Community Center Park

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

The Orinda Association (OA) has once again planned a fun-filled 4th of July with activities for the entire family. The festivities begin early and continue until mid-afternoon with lots of fun activities for children and entertainment for everyone. In addition, Chip Herman and Orinda Motors will have a Mini Car Show in the Community Center parking lot for all to enjoy. The Mini Car Show is just a little peak at the fabulous cars that will be displayed during the annual Classic Car Show slated for September 19 at Orinda Motors. The annual event, which includes rides in the cars,

supports the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program as well as several other worthy local charities.

### Roadrunners' Fun Run and Haley's Run for a Reason

Here's a great opportunity to get family and friends together while getting some healthy exercise. The 5-mile run/2-mile walk begins at 8 a.m. in front of the Orinda Community Center. It's an easy, picturesque way to begin the day. Come by 7:55 a.m. and see Boy Scout Troop 237 raise the flag.

The Orinda Roadrunners' began the walk/run in 1974 and, five years ago, the organization agreed to also include Haley's



SALLY HOGARTY

The Bob Claire Orchestra, which played last year on July 2 at Theatre Square, will provide music ranging from jazz to blues to R&B in the Community Center park following the parade.

Run for a Reason as part of the event. Participants in Haley's Run for a Reason can pick up registration forms at Safeway or the OA office.

Prior to or following the run/walk, enjoy a wonderful breakfast provided by the Orinda Roadrunners in the Community Center Park from 7:30 - 10 a.m.

chestra will heat up the Community Center Park with a variety of pop and jazz standards. This lively 10-piece band specializes in dance and party music spanning rock, R & B, jazz and blues. They play a wide variety of covers including Stevie Wonder, Steely Dan, Smokey Robinson, Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald and Aretha Franklin. Central to their sound is vocalist Darlene Langston. The orchestra

[SEE CELEBRATE page 10]

### Entertainment

Following the parade, the Bob Claire Or-

## The Orinda Association's 26<sup>th</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration Schedule of Events

7:30 - 10 a.m.	Roadrunners' Pancake Breakfast	Comm. Center Park
7:55 a.m.	Flag Raising Ceremony	Comm. Center
8 a.m.	Roadrunners' Fun Run and Haley's Run for a Reason	Comm. Center
10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Parade	
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Book Sale	Library Plaza
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Bob Claire Orchestra	Comm. Center Park
	East Bay Banjo Band	Library Plaza
	Children's Activities:	Comm. Center Park
	Balloon Twisters	
	Face Painting	
	Hotwheels Races	
	Petting Zoo	
	Mini Car Show	Comm. Center Parking Lot

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◆ CELEBRATE from page 9

will play from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Banjo aficionados can enjoy the snappy tunes of the East Bay Banjo Band in the Library Plaza following the parade.

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The parade leaves the BART parking lot a little before 10 a.m. and travels to the Orinda Theatre area of Orinda before crossing under the freeway and heading to the Village side of town. Once again, Steve Harwood will lend his mellifluous voice to the role of announcer on the Village side with Bill Cosden announcing parade participants in front of Morrison's Jewelers. Over 50 entries will delight parade watchers. Swim clubs, preschools and more will display their spirit including the Orinda Idol finalists. New this year will be Miramonte High School alumni in the parade. Several cars will feature the past graduates from as far back as 1970. Current Miramonte theater students will wear elaborate costumes in the parade and then circulate throughout the park afterwards to entertain youngsters. Musical groups in the parade include the East Bay Banjo Band, the Dixie Devils, the Spirit of 29, and the All-Orinda Volunteer Marching Band.

**Food Booths**

Following the parade, everyone is invited to go to the Orinda Community Park where The Bob Claire Orchestra will be playing from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. The grassy lawn is the perfect spot for a 4th of July picnic. If you don't want to bring your own food, there will be plenty available. The Orinda Chamber of Commerce will be grilling up hot dogs while Petra's will



BOTH PHOTOS BY SALLY HOGARTY  
The All-Volunteer Orinda Marching Band.



Twistyman returns for more balloon fun.

have Greek delectables. Two groups will supply beer – Orinda Rotary and the Sister City Foundation, which will be serving Czech beer in honor of Orinda's sister city of Tabor. MJ Kettlecorn will supply the sweet snack food with the Lamorinda Senior Transportation group serving lemonade. And, perfect for a warm July day, Loard's Ice Cream will have plenty of ice cream available.

**Children's Activities in the Park**

There will be lots to keep young hands and minds busy while parents and friends enjoy the smooth sounds of The Bob Claire Orchestra. Carla Winter Entertainment will have two face painters as well as a balloon

twister in the park. Additionally, Twistyman (a big hit from last year's celebration) will return with his silly antics and creative balloon twists. Another favorite attraction from last year also returns – the petting zoo. Supervised youngsters will be able to pet rabbits, chickens, goats, and more. A bubble machine will add to park festivities as well as costumed Miramonte drama students. The drama students, some in Disney classic outfits, will circulate among the crowd playing with and having photos taken with youngsters.

For car enthusiasts, Orinda Motors will once again sponsor the "Hotwheels Grand Prix" racetrack where children can choose their favorite car and race their friends.

For additional information about the day's festivities, call 254-0800 or go to [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).



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**Don't Forget Your Friends on the Fourth!**

Along with the parade and park festivities, the Friends of the Orinda Library will hold an expanded book sale on the 4th of July. The Book Sorting Room will be open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Offering hard-bound, as well as paperback books in every genre imaginable, the Friends'

Sorting Room has some best-sellers going for as much as 75 percent off retail. There will also be tables of paperbacks in the lower level breezeway, offering a variety of books for pennies on the dollar. For more information, contact the Friends Bookshop at 254-1358.

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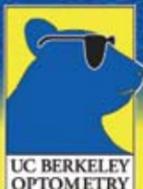
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# Gene Gottfried Named Grand Marshall

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

If you are concerned about safety in your El Toyonal neighborhood, who do you call? Gene Gottfried. If you want to help our local fire district improve its medical response program, who do you call? Gene Gottfried. If you want to learn how to operate a ham radio, who do you call? You got it – Gene Gottfried. And, the list goes on and on.

In recognition of his many years of service improving the safety of Orindans, the Orinda Association has named Gene Gottfried the 2009 4th of July Grand Marshall.

Gene and his wife Phyllis moved from New York, where Gene had been on the faculty of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine at Cornell University, to Orinda in 1981 so that Gene could accept a position in laboratory medicine at UCSF. He continued his research, working out of SF General Hospital, until his retirement in 1998. Gene met Phyllis in the Caribbean island of Barbados while serving as a Naval medical officer. Phyllis was teaching at the local college on a Fulbright Scholarship. The encounter on a romantic island would lead to a 52-year marriage. "It's amazing. I had to go half way around the world to meet the woman of my dreams," Gene remarks.

Gene and Phyllis settled in the El Toyonal area, made friends, and continued their busy careers. But, a burglary in a neighbor's garage in 1987 started a series of events that resulted in Gene being one of Orinda's busiest volunteers. "The burglary was the impetus to begin a Neighborhood Watch program," recalls Gene. "Before long, we had 150 families involved. So, we divided into a dozen groups each with a captain, and I became the coordinator."

In 1996, Gene happened by the fire dis-



SALLY HOGARTY  
Gene Gottfried is the 2009 Grand Marshall

trict's communication van during the 4th of July festivities and asked Jack Riley, who was manning the van, how his El Toyonal neighborhood could communicate with authorities during a disaster. The answer was by ham radio so Gene got his amateur ham radio license and placed a large antenna on his roof. There are now approximately 60 to 70 ham radio operators in Orinda. Gene, as Orinda's Emergency Coordinator for RACES/ARES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service), has also overseen the installation of a ham radio at Miramonte High School and at Orinda's emergency operations center at City Hall.

Gene's encounter with Riley also began a long-time association with the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD). Before long he found himself on the board as well as the board of Rescue One, the philanthropic organization that supports the district's paramedic program. Gene helps the organization purchase equipment to improve emergency medical responses vital to the welfare of local residents.

When a board member for MOFD (he left the board in December 2008 after serving for six years), Gene was chosen as the liaison to OPSAC (Orinda Public Safety Advisory Commission), which lead to more volunteerism. He not only took the CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) course recommended but became a certified CERT instructor. "We're planning a big drill at the Orinda Community Park in October," he says. "The drills bring more awareness to the public about the need to be prepared."

Gene may have retired from UCSF in 1998, but he certainly hasn't left medicine or his interest in public safety behind. Luckily for Orinda, this Professor Emeritus has found a way to use his medical knowledge and the disaster skills to make Orinda a more prepared community.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Gene Gottfried (R) and Ron Shallatt practice emergency procedures at a CERT training.

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Laurie Sherman with Charlie Ross of Moraga

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LIBRARY GALLERY / MOVE OF THE MONTH

Painters With Fearless Brushes at Library Gallery

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

From July 1 to July 31, the Orinda Library Gallery will be filled with colorful works from two talented area painters – Benny Alba and Olivia Eielson.

Alba's oil paintings in the exhibit focus on water themes from a remote island in Northern Michigan and some storm and watery type things in Montana; they are mostly about color. The smaller display case will be lined in black so that her Moonscapes can be viewed as if it were nighttime. One of Alba's overriding themes is "Beauty, Thy Name is Night." She is committed to reminding people that the night is rich and full of meaning.

In addition to paintings, Alba will fill the large display case with very simple

necklaces made with one-of-a-kind beads honed with a torch! The process of creating enamels harkens back to ancient Egypt, says Alba. Usually the process begins with copper, upon which you sprinkle powdered glass – which looks like colored sugar – and use a seaweed-like glue to stick it down. You place it in a kiln for three minutes – the glass melts and becomes a contiguous sheet. Each time you fire it, the colored glass becomes more jewel-like – it changes slightly; there are transparent and opaque enamels you can layer. When you add different layers, you're adding depth so that looking through the surface is like looking through stained glass, with the gleaming copper showing through the transparent colors. Alba teaches enameling workshops at her Oakland studio.

Alba feels a lot of what art can do for you



OLIVIA EIELSON

Olivia Eielson's watercolor "The Warning" is among the works of art featured in July at the Orinda Library Gallery.

is give you a release from the daily tensions of life. When you look at something beautiful or enigmatic you take a mini-vacation without having to leave the country.

View Alba's work at [www.bennyalba.com/](http://www.bennyalba.com/) and [www.varoregistry.org/alba/](http://www.varoregistry.org/alba/) – her paintings are in collections world-wide including the American Embassy in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Olivia Eielson's watercolors combine

figurative and abstract elements in dynamic themes such as "The Flying Figures." She has chosen to feature this series of four 40" x 60" paintings which exemplify a lifetime theme for Eielson – "What we're doing to the planet." An angel in her piece "The Warning" attempts to make people aware of a smog-filled city below. The other paintings include "The Warning Disregarded."

[SEE GALLERY page 18]

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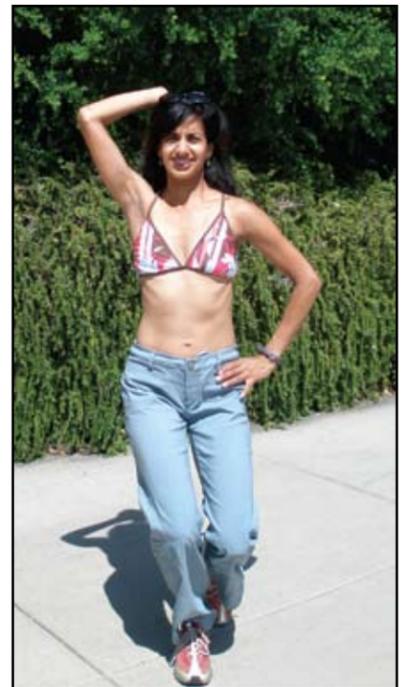
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ORINDA IDOL

# Orinda Idol Finalists 2009

Over 200 aspiring singers turned out for this year's Orinda Idol contest held at Orinda Intermediate School in late May. The following finalists, who will participate in the Orinda Association's 4th of July festivities, will compete on September 13 at the Orinda Theater for the title of Orinda Idol. For more information, go to [www.orindaartsCouncil.org/orindaidol.html](http://www.orindaartsCouncil.org/orindaidol.html).

**GRADES K-2**

Niamh Akazawa  
Malin Glade  
Alex Meckes  
Dylan Smith  
Layla Wright

**GRADES 3-5**

Amanda Bovoso  
Ryan Ford

Tatyana Belinsky  
Elizabeth De Luna  
Lindsay Ford  
Jacqueline Garell  
Erika Henningsen  
Neris Newton  
Steven Patton  
Ilene Rosas

**GROUP CATEGORY K-5\***

Duet 1: Malin Glade & Ellie Glade  
Duet 2: Samantha Martin & Isabel Mueller  
Duet 3: Jocelyn Purcell & Casey McGonigle  
Quartet 1: Sofia Kavanaugh, Lauren Bond, Kate Partington & Beth Huelsenbeck  
Trio 1: Wylie Hughs, Joe Metheny & Michael Sorenson

**GROUP CATEGORY 6-12\***

Duet 1: Jackie Patton & Steven Patton  
Duet 2: Aaron Baum & Nathan Baum  
Trio 1: Haley Reardon, Stephanie Sloves & Maddie Wheeler  
Trio 2: Emily Fuhriman, Isabelle Johannessen & Tosca Maltzman  
Trio 3: Jacqueline Garell, Amrita Newton, Neris Newton  
Duet 3: Kate Avery & Audrey Vogel  
\* Order by age of youngest group member.

**JUDGES NAMED RUNNER-UPS\*\* AS FOLLOWS**

GRADES K-2: Julia Bond  
GRADES 3-5: 1st Leah Woodcox, 2nd Aaron Baum  
MIDDLE SCHOOL: 1st Isabelle



SALLY HOGARTY (L-R) 8-year-olds Zoe Warch (Del Rey), Paloma Caldron (Sleepy Hollow), Lindsey Wallace (Wagner Ranch), and Alexia Hermann (Del Rey) are all smiles before their audition.

Johannessen, 2nd Connor Holton  
HIGH SCHOOL: 1st Melanie Jones, 2nd Sofie Woodlee  
GROUP CATEGORY K-5: 1st Grace Baer & Ophelia Luchin, 2nd Elizabeth & Emily Fabian.

GROUP CATEGORY 6-12: Tara Bagdassarian, Melanie Jones, Katie Marino & Sophie Woodlee  
\*\*Runner-Ups serve as alternates in their grade group for finalists who choose not to compete September 13, 2009



SALLY HOGARTY 7-year-old Anika Grimsrud from Del Rey sang "You are My Sunshine" wearing the perfect dress and holding her lucky stuffed animal.

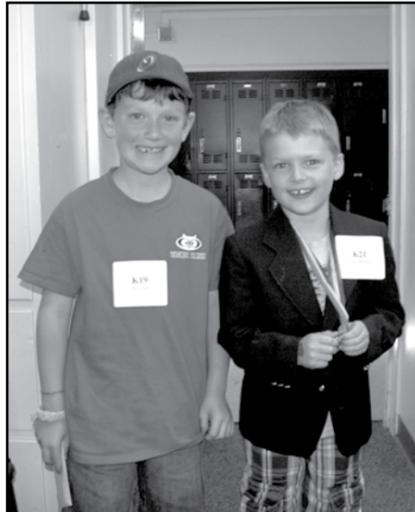
Ellie Glade  
Kate Marvin  
Joe Metheny  
Eleanor Roeder  
Mary Rockwood  
Michael Sorenson  
Tessa Viola  
Lara Waibel

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Sophie Belinn  
Maritza Grillo  
Tosca Maltzman  
Sarah McCaffrey  
Sean McFeely  
Julia Meckes  
Emily Mikes  
Amrita Newton  
Emma Patton  
Stephanie Sloves

**HIGH SCHOOL**

Matthew Barber  
T.J. Barber



SALLY HOGARTY 8-year-old Kyle Parr sang Tim McGraw's "Last Dollar" while his friend, fellow Wagner Ranch student 6-year-old Alex Meckes sang "I'll Make a man Out of You" from the musical Mulan for their audition.



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## CONTINUATIONS

## ◆ LOUDEN from page 1

in the wake of Marianne Payne's letter were from parents.

"The information is hearsay, second-hand information because they weren't at the party," said Chief French, who stressed that he can't talk in detail about the investigation as it is still ongoing and involves minors.

"When we get the toxicology report back in about six weeks, that's when we will present the case to the district attorney for prosecution," said Chief French.

So far, two people have been arrested in connection with the death of the Miramonte High School sophomore. Patrick Gabriella, 18, also a student at Miramonte, who played football and rugby with Loudon, has been charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor and furnishing alcohol to a minor leading to great bodily injury or death. The unsupervised party was held at Gabriella's home while his mother and stepfather were on a trip.

A 16-year-old boy, whose name has not been released because he is a minor, has been charged with the same misdemeanors.

For many weeks following Loudon's death, there has been an outpouring of grief for the loss of the popular teen, who was affectionately known by his friends as J.Lo. Students at Miramonte High School erected a giant memory board on an outside wall, which was signed by hundreds of students.

One student wrote: "You are one of the most passionate and likeable people I ever met. I feel incredibly blessed to have met

you and proud to consider you my friend ... you will never be forgotten."

A candlelight vigil in the school quad on May 29 was followed the next afternoon by "In Celebration of Joe" on the school's football field. Loudon was a talented athlete and played on the Matador varsity football and track teams, as well as the Lamorinda Rugby Club.

Carlo Fiatarone, the youth minister at Santa Maria Church, where Loudon was confirmed just a week before he died, was one of the speakers at "In Celebration of Joe."

*"This is a tragic accident," says Scoutmaster Don Larwood.*

Fiatarone says Loudon was very athletic and outgoing, but also very spiritual. "He showed that by how he lived and how he interacted with other people and how he treated people," says Fiatarone. Fiatarone says Loudon was one of a group of students who went to Mexico this spring to work at an orphanage for boys in Leon, Mexico. "They did a lot of manual labor - gardening, painting and clearing brush," says Fiatarone. "Joe was by far the hardest worker; he was the one who kept us focused, even working through breaks. All the kids looked up to him." Loudon also showed his humorous side by arranging a party for the orphans at the end of the week and choreographing a dance number to entertain them.

Don Larwood, who was Loudon's Scoutmaster in Troop 233, agrees that the teen "was a wonderful young man. Joe was strong and trustworthy; he always epitomized all the goals of scouting," says Larwood. "This is a tragic accident."

Larwood says Loudon was working towards his Eagle Scout, the highest rank

in Scouting. Loudon's Eagle project was "Shoes that Fit."

"He was going to provide shoes to St. Cornelius Parish School in Richmond," says Larwood. "We take having shoes for granted, but sometimes they can't get them themselves."

Two of Loudon's fellow Scouts plan on completing the project in his honor. Although Loudon wasn't able to finish his Eagle project, Larwood says a "Spirit of the Eagle" award will be presented in his name to his family.

Loudon will also be remembered by the Miramonte High School track team. At the June 1 banquet and awards ceremony, track coach Chris Puppione announced the creation of a new award: the "Joe Loudon Most Inspirational Athlete Award."

Puppione also spoke at the May 29 candlelight vigil for Loudon. "I was lucky enough to call Joe Loudon one of my athletes," said Puppione. He spoke of Loudon's integrity, his leadership qualities and his empathy with friends, family and community. He also spoke of the pain of losing Loudon. "This is a temporary pain," said Puppione. "What Joe gave us will last much longer."

Miramonte sophomore Chris Worthington remembers how he met Loudon on the bus on the first day of 6th grade at Orinda Intermediate School. "I was sitting alone and Joe sat down next to me," says Worthington, who says the pair became close friends. Worthington says his friend was an inspiration both on the varsity football team and off the field as well. "He cared about insignificant people, even those he wasn't close to, that's the type of person he was."

Worthington remembers a time when he, Loudon and another friend went to a Warriors' game. On the way out, they decided that whoever was last to reach the car had to sit in the back. "The person who was last was a bit upset, so Joe just said, 'I want to sit in the back.' Little things like that is what he'd always do."

Perhaps Loudon is best memorialized in his own words from a poem he wrote that was read at his memorial:

"I do it for all for the family,  
that others would call a team  
A brotherhood of athletes  
Living for black and green"

Loudon is survived by his mother, Marianne Payne, his father Bill Loudon, brothers Matthew and Charlie, stepmother Lisa Loudon, stepbrother Adam Brown, grandmother Patricia Payne and many aunts, uncles and cousins. The family requests that anyone with information about Joe Loudon's death, or who attended the party where he died, call Det. Sgt. Andre Charles at the Orinda Police Department at 254-6820.

## ◆ OUSD from page 1

Toris Jaeger.

Even with the reductions and the first of three yearly installments of the new parcel tax revenue, the 2009-10 budget showed \$319,000 in deficit spending. "My number one priority is to safeguard classroom teachers," said board member Pat Rudebusch. In the district's 2009-10 budget, core teaching staff positions were preserved with 114.5 FTE (full-time equivalent) classroom teachers for the year.

To that end, the district has asked Parents' Clubs and the Educational Foundation of Orinda to shift funding from enrichment programs to core programs. Thanks to the local community, the OUSD receives over 30 percent of its funding from local sources. The parcel tax constitutes 16 percent; the Educational Foundation of Orinda contributes 4 percent and the various Parents' Clubs account for 11 percent.

At its June 8 meeting, the board agreed to reallocate a larger portion of the parcel tax funds in order to address the 2009-10 shortfall and expected additional cuts for that year and the following academic year. The board will vote on the revised budget at its June 22 meeting in time to submit the final budget to the county by June 30.

As of press time, the revised budget listed \$22,016,420 in revenue, which includes an 18 percent decrease in state funding. The additional parcel tax funds allocated leave the district with \$1,484 balance rather than the \$319,000 deficit.

**Elimination of Naturalist Position**

Kathy Barrett, a member of Wagner Ranch Nature Area, expressed dismay that the board would not accept the money and pledges raised to retain the naturalist position held by Toris Jaeger. School board members had previously said that this would be considered one-time money and that they were prohibited from using it to retain a tenured teacher. Maureen Wilbur said that her children and grandchildren benefited from WRNA and that "this kind of science instruction isn't possible in the classroom."

According to Superintendent Joe Jaconette, the WRNA will still be available to school district teachers and students. "We have a committee made up of teachers and administrators who will structure the program for next year. We also have the current volunteers, who work with students at the nature area, continuing their duties," Jaconette explained.

As a tenured teacher, Jaeger has been offered a classroom teaching position. "We just don't know at this time what school or which grade level she will teach," added Jaconette.



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## GIRL SCOUTS

## Girl Scouts in Local Troop Honored

By Thama Brentam  
Contributing Writer

The Orinda Moraga Girl Scout Service Unit recently honored girls who have earned their Silver and Gold awards. Of the 920 scouts in this service unit, there are 132 Cadette Scouts (grades 6 - 9) and 75 Senior Scouts, (grades 9 - 12).

**Silver Award Recipients**

The Silver Award is the second highest award in Girl Scouts and the highest award that can be earned by a Cadette Girl Scout. It requires that each girl design, plan and carry out a Silver Award Project that takes a minimum of 40 hours (per girl) to complete.

**Troop# 30346, Leader Janice Kjell, Campolindo** – Anastasia Chilimidos, Maren Kjell, Rachel Meadows, Elizabeth Mediati, and Alicia Glidden worked together on their Silver Award project. The troop held fund raising activities and supply drives to support the J. F. Kapnek Foundation. Long's Drugstore in Rheem was a major supporter of their project. The Kapnek Foundation works in Zimbabwe to support a pediatric HIV/AIDS prevention program and a pre-school program. Troop #30346 collected 25 boxes of school supplies, games, and toys that were sent to Kapnek Foundation supported pre-school programs.

**Troop#30662, Leader Jaime Zafanella, Miramonte** – Tara Baghdassanian, Gabriela Blum, Jamie Fiero, Chelsea Godsil, Katie Latimer, Alicia Macler, Kathleen Stanaro, Sofie Woodlee, Anna Blain, Emelia Hildreth, Melanie Jones, Ashley Juarbe, Cecily Schmidt, Sophie Wegener, Leah Wolk, and Cassie Zafanella planned a special day long event titled "iScout" aimed at encouraging middle-school aged girl scouts to stay in scouting. Troop #30662 demonstrated the fun older scouts can have and included a day full of activities including games, songs, crafts, and ended with a campfire and skits.

**Troop #: 32905, Leader Marsha Harris, Miramonte** – Hanne Andersen, Grace Hilty, Selena MacDuff, Anne Odell, Hannah Swernoff, and Hayley Young planned a dog fair that was held in the Moraga Commons. Over 120 people and their four-legged friends attended the event that had representatives from pet service organizations, as well as pet fostering/adoption organizations such as East Bay Humane Society and Guide Dogs for the Blind. In addition to educating the public about dog care and ownership, they had on-site adoption and successfully placed two dogs in new homes.

**Gold Award Recipients**

The Gold Award is the highest award that a Girl Scout may earn. Each Gold Award

recipient has already performed 40 hours of career exploration, 30 hours of leadership before designing, planning and implementing a Gold Award Project that meets an expressed need in the community and will have a lasting impact on society. The scouts each spent a minimum of 50 hours designing and executing their projects.

**Troop #30189, Leaders Kappy Dye, Debra Hughes, and Colleen Stagg, Campolindo High School** – Emily Gerst's project consisted of a donation drive for Shelter Inc, which she organized and facilitated for two months last spring. Emily collected over \$500 worth of donations from various church groups, Girl Scout troops and community donors. The donation drive benefited the transitional housing program at Shelter Inc, by providing the families with basic housewares and personal items while they save money to get back on their feet. Gerst will be attending Northwestern University in the fall.

Jillian Hughes' project "Healthier Lives through Healthier Cosmetics" was a fair for middle school girls to learn about chemicals in products they use everyday. Hughes also had information about more natural alternatives and the attendees were able to make their own (cosmetic) products to take home, as well as recipe cards so that they could make the products at home. After attending the fair, scouts had earned the "Fitness to Fashion" badge. Hughes will be attending Purdue University in the fall.

Sarah DeMateo ran a musical workshop for the kids at the Shelter's Inc. low income apartments in Antioch. Throughout the day, they played games, made crafts - musical and otherwise - played the Ocarina, had lunch, and watched a video about different musical instruments. DeMateo will be attending St. Mary's College in the fall.

Amy Stagg's project "Bringing Lacrosse to Inner City Youth" was based on introducing the sport of lacrosse to youth who would not normally have the chance to experience it. She asked for donations of lacrosse equipment then used the equipment to run two week long programs at both the M. Robinson Baker YMCA and the Eastlake YMCA in Oakland, working with youths ranging in ages from 4- to 13-years-old each day. She also educated them about the importance of exercise and the importance of hydrating and eating healthy which was also supported by the YMCA's "soda free summer." Stagg will be attending University of Colorado in the fall.

**Troop #31562, Leader Brigitte Lossing, Miramonte** – Amanda Bains created a sewing club as her project. The club named



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lamorinda Girl Scouts recently received silver and gold awards.

"sew4charity" recruited members from local schools, girl scouts troops, as well as community members at large. Bains held regular meetings for members to gather and sew products to be used at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley. She also held instructional meetings for younger Girl Scout troops

teaching them how to sew and make items to be donated. Over the course of several months, Amanda and her club made "scent scarves" and "hug-a-bears", items used in the preemie ward at Alta Bates Hospital. Bains will be attending University of San Diego in the fall.

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## Enterprising College Student Has Busy Summer

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

An entrepreneur in the making, Taylor Smith may soon be in your neighborhood this summer. The UC Berkeley junior, who hopes to go on to an MBA at Harvard and eventually own his own company, is getting a taste of business this summer as an intern with College Works Painting. The largest exterior painting contractor in the United States, College Works Painting trains college students to run their own painting franchise. The students do not paint the houses themselves. Instead, they learn how to market their “business,” hire and manage people, do painting estimates, and work closely with their clients to insure that the custom painting job fits their needs. The company, which painted over 12,000 homes last year, boasts a 97 percent customer satisfaction rating.

“I work about 12 hours a day, seven days a week, because I am totally committed to reaching my goal of over \$100,000 in revenue,” says Smith. “I’ve already learned



CHARLIE JARRETT  
Taylor Smith (L) inspects Tom Lemmer's home in Orinda before giving a painting estimate.

a ton about marketing, sales, and hiring people. Later in the summer, I'll be concentrating mostly on production, making sure my clients are happy with the job we're doing.” Concentrating on the Lamorinda area, Smith already has contracts to paint a number of homes in Orinda and Moraga.

Working hard is certainly nothing new to Smith. The Industrial Engineering and Operations Research major manages to play for three intramural basketball teams and a softball team during the school year while also being treasurer of his fraternity and working 15-20 hours a week for the Microcomputing Facilities at UC.

For more information on the College Works Painting, go to [collegeworks.com](http://collegeworks.com). You can reach Smith at [tmsmith@berkeley.edu](mailto:tmsmith@berkeley.edu).

## 59th Annual Frank Isola Rotary Field Day Winners



JILL GELSTER  
Winners at Orinda Rotary's annual field day were presented with plaques and trophies at a luncheon in May. (L-R) Wagner Ranch Elementary School principal Janis Arnerich, Wagner Ranch third grader Violet Bathgate, Glorietta fifth grader Ryan Anderson, Del Rey fourth grader Arden Creson, and Del Rey Elementary School principal Kirsten Theurer. Bathgate and Creson tied in the high point girl's category and Anderson won in the high point boy's category.

## Cyrano to Swashbuckle His Way to Starlight Stage

BY DOROTHY BOWEN  
Staff Writer

There have been many chances to see *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand in recent years. I have seen performances in Ashland, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Bristol, England and most recently at the S.F. Waldorf School. (Full disclosure: My granddaughter Amelia played the part of Ragueneau, the baker.)

But none are closer to home than the Starlight Players' second offering at the Orinda Community Center Park's Outdoor Theater, July 27 through August 15. Suzanne Loraine will direct the heroic romantic drama of the noble swordsman with an overly large nose.

Starlight's *Cyrano* will be Eddie Peabody, and he is not surprised at all by the popularity of the play. “It's an enduring story of unrequited love – even the ugly can be beautiful,” he explains. “And it's full of regrets – ‘If only I'd said something.’”

Rehearsals began in early June following the opening of Starlight's *Spider's Web*, directed by Geotty Chapple. He'd worked with Peabody in the early 90s when they were both cast in Brian Friel's *Philadelphia, Here I Come* at Diablo Valley College. Peabody studied there with Jim Kirkwood at the end of that famed teacher's tenure. “It was good to get the opportunity to work with him,” Peabody adds.

Peabody went on to the Academy of Dramatic Art in Hollywood, where he studied all aspects of acting including stage combat that will come in handy for *Cyrano*. Back in the Bay Area, he played Theo in Role Players Ensemble's *Underpants*, which



JILL GELSTER  
Eddie Peabody is Cyrano in the Starlight Village Players next production.

played to sold out houses. “Audiences loved it,” he recalls.

Recently, the Moraga resident has been in two Shakespeare plays with Butterfield 8. He was the Chorus in *Henry V*, for which he was well prepared, having studied the monologues in the famous history play for a year and a half at the Academy. Next, he was in *Cymbeline*, where he played two roles, the good guy and the bad guy. “Shakespeare is my favorite,” he says.

Peabody has never seen *Cyrano* on stage, but remembers well the movie version with Jose Ferrer: “I was totally in love with the story, the tragedy of it all.” The young thespian has performing in his blood. His grandfather, also Eddie Peabody, was a banjo player in show business for 50 or 60 years.

You can catch Peabody as *Cyrano* July 27 – August 15. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m. Sunday, August 9, 4 p.m. and Thursday, August 13 at 8 p.m. Tickets are at the box office before the show or by calling 925-253-1191 or by going online to [www.orsvp.org](http://www.orsvp.org).

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## CALENDAR

## ON THE CALENDAR

## JULY

- 2 **Orinda Books**, Vivienne Sosnowski will discuss and sign copies of her new book, *When the Rivers Ran Red: An Amazing Story of Courage and Triumph in America's Wine Country*, 7 p.m., Call 254-7606.
- 4 **Orinda Association's 4th of July Celebration**, pancake breakfast at 7:30 a.m., parade at 10 a.m., park activities/concert 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Call 254-0800 or go online to [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).
- 7 **Orinda Community Center Auxiliary** concert, "Mixed Nuts," 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Orinda Community Center Park, 254-2445.
- 8 **California Shakespeare Theatre** presents *Private Lives* by Noël Coward, Tuesdays through Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Saturday matinee at 2 p.m., Sunday matinee at 4 p.m. through Aug. 2 at Bruns Memorial Amphitheater, 100 Gateway Blvd., Orinda. For tickets and information visit [www.calshakes.org](http://www.calshakes.org) or call 510-548-9666.
- Orinda Books**, Second Wednesday Book Group will read and discuss *Saturday* by Ian McEwan, 3 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606. The group meets monthly and welcomes new members.
- 9 **Orinda Theatre Square** 2009 Summer Music Series with the band Surefire featuring Bob Athayde and Friends, 4-7 p.m., free. Visit [www.orindatheatresquare.com](http://www.orindatheatresquare.com).
- 14 **Orinda Community Center Auxiliary** concert, "The Crisis" (blues and rock), 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Orinda Community Center Park, 254-2445.
- 16 **Computer Class**, 10 a.m. to noon, also July 23, 30, Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, Computers – Beginning, hands-on class covers Windows, Excel, Word. Call 254-2445.
- 17 **Orinda Starlight Village Players** present *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmund Rostand through Aug. 15 at Orinda Community Center Park, 28 Orinda Way. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 9 at 4 p.m., and Thursday, Aug. 13 at 8 p.m. Regular admission \$15; seniors/students \$7.50; season tickets \$35 regular, \$21 seniors/students. Call 253-1191 or 255-3295 (after 7 p.m.) or email [info@orsvp.org](mailto:info@orsvp.org). Groups of 25 or more receive a discount.
- 21 **Orinda Community Center Auxiliary** concert, "Stone Soup" (classic rock), 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Orinda Community Center Park, 254-2445.
- Orinda Books**, World Affairs Book Group will read and discuss *The Limits of Power* by Andrew Bacevich, 3 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606. The group meets bi-monthly and welcomes new members.
- 23 **Orinda Theatre Square** 2009 Summer Music Series with the Michael Robinson Band, 4-7 p.m., free. Visit [www.orindatheatresquare.com](http://www.orindatheatresquare.com).
- 28 **Summer Stir-Fries** cooking class, 6:30-9:30 p.m., Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. Residents, \$60; non-residents \$66. Call 254-2445.
- Orinda Community Center Auxiliary** concert, "Phaddohg" (Celtic rock), 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Orinda Community Center Park, 254-2445.

## AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified.

- 1 **Toddler Lapsit**: stories, songs and finger plays for 1- to 3-year-olds and their caregivers, 10 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., Also July 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28 and 29. Drop into any story time, but no more than once a week.
- 7 **Peek-a-Boo**: rhymes, songs and bounces. Infants through pre-walkers can enjoy early literacy along with their caregivers, 11:30 a.m., Also July 14, 21 and 28.
- 8 **Paws to Read**. Would your child like to practice reading with a friendly dog? Temperament-tested therapy dogs will listen while 1st- through 5th-grade readers earn minutes for their summer reading program, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Also July 9, 15, 22 and 29. Sign up for a 25-minute session at the library.
- 11 **Saturday Morning Create**: special July crafts in addition to story times, 11 a.m. Suitable for preschoolers and older. July 11: Chalk Talk; July 18: Puppet in a Cup; July 25: Mask Making with Minerva. No registration necessary.

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

## CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

- Acalanes Union High School District, first and third Wednesdays, district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette, 7:30 p.m.
- City Council, first and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).
- Historic Landmarks Committee, fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, public is welcome, for information, 925-788-7323.
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks, fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library. 253-1997.
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District, third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.
- Orinda Juniors community service and social meetings, the first Tuesday of the month (Sept.- June), 7 p.m. Contact Diane Petek and Ann Sullivan at [orinda.juniors@yahoo.com](mailto:orinda.juniors@yahoo.com) for location.
- 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.

## CLUB MEETINGS

- Diablo Star Chapter #214, Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 p.m., Orinda Masonic Center. Contact Karen Seaborn, 925-689-0995.
- Friends of Joaquin Moraga Adobe Meetings are at 7:30 p.m. All interested in preservation of the landmark are invited to attend. For date and location, 254-8260
- 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, 7:15 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.
- Orinda/Tábor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation, Fourth Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.
- Orinda Woman's Club, Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon; call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881.

Calendar by Maggie Sharpe

Send calendar items to Maggie at [m.sharpe66@gmail.com](mailto:m.sharpe66@gmail.com)

## Fun Things to Do This Summer



If you like to dance, try **Tomaj Trenda's** (above) salsa classes and dances at the Orinda Community Center. Go to [www.salsawithtomaj.com](http://www.salsawithtomaj.com) for more information. **Stone Soup** (right) plays on July 21 as part of the Orinda Community Center Auxiliary's Concerts-in-the-Park. See the calendar for all concert dates.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

## Couple Has Right Chemistry at Cal Shakes

BY DOROTHY BOWEN  
Staff Writer

When it opened in 1930, Noel Coward's *Private Lives* got mixed reviews. Critic Allardyce Nicoll wrote, "Amusing, no doubt, but hardly moving farther below the surface than a paper boat in a bathtub, and like the paper boat, ever in imminent danger of becoming a shapeless, sodden mass."

It must have been doubly painful to the playwright who was also the star, with Gertrude Lawrence as his leading lady and a very young Laurence Olivier as her new husband.

But what did the critics know? The comedy has been revived frequently in the West End and six times on Broadway with stars

by Diana La Mar, a New York based actress, and Stephen Barker Turner, returning to the Cal Shakes stage. They have worked together before. The new, younger spouses will be Sarah Nealis and Jud Williford. Liam Vincent will be the housekeeper, who speaks only French.

Coward's reputation has waxed and waned, says Rucker. Wildly popular through WWII, he went out of fashion after the war and was frequently attacked in the press. Then, about 10 years before he died in 1973, his work was revived again.

"The times have caught up with him," says Philippa Kelly, Cal Shakes resident dramaturg. Also, in these grim times, comedies like *Private Lives* may be as popular as the screwball comedies of the 1930's movies. *Private Lives* runs July 8 – August



KEVIN BERNE

The cast of Cal Shakes' production of Noël Coward's *Private Lives*: (L-R) **Diana LaMar** (Amanda), **Jud Williford** (Victor), **Stephen Barker Turner** (Elyot), and **Sarah Nealis** (Sibyl). *Private Lives* runs July 8 through Aug. 2 at Bruns Memorial Amphitheater.

like Tallulah Bankhead, Tammy Grimes and Maggie Smith.

Now it will be revived again by Cal Shakes, directed by Mark Rucker. He says, "It's about a couple who can't live without each other and can't live with each other. Anybody is capable of anything, given the right circumstances."

The circumstances, in this case, are the divorced couple honeymooning with their new husband and wife in adjoining suites in Deauville. Rucker's take might explain why the censors of the day found the play scandalous. Coward had to go to St. James Palace to act out the questionable scenes himself to persuade them it would be fine.

Rucker had read *Private Lives* long before he had this chance to direct it. "It's almost a perfect play," he says. But before, he saw it as an Art Deco period piece with martinis and cigarette holders. Now, he says it is about the unbelievable chemistry between the lovers. The exes will be played

2 at Bruns Amphitheater in Orinda. Call the box office at 510-548-9666 for ticket information.



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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 20

care providers help create a more gender sensitive and supportive environment for all, including gender variant and transgender youth.

“Gender is considered a binary concept and in fact it is not binary. There is a spectrum of gender. It is not just physical, but is really an interplay between three different elements that include the roles we play, how we dress and who we are on the inside as well,” says Joel Baum, director of education and training. “Basically, through our conferences and workshops we strive to create a safer and more inclusive world for people of all genders. We are trying to expand people’s understanding of the complexity of gender,” adds Baum, whose background includes serving as a middle school educator, and principal. He is currently a professor at California State University, East Bay in the Educational Leadership Department and serves as director of leadership development for the Oakland Unified School District.

“In the educational setting, we are involved at the preschool level up to college



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Stephanie Brill of Gender Spectrum

age. We work with the school’s leadership first, then faculty and staff, and then we work with parents. Once a foundation is in place, we work with students in the classroom to create a safer place for kids,” says Baum. Every year a family conference is hosted for families with gender nonconforming children in Seattle. School administrators, lawyers, medical therapists, and youth group directors gather to share information and support for families raising transgender or gender variant children. This year the family conference is scheduled for September 4-6.

Stephanie Brill is the co-author of *The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Parents and Professionals*. Brill is a midwife and established Maia Midwifery, but for the past five years she has focused on Gender Spectrum Education and Training. She is also the co-founder of the Children’s Hospital Oakland support group for parents of gender variant and transgender children. “We help people create an environment that supports and celebrates normal variations in gender identity and gender expression by people of any age and at any level of

the organization, whether they are gender variant children, the children of gender variant parents, or gender variant adult staff members.”

In addition, Gender Spectrum Education and Training provide consultations and support for parents all over the world. “Many parents who have a non-conforming gender child look for reassurance and support. We do training with therapists and medical professionals who are setting up medical protocol working with younger children. We also conduct policy work with law firms that are trying to establish various policies responsive to transgender kids, such as an athletics policy. We have a lot of requests from researchers working with transgender children and youth who would like to connect with other families,” says Baum.

“We feel we are about making the world a safer place for kids. We are about kindness and respect,” he adds. For more information or for an appointment, please call 254-3907. You may visit the website at [www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org).

**Flexperience Offers Alternatives to the 9-5 Routine**

This virtual business operates out of Orinda resident Sally Park’s home, and is guided by co-founders Sally Thornton, Lara McDonald and Michelle Fowler’s management expertise. By connecting experienced professionals with Fortune 100 companies that offer flexible contract jobs, they act as a connector of high-level talent including individuals with MBA’s and JD’s.

By her own admission, Thornton is not an entrepreneur and claims extraordinary circumstances pushed her outside of her comfort zone. “The genesis was when I was 8 months pregnant with my first child and my brother died in a plane crash. I remember the moment when my mother and I were at the crash site and she said that as much as I love my work, I better find a way to blend the two worlds of family and work life because I really don’t know how long I will have my son. It hit me really hard,” says Thornton.

“We are a business solution to an issue that has social relevance. There has been a lot of debate about women opting out. Previously, it has been a situation where professional women either worked an 80-hour workweek or opted out to become a stay-at-home mom. Today’s business culture was developed during the industrial revolution and society has changed significantly since then. There is an evolution taking place, and we offer an interesting middle ground for professionals,” adds Thornton.

Established 2 ½ years ago, today 80 percent of Flexperience talent is made up of working mothers. “Women want to continue their intellectual pursuits, generate income and enjoy a family life as well. Our clients include Genentech, Pixar and Levi Strauss, as well as start up companies. They need top notch talent and we connect them,” explains Thornton. The average project involves about 30 hours per week



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sally Park (L) and Sally Thornton cofounded Flexperience, a flexible job program.

for six months to complete. There is a current demand for reviewing sales contracts and in some cases renegotiating real estate contracts. This flexible work arrangement gives people more trust, and there is more discretion allowed in how they get their job

done by the employer.

Park and Thornton like to point out that studies have shown having women in management and leadership positions increases profitability. “The Bay Area is very progressive, and the time is right to bring about positive work/life balance alternatives,” adds Thornton. Genentech hired the duo to examine how the company can create internal flexibility for their employees. “If we can help companies solve this issue with their employees, then we are impacting more people just that much more quickly.” Flexperience received certification from B Corp., a progressive stamp of approval. B Corp. is a nonprofit that recognizes companies that are creating a positive social impact.

For more information, please visit the website at [www.FlexperienceConsulting.com](http://www.FlexperienceConsulting.com) or call 800-850-9591. Flexperience works with clients and talent who are primarily located within the Bay Area.

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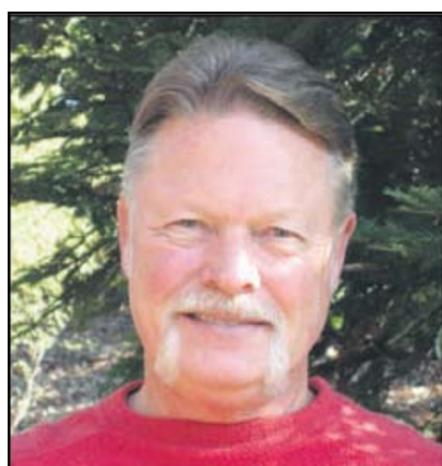
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BUSINESS BUZZ

# Business Buzz

## Putting a Personal Face on the Face of Business

Valerie Hotz



To send items for consideration, email Hotz at v.hotz@att.net.

### Pizzeria Amoroma

Now folks, this is Italian. Owner Michele Lavecchia, native of Rome, presides over a bustling wait staff that delivers up delicious platters of Italian specialties. With a wood fired oven rolling out pizzas and an abundance of Li Piatti Freddi (Cold Plates), and Li Panini (Sandwiches), the menu also offers daily specials that include lamb, linguini with half Maine lobster and filet mignon. The energy here is marvelous. The warm Tuscan inspired interior is well lit and features mustard shaded walls

accented with red brick and a fully stocked granite bar. You will want to linger over the extensive wine menu that features Italian and California wines.

Son of one of Rome's most famous chefs, Francesco Lavecchia, Michele is inspired by his father's recipes and brings them to Orinda. "When I was growing up my father was the chef at Giggi Fazi. It was the Chez Panisse of Rome, with an emphasis on the freshest ingredients. On Sundays, I would drive with my father to the countryside to visit the farms and buy the freshest cheese, and prosciutto," says Lavecchia, who speaks with a marvelous Italian accent. Summers were spent working in the

restaurant, washing crystal glasses. The recipes from Giggi Fazi are published in his father's book, La Cucina e La Cantina Mia, which Lavecchia proudly shares with me. The whimsical watercolor reproductions gracing Pizzeria Amoroma are taken from the book and feature various food scenes, each one representing a dish.

The emphasis on fresh ingredients is the foundation at Pizzeria Amoroma. "It is very important to have good ingredients. You can't mess them up. We serve naturally fed beef and free range chicken. Our cheeses come from Cowgirls Creamery, our cold cuts from Framani, and fish is delivered by Monterey Fish Company. The chef here, Noe Castro, is a much better cook than I am," smiles Lavecchia. "Food is not just technique. It is the farmer and the land. We have been a member of Slow Food since 1986, an international organization started in Italy emphasizing locally grown food, freshness and sustainability."

Lavecchia vacationed in San Francisco in 1981 and, falling in love, ended up never going back home. He served as the sous chef at Prego on Union Street and in his words, when he realized his hands don't listen well to his brain, moved into restaurant management. Your path may have crossed Michele's if you frequented Spiedini in Walnut Creek, which he opened in 1986 or, more recently, Ristorante Amoroma in Moraga. One of the perks of working for Michele is the chance to be voted Employee of the Year, a coveted prize which includes an all expense paid one week vacation to Italy. "The idea is to immerse them in the culture, and when they come back they are



VALERIE HOTZ  
Michele Lavecchia (L), owner of Amoroma, and his private dining manager, Libby Havicek.

more Italian than ever. We visit restaurants, wineries, museums, and my family. We'll take a cooking class in Tuscany. It is a great experience for them."

Lavecchia is married to Mariam Lavecchia, who is the banquet catering manager at Left Bank in Pleasant Hill. The couple has three children, Nicole, age 17, Madison, age 16, and Francesco, age 9. Every Sunday the Lavecchias join in a family basketball game. "I love soccer and basketball and can be found chasing my son Francesco around the court."

Pizzeria Amoroma is located at 65 Moraga Way and is a member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. Open for lunch and dinner 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday. You may call 253-ROMA for a reservation. For more information, please visit the website www.amoroma1.com.

### Gender Spectrum Education and Training

Originally established in Seattle, Washington, Gender Spectrum Education and Training has opened an office in Orinda located at One Camino Sobrante. Founding director Stephanie Brill, an Orinda resident, conducts seminars and conferences that increase awareness and understanding of the normal range of gender variation found in people. Specifically designed workshops for educational professionals and health

[SEE BUZZ page 19]

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# real experiences

## MAGGIE

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

## ROGER

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

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