

# THE ORINDA NEWS

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## Adam Clark is New Miramonte Principal



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Adam Clark is the new principal at Miramonte High School.

By IAN HEETDERKS  
Staff Writer

Adam Clark has been appointed Miramonte High School's new principal, replacing Raul Zamora. Zamora was principal for the past three years and is moving on to become principal at Carlmont High School in Belmont. Clark had nothing but praise for his predecessor, saying, "He [SEE CLARK page 16]

## John Stockton Takes Over As Superintendent

By FRAN MILLER  
Staff Writer

Employees at the Acalanes Unified High School District offices are pleased that the former number two in command, John Stockton, has moved into the big office, and not just because he keeps a steady supply of dark chocolate on his conference table.

"John is fantastic and is perfect for this job," says district office receptionist Karri Urdahl. "He is warm and welcoming and very personable. He checks on all of us in the office daily; we all enjoy him very much."

When former Acalanes Unified High School superintendent Jim Negri announced his resignation this past May, the [SEE STOCKTON page 14]



FRAN MILLER

John Stockton takes over as superintendent of the Acalanes Unified High School District.

## Annual Classic Car Show on September 19



SALLY HOGARTY

Presented by Orinda Motors, the annual classic car show benefits the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town transportation program and the Educational Foundation of Orinda. See story on page 3.

## Misinformation Abounds in MOFD Pension Controversy

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

The Moraga Orinda Fire Department's board of directors and Chief Pete Nowicki have been under fire since the chief's retirement package became public knowledge in early April. The chief, sanctioned by the board, followed state laws that allowed him to sell back unused vacation, holidays and sick leave. The result was an increase of almost \$40,000 in his annual salary. The move became more controversial when the chief announced his retirement shortly after the board ratified his contract in December of 2008, thus making the increased salary



SALLY HOGARTY

MOFD firefighters recently helped raise over \$47,000 for children with muscular dystrophy.

the basis of his retirement pay.

"The press and some critics say I 'spiked' my salary at the last minute so that I could retire with a higher pension, but that's not the case," says Chief Nowicki. According to Nowicki, he had been working without a contract since June 30, 2008. "We had been going over the terms of the new contract and had come to an agreement in August, but for a variety of reasons, the board wasn't able to vote on my contract until its December 10 meeting." In the meantime, Nowicki had decided to retire for personal reasons. He announced his retirement, effective January 30, 2009, to his staff in a December 13 email. The chief was hired

back as a consultant until a replacement could be found. "I don't understand why it would take so long to vote on Chief Nowicki's contract," says MOFD firefighter and Local 1230 union rep Mark DeWeese. "If it's because they couldn't get three of the five board members together for a quorum, then maybe they need to look at getting some new board members."

Thanks to the California Supreme Court's landmark "Ventura County" decision and other laws enacted by the California State Legislature, the Contra Costa County Employees Retirement Association, which MOFD employees fall under, [SEE MOFD page 18]

## Picketing Continues at Orinda Theater

By LYNDA LEONARD  
Contributing Writer

Since May, when Jim Sheehan and Tom Peterson acquired a lease to operate the Orinda Theater, if you wanted to see a movie at Orinda's first-class showplace, you had to cross a picket line to do so. The four-month conflict pits the former union projectionists against the new owners, who say that they can't afford to pay the level of union-wage hours that previous owner Allen Michann paid.

The players in this local drama include the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, the new owners, the Lamorinda Film and Entertainment Foundation (LFEF) and, peripherally, the preceding operator, Allen Michann. Michann said that once the 16-screen theaters opened in Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek, the Orinda Theater began to struggle until it reached the point that he could no longer keep it open.

[SEE PICKETING page 4]

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# Previous Orinda Idol Winners

By Maggie Sharpe  
Staff Writer

Kelly Clarkson has sold 10 million albums since she won American Idol on TV in 2002. Winner Jordan Sparks'

first album went platinum. And runner-up Jennifer Hudson got to sing at Michael Jackson's funeral.

But what has become of our own Orinda Idol past winners? We decided to catch up with some of the singers in the high school category and see where they are these days.

### Sarah Ames (2008 winner)

Sarah Ames won Orinda Idol in 2008 with her rendition of "Misery" by Steven Tyler and Pink. "Orinda Idol was a great outlet to get out and perform," says 18-year-old Sarah. "It is necessary for singers to have performance experience, and Orinda Idol was perfect for that."

Ames has been a fan of the original Idol



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sarah Ames singing at last year's Orinda Idol



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Elliot Taylor now attends Pepperdine University in Southern California.

on TV. She says her favorite contestant was Adam Lambert. "There is just something so special and unique about him. He is like a male version of Madonna in her younger years," says Ames.

Since her win on Orinda Idol, Ames has gone on to star as Sandy in Miramonte High School's production of *Grease* and has been recording songs this summer with local songwriter Abby Holland.

Ames, who graduated from Miramonte in June, will continue her love of music when she starts college at the University of Southern California this fall, majoring in popular performance: voice at the USC Thornton School of Music. "It's a brand new program that allows its musicians to learn about the contemporary side of the music industry and how to basically launch their own career in music," she explains.

Meanwhile, the past Idol winner has been busy all summer, working at TJ Maxx and getting ready for college. "I'm also preparing for college, getting dorm stuff ready," says Ames, who adds that she hopes to improve her singing throughout college and later pursue a career in music. "Ideally, it would be great to be a singer," she says. "But if that doesn't work out, it would be neat to be a music manager for other artists in the music industry."

Ames won't be able to attend this year's Orinda Idol on September 13 as she'll be

off at college, but she has this advice for contestants: "Just give it all you got!"

### Elliot Taylor (2006 winner)

Elliot Taylor, 19, won Orinda Idol in 2006, the first year it was held at Theatre Square. He played the guitar and wowed the audience with a song he wrote himself called "In the Moment."

A 2008 graduate of Bentley High School in Lafayette, Taylor starts his second year at Pepperdine University in Malibu this fall, with an eye to a degree in business.

Since winning Idol in Orinda, Taylor has had the honor of singing the National Anthem for the Giants at Pacific Bell Park. At Pepperdine, he competed with his fraternity, Sigma Chi, in Song Fest and had the lead role in singing and dancing. "I will also be performing in this year's Pepperdine's family weekend in October during the Midnight Madness pre-basketball game program," says Taylor.

Taylor doesn't limit himself to singing. He's also the youngest apprentice on the California Olive Oil Council in Napa. He races cars, sails, surfs and hunts. He also loves to cook, travel and is working on earning his pilot's license. And, he's still

[SEE IDOL page 6]

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Sunday,  
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from Orinda Idol 2008 Finals:

**Schedule By Grade Category:**

11:00 am	Elementary K-2 and 3-5
1:00 pm	Middle School
2:45 pm	High School
4:30 pm	Groups K-5 and 6-12
6:15 pm	Announcement of Winners

For a List of Finalists Visit [www.orindaartscouncil.com](http://www.orindaartscouncil.com)

See More of the 2009 Winners & Finalists This Fall!

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9/26 Moraga Pear Festival 10:15am 10/3 Orinda Library Book Fair TBA

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## ORINDA ASSOCIATION

## Orinda Association Thanks Business Sponsors

By MARK ROBERTS  
Staff Writer

If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a town to put on a Fourth of July celebration.

Orinda Association Board President Barnaby Beck in his column last month thanked the many volunteers who made the parade and activities in the park possible. I share my thanks with them as well, especially the other members of the planning committee, and with my fellow banner sponsors. I believe we were all gratified by the terrific group of parade participants, spectators and crowds in the park on the Fourth and by the many expressions of enthusiasm and thanks.

I also want to extend special thanks to the local businesses that sponsored the festivities during a year of major economic challenges: **Orinda Motors, Mechanics Bank, Orinda Optometry, Prestige Printing and Graphics, Diamond K Supply, Law Office of Clay Deanhardt, Dr. Mary Smith, DDS, McDonnell Nursery,**

**Oakwood Athletic Club, Orinda Shell Auto Care, and Village Cleaners.** These businesses made the decision to make a donation and invest in our community even though the bottom line might have suggested otherwise.

I am especially grateful to Orinda Motors for renewing their commitment as lead sponsor this year. Owner Allen Pennebaker and service manager John Vanek not only provided generous financial support, they also secured several of the convertibles used by participants in the parade – and each drove one of them – and John and his son Kyle ran the Hot Wheels racing booth in the park.

Orinda Motors will again combine their automotive expertise with their commitment to community service when they present the Classic Car Show on Saturday, September 19. Last year's show brought together a wide selection of classic cars and hundreds of enthusiasts and raised more than \$16,000 to support Orinda's Seniors Around Town rideshare program.

This program, started and managed by the Orinda Association, makes it possible for Orinda seniors who no longer drive to remain in their homes and still get to medical appointments and shop at local merchants. While dozens of volunteer drivers provide the actual rides, the proceeds from the Classic Car Show pay for the majority of the program's administrative costs. The OA is truly grateful for Orinda Motors continued and generous support of this very important program.

On behalf of the OA, I ask you to remember the local businesses that sponsor community events and express your appreciation for their good citizenship by patronizing them. When you're doing business with them, let them know that you're aware of their sponsorship and that it influenced your decision. That will reaffirm the decision of these merchants that supporting local events and organizations makes good business sense. That will be good for all of us!



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## Fifth Annual Classic Car Show Promises to be the Best Yet

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

Start your engines and prepare to be impressed. On September 19 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., Orinda Motors will have some sweet classic cars, tricked out hot rods, custom motorcycles, and maybe even a vintage tractor just revving to go down Orinda Way.

"The Annual Orinda Classic Car Show is unique because of the range of great vehicles we get from the community and beyond," says event coordinator and local resident Chip Herman. Last year's event had more than 125 entries and raised \$16,000 for the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program. Organizers hope that this year's event will be even more successful. "We've had a great response already and have more cars signed up early," says Orinda Motors' John Vanek.

Orinda Motors presents the show each year and the company is especially excited about this year's event. "We're working with the Orinda Historical Society to do a special display in our garage," says Vanek. "It will be 'Orinda Through the Years,' and we'll pair cars with the various historical events displayed." Only in Orinda would you find a car pairing/historical event!

Also new this year is the addition of classic and custom motorcycles. "There will definitely be something for everyone,"

adds Herman.

The day will include music and refreshments and the opportunity to ride in your favorite car during the afternoon parade for a small \$25 donation. The transportation program Seniors Around Town and the Educational Foundation of Orinda will benefit from the event.

The show takes place at Orinda Motors, 63 Orinda Way. For more information or to enter your car or motorcycle, email Herman at [chipherman@earthlink.net](mailto:chipherman@earthlink.net).





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EDITORIAL

Letters to the Editor

**Good Job Orinda Park Pool**

I'm writing to say 'kudos' to Orinda Park Pool and the efforts they made to keep the parking issue in the neighborhood to a minimum. A couple of weeks ago they held a relay race, and I was nervous about driving up El Toyonal that morning because of all the cars on Camino Pablo and the shuttles they were running, but I was happily surprised to see a clear road. Thank you OPP for making me feel safe driving up our street, it is greatly appreciated. I hope you won the meet!

– Scott Turtle

**Chief Nowicki Deserves Better**

Recent reports of the Moraga-Orinda fire chief's pension sensationalized selective bits of information at the expense of providing readers with the background and information needed to make their own informed decisions. Whether fueled by disgruntled union negotiators or anti-tax zealots, this incomplete reporting has drawn an erroneous connection between Chief Nowicki's pension and the Moraga Orinda Fire District's (MOFD) ability to provide salary increases to its employees when, in fact, they are two separate issues.

Like many businesses and public agencies, the fire district makes pension fund contributions for its employees; and, MOFD employees contribute between 24 and 29 percent of their salaries to the pension fund, as well. The fire district does not,

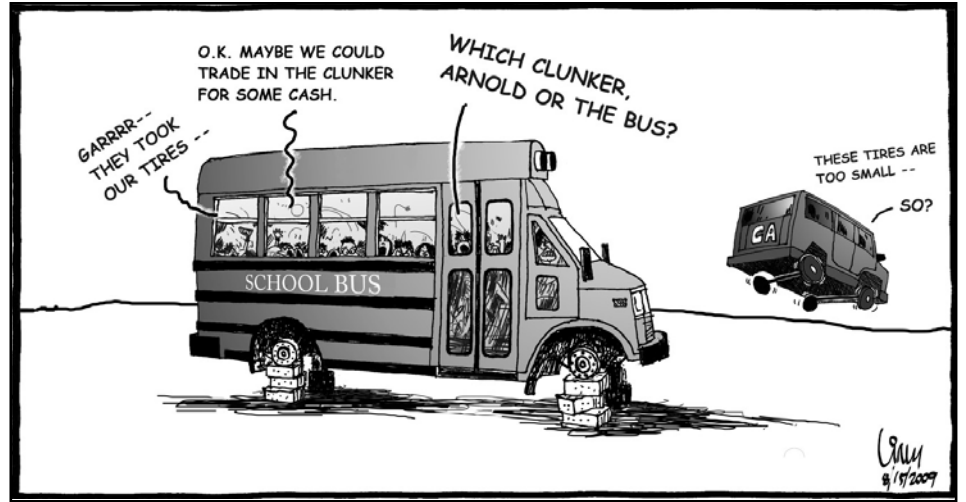
however, continue to pay into the fund for retirees. Therefore, it does not follow that the retiring fire chief's pension is tied to the fire district's current operating budget.

While the long-term sustainability of some pension funds may be called into question, it's important to note that they are governed by the rules established by a myriad of state regulations, court orders, and the negotiating groups themselves. This fact seems to have been obscured in order to draw the tenuous conclusion that Chief Nowicki is somehow at fault.

Similarly, early retirement benefits are standard for public employees such as police officers, firefighters and paramedics who put themselves in harms way to protect the rest of us. The fact that Chief Nowicki retired at 51 should come as no surprise. Similarly, it is not uncommon in business or the public sector for an employee of Chief Nowicki's stature to continue to provide service until a replacement is found. Given that we have entered high fire season in California, I'm appreciative of this continuity of leadership.

I have had the opportunity to work with Chief Nowicki on several occasions and have been impressed with his level of professionalism and that of his department. Pete Nowicki has served our community with integrity and honor for over 26 years. He and the men and women who work under him deserve better than that which has been served by recent press portrayals.

– Pat Rudebusch



**Fleeing of Orinda Goes On**

Orindans should be aware of the terms of the pension of the last fire chief to retire from the Moraga/Orinda Fire District (MOFD). This chief is in his early 50s. Before retirement, he was the MOFD Fire Chief for approximately three years.

On July 2, 2009 the Fire Fighters' Union wrote a letter to the MOFD board of directors. According to this letter, the MOFD board amended the chief's contract on 12/10/08. This amendment used tools such as backdated vacation accrual, etc., to increase his last year's salary compensation from \$184,000 to \$241,000. This hefty \$56,000 pension increase was all done by amendment three days before the chief announced his retirement and started drawing from his newly inflated pension.

This \$56,000 bonus spike over the chief's original \$184,000 contract increases his retirement pay by approximately \$2.8M over 30 years with cost of living increases.

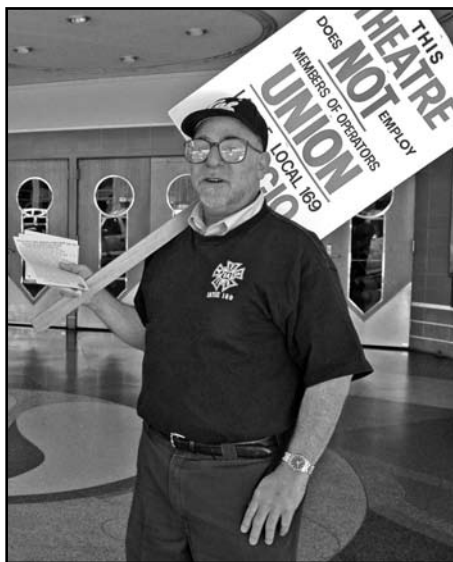
After the chief retired and started collecting his \$241,000 pension, the board hired him back on a 9-month contract at approximately \$14,000 per month.

It is unfair that Orinda annually pays approximately \$800,000 more for each of three Orinda fire stations than Moraga pays for each of their two stations. Orinda could use this \$2.4M (\$800,000 x 3) to fix roads if Orinda detached from MOFD and formed an all Orinda Fire District.

Each Orinda household annually pays approximately \$400 more for MOFD than each Moraga household pays. The fleecing of Orinda taxpayers has gone on too long.

– Vince Maiorana

◆ PICKETING from page 1



LYNDA LEONARD

Projectionist Martin Lipow worked at the Orinda Theatre for the last 13 years.

**What's best for the theater**

Everyone agrees that they want what is best for the Orinda Theater. But what is best? The new owners, of course, want the theater to thrive. They have spruced up the concession stand and brought in a popcorn popper. (For years, popcorn was brought in that had been popped at Michaan's Grand

Lake theater.) Sheehan and Peterson have plans to bring digital equipment to the theater sometime in the next several months so that "Orinda will have state-of-the-art automatic equipment." Sheehan says that after 12 weeks of operating the theater, "Income is up more than 10 percent and concession sales are up as well."

Projectionist Martin Lipow has been picketing in front of the theater since the ownership change. He has 36 years of experience as a projectionist and technician, the last 13 years in Orinda. He wants to ensure that the viewer has a quality, problem-free experience, and he sees the solution in the hands of a union projectionist who knows and maintains the equipment. Lipow says that "The vast majority of projector and movie failures you witness are easily correctable and often avoidable when professional projectionists are used, but theaters try to save money by using less experienced projectionists who are often unable to fix or avoid these problems."

Before new owners were found, LFEF began looking at ways to buy the lease or purchase the building themselves. Nothing panned out and the theater's financial problems worsened. The group continued to seek ways to make the theater viable, and they think that can happen with the new owners.

Randy Holleschau, a member of LFEF

and founder and executive director of the Orinda Film Festival, points to the agreement with the new owners that allows the community to use the theater 21 days a year for events such as a film festival, fundraisers, and the Orinda Idol competition. And LFEF successfully negotiated with the owners of Theatre Square to lower the rent by \$10 thousand a month, paving the way for the new leaseholders. Lipow says that the savings lowers the owner's expenses and, as a result, they could afford to pay for union projectionists.

"We would love to have 40 hours a week, but we are flexible," says Lipow. Sheehan counters, "We offered the union the same deal as the Albany and Piedmont theaters, but they turned it down. Why?" Those two theaters, part of the Landmark group, are similar in size and screen count to Orinda, and their contract is for 10 union hours per week. The union wants two jobs at 30 hours per week with an eventual reduction to one full-time position. Lipow says that the first action of the new owners was to fire all employees, including the two union projectionists. "Nothing prevented them from keeping the same staff." The new owner says that those employees were never on his payroll and, therefore, not his employees to fire. Michaan's union agreement stated that when he sold his lease, his contract didn't transfer to the new owner.

Holleschau thinks that it is time to bring in a mediator. We want everyone working toward the same goal. What is a well-maintained facility? How is that accomplished? How many hours a week is required to keep the facility well maintained? He says, "We all want something to work. What is that 'something?'"

Instead of picketing small privately owned theaters, Michann would like the union to picket those large theaters where there are no union employees. "While I sympathize with the union, the Orinda Theater is fighting to survive, and I urge locals to go to the theater in Orinda."

Sheehan and Peterson bought the Rheem Theater over a year ago and, more recently, they acquired the Orinda Theater. There are now seven screens owned and managed by the same people in theaters just a couple of miles apart. And while seven screens are many screens short of the multiplexes, it enables them to do things that the theaters standing alone could not. For example, take the midnight showing of the latest Harry Potter movie at Orinda. The theater experienced power outages off and on that day, so they sold only 500 advance tickets – the number of seats in the Rheem's largest theater. If there was another power outage, they were ready to bus the ticket holders to Moraga.

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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 November issue is September 22, 2009.



TEEN'S DEATH / POLICE BLOTTER

# Toxicology Report Adds to Mystery of Teen's Death

By MAGGIE SHARPE  
Staff Writer

Results of the toxicology report on 16-year-old Joe Loudon have only added to the mystery surrounding his death. Loudon, who was a student at Miramonte High School and a dedicated athlete, died following a party in Orinda on May 23.

He was found unconscious in the hallway of the home where the party was held and was taken to Kaiser in Walnut Creek



PHOTO COURTESY OF CARLO FIATARONE  
Joe Loudon in Mexico last spring with the youth group from Santa Maria Catholic Church.

where he was pronounced dead around midnight.

The results of the toxicology report revealed that Loudon had a relatively low blood alcohol level of 0.03 when he died (0.08 is the legal limit for driving); however, he had a "very high level" of a drug called papaverine in his system, according to Orinda Police Chief Bill French.

Drugs.com lists papaverine "in a class of drugs called vasodilators. Papaverine relaxes veins and arteries, which makes them wider and allows blood to pass through them more easily." According to Medicinenet.com, "symptoms of papaverine overdose may include nausea, vomiting, weakness, double vision and drowsiness."

Papaverine is also marketed under the brand name Cerespan, which is one of several well-known drugs (including Viagra) prescribed for erectile dysfunction.

French says he can't speculate on how papaverine got into Loudon's system, whether he took it himself, or whether it was slipped into his drink. "The drug was not prescribed to him," said French.

According to Loudon's father, Bill Loudon, the drug was not prescribed to anyone in his household or that of his ex-wife,

Marianne Payne, Joe's mother. "I never heard of papaverine," said Jenny Bui, an assessment counselor at Thunder Road Chemical Dependency treatment center in Oakland. "I haven't heard of any of our clients taking it."

Bui says that lots of kids take prescription drugs without even knowing what they are. "Some kids will use anything to get high, without even reading the name of the pills in the bottle," says Bui. French says he had never heard of the drug either. "I looked it up out of curiosity," said French.

Three people have been charged in con-  
[SEE TEEN page 18]



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## POLICE BLOTTER

July 2009

**False Residential Alarms:** Officers responded to 135 false alarm calls throughout the city.

**Auto Burglary** (theft from a locked vehicle): 3 incidents reported on Moraga Way, Brookwood Rd., 2 on La Espiral, El Nido Ranch Rd. at St. Stephens Dr. and La Fond Ln.

**Commercial Burglary:** 2 incidents reported on Camino Sobrante.

**Domestic Violence:** 1 incident reported on Rheem Blvd.

**Grand Theft** (theft of more than \$400 value): 1 incident reported on Ardilla Rd.

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

**Residential Burglary:** 6 incidents reported on Meadow View, Glorietta, Camino Encinas, Donna Maria Way, Meadow Park Ct., and Rheem Blvd.

**Vandalism:** 2 incidents reported on Orinda Way and Overhill Rd.

**Arrests**

**Alcohol – Drunk in Public:** 1 arrest was made on Alice Ln. at Alice Ct.

**Battery – Misdemeanor:** 2 arrests were made, on St. Stephens Dr. and on Altarinda Cir.

**Burglary – Commercial:** 1 arrest was made on Camino Sobrante.

**Domestic Violence:** 1 arrest was made on Rheem Blvd.

**Driving Under Influence:** 2 arrests were made on Glorietta Blvd. at Moraga Way and Stein Way.

**Loitering – Private Property:** 1 arrest made on Broadview Terrace.

**Other - Infraction:** 1 arrest was made on Greystone Terrace.


**Recovered Stolen Vehicle:** 2 vehicles were recovered from Camino Pablo at Camino Sobrante and Los Amigos.

**Warrant Arrests:** 1 warrant arrest was made on Orinda Way.

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving,  
Orinda Police Department

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ORINDA IDOL

◆ IDOL from page 2

writing songs and playing his guitar.

**Suvi Gluskin (2008 winner)**

Suvi Gluskin won the 2008 Orinda Idol in the group category with Maxwell Tzannes. The pair performed "Point of No Return" from *Phantom of the Opera*.

Gluskin, who will be a freshman at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh this fall, majoring in classical voice, says Orinda Idol really helped eliminate her stage fright. "Because of my experience on the stage during the Orinda Idol auditions and performance, I was able to recognize my love for performing and that inspired me to pursue music as a career option," says the 18-year-old Miramonte High School



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
**Suvi Gluskin** won in the group category with partner **Maxwell Tzannes**.

graduate.

After Idol, Gluskin took part in the

National High School Classical Voice competition and landed second place. She continues to take voice lessons every week.

Gluskin hopes she can incorporate her talent and love of music into her future career. "Whether I become a performer or not, I will absolutely incorporate music into my future profession," she says. "I love helping people so I am considering looking into music therapy."

Gluskin also has helpful words for the young artists who will perform in September's Orinda Idol final. "Be confident and trust yourself that you truly are the best," says Gluskin. "If the judges see that you have faith in yourself and can tell that you are having fun, no matter what the outcome is, they will appreciate your talent and your efforts and the audience will support you."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
**Ben Freeman**, the 2007 Orinda Idol, spent part of his year between high school and college starring in a production at Berkeley Repertory Theatre in Berkeley.

Freeman also spent his gap year working with Youth Speaks and Berkeley Repertory School of Theater, where he acted in a world premiere, which he described as "an incredible experience."

It's exciting to be heading off to college, he says, especially after months of working with younger kids. "I truly can't wait for school," he says. "I never thought I'd be this excited about school, but I'm eager to read some great books, do some great experiments, and write some (hopefully) great papers. Ideally, I'd like to pursue acting and teaching at the same time."

Freeman won't be at this year's Orinda Idol. "I'll be on the other side of the country, but I'll cheer everybody on from there," he says.

He has some advice for the contestants, however. "Be yourself, be prepared, and do your best." Like Ames, he also has some pointers for other contests that Orinda might host for its young people.

[SEE FREEMAN page 14]

**Ben Freeman (2007 winner)**

Ben Freeman won Orinda Idol with his version of "Border Song" by Elton John. He remembers the competition vividly: "I had competed the year before and botched some lyrics, so I distinctly remember sweaty palms and anxious squirming. I intended to have fun, but my nerves got in the way. The most enjoyable part was listening to everybody else perform ... those were the moments when I relaxed."

Freeman, 19, who graduated from Bentley School in Lafayette, just wrapped up his gap year and will attend Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, in the fall.

During his gap year he packed a lot in, and treasures the experience he got. "I taught Gymboree throughout the year, and also worked as an intern at 826 Valencia, which is a writing and tutoring center in the Mission where I worked with English language learners."

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**Bay Area Families Can Participate in Cultural Exchange**  
Orinda resident, Rachael Frank, is interviewing families interested in participating in a cultural exchange experience by hosting an international high school student for the coming academic year.  
Frank serves as a community coordinator for PAX, a non-profit foundation which provides a U.S. high school and home stay program for students from over 40 different countries. Specifically, she places students in the YES and FLEX program. FLEX (Future Leaders Exchange program) is a full scholarship program, funded by the U.S. federal government, which enables teenagers from the former Soviet Union to participate in the school year in the U.S. YES (Youth Exchange and Study) brings teenagers from predominantly Muslim countries to live with host families and attend high school for the year. PAX students are between the ages of 15 and 18, speak English, have full insurance coverage, and their own spending money.  
Students from different countries look forward to living like American teens for one school year, joining sports teams, studying for exams, and participating fully in family life. PAX families are asked to provide students with meals, a place to sleep and study, and a warm supportive environment. Private rooms are not required and single parents, young couples and retirees are welcome to apply.  
For information call Rachael Frank at 925-285-0449, or 254-1876, or email her at rachaelfrank@gmail.com.

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SAN PABLO CREEK BRIDGE

# San Pablo Creek Bridge Gets Much Needed Attention

■ Residents help bring our local history back to life

By CHARLIE VOLLMAR  
Staff Writer

If you haven't noticed yet, Orinda's historic San Pablo Creek Bridge at the North end of Orinda Way has a fresh coat of paint. In August, a group of enthusiastic resident volunteers, including individuals, families, and service club members, gathered with brushes in hand for a "Tom Sawyer-style" painting party. The project was a joint collaboration between the Orinda Historical Society and Museum, the Historic Landmark Committee, the City of Orinda's Public Works Department, and a group of 60 residents who gave generously of some of their valuable summer-time schedules.

The bridge, built in 1920 and designated the city's Historic Landmark #4, provided for the planning and development of the original Orinda town site. Over the years, the bridge has had its fair share of run-ins with passers-by, as its pillars have been rounded-off. It has been decades since the bridge has received any attention, as evidenced by its tattered and dingy appearance.

The San Pablo Creek Bridge is one of Orinda's 37 historic sites as designated by the Historic Landmarks Committee, which was created in 1987 to identify places of historic significance in Orinda, recommend them for landmarking, and promote their preservation for future generations. The OHS gratefully acknowledges the City of Orinda Public Works Department staff and all who contributed to preserving this important piece of local history.

The Orinda Historical Society and Museum (OHS), founded in 1969 and located in the library complex, exists to educate the community about the city's unique and colorful history; to enhance the quality of life within our community by encouraging involvement in preservation projects and museum activities; and to show our young people that place and past matter. The Orinda Historic Society is currently recruiting new members in an effort to make the city's history more relevant and engaging, especially to younger families. Annual dues are \$20 for individuals and \$30 for families and help to fund museum operations and restoration projects. More importantly, membership helps to generate a base of support to call upon for archival



MARY-ELLEN JONES

Volunteers of all ages helped paint the **San Pablo Creek Bridge** in August.

and beautification projects, such as the San Pablo Creek Bridge. Contact the OHS at 925-254-1353 or visit the website at [www.orindahistory.org](http://www.orindahistory.org) to obtain a membership application. In addition, the popular *Historic Sites of Orinda* booklet is available for a \$5 donation.

Anyone who would like to help with future civic projects, should contact Charlie

Vollmar, OHS vice president at 925-368-4181.

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**Seasoned Shopper**  
Quince, Pears, and Apples, Oh My!

BARBARA KOB SAR

The Orinda farmers' market remains in high gear, with a steady stream of fresh fall produce due to arrive in all its glory during the next few months. The market remains open every Saturday morning until mid-November, so I'm looking forward to the changes that tempt my palate and embrace the flavors of the cooler months.

An intriguing trio makes its appearance only once a year, and brings new life to the farmers' markets after the barrage of stone fruits is over. Quince, pears and apple are related, with similar shapes and the tell-tale core filled with seeds.

Quince is an old fashioned fruit once prized for its natural pectin. It takes on the appearance of a squatty pear with a bumpy, fuzzy surface. Unfortunately, quince fell out of favor along with home canning many years ago, but I do find a nice supply of quince at the McKeown Farm stand.

I don't attempt to eat any variety of quince raw - too sour, dry and grainy. Cooking them seems to magically soften their texture, sweeten their flavor and turn their yellow flesh to a delicate rosy hue.

Ripe quince are firm, but not hard, golden yellow and very fragrant. I set a bowl full of quince on the kitchen table to give off an alluring fragrance of pears and pineapple that drifts through the house.

Quinces complement other dishes containing pears and apples, but they take longer to cook. Simply cut the quince into smaller pieces than the other fruits to even out the cooking time. Grated quince go nicely when added directly to quick breads and pancakes, but baked quince is still my favorite.

Gently scrub off any remaining fuzz on the quince and carefully remove the core. Place quince in a baking dish with enough water to cover the bottom of the dish and cook for 50 to 60 minutes at 350 degrees. Sprinkle with a little cinnamon and cloves to serve.

Bartletts are a type of European pear and come to market fresh picked and still slightly firm. Unlike most other fruits these pears must finish the ripening process off the tree - if left on too long they turn soft and mushy.

Darryl Pereira from Alhambra Valley Farms in Martinez grows the quintessential Bartlett pear - smooth, creamy and intensely flavored. He gives credit to using dry farm practices where the tree roots grow deep to find water. And turning the soil about 1 inch deeper each time the ground is cultivated brings the moisture up to the surface.

Periera carefully separates the pears

according to ripeness - those ready to eat and ones needing a few (or several) days on the kitchen counter to ripen up. The fragrance will remind me when the pears are ripe, and the stem end yields to gentle thumb pressure.

Any great eating apple must be crisp, and Rainbow Orchard's apples come in with a nice, juicy crunch. Rainbow Orchards is located in Apple Hill, a region of the Sierra Nevada foothills, less than an hours drive from Sacramento. The orchards are located at the 3,000 foot level where it's much cooler, resulting in a later start and finish to the growing season.

From sweet to spicy tart, I enjoy any apple eaten fresh and out-of-hand. Red skinned Jonathans and Empires also hold their shape when cooked - perfect for applesauce and pies.

Winesaps show off a beautiful rusty-red skin and are a great all-purpose apple. Their taste is sort of spicy, and combining Winesaps with Golden Delicious makes for an unforgettable pie - the Golden's are naturally sweet so I can cut down on the amount of sugar in the pie.




BARBARA KOB SAR  
Michele Livingston from Rainbow Orchards shows a customer the latest fruit available.

I like golden, red-streaked Gala apples for lots of reasons, but mainly for eating out of hand and adding to salads. Size wise, they're just right.

Golden Delicious are thin-skinned - I just leave the peel on when making apple crisp. When cut, this apple does not discolor as quickly as many of the others and is my choice for making applesauce.

The Orinda Farmers' Market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Orinda Way in front of the Community Park. 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).



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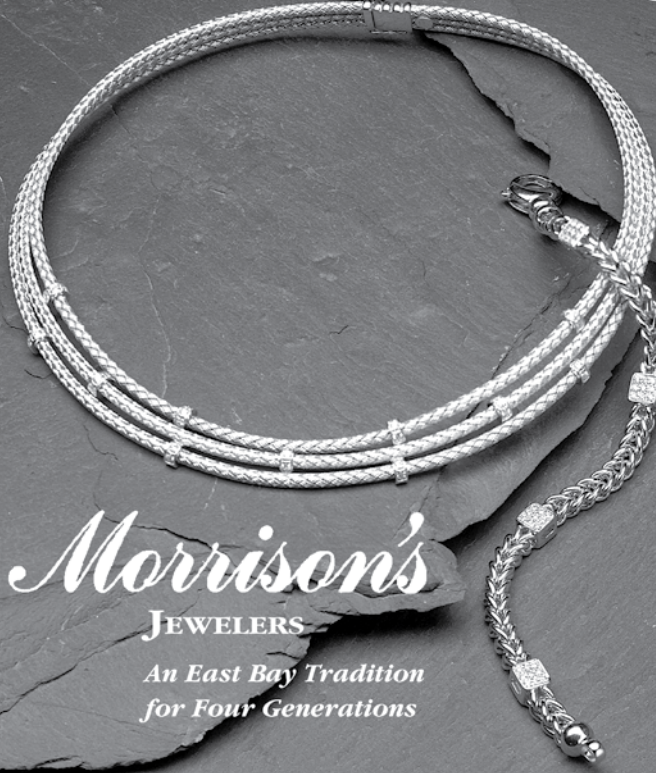
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ORINDA RESTAURANTS

# The 2009 Guide to Local Orinda Restaurants – Enjoy!

By  
MARIE WATERMAN

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

**AMERICAN / CALIFORNIAN CUISINE**

**Casa Orinda**  
20 Bryant Way  
254-2981

Hours: 4 p.m. – 10 p.m. daily; bar open until 11 p.m.; Sunday open until 9 p.m.

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

**Shelby's**  
2 Theatre Square  
254-9687

Hours: Mon. 10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.; Tues. – Sat. 10:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.; brunch served 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Sat. and Sun.

This Orinda institution has a wonderful eclectic California cuisine using the freshest ingredients around. The specials menu changes daily, with indoor and outdoor seating. They are also now serving brunch on Sat. and Sun.



The ornately carved bar at Casa Orinda is a history lesson in itself with its historical photos.

**Nation's Giant Hamburgers**  
76 Moraga Way  
254-8888

Hours: Sun. – Thurs. 6 a.m. – midnight; Fri. and Sat. 6 a.m. – 1 a.m.

Fast-food joints have nothing on these big, juicy burgers and grilled chicken – and they'll do it just as fast and for takeout too. They also have great ice cream shakes. Don't forget their pies, either whole or by the slice.

**CAFES**

**Caffé Teatro**  
24 Orinda Way (under the library)  
253-5871

Hours: Mon. – Thurs. 6:30 a.m. – 7 p.m.; Fri. until 6 p.m.; Sat. 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Sun. 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

This inviting café sports public art sculpture just outside the door, so sipping that Illy coffee is even easier. This café is just below the Orinda Library and offers wire-

less access. Fresh pastries are available, as well as breakfast and lunch sandwiches, salads and gelato.

**Geppetto's Cafe**  
87 Orinda Way  
253-9894

Hours: Mon. – Fri. 6 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sat. 6 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

This place is often crowded at lunch for a reason. The traditional umbrellas outside offer a respite while enjoying delicious salads with your espresso. It's a nice place to eat alone or with a friend.

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

Hours: Mon. – Fri. 5:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.; Sat. and Sun. 6 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Peet's not only offers great coffee but also an amazing variety of teas, such as jasmine that smells as if it's right off the

vine, and delicious pastries. Free Wi Fi with each purchase.

**Starbucks**  
2 Theatre Square  
258-0476

Hours: Mon. – Sat. 5:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.; Sun. 6 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

**Starbucks**  
One Camino Sobrante, #9  
253-0447

Hours: Mon. – Thurs. 4:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.; Fri. 4:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.; Sat 5:30 a.m. – 8 p.m., Sun. 5:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

The coffee chain also offers a location inside the Orinda Safeway store so you can order your favorite coffee and pastry no matter where you are in Orinda. Wi Fi is available in both locations.

**Village Inn Cafe**  
204 Village Square  
254-6080

Hours: Mon. – Fri. 5:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.; Sat. 6:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.; Sun. 7:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Breakfast only).

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

**CHINESE**  
**Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine**  
1 Orinda Way No. 1  
253-9852

Hours: Mon. – Thurs. 11:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.; Fri. – Sat. 11:30 a.m. – 10 p.m.; Sun. noon – 9:30 p.m. Closed Tuesday.

Hsiangs is directly across from Pine [SEE CHINESE page 10]

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ORINDA RESTAURANTS

◆ CHINESE from page 9

Grove Business Park. There is plenty of parking, and the food doesn't disappoint. The chef is known for his sauces and fresh ingredients. Great for takeout or enjoy the restaurant's quiet, relaxing atmosphere with lots of delicious menu suggestions.



SALLY HOGARTY  
Eric Tang owner of Hsiang's restaurant, in front of his impressive dragons.

**Szechwan Chinese Restaurant**  
79 Orinda Way  
254-2020

Hours: Tues. - Thurs. 11:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.; Fri. - Sat. 11:30 a.m. - 10 p.m.; Sun. 4 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.; Closed Mondays.

Eat in or order in advance for take out. Szechwan's food is as spicy as you tell them to make it and offers everything you would expect. They'll be happy to customize your order, too.

**DESSERTS**

**Loard's Ice Cream and Candy**  
230 Brookwood Road  
254-3434

Hours: Sun. - Thurs. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Fri. - Sat. 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.

This all-time Orinda favorite is the perfect place to stop after a movie or to stroll over to after dinner. A great candy assortment is also available, as well as many varieties of ice cream and ice cream cakes.

**Orinda Smoothies and Yogurt**  
21 Orinda Way, Suite G  
258-9354

Hours: Mon. - Sat. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Now under new management! You can stay or you can go. But the smoothies are made to order. Add in a little something you haven't tried before or get your banana-strawberry favorite. Now offering frozen yogurt and tapioca drinks.

**DELICATESESENS**  
**Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub**  
64 Moraga Way  
254-7202

Hours: Mon. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 9 p.m., Sun 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Orinda's only family restaurant with a play area and games. This popular spot is famous for oven roasted turkey, corned beef and burgers. You can also grab a stool, or your favorite table to catch a game and have a brew.

**Kasper's Hot Dogs**  
2 Theatre Square, #103  
253-0766

Hours: Mon. - Sat. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Sun. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

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

**Orinda Deli**  
19 F Orinda Way  
254-1990

Hours: Mon. - Sat. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Now under new management. For a quick sandwich on the go, this is the place. Don't forget the cheese, the crisp lettuce, and the in-season tomatoes. They now offer an expanded menu and also do catering!

**Subway**  
2 Theatre Square  
258-0470

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Sat. and Sun. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

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

**HAWAIIAN**  
**Lava Pit**  
2 Theatre Square, #142  
253-1338

Hours: Mon. - Sat. 11 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.  
Aloha! This place has a wonderful interior that smells of barbecue and a wide variety of delicious items. They also deliver and cater. Mixed plates are available, so mix and match away.

**ITALIAN**  
**La Piazza**  
15 Moraga Way  
253-9191

Hours: Fri. - Sat. 5 p.m. - 10 p.m.; Sun. - Thurs. 5 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Good food combines with a friendly

staff and a cozy atmosphere at this local favorite. It features brick-oven pizzas and done-to-order pastas, with a basket of fresh bread if you eat in. Movie nights are busy, so plan ahead.

**Pizzeria Amoroma**  
65 Moraga Way  
253-7662

Hours: 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. daily; brunch served Sat. and Sun.

This latest addition to the Orinda restaurant scene has good food, good people and a

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

**Zamboni's Pizza**  
1 Camino Sobrante, # 4  
254-2800

Hours: Open daily 11 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.  
If you're on a budget, this is a great place for lunch or dinner. It's a small restaurant

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**Village Pizza**  
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with a casual atmosphere that offers fast (and large!) pizza by the slice. You can eat in, take out, or they deliver.

**JAPANESE**  
**Hanazen Japanese Sushi**  
87 Orinda Way  
254-3611

Hours: Mon. - Sat. 5 p.m. - 10 p.m.  
A wonderfully intimate restaurant with all the traditional dishes and a great sushi bar. Chef Kenji Horikawa prepares every [SEE JAPANESE page 11]

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ORINDA RESTAURANTS

◆ JAPANESE from page 10

dish himself while his wife Coco, who holds a sake sommelier license, serves the guests. With only 18 seats in the entire restaurant, reservations are a must!

**Niwa Restaurant**  
1 Camino Sobrante  
254-1606

Hours: Lunch 11 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.; Dinner 4:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.; Fri. until 10 p.m.; Sat 11:45 a.m. – 10 p.m.

freshest fish, and the relaxing atmosphere will melt away the day's stress. Children are always welcome and will find plenty of kid-friendly food.

**Yu Sushi**  
19 Moraga Way  
253-8399

Hours: Mon. – Thurs. 11 a.m. – 9:30 p.m., Fri. until 10 p.m.; Sat. noon-10 p.m. and Sun. noon – 9 p.m.

This small store-front operation has a great lunch deal! Try the Value Lunch

Fri. and Sat. open until 9:30 p.m.

Petra gets top marks on the Internet from its fans and makes the most of its tiny interior and casual outside tables. The traditional lamb pita is a favorite, and you can ask for extra sauce. Petra also offers quite a few vegetarian options. Check out the Greek Salad Wrap.

**MEXICAN**  
**La Cocina Mexicana**  
23 Orinda Way  
258-9987

Hours: Mon. – Sat. 11 a.m. – 8 p.m.  
Bring on the chips! This family-friendly restaurant and friendly staff offers traditional fare. With all the right flavors, too. Come try their chicken, enchiladas and famous fajitas. Dine in or takeout

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

**Siam Orchid**  
23 Orinda Way No. F  
253-1975

Hours: Mon. – Fri. 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.; Mon. – Sun. 4:30 – 9 p.m.

The ginger salad remains one of the most popular dishes at this favorite Orinda restaurant. This is complete fare straight from Thailand, with all fresh California ingredients. You can also sit at the elegant bar and enjoy a refreshing beverage. Equally good if you take out.

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Each restaurant on the tour will provide a small portion that best represents the establishment at no cost to the event ticket holders. One glass of wine is included in the ticket price. The cost of an individual ticket will be \$30 with EFO receiving \$10 from every ticket sold.  
Reservations will be limited to 300 ticket holders, so attendees are encouraged to reserve early.

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[www.orindachamber.org](http://www.orindachamber.org)



The sushi counter at Yu Sushi where you watch delicious delicacies being made.

**Maya Mexican Grill**  
74 Moraga Way  
258-9049

Hours: Mon. – Sat. 11 a.m. – 8 p.m.  
Maya offers all the traditional Mexican dishes based on family recipes. One of the specialties is mole, and if you're a fan of the spicy chocolate sauce, you'll know what a great flavor awaits.

**MIDDLE EASTERN**  
**Turquoise**  
70 Moraga Way  
253-2004

Hours: Open daily 11 a.m. – 8 p.m.  
This Middle Eastern restaurant specializes in homemade Turquoise Burgers, Falafels and Baklava. Yum! They also offer a new website and can offer delivery services to all of Orinda at [www.turqgrill.com](http://www.turqgrill.com).

**THAI**  
**Baan Thai**  
99 Orinda Way  
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Box with soup, salad and a choice of entrees for \$6.95. The sushi is fresh, and the staff fast and accurate, making this a great place to eat in for lunch or before a movie across the street. Takeout is ready in just 10 minutes.

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LIBRARY GALLERY

Celebrating 10 Years Of Art: Lafayette Art Gallery

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

The Orinda Library Gallery showcases the Lafayette Art Gallery throughout the month of September commemorating the group's 10 years as "a creative force in

the heart of Lafayette."

Art lovers are in for a real treat as the variety of work filling the Orinda Gallery includes local landscapes, oil paintings, photography, jewelry, ceramics, painted silk, pastels, watercolors, acrylics, and sculptures utilizing bronze, other metals and ceramics. There will be figurative work – some focusing on pets – as well as abstract subject matter.

Founded by a group of 23 local artists, the Lafayette Art Gallery (LAG) still counts six founding members as active. The Art Room, which at the time was owned by Michele Grant (now owned by Gi Gi Voris), has been there from the start. Members think of the Art Room as the gallery's house-mate, not only because they share an address, but because the Art Room provides LAG with a constant flow of art students of all ages. They function as a community network, collaborating with artists of all disciplines to enrich, educate and engage in the arts and the artistic process. See [www.heart-room.com](http://www.heart-room.com) for more information.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sherry Smith Bell's "Three Windows" includes drypoint etching and collagraph.

The Lamorinda Arts Alliance has supported LAG from the beginning as well. Margaret (Maggie) Lucas-Hill is a board member of the Lamorinda Arts Alliance ([www.laa4art.org](http://www.laa4art.org)) and a member of LAG. Lucas-Hill reported that, "we are encouraging all alumni and founders to contribute to the show." She was excited to announce that *Lafayette Gallery: 10 Year Anniversary* will be available for sale at the exhibit and online at [www.lafayettegallery.net](http://www.lafayettegallery.net). This hard-bound commemorative book was created by Paula Boas and honors the work of current members and Gallery alumni.

Current gallery members include Dalia Alekna, Jeanette Baird, Sherry Smith Bell, Paula Boas, Sadie Cuming, Susan Erickson, Shannon Essex, Judith Feins, Carla Williams Gelbaum, Nancy Hartley, Patrick Hayashi, Julee Herrmann, Martha Kean, Debby Koonce, Jill Landau, Hilary Lambert, JoAnn Lieberman, Margaret Lucas-Hill, Judy Miller, Pat Prosek, Warren Emmett Rice, Ann Testa and Linda Yoshizawa.

As art educators, gallery members offer occasional public art demonstrations and hands-on art activities at their show receptions and artist's markets. They host open studios and community events and showcase local musicians and students whenever possible.

Behind the Lafayette Gallery is an intriguing sculpture garden with a gate designed and engineered by local artisan and engineer Ken Hughes. The whimsical gate is a prelude to the works of more than 20 local artists and artisans placed in the spacious garden beyond. The garden received an initial grant from the Lafayette Foundation. Joe Bologne, a local architect and sculptor, is curator.

If the Orinda Library exhibit sparks your interest, stop by the Lafayette Art Gallery at 50 Lafayette Circle open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. See [www.lafayettegallery.net](http://www.lafayettegallery.net). An artist reception is planned for the September show at the Orinda Library Gallery - call 925-284-2788 for date and time.

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**MAGGIE**  
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Draw your shoulder blades down and together. Exhale as you bend your arms to 90 degrees, pulling the weights up towards your waist. Pause then inhale as you straighten your arms slowly to the start position.

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Ballroom Dancing Instructor Brings Her Classes to Orinda

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

Have you ever watched a couple glide gracefully along a dance floor and thought, “Boy, I’d like to be able to do that?” Well, now is your chance. Popular East Bay ballroom dance instructor Marilyn Bowe is now teaching her “super-learning” method of dancing at the Orinda Masonic Hall, 9 Altarinda Rd.

“I believe we all need to add more fun to our often busy and serious lives,” says Bowe. “And why not do so through more dancing.” Bowe has been teaching for over 15 years at several Bay Area locations, including the Claremont Hotel and Spa in Berkeley. She teaches 14 dance styles divided into four categories: Smooth (Fox Trot, Waltz, etc.); swing and jitterbug; Latin; and nightclub dances, such as The Hustle.

“Let me show you how fun and easy learning to dance can be,” says Bowe. “Just show up! I’ll turn you into a dance addict in no time.”

Classes start on the first Wednesdays of the month and continue each week at the Orinda Masonic Hall. The September Beginning #1 class starts at 6 p.m. and will concentrate on the East Coast Swing. The Beginning #1 and #2 class at 7 p.m. will learn the Cha Cha, and the Intermediate class starts at 8 p.m. and will learn the Quick Step. No partner is required but groups of friends are encouraged to attend together. “It’s great exercise and just a lot



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marilyn Bowe (center) teaches her love of ballroom dancing at the Orinda Masonic Hall.

of fun,” Bowe says.

For more information, call Bowe at 510-523-5587 or go to [www.dancewithme.com](http://www.dancewithme.com).

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## Matadors Want Your Fruit and Veggies

By MAGGIE SHARPE  
Staff Writer

Are your zucchini and tomato plants producing more than you and your next-door neighbors can eat? Orange and lemon trees laden, but you don't have the time or energy to get out and pick the fruit?

Well, not to worry. A group of Miramonte High School students has come up with a great idea for your extra fruit

and vegetables. The students (juniors Conor Volpe, Brandon Huang, Matt Ward, Jonathan Wong and Ashraf Mathkour) have organized a community service project this summer to gather fruit and vegetables from local residents in the Lamorinda area and donate them to the Contra Costa Food Bank in Concord.

"We will pick the produce at a convenient time, give you as much as you want, then take the rest over to the food bank where people in need can get the fresh fruit and veggies," says Volpe, 16.

Volpe says he got the idea from seeing fruit in his neighborhood just go to waste. "Where I live there is lots of fruit just falling off the trees," he says. "A friend had so many pears on their tree that they didn't know what to do with them."

Volpe says the food bank is excited about the students' project. "The lady at the food bank even said she would come and pick up the fruit and vegetables if we couldn't deliver them," says Volpe.

However, one of the students, Matt Ward, 16, says delivering the produce should be no problem. "I drive a bus – a VW bus – so I can transport all the fruits and vegetables we can get," jokes Ward.

If you have fruit or vegetables that you would like the students to pick and donate



MAGGIE SHARPE  
Conor Volpe (seated) is surrounded by friends, from left, Brandon Huang, Matt Ward, Jonathan Wong and Ashraf Mathkour. The Miramonte High School juniors are collecting fruit and vegetables for the Contra Costa Food Bank.

to the food bank, please call 925-631-6635 or email [extrafruit123@gmail.com](mailto:extrafruit123@gmail.com). There

is no charge and the donation may be used as a tax write-off.

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### ◆ STOCKTON from page 1

AUHSD governing board did not have far to look to find his replacement – 20 yards down the hall to be exact. John Stockton had been Negri's first hire in 2005 as associate superintendent of education services. According to the board, Stockton was the natural choice as Negri's successor.

Stockton has committed his professional life to education, and in his 37 years as an educator and administrator, has successfully navigated California's various educational and budgetary ups and downs. Even with the particularly dire financial circumstances now facing California and the Acalanes School District, Stockton remains optimistic.

"I've been through these cycles and downturns before, such as with Prop 13, and I look at it as a challenge that we simply have to get through. Thanks to parent and community support, our district will be fine through this coming year," says Stockton. "The cuts we've had to make are deep, but not as deep as some other districts."

The son of Greek immigrants, Stockton grew up in Fresno. He paid for his college education at Fresno State by working in his parents' grocery store. After graduation, he began his career in education with the Clovis Unified School District, where he spent 20 years in a variety of positions including social science teacher, activities director, and head counselor. He then spent the next three years successfully opening and running a new high school in the same district. A move to Visalia followed, where he was a high school principal for three years. The Fairfield School District was next, where he was chief operating officer responsible for the building of a new high school.

In 2005, after Negri hired Stockton as the number two in command, Stockton handled many responsibilities including serving as the lead district negotiator in talks with the teachers' union.

Stockton and his wife Susan (who

recently retired after 23 years as an insurance professional) continue to reside in the Green Valley area of Fairfield where, despite a boom in development, he can still see the rolling hills from his back window. It takes him 30 minutes to get to work, 28 on a really good day.

When approached about taking the number one spot in the district, Stockton weighed his options, and based his decision on what was best for the students. "I've reached a unique point in my career where I'm fortunate that my decisions need not be financially motivated," says Stockton. "I really like this district, and this would be a really tough time for the number one and two persons to leave. I wanted to do what was right for the student population."

Stockton sees his role as helping to make district administrators successful by providing the support they need. As a quiet, approachable, behind-the-scenes leader, he is not interested in recognition or acclaim, and prefers any kudos go to his staff.

"Part of my role is to transition this district through hard times, and to make sure we have long-range success," says Stockton. "We are trying to maximize the budget to keep administrators and teachers in their jobs, and at the same time make moves that are part of a long term plan. We are building a foundation for the next generation. Every step is made with the students in mind."

### ◆ FREEMAN from page 6

"I'm not sure Orinda is ready for a poetry slam, but I'd love to hear what my peers have to say about the experience of growing up here," says Freeman.

Well, let's hear it, Orinda.

The Orinda Idol competition will be held on September 13 at the Orinda Theater in Theatre Square from 11 a.m. to 7:15 p.m. Admission is free. Orinda Idol is sponsored by the Orinda Arts Council. For more information, visit [www.orindaartscouncil.org/orindaidol.html](http://www.orindaartscouncil.org/orindaidol.html).

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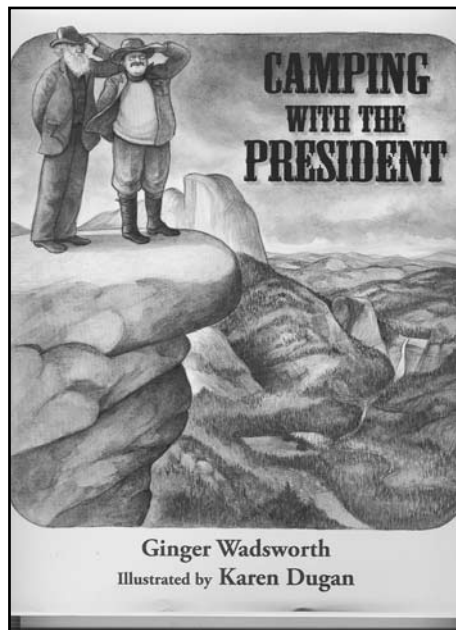


CHILDREN'S AUTHOR / SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

# Local Children's Author Focuses on Environment

By EVA SASSOON  
Contributing Writer

Ginger Wadsworth, a local award-winning author of children's books, has three new books currently being released, on top of the large collection she has already published. *Up, Up and Away* about the adventures and life-cycle of spiders, was released in stores July 1, and *Camping with the President*, a children's book based on a true story about when John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt went camping in Yosemite, will be in stores the beginning of September along with the educational book



SALLY HOGARTY

Ginger Wadsworth's new book *Camping with the President* came out in September.

*Survival in the Snow.*

Wadsworth won the Spur Award for Juvenile Nonfiction from the Western Writers of America and has published over 20 children's books. The majority of her work focuses on nature and the environment, to increase children's appreciation for the natural world. Although she avoids blatant morals in her stories, Wadsworth notes that she is trying to send a message to students that nature exists and should not be harmed.

*Up, Up and Away* is a story about the development of spiders, told in an accessible, less-scientific way. Although much research was necessary to complete the book, it is a "simple image book about spiders" says Wadsworth, who dedicated her book to Charlotte, the famous spider in E.B. White's classic *Charlotte's Web*.

In her newest book, *Camping with the President*, Wadsworth writes about land conservation, which is very important to her. "It is fun to write about and go to Yosemite," says Wadsworth; "it is such a pretty place." Wadsworth hopes to spread knowledge of Yosemite and the value and beauty of nature to those who are not fortunate enough to visit there and experience it themselves.

Her other new arrival, *Survival in the Snow*, is an educational book that will be used in elementary schools and features a boy named Moses who traveled in a Murphy-Stevens wagon train from Iowa to California over the snowy Sierra Nevada's.

[SEE WADSWORTH page 16]

Wagner Ranch Round Up is September 26

Lots of games, food and fun await participants at **Wagner Ranch Elementary School's Round Up**. The yearly event is the school's major fundraiser. This year's Round Up also includes Karaoke, a giant water slide, jump houses, and much more. The event takes place from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on September 26. For more information, call 258-0016.

# Orinda Resident Brings World Music Locally

Orinda resident and choral director Betsy Blakeslee has traveled the globe learning music on four continents. Now she, and noted world music arranger Daniel Steinberg, bring this diverse music to Lamorinda. Starting on September 17, locals can learn a cappella songs, harmonies and more while exploring the cultural heritage of various countries. A firm believer in the power of music, Blakeslee worked with traumatized refugee children during the wars in Croatia and Bosnia -- teaching them the healing properties of singing. Her Balkan YouthLink Voices performed at the UN Millennium Summit and at the State



SALLY HOGARTY

Betsy Blakeslee leads a group of singers.

of the World Forum. "Here at home, some choristers find that they can express themselves more freely, improve their memory, and reduce their prejudices through world music," says Blakeslee. For more information, go to [www.eastbaysings.com](http://www.eastbaysings.com).

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CAL SHAKES / LOCAL TEEN ACTRESS

◆ CLARK from page 1

did a great job as principal, he was well-respected, very active in the community, and he will be sorely missed." Coming to Orinda is something of a homecoming for Clark, who was born and raised in Berkeley and earned his teaching credential, administrative credential, and master's degree in administration all from St Mary's College in Moraga.

Clark has worked as an administrator in the Brentwood School District for the past 10 years. In his most recent position, he helped open J. Douglas Adams Middle School and served as its principal. He decided to leave the Brentwood School District because it only serves students from kindergarten through eighth grade, and he was interested in a career at the high school level. Although this is his first official job at a high school, it is not his first experience working with high school students. The middle school Clark helped open is located next to Brentwood's new high school, where he participated in mentoring programs, served on the Distinguished School Committee, coached sports teams, and did volunteer work.

The Acalanes School District selected

Clark out of 15 applicants. John Stockton, the district superintendent, identified Clark's leadership ability as his defining characteristic that made him the best choice for the position. "Mr. Clark has demonstrated strong leadership at a number of different levels," Stockton said, "particularly at J. Douglas Adams. He was able to bond the faculty, student body, and community together, which helped make it a successful school."

Clark describes himself as an "advocate for kids" and is looking forward to working with the highly-motivated Miramonte student body. "Orinda students are very involved both in school and in outside activities -- their days are packed and there's a lot of pressure on them," he explained. "I look forward to the challenge of helping students become well-rounded citizens by focusing on making healthy choices, building positive relationships, and thinking beyond just getting into college." Clark accepted the position in early June and has since spent time on campus meeting students, teachers and parents' groups. "I was really thrilled by how supportive everyone was," Clark said. "They're excited about the new school year and the changes that are taking place, and so am I."

◆ WADSWORTH from page 15

Unlike many of her other books, this book was published by an educational publisher and will be shipped directly to schools and school libraries.

Wadsworth's interest in children's literacy, animals and nature manifests itself in yet another – and unusual – way, by reading with dogs. The Pleasanton Library implemented a program called Paws to Read that Wadsworth adapted and brought to Orinda. In this program, specially trained dogs sit one-on-one with children and

listen to them read books out loud. Wadsworth actualized this program because she wanted a program in Orinda that would give children confidence in their reading abilities and make reading fun. "The child gains both confidence reading and experience with animals," says Wadsworth. "It is good for the kids and for the library, since it draws readers; it is a win/win situation." All of the dogs, like Wadsworth's own pet Willa, are highly trained and good with all kinds of people, especially the elderly and the young, as well as both proficient and emerging readers.

Orinda Teen in World War II Musical Onboard a Ship

**Thirteen-year-old Elena Wasserman** is currently performing in the World War II musical about Rosie the Riveter and the other "homefront soliders" who built the ships. A student at Orinda Intermediate School, Wasserman has learned all about the women who left their homes and learned how to put together the ships that helped the United States win the war. *Rivets*, written by Concord playwright Kathryn McCarty, plays through September 27 onboard the Ss Red Oak Victory Ship at the historic Kaiser Richmond shipyards. Call 925-676-5705.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Four Weddings and a Funeral

■ Midsummer Night's Dream at Cal Shakes

BY DOROTHY BOWEN  
Staff Writer

The final play in the Cal Shakes season, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (MSND), is a mirror image of the season opener, *Romeo and Juliet*. "*Romeo and Juliet* begins as a comedy of misplaced desire and moves through romance into tragedy; while *Midsummer Night's Dream* begins as potential tragedy and moves through romance into comedy," says Philippa Kelly, resident dramaturg.

The three interlocking plots all involve marriages. The first between Duke Theseus and the Amazonian Queen Hippolyta that will be celebrated on Midsummer's Eve. The second and third between four young lovers, Hermia and Lysander and Helena and Demetrius, after they get sorted out. And the fourth between Oberon and Titiana, king and queen of fairies, after some pre-nup negotiations over a changeling boy.

The funeral must be for the tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe, the entertainment for the wedding party by the comical townspeople. But as they explain, it's not a real lion to frighten the ladies and no one really dies.

The critic Harold Bloom calls MSND Shakespeare's first undoubted masterpiece and the invented plot elaborate and outrageous. But he also calls most productions brutal disasters.

Director Aaron Posner makes his directorial debut at Cal Shakes with MSND. He is the artistic director for Two River Theater Company and the co-founder of Philadelphia's Arden Theatre. He won the

1998 Barrymore Award for Best New Play for his adaptation of Chaim Potok's novel, *The Chosen*, and another for his direction of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Arden Theatre. He grew up in Eugene, Oregon, and played Oberon in a fourth grade production, wearing green tights and the torn up lining of his mother's coat.

"More than any other writer, Shakespeare understood that every scene needs to have a capacity for wonder and amazement," Posner explains. "My intuition is to go straight at it, full of love, amazement, hope and magic. Shakespeare must have been in a pretty good mood when he wrote it, as he's looking at all these very broken people and just loves them."

There is darkness, of course, in MSND, and Posner doesn't want to shy away from that. He saw a 1970's production in Eugene, Oregon where Puck was played as a devilish satyr. "Cute Pucks have since driven me a little crazy," he says.

Cal Shakes sets by Erik Flatmo will be fairly simple. Lighting will be by Russell H. Champa and, new to Cal Shakes, Serbian costume designer Olivera Garjic, who did MSND at the Prague Quadrennial.

The cast includes Caroline Clay (Titiana/Hippolyta) Keith Randolph Smith (Oberon/Theseus), Doug Hara (Puck), Dan Hiatt (Snout/Egeus), Joan Mankin (Flute), Danny Scheie (Bottom), and Patty Gallagher (Petra Quince).

"The play was believed to be first performed at Queen Elizabeth's court; although, we have no firm record of this," says Kelly.

MSND runs from September 16 to October 11 at the Bruns Amphitheatre in Orinda. For tickets, call the box office at 510-548-9666.



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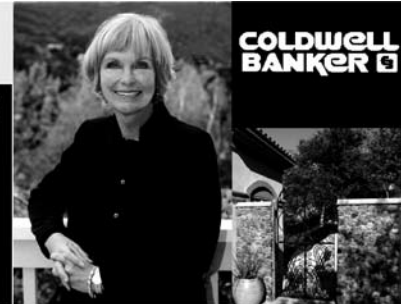
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## CALENDAR

## ON THE CALENDAR

## SEPTEMBER

- 1 **California Shakespeare Theatre** presents *Happy Days* by Samuel Beckett, Tues. through Thurs. at 7:30 p.m., Fri. and Sat. at 8 p.m., Sat. matinee at 2 p.m., Sun. matinee at 4 p.m., through Sept. 6 at Bruns Memorial Amphitheater, 100 Gateway Blvd., Orinda. For more info., visit [www.calshakes.org](http://www.calshakes.org) or call 510-548-9666.
- 2 **Orinda Hiking Club** meets at 9 a.m. at the old library parking lot on Irwin Way for its weekly Wednesday hike. Call 253-0131 for information or visit [www.orindahiking.org](http://www.orindahiking.org).
- 3 **Friends of Orinda Library** Back-To-School Book Sale 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Orinda Library Sorting Room, ground floor (through the doors to the parking garage). The Friends also need volunteers including teens looking for community service. Call 254-1358.
- 5 **Orinda Farmer's Market**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., on Orinda Way (in front of the library). Market is held every Saturday through November.
- 9 **Second Wednesday Book Group** will discuss *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan, 3 p.m., Orinda Books 276 Village Square, 254-7606. The group meets monthly.
- 11 **Orinda Starlight Village Players** present *Harvey* by Mary Coyle Chase at Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater, 28 Orinda Way, through Sept. 26. Performances are Fri. and Sat. at 8:30 p.m., Sun., Sept. 20 at 4 p.m., and Thurs., Sept. 24 at 8 p.m. Regular admission \$15; seniors/students \$7.50. Tickets are available at the box office or at [info@orsvp.org](mailto:info@orsvp.org).
- 12 **Free Brain Gym Introduction for Seniors**, presented by Transition Point and Brain Gym, teaches tools that enhance brain, body and balance, 10 to 11:30 a.m. Also Free Brain Gym Introduction for Effective Learning, 2 to 3:30 p.m., 58 Van Ripper Lane, Orinda, call Pam Whitman, 253-1223, or visit [www.transitionpoint.org](http://www.transitionpoint.org).
- 14 **Orinda Teen Advisory Council** meets at 4 p.m., Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. For information, email [orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com).
- 15 **World Affairs Book Group** will discuss *The Accidental President of Brazil: A Memoir* by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, 3 p.m., Orinda Books 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
- 17 **Orinda Theatre Square 2009 Summer Music Series** with Stone Soup, 4-7 p.m., free. Visit [www.orindatheatresquare.com](http://www.orindatheatresquare.com).
- 18 **Montelindo Garden Club** hosts a meeting at Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way. Refreshments and plant sale at 9 a.m., general meeting at 9:30 a.m., speaker at 10:30 a.m. Napa Valley native Cynthia Brian, host of travel and radio shows and author of *Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul* will talk on *Digging Deep: Gardening With Cynthia*. The club meets the third Friday of the month, September through May, free; guests and new members are welcome. Visit [www.montelindogarden.com](http://www.montelindogarden.com) or email [montelindogarden@aol.com](mailto:montelindogarden@aol.com)
- 19 **Campolindo High School Class of 1969** holds its 40th reunion at Terzetto Cuisine in Moraga, 6 to 11 p.m., \$35 per person, reservations by Sept. 1. Call Rhonda Darling at 253-9043.
- California Shakespeare Theatre** presents *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare, Tuesdays through Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sunday at 4 p.m., Saturday Sept. 26 at 4 p.m., through Oct. 11, at Bruns Memorial Amphitheater, 100 Gateway Blvd., Orinda. Grounds open two hours before curtain rises for picnics in the groves. For tickets and information visit [www.calshakes.org](http://www.calshakes.org) or 510-548-9666.
- 26 **Wagner Ranch Round-Up** will feature karaoke, giant water slide, jump house, games, food and fun, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., 350 Camino Pablo.

## AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified.

- 15 **Toddler Lapsit**, stories, songs and fingerplays for 1- to 3-year-olds and their caregivers, 10 a.m., repeats at 10:30 a.m. (Families with older siblings are welcome at toddler lapsit.) No registration, but participants are limited to one storytime a week. Also Sept. 16, 22, 23, 29 and 30.
- 16 **Pirate Program**, prepare for *Talk Like A Pirate Day* on Sept. 19 with crafts, games, stories and pirate lingo, 5 years and up, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., costumes encouraged.  
**Berkeley Repertory Theatre Docent Presentation: American Idiot**, trained docent talks about the musical adaptation of Green Day's 2004 album, *American Idiot*, 7 p.m.
- 19 **Saturday Morning Live**, family storytime for 3- to 5-year-olds, 11 a.m. in the Picture Book area. Also Sept. 26.
- 29 **Fireside Chat**, George Hammond will preview Humanities West's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season with a discussion of *Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler: Redefining Our Place in the Universe*, 7 to 8 p.m., teens and adults.

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

## MEETINGS:

## CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

- Acalanes Union High School District**, first and third Wednesdays, district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette, 7:30 p.m.
- 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. Call 925-788-7323.
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**, fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library. Call 253-1997.
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District**, third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.
- Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**, OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road, 4 p.m.
- Planning Commission**, second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, 253-4210.

## 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** meeting, 7:30 p.m. All interested in preservation of the landmark are invited to attend. For date and location, call 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 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/Tabor** (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.

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

## Six-Foot Rabbit Brings Starlight Season to a Close

By DOROTHY BOWEN  
Staff Writer

This summer's Starlight Players' season has been an exercise in contrasts for Malcolm Cowler, who will play the leading role in *Harvey*, the season finale. Elwood Dowd is the gentle character who may or may not be deluded because he sees and talks to Harvey, a Pooka, a large white rabbit. "The audience never actually sees Harvey, except for one scene where a door opens and footsteps are heard," Cowler says. "The whole thing is imaginary."

Cowler's role is a switch from his role of Oliver in the season opener, *Spider's Web*. Oliver, a truly nasty character, is killed in the first act. Cowler ordinarily plays more sympathetic parts. His Scrooge, in *A Christmas Carol*, starts out mean, but, of course, reforms.

Last season, he was the lead in *Bedful of Foreigners* and did a strip tease on stage to the theme music from *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*.

In *Harvey*, Elwood is threatened with commitment to an insane asylum because of his relationship with Harvey. His sister, Vita, who will be played by Susan England, wants to have him put away to improve her daughter Myrtle Mae's marriage prospects.

"Starlight keeps giving me really good parts," says Cowler. "That's why I keep coming back."

*Harvey*, by Mary Ellen Chase, opened on Broadway in 1944 and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1945. In 1950, it was a movie with Jimmie Stewart as Elwood and Josephine Hull as Vita. And it was on TV in 1958.

Cowler likes the range of characters in the cast, especially the attendant who says of the patients who go in for a sanity treatment: "They go in really nice and come out normal – you know, temperamental, not generous. Wackiness is nicer."

Myrtle Mae will be played by Anne Collins, Dr. Chumley by Bill Chessman, Mrs. Chumley by Kelly Hansen, Nurse Kelly by Lori Wolford, Judge Gaffney by Jerry Telfer, Veta by Susan Chapple, Mrs. Chavaneaut by Suzan Lorain, Taxi Driver is Jim Fritz, and Wilson, the attendant, by Tom Westlake.

Suzan Lorraine will direct. She stepped in to do Starlight's *Cyrano*, her first classic directorial assignment, earlier in the season when artistic director Geotty Chapple became ill. She continues with *Harvey* while



STEVE CARLTON

Malcolm Cowler and Sonya Kreiden-Karaim in last year's Orinda Starlight production of *Bedful of Foreigners*.

Chapple recuperates.

*Harvey* opens September 11, playing Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m. and closes September 26 with a Thursday, 8 p.m. show on September 24 and a Sunday, September 20 show at 4 p.m. Performances are at the Orinda Community Park Amphitheater, 28 Orinda Way. Tickets range from \$7.50 - \$15. Call 925-253-1191 or go online to [www.orsvp.org](http://www.orsvp.org).

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Student Bridget Mendlor was just cast in the new Disney Channel series, *Good Luck Charlie*.

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## Orinda Theology Group

Members of the Orinda Community Church have started a theology discussion group. Open to anyone, meetings are every third Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. in the library of the church hall at 10 Irwin Way. The next meeting is September 15 at 7 p.m. The book currently under study is Deepak Chopra's *The Third Jesus* which may be purchased at Orinda Books. Mention Orinda Theologians to get a discount. Call 254-4906.



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TEEN from page 5

nection with Loudon's death. Patrick Gabrielli, 18, was the host of the party where Loudon died. He has been charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor and furnishing alcohol to a minor, leading to great bodily injury or death. French said that, though Loudon's death was not attributable to alcohol, Gabrielli "broke the law in furnishing alcohol to a minor."

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

The investigation also led to the arrest of a third person, 22-year-old Robert Scott of Rohnert Park, on suspicion of forgery and

MOFD from page 1

includes significant benefits that are costing taxpayers plenty. One provision of the plan, the "three percent at age 50," says an employee is eligible to collect three percent of his or her final annual salary for each year employed. Employees are allowed to factor in up to one year of accrued vacation time, unused sick leave, vacation buy-back, and service credits into their final pension calculation. Chief Nowicki has been employed by the county since 1977 and his current annual retirement is \$241,000.

While the Contra Costa County pension plan includes generous retirement packages, it also requires employees to pay significantly higher contributions. Under the county plan, Nowicki pays 26.5 percent of his annual salary into the plan. "Last year I paid \$54,000 into my retirement account," he says. Members of the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CALPR) pay approximately 9 percent.

"An overhaul of the entire system is needed," says MOFD board member and San

identity theft.

"He was selling IDs to kids in the Lamorinda area, including the 16-year-old who supplied the keg of beer and hard liquor at the party (where Loudon died)," said French.

French said that at the time of his arrest, Scott had \$10,000 in cash and about 100 fake IDs ready to go. He said Scott charged anywhere from \$160 for an average ID to \$300 for a "really good fake ID."

"He probably had another \$22,000 worth of fake IDs ready," said French. "These were professional fake IDs. This is not an amateur; he was good at it." French said the IDs were so authentic that people at a liquor store wouldn't be able to tell the difference between a real ID and a fake one, so they are

not holding liquor stores accountable.

However, liquor stores are aware that fake IDs are circulating. "Since Scott's arrest, staff at BevMo in Orinda have called the police several times with suspicious IDs and several arrests have been made as a result," said French.

French says police are still gathering evidence and continue to urge teens who were at the party to come forward. French declined to comment on whether Loudon's cell phone or cell phone records have been retrieved. The cell phone was nowhere to be found on the night of the party.

Anyone with information should call Det. Sgt. Andre Charles of the Orinda Police Department at 254-6820.

Francisco firefighter Brooke Mancinelli. Mancinelli, who now lives approximately 50 yards from where he grew up in the Sleepy Hollow area of Orinda, feels the county system is "a failure." Significant loses in the fund's investment portfolio have added to the dysfunction. Fellow board member Frank Sperling notes that the MOFD board has been trying to effect changes in the retirement system, including transferring possibly to CALPR or a two-tier 401(k) type plan. "Accomplishing that objective would take both the concurrence of Local 1230 and passage of a specific enabling act by the California State Legislature," Sperling says. The firefighters union says it is willing to look at different options. "If another system saves the district money and offers similar benefits, we'd be happy to look at it," says DeWeese.

According to board member John Wyro, MOFD is also grappling with a possible \$1.3 million raid of its funds by the State of California, which would cause more problems. "If we were to offer substan-

tially lower salaries and benefits than our competitors, our ability to recruit and retain the excellent firefighters/paramedics that we now have would be completely undercut." DeWeese notes that firefighters in the district already make below some districts such as San Ramon. "We've been working with a district negotiator to wrap up our own contract, which includes no pay increases for two years." DeWeese says that Chief Nowicki's direct negotiations with the board in a timely manner rangles the firefighters. "We have been without a contract for over eight months, and we can't get the board to sit down with us," he says. "Maybe we could all get together Obama-style, have a beer, and get this settled."

The application deadline for the chief's position was July 31. Approximately 51 candidates applied. Interview panels, which will include city officials, community members, and fire district personnel, are being put together. The district hopes to have a new chief in place by the end of September.

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2009

Publication Schedule

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

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



**BUSINESS BUZZ**

◆ **BUZZ** from page 20

books are donated to the Friends' Bookshop throughout the year. This community is very supportive," says Marcia Horne, bookshop chairperson. Home encourages parents to become involved with the Friends of the Orinda Library. "We are always happy to have new volunteers. During morning shifts, volunteers will sort donations downstairs and afternoon shifts are from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the bookshop."

In addition to the Friends' Bookshop, the Friends of the Orinda Library hosts large scale book sales six times a year. The next book sale takes place on Saturday, October 3, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the plaza level of the Orinda Library and adjacent to the Community Center. In addition to the usual large selection of books, the October sale features first editions and rare autographed copies. The holiday sale is slated for Saturday, December 5, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Friends' Bookshop is open Monday - Wednesday, 1-4 p.m., Thursday 1-6 p.m., Friday and Saturday 1-4 p.m. and is closed on Sunday. For more information, call 254-1358.

**ZL Financial Services**

A licensed stockbroker and insurance professional, Orinda native Carol Lu Zischke has 30 years of experience in personal finance management. This year she established ZL Financial Services at 21 "C" Orinda Way, focusing on small family owned and operated businesses.

Zischke's forte is working person to person. "I help families and family businesses of all types and all sizes with financial emergency preparedness. Because everything is fine until it isn't and when it isn't fine, it is usually a financial emergency," says Zischke. "It is so important to be prepared," she adds. Through a very confidential, comprehensive one hour free



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
**Carol Lu Zischke** has 30 years experience in personal finance.

interview, Zischke is able to determine priorities that need to be addressed.

"My perspective on financial emergency preparedness is affected by my background. My mother was widowed twice before I was born and the financial planning my mother did with her second husband carried her through the rest of her life. All four children went to college and graduate school because of their astute preparation," says Zischke, who understands trust fund management and extreme frugality and advises clients on management issues.

After attending Smith College, Zischke transferred to Mills College where she earned a bachelor's degree in international business and legal studies and, subsequently, a master's degree in business. She joined Merrill Lynch, where she was one of a few women working as a stockbroker at the time. Her early business career involved working in Norway at the Central Bank for Savings Bank.

In her spare time, Zischke enjoys volunteering in the community. She was a member of the Contra Costa County School Bus Committee and actively participated in creating the Lamorinda School Bus program which continues to serve local

students. She was also involved in launching the Lamorinda Senior Transportation Program. Zischke also enjoys gardening and playing piano. "My Dad enjoyed playing piano and instilled it in us."

Additional services offered by ZL Financial Services include Estate Tax Planning, Retirement Planning, Elder Care, and Business Succession Planning. "After a one hour

free consultation, I customize solutions for every individual client, tailoring possible solutions for every need." For more information about ZL Financial Services, email Zischke at c.zischke@yahoo.com or visit her blog at zlfincial.blogspot.com. You may reach Carol Zischke at 925-708-9761.

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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.

**Living Lean with Sheena Lakhotia**

This local businesswoman, Sheena Lakhotia, was inspired to help people reach their fitness goals most efficiently and what began three years ago as a one-on-one program in her Orinda living room has grown to include two business locations. You can find the Orinda Living Lean Program location at 115 Altarinda Road and the Montclair office at 1955 Mountain Blvd. You may recognize Sheena Lakhotia from



SALLY HOGARTY

**Sheena Lakhotia** is the enterprising owner of Living Lean.

*The Orinda News* "Move of the Month" exercise feature. In a nutshell, the plan is a customized exercise and menu program that explains how to exercise and eat each day

in order to lose fat and gain muscle most efficiently. "Many clients arrive already working out six days a week and believe they are eating healthy, but they have not been able to reach their fitness goal. I design a program that is exercise specific to build lean body mass and reduce fat with diet that supports that," explains Lakhotia. "People tend to overestimate how many calories they burn and underestimate how many calories they take in."

Providing education, direction and motivation is what Living Lean is all about. After Lakhotia completes a thorough evaluation with a new client to design the appropriate program, the client meets anywhere from one to six times a week with a trainer, depending on the client's need. These meetings are usually a combination of personal training and group exercise classes which are semi-private (up to four people involved). Lakhotia meets with each client once a week to discuss body fat testing, review diet and talk about overcoming obstacles. Daily email tips provide additional inspiration and motivation.

Lakhotia earned a bachelor's degree in genetics at U.C. Davis and went on to Cornell University, where she earned a master's in immunology and a master's in nutrition. While in graduate school, she taught fitness in the Physical Education department at Cornell. She is a certified trainer by the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America and has a sports nutrition certification from U.C. Davis. Sheena Lakhotia and her husband, Sunjay Lakhotia, moved to Orinda four years ago. He is director of business development for Portola Pharmaceuticals. The couple has two children, Shaili and Sachin, both of whom attend Sleepy Hollow School.



VALERIE HOTZ

**Kilty Huskisson** (R) and brother **Garrett Huskisson** enjoy a relaxing break at the Friends of the **Orinda Library Bookshop**.

Lakhotia points out she teaches people how to learn more about themselves: "Using exercise is a very effective way to get in touch with your spiritual side." She has 15 years of experience as a fitness instructor and a wealth of exercises to draw from for each custom plan. Dining out is not a hindrance to Living Lean. Several local restaurants provide Living Lean entrees, including Shelbys, Baan Thai, Casa Orinda, Geppetto's and Pizzeria Amoroma. For more information, visit the website, [www.thelivingleanprogram.com](http://www.thelivingleanprogram.com) or email Lakhotia at [sheena\\_lakhotia@yahoo.com](mailto:sheena_lakhotia@yahoo.com). You may also reach Lakhotia at 925-360-7051.

**The Friends' Bookshop Celebrates 8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The Friends of the Orinda Library Bookshop is an all volunteer used bookstore located next to the Orinda Library at 24 Orinda Way. Large windows create a very sunny exposure for browsers and one ceiling fan helps maintain a comfortable temperature on hot summer and autumn days. A comfortable brown leather easy chair invites one to linger for awhile.

Established when the new Orinda Library opened in 2001, the Friends' Bookshop

relies entirely on 60 volunteers to run the operation, which involves sorting donations one morning every week and keeping the bookshop open 20 hours a week. There is a wide assortment of books available at bargain prices. All-time favorite paperbacks are just 50 cents. The children's section is thoughtfully arranged, with stools for youngster to sit at eye-level with the bookshelves. One box is labeled "Fun Things to Make and Do" and contains an assortment of crafts books. A small children's video section is an added bonus. This is a great place to stock up on Harry Potter books.

The comprehensive catalog of books surprisingly includes recent publications and runs the gamut from fiction, non-fiction, self-help, spiritual, art collections and travel. The extensive travel section includes titles from the Rick Steves and Lonely Planet series, as well as *Let's Go Eastern Europe*. One corner of the Friends' Bookshop features first editions, *Fate is the Hunter* by Earnest K. Cann and *Northwest Passage* by Kenneth Roberts, among others.

"We have many new books, so called book club books that are a lot of fun. There are so many, I could not estimate how many


[SEE BUZZ page 19]

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