

THE ORINDA NEWS

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November 2009

First Kids Triathlon Scheduled for November 14

By FRAN MILLER
Staff Writer

Orinda's upcoming NorCalKids Triathlon is a product of Plato's philosophy that necessity is the mother of invention. Orinda's twofold necessity is the need to privately raise funds for popular community events, as well as provide unique activities for youth. The invention is the November 14 athletic event, which city officials hope will meet these two needs.

As city budget cuts have laid waste to funding of community events that Orindans have come to know and love, such as the Orinda Idol competition, 4th of July festivities, the annual Restaurant Tour and Starlight Village Players Drama in the Park, the Orinda City Council and community leaders have sought alternative revenue sources in order to maintain such programs.

"All community funding (about \$20,000 annually) was cut this past spring from the city general fund because the decline in revenues and state grab of local funds left a very lean budget, despite ongoing prudent management," says Orinda Mayor Sue

Severson. "The city council was firm and united in the opinion that all of our community events and activities are important and we are facing the reality that we will have to create revenue to fund them privately."

Enter the upcoming, first annual NorCalKids Triathlon, a cooperative venture between the City of Orinda, and the Miramonte Boosters' Club, Parents' Club, Healthy Choices Committee, Leadership Class, REACH and also OIS's leadership class and Others First community service group. The event's theme is "Tri 4 Health," promoting healthy physical, social and emotional choices to.

The event, to be held Saturday, November 14 at Miramonte High School from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., is open to all kindergarten through twelfth grade students and entails individual participation in swimming, biking and running. Course distances will be adjusted for age appropriateness and medals will be awarded to winners in each category. Competition is divided by grade level, K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12.

[SEE TRIATHLON page 18]



SALLY HOGARTY

(L-R) **Brittany Anderson, Liza Katz, Chris Thatcher, and Will Lavis** prepare for the first ever Kids Triathlon scheduled for November 14. The high school juniors are all members of Miramonte High School's leadership class and plan on working the event as well as entering the competition.

Acalanes District Asks Voters to Extend Parcel Tax

By MAGGIE SHARPE
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, Nov. 3, residents of the Acalanes Union High School District will cast their votes on Measure G, a proposed parcel tax of \$189 per year on each parcel of taxable real estate within the district. The high schools include Campolindo, Miramonte, Acalanes and Las

Lomas. The measure requires a two-thirds majority to pass.

The proposed tax would extend the existing parcel tax that is set to expire on June 30, 2011, which is also \$189 per year. If Measure G passes, it will go into effect on July 1, 2010 and the existing tax would not be collected after June 30, 2010. In other words, both taxes would not be collected

[SEE TAX page 6]

Long-Awaited Caldecott Tunnel Extension Begins in Late 2009



COURTESY OF CALTRANS, DIST 4,
JOHN HUSEBY PHOTOGRAPHER

A roadheader, like the one shown above at Devil's Slide, will be used to build the Caldecott Tunnel's fourth bore.

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

On September 29, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger opened four bids for the building of the fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel. The project would help reduce traffic congestion for over 160,000 motorists who travel the Highway 24 corridor daily.

The low bid was by Tutor-Saliba Corporation of Sylmar, California. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is currently reviewing the bid. If it is determined to be feasible, the contract will be awarded sometime in November. With over 50 years in major construction and engineering, Tutor-Saliba has over \$15 billion in completed projects. They are considered

[SEE TUNNEL page 4]

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Orinda Families Seek Release of Relatives Held in Iran

By EVA SASSON
Staff Writer

The Baha'i people are gathering as the one-year anniversary of the arrest of seven of the Baha'i leaders in Iran approaches. This anniversary is especially disheartening to several Orinda families related to these seven leaders (Yaran).

Orinda resident Pamela Carr, secretary of the spiritual assembly of the Baha'i says, "All members of the Orinda Baha'i community are deeply concerned for their co-religionists in Iran." Massoud Fanaieyan, information office for the local spiritual assembly of the Baha'i of Orinda, is related to one of the seven Yaran. His cousin Khanjani is one of those now in prison.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

(L-R) Ashraf Khanjani, Massoud Fanaieyan, Jamal Khanjani (one of the 7 imprisoned Baha'i), and Ziba Fanaieyan.

[SEE BAHAI page 18]



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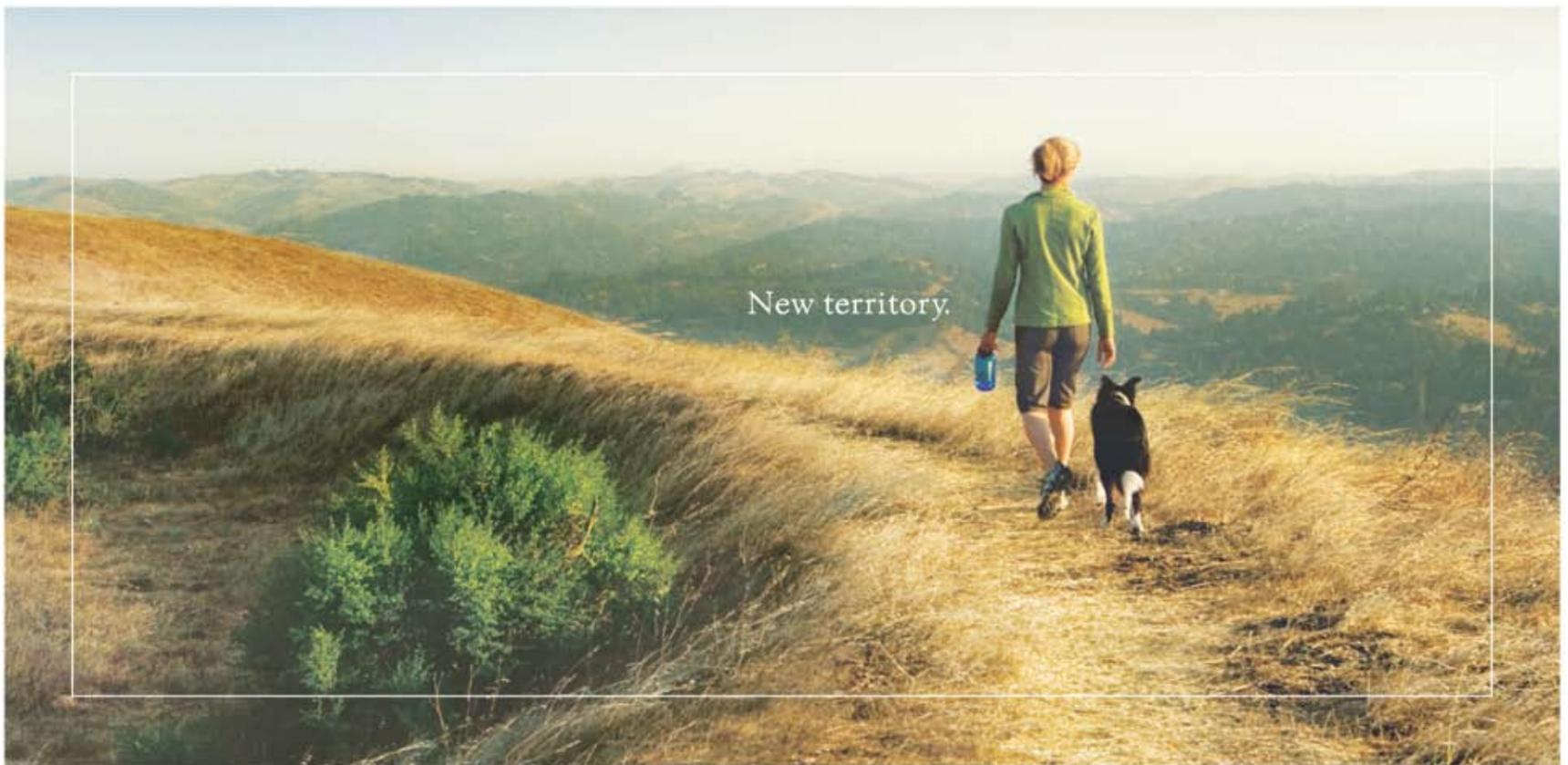
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ORINDA CLASSIC CAR SHOW



PHOTOS BY SALLY HOGARTY

(Clockwise from top L) **Arlen Ness**, legendary custom designer and builder, brought several of his motorcycles to the show which also included **Doug Johnson's 1954 Kaiser Darrin** white convertible. The **1935 tractor** was part of the **Orinda Motors/Historical Society exhibit**. The Orinda sign welcomed people to the exhibit entitled "Orinda Through the Ages," where visitors could read and view photos of Orinda with the actual cars that would have been driven at that time. An entire section of the show was devoted to race cars, that shared the street with these classic beauties, including hot rods – a big draw at the show.



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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President
Support the Home Town Team



Mark Roberts

Early November is a great time of year for sports fans. The high school, college and pro football seasons are in full swing. The pro basketball and hockey seasons are gaining momentum. College basketball will start in a few weeks. And baseball fans, like yours truly, are suffering a little withdrawal but just enjoyed an exciting playoff season and World Series.

Sports fans love to support and cheer for their home teams. What I'd like you to do is support and cheer for your home team -- in this case, Orinda, your home town.

I don't have to tell you that these are challenging times for all levels of government: federal, state, county and city. Finding funds to take care of essentials is difficult. Finding funds to take care of the things that aren't absolutely essential but which add to the quality of life in a community just aren't in the budget -- this year or next. Mayor Sue Severson and the members of the City Council have made that clear to all residents of Orinda. They don't like it, but they know that's the way it is and they want us to understand the situation.

Mayor Severson is encouraging donations by residents to the Orinda Community Fund to support the quality of life programs

The Orinda Association

The Orinda Association is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to:

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

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and services that we want and appreciate. From my past experience working as both [SEE PRESIDENT page 8]

Classic Car Show Helps Non-Profits

Orinda Motors and Chip Herman have done it again. This year's classic car show surpassed previous years in the amount of money raised for local non-profit groups. "Thanks to great sponsors and a great team, the 2009 Orinda Annual Car Show was a huge success," says Herman. The event raised a total of \$25,000 with the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program receiving \$17,500, the Educational Foundation of Orinda receiving \$5,000, and the Orinda Historical Society receiving \$2,500.

The lead sponsor was Orinda Motors with California Bank of Commerce sponsoring the "Dancing with the Cars" party held the evening prior to the car show. Supporting sponsors of the car show included: Avoderm, Bay Cities Paving, Capture Technologies, Clark Thompson-Village Associates, Container Trac, FedEx Kinko's, F'Real Foods, Living Lean, Mechanics Bank, MV Transportation,



CHARLIE JARRETT

Chip Herman and John Vanek presents Lucy Hupp Williams and Theresa Long of the Historical Society a check for \$2,500.

Romak Ironworks, Saags Specialty Meats, Safeway, and Scott Jones-Charles Schwab.

-Sally Hogarty

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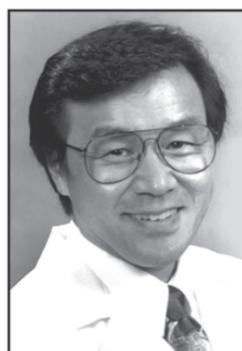
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Helping Those in Need – One Family at a Time

Almost one year ago, it was noted that the old Orinda Library stood empty and idle, awaiting demolition. That was some five years after a prior City Council tried to put the old library to good use as a temporary shelter for homeless families and seniors. Now, it is somewhat encouraging that via decisions of the current City Council, activity is ongoing to finalize plans and financing for use of the old library site for affordable senior housing (via Eden Housing), which moves Orinda toward meeting State of California requirements for providing such housing.

More encouraging is that throughout last winter, in the continued absence of a permanent location (e.g., not being able to use the old library), the Winter Nights Shelter housed, fed, tutored, and cared for 80 homeless family members and seniors. The reality also is that from 7/1/08 to 6/30/09 a total of 5,127 people used county homeless services (e.g., housing assistance,

etc). That number does not include family members that swelled those numbers even higher.

The planned affordable senior housing in Orinda is still some years away and county organizations are still far from solving the homeless situation. In fact, halfway through a 10-year plan to end homelessness, there has been little to no improvement.

But one program has made a difference – the Winter Nights Shelter program. During its five years of operation, the program has housed some 400 homeless folks. Significantly, now in its sixth season the Winter Nights Shelter will open again this October for the winter months through next April. Upwards of 1,000 unpaid volunteers augment the same paid workers to make the shelter program work.

So, as the season of thanks, giving and sharing arrives, the undersigned unpaid Winter Nights Shelter volunteer again asks for your support for the homeless of



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Volunteer Doug Merrill brings a carton of mattresses into the site of the first two-week long Winter Nights shelter.

our county. Please consider your more fortunate situations and send a donation to this effective organization, c/o the Interfaith Council of CCC (for the Winter Nights

Shelter), 1543 Sunnyvale Ave, Walnut Creek, CA 94597.

– Chet Martine, Orinda Resident and Winter Nights Volunteer

Letters To The Editor

Ban Leaf Blowers

We would like to support Susan and Peter Kendall's call for a ban on electric and gas-powered leaf blowers in Orinda (Letters to the Editor, Oct. 2009). We are new residents of Orinda, having moved here just over a year ago. We have been continually annoyed by the loud and intrusive whine of these machines from every direction in our neighborhood, and we are surprised that a community such as this would permit their use. We have often had to retreat from our backyard into our home when the assault of the leaf blowers begins in a neighbor's yard.

Beyond the annoyance these machines cause, they are, as we know, polluters that contribute to air quality problems and the larger problem of carbon emissions. And the simple truth about leaf blowers is that they are unnecessary. I am convinced that most gardening crews use leaf blowers in lieu of doing real gardening work. Blowing leaves and grass into the street or into the neighbor's yard serves no purpose. Simple rakes and brooms are sufficient for any necessary cleanup in the yard or garden.

Many communities have already banned the use of leafblowers. It is time for the Orinda City Council to do the same.

– Jeffrey Segall and Annette Ellgaard

Spinal Stenosis

Thank you to the Kendalls for calling attention to the incessant noise from leaf blowers reverberating through the Orinda hills. For a city that prides itself on being "semi-rural," anyone who lives here can attest to the inner-city cacophony these machines – electric or otherwise – inflict upon

us day in, and day out. On weekends, opening windows to the "fresh outdoors" has become an exercise in auditory survival.

Like the Kendalls, I have instructed our garden maintenance crew to rake and sweep. Their initial response was that it would take more time and, therefore, raise my costs for them to do so. That stated, I advised them that they should not return to the job. Need I add that they have since returned with rakes and brooms at no additional cost to me?

It does not take a city government ordinance, merely a spine to insist upon the service you require the way you desire it done. If some residents are generally absent during maintenance, they can advise their hired crew that any use of leaf blowers will be reported by accommodating neighbors and evidenced by their once clean, now leaf-blown dusty windows.

This is one of those issues easily resolved by community will and spine. We have it; let's use it.

– Charlie Brown

Protect Yourself From Flu

The flu season officially began in the month of October. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) are recommending that citizens take steps toward preventing the spread of influenza. Wash hands, avoid routinely touching your eyes and mouth, and stay home from school/work when experiencing flu-like symptoms. This year there are both seasonal and swine flus that may be contagious in our region. They are caused by distinctly different viruses. Vaccines are now available at pharmacies, clinics and doctors offices for seasonal flu. Swine (H1N1) flu vaccinations should also be available. There are also antiviral medi-

cations that can be taken orally within two days of having flu-like symptoms though efficacy is dependent upon which virus is contracted.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared a flu pandemic. To date, this is due not so much to the virulence of the flu viruses but rather to the spread of influenza across many geographic regions.

Populations in the southern hemisphere are well into the flu season with a large number of cases being reported. Check with your physician and/or the County Health Department for more information so that you and your family can be prepared for the upcoming flu season.

Wishing you health through the holidays,

– Dr. Bob Larsen

◆ TUNNEL from page 1

a major force as a heavy civil contractor with particular expertise in transportation.

Not only will the fourth bore project eliminate the bottleneck that occurs at the tunnel, it will also create nearly 6,000 jobs. The project has set a goal of hiring at least 3 percent of its contracted amount for under utilized business enterprises.

Scheduled to begin in late 2009/early 2010, the project calls for a two-lane, fourth bore north of the existing three bores. The new tunnel will be 41.25 feet wide with a total length of 3,389 feet. Crews will begin clearing trees, bushes and other landscape in December at both the east and west tunnel portals. Construction of a large, temporary soundwall at the west portal and the building of construction trailers at the east portal will also begin in late December or early January. The existing maintenance building will eventually be demolished and a new 2-story operations and maintenance building constructed.

Construction for the new bore will use an approach known as the New Austrian Tunneling Method (NATM), a sequential excavation method. It involves the use of large track-mounted machines (known as roadheaders) with a rotating cutter head located at the end of a hydraulically

controlled boom. Construction crews will excavate a portion of the tunnel cross section and install support for that section prior to excavating the next portion. It is also anticipated that controlled blasting may be necessary for harder rock sections. Once the tunnel has been excavated, a waterproof membrane will be installed on the roof and sidewalls followed by the installation of the final cast-in-place concrete lining.

Upon completion, the new bore and the existing northernmost bore will be permanently dedicated to westbound traffic, while the two southernmost bores will carry eastbound traffic. The new configuration will eliminate the current situation where workers at the tunnel must reverse the traffic direction in the center bore twice a day to accommodate the morning and evening commutes.

The project is a partnership between Caltrans, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, and the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency. Financing, estimated at \$420 million, comes from state, local and federal funds. This includes \$11 million from Proposition 1B, approved by voters in 2006, as well as the \$197.7 million the state secured from the federal government through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act).

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

Send letters to: Editor, *The Orinda News*, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, fax them to 254-8312, or email to news@orindaassociation.org. Letters to the Editor for the December issue are due November 5, 2009.

For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the January issue is November 16, 2009.

POLICE



POLICE BLOTTER

September 2009

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 122 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Auto Burglary (theft from a locked vehicle): 7 incidents reported on Camino Pablo, Claremont Ave., La Vuelta, Moraga Way, Altarinda and 2 on Robert Rd.

Commercial Burglary: 1 incident reported on Moraga Way.

Grand Theft (theft of more than \$400 value): 2 incidents reported on Davis Rd. and Coachwood Terrace.

Petty Theft From Vehicle (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 2 incidents reported on Van Ripper Ln. and Sleepy Hollow Ln.

Residential Burglary: 6 incidents reported on Camino Sobrante, Las Vegas Rd., Van Tassel, Southwood Ct., Carisbrook Dr. and Idyll Ct.

Stolen Vehicle 1 stolen vehicle discovered on Lombardy Ln.

Vandalism: 2 incidents reported on Moraga Way and Glorietta Blvd.

Arrests

Alcohol – Minor in Possession: 1 arrest made on Camino Sobrante.

Battery Domestic: 1 arrest made at Glorietta Ct.

Burglary – Commercial: 1 arrest made on Moraga Way.

Driving Under Influence: 4 arrests were made on Lombardy and Tarry Ln., Moraga Way, Camino Pablo and Brookside Rd.

Drunk in Public: 4 arrests made on Happy Valley/Sundown Terrace, Brookwood/Moraga Way, Moraga Way and Descanso Dr.

Other Infraction: 1 arrest made on Silver Oak Terrace at Sundown Terrace.

Other - Misdemeanor: 2 arrests were made on Happy Valley Rd. and Brookwood at Spring Ct.

Receiving Stolen Property: 1 arrest made on Austin Ct.

Warrant Arrests: 1 warrant arrest was made on Gateway Blvd.

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving, Orinda Police Department

Chief William French Returns to His Roots

By MAGGIE SHARPE
Staff Writer

Police Chief William French is happy to be back in Orinda, serving the community where he grew up. French was appointed chief in January, 2007, capping off nearly 25 years with the Office of the Sheriff, which provides police service to Orinda.

“I always had an interest in law enforcement,” says French, whose family moved to Orinda from Hartford, Connecticut in 1969. Two years later, they relocated to Moraga where French graduated from Campolindo High School in 1978.

French went on to study criminal justice at Diablo Valley College. He earned his degree in criminal justice from Cal State Hayward in 1983 and enrolled in the Police Academy.

At the time, French says, there were lots of jobs and opportunities with the Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff, which is headquartered in Martinez.

Over the span of his career, French



SALLY HOGARTY

Orinda Police Chief Bill French.

has worked in the jail, on patrol, the vice squad, as a detective – and also 6-plus years working undercover. He was promoted to sergeant, lieutenant and finally chief.

“They were all different experiences at different jobs and ranks and parts of the county – experience that I am able to offer to the City of Orinda,” says French.

[SEE FRENCH page 8]

Publish Your Story

By Evan Corstorphine, Portable CIO

In 1983, I purchased a TRS-80 computer for my father. He enjoyed writing, and it enabled him to type and save his correspondence. It meant the demise of his old Royal typewriter, but he loved the new concept of “word processing” and that Delete Key. We upgraded him to a regular PC a short time thereafter, and from there we moved him to a Macintosh Classic. He eventually ended up with a modern eMachines desktop PC, and that is what he used until the day he could no longer type.

While we were busy with our lives, he spent hours and hours at that computer typing what he called his “memories.” He filled floppy disks with his stories, and over the years I transferred that information from computer to computer, program to program, disk to disk.

Over time, his health began to fail. It became apparent that his efforts were amounting to something significant, and my mother-in-law offered to edit these memories into some semblance of a readable compilation. She spent a lot of time reading, editing and clarifying his work. My wife, Alisa, took it to the next level, and added scanned pictures from his photo albums, and from those of relatives who’ve passed away. By now, his compilation of memories had swelled to over 300 pages.

Around this time, my wife had found Lulu.com while publishing a friend’s self-written recipe book. This experience gave her the confidence to suggest publishing my father’s work into book form. Eventually, the *Autobiography of John L.*

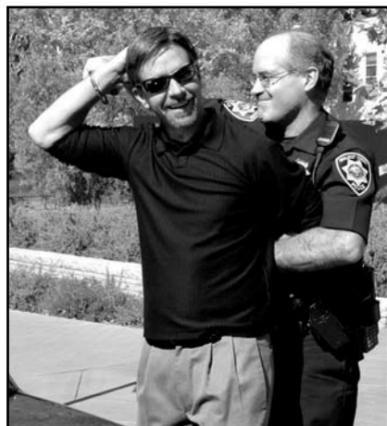
Corstorphine - Memories of a Hawaiian Childhood became a reality. Since it was published, we’ve given copies to all of our relatives and also to the Kauai Historical Society, who have an extensive file on the Corstorphines and Lydgates of Kauai.

Lulu.Com is a fantastic website for self-publishing. Everyone has a past, and as we get older, I believe it’s our responsibility to give our children an honest, unabridged perspective on where we’ve been and what makes us tick. If you’ve taken the time to write your memories, Lulu is an excellent way to publish your work. You can publish anything you want through their website, whether it’s print, voice, or video. Publishing doesn’t cost any money. They make money when individual copies of the books are sold. My father’s book is \$15 and is a professionally bound paperback with thick glossy covers and nice paper. Yours can be more or less fancy, with hardback or paperback. Lulu also will assign your work an ISBN, so that it can be found on popular websites such as Amazon.com.

Although my father passed away before he could see his “memories” published in book form, he knew the project was in progress and that it would be completed. He gave his children and society a wonderful gift. I’m sure you have a gift to offer, too, and all it takes is to start writing. The inspiration and motivation comes from you, and our passion is helping people like you reach their goals. You’ll want a healthy computer system to start your project, so if you need some help, contact Portable CIO at 925-552-7953 or email us at info@theportablecio.com.

Going to Jail for a Good Cause

Orinda resident Edward Duncan is cuffed by Officer Jim Boucher, also an Orinda resident, and taken to jail as part of a fundraiser for Jerry’s Kids. Money posted to “bail out” Duncan went to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.



Mark Roberts

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MORTGAGE MYTH

◆ TAX from page 1

at the same time.

Measure G does not contain a “sunset” clause, which means it would be collected indefinitely. It does contain a senior citizen exemption for those 65 and older. The senior citizen must fill out the appropriate application form. If the senior has already established exemption under the current parcel tax, that exemption rolls over into the new tax.

School District Superintendent John Stockton says it is essential to the continued success of the schools that Measure G passes. Big cuts to the state education funds have forced the district to trim \$6 million from its budget.

“Measure G represents more than 70 full-time teacher positions,” says Stockton. “With an average of 69 teachers at each high school, that represents the teaching staff at one entire school.”

The \$6 million loss to the district over the past two years translates into the elimination of 19 teaching jobs last year and a predicted 15 teaching jobs next year.

Stockton says the income from the parcel tax is what differentiates Acalanes schools from other surrounding districts. “Without it we would have run-of-the-mill schools with few electives and less co-curricular offerings,” says Stockton. “It would take us back to a subsistence level school district.” Stockton says parcel tax monies keep core academic programs at a “vibrant level.” The money also goes to elective courses, visual and performing arts, and school library hours.

Students won’t be the only ones to benefit from the passing of Measure G. The \$189 per year that property owners pay reaps big rewards in terms of their home values, says Stockton. “The assessed value of property is up in the district this year compared to all other districts in the state

[where property values have fallen],” says Stockton.

In fact, says Stockton, Realtors are constantly checking with the district to see if a particular house is within the district boundaries.

Not all residents are enthusiastic about Measure G, however. Donald Lively of the Lafayette Taxpayers Association says there is no need for Measure G. “There is absolutely no need to pass this tax now – an existing one of the same amount won’t expire until June of 2011. 2011 is the time to let voters decide if a tax renewal is needed.”

Lively says there is a “strong flavor of questionable ethics” in the manner in which the measure was placed on the Nov. 3 ballot. “They waited to the last minute deadline which resulted in no time for the opposition material to be provided in voter ballot pamphlets, thus getting only one side of the measure to voters.”

Lively says that Lafayette Taxpayers Association has an “excellent record of supporting genuine tax needs, but also opposing unethical or wants-focused tax measures.”

“Tax revenues should always be supported for needs such as student safety, infrastructure integrity and modernization of education support elements, such as technology upgrades. The district’s last tax measure devoted substantial sums to ‘wants’ like artificial turf playing fields, new sports lighting and new tennis courts.”

Lively urges a “No” vote on Measure G, “particularly so voters can get a full story when the current tax expires in 2011.”

Despite the measure’s detractors, Stockton says the community in general is very positive about the education system. He says that the biggest challenge is winning the two-thirds majority that is needed to pass Measure G. “The minority can stop the majority,” says Stockton.

The Myth About Mortgage Rates

By AL SANLI
Contributing Writer

As a long time local mortgage professional, the two questions I have been asked the most by Orinda residents over the years are “What is the interest rate?” and “Will the rates go up or down?”

Interest rates are determined on a case-by-case basis depending on each individual’s credit, income, employment, reserves, equity and type of loan required. People have a tendency to compare rates. However, no matter how closely your circumstances compare with your friend’s or neighbor’s situation, your rates can still be different even if your loans are established around the same time. This is due to the fact that rates change every day — possibly even two to three times a day, or your friend may have paid a point.

Will rates go up or down? The correct answer is that no one knows. There are a lot of predictions, but it’s like the stock market -- a guessing game. It’s important to know that mortgage rates are tied to the Treasury bond market. If there is a good demand for bonds, the rates will go down. There are so many factors affecting the bond market such as home sales, consumer confidence, retail sales, construction spending, gross domestic product, factory orders, producer price index and more. However, the most significant impact is based on inflation and unemployment. The bond market doesn’t respond well to inflation. If inflation goes up, interest rates go up. It’s a different story when it comes to unemployment. High unemployment means lower mortgage rates. Overall, if the economy is slow and things are negative, mortgage rates will go down. This is due to the fact that investors are going to buy safe haven treasury bonds instead of more volatile stocks and other investments.

Based on this information how can you secure the best rate to either refinance or purchase? Contact a mortgage professional familiar with the Lamorinda housing market to review your circumstances. Choose a target rate that will benefit you. Provide the necessary documentation up front so you can get approved and have your agent lock the rate when it becomes available. Keep in mind that you will have less flexibility with a purchase transaction.

Pay attention to the important details.

1) Make sure you receive a Good Faith Estimate in writing that clearly shows all the fees including the amount of compensation going to the loan agent. Please note you have less of a chance of seeing this number from retail banks because they are not required to disclose the rebate. The main difference in working with a broker versus retail bank is that with an established broker you will have access to rates from a large number of various lenders including those from your banks wholesale division.

2) Ask the loan agent what his/her fee will be and how it will be paid. Most of the time agents are paid by lenders when their clients take a certain rate. This payment is called “Yield Spread Premium” and is mostly advertised as a “No Point” loan. If the lender compensation to the broker is good enough to pay the client’s closing costs and still make a reasonable profit, then these loans can become the “No Cost/No Point” loans that you hear about on the radio.

3) Another alternative is that brokers and banks can be paid directly from a client by providing a par or below market rate (lower rate with no lender/investor compensation and borrower pays the agreed fee to the broker or bank through escrow). This type of arrangement may become more financially beneficial to you if you are considering a long term fixed loan.

4) Be careful not to be a victim of “pocket lock.” This means that when the rate goes down lower than your target rate, the agent locks the rate you agreed on and receives additional compensation without passing the benefit to you.

5) Paying your taxes and insurance with your mortgage payment as an impound account may lower your rate. Also, shorter term rate locks may help you to get a better rate such as 15 days lock versus 30 days. Your loan needs to already be approved.

6) Always ask for a loan comparison sheet that clearly shows and compares all your options next to each other. That way you will know if it makes sense to pay points for a lower rate.

The reasons that I have outlined above demonstrate why it is very important to work with a mortgage professional who has a good reputation and will disclose all

[SEE MORTGAGE page 18]

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AROUND THE TOWN



CAR TIME

Nostalgia

by ALLEN PENNEBAKER

Well, last month Orinda Motors again sponsored the fifth annual Orinda Classic Car Show. This event has grown from its roots as the brainchild of Orinda Motors' Service Manager John Vanek and prominent Orinda resident Chip Herman, Begun with 22 cars, it has grown to this year's 135 vehicles and \$25,000 in contributions for local charities. Through the work of John, Chip and many volunteers, the Orinda Classic Car Show has become one of Orinda's biggest, best-attended events.

This year John had a new idea. What about the natural symbiosis of the Orinda Historical Society and all of these classic vehicles, most of which come from right here in Orinda – another brainstorm. So he had a vision and decided to call the Historical Society and see if there was any interest. Well guess what, they loved the idea. Lucy Hupp Williams and Theresa Long got on board and started thinking about how it could work. So with numerous phone calls and a couple of face-to-face meetings the idea got transformed into a reality.

Between all his work with Chip putting on the car show and now with the Historical Society, it is a wonder that John got any work done in running Orinda Motors. As someone who originally moved to Orinda in 1954 and went through 12 years of school with a 1972 graduation from Miramonte, for me it was an incredible walk down memory lane: pictures of the original tunnel next to a 1929 Ford Model "A," pictures of the barely developed crossroads next to a very rare 1933 Continental Ace; pictures

of our own Orinda Motors, when there was still a riding stable next door, next to a 1960's vintage Pontiac; pictures of the bridge at the end of Orinda Way, Orinda sign in place, next to more vintage twenties vehicles; and pictures of the Orinda Highway 24 interchange before there were even paved roads. Over 20 blown up photos interspersed with 10 classic cars, and even a vintage tractor brought to life Orinda from the 1920s through 1980s.

But this was not just a chance for those of us that loved the walk down memory lane, but a true eye opener for the newer residents of Orinda. And this translated into a huge amount of interest in the work of the Historical Society. All day people were wandering through Orinda Motors enjoying the interaction between the cars and the pictures and then spending time with former Mayor Bill Judge and Theresa Long to talk about the Society, its purpose, and goals. And the Orinda Classic Car show generated over \$25,000 in donations for its charities which included the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town Program and the Educational Fund of Orinda. The Orinda Historical Society received a check for \$2,500 from the proceeds.

Thanks to Orinda Motors' John Vanek along with Theresa and Lucy from the Historical Society for what turned out to be an amazing addition to the ever growing and improving Orinda Classic Car Show.

You can reach Allen Pennebakker, owner of Orinda Motors Inc. at allen@orindamotors.com or call 254-2012.

Chamber Restaurant Tour a Success



PETRA MICHEL

Orinda Idol winners and finalists entertained guests on the cross-town trolley during the Chamber of Commerce's second annual restaurant tour. Here **Joe Metheny** sings as guests wait to board the trolley.

Orinda Resident Named to Muir Health Foundation

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

John Muir Health Foundation, the charitable fundraising organization for all John Muir Health programs and services, announced today that local business executives Jack Thompson (Alamo) and John Sayres (Orinda) have been named board members of the John Muir Health Foundation.

The two East Bay residents will help lead the Foundation's "Breaking New Ground Right Here" Capital Campaign, which is raising funds to support John Muir Health's current \$800 million hospital expansion and renovation projects at its Concord and Walnut Creek hospitals.

This is Sayres' first involvement with the John Muir Health Foundation. A senior advisor with the technology investment



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

John Sayres is named to board of John Muir Health Foundation.

banking group of Morgan Stanley and a member of several fundraising committees
[SEE SAYRES page 16]

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CONTINUATIONS

◆ **PRESIDENT** from page 3

a professional and volunteer fundraiser for several local non-profit organizations, I know that there are a large number of exceptionally generous people in this town who support a wide variety of institutions, causes, programs and services. I'm asking them – and all of us – to keep just a little more of our charitable donations here in Orinda for the next few years.

I'm certainly not suggesting that we become self-centered or selfish. I just want to make sure that we continue to fund programs and services that we have come to expect as part of living in Orinda. These benefit our children and youth, our schools, our seniors, our public safety agencies, arts and culture – and, at least indirectly, all of us because they make Orinda such a vibrant and livable community.

Please visit the City of Orinda's website, www.ci.orinda.ca.us, to learn more about the Orinda Community Fund (lower right corner on the home page), the programs it supports, and how you can participate to

support the home team.

Speaking of the city, we all have a special anniversary to celebrate next year. The City of Orinda was incorporated in 1985 so 2010 will mark our 25th year as a self-governing community. Many special events are being planned including, of course, the silver anniversary-themed Fourth of July parade and celebration. To make that happen, the city and the Orinda Association need YOUR help.

It's great to have hundreds of participants in the parade and thousands of spectators cheering them on each year. But it takes a lot of time and energy to plan and present the parade. The OA board and a small but mighty team of volunteers make it happen each year. We need new energy and enthusiasm to plan next year's event. So now is the time for all of you who have said, or at least thought, "I'd like to see them do (fill in the blank) in or with the parade (or activities in the park afterward)." You can be one of "them"! Your time, talent and, yes, hard work will be rewarded with a tremendous sense of pride and satisfaction on the Fourth

of July next year. For more information, please let us know your interest by sending a message to oa@orindaassociation.org.

There's no need to wait until next July to get involved. If you're an OA member, we need your help NOW. As part of the OA's agreement with the city to staff the Volunteer Center at the OA office on the Plaza level of the Library for 30 hours each week, we're actively seeking volunteers who can contribute three or four hours each week to welcome visitors, answer questions, and

help connect volunteers with organizations or activities that need them.

Please visit the OA's website, www.orindaassociation.org, for more information on how you can help the OA and help others to realize the satisfaction that comes from getting involved.

No matter what sport you're a fan of or what team you root for, every Orinda resident is a winner when they support the home town team. Jump on the bandwagon TODAY!

◆ **FRENCH** from page 5

He says one of his favorite assignments was on special patrol for the "J Team" whose mission was to arrest criminals for drug and weapons violations. At the time, there was a lot of rock cocaine and methamphetamines being sold.

"I saw how drugs can destroy people, families and communities," says French. "I wanted to enforce the laws and put people in jail who were doing that."

French adds wryly that he's not a big fan of those who break the law. At the same time, he says he's very aware of the power granted to police and never misuses his power or position.

"I'm always fair," says French. "I know that the power we have can change a person's life and change their freedom."

Over the years, French has learned plenty of lessons, sometimes the hard way. One of these lessons is to always expect the unexpected.

Thankfully, most residential burglaries in Orinda are not crimes of violence,

but they still rank as one of the city's most commonplace crimes.

Houses that are isolated are frequent targets; burglars tend to strike during the day, when people are out at work. "The burglars knock on the front door, and if there is no reply they break in and steal jewelry, cash and computers, things that they can pawn quickly," says French.

He stresses that residents – and businesses – should buy and use alarms, including car alarms.

"Make it as tough as possible for crooks to break into your house or car. If everything is secure, they'll pass on your house and move on to the next one," he says. French urges citizens to lock up their property, install and use alarms, and be vigilant about their surroundings.

Chief French, who now lives in Solano County with his wife Shelby and their teenage son and daughter, is a big sports fan. He follows baseball and coached Little League when his son was younger. He's also a Notre Dame College football fan – a passion he traces to his Irish roots.

French says he also maintains "a passion for doing a good job and serving the community."

"This is my 26th year in law enforcement, and I still enjoy the job and my position as Chief in Orinda," he says. "I have great people who work for me."

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ORINDA JUNIORS / SEASON SHOPPER

Orinda Juniors Foster Friendships

By KSENIJA SOSTER OLMER
Staff Writer

Studies show that when children come into a woman's life one of the first things that goes by the wayside is friendships. Busy moms, either working outside the home or managing the family are always pressed for time. But over 20 Orinda moms have found a perfect way to combine friendship, a deserved break from family responsibilities, and providing important service to their local and wider Bay Area community through Orinda Junior Women's Club.

At a recent open house attended by prospective members, Julie Mercer, vice dean of the group said exactly what the moms needed to hear, "We are very different from our sister organizations in Lafayette and Moraga. We do not spend a lot of time on big fundraisers but prefer hands on service projects."

Orinda Juniors keep their hands busy at monthly meetings, whether making sauces and jams for sale or decorating pumpkins to present to the residents of the Orinda Convalescent Home at Halloween or stuffing Easter Baskets for siblings of sick children at the Children's Hospital.

In fact, there is a plethora of seasonal activities and projects throughout the whole year. For Halloween, the group presents its

decorated pumpkins to the convalescent home while member's children parade around in costumes brightening up the day for residents. December brings a holiday family adoption through a different organization every year, making holidays a little more cheerful for those in need. Besides the Easter baskets for the hospital, members make spring a little brighter with a party for the children who live at the transitional housing facility of STAND! Against Domestic Violence. Each child also gets a backpack filled with art supplies that can help fill up the time while they are waiting for their moms who receive counseling and other support. April is the month for the group's literary arts program, Youth Ink Writing Contest, for budding middle school writers that attend Orinda schools or live in Orinda. And summer offers many opportunities to partner with local community organizations to provide volunteer hours and resources to local community events such as the Orinda Association's 4th of July, Haley's Run for a Reason, and others.

Long time member and former membership chair Diane Eames says it was natural for her to join the Orinda Juniors. "I inherited a sense of community involvement from my family. I find it very helpful to meet mothers of different aged kids in our group, though our friendship is not solely rooted in motherhood."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
William Poulter, a second grader at Wagner Ranch, was among the children who brought joy to residents at the Orinda Convalescent Hospital.

A new member, Charlene Robinson, took on the duty of hospitality and social chair and just finished her first project. "I helped with the set up for the 4th of July celebration, and it was not hard to start at 6:30 a.m. when you are surrounded by friends."

Lisa Rodriguez, publicity and community liaison was introduced to the Orinda Juniors like many other moms – through a good friend with kids the same age in preschool. She says, "It is a good fit for a busy mom with two young kids because it combines community service with getting to know new people in the community. Because of her personal interest in writing Rodriguez

has resurrected an old project and has been for the last two years on the forefront of the Youth Ink Writing Contest.

Molly Griffin Wilson, the president of the organization, is excited about the interest of the women in the community: "We are planning to continue to reach out to the community this year. It doesn't matter if you are a stay at home mom, a working mom or a student; we know how to mix business with fun. In the limited time our busy schedules allow, we can make a big impact."

For more information on Orinda Juniors, email Orinda.juniors@yahoo.com.

Seasoned Shopper

Peppers and Sweet Potatoes

BARBARA KOB SAR

The flurry of activity every Saturday morning on Orinda Way doesn't end until November 21. The local farmers market is still brimming with colorful fresh produce and specialty foods ready to help us with the upcoming celebrations.

Peppers are particularly pleasing. I think they're the quintessential fall fare, with brilliant colors of red, orange, yellow and purple reflecting the colors of the surrounding hillsides. From mildly spicy to blazing hot, peppers ease us into the coolest months of the year and shout out loud that the holi-



BARBARA KOB SAR
Noel Ledesma, a popular organic grower at the Orinda Farmers' Market, sells beautiful peppers.

day season is fast approaching.

All peppers are members of the capsicum family, and it's the amount of heat compound called capsaicin, not the color, that determines their degree of heat. Depending on growing conditions, the heat factor varies in peppers – even those grown from identical seeds.

In 1912, Wilbur Scoville developed a test to measure the heat of chilies in what's known as Scoville units. Bell peppers measure 0 – 99 units for example, while jalapenos and Fresno peppers are at the 5,000 to 14,999 mark, and the habanero and tepin are a searing 100,000 to 300,000 units.

Bell peppers are the best knows of the sweet peppers. Virtually all are green in color at the "ready-to-pick" but immature stage, and then turn to those amazing hues of red, yellow or purple (depending on variety) as they ripen and mature. Other sweet peppers include Gypsy peppers, Hungarian wax and pimientos – but there are dozens and dozens of varieties world wide.

The "heat" of the hot chili peppers is con-

[SEE SEASONED page 16]

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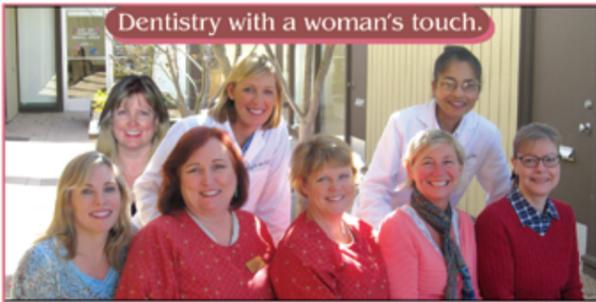
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Travel In The New Economy

By CHRISTINE TEMPLE-WOLFE
Contributing Writer

An entirely new, and much less expensive, vacation option whisked my family off to a wonderful vacation this past summer that I won't soon forget. Thanks to a home exchange website, we saved approximately \$11,000, stayed in a beautiful home with a pool, and our own house survived with nothing more than a few scratches and bumps.

The process started about six months ago when I ran across a website called www.homeexchange.com. After looking around the website, I realized that thousands of

largest expenses, so think about the option of exchanging your vehicles.

And third, document a thorough contract to protect yourself from liability issues.

Sample contracts are located on the homeexchange.com website, but they are merely templates, which you and the other family can modify to include your key concerns.

Some things that you can include in your contract are:

- Anything broken, you must replace;
- Any injuries incurred on your property are not your responsibility;
- Be respectful of my property and my



CHRISTINE TEMPLE-WOLFE and her son exchanged their house in Orinda for this one on Maui.

people across the world exchange their private homes with others to enjoy cost-effective travel.

While I don't think I took it that seriously at first, I did find my curiosity getting the best of me and I signed up for a year. For \$100, I registered my home, uploaded indoor and outdoor photos to my page for all to see. I perused other profiles and got a sense of their preferences for exchange.

Most families in the Bay Area desired exchanges with someone in Europe, Russian or Asia. My interest was more humble. I wanted to visit the western United States with my whole family, including our two four legged members, for the purpose of seeing where we would feel most comfortable living in our retirement. For the most part, I guess I wanted to see if someone would want to come and live in my home. Did I have a desirable enough location? Was it new enough, pretty enough?

My first email was from a family in Maui, Hawaii. They were interested in coming to the Bay Area for a month to visit family and friends. Wow, how could this be a bad thing?

A week later, I received an inquiry from a woman in New York City. She had a flat across from Central Park and wished to exchange in the summer for a few weeks. And a few days later, an inquiry came from a professional couple in Capetown, South Africa.

Conversations continued with the family from Maui, Hawaii, and before I knew it, I was on a United flight with my family for a month long vacation in a home located in a gated community near Wailea.

We had such a wonderful experience that I encourage others to try this new way of vacationing. If you and your family are thinking about trying a home exchange program, here are some things to think about:

First, you can choose the time period you would like to exchange. It can be a week, two weeks, or two months. It's up to the homeowners involved.

Second, you can exchange automobiles as well as homes to keep your costs low. When traveling, renting a car is one of your

neighbors;

You have "x" days to note damage to the house – in other words, produce a claim to the visitor so that it can be taken care of fairly and promptly;

Who will be responsible for housekeeping;

Who will be responsible for the garden care;

If utility bill is greater than annual average, visitor should pay the difference;

Visitors should pay homeowner for long distance telephone calls made;

Cars should be cleaned and filled with gas before leaving and upon conclusion of your stay;

Complete a thorough check of your home to note any damage that visitors should pay for.

These are just a few things to help cover the safety of your home and property as well as help you enjoy your time away without worry. You are certainly able to add whatever you wish, send to your visiting family for their additions and then you can both sign and exchange. This contract will serve as a document to enunciate a common understanding of your expectations.

Set up a few meetings where you can talk over the phone, if possible meet their friends.

Make sure the number of bedrooms and size of beds meets the needs of each family. Pack away valuables. Move private paperwork so it can't be seen. Write instructions for entertainment equipment.

If you are going to exchange vehicles, exchange insurance policies so you are comfortable with the level of coverage to operate your vehicle(s).

Keep in touch during your vacation so you know the best spots in your respective areas. Keep in touch with neighbors, housekeepers, etc so they can be your eyes and ears at home while you are away.

If you are a member of a homeowners group, make sure you are not breaking the rules – there may be fines involved.

The most important reason to participate in a home exchange is to save money while

[SEE TRAVEL page 18]

ART GALLERY

Elegant Wood Turned Vessels, Youth Sport Watercolors and Bold Acrylics

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The October exhibit at the Orinda Library Gallery showcases two individual artists – Betty Li, with her bold acrylics on canvas and Robert Becker, a local plein air watercolorist. The Bay Area Woodturners Association will also be showing work from over a dozen talented woodturners. The diverse exhibit runs from Sunday, November 1 through the end of the month, with an artists' reception scheduled for Thursday, November 5, from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Betty Li grew up in China surrounded by artists – her father created an art center at the University in Shenzhen. She began painting at the University of Vermont (Studio Arts) when she became homesick for the artistic environment she'd grown up in. Of the 20 pieces in the show, most are acrylic on canvas. Li describes her work as abstract impressionist, with some figurative work, but favors vibrant colors.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jacques Blumers' bowls made from olive trees that were removed for a construction project on Heegenberger Road.

Works from her "Teapot Series" will be featured at the exhibit (see web.mac.com/beichenli). She believes that, "Art is a tool to collect people, to tell our story, to share what we enjoy in life, whether one is the artist or the viewer."

Robert Beck is a plein air watercolorist who you will find (brushes and paints in hand) at soccer and baseball games, swim meets, and any number of youth sports activities. With three children in local schools, he decided to start painting the experiences of the people where he lives doing what they are doing. Of the thirty plus watercolors shown, locals may recognize the characters at various youth sports activities ("OMPA Warm-ups") along with local and international landscapes. At a recent North Tahoe Paint Out, Beck produced "Emerald Bay," which will be in the show as well.

The Lafayette Library recently acquired a number of his youth sports paintings for their permanent collection; Beck is donating 10 percent of the purchase price to the Education Foundational of Orinda. He specializes in architectural illustrations, and personal portraits such as "Coach Steve" at the Orinda Country Club. See www.robertbecker.com. A strong believer in art throughout our community, Becker says, "Having diverse artistic expression is extremely important for a well rounded community; each medium – fine arts, crafts, sculpture, dance, song, the written word – promotes diversity in thinking."

The Bay Area Woodturners Associa-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Robert Becker's Plein Air watercolor depicts a swim meet at Orinda Moraga Pools Association.

tion (BAWA) meets in San Ramon at the Senior Center on the second Saturday of each month, www.bayareawoodturners.org; their goal is to encourage the art and fellowship of woodturning. Of the dozen or so wood artists exhibiting, there is a wide range of skills from national prize winners to hobbyists, to give everyone in the group a chance to show their work. According to

Rosalind Harper, "It's a very tactile sort of art – you can do spindle turning, bowl turning, large and small objects, and you can see the results of your work quickly. We only use recycled wood or found local wood." Harper joined the group to learn from her colleagues, who she describes as, "Very generous in sharing their secrets."

Works such as open and lidded vessels, [SEE GALLERY page 16]

Artisan and Wine Faire at Country Club

By BARBARA DUFF
Contributing Writer

A group of artisans will display their unique approach to various mediums at the Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, on Thursday, November 19 from 4–8 p.m. Works of art will include jewelry, glass, ceramics, woodwork, fabric, weaving, photography and paintings. A selection of wineries, including the local Amaranthe, will offer tasting of a variety of wines that will also be for sale.

A volunteer group of local craftsmen and art lovers have been working for several months to bring this show together. Their goal is to offer a wide variety of work so many different tastes can be satisfied. The venue offers a pleasant environment to come and meet the artists and discuss



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Carol Zeman specializes in animal portraits. Above is a portrait of one of her own King Charles Spaniels.

their work.

Included in the show is jeweler Gail Solt. She has a background in photography, painting furniture, and working with

[SEE ARTISAN page 16]

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Tues., Nov. 17, 7 p.m.
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Backyard Getaways and Beyond
 Southern Africa-Off the Beaten Path

Ksenija Soster Olmer



“I have a game plan,” says our guide, Helmo, as we enter Kruger National Park. “We go straight for the cats.” Since this is our third time in Africa, we do not mind *not* stopping for each and every ordinary gazelle. My husband and I know our fantastic guide and his wife Yvonne from a previous trip so it is like traveling with old friends as we spend the next two weeks crisscrossing South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland in a 4X4.

Helmo’s plan doesn’t quite come to fruition. The cats are hard to find this November as the rains have only stopped the day we arrived, and there is lush vegetation everywhere with plenty of water and no need for animals to congregate at water holes. We are tantalizingly close at times as we listen to the lions’ low rumbling and roars through the night in the camps but at daybreak, they are hiding from our binoculars and cameras. It is only the dedication and professional pride of our naturalists on a very early morning drive that finally brings us close to a pride of lionesses and young lions. There are babies everywhere; a litter of white, yellow and black spotted wild dogs, playful baby elephants cavorting

With the help of friends, we decide that we would donate a playground with swings and a slide and for good measure toys, crayons, coloring books and 120 pairs of shoes, collected by the families at the Mulberry Tree Preschool in Moraga. Oh, the joy, when we open the duffel bag full of shoes. Each child is allowed to pick a favorite. Girls go right for the pink flowers and boys for the white sneakers. There are so many kids and they are so little; 38 2- to 5-year-olds, yet there is no pushing, shoving or fighting. When we tape up butcher’s paper on the walls of their small room, they all patiently line up shoulder to shoulder with new boxes of crayons and excitedly scribble. Most of them have also never been on a slide or a swing, so we have quite a back up at the lower end of the slide. Surely my husband will never forget his birthday gift that will bring joy to so many children who have so very little in their young lives.

We traverse the famous South African park in a few days and cross over the border to Mozambique. Officially, we are still in an animal park, but what a park – Africa’s largest transfrontier, conservation area. The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park,



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MIREK OLMER

Thanks to Bay Area residents there is now a playground at Huntington Village, an orphanage for children whose parents have died of AIDS or who could no longer care for them.

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Jacquie Childers



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LOCAL PLAYWRITE

Orinda Playwright Receiving Lots of Attention

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Crish Barth, Miramonte class of 1988, always knew he wanted to write. He attended the University of the Pacific as a communications major and envisioned a future in Hollywood where he would be a well-to-do, much sought-after screenwriter or perhaps the creative genius behind a major advertising agency. However, a short stint in advertising turned him off to that world and a series of screenwriting classes left him less than inspired.

"I went to a lot of live theater but had never been involved with a theater company or thought about writing a play," says the award-winning playwright. "But theater was always close by – like it was banging me on the head saying 'here, this is where your future lies.'"

Before he knew it, Barth was writing short plays. "The concept of a play was something I could wrap my head around whereas screenwriting just wasn't happening for me," he explains.

Barth jumped into his new career and has found much success the last few years. He won the PlayGround 2008 Emerging Playwright Award in San Francisco and was a finalist in the Ensemble Studio Theatre 2009 One Act Play Marathon in New York. In May, one of his plays *Reading with Friends*, was chosen to be produced in New York by the Salute UR Shorts Festival. A second play *General Admissions* was produced in October in New York as part of the Strawberry One Act Festival. "It's very exciting to have a show produced in New York," says Barth. "The last couple of years really good things have been happening for me."

Among those good things is the 517 Playwrights 10-Minute Play contest. Over 100 entries were submitted, from all over the United States and as far away as Ireland. Seven winners were selected including Barth's play *Hill Cattle*. It was produced at the Thoroughbred Community Theatre in Midway, Kentucky. "I am amazed at this contest. They are so organized and do a wonderful job promoting the festival," Barth says. It is ironic that Barth's *Hill Cattle* will see the light of day at a theater called Thoroughbred. The play, which doesn't have cattle in it, deals with two sisters having an argument about whether one of them with a disease should go in for treatment. "It's really about two opposing views of how to live your life – one is more arty, whimsical and the other more practical

SALLY HOGARTY
Crish Barth and Lex work on his latest script.

and lawyerly," Barth explains. "There is a nice twist at the end that should get people to thinking." Barth took the title from a story he heard in college about hill cattle that have two legs shorter than the others to that they can stand on hills easier.

He is also looking forward to the production of his work *Come Fly The World For Free*, about an air marshal who may or may not have done his job. It's scheduled for a November 8 showing at 7 p.m. at Studio 250, 965 Mission Street in San Francisco as part of the "Short Leaps" play festival.

His future goal is to write a full-length play. "I'm working on one now," he says. "When writing a play, you have complete control over your work. When writing a screenplay, you can get a lot of money, but you lose control over it as soon as it sells."

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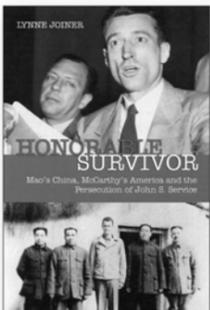
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BACKYARD

◆ AFRICA from page 12

restaurants, shops and information centers. In the Mozambique part of the park, we find only a tiny campsite with three chalets so newly built that the few pots and pans in the small kitchen area still have the price

stickers on them. But, if we are lacking the opportunity to encounter any wild animals, we revel in the village life. Because Mozambique is one of the poorest countries on the planet there are no accoutrements of Western civilization, hence no plastic bags and bottles that mar the neatly swept

courtyards filled with simple huts of different shapes and colors, some intricately woven out of reeds with brightly painted doors. There are just chickens, pigs and kids that joyfully wave at the rare sight of white people. We delight in taking pictures of the most beautiful women in brightly colored wraps carrying babies on their backs and bundles of fire wood on their heads.

Carrying is a woman's lot in Africa. Mile upon mile of the lonely roads meandering among baobab, mango or palm trees we encounter women, some very young girls, walking with heavy burdens. Being a woman in these parts means having children young and dying young. The life expectancy of a Mozambiquan woman is merely 37 years and shortening because of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. When they are gone, they leave behind orphaned children, more than a million and a half in a population of 20 million people (half of which are children under 18). The lucky and best-nourished children are on the coast, where fish are abundant and old abandoned Portuguese plantation trees give their fruit freely.

Over 1400 miles of the coast is largely undeveloped and not easily accessible except in a few areas where the first resorts have appeared. Inspired by local architecture and using local skills, the elaborate thatched roof dwellings, restaurants and dive centers are charming, light and breezy and overlook stretches of pristine sandy beaches as far as the eye can see. One of the best known places on the South Coast is the tropical paradise of the Bazaruto Archipelago, a group of five islands protected as a National Park. There are no roads on the islands and only a handful of very exclusive and very expensive luxury lodges, accessible by private yacht or helicopter.

We opt for a much cheaper, yet very pleasant day excursion on a hired wooden dhow with colorful orange sail and a colorful crew. The sailboats that the local fishermen use for their daily trade have not changed for centuries since the Arab slave traders first arrived in these parts. Each has a fire pit at the stern and steaming hot coffee and tea are served as a welcome. The color of the water is spectacular in all hues of blue, green and turquoise, and the beach on the small island we are taken to has soft yellow sand. More colors await us under water. We don our snorkels and masks and drift along the island on the natural current admiring schools of tropical fish. Here are big green and purple fish, there yellow butterflies and black and white zebras. Tiny little silver fish dance a shimmering dance in unison like a troupe of underwater ballerinas all turning and twisting at the same time. While we are enjoying a visual feast



MIREK OLMER

This giraffe was as interested in the Olmers as they were with him.

of the underwater world, the crew above prepares a colorful lunch of fresh grilled fish, chunky tomato and veggie sauce, steamed rice, fried fries and warm bread all with a side of famous piri-piri, typical flaming hot sauce of the region.

My husband gets his birthday wish and goes diving with Liquid Adventures in Tofo Bay, but then we find out that they also organize swimming with whale sharks. Fear not, these gentle giants are plankton eaters. They look like sharks, and are the size of a whale, but they are also the friendliest fish in the ocean. It is absolutely exhilarating to ride out to the open ocean searching for the whales near the surface. When one is spotted the captain stops the boat, and we quickly pull on our fins and masks and drop off the side of the boat to find ourselves eye to eye with the slow moving underwater creatures, opening and closing their comically giant toothless mouths in search of their daily sustenance. They go on their merry way while we flank them flipping our fins to stay close.

I could easily just stay on the pleasant beaches eating fresh lobster and watching the sunsets (with an occasional sighting of the spouting humpback whale), but my husband has one more mission to accomplish. He wants to go to the capital, Maputo, to see the train station designed by Monsieur Eiffel of the Eiffel Tower fame. When I am promised unlimited time on the largest craft market in Mozambique, I agree. My husband, an engineer himself, gets a few hastily shot, clandestine pictures, and I add new hand carved additions to my art collection. We end up on the outskirts of town at our guide's favorite restaurant with a delicious seafood extravaganza. The restaurant is overlooking the beach where all the newlyweds this Sunday come to take their wedding pictures. After the last stroll on the beach among the brides in white dresses and fluttering veils, we have to leave Mozambique to drive to Swaziland. But that is a story to be told another time.




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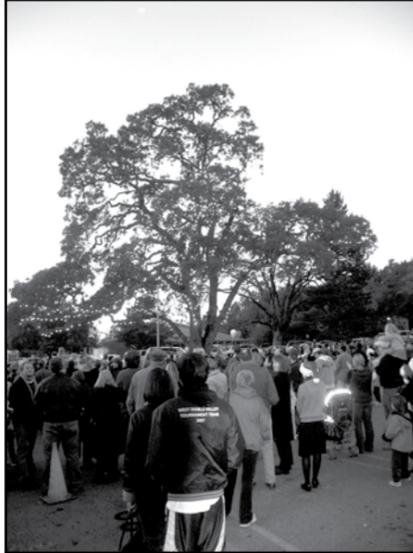
Tree Lighting Ceremony Takes Place December 5

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce and Hospice of the East Bay will once again sponsor the annual tree lighting festivities at the Orinda Village parking lot (by Bank of America) beginning at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 5.

Participants will enjoy choral music by local elementary students before Mayor Sue Severson turns on the 1,400 lights in the centuries-old oak tree. Each light represents the life of a loved one who is being honored or remembered. Orinda Safeway will provide holiday cookies, Rite Aid will have plenty of candy canes, and CVS will supply the sparkling cider and bottled water. "We are so grateful to our local businesses who help make this event possible every year," says Joyce McCulla of Hospice.

Making the event special for children is Todd Chritton, who will carry on the family tradition of being Santa Claus. Todd's father John played the jolly old man for over 10 years. When he passed away, Todd took up the red suit. In keeping with tradition, Santa will make his entrance on a big red fire truck.

Since 1977, Hospice of the East Bay has been providing competent, compassionate medical care and support for the end of life.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Hospice Tree of Lights is located in the parking lot by the Bank of America building.

The goal of Hospice is to make patients as comfortable and pain free as possible and to ease their sense of loneliness and fear.

For more information on the tree lighting ceremony, call the Chamber of Commerce at 254-3909.

— Sally Hogarty

Author's New Book Explores Relationship between Birds and Humans

Captivated by a chance meeting with a falcon as a child, Rebecca O'Connor has developed a life-long affection for birds and other wildlife. Her new book, *LIFT*, explores themes of predator and prey, forgiveness and femininity against a unique backdrop and a tempestuous love affair – with a falcon.

O'Connor's writing is inspired by a decade of examining and interpreting humanity's relationship with wild animals while she worked training, presenting and consulting at animal shows in Australia, Mexico and across the United States. She will discuss her book and sign copies at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square in Orinda on December 1 at 4 p.m. Call 254-7606.

—Katie Yates



PRISCILLA IEZZI
Author Rebecca O'Connor will be at Orinda Books on December 1 at 4 p.m.

Rotary Accepting Grant Requests

Orinda Rotary Endowment Fund asks non-profit organizations in Orinda to submit grant requests to the Orinda Rotary Endowment Fund, P.O. Box 44, Orinda, CA 94563. Grant requests should be submitted by Nov. 25.

Schools submit requests to the superintendent of schools (254-4901) or Miramonte High School principal (280-3930). Call Frank Darling at 330-4425 for details.

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CONTINUATIONS

◆ SEASONED from page 9

centrated in the interior ribs or veins near the seed heart – the seeds themselves taste hot only because they are close to the veins. This group of peppers range from the relatively mild Anaheim and Poblano through to jalapeno, Serrano and habanero.

Roasting peppers is one of the simplest ways to add unexpected taste to pasta, salads and bean dishes. Chipotles (roasted jalapeno) and roasted red bell peppers are most common, and made by baking, broiling or simply spearing the fresh pepper with a long, wooden handled fork and holding it over a gas flame until blackened. Once charred, they're placed in a heavy paper or plastic bag and sealed to allow the peppers to steam. After 10 minutes or so the peppers are cool enough to peel, stem and seed.

Sweet potatoes are a once-a-year crop in California and a sure-find at the markets during the fall. Harvesting is active in the fertile growing regions between Sacramento and Fresno, and I can always find a friendly farmer at the market offering both

moist fleshed and dry fleshed varieties of sweet potatoes. There are actually more than 40 varieties of sweet potatoes grown in the U.S. – the minority used as a fresh vegetable with the remaining destined for canneries or dried for starch and livestock feed.

Moist fleshed varieties of sweet potatoes are commonly referred to as yams, but despite their similarities to sweet potatoes "true" yams are from a different plant species and indigenous to Asia. Sweet potatoes are native to and grown in North and South America.

I always seem to end up with moist types of sweet potatoes in my basket – Beauregards, Jewels or Garnets – with their vivid orange flesh and thin skins. But I don't shy away from my favorite light skinned, dry Jersey variety sweet potato when it comes to making excellent hash browns or chips. Unlike the majority of fruits and vegetables that are at their peak immediately after harvest, sweet potatoes improve with time (just like a fine wine!). A process called curing hardens the skin for increased storage time, and a controlled environment begins the desired conversion of starch to sugar before marketing begins.

One word of advice – do not refrigerate sweet potatoes. They store best in a cool,

dry ventilated area or in a dark pantry.

The Orinda Farmers' Market closes for the season on Saturday, November 21.

Thank you to the community, city, volunteers, local businesses and other non-profits who have supported and contributed to a very successful market season. See you next May!

Be sure to visit many of your favorite growers and vendors from the Orinda market at the year round Sunday market in Walnut Creek. For more information, visit the website at www.cccfm.org or call the market hotline at 925-431-8261

Barbara Kobsar, the Seasoned Shopper, can be reached at cotkitchen@aol.com.

◆ SAYRES from page 7

at Stanford University, Sayres' financial background also includes working as an investment banker at Citigroup and Merrill Lynch. With his experience helping corporate clients raise millions in equity and debt capital, Sayres will bring valuable leadership to the capital campaign. He holds a bachelor's degree in economics and a master's in business administration from Stanford University. Sayres lives in Orinda with his wife and three daughters.

For information about how to support the "Breaking New Ground Right Here" capital campaign, call 925-947-4449 or visit www.johnmuirhealthfoundation.org.

◆ ARTISANS from page 11

glass. But her love of collecting jewels and stones from around the world led to her true passion, and in 2004 Gail started her own business called GS Originals. A collection named "From Russia with Love," inspired by finding beautiful pieces of amber on a recent journey to Russia, will be the highlight of her display. Those lucky enough to own one of Gail's necklaces are always being asked, "Where did you find that?"

Watercolor artist Cherry Benzie has sketched homes in the Bay Area for many decades. Two years ago she replaced her pen and black ink with a digital camera and vibrant colors. The arrival of an Apple computer in her studio brought a whole new way to produce art. The photographs she takes, edits and prints have a very painterly quality – the subjects chosen through an artist's eye reflect her very different approach. Note cards containing her photos will be for sale.

Carol Zeman grew up in this area and from an early age her love of color and shape was evident. She later studied design at UC Davis. Her vibrant personality is evident in her colorful brush strokes and happy results. Carol loves to cook, the results often painted before being served.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gail Solt will display her jewelry including pieces made from amber found on a recent trip to Russia.

Recently the emphasis of her artwork is on pet portraits, influenced by her two King Charles Spaniels. A delightful sense of whimsy is captured in these paintings along with each pet's unique personality.

The Art Faire is free and provides a festive opportunity to meet friends, sip wine and talk to artists. If you are looking for an unusual holiday gift for that challenging person on your list, you may find the perfect solution. For more information, call 254-6698.



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APRIL MATTHEWS

◆ GALLERY from page 11

pens, vases, natural edged bowls, urns, and boxes from Robert Nolan, Jim Rodgers, Rosalind Harper, Dean Adkins, Harvey Klein, Jacques Blumer, and many others will be seen. Jacques Blumer set up a woodturning education program where seven to eight members teach at several local high schools; Wayne Shipman teaches at Castro Valley High School; Jim Rodgers teaches at Las Lomas High School and also through Mt. Diablo Adult Education in Pleasanton. An entry level woodturning class is offered, then an advanced bowl

turning class. The bowl turning students are hand picked by the instructors and are highly coveted classes. Each year there is a ceremony with prizes awarded to high school students for the best work. BAWA members consider woodturning a lifelong activity and are dedicated to keeping the art and craft fresh and alive through their monthly meetings.

For more information on the Orinda Library Gallery exhibit, call 254-2814. This local treasure is open Monday - Thursday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at 23 Orinda Way.

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ON THE CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

- 2 **Diabetes Awareness Seminar**, free, John Muir Medical Center. 5:45 - 8:30 p.m., 925-941-4130.
- 4 **Lamorinda AAUW**, mom's panel on "How to Raise a Strong, Independent Daughter and Survive," Q & A with moms who survived, 7-8:30 p.m., Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, Moraga.
- 5 **Orinda Books**, meet mystery writers Michelle Gagnon and Diana Orgain signing and discussing their new books, 7 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
- 7 **Orinda Books**, celebrate the new Ivy & Bean book, *Doomed to Dance*, a special event for youngsters, 3 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
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 **Orinda Teen Advisory Council** meets at 4 p.m., Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. For information, email orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com.
- 10 **Orinda Books** join in readings by contributors to *Designated Heroes Remember: World War II Survivors Tell Their Stories*, 2 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) presents *Peter Pan* 4:30 p.m. Also 11/12, 4:30 p.m., 11/13, 5 and 8 p.m., and 11/14, 3 and 7 p.m. 80 Ivy Drive. For tickets www.orindaschools.org/ois or call 258-3090.
- 12 **Orinda Books**, Lynne Joiner discusses *Honorable Survivor: Mao's China, McCarthy's America and the Persecution of John S. Service*, 4 p.m., 254-7606.
- 14 **NorCal Kids Triathlon**, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Miramonte High School. Kindergarten through 12th grade students will compete in individual and relay events. Proceeds benefit Orinda Community Fund and youth programs. Go to www.norcalkids.org.
Orinda Books, poets Richard Strong and K. Lauren De Boer will read from their collections, *Great Basin Poems* and *Where It Comes From*, 3 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
- 17 **The Orinda Woman's Club's Festival of Trees**, annual fundraiser, 10:30 a.m., Blackhawk Museum, 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville, fashion show and luncheon, 963-6356.
Orinda Books, Alison Gopnik discusses her new book, *The Philosophical Baby: What Children's Minds Tell Us About Truth, Love, and the Meaning of Life*, 11 a.m., 254-7606.
World Affairs Book Group will discuss *Inside Egypt: The Land of the Pharaohs on the Brink of a Revolution* by John R. Bradley, 3 p.m. The group meets bi-monthly Orinda Books 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
- 19 **Artisan and Wine Faire**, 4 - 8 p.m., Orinda Country Club. Meet the artists and enjoy their work while tasting a variety of wines. Call 254-6698 for more information.
Orinda Books, Ron Shoop of Random House will present provocative titles for reading, 7 p.m. A benefit for Project Second Chance, the Contra Costa Library's Adult Literacy Program, 254-7606.

AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified.

- 3 **Peek-a-boo Time**, stories, songs, rhymes and rhythms for babies 12 months and under (pre-walkers) and their caregivers, 11 a.m. Also Nov. 10.
- 4 **Paws to Read**. Would your child like to practice reading with a friendly dog? Children in grades 1-5 read to dogs selected for their sociable natures, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Call or drop by for a 25-minute session.
- 7 **Saturday Morning Live**, family story time for 3- to 5-year-olds, in the Picturebook area, 11 a.m. Also Nov. 14.
Origami for Fun, Tutoring Room, 2:30 to 4 p.m. All ages. Also Nov. 14 and 21.
- 17 **Baby Music Program** ABC to Z, Betsy Stern will perform interactive songs that teach letters, vowels, consonants, and word recognition. For toddlers and preschoolers, 10:30 a.m.
- 18 **Berkeley Repertory Theatre Docent Presentation** on its current production of *Tiny Kushner*, 7-8 p.m., Gallery Room. Adult program.

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.
- Historic Landmarks Committee**, fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, public is welcome, for information, call 925-788-7323.
- 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 the Joaquin Moraga Adobe**, third Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda www.moragaadobe.org
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**, fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library. Call 253-1997.
- Montelindo Garden Club** third Friday of the month 9 a.m., Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way. Visit www.montelindogarden.com or email montelindogarden@aol.com.
- 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 Hiking Club** meets at 9 a.m. at the old library parking lot on Irwin Way for its weekly Wednesday Hike. Call Steve at 253-0131 or visit www.orindahiking.org.
- 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 7 p.m. Contact Diane Petek and Ann Sullivan at orinda.juniors@yahoo.com for location.
- Orinda/Tábor** (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation, Fourth Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.
- Orinda Woman's Club**, Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon; call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881.
- 2nd Wednesday Book Group** will discuss *1776* by David McCullough, 3 p.m. Orinda Books 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
- Sunrise Rotary**, Postino's in Lafayette, 7 a.m. every Friday, 254-0440, ext.463.

Send calendar items to Maggie Sharpe at m.sharpe66@gmail.com

Escape Into The World of *Peter Pan*

■ OIS performs the fun tale
November 10-14

By DIANNE FELTON
Contributing Writer

Word fights and pirate ships, mermaids and fairies, close calls and daring rescues all lead to the exciting adventure of *Peter Pan*. Not growing up sounds pretty appealing in this crazy world of today. Take a moment out of your hectic world and allow yourself to be swept up in the antics of this forever young adventurer. The Bulldog Theatre Company at Orinda Intermediate School (80 Ivy Drive, Orinda, 925-258-3090) will perform six shows with two distinct casts directed by Clive Worsley and produced by Kathy Simon.

The story was written by J.M. Barrie, who combined the name of his adopted son, Peter, with the name of the mischievous Greek God of the wood, Pan. This production is by special arrangement with Plays for Young Audiences a partnership of Seattle's Children's Theatre and Children's Theatre Company - Minneapolis. The book and lyrics are by Timothy Mason with mu-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mollie Fiero (as Smee) and Daniel Cook (as Captain Hook) in OIS production of *Peter Pan*.

sic by Hiram Titus.

Showtimes for the OIS performance are: Tuesday, November 10, at 4:30 p.m.; Thursday, November 12, at 4:30 p.m.; Friday, November 13, at 5 and 8 p.m.; and Saturday, November 14, at 3 and 7 p.m. Information on how to order tickets online is available on the OIS website, www.orindaschools.org/ois.



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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 20

damaged. "I enjoy crane work and we offer our customers services of hydraulic crane work," says Gates.

Expert Tree Service has a place in local Orinda folklore. It was originally established in 1920, prior to the invention of the chain saw. In those days, axes and whipsaws were used to cut down trees and the remaining stumps were blown out of the ground with high explosives. "Expert Tree Service holds the distinction of having been the first tree trimming service listed in the telephone book in 1924," says Gates. Brian Gates' wife, Amber, manages the office along with help from Connie Smidebush. Richard Trout, who retired as the head arborist of U.C. Berkeley, assists Gates in the field. The Gates' have always lived in Orinda. Their two children, Alec and Audrey, attend Glorietta School. Gates is a master cyclist and Expert Tree Service sponsors road, as well as, mountain bike teams.

Expert Tree Service provides quality work at a moderate price. Gates maintains several licenses issued by the State of California, including General Engineering, Tree Service and Demolition Landscape, in addition to property liability insurance. Expert Tree Service, located at 1 Northwood Drive, Suite 4 in Orinda is a longtime member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. For more information, give Brian and Amber a call at 254-TREE.

Steven J. Epstein Photography

After earning a bachelor's degree in broadcast communications from San Francisco State University, Steven Epstein began his artistic career as an animator for KABC in Los Angeles. Epstein went on to work for an advertising agency before he established his own business, Dream Farm, specializing in retouching photographs for the advertising industry. His clients include Sega, Sun Microsystems, Hewlett Packard and Miller-Coors. "My clients require a pristine image, and I retouch them to high resolution."

Over the past 10 years Epstein has taken annual trips of seven to 10 days duration to Montana by himself with a camera in tow. It was five years ago that he moved into fine art landscape photography. While landscape photography involves no humans and was his initial preference, recently



JESSE EPSTEIN
Steven Epstein and one of his favorite cameras - a Canon 5D MkII.

Epstein has dabbled in social commentary photography, which is distinct from photo journalism.

Epstein likes to give credit to his high school photography teacher in Oakland, Dorothy Mayers who is still a good friend. "She was and is my inspiration. She gave me incentive to stay close to photography and was my impetus to delve into landscape," he says.

"There is a whole subjective element that goes into this art. When you have technical elements at a very high level, often people really appreciate that detail," says Epstein. He is currently using a Hasselblad H3D 39 and a Canon 5D. Epstein enjoys the work of Swiss photographer Robert Frank who is known for his notable contribution capturing images of American life from the perspective of an outsider in his 1958 photography book, *The Americans*.

An Orinda resident since 2002, Epstein moved here from Montclair. He is married to Ginny Hair, founder of Echo Communications, a public relations firm. The couple has two children. Jesse is a sixth grader at Orinda Intermediate School and Adam attends the third grade at Sleepy Hollow. "The sense of community in Orinda is incredibly high. Being a landscape photographer, I did not think I would appreciate that aspect of it, but I really appreciate it and I am grateful for the strong community spirit that prevails here," says Epstein.

In the future, look for Epstein's work at the Allison McCrady Fine Art Gallery in Theatre Square. For more information about Steven J. Epstein Photography, please visit the website at www.stevenjepstein.com or email him at steve@stevenjepstein.com.



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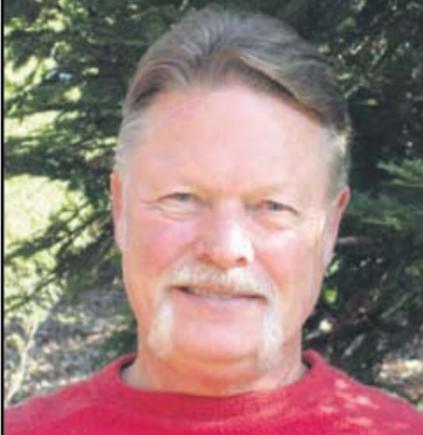
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MAGGIE

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

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Terry Riggins Photography

After a 15-year career with Kodak in management, manufacturing and sales, Terry Riggins had the good fortune to literally stumble into her dream job. After her two young sons started school, she realized she wanted to spend more time with them and coincidentally at the same time, Kodak began cutting back and reorganizing management. "My boss asked me if I would like to take advantage of the retraining program to enable me to transition to a new career. I accepted the offer and hired Yoni Mayeri, a professional photographer who had worked with *Rolling Stone Magazine*, to teach pho-

tography to me," explains Riggins.

Six years ago, Riggins established Terry Riggins Photography at 361 Village Square in Orinda. Consciously merging her talent for landscape photography with portraiture, she offers on location photo shoots.

"I feel connected to children. If you honor and respect them, they sense you are present and make it a very positive experience," says Riggins. Photographer Tish Wetzel joined Riggins as an assistant this year. "What sets Terry apart from others is the time she spends getting to know them prior to the sitting. Riggins likes to select a location that best suits the family's interests. "About one-third of my clients elect to be photographed in their home, and I love doing that," adds Riggins.



TERRY RIGGINS

(L-R) **Matt Riggins and his brother Ryan** often help their mother Terry in the studio and on location and sometimes in front of the camera.

An Orinda resident, Riggins is mindful of how community support helped establish her business and makes giving back a major priority. She has contributed \$150,000 in services to school auctions over the years, as well as EFO, Habitat for Humanity, and Wardrobe for Opportunity. Riggins enjoyed working with Miramonte High School photography teacher Susan McCauley in hiring student interns and exposing them to the world of professional photography. Riggins' husband, Wes, is the chief financial officer of a technology company. "His support and guidance has been amazing," she says. The couple has two sons at Miramonte High School. Ryan is a senior and Matthew is a sophomore.

Terry Riggins offers group instructional classes at Camera West in Walnut Creek for beginner to professional level, as well

as private classes in digital photography, marketing and building a business. This custom boutique operation offers heirloom quality wall portraits as well as beautiful custom designed coffee table books filled with fine portraits of your family. In light of the current economic climate, special packages are available. The mini holiday option is priced at \$150. This option includes a 15-20 minute session and 50 4x6 holiday prints. For more information, visit the website at www.terryrigginsphotography.com or call 253-1658.

Expert Tree Service

It was as far back as junior high that Orinda native Brian Gates first knew he wanted to go into business for himself. He liked climbing trees and went on to win the Industrial Arts Award at Miramonte High School. "My woodworking experience and skill at using hand tools came together in high school, and at age 16, I ventured into tree trimming. I would get up really early before school, make a run to the county dump, and drive my dump truck straight to Miramonte to attend classes. I wore jeans, a hickory shirt and Red Wing boots and wasn't exactly your typical Miramonte student," smiles Gates, who has 34 years of experience and is eager to share his breadth of knowledge with clients.

Expert Tree Service focuses on tree



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Brian Gates of Expert Tree Service and one of his "clients."

pruning, treatment for Sudden Oak Death with Agri-Fos, land clearing, and logging. Clients range from municipalities, single family home owners, to the East Bay Regional Park District, Mills College, U.C. Berkeley, and the Contra Costa Water District. "My emphasis on residential work is to do my best to educate the consumer so they know how to buy the service and also how to maintain their landscaping. When the housing market is vibrant, Expert Tree Service is involved in single family building demolitions. This process involves ensuring trees are preserved and the site is not

[SEE BUZZ page 19]

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