

# THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis  
Volume 25, Number 10

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

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October 2010

## City Council Candidates State Positions at OA Forum on October 13



The Orinda Association will hold a forum for the five city council candidates to discuss their positions on a variety of issues of concern to local residents. The forum, which will be moderated by the League of Women Voters, takes place on October 13 from 7 - 9 p.m. at the Orinda Library Auditorium. The Orinda Education Association and the OA will hold a forum for school board candidates on October 7 at 7:30 p.m. in the Glorietta Elementary Schools multi-purpose room. The Orinda News asked candidates running for all offices to answer a series of questions – City Council candidates (pages 7-10); Orinda Union School District Board candidates (pages 15-18); and Moraga Orinda Fire District candidates (pages 23-24).

## Orinda Celebrates Its Colorful and Proud History as well as 25 Years as a City

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

Orinda has a long and proud history. Home to the Saklan Tribe of the Costanoan Indian community in the 1700s followed by the Spanish in the mid-1800s, Orinda has always been a coveted part of the Bay Area. In the late 1800s, the California and Nevada Railroad ran a line into Orinda that terminated near Orinda's Crossroads by Theatre Square. A historical monument marks the site at Bryant and Davis Roads.

Once isolated from the greater Bay Area by hills, the opening of the Caldecott Tunnel in 1937 made Orinda the gateway to Contra Costa County. With the post World War II development boom, the small rural community saw an influx of new families looking for a less harried lifestyle. A series of neighborhood associations formed to help fulfill the needs of the burgeoning community. In 1946, these separate as-

sociations joined together to form the Orinda Association (OA), an organization that continues to serve the needs of local residents today.

By the mid-1950s, Orinda had grown substantially in population and in service needs. The OA acted as the unincorporated community's voice, attending county meetings and trying to ensure that Orinda got its fair share of resources. The County's decisions on several zoning and land use requests upset many locales and residents began talking about the possibility of incorporating and becoming a city.

In 1957, a group of residents attempted to have an election but were stopped by the large landowners in the area. At that time, owners of 51 percent of the assessed value of land could stop an election, a law that was later repealed. In 1967, an election was held but incorporation went down to defeat by a vote of 5 to 1.

Proponents of incorporation realized that



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Brownie Troop #1300 marched in the 1987 4th of July parade.

the public needed additional information on the advantages of becoming a city rather than relying on an overburdened county. By this time, many Orinda residents were [SEE HISTORY page 20]

### The Orinda News

A precursor of the Orinda Association began publishing a newsletter in 1927. It became the main source of local news for the rural community and continued publishing through 1964; although, publication was sporadic during WWII. In April of 1986, local resident Ann O'Connell-Nye revived the paper as a quarterly publication. It has published continuously since then, growing from a quarterly to a monthly newspaper highlighting the news and events of Orinda's busy citizens.

### Important Workshop/Forums

**October 7 - 7:30 p.m.**  
School Board Candidates Forum  
Glorietta Multipurpose Room  
**October 13 - 7 - 9 p.m.**  
City Council Candidates Forum  
Orinda Library Auditorium  
**October 18 - 7 p.m.**  
Downtown Revitalization Workshop  
Founders Auditorium,  
Orinda Community Center

### IN THIS ISSUE

News	
City Council Candidates	7
MOFD Candidates	23
Police Blotter	6
School Board Candidates	15
Storm Drain	6
Around Town	
Local Residents/ Organizations	2, 21, 24, 29, 31
Schools/ Students	13, 14
Business Buzz	32
Calendar	29
Classified	30
Editorial	4
Lamorinda Reads	27
Orinda Association	3
Safety/ MOFD	5
Way To Grow	26
Youth Matters	19

### October "Tiger" Fascinated by Drains



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Apple family always knows where to find Emily – in the bathroom sink! The 18-month old also loves to chase her toy mice, climb trees, parade around her roof, and loves other animals, including the neighbor's large dog.



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GALLERY

# Orinda Gallery: Moraga Art Gallery 10 Year Anniversary Celebration

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

The Orinda Library Gallery is proud to celebrate the Moraga Art Gallery's 10th Anniversary show beginning October 3 to the end of the month. Come meet and mingle with these creative souls at an Artists Reception on Saturday, October 9 from 3-5 p.m.

The Moraga Art Gallery (MAG) operates under the umbrella of Lamorinda Arts Alliance as a not-for-profit entity and recently joined the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. Founded by local artists and friends who reside or work in the area, its purpose is to promote and increase knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts. This cooperatively run gallery is located at 570 Center Street in Moraga within the Rheem Valley Shopping Center. You can't miss the color drenched art which beckons you into this pool of creativity. Often, emerging artists

stop by for encouragement and direction – and are warmly welcomed.

"Maggies," as they sometimes call themselves, believe that art in our community enhances one's perception of the world from different viewpoints. By appreciating art in gallery shows or elsewhere, our senses are bombarded and called to travel new roads; we walk away invigorated. Perhaps we walk away a little larger – opened up. Members hail from Peru, Russia, Denmark, Scotland, Canada, Botswana and Zimbabwe – how's that for expanded viewpoints! A prolific group, their work fills the entire gallery.

Artists exhibiting works include Donna Arganbright, ceramics; Billie-Jean Bertoli, oils; John Diestler, photography; Monet Foster, oils and wax; Beryl Glen-Reiland, oils; Angelica Goett, acrylics; Terry Hunt, ceramics; Mariann Mortensen, fused glass and metal jewelry; Wenda Pyman, photography; Laura Paige, jewelry; Marsha Ramp,

oils; Nancy Robinson, acrylics; Ginnie Ruble, oils; Stephanie Scott, watercolors, etchings and acrylics; Nancy Slack, fused glass and jewelry; Leslie Swartz, oils, pen and ink, watercolors, Batik; Natalia Udaltsova, acrylics and Robert Wahrhaftig, acrylics.

Many MAG members utilize the Lafayette Art Studio; several belong to East Bay Artists Guild, East Bay Pro Arts, and LAA Plein Air Art Group – all of which keeps their work fresh and energetic. MAG will participate in Open Studios on October 16-17; host guest artist Heather Metcalf and participate in the September-November Walnut Creek Library Exhibit.

The Moraga Gallery has five shows per year, each with a different perspective and focus. Gallery hours are 12-5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. For more information about the exhibit, call the gallery at 925-376-5407, visit their website at [www.moragaartgallery.com](http://www.moragaartgallery.com), or e-mail Leslie Swartz at [leslieswartz@hotmail.com](mailto:leslieswartz@hotmail.com). The group's current directors include Donna Arganbright – president, Nancy Robinson – general manager/acting curator, Leslie Swartz – treasurer, Monet Foster and Natalia Udaltsova – co-secretaries, Wenda Pyman – publicity, Nancy Slack – member-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The October exhibit includes **Angelica Samame's** "Peruvian Mother," a 30"x 38" work in acrylics.

ship director and publicity assistant. Hats off to this group of hard-working women who keep the wheels in motion!

Visit the Orinda Library Gallery during normal library hours – 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, Orinda. Call 254-2814 for more information.


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Oct. 31, 2010

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- Music provided by Stanley Middle School
- Pancake breakfast provided by the Lafayette Rotary Club.
- Presented by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and the City of Lafayette. ••
- Proceeds to benefit our local schools.

Parking is available at the BART parking lot. Walk down to Plaza Center (Mt. Diablo Blvd. at Moraga Rd.) where all the fun is taking place.  
For Pre-registration visit the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce website at [www.lafayettechamber.org](http://www.lafayettechamber.org). or [www.active.com](http://www.active.com).  
For more information visit [www.lafayettechamber.org](http://www.lafayettechamber.org) or go to YouTube [www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=lafayette+reservoir+run&search\\_type=&aq=f](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=lafayette+reservoir+run&search_type=&aq=f)



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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President

Orinda Association Holds Candidate Forum



Mark Roberts

On November 2, Orindans will have the opportunity to make decisions that will affect our community for years to come. Actually, we will be voting to elect the leaders of two bodies that we will charge with making those decisions: the City Council and the Board of Trustees of the Orinda Union School District. Three positions on each of the five-member bodies are up for election so we'll essentially be determining the majority of both.

More than ever, we need to be informed about the positions and priorities of all candidates running for these positions of public trust and responsibility. The Orinda Association recognizes the importance of this situation. That's why we're pleased to sponsor a public forum for City Council candidates on Wednesday, October 13, from 7 till 9 p.m. in the Library Auditorium. The forum will be moderated by a representative of the League of Women Voters of Contra Costa County.

Candidates will be asked a series of questions prepared in advance and each will have an equal amount of time to provide their response. There will also be an opportunity for questions from the floor. You will be able to see the five candidates "in action" and learn more about them and their platforms than you might from other sources of information. Perhaps more important, you'll see how they interact with each other, which I consider vital since the three elected candidates will have to work productively with each other and with the other two members of the council.

The OA and the Orinda Education Association will sponsor a similar forum for the candidates for the Orinda School Board on October 7 at 7:30 p.m. in the Glorietta Multipurpose Room. I observe and note with interest that all three of the incumbents whose positions were up for re-election this year chose not to seek another term. That means that all five candidates are seeking a trustee position for the first time. It will be important to learn how they will work together and with the two continuing incumbents on the board.

I want to thank all members of the Orinda Association for their support of vital public forums like these. A well informed electorate is essential to making decisions that maintain and enhance the quality of life in our community and the quality of education in our outstanding public schools. I encour-

age all OA members and all Orindans to take advantage of this opportunity.

I also want to thank Chip Herman for coordinating another fabulously successful and enjoyable Classic Car Show on September 25. The event attracted a large and enthusiastic group of automotive enthusiasts and, more important, generated valuable funding for (Seniors Around Town, the Orinda Historical Society and EFO). Thanks also go to John Vanek and Allen Pennebaker of Orinda Motors for providing not only the venue for the event but also much of the manpower and many of the vehicles on display. On behalf of the OA and all the non-profit organizations and programs that benefited from their hard work, I express my appreciation to Chip Herman and Orinda Motors for their continuing concern for, and investment in, our community.

Finally, please accept my invitation to attend Orinda's Silver Celebration, in observance of our city's 25th anniversary of incorporation, on Saturday, October 2, from 4 till 7 p.m. in the Library Gallery. The focus at this event is on the art and artists of Orinda. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the works on display will benefit the Orinda Community Foundation and its commitment to the arts and beautification. While there is no charge for admission to the event, where hors d'oeuvres will be served and music provided by the Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra, donations will be encouraged and gratefully accepted. I hope to see you there!

Orinda Rotary Requests Grant Applications

The Rotary Endowment is now accepting applications for grants that would benefit and enhance the greater Orinda area. Written proposals may be sent to:

Orinda Rotary Endowment  
PO Box 44  
Orinda, CA 94563

Grants are due October 29. Contact Frank Darling at 925-330-4425 or Don Jenkins 925-284-7900x231 for more information.

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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## Letters to the Editor

### Orinda Needs New Ideas

The voters in Orinda have an opportunity to make a statement. Three of the five seats on the city council are up for consideration. Reelecting the incumbents will only assure more of the same. We should thank the existing council for their service, whether one or three terms. This town needs new ideas!

Dr. Scott Zeller is the candidate who has new ideas yet basic values. Maintain the General Plan, spend your money wisely, encourage small business, and get the roads paved. Scott Zeller is committed to preserving the best of our semi-rural community.

This November join your neighbors in sending a message to the city. Vote for Zeller and don't cast your two remaining votes. Thank you for your consideration.

– Bob Larsen

### Continue With Wyro

In November, we will go to the poll and vote for several local office holders for Orinda including the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Board.

John Wyro has worked tirelessly on behalf of Orinda for over 25 years – first on the school board and for several years on the MOFD. John understands the complex issues facing the district over pensions and pay and has a very clear idea how to address them to reduce their impact on the district budget. These solutions are not a quick fix, but through careful and consistent negotiations, John and his board have been able to go a long way toward a long-term solution and still provide us with the best disaster response program in the county. His continuing role on the board is essential to carrying out these needed reforms.

Please join me and many other Orindans to support John Wyro for the MOFD Board.

– Ted Urban

### Need Leaders with Vision

For several years I have attended meetings and workshops related to the downtown revitalization plan. I am not a developer, and I have no financial stake in the eventual outcome, yet, surprisingly I was still able to find my way to these "insider" meetings and participate in the process.

I am a 20-year resident of Orinda who has had the good fortune to raise a family here. I believe we have an obligation to plan well for future generations. Land is scarce in Orinda, and what little we have should be used wisely. Whether we like it or not the human race is expanding. Should Orinda completely ignore the changing demographics and pass the burden of building more housing to other communities? I think not. I did not come to Orinda to cut myself off from the outside world.

The downtown areas on both sides of the freeway are in need of a face lift. The town

looks tired and shabby. I like the idea of building residential units on top of retail. In England, where I am from, all the towns and villages are like this. Given the proximity to BART and the freeway, I think this type of housing will appeal to a variety of people including empty nesters, middle age, and young professionals. It would be a shame to let the building height issue derail this.

Fear mongering from those opposed to change is rife with inaccuracies. They talk about turning Orinda into Manhattan with skyscrapers or the destruction of small businesses and life, as we know it, traffic nightmares, underhanded dealings by local officials, and greedy corrupt developers. Scott Zeller, who is their chosen leader, has surrounded himself with some who constantly rage against anything that is supported by government for the good of the community such as schools, libraries and roads. They fill the editorial pages week after week with "the sky is falling" scenarios. They see corruption and conspiracy in every corner.

I want people on the council who have a vision beyond their own backyard. I know one candidate I will not be supporting and that is Scott Zeller.

– Valerie Sloven

### Van Voorhis-Gilbert a Good Choice

We are writing in support of Bekki Van Voorhis-Gilbert's candidacy for the Orinda Union School Board. Bekki has been an active volunteer in the community and has demonstrated leadership skills. She is a proponent of increased transparency in all district dealings, a hardworker, and someone who will listen to and respond to parents, teachers and community members' concerns and ideas.

We think its time to infuse new ideas and energy into our school board, and are confident that Bekki is the most qualified candidate to tackle the important issues facing the district at this time. Bekki brings with her a background in higher education, policy analysis and legal training, in addition to her extensive community activism that make her uniquely qualified to serve on the OUSD Board of Trustees.

Please join us in voting for Bekki on November 2, 2010.

–Deborah A. Sedberry and  
Jeffrey G. Klingman

### Support Julie Rossiter

I am writing in support of Julie Rossiter who is running for the Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees this November. With three children, ages 12, 10 and 4, Julie has been involved at all levels of the Orinda educational community and an active participant in school governance and fundraising through the Del Rey Parent's Club over the past six years. As her school's legislative representative to the Las Trampas Creek PTA Council (which



## List of The Orinda News Advertisers

	Page		
<b>Automotive</b>		Sarah Butler	18
Orinda Motors	11	Tyson Krumholtz	17
Orinda Shell	10	Thomas McCormick	8
<b>Beauty and Fitness</b>		Dean Orr	10
CoreKinetics	25	Julie Rossiter	17
Full Life Fitness	12	Chris Severson	16
Gina Kahn Salon	1	Sue Severson	9
In Forma	12	Bekki Van Voorish-Gilbert	15
Living Lean	25	Amy Worth	7
Zumba	13	John Wyrom	23
<b>Churches</b>		Scott Zeller	9
Anglican Church	31	<b>Professional Services</b>	
<b>Cleaning Services</b>		Fast Frame	20
Kirby Carpet Cleaning	5, 28	Kattenburg Architects	3
Total Clean	5, 20	<b>Real Estate and Mortgage Services</b>	
<b>Computer Services</b>		A.G. Realty	6
Portable CIO	5	Coldwell Banker	
<b>Construction and Trades</b>		Laura Abrams	25
David Collins Painting	26	Patti Camras	19
Ironwood Engineering	3	Shellie Kirby	29
Mara Construction	21	Maureen Wilber	31
Tom Romaneck Painting	5	Mary Chatton Brown	24
<b>Dental</b>		Pacific Union	
Dr. Mary Smith DDS	26	Virginia and Paul Ratto	22
<b>Educational</b>		Prudential Realty	
Julie Hemker Tutoring	13	Leila Schlein	14
Orinda Academy	13	Village Associates	
The Orinda Preschool (TOPS)	13	April Matthews	27
<b>Financial and Insurance Services</b>		Ann Sharpe	
Mechanic's Bank	32	Clark Thompson	14
Stone Castle Land and Home Financial	24	<b>Restaurants</b>	
<b>Garden/Landscaping</b>		Baan Thai	14
Blue Pine Trees	3	Casa Orinda	27
Blue Ridge Landscaping	24	Hsiang's Restaurant	20
Garden Lights	26	Loards Ice Cream and Candy	13
K.B. Kolman Landscape Design	5	Siam Orchid	21
McDonnell Nursery	19	Szczepwan Restaurant	6
<b>Medical</b>		Trattoria Lupetti	2
Dr. Kristin Walker		Zambonie's Pizza	3
Medicine Shoppe	21	<b>Retail Stores</b>	
Orinda Optometry	26	Farmers' Market	19
<b>Nonprofit Associations/Foundation</b>		Hilton House Consign and Design	3
Lafayette Chamber of Commerce	2	Morrison's Jewelers	2
<b>Pet Services</b>		Orinda Books	27
Animal House Pet Sitting	18	Orinda Shoe Service	14
I Talk Dog	22	<b>Senior Services</b>	
<b>Political</b>		Casa De Gracia	27
		Lamorinda Comforts of Home	24

supports all of the Lamorinda and Acalanes parent's clubs), she is likewise extremely knowledgeable about the state budgetary and legislative issues facing our schools.

As a current member of the OUSD Board

of Trustees, I know the importance of having cooperation and teamwork among fellow trustees in working toward meeting our community's expectations for educa-

[SEE LETTERS page 19]

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 Advertising Representatives..... Jill Gelster, Elana O'Loskey, Marie Waterman  
 Editorial Committee..... Mark Roberts, Sally Hogarty, Jim Luini, Bill Reynolds, Kate Wiley  
 Staff Writers..... Sara Duplanic, Valerie Hotz, Jeanette Irving, Cathy Lambert, Steve Lambert, Kathryn G. McCarty, Elana O'Loskey, Maggie Sharpe  
 Contributing Writer..... Trevor Brooks, Chris Viadro  
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For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the December issue is October 18, 2010.



SAFETY / MOFD

# No Excuse Not to Wear Your Helmet

By CHRIS VIADRO  
Contributing Writer

When I was growing up in the 70s and early 80s, my friends and I never wore helmets when bike riding or skateboarding. I can recall one occasion where I flew off of my bike on Clement Street in San Francisco when the driver in a parked car opened her door into my front wheel. There were other minor skateboarding tumbles. Later, in my 20s, as a helmeted rollerblader, I went over the trunk of a car that turned right in front of me. Fortunately, I never hit my head and never sustained any lasting injury in any of these accidents.

Sadly, many other people are not so fortunate. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, "about 800 bicyclists are killed [each year] and more than half a million are treated in hospital emergency rooms. In recent years, almost two-thirds of the deaths and one-third of the injuries involved the head and face. About one-half the injuries to children under the age of 10 involved the head or face." (<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/5002.html>.) From my personal experience as a trial attorney, I have seen many head injuries arising from bicycle accidents, scooter accidents, and the like. The accidents have a myriad of causes: equipment failure (from poor maintenance or defective design or manufacture), operator error and/or the negligence of other individuals (e.g., drivers, other cyclists, etc.) to name a few.

According to Orinda resident and Emergency Department physician, Chris Severson, M.D., "normally, the brain floats in and is protected by a layer of fluid. However,



**Kelsey Viadro** shows how to wear a bike helmet correctly.

when the head strikes a hard object, such as the pavement, a traumatic brain injury can occur due to the direct force trauma as the brain makes contact with the inside of the skull, the tearing of blood vessels leading to compression of the brain, or shearing forces on neurons which can become permanently damaged."

Head trauma can result in a wide range of injuries from a minor concussion that resolves over a short period or more serious head injuries that result in death or lead to life long problems. According to Orinda resident and Internal Medicine physician, Jeff Ortiz, M.D., "even mild traumatic brain injuries can leave individuals with persistent headaches, mood changes, memory

[SEE SAFETY page 6]

# Fiery Debate Continues Over Future of MOFD

By MAGGIE SHARPE  
Staff Writer

The Tri-Agency Committee met for the third time on September 1 to discuss the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) and to garner more public input. Fire Chief Randy Bradley also presented facts and figures on MOFD's current and projected financials.

The Tri-Agency Committee is composed of two representatives from the Orinda

City Council (Amy Worth and Mayor Tom McCormick), Moraga Town Council (Mike Metcalf and Mayor Ken Chew) and MOFD Board of Directors (John Wyro and president Frank Sperling).

The debate around MOFD was initiated by Fire and Infrastructure Renewal (F.A.I.R.), a group of residents who advocate saving money by disbanding MOFD and contracting with Contra Costa County (ConFire) for fire services and

[SEE MOFD page 22]

## My New Phone

By Evan Corstorphine  
Portable CIO

Almost everyone has a cell phone, and they've become much more than portable telephones. The lines between telephone, jukebox, laptop and movie theatre have blurred. I've used an AT&T "Tilt" phone, and when it wore out, I used the "Tilt 2." As far as smartphones go, it's done a fine job. It's been like having a laptop in my pocket. I have been able to read email, use Word and Excel, and open PDF files. I listen to music, and I've watched movies. True, doing all of these on a little screen can be a bit daunting, but it worked, and I was happy with it.

However, the Tilt2 never seemed to have enough horsepower, and the result was sluggish behavior. When HTC recently came out with the "Evo" and "HD2" phones, I thought my prayers were answered. These phones are fast and have big, crisp screens. One phone runs Windows Mobile operating system, and the other uses Google Droid. Unfortunately, AT&T doesn't offer either phone. To use one, I'd have to switch carriers, which would have been an enormous undertaking for me.

While I've been using my Tilt2 phone, my whole family has slowly adopted the iPhone. It seemed that when we needed to look something up, their telephone web browser came up much faster than mine. When we wanted to "Yelp" a restaurant, their app was super fast, while I was fumbling through a cranky web interface. Their GPS was faster. Their texting was easier. And they had a lot of other interesting and useful applications available. I spent considerable time

and effort to research applications that could make my Windows Mobile telephone as useful as the iPhone, and you know what? Crickets. It's not possible. Microsoft is so far behind, I don't think they can catch up. The pressure for me to make a change was growing.

Finally, my old phone began having issues with email, and I had enough. I scavenged an older iPhone 3G phone and had it programmed for my telephone number, and I put in an order for the new iPhone 4. I don't want to overstate the experience of switching to the new telephone, but it was akin to taking a thorn out of my foot.

The difference between the phones was significant. When I bought my Tilt2, it was pretty advanced. However, moving from that to a simple (and now, dated) iPhone 3G was still a 100 percent upgrade. Using apps to go to my favorite sites instead of web pages is a huge convenience. I believe these apps that act as specialized front-ends for popular websites are the way of the future for telephones. Apple has nailed it.

My new iPhone 4 has arrived, and I'm amazed all over again. It is very fast. The camera upgrades and the ability to multi-task are tremendous. The quantity of tools, games and pass-times available are mind-boggling, and I'm still just beginning to explore them!

Suffice it to say I'm impressed, and if you've been holding off on purchasing one because you weren't sure, take the plunge; you won't be sorry.

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## Storm Drain Water Carves Dangerous Ravine

By MAGGIE SHARPE  
Staff Writer

A storm water pipe that dumps water onto the ground adjacent to Patricia Road above Highway 24 has carved a ravine that is currently 30 feet deep and 70 feet wide. The ravine is growing deeper and wider every year, as water continues to erode the soil.

Tatiana Moll and her family bought their home at 20 Patricia Road three years ago, right next to the ravine. She says she had no idea of the problem until her neighbors' lawyer Mark Mosley knocked on her door in August 2009 and told her, "you're in trouble."

"I thought the ravine was just part of the landscape," says Moll. "I had no idea it was being carved by that hidden pipe."

Mosley is representing two of Moll's neighbors whose properties are affected by the pipe and ravine, in a lawsuit against the City of Orinda.

The Molls' house is now just 25 feet from the edge of the ravine, according to an engineering report ordered by Moll from Allco Engineering, Inc. and dated Sept. 3, 2009.

"The erosion will ultimately remove the lateral support for the foundation of the home," reads the report. "... the house will most likely be partially, if not totally, destroyed sometime within the next 15 to 20 years." The report recommended a retaining wall be built at an approximate cost of \$260,000.

The engineers also predicted that a major landslide could occur as a result of the erosion. In 1996, a landslide from the ravine resulted in the temporary closure of the Highway 24 off ramp.

The 18-inch pipe, which collects storm water from the Candlestick neighborhood above Patricia Road, was installed when



COURTESY OF MARK MOSLEY  
Storm waters have carved an artificial ravine that is 30 feet deep and 70 feet wide and endangering neighboring houses.

the area was developed, around 1959, according to the engineer's report. As far back as 1964, neighbors complained about the growing gully to Contra Costa County, which was at the time responsible for the pipe. When Orinda incorporated in 1985, the drainage pipe, along with other infrastructure such as roads, became the city's responsibility.

Moll says that the City of Orinda has done nothing to help her or her neighbors to fix the problem. "I think it's gross negligence on the city's side," says Moll, who filed a lawsuit against the city a year ago. "We don't have the same resources as the city. This is like fighting Goliath."

Moll says the Contra Costa County Tax Assessor now values her home at less than half of what she bought it for. "The house is unsellable," says Moll. "Nobody in their right mind would buy this house."

She says she's worried about the safety of her family. "We've lost structural support already," Moll says. "In an earthquake, we could tumble into the ravine."

Moll's lawyer Alan Jang says mediation efforts with the City of Orinda failed in February, 2010, when the two sides couldn't reach an agreement. He explained the legal

[SEE DRAINAGE page 20]

## POLICE BLOTTER

August 2010



**False Residential Alarms:** Officers responded to 113 false alarm calls throughout the city.

**Auto Burglary:** 2 incidents were reported on Van Tassel Ln. and Meadow View Rd.

**Commercial Burglary:** 1 incident was reported on Camino Sobrante.

**Grand Theft - All Other:** 1 incident was reported on La Espiral.

**Petty Theft - All Other:** 1 incident was reported on Camino Sobrante.

**Petty Theft - From Vehicle:** 2 incidents were reported on Risa Ct. and Crescent Dr.

**Residential Burglary:** 2 incidents were on Moraga Via and Donald Dr.

**Stolen Vehicle:** 1 incident was reported on Moraga Way

**Vandalism:** 9 incidents were reported on Rose Ln., Muth Dr., Theatre Square, 2 on Camino Pablo, Rheem Blvd., Martha Rd., Orchard Rd. and Glorietta Blvd.

**Vandalism - Felony:** 2 incidents

were reported on Meadow Ct. and Heather Ln.

### Arrests

**Battery - Domestic:** 1 arrest was made on Tappan Ln.

**Battery - Misdemeanor:** 1 arrest was made on Las Vegas Ct.

**Driving Under the Influence - Misdemeanor < .08:** 4 arrests were made on Lombardy Ln., Camino Pablo/Monte Vista Rd., Camino Pablo and Orinda Way at Santa Maria Way.

**Drugs - Possession:** 1 arrest was made in Village Square.

**Drunk in Public:** 2 arrests were made on Moraga Way.

**Petty Theft - All Other:** 1 arrest was made on Camino Sobrante.

**Vandalism:** 1 arrest was made on Rheem Blvd.

**Warrant Arrest:** 1 arrest was made at Camino Pablo/Camino Sobrante.

- Compiled by Jeanette Irving,  
Orinda Police Department

### ◆ SAFETY from page 5

or concentration problems, and cognitive impairment among other symptoms."

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, "helmets may reduce the risk of head injury to bicyclists by as much as 85 percent. Yet, only about 50 percent of bicyclists wear helmets." (<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/5002.html>.) This is consistent with my own observations; here in Orinda, I routinely see adults riding their bikes without helmets. While I generally see helmets on kids bicycling in Orinda, they frequently are wearing them improperly. When a helmet is not strapped, too loosely strapped and/or positioned improperly (e.g., toward the back or side of the head), it can easily fly off or provide no protection in certain accidents. Aside from bikes, it is common to see Orinda kids riding Razor scooters, skateboards and the like who are not wearing helmets though the risk of head injury is no less. Indeed, just a few months ago, on Martha Road, an Orinda teen skateboarder was hospitalized after sustaining a serious closed head injury from riding a skateboard without a helmet. Dr. Severson further comments that "every month I'll see a number of patients with head injuries which could have been prevented."

The law requires minors wear helmets for a number of activities: A person under 18 years of age shall not operate a bicycle, a nonmotorized scooter, or a skateboard, nor shall they wear in-line or roller skates . . . upon a street, bikeway . . . or any other public bicycle path or trail unless that person is wearing a properly fitted and fastened bicycle helmet that meets the standards of either the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) or the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). (California Vehicle Code Section 21212(a).)

Why then, do so many people not wear helmets and/or wear them improperly? Perhaps, people feel that they are not going very fast or far, and the risk of injury is low. While speed can contribute to a head injury if there is impact with a raised object such as a pole or curb, it has little connection with head injury with the road surface. Just falling from seated bicycle height can easily generate enough force to cause a significant head injury, i.e., the acceleration from gravity can create sufficient impact speed for brain injury.

Another explanation may be that kids do not have a sense of their own mortality and are just being kids. In this regard, it is incumbent upon parents to instill good habits in kids when they are young to increase the likelihood of helmet use. By analogy, in this day and age, many people simply do not feel comfortable in a car if they are not wearing their seatbelt because it has become such a habit. That same type of habit needs to be created with regard to helmets. To that end, parents can start by modeling good behavior and wearing helmets themselves.

There are undoubtedly many other reasons why people do not wear helmets. I have even heard people say they do not want to mess up their hair. In the end, there are no good excuses. A bad hair day is not so bad when compared with a lifetime dealing with a brain injury. Don't become one of the statistics - wear your helmet!

Christopher A. Viadro, Esq. represents plaintiffs in catastrophic personal injury cases. He is a partner at Butler Viadro, LLP, in Oakland and primarily handles general negligence, products liability, premises liability and industrial accident cases.



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CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

# Candidates for City Council Discuss Their Priorities for Orinda

Tom McCormick



The five members of Orinda's City Council are elected volunteers who set policy, give direction to city staff, and make budget decisions. Besides attending twice-monthly council meetings, each council member serves on several committees. They also interact with the various levels of government between the city and the state on issues such as transportation, smart growth and traffic.

**Questions Asked**

1. Many local residents are concerned about the proposed changes to the downtown area detailed in the Planning Process Review Task Force (PPRTF) report, especially proposed increases in building height and density. What are your views on the report? How would you revitalize the downtown area and address local residents' concerns?
2. The deterioration of local roads has been an on-going concern for local residents. Given the current economic climate, how would you address this issue?
3. How would you rank, in order of importance, three areas of need in Orinda?
4. What leadership/management skills/experience do you possess that will make you an effective city council member?

**Downtown Revitalization**

As the mayor and a councilmember it is our job to identify issues facing our community, look for solutions and then present the potential solutions to the community to review and modify. The council identified the issues of revitalizing downtown and creating a plan so future changes to downtown are done in such a way that is acceptable to a majority of Orinda citizens. Without a plan, changes will occur in an eclectic manner. The council appointed the PPRTF to review the matter and provide a proposal. After more than 150 public meetings, the PPRTF presented its proposal. The proposal is currently going through the public review process. What is expected to come out of the process is a plan that is good for all of Orinda, not a minority. The PPRTF proposal allows buildings in specific areas to increase up to 55 feet, but only with specific set back requirements to allow for air and light. There is some allowance for a building roof line to go over 55 feet, but only if it adds some architectural significance, such as a skylight. All plans would

need to be approved in planning review and the Planning Commission, so the likelihood of any building going over 55 feet is improbable. The increased height limit is to allow for residential units above retail in order to increase the vitality of Orinda. Studies indicate that when residential units are above retail, downtown areas become more energetic and acceptable as a place to spend time. Further, many Orinda citizens, have voiced their opinion that they would like to have residential units in downtown Orinda. If the PPRTF proposal is not acceptable to a majority of Orinda citizens then the council will look for other options to revitalize downtown.

**Infrastructure**

Because Orinda voters have twice rejected a road bond (in 2006 and 2008), then the next possibility is to look for federal and state grants. The City Council has directed city staff to pursue state and federal grants. The City Council has also developed a plan and policy to work with local neighborhoods that want to fix their road. City staff

[SEE MC CORMICK page 12]

Dean Orr



**Downtown Revitalization**

The most important part of our process – and I embrace it – is to preserve the wonderful outdoor spaces and small town feel of Orinda while at the same time providing opportunities to bring more services and restaurants to serve our residents which I fully embrace. We all moved to Orinda because it is a wonderful, natural, family-oriented community, but we would like to have more goods and services available and to make purchases locally.

I support the full involvement of all

residents as we carefully consider changes to our downtown. We must balance the need for a thriving area, which can meet the needs of our residents – and no one is happy with empty storefronts – with the historic desire of Orindans to enjoy a natural environment where the hills and trees are the predominant features.

I want to hear the public debate on the downtown issues, but it is important for us as a community to consider the location of some residential use in the downtown, and to collectively discuss what the design limitations should be to accomplish our goals to both maintain our natural environment and to bring services and restaurants to our downtown.

I look forward to additional public workshops so that we as a community can have a further dialogue about our very important downtown areas.

In my two terms as a planning commissioner the planning process has become much more efficient and straightforward, resulting in more streamlined, balanced and thoughtful development opportunities for the city.

We must continue to review and evaluate our development process, to help applicants and homeowners build and renovate their homes and properties to contribute to the quality of our environment. In addition it is imperative that we make every effort to protect and preserve our open spaces and the natural beauty of our community. We should encourage infill construction projects and existing home renovations to meet this goal.

I also will encourage our council and department staff to find ways to support sustainable building practices and alternative energy installations. We should highlight these projects and give special attention

[SEE ORR page 12]



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CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Sue Severson



**Downtown Revitalization**

We have all seen the constant turnover of small businesses and the many deteriorating commercial buildings in Orinda. City government needs to enable and facilitate entrepreneurs who are willing to invest their resources in establishing local businesses that serve local needs and bring improvements to the downtown area. We can and should examine ways to reduce restrictive regulations on downtown businesses, which would both enhance our quality of life and augment the city's tax revenues. Establishing greater flexibility and unleashing creativity in making these improvements in our community by allowing selective building height increase and diversity of downtown housing options can better meet community needs for increased local services and affordable housing options for young families and seniors. If adopted, all projects are subject to an additional planning review process that evaluates on aesthetic design, context and appropriateness to surrounding areas, landscaping and parking needs. This is a reasonable approach to ensure downtown viability providing enhanced community services while maintaining the charm of Orinda. It is important to allow for an inclusive community process and thoughtful two-way dialogue.

**Infrastructure**

Road and drain repairs must receive the

highest priority from city government. Every day we experience unsafe pavement conditions that endanger pedestrians, bikers and drivers. Of primary importance, is to ensure that limited city funds allocated for infrastructure repair are used efficiently and effectively. Of equal importance is developing means of increasing the limited repair budget. Many options have been investigated including bond measure, parcel tax, real estate transfer tax, utility user tax and approaches to augmenting sales tax revenues. We now must make decisions on these alternatives or choose to continue down the road to escalating infrastructure deterioration. The community should be actively involved through workshops and informational presentations in near future, listen to any concerns and preferences, so we may then determine the best course to move forward to address infrastructure repairs. We as a community must come together and decide what option to pursue understanding there are pros and cons to all; certainly there is no one perfect solution that all will agree on.

**Areas of Need**

Orinda has an ongoing need for fiscally prudent management, careful financial oversight, and implementation of new revenue generating options. Secondly, we must seek viable solutions to failing roads and drains. Third, we must strive for communication improvement with the community to maximize the flow of ideas and solutions.

**Qualifications**

I have served Orinda for 13 years in elected office, and as a leader in many community endeavors such as city council, school board, Miramonte Parents' Club president, initiator of the Orinda in Action Community Service Day and founding trustee of the Orinda Community Foundation.

In all my public service my approach has [SEE SEVERSON page 12]

Amy Worth



**Downtown Revitalization**

The citizens of Orinda voted 25 years ago to incorporate so that we could have local control of zoning and land use decisions. The Planning Process Review Task Force, composed of Orinda citizen volunteers, made recommendations to the Planning Commission and the City Council regarding residential zoning regulations, improvements to the planning process to make home renovation and construction more user friendly to residents and recommendations for revitalizing the downtown.

After extensive public input and discussion which resulted in a consensus decision, the residential zoning changes and planning process recommendations were adopted. These residential changes continue to preserve Orinda's neighborhood character and make the home improvement/construction process less expensive and less time consuming for residents.

The task force also presented recommendations for improving our downtown and revitalizing businesses there. We are still in the middle of a community process to discuss those ideas and to develop a community consensus on how Orinda's downtown will evolve in the future.

Because we have local control of our zoning decisions, we can work together

as a community to achieve consensus for our downtown. Through continued open, public discussions in an informal workshop format, we can provide an important way for the community to engage in this discussion.

Recognizing that the community desires further discussion regarding downtown zoning, we will be holding additional public community workshops this fall to discuss resident's views on downtown revitalization. We will also utilize electronic interactive tools such as the City of Orinda's website so that residents who cannot attend the workshops will be able to present their ideas and thoughts as well.

We need to improve our business district in a manner that preserves the essence of Orinda and we need a tailor-made downtown that is vibrant and serves our community needs. Providing additional flexibility which promotes the reconstruction of downtown buildings will provide the opportunity to do that. We need to continue the community discussion on ideas to develop a downtown plan and a vision that uniquely fits Orinda's character and community desires. The plan that the Orinda adopts will be one that is the result of extensive community discussion, input and consensus.

**Infrastructure**

Improving our roads and drains must continue to be a high priority of the city, and we must continue to allocate the maximum city resources we have available to pave and repair roads and drains. Unfortunately, our available revenues do not begin to approach the magnitude of the problem. By prioritizing the allocation of road paving dollars, we can repair and maintain the roads that have the highest use by Orinda residents. We must continue to allocate all our garbage franchise fees and regional transportation funds towards paving roads [SEE WORTH page 12]

Tom McCormick for Orinda City Council - Fresh Ideas - Dedication



Join Us In Supporting Tom McCormick for Orinda City Council

- |  |  |
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| Bob Jungbluth<br>Orinda Planning<br>Commissioner         | Acalanes Union High<br>School District   |
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| Richard Westin<br>Former Orinda Planning<br>Commissioner |  |

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*From the Desk of*  
Thomas T. McCormick  
Mayor, City of Orinda

Dear Orinda Neighbor;

I have diligently worked to complete all the promises I made to Orinda residents in 2006. I have pushed to

- Change the residential remodeling permitting process to make it easier and user friendly;
- Cut city operating costs;
- Change city philosophy to be service oriented;
- Increase communications with residents;
- Increase the amount spent on road improvements;
- Institute a two-year city budget for better planning;
- Support Orinda schools and environmental programs; and
- Create a plan to revitalize downtown.

My promise to you is to continue to press to make Orinda an even better city with drivable roads and planning for the future. An open and communicative government is good; I will make sure Orinda is open to all new ideas for improvement and residents' concerns.

I ask for your continued support on November 2, 2010.

Tom McCormick

Kathy and Wesley Yee  
Jamie Zaffanella

Charles Zakskorn



CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

# Re-Elect Sue Severson for Orinda City Council

"She's a winner! When Sue Severson ran for the Orinda City Council in 2006 I heartily endorsed her. I thought she would bring intelligence, thoughtfulness and integrity to the Council. I was right. Re-elect Sue Severson for another term."

Dick Heggie, Orinda's First Mayor

"I can think of no individual who has done more for Orinda's children and families than Sue Severson. Her nine years of service on the OUSD Board were of substantial and lasting benefit to a whole generation of our children. Her work on the City Council over the past four years, and as Mayor in 2009, has been exemplary. She has addressed city issues and challenges with respect for all constituents, an overriding sense of fairness, and a collaborative approach, which has resulted in significant progress for the City. I enthusiastically endorse Sue's candidacy for a second term on the Orinda City Council."

Pam West, President, Orinda Union School District Board

"Sue Severson has done an excellent job on our city council. She has no special-interest agenda, just a focus on doing what is best for Orinda's citizens. Sue is detail-oriented and also sees the big picture. I encourage you to vote for Sue and keep her knowledge and experience working for us."

Linda Landau, Orinda Citizen of the Year 2010



**Join the over 500 Orinda leaders and endorsers who are voting Sue Severson for City Council.**

**SUE SEVERSON**  
 My approach throughout more than twenty years of volunteer public service has been to maintain a respectful attitude, to foster open and responsive communication and to focus on fiscally prudent practices for our tax dollars.  
 My promise is to help establish priorities to best allocate scarce resources through diligent fact gathering, thoughtful study of all options, inclusion of all interested parties and decisions made with a fair and open mind.

Sue Severson  
 Orinda City Council, 2006-present  
 Mayor, City of Orinda, 2009  
 Miramonte Parents' Club President, 2006-2007  
 Orinda Citizen of the Year, 2004  
 Orinda Union School District Board, 1993-2002

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| Brad & Cindy Barber         | Eric & Dvora Citron         | Catherine & James Farrell   | Isabel & Scott Hamilton | Jim & Linda Landau        | Petra Michel              | Terry Riggins                | Ida & Lon Spurrer          |
| Gene & Neil Barth           | David & Cristy Clarke       | Jonathan & Tracy Fayman     | Nora Harlow             | Bobbie Landers            | Brian & Laura Millham     | Ben & Janet Riley            | Carolyne & Andy Steenovec  |
| Sharon Bartlett             | Jacqueline Clodt            | John & Mary Lou Fazel       | Marsha Harris           | Gary & Carla Laney        | Charles Mitchell & Vivian | Dave & Katherine Ritchey     | Deb Stephenson & Mitchell  |
| Barnaby Hale Beck           | Stephen & Sylvia Coates     | Dr. Nicholas & Katherine W. | Steve & Tish Harwood    | Bernard & Leslee Larmer   | Nelson                    | Max & Mary Kate Rittmann     | Reed                       |
| Lucia & John Bennhoff       | Jan & Alan Coe              | Feduska                     | Peter Hasselman         | Brent & Rebecca Larson    | Matt Moran                | Mark Roberts                 | Greg & Pat Straughn        |
| Fred Berkowitz & Sasha      | Micki Cooper                | John & Kathy Fernbacher     | Bea & Dick Heggie       | Lynette & Tom Lay         | Pearl Morris              | Mike & Charlene Robinson     | Tom & Carol Sueoka         |
| Rabsey                      | Judy & Dave Corliss         | Cassandra Forth             | Pam & Carter Hemming    | Joel & Barbara Libove     | Phil & Anna Morrison      | Kevin & Susan Romak          | Anna & Skip Tague          |
| Kelly & Jim Bitzer          | Bill Cosden                 | Herb & Jeri Foster          | Holly & Gerry Henkel    | Mark & Nanette Linderman  | James & Rebecca Nadauld   | Wayne & Gail Ronnenberg      | Al & Lucy Talbot           |
| Carmel Dewies Blore         | Jesse & Vanessa Crews       | Dan & Linda Friedman        | Chip & Margaret Ling    | Jack & Ellen Nelson       | Tracie Nelson             | Dennis & Maria Rowland       | Matthew & Nancy C. Taylor  |
| Peter & Nancy Bluford       | Steve & Elaine Dathe        | Mark & Yvonne Fuhrman       | Mike & Annette Linney   | Eartha Newsong            | Li & Phil Nicolaou        | Glenn & Pat Rudebusch        | Jeremy & Kim Thatcher      |
| Jack & Barbara Bantemps     | Stephen Davis & Chris Laszc | Barry & Pam Gardiner        | Tyler & Beth Hofinga    | Liz & Phil Nicolaou       | Joel & Lori O'Camb        | Jim & Jane Ryan              | Jack & Rita Trumbo         |
| Rick & Nancy Booth          | Davis                       | Susan Garell                | Jeff & Alison Holland   | Joel & Lori O'Camb        | Tom Ohlson                | Laura Sawczuk                | Mark & Marcie Tuttle       |
| Cedric & Susan Brady        | Jim & Dana Dawson           | Phil & Lynn Garrett         | Bruce & Jackie Horwitz  | Tom Ohlson                | Diane Oshima              | Bill & Nath Schmicker        | Bev Ullman                 |
| Sandy Breber                | Rich & Luise DeFabio        | Steve Gentry                | Edna Huelhenbeck        | Kevin & Kathy Marker      | Elena & Marcus Pang       | Brad & Tracey Seals          | Ted & Lida Urban           |
| Thama & James Brentano      | Mike & Pam DeLange          | Frank & Robyn Ghali         | Jane & Nick Hyde        | April Matthews            | Laura W. Patton           | Paul Seeth & Rebecca         | Chris & Julianne Viadro    |
| Michael & Betty Brinkerhoff | Robert deStefano            | Pete & Caroline Giers       | Shirley Imber           | Mary Maxon                | Ina & Kent Pavey          | Dahlberg                     | Clark Wallace              |
| Mary Chatton Brown          | Mike & Cathy Dolbec         | Karen Derr Gilbert          | David & Monique Jasper  | Bob & Lori Jungbluth      | Janet & Norm Pease        | Brandt & Autbyn Severson     | Carl & Florence Weber      |
| Dick & Barbara Burkhalter   | Jeanne Dowell               | Kurtis & Britta Glade       | Craig & Lisa Jorgens    |                           | Carol & Mark Penskar      | Chris & Pam Severson         |                            |
| Bruce Burrows               | Shirley Dudley              | Rudy Glauser                | Bob & Lori Jungbluth    |                           | David Pierce              | Ralph F. Severson            |                            |

Partial list of endorsers.

There are 17,700 people living in Orinda. Does City Hall listen to you?  
 Let's elect someone who will work for all of us.

## SCOTT ZELLER FOR CITY COUNCIL



Cherish Orinda  
**Scott ZELLER**  
 For City Council

- Keep current Orinda General Plan
- Low buildings, great views, "village feel"
- Fix our crumbling roads and infrastructure
- Maintain the excellence in our schools
- More citizen input/votes on major issues
- Govern with fiscal responsibility
- Support small business and growth

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CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES



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Kathy and John



Kathy Mitchell    Owners    Joey O'Brien  
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Scott Zeller, MD



The current Orinda General Plan is on target, calling for low building heights, unobstructed views of the hills, maintaining a village atmosphere, and supporting local businesses that Orindans need. I believe we should maintain this plan and find ways to revitalize downtown consistent with this vision. Any major change to the Orinda General Plan should be through a vote of our citizens.

Instead of the proposal, I would start a revitalization process by surveying local residents about what kinds of businesses they want in a downtown, and then facilitate those types of merchants moving into Orinda. Perhaps our residents would like a full service health club, a produce store, a butcher? These fit in with the General Plan of serving local needs.

I would focus on filling up the great number of vacant storefronts we already have.

I would assist local organizations to improve our downtown – garden clubs to add planters, artists to do murals. I would encourage the Planning Commission to fast track approval of storefront and façade remodeling.

We can revitalize our downtown by embracing what makes us so wonderfully unique – a charming, semi-rural small town nestled in a bustling metropolitan area. With a little foresight, effort and polish, people will be much more attracted to shop in our distinctive Orinda than yet another cookie-cutter suburb.

**Infrastructure**

The roads and pipes clearly need repair, but after two bond issues were defeated at the polls, our voters have said we need to look at alternatives to tax increases.

One possibility is exploring all possible avenues for government grants. Another consideration is shared-cost neighborhood assessments, as the Crestview Drive people have pioneered. And we should do all we

[SEE ZELLER page 22]

**Downtown Revitalization**

I fully support improving our downtown, but I am for smart revitalization rather than massive development.

Though the Task Force was created to find ways to “revitalize” our downtown, its report instead recommended “redeveloping” it. The proposal calls for raising height limits in certain areas to 55’ – which could become 70’ or more depending on roof pitch – allowing for towering condominium complexes to be built.

This would turn our quaint and convenient downtown into a Transit Village. Once so changed, it will never return to the semi-rural, neighborly, hometown feel that led so many of us to move here.

Many other potential effects of the plan have not been evaluated. Redevelopment would likely evict many of our favorite local businesses, including some that provide major portions of our sales tax revenues. Parking could be very problematic in the new designs. And though downtown’s piece of Moraga Way is an artery for many to eastbound 24, there has been no study as to what redevelopment would mean to that passage, or other traffic concerns.

# Dean Orr 2010

for Orinda City Council



## Sound Judgement Effective Leadership

“As a council member, I will strive for open and active dialogue within the community, and I will help ensure that the Council’s decisions are balanced, sensible and transparent.”

“Dean brings a practical and positive approach to bring people together to solve community issues, and his goal is always to improve the quality of life for our kids, seniors and families.”

**Victoria Smith,  
Vice Mayor of Orinda**

“Dean’s enthusiasm for our community is tremendous and he is committed to supporting our schools at every level. I welcome his collaborative nature and sound judgment to the City Council”

**Clare McDonald, 2009-2011  
Orinda Intermediate  
School Parents Club  
Co-President**

“Dean is passionate about our schools, our environment and our civic life. We have all benefited from his enormous contribution to making Orinda such a special community.”

**Steve Glazer, Orinda City  
Council Member**

“I was so impressed with Dean’s work on the Planning Commission with the Pulte project. He is clearly knowledgeable, pragmatic, results oriented, and collaborative—great qualities for a council member—I’m thrilled he’s running this year!”

**Riki Sorenson, Orinda  
Union School Board  
Member**

**Selected Endorsements Include:**

**Elected Officials**

- Victoria Smith**  
Vice Mayor of Orinda
- Dick Heggie**  
Former Mayor of Orinda and Citizen of the Year
- Joyce Hawkins**  
Former Mayor of Orinda and Citizen of the Year
- Bill Judge**  
Former Mayor of Orinda and Citizen of the Year
- Bobbie Landers**  
Former Mayor of Orinda and Citizen of the Year
- Allan Tabor**  
Former Mayor of Orinda
- Laura Abrams**  
Former Mayor of Orinda
- Gregg Wheatland**  
Former Mayor of Orinda
- Matt Moran**  
Orinda Union School District Board Member

- Pat Rudebusch**  
Orinda Union School District Board Member
- Riki Sorenson**  
Orinda Union School District Board Member
- Jean Lyford**  
Former Orinda Union School District Board Member
- Brook Mancinelli**  
Moraga Orinda Fire District Board Member
- Dr. Gene Gottfried**  
Former Moraga Orinda Fire District Board Member and Volunteer of the Year
- Peter Wilson**  
Former Moraga Orinda Fire District Board Member and Volunteer of the Year
- Louise Adamson**  
Orinda Planning Commission Vice-Chair
- Todd Berryhill**  
Orinda Planning Commissioner
- Joan Kiekhaefer**  
Education Foundation of Orinda Board President
- Tricia Young**  
Wagner Ranch Parents Club Board Member
- Carrie Smith**  
Wagner Ranch Parents Club Board Member

- Megan Cohen**  
Wagner Ranch Parents Club Board Member
- Alissa Lillie**  
Wagner Ranch Parents Club Board Member
- Clare McDonald**  
OIS Parents Club Board Member
- Lynn Molloy**  
OIS Parents Club Board Member
- Shannon Fuller**  
Orinda Parks and Recreation Commission Member
- Julie Whitsitt**  
Orinda Parks and Recreation Commission Member and Volunteer of the Year
- Louise Adamson**  
Orinda Planning Commission Vice-Chair
- Todd Berryhill**  
Orinda Planning Commissioner
- Chris Knief**  
Orinda Planning Commissioner
- Terry Murphy**  
Former Orinda Planning Commission Chair and Volunteer of the Year
- Catherine Cutler**  
Former Orinda Planning Commission Vice-Chair

- Will Alloway**  
Former Orinda Planning Commission Vice-Chair
- Colleen Carter**  
Former Orinda Planning Commission Member
- Kevin Coleman**  
Orinda Finance Advisory Committee
- Tom MacKinnon**  
Former Orinda Traffic Safety Advisory Committee Chair
- Jim & Patt Aitchison**  
Dick & Julie Atkinson
- Jack & Janice Babcock**  
Rich Bartlett
- Amy Berryhill**  
Joy & Kurt Braitberg
- Kevin & Shauna Brennan**  
Monica & Shane Brun
- Barbara Burkhalter**  
Ron Carter
- Mike & Sara Curran**  
Omer Cohen
- Kim Coleman**  
Ellen & Joffa Dale
- Larry & Mary Del Santo**  
Bill & Andrea DeWitt
- Chuck & Kirsten Engs**  
Mike & Janine Evans

- Marc & Karen Evans**  
Gus & Sugar Filice
- Grant & Joyce Fine**  
Bob & Patty Frazer
- Steve & Lynn Freeman**  
Jon & Michele Gasparini
- Peter & Sandy Golze**  
Kevin & Tracy Gong
- Jim Gray**  
Tina Chou & Steven Harrison
- Pete & Helen Hasselman**  
Jeff Hawkins
- Jeanie & Jeff Hocking**  
Ellen Hoffnagel
- Tim Hyden**  
Ken Ingrey
- Monique Jasper**  
Joey Judge
- Aileen & Tom Kelly**  
Van Lam & Nancy Cha-Lam
- Robyn & Dane Lewis**  
Ken & Gretchen Lewis
- Mary & Mark Maxon**  
Deven & Kim Mays
- Brock McDonald**  
Chris & Barbara McLain
- Eric Mein**

- Tom Molloy**  
Andrew & Cathy Moran
- Eartha Newsong**  
Steven Oliver
- John & Susie Parr**  
Brandi & John Pearce
- Martin & Kerry Resch**  
Mark & Teresa Sanchez
- Alton Schmitt**  
William Simpson
- Fred Smith & Susan Bell**  
Wick Smith
- Jack Sweitzer**  
Mark & Lorree Swinton
- Ashley Taylor & Christy Blackie-Taylor**  
D.J. & Tina Tierney
- Tom & Lynn Trowbridge**  
Charlie & Doaa Vollmar
- Mike & Jennifer Vigo**  
Shirley Wheatland
- Doug Whitsitt**  
Amelia Wilson
- Volunteer of the Year**  
Tom & Carole Wolfman
- Bret Young**



ORINDA MOTORS

# Orinda Motors – Then and Now

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

As the hustle and bustle of modern hi-tech vehicles flows through Orinda Motors, it is easy to forget the heritage of the building and the historic neighborhood that still exists. Even though Orinda Motors has spent hundreds of hours of training and tens of thousands of dollars on equipment to keep current with the modern cars, there is one thing that still keeps it connected to its historic building, the classic cars. “When I first came to Orinda Motors, we did not embrace working on the older cars,” reports John Vanek, long-time service manager at Orinda Motors. “I started to get requests from regular loyal customers to work on their old Buicks and Ford Thunderbirds” states Vanek. “It turns out that there are many vintage vehicles nestled away in garages around the hills of Orinda and local towns. These owners do not feel comfortable taking their prized possessions to just anybody. Considering the same Orinda Motors ASE Certified Master Technicians employed to diagnose and repair the modern computerized vehicles also have over 25 years experience each working on older cars, it made sense to accommodate the classic car owners.”

One such classic car owner, Ford Mustang fanatic Chip Herman, encouraged Vanek and Orinda Motors to host the Orinda Classic Car Show. Six years later, the car show has turned into one of Orinda’s largest annual events raising thousands of dollars for causes such as EFO, Seniors Around Town, and the Orinda Historical Society. The last few years Vanek was inspired to put together a special exhibit at the car show that spotlights Orinda’s history. Fascinated with historical photos



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
This 1934 Ford coupe is one of the many classic cars often seen being worked on at today’s Orinda Motors.

of Orinda, Vanek wanted to connect them to the vintage cars that are displayed at the car show. The resulting “Orinda Through the Years” exhibit is a collaboration with the Orinda Historical Society.

Orinda Motors original building was reportedly a vision of Orinda pioneer E.I de Laveaga. He planned to have an auto repair shop, a feed store, a grocery store, and more in Orinda. The original shop was called “The Orinda Garage.” Many vintage photos feature the same basic building as it stands today. “It is a great feeling to know that our shop is part of Orinda’s history,” says Vanek. “We still work on the same kind of cars that were serviced in the same building back in the day.”

At any given time, you can look inside Orinda Motors at 63 Orinda Way and find a vintage car such as a 1952 Chevy parked next to a BMW or a Toyota. “We have the skills to work on cars that span the years from the 1920s all the way through to the latest technology, so we do” Vanek says. Vanek is always available to give a tour of the historic building and show off the historic photos lining the walls of his office. There will probably also be a vintage, muscle or classic car in one of the service bays to feast your eyes upon as well.



COURTESY OF ORINDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Orinda Way, circa 1920, with a lot fewer cars and trees.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
John Vanek with a classic 1968 Oldsmobile 442.

# Orinda Motors Inc.

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## CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

## ◆ MC CORMICK from page 7

will prepare the engineering necessary to complete road projects and use its contacts to obtain competitive bids for repairs. The city can also obtain necessary money to fix local roads by acting to keep sales tax dollars in Orinda. In order to keep sales tax dollars in Orinda, we must develop a comprehensive plan to revitalize downtown so it serves the needs and desires of Orinda residents. Such a plan can include support for local business, common pathways and areas for residents to gather, and a cohesive structure that invites residents to downtown, not unlike some older European cities that have a centralized promenade for meeting, dining and activities.

**Areas of Importance**

Roads and infrastructure repairs.

Better programs for youth to keep them focused on good safe living.

Develop a comprehensive plan to revitalize downtown Orinda in such a way that local businesses are supported and residents choose to shop and spend money in Orinda.

**Qualifications**

My experience on the Orinda City Council and working with other governmental agencies and representatives give me a substantial amount of experience to help Orinda find state and federal funding to fix roads and infrastructure. My background as an attorney and financial person helps me understand budgets and the need to balance the interests of many parties when overseeing the Orinda budget and personal. The City Council has taken steps to cut the city budget in order to find ways to pay for necessary emergency services and to find more money for road repairs. My experience as a father of four children in Orinda schools helps me understand the needs of our future generations and the great benefit our schools bring to our community.

## ◆ WORTH from page 8

and actively seek state and federal road reconstruction grant funds, as we used to pave Moraga Way.

Working together with the Fire District, we need to identify other revenue sources to address safety aspects of our infrastructure maintenance program.

We have undertaken an aggressive public works program to fix potholes and road repairs to slow further deterioration and have adopted a process for neighborhood self-help paving of residential streets.

While the economic climate right now is not a good time to increase taxes, Orinda will need to continue to explore future long term revenue options to repair and maintain our infrastructure of roads and drains.

**Areas of Need**

Because the state continues to take money from cities, maintaining the financial security of Orinda will continue to be the greatest challenge for our city. Although we have prudently and carefully managed our city tax dollars, we need to continue to manage our resources frugally to be able to sustain important services like police protection and public works for our citizens.

Orinda's excellent schools are a foundation of our community, and we must work together to protect and maintain the excellent educational opportunities that our children receive. State cuts in education dollars continue to threaten local educational excellence. For decades our community has come together with both public and private dollars to maintain Orinda's excellent schools, and we must continue those important and necessary efforts.

Increasingly, government decisions about the allocation of resources are made at the regional level in areas such as garbage service and recycling programs, road and public transit dollars, the Lamorinda School Bus Program, highway manage-

ment and land use policy. These decisions affect Orinda residents. It is especially important that Orinda continues to be well represented and maintains its respected voice on the regional authorities that make those decisions.

**Qualifications**

I love being on the Orinda City Council because of the opportunity it affords me to work on behalf of our citizens.

Over the years I have been able to contribute my time and abilities to bring people together to solve problems and to accomplish projects in our community. I care deeply about making decisions based on consensus and thoughtful discussion, whether it be at a City Council meeting, a community decision process like building a new library or a regional effort such as building the Caldecott Tunnel.

There are two projects in particular where I was in a position to lead that I'm most proud of: building and operating the Orinda Library and building a fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel. I enjoy working on a wide variety of projects that can improve our quality of life.

But these accomplishments are not mine alone; they are the product of many hands and collective effort.

My role is often to bring people together to solve problems or to advocate for Orinda at regional authorities. My leadership on regional bodies such as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission or the Contra Costa Transportation Authority enables Orinda to be well represented in regional decisions.

## ◆ SEVERSON from page 8

been, and will continue to be, to maintain a respectful attitude toward all participants in the process, foster open and responsive communication, and focus intently on fiscal responsibility. I believe that we succeed in maximizing the quality of life in Orinda only through a collaborative effort partnering community, schools and business.

Currently, I serve on numerous city committees, including the Audit Committee; Finance Advisory Committee that just completed review of revenue options to address infrastructure needs; Traffic Safety Advisory Committee now finalizing on the Bicycle, Trail and Walkway Master Plan; Public Works Aesthetics Review working to improve directional signage from BART to downtown and crossroads; Lamorinda School Bus Program focusing on getting kids to school safely and keeping parents off the roads alleviating commuter traffic. It is my desire to continue exercising leadership in all these areas to the betterment of Orinda.

## ◆ ORR from page 7

to applicants willing to go beyond the minimum standards of construction. As the new 2010 California Green Building code is implemented next January, we must be prepared to help applicants understand and implement these new state mandated codes.

**Infrastructure**

In the short-term, we must continue prioritizing road repairs for our limited budgets. In addition, I will work with my colleagues on the council and with our city staff to seek alternative funding sources where available. We must continue to look at alternate strategies for selecting road repair projects, the sequencing of the work, and bundling of projects to take the best advantage of the construction bid process and stretch our dollars.

Again we must continue to listen to the community to understand their willingness to support a bond or other revenue measure as a fix. When the economy permits, I will work tirelessly to educate our community on the need, the repair plan, and to gain support to succeed in securing funds to repair our roads.

**Areas of Importance**

Our deteriorating roads and aging infrastructure, as well as maintaining our prudent fiscal reserves and carefully addressing budget shortfalls continue to be key issues facing Orinda. I believe the most important issue facing Orinda is gaining greater community involvement and building consensus among residents. We must find ways to engage and actively listen to residents. I look forward to the development of our city website, the city twitter service, email lists and other media in order to make the government process accessible to everyone.

In these difficult economic times, we need to work together in a spirit of cooperation with other local agencies, the schools, utilities, and the fire district, in order to stretch our local taxpayer dollars and to make sure that our tax dollars stay at home and are not seized by the state. As a council member, I will work hard together with other local elected officials to keep tax revenue available for use in our local community. We must address our failed roads and seek every funding opportunity to obtain revenue — including grant money, bonds and partnering with the other involved agencies like EBMUD, PG&E and the Central Sanitary Agencies — to find funds to fix our roads.

**Qualifications**

I believe my professional background in  
[SEE ORR page 20]



## NEW Fall Programs Starting October 1st

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SCHOOLS/STUDENTS

## Pumpkin Patches and Fall Carnivals at Elementary Schools

Halloween lurks around the corner and three local elementary schools are ready for the fun.

**Sleepy Hollow** holds its annual Pumpkin Patch and Fall Carnival on Saturday, October 30 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Look for the wizards in the Magical Harry Potter Haunted House, join in the wild and wacky cakewalk, say hi to miniature horses, ducks, geese and sheep at the petting zoo, scale the rock wall or tackle the obstacle course and don't miss Leo the Amazing Magician. There will be plenty to eat from Maverick's Barbecue and Quenchers Smoothies and the Country Kitchen will be open for homemade treats. The school is at 20 Washington Lane.

Over at **Glorietta**, stop by the Annual Fun Fest on Saturday, October 23 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The carnival will include

pumpkin carving and painting, a bounce house and dunk tank, more than two dozen game booths, a raffle with lots of prizes (including a Grand Prize iPad), and a boutique with baked goods as well as arts and crafts. Come hungry, as there will be a barbecue with good things to eat. The school is at 15 Martha Road.

**Del Rey's** traditional Pumpkin Patch will be on Saturday, October 16 from noon to 4 p.m. Here's a chance to dunk your favorite 5th-grader, duck into the bounce house or super slide, or try your hand at carnival games, including graveyard golf and a doughnut-eating contest. Face painting, relay races, bake sale and a cake decorating contest add to the spirit of the day. New this year is the Monster Ball Relay Race. The school is located at 25 El Camino Moraga.

—Maggie Sharpe, Staff Writer



CONTRIBUTE PHOTO

**Stephanie Dolan** holds a chicken from last year's petting zoo at Sleepy Hollow Elementary School. This year's festivities at Sleepy Hollow take place October 30 from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

### ZUMBA

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## Signups for Cheerleading Camp



V. BELINSKY

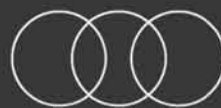
Participants from last year's Miramonte Cheer Camp for Kids.

Each fall, the Miramonte Cheer Team runs a Cheer Camp for grades K-8. This year's camp is October 19, 21 and 22. The youngsters will learn cheers on October 19 and 21 and on the 22 will perform at half-time at Miramonte's big game against Campolindo. Registration deadline is October 8. For information and a registration form, email miramontecheer@earthlink.net.

## International Walk to School Day – October 6

Walking or biking to school gives children a sense of freedom and responsibility and allows them to enjoy the fresh air while providing opportunities to get to know their neighborhood. They arrive at school alert, refreshed and ready to start their day.

Celebrate the joys of walking, biking or riding the bus to Orinda schools on October 6.



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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Local Student Participated in Costa Rican Adventure



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sixteen-year-old Bobby Taylor (far right) made it through a 24-day jungle survival course in Costa Rica recently. In addition to physical challenges, Taylor developed leadership skills and experienced firsthand the culture of Costa Rica. "Homestays were a great way to see the local culture," says Taylor, who learned how to make sugar from sugar cane and tortillas from ground corn as well as raft Class IV rapids, trek through clouded rain forests, and life with indigenous families.

Orinda Idol Winners Announced at Gala Event

Middle School Winner Madison Wheeler earned top awards at the 4th Annual Orinda Idol at the Orinda Theatre winning first place in her category and the special Audience Award. Other winners included Alex Meckes (Grades K-2); Ryan Ford (Grades 3-5), Steven Patton (High School), Glasses & Glam: Samantha Martin, Jackie Patton (Group Category K-5), and SPJANK!: Jacqueline Garell, Amrita Newton, Neris Newton, Katie Marino, Paige Powell, Sofie Woodlee (Group Category 6-12).

A celebrity panel of judges selected the winners while TV reporters Anna Werner and Laura Anthony served as Masters of Ceremonies. Go to [www.orindaarts council.org](http://www.orindaarts council.org) for a complete list of winners.

— Kathryn G. McCarty, Staff Writer



PETRA MICHEL

Audience Award Winner **Madison Wheeler**

Gabe Ostler Judged "Best of the Best"



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gabe (L) and Scott Ostler share a love of sports and a talent for writing

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY  
Staff Writer

*"The door swung noiselessly into the muffled darkness of the gym. A hooded figure, clutching a basketball under his left arm, slid quickly and quietly through the opening. With a faint click, the door closed behind him.*

*He walked, slowly but purposefully, in the direction of the free throw line. The hooded head swiveled left, right, down, and up, taking in all of the familiar scenery. Everything about the gym he knew by heart; and he could tell you where everything was without opening his eyes, but he looked around anyway, because this gym was home."*

From Gabe Ostler's "The Thin Line."

Gabriel Ostler, a freshman at Miramonte High School, is on the road to success with his writing, having recently earned the Best-of-the-Best Award in the 16th Young Writer's Contest sponsored by the California Writers Club, Mt. Diablo Branch.

His story "The Thin Line" scored first prize in the 8th grade short story division and was chosen from an overwhelming 523 manuscripts for the top honor.

His mother Kathleen adds that the head judge compared him to a "young Michael Chabon" which she found "So flattering!"

Ostler was "totally excited," with the contest's results. "Just winning in the first place was cool enough, and then I also got the "Best of the Best" which was a total surprise!"

"I've always loved telling a story, be it real or imagined, and writing, to me, is simply polishing up that story and putting it on paper," Ostler said, adding that he has been writing "for as long as I can remember" and enjoys writing everything "except poetry. I can't rhyme to save my life."

Ostler previously won an honorable mention for his short story "The Doors" in

the Orinda Junior Women's Club contest Youth Ink.

Ostler's family is no stranger to writing awards. His father, Scott Ostler, is a nationally syndicated sports columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and an 11-time winner of the California Sportswriter of the Year award.

Ostler reads his father's columns, and has also read his book *How to Cheat in Sports* which he calls "amazingly interesting and funny," adding "What I like the most, however, was a piece of fiction titled 'Crowbar's Last Stand' that my dad wrote for *Zzyva* magazine. I'd never read anything but nonfiction by him and to see this work and how well written and funny and complex it was really stunned me."

The reverence for one another's work is apparent. "He's a smart kid and a good writer," said the elder Ostler. "When I read his short story it really blew me away." His pride in his son is evident as he adds he is particularly impressed with his son's dedication to writing. "He shows a lot of skill, and he has a good imagination."

The junior Ostler said he reads "Many different authors," adding his "favorite books" are Norton Juster's *The Phantom Tollbooth* and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. "I recently read *It's Kind of a Funny Story* by Ned Vizzini, which I would recommend to anyone in high school."

Though Ostler doesn't quite know what inspires him to write, he does know that writing is "always something I've enjoyed. It's something I don't feel pressured to do. I enjoy manipulating English to really convey emotion and setting. Also, I love seeing people's reactions after they read what I wrote!"

Other Orinda winners from the Guild's contest include OIS students Isadora Palmer-Collins Stearn (first place, 7th grade essay) and Bianca Palmer-Collins Stearn (2nd place, 7th grade essay).

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## Leila Schlein

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SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

# Five First-Time School Board Candidates Share Their Views

SARAH BUTLER



**Top Priorities**

Due to the on-going state budget cuts over the last few years, our schools have already taken significant budget cuts. Statewide there has been \$17 billion cut from public schools in the last two years. California is now ranked 44th in the nation in per pupil funding.

For the Orinda Union School District, this year's state funding is 22 percent below the amount legally obligated to our district. The result is that OUSD has had a shortfall of \$3.7 million during the last 3 years and has already taken significant budget cuts as a result. State funding for OUSD makes up 61 percent of the district's budget since we are fortunate to also have strong local support from the Orinda community.

Given this situation, and the continued uncertainty in the state budget, the top priorities for the district need to be maintaining the core instructional program for

The five-member Board of Trustees works with the superintendent to establish a long-term vision for the district as well as adoption of policies, curriculum and budgets. Currently, three of the five board positions are up for election. None of the incumbents are running for re-election.

*The Orinda News* asked the five candidates to answer the following questions:

1. Budget woes continue to plague California's schools. If elected, you'll be asked to deal with the state's continuing fiscal crisis as Orinda's schools struggle to make ends meet. Given this scenario, what do you see as the top priorities for the school district?
2. School districts across the Bay Area, including Orinda, are seeing declining enrollments. This decline often has a disproportionately adverse effect on school districts struggling to keep programs whole. How would you propose dealing with this situation?
3. The current fiscal crisis has caused many school districts across the state to abandon their commitment to smaller class sizes. Orinda has been able to maintain class sizes, but raising class sizes could bring cost savings. Would you support such a move?
4. What are your qualifications that would make you an effective school board member?

all students in the district, and keeping any additional cuts as far away from the classroom as possible. In general, two of the most important factors for academic excellence are a good teacher and manageable class size. With that said, if there are any further budget reductions needed this next year, everything should be on the table to be considered in the budget process. I think it's important for the budget process to be an open process including input and involvement from all stakeholders including parents, teachers, community and district administration. Community meetings should include discussion and input on budget guidelines and budget priorities.

**Declining Enrollment and Budget**

Although schools state-wide are experiencing declining enrollment due to population trends, in Orinda we are fortunate to have held our enrollment relatively steady averaging at about 2,440 students in grades  
[SEE BUTLER page 28]

TYSON KRUMHOLZ



**Top Priorities**

Retention, support and recruitment of the highest quality teachers must be the

top priority of OUSD. The district administration should be responsive, highly efficient, and focused on delivery of the best curriculum for all Orinda's students. The district administration should work with the community to exhaustively pursue all available grants and funding opportunities in order to retain and bolster existing programs such as, technology, science, library, art, music and PE.

Orinda must maintain small class sizes. Empowerment of teachers by district and site leadership is a key first step in promotion of teaching methods that actively encourage our children to think creatively, independently and collaboratively. The earlier students develop their abilities to solve critical problems and utilize all available resources, the greater the chances are for their success in any future pursuits.

Review of district efficiency in operations is in order prior to any elimination of student programs. Handling additional fiscal losses will require the district to work with the new board to examine the entire OUSD's educational system and structure, restricting elimination based cuts and instead trimming where appropriate. A successful board should reserve any cutting for non-critical studies and consultant exercises, not our children's education.

I believe the board and the district administration must thoroughly understand the collective district needs and prioritize those that directly impact the students. Children and teachers are my first priority.

**Declining Enrollment and Budgets**

I invite readers to query California Department of Education's "Dataquest," [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov), to review K-8 enrollment prior to assuming this premise is  
[SEE KRUMHOLZ page 28]

## Julie Rossiter for Orinda School Board



Logo designed by Aidan Rossiter, OIS student



To learn more, visit Julie's website at: [www.julierossiter.org](http://www.julierossiter.org)

**Endorsed by:**

*All Five Current Orinda School Board Trustees:*  
Jack Bontemps • Matt Moran • Pat Rudebusch  
Riki Sorenson • Pam West

*Current and Past Parents' Club Presidents:*  
Jeanette Broad • Courtney Chandler • Katherine Dureault  
Kristen Fenn • Susan Miller • Lynn Molloy • Yosh Neugebauer  
Carolyn Parodi • Danya Stehr • Kirsten Whipple

**Community Endorsements (partial list)**

Jeff and Seanna Allen  
Jose Anaya  
Paul Barrie and Maria Kivel

Jack Bookbinder and Terri Moss Bookbinder  
Bruce Buchholz and Doreen Sakamoto  
Stacy Campos  
Ray Cardozo and Latika Malkani

Mike Casendino and Amy Hiestand  
Erik Chan and Veronica Chang  
William and Eunsun Chen  
Peter Chester and Caroline Silbergh  
Chris and Teresa Coufal  
Paul and Stacy Crinks  
David and Sylvia Finger  
Scott and Pam Fleming  
Glen and Shannon Fuller  
David Gravano and Valerie Lewis  
Kyle and Amanda Haas  
Mike and Cara Hardwick  
Paula Hart  
Les and Cheryl Hata  
Peter and Cynthia

Heckler  
Craig Kirkpatrick

Dean Orr  
John and Kerri Peyovich

David and Garva Soohoo  
Andy and Riki Sorenson  
Chris and Julia Stenzel  
Laurie Tennant  
Julian and Kimberly Thomas  
John Eddy and Lynn Uzzo  
Michael and Karla Vukelich  
Marta Wallace  
Susan Wisk  
Julie Whitsitt  
Diane Wong

**Proactive**

- goals include maximizing school funding and ensuring best use of funds
- legislative representative to local PTA for Del Rey
- annual fund treasurer
- Measure A parcel tax representative
- leadership roles in school fundraisers

Jorge Mancheno  
Chris and Peggy Manrique  
Peter and Anna Marinac  
Dan and Maya McBride  
Eileen McPeake  
Carolyn Mills  
Antonio and Anita Nunez  
Julie Oliver

George Reid  
Bryan and Anna Rodrigues  
Jeff and Kathy Schwarz  
Nicholas Sitar and Robin Bradley

**Pro-Student**

- will work to continue to improve school curriculum
- passionate about public education
- three children in Orinda schools (ages 12, 10 & 4)
- classroom volunteer in numerous capacities
- family involved in many community activities

**Pragmatic**

- advocate for progress in education and maintaining Orinda's success
- business litigation and employment law attorney
- skills to think critically and analyze issues affecting the school district
- significant experience in negotiation and building consensus to achieve results

Chris and Heather Biles  
Alec and Anne Binnie  
Jack and Barbara Bontemps  
Darren and Becca Carrington  
Josh and Jennifer Carter



SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

JULIE ROSSITER



**Top Priorities**

The budget crisis in California is an ongoing, long-term problem with no easy solutions. The Orinda school district has done an excellent job maintaining critical programs, including art, music, physical education and library during these challenging times.

It is only through the support of a dedicated community that the Orinda school district has been able to continue these programs. Our community has been generous in approving parcel taxes and in donating to EFO and the parents' clubs of individual schools.

The top priority for the school district is – and always is – to provide students with the highest quality education. We must continuously review and modify the district's strategic plan to ensure we are challenging our students and giving them the tools to succeed academically.

In addition, we must continue to provide enrichment outside of just math and language arts. Science, the arts, physical education and other programs are also critical to developing our students into well-rounded individuals. As a board, we must work to maintain, streamline and improve upon these programs.

Moreover, we must work to keep pace with advances in science and technology so our students can compete with other students in California, the United States, and the world.

To maintain and increase our funding, we must make absolutely sure we are maximizing the amount of funding we receive from all sources: federal and state, public and private. We must creatively seek new revenue sources and must strategically utilize the funds we have.

**Declining Enrollment and Budgets**

When school districts face declining enrollment, they encounter a decrease in funds from the state, as well as a potential decrease in private donations due to fewer families attending area schools. Ensuring that we keep our enrollment at sustainable levels is an important factor in maintaining and improving upon critical school programs.

There are several ways to address any decreases in enrollment. Utilizing combination classrooms (where two grades are combined into one classroom) and the strategic use of interdistrict transfers are two possible solutions already in use in the Orinda school district. While these methods can be useful, it is imperative that any decisions relating to combination classrooms and interdistrict transfers be made with the understanding that the school board's first priority is to ensure that existing students are not adversely impacted.

The Wilder development is one source of a future increase in enrollment in the school district. As families move in to the Wilder development, enrollment in Orinda schools should increase, and any need for combination classrooms or interdistrict transfers should, therefore, decrease.

Making sure the Orinda school district continues its commitment to excellence in education is another way to combat

[SEE ROSSITER page 28]

CHRIS SEVERSON



**Top Priorities**

I do not believe the current budget crisis has, or should, change our top priorities. We have excellent schools with a rich tradition of success. As a district, our priority is an "enriched curriculum, which imparts core knowledge, develops character, and encourages individual strengths." Certainly, the cuts in state funding pose added challenges. However, no matter the crisis, current or future, we must maintain our focus on our children. We need to continually choose the path, which will have the least impact on them. Over the years, the nature of the challenges and specific responses will change, but our vision and resolve to offer a superb education to all Orinda children must not.

**Declining Enrollment and Budgets**

Outside of our own respective families, the demographic forces which shape our schools are largely out of our control. There are a few areas, however, where I believe we can make some difference. Due to the strength of our schools, many families with school-aged children naturally seek out Orinda as a place to live. Being active volunteers in the schools, the community and in making Orinda a wonderful place

to live encourages others making residential decisions. Historically, some families choose private schools for a variety of reasons. The school district should be doing what we can to explore meeting the needs of more of these children as well.

**Class Size**

I support small class sizes and believe the benefits to students outweigh the costs. Research implies (Tennessee STAR study) that small K-3 class size confers lasting benefits to students and that the cost-benefit ratios are favorable (A. Krueger, *The Economic Journal*, Feb. 2003). While state budget cuts could become even more severe and all spending reduction options would need to be reevaluated, I believe increasing class size would be one of the more harmful and less economically efficient ways to proceed.

**Qualifications**

I love Orinda schools and greatly benefited from attending K-12 here. As the father of five, including four current OUSD students, I am deeply invested in this public school system and its continued success. I have no narrow agenda to champion: my focus will be the continued improvement of all of our OUSD schools and all of our educational programs for all students.

I spent 24 years in education becoming trained as an emergency medicine physician. I understand how important it is to have confidence in one's education. I chaired the Orinda Family Science Night and have seen how an enriched curriculum benefits students at all levels. As an undergraduate, I studied economics. The rational decision-making and critical analysis emphasized there will help as a school board member. Perhaps most importantly, I have the ability to thoughtfully communicate with parents, teachers, and the community regarding our children and wonderful Orinda schools.



*Every Child - Every School*

**Endorsements from Elected Officials**

- Matt Moran - Orinda School Board Trustee
- Pat Rudebusch - Orinda School Board Trustee
- Riki Sorenson - Orinda School Board Trustee
- Pam West - Orinda School Board Trustee
- Linda Landau - Former Orinda School Board Trustee

**Endorsements from Community Members**

- Shelli Brudzinski - Glorietta Parents Club President
- Shauna Simmonds - Sleepy Hollow Parents Club President
- Mindy Becker - Former Glorietta Parents Club President
- Wendy Bond - Former Glorietta Parents Club President
- Amber Gates - Former

**Glorietta Parents Club President**

- Tom Barber
- Amy & Todd Berryhill
- Herman Bond
- Rick & Nancy Booth
- Rob & Robyn Bowen
- Michael & Betty Brinkerhoff
- Rick & Heather Callister
- Jennifer & Josh Carter
- Gene Chow
- Nina & Todd Clark
- Sylvia & Stephen Coates
- Dana & Jim Dawson
- Mike & Pam DeLange
- Michael Donner
- Tom & Mary Eggertsen
- Mark & Yvonne Fuhriman
- Kurtis & Britta Glade
- Joe & Michelle Goldsmith
- CarrieLyn & Glen Guymon
- Carter & Pam Hemming
- Stephen Hung
- David & Monique Jasper
- John Johnston & Jackie Moreau
- Edward Kangeter & Amie Sulprizio

**John & Ghi La Porta**

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- Mike & Annette Linney
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- Christina Niehaus
- Sue Partington
- Catherine & Andy Pines
- Lisa & Brad Pugh
- Katherine & Dave Ritchey
- Brandt Severson
- Ralph & Sue Severson
- Tim & Diane Sharp
- Mark Simmonds
- Amy & Chris Smith
- Andy Sorenson
- CJ Taylor & Melissa Matosian
- Jeremy & Kim Thatcher
- Marcie & Mark Tuttle
- Chris & Julianne Viadro
- April & Scott Webber
- Ed & Joann Wrinkle
- Sheila Yeh
- Kim & Charlie Younger
- Brad & Tina Zwahlen

Elect **Chris SEVERSON**  
Orinda School Board

[www.christopherseverson.com](http://www.christopherseverson.com)



SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

# Bekki Van Voorhis-Gilbert for Orinda Schools

**“In addition to serving as an active volunteer in school affairs for many years, I have spent the last 18 months attending OUSD Board Meetings and talking with parents, teachers and concerned citizens about what is and what is not working in our schools. While test scores remain high, this is just one measure of how well the district is functioning. Having educated myself about our district and examined how other local school boards operate, I know with new leadership and a fresh perspective the OUSD Board can be more efficient, better protect children and teachers during the difficult economic years ahead and create a culture of collaboration.”** Bekki Gilbert, JD, MSW, PhD



## My Credentials:

- Active Community and Parent Volunteer
- Former Tenured Professor at CSUH/CSUEB
- Author of books and articles on Social Policy
- Attorney-at-Law

## What I Stand For:

- Fiscal Integrity and Academic Excellence during Uncertain Economic Times
- Responsiveness to Parent, Teacher and Community
- Transparency in Process and Communication
- Advancement of 21st Century Student Skills

[www.bekkigilbert.com](http://www.bekkigilbert.com)

“Bekki is an ideal candidate for the School Board: she is well-read (particularly with respect to education), razor sharp, tenacious, committed to the best interests of our children and their education, and she is unafraid to speak her mind and follow her convictions. I cannot think of a better candidate for School Board.”

Dwight Foster



## Endorsements and Supporters

### Elected Officials

Hon. Ken Berrick,  
Alameda County Board of  
Education,  
Trustee Area 3

Hon. Mary Nejedly Piepho  
Supervisor, District III  
Contra Costa County

Hon. Susan McNulty Rainey  
Mayor of Walnut Creek

Hon. Tomi Van de Broeke  
Contra Costa Community  
College District, Governing  
Board

Hon. Gary Yancey  
Former Contra Costa County,  
District Attorney

### Orinda Association Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott Jr., Environmental Awards Recipients

Jenny Papka, 2009  
Steve Gentry, 2008  
Reg & Kathy Barrett, 2007  
Dr. Gene Gottfried, 2007  
Maya Rappaport, 2006  
Linda Mizes, 2003  
Ron & Rosemary Clendenen, 2001  
Pete & Amelia Wilson, 1998  
Toris Jaeger, 1993

### Past and Current Parent Club Board Members

Cathie Barrows  
Monica Brun  
Megan Cohen  
Kimberley Coleman  
Elizabeth Haughey  
Sarah Lee  
Denise Tuemmler  
Carrie Smith  
Lorree Swinton  
Tricia Young

### Friends and Community Members

Erik Andersen  
Affi Ansari  
Tarek & Marcella Azzani  
Shanen & Aline Aghababian  
Beth Allen  
Carol Alvord  
Tom Appelbaum  
Jannyan Auyeung  
Thomas Beer & Chong Yim  
Nadine Barroca  
Paul Barrett  
Skip Battle  
Sue Bell  
Barry Bennett  
Jane Berger  
Louise Benvenue  
Ken & Jill Berrick  
Sue Boudreau  
Dutchess Booze  
Denise Bowers  
Kurt & Joy Braitberg  
Stephanie Brammer  
Kevin & Shauna Brennan  
Carol Spalding-Brown  
Shane & Monica Brun  
Barbara Burkhalter  
Mike & Sara Curran  
Karin Carroll  
Kevin & Kim Coleman  
Omer & Megan Cohen  
Joan Chomack  
Steve Danzinger & Leesa Evans  
Lisa Disbrow  
Jeanne Dowell  
Katherine Durealt  
Dorothy Dreessen  
Joey Elardy  
Roy & Karen Erny  
Tim & Martha Erisman  
Charlie & Kirsten Engs  
Marc & Karen Evans  
Cheri Etheridge  
Bonnie England  
Karen & Steve Englund  
Kyle & Eileen Fitz Faulkner  
Chris & Julie Fehrenstrom  
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Jim Fiarone  
Grant & Joyce Fine  
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Michael Kruezelman & Barbara  
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Fred Matteson & Anne Barr  
Laura Meyers  
Ed Mein  
Mike & Mary Moran  
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Peter & Deepa Nugent  
Tom Ohlson  
Michael & Karen Ostrach  
Ayala Oshri  
Andrea Wood-Packwood  
John & Susie Parr  
Diane Petak  
Will & Liz Pemble  
Tom & Liz Piatt  
Roberto & Lynne Fox Piccioni  
Wayne Phillips  
Brad Pugh  
Karen Rhodes  
Matt & Julie Ritzman  
Mark & Deborah Sanford  
Cassandra Simmel  
Karl & Leslie Schonborn  
Suzanne Schoenfeld  
Carrie Smith  
Fred Smith  
Greg & Gina Smith  
Karen Snelson  
Craig & Carolyn Stewart  
John & Colleen Supran  
Christy Blackie-Taylor  
Nancy Taylor  
Sarah Taines  
Anna Tauge  
Rain Tauge  
Brian & Denise Tuemmler  
Romeo Uriarte & Sara Carr  
Nancy Ung  
Marc & Martine van der Laan  
Susan Vandegrift  
Karen Van Voorhis  
Thomas W. Van Voorhis  
Lianne Voelm  
Charlie & Doua Vollmer  
David Wallace  
Brian Waters  
Melanie Flum-West  
Jill Weinstein  
Sheng-Chuan & Meilan Wu  
Karen Wood  
Joanna Wood  
Gary & Vicky Yancey  
Jaime Zaffanella

Partial list of endorsements

“Bekki continues to impress me with her awareness of issues that we face in our schools and her process for identifying, proposing and implementing solutions. She keeps her fingers on the pulse of district and school matters - attending OUSD Board and Parents’ Club meetings, actively soliciting input from the community and researching what works here and in other school districts. She is honest and a realist, recognizing the constraints of current economic conditions while remaining committed to maximizing what we can offer our children. Please join me in supporting Bekki for the Orinda School Board.”

Nadine Barroca

“I met Bekki this past May when I was working on re-instating a lunchtime volunteer program at OIS, ‘Kennel Cruisers.’ Bekki immediately jumped in and wondered if there was anything she could do to help. As we talked and shared ideas, I found her passion for providing our children with the best possible education and school environment energizing. She quickly proved to have the ability to break down complex obstacles/issues that arose and turn them into opportunities to make OIS a better place for our children. I know with Bekki’s background, energy and passion the sky’s the limit for our children’s future. Get on Board! Vote for Bekki.”

Ann Marie Kadie

“Bekki will bring a much-needed perspective to the Orinda School Board. The success of the Orinda schools depends on the support of the community. The School Board needs to do a better job of reaching out and listening to parents and voters.”

Fred Smith

“Bekki, quite frankly, is a hard person to miss: She’s bright, honest, diligent, thoughtful and spirited – and she gets involved. In Bekki, I’ve observed a person who is not afraid to work hard on a variety of projects to get things done. I’ve seen Bekki take on complicated school-related issues in a thoughtful and knowledgeable way when she’s felt the status quo wasn’t good enough, and I’ve watched her work tirelessly in her efforts to further education in general.”

Beth Allen





SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

BEKKI VAN VOORHIS



**Priorities**

In response to the fiscal crisis, if elected I would support a full and open examination of all aspects of the budget to determine where tax dollars might be saved, combined with a commitment to cost-containment, increased public involvement and the promotion of academic excellence. Specifically this would involve:

- An evaluation of administrative overhead, salaries and bonuses compared to those in comparable districts;

- Support for creative revenue generating ideas that include alternative uses of school resources;
  - A conservative approach to discretionary spending (see discussion regarding the demographic study below);
  - Revising and updating the Strategic Plan to promote efficiency, intra-district collaboration within a long-range vision that replaces ad-hoc annual decision making in response the vagaries of the state budget;
  - Making line-item budget data readily available to public scrutiny on the district website as in other districts;
  - Moving the time of board meetings to evenings to allow working parents and teachers to attend and actively participate in the process as in other districts;
  - Making board packets available on the district website;
  - Publishing board minutes that clearly express all the comments from the public; and
  - Increasing the in-put of parents, community members, and teachers as partners in the educational enterprise through the use of district-wide surveys.
- Finally, it is important to recognize that smart academic investments still pay educational dividends even in hard times. The district technology plan is obsolete and needs to be revised in-house utilizing

community expertise and incorporating project-based learning.

**Enrollment**

To begin with, it is not at all clear that enrollment in the OUSD is declining. While there have been slight fluctuations during the past five years (plus or minus 20 students), the district student population has remained relatively constant at approximately 2,400 students. Orinda is a “destination” community. People move here because of the family-orientated environment, the schools, and the safety of the community. As long as these conditions continue, it seems likely that enrollment will stay fairly constant. That being said, there have been peaks and valleys in the OUSD student population since the 1950s, which have resulted in the opening and closing of Wagner Ranch, Pine Grove, the conversion of Ivy School to OIS and the like. As an OUSD board member, I would pay careful attention to enrollment data and be on the look out for statistically significant enrollment trends.

In the spring of 2008, the OUSD commissioned a demographic study to help guide the district and the board in future planning. The data provided by this study are of questionable veracity, and the cost of any future studies of this type should be measured against the five figure savings to the district.

At the moment, nothing in the current data demonstrate declining enrollment is a major concern. The best protection against declining enrollment is to keep our schools strong by maintaining academic excellence, ensuring fiscal integrity, promoting responsiveness to parents, teachers and community and initiating a climate of transparency, which encourages participation and voluntary contributions.

**Class Size**

Class size reduction in California was

introduced in 1996 as an effort to improve reading and math performance among students in K-2nd grade. This change was predicated on empirical evidence gathered in other states which shows that smaller class size is correlated with better academic performance (across all grade levels K-8). To encourage smaller classes, the State of California introduced financial incentives that linked class size to state education subsidies. Because of the subsidy, the actual cost savings associated with larger (n=25+) class-size are less than might be expected. Consequently, it seems highly unlikely that Orinda will abandon the tradition of keeping class-sizes low, absent a significant change in the state law or a decrease in voluntary giving.

In these difficult fiscal times, Orinda has been able to sustain smaller sized classes because of the state subsidy supplemented by contributions made by parents to their individual school site Parents’ Club, combined with donations of parent and community members to EFO. I believe that any effort to increase class size would amount to a false economy under which limited savings would be offset by reduced parental and community support. The three-way partnership between Parents’ Clubs, EFO and the OUSD is an important one that needs to be reinforced by increasing the board’s responsiveness to parents, teachers and the community.

**Qualifications**

I have lived in Orinda for eight years with my husband Neil Gilbert (a UC Berkeley professor). We have a son at OIS and a daughter at Wagner Ranch.

I have been an active volunteer in school and civic affairs including: room parent, since 2004; Think First instructor, since 2005; Monster Mash, chair, 2005; Friendship Day chair, 2006-2008; legislative representative, 2006; parent education

[SEE VAN VOORHIS page 22]



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## YOUTH MATTERS

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Showing of film *Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North* about a young filmmaker who discovers a troubling family history followed by a day of reflection/discussion with diversity trainers Holly Fulton and Bill Peebles. Call 254-4906.

## ◆ LETTER from page 4

tional excellence. Julie has demonstrated her leadership at Del Rey as a classroom volunteer, by representing Del Rey in the Measure A parcel tax campaign, acting as treasurer for Del Rey's fundraising efforts and serving as the school's legislative advocate. All of these activities demonstrate her ability to work well across the spectrum of school-related programs and to garner the respect of school staff and parents. These characteristics are vital for future school board members, as they face the challenges and opportunities ahead.

— Jack Bontemps, OUSD  
Board of Trustees

## Rossiter Has My Vote

Julie Rossiter is running for the school board in Orinda. She is the candidate who has my vote. I encourage each and every voter in Orinda to vote for Julie Rossiter. Julie Rossiter is dynamic, committed and honest. She truly values excellence in education.

Julie Rosstier will be a great asset on the board. She knows how to get things done and is incredibly knowledgeable about the district, especially, the budget challenges facing Orinda.

Julie Rossiter has three kids; one at Del Rey, one at OIS, and one entering kindergarten next year. She has been very involved in their schools and in the community. Julie is also an attorney, and practiced as a business litigator and employment lawyer for seven years before her son was born.

Orinda has an outstanding reputation as one of the best school districts in the state. Despite state budget constraints, it's critical for our leaders to maintain and build on this excellence. How can we do more with less? How can we ensure our children have the same or better opportunities as the generation before them?

It will take the unwavering commitment and vision of a team that will work hand in hand with parents, teachers, administrators, students and the community. With strong leadership and perseverance, excellence will continue to be the standard for our district. Julie has already been endorsed by all five current members of the Orinda School Board: Jack Bontemps, Matt Moran, Pat

Rudebush, Riki Sorenson, and Pam West.

Among Julie's priorities if elected are: maximize public and private sources of school funding; continue to improve school curriculum; provide students and teachers with the resources they need to excel in today's competitive society.

Julie has a website where you can get more information: [www.julierossiter.org](http://www.julierossiter.org). I wholeheartedly support Julie in her candidacy and urge you to support her as well.

— Kimberly Thomas

## Support Van Voorhis-Gilbert

I'm writing this email to you in support of a friend and former colleague, Bekki Van Voorhis-Gilbert. Perhaps some of you know Bekki already, she has two children at Wagner Ranch. Bekki, quite frankly, is a hard person to miss: She's bright, honest, diligent, thoughtful and spirited – and she gets involved! In Bekki, I've observed a person who is not afraid to work hard on a variety of school-related projects to get things done. I've seen Bekki take on complicated school-related issues in a thoughtful and knowledgeable way when she's felt the status quo wasn't good enough, and I've watched her work tirelessly in her efforts to further education in general, whether it was to keep the Nature Area open to offer our children the unique learning experience of hands-on history and environment or be the chairperson for the Parent Education Committee.

Bekki is that rare person who can combine a strong personality and listen to what others have to say at the same time – in short, a leader.

I believe Orindans have some work to do to upgrade the educational experience of our children. We need to preserve what has been working for our children while moving forward with newer, more innovative ways that allow the system not to teach to the test but teach to the child.

We are all busy. Many of us have jobs that have nothing to do with Orinda or our children's schools. But I urge all of you to become involved in this school board election and to think about the issues currently facing us. I hope you can get to know Bekki, ask questions and express concerns.

I think you'll be impressed.

—Beth Allen

## YOUTH MATTERS

## Orinda Schools Adapt After Budget Cuts

Sara Duplancic



**Editor's Note:** *With this issue, we introduce our new student column by Miramonte senior Sara Duplancic. We hope you will enjoy seeing our local community from her fresh, young perspective.*

In April of this year, students, teachers, and parents anxiously anticipated the government's projected budget cuts for the 2010-2011 school year. With \$4.8 million cut from the Acalanes Union High School District, teacher layoffs, cut classes, and increased class sizes, general discontent loomed in the community's vision. Despite the gloomy forecast, community members and high school students rallied in support of Measure A, an emergency parcel tax that passed in May. With the onset of this school year, the measure has proven invaluable, saving both jobs and classes.

Measure A is a tax of \$112 per household in addition to the existing tax of \$189 from Measure G (November, 2009). The tax began on July 1, 2010 and will last for five years while offering a senior exemption. A two-thirds supermajority vote was required for passage, which became a reality thanks to caring community members, parents, and Miramonte High School public speaking and leadership students who volunteered their time working at Yes on A phone banks and other campaign activities.

Miramonte High School counselor Linda Fore said, "We're really thankful to the parents and Measure A supporters who made it possible, because it could have been a lot worse." According to head counselor Lois Halls, "a lot worse" would have included over 50 teacher layoffs throughout the district, one librarian for the four high schools in the district, half the number of counselors at Miramonte (which already has a student population of about 1300), a six-period day, and fewer elective offerings including VPA's and advanced placement courses.

A change in the union's contract increasing the number of students per class

coupled with fewer students overall and the passage of Measure A left Miramonte and other AUHSD schools in "surprisingly great shape with not one teacher over contract," said Halls. "We have the same class offerings, but the individual sections are tighter because fewer periods of a particular class are now being offered," said Fore.

The only classes that underwent noticeable expansion in terms of class size were English I, English II, and World History. "But even though teachers do a terrific job, a bigger class size often means less individual attention," said Fore.

Mike Whitaker, a Miramonte math teacher for 42 years, explained that everybody took a pay cut in one way or another. As teachers gain experience, their pay increases. Teachers with years of experience saw a decrease in pay of about \$2,500, which, with gas prices on the rise and the economy on the decline, hits with gravity.

Whitaker has seen his total number of students increase from about 155 to 160 students. Although that doesn't exactly seem harrowing, it is enough to leave less opportunity for students to adjust their schedules and lots of room to kvetch – kind of like the way a one or two-degree increase in the planet's temperatures is enough to cause global distress.

"It's really discouraging when you're seeing the state of affairs in California going backwards especially in education and especially at such a great school," said Whitaker. "But collectively, teachers are always in support of students and in support of each other. We took a pay cut to help other people stay in their profession and to keep valuable programs."

As for this year, the state has not passed budgets yet and community members wait anxiously. Tethering another beast of a budget cut can only shepherd problems and stress out Orinda's educators and students. So stay tuned and stay involved.

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## CONTINUATIONS

## ◆ HISTORY from page 1

concerned with gaining local control of zoning and better police protection. There was also a growing apprehension about future development and the impact of BART on the community.

In the early 70s, a Southern California builder's plans for a high-density residential development in the pristine hills above the Village side of Orinda spurred resident's interest in incorporation. The community, led by the OA, strongly opposed the development and, eventually, the developer sold the land to local developers who designed a more appropriate development, now known as Orindawoods and located at the top of Altarinda Dr.

The OA appointed an incorporation study committee and began working with the mayor of Lafayette (that city incorporated in 1968) and the president of the Moraga Association (which incorporated in 1974) to determine the benefits involved in a variety of incorporation scenarios.

In its October 25, 1972 report, the Local Agency Formation Commission of Contra Costa County, an agency charged with discouraging urban sprawl and encouraging the development of local government, recommended that Lafayette be expanded to include the then unincorporated communities of Moraga and Orinda. All three communities continued to meet and discuss

the tri-city option as well as others, and in 1973, the OA sent out a questionnaire to Orinda residents asking for their input. The returned questionnaires favored Orinda incorporating as a separate city with the following results: Orinda only - 76 percent; Tri-City - 14 percent; Orinda/Moraga - 10 percent.

While studies continued, incorporation received a shot in the arm when a local developer attempted to demolish the historic Orinda Theatre and to build a mixed-use office/commercial retail development in its stead. Once again, the community came together to oppose the development. A long legal battle ensued with locals initially losing to the developer. In 1984, the OA and Friends of the Orinda Theater filed an appeal with the First District Court of Appeals against the County Board of Supervisors and the developer. On May 30, 1986, the court granted the appeal rescinding the permit to demolish the historic structure.

The difficulties Orinda faced as an unincorporated entity dealing with County officials during the struggle over Theatre Square convinced many residents that incorporation was a good idea but many others were still on the fence. OA officers Dick Heggie, Bill Gross, and Bobbie Landers decided they needed a fun way to bring the community together while also educating people to the pros and cons of local city government. Landers remem-

bered the sense of togetherness and pride she always felt at the 4th of July parade in her hometown of Glen Ellyn, Illinois and thought such an event might also work in Orinda. Heggie and Gross concurred and on July 4, 1984, Orinda's first 4th of July parade and celebration took place.

The day many had waited for came to pass in March 1985 when residents of Orinda voted to incorporate. On July 1, 1985, Orinda officially became the 18th city in Contra Costa County and the 44th city in California. The momentous occasion was marked by a lone bagpiper leading members of the first City Council - Bobbie Landers, Dick Heggie, Joe Harb, Bill Dabel, and Aldo Guidotti - to the gazebo in the Orinda Community Center Park for a swearing in ceremony. It is fitting that on the city's 25th birthday a lone bagpiper also led the 2010 4th of July parade.

In the past 25 years, many local residents have served terms as city councilmembers and five city managers have implemented policy. During that time, the Community Center has been renovated and a beautiful new library and city hall have been constructed. Orinda has its own police force contracted through the Sheriff's Department and, along with the Town of Moraga, a joint fire district.

Roads continue to be a priority with the current City Council looking for additional monies to fix the 90-plus miles of roads in-

herited from the county upon incorporation.

To celebrate its 25th birthday, the City of Orinda has organized several events including a birthday cake presentation at the June 29 Concert-in-the-Park, a family movie night at the Orinda Theatre in early July, a celebrity golf tournament on July 25-26, the NorCal Kids Triathlon on September 25, the Orinda Silver Celebration on October 2, and the placement of a time capsule at City Hall on October 21 from 4 to 6 p.m.

Happy Birthday, Orinda.

## ◆ ORR from page 12

architecture and my experience as the chair of the Planning Commission will give me a unique perspective as a councilmember. I make a point of listening to all views with the goal of bringing the community together and building consensus in making decisions about how our city will look and feel. I am excited to share this experience and leadership as the councilmember.

As a project manager, I oversee complicated construction projects with challenging entitlement issues, demanding client groups, and large consultant teams. All of these projects have budget constraints and timeline expectations. I have effectively worked with these constituencies in a collaborative manner that has yielded many successful projects. I believe these direct experiences will prove beneficial and analogous to the work of a councilmember.

## ◆ DRAINAGE from page 6

basis of the Molls' lawsuit is a concept called inverse condemnation. "The basis of the case is that a government agency is taking private property for public use without compensation to the property owner," says Jang. "In this case, the City of Orinda is using the ravine to convey public storm drainage away. They have an obligation to do that safely, without endangering the neighbors' property."

Now that mediation has failed, Jang is filing a temporary restraining order against the city to stop it from draining the water into the ravine. "We want them to redirect the water or enclose the pipeline all the way down to Highway 24," says Jang. "We don't care which solution is adopted, as long as it stops this continuing erosion."

Mosley is representing two of Moll's neighbors in a separate, but related, lawsuit, also based on inverse condemnation.

In July 2010, the judge dismissed the lawsuit because of the statute of limitations. According to the judge's interpretation of that statute, too much time had elapsed

since the neighbors discovered the problem, until they filed suit.

"The city claims it is not responsible for the damage the diversion is causing because, quite simply, nobody caught it in time," says Mosley. "We have submitted a writ asking the court of appeal to review the judge's decision and, hopefully, reverse it."

One of the neighbors that Mosley is representing, Mark and Lynn Soloway, own 19 Patricia Road, right across the street from the Molls' house. According to the mediation statement, dated February 2010, "the drainage from Candlestick Road travels through an underground pipeline that runs directly underneath their house. This pipeline is now well beyond its design life and is badly rusted and leaking heavily. The leakage is causing soil subsidence underneath the Soloways' house." The statement also says that a portion of the Soloways' yard is "...jeopardized by the loss of lateral support caused by the expanding gully..."

The other neighbors represented by Mosley, Alex and Kosta Skoumbas, own the undeveloped land on which the pipe has carved the ravine. According to the media-

tion statement, their property is now completely unbuildable, due to the ravine, while the value of their land has gone from \$1.2 million to zero, according to Mike Turkull, a real estate evaluator. The city maintains it was never buildable in the first place, according to the mediation statement.

Chuck Swanson, the Director of Public Works and Engineering Services for the City of Orinda, says that because of the ongoing lawsuits against the city, he can't talk freely about the situation. "I'm taking direction from our attorneys at this point," says Swanson.

He says it's a difficult situation. "The city takes its responsibilities seriously," says Swanson. "The infrastructure is starting to fail, but we are making a major effort to keep on top of this; however, funding is limited." He says he has heard that the storm pipe in question is very old, but that he doesn't know all the details about its age.

Swanson says that in the past, the city has not stayed on top of routine infrastructure maintenance, mainly due to lack of funding. "The city has tried two times to generate funds through ballot measures to fix roads

and drainage," says Swanson. "Both these measures failed."

Swanson added that he thought a newspaper article about the Patricia Road situation might serve to highlight the financial problems the city is facing, in terms of fixing its aging infrastructure.

For more information on the city's improvement plans, Swanson asks the public to visit [www.ci.orinda.ca.us](http://www.ci.orinda.ca.us) and click on the Public Works Department.

Jang dismisses Swanson's argument that the city has no money to pay to fix the storm pipe problem. "Local ballot measures don't trump a person's constitutional rights," says Jang.

While the judicial wheels turn, the Moll family watches each winter as the water gushing from the storm drain carves away another one or two feet of land, edging closer and closer to their property.

"We were so happy when we moved here," says Moll, who has three children in local schools. "It was like a dream home until we found out about this. Now it's like a cancer; the ravine keeps growing, and we can't do anything about it."

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LOCAL RESIDENTS / LAVA PIT

# Orinda Resident New Voice of Portuguese Music

By KATHRYN G. McCARTY  
Staff Writer

It's a true Cinderella story for Ramana Vieira, whose Grammy-nominated CD, "Despi A Alma" (I Undressed My Soul) is heard on radio stations in the U.S., Brazil, Spain and Portugal. Vieira, dubbed "the new voice of Portuguese world music" by *Mundo Portugues Magazine*, has performed in fado houses in Portugal and was honored when performing her original song "Unido Para Amar" for the 2006 Winter Olympics video montage. She also performed for the Grammy's 50th Awards special Music Cares benefit to honor Aretha Franklin.

This summer, she completed an East Coast tour and is now promoting her latest CD "Lágrimas De Rainha (Tears Of A Queen)." The CD is being nationally and internationally distributed and can be ordered online or at Orinda Books.

Besides being a renowned vocalist, she is also an Adult Ed school teacher, as well as a fitness instructor at Orinda's In Forma.

Working at In Forma, she says, complements her work as a vocalist: "It is such a nice break to go and be with a so many nice people. I could not have found a more strategic balance in my life than the combinations of music and my fitness work," she says, adding "it grounds my energy in



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ramana Vieira recently released her latest CD.

the very unstable world of being an artist."

Vieira describes the life of an artist as "the road less travelled. But I have an inner conviction about what I am doing, and I have to keep going. I have a drive. I don't know where it comes from." She is both a vocalist and song writer and is inspired by life, by friends, family and acquaintances.

## Patients' Choice Award Goes to Local Breast Cancer Doctor



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Orinda resident **Dr. Tiffany Svahn**

Orinda resident Tiffany Svahn, MD has been awarded the Patients' Choice Award for 2009, for a second year in a row. More than 800,000 patient reviews and ratings

were gathered by the American Registry and this top rating is only awarded to a select few of the nation's doctors. Dr. Svahn specializes in breast cancer and practices at Diablo Valley Oncology/Hematology Medical Group and sees patients at the California Cancer and Research Institute in Pleasant Hill.

Seeing approximately 800 breast cancer patients a year, Dr. Svahn's approach involves treating the whole person, not just their disease. "I find it important to address not only my patient's medical needs, but their emotional and psychological ones as well. In addition to focusing on treatment of the disease, I think it is equally crucial to urge my patients to lead a healthy life, and I help them learn about the different aspects of wellness," says Dr. Svahn.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month and Dr. Svahn will be one of the moderators for "The Many Faces of Breast Cancer," an event focusing on the needs and issues of survivors, which takes place October 16 from 10 a.m. - noon at the Leshner Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek. Call 925-677-5041 or email info@diabvalleyoncology.md.

## Lava Pit Expands to Lafayette



SALLY HOGARTY

Sam Lim and Eddie Chin recently opened a new Lava Pit restaurant in Lafayette next to the popular Trader Joe's. The two also operate the Lava Pit in Orinda's Theatre Square.

"The circumstances in life and personal experiences – it's all the makings of a great song," she adds.

Known by music critics for her "soulful sound," she partners her original music compositions with Euclides Cavaco, a prominent Portuguese poet living in Canada. A first generation American, Vieira sings fado in both English and Portuguese, blending the styles of 15th Century Portuguese music with contemporary styles.

Her next performance will be at the San Leandro Library, 300 Estudillo Avenue on October 28 from 7:30 – 9 p.m. Tickets are \$15 in advance, \$17 at the door. For more information, call 925-577-3971.

Vieira will also teach a workshop, "The Art of Singing Fado" at the Berkeley Jazz School, on October 2. For more information on that event, contact www.jazzschool.com or call 510-845-5373. Her website is www.ramanavieira.net.



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## CONTINUATIONS

## ◆ MOFD from page 5

with American Medical Response (AMR) for ambulance. F.A.I.R. members say thousands of saved dollars could be used to fix city roads, pipelines and other aging infrastructure. The debate escalated when OrindaCARES (Orinda Citizens Against Reducing Emergency Services) was formed to support keeping MOFD as is.

The Tri-Agency Committee was charged with gathering and analyzing information from all sides of the debate. The September 1 meeting was held at 9 a.m. at City Hall and drew a crowd of about 30 to the packed community room. Bradley's PowerPoint presentation was preceded by a period of public comment.

## Public's Comments

Jonathan Goodwin of Canyon, a regular at the meetings, said he was going to get to the heart of the problem right away. "MOFD should be forced to reduce services, take millions from its budget and give it to Orinda for infrastructure," said Goodwin, who added that it had taken years for MOFD to replace its dilapidated engines and equipment because they were too "fiscally prudent."

Steve Cohn, representing F.A.I.R., read from a prepared statement. He addressed three issues raised at a previous Tri-Agency Committee meeting. He stated arguments why F.A.I.R. disagrees with the committee's conclusions that (1) water pipe upgrade is less of a priority for MOFD than its capital improvement needs; (2) there is no funding inequity between Orinda and Moraga; and (3) there are no MOFD resources in the foreseeable future. "Do we really need to spend over half of our treasury on emergency services when other elements of the community are crumbling?" asked Cohn. "While spending \$170 million

of our tax dollars over the past 13 years [since MOFD was formed], they have also managed to accrue \$90 million of debt and unfunded liabilities. This is an organization that has spun out of control."

Joffa Dale, representing OrindaCARES, also read a prepared statement. He said it was "misguided" to expect to tap MOFD money to pay for Orinda roads. He pointed out that Bradley has been chief for about a year and has already taken significant steps to cut costs. "He is facing a number of challenges involving very large sums of money," said Dale, citing a large retirement loan and payment for retirement health care. "We citizens should put our energy into supporting their efforts to manage through this difficult time."

Gordon Nathan of Moraga commented that the meeting was a "total waste of time and taxpayers' money." Nathan continued, "The F.A.I.R. folks have made some good points which the fire district has taken to heart. But here we are talking about the same thing over and over. Let's move on. If you want [to fix] water pipes and streets, pay for them, don't ask the fire district to pay for that."

Wesley Ayers of Orinda said he was angry. "It's beyond my ability to understand what this fighting is all about," said Ayers. "It's socially irresponsible to waste this committee's time."

## Chief Bradley's Presentation

Following public comments, Bradley presented an in-depth look at MOFD's current finances, as well as future projections. The complete presentation can be viewed at <http://orinda.waterware.com/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-473> and click on "MOFD Tri Agency Budget Presentation."

Bradley said the most important piece of the presentation was the General Fund budget. He said that by controlling expenditures, the district came in \$200,000 under

budget for 2009/2010. However, projected expenditures for 2010/2011 exceed budgeted revenues by nearly \$165,000. "I'm not happy with that number," said Bradley. "My recommendation to the board will be to take the excess revenue from last year to balance this year's budget."

Bradley also talked about the ongoing challenge of funding health care costs, including for retired firefighters. "I am going to negotiate with the labor group in about two weeks," said Bradley, who added that he's worked really hard on cost-cutting with his staff. Bradley says he sees the services provided by MOFD to Orinda and Moraga as equitable. "I don't like to draw lines with service," he said. "Every home and property tax is different."

Bradley took questions after his presentation, including one from Susan Walter, who wanted to know why MOFD is still paying for health insurance for the spouses of firefighters. "We have to be competitive with benefits to maintain our quality workforce," said Bradley.

Ellen Dale asked about Bradley's idea, stated in his presentation, to move Station 43 to Miner Road, in order to improve response time to Sleepy Hollow and Orinda

Downs neighborhoods. "It's a possibility, but we're a long way from there," said Bradley. "I have to work with the board on that."

As the two-hour meeting drew to a close, MOFD board president Sperling said that the committee "needs to determine where we're going with this process." McCormick said he would like one last meeting to hear from anyone else who wants to make a presentation to the committee. Metcalf said he thinks the committee has heard all it's going to hear. "I can't imagine where this is going," said Metcalf. "The Orinda City Council needs to do some soul-searching about what their residents have brought up. This is not a Moraga issue unless Orinda decides to opt out of MOFD."

Worth said it's important to have a final public meeting. "Then the Tri-Agency can sit down and talk about what we can agree on and what not, and get a clearer sense of how to proceed," said Worth.

The next meeting of the Tri-Agency Committee will be held in approximately 2 to 4 weeks. For meeting information visit [www.ci.orinda.ca.us](http://www.ci.orinda.ca.us). For information on F.A.I.R., visit [www.fairfororinda.org](http://www.fairfororinda.org). For information on OrindaCARES, visit [www.orindacares.org](http://www.orindacares.org).

## ◆ ZELLER from page 10

can to encourage local businesses, which will improve our tax revenues.

In addition, we pay much more in tax dollars than Moraga does for our shared fire district. We should renegotiate to get Moraga to contribute their fair share, recapturing those monies towards our infrastructure – without jeopardizing our excellent fire services.

Regardless of the solution, we need to make the infrastructure repair a defined and untouchable part of our annual budget. We cannot allow funds to go for luxuries like extravagant City Hall buildings when we should be dedicating all possible funds to the infrastructure.

## Areas of Importance

**Citizen Involvement.** We can best tackle the biggest issues facing Orinda by using our greatest resource – our amazing, intelligent and talented population. Since announcing my candidacy, I have heard from a great number of residents, and I have marveled at their passion, resourcefulness and creativity. Our city leadership should engage our interested townsfolk into committees, panels, and advisory boards, and use their collected wisdom to make decisions. The future of this city is too important to be trusted to just the determinations of five volunteer councilpersons.

On top of all this, more citizen involvement will lead to a more unified community, which will benefit us all in many ways.

Repairing our roads and infrastructure. As discussed above, this is a key problem

that will not go away if we ignore it. It must be a priority for our leadership.

Encouraging local businesses. Orinda has somewhat of a reputation as being antagonistic to businesses. This must change. Small businesses are the backbone of a city the size of Orinda, and we must welcome and facilitate them.

## Qualifications

In my current role as Psychiatric Emergency Services Chief in Alameda County, I lead one of the busiest such departments in the nation. There I am responsible for supervising budget and employee numbers exceeding those of Orinda. Among my job duties, I regularly and effectively interact with government officials, and leaders in police, fire, ambulance services, and employee unions – just as would a city councilmember.

I have functioned as a leader in many other arenas as well. This year I was elected president of American Association for Emergency Psychiatry. In 2005, I served as a volunteer medical director for the Katrina disaster clinic at the Houston Astrodome. I have been on the board of directors of several charitable organizations. And having founded several successful businesses, I know what it takes to be fiscally responsible.

Most of all, in 25 years as a physician, I have learned how important it is to be a good listener. This is true in government as well as medicine. I will be a leader that will listen to, and represent, all Orindans.

I believe these experiences have prepared me well for the City Council.

## ◆ VAN VOORHIS from page 18

chair, since 2009; technology committee member, since 2010; founder and chair of Save Environmental Education (SEE) in Orinda; Measure A, B & E Volunteer Advisory Board member; Seneca Center for Children and Families Advisory Board member; Camp Galileo (For my complete CV please visit [www.bekkgilbert.com](http://www.bekkgilbert.com)).

My educational background includes a J.D. from the University of San Francisco and an MSW and Ph.D. from UC Berkeley. In addition to my volunteer experiences, I have worked as a tenured professor at CSU Hayward teaching courses on social policy,

parenting, research and human behavior and as a litigation lawyer in San Francisco. I've authored several books and articles on social policy, and have experience in survey research and data analysis.

To learn about the OUSD, I have attended board meetings for over 18 months and visited all the Orinda schools – talking with parents, teachers and citizens about what is and what is not working in the district. I've also studied how other local school boards operate.

I believe that my educational experiences, civic leadership, legal training and analytic skills make me well qualified to serve on the OUSD Board.



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MOFD CANDIDATES

# Two Candidates Up for Election in MOFD's District 4

ROBERT JUNGBLUTH



The Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) is an independent district that provides fire protection and emergency medical ambulance services to the communities of Orinda, Moraga and the surrounding unincorporated areas. A board of directors, elected within five district divisions, governs the district. Currently, three board members are up for reelection -- districts 1, 3 and 4. The only contested race is district 4. *The Orinda News* asked the two candidates for district 4 the following questions:

1. Do you believe that MOFD should be dissolved and that services should be contracted out to an entity such as ConFire?
2. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of MOFD? How would you propose to fix any weaknesses listed above?
3. Pension benefits have come under fire in recent years with some public employee unions accepting a lower wage package for new employees. Would you propose such a package for MOFD? If yes, why and if no, why not.
4. What qualifications do you possess that would qualify you for a position on the MOFD board?

**Dissolve MOFD and Contract with Another**

No! I believe in local control. The more local our government, the more responsive it will be to the people it serves.

Currently, citizens being served by MOFD elect a board, which ensures their voice in the management of the districts activities. By dissolving the district, our community would likely be giving up the ability to participate in the decision making process, leaving us subject to a standard of service set by communities other than our own. That new standard of service could be significantly less than those to which we have become accustomed.

**MOFD Strengths and Weaknesses**

The strengths of MOFD are found in the high level of services provided, in many cases despite the geographical challenges including traversing our roads in Orinda. There is a comfort in knowing our fire protection district is immediately familiar with our community when an emergency arises. This is especially true when the emergency

is medical related.

The weaknesses include the inadequate justification of the cost we pay for that high standard of service, and to the board specifically, a lack of, or at least a perceived lack of clear and timely communications with the community and its leaders. It is easy to blame public service employees, especially in difficult financial times for perceived out of control pension benefits and high salaries. The truth is that it takes two signatures to make a contract.

**How to Fix Weaknesses**

First, everything must be on the table. Pension benefits, salaries, operating expenses, etc., must come under a financial review in order to ensure MOFD remains viable. These costs must be justified to maintain a high level of service, or be reduced or eliminated. The greatest challenge is negotiating and justifying the expense of firefighting personnel, but this review must include all employees

[SEE JUNGBLUTH page 25]

JOHN WYRO



**Dissolve MOFD and Contract with Another**

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District was formed in 1997 because the arrangement with ConFire failed to provide adequate service to Orinda. At that time, I was serving on the Orinda Fire Board, advisory to

the county where the Board of Supervisors controlled our budget and the fire service was administered through ConFire. Not only was the revenue generated by Orinda in excess of the monies spent in Orinda, we did not have paramedics, rapid ambulance response or modern equipment. I saw a need for change.

The citizens of Orinda formed MOFD to correct these deficiencies. Going back to ConFire would result in a definite diminishment of service levels and local control. Aside from the fact that ConFire does not contract, once dissolved we could not put MOFD back together again and cost control is lost to the county after the first contract period. Moreover, ConFire's current financial situation is so severe that they have announced plans to close stations.


Trusting our lives to ConFire at this time does not seem to me to be a wise decision. We need a stable work force to deal with special situations we have in Orinda, such as knowing our road system for a rapid response and being well trained in dealing with the high severity fire hazard situation in Orinda. Dissolution also does not address the fact that much of south Orinda is served primarily by ambulance and fire equipment from the Moraga stations. Dissolution just does not serve Orinda's best interests.

**MOFD Strengths and Weaknesses**

Our greatest strength is the community in which we live. While many people are expressing dissatisfaction with government at all levels, a recent community survey gave MOFD a 70 percent approval rating. In addition, we have an extremely well trained staff that includes paramedics on every engine and advanced life-support ambulances to transport our citizens more

[SEE WYRO page 30]

John Wyro



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RE-ELECT  
TO  
MORAGA-ORINDA  
FIRE DISTRICT  
BOARD

A TRACK RECORD OF COMMITMENT:  
4 years on the Orinda Union School District Board; 2 years on the Board of the Acalanes District Education Fund;  
2 years on the former Orinda Fire District Board; 11 years with MOFD; twice selected as Orinda Volunteer-of-the-Year.

"John has been a strong leader, bringing paramedic and ambulance services to Orinda. John works collaboratively with the City to provide a safe environment for our citizens."  
Victoria Smith, Vice Mayor, City of Orinda

"I have worked with John on community affairs for over 25 years, from our time together on the Orinda School Board through my time on the City Council. He is committed to doing the best for our community, and I support his re-election."  
Joyce Hawkins, former Mayor, former OUSD Board Member and Citizen of the Year

<p><b>Elected Officials:</b>  <b>Victoria Smith</b> Vice Mayor, Orinda  <b>Amy Worth</b> Orinda City Council member  <b>Joyce Hawkins</b> Former Orinda Mayor, OUSD Board Citizen of the Year  <b>Laura Abrams</b> Former Orinda Mayor  <b>Dick Heggie</b> Former Orinda Mayor Citizen of the Year  <b>Bobbi Landers</b> Former Orinda Mayor  <b>Allan Tabor</b> Former Orinda Mayor  <b>Gregg Wheatland</b> Former Orinda Mayor  <b>Sue Rainey</b> Walnut Creek, Mayor Former Moraga Mayor</p>	<p><b>Richard Rainey</b> Former Sheriff, Contra Costa County Former Assemblyman and State Senator  <b>Gail Murray</b> BART Board Member  <b>Katy Foulkes</b> EBMUD Board member  <b>Frank Sperling</b> President, MOFD Board  <b>Brook Mancinelli</b> MOFD Board member  <b>Richard Olsen</b> MOFD Board member  <b>Fred Weil</b> MOFD Board member  <b>Dr. Gene Gottfried</b> Former MOFD Board member  <b>Gordon Nathan</b> Former MOFD Board member  <b>Peter Scurr</b> Former MOFD Board member  <b>Pete Wilson</b> Former MOFD Board member</p>	<p><b>Pam West</b> President OUSD Board  <b>Matt Moran</b> OUSD Board member  <b>Pat Rudebusch</b> OUSD Board member  <b>Riki Sorensen</b> OUSD Board member  <b>Linda Landau</b> Former OUSD Board member Citizen of the Year  <b>Jean Lyford</b> Former OUSD Board member  <b>Karen Murphy</b> Former OUSD Board member  <b>Vanessa Crews</b> President, AUHSD Board</p> <p><b>Community Members:</b>  <b>Wesley Ayres</b>  <b>Sandy Barnett</b>  <b>Lucia Bennhoff</b>  <b>Alison and Bob Bordon</b></p>	<p><b>Marthella Brown</b>  <b>Jane and Mike Buchanan</b>  <b>Ann and Paul Cane</b>  <b>JoAlice Canterbury</b> Citizen of the Year  <b>Wayne Canterbury</b> Former Chair, Orinda Planning Commission  <b>Emily Cashen</b>  <b>Sandy and Bob Connor</b>  <b>Judy and Peter Coy</b>  <b>Ellen and Joffa Dale</b>  <b>Nancy Daniel</b>  <b>Pat Dunn</b>  <b>Pam Elder</b>  <b>Mary Lou and John Fazel</b>  <b>Cassandra Forth</b>  <b>Patty and Bob Frazer</b>  <b>John French</b>  <b>Linda and Dan Friedman</b>  <b>Donna and Jim Green</b>  <b>Bernice Greene</b>  <b>Tish and Steve Harwood</b></p>	<p><b>Jeff Hawkins</b>  <b>Bea Heggie</b>  <b>Pam and Carter Hemming</b>  <b>Marty Heyman</b>  <b>Gayl and Harlan Hirschfeld</b>  <b>Elle S. Hoffnagel</b>  <b>Nancy and Bill James</b>  <b>Barbara and Chris Mc Lain</b>  <b>Bob Merritt</b>  <b>Laura and Brian Millham</b>  <b>Carolyn Mills</b>  <b>Terry Murphy</b>  <b>Tim Murphy</b>  <b>Andy Palfy</b>  <b>Janet Pease</b> Citizen of the Year  <b>Norm Pease</b>  <b>Virginia and Mike Peiser</b>  <b>Lorene and Jim Quist</b>  <b>Leasa Raya</b>  <b>Kate and Max Rittmann</b>  <b>Mary and John Robbins</b></p>	<p><b>Judy Shallat</b> Former President of the Orinda Association  <b>Dr. Rick Shoop</b>  <b>Wick Smith</b>  <b>Bo and Dick Sullivan</b>  <b>Suzanne Tabor</b>  <b>Casey and Rich Thompson</b>  <b>Lida Urban</b>  <b>Ted Urban</b> Former Chair, Orinda Planning Commission Citizen of the Year  <b>Clark Wallace</b> Citizen of the Year  <b>Gerry Wallace</b>  <b>Carl Weber</b> Citizen of the Year  <b>Flo Weber</b>  <b>Mimi Wilson</b>  <b>Shirley Wheatland</b>  <b>Judy Wood</b>  <b>Carey and David Zimmerman</b></p>
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electJohnWyro.com



CLIMBERS

# Yosemite's El Capitan Climb Reunites MHS Cassmates

By TREVOR BROOKS  
Contributing Writer

When Miramonte High School graduate and filmmaker David Dowell recruited his Glorietta Elementary School classmate and world-class rock climber Steve Schneider to star in a short film for Dowell's website OomphTV.com, he had no idea the project would eventually feature Schneider and fellow 1978 Miramonte graduates Don Kavanagh and Bart Mehlhop in a challenging 3-day climb up the sheer granite face of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park.

While Schneider is a decorated veteran climber and has summited El Capitan over a hundred times, Kavanagh and Mehlhop, an attorney and businessman, respectively,

have more limited climbing experience. The catalyst for this expedition up the 3,000-foot-tall rock wall was the group's collective 50th birthdays. In their quest to prove they could still tackle the elements at such an advanced age, the group became perfect subject matter for OomphTV.com. According to Dowell, the website focuses on "aging, health and wellness for people over 40," and features videos and tips about staying active with age.

The website was inspired in part by Dowell's mother, who at 80 years young still enjoys skiing Tahoe's slopes and backpacking throughout Northern California. "She's an inspiring figure for me, my family, and my friends," said Dowell.

In addition to OomphTV.com, Dowell works as a professional cameraman and

recently began work on the hit ABC Family show "Pretty Little Liars."

While the group of former Matadors was for the most part excited about participating in the film, there were some concerns over the safety and feasibility of capturing the ascent on film. "Mehlhop was especially worried about safety issues, about having a cameraman above him," said Dowell.

In response, Dowell decided to allay concerns – both technical and financial – by using the on-mountain camera crew for only the first day of the climb and, subsequently, relying on telescopic camera work, audio recordings from the group's walkie-talkies, and footage from the top to capture the tension and struggle of the push for the summit.



LINDA DOWELL  
Grady Candler and David Dowell before the trek up to the summit.

party's triumphant arrival at the top of "El Cap," as the popular climbing destination is affectionately known.

The path to the peak was not without perils, as the nearly one-km-tall monolith proved a challenge to the citizen climbers' stamina as well as their skill. The final stretch of rock face, called the "The Nose," was a tremendous challenge for the group, especially Kavanagh, who became "just completely exhausted," said Dowell, and even considered summoning a rescue team. But as Dowell fondly recalls, "The bottom line is he made it. The guy with the most oomph was Don."

Dowell has high expectations for the film, not only because of the natural beauty of the location, but because Kavanagh and Mehlhop were compelling subjects, with "a lot of personality, a lot to say," said Dowell.

His pride and respect for his friends and old classmates is unabashed. "They set out a goal: They wanted to do this at 50 years old, and they did it," said Dowell.

While the title for the project is still in the works, Dowell plans to edit the footage into a short film and display it on OomphTV.com as well as enter it in the California Independent and Mill Valley Film Festivals.



LINDA DOWELL  
Steve Schneider, Bart Mehlhop, and Don Kavanagh in a tree at the top of El Capitan.

An exercise in editing, the film is aided by the stunning "long-shots" Dowell and his partner Grady Candler were able to take of the climbers as the group spent nights suspended against the stone wall. "It was a full moon, we got amazing time-lapse shots," said Dowell.

Camera equipment in tow, Dowell and his wife Linda then hiked a steep 10 miles and crossed three rivers to film the climbing

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## Orindans Take on Yosemite's Half Dome



CONTRIBUTE PHOTO  
Pictured after scaling up and down the infamous cables to the top of Half Dome are (L-R) John Kirby, Brian Woods, Conor Woods, Patrick Samuel, Meredith White, and Ian Woods (not pictured Randi and Lauren Woods).

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WOMEN SING / MOVE OF THE MONTH

WomenSing Celebrates 45th Anniversary



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Conductor **Martin Benvenuto** and members of WomenSing display the 2010 National Chorus America/ASCAP Alice Parker award that the group won.

By **KATHRYN G. McCARTY**  
Staff Writer

“It’s a very exciting year for us,” said Orindan Patty Murray, a member of the choral group WomenSing for the past 14 years. The chorus kicks off its 45th Anniversary season, “New Beginnings,” with “The Power of Ten,” a salon concert and silent auction to be held on October 10 at the Lafayette Veterans’ Memorial Hall, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., in Lafayette.

The evening features guest guitarist Michael Goldberg and WomenSing artistic director Martín Benvenuto performing music by J.S. Bach, Manuel Ponce, and John Dowland, as well as a special appearance of the Acalanes High School women’s ensemble Bella Voce, and WomenSing performing Craig Hella Johnson’s touching *Will There Really Be a Morning?*

There will also be a varied and extensive auction that will be accompanied by delicious food and wine.

This year WomenSing is offering a number of auction items online at the group’s website, as well as at the event. One of the auction prizes includes an Empanada

Workshop at the Orinda home of Pam Whitman, a retired WomenSing member. The winner will learn the art of preparing authentic Argentine empanadas from Maestro Benvenuto, then enjoy dinner with the company’s artistic director and hosts.

Earlier this year, the group received the 2010 national Chorus America/ASCAP Alice Parker Award. The award, presented by Chorus America and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), recognizes one choral ensemble each year for extending their repertoire of new music.

“We are thrilled to be recognized both for our efforts to preserve the great choral tradition and to assure that it remains vibrant and relevant in the 21st century,” said Benvenuto.

While Benvenuto believes original music can be “intimidating” he recognizes that “our singers and supporters alike are now fully engaged with the creativity of living composers and with keeping the great landmarks of the repertoire alive.”

Tickets and more information on the auction are available online at [www.WomenSing.org](http://www.WomenSing.org).

◆ **JUNGBLUTH** from page 23

of MOFD.

Next, the board must communicate clearly, through an outreach program, to inform members of the media, community, service organization, etc., of their decisions and rationale supporting activities of MOFD.

**Pension Benefits**

Yes. The district must explore all options to ensure fiscal responsibility and sustainability. But, that does not mean that it will automatically be accepted. Controlling the costs of firefighting personnel is a function of reaching a delicate balance between maintaining the exceptional service we have come to expect, and determining its appropriate valuation. To help determine that value, it is important to recognize what occurs throughout the industry, and

to understand how it can be applied locally.

**Qualifications**

While president of a homeowners association, I was responsible for addressing the issues and needs of the residents during a multi-million dollar settlement of a lawsuit. My negotiating skills were put to the test by both sides, and I was able to earn the respect of all involved.

I have been a member of the Orinda Planning Commission for three plus years, and have worked diligently to streamline the planning process. I am also a small business owner serving the marketing and public relations needs of a diverse client base. In all these instances, I have worked tirelessly by listening and learning in order to present options that can be acceptable to those interested parties.

Move of the Month



**Step up and Row**  
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Stand facing a step or low bench with a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing in. Step up with the left foot as you pull weights straight up toward shoulders, with elbows higher than wrists. Lift right knee 90 degrees in front of you. Step down, right foot first, and lower weights. Switch sides, repeat. Do 16 reps total, alternating sides.

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Katie Rawson

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– Katie Rawson

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WAY TO GROW

*Way to Grow*

*Solving the Challenges of Hillside Landscaping*

by Steve & Cathy Lambert



There are many challenges when designing and installing landscapes in Orinda, but one of the most prevalent is our hilly terrain.

Because the need for hillside landscaping is so common, there are plenty of creative and proven solutions to choose from. The best place to start is by writing down your goals for the space. Is the slope within view of your home and or yard making aesthetics a priority? Do you need to alleviate erosion problems? Do you want more flat space for a vegetable or flower cutting garden? Is there a need to expand your living or recreation space?

The simplest solution for low-maintenance hillside landscaping is to plant the whole hillside with species of groundcovers

or ornamental grasses that are well adapted for slopes. If you like the look of grass and your slope is not severe, buffalo grass or fine-leaf fescues (no mow lawns), along with some groupings of native Berkley sedge, are good choices. For steeper slopes, larger grasses will root deeper, along with many natives like; cotoneaster, symporocarpus, and monkey flowers. There are also numerous varieties of creeping groundcovers which root firmly enough to make them a good hillside option.

For a more dramatic look plant your slope with perennials and shrubs, which vary in height, such as purple smokebush (*cotinus*) with a foreground planting of cantaloupe torch lily (*kniphophia*). In shady areas native brown twig dogwoods, along

with rhododendrons and azaleas work well. Throw in a few foxgloves (*digitalis*) like the new 'apricot beauty' for a long lasting, blast of color.

For steeper hills, or areas that can't be graded easily, terracing can add more level ground. The amount of terracing will of course depends on the degree of slope and the desired use for the space. One approach is to build evenly spaced steps, using pressure treated landscape timbers, boulders, or other building material to create step height walls. The flat areas can then be used as individual beds, planted with low-maintenance, cascading plants and groundcovers.

Adding a walkway is a great way to take advantage of a property with a view that would otherwise not be enjoyed. However, if you add a pathway to the top of your yard you should always have a destination. This can be something as simple as a bench or something much more elaborate like a gazebo or sitting area with an arbor for shade in the summer and a fireplace for warmth in the winter.

Another option for a steeper hillside is to create deeper terraces using retaining walls. It's surprising how much space can be achieved with the addition of a small (less than 30-inch high) retaining wall. These retaining walls can be built using rock, steel or pressure treated lumber.

Any retaining wall above three feet will require engineering and city approval. They are usually made using concrete (poured in place), segmental concrete blocks, and concrete filled cinder block. Segmental block such as Keystone can be very industrial looking, but newer products such as Country Manor Keystone or Belgard's Celtic Wall, are varying sized, colored concrete that is tumbled for an antique stone look.

The availability of certain stone colors and types changes fairly often. For a cooler look we prefer the many shades of Connecticut Bluestone, and for warmer tones our favorites are Oyster Thistle, Petrified Forest Floor or Pioneer Stone. For a more formal look, stones such as Bitter Root or Kennesaw are good choices. There are also stones from Asia that have been pre-cut for ease of installation. One of our best cost saving techniques is to cap walls with stone and then cover the face of the wall with a fine Venetian plaster (stucco).

Grapevines have been planted on terraced hillside for centuries but backyard vineyards are a fairly recent trend. There are now companies, such as the local Diablo Vineyards, who will plant and maintain your grapevines, pick and crush your grapes, and bottle your wine with a custom label for your home grown varietal. Adding grapevines to your landscape can add



STEVE LAMBERT

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A sunny, side yard hillside is a great spot for a terraced vegetable or cutting flower garden. You can use a less expensive material to install your retaining walls and can enjoy the fruits (veggies and flowers) of your labor without affecting your view.

When irrigating hillsides its important to keep in mind the simple notion that water flows down hill. We often find slopes where the upper plant material is suffering from lack of water while the plants at the bottom are being overwatered. The two most effective and efficient ways to water a planted hillside are traditional over head watering, which should be adjusted to water above the upper most plant material, and drip system watering. When using drip, it's critical that you place all emitters above the plants on the slope so that water moves into the plants root zone, and not away from it. Which ever method is used we find it beneficial to use two or more cycle start times to give water a chance to soak into the soil. To figure out how long each cycle should run start your irrigation and watch for run-off to start, allow a short breather and then start the second start time.

Hillside landscaping may involve more work than landscaping a flat space, but the end results are well worth it. If you have any questions or need some advise on the topic of hillside landscaping please feel free to email us at [office@gardenlightslandscape.com](mailto:office@gardenlightslandscape.com).



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LAMORINDA READS

Lamorinda Reads! One City, One Book: *Cutting For Stone* October Events



SALLY HOGARTY

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

The fourth summer of Lamorinda Reads! finds the program bigger and better than ever, according to Carol Glick, Orinda Librarian. "Verghese's book is so popular there are 300 people on the holds list; it is a huge deal for him to come to our community." Verghese is a professor at Stanford University and a medical doctor. Why this book? It appeals to adults and teens of either sex and is so "beefy" the libraries allow check-outs for two months rather than the usual three weeks. Books became available in September with the three communities – Orinda, Moraga and Lafayette – all reading the same book through the month of October with lots of special events planned. *Cutting for Stone* is set primarily in the

1950s at an Ethiopian mission hospital and portrays a kind of cross-section between history and culture – twin brothers who are orphaned and brought up by doctors from India. One twin travels to the U.S., which brings up immigration issues as he searching for his U.S. birth father. There are interesting topics and scenes in this book, and the Lamorinda librarians think that is important when choosing a title. They all agree that the Lamorinda community really likes being able to interact with the author, so the Grand Finale event, "An Evening with Abraham Verghese" on Tuesday, October 26 from 7-9 p.m. at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Hall, is expected to be a sell-out – except that (like all the events) it's free! Go to <http://guides.ccplib.org/onebook>, and click on *Cutting For Stone* book cover for more information.

Local Author Marie Krenz Among Readers

Orinda resident Marie Krenz will read from her book *Fear at Phantom Ship Lake* on September 30 at 4 p.m. at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square. A mystery set in Lassen National Park, the story tells of tragic events at a mountain retreat during a writers conference. "The professor who assembled the conference goes missing and to add to the confusion both his young bride and former wife are in attendance," says Krenz. "It's really a lot of fun."

Also among the many writers reading from their works at Orinda Books is famed *San Francisco Chronicle* pop music writer Joel Selvin. He will read from his latest work *Smart Ass*. Culled from 40 years of reporting, this book brings together Selvin's finest reporting on California rock and roll including coverage of the Grateful Dead, Bill Graham, and the controversial life and death of Sheryl Crow's boyfriend/mentor Kevin Gilbert. Selvin's reading and book signing takes place October 30 at 4 p.m. Call Orinda Books at 265-7606.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Author Marie Krenz.

Other Lamorinda *Cutting For Stone* local events include:

**Thursday, October 14, 1-3 p.m.**

**Ethiopian Vegan Cooking Demonstration and Tasting with Selome Hailelelou**  
Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette CA 94549. Contact: 925-385-2280.

Introduction to Ethiopian ingredients such as fresh herbs, grains, spices and basic cooking techniques. You'll enjoy a small tasting plate of two dishes with authentic, fresh Injera. Arrive early – space limited.

**Wednesday, October 20, 2 p.m.**

***Cutting For Stone* Book Discussion Group**

Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd., Moraga CA 94556. Contact: 925-376-6852.

Explore the story of twin brothers born to a doctor and nun and orphaned at birth. The novel spans decades and generations, moving through history and hospitals in India, Ethiopia and America. "A masterpiece of traditional storytelling," *San Francisco Chronicle*. Join Anne Cain, Contra Costa County's chief administrator and listen or join in the discussion of her favorite book of last year.

**Wednesday, October 20, 7-8 p.m.**

**Bharatanatyam Dance Performance**

Orinda Library, Garden Room, 24 Orinda Way, Orinda CA 94563. Contact 925-254-2184.

In *Cutting For Stone*, the children learn the art of Bharatanatyam dance from their adopted mother, Hema. A special presentation and performance by The Kalanjali Dance School which allows you to experience the beauty of Bharatanatyam dance for yourself.

**Tuesday, October 26, 7-9 p.m.**

***Cutting For Stone* Grand Finale: An Evening with Abraham Verghese**

Lafayette Veterans Memorial Hall, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette CA 94549. Contact: 925-385-2280

Dr. Abraham Verghese discusses his award-winning book *Cutting For Stone* at the Lafayette Memorial Hall. Come early – space is limited; first come, first seated.

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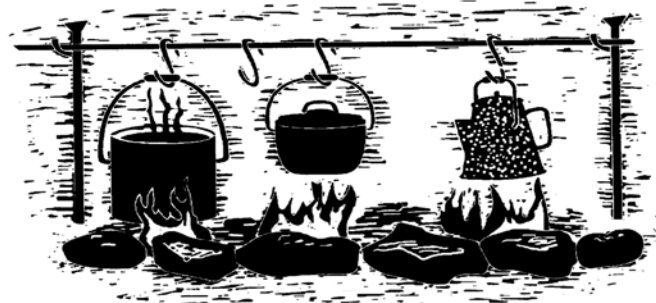


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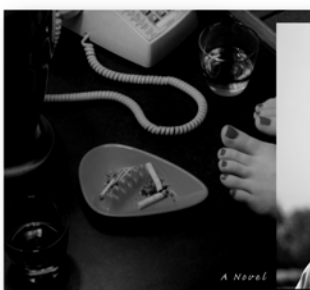
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## SCHOOL BOARD CONTINUATIONS

## ◆ BUTLER from page 15

k-8, over the last 5 years. Since state funding is allocated based on student attendance levels (\$ per student), enrollment is critically important to the district's budget and budget planning. The best thing we can do about this situation is to: 1. continue to estimate as carefully and accurately as possible for our district's enrollment projections, and 2. To continue to keep our schools strong to attract students and families to move to Orinda for our good schools.

**Class Size**

Class size is a difficult issue. Class size is very important to academic achievement, but it is also costly to maintain low class size. The severe state budget cuts over the last couple of years have caused many school districts state-wide to raise their class sizes. Many other districts in our area have already raised their class sizes significantly to compensate for the continual reductions in state revenue since all their other options have already been cut. In nation-wide comparisons, according to *Education Week*, "California's schools rank at the bottom of all 50 states in class size." Orinda, however, has made it a priority to maintain our low class size since it is so important to student success.

For OUSD, in order to address additional budget reductions, all options would need to be on the table including class size. Budget priorities should be discussed and prioritized in an open process among all stakeholders. Personally, I think that class size is very important and that it should be very carefully considered along with other budget reductions as well as ways of increasing revenue. We need to continually seek out and plan to use all of our resources wisely and to plan strategically for continual improvements to keep our schools great.

**Qualifications**

Since moving to Orinda 12 years ago, I have volunteered extensively for the schools in the Orinda Union School District. We moved to Orinda for the schools, and our two children have attended Glorietta School and OIS, and the oldest is now at Miramonte.

My experience in the Orinda Union School District has included classroom and student support as well as leadership positions on several committees. The past two years I was a co-chair of the Las Trampas Legislative Team which gave me an even greater appreciation of our school district's success despite the constant chal-

lenges from the state. I have met with our legislators including Senator DeSaulnier and Assemblymember Skinner to advocate for schools both locally and in Sacramento.

I have also been an elected member of the School Site Council at Glorietta and currently at OIS, which gives me a working knowledge of the operations, challenges and strengths of our schools. I have attended many OUSD school board meetings over the past several years to better understand the issues that our district faces.

I am a graduate of UC Davis in Environmental Planning which has also given me training in strategic planning and in the public involvement process.

Some of my additional involvement in our Orinda schools includes: EFO board member; Measure A - Orinda coordinator for AUHSD, ('10); AUHSD Budget Advisory committee, ('08-10); OIS SSCC, chairperson, '08-09; Measure B committee ('09); OUSD Strategic Planning committee; Parents' Club board member at Glorietta, OIS and Miramonte.

## ◆ KRUMHOLZ from page 15

fact. Final 2009-2010 enrollment posts mid-September 2010. California school districts have until this October to compile and submit their 2010-2011 enrollment for state review.

2005 - 2008 enrollment across six Bay Area counties, including Contra Costa, Alameda, San Francisco, Marin, San Mateo and Santa Clara actually increased by approximately 1.7 percent. In my recent discussions with various Bay Area county district officials, I have learned that 2009-2010 enrollment may remain steady or slightly increase. In actuality, 2009-2010 OUSD enrollment increased approximately 0.87 percent.

At one of several meetings I attended over these past three years, the board approved a contract request from the administration for a report of Orinda's demographics to analyze accurate enrollment projections. OUSD Administration noted enrollment may decline and recommended the study. At that meeting, during public comment, I requested a common sense approach before approving a five figure study. I recommended consideration of the new families moving to Orinda for schools and that perhaps surveying the community is prudent prior to taking action.

The district and board should evaluate and calculate potential budget impacts of any of its recommended consultant paid

studies. Competitive bidding vs. sole sourcing of the requests must be addressed prior to district request.

In these times, five figure administration requests must not be granted or contracts awarded when findings may prove to be as accurate as a "best guess."

**Class Sizes**

The short answer is no. Orinda parents and teachers agree that keeping small class sizes is imperative to quality instruction. Annual fundraising efforts of Parents' Clubs and EFO seek donations requested under this premise.

To put Orinda's K-3 issue on the table, you must understand that California's voluntary K-3 Class Size Reduction program started to effectively lower the average class size of 28.6 students to 20 given documented positive results of smaller class sizes in Tennessee. Participating districts such as OUSD receive approximately \$1,071 per student. Without full participation in the K-3 class size reduction program, Orinda's classes could slip back to 28.6+ students, resulting in elimination of roughly 16 (4 per elementary school) of our lowest paid teachers. The savings derived in a full or partial scenario cannot replace the learning environment that the program provides to Orinda's children.

Grade levels K-3, 4-8 or single subjects were not specified in the question. I am not in support of increasing any grade class sizes. Even with funding incentives in place California schools operate with some of the largest average class sizes in the country. Our children deserve far better; smaller class sizes K-8 and librarians in all schools.

**Qualifications**

Upon enrollment of our oldest child three years ago, I attended the September board meeting to listen to those responsible for setting Orinda's educational stage.

Continued attendance over these past three years provided an understanding of current issues and knowledge of the process driven dynamics impacting Orinda's children.

Volunteering is a life long pursuit. Assisting in special education in my 5th and 6th grade years, remain vivid memories echoing today in my efforts for Junior Achievement in San Francisco and Oakland Elementary schools. I support the Ronald McDonald House and Children's Book Project of San Francisco.

I was integral in chartering a new Toastmaster's International club for Webcor Builders employees and served as its president for two years. I witnessed how mentoring and constructive feedback amongst coworkers invites good communication, furthers leadership and public speaking skills, and enhances productivity.

I have valuable experience working within a myriad of governmental agencies and their constraints resulting in positive outcomes on numerous Bay Area construction projects. In my professional position at Webcor, I effectively manage, negotiate, transparently report and accurately account for project costs in nine figure construction contracts.

As a member of the new board, I will get back to the basics of one-on-one meetings with teachers, classroom visits, motivating community groups, collaborating with parents, and guiding administration to further alliances and strengthen relationships.

I offer a wealth of experience, passion and dedication to make OUSD an even better place for our children to learn and teachers to teach!

## ◆ ROSSITER from page 16

declining enrollment. As long as Orinda remains one of the best school districts in the state, it will continue to be a highly desirable place to live, especially in light of cuts being made in other school districts across the state.

**Class Size**

Since 1996, California school districts have received an annual subsidy for maintaining small class sizes through the class size reduction program. Traditionally, schools would lose the entire subsidy if their class sizes didn't meet the reduction requirements. These additional funds provided an incentive to school districts to keep class sizes low.

To give school districts more flexibility during the current budget crisis, the state legislature has changed the all-or-nothing nature of the subsidy, thereby allowing school districts to raise K-3 class size while still receiving the majority of the subsidy.

Increasing the number of students in each classroom is one way other school districts are saving money in these challenging economic times. Orinda has been fortunate to be able to maintain its smaller class sizes despite ongoing budget cuts.

While all possible avenues must be explored when facing harsh economic times, it is necessary to recognize that keeping class size low is important to the community and is something that should be protected if possible. Smaller class sizes give students the opportunity for more individualized attention and enrichment and are a very desirable feature of our school district. If any additional budget cuts are necessary, they should always be made with an eye towards keeping the cuts as far away from the classroom and, therefore, the students, as possible.

**Qualifications**

My work and volunteer experience will make me an ideal school board trustee. I have the skills to think critically and analyze issues affecting the district. I am passionate about public education and ensuring Orinda continues as one of the best school districts in California. It has been a great privilege working with so many talented and committed people in this community, and I will enjoy working corroboratively to accomplish the board's primary goal: providing Orinda students with the highest quality education.

I am an attorney and practiced as a business litigator and employment lawyer for seven years before my son was born. I have significant experience solving problems, negotiating with others, advocating where necessary for change, and building consensus to obtain results.

I have three children in or entering the Orinda school district: a son in 7th grade at OIS, a daughter in 5th grade at Del Rey, and a four-year-old daughter in preschool. I have been very involved in their schools, and my family has actively participated in many community and sports organizations.

I am very involved in my children's classrooms and in the Del Rey Parents' Club. I am the school's legislative representative to the local PTA, was treasurer of its annual fundraising drive for two years, co-chaired the school's annual parent's party, and was co-chair of operations on the school auction. Each position has given me insight into the budget challenges facing the Orinda school district and experience working with other parents in the community. Additional information about me can be found on my website: [www.julierossiter.org](http://www.julierossiter.org).

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## CALENDAR

## ON THE CALENDAR

## OCTOBER

- 1 **California Shakespeare Theater** presents Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* through Oct. 17 at Bruns Amphitheater. Call 510-548-9666 or visit [www.calshakes.org](http://www.calshakes.org).
- 2 **Orinda Rotary** Tom Fitch Annual Fishing Outing, 9 a.m. San Pablo Reservoir.  
**Orinda Community Foundation** Orinda Silver Celebration 4 to 7 p.m., Orinda Library Gallery, hors d'oeuvres and wine, music provided by Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra, [www.orindasilverball.com](http://www.orindasilverball.com).
- 7 **Orinda Books** hosts Dan Pyne discussing his new thriller, *Twentynine Palms*, 276 Village Square, 4 p.m. Call 254-7606.  
**Orinda Association and Orinda Education Association** School Board Candidates Forum, 7:30 p.m. Glorietta Multipurpose Room. Call 254-0800.
- 9 **Orinda Books** hosts Lois Requist discussing *RVing Solo Across America, Without a Cat, Dog, Man, or a Gun*, 276 Village Square, 1 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 13 **The Second Wednesday Book Group** will read and discuss *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, 3 p.m. Call 254-7606.  
**Parents of Orinda Individuals in Special Education (POISE)** meets from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Contact Anna Tague at [tague6@comcast.net](mailto:tague6@comcast.net) for details.  
**Orinda Association**, City Council Candidates' Forum, 7 - 9 p.m., Library Auditorium. Call 254-0800.
- 14 **Orinda Books** hosts Bill Barich discussing his book, *Long Way Home: On the Trail of Steinbeck's America*, 276 Village Square, 2 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 16 **Del Rey Elementary School** Pumpkin Patch, 25 El Camino Moraga, noon to 4 p.m. Public welcome.
- 18 **City of Orinda**, Town Hall-style Workshop on Downtown Revitalization, 7 p.m. Founders Auditorium, Orinda Community Center. Call 253-4200.
- 21 **City of Orinda**, Time Capsule Burial, 4 - 6 p.m., City Hall, Call 253-4200.  
**Orinda Books and Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation** hosts Victor Verney discussing his new book, *Warrior of God, Jan Ziska and the Hussite Revolution*, 276 Village Square, 7 to 9 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 23 **Parents of Orinda Individuals in Special Education (POISE)** hosts a Halloween Social. RSVP to Anna Tague at [tague6@comcast.net](mailto:tague6@comcast.net).  
**Annual Fun Fest at Glorietta Elementary School**, 15 Martha Road, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Public welcome.
- 26 **Orinda Books** hosts Bo Caldwell discussing her new novel, *City of Tranquil Light*, 276 Village Square, 1 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 30 **Sleepy Hollow** Pumpkin Patch and Fall Carnival, 20 Washington Lane, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Public welcome.

## AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified.

- 2 **Friends of the Orinda Library** Book Sale, Bookshop and Sorting Room, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
**Saturday Morning Live!** Family story time for 3- to 5-year-olds, Picture Book area, 11 a.m. Also Oct. 9, 16, 23 and 30.
- 5 **Toddler Lapsit**, stories, songs and fingerplays for infants to 3-year-olds and their caregivers, 10 and 10:30 a.m. No registration required, but attendance limited to once per week. Also Oct. 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26 and 27.  
**Peek-a-Boo Time**, stories, songs, rhythms and rhymes for newborns to 1-year-olds and their caregivers, 11:30 a.m. Also Oct. 12.
- 6 **Origami for Fun!** Learn to fold animals and boxes. For ages 5 and up, all skill levels welcome, Tutoring Room, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Also Oct. 13, 20 and 27.  
**Paws to Read:** Children grades 1 through 5 practice their reading with a friendly dog listener, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Sign up for a 25-minute session. Also Oct. 13, 20 and 27.
- 19 **Tell It! Tales for Young Children**, a storyteller weaves folktales and legends adapted for 3- to 5-year-olds, Tutoring Room, 1 to 1:30 p.m.  
**Venice: Queen of the Adriatic**, a discussion by Humanities West on the history, politics, art and culture of Venice, Fireside Room, 7 p.m.
- 20 **Bharatanatyam Dance Performance** by The Kalanjali Dance School, Garden Room, 7 p.m.
- 27 **Berkeley Repertory Theater** docent talks about the theatre's current production, *The Great Game: Afghanistan*, 7 p.m.
- 28 **Tale Spinners Story Swap**, storytelling for adults. Sally Holzman tells stories of favorites authors Steinbeck, Twain and Bradbury. Tell your own story, or just come to listen, 7 to 9 p.m.

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

## 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 Monday, 7:30 p.m., Moraga-Orinda Fire District Conference Room, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga. [www.moragaadobe.org](http://www.moragaadobe.org).
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks. Fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library. Call 253-1997.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary. Every Friday, 7 a.m., Postino's in Lafayette 254-0440, ext.463.
- Lamorinda Toastmasters. Every Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Temple Isaiah, 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, [www.lamorinda.freetoasthost.net](http://www.lamorinda.freetoasthost.net).
- Montelindo Garden Club. Third Friday, Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, 9 a.m. [www.montelindogarden.com](http://www.montelindogarden.com).
- Orinda Rotary. Every Wednesday at noon, Community Center, 254-2222.
- Orinda Association. Second Monday, 7:15 p.m., Orinda Library, May Room, 254-0800.
- Orinda Hiking Club. Please visit our website at [www.orindahiking.org](http://www.orindahiking.org) or call 253-1465 for schedule of upcoming hikes.
- Orinda Historical Society. Third Wednesday of the month, 3 to 5 p.m., OHS Museum, 254-1353.
- Orinda Job's Daughters. First and third Monday, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 925-283-7176.
- Orinda Juniors community service group. First Tuesday of the month, September to June, 7 p.m. Contact Diane Petek and Ann Sullivan at [orinda.juniors@yahoo.com](mailto:orinda.juniors@yahoo.com) for location.
- Orinda/Tabor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation. Fourth Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.
- Orinda Teen Advisory Council. Second Wednesday of the month, 4 p.m., Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. For information, email [orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com).
- Orinda Woman's Club. Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon; call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881.
- World Affairs Book Group. Fourth Thursday, 3 p.m. Orinda Books, 254-7606.

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

## Friends of Wagner Ranch Nature Area Host Olive Grove Festival October 10

By VALERIE HOTZ  
Staff Writer

Part of Orinda folklore involves the establishment from 1882-1895 of the orchard of Mission Olive Trees at the Old Oak View Ranch by General Theodore Wagner, who at that time served as the United States Surveyor General. The ranch is referred to today as the Wagner Ranch Nature Area and is owned by the Orinda Union School District (OUSD). With the school district's cooperation, the Friends of the Wagner Ranch Nature Area (FWRNA) support stewardship of the Nature Area, with an emphasis on high quality educational programs that benefit Orinda students, teachers and community partners.

"Over the intervening years, vegetation has grown around the orchard, but the olive trees are healthy," says Kathy Barrett, secretary to FWRNA. "Toris Jager, who retired as the district naturalist and currently serves as an environmental education teacher for the FWRNA as an independent contractor, is helping teachers and students incorporate olive science into outdoor activities. We are celebrating the launching of this program with the Olive Grove Festival on October 10, 2010, otherwise depicted as 10/10/10."

The day gets underway at 1 p.m. with tours of the Nature Area led by Miramonte High School and Orinda Intermediate School student volunteers. "We have numerous activities scheduled including olive tasting and olive oil tasting stations, a demonstration of olive pressing employing different methods, making objects from larger cuttings such as walking sticks, balance sticks, and trellises, a scavenger hunt that includes points of interest at the Nature Area. Guests will be able to take home olive seedlings for planting," explains Toris Jager, who served the Orinda Union School District for 31 years. Marjorie Musante, who recently retired as 5th grade teacher at Del Rey School and currently serves on the board of the Friends of the Wagner Ranch Nature Area, is creating a variety of activities for children to enjoy during the



VALERIE HOTZ  
Toris Jaeger (L) and Steve Gentry look over the olive cuttings at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area greenhouse in preparation for the Olive Grove Festival.

Olive Grove Festival.

Jager is thrilled about the 128 year-old olive grove that consists of an incredible 18 healthy olive trees. "An expert has estimated 2,000 pounds of production per tree of table olives and pressed olive oil in 5 years' time. The Friends of WRNA is looking for a used wine press so we can press the olives. An actual olive press would cost approximately \$50,000, but apparently a wine press does the same work and will cost less," explains Jager.

"People are really excited about the olive trees. I have noticed how eyes light up when I talk about the olive trees to kids, parents and teachers. It will be a productive venture and may ultimately be a way to utilize existing natural resources to finance programs," points out Jager.

With the school district's permission, FWRNA conducts educational programs with teachers on the site. "Volunteer parents really appreciate the programs. They have expressed to me time and again how much they value these programs that include Pioneer Days, Rancho Days, the Native Studies program, and the First Thanksgiving," says Jager.

For more information about the Olive Grove Festival or to volunteer, contact Kathy Barrett at 254-2224 or email her at [kdbarrett08@gmail.com](mailto:kdbarrett08@gmail.com). Additional information about the Friends of the Wagner Ranch Nature Area is available online at [www.fwrna.org](http://www.fwrna.org)

## CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

Acalanes Union High School District. First and third Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette.

City Council. First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).  
Historic Landmarks Committee. Fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room. 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. Second Monday, 4 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road. For the latest listing of dates, please check the website at [www.orindaschools.org](http://www.orindaschools.org).

Planning Commission. Second and Fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).

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## BUSINESS BUZZ

## ◆ BUZZ from page 32

an Open House. The Orinda Chamber of Commerce will conduct a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the expansion. "We invite everybody to come by as they get ready for the holidays. This is a wonderful place to shop for entertainment flatware, china and crystal," she adds.

Girgis was in marketing prior to opening her own business. She earned her bachelor's degree at U.C. Berkeley and an M.B.A. at John F. Kennedy University. Girgis reared her children in Orinda. After redecorating her home and wondering what to do with all her gently used furniture, she settled on the idea of opening her own consignment business. "I call this my retirement work, and it keeps growing. When we realized we were outgrowing our space, it was fortunate that the additional space was available conveniently located just across the parking lot," smiles Girgis. If unable to get to the store and branch locations, shoppers can go to the website at [www.hiltonhousedesign.com](http://www.hiltonhousedesign.com). Shoppers can join the email list posted on the web site and receive alerts about new inventory in a timely manner.

"Think about it. Why buy new when you can invest in wonderful pre-owned treasures from our store and save the planet at the same time? Customers can both save money and help keep the planet green. It is a smart way to recycle," points out Girgis.

Hilton House Consign and Design is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information, visit [www.hiltonhousedesign.com](http://www.hiltonhousedesign.com) or give them a call at 254-1113.

#### Ellis Insurance and Associates

With 43 years of experience as an insurance broker, Les Ellis knows the business. Ellis and Associates operated for 30 years in Richmond and moved to its present location at 324 Village Square – above

McCaulou's – in 2000.

"We are a multi-faceted agency, specializing in homeowner's policies, including personal home and auto policies, and policies for larger apartment complexes and homeowners associations of all sizes. My day is spent talking to lovely clients, many of whom I have known for 30-40 years and also new clients," says Ellis. "Our principal company is Farmers Insurance Group, and I am fortunate that I have been recognized by them for the past 13 years as having one of the most professional agencies in the country," he points out.

Like any successful business, it comes down to the people, and Les Ellis and Associates is no exception. "We have a fabulous team that includes Helen Dias, Laurie Suttle, Madeline Crandell and Maya Noble. Helen has been with me for 22 years, and Laurie has been here nearly as long, for 17 years. Each and every one brings a wealth of experience," adds Ellis.

Choosing an insurance career was an accident for Lester Ellis. He earned his bachelor's degree at San Francisco State University and originally set out to be a high school teacher. During his credential program, he was able to do some student teaching at the high school level. "I interrupted college after my freshman year to serve in the Marine Corps. I was used to a certain amount of discipline after that experience, and I discovered during my student teaching that it was not right for me. While thinking about pursuing a Master's degree I was hired by Safeco Insurance and realized I was meant to be in insurance," explains Ellis.

He goes on to point out that insurance is a people business. Ellis has built an effective team with the brokerage doing \$5 million in annual premiums. "Helen and Laurie know everyone by the sound of their voice on the telephone."

Ellis' wife, Kim, is an elementary school teacher. The couple celebrates their 50th wedding anniversary next year. They have two adult daughters, Kendra who resides in Piedmont and Megan, a Danville resident. "Our daughters are married to wonderful guys, and we have four exceptional grandchildren," says Ellis, who, in his spare time, enjoys reading nonfiction, contemporary writings about government, and traveling abroad. They recently traveled to Cambodia and Thailand where Kim was able to take a variety of photos that are on display in the office of Ellis Insurance and Associates.

For more information, visit [www.eiaca.com](http://www.eiaca.com) or give Lester Ellis a call at 258-1010. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with a lunch break from noon to 1 p.m.



Les Ellis of Ellis and Associates

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## Neighborhood Comfort Food Coming to Theatre Square

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

Long-time Orinda resident Victor Ivry and relative newcomer Michael Karp (only two years in town) have combined their considerable business acumen to open the latest culinary endeavor in Orinda – Table 24. Set to open in early October, the restaurant is located across from Shelby's and will feature comfort food at reasonable prices.

"We really want a place where neighbors can meet and where families feel comfortable – a place to gather," explains Ivry, a former Miramonte swimming and water polo coach. To that end, the restaurateurs are creating an indoor/outdoor feel with lots of warm earth tones and leather and windows that open to the patio area. They are also adding circular outdoor seating and a fire pit that will welcome patrons to Theatre Square.

While Ivry has coached several generations of Orindans and has extensive retail experience, Karp has been in the restaurant business for over 20 years. Avid swimmers, the two met in the Meadows Pool Masters program. "We want healthy, good quality food that parents can feel good about," says Ivry. "We plan on serving hearty breakfasts into the afternoon." In addition, Table 24 will include a full bar and large screen television.

Executive chef Kelly Hatcher will create the restaurant's signature "neighborhood comfort food" ranging from such diverse selections as Artisan Cage-Free egg sandwich to signature Lollipop lamb chops and a wide variety of burgers, pizzas and salads.

For more information on Orinda's new



SALLY HOGARTY

Republic of Cake will soon have a new neighbor when Table 24 moves in and creates an inviting outdoor seating area.

culinary treat, go to [www.table24orinda.com](http://www.table24orinda.com) or call 254-0124.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

## Business Buzz Putting a Personal Face on Local Business

Valerie Hotz



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

### Garden Lights Puts Your Yard in the Spotlight

Our readers are probably familiar with Steve Lambert's informative column in



VALERIE HOTZ

Steve Lambert of Garden Lights

this paper, Way To Grow. Lambert established Garden Lights Landscape in 1990, presently located at 1 Northwoods Drive, near the Crossroads. This award-winning landscape business specializes in ponds, swimming pools, waterfalls and garden lights for private homeowners, and occa-

sionally handles commercial projects, such as the recently completed Orinda Senior Village landscape.

A multitude of awards garnered over the years from the California Landscape Contractors Association adorn the sage green walls of the office, which has numerous books on landscape design available for clients to peruse. In addition to working directly with individual homeowners, Lambert has done several projects with local architects Peter Golze and Rick Kattenburg.

Garden Lights' geographic reach extends from Piedmont to Alamo and everything in-between. "We tend to favor what we call California Romantic, combining native plants with Mediterranean selections, including roses for some vibrant color. We take the approach of doing excellent, award winning work on every job. Whether or not we win an award does not matter, but doing our best is what really counts," explains Lambert. "A very big trend in landscape design is xeriscape, which is basically zoned watering which contributes to water conservation. Certainly, the more drought tolerant, the better.

Lambert's wife, Cathy, manages the business affairs for Garden Lights, while he is the creative force. Lambert earned his bachelor's degree at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo in landscape design and contracting, where he completed a senior project on landscape lighting, styles and effects. After college, he worked for a large builder doing model homes. After quitting this position,

he took on side jobs. "I never planned on starting my own business, but it snowballed. We have 22 employees, who, of course, I would be lost without. It's about having good people working for me. Locating my business in Orinda is the best thing I have ever done," he adds.

Lambert points out last year's double whammy of drought and a sagging economy has affected the landscape business, but this year homeowners are moving towards adding water features to their gardens such as fountains, waterfalls and ponds. "I tell people it is my job to get people in their yard day and night. A very big part of their investment is their yard, and people can get far more enjoyment out of their property when it is well landscaped with interesting features. Lighting is a very important factor allowing people to be able to enjoy their yard at night, after getting home from work. People are putting in outdoor entertainment areas. We love building outdoor kitchens and seeing them used at parties," says Lambert.

Cathy and Steve Lambert have been married 14 years and live in Orinda. The couple's two children, Walker and Audrey, attend Wagner Ranch School. For more in-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cyndi Girgis of Hilton House

formation about Garden Lights, visit [www.gardenlightslandscape.com](http://www.gardenlightslandscape.com) or give Steve and Cathy a call at 254-4797.

### Hilton House Consign and Design Opens Branch in Recent Expansion

This gem of a consignment shop was established 10 years ago and has been doing an excellent business ever since. It is located at 21 Orinda Way, near the Orinda Library, next door to the UPS Store. Just recently Hilton House expanded and opened a 1,000 square foot branch store adjacent to Village Pizza, a few steps across the parking lot. Featuring higher ceilings and expansive windows, there is more wall space for mirrors and artwork for customers to view offerings.

Joining in the Green movement, owner Cyndi Girgis points out buying consignment goods is an excellent way to preserve the planet by recycling treasures. "In addition to handling estate sales and featuring a fine jewelry department, Hilton House specializes in name brand items for your home including Waterford and Stubein crystal, Royal Dalton and other fine porcelain china. We have a very unusual mix of high-end quality modern furniture to antiques and rugs from around the world at wholesale prices. It is recycling at its best," says Girgis.

Customers enjoy the added selection of home furnishings in this convenient location which has free parking. These pre-owned items are available at bargain prices and shoppers will be helping the earth at the same time. "We have same day delivery service for a minimum fee, with the same person who has provided this service since we opened 10 years ago. Customers also have the option of driving their SUV or station wagon up to the front door and loading their purchase themselves. We make it as convenient as possible," explains Girgis.

Sometime this fall Hilton House will host

[SEE BUZZ page 31]

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