

# THE ORINDA NEWS

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## Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Award Winners



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Orinda Arts Council is this year's Volunteer of the Year. Board Members and Standing Committee Chairs (L-R) Petra Michel, Jane Greenthal, Steve Harwood, Susan Mautner, Natalie Wheeler, Lisa Johannessen, Susan Garell, Myrna Witt, and Gwen McNeilus. Not pictured: Maggie Boscoe, Wendy Hamett, and Cathy Wong.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The four Orinda Garden Clubs have been selected as William Penn Mott, Jr. Award Winners. Above are members of the Montelindo Garden Club doing plantings at the mini-park in Orinda. (L-R kneeling) Sandra Steinbeck, Karoline Doberenz, (standing) Louise Rowland, (with small rake) Judy Martine, and (kneeling on right) Katie Creighton.

### Orinda Arts Council Named 2010 Volunteer of the Year

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

Coordinating the monthly Orinda Library Gallery exhibits, organizing the annual high school visual arts competition, providing art supplies for Orinda's elementary schools, and, of course, producing the highly successful Orinda Idol competition are just a few of the accomplishments of the Orinda Arts Council. "The volunteer members of the arts council work tirelessly

to promote the arts in Orinda, and through their efforts, they have helped keep important visual and performing arts programs alive in the schools and in our community," says Orinda Association (OA) president Mark Roberts. "We are very happy to recognize the council as the 2010 Volunteer of the Year."

Originally founded in 1950 as the Orinda Children's Art Center to supplement art instruction in the schools, the council also has a long legacy of supporting the arts in the community. In the 1960s, it began installing art exhibits at the Orinda Library and holding art events at the Orinda Country Club featuring local professional and student artists to raise funds for arts in the schools as well as the community. In the early 1970s, the OAC provided critical financial and organizational support for the opening of the new Orinda Community Center. The 1980s included funding for the Community Center Park Amphitheater and to the California Shakespeare Theater as it moved to Orinda. When the Heart of Orinda plan was

[SEE OAC page 7]

#### City of Orinda Commission Openings

Volunteers to serve on the following:

Commissions: Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight, Parks and Recreation, and Planning.

Committees: Art in Public Places, Audit and Finance, Finance Advisory, Public Works Aesthetic Review, and Traffic Safety Advisory.

Statement of interest forms are available at the City Clerk's Office, 22 Orinda Way, and must be submitted by January 21 at 5 p.m. Application forms may also be downloaded at [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).

### Orinda's Garden Clubs Harvest Big Rewards as Mott Winners

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

Have you come out of the Caldecott Tunnel and down the Orinda off-ramp to be pleasantly surprised by a profusion of brightly colored daffodils or been walking through the Village and marveled at the large blossoms cascading down from hanging planters, or maybe the street-level planters full of native plants on the Theatre Square side of Orinda has caught your eye? Well, these are not just spontaneous acts of nature nor the work of the City of Orinda staffers. They are the result of countless hours of volunteer work and loving care provided by Orinda's garden clubs – The Orinda Garden Club, The Junior Garden Club of Orinda, Montelindo Garden Club, and Orinda Valley Garden Club.

"It is very fitting that we honor the four garden clubs in Orinda as our William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award winner," says Orinda Association president Mark Roberts. "Not only do they make our community a more beautiful place in

which to live, but they also restore and conserve valuable natural resources. We thoroughly congratulate them and applaud their efforts."

While these busy volunteers have specific projects around town for their clubs, they also join together on a number of projects

[SEE GARDENING page 7]

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#### Final "Tiger" Of The Month

It only seemed appropriate to select a cat named Tiger as our final cat of the year. Not only is this handsome Himalayan named Tiger, he is also of Croatian descent. That's a Croatian soccer ball that he is trying to get to or maybe it's the Croatian wine. The wording on the wine label translates as "Tiger's Milk." Tiger is lovingly cared for by Al and Lois Blazic. Now in their 80s, the Blazics have lived in Orinda for 54 years.

The staff of *The Orinda News* would like to thank everyone who submitted their tigers for consideration. I only wish we had more room and time to include them all.



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SCHOOL BOARD

# New School Board Focuses on Funding and Communication

By BILL O'BRIAN  
Staff Writer

The Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees has three new members but, due to the close election, it took 28 days to certify the results. The two candidates with the highest vote count were Julie Rossiter with 22.52 percent and Christopher Severson with 20.92 percent. The race for the third member was between Tyson Krumholz and Rebecca "Bekki" Van Voorhis-Gilbert with Krumholz the winner by 159 votes. The number of Orinda ballots was 19,266. Now, with the sometimes contentious election over, the new board members are concentrating on establishing a good working relationship with existing board members Pat Rudebusch and Matt Moran.

School funding is the hot button item on the school board's list. "The new school board must continue to ensure there are sufficient on-going funds to support teachers

and critical programs," says Rossiter, who also listed communication and technology as high priorities. Rudebusch concurs: "School funding will continue to be the most pressing issue facing our schools. We're not immune from the pressure to do more with less, but we've been extremely fortunate not to have to resort to furlough days, increasing class sizes, or cutting art and music programs thanks to careful financial planning by our business office, the judicious use of reserves, and the generous support of parents and local tax payers."

Krumholz identifies several other critical needs of the district: "Retention, support, development and recruitment of the high-

background in economics with its emphasis on rational decision making and critical analysis. Rudebusch brings experience and continuity to the board, having been a member for 10 years with a "long term view of what works and what doesn't." She says, "When you keep your focus on what is best for students, people with differing points of view can usually work toward consensus." Rossiter understands that each board member brings a unique set of "skills, background and strengths to the table," so some change is inevitable. She says that her skills as an attorney including "significant experience solving problems, negotiating with others, advocating where necessary for



SALLY HOGARTY  
New and current school board members honored retiring members at a recent reception. (L-R) **Matt Moran** (current), **Tyson Krumholz** (new), **Pat Rudebusch** (current), **Chris Severson** (new), **Pam West** (retiring), **Riki Sorenson** (retiring), **Jack Bontemps** (retiring), and **Julie Rossiter** (new.)

est quality educators is a top priority." He also agrees with Rossiter on the importance of communication and technology. "The board and the Superintendent must empower the district administration to improve upon parent/community responsiveness, to increase transparency and to expand its use of technology to serve these efforts," he says. He believes as well that the board "needs to embrace its leadership role to engage the community to further explore all opportunities to both revitalize and bolster programs such as science, library services, technology, art, music and PE."

Continuing school board member Matt Moran says that in addition to state funding, Orinda schools receive 30 percent of their funding from local sources. In order to maximize how these monies are spent, the school board created a fiscal advisory committee made up of citizens, staff and school board members to examine how to spend the parcel tax money. In another effort to efficiently use available dollars, the board and district staff also study the methods of other districts with similar sizes and socioeconomic factors. The staff meets with those districts to share ideas.

The new OUSD board hopes its combined individual strengths will help it navigate the difficult challenges ahead in the continuing uncertain financial times. Severson believes his 24 years in education training to become an emergency medicine physician will be helpful in his new role as a board member as will his undergraduate

change, and building consensus to achieve results" will be important background elements to her contribution. Moran feels his experience as a businessman with the goal of keeping his customers happy adds to his contribution. Krumholz points to his experience working within a myriad of governmental constraints and achieving positive results as one of his strengths. "My positive attitude, desire for continuous improvement of my leadership skills, and practiced representation will serve the entire community well," he adds.

The new board is eager to get to work. "I am honored to have been selected by the voters of Orinda to serve on the school board, and I would like them to know that I will work tirelessly to ensure that we continue to improve as a district," says Rossiter. Severson adds that he is "very excited" to serve on the board of trustees where he has lived since 1978. "I can be a bridge from our past into the future, through a collaborative, team building style of leadership, and an intense dedication to the schools and issues," he states. Krumholz gratefully acknowledges the community's support and believes that a greater level of input and collaboration with the community will increase students' success.

Moran, who attends one to two meetings a week such as parents' clubs, educational foundations, and district coordinating councils, agrees that community involvement is key: "The more you put into the job the more you get out." He talks to as many constituents and parents as he can about their concerns for the district. Rudebusch also attends countless hours of meetings with parent groups and teachers as well as visiting classrooms. She says this allows her to see "how we can best pull together to meet financial challenges, strive toward higher academic goals, and maintain a sense of balance in the curriculum."

The OUSD Board meets the second Monday of the month at 4 p.m. at the district offices, 8 Altarinda Road in Orinda.

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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President  
So What's New?



Mark Roberts

While I'm not much of a "resolutionary" when it comes to the New Year, I do like to take a moment to think about what's really new on January 1 – besides my calendars.

Actually, this year in Orinda, there's quite a lot that's new. We have a new mayor, Victoria Smith; a new vice mayor, Steve Glazer; a new city councilmember, Dean Orr; and incumbents Sue Severson and Amy Worth were elected to new terms. Congratulations to all. At the swearing-in ceremony, Mayor Smith delivered an honest and sober assessment of the financial challenges facing Orinda (and all California cities) this year. That, unfortunately, is nothing new. But she also inspired with her confidence in the ability of elected officials, city staff members, and citizen volunteers to combine their experience, ability and enthusiasm to tackle these challenges.

Since Orinda is a community of people who truly value and support public education, the election of three new trustees to the Orinda Union School District board is news indeed. Tyson Krumholz, Julie Rossiter, and Chris Severson immediately compose the new majority on the five-member board. I am confident that these energetic new members will work with the two incumbents to make decisions that enable Orinda schools to remain the best performing in the state and Orinda students to realize their full potential.

Please remember that city councilmembers and OUSD trustees are all volunteers. The only compensation they receive is the satisfaction of knowing that they're contributing their time, passion and professional expertise for the benefit of our community. They don't always get to enjoy the specific results they work hard to achieve due to limitations (often budgetary) and unforeseen circumstances. But they do deserve our appreciation for their efforts.

Which brings me to something that I hope will be new in 2011. I'm really hoping that the very small number of Orinda residents who only let us know what they don't like will find a cause they do like and support it with all the passion they have previously allocated to complaints and criticism. I certainly support the right of these concerned folks to share their opinions through letters to the editor of this paper and others. I would just be delighted

to have them devote their substantial energies to accomplishing something positive rather than focusing on what they perceive as negative.

Let me suggest some avenues for channeling that energy. The City of Orinda has numerous vacancies on commissions and committees that focus on specific issues in our community. There's the planning commission, parks and recreation commission, and traffic safety advisory committee, among others. I'm a member of the latter, and I've found it very rewarding to learn about the concerns of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists and to help neighborhood groups address those concerns. Please contact City Clerk Michele Olsen at molsen@cityoforinda.org or 253-4221.

Finally, while on the subject of volunteers, please plan to join us on January 30 to honor our newest award recipients. The OA is pleased to recognize the Orinda Arts Council collectively as the 2010 Volunteer of the Year and our four garden clubs with the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award. The members of these organizations have contributed greatly to the quality of life in Orinda for decades – in the case of the OAC, for 60 years.

Here's hoping that 2011 will be full of good news for Orinda and its residents.



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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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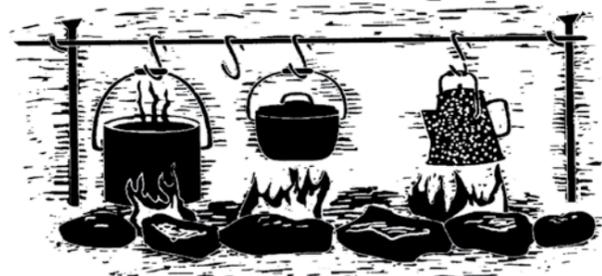
The Orinda Association Needs You!

Our membership drive is in full swing, and we hope you will renew your membership or if you are not currently a member, that you will join. Thanks to your support, we are able to provide the following to the community:

- The Orinda News
- The Volunteer Center
- Seniors Around Town, a transportation service for local seniors
- The Volunteer of the Year Award
- The William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award
- The 4th of July Parade and Celebration
- Important Forums and Debates

Join us and help make a difference! Visit our website at [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org). Thank you!

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## Letters to the Editor

### The Hero Among Us

There is a man here in our town who is a hero. He has been a fixture in Orinda forever. Anyone who has had a dog or a cat knows him. He goes by Dr. Gerry, because no one can pronounce his last name. To us, he is our friend, Gerry.

Our dog, Sam (Samantha) was a golden retriever, who died last month after almost 11 years as a part of our family. Gerry was there with her and us at the beginning and at the end. As awesome as Sam was, she was a little bit nutty (she ate socks and dish towels). As a result, Gerry knew her and us well.

The good doctor toils all day with Orinda's animals. He runs a puppy class on Tuesday nights. He always carries dog treats in his pockets. He has a young family now and, of course, he has dogs of his own. And our unsung hero wears dog ties all the time. He is a good man.

We discovered Sam had a malignant tumor, and it was clear the end was near. Gerry was patient and caring and spent a lot of time explaining the situation to us. When the time comes to end your pet's life, you want to be sure and Gerry understood that.

He came to our house late that night. He consoled us. Then he took care of the most difficult business there is. He completed the circle of life with kindness and dignity. He told us Sam was the best. Then, he took our loved one away in a sheet.

The following week, we received a note from his office saying they were making a donation to an animal care fund in Sam's name. It also had a handwritten note from the good doctor, thanking us for giving Sam so much devotion and affection and such a loving home.

Captain Sully was a hero once. Dr. Gerry is a hero all the time.

– Danny Katz

### Thanks for Community Support

I was honored to receive the support of the community, and the confidence of the voters in being re-elected to the Orinda City Council. It is with sincere gratitude that I thank my many endorsers and supporters. I look forward to continuing to serve the community and plan to work closely with you as citizens and with the new council to make Orinda an even better place to live.

– Sue Severson

### Paradise Lost

Paradise Lost ought to be the new name for Orinda.

On November 29, 2010, the Orinda City Council voted to support a housing project for low-income senior citizens. The housing would be built on Irwin Way, across the street from the Safeway.

The housing could include tall buildings – buildings in excess of the current down-

town height limit of 35 feet. Sketches of the housing reveal what looks like a giant computer card rising out of the ground. The planned housing is an eyesore.

The development would be handled by Eden Housing, a organization of dubious financial stability. Eden's tax return from 2009 shows that, compared with the previous year, Eden's investment income dropped 90 percent. During the same period, Eden's profit went from \$6.6 million to \$1.8 million (a 73 percent decrease). Income went from \$12 million to \$6 million (a 50 percent decline).

The City of Orinda should not rely on Eden to construct the housing. What would Orinda do if Eden went bankrupt while the housing were being built?

The housing should be built in Orinda but not in downtown, where parking is hard to find and traffic is often unbearable.

No one knows what this downtown housing project would do to Orinda's residential property values. Orinda is obligated to find out before proceeding with this poorly conceived project.

– Richard Colman

### Blow On

I am writing to thank the Orinda City Council for their unanimous vote to keep leaf blowers in Orinda. Years ago, summer vacationers were reluctant to come to Orinda because of our "foliage problem." It was not until the advent of the leaf blower that Orinda's population surged. It is very likely that, today, Orinda would suffer a sizable population decline if these implements were banned.

Historical documents show an even earlier and more important role for the leaf blower, particularly in the settlement of the American West. Meticulous records kept by the explorers Lewis and Clark show how often their mission faltered until Congress provided funding for the purchase of two, early model leaf blowers, allowing the explorers to clear a pathway through the mountainous, foliage-laden territory that we now call California and Oregon.

Going further back in our history, it is a little-known fact that our first settlers brought with them on the Mayflower an early prototype of the leaf blower. It is rumored that Myles Standish refused to set foot on Plymouth Rock until the blower was gassed up and the debris swept from that outcropping. Thomas Jefferson later claimed he could not possibly have maintained his estate at Monticello had he not been the beneficiary of Ben Franklin's redesigned leaf blower.

There has been much talk from the would-be blower banners about the deleterious health effects of blowers on children ("asthma in children has increased almost 200 percent in the last 25 years, etc."). This kind of emotionalism has no place in a debate about serious matters: put simply, what is to be done about the ubiquitous



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presence of fallen leaves, sticks, and dog droppings on our lawns and driveways? Am I to allow this debris to accumulate simply because my neighbors' toddlers might contract asthma or another respiratory disease from the regular dispersal of particulate matter while they are at play? Councilwoman Severson struck the right note at November's meeting: If some Orindans are worried about the noise and pollution caused by leaf blowers, why can't they simply invest in triple-pane windows and remain indoors?

Many of those opposed to leaf blowers fail to understand the variety of useful tasks

that this versatile machine can perform. Recently, when my wife's hair blower shorted out and we were faced with arriving late for an important social engagement, I employed my leaf blower successfully in drying and curling Barb's perm. When my little terrier Toby had a piece of sirloin caught in his throat, I was able to dislodge the impediment by applying several blasts of forced air from my blower directly to his larynx, saving the animal's life.

It is unfortunate that some in this community put their own family's health and peace of mind before their neighbor's right

[SEE LETTERS page 14]

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

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For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the March issue is January 20, 2011.

CHIEF OF POLICE/POLICE BLOTTER

# Orinda's Police Chief Reflects on First Eight Months on the Job

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY  
Staff Writer

Jeffrey Jennings has settled into Orinda's eco-friendly city hall where he has served as police chief since March 2010. He points with pride to floors made of cork and walls that have jeans as insulation.

Christmas Eve, he notes, marks his 19<sup>th</sup> year in law enforcement. Originally, Jennings had been enrolled in college preparing for a career in law. The birth of his first child put a detour in those plans. In search of a job to support his family, he began thinking about the various people who had influenced him as a young man.

His father served in the military before his career in the Department of Corrections, and Jennings recalls various police officers who would check in on him when he was in school. A neighbor who was a police officer suggested that he apply for the force. Jennings successfully passed the entrance test and went to work for the police department after finishing his degree in psychology.

Following his first patrols, he got "hooked on doing good in the world by getting rid of the bad guys." Indeed, his early police training took him to some of California's toughest streets in North Richmond.

"Those were my formative years," Jennings said, adding that he has learned "there is a subculture in America, a very, very small percentage - sometimes second and third generations of families -- who need a strong hand to keep them from doing bad things. Thankfully, most people want to live life and follow the American dream."

Jennings calls Orinda one of the safest cities in the nation. "We are a small unit," said Jennings, who "knew four or five of the guys personally" when he was appointed police chief. Jennings feels it is important to get "the pulse of everyone" on the force and regularly comes to work early to speak to the officers on different shifts.

The Orinda Police Department, along



Chief Jeffrey Jennings.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

with Danville, Oakley and Lafayette contracts with the Contra Costa Sheriff's department. "It's a fiscally responsible decision; there are a pool of deputies with different skill sets," Jennings said, adding that if Orinda needed assistance with a problem, "we would get it."

Jennings reflects on cuts in surrounding Bay Area Police Departments, such as Oakland, saying "We are part of the Office of the Sheriff, which has experienced cuts since 2003. However, the Orinda contract stipulates that the police department be staffed regardless of cuts."

The chief acknowledges that the sheriff's department has been affected by the tight economic situation. "We are treading water like everyone else and are waiting for the economy to right itself," he explained. "We have to take our share of cuts like other departments. We are in this downturn together and can't fight for our own interests without regard to other important social, health and educational needs of the citizens we serve."

Jennings prides himself on working cooperatively. "Nothing is unilateral. My decisions are all collaborative," he said, adding that he respects how everyone who works for the City of Orinda is "so engaged and willing to learn new ways of doing things."

The father of three, Jennings counts  
(SEE CHIEF page 14)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Orinda's Police Officers (Back Row L-R) Officer J. Gogo, Detective D. Jeffried, Officer A. Lirio, Officer R. Bullard, Officer M. Gray, Officer D. Henry, Officer A. Agadier, Office K. Kim (transferred to County), Officer K. Mooney, Officer D. Vargas (K-9), and K-9 "Chef" (Front Row L-R) Sergeant M. Djajakusuma, Chief J. Jennings, Lieutenant A. Charles (promoted to Lt. and transferred to County). Not pictured - Detective Sergeant N. Rafanan and Officer R. Westhorpe.



## POLICE BLOTTER

November 2010

**False Residential Alarms:** Officers responded to 104 false alarm calls throughout the city.

**Burglary - Commercial:** 2 incidents were reported on Moraga Way.

**Burglary - Residential:** 2 incidents were reported on Via Floreado and La Espiral.

**Grand Theft - From Building:** 1 incident was reported on Orinda Way.

**Petty Theft - From Vehicle:** 1 incident was reported on Westover Ct.

**Petty Theft - All Other:** 2 incidents were reported on St. Hill Rd. and Whitehall Dr.

**Stolen Vehicle:** 1 incident was reported on Las Vegas Rd.

**Vandalism:** 4 incidents were reported on Donna Maria Way, El Toyonal and 2 at Theatre Sq.

**Vandalism - Felony:** 2 incidents were reported on Knickebocker Ln./Stein Way and Bryant Ln.

**Arrests**

**Battery - Domestic:** 1 arrest was made on Bates Blvd.

**Burglary - Commercial:** 1 arrest was made on Moraga Way.

**Driving Under the Influence - MISD < .08:** 3 arrests were made on Moraga Way, Camino Pablo/Santa Maria Way and Camino Sobrante.

**Driving Under the Influence - MISD > .08:** 1 arrest was made on Camino Pablo at Hwy. 24 W.B.

**Drunk in Public:** 3 arrests were made on Orinda Way and 2 on Moraga Way.

**Interfering with Public Officer:** 1 arrest was made on Claremont Ave.

**Possession of Dangerous Drugs:** 1 arrest was made on Orinda Way.

**Recovered Stolen Vehicle:** 2 stolen vehicles were recovered on St Stephens Dr. & Brookwood Rd.

**Warrant Arrest:** 1 arrest was made on Brookwood Rd and Moraga Way.

- Compiled by Jeanette Irving, Orinda Police Department



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CAR TIME

CAR TIME

Going Electric

by JOHN VANEK



At one time it looked like electric cars could take off in the United States. The ill fated GM EV1 was popular with many motorists in the late nineties, but used a lead acid battery and did not have the technology to replace a gas engine vehicle for the majority of potential owners. To the dismay of many EV1 drivers, the program was scrapped. GM gave up on the program until recently. Toyota and Ford also had experimented with converting existing vehicles to electric power but had the same results. The battery technology at

the time made for short driving range and a hazardous waste nightmare once the batteries were used up. The top carmakers in the U.S. market eventually abandoned the EV experiment that had been ignited by California's Zero Emission Vehicle mandate in the early 1990s. The main culprit was the cost and performance of the batteries.

Enter Nissan: The Japanese car company made its first electric vehicle, the lead acid battery-powered Tama, in 1947. Now with the launch of the Leaf, the company is the first automaker to begin producing a mass-marketed EV. The five-seater Leaf hatchback is expected to cost about \$20-\$25,000 in the U.S. (including government incentives) and utilizes lithium-ion battery packs. In comparison, the General Motors' Volt, a plug-in hybrid that will compete with the Leaf, will cost about \$41,000. The president of Nissan has made no secret of the fact they want to change the electric vehicle industry with the launch of the Leaf. Nissan and Renault have earmarked funds to build 12 assembly and battery factories in the United States, Japan, Portugal, France and Britain that will be capable of producing a combined 500,000 electric vehicles a year.

Just the idea of mass-producing an electric vehicle is commendable, but Nissan and its French partner Renault would like to take it to a new level. If you ask officials in Yokohama, Japan's second-largest city, an electric car has yet another possible attribute: It can feed the electricity network. Because electric vehicles run on batteries,

[SEE CAR TIME page 14]

Traffic Woes on Moraga Way

By DAVID DIERKS  
Staff Writer

The Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) met on November 15 to discuss two options proposed by Orinda residents to improve the safety of the neighborhoods around Ivy Drive, Leslie Lane and Southwaite Court during the morning commute.

The problem is the amount of traffic caused by the schools in the area - Miramonte High School, Orinda Intermediate School (OIS), and Del Rey Elementary - and the recklessness of some drivers. Many drivers make U-turns at Leslie Lane and Southwaite Court in violation of California traffic laws. The law states that "No person in a residence district shall make a U-turn when any other vehicle is approaching from either direction within 200 feet, except at an intersection when the approaching vehicle is controlled by an official traffic control device."

The major issue stems from both Miramonte and Del Rey schools starting at the same time. This causes tremendous traffic from parents driving their children to school. According to TSAC member Nan Reed, "Wednesdays, when the schools are on offset schedules, there is no traffic problem. Other days, traffic can back up from Glorietta all the way downtown."

City Counsel member Sue Severson advised, "About four years ago, the Orinda Union School District was approached about having Del Rey offset their time by 15 minutes, which we felt would create a positive outcome on Moraga Way. OUSD and Del Rey were not willing to make any accommodations."

Additional bus service has mitigated the traffic congestion a little. Three years ago, bus service was started from the Glorietta

area to Miramonte, and last year, a bus was added from the Sleepy Hollow area. Both of these buses are filled and account for 40 students, which keeps a corresponding number of cars off of Moraga Way.

At the TSAC meeting, resident Chris Holton made an impassioned plea to have the "No Left Turn" sign on southbound Moraga Way at Ivy Drive removed, in an effort to "return traffic to its natural state." The "No Left Turn" sign was placed on Ivy Drive in 2000 by the City Council in order to curb traffic on Ivy Drive during the commute on weekday mornings (it is effective Monday through Friday 7 to 8 a.m.). As a consequence of this sign, Holton maintains many drivers now make left and U-turns at Leslie Lane and Southwaite Court. According to Holton, there have been as many as 150 cars counted doing this between 7:30 and 8 a.m. "These irresponsible drivers are making ill-advised left turns in front of rapid traffic coming from a blind stop light just a few hundred yards away," said Holton. "Children walking to school are constantly in peril of getting hit by these vehicles."

After much discussion, the Advisory Committee decided not to approve this proposal as it will impact the residents of Ivy Drive, and they have to be advised of the proposal and allowed the chance for a rebuttal. "The City of Orinda has only one high school and one middle school," said Maria Campos. "There are two avenues to go to Miramonte and one of them is closed just for the convenience of people living on Ivy Drive. The only way the whole City of Orinda will be properly served, is to rescind the 'No Left Turn' sign restriction."

The Advisory Committee did approve "No Left Turn" signs on southbound Moraga Way at Leslie Lane and Southwaite

[SEE TRAFFIC page 12]



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AWARD WINNERS

◆ GARDENING from page 1

including keeping all of the planters in town looking good. Three of the clubs (Orinda Garden Club, Montelindo and the Junior Garden Club) pooled resources and collective expertise to beautify the Camino Pablo median strip. The three clubs met monthly for over a year to make the median strip landscaping a reality. All four clubs donate plants and flowers to the Orinda Library on a rotating basis throughout the year.

Garden Club manages the triangular garden spot by Camino Sobrante and Orinda Way; The Orinda Junior Garden Club keeps the circular garden by Theatre Square blooming throughout the year; the Valley Garden Club also plants daffodils around town and offers a series of expert speakers to enhance everyone's knowledge, and the Montelindo Garden Club preserves the minipark garden in the Crossroads area. Six years ago, Montelindo members redesigned and replanted the garden with California natives and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Junior Garden Club of Orinda maintains the garden in the turnaround area in front of the Orinda Theatre. They have planted drought tolerant, mostly California native plants, in this demonstration garden.

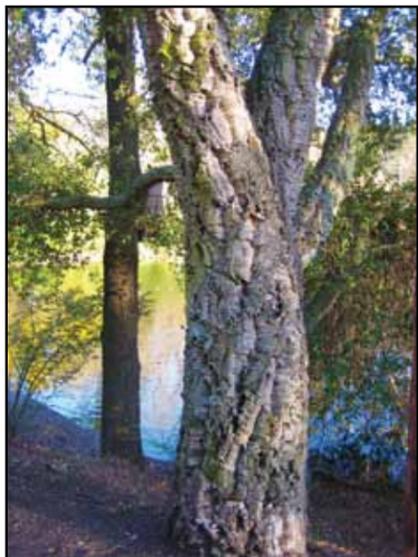
"They all came together for the project, and we are really pleased with the result," states parks and recreation director Todd Skinner. "This has created one of the longest landscaped medians in the city and was definitely one that needed the most help."

When not working on such joint projects, the clubs each have a separate area of Orinda that they maintain: The Orinda

Mediterranean plants. Recently, they have added hundreds of daffodils to add spring cheer to the Crossroads.

"We are thrilled and very proud to join our fellow Orinda Garden Clubs as recipients of the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award," says Joan Andrews of the Orinda Garden Club. This year, the club made conservation their key goal with the motto "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without." They plant the thousands of daffodils people see as they enter the off-ramp from Oakland. The area, owned by Cal Trans, doesn't have any water so the group plants the daffodil bulbs, and when they are not in bloom, they apply top dressing among the boulders to create an appealing gateway into Orinda. The group also hosted an E-waste recycling event with proceeds benefiting the Educational Foundation of Orinda, but their key project this past year has been the restoration of the Cork Oaks around Lake Cascade in Orinda.

"When the Garden Club of America requested that each club select a Centennial Project, we chose to restore the Cork Oaks on the shoreline of Lake Cascade in Orinda," explains member Heather Dunn. "This privately-owned reservoir and protected bird sanctuary has become a popular recreation area for the community providing over a mile of shoreline for



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Orinda Garden Club spent considerable time restoring and conserving the cork oak trees on the north side of historic Lake Cascade at the Orinda Country Club.

walkers, runners, bikers and bird watchers. Previous members of Orinda Garden Club planted 12 *Quercus subers* (cork oaks) in 1946 around Lake Cascade. Current member Joan Andrews formed a committee to restore these oaks to their majestic form. Thanks to the suggestion of the Garden Club of America, we discovered a part of our history we didn't know existed. Two hundred and seventy-five feet of lake front has been restored to date."

While each club continues its beautification of its own little corner of Orinda, Lani Shepp of the Montelindo Garden Club hopes more joint projects will take place next year. "The shared projects are a very constructive and productive experience, allowing us to get to know members of other clubs who share the same interest. I hope it is something we can continue and build on for next year."

To honor these hardworking Orindans, who often work quietly in the background, attend the Orinda Association's award dinner on January 30 beginning at 6 p.m. at the Orinda Country Club. For more information and reservations, call 254-0800 or go to [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).

◆ OAC from page 1

proposed in 1989, the OAC advocated for the addition of the Orinda Library Gallery and auditorium. The group also participates on the Art in Public Places committee and has partnered with the Pacific Chamber Symphony, the Orinda Film Festival, and sponsored the California Independent Film Festival's Iron Filmmakers Contest.

"We feel so honored to win this award especially since 2010 marked our 60th anniversary as an organization," says OAC president Susan Garrell. "We've had a remarkable and productive year thanks to all of our hard working and dedicated board members, committee chairs, and hard-working volunteers. And, of course, we couldn't fund our arts programs and events without our generous members, donors and sponsors."

The Orinda Association will present the OAC with the Volunteer of the Year award at a gala dinner on January 30 beginning at 6 p.m. at the Orinda Country Club. For more information and reservations, call the OA at 254-0800 or go to [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).

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**Thank You Orinda!**

I truly appreciate the support of so many of you during the City Council election. With your help, we elevated the dialogue about our downtown's future, which now will be decided by Orinda residents, as it should. Our work is not done; please visit [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org) to give your input on the downtown plans, and remember to log in to [www.SaveOrinda.com](http://www.SaveOrinda.com) for regular updates.

*Scott Zeller, MD*

FILM FESTIVAL

International Film Showcase Launch at Orinda Theatre January 28

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

On Friday, January 28, at 7 p.m., the Lamorinda Film and Entertainment Foundation (LFEF) launches the first film in its new and exciting line-up of monthly Bay Area premieres of international films.

The first one is *Max Manus* (2008), a true story of one of the most brilliant saboteurs during World War II and his battle to overcome his inner demons. The film is unusual in that it follows a small resistance group working to save Norway from Hitler's infamous war machine. At the Amanda Awards in Norway, *Max Manus* won a string of awards including Best Film, Best Actor (Aksel Hennie), and Best

Cinematography (Geir Hartly Andreassen). See [www.maxmanus.ca](http://www.maxmanus.ca) for the trailer. The LFEF film premieres are scheduled to be shown for one week each month at the Orinda Theatre, 2 Orinda Theatre Square, throughout 2011.

This International Film Showcase is the dream child of local residents and LFEF co-founders Efi Lubliner and Jo Alice Canterbury. Both have attended film festivals around the country and internationally including Palm Springs, Sundance, San Francisco, Mill Valley, Ashland, OR, New Zealand, and more. Both preview films for Telluride and other festivals. Frustrated that they could not share these treasures with local movie lovers – many were simply never available either on DVD, Netflix or in the-

atres – they decided to form an international film showcase. Lubliner and Canterbury describe the films as, "simply good, decent films we believe deserve showing. Some are capers, some comedies, some dramas – the whole range. Our criteria is that they are made for the general public to enjoy."

Helping Canterbury and Lubliner make the International Film Showcase a reality are LFEF board members Randy Holleschau, (president), Laura Abrams, (founding director), David Mayeri, (vice president), and Kate Wiley (secretary). Honorary board members include actor Kevin Spacey and Father Mike Russo, professor of communications at St. Mary's College, Moraga.

As a bonus to moviegoers, LFEF will ask them to fill out a comment form, list their email address, and they will automatically be entered into a raffle. One lucky person will win two complimentary tickets to Showcase films, to be awarded each month. Because LFEF is a nonprofit foundation, they are soliciting volunteers to help keep the movies coming. If you are interested in becoming involved, call Lubliner (925-283-1700) or Jo Alice Canterbury (254-4284) or go to [www.lfef.org](http://www.lfef.org). Current wish list includes: volunteer coordinator, promotion, movie lovers survey for suggested films, and invitations to area film classes.

At press time, the following dates have been scheduled with many more to come: January 28 to February 3, February 25 to March 3 and March 18 to March 24.



BILL CARMEL

Efi Lubliner, co-founder of the Lamorinda Film and Entertainment Foundation has spearheaded the new International Film Showcase, a monthly program at the Orinda Theatre.

Admission is \$10 for evening shows (\$8 for seniors) and \$7 for matinees any time before 6 p.m. Visit [www.orindatheatre.com](http://www.orindatheatre.com) or [www.lfef.org](http://www.lfef.org) for more information.

Orinda Association Awards Dinner

January 30 at 6 p.m.  
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Lisa Bedell  
Montclair Village

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Thank you, Sheena!



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LIBRARY GALLERY

# January Exhibit: New Images of Old Orinda – 1901-1920s

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

The New Year's first show begins January 3 and features the Orinda Historical Society's (OHS) newly discovered images of old Orinda. Thanks to the generosity of the de Laveaga family, these never-before-exhibited works show life in Orinda from 1901 through the 1920s. Local artists Joel and Nancy Hemsley will also be included in the January exhibit, where the husband and wife team will display their sculptures (Joel) and paintings (Nancy). An artists reception will be held Friday, January 7, from 4:30 to 6 p.m., so drop on by and explore this diverse exhibit.

The 22 original glass negatives were discovered at the family's estate by the granddaughters of Orinda's major developer, Edward I. de Laveaga. He was responsible for developing the El Toyonal area, Orinda Village, the Orinda Country Club, Orinda



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Joel Hemsley's Carrera marble sculpture *Pietra Santa Putto* will be displayed at the January exhibition.

Park Pool, and Lake Cascade from 1901-20s. There is a full panorama (1901) of the El Toyonal hills and valley with virtually no development in sight. OHS technology and publications director Teresa Long digitally pieced together three separate images for a never-before-seen glimpse of Orinda's pristine valley. "Faces of Early Orinda" will also be exhibited, showing early residents who shaped Orinda's character.

The range of activities the OHS participates in is amazing. For example, researchers can access bound copies of the Contra Costa Sun from 1948 – 1972 and beyond. Kay Norman does a third grade walking tour of different historic sites in the spring and the fall, local authors are hosted (check out the books they often donate in the museum), members speak at events around the area, and the list goes on and on.

Along the way they've acquired a Spanish cannon ball, a railroad tie from the California/Nevada Railroad, and other fascinating items from Orinda's past. Founded in 1969, there are 17 charter members still with the group, along with 60 lifetime members – total membership is about 175. OHS board members responsible for the exhibit are vice president Charlie Vollmar and technology/publications director Teresa Long, and Vicky Carter with help from treasurer Betty Karplus, and members Marge Rieger and Lindy Phillips.

President Lucy Hupp Williams wants viewers to, "Learn about the past and how society has changed and perhaps appreciate how our community evolved to what we enjoy today." OHS members will be on hand to answer questions and share their encyclopedic knowledge of local history.

January kicks off their yearly membership drive, so if your interest in things historical is piqued, sign up. Volunteers are requested for some interesting activi-

ties/positions in 2011 such as: coordinate "Antiques Road Show" event, inventory OHS items, FileMaker Pro Expert and more. Drop by the museum, located on the ground floor of the Orinda Library, Room 106, 24 Orinda Way but give a call first at 254-1353, or go to [www.orindahistory.org](http://www.orindahistory.org) for more information.

Sharing the Orinda Library Gallery with the Historical Society are husband and wife artists and long-time Orinda residents Joel

and Nancy Hemsley. Nancy started painting watercolors 14 years ago at DVC when she retired and gradually made her way to Walnut Creek Civic Arts Center, Mendocino Art Center, and other venues to increase her knowledge and gain experience. She credits John Finger with introducing her to pan watercolors (no tubes) and now prefers to use strong colors. At the Orinda Community Center, she attends Norm Nichols figure

[SEE GALLERY page 10]



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# Orinda Woman's Club Leads the Way in Helping Others

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

"The generosity of members of the Orinda Woman's Club (OWC) enabled them to make a special donation of \$20,000 to local charitable organizations in December," says Barbara Rogan, president. "Over many years, rather than be reimbursed by OWC for costs incurred for items such as attending conventions or printing and mailing costs, our members placed the money in a special fund. It had grown to \$30,000. We decided it should be used and were thrilled to be able to give this extra money at a time when the need is so great," Rogan continues.

Ten thousand dollars will go to the Contra Costa Food Bank, \$2,000 each to Warm Winter Nights, A Friendly Place, and The California Youth Authority, and \$1,000 each to Loaves and Fishes, Monument Crisis Center, Bay Area Rescue Mission, and Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center, Organizations which generate over \$100,000 are not eligible for the funds.

Rogan says, "We are a relatively small group of dedicated volunteers (membership stands at 80) who work hard to better our community and surrounding area." Well known for their yearly Festival of Trees, which donated this year's profits of over \$40,000 primarily to the Monument Crisis Center and the Court Appointed Special Advocates, OWC also provides grants to a wide variety of non-profit organizations.

Gail Rocha Van Wye says the group is especially proud of their education scholarships. "These scholarships are different from most as we give them to women with few or no resources who have a desire to better their lives. Perhaps the money will go to pay for gas so a woman can attend literacy classes at Project Second Chance or to purchase a computer allowing a mother who attends Contra Costa College to do her class work at home with her children rather than in the school library," she explains. "Applicants come from STAND Against Domestic Violence, the California Youth Authority, Opportunity Junction, and Project Second Chance. These are all organiza-

tions that share our goals of helping underserved women and children in the area."

The Orinda Woman's Club holds its general meeting on the second Tuesday of the month. Roche Van Wye says the one most well attended is the March meeting when representatives from agencies throughout the area come to tell about their services. From these presentations, members vote to select the recipients of their donations.

The club also has a variety of activities in which members participate ranging from visiting museums and exploring different neighborhoods with professional tour guides, to attending movies, participating in book clubs, playing bridge, and a Super Bowl party to which husbands are invited.

"We also had fun making Turtle pillows for the Paul Newman Camp for Terminally

Ill Children and adopting a polling place which we manned to earn money to give to our Community Service Fund," Rogan says.

Membership is open to women throughout the Lamorinda area and beyond, according to membership chairman, Janet Nelson. A member in good standing at any other Federated Woman's Club may transfer to the Orinda Woman's Club. On Tuesday, January 18, at 10 a.m., a prospective member's coffee will be held at 18 Evergreen Drive, Orinda. For further information, contact Janet Nelson, 925-451-0559 or email her at jcn229@comcast.net. "We welcome all women who are interested in supporting our community outreach programs while enjoying our diverse activities and forming new friendships," Nelson comments.

## ◆ GALLERY from page 10

drawing classes. "We just draw and paint in the class. Drawing is similar to plein air for me as you learn to use finger/eye coordination," says Hemsley, who will show 14 framed works in various sizes. Many paintings are from her travels with her husband, Joel to Italy, France and Thailand. Nancy says, "Art expands the community's spirit and excites their visual outlook."

Joel and Nancy Hemsley create many of their artworks right here in Orinda, where they have lived for 41 years. Joel began sculpting in 1988, both stone carving and figurative clay from live models. What got him started was visiting Greece and seeing all the classical sculptures. He did a series of Cycladic goddess sculptures inspired by the culture on Mykonos, which existed for thousands of years. He loves working with his hands and will be showing 6-8 pieces in the show, mostly carved marble. Although

Joel creates mostly figurative work, he likes the abstract works that have shown up in the library square, "It's so uplifting to walk among them!"

Works in the show include *Pietra Santa Putto*, *Jaguar* (carved from a 100 lb. block of white marble) and *Cycladic Goddess*. Both Nancy and Joel believe that exposing kids to art opens up the left side of their brain, which can awaken their spirituality and sense of wonder. Joel hopes more Orindans will "let their hair down" and take a stroll through the Library courtyard to enjoy the art.

Visit the Library Gallery during normal library hours - Monday through 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. Call 254-2814 for more information. The library will be closed January 1-2 for the holidays and on January 17 (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day).



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LEAF BLOWER / ALCOHOL COALITION

## City Council Hears Leaf Blower Issue

By DAVID DIERKS  
Staff Writer

At the November 16 City Council meeting, before a packed auditorium, Quiet Orinda presented a controversial proposal to the City Council urging them to ban leaf blowers in the City of Orinda. The City Council decided not to vote on the proposal, because, as Councilmember Steve Glazer said “there was not a clear community consensus here for an outright ban.”

The public forum lasted until 10 p.m. Seventeen people supported Quiet Orinda’s proposal, while 23 opposed it. According to City Manager Janet Keeter, the city could incur additional costs if a ban was imposed. “I can’t give a specific dollar amount,” she said. “I talked with the Parks and Recreation Director, and he indicated that it would be thousands of dollars of increased cost to the city should we have to totally eliminate leaf blowers.” Councilmember Severson felt it would be difficult to enforce. “I think there should be other options considered before an outright ban,” she added.

Jerry Segall said “calling them leaf blowers is a misnomer, since the blowing of leaves is not the primary effect of these machines. What these machines do much more efficiently is to propel into the air at speeds of over 200 miles an hour, microscopic particles - dirt and dust; allergens, mold and fungi; dry fecal matter; diesel exhaust; pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides - most of which we cannot see, but remain suspended in the air for days.”

Quiet Orinda founder Peter Kendall

cited the Bay Area Air Quality Management District’s report, which stated that “leaf blowers [should] not be used in local communities to avoid causing difficulties to people with breathing difficulties.”

During the public forum, others voiced opinions on the matter. “A leaf blower is an incredibly effective tool,” said Mark Ericson. He cited a report created for the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District by the University of California, Riverside College of Engineering “that characterized leaf blowers as an insignificant pollutant in San Joaquin Valley, one of the nation’s dirtiest air basins, and that authorities do not need to regulate them.” Ericson added, “There’s 100 times more dust caused by driving on paved roads. Construction throws up to 20 times more dust than leaf blowers. The study was not subsidized by any leaf blower manufacturers.”

Ericson also cited the Orinda Noise Regulation, section 17.39.4 that incurs fines for offences. “The Orinda Planning Department has statutes to regulate noise pollution on its books, and there has not been a single complaint lodged in 2010 with the planning department so that they could follow up,” said Ericson. A copy of the Noise Regulations can be downloaded from the City of Orinda website at [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org). Go to Departments, Planning Department, Noise Ordinance.

One point brought up during the public forum was that the police were not aware of the particulars of the noise ordinance. “The comment that the police are not knowledgeable

[SEE LEAF page 14]

--- Advertisement ---

## Password Security Redux

By EVAN CORSTORPHINE  
Portable CIO

Recently the YourMonthlyPaper.com website, which hosts *Alamo Today*, *Lafayette Today* and *Danville Today News* was hacked. Some visitors using Google Chrome and Safari browsers were notified the website contained malicious code (of note, Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox did not flag this). I was surprised and began investigating.

It became obvious how easy it is for the bad guys to use seemingly harmless websites to further their illegitimate aims. What they did was interesting. The hackers edited every HTML page on the site, and inserted a line of code that linked to a site in Russia. I followed the trail and found the website was registered in Romania but hosted in Moscow. Beyond the obvious, that the code shouldn’t be there, I couldn’t identify the specific attack that this website housed. Even when I removed the controls and protections off my test system, I couldn’t get it infected. Maybe the hackers blew it? I don’t know. But I’m happy that nothing got downloaded onto YourMonthlyPaper.com visitor workstations.

How did it happen? There’s only one way and that’s if the password used for transferring files to and from the website was figured out. Even though it had upper and lower case letters, a number and two dollar signs, it wasn’t the best password. The password was complex, but it is commonly used in the technical community. The hackers knew it existed and probably kept it in their library of passwords to try, and they used it to exploit the site. Needless to say, the password has been improved, and the bad guys will have to find another website to pick on!

I know I sound like a broken record, however, it appears the bad guys are stepping up their attempts to hack into your information. We’ve seen many email ac-

counts compromised lately. We’ve found sophisticated code called “rootkits” which we haven’t seen for awhile. Everyone needs to take this seriously!

First find a notebook and write down every electronic account you use. Next to every account, write down the username and password you use. Consider all your accounts; email, news sites, banking or investment sites, gaming and software sites – record everything.

Now go through the usernames and passwords and evaluate the quality of your passwords using these guidelines: 8-10 characters, upper and lower cAsE, with \$p3ci@! Ch@ract3rs! And p.uNctu@t10n# to break up the word. I’m worried a lot more about the guy in Russia who wants my identity and bank accounts, than the guy breaking into my house for my password notebook.

Besides keeping current, updated antivirus software on your computer (yes, Mac users too, check out [www.thexlab.com/faqs/malspyware.html](http://www.thexlab.com/faqs/malspyware.html), and [www.techeye.net/security/mac-users-face-growing-malware-threats](http://www.techeye.net/security/mac-users-face-growing-malware-threats)), I would recommend PC users use Google’s Chrome browser (<http://chrome.google.com>.) And if you haven’t had your computer in for service lately, go to [www.malwarebytes.com](http://www.malwarebytes.com), and download and install the full paid version of their Malwarebytes software. This is excellent protection, and when it’s running on your computer in the fully resident mode, it will also automatically block access to websites that contain known security threats.

*If you didn’t read this article soon enough and think you’ve already got a nasty bug on your system, give the friendly staff at Portable CIO a call at 925-552-7953 or email us at [info@theportablecio.com](mailto:info@theportablecio.com).*

## Alcohol Coalition

By DAVID DIERKS  
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition hopes to change community norms, to reduce access to alcohol for underage drinkers, and to create a healthy and safe environment for youth. The brainchild of Jaime Rich, the Lamorinda Alcohol Policy coordinator for the Center for Human Development, the coalition includes members of the three police forces, middle school principals, members of faith communities, Orinda and Lafayette city councilmembers and parents. They have laid the groundwork for what they hope to accomplish and will establish their goals in the next few meetings.

The coalition meets on the third Wednesday of every month at 10 a.m. at Orinda City Hall, 22 Orinda Way. For more information, contact Jaime Rich at 925-687-8844 x227 or email [Jaime@chd-prevention.org](mailto:Jaime@chd-prevention.org).



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YOUTH MATTERS

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Healthy Choices



Sara Duplancic

While Orinda may not be known for kids and teens that fall into the category of overweight, enormous lifestyle changes in our youth leave us not far from becoming so. Before the advent of computers, digital television, and anything touch screen, children and teens enjoyed spending their time with physical activities. It's true that new technologies have improved our lives in previously unimaginable ways, but ultimately, unless you're playing Wii Sports™, technology has made us the target of a physically inactive youth.

When it comes to the modern child, fitness and the right food choices have taken the back seat.

Placing emphasis on exercise for children at an early age is one of the most important things we can do for the well being of our future leaders, inventors and role models. Most kids need about an hour of exercise per day to keep their brains stimulated, blood flowing, and bones developing. For younger children, parents can set a good example by being active themselves. Unfortunately for high school students, getting exercise often ends up at the bottom of the lengthy homework and extracurricular to-do list. The mandatory daily hour spent in P.E. class until sophomore year (at Miramonte High School) does little to encourage teens to keep active for benefits in the long run. For example, most bone development in terms of size and strength happens before the age of 20. Instilling healthy exercise habits has to start at an early age and remain consistent until the development process is complete. An overweight child often turns into an overweight teen, which turns into an adult with an increased risk of heart disease,

higher blood pressure, diabetes, breathing complications, and a very long and dirty laundry list of problems.

Obesity and problems associated with a lack of nutritional food and exercise are too often branded as problems of lower socioeconomic populations. We are lucky that many Orinda residents have a flare for organic living and help to promote our local farmer's market, but at the same time we should not forget that over the course of the last 20 to 30 years, childhood obesity as a result of unhealthy eating has grown at all income levels. A thicker wallet does not necessarily protect against a thicker waistline. Even though we can find grass-fed meats and cage-free eggs in our grocery stores, there will always be aisles upon aisles of sugar-loaded cereals and TV dinners. (A quick tip: stay on the perimeters of the grocery store where the fresh produce and meats are.)

Fortunately, the community we live in does a great job with providing sports activities for elementary school children. It's up to parents to enroll their kids in indoor soccer and Little League baseball teams. Thanks to parent involvement and financial support from the EFO (Educational Foundation for Orinda), our middle school and high school, OIS and Miramonte, have excellent (and in some cases nationally recognized) after-school teams. But if time is an issue, consider committing to a gym membership or allocate more time to exercising at home (and not in front of the TV). As for the food we put into our body, parents should think twice about every item they purchase at the grocery store. And after all, a healthy body is priceless.

◆ TRAFFIC from page 6

Court as a short term solution. These signs would be effective the same time as the Ivy Drive sign, Monday through Friday, from 7 to 8 a.m., for one year in order to assess whether they improve the situation. The proposal will be delivered to the City Council at their January meeting, and if approved, the signs could be up by April.

"When the signs get placed on Southwaite Court, that will make the traffic on Moraga Way worse," said Campos. "Ivy Drive will not get the 150 + cars of traffic

that now turn on Southwaite Court to go back to Ivy Drive, and they will be more comfortable. That is not right. It is also going to create more accidents, because people will unexpectedly turn into Moraga Way driveways. I thought safety was the main reason for the TSAC committee."

The TSAC will continue to pursue other alternatives to address the problems on Moraga Way including determining whether it is desirable to remove the "No Left Turn" sign and talking to the district superintendent about school starting times.

Girl Scouts Raising Money for Glorietta Playground



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of Glorietta 5th grade Girl Scout Troop #30622 recently raised \$400 at a garage sale towards their \$4,000 goal to purchase a recess program called "Peaceful Playgrounds." It includes colorful, non-competitive and inviting activities painted onto the blacktop that children can play. "We hope to reduce the amount of kids that just wander around during recess who are not comfortable joining other games or groups," says parent Suzanne Tom.



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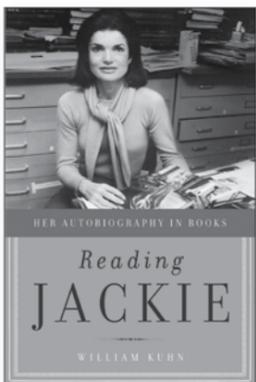
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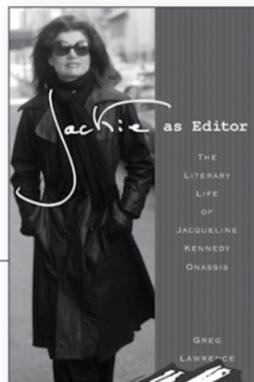
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Open houses are for adults only, and start at 6:30 p.m.

CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 3 **Orinda Historical Society** New Images of Old Orinda, 1901 to 1920s, Library Art Gallery, through Jan. 31. Also on display will be marble sculptures by Joel Hensley and watercolors by Nancy Hensley. Opening reception is Jan. 7, 4:30 to 6 p.m.
- 7 **First Friday Forum**, Laura Nielsen discusses litigation explosion, 1:30 p.m., Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church, 925-283-8722.
- 11 **POISE (Parents of Orinda Individuals in Special Education)** meets from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Contact Anna Tague at Tague6@comcast.net for information.  
**Moraga Art Gallery** features Beryl Glen-Reiland's paintings and sketches and George Ehrenhaft's "visionary realism" through March 19. Reception for the artists is on Jan. 15, 3 to 5 p.m. at 570 Center St., Moraga. Call 376-5407.
- 18 **World Affairs Book Group** will discuss *California Crackup: How Reform Broke the Golden State and How We Can Fix It* by Joe Mathews and Mark Paul, Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, 3 p.m. New members welcome. Call 254-7606.
- 28 **The Lamorinda Film and Entertainment Foundation** premieres The International Film Showcase with *Max Manus* through Feb. 3 at the Orinda Theatre. Go to www.lfef.org.
- 30 **Orinda Association Award Dinner** honors its Volunteer of the Year and presents the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award, Orinda Country Club, 6 p.m. Call 254-0800.

AT THE LIBRARY

- All events are free unless otherwise specified. Please note the library will be closed Jan. 1, 2 and 17.
- 4 **Toddler Lapsit**, stories, songs and fingerplays for 1- to 3-year-olds and their caregivers, 10 to 10:30 a.m. and 10:30 to 10:55 a.m. Also Jan. 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25 and 26. Attendance limited to once per week.  
**Peek-A-Boo Time** with songs, stories, rhymes and rhythm for newborns through 1-year-olds and their caregivers only, 11:30 to 11:55 a.m. Also Jan. 11, 18, 19, 25 and 26.  
**Origami**, learn to fold animals and boxes. For 7-year-olds and older, Library Tutoring Room, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Also Jan. 11, 18 and 25.
  - 9 **Computer Help**, a docent will provide one-on-one help for those new to computers, 1 to 3 p.m. Call 254-2184 to make an appointment. Also Jan. 16, 23 and 30.
  - 15 **Saturday Morning Live**, storytime for 3-year-olds and older and their caregivers, Picture Book Area, 11 to 11:30 a.m. Also Jan. 22 and 29.
  - 19 **Berkeley Repertory Theatre** docent discusses *The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs* and *The Last Cargo Cult*, two provocative new monologues that examine obsession with commerce, Fireside Room, 7 p.m.
  - 24 **Tell It: Tales for Young Children**, a storyteller weaves stories about wolves for children in preschool through first grade, Tutoring Room, 11 to 11:30 a.m.
  - 27 **Contra Costa Tale Spinners** present storytelling for adults. Enjoy the featured speaker, tell your own story or just enjoy listening, 7 to 8 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.
- 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.
- Montelindo Garden Club**. Third Friday, Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, 9 a.m., 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**. Go to www.orindahiking.org or call 253-1465 for schedule.
- 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 for location.
- Orinda/Tábor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation**. Fourth Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.
- Orinda Teen Advisory Council**. Second Wednesday of the month, 4 p.m., Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. For information, email orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com.
- Orinda Woman's Club**. Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon; call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881.

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.
- 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, www.orindaschools.org.
- Planning Commission**. Second and Fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.cityoforinda.org.

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

Orinda Chamber Welcomes Table 24



SALLY HOGARTY

The Chamber of Commerce officially welcomed **Table 24** to Theatre Square with a ribbon cutting ceremony. (L-R) Chamber members **A.J. Nisen**, Executive Director **Candy Kattenburg**, **Patti Camras**, **Sylvia Jorgensen**, President **Sue Breedlove**, City Councilmember **Sue Severson**, Table 24 co-owners **Michael and Lisa Karp**, **Paul Wildrick**, Table 24 co-owner **Victor Ivry**, and **Dina Zapanta**.

Professor Discusses Litigation Explosion in First Friday Forum

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

Are there too many lawsuits in the United States today? Do people turn too quickly to the law to get solutions to problems? Americans are accused of suing for just about anything but is this really the case?

Come to First Friday Forum, January 7, at 1:30 p.m. at Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC) to hear Laura Beth Nielsen, professor of Sociology and Director of Legal Studies at Northwestern University, discuss these and other issues relating to our legal system.

Titling her talk, *The Truth About the Litigation Explosion*, Nielsen says, "My research centers on the perceptions of justice in and about the civil litigation system. I'll be covering the overall litigation trends over the past 50 years, the question of whether we face a litigation 'explosion' in the United States when ordinary people think about using law versus some other solution for their problem and the different kinds of lawsuits, such as torts and contracts."

She will also talk about how law is portrayed in the media (did a woman really win millions of dollars for spilling coffee in her lap while driving?), popular conceptions of law and courts, along with her research about employment civil rights, which will serve as an avenue to address how well the courts work.

Nielsen has co-edited three books about rights in general and employment civil rights in particular. In addition, she is the author of numerous articles and the recipient of grants and awards from the National Science Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, and the MacArthur Foundation.

The daughter of LOPC members Judy and David Nielsen, Nielsen attended LOPC while growing up in Moraga. A graduate of Campolindo High School, she received her undergraduate degree from UC Santa Cruz, her law degree from UC Berkeley's Boalt Hall, and her Ph.D. degree from UC Berkeley.

For further information, call 925-283-8722 or go online to www.LOPC.org.

2011 First Friday Forum Series

January 7	Laura Beth Nielsen	<i>The Truth About the Litigation Explosion</i>
February 4	Jonathan Dimmock	<i>Can Music Change the World?</i>
March 4	Charles B Faulhaber	<i>The Bancroft Library at 150, The Past, The Present and the Future</i>
April 1	Bertram Lubin	<i>Stem Cell Research</i>
May 6	To be Announced	
June 3	John Kirk Boyd	<i>2048: Humanity's Agreement To Live Together</i>

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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 16

Dowell wanted to go to India, but never really thought she could do it. After extensive work to get referrals from special teachers, she was accepted into a one month long program at the Iyengar Institute in India. "P.K.S. Iyengar developed the yoga program I teach, and it is extremely difficult to get into the institute. It was a fantastic experience that I shared with other people who traveled from all parts of the world to India to study with him. I have also studied yoga in Greece with Angela Farmer and in Morocco with Janet McLeod."

Dowell shares her expertise in this age reversing exercise with locals during her twice-weekly class at the Orinda Community Center. Both an early morning and an early evening class accommodate busy schedules. Dowell has experience teaching yoga to disabled, deaf and blind individuals, and has also taught a class as a component of the alcohol recovery program at Alta Bates Hospital. She is recently retired from the Physical Education department at Mills College where she led four yoga classes on a weekly basis.

"My other passion in life is downhill skiing. We like to ski Squaw Valley and Northstar and take trips to Aspen and Vail, and this year, we are skiing Mammoth. If you want to continue to ski with a senior citizen pass, start practicing yoga now," encourages Dowell. A 40-year resident of Orinda, Dowell reared her three children here. Eldest son, David is a filmmaker, Duke is an electrical contractor, and daughter, Dana Dowell Windatt, is an actress and partner with her mother in the Green Buddha, a line of yoga and sport clothes based on an attitude of gratitude. "We have had amazing results practicing the principles of gratitude in our lives, and this is one way we can promote a lifestyle of gratitude," says Dowell.

For more information about yoga with Jeanne Dowell, call 254-0193 or email jeannedowell@yahoo.com

**Bonfire Pizzeria Opens in Theatre Square**

With pizza becoming just about as American as Apple Pie, Orindans benefit from the passion three friends share for this age-old favorite as they open Bonfire



VALERIE HOTZ

A construction worker reads **Bonfire Pizzeria**, the newest restaurant in Theatre Square.

**EFO Receives Check from Chamber**



DAVID DIERKS

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce presented the Educational Foundation of Orinda with a check for \$2,500 at the Hospice Tree Lighting in December. (L-R) Chamber members **Sylvia Jorgensen, Susan Martin, Dina Zapanta, Sandra McGonigle, Sue Breedlove, Patti Camras, Candy Kattenburg,** and **Keith Miller.**

Pizzeria in Theatre Square this month. Adam Sall, Justin Bain, and Ryan Mason yearned for an opportunity to create their own family style pizza parlor that is high on quality and excellent service, and they set about creating such an atmosphere at a convenient location a few months back.

Having a strong culinary background, Ryan Mason designed the menu and selected the recipes with a heavy reliance on community-supported agriculture (CSA). "Bonfire Pizzeria incorporates CSA's, suppliers and distributors of organic meats and vegetables, into our kitchen, and we feel it is reflected in our dishes," says Adam Sall. "Everything we serve is homemade, including our Bleu Cheese and Ranch Style salad dressings. Our pizza starts with a really, really good crust with high quality toppings. We keep the menu simple and ensure high quality," adds Sall.

Justin Bain is the manager of Bonfire Pizzeria, overseeing the dining room, as well as the take-out, delivery and catering components of the restaurant. "Being here in Theatre Square at the Crossroads is great. We enjoy the casual atmosphere and easy access for our guests," says Bain. "We are looking forward to being an active member of the community in several ways, including sponsoring youth sports, joining the Orinda Chamber of Commerce and hosting a fundraising evening once a month for local schools," he adds.

The trio developed the concept for Bonfire Pizzeria as a relaxed gathering spot where families with children of all ages can feel comfortable. It is a sports friendly environment that includes a television for viewing games. Beer and wine offerings will feature local micro brews.

Adam Sall is married to Anna and the couple has a two and a half year old daughter, Mika. Anna Sall is a nurse practitioner and very involved in the Lamornorinda Mothers Club. Ryan Mason and his wife, Meg, have two young children, Jack and Sophia. "I am thinking of getting a dog," laughs Justin Bain.

All three partners enjoy cycling in their spare time and, of course, eating pizza.

[SEE BUZZ 2 page 14]

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BUSINESS BUZZ

## Business Buzz Putting a Personal Face on Local Business

Valerie Hotz



### Dianna Condon Cuisine

If you attended last fall's 25th Anniversary celebration of the incorporation of the City of Orinda, then you have experienced the talents of Dianna Condon. A local caterer who is in big demand these days, Condon taught cooking for eight years at Viking Home Chef in Walnut Creek and was co-owner of another catering company, Savory Affairs, before establishing Dianna Condon Cuisine. She has managed the Stingray Café at Orinda Park Pool during

swim season for the past two years and also teaches cooking at the Del Rey School Dolphin Club program.

A wide array of dining options is available from the 15-page Dianna Condon Cuisine menu. Main menu offerings include chicken, beef, pork, seafood, lamb and vegetarian items, with old time favorites being the enchilada casserole, turkey sausage lasagna, and vegetable lasagna. An excellent selection of salads, soups and desserts is available. "The lasagna offerings are favorites for sports team events, especially the enchilada casserole and mini burritos,"



VALERIE HOTZ

Dianna Condon's many accomplishments include establishing a popular catering company.

says Condon. An extensive Mexican menu is available. For the complete menu, please visit the website at [www.diannacondon-cuisine.com](http://www.diannacondon-cuisine.com)

Every dish is prepared at the Orinda Park Pool commercial kitchen, which was

remodeled five years ago, and has been inspected and approved by the Contra Costa County Health Department. "I have taught cooking for so long that people will call me with a special recipe they want prepared for dinner for 12. I have an art background and these kinds of assignments are really like art in that I am creating something new for people to enjoy," says Condon. Trevor Rose, who is known in his role as coach of the women's water polo team at Miramonte High School, serves as sous chef.

Condon moved to Orinda in 1991 and has been a member of Orinda Park Pool since her children were toddlers. Daughters Emily and Natalie are currently students at Miramonte High School. Prior to establishing her business, Condon enjoyed a career in sales and marketing for the airline industry and traveled extensively. "I was fortunate to be able to travel the world and everywhere I went I took photographs of food. While doing this, I realized I craved working with my hands so I enrolled at the Academy of Fashion, taking night classes and working full-time during the day." She also took some time away from full-time work to rear her family.

These days Condon is working far more than full time in her catering business. She prepares meals for the Living Lean program, which she delivers to the Living Lean shop located in Theatre Square. Squeezed into her busy schedule is a Bar Method class she teaches in Walnut Creek. "I like to work out five to six days a week and by chance a friend told me about the Bar Method, which combines pilates, yoga and ballet. I love it. It feels a lot like synchronized swimming, but on land," smiles Condon. When she does get a free moment, Condon enjoys going to restaurants and spending time with family and friends.

For more information and to view menu offerings, visit the website at [www.diannacondoncuisine.com](http://www.diannacondoncuisine.com) or email her at [info@diannacondoncuisine.com](mailto:info@diannacondoncuisine.com).



VALERIE HOTZ

Jeanne Dowell believes yoga helps keep her young.

### Yoga With the Inspiring Jeanne Dowell

It was in grammar school when Jeanne Dowell read a book about yoga and learned that if she practiced this form of exercise, she would age well indeed. The way she tells it, she recalls her mother being worried about growing older and in the 4th grade Dowell became conscious of the connection between yoga and preventative health. "Growing up in the Midwest, I was intrigued with Indian culture and particularly Mahatma Gandhi. I read about people being able to stand on their heads and I wanted to do that," smiles Dowell, who has been teaching Iyengar yoga at the Orinda Community Center since it opened.

When Dowell moved to California 40 years ago, she took her first yoga class and instantly became a junkie. "I could not get enough of it. I was taking classes four days a week and found that the age reversing benefits are real. From that day on I was hooked. Practicing yoga regularly keeps a person healthy. There is also a crossover effect, and I believe it improves performance in other sports such as swimming," says Dowell with conviction.

Ever since she was a young child, [SEE BUZZ page 15]



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