

THE ORINDA NEWS

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First Series of Downtown Workshops Complete

By DAVID BEAL
Contributing Writer

Controversy is stirring around proposed changes to Orinda's downtown. Two public workshops at the Orinda Community Church on October 18 and December 9 provided forums for discussion about the downtown's commercial, residential and architectural future.

Over 200 people attended the October workshop, and around 150 attended the December workshop. The City of Orinda hired MIG, a planning and communication services company, to facilitate the events and synthesize public comments. The city is also planning smaller neighborhood workshops for the future.

For the first workshop, MIG facilitator Christopher Beynon led an open conversation about the different assets and challenges facing the downtown area. For the second workshop, city leaders gave background on planning processes, timelines, and documents. Attendees then separated into five groups to talk about key areas of agreement and disagreement.

At the crux of the debate are two sets of proposals to revitalize downtown Orinda, one from a city-appointed planning task force and one from an independent group of Orinda citizens. Although the proposals coincide, the city is not officially reviewing the independent proposal.

In October 2007, the City Council established the Planning Process Review Task Force (PPRTF), a 10-member committee of residents, planners, developers, property owners and city leaders. The PPRTF pro-

[SEE DOWNTOWN page 14]

Tribute to Glorietta Teacher



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The untimely death of **Sue Johnson** left many in shock. See story on page 9.



RENDERING BY STEVEN KUBITSCHKEK

Boutique Assisted Living Facility Planned for Orinda

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

A Craftsman-style, 45 unit, assisted living facility could be available for occupancy by March of 2013 if all goes according to plan says Agemark's Richard Westin. The 40-year Orinda resident is currently working with the City of Orinda to build the facility on a 1.1-acre lot situated between Wilder Road and the eastbound Highway 24 onramp.

"This will be the queen of the fleet," says Westin, referring to Agemark's 13 other properties. "Because I live in Orinda, I am sensitive to the environment and local residents. This facility will be upscale, gorgeous, fulfill the needs of the elderly, and be what their adult children would really want. I've always wanted to bring something like this to Orinda. It won't be outrageously posh but rather warm and welcoming."

Agemark's nearest neighbor, Wilder residential development, which is currently under construction, objects to the planned facility. "We have serious concerns with the size, massing and design of the proposed Agemark facility," says Wilder spokesperson Jason Keadjian. "We believe the size of the proposed facility – nearly 40,000-square feet on a small 1.1 acre parcel – is disproportionately large, and entirely out of context and inappropriate for the location." Keadjian further noted that his company doesn't feel the new project is compatible with the scenic

Highway 24 corridor, the development and design standards for the Wilder community, or the adjacent City-owned public playfield and trail uses. "We believe that the project is inconsistent with the City's General Plan and zoning code and would cause significant aesthetic impacts, material safety issues, and local traffic and circulation problems," Keadjian adds.

Westin feels the assisted living complex, called Astoria, will be an asset for Wilder.

"It will fit in with their architecture and will be very convenient to their residents who may have aging parents that they want close by," he says. "It's also wonderful for parents and children utilizing the sports fields at Wilder. They can stop by and see grandma or grandpa on their way to a game or the grandparents can go to the games."

To facilitate concerns, Agemark has agreed to hire a company to prepare an

[SEE AGEMARK page 6]

Local Author Wins National Book Award



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ginger Wadsworth, shown above with **Willa** (L) and **Scout**, was recently named a National Outdoor Book winner for her children's book *Camping With the President*, which chronicles the famous meeting of John Muir and President Teddy Roosevelt in Yosemite. Wadsworth is currently working on a new book about the first Girl Scout, Juliette Gordon Low, due out in mid-November.

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VISUAL ARTS

February Gallery Exhibit Features Four Local Artists

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

To shake off the winter fog and wet, stop by and view the splendid art presented in February's Orinda Library Gallery exhibit of four local artists. Photographs from the late Ron Brown, who was an inveterate hiker, will transport you to the California environs he so dearly loved. Judith Feins' pastels and oils capture movement and light. Jill Landau is hooked on painting glass and reflected light in rich deep oils while Debby Koonce delights in plein air painting. The artists reception will be held Sunday, February 6, from 3 to 5 p.m.

In 2010, Ron Brown was posthumously honored by the California Trails and Greenways Conference with a lifetime achievement award. Brown looked closely at Bay Area terrains, seeing familiar old scenes through new "lenses." His appreciation of California history was as deep as his love for the land, which shines forth in each



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Judith Feins' "Still life with Green Glass" will be in February exhibit.

photo. His friends insisted that his work be shared with our community, and his wife Joan provided his precious photographs

including *Fallen Leaf Lake* (8" x 12") and *Whitney Portal* (12" x 18").

Judith Feins has painted and made pastel drawings since the age of six. She was the principal illustrator for the Coastal Access Guide produced by the California Coastal Commission and also created illustrations for the Archeological Department of the University of California at Berkeley. Feins is drawn to the color and texture of paintings and pastels and portraying how the quality of light makes things glow. Works include *Canoe, Elwell Lodge* (9" x 12") pastel, *Still Life with Green Glass* (11" x 14"), oil and *Still Life with Eaten Orange* (11" x 14"), oil. Go to www.judithfeins.com to view more of her work.

Jill Landau's current theme in her 30 year career as a painter is portraying light on glass and reflected light, which fascinates her. Works such as *A Pleasant Table* (12" x 16"), *Yellow Glass Bottle and Apricots* (11" x 14") and *Glass Jar and Lemons* (11" x 14"), all done in rich oils, exemplify this theme. Landau believes, "Art can reflect and uplift our community, so it is of great importance to the spirit, quality and vitality of any community." She won 2nd Place at the Tokyo International Print Triennial for

High School Visual Arts Competition



High school students who live or attend school in Lamorinda are invited to join the Orinda Arts Council's visual arts competition. Registration begins February 1 with artwork due by February 28. Go to www.orindaartscouncil.org for information. **Macy Miller** (above), then a senior at Miramonte, won first place last year for her work entitled "Crystallized."

her etching, *Take Flight*.

Debby Koonce enjoys plein air painting, as well as working in her Moraga studio. Her works are peppered with inspiration from architecture, alleyways and garden settings, and she excels at heightening realism with imagination. Koonce created four murals at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School and was honored to be a 2008 White House Christmas ornament artist. Works include *The Dingle Peninsula* (30" x 40"), acrylic and *Lafayette Reservoir* (15" x 30") acrylic. Visit Koonce's body of work at www.lafayettegallery.net.

Visit the 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.

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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President
Share Your Ride



Mark Roberts

As I've stated before in this column, I believe Orinda is one of the most family-friendly communities imaginable. Spacious homes on large lots with lots of privacy, terrific schools, and an abundance of extra-curricular activities all contribute to a great growing-up experience for the children and youth of our community. It's one of the many positive characteristics that attracted my wife and me to Orinda years ago, and I wouldn't change it for the world.

One possible downside: the need for parents or other adults to transport their kids from home to school and the sites of all these activities. Our hilly topography and narrow roads, most without sidewalks, make walking or biking a difficult, if not downright risky, option for many youngsters. Driving them is often the only choice. Parents just get in the habit of adding in time for transportation for most activities and that's the way it is. It becomes second nature to get in the car and drive where you need to go to do what you (or your kids) need to do.

But what happens, many years later when the kids have moved away – and, with any luck, not had to move back as adults – you find it difficult to drive or, even worse, are told that you no longer can drive?

Fortunately, here in Orinda, you can call Seniors Around Town (SAT). This program, which is entering its fifth year, matches volunteer drivers with Orinda seniors who need a ride to a doctor's appointment, to shop or for many other reasons. It helps our seniors stay in the Orinda homes they love and stay connected with their community that they've been a part of, in many cases, for decades. This is a real "win-win" situation if ever there was one.

I want to thank all the volunteer drivers who make this program possible. They are among the most thoughtful, caring and generous Orindans I know. I'm especially grateful to Eartha Newsong, the Seniors Around Town coordinator, and to the folks who assist her in running the program to match riders with drivers.

My special thanks go to Chip Herman, the founder and organizer *extraordinaire* of Orinda's Classic Car Show, and to Allen Pennebaker and John Vanek of Orinda Motors for their tremendous financial support of Seniors Around Town for the past four

years. While the City of Orinda obtained a grant that launched the program, the proceeds from the car show have provided SAT with a continuing source of funds that will keep the program going – and our seniors moving – for years to come.

To learn more about Seniors Around Town, or to become a driver or schedule a ride, please call Eartha Newsong at 925-402-4506.

Back to the younger set. Most of us are aware of the traffic congestion on Moraga Way on weekday mornings during the school year. High school students are heading to Miramonte at the extreme south end of town at the same time that younger students are heading to Del Rey School. (Thank goodness classes at nearby Orinda Intermediate School start 45 minutes later.) All the cars heading to these schools, combined with drivers from south Orinda and Moraga heading the other way toward Highway 24, make Moraga Way a slow-moving obstacle course for drivers and a real challenge for kids on foot or bikes.

I'm hoping that the Orinda Union School District will consider moving the start time at Del Rey back 15 minutes to reduce the congestion caused by so many people head-

ing in the same direction at the same time. I know there are many "moving parts" to take into account before such a change could be made, but I'm pretty sure the results would be beneficial.

In addition to that proposed change, I'm hoping that as many parent and Miramonte student drivers as possible are sharing their rides. Four students going to school in the same vehicle means three fewer cars on the road than if all went separately. Ridesharing can save gas, money and often frustration and time since fewer vehicles occupying space on Moraga Way should allow traffic to flow faster. I can't make any guarantees but the physics seem sound to me.

With both seniors and students sharing their rides, Orinda residents can stay connected, get where they need to go and have a little more fun in the process.

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In March, we will publish our annual membership list in *The Orinda News*. Be sure your name is among your friends and neighbors who help make Orinda such a wonderful place to live, learn, work and play.

Also in March, we will begin our monthly profile of one of our members right here in the newspaper. Learn more about the individuals, who through their tax-deductible donation, help the Orinda Association provide such events and services as:

- The Fourth of July Parade and Celebration**
- Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Awards**
- Community Forums**
- Seniors Around Town Ride Share Program**
- Volunteer Center, connecting organizations with people**
- The Orinda News*

Over 1,000 Orinda households are already members of the OA. Join them and enjoy the satisfaction of participating in making Orinda even better! Visit our office on the plaza level of the library or join online at www.orindaassociation.org.

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Happy Valentine's Day

Letters to the Editor

Quiet Orinda Should Focus on Noise Issue

I admit I was slightly amused by J. Segalls' letter to the editor of January. It was kind of cute, however it was nonsense. Using invented history does not make any point.

It appears "quiet orinda" has no understanding of the scientific method. It is intuitively obvious that particulate matter put in the air by leaf blowers is insignificant compared to other sources. Therefore, if someone wishes to ban everyone's use of leaf blowers, they must prove that the particulate matter in the air is: a) Harmful and b) put there by leaf blowers; as opposed to the many other (and stronger) forces. They have made no attempt to do either.

Mr Segalls' letter clearly demonstrates that the "quiet orinda" arguments that leaf blowers are dangerous are phony. They were contrived simply because "quiet orinda" people do not like the noise.

Too many people of the left side of things can only think of banning things they do not like. They do not trust other people, believing they should be heavily controlled by government. They should understand the people of Orinda are not going to accept a leaf blower ban.

Perhaps they should continue their organization based on the noise issue. They might have members make a pledge not to use leaf blowers, voluntarily. They could put bumper stickers on their cars if they wanted. This could become a volunteer movement.

– Henry R. Pinney

Orinda Taxpayers Must Stop Subsidizing Moraga

Orinda taxpayers should not pay more for Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) fire engine service than Moraga taxpayers. However, according to the Contra Costa County Controller's Office, the 2010 Ad Valorem Tax revenue from the City of Orinda taxpayers to MOFD was \$10.9 million but only \$5.8 million from Moraga.

This huge financial inequity in MOFD has always existed because the City of Orinda's property tax rate for MOFD is 22.6 percent whereas Moraga's rate is only 19 percent. In addition, the City of Orinda's annual property tax assessment is now \$1.7 billion more than Moraga's. It makes no financial sense for Orinda to have a fire district with Moraga, which has a lower fire tax rate and lower property tax assessment.

Orinda has 11 fire fighter positions and Moraga has eight which means Orinda is paying \$257,647 more per fire fighter position including overhead than Moraga pays per position including overhead. Therefore, Orinda taxpayers pay approximately \$2.8

million more annually to MOFD than Moraga for service.

I believe the idea of "economy of scale" only works for Moraga, the city being subsidized. Since 2002, I have been recommending Orinda detach from MOFD and form an all Orinda Fire District. This would have saved approximately \$20 million, and many crumbling residential roads in Orinda would now be safe. If the City Council keeps ignoring this MOFD taxpayer inequity for the next 10 years, another \$20 million will be unnecessarily wasted.

In the interest of fiscal discipline and the preservation of the taxpayers' dollars, the Orinda City Council should form an Orinda only citizen's committee to investigate Orinda's revenue to MOFD compared to Moraga's contribution.

Orinda taxpayers should not approve any tax measures until Orinda stops subsidizing another community. The Orinda City Council must bring those tax dollars home for residential roads and water pipes.

– Janet Maiorana

For or Against Ban?

I trust readers will check out the statements made by one J. Segall on the leaf blower controversy where he appears to have let his imagination run wild. But more seriously, he takes the position that if particulate matter, including dog droppings, are sprayed into the air to the detriment of neighbors, well, that's just too bad. And if Severson said that objectors could simply invest in triple-pane windows and remain indoors, that is the most arrogant and stupid comment I have heard in a long time. Reminds one of the "Let them eat cake" statement attributed to Marie Antoinette (but later discounted by historians).

Strangely, your article on City Council deliberations quotes a Jerry Segall as saying that the machines... "propel into the air.... dirt and dust; allergens, mold and fungi, dry fecal matter, pesticides.....most of which we cannot see but remain suspended in the air for days." Is he not making a case for the ban, instead of against it?

– T. Flagg

Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Architectural Presentation

At the 12/7/2010 City Council meeting, Planning Director Ersu introduced the Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Architecture, and he recognized the Councilmembers and Planning Commissioners involved in the program. He then announced each of the award winning projects, and Mayor McCormick presented each of the owners with a certificate recognizing their projects:

Remodel: 51 Orchard Road, Neal Rose, Homeowner.

What a wondrous selection. I am particularly impressed with the three years it took for completion along with about two years of stone sawing which coated my property



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with dust as well as numerous violations of the construction noise ordinance. In my view, the most notable architectural feature is the bright incandescent light bulb without any shading in the backyard.

Perhaps next year Mr. Rose can be selected for his property at 47 Orchard Road where it now seems that he has a dog kennel located in an outbuilding with at least one dog barking all night as well as continuing construction noise violations on that property.

– C. Burke Gordon

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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 April issue is February 20, 2011.

CAR TIME

CAR TIME

Avoid The Chaos

by JOHN VANEK



There is always some preparation required before taking a holiday road trip. We secure our lodging and rent skis. We make sure that our neighbor will take in the newspaper. Then we think about the noisy brakes on the SUV. I have recently noticed a trend in which some motorists will wait until the last minute to tend to their vehicle's needs before taking a road trip. Many drivers had to have last minute brake and cooling system repairs right before the holiday this season here at Orinda Motors. During these repairs, it was often noticed that the tires and filters also need attention. It is good to know that people can recognize when there is something wrong with their vehicle and bring it in before actually hitting the road. However, the last minute aspect puts stress on everyone involved. The service provider must go into overdrive to get the car done in a rush. Sometimes, you have to delay your departure because the vehicle needs several hours worth of work. Keep in mind, many problems can be noticed during a routine maintenance inspection. Regularly scheduled maintenance can cut down on the chaos. It is never a good idea to wait to the day before leaving to bring the car in.

Due to my advanced age, I must get a physical before going to Boy Scout camp every summer. I expect the doctor to tell me if there is anything to be concerned about. Early detection works with cars as well as people. All of your fluids need to be checked and topped off with special attention to your antifreeze. The condition of the battery is also crucial when heading to

extreme climates. An under car inspection will detect possible leaks that could affect reliability. There is special "anti-freeze" to add to the windshield washer system so your fluid doesn't freeze. The condition of your tires is also crucial in severe weather.

It comes down to making your vehicle's maintenance a priority. Check your maintenance history a week or two before your trip and establish what kind of service your vehicle may be due for. Give yourself and your service provider plenty of time to check out your vehicle and perform required repairs. You may not consider your vehicle's health as important as your family's health, but it is important. Because your loved ones ride in that vehicle, its reliability is crucial.

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POLICE BLOTTER

◆ **AGEMARK** from page 1

Environmental Impact Review (EIR) for the project. At the January 4 City Council meeting, the council authorized the city manager to execute a contract on behalf of the city with Urban Planning Partners, Inc. to prepare the EIR. Agemark will cover the costs.

Agemark has a total of 13 assisted living facilities to date primarily in the mid-west. Their other California facility is in Tracy. The company divides its facilities into memory care only (CountryHouse), assisted living (Kensington), and a combination of the two (Astoria). The company has been in existence since 1987.

According to Westin, the Astoria at Wilder would feature 34 assisted living units and 15 memory care units. "Since the building will be built on a slope, each story will have its own entrance thus separating the assisted living and memory care units," Westin explains. "This parcel is really perfect for us. It was already zoned for something like this, and we'll have transportation for our residents. We want them to be a part of Orinda – to go to Concerts-in-the-Park, be part of Orinda in Action, attend the theater and go to local restaurants."

An estimated timeline by the Orinda Planning Department calls for a public meeting on the project in March followed by the draft EIR in early April. The pub-

lished EIR for public review is estimated for June 1 with a 45- day comment period followed by a public hearing. "We hope to start construction by April 2012 and open in March of 2013," says Westin. "To this day, I am just infatuated with what I do. I love making a difference in people's lives. My son, Forrest, is now my partner and he has the same dedication to quality service as I do. One of our company mantras is whenever we say goodnight to one of our residents, we fully understand that it might be good-bye. So we try to make every day a special day. That kind of passion is displayed in whatever we do – giving a bath, reading to residents, or preparing meals. It's a very rewarding business."

For more information on Agemark, go to www.agemark.com. For more information on the status of the Astoria project at Wilder, go to www.cityoforinda.org.

Orinda Woman's Club Accepting Applicants for Grant Money

Organizations must serve women and children in need in Alameda and/or Contra Costa County and have an annual income of \$750,000 or less. Request applications at Orinda Woman's Club, P.O. Box 533, Orinda, CA 94563 or at adeline@mcclatchie.com. Applications must be received by March 1 at 7 p.m.



POLICE BLOTTER

December 2010

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 99 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Burglary – Commercial: 1 incident was reported on Moraga Way.

Burglary – Residential: 1 incident was reported on La Espiral.

Petty Theft – From Vehicle: 1 incident was reported on Via Floreado.

Stolen Vehicle: 3 incidents were reported on Camino Encinas, Orinda Way and Manzanita Dr.

Recovered Stolen Vehicle: 3 stolen vehicles were recovered on Bryant Way/Vashell Way, Davis Rd. and Brookwood Rd.

Arrests

Driving Under the Influence – MISD: 2 arrests were made on Camino Sobrante/Orinda Way and Moraga Way/Valley View Dr.

Driving Under the Influence –

MISD < .08: 2 arrests were made on El Camino Moraga and Hwy. 24 WB at on ramp.

Driving Under the Influence – MISD > .08: 1 arrest was made on Camino Pablo.

Possession of Counterfeit Bills: 1 arrest was made on Moraga Way.

Possession of Dangerous Drugs: 1 arrest was made on Berkeley Ave.

Possession of Marijuana in a Vehicle: 1 arrest was made on Camino Pablo/Santa Maria Way.

Drunk in Public: 2 arrests were made on Moraga Way and Moraga Way at Orchard Rd.

Stolen Vehicle: 1 arrest was made on Orinda Way

Warrant Arrest: 3 arrests were made on Camino Pablo/Santa Maria Way, Rheem Bl. and Camino Pablo.

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving, Orinda Police Department

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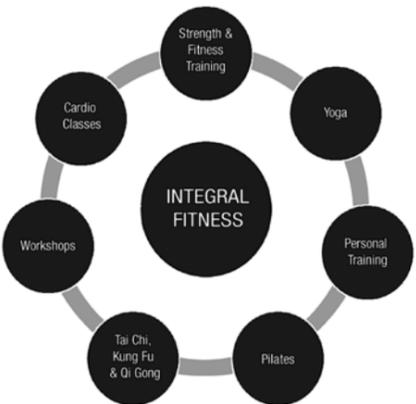
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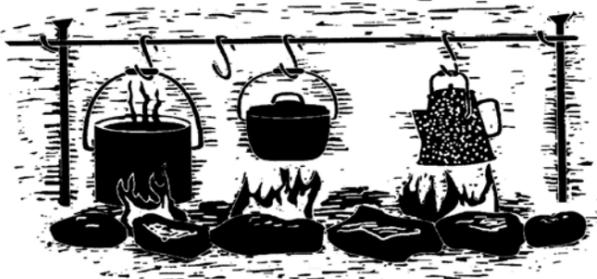


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SCOUTING

New Eagle Scouts Join Troop 237's Eagle Family

Four Miramonte juniors – Kelly McGonigle, John Palmer, Kyle Weikert and Kevin Yee – were honored at an Eagle Court of Honor on Sunday, January 9, 2011. Scoutmaster Eric Jorgensen presented the Eagle awards, the highest rank in scouting.

Each Scout must complete an approved project before receiving the Eagle Scout award. Kelly Joseph McGonigle conducted a backpack drive to benefit the Global Health Access Program based in Berkeley. John Kingsland Palmer dismantled and rebuilt two baseball backstops at Del Rey Elementary School in Orinda. Kyle Robert Weikert designed, built and installed a large redwood shade arbor at Sleepy Hollow Elementary School in Orinda and dedicated it to a long-time teacher there, Kay Aaker. Kevin Mark Yee designed and built a table and bench benefiting the City of Orinda and the Christian Science Church.

Each Eagle candidate must earn a minimum of 21 merit badges. They must also demonstrate leadership, outdoor skills,



New Eagle Scouts (L-R) Kyle Weikert, John Palmer, Kevin Yee, and Kelly McGonigle.

Scout spirit plus successfully complete a service project with a minimum of 100 volunteer hours.

Glorietta's Second Grade Brownie Troop



Brownie Troop #30238 got into the holiday spirit by caroling at the Orinda Convalescent Hospital.

Orinda Girl Scouts Earn Silver Awards



All 12 members of Orinda Girl Scout Troop 31561 were recently presented with Girl Scouting's second highest honor, the Silver Award. The Miramonte High School sophomores celebrating this outstanding achievement were (front row) **Kendall Kovalik, Karmi Chan, Mary Kate Engstrom, Lauren Dougherty, Julia Govan, Alaina Hyde** (back row) **Kendal Taylor, Maddy Bush, Laurie Simon, Taylor Nielsen, Sydney Livingston and Megan Howard** (not pictured). Each of the girls planned, organized and completed large scale service projects benefiting the performing arts programs at Orinda Intermediate School and Miramonte High School, as well as Oakland Children's Hospital patients and their families.

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WAY TO GROW

Way to Grow

Artificial Sod - Go Green, Stay Green & Save Green

by Steve & Cathy Lambert



In June 2009, we wrote an article “Honey, I shrunk the Lawn” on the growing trend of shrinking lawns in local landscapes. One of the alternatives we included in that article was a paragraph about artificial turf. Since then, this market has taken off.

Although water conservation is a big factor, it’s by no means the only efficiency afforded by artificial grass. Lawn care, fertilizing, pesticides and mowing accounts for two percent of overall fossil fuel consumption. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also attributes lawn care activities for as much as five percent of hazardous air and water pollution.

However, it appears that the real reason people are installing synthetic sod is so

they can spend less time maintaining and more time enjoying a lawn that looks good year-round.

Today’s manufactured grass, when properly installed, looks incredibly real and feels quite natural underfoot too.

Another misconception is that artificial lawns are unsafe. Today’s synthetic materials, like polyolefin blades and soy based backing, are built to be safe and require little or no infill. These products have multiple layers of blade height, some as tall as 1.5 inches and others short and curly to help hold up the taller blades.

Another common misconception is that these man-made lawns are not pet friendly. Dogs and other pets love rolling around



STEVE LAMBERT

Today’s artificial turf is not your grandmother’s bright green patio cover. A wide variety of “grasses” are available for every need.

on synthetic lawns, and their owners love that cleaning up after them has never been easier.

Of course, as with most products there are a few draw backs. The number one problem we’ve experienced is that synthetic sod can get too hot. This only occurs on very hot days, which are few and far between here in Orinda and can be easily solved by watering the sod down. The other complaint is that the surface is much harder than natural sod. This is because most artificial turf is installed on well-compacted gravel. There are now foam padding underlays, which are a great option for use under play structures.

If you decide to go artificial, you’ll find the following installation information to be very valuable.

1. Excavation: First excavate the area to a depth of 4-to 6-inches. After excavation, the soil must be compacted for even drainage and to ensure the turf stays flat, tight and has a natural lay. We often place weed block barrier on top the bare soil to act as a gopher barrier. We don’t recommended using chicken wire or aviary wire because it will break down after a few years.

2. Bender Board Installation: How the trim is installed makes the difference between a fake, cheap looking lawn and one that looks natural. The best bender board is made entirely from recycled products. It should measure 3½ by 1½. The best method is to install the plastic bender board around the entire perimeter. This provides a secure edge for the installers to staple the grass to. Galvanized staples should be placed at three-inch intervals. We like to take this process one step further and wrap the turf around the bender board to achieve clean, crisp curves without a highlighted (bender board) edge.

Some companies only install bender board where there are no existing concrete borders, against soft landscape areas that border planters, flower beds, etc. This may result in ripples in your turf which become trip hazards. Leaving edges with no bender board can also allow a space for critters to burrow under the sod.

3. Substrate Installation: Crushed gravel

will be brought in to a depth of 4 inches then raked out and compacted to 95 percent compaction. This step provides excellent drainage for your lawn. There should be a slight crown in the middle, which insures proper water run-off. We find it best to add two inches, or more, of decomposed granite on top of the gravel. Don’t allow the use of sand for the final layer as it can create a divot in your turf during the nailing process.

4. The Turf: Artificial lawns are basically large carpets. In fact, there are only seven manufacturers of synthetic lawns in the United States and six of them are located in Dalton, Georgia, which is the “carpet capital” of the US.

Synthetic grass comes in 15-foot rolls and has a variety of backings. The best backing options are those made from Polyolefin or a soy based material. Polyolefin is completely permeable throughout, while soy based products have holes punched into them for drainage. The one advantage of the Polyolefin backing is that it functions well as a weed barrier while the hole-punched soy varieties can allow weed growth.

5. Artificial Lawn Installation: Artificial lawn is installed much like carpet and using some of the same tools. The perimeter is stapled in place with a pneumatic staple gun and galvanized staples. The area in the middle, known as the field, will be anchored in place with six inch, un-galvanized foundation nails placed at one foot intervals. Un-galvanized nails are used for this process because the rust that ultimately forms on the nails actually binds better with the gravel.

6. Blooming: Once your lawn is in place, the installers will use power brooms to “bloom” the fibers so they stand up straight. If you purchased a no-fill product, this is the final step. If not, the installers will fill in between the blades with green sand and/or encapsulated nylon.

Once your lawn is installed, the only tools you’ll need to maintain it is a nylon rake, which the synthetic grass company should provide, and perhaps (dare I say it?) a leaf blower.

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GLORIETTA TEACHER

Honoring A Beloved Teacher

By BILL O'BRIAN
Staff Writer

In the tune "I Shall Be Released" by Bob Dylan, the lyrics begin: "They say everything can be replaced; they say every distance is not near. So I remember every face of every man who put me here. I see my light come shining, from the west unto the east. Any day now, any day now, I shall be released."

In December of 2010 when Glorietta Elementary School teacher Sue Johnson was released from this earthly life, she left a legacy of concern, love and respect for school children that overflows in the hearts of the many students, parents, teachers, administrators and friends who knew her and worked with her over the years. It is a rare gift when some people are considered "irreplaceable" or "one of a kind," those that break the mold when it comes to uniqueness or love or hard work. Sue Johnson was one of those singular people who remain in the minds of many people as the finest personification of friend and teacher.

Johnson not only remembered every face of every student, but she followed their activities and successes after they left her second and third grade classes. Joni Binder Shwartz recalls when her daughter, who had been a student of Johnson's, went on to participate in the annual Odyssey of the Mind academic competitions for elementary through high school students. She competed each year through the fifth grade, and Johnson attended the local and state competitions, sitting in the front row, to cheer on her students. Two years after being in Johnson's class, the team went to Michigan for a world competition, and "Sue gave each competitor from Glorietta a brand new, crisp five dollar bill, and told them Michigan was where she was from, and the state had the best ice cream in the world, and each child was to buy an ice cream cone or sundae," Shwartz adds.

Additionally, every student of Johnson's who graduated from Glorietta's fifth grade received a personal card of congratulations explaining how the student was unique, how she or he impacted the class and helped the teacher. Shwartz says, "She made every student and parent feel like the most important person to her and that they all had a special relationship with her."

Matt Moran, school board member and parent of two students who were in Johnson's class, says she was always ready to accept the split class of second and third graders together. Moran explains that "Teaching a split class is a challenge for teachers on many levels, but Sue would not only accept the challenge, she would relish it. That was Sue in a nutshell - looking for challenges and then exceeding expectations." Moran volunteered to teach two break-out groups for Johnson's class

(character education and math), and from his observations of her interacting with the students in the classroom he adds, "All I can tell you is that Sue was both engaged in the process and passionate about it. She loved teaching our children!"

Almost prophetically, Sue had a 45 minute phone conversation with Moran three days prior to her fatal surgery. He explains that they had a wonderful conversation on a wide variety of topics, and though he is a member of the school board, she was not shy about "illuminating me to her opinion of what is right and wrong relative to education locally, state-wide and nationally. Upon reflecting after her death, I realized that Sue was imparting to me information that was very important to her. She wanted to make sure that I knew how she saw the dynamics surrounding education. My point is this: Sue was a woman of courage. She did not shy away from any controversial subject. There were no glass houses for Sue."

Laura Millham, a mother of three children who were Johnson's students says, "She was just amazing, so devoted to the students and teachers, very organized and experienced. Every project she poured herself into, and she and the students were so involved." Millham says one project was the "Quilt" report whereby each student would follow a sequence of telling about a book read in class by creating a single piece of paper that would be glued to a larger butcher piece, so the report resembled a quilt. One quilt piece would give the title, another would describe the story; others were about the characters, the conflict, etc. until the whole report was told via one paper quilt patch at a time. When Millham's first student was assigned to Johnson's

[SEE JOHNSON page 11]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sue Johnson loved working with students and often supported their various activities after they left her class, even preparing a special graduation card for each former student when they graduated from Glorietta.



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Campolindo Orchestra Prepares For Beijing



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Campolindo Orchestra students **Adrienna Moore** (Orinda), **Annie Carlson**, and **Cheyenne Ziermann** raised money for the trip by gift wrapping at Barnes & Noble over the holidays.

The Campolindo Orchestra has been invited by the Chinese Ministry of Culture and the International Fine Arts Institute to perform in Beijing, China, during spring break 2011. Thanks to an overwhelming response to the orchestra's Rent-A-Student and other fundraiser activities, they are well on their way to affording the trip.

Tessa Cunha, the student who coordinates Rent-A-Student, says requests range from babysitting to help with electronics such as i-pods and computers as well as housework and gardening. "I also had requests for musicians to play at luncheons and even at a wedding," says Cunha.

Orinda resident and Campolindo orchestra student Adrienne Moore is very excited about the trip to Beijing. "I'm a senior at Campo, and this is an opportunity of a

lifetime for me," she says. Moore is on the students' fundraising committee, which raises money for student scholarships, instrument rentals on site, and other expenses. "We offered free gift wrapping at Barnes & Noble in Walnut Creek during the holidays. It was fun, and we must have made over \$1,000! Right now, we're selling tickets for a drawing to be held at our winter concert on February 24," says Moore.

The February 24 concert will also feature three-time Grammy nominee Jeremy Cohen and Barry Green with his Green Man Group as guest artists. They also will be performing with the students in Beijing. Tickets are still available. For more information about the orchestra's trip to China, the benefit concert, and upcoming events, go to the website www.campomusic.org.

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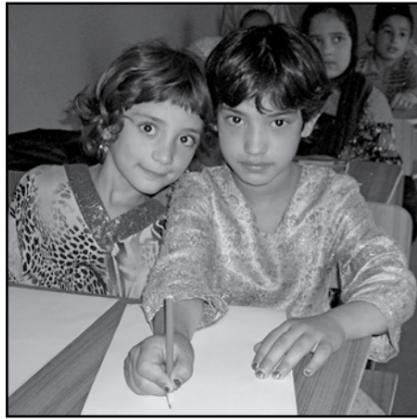
EMPOWERING WOMEN

Orinda Resident Uses Art to Empower Women

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Through "Traveling Postcards," Orinda resident Caroline Lovell has created an art-based initiative that empowers women and girls worldwide through creative action and global awareness. "Through the simple act of creating a handmade postcard, you can connect with a woman in Afghanistan, share your voice with the world, and become an agent of change in both her community and your own," Lovell says.

The group has partnered with Lafayette's Trust In Education to raise money to build an after school art program in a rural town outside of Kabul, Afghanistan. To that end, Lovell has planned a postcard making session on Saturday, February 5, from noon - 5 p.m. at the Fotovision Studios, 5515 Doyle



Young children in Afghanistan work on artwork to send to the United States.

Street in Emeryville. All art supplies, food and drinks will be provided. For more information, go to www.travelingpostcards.org.

◆ JOHNSON from page 9

2/3 split class, she was concerned that one teacher could successfully teach students on two different levels. One of her friends said, "Don't worry, you just won the lottery with the 2/3 split class."

Nancy English, a fellow Glorietta teacher, says, "We took trips to France and Italy. She was the perfect traveling companion. She always said we were old Girl Scouts who didn't need to stay in fancy places. We had a lot of laughs and good conversations. She was an excellent listener, a dear friend, and a passionate teacher. I will always treasure our times together."

Another Glorietta teacher, Emily Cashen, recalls her first teaching year when she ran into Johnson just minutes before class was starting. Johnson asked how she was doing. "When Sue learned of a lesson I was about to teach, she immediately suggested a wonderful picture book to spark my writers. I smiled and thanked her. But she stopped to ask if I had a copy. I did not. Without a pause, she pulled me into the school library,

darted straight for the back corner shelf where it sat upright, and handed it to me. The bell rang and with repetitive gratitude from me, we parted for the morning. That book she shared with me is read every year in my class with great joy. It is a beautiful story that makes me want to cry for the meaning. But it also signifies to me the caring friend I made that day."

For most of our lives, people come and people go; we have family, friends, acquaintances, colleagues, and most often others in the world doing their jobs with whom we lightly interact. Then there are those rare and unique people that on occasion "stand out larger" and "burn brighter" in the memories of families and friends. Though Dylan sings that everything can be replaced, most certainly people cannot be replaced. And also most assuredly, some individuals such as Sue Johnson seem to be so matchless in their dedication to people, in the sharing of their love and their assiduous work to improve the lives of others, that the memory of their lives becomes the "shining light" of which the poet sings.



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Lee and Grant

150 Years after the Civil War, a major new history exhibition assesses the conflict through the lives and careers of the two generals.

JAN 30 - MAR 20
HEARST ART GALLERY, SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE

Robert E. Lee
June 1863
Minnis and Cowell photo,
Richmond, VA

Sunday, January 30, 2 pm,
Soda Activity Center

"An Inside View of Grant's Campaign against Lee" by Carl Guarneri, Ph.D.

Living History Displays by the National Civil War Association [NCWA] - battlefield surgery, uniforms, cannon, cooking for the troops, sharpshooters.

Saturday, March 19, Re-enactment

NCWA and California Horse Artillery Society: fife and drum band, frontline medical care and equipment, uniforms, weapons, cannon firing, skirmishes, horse-drawn wagons.

U.S. Grant at his Headquarters tent, Cold Harbor, VA
June 1864
Mathew Brady photo,
Library of Congress

Exhibition free for K-12 graders; adults: \$4

Opening Day events free Through Sun, Mar 30

Hours: Wed - Sun, 11 am - 4:30 pm
hearstartgallery.org

This exhibition has been made possible through NEH on the Road, a special initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities. It is brought to you by Mid-America Arts Alliance. Lee and Grant was organized by the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, Virginia.

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Check Out that Website

By EVAN CORSTORPHINE
Portable CIO

One of the reasons people work with Portable CIO is that we research and answer questions as part of our commitment to customer service. Recently a firm contacted us after having been infected with malware. The malware looked very legitimate. However, it throws warnings on your screen that announce terrible things about your computer that aren't true. The object is to scare you into buying their "cure," which is a hoax. Once you bite, they steal your credit card info, and leave you with a broken computer and the hassle of cancelling cards, etc. to protect yourself.

Everyone wants to know how they get infected with this junk. One way we've seen this transmitted is via "drive-by" downloads on websites. A way to prevent yourself from being infected is to watch what sites

you visit. Even simple misspellings of a website's address can throw you onto a similarly-named but completely illicit site. Clever programmers have figured out how to attach code to your computer's browser or operating system simply by visiting their site. As a result, many antivirus and anti-malware firms now provide website screening. As soon as you try to go to a page, the antivirus program reads the website's code and determines if it's okay to give you access.

Back to our customer. They wrote: "We'd like to download a form from www.uslegalforms.com. The site looks very official, but I know that's no guarantee. What's your recommendation on determining which sites are safe for downloads?"

One of our consultants replied, "You are correct. There is no guarantee, but here are a few things that you can look for:"

- Make sure that the URL matches (or has some pertinence) to the actual website. In this case, www.uslegalforms.com, there is a perfect match.

- Another trick is to perform a WHOIS lookup on a site. Go to (<http://www.networksolutions.com/whois/index.jsp>), type in the domain name, and click search. In this case, typing in "uslegalforms.com" tells us that the site is registered by a company in Jackson, MS, and that the administrative contact is a Frank Edens at the same company. This looks good. While this information can sometimes be listed as "private," it is worth checking to make sure the website isn't listed to some completely different entity in a foreign country.

- If your AVG antivirus and Malwarebytes aren't alerting you about the site, it doesn't mean that it's safe, but it does mean it's passed a fairly good test. Try opening the website in the Google Chrome web browser, and see if it alerts you to anything about the website. If all three of these products clear you for accessing the site, it's a good sign.

- Lastly, there are a number of design elements to look for. Here is a link that describes many of the things you can and should look for and tell-tale clues as to whether a site is legitimate (http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/363241/how_to_tell_if_a_website_is_legitimate.html).

I checked out the uslegalforms.com website, and to me, this site looks like it is legitimate. While it is good to be cautious, I find that my instinct will usually lead me in the right direction.

With so much going on in the computer arena, every situation is a bit different. Call or write Portable CIO with your questions, and our friendly staff will do their best to help you. 925-552-7953 or email info@theportablecio.com.



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Between the Lines New On The Shelves This Month And Next!

Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



Thirty-one years ago, **Jean Auel** and her readers commenced their journey through the Ice Age with Ayla, a five-year-old Cro-Magnon girl raised by Neanderthals. Readers picked up (and couldn't put down) *The Clan of the Cave Bear* and its subsequent sequels. The sixth book of the series, *The Land of Painted Caves* (Crown \$30-March 29) will answer many questions about the stability of Jondelar and Ayla's relationship and satisfy all of us who can't wait for another fictional visit to the Danube basin of 25,000 years ago.

Maev Binchy again touches our hearts in her tenderly sentimental *Minding Frankie* (Knopf \$26.95-March 1) Noel finds himself a single father — his former girl friend is terminally ill — and needs all the help he can get to create a life for baby Frankie. Binchy fans, who are legion, will love this opportunity to revisit Dublin's St. Jarlath's Crescent and some of Binchy's continuing characters who help Noel in "Minding Frankie."

Amy Chua addresses parenting her two daughters the Chinese way in *The Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (Penguin \$25.95). Told with honesty and humor, Chua contrasts her daughters' programs with the "feel good" approach of western contemporary parenting.

Kate Atkinson has solved the problem of writers with an appealing protagonist whose readers want more and more of him by making him a bystander to a good deal of the action in her superb Jackson Brodie series. In *When Will There Be Good News*, Jackson was in hospital for a major portion of the novel. In *Started Early Took My Dog* (Hachette \$24.99-March 21), Atkinson's Brodie takes second place to Tracy Waterhouse, a former Leeds policewoman with a tender soul, whose heart is grabbed at the sight of a tiny girl being jerked through a tatty shopping mall by an angry prostitute where Tracy is a security guard. Atkinson's prose continues to sparkle — and Brodie continues to be the tough yet sensitive man of a woman's dreams.

Back in the USA, **T.C. Boyle** tackles each subject he writes about with such energy that a reader is well advised to plan ahead before plunging in. His many faceted plots demand careful attention for the reader to absorb and appreciate the passion with

which Boyle addresses a subject. *When the Killing's Done* (Viking \$26.95-February 2) is set primarily on Santa Barbara's Channel Islands where introduced species have all but eradicated the native flora and fauna. Moments of high drama when animal rights activists collide with the Parks Service's attempts to restore native populations are highlighted but the continuing often tragic spectacle of man's impact on the environment is Boyle's true concern.

Many of last year's hardcover favorites are emerging in paperback editions to delight book groups. Some Orinda Books' favorites in fiction are *The Imperfectionists* by Tom Rachman (Dial \$15), a superb first novel — an elegy to newspapers — that takes place in Rome and through interconnected vignettes chronicles the life and times of a newspaper strongly resembling the overseas edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*. *Major Pettigrew's Last Stand* (Random House \$15) by Helen Simonson hardly needs an introduction in Orinda as it was one of Orinda Books' bestsellers in hardcover. Now this engaging love story is in paperback (Random Houser \$15) where Major Ernest Pettigrew and Mrs. Jasmina Ali will make many new friends. *Ordinary Thunderstorms* by William Boyd (Harper \$15.99) is a fast-moving thriller set in contemporary London about a visiting young climatologist who becomes tangled in a crime scene and is forced to erase his own identity as he is wanted both by the police and major criminals — Boyd at his best!

Soon out in paperback, *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet* by David Mitchell (Random House \$15-March 8) transports readers to Nagasaki in 1799 in an adventure tale like no other and — like *The Imperfectionists* — was a *New York Times* Notable Book for 2010. For an add-on bit of literary trivia, moviegoers who have been captivated by the superb performances of Colin Firth and Geoffrey Rush in *The King's Speech* can read online David Mitchell's comments, made to the British Stammering Association, about his own struggles with a stammer which he fictionalized so well in his semi-autobiographical novel of 2006, *Black Swan Green*.

A little bit of everything for the New Year—happy reading!

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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

JANUARY

28 **Orinda Chamber of Commerce** presents Tom Franier, co-owner of Semifreddi's on "Slow Capitalism," 1:15 p.m., Orinda Country Club, 254-3909 or www.orindachamber.org.

FEBRUARY

- 1 **Orinda Library Art Gallery** features an exhibit of paintings by Melissa Adkinson, watercolors by Victoria Chiofalo and photographs by Ron Brown through Feb. 28.
- Orinda Arts Council** presents the Eighth Annual High School Visual Arts Competition featuring 2D, 3D and photographic art is open to all high school students who live or attend school in Lamorinda. Registration Feb. 1 to Feb. 17. Submit artwork to Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, on Feb. 27, 1 to 4 p.m. and Feb. 28, 3 to 5 p.m. The exhibit runs March 2 through 31 at Orinda Library Gallery, www.orindaartscouncil.org.
- The Lamorinda Film and Entertainment Foundation** presents The International Film Showcase through Feb. 3 at the Orinda Theatre. The showcase features *Max Manus*, an award-winning film based on the true story of a Norwegian World War II hero. Visit www.lfef.org for information.
- 4 **First Friday Forum**, Jonathan Dimmock present "Organs, Churches and Acoustics: Working Together," 1:30 p.m., Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church
- 24 **Orinda Chamber of Commerce** presents the First Annual State of the City Address and Special Recognition Awards Dinner, 6 p.m., Orinda Country Club. State of the City address by Mayor Victoria Smith, Best Small Business Award to Orinda Taxi, Special Recognition Awards to Sally Hogarty and Valerie Hotz of *The Orinda News*. RSVP by Feb. 22, 254-3909 or www.orindachamber.org.
- 27 **Orinda Arts Council** Premiere Oscar Party and Fundraiser, features a screening of the 83rd Annual Academy Awards. For more information visit www.OrindaArtsCouncil.org.

AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified. Due to budget cuts, the library will be closed February 11 through 13 and Feb. 21 for President's Day.

- 1 **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 Feb. 2, 8 and 9. 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, 11:30 to 11:55 a.m. Also Feb. 8.
- Origami for Everyone**, learn how to fold boxes and animals in this Japanese paper art. Suitable for ages 7 and up, Tutoring Room, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Also Feb. 8, 15 and 22.
- Toledo: The Multicultural Challenge of Medieval Spain**, presented by Humanities West, Fireside Room, 7 p.m.
- 3 **Book Sale** hosted by Friends of the Library, Bookshop and Sorting Room, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bookshop is open until 6 p.m.
- 5 **Saturday Morning Live**, story time for 3- to 5-year-olds and their caregivers, Picture Book Area, 11 to 11:30 a.m.
- Tales for the Lunar New Year** celebrates the Year of the Rabbit with stories for the whole family, sponsored by the Eng Family, Garden Room, 3 to 5 p.m.
- 23 **Inner and Outer Peace** through Meditation with Dr. Marshall Zaslov, Garden Room, 6 to 8 p.m.
- 24 **Story Swap**, presented by Contra Costa Tale Spinners, features storytelling for adults, Gallery Room, 7 p.m.
- 28 **Tell It: Tales for Young Children**, a storyteller weaves folk tales adapted for children ages 3 to 5, Tutoring Room, 11 to 11:30 a.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**. Please visit our website at 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 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. For the listing of dates, 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

Learn the Mysteries of Pipe Organs and More at First Friday Forum

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

Jonathan Dimmock, organist at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC), will present "Organs, Churches and Acoustics: Working Together" at First Friday Forum (FFF), February 4, 2011, at 1:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of LOPC, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette.

Dimmock says, "In this talk, I will include a history of organ design and organ literature; the buildings that housed the instruments (normally churches and cathedrals; and how the acoustical properties of the buildings influenced the way organs were built). I will address questions about the LOPC organ, its design, effectiveness, and the church's acoustics." He will demonstrate on the organ and include musical selections. With the large screen, the audience will be able to see the intricacies of the organ and the hand and foot work.

Dimmock has distinguished himself through his highly sensitive performances in churches, major concert halls music festivals and cathedrals throughout the world. A graduate of Oberlin Conservatory, Yale School of Music and Yale Divinity School, he became the first American to hold the prestigious position of Organ Scholar of Westminster Abbey. He has also worked for two American cathedrals – St. John the Divine in New York City and St. Mark's in Minneapolis.

Along with his position at LOPC, Dimmock is the organist of Congregation Sherith Israel, San Francisco and plays for the San Francisco Symphony. With the San



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Jonathan Dimmock will demystify church organs at the First Friday Forum in February.

Francisco Symphony, he participated in the Grammy award-winning CD recording of Mahler's Eighth Symphony, the classical album of the year for 2009.

A published composer and writer, Dimmock has more than 30 CDs to his credit. He has been featured on National Public Radio, Radio France, BBC and stations in Australia, Hungary and South Africa. His appreciation of the healing power of music and the arts has led him to found the non-profit organization Art to the Nations, using music in international conflict resolution.

"This presentation promises to be a special event for music lovers, and those who would like to learn more about music and the organ," says Judy Nielsen, chair of FFF. "It is a free event open to all. Refreshments will be served."

For further information, call 925-282-8722 or click on LOPC.org.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 16

and with adequate notice can personalize a variety of gift items including rings, necklaces, key chains, silver frames, money clips, cuff links – you get the idea. “Hand engraving is an incredibly specialized skill that we don’t see often these days. We cater to our customers who are looking for hand engraving by using a skilled craftsman located in South Carolina.”

What sets Morrison’s apart from other jewelers is the devotion to friendly customer service. Evidence of this is the fact that for over 30 years Morrison’s has provided recognition awards for the University of California and other local prominent institutions. “If I do not have it in my case, I will make it for you or call around the world and get what you want,” says Berryhill. With 85 years in the business, Morrison’s has numerous contacts and resources to draw upon.

Valentine’s Day brings to mind diamonds and jewels, but a closer look at offerings reveals a pewter shot glass available at \$12.50, elegant silver cuff links, business card cases suitable for engraving, dramatic silver and crystal champagne flutes, Swiss Army watches, and an enormous variety of sterling charms, among other offerings.

“Many of our customers have inherited jewelry that contain beautiful stones or diamonds and desire a redesigned piece with their family’s heirloom. We also repair fine jewelry, everything from pearl restringing, to servicing Rolex watches. We replace watch batteries. Every repair you can think of we do,” explains Berryhill. Additional services include restoring fine sterling silver and hand-me-down flatware, antique silver brush and comb sets. Verbal estate appraisals are available. However, clients who wish a written appraisal are referred to another colleague who is past president of the American Society of Appraiser’s and located in Walnut Creek.

Stephanie Brophy and Crystal Morey deliver prompt and friendly customer service and will help you decide from the fine selection of reasonably priced wedding and anniversary gifts. There are several tennis bracelets ranging from \$3,000 to \$24,000. “When we receive jewelry, we stock it at the prevailing rate when received. We do not mark it up to today’s current selling prices. Here at Morrison’s Jewelers, we pass this savings on to our customers,” says Stephanie Brophy.

Morrison’s Jewelers is a long time member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. Open Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., you can find more information on the website at www.morrisonjewelry.com or call 253-9227.

McCartt Construction Certified Green Builder

Ian McCartt, general contractor and principal of McCartt Construction, is a native

Orindan and 1991 graduate of Miramonte High School. An enthusiastic worker, McCartt has served as the carpenter for cable television’s home and garden show “Color Splash” for the past five years and also hosts the home and garden radio show Saturday mornings from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. on 910 KNEW.

This company specializes in custom home renovations in the Lamorinda area, focusing on high-end homes that need renovation. “I began working in home construction for a local contractor when I was 14 years old and take pride in providing high quality work with integrity for clients,” says McCartt, who established his company in 1999. “We have been certified as a green builder through Build It Green, a nonprofit



General contractor **Ian McCartt**.

agency that focuses on educating builders about green practices, with the ultimate goal to make a house as energy efficient as possible. By taking this approach, we reduce our footprint on the environment by using green products and green methods of installation throughout,” he explains.

McCartt is quick to point out that using green practices during construction initially costs more, but there is a greater dividend over the long haul. “While incorporating green building practices may cost the homeowner a little more up front, over the long term, say over a 20-year period, the homeowner saves money and provides a better environment for their children and ultimately, their grandchildren. I have noticed people are coming around to using green products, once they understand the overall benefits,” adds McCartt. The philosophy starts with installing double-pane windows that compliment an energy efficient furnace and extends into applying low volatile organic compound paints.

“We are as conscientious as possible, incorporating reuse and recycle during renovation at a competitive cost. Ultimately, implementing this approach will be to our benefit, as well as our children’s benefit. I live in Orinda and understand our community.” Ian McCartt is married to Pascal, who spends her time rearing their two children, Aidan, age 6, and Mason, age 18 months. Pascal is an artist who enjoys painting and crafts projects and also volunteers at Del Rey School, where Aidan attends kindergarten.

For more information, call Ian McCartt at 376-5717 or send an email to mccarttconstruction@msn.com.

Leila Schlein Joins Pacific Union

By VALERIE HOTZ
Staff Writer

Long time Orinda resident and realtor Leila Schlein announces her affiliation with Pacific Union. With over seven years experience in real estate, Schlein’s move to Pacific Union coincides with the realty firm’s relocation to offices on the street level of Theatre Square.

In addition to being extremely knowledgeable about the Lamorinda community, she keeps abreast of developments in North Berkeley and Piedmont neighborhoods.

Her method is to tour clients through several different types of neighborhoods in order to understand their needs. Schlein points out that she has always been very fortunate to have terrific clients. “I love real estate. It is very satisfying to help people get where they want to go in life, whether it is helping them sell their home so they can move on or locating their new place,” adds Schlein.

Recognizing that clients are often experiencing tremendous stress when buying or selling, Schlein brings a sense of balance and enthusiasm to the process. “It is easy to get caught up in minutia during the process of securing a 30-year mortgage, and I help clients keep their eyes on the ball and focus on what is important in the big picture. This involves using a lot of intuition for both me and my clients.”

Schlein relishes working with people who are journeying through important phases of their lives, as is the case when buying or selling a home. She works with elderly clients who are no longer able to maintain an extensive garden and are looking to downsize to a smaller home that is easier to maintain, as well as young couples who are looking for space where their families can grow.



Realtor **Leila Schlein** is now with Pacific Union.

The available inventory in Lamorinda is inordinately low this year, about 40 percent lower for this time of year compared to previous years. “There is definitely a feeling that homeowners are not making any changes and are waiting for the market to improve. Short sales and foreclosures are still taking place, although to a lesser degree in Orinda than other parts of the region,” explains Schlein. “A lot of legal changes are taking place, and it is important to stay up on practices involved for short sales and bank owned properties.”

In her spare time, Schlein enjoys hiking and being in nature. She spent many years backpacking throughout California with her late husband, John Bogy, who passed away three years ago. Their 13 year-old daughter, Alison, is an 8th grader at Orinda Intermediate School.

Skilled at finding common ground with clients and building great relationships, Schlein brings a lot of enthusiasm to her work. For more information, visit Schlein’s website at www.leilaschlein.com or give her a call at 925-899-7927.



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BUSINESS BUZZ

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Orinda Taxi Celebrates 4th Anniversary

Julian Juricevic established this delightful family business with one Ford Hybrid vehicle and one driver – himself -- and in a short period of time, has expanded his company to include six hybrids and 15 drivers. Equipped with GPS navigation, air conditioning, side airbags, comfortable leather interior, Sirius satellite, and Zoombak tracking, the Orinda Taxi fleet is dependable, courteous, clean and environmentally sound. This month the Orinda Chamber of Commerce hails Orinda Taxi as Best Small Business of the Year.

“I discovered that the City of San Francisco required all new taxi services to be energy efficient, so I decided to start this trend in the East Bay. Many clients call us because we use Hybrid vehicles, and they want to support a local family owned business. Customers know they can rely on us



VALERIE HOTZ
Julian Juricevic heads the family business, Orinda Taxi

any time of day or night. We have found that a lot of our business is based on word of mouth referrals,” says Juricevic. Such has been the growth of this family business that Orinda Taxi established an office at 15 Altarinda Road, Suite 204, complete with enormous maps of the Bay Area gracing the walls, and two computers equipped with

the Zoombak tracking system so they know where their vehicles are at any given time.

You can’t miss the distinctive bright green Orinda Taxi vehicles across town and at BART. Many customers reserve their roundtrip transportation to San Francisco or Oakland Airports with Orinda Taxi, rather than a limousine service. It is recommended airport service be booked one or two days in advance. “We give our customers the V.I.P. treatment 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So often travelers experience flight delays and are dehydrated from their air travel, so we provide cold Pellegrino or still water for our airport pick-ups. Every vehicle carries a step stool to ease access for elderly passengers,” explains Juricevic. Customers are encouraged to call ahead in order to eliminate a wait time.

Assisted by his wife, Tanja, who serves as vice president of the firm and his daughter Sandra, Juricevic oversees 15 drivers who have previously undergone background checks by the Walnut Creek Police Department and secured a taxi driver permit.

Originally from the former Yugoslavia, where Julian was a government economist, the Juricevics came to the Bay Area in the early 1990’s. The couple has two grown children. Sandra, a 2006 Miramonte High School graduate, is the office manager at Orinda Taxi and designed the firm’s logo. Jurai, a 2009 graduate of Miramonte, is currently a sophomore at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Previous to establishing his small business, Julian volunteered as referee for Lamorinda Soccer and East Bay soccer leagues.

Orinda Taxi supports Education Foundation of Orinda, donates vouchers for airport trips to local school fundraisers and has been a member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce for four years. For more information, visit the website at www.orindataxi.com or call 925-253-8294, which is easy to remember as 253-TAXI. Many clients prefer to enter contact information



VALERIE HOTZ
David Berryhill is the fourth generation owner of Morrison’s Jewelers.

into their mobile phone for easy access. To text information regarding airport location, flight number and arrival details, enter 925- 482-7112.

Morrison’s Jewelers

For that perfect Valentine’s Day gift for your sweetheart, shop Morrison’s Jewelers, located in the Crossroads at 35 Moraga Way. For the third year in a row, Morrison’s is offering its pre-inventory/Valentine’s sale throughout the entire month of February. This family-owned business was originally established in Berkeley in 1923, and today is owned and managed by fourth generation David Berryhill.

As a fine jewelry store, Morrison’s offers attractive contemporary styles by well known designers that include Michael Sugarman, Christian Bauer, Coge, Zina, Dana and David, and Cheri Dori. If you are the creative type, you will discover the beauty of a custom designed piece that is manufactured on the premises. “Nick Tutino and Harper Noehren are incredibly talented goldsmiths and work with our customers to create unique pieces,” explains Berryhill. Noehren is skilled at machine engraving

[SEE BUZZ page 15]

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