

THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis
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Crime Statistics at Orinda BART Station

By DAVID DIERKS
Staff Writer

Between January 1 and June 2, there were 12 auto burglaries, two grand thefts, two auto thefts, seven cases of petty theft, and one possession of stolen property reported at the Orinda BART station. Compared to 2010's statistics (January – December): one robbery, two assault/battery incidents, 37 auto burglaries, 19 grand thefts, 11 auto thefts, one petty theft, two possession of stolen property incidents, and three public intoxications, it appears that major crime at the Orinda BART station is on the decline, while petty theft is on the rise.

"BART Police Department (BPD) is conducting a complete assessment of the entire transit system so we can truly understand where and when crime is occurring on BART property," said Justin S. Morgan, Police Administrative Supervisor, BPD. "BART Police Chief Rainey has been meeting with staff to discuss emerging technology that can assist and/or complement our existing CCTV security camera systems,"



SALLY HOGARTY

Orinda BART police are taking added precautions to limit amount of thefts.

adds Morgan.

The BART Police Department consists of 296 employees, which patrol four counties and 26 cities within the Bay Area. The department utilizes police patrols and video-surveillance systems in trains, stations and parking lots. BPD officers are fully sworn peace officers and have the same police authority as city police officers and deputy sheriffs. BART Police Chief Kenton W. Rainey meets with the Contra Costa County

[SEE BART page 4]

Celebrate the 4th of July in Orinda



SALLY HOGARTY

The Orinda Association in partnership with the Orinda Community Foundation has planned an exciting parade and fun park activities and concert to celebrate America's Independence Day. Complete details begin on pg. 9.

Golf Tournament Benefits Food Bank

By FRAN MILLER
Staff Writer

Play a round of golf at beautiful Orinda Country Club on Monday, July 25, and you'll help more than just your golf game. For every registered golfer in the Orinda Community Foundation's "Celebrate Everyday Heroes" Golf Tournament, another hungry mouth will be fed.

This second annual fundraising tournament, brainchild of a group of civic-minded citizens and Orinda Community Foundation (OCF) founding trustee and City Councilmember Sue Severson, will benefit the Food Banks of Contra Costa and Solano Counties. The Food Bank, distributing 12 million pounds of food per year, or about 9.6 million meals, works to end hunger and increase access to affordable, nutritious food for low-income individuals and families. "The planning committee reviewed several charities with which to partner, and we chose the Food Bank



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A golfer from last year's tournament tests his skills.

because of the current great need," says Severson. "Most proceeds will benefit the mission of the OCF, enhancing the quality of life in Orinda."

[SEE GOLF page 5]

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Orinda's Pam Glover: *A Life In Art* Retrospective at Hearst Gallery

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

Heidi Donner, public information and educational programs manager at The Hearst Gallery of St. Mary's College, is honored to present a retrospective exhibition of the late Pam Glover's body of work from Sunday, July 10, to Sunday, September 11. Included are more than 55 colorful California *plein air* landscape paintings of iconic bay, coastal and wine country venues; student work from China and Australia; rarely seen post-World War II and 1950's fashion illustrations; landscapes from France and Switzerland; and mixed-media and non-representational paintings.

Many pieces are on loan including works from the Glover family collection courtesy of Anne Marie Glover, the Epperson Gallery and Kerwin Gallery. Archival works are from the Hearst Art Gallery collection.

A catalog with extensive color illustrations and a biographical essay accompanies the exhibition.

There will be a free panel discussion with distinguished East Bay *plein air* painters and former students of Glover's about her body of work on Sunday, July 10 at 2 p.m. at the Soda Center, followed by a reception at the Hearst Art Gallery and patio. Questions and comments from the public are invited. This summer exhibition represents Glover's entire career, from very competent student work that signaled her future promise, to the post-war fashion illustrations and ads that so few people have seen – not to mention her deftly painted elegant landscapes that have assured her place as one of the Bay Area's most significant *plein air* artists of the last 25 years.

Born in China of English parents, Pam's youth was spent in Shanghai studying [SEE GLOVER page 6]



PAM GLOVER

Pam Glover's oil on canvas entitled "Spring Blossoms, Bear Creek Road, Orinda."

Valley Art Gallery Adds Summer Sparkle to Library Gallery

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

Celebrate summer and stop by the Orinda Library Gallery to catch over 66 paintings created by 53 artist members of the Valley Art Gallery from July 1 to August 1; there will also be ceramics and jewelry in the show. Most of the 150 artists and crafts people affiliated with Valley Art have years of experience in their craft and medium. You'll find every subject and technique you can think of and then some, from *plein air* to still life, abstract to representational.

For over 60 years, Walnut Creek's Valley Art Gallery (VA), a true grass roots art endeavor in the central Diablo Valley, has operated as a nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to providing a professional venue for Bay Area artists and crafts



JULIE ARMSTRONG

Julie Armstrong's acrylic on canvas entitled "Mendocino Garden" will be exhibited at the Library Gallery.

people. It does so in the belief that the arts enrich everyone's life. The mission is to encourage, support and promote those who make art as well as to make art accessible [SEE GALLERY page 18]

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July 10 to Sept. 11

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Opening Day Reception:
Sunday, July 10
Panel discussion: 2 pm,
Reception follows
Location: Soda Center, Art Patio &
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Opening Day events are free

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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President
Safety First on the Fourth



Mark Roberts

Summer took its sweet time getting here this year but it has finally arrived. Now it's time for Orinda's favorite community-wide celebration: the Fourth of July parade and the festivities before and afterward. It's also time to think about how we can all celebrate the Fourth safely.

The OA is proud to again present the parade that has become a tradition for Orindans young, old and in-between. But there's one tradition associated with the parade that has developed over the past 27 years that needs to change.

Many parade entries have developed the habit of throwing candy or other small objects from their moving vehicles to children lining the parade route. This seems like a friendly and generous gesture but it creates a definite hazard. Kids love getting the candy, of course, but it often doesn't land in their hands after being thrown. Pieces will land just a few feet from the vehicle from which it was thrown and kids, being kids, will run into the street to retrieve them without being aware of that vehicle or others that could strike and injure them.

I know parents are concerned for their kids' safety and wouldn't knowingly put them in danger. To the best of my knowledge, we have not had any accidents involving parade vehicles and kids since 1984, but I've seen too many close calls in my many years as a parade marshal for my comfort. (I've also seen children and adults hit on their heads or shoulders by energetically

thrown candy or other objects.) The OA and I want to make sure that no such accidents EVER occur.

To that end, and with the endorsement and assistance of the Orinda Police Department, I am reminding all parade entries to **NOT THROW CANDY OR OTHER OBJECTS INTO THE CROWD ALONG THE PARADE ROUTE.** Instead, please assign walkers – or skateboarders or rollerbladers – alongside your vehicle to hand out candy, etc. to children along the route. This will accomplish your same goal of being friendly and generous without putting any kids at risk.

Police Chief Jeff Jennings will be in the parade staging area to personally remind all entries of this new tradition. I'm very grateful to Chief Jennings and all the members of the OPD for their support and cooperation in helping the OA keep the Fourth of July parade fun AND safe.

Speaking of support and cooperation, I want to extend my special thanks to the Orinda Community Foundation (OCF) for their partnership with the OA in presenting this year's parade and celebration. The OCF's generous grant is truly appreciated.

Of course, I also want to thank our terrific business sponsors for their support, especially Orinda Motors, Mechanics Bank and Chevron Humankind. Thanks, too, to all our banner sponsors for helping fund the Fourth AND decorating the business districts with their colorful banners. Last

but not least, I thank the City of Orinda – city councilmembers, City Manager Janet Keeter and staff members from several departments – for its support and cooperation. Without the participation of all these team players, the Fourth of July celebration just wouldn't happen.

One other safety note directed especially to residents of the Country Club area who rely on Camino Sobrante as their primary access route. I know there were some extended traffic delays last year on the Fourth which led to impatience and even anger on the part of a few drivers. With the help (again) of OPD Chief Jennings, those delays will be minimized this year. I remind you, however, that traffic will be held on Camino Sobrante at Orinda Way several times between 8 and 9 a.m. as runners start and return from the Fun Run. Please keep this in mind and plan your trip accordingly.

With the cooperation of all Orindans, we'll again celebrate the Fourth of July with fun, festivity AND safety!

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Historical Society Spruces Up Old Train Depot



SALLY HOGARTY

Tom Romanek of Tom Romanek Painting, a board member of the Orinda Historical Society, donates his time and painting expertise to restore the historical train station at the corner of Bates and Davis Road. Before he could paint, Romanek had to de-lead the surface of the structure. The Orinda Garden Club donated the paint for the project and will be landscaping the area as well.

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The Orinda Association is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to:

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

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Letters to Editor

Library Mostly Private Money

A recent article in *The Wall Street Journal* about the sad state of Orinda's roads received much coverage in our local press. In the story, an Orinda businessman is quoted as saying that the city spent a lot of money on the new (opened in 2001) library. This is simply not true.

Many people, Orindans as well as others, do not realize that the Friends of the Orinda Library raised over \$5 million in donations for library construction. The Friends also owned the old library and received almost \$2 million for that building. The city's contribution, about \$3 million, was from developer fees negotiated with the company which is currently building a new housing development called Wilder. Those developer fees are restricted by state law for public facilities and could not have been used for road repairs.

The Friends of the Orinda Library, a nonprofit organization, is the owner of Orinda's wonderful library. The Friends board members are proud that we were able to raise the money and provide such a warm, welcoming and well-loved facility for everyone who comes to enjoy it. We just want to set the record straight.

— Linda Landau

Treasurer, Friends of the Orinda Library

Downtown and More Pressing Matters

As a previous member of Orinda's Planning Process Review Task Force (PPRTF) that provided recommendations to streamline the permitting process, improve residential building codes, and a comprehensive approach to revitalize our decaying downtown, I was surprised at the limited content of the June, front page article "Local resident offers compromise on downtown plans." Murals, landscaping, benches, awnings, signs, banners, and volunteer time may be fine ideas, but even in these uncertain times, they can hardly be characterized as a "compromise" to the PPRTF proposal. Interestingly, the article was totally silent about building heights, and the proposed 50' height allowance,

which caused so much controversy. This is where a well thought out "compromise" for all downtown zones was needed.

For a variety of reasons, my guess is any significant future downtown "revitalization" is probably DOA in my lifetime, but that may be a good thing. The City Council can focus on more important priorities. I suggest the top three are: roads, roads and roads. Lack of road maintenance is a disaster and in many locations rapid surface and structural deterioration is apparent. Unless we fix and maintain our roads very soon, high clearance four-wheel drives will be the standard requirement for getting around in Orinda. Adverse impacts to housing values and schools would likely follow.

Unfortunately, previous attempts to fund road repairs with new taxpayer-funded bonds failed, but maybe our budgets, funding priorities, organizational structures, and use of contingency reserves require a serious, methodical rethink. Residents should decide.

— Chris Kniel

Ivy Drive a Privileged Neighborhood.

In the letters to the editor *Orinda News* May issue, an Ivy resident writes that she won't address the tax paying issue because simply put, she does not have an effective argument to refute that issue.

She goes on saying that "is not preferential treatment that we try to keep our kids safe" because despite the irregularly obtained no left turn and two speed bumps she chose to live in a busy street and states that is their right to keep their kids safe.

She also says that "Everyone who lives in this neighborhood has seen for themselves a child, almost being hit by a car."

Lets make it clear. Parents choose to move to a busy street, children have no choice in that matter. Once a parent has knowledge that her child is in a present and clear danger, that parent has a duty to immediately remove that child from such a danger. Otherwise, it is time to call Children Protective Services.

— Maria Campos

◆ BART from page 1

police chiefs, including Orinda Police Chief Jeffrey Jennings, on a monthly basis to discuss crime issues. "Public safety is our number one priority, and it is our intent to ensure that our customers are not victimized when they use our transit system," said Rainey.

Morgan provides the following safety tips when parking in the BART lots: "Lock your vehicle, roll up your windows, and remove all items from your car. You may think an item is not valuable, but a thief may think otherwise. Secure your items out of

sight, prior to driving onto BART property. Avoid using your console or glove box as a mobile lock box. Make sure that accessory charger plugs and radio faceplates are not visible. Make sure that the coins in the ash-tray are removed. It is also recommended that you use an anti-theft device for your vehicle. A Club or ignition kill device will reduce the chance that your vehicle will be stolen. Statistically catalytic converter thefts on Toyota Trucks and SUVs are on the rise. Having special lug nut locks for your vehicle's wheels is also recommended in order to prevent the theft of a vehicle's



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rims and tires."

Mobile cellular devices are becoming more of a target for criminals. Morgan suggests that patrons "keep vigilant and be constantly aware of your surroundings before using your mobile device. Keep your mobile device out of plain view as much as possible and avoid using mobile devices while seated in the vicinity of train doors."

To report suspicious activity to BART

Police call 877-679-7000 (toll free) or pick up a yellow emergency phone in the parking lot to directly contact BART Police. "We encourage our commuters to join us as partners in keeping our system safe; remember, if you see something... say something," adds Morgan.

To better inform *The Orinda News* readers, *Orinda BART* crime statistics will now be posted to the *Police Blotter*.

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

Send letters to: Editor, *The Orinda News*, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, fax them to 254-8312, or email to news@orindaassociation.org. Letters to the Editor for the August issue are due July 5, 2011.

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

POLICE BLOTTER / SCHOOLS/REDISTRICTING



POLICE BLOTTER

May 2011

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 116 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Burglary – Auto: 2 incidents were reported on Las Aromas and Camino Sobrante.

Burglary – Commercial: 3 incidents were reported on Camino Sobrante (2) and Altarinda Dr.

Burglary – Residential: 9 incidents were reported on Estates Dr. (2), El Gavilan, Del Valle, Scenic Dr., El Verrano, El Toyonal, Monte Vista Rd. and Miner Rd.

Petty Theft – From Vehicle: 2 incidents were reported on Glorietta Blvd. and Las Vegas Rd.

Vandalism – Felony: 1 incident was reported on Bryant Way.

Arrests

Battery – Domestic: 2 arrests were made.

Burglary – Commercial: 3 arrests were made on Camino Sobrante (2), and Altarinda Cir.

Burglary – Residential: 1 arrest was made on Miner Rd.

Driving Under the Influence – MISD < .08: 1 arrest was made on Moraga Way.

Driving Under the Influence – MISD > .08: 2 arrests were made on Camino Pablo/Camino Sobrante and Bryant Way/Moraga Way.

Drunk in Public: 1 arrest was made on Moraga Way.

Interfering with Public Officer: 1 arrest was made on Orinda Way/Santa Maria.

Recovered Stolen Vehicle: 1 vehicle was recovered on Scenic Ct./Scenic Dr.

Trespassing: 1 arrest was made on Orinda Way.

Warrant Arrest: 6 arrests were made on Orinda Way (2), Moraga Way, Oak Rd., Camino Pablo and Moraga Way/Northwood Dr.

Orinda BART Station

Petty Theft: 4 incidents were reported.

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving, Orinda Police Department

◆ **GOLF** from page 1

The overwhelming support for last year's inaugural tournament – created to raise private dollars in support of valued community traditions that were in jeopardy - led organizers to believe that an annual event might be worth exploring. "The tournament was very well received last year," says OCF president Richard Westin. "We had great reviews from the players and the Everyday Heroes who we honored."

"Participants universally stated it was the best tournament in which they had played, and they had a wonderful time. We felt there was momentum to continue this year and create an OCF tradition. We expect about 100 civic-minded players who are interested in the quality of life in our small city," he adds.

Tournament co-chairs AJ Nisen and Susan Sohrakoff are planning an even more successful and fun event this year. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. with a buffet brunch. A shotgun start begins at noon, with

a two best ball of foursome shamble format. GHIN Index is requested for all players to ensure equitable play. Fun contests, food and treats await all participants along the course. Awards and entertainment will conclude the day.

For those who have always wished to play the Orinda Country Club, the price is right: single registration is \$195 and a foursome is \$780.00. Various sponsorships are also available.

Register online (and find sponsorship opportunities) at www.everydayheroes.golfreg.com, or mail your form to Orinda Community Foundation, P.O. Box 21, Orinda, CA 94563. For questions, email CelebrateEverydayHeroes@gmail.com.

OCF was founded in February 2010 to raise private dollars in support of community programs, arts and events after the city was forced to cut all community outreach support due to decreasing revenues and economic downturn. "OCF plans to build upon its success each year to provide a fabulous event, recognizing local everyday heroes, and providing support to community events and programs," says Severson.

EFO Makes Its Fundraising Goal



TRACEY MILLHAM

The Educational Foundation of Orinda thanks our 2010-2011 donors for their generous contributions. Donations from parents, local businesses and the Orinda community all helped EFO reach its goal of \$1.5 million, supporting programs which benefit each and every student in Orinda's six public schools.

Supervisor Redistricting Should Not Affect Orinda

By DAVID DIERKS
Staff Writer

Gayle Uilkema, Supervisor of District II, which covers Orinda, held a workshop on June 1 at the Lafayette Community Center to discuss the ramifications of the redistricting and to get community feedback on the current concepts for redistricting. There are seven concepts currently being debated, and in all the concepts, Orinda will stay in District II.

According to California Elections Code Section 21500, every 10 years the supervisorial district boundaries are redrawn so that they are as "nearly equal in population as may be." Since the census was last

year, the Board of Supervisors is required to redistrict the five supervisorial districts using the 2010 Census data. In order to make the districts nearly equal in population, District I will have to be enlarged by approximately 20,000, which will have to be taken from District II. In return, District II will have to increase by roughly 43,000 (23,000 because it is low, plus the 20,000 that District I is absorbing).

The Board of Supervisors met June 28 to discuss the proposed concepts. The results of the meeting were not available at press time. For more information on redistricting, go to <http://ca-contractocostacounty.civicplus.com> and click on Redistricting or www.co.contra-costa.ca.us.



We wish all of you a very Happy 4th of July and a Cheer for Our Troops from your LaMorinda Home Team!

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CONTINUATIONS

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anatomy, still-life, portraiture and painting with Russian artist Olga Popoff (a student of Rodin). She lived in Australia and England before moving to the Bay Area in 1953 where she took painting courses at the California College of Arts and Crafts, exhibited and won prizes. Her involvement with Lundy and Louis Siegriest, Terry St.

John, and the Society of Six is sure to come up in the panel discussion. During that time, she experimented blending asphalt and sand with oil paint to create dense surfaces for her non-representational canvases. In 1975, her passion for working outdoors begat a beautiful affair with *plein air* painting which lasted the remainder of her life.

Glover began teaching landscape painting through the Orinda Community Center in the mid-80s to packed classes of devoted students. She lives on, not only through her widely admired legacy of superb landscape paintings, but through the next generation of painters who thrived under her tutelage.

The gallery is also pleased to announce the launch of Blue Star Museums, a partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, and more than 1,300 museums across America to offer free admission to all active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. Leadership support has been provided by MetLife Foundation through Blue Star Families. The complete list of participating museums is available at www.arts.gov/bluestarmuseums.

The Hearst Art Gallery is accredited by the American Association of Museums and is open from Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$4 for adults, free for K-12 graders and Friends of the Hearst Art Gallery members. Group tours are free. For more information, please call 925-631-4379 or go to www.stmarys-ca.edu/arts/hearst-art-gallery.

Tabor Student Comes to Orinda



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sixteen-year-old Stepanka Jandova is the latest student to travel from Orinda's sister city of Tabór in the Czech Republic to study at Miramonte High School. She competed with 15 other students to be selected. Stepanka has a passion for sports, especially skiing, and is also studying to become an artist. Her host family is Maryett and Bob Thompson.

Jan Coe Named AAUW's Outstanding Volunteer



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mary Stephens Smith (L), last year's Distinguished Woman, presents this year's award to Jan Coe.

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

In recognition of her outstanding volunteer work in the community, Jan Coe received the Distinguished Woman Award of 2011 from the American Association of University Women (AAUW) at their May luncheon held at the Orinda Country Club.

Among Coe's numerous activities her work in education stands out. "It's a passion of mine," she says. A teacher for five years, she began her volunteer work at Glorietta Elementary where she was president of the Parents' Club. At Orinda Intermediate School, she ran the Bulldog Kennel lunch program, turning it into a financial success. Under her leadership, volunteers served lunch and brunch five days a week for over 800 students, "In 1997, we topped \$100,000 in profit. My job is now a paid position," Coe adds. Continuing the volunteer path, she was president of the Parents' Club at Miramonte and chaired two senior grad night parties.

Coe has been a great fund raiser for education. She was co-chair of successful parcel tax campaigns for the Orinda School District and the Acalanes Union High School District. She recalls that she was working in a paid position at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church's Seedlings Preschool when she announced to her husband Alan that she wanted to quit her job because she didn't have enough time to do her volunteer work. He agreed, and she did.

This energetic woman served on the board of the Educational Foundation of Orinda (EFO) for 10 years and as its president for two years. Dr. Frank Brunetti, former Superintendent of the Orinda School District, paid tribute to Coe at the luncheon, praising her organizational skills.

Coe also chaired Vanessa Crews' successful campaigns for the Acalanes School board. Coe and Crews shared Orinda's Citizen of the Year award in 1998.

Stephanie Allen, a first grade teacher at the Burckhalter School in east Oakland where Coe has volunteered in the classroom for seven years, praised her one-on-one work with children who need extra help and helping them do projects such as making gingerbread houses.

Coe has also been active at her church, Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian, where she was a director of the child care program, served as an elder, and worked on finance campaigns.

The AAUW has benefited from Coe's leadership skills as well. She served as president from 2005 to 2007. During this time, she organized and directed the celebration of the branch's 50th anniversary. She has been hospitality chair, co-chair of programs, and currently is co-vice president of AAUW Funds, along with involvement in the Scholarship and Sister-to-Sister programs. Mary Stephens Smith, last year's Distinguished Woman honoree, presented Coe with an engraved Nambe tray and a Memory Album.

Other awards conferred during the luncheon included honoring Elizebeth Kingsley and Lynn Lonbaken for their 50 years of membership in AAUW. Newly elected president, Deana Vick Davidson presented outgoing president, Mary Helene Tietz, with the AAUW Past President's pin. The branch also celebrated their recent Garden Tour fundraiser which generated over \$5,000 for the Tech Trek program, which sends middle school girls to a week-long summer science camp. Because of the branch's successful fundraising, five girls from the Lamorinda area will participate this year.

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CAR TIME / THREE QUARTER CENTURY CLUB

CAR TIME

When to Replace Shocks and Struts
by JEFF JOYCE

Every component of a complex machine has a limited service life, as wear and tear takes its toll over time. Your car's shocks and struts are no exception. If you want to maintain or even improve the degree of riding control and comfort of your car, it's essential that you know when to replace shocks on your car, along with the struts, which support them. Timely maintenance and replacement of car parts, when they are close to termination of service life, helps avoid any car crisis situation from developing.

Let me briefly acquaint you with the role played by shocks and struts in the functioning of your automobile. Both shocks and struts are part of the car's suspension, whose primary function is to create the shock-absorbing buffer between the car's frame and the wheels. They also ensure safety and that the car's tires remain in close contact with the road, providing you with a smooth ride and control over the car while accelerating, braking and turning. Remember the only part of the car that touches the road is the tires. Worn shocks and struts will increase stopping distances, promote more rapid brake lining wear, and decrease handling control around curves as well as on rough road surfaces.

The reason you don't feel most of the road bumps encountered by your car's wheels is because the car's hydraulic shock absorbers or shocks, along with the struts, absorb the impact through a spring mechanism and dissipates it before it gets transmitted to the car frame.

They also provide structural stability to the car's suspension and provide you with more control while driving. When the shock absorber or strut hydraulic mechanism leaks or the overall system undergoes damage, it's no longer effective in providing driving stability and absorbing road shocks. So, the result is your ride is bumpy and your car sways more while driving.

Symptoms of Worn Out Shocks/Struts

When your car's shocks and struts are worn out, it's difficult to ignore the problem as you can literally feel its effects whenever your car hits a pothole or you take a ride on a bumpy road.

One of the primary signs, which indicates that your car shocks and struts need a replacement, is when you hit the brakes. When the shock absorber mechanism is not working, the car's front nose dives down when you hit the brakes. On the other hand, when you accelerate, you can distinctly feel the rear end of the car squatting. Rides become increasingly bumpy and the whole car's frame tends to bounce or oscillate up and down after hitting a pothole. When turning, the car may sway excessively creating a very difficult vehicle to handle.

Also, if you find active leaks on the strut or shock absorber housing, find damaged piston rods or excessively worn out tires, its time you got both the shocks and struts replaced. Shocks or struts do not have to be leaking to be bad. They can even pass the bounce test and still be bad. The valves, piston and cylinder may be damaged from the car's suspension bottoming out, like after hitting a pothole. The internal damage can never be seen. But when the shock/strut is working the hardest, it can no longer perform as new. Knowing when to replace shocks/struts is extremely important, and when you see any of the above signs, you can be assured that it is time to visit an auto service center.

When to Replace Shocks and Struts?

Car industry experts provide information about when to replace your shock absorbers or struts. Generally, replacing shocks and struts is recommended between 50,000 to 60,000 miles. Whenever there is verification of any of the above-mentioned signs of shock absorber wear and tear, you need to go for a replacement. Refer to your local trustworthy service center for specific details about the ideal replacement period.

The best way to determine when to replace shocks and struts is through an actual inspection. If you identify any signs of wear and tear, it's best you get the shocks and struts replaced as soon as possible, unless you enjoy roller coaster rides! Timely replacement will also ensure that your car's tires and drive train assembly are not significantly affected.

Any Questions? Feel free to email me at jeff@orindamotors.com.

Female Air Force Pilot From WW II Speaks at Luncheon

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

Both Barbara Anderson and Gretchen Miller agree it took them a while to admit they were older than 75. Now, both say it's well worth it because they may attend Orinda's Three-Quarter Century Club Luncheon. They, along with Chuck and Joye McCoy, Connie Doty and Rudi and Teeb Thomas explained that they appreciate the opportunity to meet long time friends. "It's Orinda's homecoming event," Rudi remarked.

Originator of the club John Fazel announced that this was the 12th annual luncheon and that this was the second Three-Quarter Century Club in the nation. The one to which his mother belonged in Perry, Iowa, was the first. John and his wife, Mary Lou, recently attended the 81st meeting of the Iowa group. John dedicated the Orinda gathering in honor of Helen Vurek, who had been the Queen (oldest woman attendee) for the past five years. She died earlier this year just after her 101st birthday.

Orinda Mayor Victoria Smith read a proclamation stating June 15 was designated as Three-Quarter Century Club Day. Former mayors in attendance were Dick Heggie, with his wife Bea, Bobbie Landers, and Aldo Guidotti.

Reminding the audience of what it was like 75 years ago, John said, "The novel, *Gone With the Wind* was published; Hitler introduced the Volkswagen; a new home's average cost was \$3,900; cars were \$780; and gas was 10 cents a gallon."

Then the royal court was chosen. Again, Tom and Aileen Deahl were married the longest, as they celebrated their 70th anniversary June 7 (1941). Tom was the King, at age 96. Molly Gravelle, also 96 and a former teacher at Miramonte, was the Queen. The Baby of the Year was Ron Loos, who turned 75 on May 21.

Ninety-year-old Betty Budde of Concord was the speaker of the day. A WASP (Women Air Force Service Pilots) during World War II, she told tales of her days flying some 30 different planes during her time of service. "They'd put us in a new plane with a manual, we'd look it over, check the dials on the dashboard, and take off." Budde's main service was towing targets for anti-aircraft practice. "Luckily, they never hit my plane," she said.



JILL GELSTER
Molly Gravelle, a former teacher at Miramonte, was crowned Queen by Master of Ceremonies John Fazel.

The WASPS received no rank or military honors for their service, but the "fly-girls" flew 60 million miles in every type of military aircraft, from the fastest fighters to the heaviest bombers, and they piloted every type of mission flown by their male Army Air Force counterparts, except combat.

Fellow WASPS also spoke – AJ Starr, a Moraga resident, and Maggie Gee from Berkeley. Starr recounted that women flew the B-26s and B-29s to prove to male pilots that those planes were actually safe to fly. She added that although the government was slow to recognize the WASPS contributions in the war effort, they were eventually given veteran's status in 1979.

On July 2, 2009, President Barack Obama awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the WASPS, the highest honor given to civilians. In May of 2010, Budde, Starr and Gee, along with a group of some 200 out of the original 1100 women flyers, each received a replica of the medal.

Miramonte graduates, Jacqueline Garell and Neris Newton sang solos at the event closing with the nostalgic WW II song, "Sentimental Journey."

Sponsors of the Three-Quarter Century Club Luncheon were BHG Mason-McDuffie Real Estate, Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary, and the Orinda Community Church. Lisa Shaffer was in charge of the arrangements. For information on next year's luncheon, contact John Fazel at 925-324-2017 or email runmtns@prodigy.net.

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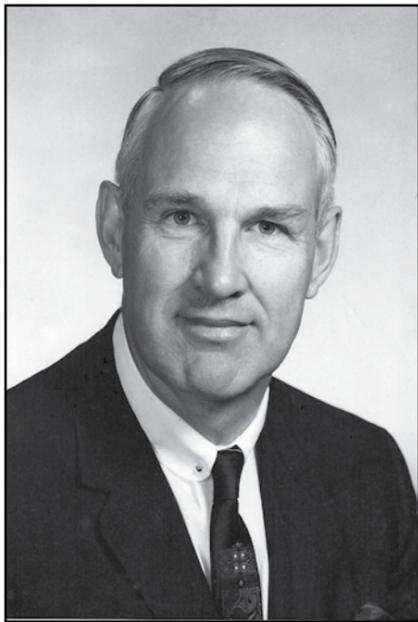
Remembering Long-time Orinda Resident

Walter Blumst passed away peacefully on April 28, 2011 at the age of 93. He was married to Dorothy Blumst for 67 years. Their family includes son Torin and his wife Karen Blumst of Fairfield, daughter Lisa and her husband Mike Savin of Westlake Village, and grandchildren Claire Savin, Scott Savin, Erik Blumst, and Anders Blumst.

Born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Walter attended Minneapolis public schools, and graduated from the University of Minnesota. He received his Bachelor of Science in Economics (statistics) thanks to the G.I. Bill, earned while serving his country as a member of the United States Coast Guard during World War II. He and Dorothy moved to California in 1948 and spent the last 43 years in Orinda.

Walter was employed by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company in San Francisco for 32 years in positions of increasing responsibility and importance. A highly regarded manager and public voice for PG&E during the '60s and '70s, he retired in 1980. He was also an accomplished public speaker and economist.

During his retirement, Walter remained active, for a number of years working part



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Walter Blumst was an ardent supporter of senior issues and civic activism.

time as a tax preparer for H&R Block, polling place volunteer at election time, and census taker.

His passions were senior issues and civic activism, leveraging the skills that served him well during his business years to help his community. He served on the California delegation to the 1995 White House Conference on Aging hosted by President Bill Clinton. In 1989, he was president of the Contra Costa County Advisory Council on Aging. Walter also served many years on the Orinda Senior Services Committee and headed a committee that studied transportation issues.

Walter was an ardent supporter of the SF Symphony League of Contra Costa County, loved a good game of volleyball, and traveled extensively with Dorothy all over the world.

Friends and family honored Walter at a memorial service on May 28 at Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church in Orinda.

— Karen Blumst

Between the Lines Re(a)d, White, and Blue

Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



In 1778, to mark the anniversary of independence, George Washington issued double rations of rum to all of his soldiers, and in 1781, several months before the key American victory at Yorktown, Massachusetts became the first state to make July 4th an official state holiday. For over 20 years, Orindans have officially celebrated the Fourth with a glorious parade — no rum required — and have often ended the day with the concert and fireworks on Moraga's Commons.

What a perfect time to brush up on your founding fathers, who, after all, are the reason we celebrate on the 4th in the first place. If you can't wait till September for the paperback edition of Ron Chernow's Pulitzer prize-winning biography, *George Washington* (at 928 pages, it's a little heavy for a beach book anyway), try *Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation* by Andrea Wulf (Knopf \$30). Wulf writes that even as the British ships were gathering off Staten Island, Washington was worrying not only about the state of his army but also about the state of the gardens at Mt. Vernon, and as Adams and Jefferson were negotiating the Treaty of Paris, they were also touring private gardens and taking notes on new agricultural techniques to carry back to their own American farms. Meanwhile, James Madison was well ahead of his time as an environmentalist when he took steps to mitigate the disastrous effect of continuous tobacco farming on his Virginia soil.

And when we consider the American Revolution, do we ever think about the other side, the loyalists. Those who were not anxious to sever ties with Britain were often brutally treated — partisan politics during the birth pangs of the republic often included tar and feathers. Maya Jasanoff, in her new book, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in a Revolutionary World* (Random House \$30) tells a fascinating narrative history of the more than 60,000 Americans who left home to become refugees in some other part of the British empire — life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for them meant a new beginning in a far corner of the British world.

New in paperback is Stanford Professor Jack Rakove's *Revolutionaries: a New History of the Invention of America* (Mariner \$16.95). Rakove is a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and constitutional scholar who here considers the human dimensions of the big names in our American

Revolutionary diorama and also introduces some lesser-known figures — important players on the 18th c. stage. Rakove is a most entertaining lecturer as well. If you're an iTunes user, look up his "Colonial and Revolutionary History" course, available to anyone at iTunes at Stanford University — a great class and you don't even have to take a final!

And, while it's only July, we are fast approaching a mid-term election heavy with those who claim the mantle of our founding fathers, whether they stand left, right or center. The "idea of America" has been fluid since its inception and can, as we see, be shaped to support almost any political stance. Gordon Wood is one of the preeminent scholars of the American Revolution and his new book, *The Idea of America: Reflections on the Birth of the United States* (Penguin \$29.95) collects essays Wood has written over the past 20 years, with annotations to bring them up to date. The better understanding Wood gives us of what those founders actually thought and did, the precepts on why they began to build the nation we know today, and the results that ensued, can help us better evaluate the positions that our current leaders and candidates advocate and endorse. The revolutionary generation felt they were treading a delicate balance between mob rule and a "virtuous republic." We may be replicating some of those birth pains today as we define and redefine the new roles and new positions of our government both at home and abroad.

Remembering those who continue to fight for our country's freedom is novelist Ellen Feldman. Her new work, *Next to Love*, (Spiegel & Grau \$25—July 26th) takes us to the home front after World War II. Feldman tells a moving and insightful story of three young women in a small New England town, two of whom lose husbands on the Normandy beaches. The third's husband returns but is haunted by what we now know as post traumatic stress disorder. Feldman beautifully tells how they attempt to rebuild their lives.

Her narrative encompasses the racism and the anti-Semitism of those years as well as the nascent women's movement without ever seeming didactic and all the while making the reader care deeply for the novel's protagonists. A brilliant book — watch for it at the end of July!

So, wave a flag, enjoy the sparklers...and read a little history — or a good novel — to celebrate America's past!

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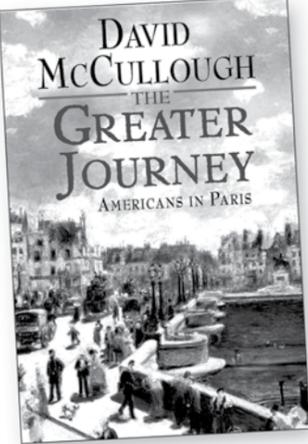
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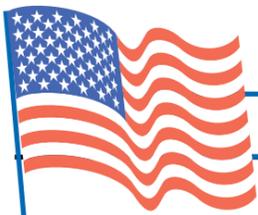
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Lots of Fun Planned for 4th of July

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

A fun-filled family day is in store for Orindans on the 4th of July. Following the parade, the Orinda Community Park will be packed with things to do for young and old.

The long list of entertainment and activities for kids includes: Jeremy the Juggler; Twistyman making balloon animals, a petting zoo; Face Painting; bracelet and necklace beading at the Lafayette Calvary Baptist Church craft booth; picture taking with Cinderella; face painting by the Orinda Junior Women's Club and the "Juniorettes"; the Orinda Motors Hot Wheels Races; and the Miramonte Football Toss.

New this year will be Laser Tag sponsored by Games 2 U, which will be set up on the tennis courts, with divisions for older and younger children. Also, The Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority (CC-SWA) teams up with the Recycle Bank for a recycle sorting game. Kids will have the opportunity to sort recyclable and non-recyclable items and all participants will receive a prize.

There will be a number of non-profit



SALLY HOGARTY

Cinderella did face painting last year in the park. This year the Orinda Junior Women's Club and the Juniorettes will do the honors.

booths as well ranging from the Lamorinda Democratic Club and Lamorinda Republican Women's Club to Cal Shakes, Orinda Community Foundation, Orinda Vision, Save Orinda, the Orinda Woman's Club, Rescue One Foundation, the Oakland Strokes, CCSWA, Orinda Masons, Orinda City Council, Friends of Joaquin Moraga and Orinda City Traffic Advisory Committee.

The ever-popular Bob Claire Blues Band will serenade the crowd with plenty of good listening and dancing tunes while local groups and restaurants provide plenty to eat and drink. For those with a thirst, they can choose from beer at Orinda Rotary or Czech beer at the Tabor Sister City Foundation booths. Grilling their popular hot dogs again this year will be Orinda Chamber of Commerce members. Try some delicious Greek food at Petra's booth and finish up your meal with cupcakes from Republic of Cake and ice cream from Loard's Ice Cream and Candy.



SALLY HOGARTY

"Funnelman" had a fun time in last year's parade.

The 4th of July Leadership Team

- Fun Run, Haley's Run & Pancake Breakfast: Co-Chairs John Fazel & Suzanne Tom
- Parade & Park Activities: Co-Chairs Chris Laszcz-Davis & Mark Roberts
- City Coordinating Logistics: Mark Roberts
- Communications: Sally Hogarty
- Banners: Chris Laszcz-Davis, Claire and Mark Roberts
- Food Booths: Clay Deanhardt
- Non-Profit Booths: Jan Cushman
- Parade: Co-Chairs: Steve Meagher & Bill Waterman (with BART organizing volunteers Bruce McGurk & Stephen Davis)
- Sponsors/Donations: Jane McKahan-Jones
- Finance/Parks & Rec. Coordinator: Jim Luini
- Event Announcers: Steve Harwood & Mark Roberts
- Kids Park Activities: Co-Chairs April Meagher & James McGurk
- Music/Bands: Cindy Powell
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- 7:55 a.m. Flag-raising Ceremony, Orinda Community Center
- 8 a.m. Fun Run and Haley's Run for a Reason
- 8:30 a.m. Marching Band percussionists meet behind Valero gas station at Bryant and Davis Roads.
- 9:00 a.m. Friends of Orinda Library Book Sale
- 10 a.m. Marching Band instrumentalists meet behind Valero gas station at Bryant and Davis Roads.
- 11:30 - 1:30 p.m. Parade begins (see route on page 12)
- Community Center Park Activities
 - ★ Non-profit booths
 - ★ Entertainment by Orinda Idol Singers
 - ★ Children's Activities: Hot Wheels Race, Petting Zoo, Face Painters, Balloon Artists, Arts and Crafts, Games, Celebrity Characters
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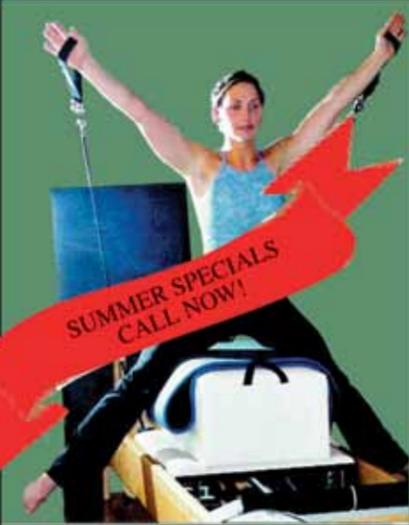
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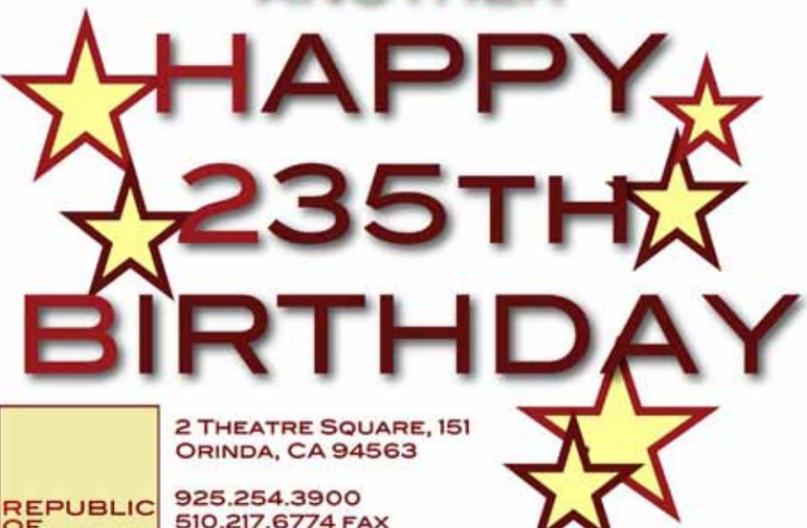
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SALLY HOGARTY

The Bob Clair Orchestra will once again perform in the park following the parade.

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Colorful floats, classic cars, marching bands, lots of musical groups, and even trained dogs will delight youngsters of all ages at Orinda's annual 4th of July parade. Music lovers will have their pick of music from the East Bay Banjo Band to St. Gabriel's Brass Band to our very own Orinda Idol singers.

The parade begins at 10 a.m. and will travel from the south side of Orinda (see parade route on page 12), under the freeway and over to the north side, ending at the Orinda Community Center Park at approximately 11:30 a.m.

Sponsored by the Orinda Association in partnership with the Orinda Community

Foundation, the day's festivities begin at 7:30 a.m. with the Roadrunners' Pancake breakfast followed by the Roadrunners' Fun Run and Haley's Run for a Reason. Participants can choose between a 2-mile run/walk or a 5-mile run through scenic parts of Orinda and EBMUD watershed.

Immediately following the parade, a host of fun activities, including a wonderful concert, will take place in the Orinda Community Park.

For the complete schedule of activities, the parade route, and road closures, go to www.orindaassociation.org or call 925-254-0800.

– Sally Hogarty, Editor

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Over 1,000 Orinda households are already members of the OA. JOIN THEM and enjoy the satisfaction of participating in making Orinda even better for all of its residents! Visit our office on the plaza level of the library or join on-line at www.orindaassociation.org TODAY!

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March with the Band this Holiday



SALLY HOGARTY

One of the musicians in the **All Volunteer Pick-up Marching Band** entertains the crowds.

The All Volunteer Pick-up Marching Band is a fixture in the annual parade. Every year long-time marchers, music teachers and their students, and generations of the same family celebrate the 4th of July by marching in the parade. Lamorinda Music owner Colleen McCormick and her husband have been playing in the band since 1995 and now their teenage children join them.

Two rehearsals are scheduled the morning of July 4 – 8:30 a.m. for percussionists and 9 a.m. for all other musicians. Rehearsals take place behind the former Valero gas station located next to Casa Orinda.

Anyone who has an instrument that can be carried while marching is welcome. Participants should wear blue shorts or pants and a white top. American flags are also encouraged. Music will be available in advance at Lamorinda Music. Call 925-385-0963. For further information, call Mo Levich at 925-284-0961.

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Road Closures:

- The westbound Highway 24 on ramp (east side of Camino Pablo) will be closed during the parade from approximately 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- One northbound lane of Camino Pablo will remain open.
- The southbound lanes of Camino Pablo with the on/off ramps on that side of the street will remain open.
- Moraga Way from Wells Fargo Bank to the Davis Road intersection will be closed from 10:00 am - 1:00 p.m.
- A portion of Santa Maria and Orinda Way (between Santa Maria and Camino Sobrante) will be closed from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- Highway 24 access for both on and off ramps will be available at St. Stephens Drive.

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WAY TO GROW

Way to Grow

Fantastic Foliage for Adding Color, Contrast and Flare to Your Garden

by Steve & Cathy Lambert



Sometimes we, as gardeners, get fixated on adding flowering plants to bring color into our yard. Most shrubs and perennials typically flower for only three to six weeks. Sure there are some exceptions to this, but flowers are fleeting while foliage is not.

With the proper selection and placement plants, colorful foliage can increase interest and contrast in your landscape year-round. Combining plants with purple leaves, gold and chartreuse foliage, variegation of color, and even black or grey leaves can provide so many great eye-catching possibilities. As landscape designers, we have learned that the most interesting gardens are those based on form and foliage – not just on flowers. Flowers should be considered as icing on the cake, not the cake itself.

Many people believe that green is the backdrop for the garden. While green is calming and soothing to the eye, it can be boring without adding some contrasting colors to create bold accents.

One of our favorite vibrant combinations is mixing purple foliage with plants that have chartreuse or gold leaves. The visual contrast of the dark purple and bright gold will make your garden sizzle! For example, use dark purple “Cherry Bomb” Japanese Barberry under planted with the unique grey/chartreuse Stachys “Primrose Herron” or Lambs Ears, or Weigelia “Wine and Roses” next to Spirea “Neon lights.” These combinations also work well on a small scale in pots. Try planting “Helmunds Pillar” Japanese Barberry, which has dark purple leaves and a natural columnar shape, with “Golden Crinkle leaf Oregano.” Reverse this stand out color combo by planting “Sun Pillar” Japanese Barberry (which has the same growth habit of “Helmunds Pillar” but with bright gold leaves) near any of the fabulous purple leaf Coral Bells.

Other exciting plant groupings include silver leafed plants accented by maroon or dark green foliage. The new *Pennisetum setaceum* “Fireworks” fountain grass with its bursts of maroon, plum and pink, will add some “ohhhh” and “ahhhh” to any spot in your yard especially when planted with “Silver Falls” Dicentra for an intriguing opposition of both color and growth direction. The dramatic difference of the many red hues on the upward reaching,

strap shaped leaves against the dime sized, silver, downward trailing ones is striking. *Pseudocarpus* or “Nine barks” is part of a family of shrubs that hybridizers have been spending a lot of time working on recently. The first of these hybrids we began using was the appropriately named “Diablo.” It provides plenty of contrast on its own with deep green and burgundy leaves, unique bright red stems and round clusters of small, bright white flowers with a burst of gold in their center. It is, however, very large and can grow six to eight feet in height and width. Plant breeders have now introduced several dwarf varieties. One such dwarf *Pseudocarpus* is “summer wine.” It has the same characteristics as “Diablo” but tops out at four to five feet. Another newer dwarf variety is “Coppertina,” which has a unique orange, copper glow to its new growth.

Variegated shrubs and perennials have brightly contrasting colors in and of themselves, and many of them add foliage color and contrast all year long without being in bloom. For example, the variegated foliage of “President Roosevelt” Rhododendron has striking dark green foliage with a wide yellow spray running through its center. It’s an excellent choice to brighten up a dark corner. Variegated Japanese Forest grass makes an excellent foreground plant that adds movement and magic anywhere it’s planted. Other variegated plants that do well in Orinda are creek, shrub or colored twig dogwoods. Our favorite is *Cornus spaethii*, with its dark salmon/red twigs and bright green and yellow leaves that stay on the shrub until Christmas time when they turn a translucent pink. The “Holy Grail” of variegated shrubs is *Cornus alternifolia* “Golden Shadows.” This plant glows in the sun or shade and has a unique growing pattern of horizontal branches which has earned it the common name of “The Pagoda Dogwood.” Traditionally rare to find, these are now more readily available and make an unbelievable specimen plant.

Native and drought tolerant plants often grow foliage that’s light grey to white, sometimes with fuzzy leaves to reflect the bright sunlight. Most of these require some shade in our inland climate. Since the lighter color denotes an absence of chlorophyll, they can burn in very hot sun



STEVE LAMBERT

Colorful foliage brings long-lasting variation to your garden.

where humidity is low. These light-leaved plants provide an excellent foil for bright or dark green foliage. The *Teucrium* family of plants (Germander) grows into a soft grey shrub that blooms with sky blue flowers in the middle of the winter.

Phormiums, commonly known as New Zealand Flax, come in a wonderful rainbow of colors. Their sword-shaped leaves are a delightful contrast to the mounding form of most other plants. Plant the very upright *Phormium* “Guardsman,” with its striking combination of olive green, maroon and bright pink stripes, in a sunny spot where you want to add a dramatic pop. *Phormiums* can burn out their prettiest colors if overexposed to intense heat, so a spot with morning to midday sun is preferred.

Many ornamental grasses like the *Miscanthus* or *Carex* come with colored stripes, bands or spots and are flush with contrasting blues, reds, oranges, yellows, pinks or purples. Use these colorful plants for their vertical accent in your landscape and for the seductive wave of motion they add in a breeze. A group of grasses that are more palm-like in appearance is “Cordilines.” In the past, these plants grew quite tall atop a narrow trunk. More recent introductions have a round trunk and an ultimate plant height of around three to four feet. Our favorite is Cordaline “Festival grass,” which is a dark maroon and has sweeping one inch wide, strap shaped leaves. These are amaz-

ing when planted where you can look up at them so the sunlight illuminates their leaves. Another favorite grass for a stunning contrast when combined with bright chartreuse, red or coral is “Black Mondo” grass, *Ophiopogon nigresens*. This thin-bladed, small, mound grass is without a doubt black, grows three to six inches tall and adds amazing drama when planted near light colored rocks or under pale or bright green shrubs.

Many subtropical plants that do well in Orinda also boast unbelievable color and contrast in their foliage. The large leaves of the Canna Lily come in a wide range of colors and sizes. A truly unique Canna is “Stuttgart,” which has a fun, wavy edged, deep green leaf with pure white strips of varying widths.

As with any mixed bed or border, be sure to take into account the expected growth dimensions of all plants to prevent overcrowding. Taller plants should go in the back, or middle of your border, while smaller plants can be tucked around the front and edges.

There are many more fantastic foliage plants to choose from, some with colorful flowers as a bonus. Just remember, whether your garden is in full bloom or not, you can add flare with foliage to keep it looking lovely and lively all year round!

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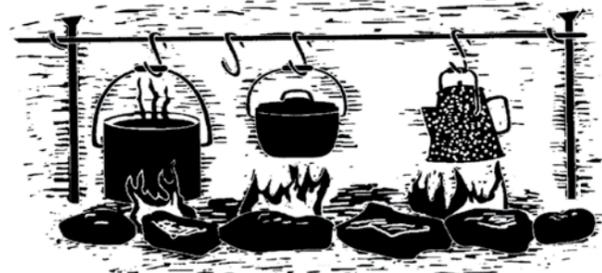
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Two Miramonte Seniors Will Attend Naval Academy

By FRAN MILLER
Staff Writer

Since its opening in 1955, Miramonte High School has produced 20 appointees to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland – an average of one appointment every three years. It is unusual then, that within the past two years alone, four Miramonte appointees have been named.

Erin Walsh and James King, Miramonte graduating class of 2010, caused a few eyebrows to be raised last year when they both claimed they looked forward to the grueling Plebe summer – the USNA's demanding period of indoctrination that challenges candidates morally, mentally and physically. By all accounts, Walsh and King emerged unscathed, and they will return for their second year. Making the same claim of anticipation for Plebe summer are this year's Miramonte appointees to USNA, Will Lavis and Tyler Barker. Induction Day is June 30, and Lavis and Barker say they're ready.

"I realize Plebe Summer will be tough," says 18-year-old Lavis, whose ultimate goal is to serve as a United States Military Officer. "But I believe that accepting the challenges will help me get through."

Lavis applied to Annapolis because "USNA represents so many things I have

believed in since I was a kid – duty, service, honor, loyalty." After attending the USNA Summer Seminar Program last summer, Lavis' decision to pursue the USNA was reaffirmed. "Having the opportunity last summer to experience at some level what even a week could be like at the Naval Academy was invaluable. Attending the Academy will give me a challenging education and the privilege of giving back to my country through service."

Lavis notes that he always wanted to one day serve his country and being accepted to the Naval Academy has turned his goal into a reality. "This has definitely jump-started it all for me," says Lavis, who hopes to compete for a spot on the USNA golf team. Lavis was a member of Miramonte's varsity golf team, and was part of the Leadership class, serving as Junior Class treasurer and ASB treasurer senior year. He is also an Eagle Scout.

Eighteen-year-old Tyler Barker was recruited to play water polo at USNA. "I will be joining the team the day I get to school, and I plan to continue for all four years assuming I continue to make the team," says Barker, who had the chance to stay with one of the members of the team during a seminal visit last spring. "I felt like I could easily fit in with a team like Navy. The Navy Water Polo team frequently places in the top four best teams in the nation,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Erin Walsh (center), a 2010 Miramonte graduate and current MIDN 3/C at the Naval Academy, welcomes incoming freshman Tyler Barker (L) and William Lavis.

and after talking with the coach, I felt like I would be given a fair chance to play for this team. It would be amazing if I could be part of a team that makes it to the NCAA championships."

Barker also looks forward to Plebe Summer. "It may sound crazy but I'm excited for it. We will be tested morally, emotionally, physically and mentally. There is not a single part of life that the Navy does not push to the limits during Plebe Summer, but it will allow us to work as a team and understand just how tough we can actually be together."

Several factors, in addition to his recruit-

ment for water polo, played into Barker's decision to attend USNA. "Most important was the education I will be receiving at the Academy; I plan to major in aeronautical engineering, and the Naval Academy is the top aeronautical school in the nation which gives me confidence that I will be well educated for any engineering job."

He also looks forward to the extreme challenges. "Naval Officers are some of the best people in the world, and I want to push my limits farther than I ever believed possible."

Barker hopes to ultimately become a fighter pilot or join the Navy SEALs.

Miramonte Cheer Team Brings Home Third Place Trophy

By MARY REQUA
Contributing Writer

Miramonte High School's Cheer Team participated in the United Spirit Association National Cheer and Dance Competition in Anaheim, California in March. There were 11 high schools that competed in the small novice division, and Miramonte brought home a third place trophy after tying for first in the preliminaries.

Over 7,000 cheerleaders from all over the United States attended this three-day event. In order to participate in the national championships, Miramonte had to qualify at regional competitions in January and February. Rebecca George, Miramonte's cheer coach and biology teacher stated, "I

am extremely proud of this year's team and what they have accomplished. When we started the season back in July, eight of the 12 members of the team had never cheered before. For them to walk out on a national stage and bring home third place is absolutely amazing. I can't put it into words."

This dedicated, enthusiastic group of athletes works from July through April each year to support and inspire all of Miramonte's sports teams to achieve their goals. They also strive to represent MHS excellence as strong competitors in the national cheer community.

The team thanks the community for their generous support including the Miramonte Boosters' Club, Orinda Safeway, and Pizza Antica in Lafayette.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Miramonte High School's Award-winning cheer team.

Orinda Arts Council's "Arts in Bloom" Takes Place July 19

The Orinda Arts Council's annual visual arts faire and Orinda Idol concert takes place July 19 beginning at 5 p.m. at the Orinda Community Center Park. Celebrating Orinda's visual and performing arts, the event benefits the Orinda Arts Council.

At 5 p.m., visual artists will have exhibits and work for sale including paintings, drawings, sculpture, jewelry and decorative art. There will be children's arts and crafts activities and Loard's Ice Cream will be on hand to sweeten the event even more.

At 6:30 p.m., the Orinda Community Center Auxiliary's Concerts-in-the-Park begins featuring finalists in this year's Orinda Idol contest.

Families are encouraged to bring a picnic and enjoy the festivities while supporting the Orinda Arts Council.

– Sally Hogarty, Editor

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SCOUTS

Orinda Brownies Participate in Relay for Life

By LEANNE MARIE FRANCISCO
Relay Participant

Pleasant Hill's Second Annual Relay for Life event was held recently at Pleasant Hill Middle School. Relay for Life is a 24-hour event, where teams of people of all ages raise money for the American Cancer Society, as well as raise cancer awareness.

At the beginning of the event, we celebrated cancer survivors with a "Survivor Lap." A survivor is anyone who has ever heard the words "You have cancer." Throughout the day, there were many events for kids and fun music and entertainment. After sunset, the Luminaria Ceremony began, where we remembered those who have lost their battle with cancer or those who are still fighting this disease.

The Brownie Troop from Glorietta Elementary in Orinda played a very special part in this year's ceremony. Dr. Tiffany Svahn, breast cancer specialist of Diablo Valley Oncology, introduced the girls and they serenaded us with a few songs to open up the ceremony. It was a very sweet and cute touch that lightened our hearts. The track was lined with luminaria bags that were decorated in memory of, in honor of, or in support of their loved one; some of which were decorated by the Brownie Troop. They even used some of their money raised from Girl Scout cookie sales to buy art supplies to do so... very thoughtful! The luminaria bags were lit up by glow sticks (also with the help of the Brownie Troop) and they illuminated the field as we walked a silent lap in remembrance. On Sunday



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Brownie Troop from Glorietta Elementary School tries to stay warm during a recent Relay for Life in Pleasant Hill.

morning, after hours and miles of walking, there was a Fight Back Ceremony, where we found out how much we have raised to date and how we can all fight back as a community against cancer.

This was my 5th Relay since 2009 and each event is always an indescribable experience. There is something unique about being in a place where you are surrounded by people who are all there for the same reasons - we were all there because we have been touched by cancer and we want to see an end to cancer in our lifetime. You can feel the strength and hope in the air. I

was blown away by all the participants that never stopped and walked for miles and miles... a few kids beat their own goal of walking a marathon (26 miles), one of the boys walked 116 laps.

On July 9, Relay for Life comes to Orinda for the first time. The event begins at 10 a.m. at the former Pine Grove School at 12 Altarinda Rd. and continues through July 10.

For more information and to donate to this wonderful fundraising event, call Carissa Crader at 925-519-2192 or email her at Carissa.crader@cancer.org.

Troop 303 Inducts Two New Eagle Scouts

By KIM WOLFE
Contributing Writer

Chris Perry, a Miramonte senior, and Austin Wolfe, a Miramonte freshman, earned the highest advancement rank in Scouting by fulfilling requirements in the areas of leadership, service and outdoor skills. In addition, an Eagle Scout must have earned at least 21 merit badges and organized and led a service project benefiting his community. Perry and Wolfe each led a project benefiting the elementary school where they began scouting as a Tiger Cub.

Perry's Eagle Scout Project provided Del Rey Elementary School with a reconstructed and safer sandbox in the main playground area. Perry tore down the existing splintered wood structure and replaced it with a cement structure that included a water drainage system. He then added synthetic wood panels on top of the walls for a comfortable and aesthetic place to sit. New sand was poured into the sandbox, replacing the rock and dirt originally found.

Wolfe designed and led members of Troop 303 in the construction of an attraction for the Sleepy Hollow Elementary School Pumpkin Patch Carnival. The attraction, a 21-foot race track and fleet of 16 Halloween-themed race cars, was designed to provide the youngest members of the school community an opportunity to be successful in an exciting non-skill based competition against older students. Austin donated the race game to the Sleepy Hollow Parents' Club.

Chartered by the Rotary Club of Orinda, Troop 303 has been providing boys with a variety of hiking, camping, community service and leadership opportunities for over 45 years.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Miramonte senior Chris Perry (L) and freshman Austin Wolfe are Troop 303's newest Eagle Scouts.

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Orinda Family Winds Down Year in China and Prepares for Home

By JULIE MCCORMACK
Contributing Writer

This is the final article in a series written by Orinda resident Julie McCormack. She, her husband and two young children have been living in Chengdu, China since August of 2010.

Recently I had a conversation with another American mom (and international schoolteacher here) from the Midwest about how, after eight months in China, things that were once noteworthy don't surprise us anymore and are now almost normal. We don't bat an eye when

locals drop trash on the street, little kids with an open seam at the bottom of their pants squat down to pee on the street, or someone drives down the wrong side of the road because it's convenient. While we do not spit or cut in line, these actions barely elicit a double take from the kids or us. We have become accustomed to the nuances of life here and only when family or friends come to visit, do we take notice.

I've also gained insight into why the Chinese do many of the baffling things they do. I no longer throw up my hands when I witness locals mopping the sidewalk outside a building or their store. It used to seem like such a *Sisyphian* task, but now I know that those children with the open seams regularly pee on the streets and many locals spit on them, too. In addition, China has over 1.3 billion people and, in order to maintain stability, they need to employ these people. Hence full employment leads to many jobs here that would not be jobs at home.

In April, our friends Clay and Lisa Siemsen and their kids, Lucas and Arabelle, from Orinda visited us, and we embarked on a five day trip to the Sichuan mountains and the Tibetan village of Jiaju. Jiaju is a picturesque eco-village perched on the side of a mountain with terraced mustard and other fields. Jiaju still moves to a different rhythm: cows pull handmade wooden plows, crude irrigation systems water the fields, and a 7-year-old boy we met walked one hour each way to his primary school. Clay, Lisa, Michael and I took a couple of long walks around the village and into the hills. We allowed our four kids, ranging from age 7 to 10, to explore on their own, and they proceeded to construct a dam, waterfall and water diversion project. Accom-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Michael Roemer, Julie McCormack with their children Conor and Erin will soon be returning to life in Orinda.

modations and food were basic, but colorful and clean. Our Tibetan hosts cooked tasty food and spoke Mandarin. The Tibetans in this area are the Gyarong Tibetans – different from the Khampa Tibetans who also reside in Sichuan, Yunnan and Qinghai provinces. Although this area is not in the Tibetan Autonomous Region – what the Chinese call Tibet – it is still a sensitive area to visit. We found out that it was particularly delicate at this time because the Tibetan New Year had just passed and the 60th anniversary of China's annexation of Tibet was in May.

On our way there, we had to stop at a Public Security Bureau (PSB) checkpoint. All of us had to get out of the car and the PSB employees took our passports. There were a couple of guards with automatic weapons and stern expressions who made us uneasy. Our driver began frantically negotiating with the guards. We didn't know what was going on as they were speaking Sichuan dialect, but we guessed it wasn't good. We tried to keep the kids away from the guards with automatic weapons. Eventually, one of the younger guards, who didn't have a gun, smiled and said we needed to wait a little while, then we could be on our way.

Finally, they called us over and asked all of us to sign our names in a logbook where they'd filled in our passport details. We signed our names and then Conor and Erin, who'd been speaking to them in Chinese, wrote their Chinese names. This elicited much attention and soon everyone was in a good mood. Then Lucas wanted to sign his name in Chinese. One of the female guards pulled out her camera and began snapping away. It has always been my experience in China that a foreigner can go a long way by speaking Mandarin and learning about Chinese culture. The Chinese are always impressed that a *lao wai* (old foreigners, as they like to call us) has taken the time to learn their language and culture and are

quickly endeared to you.

We loved having the Siemens visit us, and they did their part to compliment our kids on their Mandarin. Lisa, who is Chinese and was born in Hong Kong, quickly asked Erin to translate for her and to correct her Mandarin (as Lisa speaks Cantonese). Erin jumped on the task enthusiastically. Then, when we were back in Chengdu, the Siemens went with Michael to pick the kids up at school one day and on the way home, Clay asked Conor if he realized how amazing it was for a 10 year old to get around on his own, using another language, in a city of 10 million people? We realized that although our kids have lived here for 8-1/2 months, their palates are still American, and we were all fascinated by tiny, 7-year-old Arabelle Siemsen who kept ordering foods like pig knuckle soup and small barbecued quail on a stick. Arabelle likes bones and gristle and Lisa told us that she has been training her kids' palates since birth!

We have recently started to give Conor and Erin more freedom and independence. They have come home from school on their own a couple of times without a problem.

They walk places in our neighborhood on their own, and we send them to purchase produce at nearby fruit and vegetable markets. Sometimes Michael and I feel we are being remiss in our parenting, but we are comfortable and, more importantly, the kids are comfortable with this newfound freedom. Both Michael and I feel that China is safer than the U.S. Although Chengdu is a city of 10 million, it feels as safe as Orinda.

We still get a lot of flak from Conor about his Chinese homework. He regularly tries to avoid doing it, and it usually requires my having a brief conference with his teacher to translate the handwritten homework sheet. However, Lisa Siemsen noticed that one day when Erin asked, "Who misses Glorietta?" Conor raised his hand, but then followed by saying, "I like Chengdu Waldorf, too." Eight months ago I never dreamed those words would pass his lips.

Our time in Chengdu is winding down. We have often discussed what we will miss in Chengdu. Michael and I will not miss the grey skies, pollution or traffic. Nor will I miss cooking in our tiny kitchen, grocery shopping without a car or bike, and no yard.

However, we will all miss our friends. I will also miss my almost daily lunch of noodles for 6 yuan (90 cents), speaking Mandarin, and continuing to learn the subtleties of this challenging language and the diversity of folks we have met here. One of Michael's favorite Chinese expressions is *man zou* (go slowly) which shopkeepers, restaurant owners and taxi drivers invariably say to us as we depart. As we leave this amazing, frustrating, challenging and interesting, but never dull country, I will say to our friends and community, "*man zou!*"



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Village Players**
Presents

by Norman Barasch and Carroll Moore
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**Fridays and Saturdays, at 8:30 p.m.
July 15 through August 6
Sunday, July 24, 4:00 p.m.
Thursday, August 4, 8:00 p.m.**

**At the Outdoor Theater,
Orinda Community Center Park,
26 Orinda Way (Across from Rite Aid).**

Regular admission \$16, Discount admission \$8
Season Tickets: \$35 regular, \$21 discount tickets

Orinda Starlight Village Players,
P.O. Box 204, Orinda, CA 94563
www.orsvp.org
Tickets at Box Office or call 925-528-9225 or email info@orsvp.org

Starlight Dinner Theater Offer
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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

JULY

- 1 **Moraga Art Gallery** presents *Off the Wheel, Off the Canvas* through August 13, featuring gallery member Donna Arganbright's acrylic paintings and Orinda artist Sharon Tama's original stoneware, 570 Center Street. Visit www.moragaartgallery.com.
 - 4 **Annual Fourth of July Celebration** begins with a pancake breakfast, 7:30 to 10 a.m. at Orinda Community Center, with flag-raising ceremony at 7:55 a.m. followed by Roadrunners' Fun Run and Haley's Run for a Reason. Parade starts at 10 a.m. (see parade route, p. 12). The celebration continues at the park with games, food booths, petting zoo and blues music by the Bob Claire Orchestra. Call 254-0800 or visit www.orindaassociation.org.
 - 5 **Concerts-In-the-Park** features the rock/pop sounds of Pacific Coast at Orinda Community Park, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Bring a blanket and a picnic. Free.
 - 6 **California Shakespeare Theater** presents *The Verona Project* through July 31. The original hybrid of play and rock concert was inspired in part by Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and features an 8-person acting band. At the Bruns Amphitheater, 100 California Shakespeare Way (formerly Gateway Boulevard). Call 510-548-9666 or visit www.calshakes.org.
 - 7 **The Summer Music Series** at Orinda Theatre Square presents Bob Athayde and Friends' Quartet from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Enjoy jazz music while shopping or dining at the square. Visit www.orindatheatresquare.com/events.
 - 12 **Concerts-In-the-Park** features the classic rock band Stone Soup at Orinda Community Park, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Bring a blanket and picnic. Free.
 - 13 **Second Wednesday Book Group** will read and discuss *The Unit* by Ninni Holmqvist at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, 3 p.m. Call 254-7606. New members welcome.
 - 15 **Orinda Starlight Village Players** presents the hilarious comedy *Send Me No Flowers* by Norman Barasch and Carroll Moore 8:30 p.m. at the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater. Fridays and Saturdays through August 6 and Sunday July 24 and Thursday August 4. Call 925-528-9225 or www.orsvp.org for information.
 - 19 **World Affairs Book Group** will read and discuss *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World* by Niall Ferguson at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, 3 p.m. Call 254-7606. New members welcome.
- Arts in Bloom in the Park**, presented by Orinda Community Center Auxiliary, features art exhibits and sales, silent auction, arts and crafts activities for kids, hot dogs and ice cream, Orinda Community Park, 5 p.m. Orinda Idol 2011 finalists (grades K-12) will perform at 6:30 p.m. Visit www.OrindaArtsCouncil.org.
- 26 **Concerts-In-the-Park** features the Celtic music of Pladdohg at Orinda Community Park, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Bring a blanket and picnic. Free.
 - 31 **Opera in the Park**, presented by Orinda Rotary, Orinda Community Park, 4 to 6 p.m.

AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified. Please note the library will be closed July 3 and 4 for the Independence Day holiday.

- The Summer Reading Program** takes the theme *One World, Many Stories* and has programs for babies, kids, teens and adults and special events throughout the summer. Visit ccclib.org.
- 2 **Saturday Morning Live**, storytime for 3- to 5-year-olds and their caregivers, Picture Book Area, 11 to 11:30 a.m. Also July 9, 16, 23 and 30.
 - 4 **Book Sale** hosted by Friends of the Library, Orinda Library Plaza, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 - 5 **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. Drop-ins welcome, but limit attendance to once per week. Also July 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26 and 27.
 - 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 July 12, 19 and 26.
 - 6 **Paws to Read**, children in grades 1-5 can practice their reading with a friendly dog, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Also July 13, 20 and 27. Register at the library or call 254-2184.
 - 15 **Mystery Book Club** members discuss their favorite genre, Tutoring Room, 3 to 4:30 p.m. This month's book is *Case Histories* by Kate Atkinson.
 - 16 **Weekend Paws to Read**, children can practice their reading in 20-minute sessions with a friendly dog, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Also July 30. Register at the library or call 254-2184.
 - 27 **Eastern Strings: Al'Azifoon Plays Music of the Arab World**, all ages, 6:45 to 7:45 p.m.
 - 28 **Storytelling for Adults**, hosted by the Contra Costa Tale Spinners, share your own story or just come to listen, 7 to 9 p.m.

CLUB MEETINGS

- Diablo Star Chapter #214**, Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 p.m., Orinda Masonic Center. Contact Karen Seaborn, 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, 253-1997.
- Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition**, every third Wednesday, 10 to 1:30 a.m. at Orinda City Hall Sarge Littlehale Room, and 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Supervisor Uilkema's office, 3338 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Call 925-687-8844, ext. 227.
- Lamorinda Sirs** for retired men. Second Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. Luncheon speakers plus golf, tennis, bocce, bridge and astronomy. Call Pete Giers, 254-4667.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**. Every Friday, 7 a.m., Postino's, 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, noon, Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, 254-2222.
- Orinda Hiking Club**. Please visit our website at www.orindahiking.org or call 253-2465 for schedule of upcoming hikes.
- Orinda Historical Society**. Third Wednesday, 7 to 9 p.m., Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, 254-1353.
- Orinda Job's Daughters**. First and third Monday, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 283-7176.
- Orinda Juniors** community service group. First Tuesday, September to June, 7 p.m. Contact Diane Petek and Amy Campbell at orinda.juniors@yahoo.com for location.
- Orinda/Tabor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation**. Fourth Thursday, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.
- Orinda Association**. Second Monday, 7:15 p.m., Orinda Library, May Room, 254-0800.
- Orinda Teen Advisory Council**. Second Wednesday, 4 p.m., Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. For information, email orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com.

—Calendar continues next column—

Orinda Starlight's *Send Me No Flowers*

DAVID DIERKS

Orinda Starlight Village Players first show of the season was Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*. Seen here from the cast are (R-L) Marian Simpson, Kelly Hansen, Al Guaraglia, Malcolm Cowler, Mark Barry, David Weiner, and Babette Bilger.

By DAVID DIERKS
Staff Writer

Orinda Starlight Village Players' (OrSVP) second show of their 29th season will be Norman Barasch and Carroll Moore's comedy *Send Me No Flowers*. The show centers on George (played by Shawn Bonnington), a hypochondriac who overhears a conversation his doctor (played by Mark Barry) is having about a dying patient and assumes the conversation is about him. George decides that he must make plans to take care of his wife, Judy (played by Jill Gelster), after he is gone. What ensues is one misunderstanding after another.

The director, Geotty Chappel, has wanted to do this play for many years. He talked with Chris Constantouros about playing

the part of George's neighbor, Arnold, over 17 years ago, but Constantouros had family commitments and was unavailable for many years. Chappel decided this year that he was finally going to do the play, and out of the blue, Constantouros contacted the theater to see what was on the schedule for this summer. "It seems miraculous. I've always wanted to see Chris do this part," said Chappel.

The cast also includes Jim Fritz, Charlie Guitron, Barry Hunau, Josette Canilao, and Ken Sollazzo.

The show runs July 15 through August 6 on Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:30 p.m. Also, Sunday, July 24, at 4 p.m. and Thursday, August 4, at 8 p.m. For more information, visit www.orsvp.org or call 925-528-9225.

Cal Shakes Debuts *The Verona Project* – A Play and Concert in One

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY
Staff Writer

Nationally acclaimed director Amanda Dehnert will make her California Shakespeare Theater debut with her World Premiere *The Verona Project*, a brand-new hybrid of play and concert, inspired in part by Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* in July at the Bruns Amphitheater. With original text and music by Dehnert, the show runs July 6 through July 31.

The Verona Project features a band — composed of eight actors playing over 20 instruments, in a hybrid of theater and rock concert that marries Shakespeare to fairy tales to real life.

According to Cal Shakes representatives, *The Verona Project's* plot revolves around childhood best friends Proteus and Valentine; Julia, the girl who comes between



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Verona Project is up next at Cal Shakes.

them; the princely Silvio who complicates everyone's story; and the truth-seeking, [SEE CAL SHAKES page 18]

Orinda Woman's Club. Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon, call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881.
Parents of Orinda Individuals in Special Education (POISE) holds regular meetings and events. Contact info@orindapoise.org or visit www.orindapoise.org.

CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

- Acalanes Union High School District**. First and third Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette.
- City Council**. First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.cityoforinda.org.
- Historic Landmarks Committee**. Fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room. Call 925-788-7323.
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District**. Third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.
- Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**. Second Monday, 4 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road. For the latest listing of dates, please check the website at www.orindaschools.org.
- 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

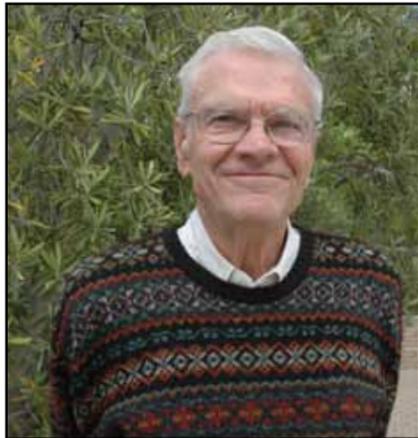
BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 20

several locations within a given property. Testing reveals texture, Ph content and conductivity.

"I am interested in gardeners doing their own composting. There is a food web underground, with fungi and bacteria primary decomposers. In essence there is a whole web of predators and a healthy food web below makes a healthy habitat for plants. The soil speaks to us and it says to us, "If we do not eat, no one eats. After all, photosynthesis and decomposition are the foundation of life on earth," says Strong.

More and more people are focusing on organic and sustainable farming. Organic is defined as without chemicals. One can apply for certification after three years of no pesticide use and be deemed organic. "What constitutes 'sustainable' is being defined. This process includes examining the carbon footprint and how far goods must be transported to market. The first step to sustainability was recognizing the impact of pesticides on human health and the second step is to recognize the health of the planet. We are now recognizing the value of preserving biodiversity and habitat," adds Strong.



VALERIE HOTZ

Richard Strong's Voice of the Soil works with gardeners, farmers and developers.

A longtime Orinda resident who built his own home here, Strong earned his bachelor's degree at U.C. Berkeley, did a tour of duty in the Korean War, undertaking soils work at U.C. Davis when he returned. He studied animal science at Fresno State University. In addition to owning and managing Voice of the Soil, Strong also serves as a consultant to Brookside Laboratories. "I like to determine the history of soil and how it got there. Roots will tell you where they are feeding and where the water source is located. Watering is the biggest problem clients have here because of the clay soil. There is low infiltration rates in these heavy clay soils, so determining proper irrigation is very important," points out Strong.

He advises the best way to increase infiltration of clay soil is to build up the soil with organic matter. "If roots get deep, the plant will draw on the nutrients in the soil much more efficiently, and this is the great value of drip irrigation. It allows the roots to reach very deeply into the soil for those nutrients. In contrast, if watering is too shallow, the roots concentrate and are more likely to develop fungi as a result," says Strong, who enjoys clients who are very interested in learning more about and have a passion about their garden.

Strong is involved in pro bono work developing community gardens in areas where funding is scarce and involving families and youth is a priority. He points out that the tie to animals and the soil is very important to humans. "There is a lot of enthusiasm for the Olive Festival at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area and the Farmers' Market in Orinda. These are excellent developments," says Strong. He is known to give informative talks at the Ecology Center in Berkeley.

For more information about Voice of the Soil, or to get information about the amazing U.C. Davis soil map, call Richard Strong at 254-7198 or bump him an email at voiceofthesoil@gmail.com.

Move of the Month

Tricep Dips Bench and Ball: For great tank top arms!



Position your hands shoulder width apart on a secured bench or stable chair and heels on a stability ball.

Move your bottom in front of the bench.

Straighten out your arms and keep a little bend in your elbows in order to always keep tension on your triceps and off your elbow joints.

Now slowly bend at your elbows and lower your upper body down towards the floor until your arms are at about a 90 degree angle. Be sure to keep your back close to the bench.

Once you reach the bottom of the movement, slowly press off with your hands, and push yourself straight back up to the starting position.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

Business Buzz
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Author Ginger Wadsworth

Several years ago Orinda author Ginger Wadsworth realized the 100th Anniversary of the Girl Scouts would take place on March 12, 2012 and having a lifelong appreciation for the efforts of the founder, Juliette Gordon Low, Wadsworth began researching and writing, *First Girl Scout*, due to be released on December 6. This publication is the 25th book authored by Wadsworth, who writes about science, nature and biographies for the 9-12 year-old age group.

With access to the library at the Girl Scouts national headquarters in New York, as well as the abundant resources at Low's home in Savannah, Georgia – an historic landmark – Wadsworth conducted thorough research to bring this story of an amazing and dedicated woman to youngsters.

Reviewing letters, diaries and photographs, as well as Low's art (she was an artist as well), Wadsworth became even more inspired about the simple gift of friendship that Low promoted. "My husband, Bill, was in charge of photo acquisitions for the book. We travel the country together doing research for my books, and he is always my first editor," smiles Wadsworth. The couple moved to Orinda in 1980 and have two adult sons, Mark and Dan, both graduates of Miramonte High School.

First Girl Scout begins with Low's birth a few days before the outbreak of the Civil War. Her father was a southerner and her mother from the north. She grew up with an unusual dynamic of having family members who fought for both the Union and Confederate armies. Her father survived the war, but naturally many wounds remained to be healed. Low lived in a time when food was scarce. As Wadsworth points out, Low's lifespan encompassed three wars, including

the Civil War, the Spanish American, and World War I.

To learn about the amazing life and many contributions of Juliette Gordon Low, pick up your copy of *First Girl Scout* from Orinda Books after December 6. It is an excellent gift for that young girl on your list. For more information about Ginger Wadsworth or to coordinate a custom presentation, visit her website at www.gingerwadsworth.com

Working out of her home office that is shared with two golden retrievers, Willa and Scout, Wadsworth enjoys writing about the environment and bringing an awareness of our natural resources to children, especially to those in urban areas who may not have an opportunity to walk along a beach or hike Yosemite. A native Californian, she also writes about young pioneers of the west who traveled by covered wagon. Wadsworth is available for custom presentations to all age groups, from college students to pre-school groups. She enjoys participating in the Paws to Read program with Willa and Scout, who serve as therapy dogs as well.

Named to the Smithsonian Best Books of 2009, *Camping with the President* is a delightful read about a camping trip to Yosemite, the nation's third oldest national park, taken by John Muir with then President Theodore Roosevelt. The three nights, four day trip in 1903 had a profound effect on President Roosevelt, influencing his commitment to establish additional national



VALERIE HOTZ
 Author Ginger Wadsworth recently completed a book on the first girl scout, Juliette Gordon Low.

parks and monuments in the United States during his administration.

River Discoveries introduces readers to 13 river creatures, including the moose, mountain lion, osprey, river otter, beaver and catfish. It is the third in a series about ecological zones, the other titles being *Tundra Discoveries* and *Desert Discoveries*. Interestingly, *River Discoveries* is beautifully illustrated by Moraga *plein air* artist, Paul Kratter.

Voice of the Soil

Richard Strong's business, Voice of the Soil, serves gardeners, farmers and developers by testing organic matter of soils. Since soils are complex and each person's soil can be very different depending on the location, it is advisable to auger in

[SEE BUZZ page 19]

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