

# THE ORINDA NEWS

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## Tippi Hedren and *The Birds* Flock to Orinda to Launch Independent Film Festival

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

The California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF) brought the stars back to Orinda with its screening of Hitchcock's 1963 thriller *The Birds* on September 18 at

the Orinda Theater. The star of that flick, Tippi Hedren, was in attendance to cut the ribbon on the festival's first event in Orinda and to be the first to have her own star in the walkway outside the theater, a tradition the festival will continue for subsequent films. Hedren also graciously hosted a question

and answer session before the film and also entertained guests at a dinner at Shelby's in Theatre Square prior to the screening.

"I recall reading the scene where my character walks up the stairs, opens the door, and is attacked by birds," says the gracious actress. "I asked Hitchcock how

he was going to do the scene, and he told me he'd use mechanical birds, which was a relief to me. But when the day came for filming that scene, he sent the assistant director to tell me that they would be using real birds. I was terrified." According to He-

[SEE FILM page 8]

## Historical Exhibit a Big Hit at Classic Car Show



SALLY HOGARTY  
Eight-year-old Demetri Counelis stands in front of his 1932 Model T-Deuce custom built club car golf cart.

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

The fifth annual Classic Car Show was a splendid event bringing hundreds of car enthusiasts to ogle 132 classic cars and, new this year, classic and custom motorcycles. Sponsored by Orinda Motors and coordinated by Chip Herman, the event on September 19, raised over \$25,000 for the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program, which provides rides for Orinda seniors to various appointments, and for the Educational Foundation of Orinda.

"We try to do something new each year," says car show co-founder and Orinda Motors' service manager John Vanek. "In addition to having the motorcycles, I thought it would be great to do something involving the history of Orinda. I've always been fascinated by the history of this area and proposed the project to the Orinda Historical Society." The Historical Society happily joined in and together they created

a fascinating exhibit in Orinda Motors' main repair shop. Lucy Hupp Williams and Teresa Long of the Historical Society put together large photos of Orinda and Vanek found cars that would have been driven during that period. The result was "Orinda Through the Years," an educational and fun exhibit for residents of all ages. "We even had a 1930's vintage tractor," adds Vanek. Also part of the exhibit was Tom Fellner's 1947 Willy's Woody and George Grover's 1933 Continental Ace. "I'm sure the exhibit was like a trip back in time for our older residents and, hopefully, was very educational for the young people who attended," Vanek says.

Vanek and Orinda Motors believe strongly in giving back to the community they serve. For many years, the company has sponsored a variety of fundraising events for local schools and is the main sponsor of

[SEE CAR SHOW page 6]

## City of Orinda Deals With Budget Woes

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

The economic crisis and housing disaster has the City of Orinda making some tough decisions. According to City Manager Janet Keeter, the city can usually count on an assessed value growth rate of approximately 7 percent. But with foreclosures and decreased activity in the local housing market, analysts have predicted a growth rate of only 1.6 percent. "That's a significant difference in anticipated revenue," says Keeter. While subsequent reports have shown a potentially higher growth rate, it will still not match the 7 percent originally projected.

In addition, the State of California, under Proposition 1A, has the ability to borrow money from cities for up to three years

[SEE BUDGET page 7]

## New Info on Student's Death



Shocking mistake in cause of death of popular Miramonte student. See news brief on page 4.

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VISUAL ARTS

# A Family Show: Flowering Metaphors, Shey-Ye Landscapes, and a Carved Tufa

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

There's a family of artists in the East Bay known for printmaking, still life painting, flora and fauna painting, sculpting with tufa, prolific writing, Shey-Ye painting and fine ceramics – and that's just for starters. Beginning Thursday, October 1, you can see why Mei-Yu Lo, Mei-Rung Huang and Wayne Wright filled the entire Orinda Library Gallery without even breaking a sweat!

Mei-Rung Huang lives in Orinda, while her sister and brother-in-law, Mei-Yu Lo

and Wayne Wright live in El Cerrito. There is considerable diversity in their styles. Lo's (mei-yu.com) acrylic paintings span still life to abstract subject matter whereas Huang's (www.meirung.com) approach with acrylics is more representational, focusing on flora and fauna subjects – see Alight (acrylic, 40 x 30). Huang's ceramic pieces include fish-inspired teapots as well as porcupine-shaped vessels.

Wright's (www.waynewright.biz) fascination with painted prints has led him to explore everything from tracings, photo-silkscreen, photo-lithography, various forms of electrostatics and thermoplastic transfer, and at present giclee or digital-processed pigment printing to create multiple generations of his images. For sculpture, he makes molds and casts artificial tufa (calcium carbonate) from cement, sand and vermiculite, which he then sculpts before it fully sets up.

The sisters come from a very artistic family in Taiwan -- both parents were artists. As a child, Huang remembers sitting next to her mother as she studied art; later she studied art herself – Chinese painting in Taiwan and Western painting media and ceramics at the University of Oregon.

## “Angels, Demons and Fools” Exhibit at Orinda Community Church

An exhibition of paintings by Karl Schonborn challenges the viewer to ask whether the icons of our culture are heroic, villainous or foolish. “One person's hero is often another's villain or fool,” says Schonborn. “Some have spent parts of their lives being each of the three.” Make your own choice and see if the person next to you agrees. The exhibit runs through November 1 at the Orinda Community Church sanctuary, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda. Call 254-1348.



Huang experiences creating art as a way of meditation – each form (painting and ceramics) allowing self-expression in different ways. Her work stays fresh because she never repeats the same form exactly. She also visits museums and galleries, takes occasional workshops and classes, and is a member of the Valley Art Gallery in Walnut Creek. Her favorite green or oolong teas actually make their way into the lyrical teapots she creates in her studio – they don't just live on a shelf!

Lo's acrylic paintings on canvas reflect her intention of using landscape to express feeling and emotion; precise optical images don't interest her. Simplification, semi-abstractness, high contrast color and exaggerated brush strokes hold her interest. She often uses fruit still lifes as a metaphor to show a certain kind of personality – there could be two pieces of fruit sitting there, talking to each other such as in “Conversation” (42 x 38). This reflects the Chinese tradition of using simple subjects as metaphors for more complicated forms and feelings. The mood of the piece is important to her, as is the symbolism, a hallmark of Asian art. She hopes her work provides a window to these reflections so each person viewing the piece sees whatever it evokes for them. Recurring themes of calmness, tranquility and peacefulness pervade her work, especially the sense of being one with nature. She teaches at the El Cerrito Community Center; see www.el-cerrito.org/recreation/art\_center.html for more information.

Wright explains that a number of years ago some concrete sculptors began making their own tufa, inspired by the “tufa towers” or calcium-carbonate spires and knobs formed by interaction of freshwater springs and alkaline lake water at Mono Lake – see www.parks.ca.gov. It's been part of the art scene for over 30 years now and used to be called vermiculite concrete. After he creates his own tufa, he then cuts wood and combines it with the cast and sculpted tufa, as in his piece “Three Bottles” (23 x

11 x 5).

Huang believes art invites you to look at an image; the image then invites your mind to wander someplace new – like entering a dream – taking you out of your troubles to somewhere different, beautiful. Lo says that art is a sanctuary, a place of refuge. On a community level, she feels that art reflects different cultures; it asks you to learn about each of them through compelling cultural narratives. For Wright, “Art helps us understand who or what we are; it's a conversation we are having with ourselves, whether it is images of deities, Dutch interiors and still lifes, or wild or manicured landscapes.”

Meet the family who creates all this intriguing art at a reception on Saturday, October 17, from 3 to 5 p.m. Or you can



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Mei-Rung Huang's acrylic painting “Alight” will be featured in the October show.

visit the Orinda Library Gallery during normal library hours: Mon. through Thurs. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fri. and Sat. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sun. 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at 23 Orinda Way, Orinda (Orinda Village Exit); call 925-254-2814 for directions or more information.

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

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Roger had a double knee replacement. After the surgery, he needed physical rehabilitation before returning home. We helped him regain strength and endurance. Roger is home and golfing with his friends and family.

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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

Orinda Association Looking for Nominations

It's that time of the year again. Time to think about your friends and neighbors who put in so much volunteer time to make Orinda such a wonderful community in which to live.

Nominations for the Volunteer of the Year and the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental awards will be due on December 1. The annual awards dinner will take place at the Orinda Country Club in January. Forms for nominations can be downloaded at the Orinda

Association website at [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).

Last year, Lucy Hupp Williams received the Volunteer of the Year award for her long involvement in volunteerism throughout the community. Stephen Genry, also known as the Bee Man, received the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award for his work promoting organic foods and farming as well as his volunteerism at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area.

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MEI SUN LI

The Lamorinda Spirit Van takes seniors to appointments throughout the area. From left to right: Patricia Boudoin, Audrey Eatmon, Bill Brochier, Norine Helms, Eddie Carvalho, Billie Dodge. Front Rosalee Biasatti

By MARY BRUNS  
Contributing Writer

Many Orinda residents are well aware of the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program that provides rides to local seniors. But, you may not be as familiar with the Lamorinda Spirit Van, which also serves Orinda.

You may have seen the white van spiriting about delivering older residents to the C.C. Café at the Walnut Creek Senior Center for lunch Monday through Friday and on errands to local stores and businesses, hair and medical/dental appointments in the afternoons. Rides to lunch are free. Call 280-7310 one business day ahead of

time by 11 a.m. to reserve your lunch at the C.C. Café

Rides to errands and appointments are \$3 one-way, \$6 round trip. Call 283-3534 one business day ahead of time by 1 p.m. for lunch or errands and two business days ahead of time by 1p.m. for medical/dental appointments.

Errands for Orinda residents to places in Orinda are scheduled for Thursday afternoons. We can also take Orinda residents to doctor's appointments in Orinda on Thursday afternoons; to Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill, Concord, and Martinez on Mondays and Fridays all day; and to John Muir and Kaiser in Walnut Creek during the lunch hour.

The Orinda Association

The Orinda Association is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to:

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

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## Letters to the Editor

### Need to Watch Our Leaders

I note that the MOFD union rep. said that "maybe they need to look at getting some new board members." Yes, I'm taking out of context, but a good reminder to anyone who is concerned with fiscal responsibility and possible conflicts of interest. We as citizens should be paying attention to what our elected or appointed officials are doing or not doing.

This article and those like it are timely in this economic environment and, hopefully, will lead to changes that are beneficial to the toal community.

— Chet Ferdun

### Disagree with Rudebusch

In the September issue of *The Orinda News*, Pat Rudebusch wrote a letter defending MOFD's \$242,000 pension to the outgoing fire chief. So many of the points she makes demand comment it is hard to address them all in a single letter. The first is "what public employee deserves a quarter of a million dollar pension at age 51?"

Chief Nowicki, up until three years ago, was a battalion chief earning \$150,000. What math or logic can justify a \$240,000 pension three years later? Even with the district contributing 20 percent of salary into the pension fund and employee contributing 25 percent, there is no way his \$240,000 pension could have been fully funded; it would take about \$4,000,000 to fund that level of pension for 30 years. Which raises two more questions: "What municipal employee, or any employee, can afford to put 45 percent of salary (employee plus employer) into savings and what municipal employee has built up a \$4MM nest egg by the time he is 51?" Maybe none of these questions reflect directly on Chief Nowicki or the board of MOFD, but it should be noted that in a review of other MOFD retirees' pension payments, only one person other than Chief Nowicki is getting over \$140,000. Someone "gamed the system" and the board allowed it to happen at a time when the pension plan is probably \$40MM underfunded. A final question is in response to Ms. Rudebusch's statement "The fire district does not, however, continue to pay into the fund for retirees." When the board gave Chief Nowicki an unfunded \$57,000 annual retirement bonus, where does she think that money is going to come from? The pension fairy? In the end, the taxpayers are going to have to pay for this as opposed to some other municipal need, like road repair. Is the MOFD board making other "fiscally prudent" (as their strategic plan dictates) decisions with the \$11MM of tax dollars that Orinda gives them each year?

— Steve Cohn

### Is MOFD Using Money Wisely?

In the August issue of *The Orinda News* concerning the MOFD stacking unused vacation time pay on top of 30 years of already generous pension payments, the editor asks the question, "Why do these practices still exist in our district?" One must further ask, what other practices still exist at MOFD that may be costing the tax payers vast sums of money?

A very recent report by LAFCO states that MOFD is the most expensive fire department in the county. It provides 5.5 firefighters per 10,000 residents served, while the main Contra Costa fire department, Con Fire, only needs 1.5 firefighters to service 10,000 residents.

MOFD says that Orinda needs to pay \$1,700 per household when our "equal" partner Moraga pays \$1,100. Each Orinda household pays over three times what the median household pays in Contra Costa County. Are these expenditures necessary or is MOFD spending our money simply because it has it to spend due to a three decade old Proposition 13 tax allocation formula? For example, since we have almost four times as many fire fighters per capita as our neighbors, is it necessary to staff our ambulances with firefighters costing three times what non-firefighter paramedics cost? Is anyone asking these questions? Shouldn't our City Council, which is beating the bushes for money to repair our roads, be doing so?

— Ian Baird

### Acalanes District's Permanent Tax

*The Orinda News* (September 2009 issue) provided an interesting profile of the new superintendent of the Acalanes Union High School District. Yet the newspaper could have reported on another aspect of the Acalanes district: the district's plan to make a temporary property tax go on forever. Orinda residents live in the Acalanes district.

A few years ago, the Acalanes district received voter approval to raise a property tax 122 percent -- from \$85 annually to \$189. The higher tax is set to expire in June 2011.

Recently, the Acalanes district voted to put a measure on the ballot to make the temporary tax permanent. On November 3, Orinda voters can, by a two-thirds vote, approve the permanent tax. Not too long ago, the Acalanes district voted to extend a different tax by 17 years.

Currently, the official unemployment rate in California is 11.9 percent. On July 15, *The New York Times* reported that the unofficial California unemployment rate is 20 percent.

During difficult economic times, the Acalanes district should be more considerate of local residents. The district should



have asked for a short-term extension of the \$189 tax. The district should not have asked that for a tax that goes on forever.

While good schools lead to higher property values, too much taxation can drive families from their homes, depressing property values.

Orinda's voters should reject the permanent tax.

— Richard S. Colman

### Leafblowers Annoying to Neighbors

Any longer-term resident of Orinda would certainly notice the enormous increase in neighborhood noise caused by the widespread use of gas and electric leafblowers. We've lived in Orinda 15 years, and in the past three years or so, it seems most homeowners employ a "landscaper" who visits weekly. Every one of these mobile gardeners has the backpack leafblower, and they spend from 15 to 45 minutes spewing dust and exhaust, and broadcasting that grinding shriek caused by their machines.

From inside our home, we can hear the blowers' noise emanating from homes and streets a quarter mile away. Just one single leafblower sends noise throughout the hilly topography of Orinda, permitting its uniquely irritating loudness to blanket several neighborhoods at a time. Literally dozens of households put up with just one leafblower's use.

A couple of years ago, we told our gardener to switch to rakes and brooms. We could not in good conscience subject our neighbors to such unnecessary and intrusive noise. There's simply no justification for willfully infringing on my neighbors' right to the quiet enjoyment of their property.

Friends from nearby Piedmont visited recently, and they were astonished at how loud and frequent the leafblower episodes were. Piedmont banned their use several years ago; similarly Berkeley, Santa Barbara, and numerous other communities have outlawed leaf blowers. Orinda enacted a ridiculously ineffective "noise ordinance" back in 2004 that only bans

gasoline-powered leafblowers on Sunday (but permits electric blowers on Sunday, which are nearly as loud).

Orinda permits their use Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. and on Saturday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. We often hear them outside of these hours, particularly Saturday mornings and sometimes on Sunday afternoon.

It is high time the city of Orinda moved to ban the use of these obnoxious and stress-causing machines entirely. Rakes and brooms do a fine job, don't pollute, and cost less.

— Susan and Peter Kendall

## Loudon Didn't Take Prescription Drug

It turns out 16-year-old Joe Loudon's family was right all along. Loudon did not ingest the lethal dose of the drug papaverine that the coroner listed as the cause of his death.

Papaverine, which enhances blood flow, was injected into his body after his death by staff at the Northern California Transplant Bank where Loudon's organs were donated.

In a letter to Loudon's family, Allen Brown, executive director of the transplant bank, wrote: "Blood samples used by the coroner's office were provided by the bank and those samples were drawn after the introduction of papaverine ... we take full responsibility for this finding. I want to formally apologize."

Loudon, who was a student at Miramonte High School, died following a party in Orinda on May 23 after choking on his own vomit.

Now the question remains. What did cause Loudon's death?

— Maggie Sharpe

*This information came to The Orinda News right at press time. A more extensive story will be in the next issue.*

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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 November issue are due October 5, 2009.

For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the December issue is October 15, 2009.

CHARITY BIKE RIDE

Links For Life/emc Sponsors Cruella

■ Challenge Charity Road Bike Ride

By VALERIE HOTZ  
Staff Writer

The mother of all East Bay recreational road bike rides is scheduled to roll through parts of Orinda on Saturday, October 24. If it is hills you want, it is hills you will get on this charity ride that offers both metric century and full century routes. Title sponsor Links For Life Foundation of California, a nonprofit established by Collier's International, teamed up with Alamo resident Kathleen McCormick's Endurance Multisport Connection to form an all women's multisport team, Links For Life/emc.

The Links For Life/emc Team is sponsoring the Cruella Challenge. Established in 2008, the team is made up of 50 women who compete in numerous athletic endurance events throughout California (and other parts), gets women involved in outdoor sports, and provides a safe and supportive environment for trying something new. These endurance events include century bike rides, triathlons, marathons and iron-man events. "The core of our team mission is to bring like minded women together with various levels of experience to try

new athletic challenges. The whole team is about building community and building relationships. We mentor women who are new to cycling and give back to our communities by getting more women involved in what we do," explains McCormick.

This year marks the inaugural of the Cruella Challenge, which features some of the best climbs the East Bay has to offer. The ride begins at 8 a.m. at Oak Hill Park in Alamo, and proceeds up Mt. Diablo, Pig Farm, the Three Bears, Wildcat Canyon and Grizzly Peak before ending up back at Oak Hill Park. For those who prefer the metric century (65 miles), the route omits Wildcat Canyon and Grizzly Peak in favor of traversing San Pablo Dam Road to Moraga Way and then heading back to Oak Hill Park by way of St. Mary's Road. Five designated rest stops will provide riders with Hammer Nutrition products and other delicious snacks.

Registration for the Cruella Challenge is \$70 and riders can register online at [www.sportsbaseonline.com](http://www.sportsbaseonline.com). Proceeds benefit Girls on the Run, a nonprofit that encourages preteen girls to develop self respect and a healthy lifestyle through running. The program addresses all aspects of a girl's development, including physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual well being. For more details, visit [www.girlsontherun.com](http://www.girlsontherun.com).



Links for Life rolls through Orinda October 24. Proceeds benefit Girls on the Run, a nonprofit that encourages preteen girls to develop self respect and a healthy lifestyle.

"By hosting the Cruella Challenge we are offering the cycling community another extremely challenging course, and we hope to raise our targeted goal to donate to our designated charity, Girls on the Run as a fulfillment of our mission to give back to our community," adds McCormick. Event sponsors for the Cruella Challenge include Pegasus Bicycle Works in Danville, Vaska Products, Sports Basement, Hammer Nutrition, and Yellow Wood Café in Alamo. Additional Links For Life/emc Team spon-

sors for 2009 include Saint Francis Memorial Hospital Center for Sports Medicine, Pacific International Steel, Rudy Project, Wenzel Coaching, 2Toms, Zoot and Cowboy's Fuzzy Duds.

For more information about the Links For Life/emc Team, visit the website at [www.emcteam.org](http://www.emcteam.org). For details about the Cruella Challenge, email event director Kathleen McCormick at [run4yourlife@sbcglobal.net](mailto:run4yourlife@sbcglobal.net) or call her at 925-280-1621 or visit their website at [www.emcteam.org](http://www.emcteam.org).

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◆ CAR SHOW from page 1

the Orinda Baseball Association's opening day program and the Orinda Association's 4th of July celebration.  
 In addition to "Orinda Through the Years," car enthusiasts had the opportunity to view pristine examples of automotive excellence from more recent years. "We had a wonderful response from car owners, especially those with '60s and '70s model cars," says Herman. "The center piece of our vintage race car exhibit was Steven Read's 1967 Ferrari 275 GTB Comp."



SALLY HOGARTY  
**The Orinda Historical Society and Orinda Motor's John Vanek** put together a display showing photos of Orinda at different decades with the appropriate cars displayed next to the photos.

A DJ added to the festival atmosphere with a wide variety of music and Boy Scout Troops 57 and 233 provided refreshments. The culmination of the day was a parade of cars throughout Orinda. For \$10, participants could ride in the car of their choice.  
 The event actually jump-started the day before with an elegant dinner/dance at Buchanan Field. Held at Doug Johnson's custom hangar filled with his private collection of classic cars the evening, entitled "Dancing with the Cars," included delicious food, a live auction, and dancing. Sought-after auction items included use of a vacation home in Hawaii and box seats to a Giants baseball game.  
 "We are very grateful to Chip Herman and to Orinda Motors for all they do for the community," says Seniors Around Town coordinator Eartha Newsong. "Thanks to their efforts, we can help our seniors remain in their own homes and still be a vital part of our community."

Marching to the Beat of Their Own Drum

By SALLY HOGARTY  
 Editor

Colleen and John McCormick first met when they were placed next to each other in the Cal marching band. The UC Berkeley graduates went on to make beautiful music together, not to mention two children (Emily now 17 and Scotty 14).  
 While pursuing non-music careers, the two continued to play music with the Orinda All-Volunteer Marching Band. "I was eight months pregnant with Scotty when we first marched with the group on July 4, 1995," recalls Colleen. The family has been in just about every 4th of July parade since with Emily and Scotty carrying the banner until they were old enough to play in the parade as well.  
 Colleen recently traded in her career in science for one dedicated to music when she and John opened Lamorinda Music in Lafayette this past July. "I didn't realize how much I loved being around music until I was helping the band director at Springhill Elementary in Lafayette," says Colleen. "We found this lovely space and have tried to transform it into a cozy place for people to look for music and instruments as well as a comfortable area for music students and their parents."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
**Owner Colleen McCormick and manager Janet Stroud** of Lamorinda Music.

The beautifully appointed store includes musical accessories (including jewelry, tote bags and clothing) and instruments you can buy or rent-to-own. There is a lovely lounge

area with refreshments and even a relaxing patio overlooking the creek.  
 Lamorinda Music is located at 81 Lafayette Circle (close to Chow's Restaurant). Call 925-385-0963.

2009 Orinda Idol Winners Chosen



SALLY HOGARTY  
 (L-R) **Jacqueline Garell, Neris Newton, and Amrita Newton** were thrilled to win in the newly created group competition. The Soul Sisters sang "Super Trouper" for the win.

The Orinda Theater was full of excited hopefuls, family and friends as the 2009 Orinda Idol competition came to a close on September 13. Given the plethora of talented young people, the judges certainly had a difficult time selecting the winners.  
 The 2009 Orinda Idols are:  
**K-2nd Grade: Niamh Akazawa**

**3-5th Grade: Joe Metheny**  
**Middle School: Maritza Grillo**, who also won the Audience Award  
**High School: Erika Henningsen**  
**Groups K-5th Grade: Wicked Girls (Samantha Martin and Isabel Mueller)**  
**Groups 6-12th Grade: Soul Sisters (Jacqueline Garell, Amrita Newton and Neris Newton)**

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## CERT / POLICE

## Lamorinda Cities Prepare for Disasters

By REBECCA KUNZMAN  
Contributing Writer

On Sunday, October 18, the Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) Committee and the City of Orinda will host a training drill for Lamorinda CERTs, employees of the Lamorinda cities, and the neighborhood group leaders. It will be an opportunity for Lamorinda as well as Canyon, local fire departments, the American Red Cross, and the Salvation Army to practice their response to a simulated emergency in the tri-city area.

The exercise will include setting up a Red Cross Shelter, practicing transport team skills, medical team operations, the Incident Command System, and animal sheltering with the Disaster Animal Rescue Team (DART).

The exercise will include an opportunity for organized neighborhood groups and CERTs to practice neighborhood checks using door-to-door and/or FRS radio checks and contact the city to report their status at 10 a.m.

At 11 a.m., pre-registered victims and clients will report to the Orinda Community Center for instructions. The pre-registered



SALLY HOGARTY  
CERT personnel triage "patients" during last year's drill in Moraga.

CERT participants will check-in at 12 p.m. and the simulation will take place between 1 and 4 p.m.

Residents of the area are invited to participate in the drill by volunteering to be clients and victims for the exercise. Participants will need to pre-register on the [www.lamorindacert.org](http://www.lamorindacert.org) website or contact Ken Tom: 376-0533 or email [TTKenTom@aol.com](mailto:TTKenTom@aol.com).

## ◆ BUDGET from page 1

in order to balance the state budget. The amount the state would borrow from Orinda would be \$415,000. "We are seeing our revenues decline while day-to-day expenses continue to rise," Keeter explains.

In order to deal with the disparity, the City of Orinda is trying to reduce expenses wherever possible. "We won't be able to contribute from our general fund to local organizations and events as we have in the past," says Mayor Sue Severson. "Our financial support of such things as Orinda Idol and the 4th of July festivities will have to change."

To help deal with the revenue losses, the City Council has asked city staff to look into changes in the city's investment policy. Councilmembers have expressed concern that the city's small portfolio needs to be more diversified. The Finance Advisory Committee is reviewing the issue of diversification.

The biggest expenditure for the city is its employees. The City Council has already approved a resolution for management and mid-management employees not covered by the union. In that document, employees will have 10 furlough days per year and no cost of living adjustment for the next two years. There will also be a cap on medical benefits with the city paying the lowest cost health insurance plan. If an employee wants a more expensive plan, he or she would pay the difference.

"The 10 furlough days is not a small thing," says Keeter. "It amounts to approximately a four percent cut in pay. But

the managers wanted to set an example, and this compromise is much better than having to let workers go." Keeter is currently in negotiations with Local 1 for the rest of the city employees.

According to Keeter, the \$415,000 being withheld by the state won't happen until January. In October, the City Council will consider possibly using reserve funds to address this shortfall. "We'll know more in January when December property taxes come in. Right now, we're being very conservative," says Keeter. The City Manager also noted that the city expected increased costs in 2010 for the police service contract with the Contra Costa Sheriff's department. The city is currently investigating other alternatives that would provide the same level of service at reduced cost. While some cities are hamstrung because of retirement liabilities, Keeter says Orinda doesn't have that problem. They do, however, end up paying indirectly for costly retirement plans through such agreements as the current police services contract.

Keeter and the City Council are hoping to arrange employee furlough days that will have the least impact on the public. "We're looking at closing down between Christmas and New Year's," she says. "That's a very slow time for us, and our employees would probably appreciate a little more time off over the holidays even if it is without pay."

One employee, who declined to be named in the article, thought a reduced paycheck at the holidays wasn't such a good idea.



## POLICE BLOTTER

August 2009

**False Residential Alarms:** Officers responded to 132 false alarm calls throughout the city.

**Auto Burglary** (theft from a locked vehicle): 5 incidents reported on Bates Bl., Normandy Ln., Tahos, El Toyonal and Overhill Rd.

**Commercial Burglary:** 4 incidents reported on Orinda Way, Camino Sobrante, Village Sq. and Moraga Way.

**Grand Theft** (theft of more than \$400 value): 5 incidents reported on Sandhill Ct., Fiesta Cir., Meadow View, Hacienda and Altarinda Rd.

**Petty Theft From Vehicle** (theft of less than \$400 value from an unlocked vehicle): 2 incidents reported on Meadow Ln. and Overhill Rd.

**Vandalism:** 9 incidents reported on Camino Sobrante, Altarinda Cir., 2 on Bates Bl., Spring Rd., Camino Pablo, Meadow Ln. and Moraga Way(2).

**Arrests**

**Burglary – Commercial:** 1 arrest was made on Camino Sobrante.

**Driving Under Influence:** 3 arrests were made on Crestview Dr at Valley View and Camino Pablo at Moraga Way and Rustic Way.

**Drugs – Possession of Narcotics:** 1 arrest was made on Glorietta Bl.

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

**Other - Misdemeanor:** 1 arrest was made on Camino Pablo.

**Public Nuisance:** 1 arrest was made on Orinda Way.

**Warrant Arrests:** 3 warrant arrests were made on Glorietta Bl. at Moraga Way, Bryant Way at Moraga Way and Camino Sobrante.

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving,  
Orinda Police Department

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## FESTIVAL OF TREES / LAMORINDA READS

## ◆ FILM FESTIVAL from page 1

dren, five prop men hurtled birds at her for five days to get the scene. "They made sure that everyone had up-to-date tetanus shots. The bird trainer was also very wonderful. He really watched out for his animals, and when they got tired, he'd tell Hitchcock that he had to stop using them for the day. Too bad we didn't have someone doing that for the actors," she laughs. Hedren also recalls Cary Grant visiting the set during the filming of the famous scene. "He told me that I was the bravest woman he had ever met," she adds.

The actress also says she is forever grateful to her co-star Jessica Tandy. "If it weren't for Jessica, my character would have been very unpopular," she explains. According to Hedren, Jessica was in the editing room while Hitchcock was working on a scene between her and Hedren. "It was the tea scene and Hitchcock had told me to play it very bitchy, but when Jessica saw the scene on film, she told Hitchcock that nobody was going to like me that way. Hitchcock decided she was right and, even

though we were through with filming and the set was put away, he had the set brought back and called back the actors and we re-shot the scene. It made my character much more sympathetic."

Hedren and her husband, veterinarian Martin Dinnes, now run the Shambala Animal Preserve in Southern California, the home of Michael Jackson's tigers and many other large cats. Hedren became interested in the large animals and animal rights following the filming of *Mister Kingstreet's War* (1973) when she found out that the big cats used in the production had no place to go. She purchased a parcel of land, Shambala, to establish a natural setting for retired big cats. Hedren has since won many awards for her efforts working with animals as well as her many other humanitarian causes.

"We are very happy to have the California Independent Film Festival make its home in Orinda," says Lamorinda Film and Entertainment Foundation (LFEF) board member Kate Wiley. "The festival brings lots of expertise in programming which will allow our organization to bring in other special events like the screening of *The Birds*." LFEF board member Randy Hollerschau concurs saying "Having the festival in Orinda helps us preserve and protect the legacy of our beautiful Art Deco theater for present and future generations."

CAIFF, which has been producing film festivals for 11 years, has been in Livermore for the past seven years. "We are very excited to be so embraced by the City of Orinda," says program director Beau Behan. "We really feel that the environment is right for us and the proximity to BART makes us so easily accessible to our patrons."

The Independent Film Festival's 12th season will take place April 22 - 25, 2010. Entries for the film festival are currently being accepted. Behan says the festival will announce the line-up of films in mid-February. The festival's mission is to celebrate diversity, human rights, and freedom of expression through an array of dramatic and comedic feature films, shorts and moving documentaries.

For more information, go to [www.caiff.org](http://www.caiff.org).

## Gala Festival of Trees at Blackhawk Car Museum

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

The Orinda Woman's Club will once again hold their much-anticipated annual luncheon and fashion show, featuring creations by Helen Lyall, at the Blackhawk Car Museum in Danville. This year's event takes place on November 17.

Beginning at 10:30 a.m., guests can purchase raffle tickets for the beautiful holiday gift baskets and tabletop trees on display. A sought-after raffle item will be two nights at Madrona Manor Country Inn and Restaurant in Healdsburg. It includes a buffet breakfast for two and a \$200 gift certificate as well.

Proceeds from the event will benefit CASA (Contra Costa County Appointed Special Advocates for Children), CYC (the California Youth Connection), and scholarships for women seeking to improve their lives through education. Last year, the Orinda Woman's Club raised over \$35,000 for the Monument Crisis Center,



SALLY HOGARTY  
Sue Farmer, Orinda Woman's Club member, modeled at last year's show.

the Child Abuse Prevention Council, and scholarships.

For tickets to this year's event, priced at \$85, call 925-963-6356.

Lamorinda Reads the *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

By MOYA STONE  
Staff Writer

If it's autumn it's time for Lamorinda Reads, the local spin on the ever-popular reading program, One City One Book. This year's program runs October 5 - 25 and the book of choice is *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum.

Each year, Orinda, Moraga and Lafayette libraries choose a book for the entire community to read and offer an array of library programs and special events to compliment the book. Orinda Library Senior Commu-

nity Library Manager, Caroline Gick says this year the committee set out to get kids and teens more involved in the program. "We chose a book that we could use to appeal to all age groups and maybe even get families to read together," says Gick. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was written in 1900 and is the first in the series of 14 Oz books.

The three-week program includes discussions and special events around the book including crafts for kids and a book cover art contest for grades 6-12, which will be judged by art professors from Saint Mary's College. A presentation about L. Frank Baum and the creation of the Oz books will be given at Moraga Library by author Angelica Carpenter, president of the International Wizard of Oz Fan Club. "There have been theories proposed and refuted for years about L. Frank Baum and his social, political and personal reasons for writing this book," says Gick.

The Lafayette library is working with Town Hall Theater on a stage production of *The Wizard of Oz*. The grand finale will be a screening of the classic 1939 movie, *The Wizard of Oz* starring Judy Garland and is scheduled for Sunday October 25, 3 p.m. at the Orinda Library auditorium.

"While the book is officially a children's book," says Gick, "there is much to be enjoyed by adults and teens, and we're hoping to appeal to everyone with the message of rediscover the classic." For more information and a schedule of events, go to the Contra Costa Libraries website at: <http://guides.ccclib.org/onebook>.



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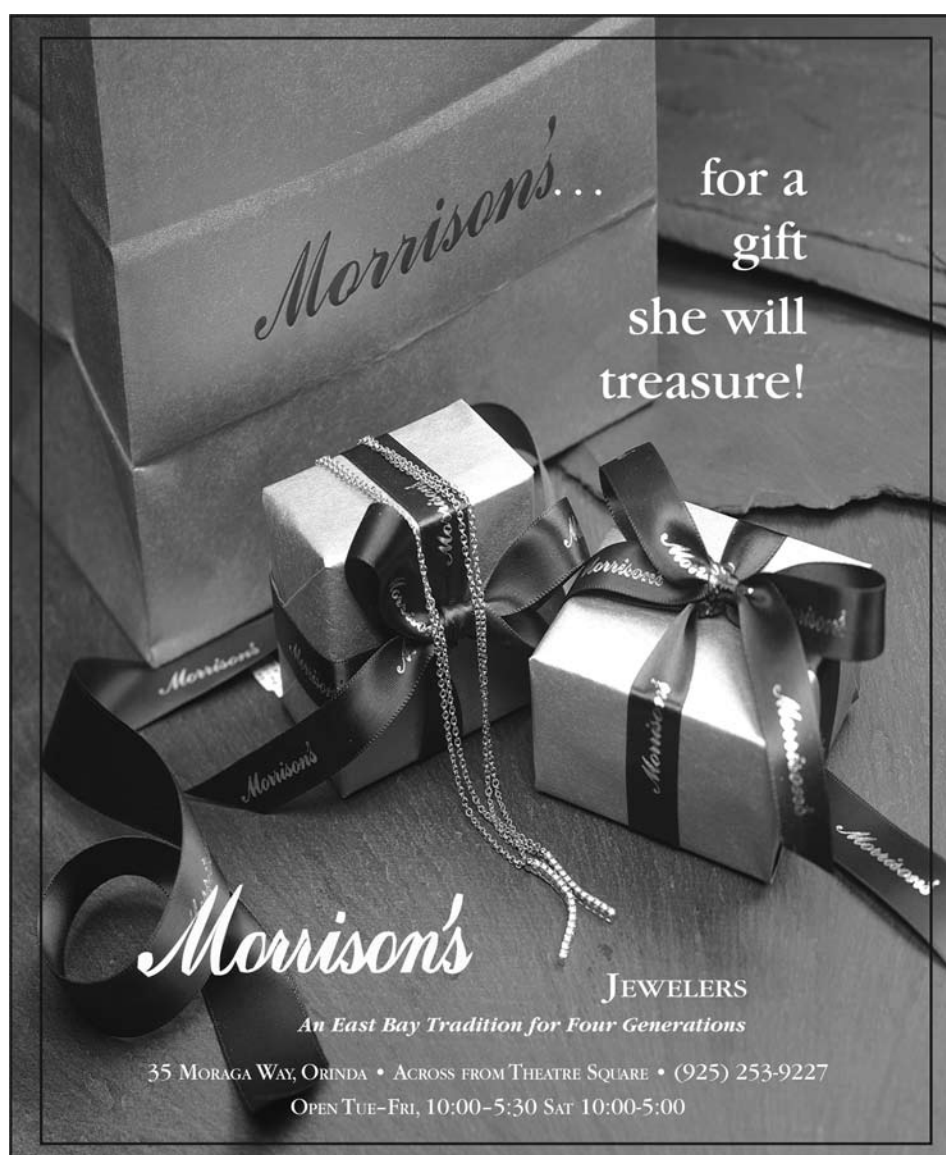
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SALLY HOGARTY

Elise Holzemer from TOPS Preschool whips up a yummie desert.

By CAITLIN NEVIN  
Contributing Writer

Preschool presents young children with an opportunity to delve into a new and exciting social world, and offers parents some much needed flexibility in their hectic schedules. Here is *The Orinda News'* list of Lamorinda preschools, tot drops, pre- and post-school programs. This feature may serve to be a handy resource for last-minute needs and upcoming research for just the right program.

Many schools listed below include websites which offer further information regarding the program, along with costs, enrollment information, and wait-list forms, if needed.

The website [www.eastbaypreschools.com](http://www.eastbaypreschools.com) is also a helpful resource (used by many of the schools listed here) for families researching local programs for their young children.

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[www.fountainheadmontessori.org](http://www.fountainheadmontessori.org)

**Holy Shepard Christian Preschool**  
433 Moraga Way, Orinda, CA 94563  
925-254-3429  
9 a.m. – noon, extended day until 2 p.m.  
Toddler (2-3), Pre-kindergarten (ages 4-5)  
Extended care (monthly or hourly)  
[www.holyshepard.org](http://www.holyshepard.org)

**St. John Preschool**  
501 Moraga Way, Orinda, CA 94563  
925-254-4470  
7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.  
Preschool (2-3 or 4-5), Jr. Kindergarten (4+)  
[preschool@stjohnorinda.org](mailto:preschool@stjohnorinda.org)

**St. Mark's Nursery School**  
451 Moraga Way, Orinda, CA 94563  
925-254-1364  
9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday  
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**St. Stephen's Nursery School**  
66 St. Stephen's Dr., Orinda, CA 94563  
925-254-3770, ext. 19  
9 a.m. – noon, Tuesday and Thursday, for 2-year-olds



SALLY HOGARTY

Allison Oxner and Megan Mitchell take a break from playing at St. John Preschool.

9 a.m. – noon, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for 3- to 4-year olds, with optional lunch bunch until 2 p.m.  
[www.ststephensorinda.org](http://www.ststephensorinda.org)

961 1st Street, Lafayette, CA 94549  
925-283-4500  
7 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
PreK, Before/after school care year round

**The Orinda Preschool – TOPS**  
10 Irwin Way, Orinda, CA 94563  
925-254-2551  
8:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
Preschool (ages 2-4), Lunch Bunch Playgroup (ages 3-5), Developmental kindergarten (age 5)  
[www.topsonline.org](http://www.topsonline.org)  
[topsonline@sbcglobal.net](mailto:topsonline@sbcglobal.net)

**Child Day School**  
1049 Stuart Street, Lafayette, CA 94549  
925-284-7092  
Ages 2-6, minimum 3-5 days per week  
Infant/Toddler (1+), Twos, Threes, Pre-K, summer care, Developmental Kindergarten  
6:45 a.m. – 6:15 p.m.  
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[www.tcdschools.com](http://www.tcdschools.com)

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[SEE PRESCHOOLS page 10]


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PRESCHOOLS

◆ PRESCHOOLS from page 9

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 925-283-9822  
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 Madame@frenchforfun.com

**Gan Ilan Preschool, Temple Isaiah**  
 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, CA 94549  
 925-284-8453  
 9 a.m. to 1 p.m: ages 2-5  
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 Temple-Isaiah.org

**Happy Days Learning Center**  
 3205 Stanley Blvd., Lafayette, CA 94549  
 925-932-8088  
 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
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4-year-old Alice Ball enjoys the monkey bars at St. Mark's Preschool.

SALLY HOGARTY

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 www.meherschools.org

**Moraga Child Day School**  
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[SEE MORAGA SCHOOLS page 11]

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PRESCHOOLS / HALLOWEEN FUN

◆ MORAGA SCHOOLS from page 10

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Kindergarten (4-6)  
Child care (2-6) hourly  
www.fountainheadmontessori.org

**Growing Tree Preschool**

1695 Canyon Road, Moraga, CA 94556  
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Preschool (ages 2.9-4), Pre-K (4-5)  
www.saklan.org



SALLY HOGARTY  
Drew Persinger has fun with the many cars and trucks at The Orinda Preschool (TOPS).

Schools Prepare for October Fundraisers



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

These young ladies choose Halloween "treats" at last year's Sleepy Hollow festivities.

At Sleepy Hollow and Del Rey, they're called Pumpkin Patches and at Glorietta, it's known as the Fun Fest. But, whatever the name, it still spells fun for kids and parents alike as well as much-needed funds for our elementary schools.

Sleepy Hollow's Pumpkin Patch takes place October 17 from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. and includes such old-fashioned fun as a haunted house and cake walk as well as lots of carnival games and jump houses. There will also be a pumpkin contest with prizes for the heaviest, fattest, tallest and silliest pumpkins.

Del Rey's Pumpkin Patch also takes place on October 17 from noon - 3 p.m.

Carnival games include "Graveyard Golf," "Spooky Sponge Toss," and "Spider Spin." There will be lots of contests including scarecrow building and pumpkin carving. Halloween costumes will be for sale and a live auction takes place at 2 p.m.

Glorietta's Fun Fest on October 17 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. includes the popular dunk-tank, mega-slides, game booths, pumpkin decorating, and lots of great carnival food.

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STUDENT ATHLETES

# Local Girls Compete In Serbia

By KATHY YEE  
Contributing Writer

How do today's synchronized swimmers prepare for the 2016 Olympics? They train year round with world-renowned coaches and compete with their peers in international competitions. Three Lamorinda girls, **Tori Yee** (Orinda Intermediate School - 8th grade), **Grace Moran** (Orinda Intermediate School - 8th grade) and **Marisa Tashima** (Campolindo High School - 9th Grade) of the Walnut Creek Aquanuts are following this path. They recently returned from the Comen Cup in Belgrade, Serbia.

From August 3rd through 9th, the best synchronized swimmers born in 1994, 1995, and 1996, competed in Serbia. The Walnut Creek Aquanuts had the distinction of representing the U.S.A. in this competition, bringing international recognition to our small community.

The Aquanuts competed in three categories: solo, duet and team competition.

Alexa Tcheknarev impressively came home with a bronze medal in the solo event and teamed with Alyson Haylor to win bronze in the duet competition. The team competed with 13 countries and finished in 5th place with their "Chopsticks" routine. The girls said that it was unbelievable that they were competing against world teams like Russia, Greece, Italy, Canada and other numerous European nations.

The team competition included eight long-time Aquanuts: **Gwen Gabie**, **Rina Horii**, **Grace Moran**, **Sandra Ortellado**, **Suying Rothrock**, **Marisa Tashima**, **Lizzie Welzien**, and **Tori Yee**. Just weeks earlier, this eight member team won gold at the US 13-15 Age Group National Championship in Gainesville, Florida. They had just seven weeks to prepare for the Comen Cup competition.

All of these athletes were coached by **Tammy McGregor**, 1996 US Olympic Gold Medalist and 2008 US Olympic head coach. McGregor, a Northgate High School gradu-




CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Walnut Creek Aquanuts represented the U.S. in Serbia. (Top row L-R) **Sandra Ortellado**, **Grace Moran** (Orinda), **Marissa Tashima** (Moraga), **Gwen Gabie** (Bottom row L-R) **Suying Rothrock**, **Lizzie Welzien**, **Tori Yee** (Orinda), and **Rina Horii**.

ate, had tears of joy as she watched her team compete. McGregor said, "I am very proud of this team. They trained less than a year together and worked very hard. The possibilities are endless for these young world class athletes."

Since synchronized swimming debuted

in the 1984 Olympics, the Walnut Creek Aquanuts have won more medals than any other synchronized swimming club in America. With less than seven years to the next Olympics, these upcoming synchronized swimmers may very well be standing on the medal stand in 2016.



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## Local Swimmer Brings Home the Gold

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

Years of three and a half hours of practice, six days a week, paid off for 14-year-old Miramonte sophomore, **Heidi Homma**. She placed first in individual, figures and trio events at the National Competition for synchronized swimming held in Gainesville, Florida, this summer, bringing home three gold medals. She went on to earn a place on the National Team which has just 10 members.

"I was shocked and surprised and so happy over the results in Florida," Homma says. "Only three from our region could

go to Nationals. There I was competing against 50 girls from throughout the United States."

Homma has been on the Aquanuts swim group since she was 9-years-old. A family friend introduced the Hommas to synchronized swimming, with Heidi beginning a year after her sister, Jane. This year the two swam a duet routine in the Junior Nationals, qualifying 13th. Jane competed in Greece in 2004, placing 4th.

It has taken the whole family's dedication to get the girls where they are today; Atsuko, their mother, has made countless journeys to Heather Farms Park where the girls practice. When they were on different teams, they both stayed, doing their homework while the other one was swimming with mom making four trips from home and back. Now they practice from 3:30 to 7 p.m. which changes the family's dinner hour. Both Atsuko, and dad, Masa, help with the programs and fund raisers that the Aquanuts sponsor.

"We really appreciate all our parents have done for us as we like synchronized swimming so much. We both look forward to improving our skills," Heidi comments.

Endurance is the most important thing in synchronized swimming with holding one's breath a close second. "I can't hold my breath as long as many others. My limit is about 40 seconds when under water," says Heidi. "Some of the moves are harder for me because I'm just 5 feet tall, so I have to stretch, but I am easier for others to lift."

Heidi says she likes being on the team because "we built trust in each other, like when we do lifts. Also, when we keep a tight pattern it is hard not to kick each other,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Miramonte student **Heidi Homma** placed first in the synchronized swimming competition held in Florida.

so you have to accept that and not get upset because overall, a tight pattern helps the team's cohesion."


Her coach, **Tammy Declerq**, developed Heidi's routine and accompanying music. "She shows me the moves on land, and I test them in the water," Heidi explains. She also reveals the secret of keeping a swimmer's hair in place. "We apply Knox gelatin mixed with water. I have to soak my head in hot water, and it's still very hard to get it out."

Starting the new season, Heidi will be competing at the Junior level which includes girls 15 - 18. "I know it will be a lot harder for me, but I'll try to keep up and I'm excited about going to this new level," she says with determination and a smile.

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**Polly Gorin**

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I began the path of eating "on plan" and exercising regularly. But in the 3rd week I feared that I would have a major setback when I fell at work and broke my arm. I know that in any other setting (a class or gym) I would have quit exercising because I could no longer "keep up" with a routine. But with Living Lean each session was individualized so there was no "keeping up", just moving forward at my own pace. Trainers kept me motivated and moving. In spite of my broken arm, I reduced my body fat from 26% to 15% and fit into my old pants!

Thank you for the support Sheena, Saki, and all the trainers that have helped me. I feel so much better.

Polly Gorin

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STUDENT ATHLETES

Kelly Bauer's 8 Boat Wins Junior Internationals for the United States

By VALERIE HOTZ  
Staff Writer

It was a whirlwind summer of exciting competition, grueling training, and extensive travel for Miramonte High School senior Kelly Bauer, a 5 foot 10 inch member of the Oakland Strokes crew team since her freshman year. Competing with her pair partner Barbara Barnes, the duo finished third at the Regional Championships held at Lake Natoma last May. Their third place finish qualified them to compete at the Junior National Championships. The pair moved on to train with Coach Ian Simpson twice a day for five weeks as preparation for the Junior Nationals held in Cincinnati, Ohio in June.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Miramonte senior Kelly Bauer helps U.S. team win in France. Seated in the first chair next to the coxswain, she controlled the rate and rhythm of the team.

"Barbara and I trained intensively and really learned how to crew together as we prepared for the National Championships," says Bauer. Winning all three of their races, the heat, the semi-final, and the final, the pair was undefeated. "It was really fun and competing in the National Championship was really cool," adds Bauer.

Oakland Strokes coach Ian Simpson coaches Barnes and Bauer throughout the club season - which runs from September through the spring. "The main thing about Kelly is her quiet determination. Early in the year, she set a goal to go to the International Championships. She wanted to

represent the United States. Kelly had desire and she maintained ambition, making the most of every opportunity. Even when things did not go well, she continued to persevere," says Simpson.

Upon conclusion of the National Championships, select rowers are invited to participate in either the sculling or sweeping camp, as a step towards selection of the U.S. National Team. "Kelly was not initially invited to train with the National Team. As Oakland Strokes, we don't do a lot of sculling. Kelly really enjoys sculling and thought her chances would be better to make the sculling camp, but she missed out

on that. Although it was a disappointment, she did not give up and asked to be transferred to the sweep camp. Her request was granted and as soon as she got to the sweep camp, she was in the 8's boat," explains Simpson. Boats are designated by number of crew in each.

[SEE BAUER page 16]

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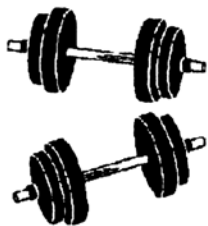


Hold one water bottle in front of your thigh (palm forward) and the other extended overhead. Curl the lower water bottle up as you contract the triceps of the other arm to bring the bottle behind your head and lower than your elbow. Simultaneously do a stationary lunge. Pause, extend the water bottles, and repeat for six to eight reps.

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BETWEEN THE LINES

Between the Lines  
Book Pairings

Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



Gourmet magazines today are full of sage advice about food and wine pairings. More educated taste buds than mine have recommended the perfect Camembert for a particular Cabernet, or a Roquefort that will make you hum with pleasure as you taste it with your tawny Port. In a similar fashion, some recent reading on my part led me to consider book pairings.

An enchanting new novel by Audrey Niffenegger, who wrote *The Time Traveler's Wife*, takes place in a cemetery, and it made me recall with pleasure other favorites where ghosts wove a magical and often disturbing spell on the reader. Set in and around Highgate Cemetery in London, Niffenegger's new book, *Her Fearful Symmetry*, explores the dimensions and mean-

ing of love. Another cemetery book I read this year was Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*, which won the Newbery Medal for Best Book for Young Readers. In Gaiman's intriguing narrative, the graveyard ghosts adopt and protect a little boy whose parents have been murdered and for whom the murderer is still searching – clever, suspenseful, and not just for 10-year-olds.

These two new books led me back to another pairing of graveyard tales. Highgate Cemetery is also the setting used by Tracy Chevalier (*Girl with a Pearl Earring*) in her 2002 novel *Falling Angels*. In 1901, two little girls become friends because their families have adjoining burial plots. Their family stories, over the ensuing 10 years, engagingly chronicle societal changes as the Victorian era ends and the Edwardians take center stage. Still in the mausoleum mode, a Bronx graveyard and its ghostly inhabitants make an unforgettable appearance in Peter Beagle's *A Fine and Private Place* (1960), which he wrote when he was only 19 and which has continued in print. As in Niffenegger's *Her Fearful Symmetry*, the interaction of the living and the dead — and our own longing for the survival of love — creates a magical tale.

Book pairings can be an occasion to revisit old friends. In Frances Osborne's new biography, *The Bolter*, she recalls her scandalous great-grandmother, Idina Sackville, one of the "bright young things" of '20's London. Sackville's light shown brightest in the Rift Valley where she lived with four of her five husbands and entertained almost continually at the notorious house parties, which were an integral part of the life of European expats in Kenya. Among the guests at Idina's farm, were the parents of Elspeth Huxley, whose own Kenyan memoir, *The Flame Trees of Thika*, remains a most engaging colonial story and one of my favorite growing-up memoirs.

Nancy Mitford borrowed quite liberally and literally from Idina Sackville's life when she wrote *The Pursuit of Love*, another old favorite of mine. In that novel, the narrator's mother is known as "Bolter," who abandons her daughter to follow her own pursuit of love. It was fascinating to meet the woman who was Mitford's inspiration in Frances Osborne's book.

Pairings can also make you long for your younger self. Set in the Golden Age of children's literature — J. M. Barrie, E. Nesbit, and Lewis Carroll — *The Children's Book* by A.S. Byatt is due at Orinda Books on October 6. One of its principal characters is a writer of children's books and Byatt gives the reader, as she did in *Possession*, tantalizing fragments of wonderful fairy tales. *The Children's Book* made me want to unearth my copy of *The Princess and Curdie* (1872) by George MacDonald and again explore the underground world of the goblins.

And you, dear readers, can have fun playing "book pairings." For example, *Border Songs*, an immensely entertaining new novel by Jim Lynch (*The Highest Tide*), introduces us to Brandon Vanderkool, an awkward and extremely tall patrol agent on the Washington border with British Columbia, watching for drug smugglers, terrorists, and illegals, but finding time to count snow geese, red-tails, and juncos that he can recognize by the first notes of their call. Brandon is one of the most original characters in this year's crop of fiction. He's gawky, dyslexic and very uncomfortable with his height. One might want to give him another book new to this season, *The Tall Book: a Celebration of Life from on High* by Arianne Cohen. Brandon would be surprised to know that the "talls" as Cohen names her tribe have higher IQs, live longer lives, and earn bigger salaries than the rest of us. Another recent title Brandon would enjoy is *Birdscapes: a Pop-up Celebration of Birdsongs* from Chronicle Books. It combines wonderful visuals and pop-ups, with beautifully blended soundscapes from each of seven North American habitats — even Brandon's Pacific Northwest.

And to bookend this article, a fat pairing of two fine novels about India, weighing in at 1.7 and 2.6 lbs. respectively — *Sacred Games* by Vikram Chandra and *A Suitable Boy* by Vikram Seth. After reading both of these superb books, there is no need for *A Passage to India*.



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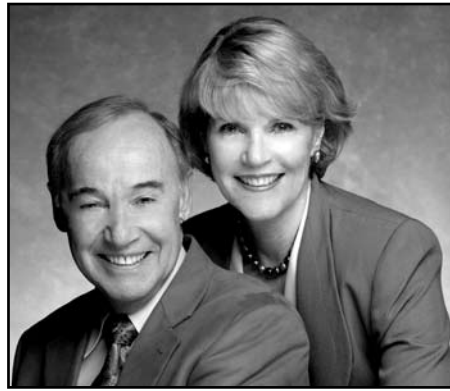


LOCAL AUTHORS

# Local Doctor's New Book Looks Outside the Box

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

There's a not-so-quiet revolution going on over health care in this country. President Obama and Congress have been going round and round on various reforms with no end in sight. But one Orinda man is waging his own war on the behemoth known as the American health care system, and he intends to win one person at a time. Dr. Len Saputo says that people need to "become the change they want to see" and not be afraid to combine less traditional medical approaches to mainstream medicine.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
**Lee Saputo**, shown here with his wife **Vicki**, will read from his new book *A Return to Healing* at Orinda Books on October 17 at 3 p.m.

Dr. Len Saputo left his successful internal medical practice over 17 years ago and took the road less traveled by opening an integrated medical clinic in Lafayette in 2001. The impetus to change came when his wife Vicki, a registered nurse, began having a series of life-threatening allergic reactions. Western medicine could not find the cause, and she soon began having serious side effects to the heavy-duty drugs she was taking to treat the symptoms. A fortunate series of circumstances put the Saputos in touch with Dr. Russell Jaffe, who had pioneered a new test in his Virginia laboratory. His ELISA/ACT test on Vicki identified 41 allergies

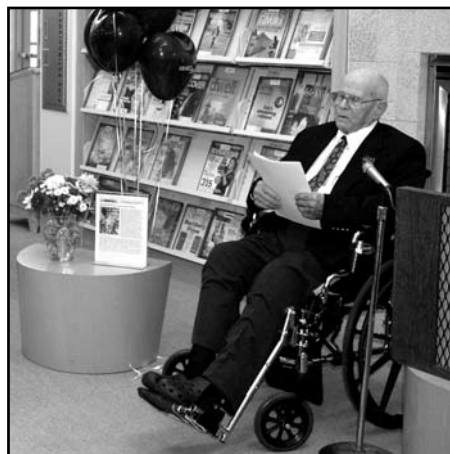
to common foods, skin care products, and many everyday chemicals. Dr. Jaffe's test not only saved Vicki's life but set Dr. Saputo on a new path as well.

According to Dr. Saputo, traditional medicine begins once disease occurs; whereas, integrated health medicine prioritizes prevention and noninvasive treatments as the first line of defense. "I believe in blending the best-evidenced solutions from both mainstream and alternative healing modalities," says Dr. Saputo, whose former colleagues at John Muir Hospital often refer patients to him. Dr. Saputo also believes [SEE SAPUTO page 18]

# Local Poet Shares Life Stories at the Orinda Library

By MOYA STONE  
Staff Writer

On August 21, Orinda Library patrons were treated to some home-grown poetry written and read by Walnut Creek resident, Denver Nunley. Family, friends and patrons alike gathered in the fireside nook of the library and delighted in the life stories and poetry of Nunley, who was also celebrating his 95th birthday.



SALLY HOGARTY  
**Denver Nunley** celebrated his 95th birthday by reading from his *Poems from the Heart* collection of poetry written over a life time.

With an eye for the ladies and a mischievous grin, Nunley shared stories of growing up poor in the Texas Panhandle. "I was born in Texas, by chance, not by choice," he said. He had a crush on his grade school teacher, Miss Shipley, who was nearly adopted by a local wealthy rancher, and survived both the Depression and the Dust Bowl. "I was called the Sharecropper Kid," he added. "That was a stab to the heart."

In between life stories, Nunley read his poems. Many are autobiographical, including "Pearl Harbor" in which he discusses flying security patrol around Hawaii until the patrol was discontinued, leaving the path open for the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. Another poem, "Cheek to Cheek," was written about his wife, Patricia whom he met and married in 1942.

"Soft light soft music soft cheek.  
Quietly flows, the time.  
Let this moment last I seek,  
immersed in living so sublime."

With *joie de vivre*, the poet has embraced some unusual studies such as yoga and hypnotism. He developed his own self-improvement program called Personalysis and taught human relations at Contra Costa [SEE POET page 18]

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WAY TO GROW

◆ BAUER from page 13

Once invited to join the U.S. Junior National 8 boat team, Bauer immediately traveled to Princeton to train for an additional three weeks for the International Championship to be held in Brive-la-Gaillard, France. Justin Moore, head crew coach for Williams College, served as the head coach for the 8 boat team. "It was incredible to train on a 2,000 meter course where our Olympic team trains. We could break the course down into different lengths and work on our strategy and timing," explains Bauer. The headiness of training in the same vicinity as the senior national team was one thing. The three week training regime incorporated rowing twice a day and either weight lifting, running or yoga practice, depending on what each individual athlete needed to strengthen. "The combination of incredibly hard work and putting yourself out there everyday helped us bond and become best friends. The drive to be the best pushed us

all to a higher level," adds Bauer.

With a winning time of 6:26.89, the U.S. team beat out New Zealand by over four seconds and third place Germany by eight seconds. Bauer, who sits next to the coxswain in the first chair and controls the rate and rhythm of her crew, was ecstatic. "It was an amazing experience."

The Oakland Strokes began its season on August 29, and Kelly Bauer is settling back into school, preparing college applications and setting new goals. She has her eyes set on the East Coast for college next year and, of course, rowing will be part of it. Her younger sister, Becky, is a sophomore at Miramonte High School and starting her first year as a varsity rower for Oakland Strokes. With much of the team returning this year, it looks to be another great year for the Oakland Strokes, one of the best crew organizations in the country.

For more information about Oakland Strokes, visit the website at [www.oakland-strokes.org](http://www.oakland-strokes.org).

Way to Grow in Orinda  
It's All in the Details



Steve & Cathy Lambert

The phrase "It's all in the details" holds true when it comes to quality landscaping. Poor attention to detail can make even the most expensive landscape look cheap or just plain shabby.

**Rock and Stone Details:** Dry-stack retaining walls are very popular in our area due to the number of sloping lots. Rocks for dry-stack walls come in many shapes and sizes, but when you use too many of the same size rock the wall can look very artificial. It's best to use rocks of varying sizes from boulders to what's known as head-sized stones. To achieve an old world, softer and more natural look, plants should be placed in front of and on top of the wall. The foreground plants should be allowed to grow to varying heights and those planted above, grown to drape down over the wall. Planting pockets can also be built into the face of a rock wall to further soften its appearance.

Varying the stone size is also an important detail to assure a natural looking dry creek, wet creek or waterfall. Be sure to incorporate several larger stones, especially for creating small falls, which look as if they've been "kissed by water," in other words, stones that are flat and smooth or have a carved out crevasse. As with rock walls, adding some draping edge plants and water plants creates a naturally softened appearance.

Here's a detail that when poorly executed can destroy the look of an expensive stone patio – mortar color. It's very important to use a mortar color that matches or slightly contrasts your stone. Using a mortar with a strong contrast or in a different color tone creates a very busy look, while something that blends with your stone creates a natural and more soothing appearance.

**Lawn Edging Details:** Here's another detail where the proper installation and correct material choice for your yard make a big difference in its overall appearance. Aside from framing the lawn and giving it a finished edge, lawn edging provides your mower an edge to run against or up to.

Edging comes in varying thicknesses from ¼-inch steel, to 6-inch concrete, or brick mow strips. The newer composite (Trex type) bender-board looks good as long as it is staked down properly. Bender board edging should always have both sides on the same level. These materials are not designed to be used as a retaining edge for a soil-lawn because it's not strong enough and will bow or break and get gouged by the lawn mower when it falls off the edge.

We prefer to use 2-inch by 4-inch bender board over thinner options because it provides smooth and flowing curves. Thinner boards are weaker and don't bend as well leaving a wiggly edge on curves.

To help choose your edging material, look at your landscape design; if your yard is formal without a lot of plants over hanging near the lawn, you can go with a narrow mow strip. Modern or formal designs look great with knife-edge steel. If your garden lends more toward an English country garden or California romantic style with soft flowing plant material, choose something wide like concrete or brick where the plants can overflow without being chewed up by your lawn mower.

**Unnecessary Eyesores:** Drain grates are a necessary evil but they don't have to be an ugly, discolored, white plastic. Brass drain grates are economical, look much better than plastic and last practically forever. Another detail we've used in stone patios is to cover the drain with a removable piece of stone, which has drain openings cut right in.

Unightly, white plastic skimmer lids on a beautiful stone or concrete pool deck is a detail easily improved on. A stone lid can be cut to fit in its place. There is also a product that allows you to pour a formed lid that matches any concrete color.

**Lighting Details:** At night, a garden can be over lit with too many lights or under lit with too few. If your garden has lots of trees or other vertical focal points, it's important to choose carefully which ones to highlight. Sculptures are beautiful, but if you have too many and illuminate them all with the same intensity, it can be confusing to the eye and resemble a graveyard. Another sloppy detail is visible wires next to the fixtures. It's easy to bury these connections making the installation look professional and clean.

Finally, crooked path lights are a detail that can easily be remedied. Landscape maintenance people often knock path lights askew but rarely take the seconds required to straighten them out. Ask your gardeners to add this to the services they perform occasionally.

Details, details, details, they usually refers to something small and often trivial, but if your landscape designer does not have an eye for them, well the result will be far from trivial.

If you have any specific question on the topic of plant placement or species, feel free to email us at [office@gardenlight-landscape.com](mailto:office@gardenlight-landscape.com).

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## CALENDAR

## ON THE CALENDAR

## OCTOBER

- 3 **Orinda Farmer's Market**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., on Orinda Way (in front of the library). Market is held every Saturday through November.
- Friends of the Orinda Library** Annual Book Fair, library plaza and upstairs hallway, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Orinda Idol 2009 winners and finalists sing at 2 p.m.
- Garden Club**, E-waste recycling, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Rite Aid parking lot, benefits EFO.
- 4 **Forum Series on Climate Change**, Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, panel presentation and open discussion. The scientific, sociological and religious aspects of climate change will be addressed, 11:30 a.m. Call 254-4906.
- 6 **Orinda Books**, Kathryn Ma will discuss *All That Work and Still No Boys*, her new short story collection, 7 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
- 7 **Orinda Hiking Club** 9 a.m. at the old library parking lot on Irwin Way for its weekly Wednesday hike. Call 253-0131 or visit [www.orindahiking.org](http://www.orindahiking.org).
- 8 **Orinda Books**, Dan Chaon will discuss his new novel, *Await Your Reply*, 7 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
- 9 **Orinda Books**, ceramic artist Gerry Wallace holds an exhibition and sale of her latest creations, 10 a.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
- 10 **Fire Prevention Month**, open house Station #41, 1280 Moraga Way, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., 258-4599.
- 11 **Orinda Rotary Club and Open Opera** free concert in the Park featuring the top 40 of well-known opera songs and arias by professional singers, 4:30 p.m.
- 12 **Orinda Teen Advisory Council** meets at 4 p.m., Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. Email [orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com).
- 13 **Orinda Books**, Rima Barkett will discuss and sign copies of *Cooking Dinner: Simple Italian Recipes Everyone Can Make*, 1 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
- 17 **Orinda Books**, Len Saputo, MD, will discuss his story of integrative medicine, *A Return to Healing: Radical Health Care Reform and the Future of Medicine*, 3 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
- 18 **Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness** 10 to 11 a.m. groups will check neighborhoods and report to the City of Orinda communication chief. This exercise is part of the Lamorinda CERT Drill.
- Lamorinda CERT, Lamorinda Cities, ARC and Salvation Army** 1-4 p.m. will conduct a training Drill at the Orinda Community Center.
- 19 **Orinda Books**, Shela Dean will discuss *Frequent Foreplay Miles*, her new book that gives couples a common language, 7 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
- 22 **Speaking Fearlessly** transforms the way people communicate by focusing on the connection between speaker and listener, 8:45 to 11 a.m. For information and cost visit [www.transitionpoint.org](http://www.transitionpoint.org). RSVP Pam Whitman 253-1223. Also 10/26.
- 23 **Friends of Orinda Creeks** meets at 8:30 a.m. in the May Room of the lower level of the library. Call Maya at 253-1997 or [mayarapp@comcast.net](mailto:mayarapp@comcast.net).
- 24 **Orinda Books**, Pamela Johnson will discuss *Heart of a Pirate: A Novel of Anne Bonney*, 3 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606.
- Brain Gym** Introduction for seniors, teaches tools that enhance brain, body and balance, 10 and 2 p.m. RSVP Pam Whitman, 253-1223, or visit [www.transitionpoint.org](http://www.transitionpoint.org).
- 27 **Community Forum**, 7-9 p.m., Miramonte High School, discuss health and safety issues for students.
- 29 **Orinda Books**, Keith Raffel will discuss *Smasher: A Silicon Valley Mystery*, 4 p.m., 276 Village Square, 254-7606.

## MEETINGS:

## CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

- Acalanes Union High School District**, first and third Wednesdays, district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette, 7:30 p.m.
- City Council**, first and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).
- Historic Landmarks Committee**, fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room, public is welcome, for information, call 925-788-7323.
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**, fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library. Call 253-1997.
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District**, third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.
- Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**, OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road, 4 p.m.
- Planning Commission**, second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, 253-4210.

## CLUB MEETINGS

- Diablo Star Chapter #214**, Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 p.m., Orinda Masonic Center. Contact Karen Seaborn, 925-689-0995.
- Friends of Joaquin Moraga Adobe** meeting, All interested in preservation of the landmark are invited to attend. For date and location, 254-8260.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**, Postino's in Lafayette, 7 a.m. every Friday, 254-0440, ext.463.
- Montelindo Garden Club** meets the third Friday of the month at 9 a.m., September through May at Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way. Visit [www.montelindogarden.com](http://www.montelindogarden.com) or email [montelindogarden@aol.com](mailto:montelindogarden@aol.com)
- Orinda Rotary**, Community Center, every Wednesday at noon, 254-2222.
- Orinda Association**, Orinda Library, May Room, second Monday, 7:15 p.m., 254-0800.
- Orinda Historical Society**, third Wednesday of the month, OHS Museum, 3 to 5 p.m., 254-1353.
- Orinda Job's Daughters**, first and third Monday, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 925-283-7176.
- Orinda Juniors** the first Tuesday of the month (September to June), 7 p.m. Contact Diane Petek and Ann Sullivan at [orinda.juniors@yahoo.com](mailto:orinda.juniors@yahoo.com) for location.
- Orinda/Tábor** (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation, Fourth Thursday of the month, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.
- Orinda Woman's Club**, Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon; call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881.

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

## Open Opera Presents Free Concert in the Park

By MAGGIE SHARPE  
Staff Writer

The Top 40 hits of opera will be presented in a free concert by Open Opera on Sunday, October 11, at 4:30 p.m. at Orinda Community Park.

Ellen St. Thomas, executive director and one of the founders of Open Opera, says the operatic gems will include excerpts from *The Marriage of Figaro* by Mozart, the *Rigoletto Quartet* by Verdi, and "Un Bel Di" from Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*.

Open Opera is a group of professional and up-and-coming singers who want to bring opera to people of all ages around the Bay Area. This summer they performed *The Marriage of Figaro* at John Hinkel Park in Berkeley and drew an enthusiastic audience of 800 people.

"Open Opera's goal is to bring free opera to the masses in park settings and to draw in more young people," says Richard Marchick, a member of Orinda Rotary Club, which is sponsoring the event.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Orinda resident **Lisa van der Ploeg** will sing at October 11 concert.

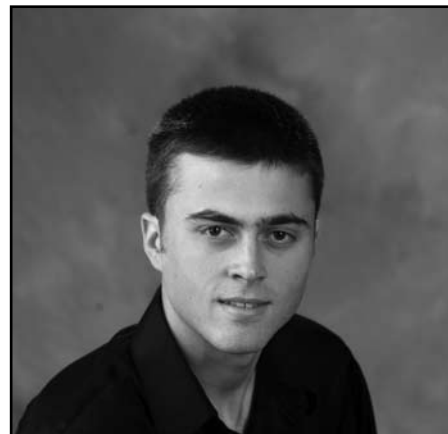
Marchick says he heard of the group through his daughter and invited them to sing at a Rotary Club meeting. "They were so wonderful that I asked them to come back to Orinda," says Marchick.

"Not only will the audience have the chance to hear some of the best voices in the Bay Area, there will be hamburgers, hot dogs, beer, wine and soft drinks," says Marchick. It will also be the perfect Sunday evening venue to sit on a blanket and enjoy a family picnic.

"We are hoping for a wonderful community event that will be repeated every year," says Marchick. "And we want children to come, not just old people."

One of the members of Open Opera, who will be singing on October 11 is Lisa van der Ploeg, an Orinda resident. She has personal experience of how children are enraptured by opera – if they have a chance to hear it.

Van der Ploeg was attending Rotary [SEE OPERA page 18]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Opera singer and Orinda resident **Julian Arsenault**.

**Lamorinda Reads! The Wonderful Wizard of Oz Programs**

- 5 **Teens**: Design a *Wizard of Oz* Book Cover – contest begins today. Kickoff party at the Lafayette Library, 952 Moraga Road, 3:30 p.m.
- 7 **Teens**: *Wizard of Oz* Trivia Lafayette Library, 952 Moraga Road, 3:30 p.m.
- 8 **Kids**: Make an Oz Wand at the Lafayette Library, 952 Moraga Road, 3 to 5 p.m.
- 10 **Adults & Teens**: Oz on Film and Stage, join Professors Frank Murray and Reid Davis from St. Mary's College Department of Performing Arts for a talk on *The Wizard of Oz* on screen and stage, Orinda Library, 11 a.m.
- 16 **Adults and Teens**: Up Close and Personal with L. Frank Baum, presented by Angelica Carpenter, member of the International *Wizard of Oz* Club and author of L. Frank Baum, Royal Historian of Oz, Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Road, 3:15 p.m.
- 18 **All Ages**: The Town Hall Theatre and Town Hall Kids present a stage production of *The Wizard of Oz* at Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School St., Lafayette, 3:30 p.m.  
**Teens**: Deadline to submit Book Cover Contest entries.
- 20 **Kids: Make an Oz Wand** at the Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Road, 3 to 5 p.m. Through the 22nd.
- 21 **Adults and Teens**: Take a break from Oz and visit the real Emerald Cities: Art of Siam and Burma, a behind-the-scenes look at the exhibit of the same name, presented by a docent from the San Francisco Asian Art Museum, Orinda Library, 7 to 8 p.m.
- 22 **Adults and Teens!**: A book discussion on *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, Gregory Maguire's acclaimed 1995 novel, Moraga Library, 952 St. Mary's Road, 2 p.m.
- 25 **All Ages**: A showing of the movie, *The Wizard of Oz*, with arts and crafts, Orinda Library Auditorium, 2 p.m.

## AT THE LIBRARY

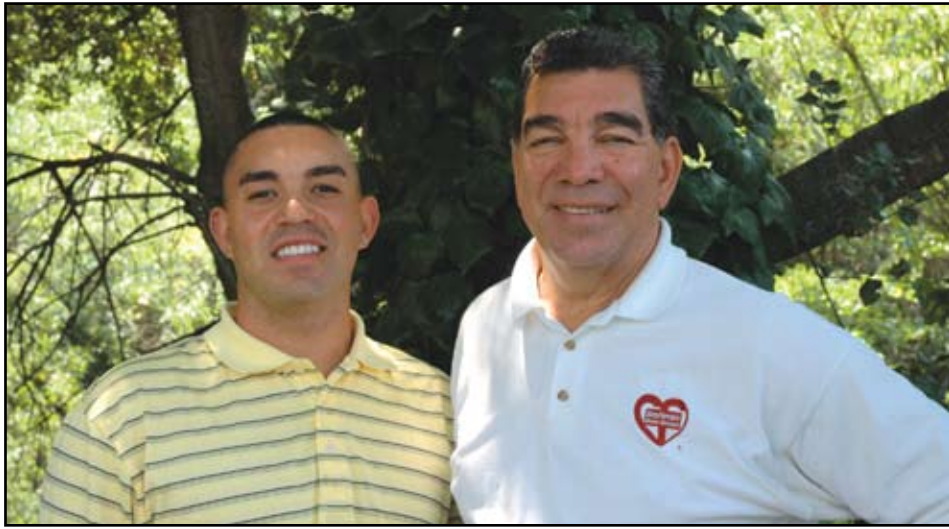
All events are free unless otherwise specified.

- 3 **Saturday Morning Live**, family story time for 3- to 5-year-olds, held in the Picturebook area, 11 a.m. Also Oct. 10, 17, 24 and 31.
- Origami for Fun**, learn how to fold animals and shapes. All skill levels welcome. Parents must help those younger than 7. Held in the Tutoring Room, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Also Oct. 10, 17, 24 and 31.
- 6 **Toddler Lapsit**, stories, songs and fingerplays for 1- to 3-year-olds and their caregivers. Gallery Room, at 10 a.m., repeats at 10:30 a.m. Also Oct. 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27 and 28.
- Peek-a-boo Time**, stories, songs, rhymes and rhythms for babies 12 months and under (pre-walkers) and their caregivers. Gallery Room at 11 a.m. Also Oct. 13, 20, 27 and 19.
- 19 **Beginning Knitting** for ages 8 years and up. Five-week session, learn a new stitch each week and make a sampler or work on your own project. Meets in the Tutoring Room, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Register online or at the library information desk

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



BUSINESS BUZZ



VALERIE HOTZ

Vern McCalla, Jr. and Vern McCalla, Sr. run ComForcare Services.

◆ BUZZ from page 20

a.m. to 3 p.m., 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Friday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday noon to 10 p.m. and Sunday noon to 9 p.m. For take-out, call your order in ahead of time at 253-8399.

**ComForcare Senior Services Established in Orinda**

This family business is located at 19 Orinda Way, behind Village Pizza and The Framemaker. The father and son team of Vern McCalla, Sr. and Vern McCalla, Jr. delivers highly trained professional home caregivers to the homebound individual. They provide a range of services from companionship to meal preparation to hands-on personal care 24 hours a day.

ComForcare services include home companions, personal care aids, home health aids, certified nurses aides, and 24-hour live-in assistants. These services are available anytime: 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Whether an individual is suffering from a long-term illness, recovering from an injury or coping with aging, ComForcare

provides the support necessary to lead a dignified life. Careproviders are screened with a six-step hiring process and are licensed, bonded and insured.

ComForCare Senior Services is a non-medical company and does not administer medications. Family members are responsible for all medications. An initial nurse's assessment is conducted prior to assigning a caregiver to an individual. This assessment is free of charge and addresses such issues as the individual's balance, gait and range of motion, as well as a memory evaluation.

"Our experience has been that often the family recognizes a need and often the elder does not want any help. We consult on what we think should be happening," explains Vern McCalla, Jr., who manages the office and hires the caregivers. While the focal point of ComForcare is seniors, care is also provided for children with disabilities. "The value of staying at home for a senior is to be able to age in place. People enjoy staying in their home where things are familiar. It tends to make the rest of their life an easier transition than if they

are displaced," he adds.

Three levels of care are offered. The first level is considered companion care, the second level is a home health aid who is trained in personal care and meal preparation, and the third level is a certified nursing assistant who is able to assist with bedside service such as turning an individual on the bed. "We are able to deal with a person at any stage of mobility. We work with Hospice of East Bay. Every three to four months a Hospice nurse provides in-service training to our caregivers," explains Vern McCalla, Jr.

"It is a good feeling to work with my

son after watching him work hard at Miramonte High School and the University of Oregon. Today, I see him put the skills he has learned to good use helping other people," says Vern McCalla, Sr. "He brings positive things to our business including office management and a knack for hiring excellent people. My skills are in marketing and sales," he adds.

The McCallas have lived in Orinda for 20 years and immensely enjoy owning a business together. For more information, visit the website at [www.ComForcare.com](http://www.ComForcare.com), send an email to [Lamorinda@comforcare.com](mailto:Lamorinda@comforcare.com) or call 258-9840.



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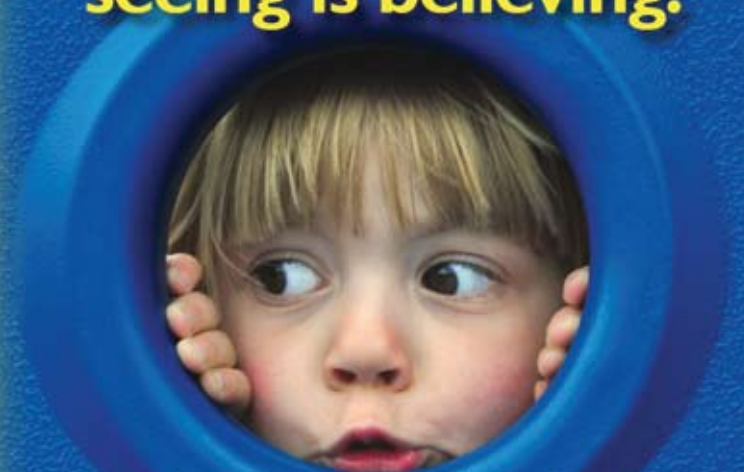




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BUSINESS BUZZ

## Business Buzz Putting a Personal Face on the Face of Business

Valerie Hotz



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

### The Proof is in the Eating

Proof is an exciting home-based business established by Orinda resident and author, Amanda Haas, whose enthusiasm for cooking is virtually contagious. Haas' eyes twinkle as she describes her passion for cooking and providing personalized semi-private cooking classes for groups of six in her own kitchen. A graduate of Tante Marie's Cooking School, Haas enjoys an additional expertise as a recipe tester for cookbook authors. "The name of my business, Proof, carries a double meaning. In cooking we use the term "Proof the yeast" to make sure it is accurate, and I proof recipes to ensure they work," says Haas.

After graduating from the University of



VALERIE HOTZ  
Amanda Haas turned her love of cooking into a business.

Arizona with a bachelor's degree in French and Economics, Haas joined Williams Sonoma as the manager of the Chestnut Street store in San Francisco. She eventually moved into the corporate offices to coordinate new store openings, before leaving the corporate world entirely to attend Tante Marie's Cooking School in San Francisco. "I have always loved cooking and my husband, Kyle, encouraged me to go to Tante Marie's, where my classes had just 12 students. There were no restaurant management courses, just cooking. It was wonderful," adds Haas.

After completing school, Haas became an instructor at Tante Marie's. At that time, Mary Risley, owner of Tante Marie's, was writing a cookbook and asked Haas if she would test the recipes. "I had six weeks to cook 200 recipes. During that time I tested 10-12 recipes a day and realized I loved the work." The Tante Marie's Cooking School Cookbook was the first of numerous cookbooks that Haas has tested, including Marion Cunningham's *Lost Recipes: Meals to Share with Friends and Family*. Haas was soon asked by Williams Sonoma to test recipes in the company's corporate headquarters kitchen and to create two to three minute instructional videos for the website.

Haas co-authored with Tori Ritchie a Williams Sonoma publication, *Roasting*. She continued to test recipes for books before she and her husband started their family. "Surprisingly, many authors do not have a tester. There is a great deal more objectivity when a tester is involved. From time to time, I do find errors. Occasionally, I am paid by the author to get the recipe right," she adds with a smile.

The Haas' moved to Orinda from San

Francisco in 2004. Kyle Haas is in finance and the couple has two young sons. Connor is a first grader at Del Rey School and Charlie is 3-years-old.

Proof cooking classes take place in the family's kitchen, where Haas enjoys teaching the basics of cooking using simple recipes. "My goal is to teach parents how to cook recipes that everyone in their family will eat and enjoy together. The recipes introduced usually have five to 10 ingredients. I like to share with parents that you can cook a great meal in 30 minutes and have time to enjoy good food with their children," explains Haas.

Proof classes are usually scheduled 10 a.m. to noon and 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The fee is \$65 for a two hour personalized class. For more information, visit [www.proofrecipes.com](http://www.proofrecipes.com), email Amanda @ [proofrecipes.com](mailto:proofrecipes.com) or give Amanda a call at 415-891-8158.

### Yu Sushi Celebrates 5th Anniversary

A sushi chef and kitchen chef with over 20 years of experience, Japanese native Charlie Ling continues to provide locals with a pleasing array of over 100 sushi rolls and even customizes dishes for diners. Located at the Crossroads at 19 Moraga Way, across from the Orinda Theater, and open seven days a week, Yu Sushi has a strong and loyal following.

"We offer a very good lunch special that business people enjoy. The Lunch Special Box is served Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and includes Miso soup, salad, steamed rice, four pieces of California Roll, one Shrimp sushi and any one of 10 selections such as vegetable tempura,



VALERIE HOTZ  
Gabrielle of Yu Sushi always has a welcoming smile for patrons.

salmon teriyaki, sashimi and chicken teriyaki," says owner Chef Charlie Ling.

This small restaurant is always busy and does a tremendous take-out business. Call in your order ahead of time for even more efficient use of your lunch hour. Charlie and crew will have it ready in 10 minutes. Slate tile floors in earth tones, good lighting and large windows overlook the Crossroads street scene outside. Seven tables and seating at the sushi bar are available. Prior to opening Yu Sushi, Charlie Ling owned and operated Tomotachi on Park Blvd. in Alameda and has owned a restaurant in the Shinjuku area of Tokyo.

"We are grateful to our customers. We enjoy serving good food with low prices and good service. We have never increased our prices in the five years we have been doing business here," says Ling. Operating a restaurant seven days a week does not leave a lot of spare time for Ling and his staff. When he does have time off, he enjoys watching the food channel, traveling and sports. A member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce since 2004, Yu Sushi supports the community by donating to the local public schools, including Miramonte High School's Grad Night Event, as well as donating to the Chamber of Commerce's Taste of Orinda.

Yu Sushi is open Monday – Thursday, 11

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