



# THE ORINDA NEWS

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## Red Fire Truck Delivers Santa to Annual Tree of Lights

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY  
Staff Writer

Santa is expected to take a break from his North Pole preparations to visit Orinda on Saturday, December 7, following the annual Tree of Lights ceremony, to be held in Orinda Village in front of Bank of America. The ceremony will begin at 4:30 p.m.

The guest of honor from the North Pole will arrive via fire truck after the tree is lit. During Santa's visit, children will have the opportunity to pose with him for pictures, enjoy refreshments and Christmas Carols performed by local school groups.



SALLY HOGARTY

Todd Chritton carries on the family tradition of being Santa.

Sally Chritton, a long time member and volunteer for Hospice of the East Bay, has been enjoying the Santa tradition for almost two decades. Her husband John, who passed away nine years ago, donned a red suit and beard as the first family Santa. Her son Todd followed in his father's footsteps and has been continuing the tradition for almost 10 years. "They've both enjoyed it so much," she said. "They were always shopping for new Santa Claus outfits, and they just loved the kids and the kids loved them. There is something wonderful about it."

Tree of Lights chairperson Duane Callahan said the arrival of Santa is especially noteworthy with the second generation Chritton as Santa. "He does a great job," said Callahan.

Local merchants participating in the event include the Orinda Safeway, Rite Aid and CVS which will provide Christmas cookies, cider, popcorn and candy canes for Santa's visitors.

The lights on the tree represent a loved one who has passed. Orindans can dedicate a Memorial Light, in honor of a loved one, with proceeds from donations being used to support end-of-life patient care. The program will raise money to be used in

[SEE HOSPICE page 14]

## Caldecott's Fourth Bore an Early Xmas Present



SALLY HOGARTY

U.S. Congressman **George Miller** (orange tie) wields the big scissors while fellow politicians and important guests (such as the young artists who created the medallions above the 4th bore) had smaller scissors as they cut the ribbon signifying the opening of the new bore. The four-year, \$417 million project came in ahead of schedule and under budget, a mantra repeated by many speakers at the opening ceremonies. Bigan Sartipi, District 4 Director for Caltrans Department of Transportation, said, "We had tremendous challenges with this project, but with tremendous multi-agency commitment, we overcame them." Congressman Miller added, "We also salute the incredible work force of trained, skilled construction workers who made this all possible."

## Fountainhead Montessori Will Not Move into Old Phair's Site

By BILL O'BRIAN  
Staff Writer

The controversial Fountainhead Montessori school building project came to an abrupt halt at the Orinda City Council meeting on Tuesday, November 5, when the council voted to deny the project after nearly two dozen people spoke for and against the proposed new school building. The speakers were almost evenly divided on either side of the issue. The project to build a new school building on the Phair's building site at Orinda Way and Avenida de Orinda had been approved by the city planning commission by a five to two vote, but Terry Murphy filed an appeal to the

City Council.

At the start of the meeting when the Mayor Worth called role, Councilwoman Sue Severson read a prepared statement that recused her from the proceedings, mentioning an email that had been released from the city due to a public information request. The email was a communication between Severson and Bruce Burrows, a local developer, in which she spoke of her opposition to the Montessori school and hoped to convince others to also be against it. The audience clapped loudly upon her recusal which prompted the mayor to remind everyone that the decorum rules did not allow clapping.

Shandy Call, the director of the current Montessori school located at the former Santa Maria school, explained the school's facilities are outdated and too small. She hoped to increase the students from the present 100 to 150 at the new building. "We have spent three years and hundreds of thousands of dollars to get here, and the Planning Commission voted five to two in favor of our school," Call said. She went on to explain the building location has been vacant for 12 years adding, "Orinda deserves state of the art facilities."

The proposed building was to provide 11,041 square feet for the pre-school and 4,557 square feet of retail space. Another

speaker in favor, Dave Johnson, said it is "critical we provide retail" in the downtown. Peter Galloway did a parking study for Call and concluded that the school could lessen the impact of excessive traffic by taking two actions: first, staggering the drop-off time of children and, second, having additional school staff assist the children from the cars to the school.

People speaking in favor of the school  
[SEE PHAIR'S page 10]



ANN O'CONNELL-NYE

Tom Phair and his wife attended the November 5 City Council meeting speaking in favor of the Montessori project.

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GALLERY

# The Glover Group, A Legacy of Light and Color

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

The Orinda Library Gallery will show close to 100 *plein air* works painted by members of The Glover Group this month. Give yourself a holiday gift and gaze upon the golden hills, flowered fields, radiant vineyards and glistening waters of California as captured by these 21 talented artists. Join them on December 8 from 2 to 4 p.m. for an artist reception where light refreshments will be served.

All members of the group studied with Pam Glover, many through the Orinda Community Center. They have been meeting regularly since Glover's passing in 2010. Glover absorbed the techniques and sensibilities of the Society of Six (1917-1932), a recognized group of East Bay outdoor landscape painters known for their Impressionist techniques and unique style. She painted *plein air* with Louis and Lundy Siegriest in the 1970s and went on to become one of the foremost landscape painters in the Bay Area. Known as a "California colorist," Glover's weekly *plein air* classes encompassed the entire

Bay Area for over 20 years. Paintings from her family's private collection will also be on view. For more about Pam Glover, see [www.pamglover.com](http://www.pamglover.com).

Nancy Boas' book, *Society of Six: California Colorists* (1997, Univ. of California Press), elucidates what made this group not only groundbreaking for its time, but, as some say, influential beyond regionalism. Their color-centered indigenous modernism remains the most advanced painting of its era in Northern California and secured a place for these six painters in the history of American Post-Impressionism. Boas' book is available on Amazon.

Iris Sabre, Janet Mardirosian and Susan Kendall kept the group together after Glover's death by researching painting locations and sending out email invites to bi-weekly paint-outs. Susan Kendall organized the group in a more official way in 2012 and continues as the group's leader. There are no formal meetings; attendance at the bi-weekly painting locations is fluid. A paint-out is an event where *plein air* artists capture the spirit and essence of a landscape or subject outdoors, incorporating natural light, color and movement in



CATHERINE FASCIATO  
Catherine Fasciato's 12"x 16" oil on canvas entitled *Briones to Mt. Diablo* will be displayed at the Library Gallery during December.

their work which is painted on the spot. Maria SantoStefano says, "There is much to be said for the group dynamic as being inspirational in and of itself. Just having the fun peer pressure helps motivate a person to get out and do their painting. Once you're outdoors with nature, the pure pleasure of the experience takes over and makes you happy that you came out. There's a lot of discussion of work that goes on and a rather amazing amount of encouragement and support derived from one another." For a look at more of their work, see [www.flickr.com/photos/theglovergroup](http://www.flickr.com/photos/theglovergroup).

Shows, whether local, regional or national, form another source of inspiration for group members. *Evolution of Style* at Benicia Arts last month is a perfect example. It focused on the cross-pollination of influences that brought forth the Outsiders and like-minded painters. Formed in 1997, the Outsiders, of which Glover was a founding member, eschewed painting pretty pictures, instead painting what was in front of them be it dilapidated piers or neatly laid-out vineyards. The group also nursed a shared ambition of painting a canvas in one sitting in the out of doors.

While other painters may harken back to antecedents such as the Hudson River School, the California colorist forbearers were right here in the East Bay and painted many of the same outdoor scenes that the group paints today. SantoStefano says, "There's nothing like going to a show and seeing a painting done in 1930 or 1960 of a scene you yourself did just the other day and recognizing some of the same techniques! There's a thrill of recognition and a great sense of continuity."

With the two exceptions below, all Glover Group artists will be exhibiting oil paintings: Maureen Angelo, Moraga; Flora Baumann, Walnut Creek; Dana Beebe; Julie Bradner, Orinda; Catherine Fasciato, Concord; Sylvia Fones, Piedmont (may exhibit some pastel paintings along with her oils); Therese Gladstone Gordon, Orinda; Jo Ann Hanna, Walnut Creek; Laurie Heath; Susan Kendall, Orinda; Janet Mardirosian, Concord; Margaret Mason, Moraga; Renie Herrera-McDonough, Berkeley; Allyn Morton, Orinda; Iris Sabre, Albany; Maria SantoStefano, Orinda; Mary Spain, Orinda; Mary Claire Stotler, Walnut Creek (may exhibit acrylics along with oils); Taki Tu, Orinda; Pamela Wright, Lafayette; and Polly Ziolkowski, Moraga.

The group also considers part of its *plein air* legacy to be an interest in supporting environmental and historical preservation. They contribute to environmental causes by accepting invitations to hold paint-outs at a location of interest to a particular environmental or historical preservation group. This event could take place over a single day or many days. A sale, auction or exhibit

[SEE GALLERY page 16]

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YELLOW HOUSE

# Architect Remodeling Yellow House Wins Recognition Award

By CHARLIE JARRETT  
Staff Writer

James Phillip Wright, who is currently restoring Orinda's iconic "Yellow House" on Moraga Way, recently won a 2013 Contra Costa County Arts and Culture Commission Arts Recognition Award for his artful restoration of older properties into environmentally sustainable buildings.

"We are not just looking at the visual or esoteric artistic value of the contributors' works," said Darwin Marable, a member of the commission representing Lamorinda, San Ramon and Alamo. "We look at the total package – what they have done in the past, their total creativity and ingenuity. We focus on people who are truly creative."

Marable became aware of Wright's work when he drove past the Yellow House on Moraga Way. The sign outside the home lauding it as a "Net Zero" energy efficient home peaked Marable's interest. A review of Wright's website ([www.netzeroenergyarchitects.com](http://www.netzeroenergyarchitects.com)) further engaged the commissioner as he became aware of the architect's unique commitment to environmental sustainability in older buildings while preserving the beauty of the original.

According to Marable, the Yellow House is a "prime example of the dedication that Mr. Wright has in maintaining the simplicity of the original 1890's artful design while attempting to bring it into the current century." Marable noted that famed architect, Frank Lloyd Wright (no relation to James Wright), believed, "the true basis for any serious study of the art of architecture still lies in those indigenous, more humble buildings everywhere that are to architecture what folklore is to literature or folksong to music . . . these many folk structures are of the soil, natural. Though often slight, their virtue is intimately related to environment and the heart-life of the people."

In addition to Wright, this year's award recipients included: Eugene Rodriguez, art director of Los Cenzontles Mexican Art Center in San Pablo ([www.loscenzontles.com](http://www.loscenzontles.com)) and Corey Mason, the educator/founder and director of WorldOneRadio (<http://worldoneradio.org/>). Each recipient received a declaration certificate by the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors and a hand blown glass flame sculpture created specifically for the occasion by award winning glass artist Randy Strong.

While Wright received the arts award for his total body of work, the Yellow House



CHARLIE JARRETT

James Phillip Wright, owner and architect of Orinda's Old Yellow House, received recognition from the Contra Costa County Arts and Culture Commission.

represents a stellar example of his commitment to preserving older buildings while transforming them into models of energy efficiency. Originally built in 1890 to be a stopover for the California and Nevada railroad station in Orinda, the Yellow House fell into disrepair and remained vacant for many years until Wright purchased the home in March of 2012.

Intended to connect the Orinda Crossroads to Eastern Lafayette via the Moraga Valley Railroad, the Yellow House boasts two front doors – one served as an entryway for the innkeeper cook and the other provided access to the six residential overnight sleeping rooms of the building.

Wright stripped the building down to its basic framework, peeling away the old interior framing as well as all the electrical and utilities conduits. Like archeologists, his team carefully marked each and every piece of frame and molding within the structure. Once the state-of-the-art insulation materials, natural energy transference air returns, and heat recovery ventilation systems have been installed, the aged frame and molding will be reconstructed returning the home to its original artful ambiance. Wright has also replaced the fading pink exterior paint with the same shade of yellow used in the 1890 original.

While Wright intends to make the Yellow House his home, it will also be used as an educational tool. The architect hopes to open the house to school children and their parents to show how a home can harness the natural "geo-solar energy" of the earth. For instance, Wright has transformed the basement into a thermal heat sink and storage unit to assist in the performance of the building's "passive" heating and cooling system. This is just one of many energy conservation innovations that contribute to

the unique qualities of the Yellow House.

An added bonus for those touring the house will be the framed artifacts Wright and his brother Rick uncovered under the interior flooring. They discovered a cache of old newspapers, many from 1938 and 1939 when the world was trying to understand the politics and rattling of war drums around the world and the cataclysmic events that transpired as Germany and Europe prepared for war. The brothers are in the process of designing the walls to become art frames in certain areas of the house to accommodate these preserved news artifacts.

Wright plans to have the restoration and rejuvenation project completed by next spring. At which time, he will host a public reception and opening ceremony for the "Old Yellow House." For more information on the house and Wright's work, go to [www.netzeroenergyarchitects.com](http://www.netzeroenergyarchitects.com).



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The restoration of the Yellow House on Moraga Way should be completed by spring.

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Editorial ...

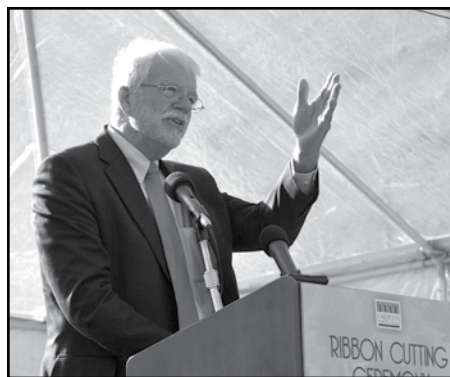
# Caldecott Tunnel's Fourth Bore a Bright Spot in Orinda's Future

The sun was shining and the politicians joked and congratulated themselves as they cut the ribbon on the long-awaited fourth bore on November 15. The mantra for the day soon became "ahead of schedule and under budget," a rarity in projects of this scale.

I would suspect passengers in cars barely moving towards the third bore were not in such happy spirits. Ironically, the tunnel experienced some of its heaviest non-commute traffic at that time. But, it does give them bragging rights about being in the last (we hope) big non-commute backup as the fourth bore officially opened in the early hours of November 16.

Many of the dignitaries speaking at the ribbon cutting related their own problems over the years trying to get to appointments or pick up children and not knowing how long they would be stuck getting through the tunnel. U.S. Congressman George Miller even regaled those in attendance with his animated rendition of a family arguing in the car over whose fault it was they didn't get to the Caldecott before it closed to just one tunnel in their direction.

According to Scott Haggerty, chair of the Alameda County Transportation Com-



U.S. Congressman **George Miller**

mission, Orinda Mayor Amy Worth was "jumping out of her chair with excitement." She certainly had a right to be pleased with this project. As chair of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, she was heavily involved with the new section of the Bay Bridge, a project that didn't come in "ahead of schedule and under budget."

Congratulations to all of the agencies that made the fourth bore possible, including the taxpayers who supported it with their wallets. Hopefully, planning trips around which direction has two tunnels open will be a thing of the past.

— Sally Hogarty, Editor



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Obituary ...

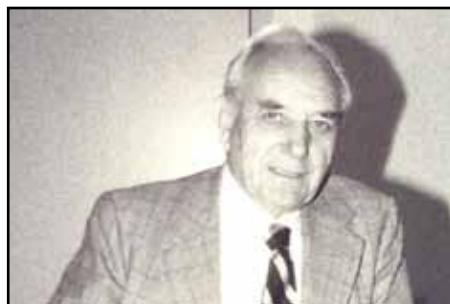
# One of Orinda's First City Councilmembers Leaves Legacy Behind

At the age of 93, Aldo Paul Guidotti died peacefully in Napa on October 8, 2013.

As one of the City of Orinda's first City Councilmembers, I had the privilege of meeting Aldo on several occasions where he was honored for one or another of his many accomplishments.

He served as a councilmember from 1985-1996, becoming mayor in 1989 and 1994. His fellow councilmember, Bobbie Landers, remembers those early days.

"We worked hard, along with Dick Heggie, Bill Dabel and Joe Harb, for Orinda's incorporation as a city, and then we were elected as its first City Council," says Landers. "It was quite a challenge starting something so new. Aldo didn't want more government, and he told us up-front that 'If you want to make a lot of laws that strangle business in Orinda, I will be against that.' Aldo never got angry or lost his temper. He was always a gentleman. Although we often had differing views, we became friends. It was a pleasure to have his experience on the council, and I will miss him."



**Aldo Paul Guidotti**

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Born of Italian immigrants, Giuseppe Guidotti and Pierina Bardelli, on a small farm in Orland, California on March 29, 1920, Aldo was the first of his family to attend college. He received his B.A. in political science from U.C. Berkeley in 1941 and his J.D. from Boalt Hall in 1944, serving as associate editor on the *California Law Review*.

Aldo's legal secretary, Bernadine Bushman, became his wife in 1950, and, in 1953, their only child Joanna was born. Aldo moved his family to Orinda in 1958, where he contributed many hours over several

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decades to serving the Orinda community. In 1989, Aldo and attorney Charles Lee formed their own law practice, moving their new business to Orinda.

While Aldo and Bernadine moved to Napa in 2007 to live with Joanna and her family, Aldo still drove several days a week from his home in Napa to his Orinda law office. According to Joanna, her father was passionate about the law. "He was a brilliant lawyer with down-to-earth roots who guided his clients through complex legal

issues with trust, ease, and understanding," she wrote in his obituary.

Aldo leaves his wife of 63 years, Bernadine, daughter Joanna Guidotti, son-in-law Brian Jensen, and two grandsons Adam and Erik Jensen, along with several nieces and nephews.

A celebration of his life took place on October 27 at the Orinda Country Club. Condolences to the family may be left at [www.claffeyandrota.com](http://www.claffeyandrota.com).

— Sally Hogarty, Editor

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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President  
Some Random Year End Thoughts



Bill Waterman

I'd like to reflect on one of the responsibilities the Orinda Association seeks to fulfill – that of promoting awareness and discussion of issues that are important to our community. The OA seeks to fulfill this part of its mission primarily by publishing *The Orinda News*, and, secondarily, by hosting “public forums” during election years (none this year). This paper strives to cover the stories that Orindans care most about, and this past year there have been no shortage of these stories. We, the members of the OA Board, hope all Orindans appreciate the contributions made by this paper, and the efforts of the many people working behind the scenes to bring the news to you every month.

Along these lines, in the spirit of promoting discussion of issues of importance, I have one observation to make – the problem of a lack of respect that some of us occasionally show to one another, particularly when it comes to certain very important issues of the day. Of course this is not news to many people, and it has probably been going on for many years. Whether out of a sense of frustration with a decision of our elected civic leaders or out of anger toward

people with divergent or opposing views, too frequently some of us seem to lose control over our emotions. Not wanting to sound hypocritical about this, I admit that I too behaved unprofessionally recently in a public forum. I regret having done so, and I apologized for my actions. Wanting to speak out in favor of a cause or issue near to our heart is laudable, but we should be careful what we do or say towards others. Is it too much to ask that all of us pledge to refrain from such behavior and behave respectfully toward each other and to our elected and appointed officials? We all deserve this respect.

Perhaps we lash out at others because we feel powerless to effect change. On reflecting about this, I saw an interesting quote from journalist Norman Cousins. He was once asked what the greatest human tragedy was, and he answered that it was not death, but “...death in life – though your body survives something important inside you has perished.” He was referring to the solid belief in one’s own incredible potential. Along these lines he said, “... you must never devalue the lives and feelings of others. Your supreme goal must be mutual acceptance – and you must never abandon that most noble human sentiment, trust.” If we can each accept that everyone has something to contribute to public discussion, then we should be able to tolerate each other better. At a minimum, more of our fellow citizens will feel comfortable sharing their views without fear of being shouted down. We can all stand to learn more from engaging in dialogue, not shouting.

I wish everyone joy and good health over the holidays. Thank You.

Next Orinda Association Meeting  
December 9, 7:15 p.m.,  
Orinda Library, May Room



SALLY HOGARTY

Attendees at a past public forum sponsored by the Orinda Association.

Nonprofits Grateful Recipients of  
Classic Car Show Weekend



SALLY HOGARTY

Thanks to efforts of the Orinda Classic Car Show Weekend Pit Crew and the Orinda Rotary (Dancing with the Cars) over \$50,000 was raised during the Classic Car Show Weekend in September. Proceeds benefited many local organizations. (L-R) Top Row: Chip Herman (founder, Orinda Classic Car Show), David Cronin (Orinda Chamber of Commerce), Bill Waterman (Orinda Association, Seniors Around Town) Lower Row: Dina Zapanta (Chamber), Marge Rieger (Orinda Historical Society), Sue Breedlove (Orinda Rotary), and Sylvia Jorgensen (Chamber). Recipients not pictured: Educational Foundation of Orinda, Orinda Starlight Village Players, Orinda Arts Council, and Lamorinda Film and Entertainment Foundation.



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Nominations for this year's awards are now being accepted by the Orinda Association. The Volunteer of the Year recognizes outstanding service by a volunteer or a group while the William Penn Mott Jr. Award recognizes efforts towards environmental preservation and protection. **The deadline for nominations is December 1.**

Nominees can be emailed to [oa@orindaassociation.org](mailto:oa@orindaassociation.org), faxed to the office at 254-8312, or by mailing to P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563.

The Orinda Association

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

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

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# Joaquin Moraga Adobe Rich in California History

By CHARLIE JARRETT  
Staff Writer

The Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe (FJMA) gathered in the Orinda Library in October to discuss plans for the restoration and preservation of the 172-year-old Joaquin Moraga Adobe. Recorded as a California State Historic landmark in 1954 and designated as an Orinda City Landmark in 1995, the adobe is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The founding members of the FJMA group began meeting between 2008 and 2009 to see if they could find similarly

minded people in the Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda area interested in saving and restoring an adobe that may be “one of the most significant historic sites” in the East Bay. The purpose of this particular meeting was to explain the current status of the project and to explore the most feasible way to move forward with fundraising, grant writing and support team interaction.

Kent Long, president of FJMA, presided over the meeting stating that the Moraga Adobe is the oldest surviving building in Contra Costa County. Long emphasized that it is most important for the community to understand the colorful history as



CHARLIE JARRETT  
Marilyn Merlino and Lance Beeson performed Hispanic music at the Friends October meeting. Beeson's great, great grandmother, Gomacinda Moraga, was born in the Adobe.

it relates to this particular adobe, a history which basically began with the Spanish colonization efforts of Juan Batista Anza and the Anza Expedition in 1776. Granting land deeds to dedicated military men and their families topped off the resulting colonization and building of missions. A top aid to Anza was a soldier by the name of Jose Joaquin Moraga, who founded the city of San Francisco, the San Francisco presidio and two missions. Moraga spent the next nine years implementing a system of government and helped to establish community life in the Bay Area. Jose's grandson, Jose

Joaquin de la Santissima Trinidad Moraga, was to become the first grantee and settler on the vast 13,000 acre Moraga Ranch, now known as the Moraga Adobe. While the Moraga adobe is actually located within the current city limits of Orinda, it sits above Del Rey Elementary School and abuts the adjacent Moraga Country Club fairways, which are within the Moraga town limits.

According to Long, the Moraga Rancho started out in 1841 as a two or three room adobe structure with dirt floors built on a hillside overlooking what is known today as

[SEE ADOBE page 16]




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## POLICE BLOTTER

October 2013

**Auto Theft:** 1 report on Robert Rd.

**Burglary – Commercial:** 1 report on Moraga Rd.

**Burglary – Residential:** 5 reports on Candlestick Rd., Crescent Dr., Lombardi Lane, Tahos and Tara Rd.

**Grand Theft:** 2 reports on Risa Ct and Wilder.

**Stolen Car:** 1 report on Camino Sobrante.

**Theft from Vehicle:** 3 reports on Marston Rd., Valley View and Miramonte High School.

**Arrests**

**Driving Under the Influence:** 5 arrests.

**Driving Under the Influence – Felony:** 2 arrest.

**Violation of Restraining Order:** 1 arrest.

**Warrant Arrest:** 1 arrest.

**Orinda BART Station**

No stats available at this time.

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving,  
Orinda Police Department

**Additional Police Activity During October/November**

- The Investigation Unit filed several misdemeanor cases with the District Attorney. They also assisted the patrol units by doing extra patrol in the city due to recent residential burglaries.
- Recently, Orinda Police have noticed a trend of homeowners not setting their home alarms. Please activate your alarms when you are leaving your homes. If you have a front gate, please close it as this can deter a person from entering your home.
- The Investigation Unit assisted Lafayette Police Department on a follow-up investigation in Oakland.
- There has been an increase in vehicle break-ins at the Wilder fields' parking lots. Please do not leave any valuables in your vehicles. If you see any suspicious vehicles in the parking lot, call the police and give a description of the vehicle and occupants.

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## CAR TIME / MOFD

## CAR TIME

Trying Too Hard To Save Money On Car Repairs?



By John Vanek

Like most everything else, car repair has reached significant cost levels. Modern automobiles are highly engineered and are much more complex than ever before. They require special equipment, training and knowledge to successfully repair or maintain them. Auto repair is an unwanted expense, and it can hurt your budget every time something happens. It is natural to try to find ways to keep the costs down. Some car owners are desperate to find affordable repair options.

Shopping for the best price for diagnosis does not always get the best results. You should be shopping for a facility that you can trust and has the skills to properly diagnose the problem the first time. Remember that repairing a car problem is usually a two-part process. First, diagnosing the problem then fixing it. There is usually a fee associated with the proper diagnosis.

*"Most owners are looking for a silver bullet," says John Vanek.*

I realize that car owners are frustrated when it comes to finding out what is wrong with their vehicle. There is definitely some anxiety that occurs as soon as your car develops a problem. How much will it cost is the burning question.

What alternative diagnosis and repair options are available? Thanks to the Internet, there is a vast amount of information available online. Information in the wrong hands, however, is not always a good thing. The average owner/driver will normally

not have enough automotive experience or knowledge to confirm their findings. Professional auto repair technicians spend years of training to reach a point of confidence on today's modern vehicles. It is hard to compare a professional diagnosis to an Internet guess.

Many owners are looking for the "silver bullet" to solve their car problem. You can save money if it works out, but what if it doesn't? You basically pay twice plus the diagnosis time required to properly solve the problem.

Buying parts online will potentially offer savings because no repair shop can compete with an online warehouse. Repair shops are responsible for ordering the correct parts, and they stand behind those parts for a responsible amount of time. They are also responsible for selecting a grade of part that offers the quality and longevity of the original equipment. Sub-standard parts manufactured overseas usually do not offer the equivalent quality and longevity as other parts available but do cost less.

What if the part ordered online is incorrect or defective? You have no recourse with the installer; he/she still needs to be paid. A sub-standard overseas radiator, for instance, that leaks after only three years is not a good value. The key to saving money is to shop value, not price. What is your time and energy worth to you? It is a better value to have your vehicle back in a swift manner and fixed right. As usual, I recommend keeping on top of car maintenance and repairs in order to beat the unexpected car repair demon.

## MOFD Reduces Service Model

By DAVID DIERKS  
Assistant Editor

Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) board voted to reduce firefighter staffing at their October 16 meeting. The revised staffing model went into effect on November 10. Administrative services director Gloriann Sasser said, "As a result of the new staffing model, overtime expenditures are projected to decrease \$550,000 this fiscal year. The district's general fund deficit projection was \$950,000. As a result of this reduction in expenditures, the revised deficit projection is \$400,000." The district met with United Professional Fire Firefighters Local 1230 and reached an agreement with union leaders to implement the staffing reduction.

The new staffing model keeps one full-time ambulance in Moraga at Station 41 and puts three cross-staffed ambulances in Orinda at Stations 43, 44 and 45. Fire Chief Stephen Healy said, "This looks to

be the best model. We keep the ambulance in Moraga, because it is statistically the busiest ambulance. We have a good distribution of firefighters between Moraga and Orinda. Including the battalion chief, you would have 10 people in Orinda and eight in Moraga."

Station 44, in the center of the district, would be run as a full-time ambulance. "That crew would go with that ambulance when they go shopping. It would basically be an ambulance crew that also happens to be an engine crew. It would be the primary ambulance for Orinda. You would also have redundancy in Orinda because you have the engine/medic combination at 43 and the engine/medic combination at 45," added Healy.

In June, MOFD approved a capital projects fund and general fund preliminary budget for fiscal year (FY) 2013/14. The capital projects fund can only be used for the replacement of fire-fighting equipment,

[SEE MOFD page 14]



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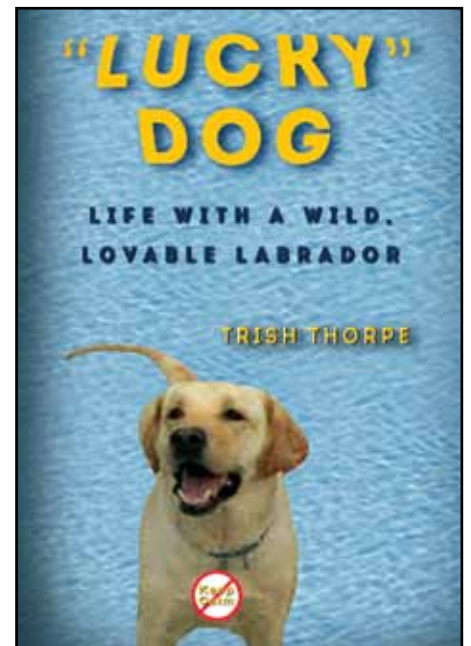
# Lucky Dog: Life with a Wild, Lovable Labrador Penned by Former Orinda Mom

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

Trish Thorpe now lives in Denver but hopes to return to the Bay Area – Denver is just too cold for this California girl. She lived in Orinda in the Glorietta neighborhood for two decades while raising her son Ty. Working at Hewlett Packard (HP) for all those years and raising a son curtailed any writing projects, which remained on the back burner along with her U.C. Berkeley degree in English. With her son off to S.F. State and being laid off from

HP, she finally had time to write. “Orinda was exactly what I wanted for my child – a safe environment, wonderful school system, beautiful landscape to appreciate; it turned out to be everything I hoped it would be. Lucky loved the wide open spaces, and the fire roads were wonderful for his daily run,” she says. *Lucky Dog: Life with a Wild, Lovable Labrador* (Lucky Dog) is her fourth book, her first being a personal memoir, her second insights gleaned from dealing with breast cancer, and the third a book with 15 tips for Asperger’s sibling support. She’s

already planning a second edition of *Lucky Dog* which will include photos of Lucky and info from her Labrador research file. Compared to writing her earlier books, writing about Lucky was “pure fun.” She challenges anyone to read chapter 8 (Carpet Fiber? Where?) without laughing. Thorpe’s background in Internet technology helps her navigate the world of self-publishing. The response to her Asperger’s sibling support book was so gratifying that she’s planning an additional book focusing on teenagers. Her books are available on Amazon and can also be accessed through her website, [www.fisheyebooks.com](http://www.fisheyebooks.com).





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It’s December, the busy month of gifting. No matter what holidays you celebrate, or, even if you celebrate none, you cannot avoid the pulse of a holiday season that urges us to find those perfect gifts. And what of the animals in our lives? What gifts might be perfect for them?

For most animals, the simplest gifts are the best ones, and, interestingly, they match those that are important to us humans as well – good health, good food, good home.

Good health for your companion animal means partnering with a veterinarian. It means keeping up with vaccinations and routine health checks. Your veterinarian is your animal’s second best friend – second only to you, of course – and, therefore, should be a regular part of your pet’s life. In addition to basic vaccinations, you can schedule teeth cleaning, ear cleaning, and physical exams that can prevent the onset of potential problems. Take seriously your veterinarian’s recommendations for weight control and skin care. There is nothing cute about an obese cat or dog. Animals with skin folds, such as bulldogs, require special attention to maintain healthy skin.

Good food for your cat, dog, pocket pet, bird, fish or reptile is available in abundance through reputable companies throughout the Bay Area. A cat or dog may have specific needs to counteract allergies, skin conditions, weight issues and age. A generic pet food may not be suitable. Again, the recommendation of your veterinarian is important in choosing the best food for your pets. Discuss ways with your veterinarian to add variety to your pet’s diet. In some cases, fresh vegetables and fruits can be healthy additions to meals or as treats.

Most of my Labradors loved carrots and apples; one even liked broccoli! Yet another was so highly allergic to many foods that he required a very specific special diet for his entire life. I cannot stress enough the importance of the right food for your pet as it will affect everything else in your animal’s life.

Good home is the hearth upon which your pet’s well being resides. A good home for an animal is comprised of comfort, consistency, and companionship. The comfort may be a warm bed, a scratching post, a clean fish bowl. It may be your lap, your couch, your shoulder. My black rat “Max” liked nothing more than to sit on my shoulder and, on occasion, he would even fall asleep there!

The consistency of a good home is one in which your behavior toward your companion animals is reasonable, fair, and generally predictable. If you’ve had a bad day at work, leave that bad day at work and come home to your pet happy to be together. If you have allowed your dog to chew on slippers as a puppy, then don’t be surprised when, as an adult dog, your boots become a favorite chew toy. Train your dog as early as possible so that you both understand expectations and boundaries.

Companionship is why most of us join our lives to other creatures and it is a two-way street. As much as you crave the song of your bird, that bird appreciates your attention as well. Don’t hide a bird cage in some dark corner. Don’t confine your dog to one room of your home or, worse, to a life exiled in the yard. Integrate your pets into your daily life. Talk to them, sing to them,

[SEE HOWL page 14]

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PERFORMING ARTS

# WomenSing Holiday Concert Filled with Light

By LINDA INFELISE  
Contributing Writer

From flares and fireflies to more introspective illuminations, WomenSing presents a wonderfully fresh holiday concert *In Lumine* (In Light). Guest conductor Jeremiah Selvey steps to the podium to direct on Sunday, December 15, at 4 p.m. (First Congregational Church of Berkeley, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley) and on Wednesday, December 18, at 8 p.m. (Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette).

Recently named artistic director of Oakland-East Bay Gay Men's Chorus, Selvey brings his artistry and energy to WomenSing as the group performs works for treble voices that celebrate the presence and wonder of light. The full spectrum of light will shimmer in the various hues the repertoire and vocal technique of this special performance yield.

Full, robust and romantic elements

abound in Imant Raminsh's *Missa Brevis in C Minor*. From string-like melodies and cluster chords painting the holiness and beauty of the Mother (Ivo Antognini's *Ave Maris Stella*) to the orchestral-like treatment of voices in Karen Thomas' motet collection of Hildegard von Bingen texts (*Lux Lucis*), the light of spirit, sun, flame, and radiant heat are portrayed. The concert also features Dale Trumbore, former winner of WomenSing's Youth Inspiring Youth composition competition, in his new work *Flare*.

Guest baritone Stephen Lancaster will solo in a sparkling new arrangement of Moses Hogan's beloved "This Little Light of Mine." An avid recitalist and current faculty member of the University of Notre Dame's music department, Lancaster has made appearances with noted orchestras and opera companies worldwide.

Both serious and light-hearted, *In Lumine* is a welcome addition to the holiday



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

WomenSing will perform December 18 at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church.

concert season. Advance tickets are available up to 24 hours prior to concert at [www.womensing.org](http://www.womensing.org) or by phone at 925-974-9169. Tickets will also be available

at the door. Tickets are priced at \$30 for premium seats, \$25 for general admission, \$20 for seniors, and \$10 for students/youth 18 and under.

# Ballet Company Serves Up a Sweet Confection for the Holidays

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

Orinda Ballet Academy and Company returns with its fifth production of *A Sweet Dream Nutcracker*. The magical holiday staple performs December 13 at 6:30 p.m., December 14 at 11:30 a.m., and 4 p.m., and December 15 at 11:30 and 3:30 p.m. at the Orinda Library Auditorium.

The performance involves student dancers, ages 3-18 years old as well as professional guest artists. This year's guest artists include: Kendall Sparks (Uncle Drosselmeyer and Nutcracker Prince); Kristin Lindsay (Sugar Plum Fairy and Arabian Coffee); David Bier (Cavalier and Mouse King); and Orinda Ballet alum Brooke Lyness (Arabian Coffee).

"Every year, we try to add something new to the scenery and to the show to make it a richer, a nicer experience," says artistic director Patricia Tomlinson. Tomlinson, a New York native, studied at the School of American Ballet and has danced with the Houston and Pennsylvania ballet companies prior to moving to the Bay Area.

Tickets to *A Sweet Dream Nutcracker*



JAMIE WESTHAL

Guest artists from last year's performance included Jackie McConnell and Michael Galloway.

are \$18 in advance and \$20 at the door. To purchase tickets in advance, go to [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com). For more information on Orinda Ballet, call 254-2445 or go to [www.orindaballetacademy.com](http://www.orindaballetacademy.com).



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HOLDEN HIGH SCHOOL

# Holden High's Student Council Presents Open Mic Night

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY  
Staff Writer

Senior Keenan Isaacs credits Holden High School's Student Council as being "important because it gives the student body a voice."

That voice takes on a non-traditional form when students perform in the school's upcoming "Open Mic Night" on Friday, December 6, at 6 p.m. at Orinda Community Church Fellowship Hall, 10 Irwin Way. Students will have the opportunity to present music, dance and spoken word poetry, in a performance produced by Holden High School's Student Council.

According to Isaacs, everyone is welcome to perform at the event, and no auditions are required. Isaacs has performed bass guitar and spoken word in previous open mics and has helped produce two of the shows, including the upcoming event. There are a variety of acts, he says, noting that "last year the West African drum class performed."

Kristen Lamoureux, Holden High School's co-director, works with Isaacs and the Student Council on events. Lamoureux



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Keenan Isaacs performs a "spoken word" piece at last year's open mic.

says, "I love working at Holden because we really get to know our students and watch them grow academically, socially and emotionally." The Student Council organizes [SEE HOLDEN page 19]

◆ PHAIR'S from page 1

listed many reasons, which included: moving to Orinda for the school; the handiness of dropping off children at the pre-school and then walking around town shopping; the desperate need for a modern, new pre-school; and how the new location would contribute to a vital and thriving downtown, as well as the enrichment the school provides for the children.

Terry Murphy speaking against the proposal said, "Childcare is allowed almost everywhere in Orinda, but not in the downtown commercial area." According to the general plan "personal development services" are allowed in the downtown area, but Murphy said the planning commission "changed policies and rewrote the general plan" to include a pre-school within the category of "personal development." Looking at the council members and pointing to the planning director he said, "That is not their job; it is yours."

Mark Roberts, a five-year member of the Traffic Safety & Advisory Committee, said the council's decision should consider "safety first." He added that the present school is on private property with a safe environment that cannot be replicated with the new proposed school. He said there will be increased traffic and a lack of parking.

Pete Hasselman said he had a 45-year career as an architect and urban planner and "this project falls short." Across the room from the large architectural drawings of the proposed school, Hasselman had his own poster sized multi-colored drawings of the traffic patterns of parent cars, pedestrians, school children and general auto traffic which had been marked with directional arrows indicating conflicts of all the above elements. He said there are "significant problems" with the traffic from the school including: traffic pedestrian conflicts, a blind corner, dysfunctional drop-off site, parking movement conflicts and child safety issues.

Franklin Lieu, part owner of the Szechuan Restaurant near the proposed site said his family has had their business in that location for 32 years and he opposed the site. He said, "There is not nearly enough parking," and because the school would create extra traffic from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., it "will create chaos for our customers." He named six to eight other nearby businesses that would be affected by the school because it "would take up street parking." He finished with a request to the City Council to "please consider us."

Other speaker arguments against the project included: major traffic jams, lack of

adequate parking or drop-off, an assault on the city building code, privatizing a public street, and golf balls hitting people from the golf course across the street.

Tom Phair, owner of the property, recalled fondly how children used to walk to the village. He said his building is like the "Winchester Mystery House" and that it is old, vacant and not usable. "We have found good tenants with a wonderful plan," he concluded.

After three hours of discussion, the council took a break before returning for comments by the three City Councilmembers.

Councilwoman Victoria Smith spoke first, explaining that she had received emails regarding what type of buildings would be built if the Montessori application is denied. She said people had mentioned as possibilities low-income housing or luxury condominiums. She stated that there are no other issues before the council tonight, but any kind of construction would entail traffic and parking concerns.

She explained that the council has to decide whether the pre-school fits within the category of "personal development services" which is allowed as Class B development in the downtown commercial area. Items stated in the general plan such as dance, music, martial arts, travel agencies, retail financial and beauty parlors all have one important item in common: they all produce "customers coming and going as foot traffic, which is what the general plan calls for." She went on to mention that "the applicant has told us 80 percent of the school drop-offs would be drive-through activities," and this adds nothing to downtown businesses. Further, she stated "the general plan addresses certain locations for pre-schools: downtown offices, semi-public/utility areas (such as a church) and residential areas. She concluded that this project does not fit the general plan.

Councilman Orr stated "I do not believe this project meets the requirements of Class B usage." He added that he does not think it fits within the "personal development services category."

Mayor Amy Worth concurred with the two previous councilmember comments. She said the building code "indicates the type and intent of businesses defined by personal development services and is not applicable under Class B usage" for this project. The city attorney stated that if the council concludes the zoning code does not allow this project, then it is denied.

Councilman Orr made a motion to deny the application because it did not meet the criteria of Class B downtown commercial use. All three members voted to deny the application.

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CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS

# Student Activities at Wagner Ranch Nature Area's First Thanksgiving



ALEC ABRAHAMS  
(L-R) **Chris Bruen**, UC Davis wildlife biologist **Brett Anne Balamuth**, and **Audrey Allen** make proclamations using hand-make quills dipped in ink and sealing with wax.



OLIVIA MCKEE  
**Claudia Gravanl** shows off her stenciled art work.



JACKSON FOUNTAIN  
(L-R) **Emma Lankford**, **Ava Moran** and **Sara Persson** take turns churning butter.

Fifth grade students from Del Rey Elementary School attended the First Thanksgiving activities at Wagner Ranch Nature Area on November 13. To deepen the students historical understanding of what life was like for those at the First

Thanksgiving, WRNA volunteers helped fifth graders from all Orinda's elementary schools learn about food preparation, arts and crafts, and various games such as log toss, archery and pillow jousting. The day ended with a delicious feast and the Wampanoag Indians Ceremony of Thanksgiving.

While a small portion of the cost of First Thanksgiving (5th grade - November), Native American Studies (4th grade in the fall and spring), and Animal Camp (3rd grade in the spring) is paid for by classroom parents, the Friends of WRNA must raise approximately 70 percent of the WRNA budget. Additional projects at the WRNA

include: Wildlife Festival, Olive Festival, and a variety of Girl Scout and Eagle Scout projects.

To help ensure the continuance of these programs, send your donation to FWRNA, P.O. Box 821, Orinda, CA 94563. For additional information, go to [www.fwrna.org](http://www.fwrna.org).

## How Do You Celebrate the Holidays?



ALEC ABRAHAMS  
"I celebrate Hanukkah in San Francisco with my brother and sister-in-law and my daughter and her husband. I also like to celebrate the winter solstice."  
— Beth Girshman, Head Librarian at the Orinda Library



OLIVIA MCKEE  
"We mostly stay in Orinda for the holidays and have a big meal of roast beef, brussel sprouts and pies with my grandparents. We usually get a treat at Rite Aid as well and go ice skating in San Francisco."  
— Jack Walker with his mom Terri



JACKSON FOUNTAIN  
"We both love celebrating Christmas. My husband and I sometimes go to Tahoe for the holidays and we celebrate with our grown children when they are around."  
— Leslie Schonborn (R) with her friend Marjorie Hitzl

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...Shakespeare

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HEALTH & BEAUTY

## Move of the Month

### Cross Punches

Works core, chest, back, shoulders and arms.

Stand with feet shoulder width apart, a dumbbell in each hand, elbows softly bent, and arms in front of you.

Punch out in front of you with your left fist, using the length of your arm muscles to control the movement. Return to start and punch with your right fist. Continue alternating sides for 20 reps.

For even more core work, pivot on your feet to alternate sides as you punch.

For more information, contact Sheena with Living Lean personal training and eating for elite fitness, at 925-360-7051 or [www.thelivingleanprogram.com](http://www.thelivingleanprogram.com).



## Everyday Changes

### Seasonal Changes, The Curse of Demeter!

Bonnie Waters



The ancient Greeks blamed seasonal changes on the unfortunate marriage between Persephone, the daughter of the goddess of the harvest, and Hades, the god of the underworld. For four months out of the year, Persephone would travel to the underworld to visit her husband; stricken with grief, her mother Demeter would let the fields grow cold and lifeless.

Although winter in California is not so intensely cursed by Demeter, we still experience the toll of seasonal changes on our skin and body. For the best recommendations for winter skin and body care, I have posed the following questions of our resident experts.

**Question:** Why do many people experience joint aches and stiffness when the weather changes from warm to cold?

**The Expert:** Sergio Casco, Massage Therapist and Certified Yoga Instructor

“There are many possible causes of joint aches and or stiffness in winter. The most common reasons are:

Blood doesn't circulate to your extremities as easily in cold weather;

In cold weather our muscles tighten up; And in winter we have a tendency to exercise less.

**What to Do:** Protect...Eat...Move

**Protect:** To eliminate joint aches and stiffness during cold weather, the solution is to keep your body and especially your joints warm. Layer when outdoors and remove layers indoors.

**Eat:** A diet containing the proper amount of calcium and vitamin D is important for good bone and joint health. Enjoy a calcium rich diet by eating foods such as broc-

coli, kale and figs. Adequate vitamin D allows calcium from the foods you eat to be readily absorbed. Moderate sun exposure helps to provide the body with Vitamin D.

**Move:** Less movement means slower blood circulation and more stiffness in your joints. Opt for exercises that won't give your joints a pounding such as gentle yoga and walking. Thai Yoga Massage is excellent for loosening up tight joints and improving circulation. Add self-massage to your daily routine with a nutrient rich liniment.

These recommendations are no way limited to the winter months. We would all benefit year around!

**Changes' Expert Recommendation:**

Soothing and healing liniment: Freeflex with MSM, Freeflex Boost

**Question:** How can we have a fresh, radiant face for winter?

**The Expert:** Holly Fox, Esthetician and Skincare Specialist

“After putting our skin through the intensity of summer sun exposure and the drying days of fall, now is the perfect time to nourish and restore our skin back to its fresh, healthy state. It really is as simple as 1-2-3!

**Follow these 3 Steps: 1 - Exfoliate 2 - Brighten 3 - Protect**

1. Exfoliate, exfoliate, exfoliate! Most of us don't exfoliate enough! By using an exfoliating cleanser as little as once a day you will see the benefits almost immediately.

2. Follow with a serum to lighten hyper-pigmented sun spots or sun darkened skin left over from summer.

3. Even in winter it is important to use sun block every day! Select a sun block that will not clog your pores.

Incorporate these three steps into your daily routine for radiant and healthy winter skin!”

**Changes' Expert Recommendations:**

Exfoliate: Purity Clean by CosMedix;  
Brightening: CosMedix Simply Brilliant  
Protect: Reflect by CosMedix

*Bonnie Waters, Owner of Changes Salon and Day Spa.*

## Young Students Raise Money for Unicef



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Shaili Lakhota and Keishani Cardozo, sixth grade students at Orinda Intermediate School, spent three hours baking and two hours selling their delicious goods at Theatre Square. All proceeds benefited UNICEF, the United States fund dedicated to providing lifesaving emergency care to children, immunizations against such diseases as polio and measles, and providing food for malnourished children. The young bakers raised \$70 for the organization.

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- Neil Cohn  
Orinda

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HELPING OTHERS

## Cans for a Cause Food Drive Already Underway

By AIMEE STEVENS  
Contributing Writer

The City of Orinda is pleased to announce, "Cans for a Cause Food Drive." The city has partnered with the Orinda Union School District (OUSD) and Republic Waste Services. Specially marked collection bins will be placed at Orinda School locations, Orinda City Hall, and the Orinda Community Center. Residents are encouraged to donate non-perishable canned goods and packaged foods. Items needed are fruits, vegetables, rice, pasta, peanut butter and other shelf stable items. All items collected will be donated directly to the Contra Costa Food Bank.

Republic Services, our local refuse pro-

vider, has graciously offered to match the amount of food collected. "Our company strongly believes in being a community partner, and that means helping those in need. We look forward to helping the Contra Costa Food Bank and matching the efforts of the residents of Orinda," said General Manager, Tim Argenti.

The City of Orinda and OUSD will host their food collection from December 9-20. The Orinda Schools began with Orinda Intermediate School collecting food from November 12 through November 22. The remaining schools will follow in December, with the final school, Glorietta Elementary hosting their event February 3-14, 2014.

Staggering the collection drives will allow the Contra Costa Food Bank to receive donations even after the holiday



AIMEE STEVENS

Mina Lim, Delanie Stevens and Cash Stevens collect food for Glorietta's can food drive.

## A Labor of Love Helps Build Schools in the Congo

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

A team of women from Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC) has been making necklaces since April to support the Congo Excellence in Education Project (CEEP) and now have over \$4,000 in their account, (plus \$2,000 already given). A motorcycle, which costs \$4,000, was the group's top priority. Serendipity! Money has been sent for its purchase. The team hopes it might be called the LOPCycle.

Believing that education is the key to helping bring children out of poverty, over 20 women of LOPC dedicated their crocheting to produce handsome necklaces as a fundraiser for CEEP, which is overseen by the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA). Presbyterians have worked in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for over 100 years and now have over 800 schools in great need of help.

A motorcycle is an efficient vehicle to deliver supplies and teachers to some of the remote locations where most of the schools are located. Money goes a long way in Congo, where \$50 provides an orphan's scholarship and \$100 gives a teacher training for a week. Zappo Zappo is a school just completed by PCUSA. Now, funds are being raised for another school. With a majority of the schools made of thatch, which deteriorates easily causing leaky



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Necklaces such as these made by members of LOPC are on sale to help schools in the Congo.

roofs during the Congo's nine-month rainy season, CEEP's sturdy, more rain-resistant buildings, as well as books and supplies, are critical.

Necklaces, for which a \$12 donation is asked, will be on display at LOPC, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette, on Sunday, December 8, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. They are also available for purchase by emailing bobbiedodson@comcast.net. Lightweight to mail, they make excellent Christmas gifts. Santas, snowmen, Christmas trees and crosses are specialty items, along with a wide variety of pendants on yarn of many different colors.

season, when donations tend to be lower. "The OUSD felt it was important to teach the children about opening their hearts and helping those struggling this holiday season. The students will have the opportunity to be directly involved in the collection and see the results of their efforts and the difference it will make for those in need.

The Orinda schools will be collecting food on the following dates:

Orinda Intermediate School – Completed drive in November;

Sleepy Hollow Elementary- December 2 - 19;

Wagner Ranch Elementary- December 2 - 19;

Del Rey Elementary- December 2 - 19; Glorietta Elementary- February 3-14, 2014.

If residents have any questions, call 925-570-5654.

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FILM

◆ MOFD from page 7

software and hardware, apparatus, building upgrades, acquisition and construction of major capital projects. The general fund is the operating fund for the district. "To maintain service levels over the last three years, the district has spent reserves," said Healy. Revenue for the general fund for FY 2013/14 is projected to be \$19.2 million. The FY 2013-14 general fund budget projects use of general fund reserves in the amount of \$950,425. In October, staff

discovered a series of accounting errors that go back to 2005. Because of these errors, the June 30, 2013 financial statements have been adjusted and the district's general fund now has a starting deficit of \$103,719.

For more information, visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org).

◆ HOWL from page 8

celebrate the bond you share with them.

You can make every day a holiday with the gifts of care, comfort, and companionship. To you and your animals, I wish you good health, good food, and a good home for all of your days together.

◆ HOSPICE from page 1

bereavement services, and to support both the Vigil Program and Bruns House, an inpatient hospice facility in Alamo.

This is Callahan's first time as chairperson, and she credits president Carolyn Schiller with getting her to volunteer to chair the event. "Members will also be on hand to accept donations the day of the Tree of Lights," Callahan said.

The event is sponsored by the Hospice of the East Bay, Friends of Hospice, and the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. For more information, visit [www.hospiceeastbay.org](http://www.hospiceeastbay.org) or call at 925-887-5678.

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**THE REEL LESS TRAVELED**

ON DECEMBER, DICKENS AND SHAMELESS PLUGS



Tom Westlake

The irony is not lost on me. Here we are well into the holiday season where "abundance rejoices" and yet, as far as special programs are concerned, there is little to report on the film scene. There are several reasons for this. One being that the good folk over at CAIFF are probably still recovering from the International Film Festival, and another may be the plethora of big Hollywood mainstream films flooding both the Rheem and Orinda Theatres. To be sure, that is the main reason why we haven't had Efi and JoAlice's International Film Showcase for the last two months. Knowing better than to compete against all the latest blockbusters, they have wisely opted to sit the season out, knowing that we will be all the more appreciative when they return in January.

There are, however, at least two notable films well worth your time – the first being a well established tradition that many consider an integral part of their Yuletide celebrations. Although *A Christmas Carol* might be dismissed by some as nothing more than the origin of the phrase "Bah! Humbug," it should be noted that this is one of the most widely adapted pieces in the English literary firmament. The Internet Movie Database ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)) has well over 50 entries alone and that's not including individual TV episodes and ancillary cartoons, not to mention stage and festival production. The latter of which your humble columnist is a part of as he assays the role of Jacob Marley at *The Great Dickens Christmas Fair*, running Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. through December 22 at the Cow Palace. Go to <http://dickensfair.com> for more information.

The reason for *A Christmas Carol's* ongoing popularity is clear: it's a plain good story that continues to resonate...not to mention that Charles Dickens had the wit and nerve to write (of all things) a ghost story to celebrate the Christmas season. The 1951 film version showing at the Orinda Theatre on December 12 at 7 p.m. starring Alastair Sim is often thought of as the definitive cinematic version of the story with Sim's portrayal of the central character being the template for all subsequent versions

of the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge.

Charles Dickens continues to entertain later in the month as the Moraga Movers present *David Copperfield*. Though nowhere near as famous as *Carol* (IMDB only lists just under 20 movie versions.) this one, made in 1935, does boast one of the earliest examples of what we now call "stunt casting." Familiar actors, mostly known for their talents in other genres, notably W.C. Fields, Basil Rathbone and Elsa Lanchester, venture well outside of their pigeon holes and, under the direction of George Cukor, manage to deliver all the major plot points of one of Dickens more rococo novels. Relative newcomer Freddie Bartholomew playing the title character (as a youth) also manages to hold his own with this impressive cast, making this, again like *Carol*, the most recommended of all the other versions out there. It will be playing at the Rheem on December 18 at 4 p.m.

And speaking of recommendations, it is highly encouraged that everyone check [www.lamorindstheatres.com](http://www.lamorindstheatres.com) for delicious surprises. After all, isn't that one of the hallmarks of the season?

So, until next month, remember to stay in the dark for that is where the true magic happens.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Tom Westlake as his alter ego Jacob Marley.



**Happy Holidays!**  
We would like to thank all of our clients for their loyalty and trust and wish everyone a Happy New Year 2014!

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BOOKS

# Author of *The Kite Runner* to Speak in December

By MAGGIE SHARPE  
Staff Writer

Afghan author and activist Khaled Hosseini, whose books *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *And the Mountains Echoed*, are *New York Times* blockbusters, will talk on Friday, December 13 at Acalanes High School in Lafayette.

Hosseini's books give readers a rare opportunity to look into a peaceful, somewhat poetic life in Afghanistan before invasions by Russia and later the USA, and to deeply experience Afghan culture and the familial ties that bind us all.

The event is hosted by Trust in Education, a group founded by Lafayette resident Budd MacKenzie, which strives to help the people of Afghanistan rebuild their lives and communities in the wake of war and ongoing strife.

"We are honored and excited that Khaled Hosseini agreed to once again support Trust in Education by coming to Acalanes," said MacKenzie. "We are grateful for the support provided by Acalanes and its students."

MacKenzie encourages guests to arrive by 6 p.m. so they can enjoy delicious Afghan food donated by Bolani Food Company.

Hosseini was born in Kabul in 1965. His father was a diplomat in the Afghan Foreign Ministry and his mother taught Farsi and history at a high school in Kabul.

In 1976, the Foreign Ministry relocated the Hosseini family to Paris. They were ready to return to Kabul in 1980, but the Soviet Army staged a bloody coup.

The Hosseinis were granted political asylum in the United States and the family settled in San Jose.

Hosseini graduated from high school in

1984, and then earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Santa Clara University. He subsequently earned a degree in medicine from UC San Diego and completed his residency at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles.

In 2003, while still practicing medicine, Hosseini's first novel, *The Kite Runner*, was published and quickly became an international bestseller. The rest is history.

Hosseini is also a Goodwill Envoy to the United Nations Refugee Agency and founder of the non-profit Khaled Hosseini Foundation, which provides humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

[SEE HOSSEINI page 18]




ELENA SEIBERT

Acclaimed Afghan-born author **Khaled Hosseini**, who now resides in Northern California, will talk at Acalanes High School in Lafayette on December 13.

## Between the Lines

An Alphabet of Holiday Gift Books from *Amsterdam* to *Zealot*

Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



**A** is for *Amsterdam: A History of the World's Most Liberal City* by Russell Shorto (Doubleday \$28.95) — A contemporary consideration of this city's historic liberalism, under siege today.

**B** is for *The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics* by Daniel Brown (Viking \$28.95) — An authentic look at the '30s and a must for any oarsman or sports aficionados.

**C** is for *The Circle* by Dave Eggers (Knopf \$27.95) — Egger's fiction gives added force to our current concerns about personal and national privacy threatened by new technologies.

**D** is for *David & Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits & the Art of Battling Giants* by Malcolm Gladwell (Little Brown \$29) — Every new Gladwell book guarantees provocative brain candy.

**E** is for *The English Girl* by Daniel De Silva (Harper \$27.99) — Any adventure with Gabriel Allon, Israeli super-spy and art restorer is a thrilling journey through Europe's capitals.

**F** is for *Flora & Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventure* by Kate DiCamillo (Candlewick

\$17.99) — Lovers of *Charlotte's Web* will delight in Flora's story. Note: Ulysses is not "some pig!" but a super-hero squirrel.

**G** is for *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt (Little Brown \$30) — The exultant reviews have been accurate. This superb novel is worth every minute readers invest in its 784 pages.

**H** is for *The House of Hades* by Rick Riordan (Disney \$19.99) — The conclusion to Riordan's *Heroes of Olympus* series has been anxiously awaited by young readers.

**I** is for *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up For Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* by Malala Yousafzai (Little Brown \$26) — This brave young girl has a powerful message for the world.

**J** is for *Just One Evil Act* by Elizabeth George (Dutton \$29.95) — Barbara Havers is front and center in a new Lynley adventure that takes Lynley out of England for the first time.

**K** is for *The Kingmaker's Daughter* by Philippa Gregory (Touchstone \$16) — A treat for fans of fine historical fiction is now in paperback.

**L** is for *Longbourn* by Jo Baker (Knopf

[SEE BOOKS page 18]

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Lafayette Open Houses  
Jan. 16<sup>th</sup>, Feb 10<sup>th</sup>  
6:30 p.m.  
984 Moraga Rd.  
(925) 284-4321

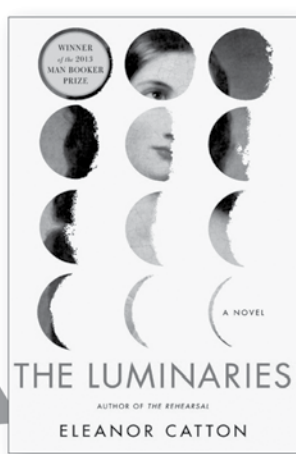
Walnut Creek Open House  
Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>, Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>  
6:00 p.m.  
55 Eckley Lane  
(925) 934-1507

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## CALENDAR

## ON THE CALENDAR

December

- 3 **Open Painting Critique** by Anne Marie Glover, 11 a.m. -2 p.m. Bring 3-4 paintings for discussion/painting at Valle Vista Staging Area, Moraga 94556. Fee \$25. To sign up email amglover7@earthlink.net.
- Orinda Arts Council Annual Holiday Luncheon**, with performances by Lamorinda Idol singers and OIS Bulldog Theater, Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, noon to 2 p.m. Contact Myrna Witt at keyofm@ol.com.
- 4 **Orinda Historical Society Holiday Party**, Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, 6 to 9 p.m. Speakers include founders of Holden High School and the Old Yellow House architect James Wright. \$40. Call 254-1353.
- 5 **Saint Mary's College Guild's Christmas Luncheon**, with lunch (\$40), holiday bake sale and raffle and entertainment, benefiting the college's scholarship fund, 11 a.m. Call 376-3306.
- Story Hour** with Cathy Goshorn for toddlers and their caregivers, Thursdays, Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, 10 to 11 a.m. Call 254-7606.
- 6 **Community Sing-a-long of Handel's Messiah**, with Festival Choir, professional soloists and chamber orchestra, Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 Saint Stephens Drive, 7:30 p.m., a fundraiser for the food bank. Childcare available. Contact Brenda Free at office@ststephenorinda.org or 254-3770, ext. 10.
- Voices of Musica Sacra** sings a variety of Christmas favorites, Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, 1924 Trinity Avenue, Walnut Creek, 8 p.m. Also, December 8, 3 p.m., Saint Stephen Catholic Church, 1101 Keaveny Court, Walnut Creek. Tickets are \$20 adult, \$15 senior 60+, student \$5, children 5-12 free. Contact www.vmschorus.org or 228-1181.
- 7 **Hospice Tree Lighting**, Orinda Village Square, a benefit for Hospice of the East Bay, features choral performance by local students, refreshments and photos with Santa, 4:30 p.m. Visit www.hospiceeastbay.org.
- Orinda Books** hosts Tamara Ireland Stone discussing her novel, *Time After Time*, 276 Village Square, 3 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 8 **Queen Lear: Her Story**, a play by local author James Keller about two daughters trying to have their mother committed, Fellowship Hall, 1606 Bonita Avenue, Berkeley, 4 p.m. Call 473-1363.
- 13 **Orinda Ballet Academy** performs *A Sweet Dream Nutcracker*, Orinda Library Auditorium, 6:30 p.m. Also Dec. 14 at 11:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. and Dec. 15 at 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Tickets \$18 advance, \$20 at door. Call 254-2445 or visit www.orindaballetacademy.com or www.brownpapertickets.com.
- Orinda Books** hosts an exhibit and sale of Gerry Wallace's holiday ceramics and Paul and Joel Kratter's art on canvas, 276 Village Square, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 14 **Holiday Book Extravaganza** with reps from Random House, Penguin and Conway-Random House recommending books for holiday giving, Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, noon. Work by local craftspeople will be on display. Call 254-7606.
- 15 **Orinda Books** hosts Meg Donohue discussing her novel, *All the Summer Girls*, 276 Village Square, 10 a.m. Call 254-7606.
- 21 **Sleepy Hollow Holiday Walk**, a one-mile loop around Sleepy Hollow, starts at 76 Tarry Lane, 9:30 a.m. Holiday coffee will be served. Dogs in holiday costume welcome.

## AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified. The library will be closed Tuesday and Wednesday, December 24 and 25 for Christmas and Tuesday, December 31 for New Year's Eve. For more information, call 254-2184 or visit [www.ccplib.org/locations/Orinda.html](http://www.ccplib.org/locations/Orinda.html).

- 1 **Basic Computer Help for adults**. Work one-on-one with a volunteer to learn about the Internet, PowerPoint and Excel. Call for a one-hour appointment. Also December 8, 15, 22 and 29.
- 3 **Toddler Lapsit**, stories, songs and fingerplays for infants to 3-year-olds and their caregivers, Gallery Room, 10 to 10:30 a.m. and 10:30 to 10:55 a.m. Drop-ins welcome, attendance limited to once per week. Also December 4, 10 and 11.
- Peek-A-Book Time**, songs, stories, rhythms and rhymes for infants to 16 months old and their caregivers, Gallery Room, 11:30 a.m. Also December 10.
- 4 **Winter Concert** for all ages with Brazilian songs and seasonal tunes, featuring mezzo soprano Mary D'Orazi accompanied on piano and drums, 7 to 8 p.m.
- 5 **ESL Conversation Circle** for adults, practice and improve English conversation skills in a small, informal group, 1 to 2:30 p.m. Registration not required. Also December 12, 19 and 26.
- 7 **Saturday Morning Live** features story time for children 0-5 years, Picture Book Area, 11 to 11:30 a.m. Also December 14 and 21.
- 12 **Book Sale** sponsored by Friends of the Orinda Library, Book Shop and Sorting Area, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- 13 **Mystery Book Club** members read and discuss *The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Arthur Conan Doyle, Tutoring Room, 3 to 4 p.m. Adult program.
- 17 **Toddler Dance Party** geared for children 1-5 years, 10 to 11 a.m. Also December 18.

## CLUB MEETINGS

- Diablo Star Chapter #214**, Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 p.m., Orinda Masonic Center. Call Karen Seaborn, 689-0995.
- Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe**. Third Monday, 7:30 p.m., Better Homes and Garden Mason-McDuffie office, 51 Moraga Way, [www.moragaadobe.org](http://www.moragaadobe.org).
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**. Fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library, 253-1997.
- Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition**. Third Wednesday, 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Orinda City Hall Sarge Littlehale Room. Call 687-8844, ext. 227.
- Lamorinda Nature Walk and Birdwatching** for seniors. Wednesdays, 9 to 11 a.m., free. Call 254-2445 for weekly meeting place.
- Lamorinda Sirs** for retired men. Second Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. Luncheon speakers plus golf, tennis, bocce, bridge and astronomy. Call Pete Giers, 254-4667.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**. Every Friday, 7 a.m., Celia's Mexican, 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, 254-0440, ext. 463.

## Popular Community Center Film Instructor Pens New Work

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY  
Staff Writer

Playwright James Keller says the inspiration for his new work *Queen Lear: Her Story* was a reflection by Orson Welles that "in Shakespeare's King Lear, the three daughters' mother is never mentioned."

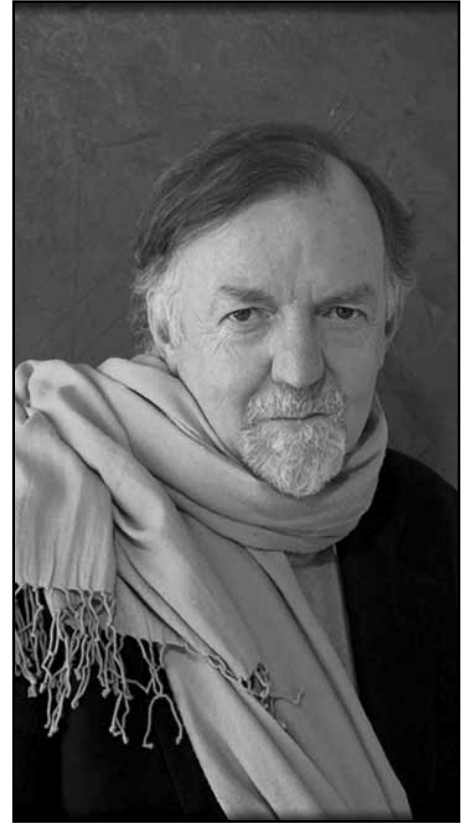
This raised a question to the writer: "What if in our world of people living longer, a mother is confronted by two daughters who do not want the responsibility of taking care of her in her last years?"

"The play is one of a long series of pieces I have written specifically addressing senior issues," said Keller, a popular area writer and educator.

So far the play has been booked in the Delta Room at Rossmoor on Sunday, December 1, at 3:30 p.m. and at the Fellowship Hall, 1606 Bonita Ave., in Berkeley on Sunday, December 8, at 4 p.m. Tickets, which are \$25 may be purchased by calling 925-473-1363.

Keller said he looks forward to seeing *Queen Lear: Her Story* produced at other venues. "I consciously write these plays for

[SEE KELLER page 18]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Playwright James Keller premieres his latest work in December.

- Lamorinda Toastmasters**. Every Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Temple Isaiah, 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, [www.lamorinda.freetoasthost.net](http://www.lamorinda.freetoasthost.net).
- Orinda Garden Club**. Fourth Thursday, 10 a.m. to noon, September through May, Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante. Visit [www.orindagardenclub.org](http://www.orindagardenclub.org).
- Orinda Juniors Women's Club** community service group. First Tuesday, September through June, 7 p.m. Contact Thama Brentano at [thamascout@gmail.com](mailto:thamascout@gmail.com) or [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org).
- Orinda Rotary**. Every Wednesday, noon, Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, 254-2222.
- Orinda Association**. Second Monday, 7:15 p.m., Orinda Library, May Room, 254-0800.
- Orinda Hiking Club**. Every weekend and first Wednesday. Visit [www.orindahiking.org](http://www.orindahiking.org) or call Ian at 254-1465.
- Orinda Job's Daughters**. First and third Monday, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 283-7176.
- Orinda/Tábor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation**. Fourth Thursday, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.
- Orinda Teen Advisory Council**. Second Wednesday, 4 p.m., Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. Email [orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com).
- Orinda Woman's Club**. Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon, call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881. Visit <https://sites.google.com/site/orindawomansclub/>.
- Walnut Creek Garden Club**. Second Monday, 9:30 a.m., Camellia Room, Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Road, Walnut Creek. Holiday Luncheon at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, 11 a.m. Tickets \$28. To purchase, contact Susie Paul at [suzanne11@astound.net](mailto:suzanne11@astound.net). Visit <http://californiagardenclubs.com/content/walnut-creek-garden-club>.

## CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

- Acalanes Union High School District**. First and third Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette.
- City Council**. First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).
- Historic Landmarks Committee**. Fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room. Call 925-788-7323.
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District**. First and third Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m.. Visit [www.mofd.org/board/meetings](http://www.mofd.org/board/meetings) meeting location will be posted on the agenda.
- Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**. Second Monday, 6 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 25 Orinda Way—Suite 200, Orinda, CA 94563. For the latest listing of dates, please check the website at [www.orindaschools.org](http://www.orindaschools.org).
- Planning Commission**. Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).

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



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CONTINUATIONS

**NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE  
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COMMISSION OR COMMITTEE**



The City of Orinda is seeking applications from **resident volunteers** to serve on the City's:

- Art in Public Places Committee (1)**
- Planning Commission (2)**
- Parks & Recreation Commission (2)**
- Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission (2)**
- Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (3)**
- Finance Advisory Committee (3)**
- Public Works Aesthetic Review Committee (1)**
- Historic Landmark Committee (3)**

The City of Orinda is also seeking applications from **resident volunteers** to serve as the City's Liaison to the following local agencies:

- Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District Trustee (1)**
- Contra Costa County Advisory Council on Aging (1)**
- Representative on the Contra Costa County Library Commission (2)**
- County Connection Citizens Advisory Committee (1)**

A statement of Interest form is available from the Orinda City Clerk's Office, 22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563. If you have any specific questions regarding the recruitment, contact Michele Olsen, City Clerk at 925-253-4221 or molsen@cityoforinda.org. Application forms may also be downloaded from the City's website at [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).

Completed Statement of Interest forms must be submitted to the City Clerk's Office by Friday, **January 3, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.**

Qualified applicants for City Commission and Committee appointments will be invited to interview before the full City Council on **Saturday, January 11, 2014.**




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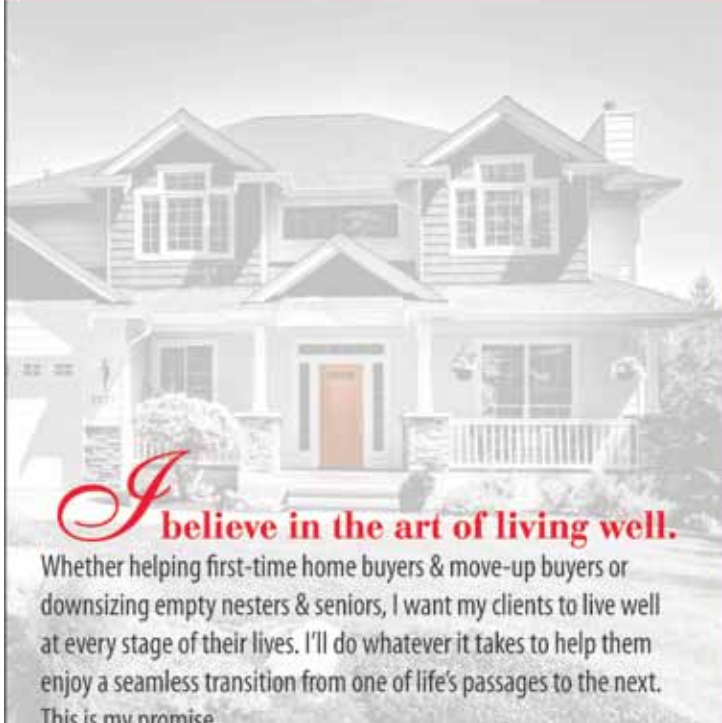
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◆ **BOOKS** from page 15

\$25.95) — A new look at *Pride & Prejudice* from the servant's hall and one that stands firmly on its own as an outstanding Regency novel.

M is for *Making Masterpiece: 25 Years Behind the Scenes* by Rebecca Eaton (Viking \$29.95) — PBS fans will be absorbed by an anecdotal history from *Masterpiece's* executive producer.

N is for *No Man's Nightingale* by Ruth Rendell (Scribner \$26) — Inspector Wexford is Rendell's most successful creation. Now officially retired, he is still ready to join a new investigation.

O is for *One Summer: America, 1927* by Bill Bryson (Doubleday \$28.95) — Bryson's diverting history brings Lindbergh, Babe Ruth, Al Capone, Jack Dempsey, and Gutzum Borglum vividly to life.

P is for *Police: A Harry Hole Novel* by Jo Nesbø (Knopf \$25.95) — Harry Hole's fan base is growing. Nesbø again delivers a riveting Norse thriller.

Q is for *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* by Susan Cain (Broadway \$16) — Cain's homage

to the soft-spoken is a popular gift book.

R is for *The Round House* by Louise Erdrich (Harper \$15.99) — A mystery, a coming-of-age story, and a National Book Award winner, this is a superb book group choice.

S is for *The Signature of All Things* by Elizabeth Gilbert (Viking \$28.95) — the author of *Eat, Pray, Love* has written a sprawling and seductive novel about a 19th century botanist whose work with mosses leads her to discoveries of Darwinian stature.

T is for *Tatiana* by Martin Cruz Smith (Simon & Schuster \$25.99) — It's hard to believe the author lives in Marin County rather than in the shadow of the Kremlin. This new Renko mystery dazzles with Muscovite detail.

U is for *The Uncommon Reader* by Alan Bennett (Picador \$12) — If you missed this charming novella five years ago, find out what happens when the Queen of England takes up reading.

V is for *The Valley of Amazement* by Amy Tan (Ecco Press \$29.99) — With her first novel in eight years, Tan reprises her favorite theme — mothers and daughters—against the world of courtesans in old Shanghai.

W is for *We Are Water* by Wally Lamb (Harper \$29.99) — Contemporary family relationships, the art world, and gender issues make Lamb's new novel relevant and compelling reading.

X is for *Xenocide* by Orson Scott Card (Tor Books \$7.99) — We have to pay tribute to Card's superb *Ender Wiggins* series — continuing best sellers for 20 years.

Y is for *Yosemite's Songster: One Coyote's Story* by Ginger Wadsworth & Daniel San Souci (Yosemite Association \$15.95) — This homage to the splendor of Yosemite is a book that will be a family treasure.

Z is for *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* by Reza Aslan (Random House \$27) — Meticulous research and vivid narration will make readers feel sand in their sandals.

Happy Holidays and Happy Reading from A to Z!


◆ **HOSSEINI** from page 15

A Q&A period and book signing will follow the conversation with the author.

"This will truly be a 'fun raiser' as well as a very informative evening," said MacKenzie.

MacKenzie will moderate "An evening of conversation with bestselling author and activist Khaled Hosseini." It begins at 6 p.m. on December 13 at Acalanes High School Theatre, 1200 Pleasant Hill School, in Lafayette. General admission for the event is \$50 with student admission priced at \$30. For tickets, call 925-234-9990 or go to [www.bpt.me/466762](http://www.bpt.me/466762).

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BUSINESS BUZZ / JEFFERSON AWARD

◆ BUZZ from page 20

The diverse offerings include hand-forged jewelry by Kawela Kai from the North Shore of Oahu, gorgeous pearls from Tahiti, and Divinity Jewelry designed by Michelle Mirekovich. But, don't stop there. Mosey into the next room where racks of designer clothing for men and women from Tart, Stella McCartney, Calvin Klein, Betsey Johnson, and others abound. You will also find a selection of hats from San Diego Hat Company and high-end designer purses that have been left on consignment. One of a kind Indah dresses from Indonesia spark the imagination. "The spanx workout pants are terrific. The comfort is unbeatable, and they are extremely flattering," points out Rubio.

Rubio is exuberant about her December 7 Holiday Party, when she will host a showing of the latest interactive book phenomena, *Trap the Elf*. Women are encouraged to bring in gently used purses for consignment and 10 percent of sales on this day are directed to a local hospice program.

Customers enjoy taking time out and relaxing on the serene and quaintly appointed patio amidst morning glories, roses and lavender. Strategically placed umbrellas block the sun. "I am an artist, and I have always loved clothing. J. Colleen is a platform for local artists. You can see a short film here,



VALERIE HOTZ

Julie Rubio's new boutique is her latest creative endeavor.

enjoy paintings and find beautiful clothing. J. Colleen is about bringing people together to experience something unique, organic, real and beautiful," explains Rubio.

Local artisans are featured throughout the boutique from Berkeley's Zina Kao, who uses reclaimed silver in her jewelry pieces, to painters Wel Sed, Brian Robertson, Cannon Dill and David Polka. If vintage is your cup of tea, visit the backroom where you will find consigned pieces by Diane Von

## Tyler Hofinga Receives Jefferson Award for Public Service

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

Orindan Tyler Hofinga was presented with the Jefferson Award for his public service at the annual Authors Luncheon to benefit the Kidney Foundation. This is the 19th year Hofinga has chaired the event, which raises around \$500,000 each year for the foundation. Ann Getty and Amy Tan have been his honorary co-chairs for all of these years.

Furstenburg, Free People, winter ball and prom dresses, as well as vintage wedding dresses by Jessica McClintock.

An Orinda resident for 14 years, Rubio is a producer and director as well. Copies of her film *Too Perfect* are available for purchase here. She is married to Blake Wellen, owner of Lafayette Car Wash. Her son Elija Stavena is a junior at Miramonte High School where he plays on the boy's water polo team. Stavena's first Hip Hop music video entitled "Life is About Your Individuality" is due out soon.

J. Colleen is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and is closed on Sunday. For more information, visit the website at [www.jcolleenboutique.com](http://www.jcolleenboutique.com) or call 925-258-0300.

◆ HOLDEN from page 10

the invitations, food, details of the program, the set up and the clean-up.

"Anyone is welcome to perform," she said. "We have had students who have never performed before perform in this event." According to Lamoureux, the Student Council is a community-building event, and staff, students, family and community members are welcome to attend and/or perform.

"It's pretty cool to see the talent that my peers have," said Isaacs. "It's different than seeing them in everyday life," he said, adding, "It's fun to share your talents with other people. If you show them what you do, it helps them feel more comfortable performing, and it allows students to collaborate with one another."

For more information, visit the school's website at <http://holdenhigh.org>.

A video of the extensive preparations necessary for the luncheon took six months to make. Hofinga was filmed as he interviewed the authors, which this year included Anne Lamott, Amy Tan, Jess Walter, Simon Winchester, chefs Lidia Bastianich and Daniel Boulud, and children's author Sherri Duskey Rinker; sampled luncheon food; and attended to the myriad details necessary to put on such an event where attendance has averaged 1,100 each year. The video and radio interviews were aired on KPIX5 and KCBS in November and, now, can be seen at <http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/category/jefferson-awards/>.

"We are so fortunate in the opportunities we have to lend a helping hand," Hofinga says. "I believe it is our responsibility to lead by example and give back to those less fortunate. In raising money for the Kidney Foundation, I feel I am making a difference in people's lives. As research continues to advance treatment for those with kidney disease, it keeps the door open for patients to receive these treatments and prolong their lives. The National Kidney Foundation is the top organization in the country dedicated to the awareness, prevention and treatment of kidney disease, which is the eighth leading cause of death in the United States."

Although this award was given primarily for Hofinga's work with the Kidney



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Orinda resident Tyler Hofinga honored at Jefferson Awards.

Foundation, he has found many other ways to participate in activities to benefit others. He has been on the board of UC Berkeley Alumni Association, the Foundation Board of the Oakland Zoo, endowed the children's room at the Orinda Library, endowed part of the rebuilding of a Shelter, Inc. home, endowed two Tyler H. Hofinga Alumni Scholarships at UC Berkeley, served on the Stewardship committee at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, and endowed the new African Lily Pad Exhibit at Oakland's Children's Zoo.

Hofinga has lived in Orinda for 17 years. His four children attended local schools, with John and Robert graduating from UC Berkeley and Ann a senior attending the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. His youngest, Elizabeth, is a sophomore at Miramonte High School.

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### Morrison's Jewelers Celebrates 90 Years with Trunk Show December 3

Situated in the center of the Crossroads at 35 Moraga Way, you can't miss Morrison's Jewelers, nor would you want to. This family-owned business offers a dazzling array of fine jewelry selections by popular designers and a variety of special occasion gift items. Jump into the holiday season this week by stopping at Morrison's and taking in the Holiday Trunk Show on Tuesday, December 3, from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. Champagne and hors d'oeuvres will be served up, along with dazzling designs made from silver, sapphires, topaz and other gems.

"We are looking forward to kicking off the holidays with our Holiday Trunk Show featuring Bellarri, Toby Palmeroy and Pascal LaCroix. Every piece included in each collection will be available for our customers. We donate 10 percent of the Trunk Show sales to the Education Foundation of Orinda. It is a good way to give back to the community that been loyal to us since we moved to Orinda from Berkeley in 1994," says David Berryhill, owner and

the 4th generation of Berryhills to manage Morrison's Jewelers.

The Menorah and Christmas trees in the front windows add special holiday spirit to an already cheerful spot. Holiday ornaments adorning the trees are available for purchase. An abundance of natural sunlight streaming into Morrison's highlights the natural beauty of semi-precious and precious gems. An array of timeless special occasion gift items includes crystal vases and champagne glasses, silver baby cups, elegant silver picture frames, Swiss Army knives, an inventory of stylish men's and women's wrist watches, and much more is available. Morrison's handles engraving in



David Berryhill of Morrison's Jewelers carries on family tradition.

several different script styles.

"Our custom designed jewelry is our real forte," says Berryhill. "Often when people inherit jewelry from family members they like to retain the stone, sentiment and history of the piece, but recast it in a new setting. Our on-site goldsmith, Nick Tutino, is second to none in that department. I have never come across a better goldsmith than Nick," he says. For those who have lost special pieces to burglars, Tutino can re-create the jewelry from a photograph. "Designer and gemologist, Betsy Bergmann Jimenez, does an outstanding job for our customers."

Berryhill began his career as a youngster working in the Morrison's Jewelers Berkeley store. After managing a jewelry store in Lake Tahoe for 10 years, he returned to the family business in 1998. Berryhill has two children, Bryan, age 13 and Kylie, age 15. When he is not at Morrison's Jewelers, he enjoys riding his Harley-Davidson motorcycle. "Both my kids like to ride my Harley with me," he smiles. "My longtime better half, Chris Jorgensen, is sales associate at Morrison's, in addition to being our website designer extraordinaire," he adds.

Morrison's Jewelers is a member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce and concentrates charitable donations locally within the Lamorinda area. Open Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit the website at [www.morrisonjewelry.com](http://www.morrisonjewelry.com) or call 253-9227.

### MexCal Bistro Fusion and Bar Opens at Crossroads

Hailing from the state of Jalisco in Mexico, Jose Luis Barajas and his wife Maria are excited to unveil MexCal Bistro this month at 65 Moraga Way, next door to Peet's Coffee and Tea. A family affair business involving everyone in this energetic family - which includes seven children - Jose and Maria cook together in the kitchen to present their guests with delicious fare.

"Our authentic Mexican food is a fusion of Central and Latin America and Europe, especially Italian and Mediterranean dishes. The California influence is in the presentation aspect, which is very different from how Mexican food is traditionally presented in the United States," says Barajas, who has been in the restaurant business for the past 15 years in Mexico.

Diners will enjoy ceviches from Peru, and a variety of dishes from the different states of Mexico. "We are bringing something new to Orinda. Here in the U.S., people think of Mexican food as burritos and tacos. From the Yucatan, we present marinated and slow cooked pork; from Puebla, we have moles; and from Vera Cruz, our guests will enjoy pescado



Jose Luis Barajas brings MexCal fusion to the Crossroads.

Jarocho. A variety of shrimps from Sinaloa are a special feature on our menu," adds Barajas. The degree of spiciness is at the customer's request.

All tortillas are fresh and handmade on the premises. Exotic salsas are made of organic, fresh vegetables. The classic Caesar salad - originally created at Caesar's in Tijuana - is authentic fare. A live band at MexCal serenades guests each evening, contributing to a festive atmosphere and an enjoyable dining experience. "Our philosophy includes serving organic, natural and sustainable meats. We feel this serves our guests well."

You will find a memorable margarita here at MexCal Bistro, along with Corona, Negra Modelo, Heineken and Stella Artois beers to round out your dining experience. "Our famous margaritas are made with fresh fruta fresca and organic tequilas. Tequila and mescale are made from the same agave, but the process is different," explains Barajas.

MexCal Bistro is open seven days a week. Lunch hours are from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily. Dinner is served from 4:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Beginning in March, brunch will be served on Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to noon.

With the live music complement, this establishment is a fine location for your private party. For more information, call 253-7777

### J. Colleen Hosts Holiday Party December 7

Orindan Julie Rubio recently launched J. Colleen at 261 Lafayette Circle in Lafayette, bringing a boutique shopping experience to Lamorindans that entices the senses with natural products. "It is like Fred Segal in Los Angeles, where clients are invited to go from room to room and everything you see is for sale. I have lived in Manhattan, London, Hawaii and Los Angeles and I felt that Lamorinda was ready for something like this. There is truly something for everyone here, including the Vespa in the window," says Rubio.

[SEE BUZZ page 19]

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**TABLE 24 COMFORT FOOD**  
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**THE HOLIDAYS. ALL SQUARED AWAY.**  
Once your stockings are hung by the chimney with care, be sure you stop by Orinda Theatre Square. With visits from Santa, carolers and surprises galore, this will be a visit of memories and so much more! So button your coat and put on your mittens, this year's festivities will leave you smitten! Visit the website today for updates!

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