



THE ORINDA NEWS

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Young Orindans Share With Others This Holiday Season



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



SALLY HOGARTY



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Orinda residents and students remember the spirit of the holidays by helping those less fortunate. This issue features several stories on their work including (L-R) **Julia Hunt, Bridget Meagher and Lia Verrico** from Del Rey Elementary (see story page 15); Sleepy Hollow Girl Scout Junior Troop 30859 (see story page 14); and OIS Others First program (see story page 14).

Residents Weigh In On Housing Element Alternatives

By DAVID DIERKS, SALLY HOGARTY and FRAN ENDICOTT MILLER

Although sparsely attended, the Nov. 5 City Council and Nov. 17 Planning Commission meetings held plenty of controversy as local residents expressed opinions on potential housing sites to fulfill the city's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for lower income categories.

Designed to meet projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community, the state-mandated housing requirement comes up for revision every eight years. The current 5th Cycle Housing

Element under consideration covers 2015 – 2023.

The city is currently considering three alternative housing sites to meet the mandate: 3.2 acres at Santa Maria Church (40 Santa Maria Way), which currently contains a ball field; a total of 3.2 acres from three church sites – Orinda Community Church upper parking lot (10 Irwin Way), St. Mark's Church southerly parking lot (451 Moraga Way), and vacant land at St. John's Church (501 Moraga Way); and a total of 3.2 acres from three Orinda Village downtown locations - Orinda Community Church upper parking lot (10 Irwin Way), Rite Aid (27

Orinda Way), and the restaurant/martial arts studio complex at 1 Orinda Way. Each of the three proposed sites could total 80 units of housing.

The City of Orinda has asked the public for its input on both the three alternative housing sites and the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

At the Nov. 5 City Council meeting, parents from Orinda Academy and members of the Orinda Baseball Association expressed surprise and concern over the possibility of a playing field on the Santa Maria Church property becoming a residential develop-

[SEE HOUSING page 8]

City and OUSD Join Together for Food Drive

By AIMEE STEVENS
Contributing Writer

The City of Orinda has partnered again this year with the Orinda Union School District (OUSD) and Republic Waste Services for the second annual "Cans for a Cause Food Drive." Specially marked collection bins will be placed at Orinda school locations, the OUSD office, Orinda City Hall and the Orinda Community Center. Residents are encouraged to donate non-perishable, non-expired 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 Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

Last year as part of this collaborative effort, nearly 10,000 lbs. of food was donated to the Food Bank. The generous spirit of giving continues again this year with Republic Services matching the efforts of the schools with a donation. "We are

committed to giving back to the residents in the areas we service and are happy to help those in need. We look forward to encouraging the Orinda students and their giving

spirits by matching their efforts," said Tim Argenti, Republic Services General Manager.

Neatly decorated posters advertising this event could be seen throughout many of the hallways of OUSD campuses last year. The students, along with their principals, are busy planning their strategies to collect even more food for those in need this year. While many schools opted for several smaller collection bins throughout campus, some requested large containers

[SEE FOOD page 4]



AIMEE STEVENS

(L-R) Giorietta Elementary students **Ava Caballero, Kristina Maksimovic, Jack Spencer,** and principal **Ron Langer** and student **Adam Brudzinski** collect food as part of the City of Orinda, OUSD and Republic Waste Services canned food drive.

City Council and OPD Look at Using Cameras to Combat Crime

By SALLY HOGARTY and
MICHAEL SAKODA

Orinda's rise in home burglaries from 56 in 2012 to 86 in 2013 prompted a series of local meetings on how to prevent this type of crime. At an Aug. 28 meeting, Orinda Police Department (OPD) Chief Mark Nagel presented two forms of surveillance he hoped would help put a dent in the crime rate — motion-activated cameras and license plate readers. An overwhelming majority said they wanted the more expensive license plate readers.

The discussion continued at the Nov. 17 City Council meeting where Chief Nagel presented a report reviewing camera technology options to assist in preventing and solving crimes. According to Chief Nagel, license plate reading (LPR) systems have been in existence since 1976 and are used around the world. The readers scan the plates from passing vehicles and enter them into a database that can be accessed

[SEE CAMERAS page 20]

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Legion of Honor Presents Spectacular Houghton Hall Exhibit

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

Whether or not you are a fan of the television show "Downton Abbey," *Houghton Hall: Portrait of an English Country House* calls to mind Highclere Castle, where the PBS series was filmed. The exhibit runs through Jan. 18, 2015 at the Legion of Honor in San Francisco. Houghton Hall has all the accoutrements of a centuries-old English country house but with a twist – a world-class art collection dating from England's first Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole (1676 – 1745). Wal-

pole's descendent, the Marquess of Cholmondeley (pronounced Chumley), Lord Great Chamberlain of the United Kingdom, was on hand to speak candidly about the fascinating ups and downs of his family home at a recent event. The Norfolk estate consists of 4,000 acres and the hall, built in the 1720s, has 106 rooms. Houghton Hall has played an important role in 300 years of British art, history and politics through its collections, architecture and stewards.

The opulent interiors bear the stamp of William Kent, architect and designer. You will be able to see them in well-documented videos (done by Lord Cholmondeley) and photographs. Every detail was created to highlight the art Walpole so passionately collected. Kent designed the furniture, wall, floor and window treatments, lighting, casings, trim, fabrics and picture frames in the Palladian style; think velvet-covered walls. Separate galleries named for rooms in Houghton Hall display more than 200 clearly labeled objects of all descriptions. Where else can you see Gainsborough's earliest self-portrait, second-century busts of Hadrian and Zeus, a 16th-century bronze *Rape of the Sabine Women* by Giambologna, an 1847 throne for the Prince of Wales (still used) and an entire room of John Singer Sargent's, in one place? A fuller description of what is on exhibit is available online but safe to say you will recognize names of historical figures, artists, performers and politicians.



NICK MCCANN

Cabinet at Houghton Hall, Norfolk, England is the result of generations of collecting. The walls are Chinese hand-painted and printed wallpaper, circa 1780. A sample of the wallpaper is in the exhibit.

Sargent and Lady Sybil Sassoon were great friends and he painted her more than once. In his *The Countess of Rocksavage* (1922), a life-sized portrait, her face is crystal clear. The brush strokes on her face are blended, whereas in the rest of the

painting, the brushstrokes are loose and calligraphic. This is a beautiful stylistic device and from a distance her face appears almost alive, as if a slight wind is blowing on it. The term Lyrical Realism is sometimes used to describe Sargent's portraits and indeed, he was an accomplished musician. Musicians Percy Grainger and Gabriel Fauré, close friends of Sargent's, said that his musical ability was as great as his painting skills. Also not to be missed are Artemisia Gentileschi's *Samson and*

[SEE EXHIBIT page 6]

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Orinda Library Gallery Showcases Eight Abstract Artists

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The Orinda Arts Council presents the work of eight East Bay painters at the Orinda Library Gallery during December. The show is entitled *Abstract Rhythms* because all the paintings move through qualities of rhythm, line, shape, color and texture. Meet the artists at a reception on Sunday, Dec. 7, from 2 to 4 pm when light refreshments will be served. Give yourself a gift of something a little different this holiday season – stop by the well-lit gallery and soak up some quiet serenity while viewing art.

Exhibiting artists include: Tina Pressler (www.tinapressler.com) and Lynn Glenn of Danville; Nancy Robinson of Martinez; Elise Marshall (www.elisemarshall.com) and Lisa Steele of Orinda; Valerie Corvin of Piedmont; and Ruth Brophy and Jackie Carroll of Walnut Creek. These eight East Bay abstract painters meet regularly at a studio in Orinda where they play off each other's work. Many of them exhibit extensively. A quote from Squeak Carnwath, a Bay Area painter, inspires the group: "A painting reveals, covers and uncovers. It is the archaeology of the mind. It is about the cosmology of the soul."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO


Tina Pressler's *Momentum #52* is a 24" x 24" acrylic on paper.

Tina Pressler, curator of the show, is a professional artist and art educator who has been painting for 30 years and meeting with the other artists at the Orinda studio for the last three years. In some of the art classes, more than 50 percent of the kids were labeled in some way. But when she put them in a circle and, for example, showed them how to shape wire into something, a change occurred. They became so involved in what they were doing that they were quiet; their minds were engaged; they were

[SEE GALLERY page 16]

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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President
Year In Review – Things are Looking
Up



Bill Waterman

For our fair city, 2014 has been a year of change and of distinct progress on some fronts. Take our beleaguered roads, for example. Spurred on by the efforts of the Fix Orinda Roads Committee, Measure J, a \$20 million bond, passed last June by a whopping 75 percent of the voters. Hence, the city will finally now have funding to repave and repair the notorious “worst roads” in Orinda, based on a “Pavement Condition Index.” This bond, in combination with the Measure L half-cent sales tax passed in 2012, constitute phases one and two of the city’s four-phase road repair plan (and yes, we will all have time next year to dialogue about how to fund the rest of the very necessary repairs going forward). We have already seen the benefits of these two phases of the plan – portions of Lost Valley Road and Charles Hill Road have been completely repaved in the last few months. Also, the Citizens’ Infrastructure Oversight Committee (CIOC) is now creating the list of roads that will be repaired in 2015. So we now can see some light at the end of the roads’ tunnel, and we thank everyone who supported these two measures, the dedicated volunteer members of the CIOC and members of our City Council for working hard to come up with the plan in the first place.

Our City Council will welcome a new member this month. Congratulations to Eve Phillips, our latest council member, as well as returning incumbents Dean Orr and Amy Worth. This council election was a spirited one – thanks to the willingness of fellow citizens Carlos Baltodano, Linda Delehunt and Robert Thompson to run. We owe all of them thanks for being willing to step forward and create a dialogue about what needs to be done to make Orinda a better place to live in the future.

This year was a good one for the Orinda Association (OA) as well

For the 31st year, the OA organized the Fourth of July (FOJ) parade and festivities with double the number of bands and decorations and many other improvements – thanks go to the many volunteers on the FOJ committee and to 2014 co-chairs Andy Radlow and Steve Meagher. (We have openings on our committee for 2015 too!)

Now in its ninth year, the OA runs the

Seniors Around Town (SAT) ride program – and thanks to our staff and program director Kate Wiley, our volunteer drivers will provide more than 600 rides to Orinda seniors again this year. We thank all of our dedicated volunteer drivers. (For those of you thinking that you don’t have time to get involved in volunteering, think again – we can use your help, even if you only drive a senior once a month.)

The OA operates the Volunteer Center from our office – we can help your group line up volunteers, and we celebrate volunteers with our annual Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award.

The OA helps with administrative support for the Orinda Classic Car Show and, thanks to the efforts of the Car Show Committee, this year’s event was the best ever. This event was paired with the Dancing with the Cars dinner, organized by Orinda Rotary. Together the events raised funds for many Orinda non-profits. Thanks to everyone involved with both events – great job!

These diverse events and programs were made possible by the combined efforts of volunteers who donated more than 2,000 hours of their time. We thank each and every one!

And last but not least, *The Orinda News* is supported by the OA – and this paper continues to be the most sought-after source for news in Orinda. All of this is due to the efforts of Editor Sally Hogarty and staff members David Dierks, Jill Gelster, Elana O’Loskey and our many talented writers and contributors. The paper continues to inform us about the goings and comings here in town.

In closing, I want to thank all of the 450-plus families that are members of the OA and the many volunteers – your support is what makes all of this possible. Have a safe and memorable holiday season.

Nominations Due Now!

Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. nominations are due Dec. 1. Send to the OA via email at oa@orindaassociation.org, call 925-254-0800 or mail 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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Save the date!

February 8

Celebrate Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award Winners at a gala dinner and awards ceremony starting at 6 pm.

Orinda Country Club

Winners announced in the January issue of *The Orinda News*. For more information, call 925-254-0800.

Wishing Everyone a Happy Holiday Season and a Prosperous New Year.

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Editorial...

At such a busy time of the year, it is nice to be reminded of the truly important things in life -- being grateful for what we have and helping others less fortunate. In this issue, we have many stories where our youngest residents remind us to share our good fortune with others. We also have a story on Blue Star Moms and the sewing angels of Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church who make the lives of those serving our country just a little bit better.

If you're looking for a different way of dealing with holiday gifts or year-end donations, take a look at Ksenija Olmer's "Accidental Philanthropist" column on page 12. She has solicited recommendations for worthy nonprofit organizations from local residents.

Finally, we honor those that have recently passed (see page 9). Unfortunately, we received word of the death of Barclay

Simpson just before going to press and could not include a tribute to this wonderful man in this issue. There will be a story on him in the January issue.

Have a safe and wonderful holiday!
- Sally Hogarty, Editor

Corrections . . .

In the November issue, a letter to the editor by Mark Roberts stated that the Orinda School (now the Community Center) closed in the 1950s due to rapidly increasing number of students. The school closed in 1973 due to a decline in students.

In the November issue, a story on Tree of Lights listed the Bruns House in Walnut Creek. It is located in Alamo. It was also listed that Hospice provides hospice services for children in its Comfort for Kids program. That program hasn't operated since 2010.

Letters to the Editor

Nothing "Sub" about Rap

Regarding an article on page 21 by Michael Sakoda in Volume 29, Number 11, I appreciate reading about local artists and musicians and enjoyed reading about Elijah Stavena, aka Kahleo, who I had not heard of. However, I wish Mr. Sakoda had not framed the article with this sentence, "To the layman, rap has always been more a sub-music..." When I read this sentence, I wondered what layman Mr. Sakoda might be thinking of. I think that most lay people under the age of 40 have never regarded rap to be a "sub-music" or "sub-genre," as rap's importance has been accepted in popular culture for at least 30 years.

I imagine many older lay people of color and lay people growing up in cultures generally under-represented in Orinda also never saw rap as a "sub-music" or "sub-genre," but recognized, even when the form was young, that it was a legitimate out-growth of music in the African-American tradition. Finally, I find the term "sub-music" to have really troubling undertones more generally. While the writer may have meant by the term "subgenre" a genre below another more "legitimate" genre, the use of the prefix "sub-" in "sub-music" sounds quite close to calling the producers of this form inferior.

- Stephanie Brown

Residents Concerned About MOFD Station 43 Closure

While it is understandable that people in the neighborhood around Station 43 do not want to see it moved further away, the problem is that MOFD has spent \$80 million more than it took in over the past 17 years, and now it has to pay it back. They should be spending about \$6 million per year to

pay that debt down and right now they are only paying about \$4 million. Where is the extra \$2 million going to come from?

MOFD's operating expenses, exclusive of debt, are about \$1 million per firefighter position. When Station 46 is in operation, ConFire will pay for half of the cost of the three-person station; saving MOFD about \$1.5 million per year.

Will this impact service around Station 43? Yes, but minimally. In the one year the Orinda Emergency Services Task Force analyzed MOFD incidents, Station 43 was first responder to 65 Code 3 (lights and siren) emergencies. Twenty-three of these were south of Highway 24 so their response time will not be impacted by the station location shift. Twelve were in the downtown Station 45 service area and four were in Sleepy Hollow, which is just as close to Station 45 as 43.

The Station 43 crew only responded to 26 emergencies during the year in their service area north of Highway 24; once every other week. Eight of these were responded to in under four minutes so a two minute delay from Station 46 would still bring a response in under six minutes, the response time target for the district, leaving 18 incidents which would end up with response times in excess of six minutes. By comparison, the Sleepy Hollow / Orinda Downs area experienced 54 (out of 58) Code 3 incidents responded to in excess of six minutes over the year.

Is it worth \$1.5 million per year for the extra service for these 18 incidents? If the residents believe so, maybe they should examine options, like a benefit assessment district, to fund this expense. Or maybe they could get the service they really need for less. Note that 16 of the 18 emergen-



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cies were medical in nature. Could a single paramedic in the area, possibly serving Orinda Downs and Sleepy Hollow also, provide crucial first-responder service for the 90 percent of emergencies that are medical in nature for a much lower cost?

- Steve Cohn

◆ FOOD from page 1

in an effort to challenge classmates to help fill them to the brim. Whatever the chosen

method of collection this year, one thing is certain, and that is the desire to give back and make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate.

Collections at the City of Orinda, OUSD office and many of the Orinda schools will begin December 1. Look for specially marked collection bins at City Hall, Orinda Community Center, OUSD offices, and school campuses. One can at a time, Orinda gives back.

Food Drive Coordinator Aimee Burastero Stevens can be reached at 925-570-5654.

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

Send letters to: Editor, *The Orinda News*, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, fax them to 254-8312, or email to news@orindaassociation.org. **Letters to Editor** for the January issue are due **December 8, 2014**.

For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the January issue is December 8, 2014.

BART / MOFD / POLICE

Fire Chief Accepts Chair of Eight Agency Forum



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

MOFD Fire Chief Stephen Healy (L) receives the gavel as 2015 Chair of the HEF from HEF Staff Cheryl Miller and Cal Fire Director Ken Pimlott.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Fire Chief Stephen Healy was made the chair of the Hills Emergency Forum (HEF) for 2015. HEF was formed in 1993 after the Oakland Hills Fire and brings eight local governing bodies together for fire prevention mitigation, suppression and emergency planning for the urban-wildland area of the Oakland-Berkeley hills.

Members agencies include the City of Berkeley, the City of Oakland, the City of El Cerrito, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the East Bay Municipal Utility District, the East Bay Regional Park District, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the University of California. One of HEF's subcommittees is the East Bay Fire Chiefs (EBFC) which consists of chief officers from fire departments in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. EBFC aims to standardize equipment and training for the counties to assure coordinated responses to major incidents and educate the community about wildland fire safety.

For more information, visit www.mofd.org or www.hillsemergencyforum.org.

Orinda Works to Improve Bryant Way BART Access

By DAVID DIERKS
Assistant Editor

The Orinda City Council approved a Fund Pass-Through agreement with Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) for the improvement of the access ramp between Bryant Way and the Orinda BART station on Nov. 5. Orinda Senior Civil Engineer Larry Theis said, "The City of Orinda was awarded a \$250,000 grant to improve the access connection between the Orinda BART station and our downtown Theatre Square. With this major financial contribution from BART, the city is planning to replace the existing ramp and stairs between the end of Bryant Way and the elevated sidewalk along the east side of Camino Pablo. The project will also include lighting near the new ramp and along the sidewalk underneath the eastbound Highway 24 overpass."

These improvements will bring the current ramp at the end of Bryant Way up to ADA standards as well as provide a more secure walkway with additional lighting. "I am very happy that this project also

includes the additional safety factor of lighting under the freeway overpass," said City Councilmember Victoria Smith.

Leptien, Cronin, Cooper, Morris & Poore, Inc. of Martinez was awarded the engineering design services contract for the ramp and lighting project. "The pedestrian access for our downtown crossroads and the Orinda Village to BART is really important, and this will make it safer, more convenient and more reliable for people. This is going to be a great addition to our community," added City Councilmember Amy Worth.

BART Director Rebecca Saltzman said, "We're really excited to provide the funding for this project to provide an ADA compliant access ramp adjacent to the city's theatre district and to improve the link between the two commercial and civic areas of the city and to the BART station." City Manager Janet Keeter noted, "This is a project that we've been looking forward to for a long time, and we're delighted to work with BART to make this project come together."

For updates on the project, go to www.cityoforinda.org.

Morrison's Jewelers Holiday Trunk Show Benefited Children's Health Guild



DAVID DIERKS

(L-R) May-Britt Malbec of Alienor Wines with Morrison's Jeweler's owner David Berryhill and sales manager Chris Jorgensen.

Morrison's Jewelers donated 10 percent of sales on November 15 to the Children's Health Guild, which supports UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland and George Mark Children's House. May-Britt Malbec of Alienor Wines provided wine tasting while customers viewed Morrison's fine selection of jewelry.



POLICE BLOTTER

October 2014

Battery: 2 incidents: Camino Sobrante and Rite Aid.

Brandishing a Weapon: 1 incident: Orinda Country Club.

Burglary: 1 incident: Muth Dr.

Burglary, Auto: 1 incident: McCaulous.

Burglary, Miscellaneous: 1 incident: La Campana Rd.

Burglary, Residential: 2 incidents: La Noria and Warford Ter.

Domestic Disturbance: 2 incidents: Undisclosed location (2).

Grand Theft: 1 incident: Orinda Way.

Identity Theft: 4 incidents: Orinda Way (2), La Espiral and Counter Report at Orinda PD.

Petty Theft: 2 incidents: Moraga Way and Washington Ln.

Petty Theft from Vehicle: 3 incidents: De Soto Ct., Library and Moraga Way.

Shoplifting: 1 incident: Safeway.
Theft of Access Card: 1 incident: Moraga Way.

Vandalism: 1 incident: Counter Report at Orinda PD.

Violation of Custody Order: 2 incidents: Glorietta Elementary School (2).

Arrests

Shoplift Arrest: 2 incidents: Camino Sobrante, Safeway.

Suspicious Vehicle Arrest: 1 arrest: El Nido Ranch Rd./St. Stephens.

Traffic Stop Arrest: 2 arrests: Camino Pablo/Santa Maria Way and Camino Pablo/Camino Sobrante.

Welfare Check Arrest: 1 arrest: Orinda Way.

Orinda BART Station

No incidents.

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving,
Orinda Police Department



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ROADS / COMMISSIONS

Updates on Orinda's Roads
New Year Means New Roads



Mark Roberts

Come 2015, the City of Orinda will give "gifts" to all motorists, cyclists and pedestrians in Orinda in the form of miles of repaved roads. Most work will begin in the summer of 2015.

At its Nov. 5 City Council meeting, members unanimously approved the list of roads to be repaved next year. The Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Commission (CIOC), in conjunction with the city's Public Works Department, created the list. For the first time in the city's history, Orinda will be able to invest nearly \$7.25 million in improving its infrastructure.

Let's start with the arterial and collector roads to be repaved. Funding for these projects comes from return to source funding, including sales taxes from county measures C and J and gas taxes. Three segments of Overhill Road, from Moraga Way to Broadview Terrace, will be repaved. The other project will be the repaving of St. Stephen's Drive from the north side of Highway 24 to La Espiral. The estimated cost of these projects is just over \$1.2 million.

Next up are residential roads, which will be repaved thanks to Measure L, the half-cent sales tax approved by Orinda voters two years ago. As a result of nearly \$980,000 in funding generated by 2014 spending in our own community, the following roads will be renewed:

Brookside Drive (from Orchard Road to Moraga Way), Camino Sobrante (from south end of La Noria to La Espiral),

El Camino Moraga (from Donna Maria Way to Don Gabriel Way) and Valley Drive (from Scenic Drive to Heather Lane).

Without the passage of Measure J by 75 percent of Orinda voters in last June's election, the list of roads to be repaved in 2015 would end here. But it doesn't! With the sale of the first \$10 million tranche of bonds authorized by Measure J, \$5 million will be available in each of the next two years to repair many residential roads in the worst condition. Visit the city's website, www.cityoforinda.org and click on City Council meetings, Nov. 5 agenda, Item I-3, Exhibit H for specific start and end points: Ardor Drive, Arroyo Drive, Calvin Drive (2 segments), Camino Sobrante, Canon Drive, Charles Hill Circle, Charles Hill Road (from end of 2014 project), Crest View Drive, Donald Drive (4 segments), Donna Maria Way, Kite Hill Road, Knickerbocker Lane, Lost Valley Drive (from end of 2014 project), Meadow View Road, Miner Road (2 segments), Mira Loma, Moraga Via, Normandy Lane, Ridge Lane, Woodland Road and Zander Drive.

If your street or one of special interest to you doesn't appear above, fear not. Remember that funds from Measures L and J will fund similar projects from 2016 through 2018. By the end of that year, nearly all roads with Pavement Condition Index (PCI) ratings below "fair" will be repaved.



Notice Of Opportunity To Serve
On A City Of Orinda
Commission Or Committee

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

- Planning Commission (3)
- Parks & Recreation Commission (3)
- Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission (3)
- Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (3)
- Finance Advisory Committee (3)
- Public Works Aesthetic Review Committee (3)
- Public Safety Committee (2)
- Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (4)
- Historic Landmark Committee (1)

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

- Representative on the Contra Costa County Library Commission (2)
- Contra Costa Transportation Citizen Advisory Committee (1)

Statement of Interest forms are 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.

Completed Statement of Interest forms must be submitted to the City Clerk's Office by Friday, December 19, 2014 at 5 pm.

Qualified applicants for City Commission and Committee appointments will be invited to interview before the full City Council.

◆ EXHIBIT from page 2

Delilah, c.1632; *Portrait of a Young Man*, 1646-48 by Frans Hals; and *Pope Innocent X*, c. 1650, by Circle of Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Vasquez.

Each of the objects on display is a window into the time and sensibility in which it was created, who created it, who acquired it, and why. The exhibit allows us to peek into the stratagems of a family of art patrons who have been, and continue to be, stewards for 300 years of art. Lord Cholmondeley's beloved grandmother, Lady Sybil Sassoon, Marchioness of Cholmondeley (1894 - 1989) was born in London and was part of the Sassoon and Rothschild families. In 1913, she began restoring Houghton Hall after it had seen over 100 years of neglect. She befriended John Singer Sargent and many other artists. A lover of poetry, she endowed the Cholmondeley Poetry Prize. Lord Cholmondeley said that it was quite exciting to visit her every summer as a child as he never knew who would pop in for a visit - Yehudi Menuhin, Cecil Beaton and other famous figures of the time. Conversely, the Third Earl of Orford gambled away his inheritance and lost the stone steps on the front of the house on a bet. He also sold 204 old master paintings in 1779 to Catherine the Great, who installed them in her Hermitage at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. This shocked Orford's contem-

poraries, but rescued him from penury and kept Houghton Hall in the family.

A big thank-you goes to curator Martin Chapman and everyone at the Legion of Honor for providing this rare treat. They recognized that the interrelationship between the collectors and the collected works in this exhibition is inseparable and compelling.

Drop by the Legion of Honor Café and sample its traditional English tea (cucumber sandwiches, mini scones with clotted cream or just tea beginning at \$2.50) - no reservation needed. The café is open Tuesday to Sunday, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm; call 415-750-3595 for more information. The exhibition hours are Tuesday to Sunday, 9:30 am to 5:15 pm, except for special holiday hours on Dec. 24 and Dec. 31 when the hours are 9:30 am to 4 pm; closed Christmas day. General admission is \$10 - \$18; free general admission on the first Tuesday of every month. There is an additional special exhibition surcharge for admittance to the Houghton Hall exhibit. Free public tours (after special exhibition ticket is purchased) are available most days of the week at 11:30 am and 1:30 pm; check the daily calendar. The Legion of Honor is located at Lincoln Park, 100-34th Ave. (at Clement Street), San Francisco, 94121. Go to <https://legionofhonor.famsf.org/houghton-hall> for more information or call 415-750-3600.

Applications for Rescue One Foundation

The Rescue One Foundation is seeking applicants to fill a vacancy on its Board of Directors. Residents living within the Moraga-Orinda Fire District's coverage area are eligible to apply.

The Rescue One Foundation serves as a support organization for the paramedic program of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, acquiring emergency medical equipment and training materials not otherwise available through the Fire District's regular budget. The Founda-

tion has provided in excess of \$350,000 of equipment and training materials for our paramedics since its formation 35 years ago.

Letters of interest should be sent no later than December 15, 2014 and addressed to: Rescue One Foundation, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga, CA 94556

For further information about this position, please visit www.mofd.org/about/rescueone or call 925-376-2086.



Happy Holidays!
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CARS / VETERANS

CAR TIME

What is TPMS and Why Do You Need It?

by JOHN VANEK



The tire pressure monitoring system (TPMS) is an electronic system designed to monitor the air pressure inside the tires on modern vehicles. TPMS reports tire pressure to the driver via a message, a pictogram display or a low-pressure warning light. It's like a check engine light for tires.

The Firestone tire recall in the 1990s followed more than 100 deaths from rollovers due to tire tread separation. This pushed the U.S. government to pass the TREAD Act, which mandated the use of a TPMS in all light motor vehicles (under 10,000 pounds) to help alert drivers of under-inflated tires. This act affects all light motor vehicles sold after Sept. 1, 2007. As of 2008, all new passenger cars sold in the U.S. must be equipped with a TPMS. Just as the government imposed check engine light regulations for safety reasons, it has also been proven that tire pressure has an effect on vehicle safety and efficiency. It has also been shown that most motorists don't efficiently check their vehicle's tire pressure.

The European market first adopted TPMS in the 1980s as an optional feature for luxury passenger vehicles. General Motors introduced TPMS for the 1991 model Corvette. It has been standard on Corvettes ever since.

Will the TPMS end up costing you money in repairs? Many companies use TPMS products that rely on battery-powered radio transmitters to measure tire pressure. These built-in batteries will likely go dead eventually, causing the TPMS light or message to appear. At that point, the system will

need to be checked out to determine which component needs to be replaced. Some more sophisticated vehicles display which tire has low pressure. The price for replacement varies depending on the model. If one TPMS sensor goes bad, it is likely that the remaining sensors will follow suit.

What happens if you ignore the annoying TPMS light? Nothing, except you won't know if you have low tire pressure or not. Low tire pressure has been proven to contribute to accidents and decreased fuel mileage. It is always best to keep all the systems in your car fully functional, especially regarding safety. Always pay attention to your dash warning lights and be a good consumer of auto repair.

Saint Mary's Guild Party Funds Scholarships

The Saint Mary's College Guild celebrates the holidays in style with an elegant meal and entertainment provided by the college's gold medal winning chorale. The talented singers traveled to Europe last spring competing in and winning an international competition.

This year's holiday luncheon takes place on Dec. 4 from 11 am - 2 pm at the Soda Activity Center on campus, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga.

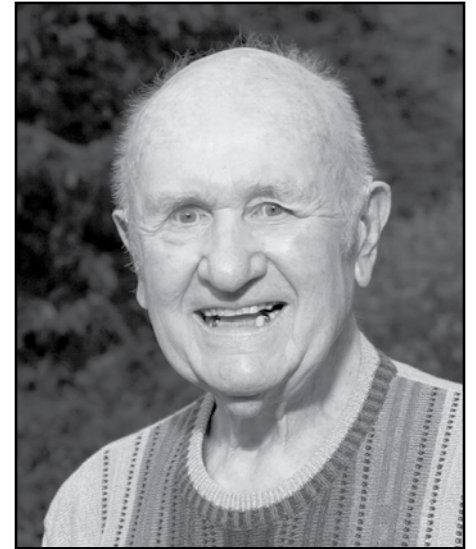
Tickets are \$45. Prior to the luncheon,

Scouts Seek Vets Who Served in Normandy Invasion

By CHARLIE JARRETT
Staff Writer

Orinda Scoutmaster Emeritus and World War II veteran Bill Cooper announced last month that Orinda Boy Scout Troop 237 has put out a call for surviving veterans from the Battle of Normandy, the Allied invasion of France. Officials from the Normandy region have asked Boy Scouts to try and locate veterans who served in Normandy during the first 100 days after the invasion (June 6 through Sept. 4, 1944). Scouts will present these veterans with a Battle of Normandy medal commemorating the 70th anniversary of this epic battle as well as a commemorative certificate.

Cooper asks anyone who knows of an Orinda veteran who served in the Normandy invasion during this specific time period to contact him at 925-376-5579, by letter to 23 Lavina Court, Orinda 94563 or



CHARLIE JARRETT
Scoutmaster Emeritus **Bill Cooper**.

via email coop237@gmail.com. Cooper requests the veteran's name, address, phone number, military unit and when the veteran served. The scouts will present the medal and certificate to the veterans at a future scout troop meeting.

Bill Cooper has been in scouting for 77 years. When the Boy Scouts of America celebrated its 100-year anniversary in 2010, he was named Scouter of the Century. His Boy Scout Troop has graduated more than 200 Eagle Scouts and Cooper has attended every Court of Honor held by the troop for 60 years. Cooper still continues to serve scouting as Orinda Troop 237 Scoutmaster Emeritus.

Volunteer of the Year Nominations
Due December 1
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FILM

◆ HOUSING from page 1

ment.

The Santa Maria parcel has been zoned for multi-family housing since the city's incorporation in 1985. In 2013, a High-Density Overlay District was applied to a 3.2-acre portion of the site as part of the city's 4th Cycle Housing Element.

"Orinda Academy has been located in Orinda for 33 years," said Orinda Academy founder Ron Graydon. "For 21 years, we have been located adjacent to the sports field at 19 Altarinda Road. Our school of 90 students and 26 staff members has used this sports field daily for PE classes, environmental activities, sports recreation and student activities. Losing this field would be detrimental and will affect the viability of Orinda Academy. Orinda Academy could be forced to relocate to another area. This would remove 90 families, 90 students and 26 staff from Orinda, as they would need to take their business elsewhere."

The Santa Maria field possibly becoming residential housing also troubled Joel Aroner, president of the Orinda Baseball Association. "We are a 31-year-old Orinda-based community baseball organization. We have over 300 Orinda children who participate in a 10-month program here in Orinda playing competitive baseball. We have used this site for years for our youngest age group at a nominal fee that we have in partnership with the church. It's a great facility built specifically for kids of a young age. They don't have to make the long throws that they'd have to make on a larger field."

Aroner also noted that his organization had spent the last two years working with the church to improve the facility. "We've brought the infield up the highest level of standards, brought in irrigation for the field, and re-sodded the field all in partnership with the church," he said.

City Councilmember Steve Glazer stated that the council was only considering maintaining existing zoning at the Santa Maria site. "It's the property owner's choice. If the church is happy with its current use of its field, there's nothing that we may do, that I'm aware of, that would change the use from how it's currently used today," he said.

Staff attorney Osa Wolf concurred. "Our obligation under state law is to provide zoning. It is not to provide housing. We are not working on any proposals to begin entering eminent domain [proceedings]."

Objections to residential development at Santa Maria continued at the Orinda Planning Commission on Nov. 17 when community members expressed concern about increased traffic along Altarinda Road. Other people had objections to possible

housing at the church sites along Moraga Way, stating traffic as their main concern.

Although not specifically concerned with a particular parcel, resident Owen Murphy had apprehensions about possible changes to Orinda's General Plan and the effect on various resources. "In the area of school impact, the measurement of this project is measured only against the aggregate capacity of the Orinda Union School District, not against the capacity of a specific school or particular neighborhood," he said. "That seems inadequate in terms of what citizen expectations are. I'd also like to see responses from the school board, the fire chief, the police chief and the city's finance director about the impacts in their respective areas."

Orinda's Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu added, "The city has encouraged public input on which sites to consider, but members of the public need to recognize they speak with several voices. Residents bring different ideas and suggestions, some of which are competing."


After reading numerous letters and listening to public comments, the Planning Commission voted to recommend alternative number three to the City Council - the Orinda Village downtown locations. The City Council will consider the Draft Housing Element and the Planning Commission's recommendation at its Dec. 9 meeting. If needed, the topic will also be placed on the council's agenda for its Dec. 15 meeting. In late December, the council will send its final Draft Housing Element to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for a 60-day review.

Following close on the 45-day public comment hearing for the DEIR on Dec. 1, the City Council will begin preparation for the final Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The City Council plans to submit the final EIR and the final 5th Cycle Housing Element to the HCD before the end of April 2015. Failure to comply by the deadline could result in cuts in state grant money as well as forced compliance to update the housing element every four years rather than every eight.

The draft 5th Cycle Housing Element and the DEIR are available on the city's website at www.cityoforinda.org.


Troop 57 Open House

All boys ages 10 - 17 are welcome to attend an open house on Dec. 9 at the Orinda Intermediate School Multipurpose room at 7:10 pm. Enjoy a "Troop 57 Style" dessert and other fun activities. Call 925-247-0077 or email davidfinger@newlookgroup.net. <http://orinda57.mytroop.us/aboutus>.



THE REEL LESS TRAVELED

HOLIDAYS ARE UPON US!



Tom Westlake

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, just past, and the upcoming Christmas-tide, I'd like to thank Efi Lubliner, Jo Alice Canterbury, Lindsay Pirckle and the programmers at Moraga Movers for their assistance, not only in providing information for this column, but for making sure there are plenty more choices at our local movie screens than just the latest mainstream studio releases. I often bemoan the fact that the rich 100-plus years of cinematic history is so frequently overlooked or minimized. These aforementioned folks are doing all they can to stem that tide.

So, what are they doing this month? First off, there's *A Christmas Story*, playing at the Orinda Theatre on Dec. 11 at 7 pm (free). In many ways, this film bucks the trend and does not preach or present this celebrated time of year as anything other than what it was for "real people." There are no ghosts, Victorian misers, sappy musical numbers and even the cynicism is not so cloying as to sour the overall mood of the film. Set in the 1940s, it follows the story of Ralphie and his singular desire for one particular present to be found under the tree on Christmas morning. There is a strong nostalgic streak running throughout

this movie that is universal. Many have adopted this film as a welcome antidote to the overbearing sentiments found in other seasonal entertainments. Then, of course, there's that lamp.

Meet Me In St. Louis (1944), starring Judy Garland, plays at the Rheem Theatre in Moraga on Dec. 17 at 1 pm (free). It's revolutionary and downright forward-thinking in its structure and content, detailing a year in the life of a family at the turn-of-the-century, though much of that is obscured by the catchy central song and the impish performances by Margaret O'Brien and Garland. Taking on a far more mature role here, there's plenty of opportunity to put Dorothy behind her - and she does just that in style - whether lamenting about *The Boy Next Door* or giving said boy a royal piece of her mind during one memorable Halloween. With St. Louis and its World Fair as a backdrop, this lavish film is guaranteed to lighten even the sourest of moods.

Don't forget to check out www.lamorindatheatres.com as well as <http://internationalshowcase.org> and, until next year, remember to stay in the dark for that's where the reel magic lies.

Echo Grove's December Charms

Dean Shutt and Mags Doty of Echo Grove have two new charms for December. "The first is a Scrabble Tile charm of Orinda Theater Square to remind people to shop local this December," says Doty. "The second is a bottlecap charm with an image of the San Pablo Dam Reservoir to publicize the Dam Jingle Bell Dash, a fun walk/run for all ages on Dec. 6 at 9 am."

This is the 4th annual Jingle Bell 5K/10K and Kids Dash to Santa. Over 100 youngsters "dashed" to Santa last year, thrilling the jolly old man. The 5K/10K event begins at 9 am at the San Pablo Dam boat launch ramp at the Orinda entrance. The Dash starts at 10:30 am. Everyone is encouraged to wear a Santa hat and/or favorite holiday attire. To pre-register, go to <http://wolfpackevents.com/calendar/142>. Same day registration will be from 7 am - 8:45 am.

To receive one of the free charms, just walk into Echo Grove, 2 Theatre Square #112, and say "Jingle Bells."

- Sally Hogarty, Editor



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

To receive one of these free charms, just say "Jingle Bells" at Echo Grove.

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OBITUARIES

Charlotte Rider Chapple Meyer Dies at 101

Charlotte Rider Chapple Meyer passed away on Sunday, Oct. 19, of natural causes at Kaiser Hospital in Walnut Creek. A long-time resident of Orinda, she lived a full and active 101 years.

Born in Stockton on Nov. 18, 1912, she was the eldest child of Charles Ingals Rider and Vestra Maude McKarney. Her father owned the first Maxwell car and a car dealership in Stockton before moving to Redwood City. Graduating from Sequoia High School in June of 1930, she went on to UC Berkeley where she received her diploma in 1936, and did her post-graduate work at Stanford.

Besides being a proud mother of three sons, Meyer's passion was theater. She attributed her good health and sharpness of mind to her involvement in theater arts including set design, directing, costume design, writing and acting. Her long career began at the San Francisco Ballet where she did set and costume design. Meyer broke the gender barrier by becoming the first woman member of the Scene Painters' Union. She was also part of the Theatre Arts Colony, a group similar to the American Conservatory Theater.

Meyer married James Lawrence Chapple on June 22, 1941. They lived in Glendale in Southern California. There she was involved in theater production and costume design. She was touted to be a contemporary of Edith Head.

Meyer and James moved back to the Bay Area in 1950. She designed and, with help, built their home in Orinda where she resided for the rest of her amazing and productive life.

In 1965, Charlotte married George



DAVE DIERKS

Charlotte Rider Chapple Meyer.

Meyer, a professional actor. For many years, she directed and produced plays at the Dramateurs Theater in Lafayette including Dicken's *A Christmas Carol*; George played the leading role of Scrooge. He passed away in 1979.

In her 70s, Meyer went to Diablo Valley College to earn her tailor's license. She was a past president of the "Orioles," a Children's Hospital Auxiliary. In her 90s, she still kept her driver's license and teacher's certificate active.

Meyer was also an active member of the Republican Women, Republican Central Committee and Daughters of the American Revolution. She met former presidents, Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon, and author and TV host, Art Linkletter. At age 95, she adapted the children's classic, *The Wind in the Willows* into a play that was

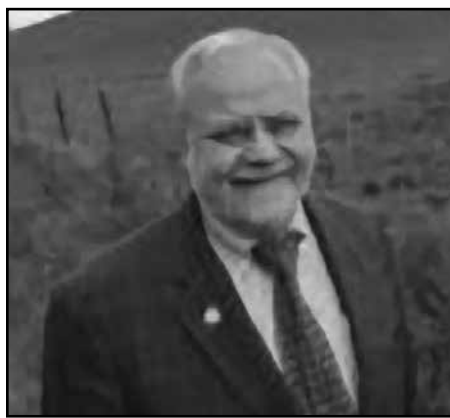
[SEE MEYER page 20]

Roger Poynts Dies in Car Accident

Active Orinda Chamber Ambassador and long-time Moraga resident Roger Poynts died Oct. 26 in a single-car accident on Moraga Road in Lafayette. He was 64.

A graduate of Purdue University, Poynts earned an MBA from Saint Mary's College in Moraga. He founded Poynts and Associates, a civil engineering and land surveying company with offices in Moraga. "He was an engineer, surveyor and land manager who was passionate about wine-making and his local community," said Orinda Chamber of Commerce president Sylvia Jorgensen.

At the time of his death, Poynts had been working on a proposed development, the Painted Rock Winery and Performing Arts Center, to be built on his land at the northeast corner of Rheem Blvd. and Moraga Road. The site is known for its large patch of rocks, often covered with paint, and the herds of cattle and goats that graze there.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Roger Poynts.

The future of the development is now in doubt.

Poynts is survived by his wife, Nancy Christman. A memorial service was held on Nov. 22 at the Orinda Masonic Lodge.

— Sally Hogarty, Editor

Obituary Policy

We are glad to include obituaries whenever possible. Unfortunately, we received word of Barclay Simpson's death too late to include in this issue. A tribute to him will be in the January issue. There is no charge for this service. Please send information and a high resolution photo to news@orindanews.org.

Young Orinda Resident Dies Tragically

Bryan Willam Capdevielle passed away Saturday, Oct. 25, 2014, when a strong rip current swept him out to sea off Asilomar State Beach. He had been swimming with his younger brother, who was rescued by a surfer. When the surfer went back to help Bryan, he was gone. Bryan was 18 years old.

Born March 13, 1996, Bryan lived in Orinda most of his life. He is survived by his loving parents, mother Robin Capdevielle Hoydal, father Cliff Capdevielle, his dear brothers Christopher Capdevielle, Bobby Capdevielle, Brandon Capdevielle, and loving grandparents, Coke Swanson-ton, Bengamin Artellan and Mary and Everett Ascher.

Bryan had a passion for skate boarding at the Moraga Skate Park and hiking with his close friends. He had recently graduated Acalanes Center for Independent Study. Bryan found joy in every little thing that he did. He loved gardening and was planning on getting a job at a local nursery. He had recently taken up painting. Most of all, he enjoyed spending time with his family and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bryan William Capdevielle.

friends. Bryan's loving spirit and positive

[SEE CAPDEVIELLE page 20]

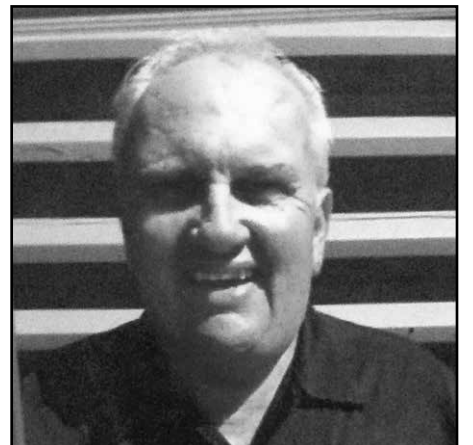
Beloved Owner of Orinda Tow Passes Away

Larry Lindsey had a passion for cars and for people. He began Orinda Towing 28 years ago and developed wonderful relationships with his customers, many of whom became close friends. Many say he knew Orinda "like the back of his hand." He passed away from heart failure on Oct. 6 just shy of his 62nd birthday.

An avid volunteer, Larry could be seen grilling hot dogs at school functions or loaning his truck as a rolling stage for Orinda's annual 4th of July parade. He was especially proud of the rapport he developed with the Orinda Police Department.

"We had a long standing relationship with Larry," said John Vanek of Orinda Motors. "He was everybody's favorite tow truck driver and really had a personal mission to take care of the town of Orinda."

Larry's other passion was sports. He



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Larry Lindsey.

began bowling at 8 years old and bowled in countless leagues over the years. He also

[SEE LINDSEY page 20]

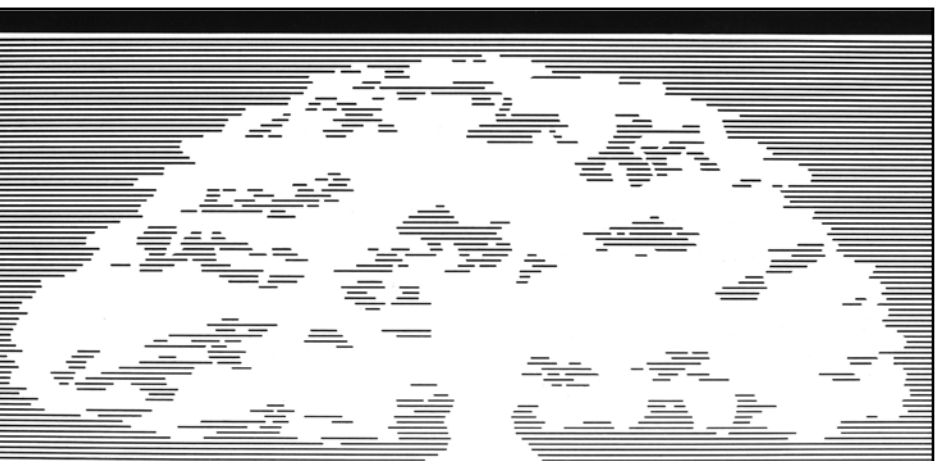
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ANIMALS

16th Annual Sleepy Hollow Dog Walk



DAVID DIERKS

It's time to get out those comfortable shoes and dog leash and take your best friend for a walk around the neighborhood. Founded by Kaye Chavalas, the event allows neighbors to get together during the holidays and enjoy one another's company as well as meet all the neighborhood pets.

This year's walk takes place Dec. 20 at 9:30 am. The 1-1/2 mile walk around Sleepy Hollow begins at Pam and Gary Schroeder's home, 76 Tarry Lane. Refreshments will be served.

Something to Howl About...
Animal Tales

The Best Gift



Jennifer Conroy

Are the holidays a good time to give someone a new pet? The answer is "No!"

This is the worst kind of gift, especially if it is done as a surprise. Such a surprise amounts to giving someone another mouth to feed, an animal that will require veterinary care, regular walks and exercise, cage or tank cleaning or litter box changing, as well as a minimum amount of attention and interaction. Frankly, giving a companion animal the minimum is hardly worth the trouble of having an animal at all.

Embracing another creature's life is a big step. It requires thought, research, budgeting, honest soul searching and a commitment to the lifetime care of the animal. That's not to say you should never help someone acquire a pet. You can actually be a big help to a someone who wants to expand their family by adding a companion animal. There are ways to give a friend or family member a pet without actually handing over a live animal.

If you know what type of animal your friend would like, do the research. There is a copious amount of information on the Internet about specific needs, feeding, habitats, breed issues or flaws, veterinary concerns, proper care and grooming. That is step one – finding out what a particular animal needs to thrive.

The next step is learning about availability, for instance, animal shelters, rescue organizations or breeders. Again, let your fingers do the walking by searching the Internet. Find out about local animal shelters. Make a list of the rescue organizations that save the particular type of animal you are

interested in. There are even rescues that save greyhounds that have been discarded by dog racing entities. In fact, there is a rescue program for virtually every breed of dog (and cat).

But wait, after you do the research, do not go out and buy the animal. Instead, create a notebook or album that contains the information you've collected. Add tabs or chapters on such topics as the history of the breed or type of animal, its unique features, feeding requirements, types of vaccinations that are necessary to keep it healthy, its preferred habitat – you can even include photos. At the end of the album, add a gift certificate for the purchase or adoption of the pet. If you can afford it, offer to provide a nice bed or a month of food, or payment for vaccinations. Don't put a time limit on the gift certificate so that your friend can really think through the responsibilities and joys of having a companion animal.

The album or notebook is the best possible gift you can give to someone considering adopting an animal. It provides useful information without pressure. It shows you respect the person's right to choose. Most importantly, it shows that you value animal life and will help ensure that once an animal becomes part of your friend's family, the relationship will be a positive and long-lasting one.

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SUPPORTING TROOPS / BALLET

Blue Star Moms, Local Church Continue Care Package Tradition

By KATHRYN G. McCARTY
Staff Writer

While the number of soldiers deployed in the Middle East and Africa has dwindled over the past few years, thousands of soldiers who remain overseas during

U.S. soldiers collect donations of personal items (for instance socks, razors and sunscreen) as well as non-perishable food to send to deployed soldiers. Major shipments are made for July 4 and in December, though Masnada says the group also sends packages at other times of the year, "when



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"Sewing Angels" of Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church display the blankets they've made for service personnel.

the holidays will receive gifts via stateside organizations such as the Contra Costa Blue Star Moms and Orinda's Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church.

Loretta Masnada, care package coordinator for the Contra Costa Blue Star Moms, Chapter 20, said their group is one of more than 200 chapters across the U.S. who will send care packages in December. Throughout the year, mothers and grandmothers of

there is a need."

Masnada said that when she joined seven years ago, the group sent about 5,000 packages to soldiers. This year, with fewer deployed, she expects "about 1,000" packages to be sent.

Masnada's son, Anthony Noble, is currently a sergeant in the Marine Corps, and [SEE CARE BOXES page 20]

My Twelve Days in Iran: Part I

By JULIE MCCORMICK
Contributing Writer

Editor's Note: This is the first part of a two-part story written by Orinda resident Julie McCormick about her recent trip to Iran.

"Keep your head down and your scarf on" was the last text I received from my sister Celia before I boarded a Lufthansa flight at SFO to Frankfurt, where I would connect to Imam Khomeini International Airport in Tehran. I didn't realize how difficult that would prove to be!

About an hour before we landed in Tehran, I woke up and looked around. All the uncovered women had been transformed – with leggings or pants and headscarves.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Julie McCormick with a cleric at Khomeini's childhood home.

I became slightly panicked as my trench coat and scarf were at the bottom of my bag in the overhead compartment. I stood up to retrieve it and once the flight landed,

[SEE IRAN page 16]

A Sweet Dream Nutcracker Returns in December

A festive Christmas party with wonderful presents, a dreamy trip to the Land of Sweets, and a favorite toy come to life, what more could a young girl want? Not much if you're Clara in Orinda Ballet Academy's production of *A Sweet Dream Nutcracker*.

The perennial favorite takes place Dec. 12 at 6:30 pm, Dec. 13 at 11:30 am and 4 pm and Dec. 14 at 11:30 am and 3:30 pm at the Orinda Library Theater.

"We have a new guest couple this year alternating with an upper division student cast," says artistic director Patricia Tomlinson. A professional dancer herself, Tomlinson studied at the School of American Ballet and has danced with the Houston and Pennsylvania ballet companies.

The Orinda Ballet Academy and Company involves student dancers ranging in age from 3 – 18 years as well as professional guest artists. The company will present a new Peter Pan ballet in the



PATRICIA TOMLINSON

(L-R) 1st row: Anna Hillen (Clara) and Connie Warthen (Sugar Plum Fairy); 2nd row: Andrea Shammass, Lauren Bond, Aisling Holton and Helen Casendino.

spring of 2015.

Tickets to the December performances are \$20 and can be ordered in advance by going to www.brownpapertickets.com. For additional information, call 925-254-2445.

– Sally Hogarty, Editor



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Community Center Halloween Parade for Preschoolers a Big Success



SALLY HOGARTY



SALLY HOGARTY

Costumed youngsters, who paraded around the Community Center Park and enjoyed art projects and refreshments, included (L) superheroes **Zayn, Amal** and **Farah Zoubi** and princesses **Lucia** and **Maya Sucher** accompanied by their knight in shining "dog" armor, **Lexie**.

Accidental Philanthropist Worthy Non-profits



Ksenija Olmer

Like a recommendation for a great restaurant or a good contractor, I value the opinion of friends and neighbors about worthy non-profit organizations. So, if you are doing some end-of-year charitable giving, here are personal recommendations from the Lamorinda community. By the way, did you know that many non-profits bring in more than 50 percent of donations in the last three months of the year, and 30 percent of those in the last week of December?

needs money for administrative purposes and to furnish essentials for the children." Lee was a CASA volunteer for more than 10 years and learned a great deal about the sad state of our foster care system. She is no longer a volunteer but still keeps in touch with her now grown child who is, happily, one of the success stories.

Bill and Joey Judge, Orinda, Winter Nights Shelter, www.cccwinternights.org.

"Ten years ago this organization requested the use of the old Orinda library as a temporary shelter for homeless families. It caused a huge brouhaha resulting in the withdrawal of its request. We always felt Orindans let them down and we were not proud of that. We started donating that year and have continued to do so. A number of churches in the area house the families during the cold winter months. What could be more valuable than that?"

Jill Tucker, Orinda, Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, www.foodbankccs.org

"Having suddenly lost my roommate while in college, I had to decide between paying the rent and buying food. I remember what it felt like to be hungry, yet knowing I wouldn't have enough money for bus fare the next day if I squandered the little cash remaining on a meal. Being hungry is painful, but for me it was temporary. Still, it amazes me that in this country of excess, there are many people who go hungry. The Food Bank distributes almost 14 million pounds of food each year to children in poverty, families in crisis and low-income seniors both directly and through a network of 200 local charities. They also rank highly on the www.charitynavigator.com website.

Beth Eliason, Orinda, Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, www.foodbankccs.org.

"I donate monthly automatically. The Food Bank helps people in our county and food banks have a very transparent financial statement."

Diane Arney, Orinda, Aspire Charter Schools, www.aspirepublicschool.org.

"My husband and I support education and have a relative who is a teacher there so we know first-hand what good work they do in areas where it is often a challenge to be a teacher."

[SEE GIVING page 18]

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HOLIDAYS

Roving Reporter Celebrating the Holidays

Charlie Jarrett



Alison Waterman works for the Orinda Unified School District teaching 6th grade core at Orinda Intermediate School, where she has worked since 1996. This December she will probably be getting together with her father and family from Davis, California and will be sharing the family tradition of potato Latkes and perhaps even playing Dreidel. “Hanukkah is really a kid’s holiday, it’s a big time for the family and children,” says Waterman. She says she loves living and working in Orinda and that she has just moved back here after living in Lafayette for the past five years.



CHARLIE JARRETT

Alison Waterman.

Pam Center was born in Orinda and has lived here most of her life. She attended Miramonte High school and was an active member of the local Jobs Daughters. As a young woman, Pam had her own horse who lived across the street from her Orinda house. Pam’s father had a successful building supply trade which involved selling American made roofing supplies to customers in Mexico. Pam followed in his footsteps with a career in the import/export business. Her Christmas holiday plans are quite simple -- entertaining local friends in her Orinda home.



CHARLIE JARRETT

Pam Center.

Good Friends **Lola Olabode** and **Linnea Visher** have both lived in Orinda for six to seven years respectively and both attend Miramonte High school. They say they love Orinda because it’s like a close family and that this community is a very active upbeat place. The Fourth of July parade was a highlight for both of them. Linnea says that she and her mother love horses and that they



CHARLIE JARRETT

Lola Olabode and Linnea Visher.

occasionally borrow horses and even go on cattle drives. Lola says that she loves to run and that she enjoys track and field events. Linnea’s family has a family tradition of making a Swedish Christmas Sausage for the holidays, and they will probably have relatives visiting during that time as well. Lola says that since their family is quite active in sports and her brother, Niyi, will be competing in a basketball tournament over the holidays, they will be spending part of the holidays watching him and his team compete. Lola says they will have family visit over the holidays as well.

Laura Wittenberg recently returned from three weeks in Northern Germany and Finland where she was visiting two of her exchange students. Wittenberg is a family therapist who went back to school at age 63 and received her license at 67. Married in Orinda in 1966, she has lived here since, except for a 10-year sabbatical following her husband’s death. Her daughter, Wendy, grew up in Orinda, attended Miramonte High School but now lives in a town close-by with her five-year-old son Devin. Grandmother promises there will be lots of Bavarian and German-made Christmas presents to share this year as she plans a very merry Christmas to close out 2014.

Patti Grier and her family have lived in Orinda for 23 years. When they decided to move to the Bay Area, some friends said



CHARLIE JARRETT

Patti Grier.

this was the best place to live. Patti has loved working as a physical therapist for the past 35 years, which she says is definitely more than a job to her. She is also enthused about how absolutely great the schools and the community are in Orinda. She and her family have attended the Orinda Community Church since 1993, which has a new minister, Jim Bergquist, whom she personally helped the church to locate.



CHARLIE JARRETT

Laura Wittenberg (far right) with her daughter Wendy and grandson Devin.

Patti has two sons, Rob, who is 26 and Austin, who is 23. Rob is a Georgia Tech, Biomedical Engineer graduate who stayed in Atlanta when he graduated and where he found a very good job with a biomedical tech startup company. Austin is a Cal Poly Graduate in Biology. Patti’s husband Dixon is a CPA in the unique field of forensic accounting and is a managing partner in his company, Matson, Driscoll and Damico. They are very interested in and have even invested in wine grapes in the Lodi area. Patti loves hiking, reading and knitting. She and Dixon recently purchased a little cottage in Michigan, which they have torn down and completely rebuilt as a family get-away place. The Griers are still finalizing their holiday plans but are sure lots of family get-togethers will be included.

Youth Ink 2015

The Orinda Junior Women’s Club announces the start of Youth Ink 2015. The topic this year is choices. The contest is open to 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade students who live or attend school in Orinda.

Submissions are due by Feb. 18. For information on the contest and obtaining submission forms, go to www.orindajuniors.org.





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Selling Cookies to Buy a Well



SALLY HOGARTY

Sleepy Hollow Girl Scout Junior Troop #30859

The Sleepy Hollow Girl Scout Junior Troop (Brownies) #30859 used their money from selling cookies last spring to purchase a well for the Toeum Tin family in Cambodia. According to scout master Erica Kain, the fourth grade students also spent a year studying water usage around the world. “They even put on a play for Sleepy Hollow about water conservation,” she says.

“People in Cambodia spend hours getting water from the river,” said Amelia. “They can’t even go to school because they spend half of their day going to the river and back,” adds Courtney. “Sometimes the water can make them sick, but with the well we bought, they now have clean water to drink,” explains Kaila.

– Sally Hogarty, Editor

Awareness of Diverse Abilities

Orinda Intermediate School held its annual Diverse Abilities Awareness Week with an open house on Oct. 22. The week’s activities make students more aware of how challenging it can be for some students to do simple tasks. The wheelchair basketball game was a highlight of the open house.

– Sally Hogarty, Editor



SALLY HOGARTY

Thinking of Others First at OIS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

OIS students sort food at the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

By ARMAN ASGARI
Contributing Writer

Others First is a volunteer organization based out of Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) whose mission is to help others in our community. Each month, there is a choice of three to five volunteer activities, such as sorting food at the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, feeding the homeless, helping at the local animal shelter, and cleaning up the Wagner Ranch Nature Area.

Each year, over 500 OIS kids volunteer in the various activities, some of whom donate up to 100 hours per year to helping others.

My peers and I volunteered at the food bank sorting food on Oct. 16 and prepared a lunch at Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco on Nov. 2. I like volunteering through Others First because I get to join efforts with my peers to make a difference. I am more compelled to do it when I’m doing it with other people.

Arman Asgari is an eighth-grade student at Orinda Intermediate School.



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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

University Women Make Big Changes to Sister-to-Sister Summit

By VALARIE BURGESS
Contributing Writer

Lamorinda's branch of the American Association of University Women's Sister-to-Sister (S2S) outreach program has evolved into something new. We will not have a March Summit this year. Instead, we have created three two-hour monthly sessions, beginning in January, and our high school girls are enthusiastically preparing for the first big day.

We have always asked for feedback from high school and middle school participants and then tweaked the program to accommodate new ideas. This year we are becoming "a sisterhood of reinvention" as we leave the idea of a big one-day culminating event (the Summit) behind and re-conceive S2S as an ongoing gathering place for girls to deepen relationships and support each other.

Emma, a senior who has participated

in S2S the past two years, suggested the following: "I think it would be awesome to have a second summit day, maybe a couple of months after the first summit, where we meet with the same girls in our groups to check up on them. We could ask how they are doing in high school, or if our advice helped them solve their problems." Several other returning girls made the same suggestions, which made us take the idea seriously. Why not create further opportunities for follow-up and connection?

In meetings this fall, we have been developing ideas in collaboration with the 24 high school facilitators, which includes 12 new girls. Our new program will put time, energy and resources into the parts of the S2S program that we most value: the friendship and connections that we all experience in a positive environment. The three two-hour sessions will provide two opportunities to follow up on issues



LYNDA LEONARD

Sister-to-Sister seniors, class of 2014, celebrate a successful Summit. (L to R) **Elizabeth Chenok, Miramonte; Lauren Witt, Las Lomas; Becky Leibowitz, Bentley; Maddie Nelson, Miramonte; Ariel McLean, Miramonte; and Olivia Madsen, Miramonte.**

raised by the middle school girls in previous sessions.

Emma states the rationale for the change very effectively: "After the summit last year, I missed the girls in my group and even today I wonder how they are doing in school. I think having follow-up time to catch up with our little sisters would really show them that we care about them being happy and successful in life."

The 2015 S2S program will be presented on Jan. 11, Feb. 8 and March 15 from 2:30 to 4:30 pm at Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way. This new format will al-

low for follow-up with the middle school girls and encourage stronger connections between the participants and their "big sisters."

Registration is now open. The cost is \$45 if registered by Dec. 15. There is a special "Register with a Friend" discount of \$10 (\$35 per participant). After Dec. 15, registration is \$55 each or \$45 for "Register With a Friend." Applications are available at www.oml-ca.aauw.net/s2s/. For more information, contact Laura Wittenberg at 925-788-0901 or laura.wittenberg.mft@gmail.com.

Del Rey Students Scare Away Hunger

By MAGGIE SHARPE
Staff Writer

Students at Del Rey Elementary School went trick-or-treating as usual this Halloween but not just for candy. They also collected non-perishable food items that they donated to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. The end-hunger effort, which included a big bin for food donations in Bethany Valentine's second-grade classroom, is part of the We Scare Hunger: Be Hunger Heroes campaign through Free the Children, an international charity that strives to end hunger and educate children.

"It was a great way to bring awareness to an on-going issue, and it was nice to see the students take it to heart and try in their way to help others," said Valentine. "That is certainly something to smile about."

Parent Elizabeth Sautter introduced the idea to her sons' second- and fifth-grade classes at Del Rey, which the boys began attending a year ago after the family moved to Orinda from Oakland. Sautter said her boys' previous school, Glenview Elementary – as well as other schools in Oakland



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gabriel Sautter Savala did more than collect candy this past Halloween.

and Berkeley – participated in We Scare Hunger for a number of years.

"It is a good lesson for kids that we wanted to bring to our new community," said Sautter. "I really like the We Scare Hunger campaign, because there are so

[SEE HUNGER page 16]

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CONTINUATIONS

◆ IRAN from page 11

I began fumbling with my stuff. I was tired and anxious and nearly teared up as I fiddled with my scarf and tried to get it right. I was worried the religious police were going to nail me as I disembarked. I tapped the woman next to me who had a dramatic transformation, and whose adorable 14-month-old son I'd been smiling at for much of the flight, and asked her to help me. She immediately saw how uneasy I was and said, "Take it easy! It's fine. Any way is fine," and deftly tied my scarf for me. I exhaled gratefully. Customs and immigration went smoothly.

The next morning, I toured Tehran with a guide, stopping off at Golestan Palace. The history of Persia is mind-boggling with so many empires, kings and rulers that it's hard to keep them straight. We went to the bazaar, and it was everything I'd imagined in a classic Middle Eastern bazaar: Congested, hot and filled with yelling, gesticulating vendors working hard to get customers' attention. Women in black chadors scurried past. I constantly fiddled with my scarf. When I moved my camera for a shot or scratched my head, it came off. Why hadn't I brought bobby pins to keep it in place? I spent half the first day fooling with the darned thing. It made me hate it even more than I hated the idea of it. During my 12 days in Iran, I never got used to it.

My guide told me it was War Week, commemorating the Iran-Iraq War that started in 1980 when Saddam Hussein invaded Iran. We saw many displays as we walked

along the streets. One showed the logos for Google and Facebook with a woman in full chador sitting at the table. My guide explained that the display was about conspiracy theories concerning Google and Facebook. Although I'm not on Facebook and won't allow my kids to be either, I found myself arguing that Facebook was hardly full of spies, but rather teenagers and others simply posting their photos of things they'd done that day.

I asked why they would have such a display when Iranians can't even access Facebook. My guide informed me that 67 percent of the population had VPNs (Virtual Private Network) that allow them to access blocked sites. I asked if that was illegal. He said the government turns a blind eye. This was not the last time during my trip that I heard about the government turning a blind eye to something illegal. So far I wasn't doing too well on keeping my head down or my scarf on!

Throughout my first day, however, I never felt unease or hostility. When people found out I was American, they gave me a special welcome. Many of them didn't know Americans could travel to Iran. They all love Americans and most seemed to love our country, too. We saw many tourists, mostly Italians, Germans, French and Chinese.

The next day I visited the city of Persepolis, built by King Darius in the 6th century BC and later razed by Alexander the Great. It was amazing. The art and level of scientific knowledge they had during the first Persian Empire was impressive. Although Alexander destroyed much of



JULIE MCCORMICK
The City of Persepolis displays a high level of art, architecture and scientific knowledge dating to the first Persian Empire.

Persepolis, enough remains to get a feel for the size and sophistication of society at the time. After Persepolis, we went to Pasargad, which was the city of Cyrus the Great of the first Persian Empire. One of the few disturbing things I saw during my trip was a sign next to the Pasargad World Heritage Site that read, "All the politics of Iran are due to the evil U.S. and Iranians hate the U.S. government and all Americans." I felt like I had been slugged, despite the fact that my experiences in Iran suggest the polar opposite of this statement.

Cyrus was distinguished by his conquests and by the fact that when he conquered a new area, he allowed the people to practice their own religion and culture. His tomb is a simple structure and, to save it from being destroyed by later invaders, it is said that it was identified as the tomb of Solomon. Despite razing the nearby city of Persepolis when Alexander later invaded this area, he bowed down at the tomb of Cyrus and didn't deface any part of it.

After lunch, I went to the bathroom and said hello to an attractive young Iranian woman washing her hands. I learned that she was 30 years old, married and an

electrical engineer from Tehran. Midway through the conversation (with no prompting by me), she tugged at her head scarf, which was snug and fastened under her chin like a nun's habit. "We hate *this!*" she exclaimed. "We do, too!" I declared. The whole time she was smiling and then she said, "But we must wear it." She, like everyone else, was shocked to learn I was American.

After Persepolis and Pasargad, we traveled to Isfahan. When Cyrus freed the Jews from Babylon in the 6th century BC, many went to Isfahan, which still has one of the largest Jewish populations in Iran today. We visited the main square of Isfahan, which is even larger than Tiananmen Square in China and is dominated by the only Ladies Mosque in the world (the Jame Mosque), a former palace and the old bazaar. The middle of the square is filled with grassy areas bordered by trees and flowers, fountains and picturesque walkways. There are shops all around the square and, apart from the mosques and women in black chadors and head scarves, it has a European feel.

As we visited the Jame Mosque, a 20-something woman approached Barbara, a spry 81-year-old who was also on our tour, and me. She asked where we were from and exhibited the usual astonishment followed by a warm welcome. We talked for a few minutes, and I asked if I could take her picture. She said "no," explaining that Muslim women are conservative and don't like to show their faces. Sensing my disappointment she asked if I would promise not to show it to anyone. I told her I respected her decision and didn't have to take her photo. As Barbara and I left, the young woman told us that she thought kindness was the most important thing in the world and that she tried to be kind to everyone – even those who were not kind to her. Barbara and I agreed that it was critical – and sorely needed.

◆ GALLERY from page 2

working with their hands; and they created something. She has not found anything else that can do this for kids. She believes art creates a channel for them to both receive and give back information. Pressler says, "I don't know why art has been so devalued; we should really nurture imagination. I hope people will read Stanford Professor Elliot Eisner's book, *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*. He asserts that the arts are a critically important means for developing complex and subtle aspects of the mind."

Look for Marshall's *Winter to Spring* acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36," and Pressler's *Momentum #52* acrylic on paper, 24" x 24." "I just returned from a workshop in Santa Fe, New Mexico," says Pressler. "When you look at the sandstone structures that are part of the landscape, they have a fractal property about them." Marshall says, "I am very interested in the relationship between people and their surroundings,

especially with regard to the Golden Mean, the Mandelbrot Set and other mathematical ratios." Benoit Mandelbrot is a famous mathematician whose study of fractals has fascinated many an artist. A fractal is a never-ending pattern that repeats itself at different scales; this property is called self-similarity. Natural fractals include branching patterns such as trees, river networks, lightning bolts and blood vessels, and spiral patterns such as seashells, hurricanes and galaxies. See <http://fractal.foundation.org> for more information.

The group hopes its work creates a space for interaction with the community on many levels and welcomes the opportunity to bring abstract art to the spacious gallery. Visit the gallery at 26 Orinda Way during normal library hours – Monday through Thursday, 10 am to 8 pm; Friday and Saturday, 10 am to 6 pm; and Sunday, 1 pm to 5 pm. All libraries are closed Dec. 24 -25, and close at 5 pm on Dec. 31. Call 254-2184 for information or visit <http://ccclib.org>.

◆ HUNGER from page 15

many food drives around the holidays – the Halloween drive spreads it out a bit. I also like that it really involves the children and the neighbors."

The trick-or-treating for food took some planning ahead. Prior to Halloween, Sautter presented a lesson to the students on "Wants vs. Needs," in which they discussed things people really need – such as food, shelter and sleep – versus what people might want – such as an iPad or video games. A week prior to Halloween, the children distributed letters to their neighbors, describing We Scare Hunger and requesting donations.

Sautter's 10-year-old son Julian, who is in Kevin Cutler's fifth-grade class, said a lot of neighbors donated to the food drive. "I think they liked giving food to those who don't have food," said Julian.

His younger brother, Gabriel, 7, said a lot of students in his class got really excited about the project. "They thought it was good for the world, and it was fun and good to learn about wants vs. needs," said Gabriel, adding that neighbors gave not just canned food, but cereal, beans, tomatoes

and peanut butter.

As part of the "Wants vs. Needs" activity, all the students decorated empty food cans that Sautter and her sons had spray-painted orange and which the students recycled into pencil holders. Most of the kids decorated their cans as super heroes, reflecting the theme of "Be Hunger Heroes."

"It was fun spray-painting the cans, but I had to put tissue up my nose because if you breathe in the toxic paint fumes, your brain cells won't work," concluded Gabriel.

Next year, Sautter wants to bring We Scare Hunger to all the grades at Del Rey and hopes other Orinda schools will pick up the idea too.

Valentine said students told her it made them feel really good to give to people who don't have enough food.

"One student said it was good to give because we have plenty and they don't," said Valentine. "Others said they learned that they shouldn't waste food because others don't have enough to eat; one student said they recognized how lucky we are to have plenty, while another said they were proud to be part of We Scare Hunger."

For more information, visit www.freethechildren.com.



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SCHOOLS / STUDENTS

Decline in Enrollment Challenges Holden High School

By BILL O'BRIAN
Staff Writer

Holden High School has operated in Orinda for 45 years with a unique mission: "How can we help teenagers who are turned off to learning and school, discouraged about their abilities and feeling disconnected from peers, adults and the community?" The private, non-profit school fulfills that mission by valuing social/emotional development as well as academics, using small, engaging classes that focus on individual learning styles and providing a caring community of teachers and learners. Students learn to develop life skills and get a detailed post-high school action plan.

Located next to Orinda Community Church on Irwin Way, Holden High currently has 25 students, though in the past it has as many as 40 and as few as 17 students. The school is experiencing a major budget crunch to deal with present enrollment costs. Decline in enrollment is attributed to expanded competition from for-profit high schools, on-line learning options and increased programs in the public schools. Kate Lamoureux, one of the school's four co-directors, has sent a letter to friends of

Holden explaining the budget crunch and what changes the school is making to increase funding and reduce expenses. "The deficit is concerning, but we have reserve funds and are financially secure through this school year," said Lamoureux.

Two new options aimed to increase enrollment are the Independent Study Enriching Program (ISEP) and the Academic Options Program. These programs offer Holden's classes and community experience to teens that are either homeschooled or are on independent study. Additionally, the Tutoring and Mentoring Center provides academic support during afterschool hours to high school and community college students. According to Lamoureux, the intention of these programs is to strengthen Holden, "so we can continue to offer the features that make Holden both unique and effective in helping challenged teens. It is not uncommon to have a smaller enrollment in the fall, and we enroll throughout the year, but we would like to have more students."

Although Holden has reduced the number of teachers and aides this year, it still provides a ratio of student to teacher of 5 to 1 or fewer, compared to 9-12 to 1 at comparable Bay Area schools. There are currently



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Holden students during art class (clockwise from left): **Hannah Field, David Werner, Taylor Odom and Julia Winter.**

three full-time and one part-time teacher and five part-time, volunteer counselors.

In her letter, Lamoureux's also requests that people donate through a single gift or a little each month. People can also sign up with Amazon Smile with a percentage of their Amazon purchases going to Holden (<http://smile.amazon.com/> and select Holden High School). The school held a fall fundraiser in early November and

plans an April bike ride and a Spring Arts Festival to raise money. All contributions are tax-deductible and are slated for such projects as additional lighting, art room supplies, and the purchase of 35mm SLR cameras.

"We are spending frugally, and the students have what they need," said Lamoureux. "Mostly what we need is more students."

Orinda Aquatics Swimmers Honored at Pacific Awards Banquet



BILL NAGLE

(L-R) Coach **Kevin Lai, Will Nagle, Jordan Owyong, Max Cruz Costello** and Coach **Don Heidary** at the annual awards banquet.

By JYNANE WHEELER
Contributing Writer

Pacific Swimming hosts an annual banquet to celebrate the accomplishments of their swimmers and coaches throughout the year. Just recently, four Orinda Aquatics swimmers were honored at the 2014 banquet.

Max Cruz Costello was recognized as the Outstanding 11-Year-Old Male Swimmer for the Short Course Season while Will Nagle was named the Outstanding 11-Year-Old Male Swimmer for the Long

Course Season.

Additionally, Hannah Grubbs and Jordan Owyong were both chosen as finalists for the esteemed Impact Swimmer of The Year Award. This award is given to a swimmer that has made an impact, not only in the sport of swimming, but also in either their school or community, or both. Ultimately, the award was presented to Hannah Grubbs in recognition of her swimming successes, her leadership and character, and her continued involvement with the Harbor House Ministries, a charity benefitting Oakland inner city children.

Holiday Entertainment at Local Schools

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY
Staff Writer

Deck the halls and streets of Orinda with the sound of school choruses starting Dec. 6 at 4:30 pm at the Orinda Tree Lighting Orinda Village (by Bank of America, 31 Orinda Way). Choir members of area elementary schools and Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) choirs will perform, according to Christina Martin, OIS and Sleepy Hollow Elementary choir teacher.

"The Orinda Tree Lighting is great for the community because it allows all the children throughout Orinda that love to sing to come together and be a part of a tradition," said Martin, who is in her fifth year as choral director at OIS.

Opportunities to perform at the tree lighting and in subsequent winter shows throughout Orinda are good educational opportunities for students.

According to Orinda Academy music teacher Molly Smart, "While students rehearse all semester, playing in front of an audience is a very different situation. It is great practice for being a performer -



SALLY HOGARTY

School choirs performing at a previous tree lighting.

dealing with the nerves, unexpected things happening on stage, remembering your parts while a roomful of people are staring at you, and, of course, hearing genuine applause after playing well."

Both Smart and Martin are seasoned performers themselves. Martin performs locally with companies including Wood-

[SEE CONCERTS page 18]

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LOCAL RESIDENTS

◆ GIVING from page 12

Margaret Govednik, Orinda, HOPE Conference, c/o Ron Weston, 12205 Santa Teresa Drive, San Ramon, CA 94583.

"I highly recommend this organization. They fund gaps for essential services (utilities, rent, medical, etc.), families and individuals at risk of losing their homes/rentals. It's interfaith-based and managed by St. Vincent de Paul Society through volunteers with no salaried employees. The organization comes to the rescue when other agencies cannot handle their requests."

Global Non-Profits

Chelsea de Vries, Orinda, Cambodian Child's Dream (CCDO), www.cambodiachildsdream.org.

"Although I have been lucky enough to travel to Cambodia and experience firsthand the impact CCDO donations make on the lives of people living in the villages. You do not have to hug the people receiving your gift to know that you have changed someone's life and feel their gratitude radiating across the Pacific. Your donation extends far beyond the pump of a well or the door of a latrine or the edges of a vegetable garden. You are donating to a higher quality of life with its vast and multiplying consequences: improved health and food sources lead to an increased ability to work or concentrate in school and subsequently the ability to provide for family or obtain a higher-paying job – thus, ending the cycle of poverty in villages."

Mike and Lee Callahan, Orinda, Hands in Outreach (HIO), www.handsinoutreach.org.

"HIO's main goal is to educate girls, mostly from the Katmandu area. We have supported HIO for more than 30 years because we have been so impressed by their dedicated board of directors. Over the

years, we have supported the education of a number of girls and are now supporting the medical education of one of the girls. As a supporter, you are in direct communication with the child and receive all her school report cards. HIO also has a vocational training program for young women. We also support Nature Conservancy, Doctors without Borders and the San Francisco Chronicle's Season of Sharing."

Sophie and Rob Lucacher, Moraga, Doctors Without Borders, www.doctorswithoutborders.org.

"We know what important work they do all over the world, whenever and wherever it is needed. They are brave volunteers who go where the need and, many times, the danger is greatest. Eighty percent of their funding comes from private funders. We've known this group and its work for more than 40 years."

Gail Smith Pratt, Canyon, Sionfonds for Haiti, www.sionfondsforhaiti.org.

"Sionfonds provides educational opportunities in Haiti and has three schools educating some 800 kids each day. It also provides healthcare and feeds children. In April and November each year Sionfonds leads teams of healthcare providers from the U.S. and other developed countries to Haiti where they set up mobile health clinics. Founder Annie Blackstone is an honorable woman who adopted two kids from Haiti many years ago. She feels strongly about helping the Haitian people. When she travels to Haiti with her team she sleeps in the orphanage where she adopted her children. I feel honored that she is my friend. My husband and I provide a monthly salary for a teacher through Sionfonds for Haiti."

K. de Groot, Lafayette, Trust In Education (TIE), www.trustededucation.org.

"I admire and trust TIE and its director Budd MacKenzie. TIE makes an enormous difference in the lives of the villagers in Afghanistan. TIE focuses on gender equity education – 50 percent of the students are girls. With the help of local volunteers, TIE packs and sends school supplies, clothing and rice that is distributed all over Afghanistan, including refugee camps. TIE empowers women through education, health and hygiene clinics. During the winter school break, TIE-trained teachers teach women and their children computer technology in heated classrooms."

◆ CONCERTS from page 17

minster, Diablo Theater Company, Alameda Civic Light Opera and Tri-Valley Repertory Theater, while Smart plays with area bands such as *Ghost and the City* and *Benjamin Winter and the Make Believe*.

The winter concerts are chances "for our musicians to practice what it feels like to be a performing musician," said Smart, "While parents may see their kids practicing at home, it is great to see them successfully play with their fellow musicians. It's a fun family activity."

Jamtown: The New Mecca of Basketball

By MICHAEL SAKODA
Contributing Writer

"The Mecca of Basketball" is a term thrown around a lot, primarily in reference to cities such as Chicago and New York. But what about Oakland? With so many great players coming out of the Bay Area, it's only fitting that the larger basketball community start to take notice.

This summer, Orinda residents Laura and Eric Lamison took a big step towards putting Bay Area hoops on the map, opening Jamtown, a name chosen by their 11-year-old son Luke. Located near Jack London Square, it features a state-of-the-art basketball facility unrivaled in Northern

California and a top-notch training staff.

dating eight practice courts and, for games, four regulation courts.

"Jamtown is the first of its kind in Northern California, probably one of the biggest facilities that you'll see anywhere," said General Manager Sam Moses, a former player at Cal State Hayward and one of Jamtown's three on-staff trainers. "The detail, the time and the money that was put into this facility make it one-of-a-kind."

The floors at Jamtown aren't typical basketball courts. They're hard maple with a bio-cushion underneath. The eight main baskets are the same rollaway hoops the NBA uses, each court has its own unique color scheme and anyone can rent Shoot-A-Way's 8000 Series Gun, a top-of-the-line



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Orinda residents create basketball oasis in Oakland.

California and a top-notch training staff. "We spent a lot of time with our kids, Luke and Nicole, 9, in gyms," said Eric. "There are many parents and kids in Orinda who are into basketball - in Amateur Athletic Union and other competitive leagues - and there are places that specialize in creating spaces for them, but none that offer what we thought was the right product."

With Dream Courts USA in Hayward closed, Tice Valley in Walnut Creek became one of the only multi-court complexes left in the Bay Area. "When people from Lamorinda hear you're a big basketball facility, I think Tice Valley is what they picture," said Laura.

However, Tice Valley only offers three courts. Jamtown has 24 baskets, accommo-

shooting machine that kicks the ball back to players, maximizing a solo shooting practice. Even the ceilings are hardwood, a gem you'll only notice if you happen to look up.

"Everything about this facility had thought put into it," said Laura, who heads up Jamtown's staff - including the location. "We put it in Oakland, one of the top basketball markets in the country," said Eric. "Oakland is filled with strong basketball players and a strong community. We're close to San Francisco, Marin, Silicon Valley, Lamorinda, Hayward and Berkeley - right in the middle."

Jamtown's central location also creates a unique opportunity to bring kids together who might never otherwise meet - or compete. "Kids from a lot of areas don't play each other historically, in large part because of where the gyms are located," said Eric. "By putting it here ... we can get kids who really like basketball to come and play kids from the other side of the tunnel."

Already Jamtown is booked solid for tournaments - including one that featured more than 70 games over a two-day span - practices, adult recreational leagues, private sessions, open gym and camps.

"Harrison Barnes [of the Golden State Warriors] held a free camp here in August for kids from Richmond that he bussed in to our facility," said Laura. The Warriors are also holding a youth camp at Jamtown Dec. 29-31 - so it's possible that another Orinda resident, Golden State Warrior Stephen Curry, might make an appearance.

Khari Walker, a former player at Central State Ohio and one of Jamtown's assistant managers moved from Atlanta to work at Jamtown. "It's the reason I moved out here, to be a part of this project," Walker said. "Jamtown is a place where kids can come

[SEE JAMTOWN page 23]



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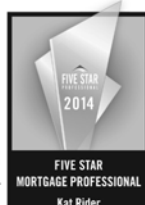
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BOOKS / VOLUNTEER

Between the Lines

A 2014 Alphabet of Holiday Gift Books from A to Z

Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



A is for *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr (Scribner \$27) – in this dazzling bestseller, a young French girl and a German boy follow different paths through the perils of WWII.

B is for *The Blood of Olympus* (Heroes of Olympus #5) by Rick Riordan (Disney \$19.99) – Percy Jackson and friends continue their action-packed adventures in this wildly popular series. (Ages 10-14)

C is for *Capital in the 21st Century* by Thomas Piketty (Belknap \$39.95) – rave reviews worldwide sent customers streaming into the store for this doorstep of a book.

D is for *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul* (Amulet \$13.95) – Greg Hefley and his family go on a road trip that will delight Kinney's reader-fans. (Ages 7-12)

E is for *Edge of Eternity* (Century Trilogy #III) by Ken Follett (Dutton \$36) – Follett concludes his sweeping fictional history in fine style; a gripping read in 1,120 pages.

F is for *Frank Einstein & the Antimatter Motor* by Jon Scieszka & Brian Biggs (Amulet \$13.95) – a brand new adventure series with real science tucked in. (Ages 8-12)

G is for *Give Me a Fast Ship: The Continental Navy & America's Revolution at Sea* by Tim McGrath (New American Library \$26.95) – the Wall Street Journal called this a "new flagship for naval literature."

H is for *How We Got to Now: Six Innovations That Made the Modern World* by Steven Johnson (Riverhead \$30) – Johnson builds fascinating connections about objects we take for granted as part of everyday life.

I is for *The Innovators: How a Group of Hackers, Geniuses, & Geeks Created the Digital Revolution* by Walter Isaacson (Simon & Schuster \$35) – the title says it all. Isaacson (Steve Jobs) has written another landmark book.

J is for *Jamie Oliver's Comfort Food* (Ecco \$34.99) – always easy to follow, Jamie here takes on comfort food from around the world with every recipe beautifully photographed.

K is for *The King's Curse* by Philippa Gregory (Touchstone \$28.99) – Gregory continues her well-researched 15th c. fiction with the story of Margaret Pole, Katherine of Aragon's lady-in-waiting.

L is for *Lucky Us* by Amy Bloom (Random House \$26) – read the opening line and you are captured by this lively novel about two sisters, Midwest, Hollywood and New York in the 1930s and '40s.

M is for *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante (Europa \$17) – this first volume in the author's Neapolitan trilogy catapulted to readers' attention this year – a story of two women in 1950's Naples.

N is for *Norwegian by Night* by Derek Miller (Mariner Books \$14.95) – a thriller with heart in which an aging New Yorker transplanted to Oslo tries to save a small boy's life.

O is for *The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight in an Age of Information Overload* by Daniel Levitin (Dutton \$27.95) – the author turns from "your brain on music" to your brain in overdrive.

P is for *The Pigeon Needs a Bath* by Mo Willems (Disney \$16.99) – Willems' pigeon is well known to the younger set. This is a great learning-to-read picture book. (Ages 3-5)

Q is for *Quartet for the End of Time* by Johanna Skibsrud (Norton \$26.95) – post-WWI America is well researched in this historical novel that takes us from the Bonus Army riots to the London Blitz.

R is for *The Rosie Project* by Graeme Simsion (Simon & Schuster \$15.99) – Orinda Books favorite go-to paperback. Follow the adventures of Don Tillman, high on the Asperger spectrum, as he searches for a wife.

S is for *Some Luck* by Jane Smiley (Knopf \$26.95) – back in Iowa (A Thousand Acres) Smiley chronicles a farm family's life, year by year, in what will become her 20th c. trilogy.

T is for *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate* by Naomi Klein (Simon & Schuster \$30) – the New York Times called Klein's book "the most momentous and contentious since *Silent Spring*."

U is for *Under Magnolia: a Southern Memoir* by Frances Mayes (Crown \$26) – from the author of *Under the Tuscan Sun*, this is a moving memoir of coming of age in Mississippi.

V is for *The Valley of Amazement* by Amy Tan (Ecco Press \$16.99) – mothers and daughters are again at the core of Tan's newest novel.

W is for *We Are Not Ourselves* by Matthew Thomas (Simon & Schuster \$28) – the author charmed us when he visited Orinda Books this fall. We are all fans of his debut novel, the story of an Irish-American family in New York in the latter half of the 20th c.

X is for *X Why Z Animals* by Mark Shulman and James Buckley (Time for Kids Books \$14.95) – fun and fact filled for 4- to 8-year-olds.

Y is for *Yes Please* by Amy Poehler (Dey St. Books \$28.99) – Tina Fey's best pal (SNL & Parks & Recreation) takes us backstage and behind the scenes in her life.

Z is for *Zone of Interest* by Martin Amis (Knopf \$26.95) – brilliant and thought provoking; a WWII novel that will keep you thinking well into 2015.

Happy Holidays and Happy Reading from A to Z

Access Adventure Names Mary Lou Fazel Volunteer of the Decade

By CHARLIE JARRETT
Staff Writer

Access Adventure has named Orinda resident Mary Lou Fazel its first Volunteer of the Decade. Director of Therapeutic Services Michael Muir (great-grandson of John Muir) made the announcement at a breakfast meeting of volunteers in October at the Veteran's Hospital in Yountville, where they were preparing for the new Welcome Home Veteran's rehabilitation program. Access Adventure helps people with disabilities through working with

is owned by the Solano Land Trust.

Fazel and Muir also began writing and applying for grants. "The first successful grant we were awarded was \$10,000 from the PG&E Stewardship Council which was used to pay for the first carriage," said Fazel. "The first horses we had were loaners. Our new carriages are designed for two horses and have electric lifts to accommodate wheelchair-bound individuals."

Today Fazel's role includes not only grant writing but also bookkeeping, taking minutes at meetings and many other administrative tasks. She also helped put



CHARLIE JARRETT

Michael Muir, the great-grandson of John Muir, with volunteer and Orinda resident Mary Lou Fazel.

horses and horse-drawn vehicles.

"Mary Lou Fazel has been behind the scenes for 10 years, and we are celebrating her service with this special award," said Muir. "Her administrative and developmental work has been invaluable to our program. In fact, Access Adventure is in large extent here today, equipped as we are, because of her work in helping us to access grant money and her intensive long-term administration skills."

Fazel discovered Access Adventure following the death of her own horse. "I saw an article in a newspaper entitled "A Ticket To Ride," about how Michael Muir was attempting to start this horse-centered rehabilitation program for the handicapped," said Fazel. "The article mentioned that Michael had multiple sclerosis (MS), which my brother had also. The horse connection and the MS connection caught my interest."

When Muir came to Orinda a short time later to address the Muir Heritage Land Trust, Fazel introduced herself. The following spring, they met to discuss the startup program that allows disabled people to work around horses and wagons and enjoy outdoor recreation. Other volunteers joined in the effort and, in 2005, Access Adventure became a reality. It is located on 2,070 acres of preserved land on the Rush Ranch, which

together a training manual, set protocols on safety and training of horses and works on the web site and tracking systems.

"Access Adventure is now a very viable, stable, program," said Fazel. "It enriches the lives of people with disabilities and other under served members of our community by providing outdoor recreation, open space access, education and therapy through a working partnership with horses. I am very proud to be an active part of this program."

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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

DECEMBER

- 1 **Moraga Art Gallery** presents *Waters of the Koi*, featuring abstract paintings by Heather Metcalf and wood-turned bowls and platters by Jacques Blumer, through Jan. 11, Rheem Shopping Center, 522 Center St. Visit <http://moragaartgallery.com> or call 925-376-5407.
Orinda Library Gallery presents *Abstract Rhythms*, the work of eight East Bay painters, during December. Artist reception Sun., Dec. 7, 2-4 pm. See article p. 2.
- 2 **Lamorinda Reads** presents former Captain Luis Carlos Montalvan, Iraq veteran and author of *Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him*, Lafayette Library Community Hall, 7 pm. Contact your local library or email bgirshma@ccclib.org.
Orinda Arts Council Annual Holiday Luncheon with holiday songs by Lamorinda Idol winners and excerpts from *The Snow Queen* by OIS Bulldog Theater Company, Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, noon to 2 pm. \$25. RSVP susangarell@comcast.net.
- 4 **Orinda Books** Story Hour with Cathy Goshorn for children aged 2 to 4, Thursdays, 10 to 11 am, 276 Village Square. Call 925-254-7606.
St. Mary's College Guild Christmas luncheon, 11 am - 2 pm, St. Mary's College Soda Center, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. Call 925-376-3306.
Thursdays Together Board games for seniors at Orinda Community Center, 10 am to noon. \$3 residents, \$4 non-residents. Call 925-254-2445 or visit www.cityoforinda.org.
- 5 **St. Stephens Episcopal Church** Sing-It-Yourself *Messiah*, 66 St. Stephen's Drive, 7:30 pm, free. An offering will be taken for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano counties. Childcare available by reservation, office@ststephensorinda.org or 925-254-3770, ext. 10.
13th Annual Tarabrook Holiday Boutique, noon - 8 pm, 1 Tarabrook Drive, Orinda. Also Dec. 6-7 11 am - 6 pm. Hand-crafted gifts, decor and specialty foods. Percentage of proceeds to benefit Doctors Without Borders. <https://www.facebook.com/TarabrookHolidayBoutique>.
- 6 **Orinda Books** hosts Kevin Dunne in a book launch party for his debut novel *The Chairman*, 276 Village Square, 5 pm. Call 925-254-7606.
Hospice Tree Lighting, Bank of America, Orinda Village, 4:30 pm. School choirs perform and Santa Claus arrives in a fire truck. Call 925-887-5678 or www.hospiceeastbay.org.
- 9 **Boy Scout Troop 57** Open House for boys ages 10 to 17 years old, Orinda Intermediate School Multi-Purpose room, 7:10 pm. No prior Scouting experience necessary. Evening features fun activities and dessert. Contact David Finger at 925-247-0077 or davidfinger@newlookgroup.net.
- 11 **Orinda Chamber of Commerce** Holiday Mixer, Oak Springs Pool Clubhouse, 39 Springs Road, 5:30 to 7 pm. Visit www.orindachamber.org or call 925-254-3909.
California Independent Film Festival presents *A Christmas Story*, Orinda Theatre, 7 pm, free. Visit www.lamorindatheatres.com.
- 12 **Orinda Books** hosts Gerry Wallace, Paul Kratter, Tia Kratter and Joel Kratter in their annual holiday sale of ceramics, art, drawings and paintings, 276 Village Square, 10 am to 5 pm. Call 925-254-7606.
- 17 **WomenSing** Holiday Concert features female chorus plus chimes and timpani, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga, 8 pm. Tickets \$30 premium, \$25 general, \$20 seniors, \$10 students and youth. Visit www.womensing.org or purchase tickets at the door.

AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified. Note the library will be closed Dec. 24 and 25 for Christmas. On Dec. 31, the library will close at 5 pm and will be closed Jan. 1. For more information, call 925-254-2184 or visit www.ccclib.org/locations/Orinda.html.

- 1 **Lamorinda Reads Coffee and Conversation.** *Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him* by Iraq war veteran Captain Luis Carlos Montalvan. Adult program, 10:30 am.
- 2 **Toddler Lapsit.** Story time for children aged 1 to 3 and their caregivers, Gallery Room, 10 and 10:30 am. No registration required, but attendance limited to once per week. Also Dec. 3, 9 and 10.
- 4 **English as a Second Language Conversation Circle.** Practice English conversation in an informal, small-group setting, Tutoring Room, 1 to 2:30 pm. Preregistration not required. Also Dec. 11 and 18.
- 6 **Saturday Morning Live!** Story time for children aged 3 to 5, Picture Book area, 11 am. Also Dec. 13.
- 8 **Write to a Service Member.** Write a note of appreciation to a service member/veteran at the library's writing table. The letters will be sent to A Million Thanks, which will redistribute them to service members. Through Dec. 14.
- 9 **Peek-A-Boo Time.** Songs, stories, rhythms and rhymes for infants to 18 months, Gallery Room, 11:30 am.
- 11 **Special Monthly Book Sale.** Hosted by Friends of the Orinda Library, Book Shop and sorting room, 10 am to 1 pm.
- 12 **Mystery Book Club.** Members discuss *Laura* by Vera Caspary, Tutoring Room, 3 to 4 pm. Adult program.
- 16 **Holiday Tot Hop.** Seasonal music and fun for toddlers and preschoolers, Gallery Room, 10 to 11 am. Also Dec. 17.
- 17 **An Evening of Jazz.** Brazilian songs and American standards features singer Mary D'Orazi, Tim Campbell on piano, and Greg German on drums/percussion, free, 7 pm.

CLUB MEETINGS

- Diablo Star Chapter #214,** Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 pm. Orinda Masonic Center, Karen Seaborn, 925-689-0995.
- Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe.** Third Monday, 7:30 pm, Gallery Room, Orinda Library, www.moragaadobe.org.
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks.** Fourth Wednesday, 8:30 am, May Room, Orinda Library, 925-253-1997.
- Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition.** Third Wednesday, 10 to 11:30 am, Orinda City Hall Sarge Littlehale Room, 925-687-8844, ext. 227.
- Lamorinda Nature Walk and Birdwatching** for seniors. Wednesdays, 9 to 11 am, free. Call 925-254-2445 for weekly meeting place.
- Lamorinda Sirs** for retired men. Second Wednesday, 11 am to 1:30 pm, Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga, Pete Giers, 925-254-4667.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary.** Every Friday, 7 am, Lafayette Park Hotel, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, <http://www.lamorindasunrise.com/> or 925-283-8288. Dec. 5 speaker is former U.S. Navy member Ryan Sykes; Dec. 12 features Dennis Erokan, creator of BAM magazine;

WomenSing "Ring the Bells" Concert



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Accompanied by handbells and timpani, WomenSing will perform a mix of traditional and contemporary music, including a little Latin flair at its Dec. 17 concert at St. Mary's College in Moraga. The event starts at 8 pm in the college chapel. Tickets, priced \$10 - \$30, are available online at www.womensing.org or at the door the night of the concert.

- Dec. 19 features scientist and opera singer Indre Viskontas. Dark on Dec. 26.
- Lamorinda Toastmasters.** Every Tuesday, 7:30 pm, Temple Isaiah, 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, www.lamorinda.freetoasthost.net.
- Montelindo Garden Club.** Third Friday, 9 am, September through May, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephen's Drive, www.montelindogarden.com.
- Orinda Garden Club.** Fourth Thursday, 10 am to noon, September through May, Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante.
- Orinda Juniors Women's Club** community service group. First Tuesday, September through June, 7 pm, www.orindajuniors.org.
- Orinda Rotary.** Every Wednesday, noon, Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, 925-254-2222.
- Orinda Association.** Second Monday, 7:15 pm, Orinda Library, May Room, 925-254-0800.
- Orinda Hiking Club.** Every weekend and first Wednesday, www.orindahiking.org or Ian at 925-254-1465.
- Orinda Historical Society.** Holiday party and dinner, Dec. 3 at 6 pm, Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way. Speakers include EBMUD's Michelle Blackwell and Nora Harlow on water development in Orinda. 925-254-1353.
- Orinda Job's Daughters.** First and third Monday, 7 pm, 9 Altarinda Road, 925-283-7176.
- Orinda/Tábor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation.** Fourth Thursday, 7 pm, social, 7:30 pm, meeting, call 925-254-8260 for location.
- Orinda Teen Advisory Council.** Second Wednesday, 4 pm, Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, email orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com.
- Orinda Woman's Club.** Second Tuesday, 9:30 am to noon, call Jean Barnhart, 925-254-3881, or <https://sites.google.com/site/orindawomansclub/>.

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.
- Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Commission.** Second Wednesday, 6:30 pm, Sarge Littlehale Room, City Hall. www.cityoforinda.org.
- City Council.** First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.cityoforinda.org.
- Historic Landmarks Committee.** Fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room. Call 925-788-7323.
- Moraga-Orinda Fire District.** First and third Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m.. Visit 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.
- Planning Commission.** Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.cityoforinda.org.

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

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Everyday Changes

Simple Tips for a Healthy, Happy and Meaningful Holiday Season



Bonnie Waters

With the impact of the seasonal changes that winter brings and the increased demands of the holidays, many of us find it difficult to experience harmony of body, mind and spirit. Our mind is pre-occupied with creating the perfect holiday experience for our loved ones, while our bodies are trying to fight off the flu bug and our spirit is trying to find the meaning of this special time of year.

Psychologists recommend that the best antidote for hectic holidays is to simplify, simplify. But what does that really mean? Where do we begin and what can we do to avert the physical, mental and emotional distress of "season shock?"

First, take the time to establish your priorities. What is really important to you? Evaluate your holiday habits and ask yourself "Is this really meaningful?" Is this the best use of your time, money and energy? Just because you have done something every year doesn't mean you need to do it this year. Be realistic, be authentic. Let go of your concerns about what others may think.

Secondly, simplify your gift list. When it comes to gift giving focus on making memories. Bring together family and friends for a memorable experience. We often see mothers, daughters and granddaughters, couples or girlfriends together for an afternoon at Changes Salon and Day Spa. We love to help the hostess make the day especially memorable by customizing

the experience with festive refreshments or gifts that can be enjoyed during their manicures, pedicures, facials and massages. Sometimes the special memories come in the form of gift certificates for a later date where the host and recipients can enjoy a spa day together when the hectic holidays have passed.

If you are reading this and thinking of how to find the perfect gift for your wife, recent studies report that for many women spa gift experiences top the list as one of the most appreciated gifts received. Most women surveyed report that spa gifts encouraged them to take time out for themselves, something most women find difficult to do.

Last but not least, don't over-commit your energy this holiday season. Taking on too much, taxing your body with insufficient rest, too much worry, grabbing fast food and not taking the time to eat nutritious meals, make us more susceptible to the onset of the flu bug and upper respiratory infections that are so prevalent this time of year.

What we all want, any time of year, is quality time with our loved ones and seeing those we care about most be happy and healthy. Take the time now to evaluate your holiday lifestyle and see if you can give the gift of joy, health and memories to your loved ones (and you) this year.

We wish each of you a healthy, happy, joyous holiday!

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EFO Present Commemorative Quilt to OUSD



DAVID DIERKS

EFO Co-presidents **Dean Burnick** (L) and **Cara Hoxie** present OUSD Superintendent **Dr. Joe Jaconette** (R) with a handmade quilt.

To commemorate their 35 year relationship, the Educational Foundation of Orinda (EFO) presented a quilt to the Orinda Union School District (OUSD). The quilt was given to EFO in 2010 and "for the past 4 years, the EFO has been looking for the best possible home for this incredible piece of art," said EFO co-president Cara Hoxie. "The new Orinda Union School District Offices seemed like the perfect solution." The quilt will be hung in the lobby of the new OUSD offices on Altarinda Road.

The quilt's frame was made possible by a donation from Hoxie and EFO co-president Dean Burnick. The quilt was created by Leasa Raya, Liz Piat, Margaret Zucker, Virginia Ross, Jocelyn Marzan, Sandy Chan and Cheryl Hata, and designed by Helen Calvert and Terry Lowenthal.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 24

a question about it on our web site and Facebook page. Anyone who can come in and answer the question receives a 10 percent discount," he explains.

ECHO Grove is open every day from 10 am to 8 pm during December. For more information, visit www.echogrovestore.com



VALERIE HOTZ

Michael Sanchez, Yolanda Sanchez and Connie King of Sweet Dreams.

com or call 925-257-4137.

Sweet Dreams Is a Wonderland for Kids and Adults

This good, old-fashioned local toy store was established by Gary Gendel at 2 Theatre Square #107, more than 20 years ago, offering a rainbow of toy selections sure to delight. Staffed by knowledgeable and helpful toy enthusiasts Connie King, Michael Sanchez and Yolanda Sanchez, you are guaranteed to find a myriad of educational and entertaining gifts.

A recent walk-through with King reveals a remote-controlled dog named Zoomers is high on the list for children this year. "Double Shutter is a numbers game that

the kids adore. Everything is contained in a little box, which makes it great for traveling," says King. For the budding Einstein in your family, science kits are in stock. It was this great scientist who once observed, "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world,

and all there ever will be to know and understand."

The fun thing about Sweet Dreams is the great variety of toys available. There are traditional wooden blocks, an old-school vortex marble run fashioned from wood for ages four and up, an eye-popping fantasy land of figurines made by Papo including pirates, knights, three-headed dragons, kings and unicorns.

Contribute to your child's imaginative endeavors with the Laser Pegs that interlock with Legos. "Some Laser Pegs kits require batteries, but you do not need a special table to use them. The Brio, Thomas and Melissa and Doug wooden train sets interlock and can be used together, which makes it very

nice," says King.

Around the corner discover a great selection of Lego and Playmobil sets. "We have an extensive collection of plush toys, especially Gund stuffed animals," observes Sanchez. The hand puppet offerings include a fun brown puppy, guinea pig, monkey, cow and more. Not to miss are the classic board games of yesterday - Mousetrap, Trouble, Hungry, Hungry Hippo, Monopoly and Scrabble - that still provide hours of entertainment for families.

If you are looking for something more tactile and contemporary, Sands Alive is a mixture that looks like sand, but has the texture of Play-Doh and does not leave a mess or residue. Merrilee Mermaid and Friends, Dinosaur and Sweet Shop sets are in stock at Sweet Dreams.

"Calico Critters of Cloverleaf Corners is hugely popular with our customers. The collections include bunnies, cats, mice, chipmunks and pandas and there are doll houses to choose from as well," says King. "We have a huge inventory, not to mention the collection of Corolle baby dolls avail-

able." Lovely Hagen Renaker miniature animals made in San Dimas, California since 1946 make a thoughtful gift.

Sweet Dreams offers free gift wrap and is open Monday through Saturday from 10 am to 6 pm and Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm. For more information call 925-254-6672.

Of course, Orinda Books, Sweet Dreams and Echo Grove are just a few of the many fine Orinda businesses where great holiday presents can be found. And, don't forget a gift certificate at an Orinda restaurant also makes a wonderful present!

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◆ JAMTOWN from page 18

and get instruction and training. We have the best trainers in the Bay Area here."

Kelly Sopak, head coach of the women's basketball team at Miramonte High School, uses the facility for his Cal Stars basketball program. "It's less than 14 minutes from Orinda, a great facility, and the kids love coming here," he said. "We have 18 Cal Stars teams that call this our home, and we're happy to be here."

Randall Harding shared the Lamisons' dream for a great basketball facility and was the first to sign on as an assistant manager and trainer.

"I was training their kids, and I guess they saw the passion that I have for working with children," said the Oklahoma native and former guard at Cal State Bakersfield. "We had a similar vision. We wanted to have that one place people could go to train and where I could go to teach, and here we are now."

For more information, visit www.jamtown.net.

Emeritus College Annual Holiday Luncheon
 Tickets are going fast for the Holiday Luncheon on December 6 from 11:30 am -1:30 pm in the Food Court on the Diablo Valley College Campus. The menu includes appetizers, two pasta dishes, salad and dessert. There will be entertainment, raffle prizes, a silent auction and handmade items for sale. The luncheon provides an opportunity to relax with friends, enjoy good food and do some holiday shopping in the process. Tickets are \$25 and help support Emeritus College whose mission is to provide affordable classes for people 50+. Call 925-969-4316 to reserve your seat. If you wish to sit with friends, please register together. Tickets will not be available at the door.

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Business Buzz Shop Local This Holiday Season

Valerie Hotz



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

All New Orinda Books Shines

Take a look around your neighborhood this holiday season, and you will find unusual and delightful gifts for the ones you care about right here in Orinda. By spending less time on the road and more time with your loved ones, you will enjoy more precious moments together as well as lasting memories.

Our loyal readers already know Orinda Books recently changed hands and new proprietors Maria and Danny Roden have renovated the shop, bringing new programs with the usual reliable superb service. "I adore sharing excellent books with people," says Maria Roden. "It is a lifelong passion of mine, a real pleasure to share a good read." Offering 10,000 titles in stock, if you do not find what you are looking for Roden and her staff will special order and have it for you within a couple of days. Orinda Books is located in Village Square, adjacent to Village Inn Café and McCaulou's.

Step inside this independent and locally owned bookshop and notice the new hardwood floor, with the sun shining brightly on

the freshly painted gray blue walls. Abundant space has been set aside with plenty of seating in one section of the shop for free author events that are hosted regularly. Local author Kevin Dunn launches his book on Dec. 6 at 5 pm.

Orinda Books is not only a bookshop. It is a gathering place for the community that features local talent. On Dec. 12, from 10 am to 5 pm, ceramicist Gerry Wallace, her daughter Tia Kratter and son-in-law Paul Kratter will present their work, which will be available for purchase. The Artist of the



Valerie Hotz
Maria and Danny Roden are the new owners of Orinda Books.

Month program currently features acrylic and watercolor paintings by Orindan Dee Tivenan. Allison McCrady will be featured in the coming months. Artists who wish to be considered should contact Roden for details. Further rounding out the local influence are greeting cards for all occasions by local photographer Karen Malkson.

Included among the selection of 2015 engagement calendars is a charming edition entitled, "Gardener's One Line a Day 5 Year Book of Garden Memories." This is a delightful gift for the gardener on your list who savors daily moments in the garden and making them last for generations to come.

You will find all the usual categories of books and some exceptionally interesting finds. For the creative seamstress, consider, "Famous Frocks - the Little Black Dress," containing patterns for 20 garments inspired by fashion icons including Mary Quant, Audrey Hepburn and Grace Kelly. For the Buddhist in your crowd, pick up a copy of *How to Eat* by Thich Nhat Hanh.

The children's section is definitely a place to linger with a comfy beanbag chair on the floor and access to a well-appointed doll house and Lego set. In addition to Peter Rabbit gift sets, you will find velvety soft swaddle blankets for wrapping up baby and onesies emblazoned with "Born to Read" across the chest.

For every \$100 spent, customers receive a \$5 discount coupon. Gift certificates are available and chocolate lovers can purchase their favorite Guittard chocolate bar at checkout. Dog aficionados won't be able to pass up the hand-knotted rope toy for Rover this holiday season. The icing on the cake is the free gift wrap.

Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, is open Monday through Friday 10 am to 6 pm, Saturday 10 am to 5 pm and Sunday 10 am to 3 pm. For more information, visit www.orindabooks.com or call 925-254-7606.

ECHO Grove

Stepping into ECHO Grove is reminiscent of stepping into a favorite art museum, in the sense that you never know what marvel awaits around the corner. Everything in the shop is novel and functional, with a great emphasis on repurposing material into useful, sometimes whimsical items. Located between Serika and Starbucks at 2 Theatre Square #112, owners Dean Shutt and Mags Doty established this avant-garde gift shop this year. Drop in to find that unique gift for the special people of all ages on your list.

During December, ECHO Grove hosts a "Click and Collect" feature on its website at www.echogrovestore.com. Orders



Valerie Hotz
Dean Shutt and Mags Doty own Theatre Square's Echo Grove.

placed by noon will be wrapped and ready for pick-up by 3 pm the same day. "Click and Collect" is a mobile-enabled website, encouraging shopping on the go. An available option in the website shopping cart is a flat \$5 charge for delivery of purchases within Orinda.

"We are very eco-friendly and have discovered that people like to buy things that are repurposed, which is different from recycled. A repurposed item forges material into an entirely different product. For example, we have desk organizers and mail sorters made of 45 rpm records, which are really fun," says Doty. Other repurposed items include old game boards from Scrabble or Candyland games crafted into purses.

A popular gift item is the Flighty Fleurs, handmade bouquets of flowers made by Joanna Moser of Oakland. Moser creates the bouquets from brightly colored papers and wraps them in tissue paper. While many items are handmade by California artists, Doty and Shutt make an effort to reach out to artists across the United States. Bette Hestle paints glassware in her Golden Hill Studio in New York. The beautiful glassware is influenced by her extensive travels.

A thoughtful gift for the writer or sketch artist in your circle is a handsome leather journal created by Manino Leather. A recent customer purchased one for use as a wedding guest book. "We consider everything we carry to be functional art," says Doty, who serves as the buyer for ECHO Grove.

Allow enough time to browse the shop to take in all the offerings. With such an impressive range of gift selections, you are bound to find that special something. Cabinetmaker Berkley Hansen hand tools beautiful cutting boards, keepsake boxes and candle holders from exotic woods employing exquisite finishes.

Is photography your thing? Colleen Eve Macomber makes unusual photo frames from the bark of trees. If the "kids" in your life have four legs, check out the designer sweaters made by My Fabulous Puppy. These doggie sweaters are repurposed from out-of-season designer clothes.

A truly innovative alternative to plastic sandwich bags is the re-usable cotton cloth sandwich bag. "It saves from pouring plastic into landfill. One of our customer's said she has used the same one for the last four years," explains Doty. The re-usable sandwich bag is machine washable.

Mags and Shutt's eight-year-old daughter, Katie, offers a free craft class this month. Check the website for date and time details of "Katie's Corner" and bring your youngster to ECHO Grove to create a special hand-made gift. "Katie is awesome," smiles Doty.

Shutt initiated the ECHO Grove Book Club, inviting readers to share a different book every month. "I pick a book and post

[SEE BUZZ page 23]