

# THE ORINDA NEWS

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## First Wilder Playing Field Available Soon

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

For many years, the five playing fields at the Wilder development have been a gleam in the eye of many a coach and player. Finally, that gleam can translate into running and sliding as a variety of sports get underway in the near future on Playing Field #1.

The City of Orinda is hopeful that the first field will be available in late February or early March. "I know it's frustrating for people when they come to Wilder and see two fields that look completed. But there are several more important items that need to happen first," explains City Manager Janet Keeter. Those steps include bringing power, water and sewage disposal to the site as well as ADA access. "We've been able to run the lights with generators, but we really need PG&E to complete the electrical connections before we open to the public," she adds. Once power and water are installed at the site, the city may open the field using portable bathrooms until a sewage line is connected to the permanent rest rooms.

Playing Field #2 needs these items as

well as an access road to the parking lot and field before it can open. "Right now, construction crews are using a temporary one-lane maintenance road, but it doesn't have the safety features we need for the public," says Keeter.

A total of five playing fields will eventually be deeded over to the City of Orinda per its agreement with Brooks Street, the developer of Wilder. Playing Fields #1 and #2 are turf fields with lighting while the other three fields will be grass and not have lighting for evening use. The other three fields are also located closer to the residential units where brightly lighted fields would be intrusive. "Since we'll be accepting the fields in phases, we'll have to enter into an agreement with Wilder that spells out liability and insurance issues as well," Keeter adds.

"This is a state-of-the-art sports, recreational and park facility that the Wilder neighborhood and Orinda community can be proud of and will use for decades to come," said Jason Keadjian, spokesman for Wilder. "We have worked closely with the city on this project and appreciate their vision and continued support."



Field #1 (upper right) may be available in early spring. Field #2 (lower left) still needs an access road and parking lot completed.

## California Independent Film Festival Brings Stars and Award-Winning Films to Lamorinda

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

Local residents have the opportunity to size up the Oscar competition this February as the California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF) holds its 14th anniversary festival at both the Orinda and Rheem Theatres. Scheduled for February 10 - 16, the seven day event opens with the award winning film *Monsieur Lazhar* at the Rheem Theatre. NBC Bay Area News anchor, Diane Dwyer, will host the opening night ceremony.

*Monsieur Lazhar* won the Best Canadian Film award at the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival and is Canada's official 2012 Oscar entry for Best Foreign Language Film. The film also screens at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, only a few days before opening at CAIFF.

Other notable Oscar entries screening at the 14th Annual CAIFF include: *Tilt*, an award winner at the Seattle International Film Festival and Bulgaria's official 2012 Oscar entry for Best Foreign Language Film;



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Actor **Burt Young**, who played Sylvester Stallone's brother-in-law in *Rocky*, will receive CAIFF's Lifetime achievement Award.

*Hermano*, Best Picture award winner at the Moscow International Film Festival and Venezuela's 2011 Oscar entry for Best Foreign Language Film. In total, CAIFF will be screening 11 feature films, seven documentaries, and 23 short films as well as hosting educational seminars. Seminars include "Learn to Maximize Your Film

[SEE CAIFF page 16]

## Pine Grove Project on Track for Transfer of Ownership



COURTESY OF PULTE HOMES

Pulte Homes plans a variety of housing styles to mirror the various types of homes in Orinda. The roughly 14-acre site will have 65 single-family homes and eight duplex homes in a village atmosphere.

By BILL O'BRIAN  
Staff Writer

If all elements proceed smoothly, June of 2012 should see the transfer of ownership of the Orinda School District Pine Grove property to Pulte Homes for development into a project called Orinda Grove.

In 2005, Pulte Homes submitted to the City of Orinda a formal application for development of the 11-acre Pine Grove school site and the adjacent 3.1-acre city-owned ball fields. The original plan included 80 new homes which was later revised to 73 homes. The plan is for 65 detached single-family and eight duplex homes in a village atmosphere. The duplex homes are considered affordable housing priced in the mid \$300,000s. Addi-

[SEE GROVE page 18]

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LIBRARY GALLERY



GREG PIATT

Artist Greg Piatt's art work includes *Carmel Sunset*, an oil on wood, which will be part of the Orinda Library exhibit.

## Confessions of Five Artists à la Camus

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

Albert Camus once said, "A work of art is a confession." If that is true, then the walls and cabinets of the Library Gallery are filled this month with the confessions of lifetimes spent creating. Dorothy Davis' group, which includes Joan Machado, Marion Melin, and Greg Piatt, will display award-winning portraits, landscapes painted on reclaimed wood, and still lifes.

Rumiana Allen's oils on canvas harken to the theme "Sea Breeze," echoing the warm sand of distant beaches.

The artist reception will be held Sunday, February 26, from 3 to 5 p.m. where light refreshments will be served.

Octogenarians Dorothy Davis, Joan Machado, and Marion Melin met in the 1950s at California College of the Arts (CCA) and have been creative colleagues ever since. Davis, well-known as a portrait artist, lives in Orinda and plans another exhibit in March showing her body of work (see [www.dorothycutrightdavis.com](http://www.dorothycutrightdavis.com)). Portraits she is showing at the Orinda Library's exhibit in February include *Woman Reading a Newspaper in Her Kitchen* and *Woman Looking Out the Window After Grocery Shopping*, oil on canvas 3' x 4' and 35" x 42" respectively. A member of the Orinda Arts Council, Davis quips, "I've always longed for an exhibit showing only portraits; some people say they're not considered 'art' but I've noticed no one ever throws them away."

Joan Machado of Lafayette is showing acrylic paintings on canvas; she favors Liquitex and Golden acrylics. Works include *The Singer* and *Helping Hands*, both 20" x 24." She has been painting in acrylics for 10 years after switching from oil painting because of the toxicity. At DVC, she took printmaking and enjoyed creating woodcuts and etchings. To keep her work fresh, she attends art exhibits. To deal with her prolific creative output over her lifetime, she photographed all her work (graphic designs, fashion illustrations, paintings, etc.) and created a Mac Book – she was able to discard the originals but preserve her oeuvre.

Marion Melin of Montclair majored in advertising art and design at CCA and worked in those fields when not raising a family. She can't wait to learn the latest Adobe Illustrator release and uses the program for some of her art. Works she is showing include matted and framed drawings entitled *Red Onions*, 13" x 12;" *Wood Duck*, 9" x 12;" and *Asparagus*, 11" x 15."

Melin says, "If I'm not doing something creative, usually on my computer, I get grumpy. I take pictures, draw, make DVDs, and all manner of things."

Each of these women is multi-talented and pursued different careers. Davis authored *This Is: Was-Or-Will-Be* and signed copies in April at Orinda Books, and maintains a painting studio. Melin worked as a graphic designer so is computer savvy, makes her own DVDs, enjoyed creative projects with her children and now with her twin grandchildren. Machado, also computer savvy, was the art director for Jumping Jacks children's shoes, a fashion illustrator, and is active in their CCA alumni group which has met yearly for decades. Their lives have been intertwined in collaborative creative projects since they



RUMIANA ALLEN

"Fiji Beach," an oil on canvas, is among the works that artist Rumiana Allen will have on display.

met; their innate creativity has imprinted their children, grandchildren and now, our community.

Gregory Piatt is part of the Dorothy Davis group because his mom, Liz Piatt of Orinda, is one of Davis' creative colleagues. If you've visited the Orinda Library and seen the blue quilt, *Orinda – A Little California Town*, you know her work. Recently, she donated over 50 soft hand-sewn sculptures of Dr. Seuss characters to Orinda Books. Greg is a professor of printmaking at CCA and a visiting faculty member at the San Francisco Art Institute; he lives in Pleasant Hill with his family. But instead of prints, he will show six to eight oils painted on wood on the wall and 60 in the glass cases. His largest work is 3' x 1' but most are sized like *Carmel Sunset*, 5" x 6." Inspired by John Audubon, a 9-year-old Piatt began his drawing career, and, encouraged by his mom, hasn't stopped yet. His parents also taught him about recycling before the word was even invented. His landscapes are done in oils painted directly onto repurposed wood he obtains from many sources. He doesn't prime as he wants the grain and color to be incorporated in the painting – a

[SEE GALLERY page 18]





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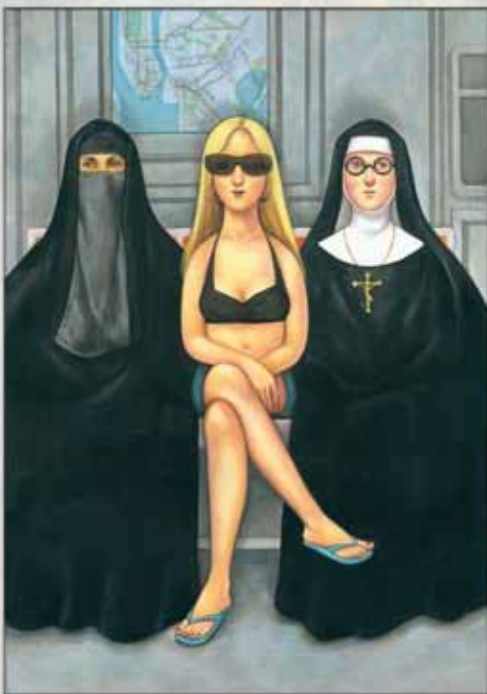
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Saint Mary's College Museum of Art  
presents

## The Veil: Visible and Invisible Spaces

Feb. 12 - Mar. 25



Painting, sculpture, documentary film, fabric, photography, installation and digital media by 30 contemporary artists.

Curator Jennifer Heath will give a slide talk Sunday, Feb. 12, at 2 p.m. in the Soda Center and sign copies of her latest book, *The Veil: Women Writers on Its History, Lore, and Politics*, UC Press, during a reception following.


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Orinda Residence



ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President  
Happy to Serve



Bill Waterman

I was born and raised in Orinda. I can proudly say this because my grandmother liked what she saw on her first visit here in 1951 and persuaded my parents to move over the hill from Berkeley. I was not even born yet, but my two sisters, Melanie and Cecily, and my parents, Betty and Herb Waterman, settled into their new house on Meadow View Road. Thus began our family's "Ozzie and Harriet" life here in Orinda. My parents have since left us but would be happy that my wife Marie and I chose to carry on the Orinda tradition. Our 23 years here have

been blessed with great friends and many happy memories.

Volunteering my time with the Orinda Association has been the proverbial "win win" for my wife Marie and I. I have made many new friends through my participation in our OA activities, including the Fourth of July, Volunteer of the Year dinner, our operation of the Seniors Around Town ride program, and our publishing of this newspaper. It is only through the dedicated efforts of our great OA board members and volunteers that we have these successful

programs today. I would also like to give special thanks and congratulations to Chip and Carolyn Herman, the 2011 OA Volunteers of the Year, for their support of SAT via the Orinda Classic Car Show, and our 2011 William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award winner, Barbara Denny. These dedicated volunteers will be honored at our awards dinner on February 12 at 6:30 p.m.

at the Orinda Country Club.

I look forward to serving as OA President this year, and thank Mark Roberts for his wonderful leadership the past two years. And finally, on behalf of the OA Board, I thank all Orindans for your support of the Orinda Association's activities, including the advertisers that support *The Orinda News*.

OA Gala Awards Dinner

Join us in honoring Carolyn and Chip Herman as the 2011 Volunteers of the Year and Barbara Denny as the William Penn Mott, Jr. award winner at a festive celebration at the Orinda Country Club on February 12.

Since 2005, the Hermans have organized the Orinda Classic Car Show, which has benefited numerous nonprofit organizations throughout the years including the OA's Seniors Around Town ride program.

Barbara Denny, an AP Environmental science teacher at Miramonte, is the faculty advisor for the school's nature club and has worked closely with the Wagner Ranch Nature Area and the Friends of the Orinda Creeks.

Cocktails start at 6:30 p.m. followed by the dinner and award presentations. For reservations, call the OA office at 254-0800 or go online to [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).

- Sally Hogarty, Editor



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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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## Letters to the Editor

### Air Quality

As a community surrounded by hills, Orinda is a place wherein I believe that the City Council should consider a proactive stance on air quality. Why not a "no burn" ordinance? Simply shut down all burning in fireplaces, just as correctly happened with leaves and garbage in the '60s. My neighbors apparently have decorative fireplaces that they enjoy at my (and other neighbors') expense. After four days of "no burn" and a "no burn" tomorrow, it is suffocating out tonight because there is a one-day hiatus in "no burn" days. I cannot walk or open my windows. I, too, would love to burn logs in my fireplace; its lovely; but I realize that the folks on the receiving end are less enthusiastic.

– Bill Oldham

### Repair of Roads and Drainage Pipes Should Be Priority

In its January 2012 issue, *The Orinda News* reported that "... repairing all the drainage and bringing up the road to a good standard would cost the City of Orinda in the neighborhood of \$67 million..."

Orinda's voters ought to be aware of how difficult funding the needed repairs will be. In November 2011, Lafayette's voters rejected a 10-year \$89 annual parcel tax (Measure G). The measure would have raised \$10 million over 10 years (Contra Costa Times, Nov. 10). While Measure G garnered 58 percent of the vote, a two-thirds majority would have been needed for passage. Measure G received 3,413 "yes" votes and 2,496 "no" votes. In addition to the parcel-tax money, the Lafayette plan contained a pledge of \$20 million of city money.

If Orinda wants to charge a parcel tax to fix its roads and drainage system, the city might want to consider an annual parcel tax of less than \$89. In addition, the city might want to avoid using Project Labor Agreements (PLA's). PLA's, which are used for government construction projects in Concord and in Contra Costa County, can raise costs by 20 to 50 percent.

– Richard S. Colman

### Fix Our Crumbling Streets

Orinda is a hidden jewel of the Bay Area with a strong sense of community and outstanding schools. It is a great place to raise a family, and I know that many of my neighbors and friends share the same sentiments. Our tax dollars are spent correctly most of the time, going to support local programs and schools; however, one area that does not get any attention is our crumbling roads.

Orinda's roads are some of the worst in the Bay Area, if not California. Out of 100 Bay Area cities, this affluent community consistently ranks at the bottom for road

conditions. The residential streets are in very bad shape. I know that my street is falling apart, and there has been no indication that any improvements will happen, ever. I also know that some of the neighborhoods have gone to the extreme measure of paying for street resurfacing with their own money.

I think it is very important to get the word out to our community and to our elected government officials about getting a bond measure on the ballot specifically for residential road improvements. I know that many of my neighbors and friends would be in favor of improving our roads, even if it means paying a little to support it.

– Jaemin Park

### Moraga/Orinda Fire District Board Scams Taxpayers Again

The focus for MOFD should be (a) emergency services and (b) paying off the huge under funded liability problem directors have created for taxpayers.

Instead, the directors plan to use money dedicated to rebuild St. Stephens Station in Orinda as a Christmas present for the owner of a burned out Moraga building. The directors approved the purchase of this 9,000 sq. ft. building, which has been vacant for two years, to house 12 Administrative MOFD staffers. The cost to taxpayers is \$2.2 million.

If directors did not want to spend the \$2.2 million on their emergency services priority, they should have spent the money to pay down the huge under funded liability problem.

The directors give their reasons for going into the speculative commercial real estate business as follows:

1. Directors believe it is a good time to buy because prices are low, and the building will appreciate \$60,000 per year.

Fact: Prices are now where they would have been without artificial Federal interference and manipulation. There is no justification to speculate on \$60,000 annual appreciation.

2. Directors believe they can rent the unused space for \$70,000 annually.

Fact: Directors need to look at empty storefronts in Moraga and Rheem.

It is easy for directors to spend other peoples' money. If they were financially responsible for their decisions, they would not throw taxpayer money away on pension spiking, illegal lawsuits, and other financially irresponsible decisions too numerous to mention here.

Orinda taxpayers are on the hook for 65 percent of MOFD directors' financially irresponsible decisions. It is up to the Orinda City Council to look out for Orinda citizens. Before the Orinda City Council asks voters to approve a road bond, they should detach from MOFD. An Orinda Fire District would save taxpayers money that could be spent on Orinda roads.

– Bruce Nicolai



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### MOFD Wasting Tax-Payers Money

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors has, by a three to two vote, decided to waste \$2.2 million of our taxpayer dollars in buying a burnt-out Moraga building and refurbishing it solely for the convenience of its 12-person administrative staff. This 12-person administrative staff

is currently housed in two offices, one in Orinda and one in Moraga. The two-office locations have never had any problem communicating by telephone and e-mail or by a short four mile drive when necessary. The majority of the MOFD directors are spendaholics.

[SEE LETTERS page 14]

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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.

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For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the April issue is February 20, 2012.



## MOFD BUILDING PURCHASE

*Editor's Note: The MOFD reconsidered its decision to purchase this building after the February issue was printed.*

## Purchase of Building Adds Efficiency to District

After a great deal of study on December 8, 2011, the Board of Directors of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District voted to purchase the building located at 1150 Moraga Way to be used as the administrative offices for the fire district. The initial intent was to wait until Station 43, our first priority, was replaced (Station 43 is currently in the design phase) and Station 41, our second priority, was renovated prior to addressing administrative office inadequacies. But an opportunity to re-purpose the current administrative facility in Moraga and the availability of an adjacent office building prompted the board to take advantage of a downturn in real estate and construction costs.

This decision was made after numerous public discussions on the options available to address the district office needs. The current administrative facilities are divided between two locations and do not meet access requirements for the disabled. Having the offices in two locations decreases efficiencies due to the additional staff needed for both offices.

While evaluating the Station 41 renovation, it was determined that the current on-site administration facility could be re-purposed and reduce the cost of the renovation by \$500,000. The current administrative space at Station 41 could also be used as temporary quarters during construction for additional savings. Without this approach, administrative office space for the employees assigned to the Moraga office and the training rooms would have to be relocated with no district facilities available. It was determined addressing administrative office needs prior to completing the station renovation will save the district money.

Over the past year, the board thoroughly reviewed options to address the administrative office needs and determined that purchasing 1150 Moraga Way would be in the best interest of the district, both in the short and long-term.

The district will require approximately half of the space available in the building. The facility will be used for administrative offices for district staff and will include a multi-use room both for training and community and district board meetings. This room will also be available to other public agencies in need of meeting facilities. Our current administrative facilities

are not ADA compliant, and this plan will correct that issue. The efficiencies of a centralized staff will reduce personnel and equipment costs.

In deciding on 1150 Moraga Way, as it is more space than we need, we studied the market and alternative users for the remaining space and are confident of finding tenants. First choice is a public agency and



SALLY HOGARTY

The MOFD wants to purchase this vacant building at 1050 Moraga Way. The building suffered fire damage a few years ago and has been unoccupied since its restoration.

that option is being pursued. We are also working with the commercial brokerage community.

The financial analysis has been exhaustive and thoroughly examined by community members, consultants, staff and the board. In summary:

- Consolidating administrative functions and training facilities will save \$120,000 per year.
- The cost of construction of Station 41 will be reduced by \$500,000.
- The annual payment will be \$145,000 and paid off in 20 years or less.
- Paying rent has no end, builds no equity, and will increase.
- The net annual benefit totals \$200,000 – less the lease/purchase payment results in an increase in revenue of \$55,000 annually. And we own the building.

When the district was formed, two specific funds were established:

- The General Fund is financed by property tax and user fees. This fund pays for maintenance and operations of the district – primarily personnel costs, now 90 percent of the budget. Currently, we contribute \$3,000,000 toward unfunded liability out of a total General Fund of \$18,205,000.

[SEE BUILDING page 14]

## MOFD's Purchase of Building a Misuse of Funds

The MOFD has sold the taxpayers short in agreeing to purchase a 9,200 square foot office building in Moraga for its new headquarters, when they only needed 2,500 square feet. It is not the charge of the district to make speculative investments; it is to provide emergency services.

There are many reasons why this decision was the wrong one – a building bigger

What the district does not take into account is that it has \$700 million in deferred employee benefit liabilities (pension and retiree medical benefits) and only \$120 million in assets to cover them. It should fund at least \$60 million more today. Applying the \$2 million it plans on spending on the building to its underfunded liabilities, according to district projections, would "earn" it \$155,000 annually; \$35,000 more than it expects to gain from purchasing the building.

Alternatively, the district could pay Orinda \$75,000 to rent space and still realize its \$100,000 savings from consolidating its administrative staff. But what does this cost the MOFD taxpayers? Nothing. Seventy-five thousand dollars out of one pocket and back into the Orinda taxpayers' pocket. Net savings: \$100,000.

Other arguments against purchasing the building include: wastefulness by purchasing a 9,200 square foot building when you need only 2,500 square feet of offices; speculation of taxpayer money by purchasing and leasing commercial real estate, which is not an appropriate use of the taxpayer's money; and the district should focus on the real problem – massive debts. Every extra dollar the district has should go into dealing with its huge underfunded liability problem.

Despite the fact that the district "railroaded" the decision to purchase the building over the Christmas holiday and under the public radar, there were numerous written and verbal responses from the citizenry, including Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer. Of all of these, only one person was in favor of the purchase. How did the directors supporting the purchase rectify this public response? They "know" from past experience that only those objecting to something speak out; those who agree, stay quiet. Is this so?

So why would three of the MOFD directors (Directors Olsen and Mancinelli rejected the plan) vote to risk \$2 million of the taxpayers money on a speculative real estate venture when there are other crying needs for the funds? My opinion is that this is pure hubris on their part. The ability to have a big red MOFD in front of a building on Moraga Way rather than having to be tenants in the Orinda City Hall was too important to them. This is not a good reason to mishandle our tax dollars.

– Steve Cohn  
Orinda Resident

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SPEED LIMITS/ POLICE BLOTTER

Ivy Drive Residents Request Speed Cushions

By DAVID DIERKS  
Assistant Editor

Local residents along Ivy Drive near Arroyo Drive are working with the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) to stop speeding in their neighborhood. Resident Rick Ren's property was damaged when an out of control car missed making the turn onto Arroyo Drive and drove through Ren's side yard and plowed through a fence. Ren and his neighbors would like to install speed cushions on Ivy Drive on either side of Arroyo Drive, as well as a speed cushion on Arroyo Drive.

In 2006, residents tried to get speed cushions placed on lower Ivy Drive and failed.

TSAC member Nan Reed explained, "It was before we got our process. That end of the street voted to install speed cushions. What ended up happening was that we hadn't polled the residents on either side of where the speed cushions were proposed. Somebody on one side was fine with it. The neighbors across the way had a disagreement between the husband and wife. In the end, even though it polled positively and everyone wanted the speed cushions installed, they didn't have consensus on one side of the street where it was going to be. They couldn't find another location to put the cushions." Reed added "You may have neighborhood approval for it. The key [SEE IVY DRIVE page 18]



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POLICE BLOTTER

December 2011

**False Residential Alarms:** Officers responded to 110 false alarm calls throughout the city.

**Arson:** 1 incident was reported on Orinda Way.

**Burglary - Auto:** 8 incidents were reported on Camino Sobrante (2), Orinda Way (2), Van Ripper Ln., Moraga Way, Whitehall Dr., Ellen Ct.

**Burglary - Commercial:** 2 incidents were reported on Camino Sobrante.

**Burglary - Residential:** 7 incidents were reported on Ironbark Cir., Sunrise Hill Ct., Del Mar Ct., Aspinwall Ct., Oak Dr. (2), Moraga Via.

**Petty Theft - From Vehicle:** 3 incidents were reported on Bryant Way at Moraga Way, Whitehall Dr., Longview Terrace.

**Stolen Vehicle:** 2 vehicles were

stolen from Ardor Dr. and Monterey Terrace.

**Arrests**

**Burglary - Resident:** 1 arrest was made on Meadow Park Ct.

**Drugs - Possession of Narcotics:** 1 arrest was made on Canon Dr.

**Drugs - Possession of Paraphernalia:** 1 arrest was made on Orinda Way.

**Other - Misdemeanor:** 2 arrests were made on Moraga Way at Stein Way and Camino Del Diablo at El Toyonal.

**Warrant Arrest:** 4 arrests were made on Camino Sobrante.

**Orinda BART Station**

0 incidents and arrests reported.

- Compiled by Jeanette Irving,  
Orinda Police Department

TSAC Review Glorietta Blvd. Speed Limit

By DAVID DIERKS  
Assistant Editor

The Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) was assigned the task of reviewing the recent City Council resolution to increase the speed limit on Glorietta Blvd. from 25 mph to 30 mph. The latest speed survey conducted by TJKM Transportation Consultants established that the 85th percentile speed along the corridor was 36 mph, which would result in a speed limit of 35 mph, but due to road conditions could be reduced to 30 mph. The section of road on Glorietta Blvd. between Sally Ann Road and Daryl Drive will remain unchanged because it is a school zone with speeds remaining at 15 mph when children are present.

Residential street speeds are set by the California Vehicle Code at 25 mph. However, Glorietta Blvd. is classified as an arterial road, and speed surveys are used to set the speed limits on arterial and collector roads. Speed surveys measure the speeds of vehicles traveling on the road, and the speed limit is then set at the speed at which 85 percent of vehicles measured were traveling (the 85th percentile). The idea is that 85 percent of the people will be driving reasonably for the conditions of the road being traveled. Certain conditions allow the speed survey results to be lowered in 5 mph blocks: a windy road, obscured visibility, proximity to schools, and other

safety considerations. Speed surveys are required every five years.

Unless there is a speed survey, police can only issue speeding tickets based upon observation, but not based upon radar. Orinda City Engineer Janice Carey said "You can set a speed limit; the problem is radar enforcing it. Unless there is an established speed limit within established guidelines from the vehicle code, the police cannot enforce the speed limit with the use of radar."

Local residents are trying to increase awareness to get the speed reduced. "There is a consensus along the entire length of the street. Neighbors would like to get the speeds down on Glorietta," said TSAC committee member Nan Reed. Residents are looking at ways to lower speeds on the road, so that when the next speed survey is done the results will be lower. A local resident at the December 19 meeting said, "We live on Glorietta and have a son that attends Glorietta Elementary School. We live a block and a half from Moraga Way, where everyone comes down off the signal and zooms past our house. On our side of the street, there is just a ditch, so our son has to walk on the opposite side of the street. My son would like to ride his bicycle every day, but we can't let him because it's too dangerous on Glorietta." For more information, visit [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org), click on City Meetings and then click on Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC).



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PARK & REC / CAR TIME

## New Parks and Rec Director Brings Wealth of Experience

Michele Lacy has been involved with park and recreation departments for as long as she can remember. She began as a day camp leader before going on to Oak Grove Community Services in Sacramento and, most recently, serving as the recreation service manager at the Town of Danville for the past nine and one-half years.

"I was ready for a new challenge and look forward to getting up to speed with everything here in Orinda," says Lacy. "So far I've been very busy meeting lots of people and learning about the different projects – like the Wilder ball fields, which will be a great asset for the community." According to Lacy, the current available fields in Orinda barely accommodate the number of groups requesting space and, until the new fields at Wilder open, any new teams cannot be assigned practice/play time. "We're hoping Wilder's playing field #1 will come online sometime in February and, hopefully, field #2 shortly thereafter. These fields will be a real benefit for the youth of Orinda," she adds.

Lacy's main priority at the moment is



Michele Lacy settles in as new Director of Parks and Recreation.

to continue providing the high quality programs that Park and Rec is known for. "Once I learn everything we currently offer, I can see where there might be things we can improve upon or new items we can add," she says.

– Sally Hogarty, Editor

## CAR TIME

Controlling Your Fuel Costs More by JEFF JOYCE



Consumers may be victims of spiraling gasoline prices, but they are not powerless in controlling their fuel costs. "There's a wide range of fuel-saving tactics that can help drivers get more miles from a tank of gas," according to automotive authority Joel Burrows, a.k.a. "The Car Doctor" and VP of Training/R&D at Precision Tune Auto Care. "If motorists adjust their driving habits and observe some simple car care techniques, they could make a significant impact on how much fuel they waste, and that translates into substantial money savings."

To drive this point home, the Car Doctor provides the following eight fuel-saving tips: 1) Keep tires properly inflated (recommended air pressure is posted on the driver's door or in the glove compartment). Under-inflated tires cause drag; over-inflation causes improper tire-to-road contact. 2) During your regular maintenance check-ups, your auto technician should consult your manufacturers' recommendations to ensure all necessary services are performed

to maintain your vehicle's warranty and ensure your vehicle is running at peak performance. This should include removing carbon deposits from intake valves and fuel injectors for increased fuel economy and performance, an engine and emissions analysis to ensure the engine is running at maximum efficiency, and checking that all fluids are in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations. 3) Avoid making quick starts or stops, which use excessive fuel. To avoid jamming on brakes, stay a good distance from the car in front of you. When possible, slow down simply by taking your foot off the gas. 4) Maintain steady speeds; use cruise control on the open road. Use over-drive gear for highway driving. 5) Use proper octane fuel. Higher-octane gas, which produces less energy, not only costs more, it also yields lower miles per gallon. 6) Don't let the engine idle more than a minute or two. This is extremely important on cold morning start-ups. 7) Plan your day. Limit trips by running all errands at the same time or on your way to or from work.

## AAUW Meeting to Focus on State Budget

Help solve the state budget deficit. Deana Davidson, president of the American Association of University Women, Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (AAUW/OML), invites the public to the Tuesday, February 21 meeting at 9:30 a.m. to experience the "California Budget Challenge." Assemblymember Nancy Skinner will host the program developed by Next10.org. Attendees will be provided with response clickers that

will tally the groups' "votes" about how much to spend on schools, prisons, the environment and other state programs, as well as make choices to reduce state expenses. The meeting begins with coffee and socializing from 9-9:45 a.m. followed by the "Next Ten" budget presentation and discussion. The meeting will be held at the Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga, CA.

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## Active Rotarian Jack Reilly Remembered

Jack Reilly, born in the Bronx, New York City, was a loving father and brother, a devoted uncle and adoring grandfather. He passed away peacefully on December 10 at John Muir Hospital at the age of 97 with family members at his side. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Jack attended Loyola University in Los Angeles and received his degree from the University of California, Berkeley in 1935. He met Dorothy Gramms in Portland, OR; the two wed in 1938 and shared an incredible 67 years of marriage.

The Reillys lived more than 50 years in Orinda, where they had a very active social life with wonderful friends and were long time members of the Orinda Country Club. Jack is survived by Dorothy Mussey, Anne McCabe, and John Reilly (Sheree), and grandchildren, Melissa Goodman-Elgar (Richard Elgar), Bill McCabe (Alison), John McCabe, Shannon Reilly, Sean Reilly, and Michael Reilly, as well as Nikki Bush (Paul and son Ryan). He relished the company of his six great-grandchildren and his unrestrained Boston terrier, Casey. At age 13, Jack got his first ham radio license, which he kept active for the rest of his life,

W6LSZ (later AA6VN), and delighted in talking to people around the world and kept meticulous logs of these contacts.

Rhodes Western was Jack's work world, but he would never have called it "work;" he so much enjoyed his retail family. He was elected president of Western Department Stores in 1956 when there were only 4 stores – Kahns in Oakland, Olds & King in Portland, and Rhodes in Tacoma and Sacramento. He eventually expanded the chain to 13 stores. In 1969, Jack established his own business, Binary Systems, Inc. to promote his retail point of sale and inventory data capture system. The bar code Jack created in his home shop used a special font, which the human eye could also read. He strove to the end to use the latest technical developments in electrical and computer engineering. Among his community contributions were serving on the Board of Regents of St. Mary's College and serving as newspaper editor of the Rotary Club of Orinda. In his 80s and 90s, he served in the emergency Communication Van for the Orinda Fire Dept. A funeral mass was held on December 29, 2011 at St. Stephen's Catholic Church in Walnut Creek.



Mary Williams Carter (standing in middle row on right) enjoyed spending lots of time with her large family. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## Remembering a Dedicated Mother and Grandmother

By SCOTT CARTER  
Contributing Writer

Mary Williams Carter passed away peacefully from complications of Parkinson's disease on December 30, 2011, three days after her 88th birthday. She had

been an Orinda resident for more than 40 years before moving to Davis, California for the past 10 years. In the last week of her life, she enjoyed the constant companionship of her three sons, their wives, and all seven of her grandchildren. She will be greatly missed.

Mary was a native Californian, born in Redding on December 27, 1923. At the age of three she moved with her family to Berkeley, where she and her older brother Henry were raised. After graduation from Berkeley High School in 1941, she headed to the east coast to attend Mt. Holyoke College in Massachusetts, graduating cum laude with a degree in geology in 1946. After college, she traveled extensively in Europe before beginning a Master's Degree program in geology at U.C. Berkeley.

In 1949, Mary met Mississippian Harris Carter, a young chemical engineer who had recently graduated with a Master's Degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He had just moved to California to begin a career with Standard Oil Company. They were married in the summer of 1950 in Berkeley.

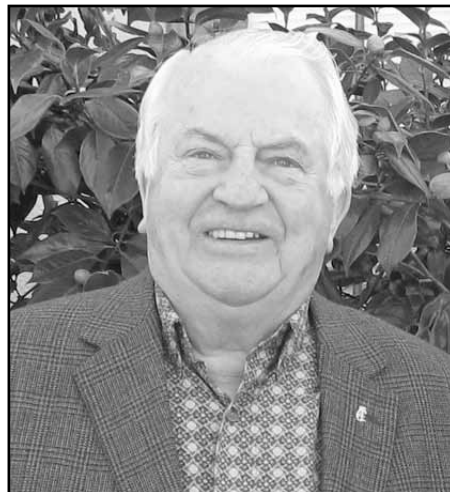
Mary's three sons Scott, Doug, and Steve were born in Berkeley in the 1950s. The role of homemaker, mother and grandmother defined the rest of her life and was the accomplishment of which she was the most proud. In 1961, the family moved a few miles east to Orinda, where Mary's children attended Pine Grove Junior High and Miramonte High School. Although Mary moved to Davis in 2002, she always considered Orinda to be her home.

Mary loved watching and playing tennis. She and Harris attended tournaments all over the world including Wimbledon, the French Open, and the US Open. She played tennis five days a week until she was

[SEE CARTER page 14]

## Founder of Andersen Travel Passes Away on Christmas Day

Gerhard "Harry" Andersen passed away peacefully in Orinda on Christmas Day, 2011, surrounded by his close family. Born in Svendborg, Denmark in 1924, Harry grew up in the town of Odense, later studying at the University of Copenhagen. He was active in the Danish Resistance during World War II, after which he immigrated to the United States. Arriving in California in 1948, he worked and studied at U.C. Berkeley, planning to continue on to medical school. But as more and more Americans traveling to Europe began to seek him out for his extensive knowledge of European cultures and languages, Harry found his niche as a tour organizer and guide. He led his first Eur-Cal tour in 1951, in conjunction with U.C. Berkeley. As the word spread about his engaging leadership of 80-day European tours, he



Harry Andersen established himself as a leading travel expert with his well-respected agency Andersen Travel. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

established his own business, Andersen Tours, to meet the high demand. He also co-founded Andersen Travel in Berkeley and Orinda. It was on Harry's European tour in 1955 that he met his wife, a schoolteacher named Jane Kay Stevens. They married on December 28, 1955, and lived in Berkeley and Orinda before moving to Carmel in 2000. There, Harry and Jane enjoyed their retirement years together in the vacation home they had bought years earlier. Harry

[SEE ANDERSEN page 18]



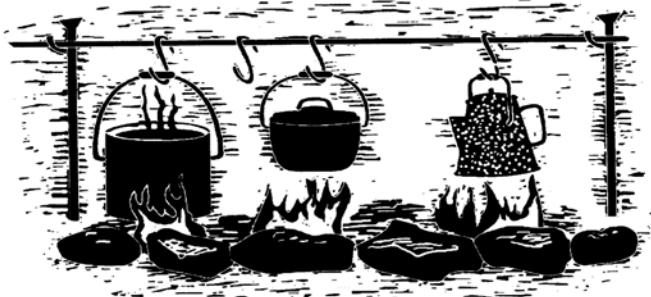
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MIRAMONTE KITCHEN TOUR

Popular Kitchen Tour Includes Model Home at Wilder

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

The Miramonte High School Parents' Club Kitchen Tour not only includes some gorgeous local residences, it also includes a tour of the model home at the new Wilder development in Gateway Valley. "In fact, the tour will begin at the Wilder home," says parent club member Victoria Bizieff. "All funds raised from this event will be used to support academic programs and events that benefit Miramonte students."

The event takes place on Thursday, February 9, from 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. with self-guided tours of six local kitchens ranging from a traditional adobe ranch house to a contemporary kitchen featured in Pottery Barn. "The tour highlights interior and exterior kitchen design in the room that is the heart of every home," Bizieff says. "The houses and kitchens were selected not only for their unique design but for their different styles. The homes are scattered throughout Orinda and range in age from newly built to a restored 70-year-old adobe. Some of the featured homes also have an outdoor kitchen."

When participants enter the model home located in the new custom home develop-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The model home at Wilder's large, light-filled kitchen begins this year's kitchen tour, a fundraiser for Miramonte High School.

the-border foods from Barbacoa, a new restaurant from the owners of Table 24, at one home and a display of a re-organized pantry and interior cabinets by Spiffy Chicks at another.

"The parents' club was looking for a way to bring the community together at some sort of fundraising event," Bizieff explains. "We felt that a kitchen tour was the perfect event to host. Although there have been kitchen tours benefiting Miramonte High School in the past, this is the first one to be hosted by the parents' club in a while."



TERRY RIGGINS PHOTOGRAPHY

The kitchen in the Marvin family's home has a lovely old-world charm.

ment known as Wilder, they will be treated to special morning treats by Dianna Condon Cuisine. Brochures will be available detailing the six kitchens on the self-guided tour with maps for each. As people journey to the other kitchens, more surprises take place including a selection of south-of-

Funds from this year's kitchen tour will help reduce class sizes in history, math and science; provide instructional materials for English, history, math, science and world languages; purchase laboratory equipment and supplies; and fund instruction for non-

[SEE KITCHEN page 13]

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LOCAL RESIDENTS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Miramonte High Graduate in AmeriCorps

Lindsey Loeper recently began her 10-month term of service in the National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), an AmeriCorps program. Founded in 1994, the NCCC is a residential national service program that supports disaster relief, the environment, infrastructure improvement, energy conservation, and urban and rural development.

A 2011 graduate of Miramonte High School, Loeper recently completed her first project in Missouri. She will complete at least 1,700 hours of service during the 10-month program. Participants in NCCC receive \$5,500 to help pay for college. Other benefits include a small living stipend, room and board, leadership development, and team building skills. "I feel every citizen of the United States, young or old, should take the time to give back to their community and country," says Loeper. Her parents are Orinda residents Pia and



Miramonte graduate Lindsey Loeper

Gerald Loeper.

For more information about AmeriCorps NCCC, visit the website at [www.americorps.gov/nccc](http://www.americorps.gov/nccc).

## Orinda Chemist Elected President of World's Largest Scientific Society

By ZACK MAYERI  
Contributing Writer

Marinda Li Wu, Ph. D., an Orinda local, was recently elected the 2013 president of the American Chemical Society (ACS), which is the world's largest scientific society. She is the first Asian American chemist to be elected president of ACS in its 135-year existence. In 2012, she will serve ACS as the president-elect; in 2013 she will serve ACS as president, and in 2014 will serve ACS as immediate past president. From 2012-2014, she will continue to be a member of the ACS Board of Directors, which she has been a part of since 2006.

Dr. Wu, who has been a member of ACS since 1971, was also the founder of "Science is Fun!" in Orinda; a program created



Dr. Marinda Li Wu will be the president of the American Chemical Society in 2013.

in 1993 with the intention to introduce young students to the joys of science by raising awareness of the importance of science in education.

One of Dr. Wu's many goals is the promotion of jobs by increasing awareness among legislators and the general public of the importance of science literacy, education and research and development. "I will actively work with leaders from industry, small business, academia and government to explore the supply and demand of jobs and how ACS can better help with retraining and professional growth," she said.

Dr. Wu has received numerous honors for her help with creating programs that promote awareness of science in the community. Her endeavors included creating a partnership between the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation (LLLFCF) and ACS to bring a popular monthly Science Café program to the Lafayette Library. For more information on the dates and times of the Science Café program, visit: [www.lafayettelib.org/pdf/2monthCalendar.pdf](http://www.lafayettelib.org/pdf/2monthCalendar.pdf).

### Orindans on John Muir Board



John Sayres (above) will serve his second term as secretary-treasurer of the John Muir Health Foundation, the fundraising arm of John Muir Health in Walnut Creek. Also on the board is James V. Mitchell of Orinda.

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Moya Stone

New Orleans was never on my must-see list until my nephew Forrest moved there and began his quest of getting me to visit. It took 10 years, but I finally made it this past October, and I was surprisingly charmed by the city's *joie de vivre*.

As is my custom while traveling, I looked for the quirky places off the beaten path, and Forrest was a great guide for that. We started with a trip to a swamp. Located just outside of town is the Barataria Preserve, which offers a self-guided two-hour tour along a raised wood footpath in and around a swamp. It was warm and muggy on the day we went and even the crocodiles weren't too active, but still we saw them as well as birds, wildflowers and an amazing spider.

I stayed at the home-owned B&B Avenue Inn on St. Charles Street, a lovely tree-lined boulevard famous for its streetcar. St. Charles has many-a-southern mansion to gaze upon, including one built in 1907, which now houses the Milton H. Latter Memorial Public Library. Also located on St. Charles is The Columns Hotel built in 1883. This massive Italianate-style building was initially a private home, and now it's a popular hotel used in the 1978 film *Pretty Baby*. The Columns is a nice spot to stop for a drink and live music.

The French Quarter may be touristy, but I found a few unexpected treats. On the day that we visited, there was a small film crew shooting street musicians in front of Jackson Square Park. The New Orleans Pharmacy Museum on Chartres Street was

the first registered pharmacy in the U.S. dating back to 1823. The museum is located in a Creole Townhouse typical of New Orleans architecture and displays a large collection of 19th century pharmaceutical oddities, such as a leech jar. The Louisiana Music Factory on Decatur is worth a stop for their extensive selection of CDs by local musicians.

Another destination spot is Magazine Street, a six mile stretch of home-owned galleries and boutiques. Some of the standouts for me included Poets Gallery, which exhibits eccentric and somewhat spooky art pieces. The Magazine Antique Mall has a wonderful collection of reasonably priced treasures, including vintage New Orleans postcards. Any fan of the television show *Mad Men* will want to pop into Hazelnut Gift Shop, co-owned by actor Bryan Batt.

Food in New Orleans is varied and the portions are generous. We enjoyed Vietnamese, Japanese, Thai, Mediterranean, even vegan. My favorite restaurant was Rio Mar, located not far from The French Quarter on South Peters Street. Modern and upscale, Rio Mar has a large bar and dining area. Fresh local seafood with a Spanish twist is their specialty, and the ceviche is not to be missed. Also consider the flounder, a slightly sweet white fish not easily found in Northern California.

One doesn't necessarily connect New Orleans with World War II, but any history buff will want to take at least one day to visit The National World War II Museum located downtown. Opened in 2000, this



MOYA STONE

Musicians play in front of Jackson Square in the French Quarter.

museum uses interactive exhibits, video, and audio interviews to tell the detailed story of America's involvement.

Art and artists of all kinds are appreciated and supported in New Orleans. There are year-round art and music festivals and many galleries, including Highwater Art Gallery and Studio on Oak and Burdette Streets. Owned by my nephew, Highwater offers unique artwork and jewelry from around the world.

New Orleans was larger and less quaint than I expected but comfortable and easy to walk. I was warned not to walk around the city after 8 p.m. so, for traveling around any time the most reliable cab company is United Cab. A cab ride is necessary to get to the New Orleans Art Museum, which is celebrating 100 years and is known for its French and American art collections.

Forrest tells me that since Katrina, there has been an influx of out-of-state investors buying and fixing up property, opening new businesses, and adding to the city's vibrancy. It was great to see so many home-owned shops and restaurants. The interest and renewed energy in New Orleans has certainly added to the city's unique charms.

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## Everyday Changes

### In 2012 Put Your Best Foot Forward



Bonnie Waters

New Year's has come and gone, and it is time to put your best foot forward. For the most part, we don't usually think much about our feet until "sandal-season" (still a few months off), yet our feet are the most utilized part of our body. The average person spends four hours pounding 8,000 to 10,000 steps every day. We exert a force equivalent to several hundred tons every day on our poor friends down south.

So what do we do in return? Fashion dictates that women wear the highest heels in history with print and electronic media bombarding us with photos of "Celebes" teetering on six-inch plus pedestals. Statis-

tics show that two in five women wear high heels every day and nearly half say they won't give them up. And when occasion calls for a more casual shoe, we adorn our personal shock absorbers with fashionable, yet unsupportive, ballet flats and flip-flops.

Being a slave to sexy foot fashion is not without consequence. Foot related conditions are almost pandemic with the likes of plantar fasciitis, bunions, hammertoes, corns and Hagland's deformity (you know that heel bump known as "pump bump")... the list goes on. Medical experts argue that high heels share the blame for the fact that four in five American women now suffer foot problems. Whether or not you are one of the "four in five," it is imperative that you take the time to "treat your feet" on a regular basis.

Don't know where to begin? Visit your local foot care professional and request a therapeutic foot treatment. Find someone knowledgeable in the care of foot problems. They can help you develop a daily approach to healing and revitalizing your feet. In 2012, start your beauty regime from the ground up, and add regular foot care as a vital component to your overall health and well being.



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## CHINA

## McCormack/Roemer Family Back From a Year in China

By Julie McCormack  
Contributing Writer

*Julie McCormack and her husband Michael Roemer moved with their young children, Conor and Erin, to Chengdu, China in August of 2010. During that time, McCormack wrote a series of articles detailing the experience. Now back home in Orinda, she comments on the transition.*

I no longer use my iPod when running since returning to Orinda. In China, my iPod was a distraction to the sensory overload of life in a crowded city of 10 million. In Orinda, especially in the fall, with trees dropping leaves in a myriad of colors, relatively smooth running surfaces and clean air, I don't need the iPod. In this case, I have returned to my pre-China behavior, but since our return I have found that our whole family has shaken things up in many ways. Whether it is hanging out with new friends; finding new work; walking and biking, rather than driving or trying new restaurants on our Friday night family outings, our patterns have shifted.

All in all, we have been treated to a transition back home as easy as our transition to Chengdu was challenging. Our kids have slotted right back into their school, sports, activities and, most of all, their friends. Both have become more open and outgoing. One day this summer, we were relaxing at Orinda Park Pool, where we have been members for years. I was sitting out, working on my computer, courtesy of Park's wi-fi. When it was time to go, I found that Conor and Erin had befriended a family from Berkeley with three kids. The parents of these kids were German and Dutch. In 10 years of belonging to Park Pool, my kids had never once made friends spontaneously. I had to credit it to our year in China.

Moments experiencing culture shock in our own country have been an interesting sideline since our return. Initially, we would wait patiently at stop signs or signals for cars to pass. Those cars would wait for us to pass. A stalemate would ensue before we realized that we could safely cross without risking being mowed down.

Another instance occurred when driving cross country to visit my in-laws in Michigan. On a lunch stop in Iowa City, Iowa we managed to find a Chinese restaurant. We all became excited upon entering. First we got the menus and found a complete absence of Chinese characters on the menu. We were forced to figure out dishes based on their poor English translations. In addition, the tables had no chopsticks in evidence, then our waitress appeared

and she was not Chinese. Finally, when we were paying, our kids tried speaking Chinese with the owner, but she was from Hong Kong and did not speak Mandarin! In the end, it was a disappointing experience for our first Chinese meal upon returning. Surprisingly, the food was not bad.

The first few times I did a load of wash after moving back into our house I would gather up a large bundle of clothes, only to find that it barely filled 1/3 of the washer. I had become accustomed to a tiny cold water-only washing machine that lived in our Chengdu bathroom. It was a revelation for "permanent" stains in China to suddenly disappear with a liberal dose of Spray and Wash and more powerful washer.

Since our return, and combined with the current economic situation in our country, we have been acutely aware of how much the average American consumes relative to the average Chinese. In the thick of winter, it was common for me to knock on my 10th floor neighbor's door to borrow something and find her bundled up in a calf-length down coat. Large heating units stood sentinel -- quiet and cold -- in each room of her spacious apartment. It never occurred to her, as it did not to most Chengdu natives, to turn on her heat. Better to throw on a jacket and save money. Our kids went to school for a whole year with no heat. And while the mercury in Chengdu rarely hit freezing, the humidity corroborated to make even 50 degrees Fahrenheit a bone-chilling cold. Wearing long underwear inside was a must nearly everywhere but our apartment.

Other examples abound from the tiny washing machines to tiny refrigerators and only two-burner ranges. Sparing use of lights in many public places, customers required to pay for plastic bags in supermarkets and even for to-go containers at small eateries. The margin for such cafes was so low that they needed to charge customers for paper, plastic or Styrofoam containers.

Our year in Chengdu, living in a three-bedroom apartment with essentially one bathroom and our kids sharing a room, taught us that we do not need as much stuff as we thought we did. We only brought what we could check on the plane, so we ended up with mostly clothes, books and a few things for our kids to pass the time. Although we were all delighted to return to our home in Orinda and all our things, we learned that we don't need most of these things.

Our whole family's palates changed dramatically from living a year in Sichuan province. Having become accustomed to very strong flavors from chiles to Sichuan

peppercorns (which create a numbing effect on the lips and tongue when eaten in large quantities) to copious amounts of garlic and ginger, many of the foods we pined for in China now do not taste as good as we remembered. It has also made it difficult, however, for us to go out to eat Chinese food, as the watered-down American version of Chinese food does not appeal. Luckily, we know of a couple authentic Sichuan restaurants in the Bay Area, and we frequent those.

After we had been home a few months and our kids had returned to school, I hired a Chinese doctoral student from Berkeley to tutor them. Our tutor is from Chongqing, so he's a Sichuanese guy. One of the sweetest moments since our return occurred when our tutor, Zhenyu, told me that if he had not seen Erin's face, but just heard her speaking Chinese, he would have thought she was Chinese. That comment alone made all the trials and tribulations of our year abroad worth it. Now the challenge is to maintain the progress Conor and Erin made in speaking Chinese. That is already proving a difficult task as soccer, basketball, clarinet, Girl Scouts and other activities intervene. In addition, we are now getting more pushback from our kids on studying Mandarin. In the midst of this, we are trying to keep a sane balance on pushing the Chinese language, well aware of what our kids endured last year.

It took us several months before any one of us missed Chengdu, but after six months back all of us miss Chengdu for various reasons and at different times. As the frenetic pace of our Orinda life -- full of family, friends and activities -- threatens to gallop away, I sometimes miss our slow-paced life in Chengdu. I am trying to maintain some



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
The McCormack/Roemer family has returned from China. (L-R) Julie, Conor, Michael and Erin.

of the slow pace, even in the midst of the current chaos.

After much processing and analyzing, I have realized that we might not have undertaken this experience had we known how difficult it would be. Yet now that we've all come through this experience, which stretched and tested us in critical ways, we all agree we would do it again.

#### ◆ KITCHEN from page 9

core electives to name just a few.

Tickets to the kitchen tour are \$35 and can be purchased at McDonnell Nursery (196 Moraga Way, Orinda), Orinda Books (276 Village Square, Orinda), Lazy K House at Orchard Nursery (4010 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette), or online at [www.miramonteparents.com](http://www.miramonteparents.com) by clicking on "Web Store." To reach the model home at Wilder, take Hwy 24 to the Wilder exit, cross over to the south side of the freeway and follow the signs to the model.



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ANIMALS / CONTINUATIONS

Something to Howl About...  
Funny February

Jennifer Conroy



February is one of those funny months identified mainly with two big holidays – Valentine’s Day and Presidents’ Day. Oh, yes, and let’s not forget all those February white sales and end of season clearances. Otherwise, it seems that not much is happening in February. But what about the animals in our lives. What happens in February for them?

The month of February is a time of restoration and preparation in the animal world. For our cats and dogs, their winter coats have grown thick. For dogs with undercoats, this is especially true. Those lucky pooches, such as Labradors, Golden Retrievers, and Shepherds, come equipped with two coats: a coat growing right against the skin that is soft and thick, almost like down, and a finer, longer coat of hair right on top of that. Breeds with undercoats were typically developed as workers in areas where warm coats were necessary. Labradors, for example, were originally bred and used to work with fishermen, diving into cold water, and helping pull in fishing nets.

While all dogs and cats need regular grooming, the dog with an undercoat is a shedding bomb just waiting to explode. To help keep your dog’s coat in shape, groom it frequently, using a brush to work through the coat and follow up with a fine comb. Chances are that you will end up with enough dog hair to create your own blanket and, guess what, the hair of some breeds is, in fact, used for weaving!

But, seriously, what are you going to do with all that dog fur you’ve extracted?

And cats? Well, they grow winter coats, too, and actually do a pretty good job keeping groomed. But even the most fastidious

cat needs some help, and you can try gently combing through the coat when kitty is relaxed on your lap. It is because cats are so attentive to their own grooming needs that they develop hairballs from ingesting their own fur. Your veterinarian or quality local pet supply store can recommend hairball relief products. For my own cats, I have used a pea-size amount of Vaseline on my finger tip coated in some cat food delicacy to encourage kitty to swallow it. The lubricant helps the cat expel the hairball which, amazingly, looks exactly like a small ball of fur!

And about all that dog fur you’ve extracted, here’s a tip to help with the February preparations for the wild birds in your neighborhood. Spread some of that fur in your yard, ideally in an area frequented by birds. Don’t be surprised if you look up in the trees one day and see nests lined with that something that looks very much like your dog’s fur! Our bird neighbors are either busy repairing nests following winter rains and wind or building new ones in preparation for egg laying later in the spring. Some of them will appreciate the extra insulation your dog’s hair can provide. As for kitty’s hairballs, sorry, but you may as well dispose of them.

February is also a time to continue whatever bird feeding practices you have established. If you have a seed feeder or hummingbird feeder, keep them well supplied as natural food supplies may be scarce.

Use the month of February to keep all the animals in your life healthy and happy and don’t forget to tell them how much you love them on February 14!

◆ LETTERS from page 4

This \$2.2 million could have been used to build a new St. Stephens fire station to replace the existing run-down station. Instead, the MOFD directors will take out a mortgage on an existing fire station to supply the money for St. Stephens. Thus, we add \$2.2 million to the \$24 million debt the MOFD already has to pay for its exorbitant employee benefits. In our current economy, the last thing we need is waste of our taxpayer money.

If you object to this waste of our money, send an e-mail to the Fire Chief expressing your disapproval and asking that he pass it on to all of the Board of Directors of the MOFD. Send it to rbradley@mofd.org.  
– Clyde Vaughn

Buying Building a Bad Decision

Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) directors are using taxpayer dollars to speculate on commercial property.

The number one priority for us, the citizens, should be: emergency services. Rebuilding the St. Stephens fire station is important for emergency services. The MOFD directors have decided, though, that the first priority should be for administrative offices - not rebuilding the St. Stephens fire station.

The MOFD board will spend over Two Million Dollars to buy a less than 10,000 sq. ft., burned-out, building in Moraga

- in order to house 12 admin. staffers. Orinda pays 65 percent of the MOFD revenue so Orinda taxpayers will be on the hook for nearly one-and-a-half million dollars for this Moraga building, and Moraga will pay only \$770,000. Equitable?

And, Orinda will still not have its sub-standard St. Stephens fire station rebuilt.

The directors, however, are proposing borrowing the money to fix the St. Stephens station. Of course, Orinda taxpayers will only pay 65 percent of the cost of the borrowed money. Moraga will pay 35 percent. Is this equitable?

The Orinda City Council could form an Orinda Fire District. The Orinda Fire District admin. staff would be housed in the empty space in the new city offices. That would save Orinda taxpayers nearly a Million Five Hundred Thousand since we would not have to buy the 9000 sq. ft. building in Moraga.

Orinda has already allowed \$16 million tax dollars that might have been used for our roads as a subsidy for emergency services in Moraga. Is this equitable?

The \$16 million pothole grows, and Orinda has less and less money for roads and still has substandard fire-response times into some parts of our town.

– Wayne Phillips

◆ CARTER from page 8

in her late 70s.

During her final years, Mary valiantly battled Parkinson’s disease. With the help of Dr. Michael McCloud and the wonderful staff of healthcare professionals at University Retirement Community, she remained active, alert and happy for many years. Until her final days, she exercised,

lifted weights, and did physical therapy five times per week.

She is survived by her three sons, Scott, Doug, and Steve, their wives, Sue, Deborah, and Terri, and her seven grandchildren, Sabrina, Tim, Garrett, Jeff, Greg, Jennifer, and Lauren. She was preceded in death by her husband of 38 years, Harris, in 1988.

◆ BUILDING from page 5

We are working with our employees, who have not had a salary increase in over four years, on new ways to manage these costs. We must meet our salary and pension obligations from this fund.

- The Capital Fund was established to pay for all capital expense, i.e. fire stations, equipment (primarily fire engines), and office space. This fund derives its revenue from the fire flow tax. The fire flow tax was not established for or ever meant to be used for operational expenses, such as pension obligations. With the completion of the facilities, I hope to see funds become available to contribute to other community infrastructure needs.

Be assured that staff and the board have been working diligently to provide the highest level of emergency medical and fire service as expected by the community

in the most cost effective and efficient manner. For over a year, we have continued to study the state of the economy, our financial obligations, budget, costs, alternatives, and impacts of the avenues available to us to meet our community’s needs. There have been public hearings and public input. We will continue to do what we feel is in the best interest of the community.

I have been serving on the district board for 14 years, and I promise we have studied and discussed this as much as anything we have ever done. We take this charge seriously and believe that given a thorough study of all the data, we made the correct choice in purchasing the building. Please note, these thoughts are mine and I cannot speak for the Board.

John Wyro  
President, Board of Directors  
Moraga Orinda Fire District

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CREATIVE LOCALS

# Tracing Family Histories Creates Lasting Legacy

By FRAN MILLER  
Contributing Writer

When Los Angeles native Charlynn Throckmorton moved to the Bay Area several years ago, she was startled to find that her unusual last name had been claimed by an entire Marin County town. Her curiosity about a possible relation to Mill Valley founder Samuel Throckmorton led her to the Mill Valley library where she discovered that he is her great, great grandfather, once removed. She also found that she bears a striking physical resemblance to Susanna Throckmorton, Samuel's wife and third cousin.

The enjoyment she experienced in researching her genealogical roots led her to a new career as a personal historian. Likening the unearthing of family facts to an archaeological dig, Throckmorton relishes the sleuthing nature of her new profession. "It's kind of a relentless pursuit of 'what happened here and who were these people?'" says Throckmorton. "It's solving a puzzle and giving people pieces of themselves, their history and their ancestry, that they might not otherwise be able to access."

With a background in freelance writing, counseling and education, and an undergraduate degree in communications and a master's in psychology, Throckmorton (who is a substitute English teacher for the Orinda Union School District) is well-

equipped to guide her clients through the affecting and powerful process of uncovering personal legacies. She is also a member of both the National Genealogical Society and The Association of Personal Historians, an organization dedicated to furthering the awareness of the value of personal history.

Her business is called "Footprints, Feathers, and Bones," and her first book, written for her client author Sondra Busch Perry, was self-published in February. The Busch family's story spans over 300 years; the narration describes their immigration from Germany to Russia and then to America, and includes eight generations. "My client hired me to write her family history and gave me what turned out to be a very sketchy, incomplete, skeleton-like and somewhat inaccurate account of the line of her family going back to Germany in the 1700s," says Throckmorton. "I researched both the family and the history and have been able to put together a narrative that the family loves, and some interesting stories have emerged. For example, one 19th century ancestor died while attempting to deliver a load of grain over the not-yet frozen Volga River in December. The ice cracked, and horse, sleigh, grain and man drowned. This is an example of the kind of stories that can and do emerge when researching family histories."

Throckmorton can spend anywhere from a few days, to several months on a research



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Charlynn Throckmorton at a street sign bearing her family name in Mill Valley.

project. A client's time commitment is minimal compared to the actual research. A straight personal history entails a minimum of four hours of client interviews. Each client interview hour translates to roughly 10 hours of work for Throckmorton. From there, she transcribes, edits and creates a draft for a narrative.

"Capturing personal and family histories is an invaluable legacy to leave loved ones," says Throckmorton. "Doing so honors lives in a way nothing else can. Personal histories and memoirs are not just for the rich and famous. Everybody's life is a story, and everybody's story is worth telling."

For more information on Throckmorton's services, visit her website: [www.footprintsfeathersandbones.com](http://www.footprintsfeathersandbones.com).

## New Registration Requirements for Youth Entering Kindergarten

Beginning next school year, 2012-2013, the Orinda Union School District will have new age requirements for Kindergarten Registration as required by the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010.

To enroll in Kindergarten for the School Year 2012-2013, students must be 5 years old by November 1.

Kindergarten Registration will be held at each of the elementary schools from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Monday, February 6, 2012 – Thursday, February 9, 2012.

For more detailed information and help in determining the school of attendance, please check the OUSD website: [www.orindaschools.org](http://www.orindaschools.org) or call the District Office at 258-6211.

Governor Brown's preliminary budget, released on January 5, proposes that Transitional Kindergarten will no longer be funded by the state for the 2012-2013 school year. At this time, there are no plans to provide districts with state funding to operate a Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program. Therefore, registration and planning for the district's TK program will not take place until state funding for the program has been reinstated.

# Orinda Residents Create Library

By HANNE ANDERSON  
Contributing Writer

I have been a member of Girl Scout Troop 32901 in Orinda since I entered the first grade at Glorietta Elementary School. I am now 17 and about to complete my Girl Scout Gold Award. A connection with a small primary rural town called Lethe in the north of Jamaica inspired my project.

My uncle's mother and an Orinda native, Betty Karplus, served in the Peace Corps from 1991 to 1993 in Lethe. In honor of her 85th birthday, her seven children planned a trip back to the town where she served almost 20 years ago. Not only did they visit the town, this innovative family orchestrated the building of the library and actually did much of the hands-on work themselves. They named it "Betty's Lending Library" in her honor.

This extraordinary project was featured in the November 2010 issue of *The Orinda News*. In order to help fill the shelves, many Orinda residents helped contribute books appropriate for the new library. I am pleased to report that our community donated over 1,000 books to the collection.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Hanne Anderson and Betty Karplus in the library established by Karplus' family and other Orindans in Lethe, Jamaica.

The second aspect of the project involves educating kids in the United States about life in Jamaica. Many American students have not had the opportunity to learn about Jamaican poverty in a meaningful way. Most children in Lethe have never received a letter or even a postcard in the mail, so for my Girl Scout Gold Award project, I am connecting young students in the States with students at schools in Jamaica through a pen-pal program. Young students in St. Louis are already writing, and Orindans are encouraged to also participate. I invite anyone interested in this worthwhile project to contact me at [anderhus@pacbell.net](mailto:anderhus@pacbell.net).



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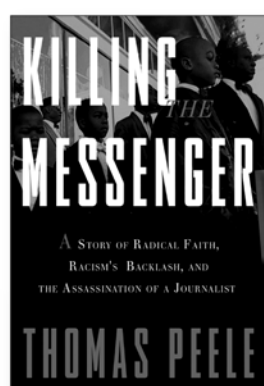

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When a 19-year-old member of a Black Muslim cult assassinated Oakland newspaper editor Chauncey Bailey in 2007—the most shocking killing of a journalist in the United States in 30 years—the question was, Why? "I just wanted to be a good soldier, a strong soldier," the killer told police. A strong soldier for whom?

**Killing the Messenger: Radical Faith, Racism's Backlash, and the Assassination of a Journalist** is a searing work of narrative nonfiction that explores one of the most blatant attacks on the First Amendment and free speech in American history and the small Black Muslim cult that carried it out.

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## FILM



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Tom Westlake

February has a deservedly bad reputation. It would seem that this shortest month serves no other purpose than to drive home the sad fact that the holidays are officially over. Apart from Valentine's Day, there is nothing really to celebrate. By now, all of the lights and decorations have been taken down and packed away, making the world just that much darker and some sidewalks still bear the corpses of discarded Christmas trees. Indeed, so prevalent is February's dour weight upon us that even Gilbert & Sullivan remarked upon it in their light opera, *Pirates of Penzance*.

Thank goodness for Efi Lubliner, Jo Alice Canterbury and Beau Behan, who never seem to take any time off. Undaunted by December and January's departure, they have plenty of cinematic treats to keep us distracted, not the least of which is the upcoming 2012 California Independent Film Festival – see page 1 for more information on that momentous event.

Let us, instead, center on this month's offering from the International Film Showcase, which is the 2009 French-Canadian film *Sticky Fingers* – a combination crime/quest comedy about the challenging road towards redemption. Nominated for its cinematography and art direction, the film

weaves a tale of incompetence, pilgrimage and introspection, as well as several other unexpected surprises. Directed by Ken Scott, this film runs February 6 - 12 at the Orinda Theatre. For specific show times, be sure to check out [www.lfef.org](http://www.lfef.org) or call 925-283-1700.

On the complete other side of the coin, the Rheem must be taking some dubious pride in their new feature, which takes place on the third Friday of every month. Though no particulars were available at press time, "The Queen's Slumber Party" bills itself as a completely silly thing. Urging you to "give your brain a rest," this film festival will feature movies made during that time in our not so distant past when the drive-in movie reigned supreme, and the back seat was *not* meant for additional passengers. This was a time when such films as *The Killer Shrews* (1959) and *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman* (1958) were standard fare, and for those of you who were doing "other things" when these films first came out, now's your chance to see them projected on the big screen – possibly for the first time.

As ever, Vanessa, the Queen of the Rheem will be your hostess, so be sure to keep checking in at [www.lamorindatheatres.com](http://www.lamorindatheatres.com) for show times and tickets.

So it looks like February won't be so bad after all, what with the film festival ([www.caiff.org](http://www.caiff.org)) and all of the activities mentioned above.

And remember, stay in the dark. That's where the magic happens.



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## Fundraising Campaign Targets New Digital Equipment for Lamorinda Theaters



ANN O'CONNELL-NYE

(L-R) Lamorinda Theatres Foundation board member Edy Schwartz, operator of the Lamorinda Theatres Derek Zemrak, and theater manager Beau Behan attended the Orinda Historical Society dinner that celebrated the Orinda Theatre's 70th anniversary.

By SALLY HOGARTY  
Editor

Digital has long been the preferred technology for a variety of electronic devices including film projection. While major studios have been distributing their films in digital as well as film to theater outlets, they are now pushing for digital movies only. Sending digital films to outlets not only results in a high-quality product, it also results in greater savings for the studios.

While changing to digital isn't much of a problem for large multiplexes, it can be a challenge for smaller movie houses that still use reel projectors, such as the Orinda Theatre and the Rheem Theatre. "Small

operations like ours really need to keep up the pace," says Beau Behan, manager of both the Orinda and Moraga theaters. According to Behan, the digital projectors required by the studios are a relatively new technology that allows the downloading of high quality graphics to the projector that then plays the movie. "We hope to have at least two screens at each theater equipped with the new digital projectors by April and to have them available for all seven screens (three at Orinda and four at Rheem) by 2013," Behan adds. He estimates the cost at \$80,000 per screen.

While the studios are offering a rebate program that returns some of the money to theaters converting to the new digital sys-

[SEE DIGITAL page 18]

### ◆ CAIFF from page 1

Audition Results" with director and acting coach Joie Landeaux and "Filmmaker's Panel" moderated by independent film producer Leonard Pirkle.

"My favorite film in the 2012 CAIFF is not relegated to one single film, but it lies in the interwoven fibers of every single film in our festival," says CAIFF program director Beau Behan. "This year's films truly epitomize every fiber of our rich 14-year history. This is also the reason why I feel the 2012 CAIFF will be our most successful film festival to date."

In addition to the screening of award-winning films, celebrities will descend on Lamorinda beginning with CAIFF's Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. This year's award will be presented to veteran actor Burt Young, who received an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of Pauly, Sylvester Stallone's brother-in-law, in the Oscar-winning film *Rocky*. The iconic film will be shown at the Rheem Theatre on Saturday, February 11 at 8 p.m., followed by a Q & A with Young and moderated by KRON TV's Jan Wahl. The actor's many other film credits include: *Chinatown*, *Pope*

of *Greenwich Village*, *Once Upon A Time in America*, *Back to School*, *TransAmerica* and *Win Win*.

A special treat will be the guest appearance of Oscar recipient Margaret O'Brien on Wednesday, February 15. O'Brien will be at the Orinda Theatre for the screening of the classic film *Little Women*. The closing night ceremony takes place at the Rheem Theatre on February 16. In addition to the showing of *Meet Me in St. Louis* (where O'Brien played the role of Tootie opposite Judy Garland), O'Brien will be presented with the 2012 CAIFF Diamond Award for outstanding contribution to the film and television industries. A Q&A will follow hosted by *Diablo Magazine* senior editor Pete Crooks.

The popular Iron Filmmaker contest begins January 28 when the contestants are given 24 hours to complete a three-minute film. The completed movies are then screened and judged by a panel and shown to the public on February 12 at 11 a.m. at the Rheem Theatre.

Tickets are available by calling 925-388-0752 at either the Orinda Theatre or Rheem Theatre, or at the festival's website, [www.caiff.org](http://www.caiff.org)



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## CALENDAR

## ON THE CALENDAR

## FEBRUARY

- 2 **Public Speaking Showcase**, Miramonte High School Theater, 750 Moraga Way, 7:30 p.m. Also Feb. 3 at 7:30 p.m.
- 4 **Contra Costa Interfaith Housing** fundraising event "Ruby Slippers" featuring jazz standards sung by Amanda King and an elegant plated dinner and silent and live auctions. Guests encouraged to wear red shoes and dance to the band Other People's Money. Proceeds benefit at-risk families. Call 925-944-2244 or go to [www.ccinterfaithhousing.org](http://www.ccinterfaithhousing.org).  
**Fundraising concert for Ryan Buchanan**, Miramonte student severely injured in an accident who needs on-going medical care. 7 p.m. at Creekside Community Church in Alamo. Go to [www.ryanbuchanan.org](http://www.ryanbuchanan.org).
- 5 **Women Helping Women Heart Health Fair** features free screenings, door prizes and health information, Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- 8 **Second Wednesday Book Group**, Orinda Books, 3 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 9 **Miramonte High School Kitchen Tour**, fundraiser features six Orinda kitchens. Tickets are \$35 and can be purchased at the school's web store or Orinda Books.
- 10 **14th Annual California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF)** through Feb. 16 at the Orinda Theatre, 4 Orinda Theatre Square, and New Rheem Theatre, 350 Park St., Moraga. For tickets, visit [www.CAIFF.org](http://www.CAIFF.org). For featured films, visit [www.caiff.org/films.asp](http://www.caiff.org/films.asp).
- 11 **Orinda Books** hosts local author Robert Etheredge discussing *The American Challenge: Preserving the Greatness of America in the 21st Century*, 1 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 12 **Orinda Association** Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award Gala Dinner, Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, 6:30 p.m. Call 254-0800 or visit [www.orindaassociation.org](http://www.orindaassociation.org).
- 21 **Orinda Books** hosts Amy Franklin-Willis discussing her novel *The Lost Saints of Tennessee*, 276 Village Square, 2 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 24 **Orinda Chamber of Commerce Luncheon** with speaker Diane Dwyer, news anchor for NBC Bay Area, Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, noon to 1:30 p.m. Call 254-3909 or visit [www.orindachamber.org](http://www.orindachamber.org).
- 25 **Orinda Books** hosts Thomas Peele discussing *Killing the Messenger: A Story of Radical Faith, Racism's Backlash, and the Assassination of a Journalist*, 1 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 29 **Orinda Community Foundation** hosts a celebration of community grant recipients, Orinda Library outdoor plaza, adjacent to art gallery, 5 to 6 p.m. Everyone welcome.

## AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified. The library will be closed Feb. 20 for Presidents Day.

- 1 **Toddler Lapsit**, stories, songs and fingerplays for infants to 3 year olds and their caregivers, 10 to 10:30 a.m. and 10:30 to 10:55 a.m. Drop-ins welcome, but limit attendance to once per week. Also Feb. 7, 8, 14 and 15.
- 2 **Friends of the Library Book Sale**, book shop and sorting room, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- 4 **Saturday Morning Live**, story time for 3 to 5 year olds in the Picture Book Area. Also Feb. 11 and 18.
- 5 **Computer Help** for adults and seniors, learn basic skills in one-on-one hour-long sessions, 1 to 3 p.m. Also Feb. 12, 19 and 26. Computer Help is also available Feb. 3, 10, 17 and 24 from 10 a.m. to noon. Visit the library or call 254-2184 to register.
- 7 **Peek-A-Boo Time** with songs, stories, rhymes and rhythm for newborns through 1-year-olds and their caregivers, 11:30 to 11:55 a.m. Also Feb. 14.  
**Humanities West Preview: The Power and Glory of China's Ming Dynasty**, program for adults led by George Hammond, Fireside Room, 6:30 to 7:25 p.m.
- 9 **Origami Workshop** for teens, 4:30 p.m. Materials will be provided. Space is limited. Visit the library or call 254-2184 to register.
- 15 **Inside the Dancer's Life: Black Swan and Beyond**, panel discussion for adults and teens with members of Diablo Ballet, explores the demanding life of a ballet dancer, 6:30 p.m.
- 21 **Berkeley Repertory Theatre** docent discusses their production, *A Doctor in Spite of Himself*, Moliere's play about love and laughter as the best medicine, adult program, 7 p.m.
- 23 **Talespinners of Contra Costa**, storytelling for adults or just come to listen, Gallery Room, 7 p.m.

## CLUB MEETINGS

- American Association of University Women**, Feb. 21, 9:30 a.m., Assemblymember Nancy Skinner to discuss state budget, Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga.
- Diablo Star Chapter #214**, Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 p.m., Orinda Masonic Center. Contact Karen Seaborn, 689-0995.
- Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe**. Third Monday, 7:30 p.m., Moraga-Orinda Fire District Conference Room, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga, [www.moragaadobe.org](http://www.moragaadobe.org).
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**. Fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library, 253-1997.
- Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition**, every second Wednesday, 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Orinda City Hall Sarge Littlehale Room. Call 687-8844, ext. 227.
- Lamorinda Sirs for retired men**. Second Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. Luncheon speakers plus golf, tennis, bocce, bridge and astronomy. Call Pete Giers, 254-4667.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**. Every Friday, 7 a.m., Postino, Lafayette, 254-0440, ext. 463.
- Lamorinda Toastmasters**. Every Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Temple Isaiah, 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, [www.lamorinda.freetoasthost.net](http://www.lamorinda.freetoasthost.net).
- Montelindo Garden Club**. Third Friday, September through May, Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, 9 a.m., [www.montelindogarden.com](http://www.montelindogarden.com).
- Orinda Juniors Women's Club** community service group. First Tuesday, September to June, 7 p.m. Contact Julie Mercer or Charlene Robinson at [info@orindajuniors.org](mailto:info@orindajuniors.org) or [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org).
- Orinda Rotary**. Every Wednesday, noon, Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, 254-2222.
- Orinda Association**. Second Monday, 7:15 p.m., Orinda Library, May Room, 254-0800.
- Orinda Hiking Club**. Hike every Wednesday, 9 a.m., old library parking lot on Irwin Way. Call Steve at 253-0131 or visit [www.orindahiking.org](http://www.orindahiking.org).
- Orinda Historical Society**. Third Wednesday, 3 p.m., Historical Society Museum, 26 Orinda Way, 254-1353.
- Orinda Job's Daughters**. First and third Monday, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 283-7176.
- Orinda/Tábor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation**. Fourth Thursday, 7 p.m. social, 7:30 p.m. meeting, call 254-8260 for location.
- Orinda Teen Advisory Council**. Second Wednesday, 4 p.m., Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. For information, email [orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com).
- Orinda Woman's Club**. Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon, call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881.

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

## Chamber's Comedy Night Features Will Durst

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce has a big night of laughs planned for Orinda on March 2 at the Orinda Theatre. Doors open at 6:45 p.m. and the fun begins at 7:30 p.m. when master of ceremonies Michael Fender takes the stage. "We really wanted to go local this year, and Michael is from Lamorinda," says the Chamber's Rick Kattenburg.

His roots might be local but Fender has become a sought-after performer throughout the Bay Area. In addition to being MC for the evening, he will also sing tunes by Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, and others.

The headliner for the fundraising event is popular political satirist Will Durst. Recognized as the nation's foremost political comic, Durst is a five-time Emmy nominee and has over 400 television appearances in 14 different countries. Other comedians performing include: Kabir Sing, Dan St. Paul, and Johnny Steele.

There will be a no-host bar sponsored by Table 24. Proceeds from the event will



Popular vocalist Michael Fender will MC comedy night. STUDIO SEVEN

benefit the Educational Foundation of Orinda among others. "We always put all the profits right back into the community," Kattenburg adds. "We hope to have the evening end in time for folks to enjoy one of our fine restaurants."

Tickets are available through the Chamber's website at [www.orindachamber.org](http://www.orindachamber.org) or by calling 254-3909.

## The Arab Spring Heats up February First Friday Forum

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

With the turmoil in the Middle East continuing to make newspaper headlines, First Friday Forum presents Dr. Glen Robinson speaking on the timely topic, *The Arab Spring: Causes and Consequences* in the Sanctuary of the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette on February 3 at 1:30 p.m.

Robinson says, "Brought about largely by the information revolution, the Arab Spring has changed the political and strategic map of the Middle East for years to come. I will discuss the challenges to its interests the United States faces because of this revolution in the Arab world and the possible consequences for American foreign policy, including opportunities and potential problems."

Currently an associate professor in the Department of Defense Analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey, Robinson has helped design and implement various development projects in the Middle East. This has included fieldwork, involving many trips to Jordan, Yemen and the West Bank/Gaza. He also is a Research Associate at the Center for Middle East Studies at UC Berkeley and the author of three books and 22 major journal articles. Robinson has lectured at universities around the world and won teaching awards at UC Berkeley and NPS.

The son of Mardy and the late Ned Robinson, Robinson grew up in Lafayette, graduating from Acalanes High School. He received his Bachelor, Masters and Ph.D. degrees from UC Berkeley. He, his wife Elizabeth, and two daughters live in Carmel Valley.

## CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

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



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◆ GROVE from page 1

tionally, the development proposal included relocation of the city-owned ball fields to an area near the northwesterly corner of the project site, and construction of an approximately 6,000 square foot Orinda Union School District (OUSD) office building to replace the existing District offices on the site.

In July of 2008, the Planning Commission certified the final environmental impact report and approved the vesting tentative map, design review, tree removal, sign and exception applications, and recommended that the City Council approve the General Plan Land Use and Zoning Map amendments and planned development plan application for the project.

In August of 2008, the City Council approved the General Plan Land Use Map and Zoning Map amendments and a Planned Development Plan application for the Orinda Grove project by Pulte.

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Handyman small jobs around your house, plumbing, repairs, painting, hauling, 510-332-0982 Orinda references available.

Vacation Rentals

Come snow brd w/Shawn White! Luxury Northstar Home. 5 bedrm/3 ba. Sleeps 14. Great for families, 213 Basque Drive Truckee. Call 800-521-6656.

Wanted

I buy 1950's Furniture. Danish modern, Herman Miller, Knoll wanted. 1 item or entire estate! Call Rick at 510-219-9644. Courteous house calls.

Pulte Homes has made several "good-faith" payments to the city to keep the project on track to completion. Just prior to the recent holiday season, the city representatives met with people from Pulte Homes and DR Horton to discuss the status of the project. Horton, a publicly traded homebuilder company, was involved as a possible partner in the project. Pulte has until June of 2012 to complete all arrangements to take ownership of the property.

According to Emmanuel Ursu, City of Orinda Planning Director, Pulte wants "to proceed and break ground prior to June." Ursu also says the city is "waiting for the developer to submit final improvement plans, which include engineering, roads, storm drains, grating, etc." Once submitted and approved, Pulte can then break ground and move to the next phase which is the ground preparation preceding the home construction. The OUSD and Pulte have an agreement to "close on the deal" by June of 2012, says Ursu. This statement means Pulte will take ownership of the property from the school district by then, just as any property closes in escrow.

Repeated phone calls and emails were not returned by either DR Horton or Pulte Homes.

◆ IVY DRIVE from page 6

is to find someone who is willing to have it in front of their house."

Ren also requested that a 3-way stop sign be installed, but the TSAC rejected that proposal because a stop sign is not an option. Three years ago, the area "was evaluated by traffic engineering. They said a stop sign could be placed at the bottom of Arroyo. It went to the City Council, but the City Council decided it was not warranted, because you are required to stop at a T-intersection," said City Engineer Janice Carey. "It doesn't meet the requirements for a 3-way stop," added Carey.

Other neighbors are also concerned about the chronic speeding problems. Local resident William McCord added this note to Ren's Traffic Calming Request Form "As a member of the Ivy Drive Safety Committee, I think this is another example of speed on lower Ivy. Nothing seems to correct the speed problem. I have reported this to the committee and police dozens of times. Do

◆ ANDERSEN from page 8

is remembered for his generous spirit and his deep love for family, friends and travel.

During Harry's travel career, he introduced many, many people to his native Denmark, and in 1982, Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark made him a Knight of the Order of the Dannebrog for his service to the country. In California, Harry also enjoyed contributing to his community as a member of many organizations, including Rotary of Piedmont, Orinda and Carmel, the Danish-American Chamber of Commerce, and the Danish Club of San Francisco. He is survived by his wife Jane, his sister Elisabeth Flindt of Odense,

◆ DIGITAL from page 16

tem, it still leaves a substantial amount of funds necessary to purchase the equipment.

To raise the money needed, the Lamorinda Theatres Foundation has launched a major fundraising campaign. The committee is comprised of residents of all three Lamorinda communities and includes: Ann O'Connell-Nye (Orinda); Shari Simon, Edy Schwartz, Judy Kanter (Moraga); and Charlotte Holden (Lafayette). A membership drive is currently underway, which includes perks at the theaters and the California In-

something before somebody is killed."

The city installed speed counters in January to measure the speeds of vehicles on Ivy Drive. Because Ivy drive is a residential street, the speed limit is 25 mph. The data was presented at the January TSAC meeting but was not available at press time.

For more information, visit www.cityoforinda.org, click on City Meetings and then click on Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC).

◆ GALLERY from page 2

tip of his hat to nature.

Rumiana Allen of El Sobrante has been painting in oils since she arrived from Bulgaria six years ago. Her theme for the exhibit, Sea Breeze, will transport you to the beaches of Fiji, Moorea and other exotic locations. Works include Cooks Bay Moorea and Fiji Beach, both 16" x 20" oils on canvas. Allen loves painting in oil because it is so forgiving, easy to change and beautiful. In the past, she has taken classes and workshops but now is exploring

Denmark, his son Per and daughter-in-law Karin of Randers, Denmark, his son Steven and daughter-in-law Yuqin of Sacramento, his daughter Karen and son-in-law Andrew Karplus of Corvallis, Oregon, his son Niels and daughter-in-law Heidi of London, his son Erik and daughter-in-law Heather of Orinda, and his 13 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, the family has asked that donations in Harry's memory be made to The Orinda Rotary Club Endowment Fund, P.O. Box 44, Orinda, CA 94563, or to the Orinda Community Foundation, P.O. Box 21, Orinda, CA 94563. A celebration of his life took place at Orinda Community Church on December 31.

dependent Film Festival (CAIFF). "One of the best ways for people to contribute is to become a member of CAIFF," says Behan. For more information on the campaign or to join CAIFF, go to www.caiff.org.

"Even if we convert our screens to the new digital projectors, we are fortunate to have enough room at our beautiful art deco theaters to also offer classic and independent films in 35 mm," Behan adds. "It's great to have enough space to accommodate both types of projection for our varied audience."

her own imagination; she reads books about other artists and also about different painting techniques. Sometimes, she does plein air work on-site when she and her husband travel, but often works from photographs taken at the beaches she loves so much. Allen finds painting, "Like a meditation on peaceful marine themes which brings me, and hopefully others, relaxation and satisfaction."

Greg Piatt believes that, "Art creates a moment's pause, such as in music, where there's no sound; during that pause we think, reflect and our ability to hope is rekindled." Joan Machado says that, "People are really interested in art, they really perk up when you mention it. I think most people like it because it's in our DNA to begin with. Even a simple flower, if you really look at it, can bring a 'wow' moment."

Visit the gallery during normal library hours - Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Call 254-2814 for more information.

2012 Publication Schedule

Table with Issue (Mar 2012, Apr 2012) and Deadline (Feb 5, 2011, Mar 5, 2012)

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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 20

currently in the Dominican Republic. A 25-year member of the Rotary Club, Englehart is active in Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary and was recently named president-elect of the organization for 2013. His special interest involves the home maintenance for the elderly program (HOME), which sends teams out to visit the elderly and performs home maintenance for seniors in the Lamorinda area. Learn more about at HOME at [www.rotaryhometeam.com](http://www.rotaryhometeam.com). On weekends, Englehart enjoys spending time with his wife Regina, visiting antique shops, hiking, fishing and riding motorcycles.

For more information about Laurus Financial Group, visit the website at [www.LFGadvisors.org](http://www.LFGadvisors.org) or give Englehart a call at (818) 642-6260. You may also contact him by email at [hays.Englehart@lpl.com](mailto:hays.Englehart@lpl.com).

**The Orinda Preschool (TOPS)**

This educational institution was established in 1938 as a parent participation based preschool and offers a transitional kindergarten. Today, students enjoy the recently remodeled playground by renowned outdoor children's playground architect Ron Holthuysen. The Orinda Preschool (TOPS) is located at 10 Irwin Way, adjacent

in Wonderland. All combine to provide creative and safe learning experiences for children," explains Stephanie Barmmer, TOPS parent and member of the board of directors.

Playground architect, Ron Holthuysen, designed the children's playgrounds at the AT&T baseball park, the Bay Area Discovery Museum, and Oakland's Fairyland, among others. The previous play structure at TOPS was removed last summer, and Holthuysen designed the new features with an eye toward stimulating a child's individual creativity in the outdoor environment. "We are thrilled with the result that kids can play and be creative at the same time," adds Barmmer.

TOPS offers separate age appropriate programs for two, three and four year olds, as well as a transitional kindergarten staffed by two teachers. Class sizes and student-teacher ratio remain small. The programs are unique, being the only parent participation preschool in Orinda, and the welcoming close-knit community feeling is pervasive. "One of the reasons I enrolled my children at TOPS was to meet other parents. Some of my best friends have come out of TOPS," says Barmmer. The annual Art and Music Festival will be hosted on campus April 21, from 9:30 to noon. This delightful event features puppeteers from



SCOTT BARMMER

James MacKenzie, Grant Barmmer, Katie Barmmer, Anarose Smith, Pierson Smith enjoy the play structure at TOPS.

to the Orinda Community Center Park.

TOPS is so ingrained in Orinda culture that graduates return decades later enrolling their offspring in their childhood preschool. "As a play based and parent participation based preschool, students get a well rounded early childhood education. Every day materials are deliberately set out for children to explore freely. A growth motor skill station is available as well as a fine motor skill station. In addition, we are very excited about the new playground, which incorporates safe water areas, tide pools and an outdoor house reminiscent of Alice

Oakland's Fairyland, art booths, face painting and interactive musicians.

Guided tours of the campus may be scheduled at the convenience of prospective families by calling Emily Demir at 254-2551. Applications are currently being accepted for the 2012-13 academic year. The deadline is March 17. In addition, a six week summer school program is offered commencing mid-June through July. For more details, please call Emily Demir at 254-2551 or visit the website at [www.topsonline.org](http://www.topsonline.org) or email [topsonline@sbcglobal.net](mailto:topsonline@sbcglobal.net).



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BUSINESS BUZZ

# Business Buzz Putting a Personal Face on Local Business

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

### Just Say Yes Therapeutic Massage

Having previously served the Orinda community from her studio located above Geppetto's, Kelly Greenwell has established her new massage studio at 61 Moraga Way, Suite 2, located at the Crossroads above Peet's Coffee and Tea. With professional training in Swedish, Ashiatsu, Acupressure, Deep Tissue, and Thai modalities, Greenwell also serves as a hospice volunteer providing services to those diagnosed with terminal illness.

"My focus is on connecting with the client and discovering what is going on with them so that I can approach the whole

person. This includes understanding what is going on in a client's life and what types of stress they are coping with. We talk about what they feel their body is asking for. I do my best, blending all the different modalities I have learned to address their body," explains Greenwell.

During preparation for a nursing program, Greenwell discovered massage therapy and switched gears after discovering she would have more time to connect with an individual through massage therapy. "I fuse all the knowledge I have gained doing body work over the past 15 years to serve clients effectively. People often share things that they do not necessarily relate to their body. It can involve a physical thing such as those who sit at a desk all day long and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Kelly Greenwell of Just Say Yes Therapeutic Massage.

need to make sure their work environment is ergonomically correct," she adds.

While traveling throughout Indonesia in the mid-1990s, Greenwell discovered the tiny island of Gili Air and underwent a personal transformation there. When she discovered that children did not progress past 6th grade because of a lack of facilities, Greenwell went into action, raising funds to build a junior high and over a three-year period buying the land and constructing the school. Today 90 to 95 percent of the children on Gili Air progress to high school, which is located on the island of Lombok.

Greenwell points out that touch can be a powerful healing tool. "I learned from Indonesians how to approach a body because they have a different way of looking at the human body. When I work, it is very meditative for me. I consider massage therapy an art form, with a rhythm all its own," says Greenwell. While practicing massage therapy in Orinda, she finds time to visit Gili Air for a month every year, where the father of her six-year-old son, Chaz, still resides. On weekends, Greenwell enjoys spending time outside with Chaz rollerblading or hiking. They especially like playing

in the park or at the beach.

For more information about Just Say Yes Therapeutic Massage, visit the website at [www.justsayyes.co](http://www.justsayyes.co) (that is right, it is .co and not .com) or call Kelly Greenwell at 925-705-3554.

### Laurus Financial Group

With 30 years of experience as an independent fee-based financial planner, Hays Englehart relocated Laurus Financial Group to Orinda from Los Angeles five years ago. The firm specializes in working with clients and small groups on pension plans and retirement programs such as IRA's and 401 K's, helping people to plan retirement and advising on how to take distributions during retirement. The firm is conveniently located at One Bates Blvd in Orinda.

Englehart points out that most people are focusing on conserving assets at this time. Customized programs are designed to help grow and conserve clients' wealth through superior customer service. "Especially with the recent market downturns and volatility of 2008 and 2009, we are seeing clients placing emphasis on conservation of assets," he says. "I am happy to say we have



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Hays Englehart of Laurus Financial Group.

been able to accomplish this for our clients throughout this challenging time."

Englehart is married to Regina Englehart. They celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary this year. Regina is office manager at the Better Homes and Garden Real Estate office in Orinda. The couple has two adult children, Erin, a graphic designer who also resides in Orinda with her husband Josh Cooley, and Ashley, a dolphin trainer

[SEE BUZZ page 19]

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