

THE ORINDA NEWS

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Orinda Taxi Wins Green Award



SALLY HOGARTY

Orinda Taxi was recently certified as a Green Business by the Contra Costa County Green Business Program. The company uses all hybrid vehicles and remodeled its office to be energy efficient. (L-R) Sandra Juricevic, her father Julian, founder of the company, and Green Business representative Claudia Pingatori.

Miramonte High School Teacher Named Environmental Award Winner for 2011

By FRAN MILLER
Staff Writer

Linda Mizes first met Barbara Denny at Miramonte High School in 2003 when Denny agreed to be the faculty advisor for the Nature Club that Mizes hoped to establish there. In the fall of that year, Denny and several students helped plant bulbs and wildflower seeds at the school in an abandoned plot that became known as "The Poppy Patch." Over several years, Miramonte students, faculty and admin-

istrators watched the Poppy Patch bloom into a spectacular habitat garden that would eventually become certified as a National Wildlife Schoolyard Habitat and a Bay Friendly garden.



SALLY HOGARTY

Barbara Denny (center) won the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award. Shown here with her students (L-R) Kevin Zheng, Mohsen Brown, Denny, Kelsi Lerner, and Charlie Ross.

istrators watched the Poppy Patch bloom into a spectacular habitat garden that would eventually become certified as a National Wildlife Schoolyard Habitat and a Bay Friendly garden.

Mizes was one of several to nominate Denny this year for Orinda's William Penn Mott Jr. Environmental Award, in recognition for her above and beyond volunteer

term to serve as the Director of the National Parks Service from 1985 - 89, after which he returned to the Bay Area to head the Presidio conversion effort from a military installation to a National Park. Mott also served as the first president of the Orinda Association when it was first established in 1945.

"Barbara truly deserves to be a William Penn Mott Jr. Environmental Award winner."

[SEE DENNY page 12]

Orinda Volunteers of the Year Announced

By DAVID DIERKS
Staff Writer

Since 2005 Carolyn and Chip Herman have put in countless hours organizing, publicizing and producing the Orinda Classic Car Show, which has become a major fundraiser for several local groups. The Volunteer of the Year Award is given to citizens who display outstanding contributions through volunteer efforts that benefit the community.

Chip Herman's interest in classic cars began later in life. "I was a kid whose first car was a 1965 Mustang. I never thought about classic cars until one day I saw another '65 Mustang and thought it would be fun to own the car that I had originally. I bought my first classic Mustang, and it became a great hobby and passion, and now I own five different Mustangs or Sheldons. It's gotten totally out of hand!" said Chip.

The origins of the Orinda Classic Car Show started when Chip Herman "began buying Mustangs and realized there were a lot of folks in the Lamorinda area who had great classic cars tucked away in their garages as well. It was a combination of my



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Carolyn and Chip Herman.

interest in cars and recognizing that there were a lot of people in Orinda, Lafayette and Moraga that also had classics but were looking for other ways to enjoy their cars. They didn't go to other car shows."

The Hermans teamed up with Orinda Motors' Allen Pennebaker and John Vanek to bring the car show to life. "The whole idea of working on classic cars was something that Allen Pennebaker had questions about. After working with me on my cars and realizing there were a lot in the area, he, John Vanek and I came up with the idea. The Orinda Motors folks saw the op-

[SEE HERMANS page 12]

Orinda To Set Up Poll on Funding Options to Repair Roads

By DAVID DIERKS
Staff Writer

The City Council voted unanimously at the November 29 City Council meeting to have the staff contract a professional service firm to conduct a community telephone poll regarding the city's roads and storm drains. The poll is to determine how local residents feel about the different funding options for fixing Orinda's roads.

The contract was awarded to Fairbank, Maslin, Maulin, Metz & Associates (FM3) who has prior experience doing opinion polls in Orinda. FM3 will conduct an 18-minute survey of 400 residents and should start polling around January 9, 2012.

[SEE ROADS page 14]

IN THIS ISSUE

News	
Architecture Awards	7
Opening Stein Way	7
Underage Drinking	5
Around Town	
Local Filmmaker	9
Moms with Muscle	9
Performing Arts	2
Youth Ink Contest	13
Between the Lines	10
Business Buzz	16
Calendar	13
Classified	14
Editorial	4
Everyday Changes	11
Orinda Association	3
Police Blotter	17
Something to Howl About	17
The Reel Less Traveled	17
Way to Grow	8

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GALLERIES

Intrepid *Plein Air* Painters Bring the Outside In at Library Gallery

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The Orinda Library Gallery ushers in 2012 with over 50 paintings from members of The *Plein Air* Group, an ongoing painting class at the Orinda Community Center. Join them on Sunday, January 8 from 3 to 5 p.m. at the artists reception and enjoy light refreshments while meeting the artists.

All would agree with *plein air* painter K. A. Bressler: "I feel the pounding of my heart and the wind through my fingertips as I rush to paint again." The 12-week class meets Wednesdays from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30

p.m. at field sites within 50 miles of Orinda, weather permitting. The "permitting" part, of course, can include wind, fog, cold and damp but also bright sunshine, which bathes nature in sparkling colors. Works are displayed grouped by locations such as: the Moraga Pear Orchard; San Pablo Reservoir; San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville; Borges Ranch in Walnut Creek; Bear Creek in Briones Regional Park; and the Berkeley Marina.

The roots of this class go back 25 years when the late Pam Glover brought her passion for *plein air* painting to Orinda. Glover (among other local artists) animated *plein air* painting for the art world, and it has never been the same. Anne Marie Glover (Pam's daughter) taught the class next, then Teresa Onoda, and on to the current instructor, John Finger. Most of the 18 class members are experienced artists, but there is always a mix of experience levels including beginning and intermediate painters. Many work in oil, but there are those who prefer watercolors and acrylics. Painters exhibiting work include: Julie Bradner, Dana Beebe, Margaret Mason, Mary Spain, Maria Santotefano, Anita Roger-Fields, Therese Gladstone-Gordon,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

John Finger's "Moraga Pear Orchard" is one of the *plein air* oil paintings in the Orinda Library Gallery.

Susan Kendall, Renie McDonough, Iris Sabre among others.

John Finger grew up in Lafayette, graduated from the California College of the

Arts, and now lives in Walnut Creek. He has taught painting at Walnut Creek Civic Arts, the Academy of Art, and Diablo Val-

[SEE GALLERY page 11]



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Local Artist's Career in Sociology Informs His Paintings



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Karl Schonborn (L) stands next to one of his large images in his "Peace on Earth" exhibit at Orinda Community Church.

By GWEN McNEILUS
Contributing Writer

Orinda resident Karl L. Schonborn calls on his many talents and interests to create his art. A sociologist and professor, Schonborn demonstrates his artist abilities in a show entitled "Peace on Earth" currently at The Doug Adams Sanctuary Gallery at Orinda Community Church through January 22.

The images (and statements) created by Schonborn are clearly influenced by his occupation. His drawings and paintings deal with social issues such as conflict, violence and inequality, as well as sociological concepts such as alienation, charisma and deviance.

"Much of my art career has paralleled my academic career ... with a focus on nonviolence and violence, including homicide, revolution, and war and efforts to ameliorate these," Schonborn explains.

He has often painted Gandhi, Jesus, St. Francis, Martin Luther King, Jr., and A.J. Muste because of their shared commitment to nonviolence. "What really set them apart was that they also shared a commitment to change – to shaking up the status quo – but without resorting to violence in the process," says Schonborn. "They've underscored the importance of keeping the 'ends' in mind as we choose the 'means' to advance social issues and social justice."

Schonborn feels the Occupy Movement makes some good points. "The world won't be peaceful as long as one percent (or even 20 to 40 percent) gets the lion's share of the goodies in various societies. The Occupy movement is on to something. I just hope it can adhere to democracy and nonviolence," Schonborn says.

Running through January 22, "Peace on Earth" is open to the public by appointment Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Call 254-4906 to make arrangements.

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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President
Thankful and Hopeful



Mark Roberts

As I complete my term as president of the Orinda Association, I'm truly grateful for a lot of things and to a lot of people. I'm also very hopeful about the future of the OA, our community, and its tradition of residents volunteering to serve others and the greater good.

First of all, I'm grateful to all my fellow board members for their continuing commitment of their time, talent and treasure to the OA and their fellow Orindans. I particularly want to thank Jim Luini who has served as treasurer for more than a decade. Jim is now working with past OA president Kate Wiley to boost membership and make it even more valuable. I also want to thank long-time board member Bill Waterman for being the best-prepared new president in OA history. I know he will lead the OA into an even brighter and more productive future.

My gratitude also goes to OA office administrator Marie Waterman for keeping me and other board members well informed and organized. Marie and webmaster Lisa Burlini have also helped us make significant technological strides over the past two years to make it faster and easier for members and visitors to stay connected with the OA via our website, www.orinda-association.org. If you haven't visited it in a while, check it out.

It's been a real pleasure for me to work with *Orinda News* editor Sally Hogarty and her terrific team of writers and reporters. I've learned how much time and effort goes into the creation of the paper that is the best monthly source of news and views in our community. I look forward to remaining a member of the editorial committee (if they'll keep me). Speaking of the *News*, my thanks go to all our loyal advertisers for the revenue that enables the OA to distribute the paper to all homes and businesses in Orinda free of charge. Thanks, of course, go to all OA members whose contributions also support the *News* (and all other OA programs). Long live print media!

I'm grateful to all the wonderful Orindans who volunteer to serve as drivers in the Seniors Around Town (SAT) program. These people generously share their time and the use of their vehicle (and their gas) to drive seniors who are no longer able to do so themselves to and from medical appointments and on shopping trips so that they can

remain in their long-time homes and stay connected with their community. My special thanks go to current SAT coordinator Jen Villafane and to her predecessor in the position, Eartha Newsong, who recruited drivers and connected them with riders from 2005 till mid-2011. To become a rider or driver, please call SAT at 402-4506 or connect from the OA website.

Speaking of volunteers and SAT, kudos go to the 2011 Orinda Volunteers of the Year, Chip and Carolyn Herman. The Classic Car Show has been the primary source of funding for SAT since Chip created the event seven years ago. The OA is truly grateful to him and Carolyn for their generosity and commitment to the community, which now extends to the EFO, the Orinda Historical Society, and other vital organizations and programs.

I want to express my appreciation to ALL Orindans who volunteer to enhance the quality of life in our community. While there are some folks who get involved only when they want to express their opposition to a proposed change in a policy or situation, the volunteers I'm thanking share their time, energy, expertise and enthusiasm with their community in many positive ways. Just a couple of examples include the members of our four garden clubs, who maintain

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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the beauty of numerous botanical displays around town year round and Rotary Club members (Orinda and Lamorinda Sunrise) who sponsor programs and events that benefit Orindans from students to seniors. The members of these organizations and dozens of others in Orinda know the value and the joy of sharing themselves and their abilities and interests with their community. To join them, come to the OA's Volunteer Center on the plaza level of the library or visit the OA's website.

Another way you can volunteer to share your skills and experience with our community is by visiting the City of Orinda's website, www.cityoforinda.org, clicking on

the "City Commission Openings" link right near the top of the home page and learning about the openings on several city commissions and committees. I've found my three years on the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee to be most informative, enlightening and rewarding. I hope you'll offer to serve on one of these essential groups and enjoy the same experience.

While on the topic of traffic safety and hope, I'll express my hope that pedestrians will recognize the vital role they play in traffic safety. In a previous column, I mentioned that U-turns and mid-block turns across double yellow lines were against the

[SEE PRESIDENT page 14]



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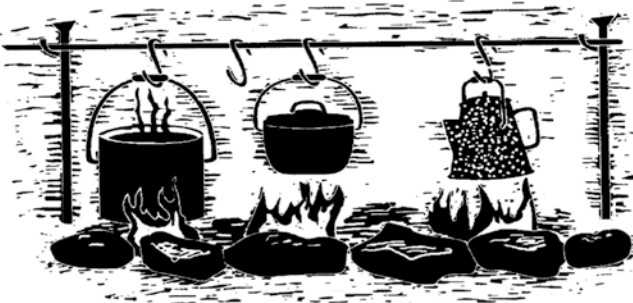


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Letters to the Editor

Looking for Photo of Best Friend

I am looking for information on my best friend John Leroy Simpson, who passed away on April 7 2005, and his wife Barbara Jean Simpson, who passed away on Sept. 17, 2007 in Orinda, CA. Leroy and I were best friends, almost like brothers. We joined the Army together on January 3, 1956 and got out in January 1959.

We worked in Spokane a year or more before I went back in the Army in July 1960. I did three tours in Vietnam. When on leave, I would try to go to Spokane to see Leroy. However, Leroy went to Texas then back to Spokane before moving to Oakland, CA in 1971 and finally Orinda in 1975. He was a member of the West Potters Sailing Club. He and Barbara had a son David D. Hogan and grandchildren Heather Hogan, Krystal Hogan, and Michael Hogan of Concord, CA.

I would like to find David Hogan or some member of the Hogan family to request a picture of Leroy and Barbara for my family album. My e-mail address is Rod-Reb@Hughes.net.

– Rodney R. Doan

Locals Provide Holiday Spirit

Thank you so much to the Orinda Garden Club for the lovely wreaths celebrating the holidays in Orinda! And, to the Boy Scouts who did lots of the hanging! And, to Theatre Square for brightening up the Crossroads with Holiday Spirit! You have made it a treat to shop in Orinda this season! Hooray!!

– Bobbie Landers

Don't Let Orinda Crumble

As a 22 year resident, I know Orinda is full of wonderful, committed people that value our location, our great schools, and the friendly nature of the community. At the same time, almost everyone is frustrated with the state of our residential roads and storm drainage. It's easy to hear complaints all over town, but it doesn't seem easy to get the community to fully understand the engineering and funding realities. Many residents believe the city is somehow diverting money that should go to roads. Many harbor concerns or frustrations about other issues – past and present – that they have strong feelings about such as City Hall or the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

As both a licensed civil engineer and a current member of the city's Infrastructure Oversight Commission, I can reliably testify to key facts that I hope all Orindans will continue to educate themselves about. Orinda's overall road network is one of the worst in the Bay Area. Our roads are 50-plus years old; past their useful life and require major rehabilitation and replacement. They deteriorate further every day.

Despite any criticisms of city governance, in the last five years the city has

done an amazing job of improving our main thoroughfares using the limited funding available. Priorities and policies have been set to deliver the most benefit possible for the community at large. Each year the city is able to spend about \$1 million on infrastructure out of a total annual budget of \$10-11 million. That total budget is very modest considering that it includes our police services and all other needed activities. In recent years, tax revenues have dipped and, like most entities, the city has had to cut back virtually everywhere. The city is working hard to maintain the major roads, but there is absolutely no budget for residential road improvements.

Getting our roads and drainage to the condition that we would like requires nearly \$60 million. Extensive details about the topic are available on the city's website at www.cityoforinda.org. The entire city budget isn't enough to solve our problem without new funding sources. Federal and state money for our residential roads is non-existent. The only solution is for Orindans to decide that there are some taxes worth paying – that we care about our infrastructure and want to invest in our home and our future.

– Darlene Gee

Great City, Bad Roads

Our community, Orinda, is such a great city! But, our community has such bad roads!

With only an \$11 million annual budget, Orinda will never be able to spend more than \$1 million annually on road repair/maintenance. This guarantees that each year, the city will make fewer repairs than the roads need. Our roads – particularly our residential roads, where most of us live – will gradually and inevitably deteriorate even further. More potholes – even gravel? The trend is down, down, except for the big roads, where we get matching funds from outside.

Much of our sales tax and property taxes leave Orinda, never to return. Our big brothers, Contra Costa County and the State of California, grab our revenues and don't let go.

Convince the legislature to change the law? Keep more of that existing revenue here? Very unlikely to convince the huge – and nearly broke – State of California to change. They have enough problems.

Get money for Orinda roads from the fire department? From our school districts? Other local districts? They are separate entities. Separate boards of directors. They have enough problems; they have a legal duty to take care of their own responsibilities.

Can we just re-order our city budget? Give more to roads? That would cripple police services. Cripple recreation services, classes at the Community Center, especially for our children and older adults (CPR



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	Page		Page
Automotive		Nonprofit Organizations	
Lafayette Car Wash	2	Educational Foundation of Orinda	8, 15
Orinda Motors	5	Friends of the Orinda Library	7
Orinda Shell	16	Pet Services	
Beauty and Fitness		Animal House Pet Sitting	15
Changes Salon & Day Spa	16	I Talk Dog	13
CoreKinetics	15	Professional Services	
Full Life Fitness	11	Bruce Jett Associates	16
Gina Kahn Salon	1	Kattenburg Architects	2
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Living Lean Exercise & Eating Program	7	AG Realty	
Orinda Fitness	9, 10, 15	Alexander Gailas	3
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classes).

Should we just let the roads go? Yes, we could. Or, should we try to keep more money here, to fix our roads by ourselves? One way to do that is to vote in a new revenue stream or tax that, very strictly, may only be used in Orinda – only for Orinda roads, not for anything else. Such a tax cannot be subject to the highway robbery that is foisted upon us now by the county and state.

Will it take political will to do this? Of course, but, it is within the control of our community.

Keep our money at work in Orinda. Bypass the dysfunction in state and federal governments. Embrace change and put our hands on the cash we need right here at home.

We can fix my road, fix your road – our roads, our community.

– David W. Anderson

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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 March issue is January 20, 2011.

ROADS / CAR TIME

City Council's Year-end Reorganization



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

At the December City Council meeting, Mayor Victoria Smith (center) completed her term as mayor. Steve Glazer (2nd from right) is the new mayor. Others in the picture include Vice Mayor Amy Worth (L), and City Councilmembers Dean Orr (2nd from left), and Sue Severson (far right).

TSAC Recommends Opening Stein Way/Knickerbocker Lane Gate

By DAVID DIERKS
Staff Writer

At the November 28 Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC), the committee unanimously agreed to advise the City Council to remove the gate between Stein Way and Knickerbocker Lane. However, the TSAC has conditions that they feel need to be met before the gate can be permanently opened: the TSAC would like an evaluation to be made of pre- and post-traffic conditions in both neighborhoods, and in addition, the TSAC would like to do a survey of the area and make recommendations for possible traffic calming measures based upon their expertise and the input about threats to safety from residents.

Many local residents have requested that the gate be permanently reopened to

traffic, while other neighbors are resistant to this happening. Those who wish the gate opened are worried about the safety of neighborhood residents in the event of an emergency, while opponents to opening the gate are worried about increased traffic along Stein Way.

The gate between Stein Way and Knickerbocker Lane was installed in 1997 when the first homes in the Castlegate development were built. The gate was originally erected as a chain and bollard barrier, then became barricades and in 1998 the current gate was erected.

The TSAC recommendation will be brought before the City Council at a future date. For more information, visit www.cityoforinda.org, click on City Meetings and then click on Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC).

CAR TIME

Importance of Interior Car Care
by Joseph Torbati



Dust and dander are the number one causes of allergies in life. Typically, inside the car, the first thing we think of is the dashboard where we can always see the dust. Well, that same accumulation is also happening everywhere else in the car, all the time. This can become a problem especially if you're allergy prone. Vacuuming and dusting should be performed often, just like preventive maintenance.

In this same vain, your cabin air filter should be inspected annually and replaced as needed. This is the filter that outside air goes through before it comes into the vehicle interior, and the filter is responsible for filtering exhaust from other cars, pollen and smells in the air. I have personally found mold, mildew and other, best not described, things in cabin filters.

If you have carpet floor mats, these are generally the biggest allergen holders in your vehicle. Pick one up and shake it; if a cloud comes out, vacuuming alone will not fix it. Most professional detail shops use steam cleaners and hot water extractors to remove dust build up from carpets and mats, along with compressed air to get to hard to reach places. Professional cleaning should be done every six months, and depending on the amount of traffic, the carpet floor mats should be cleaned as often as monthly. The seams in leather seats are another place that tends to hide allergens and cleaning them usually requires steam.

Taking these steps will keep your vehicle fresh and help it retain its resale value.

If you have any questions, email Torbati at joe@orindamotors.com.

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UNDERAGE DRINKING

Getting the Facts Straight About Underage Drinking in Lamorinda

By BILL O'BRIAN
Staff Writer

Recently, at the end of the 2010-11 school year, the Center for Human

Development, a community-based organization located in Pleasant Hill that offers a spectrum of services for at-risk youth, individuals, families and communities in the Bay Area, conducted a survey of parents of middle and high school students in Lamorinda regarding underage drinking. Jaime Rich is the policy coordinator of the Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition, a subgroup of the center. The Coalition delivered the survey information to each of the three middle schools and three high schools in the area to distribute to parents. At Miramonte, the invitation to take the survey was included in the principal's e-letter to parents. The information suggested parents interested in taking the survey go to a website and complete the survey which was then tabulated by Rich. Information on how the other schools delivered the survey was not available.

The Human Development Center issued a press release this fall that stated: "Thirty-two percent of Lamorinda parents know parents who host parties where alcohol is available or served to teens." The survey had responses from "approximately 500 Lamorinda parents." With three middle schools averaging about 800 students each, and three high schools at around

1,200 each, the total number of Lamorinda parents of middle and high school students totals over 10,000 parents, resulting in the survey gathered information from a sampling of five percent or less of the parents.

The purpose of the survey and the Coalition, according to Rich, is to "decrease youth access to alcohol in homes and to increase community awareness of the issue." While the survey has provided useful information regarding this situation, its conclusions are limited due to the number of parents responding.

St. Mary's College statistics professor Mary Coe says the survey "could indicate a trend or problem, but it does not substantiate the percentage of underage drinking in Lamorinda homes." She indicates that a survey would have to be constructed differently and administered in another way to get more accurate detailed answers to its questions. However, there are two other purposes of the survey beyond gathering parental statistics about teen drinking in Lamorinda homes: to promote awareness of teen drinking and to promote the knowledge of the laws against parents providing alcohol at teen parties.

"These findings are alarming and the Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition is working to do something about it," says Rich. The parent survey also assessed the knowledge of the current laws regarding underage drinking and determined that half the parents responding were unaware of the fine for hosting a party where youth under age 21 consume alcohol.

In Lafayette, a parent providing alcohol to a minor can be charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor, a misdemeanor crime. Moraga and Orinda each have a Social Host ordinance but with very different penalties. In Moraga, the violation is an infraction and someone can be fined

up to \$100 for a first time violation. According to Rich, the ordinance in Orinda states that "No person may permit or host a loud or unruly gathering when that person knows, or reasonably should know, that a person under 21 years of age possesses or consumes an alcohol beverage at the gathering. A violation of this law can result in a fine up to \$1,000 or imprisonment not to exceed six months or both."

The Center for Human Development created the Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition, and it is funded by the Contra Costa Health Services, Alcohol and Other Drugs Services Division. The coalition has been active since October 2010 and includes member of local law enforcement, among others. "The overall goal of the coalition is to reduce underage drinking in Lamorinda," says Rich. She created the survey as a result of coalition member concerns and sent it to the local middle schools and local high schools to give to their parents.

She adds, "The coalition has identified that the number one place where teens access alcohol is from parents and homes. This data is shaping our work."

According to the center's website, the organization has "provided wellness programs and support aimed at empowering people and promoting positive growth" since 1972. The center works with schools and communities in Contra Costa, Alameda and San Francisco counties to deliver programs and services addressing wellness, youth leadership, conflict resolution, parenting skills, and other challenges facing communities.

The coalition survey is different from the bi-annual Healthy Kids' Survey the Acalanes Union High School District administers to its students. This test is mandated by the State Education Department and administered at each high school in the fall, and the results are published on the state website in the spring. The results of this school year's survey will be available in the spring of 2012 on the State Education website; <http://dq.cde.ca.gov>. All 9th and 11th graders receive the survey.

Whereas the Coalition administered the survey of parents only regarding teen alcohol use in Lamorinda, the Healthy Kids Survey asks the teenagers throughout the four district high schools lifestyle questions that include use of drugs, alcohol, food, exercise and other categories. The Data Quest Healthy Kids Survey is administered in classes by teachers to the students with parental permission; whereas, the coalition survey information was administered online to parents.

Beginning in January of 2012, the Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition will be meeting the second Wednesday of each month in the morning at the Orinda City Hall. For more information, go to www.chd-prevention.org.



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ARCHITECTURE / WINTER NIGHTS

Mayor's Architecture Awards for 2011

By DAVID DIERKS
Staff Writer

The 2011 Mayor's Award for Excellence in Architecture was awarded at the December 6 City Council meeting. This year, in addition to the major and minor projects categories, a downtown category was added. The Minor Projects category encompasses projects that add less than 1,500 square feet, Major Projects are any projects greater than 1,500 square feet, and the Downtown category covers any development that adds to the vitality of the downtown area. Seven recipients received award certificates.

The winners in "Minor Projects" for 2011 are: 10 Crestview Court, Owner Lupita Sutton, Architect Fred Hyer; 19

Via Hermosa, Owners Susan and Howard Warner, Architects Robin Pennell and Cindy Chan of Jarvis Architects; and 1 Crestview Court, Owners The Bohongroup Inc. In "Major Projects," the winners are: 2 Honeyhill Court, Owners Don and Jennifer Lyons, Architect Peter Golze; and 14 Meadow Park, Owners Ian and Lani MacKenzie, Architect David Fagerstrom. There were two winners in the "Downtown Category:" 22 Bryant Way, Flying A Gas Station, Owner Allen Pennebaker; and 2 Theatre Square, Table 24, Owners Victor Ivry and Michael Karp.

For more information about past awards, go to www.cityoforinda.org, click on Departments, click on Planning Department, click on Mayor's Award for Excellence in Architecture.

Churches of All Faiths Help Those Without Shelter During Winter

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

Christmas carol melodies played on the keyboard by volunteer, Carolann Elmore, filled Fellowship Hall as the guests for the Winter Nights program for the homeless, lined up for dinner. Hosted

for two weeks at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC), the group of 12 adults and 18 children were provided meals and a place to sleep in tents set up in the hall.

Sponsored by the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, Winter Nights runs from October 11 through April 11. Orinda's St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Santa Maria Catholic Church, and Orinda Community Church are also involved in the Winter Nights program, providing space, donating food, or volunteers to help those in need.

"We serve families with children and single adults over the age of 65," said Rev. Brian Stein-Webber, executive director of the council. We provide a safe, dry and warm place for families when they have nowhere else to go and we make every ef-

[SEE CHURCHES page 11]



BOBBIE DODSON

Three-year-old **Bobbi** celebrates her birthday at LOPC.

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- Victoria Robinson, Piedmont

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Way to Grow

Winter Wonders

by Steve & Cathy Lambert



After flowers fade and leaves fall other subtle plant characteristics that go unnoticed spring through fall, begin to grace our gardens with winter wonder. There are plenty of plants that can add visually stimulating drama or peaceful beauty to your winter landscape with colorful peeling bark, twisting branches, and textural seed heads. To follow are a few of our favorite ways to ramp up some winter interest in your yard.

Planting trees and shrubs with colorful bark or stems can provide a welcome contrast to bare gardens and dreary, gray skies. Certain trees can also add textural interest with their exfoliating bark. Exfoliating bark refers to a shedding or peeling quality found on certain varieties.

Even the most casual garden observer can't help but notice the pure white branches and trunk of a bare Indian white birch as it captures the late season sun or is silhouetted against a crisp, blue winter sky. Our top pick for birch is the *Betula utilis* 'Jacquemontii' (white bark Himalayan birch) which is native to India at the same latitude and longitude as the Bay Area making them particularly well suited to our Orinda climate. The typical European white birch, which is commonly found at many local nurseries, does not adapt nearly as well to our environment.

Two other favorites for their peeling bark appeal and color are *Acer griseum* (Paperbark Maple) and *Physocarpus* 'Diablo' (Purple Leaf Ninebark) also known as Diablo ninebark. Paperbark maples are a small to medium height, slow growing tree with a maximum height of 15-to-20 feet. They have attractive light green, trifoliolate foliage that turns a striking yellow and red in the fall. It's the bark however, that makes this tree truly stand out in winter. Large, paper-thin shavings of deep mahogany bark curl and cling from this tree revealing a light, tan bark beneath. We have a gorgeous, mature specimen in our yard planted where it can be enjoyed from our front door.

Diablo ninebark is a show-stopping shrub from spring through fall with lush, purple foliage and contrasting white flowers with just a hint of pink blush. Both the leaves and seedpods provide great fall color, picking up darker burnt orange and red tones. As its name suggests, the bark is a major part of this shrub's appeal. If left un-pruned, its bark will exfoliate in the winter, to reveal several layers of color from white to a brilliant red. This shrub grows 7-to-9 feet in height and is slightly narrower in spread.

Another exfoliating tree which has a



STEVE LAMBERT
 This paperbark maple adds interest to a winter yard.

shiny bark and horizontal strips is the Amur cherry, *Prunus maackii*. This year-round contributor adds a special magic in the winter with its glossy, rich bronze color. It appears almost like a polished metal sculpture.


Patterns created by winter's low light shining through trees and shrubs with twisted branches also help to add some visual interest to your otherwise barren winter yard. For this purpose, we recommend both Henry Lauders' walking stick and *Corylus* 'contorta' with incredible twisting branches that are best appreciated when bare. A beautiful, smaller, arching tree with twisted branches is the Twisty Baby Locust, (*Robinia* 'Twisty Baby') which creates an impressive 8-to-10-foot fountain of flowing vines when properly pruned.

The showiest of wintertime plants are those that offer the most colorful bark to contrast the dull, pale palette of a winter garden. Few plants have brighter winter stems than shrub dogwoods or creek dogwoods. These dogwoods are native to forests from Newfoundland to Alaska as well as south through the Rockies, into California. Available in an array of brilliant colors from red and yellow to bright salmon, creek dogwoods do very well in Orinda when planted under large trees.

In our garden we leave the seed heads of several varieties of Black-eyed Susan, *Salvias*, and Safflowers in the garden long after the petals have fallen off. Black-eyed Susans add interesting texture with their tall cones. A far better reason not to deadhead these flowers is for the finches and other small birds they'll attract. The fluttering of these small birds feasting on the seeds atop the thinly stemmed cones will make your plants appear to dance beneath them.

Deciduous grasses can also add winter texture and movement. If left un-pruned, they'll fade to tan or gold and glow as they catch the low winter light. All too often these plants are cut back, or even worse hedged, as soon as their color starts to fade robbing your winter garden of their golden color and glimmer on frosty mornings.

[SEE GROW page 10]



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LOCAL FILMMAKER

Local Filmmaker Raising Money to Produce Film on *Moms Got Muscle*

By KATHRYN G. McCARTY
Staff Writer

Ramona Maramonte is a woman on a mission. She's just finished the first phase of a fundraising effort to produce the full-length feature *Moms Got Muscle*, a film script she co-wrote with Kelly Byrn. As a female producer and director, she believes she has her work cut out for her battling traditional trends in film production.

According to Maramonte, the statistics on women vs. men employees in film are almost a five to one ratio. "The way that is going to change is through independent film with women filmmakers giving opportunity to women."

Maramonte, who has two daughters, Tyler and Tonii (a senior at Miramonte High School), said she'd like "to show them that women can be the ones to call the shots. We don't have to rely on being hired; we can create our own work. If they see their mom doing it, it shows them yes, it can be done. They are actually seeing it being done."

Son Robert and husband Anthony are extremely supportive of Mom's efforts. Anthony, her husband of 25 years, owns Mara Construction in Orinda. "My husband and I see just about every movie that comes out," she said before touting the classic movies shown at the Orinda Theatre. "I'm really excited to see *Godfather 2* in January," she said adding that the classic series provides a chance to see films "on the big screen" that she was "too young to see as a child."

According to Maramonte, *Moms Got Muscle* "is about four women. It starts off in the '80s in high school with four girls who were in auto shop together," she said, describing the characters as "Very tight friends, and outcasts because they don't run with 'the' crowd." When the women unite 20 years after graduating to help with a school fundraiser, their friendship is tested as they deal with life issues.

Maramonte, who describes herself as a real life "die hard muscle car fan," says the catch to what might normally be considered a chick flick is that the plot centers around



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Producer Ramona Maramonte is making her first film about women and muscle cars, one of her passions.

muscle cars and includes two drag races. She calls *Moms Got Muscle* "Real Housewives meet American Graffiti."

Maramonte and her crew are looking to raise \$100,000 to make the film. Funding will cover pre- and post-production, editing, cast, crew, cast services, permits, location and insurance. According to Maramonte, *Moms Got Muscle's* initial fundraising was through Indie Go Go, a grassroots crowd funding website.

While garnering 6,000 hits and just under 100 donors, Maramonte and her production staff were pleased with the exposure they received and are now readying themselves for phase 2 of the capital campaign, which will include product placement, that she calls "great advertising."

"If someone is interested in film, this is a good project for them," Maramonte added, explaining that by supporting the film's production, local actors may be able to get screen time. "It's an opportunity for kids to get film credit and experience on a film set." Various levels of donations are rewarded with gifts such premiere tickets, set visits, and t-shirts with the *Moms Got Muscle* logo.

Maramonte doesn't just have her eye on raising capital for her film. She intends to create a "trickle down" effect, by filming mainly in Orinda and the surrounding Bay Area. "We are creating jobs for the local economy and patronizing local businesses" so that "some of the money will be going

back out into our economy."

She is not looking for theatrical release for *Moms Got Muscle*, but for distribution through Video on Demand, Streaming Video, or Netflix, saying she believes that is where the film market is heading. "People want it now. There's more television sets than movie screens, and I want to get to those people."

"I have stories I want to tell," Maramonte says, "I want to see movies I wouldn't see if

I had to wait for Hollywood to make them."

As far as being a female in a male dominated field, Maramonte tells her teen daughter, "It's great for you be pretty, but I want you to be as smart as you are pretty."

"I want to show strong females. To have a balance would be the best part. You can be strong and intelligent and sexy. You do it in a manner where it is not salacious."

For more information on the film, visit www.momsgotmuscle.com.

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BETWEEN THE LINES

Between the Lines Football Isn't Everything!

by Marian Nielsen, Orinda Books



Between the Rose Bowl and the Super Bowl, comes January — a time to let the winds blow, the rain slosh down, digest the past football season — and to read a good book or two. But before we put aside football for literary pursuits, I have to throw in a wonderful quote about the game from a favorite author, Dave Barry: “Sharks are as tough as those football fans who take their shirts off during games in Chicago in January, only more intelligent.”

For our intelligent and ready-for-any-

thing readers, publishers do produce a remarkable crop of new titles in January — those that deserve attention but might have gotten lost in the plethora of big names that *always* come out with a BIG novel in November/December, such as Evanovich, Grisham, Grafton, et al. Two January titles that have gotten a great deal of pre-publication buzz are William Landay’s *Defending Jacob* (Delacorte \$26) and Adam Johnson’s *The Orphan Master’s Son* (Random House \$26). These are both muscular novels and

each would serve as a welcome break from second-guessing referees, studying instant replays, or wondering what in the world the expletive-deleted coach was thinking.

Landay’s courtroom drama *Defending Jacob*, is a superb legal thriller that not only takes the reader into the courtroom but also into the heart of a family facing a nightmare most parents will thankfully never confront — that of a beloved son, and only child, accused of murdering a middle school classmate. Readers who always pick up the latest John Grisham or those who never miss a Jodie Picoult novel are among the many who will love this book. Landay is as good as or better at times than both. His past experience as an assistant district attorney as well as his real life role as a father brings to his fiction a moving authenticity — you turn each page as fast as you can to reach the stunning ending.

Landay’s book won’t be out until the end of January, but Adam Johnson’s one-of-a-kind novel, *The Orphan Master’s Son*, is due from the publisher on January 10. Johnson, who teaches creative writing at Stanford, takes his readers on an unforgettable journey into the closed society of North Korea. Pak Jun Do, the orphan master’s son of the title, survives a series of horrendous assignments, tunneling under the DMZ, listening to transmits from aboard a fishing/spy boat, being part of a weirdly dangerous “good-will” mission to Texas, and, ultimately, masquerading as a high-level associate of Kim Jong Il. This is creative fiction, indeed, as Johnson, after years of research, was able to visit North Korea for only one week and was closely observed at all times. Despite that, his skill as a novelist has enabled him to capture the essence of existence in a nation governed by a mad dynasty. This is a breath-taking story of survival.

In January, if you are lucky enough to be wondering what to do with your Orinda Books gift certificate, we have a unanimous staff suggestion. Neil MacGregor’s *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (Viking \$45) is the gift for someone who has everything — perhaps yourself! In this unique treasury of information and coffee table

book, MacGregor, the director of the British Museum, accompanies each of his chosen 100 objects, which range from a hand-axe to a credit card, with a charmingly discursive essay on the provenance of each object and the reasons it can be used to describe a seminal period in human history. And these events have universality for us today. For example, in his chapter “Pieces of Eight,” MacGregor shows us the legendary Spanish dollar, minted in the New World in 1500, but also quotes a 16th c. writer lamenting the ruin of the Spanish economy using words that could apply to contemporary debacles in Italy and Greece. If *A History of the World in 100 Objects* comes to rest on your coffee table, we guarantee it will not gather dust or rings from coffee cups — it is irresistible.

And, at the end of the month, the Stanford Women’s Club of the East Bay “Books on Review” program is always a feast for local readers. The 37th annual **Books on Review** will be held at Shadelands Arts Center in Walnut Creek on the morning of Thursday, January 26. This year’s authors will be Vanessa Diffenbaugh (*The Language of Flowers*), Philip Taubman (*The Partnership: Five Cold Warriors and Their Quest to Ban the Bomb*), Shilpi Gowda (*Secret Daughter*), and Alice LaPlante (*Turn of Mind*). The books being featured will be available for sale at the event, courtesy of Orinda Books. For questions about reservations, contact Marcia Argyris at margyris75@gmail.com.

Happy New Year — and may each of the next 12 months bring new adventures in the world of books.

◆ GROW from page 8

Take a good look at your landscape this winter and note where you could use a splash of color or the textural accent of peeling bark. Bark, stems and seed heads, otherwise lost in the flower and foliage of a garden in full bloom can become center stage stars in a sparse winter landscape.

If you have questions about this article, please email us at Office@GardenLights-Landscape.com.

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EVERYDAY CHANGES

Everyday Changes
HEALTHY RESOLUTIONS...
The 80/20 Rule...

Bonnie Waters



The hot topic every New Year's Day is no doubt "resolutions" and to no one's surprise, following the holidays, weight loss tops most people's list.

There is an ongoing debate in many circles as to whether counting carbs or calories is more effective; however, recent trends show that neither is necessarily more effective let alone sustainable.

As unbelievable as it may seem, there is a healthier approach that involves a lifestyle change many of us can easily live with. We have all heard of the 80/20 rule where 80 percent of the results are created by 20 percent of the actions. When it comes to successful weight loss, it is just the reverse. Fast, rapid weight loss can occur by enjoying a diet comprised of a minimum of 80 percent of healthy vegetables either lightly steamed or preferably raw. Lean fish, meats, whole grains, and minimal unrefined oil, raw nuts and seeds will comprise the remaining 20 percent.

The energy and health benefits of this type of diet are scientifically documented. In 1992, Bruce Tainio of Tainio Technology built the first frequency monitor in the world. Tainio has determined that the aver-

age frequency of the human body is 62-72 megahertz (MHz). We live in a world that is polluted with toxins and poisons, all of which contribute to lowering the frequency of the human body. When the frequency drops, energy decreases and the immune system is compromised. If the frequency drops to 58 MHz, cold and flu symptoms appear. Organic fruits and vegetables range from 72-80 MHz. By eating an 80/20 fruit and vegetable diet, not only will rapid, consistent weight loss occur but the side effect is ongoing detoxification, more energy and better health!

Detoxifying and cleansing the body is critical to weight loss and our overall health. The most effective way to accelerate cleansing and weight loss is to begin with a formal cleanse of a minimum of 21 days in length and then continue to reap the benefits by eating a diet of primarily fresh organic fruits and vegetables.

Although cleanse programs are trendy now, cleansing and body purification have been a part of mankind's ritual for health and well-being for thousands of years. The body cleanses continuously; however, a formal detoxification program is becoming so

meals. Tonight we had oven fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, and huge trays of vegetables and fruit. Delicious. Also, there's a good community of people here."

Jim Reiter, chair of the group from LOPC, said some 225 volunteers came out to support the program.

Anyone interested in helping with Winter Nights may contact cccwinternights.org.

work because your location is always changing and so is the weather. Finger believes that if, somewhere in your life, someone gives you permission to explore art (or music, etc.), you have been gifted with a take-away experience; you take it with you the rest of your life, and one day you act on it. He enjoys working with beginning students because their minds are wide open and, "They can go anywhere with their art, it's exciting to see them explore."

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.

important because of the extreme amounts of environmental toxins that we experience on a daily basis. Some people carry around as much as 15 pounds of mucous that harbors this waste.

So this New Years, make a resolution to break bad habits or addictive behaviors that could be causing you to gain and retain weight. Good nutrition, exercise and a healthy emotional state are key to achieving wellness goals. Get off to a good start by attending a 21 Day Cleanse Workshop presented by Lori Mancuso, D.C. at Changes Salon and Day Spa in Walnut Creek and learn how to identify and eliminate toxicity that might be causing you to be resistant to weight loss.

Whatever your resolution, I wish you a healthy, happy and peaceful 2012!

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◆ CHURCHES from page 7

fort to find transitional or more permanent housing for them, all the while providing tutoring and social work services for the family."

A father of three children at LOPC said, "I really appreciate having a place that keeps me and my family warm and nice

◆ GALLERIES from page 2

ley College. Finger remembers being inside the art studio at school with his fellow students, painting away while listening to music and drinking coffee. They smirked at the "Sunday painters" perched outside the studio with their flyaway easels who had to deal with sun, wind, bugs and gawkers. As Finger matured as an artist, he realized the "Sunday painters" were on to something big. "Outdoors you have all these unique experiences you just can't have indoors. How lucky we are that we get to do this every week!"

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◆ DENNY from page 1

Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award recipient,” stated Mizes on her nomination form. “She has been tireless in her desire to address environmental issues; she has worked closely with the Wagner Ranch Nature Area, holding classes there and encouraging her students. She also has worked with Friends of the Orinda Creeks to rehabilitate the creek along Miramonte’s campus; she has regularly accompanied students on field trips to the Pacific rain forest; she has encouraged her students to be involved with Earthteam, a Bay Area student run environmental organization. And she has continued to maintain and extend the gardens at Miramonte while teaching full time.”

Toris Jaeger, naturalist and teacher for the Friends of the Wagner Ranch Nature Area, also nominated Denny, with whom she has worked closely. “Barbara is the link from OIS and the elementary schools in providing hands-on, meaningful environmental education,” says Jaeger. “Her students are always involved in the Friends of Orinda Creeks projects of restoration, litter monitoring, weeding and planting of natives. She and her students have participated in the Friends of the Wagner Ranch Nature Area Wildlife and Olive Festivals; her students recently were involved in collecting data on the noise and pollution of leaf blowers. She and I teamed up to provide a day for her students at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area that involved an assortment of environmental education activities. I hope that paints a picture of what an incredible teacher Barbara Denny is,” said Jaeger’s nomination form.

Mizes, who in 2003 was the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award winner herself, credits Denny with revitalizing an unused vegetable garden site at Miramonte and securing a \$5,000 garden grant from the California Department of Education. “Organically grown vegetables and flowers grown with the help of the Special Education students were often shared with the culinary arts department and other students,” says Mizes.

William Penn Mott’s philosophy was that people enjoying and experiencing California’s parks should leave with a greater awareness of their responsibilities in maintaining the quality of the environment. Through her daily interactions with her students, Barbara Denny imparts this same philosophy, planting an environmental legacy that would make Mott proud.

Barbara Denny and Volunteers of the Year Carolyn and Chip Herman will be honored at a festive dinner at the Orinda Country Club on February 12.

◆ HERMANS from page 1

portunity to meet people with classic cars and offer services to help them take care of those cars,” Chip said. “No other organization gives so much back to the community. John is really the driver of the community outlook and outreach of that business. For me, to have teamed up with them made a world of difference in keeping our sanity and continuing to find new and better ways to build a great community event. Our focus has always been on building a great event, and the benefit that comes from it is a by-product, not the focus. The focus is doing something for the community that’s unique and that only they might be able to provide. That partnership has been fantastic.”

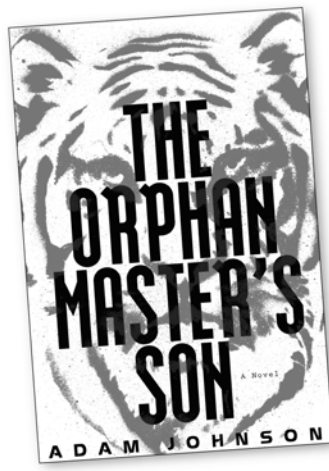
The difference between the Orinda show and most other car shows is that it contributes back to the community. “I really felt that if we were going to get people together and have people show their cars, we ought to do it to help people in the community to come together and work on helping local charities that are important to what we are doing in Orinda,” said Chip. “I spend quite a bit of time on the Orinda Classic Car Show, about six months of the year.” Carolyn Herman added, “We both worked full time until we were lucky enough to retire early, and now the car show has become our part-time job.”

Over the last seven years, Chip and Carolyn built the Classic Car Show from a modest event with 26 cars that raised \$1,500 to the monster event this past year with 175 cars that raised \$45,000 for local charities.

The Hermans are adamant that this couldn’t be done without the amazing support that they receive. “I wish we could share this award with John Vanek. He is the unsung hero. He spends so many hours, plus working a full time job at Orinda Motors. John has been an incredible partner through the years in putting this on,” said Carolyn. Chip added, “We have a support network of 75 people who work on this and have a great time working together on one really cool, unique Orinda community event. We just want to raise a little money, put on a great community event, and have a lot of fun doing it. That’s been the focus, to make a really, really cool thing that can live on and people can enjoy. It’s amazing the way it’s grown. Who woulda’ think it?”

Awards Dinner - February 12
6 p.m. - Orinda Country Club

For reservations, call 254-0800 or go to www.orindaassociation.org.



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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 6 **First Friday Forum**, Marty Beard, 1:30 p.m., Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church. 925-283-8722.
International Film Showcase presents *The World Is Big and Salvation Lurks Around the Corner*, a Bulgarian film based on a true story, at the Orinda Theatre through Jan. 12 and at the Rheem Theatre in Moraga Jan. 13 through 19. For tickets, visit www.lfef.org.
- 10 **Orinda Books** hosts Sean Nye discussing *Poul Anderson's Orinda* and James Cameron's *Avatar: A Sci-Fi Life and Legacy*. 276 Village Square, 2 p.m. Call 254-7606.
WomenSing auditions by appointment for experienced singers. All voice parts. Contact audition@womensing.org, 925-974-9169, or www.womensing.org for more info.
- 11 **Second Wednesday Book Group** meets at Orinda Books, 3 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 14 **Classic Film Series** presents *The Godfather, Part 2*, 7 p.m., Orinda Theatre, www.lamorindatheatres.com.
- 17 **American Association of University Women** will discuss the importance of women's quality education. Speakers will discuss famed architect Julia Morgan. 9 a.m. at the Holy Trinity Servian Cultural center, 1700 School Street, Moraga. www.aauwoml.org.
World Affairs Book Group will discuss *To Die in Mexico: Dispatches from Inside the Drug War* by John Gibler. Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, 3 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 18 **Classic Film Series** presents *Laura*, 4 p.m., Rheem Theatre, www.lamorindatheatres.com.
- 24 **Orinda Books** hosts Thrity Umrigar, discussing her new novel, *The World We Found*, 276 Village Square, 2 p.m. Call 254-7606.

AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified. The library will be closed Jan. 1 and 2 for the New Year holiday and Jan. 16 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

- 10 **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 Jan. 11, 17, 18, 24, 25 and 31.
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 Jan. 17, 24 and 28.
- 12 **Winter Games** for teens, celebrate the New Year with classic board games, Gallery Room, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
- 14 **Saturday Morning Live**, story time for 3 to 5 year olds in the Picture Book Area. Also Jan. 21 and 28.
- 17 **Berkeley Repertory Theater** docent discusses the theater's latest production, *Ghostlight*, about the assassination of George Moscone and its effect on his son Jonathan, who directs the play. Adult program, 7 to 7:55 p.m.
- 20 **Mystery Book Club** members discuss their favorite genre, Tutoring Room, 3 to 4:30 p.m.
- 23 **Lunar New Year Crafts**, celebrate the Year of the Dragon by making a dragon puppet at the library craft table. Daily through Jan. 29.
- 25 **Introduction to Library's Downloadable Media Collection of eBooks**, audio books and music, Garden Room, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Space is limited. Call 254-2184 to register.
- 26 **Talespinners of Contra Costa**, storytelling for adults or just come to listen, Gallery Room, 7 p.m.
- 29 **Lunar New Year Multicultural Music** features Don O'Brien who will present instruments from around the world for children to see and play, Garden Room, 3 p.m.

CLUB MEETINGS

- Diablo Star Chapter #214**, Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 p.m., Orinda Masonic Center. Contact Karen Seaborn, 925-689-0995.
- Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe**. Third Monday, 7:30 p.m., Moraga-Orinda Fire District Conference Room, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga, www.moragaadobe.org.
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**. Fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library, 253-1997.
- Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition**, every third Wednesday, 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Orinda City Hall Sarge Littlehale Room. Call 925-687-8844, ext. 227.
- Lamorinda Sirs for retired men**. Second Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. Luncheon speakers plus golf, tennis, bocce, bridge and astronomy. Call Pete Giers, 254-4667.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**. Every Friday, 7 a.m., Postino, Lafayette, 254-0440, ext. 463.
- Lamorinda Toastmasters**. Every Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Temple Isaiah, 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, www.lamorinda.freetoasthost.net.
- Montelindo Garden Club**. Third Friday, September through May, Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, 9 a.m., www.montelindogarden.com.
- Orinda Junior Women's Club** community service group. First Tuesday, September to June, 7 p.m. Contact Julie Mercer or Charlene Robinson at info@orindajuniors.org or go to 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.
- Orinda Historical Society**. Third Wednesday, 5 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.
- 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
 See web edition for City Meetings at www.orindanews.org.

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Marty Beard Explores Impact of Social Media and Mobile Technology

"The Global Impact of Social and Mobile Technology" is the topic Marty Beard has chosen for the First Friday Forum on January 6 at 1:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC), 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette.

President and CEO of LiveOps, Beard is a software and mobile industry veteran. Prior to his current position, he served as president of Sybase 365, the recognized global leader in mobile messaging and mobile commerce services, and vice president of Oracle Online. Beard's talk will center on the huge impact social and mobile technologies, like Twitter and SMS, are having on the business environment.

For further information, call 925-283-8722 or click on LOPC.org and enter First



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marty Beard will speak on social and mobile technology.

Friday Forum in the Search box.

— Bobbie Dodson

Calling All Middle School Writers to Enter Youth Ink Contest

By KATHRYN G. McCARTY
 Staff Writer

There is a knock on the door... Do you remove the chain and answer it? Hide in the hallway?

There is a knock on the door...

Did you imagine it? Could it be someone with a gun at the door? Or the paperboy?

There is a knock on the door. What happens next?

Well, if you are an aspiring writer in 6th-8th grade, you should heed that knock (and writing prompt) and submit your creative writing to the Orinda Junior Women's Club Youth Ink 2012 service project. Write something based on this year's theme "There is a knock on the door," and your best work could win up to \$250, or one of many other prizes.

"We chose the theme to encourage descriptive writing, and we believe it lends well to open style choice," says past Youth Ink co-chair Lisa Rodriguez. Rodriguez has co-chaired the project for the last 4 years.

During that time, she read every single submission, and reports, "I am blown away by the talent, creativity and courage of Orinda's young writers. They've written everything from touching personal narratives to lighthearted poems to frightening science fiction adventures to realistic historical fiction," says Rodriguez.

"While Orinda students are certainly fortunate in many ways," she continued, "Our community does not shelter them from the stresses of adolescence. We believe when adolescents have a healthy outlet, such as the arts, and receive positive recognition

and validation for their talents, they are more likely to build positive self-esteem."

She said that the Orinda community has been "amazingly supportive of this program." Sponsors include the Orinda Association, Orinda Community Foundation, Orinda Books, Friends of the Orinda Library, and several other local businesses.

"We have a group of local professional writers who serve as judges, contributing their valuable time to read and discuss every entry," Rodriguez says. This year's awards presentation will be held Thursday, April 26, at 6 p.m. at the Orinda Library Auditorium.

Rodriguez adds that she was excited about a new program from the club, the Orinda Juniors, formed last year when several teenage girls approached the Orinda Juniors with a proposal to start the high school aged volunteer service club. The Juniors offered counsel on this year's theme and poster design for Youth Ink 2012.

Youth Ink 2012 submissions will be accepted on an ongoing basis but must be hand-delivered to a designated school representative or postmarked by February 10, 2012 and mailed to Orinda Junior Women's Club, Post Office Box 40, Orinda, CA 94563. Youth Ink 2012 submission forms are available through the administrative offices and English departments at Orinda Intermediate School, the Orinda Public Library, Orinda Academy, Athenian School, Julia Morgan School for Girls, John Ogro, DDS Orthodontics' office, SmartLounge, and Orinda Books, or online at www.orindajuniors.org.



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CLASSIFIED

◆ ROADS from page 1

Their findings will be reported to the City Council on February 7, 2012. The cost of the telephone poll is \$16,350, which will come out of the city's reserve fund.

There are 92.8 total miles of roads in Orinda. As of 2010, of these 92.8 miles, 21 miles are rated in very poor or failed condition, 33 miles are in poor condition, 10 miles are rated fair, 15 miles are rated good, and the remaining 13 miles of road are rated excellent. Meanwhile, the 21 miles of drainage pipes under the roads are in a damaged state and also require repair. The cost of repairing all the drainage issues would be roughly \$12.5 million dollars.

Taken together, repairing all the drainage and bringing the roads up to a good standard would cost the City of Orinda in the neighborhood of \$67 million dollars.

Sixty-nine percent of Orinda roads are residential. Bringing only these roads up to a good standard and repairing the drainage would run \$55.5 million dollars.

At the November 29 meeting, city staff provided reports on the viability of some of the funding options: Sales Tax, a Real Estate Transfer Tax, Utility User's Tax and Benefit Assessment Districts (BAD).

A sales tax would not generate enough funds to warrant the expense. City Manager Janet Keeter said "A sales tax could potentially generate \$370,000/year if we add 1/4 cent sales tax." Of that \$370,000, \$150,000 would be from vehicle sales outside of Orinda.

Real Estate Transfer Taxes require Charter City status. Since Orinda is a general law city, an election would be required to become a Charter City, as well as a second election to pass the Real Estate Transfer Tax. At that time, staff had yet to find a city that had used this tax for road improvements.

A Utility User's Tax is a tax imposed on residents' utilities and is collected by the utility companies and forwarded to the city. The Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) did a study in 2009 and determined that an estimated \$4 million could be raised at an eight percent rate. The Council Roads Subcommittee had the FAC revisit their study with the option of only taxing electricity, gas, water and sewer utilities, as these utilities are stable and easy to control. If only these utilities are taxed, an estimated \$2.3 million could be raised at eight percent or \$1.4 million at five percent. Voters would need to have a 2/3 majority approval in order for this tax to pass. At that time, staff had not found a city where this tax was used for road improvements.

While looking at Benefit Assessment Districts, staff could not find a successful example used for road repairs, though they did find three cases where a BAD had been challenged in the Courts and found to pose legal risks to the districts. These three

districts were the County of Santa Clara, the Town of Tiburon, and the County of Riverside.

Local resident Diana Stephens approached her neighbors and asked their opinions about a BAD and provided her findings to the city council: Of the 75 neighbors she polled, she received 23 responses. five support BAD, fourteen do not support BAD, and four might support BAD.

For more information, visit www.cityof-orinda.org, click on City Meetings and Click on Roads Subcommittee.

◆ PRESIDENT from page 3

law for drivers. While pedestrians nearly always have the right of way over vehicles, I ask that you exercise that right wisely. I see too many people on foot, especially in our business districts, who are distracted by other people or mobile devices (cell phones, iPods, iPads, etc.) and are not paying attention to their surroundings. Not surprisingly, many of them are jaywalking, crossing streets mid-block, and out of marked crosswalks. My hope is that parents of young children, for example, will think about the example they're setting when they jaywalk across Brookwood Road to get from Theatre Square to Loard's. Even great ice cream is not an excuse for putting themselves and their kids at risk. Please keep all Orindans safe by being aware of your surroundings and being courteous to other people whether you're behind the wheel, on your bicycle, or on foot. Thanks!

Finally, I want to express my fervent hope that we will deal with the current and future challenges that our city faces as a community of concerned, caring and sharing citizens. Despite the rhetoric we hear and read, no one else is going to solve the problem with our roads and drains, just as an example. We have to recognize that they are OUR roads and drains whether they're in front our homes or across town. We inherited them when we incorporated as a city in 1985, and they are our responsibility whether we like it or not. Only WE, as a community of people who care about our neighbors and not just ourselves, are going to take the necessary actions - and, yes, provide and expend the necessary funds - to solve this problem. I am hopeful that we will do just that, and I'll be very thankful when we do so.

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Christian Science Reading Room Moves. Ribbon-cutting ceremony was recently held at the Christian Science Church on Orinda Way to celebrate the opening of the Christian Science Reading Room. (L-R) Assistant to the City Manager Monica Pacheco, members of the Christian Science Church Anna Lisa Kronman, Nadine Hack, Linda Luini, Ron Aarts, Hazel Faries, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Candy Kattenburg, Candace Olsen of the Christian Science Reading Room, and City Clerk Michele Olsen.

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2012 Publication Schedule Orinda News classified ads ... Ad rates are \$5 per line - \$10 minimum. There are 32 spaces per line. Count each letter, punctuation mark, and space between words. Name _____ Category _____ Address _____ Number of Lines _____ City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____ Write your ad in the boxes below with one letter, space or punctuation mark in each box. Cost is \$5 per line: \$10 minimum. Enclose your check payable to The Orinda Association and mail to Orinda News, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563. We reserve the right to reject any ad. Classified ads must be prepaid. Your cancelled check is your receipt.

BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 16

practices foster soil health, conserve water and other valuable resources while reducing waste and protecting the Bay Area watershed. Visit the website for more information about the Bay-Friendly Landscape program at www.stopwaste.org.

Recently, Jett completed work on the Sustainable Concept Plan for Lawrence Livermore Laboratory and is currently designing the downtown Livermore Plaza, located near the performing arts theater.

“Each of our designs is really different, each project a unique expression based on a client’s needs, the landscape area, and its use. What distinguishes us from contract design builders is the ability to take on highly technical projects and coordinate the public approval process. On controversial projects, we work with planning departments and neighbors. If you can’t make the neighbors happy, you won’t be able to complete the project,” adds Jett. The firm’s CADD manager, Erin Jackson, assists Jett in creating 3-D computer models for clients.

A native of Saratoga, Jett grew up there during the pre-Silicone Valley days and enjoyed easy access to the Santa Clara Mountains. “My brother and I spent our youth very engaged with the landscape. We saw dramatic changes taking place, and I selected a landscape design career and my brother Guy became a geologist,” smiles Jett. He is married to Nicole Normandeau, proprietor of Health Management Solutions. Her business handles staffing needs for hospitals located in Northern California. The couple has one daughter, Celeste, who is currently a junior at Miramonte High School. Downhill skiing, river rafting and backpacking with his daughter in Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks, and most especially the Yosemite Wilderness, are his favorite hobbies. For more information about Bruce Jett Associates, call 254-5422.

Rene Rasmussen Joins CoreKinetics at 50 Vashell Way

All her life, Rene Rasmussen has danced ballet, tap, jazz – you name it – she has a passion for expression through dance. In the CoreKinetics Pilates program, emphasis is placed on quality of movement and correct breathing with each exercise. Concentration coupled with awareness of the mind and body connection emerges foremost as students learn to execute each move precisely. Rasmussen first came to embrace Pilates after giving birth to her first child by Caesarean Section.

“I took a Pilates class as part of my re-

covery from surgery and fell in love with Pilates immediately. It was not until after delivering my second child by C-Section that I trained to become an instructor,” says Rasmussen. “I realized that everyone has been injured at some time or another in their life, and I enjoy bringing movement back into people’s lives,” she adds. Rasmussen has encountered people who think they might never regain movement. “I love helping them recover and flourish once again.”

While she purposely decided she would not specialize in any specific age group or rehabilitation need, Rasmussen has discovered she especially enjoys working with moms in the Orinda community. Pilates practice helps individuals become more balanced and helps them age better as a result. “Think of it as flipping the pillows on your sofa or the mattress on your bed,” she says with a smile.

While yoga helps one develop flexibility,



Valerie Hotz
Rene Rasmussen of CoreKinetics brings an extensive dance background to her work.

Pilates focuses more on stability and creating balance, with the result that you will move in a more fluid fashion. “The beauty of Pilates is the fact that there are literally

thousands of different exercises and ways to work on a particular muscle group, while focusing on breathing and connecting to the movement,” explains Rasmussen. After realizing how much she enjoyed teaching mothers, Rasmussen took two classes specific to pre-delivery and postpartum recovery in order to better assist her students.

Dena’s husband, John Rasmussen, works in the finance industry. The couple has two children. Jensen is a second grader and five

year-old Boden attends preschool. In her spare time, Rasmussen loves to hike Tilden and Briones, taking along her Havanese dog named Rosie. “I love to see a movie at the Orinda Theatre.”

You may register online for any of the 55-minute classes that are available Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. at www.corekinetics.com, or call Dena Rasmussen directly at 415-385-2799.

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BUSINESS BUZZ

Business Buzz Putting a Personal Face on Local Business

Valerie Hotz



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

Anoush Ella! It Is Indeed Sweet at La Mediterranee

Orinda resident Garbis Bagdasarian's artistic sensibility shines at his La Mediterranee Restaurant, located at 2936 College Avenue, between Ashby and Russell. His first passion was studying art at L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris during the late 1960's, but when the 1968 student riots disrupted

Paris, Bagdasarian returned to his native Lebanon and took a job as an interpreter for a French company in Beirut. "When you love something, it stays with you and sometimes becomes transformed into something else," he smiles.

As an Armenian growing up in Beirut, Bagdasarian's first language was Armenian, followed rapidly by French, Arabic, Turkish, Greek and, eventually, English. Upon immigrating to California in the early 1980s, he joined his cousin who

had established the first La Mediterranee at 2210 Fillmore Street in San Francisco. Bagdasarian oversaw the opening of the College Avenue location in 1982.

Incorporating many recipes handed down in his family, the menu at La Mediterranee features delicious Mediterranean fare at reasonable prices. An abundance of ferns, palms and other plantings adorn the walls while strings of white lights add a festive air. Mosaic tile topped tables adorned with sprays of fresh flowers, combined with wrought iron hanging light fixtures provide a comfortable atmosphere to enjoy a range of delicious breakfast, lunch and dinner menu offerings.

"Our signature dish is the Middle Eastern Mixed Plate, a combination of Chicken Cilicia, Grecian Spinach and Feta, Levant



Orinda's Garbis Bagdasarian owns Berkeley's La Mediterranee.

Sandwich and Lamb Lule or Chicken Pomegranate, with choice of green salad, Armenian potato salad or cup of soup," says Bagdasarian. For newcomers to Mediterranean cuisine, the Mediterranean Meza is an excellent choice, offering a delightful assortment of 10 house specialties and appetizers including Lamb Lule, Dolma, Hummos, Ghanoush, Tabuleh and more. Vegetarian and Vegan selections are available. You won't want to miss the Moroccan Mint Tea. This soothing hot beverage is half green and half mint tea, topped with a sprig of mint.

The hand rolled and mouth-watering Filo specialty offerings are Chicken Cilicia, Grecian Spinach and Feta, Cheese Karni, and Levantine Meat Tart. Small and large box lunches at \$9.45 and \$11.45 respectively are ideal for an afternoon in the park or a day trip to the beach.

If you are planning a celebration or family reunion, check out La Mediterranee's catering and take-out menus featuring party platters, appetizer trays, fruit and cheese platters, sweet trays and more. For complete catering and take-out information, including prices, visit the website at www.cafelamed.com.

Bagdasarian and his wife Silva, have been married 27 years. The couple moved to Orinda in 1993. Their son Ara is a 2008

graduate of Miramonte High School and daughter Tara is currently a senior there. Although the restaurant business is a 24/7 proposition, Bagdasarian enjoys fishing with his son and walking the Lafayette Reservoir whenever his schedule allows.

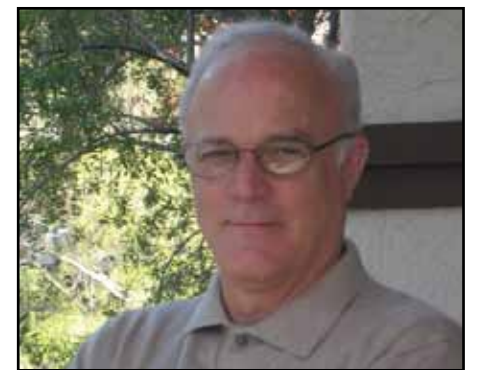
La Mediterranee is open seven days a week, Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 11 p.m., and Sunday 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. For more information, call 510-540-7773 or visit the website at www.cafelamed.com.

Bruce Jett Associates

As the principal in his landscape architect enterprise, Bruce Jett decided to shorten his commute and relocated his practice to Orinda this past September. The firm is located at 4 Orinda Way, Suite 100-D and specializes in creating residential, commercial and civic sustainable landscape designs.

A graduate of U.C. Berkeley, Jett went on to earn his Master's degree in Landscape Architecture at Harvard University, where he studied sustainable landscapes 20 years before it became in vogue. "I trained in rainwater catchments and became certified in green roof design. There are two categories of green roof design, the extensive roof, which involves a thin layer of green plants and the intensive roof, where you grow trees and install pavement. The intensive roof requires more structural design than the extensive roof," explains Jett.

"Several considerations can be integrated into designing landscapes so that you don't have a large impact on the environment. Avoiding pesticides is one example. These principles are part of the Bay-Friendly



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bruce Jett recently relocated his landscape architect business to Orinda.

Landscape program, operated by Alameda County's waste management program. Other factors we incorporate into all of our designs are storm water management and soil biology considerations," says Jett.

Considered a holistic approach to gardening and landscaping that works in harmony with the natural conditions of the San Francisco Bay watershed, Bay-Friendly

[SEE BUZZ page 15]

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Something to Howl About... A Column For Animal Lovers NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS FOR PETS AND THEIR PEOPLE



Jennifer Conroy

What if your cat or dog could give you a list of resolutions it would love for you to keep in the New Year? Let's see what that list might look like for Kitty.

- Clean my litter box every day and change it completely once a week so I don't have to wear a clothes pin on my nose.
- Give me a scratching post worthy of my sharp nails so I don't have to use the sofa legs to trim them
- Get me microchipped just in case I scoot out the door when you're not looking. I always want to be able to find my way home.
- And, please don't freak out if I bring you a little "gift" from the outside. Remember, I'm a hunter by nature and these gifts are meant to show you I love you.

And what about Fido, what would Fido's list look like?

- You know when I stand by the door and do that little whiney dance? That means I need to go out now.
- You can get me microchipped the same time you take Kitty for her...or his. It's sort of like having a doggy passport that will help me get home.
- A reflective collar would be great for those evening walks we take. It'll help keep you safe, too!
- And, please, don't get too mad at me when I jump up on the couch to be near you. It's only because you smell good and I love you.

These are just a few things your cat or dog might wish for in the new year, but

animal companionship is a two-way street; so, what might you expect from the pets in your life?

- **No biting!** That's a big one. No biting of humans or other animals. Biting behavior starts young and needs to be eliminated through rigorous training and positive reinforcement. If you have a puppy or kitten and think it's cute when they nibble on your finger, you may end up with a serious problem later. Any biting behavior needs to be immediately reprimanded with a sharp NO! Sharp does not mean loud. Tone is what counts here, not volume.
- **No chewing!** That means no chewing of your shoes, your carpet, your furniture, or anything not meant for pets. In some cases, the object of chewing delight can simply be moved out of the way. But chewing behavior should not be encouraged by allowing your puppy or dog to chew on old worn out slippers and then being upset when the pooch goes for the wing tips. Give your cat or dog appropriate chew toys of their own and praise them for playing with them. Remove any inappropriate items from their mouths with a sharp NO and replace that item with their own chew toy.

There are other behaviors that are problematic for pet owners, such as incessant barking, jumping, spraying, to name just a few. We'll look at these in future columns.

For now, enjoy the promises a New Year offers and make this the best year ever for you and all the animals in your life.



POLICE BLOTTER

November 2011

False Residential Alarms: Officers responded to 104 false alarm calls throughout the city.

Burglary – Auto: 2 incidents were reported on Martha Rd. and Lombardy Ln.

Burglary – Commercial: 2 incidents were reported on Hwy 24 on WB @ Wilder and Bear Creek Rd.

Burglary – Residential: 3 incidents were reported on Dalewood Dr., Orinda Woods Dr. and Meadow Park Ct.

Petty Theft – From Vehicle: 2 incidents were reported on Carisbrook Dr./Coral Dr. and Orinda Wy.

Stolen Vehicle: 1 vehicle was stolen from Glorietta Blvd.

Arrests

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

Possession of Unlawful Weapon: 1 arrest was made Tahos Rd. / Wanda Ln.

Property - Receiving Stolen: 1 arrest was made on Oak Ln.

Terrorist Threats: 1 arrest was made on Orinda Wy.

Orinda BART Station

Not Reported.

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving, Orinda Police Department



THE REEL LESS TRAVELED

...AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Tom Westlake



That sound you don't hear is the lull after the storm. By the time you read this, the holidays will be a not so distant memory. Christmas lights are coming down. Decorations are being packed away and stored, and trees are lining the streets (although, for those that have wood burning stoves and/or fireplaces, they make great kindling). New acquisitions still retain their luster, though, so it's not solely about returning to normalcy and, although it would be easy enough to continue on in this vein with clever puns about the forthcoming gifts that await us still at the Orinda and the Rheem theaters, quite frankly, most of us are still trying to catch up with the holiday releases. The holiday season, it would seem is, cinematically speaking, the gift that keeps on giving and unless you're one of the lucky few that has time to burn, it won't be until mid-February that you get all of the mainstream offerings out of the way.

That being said, though, there is still enough fresh, unknown stuff to entice you if you've had your fill of 3-D, franchises and all of those other films that will be vying for Oscars in a couple of months.

The first and most welcome return is the International Film Showcase. After their hiatus in December, Jo Alice Canterbury and Efi Lubliner bring us the Bulgarian film *The World is Big and Salvation Lurks Around the Corner*. In many ways, this is the perfect film for this time of year as it deals with new beginnings and fresh discoveries. It tells the tales of memories lost and the various attempts to regain them, and to the game players out there, much of these events center around backgammon, which

serves as the center that holds it all together.

The film will screen during the first week of January, first at the Orinda then moving on to the Rheem giving plenty of opportunities for viewing. Thus far, Canterbury and Lubliner never steered us wrong yet so it's a fairly safe bet that a good time is guaranteed for all.

It also bears mentioning that *World*, aside from the accolades it received at the Palm Springs International Film Festival where it made its debut, was also voted Best Film at last year's California Film Festival right here in our own back yard.

And if that wasn't enough, the Classic Film Series has the best of the old and the new, starting on January 14, at the Orinda Theatre with a screening of *The Godfather Part 2*. To many, this film exceeds the excellence of the first one as it tells two stories – one taking place in the past, with Robert De Niro and the other in present day, anchored by a stunning Al Pacino.

Then on the December 18, at the Rheem, the Otto Preminger classic *Laura* will have a matinee screening at 4 p.m. Apart from the lilting title melody, this is one of the earliest examples noteworthy for its mystery and unique way it unfolds. To say more would be to commit a grave injustice to those that have yet to see this film. Suffice it to say, you will not be disappointed.

As ever, you are encouraged to peruse the websites and even subscribe to either www.lamorindatheatres.com or www.caiff.org for further information. Often there are last minute additions and surprises in store.

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

ON THE CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

Acalanes Union High School District. First and third Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., district office, 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette.

City Council. First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.cityoforinda.org.

Historic Landmarks Committee. Fourth Tuesday, 3 to 5 p.m., Library Garden Room. Call 925-788-7323.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District. Third Wednesday, 7 p.m., Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.

Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees. Second Monday, 4 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 8 Altarinda Road. For the latest listing of dates, please check the website at www.orindaschools.org.

Planning Commission. Second and Fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, www.cityoforinda.org.

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