



# THE ORINDA NEWS

Gratis  
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## 2013 Volunteer of the Year and Environmental Awards Selected



SALLY HOGARTY

Orinda Juniors member **Cindy Powell** (R) helps **Mikayla Llewellyn** and **Melissa Wilson** play games with a resident of the Orinda Convalescent Hospital during the club's annual Halloween Parade and celebration at the facility.

By **DAVID DIERKS**  
Assistant Editor

The Orinda Association selected the Volunteer of the Year and the winner of the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental

## Neighbors Call Meeting with Top Cop on How to Cut Crime

By **BOBBIE DODSON**  
Staff Writer

After being robbed three times, Orinda resident Marc Rovetti took action, initiating a neighborhood meeting with Orinda Police Chief Scott Haggard to increase community awareness of crime.

Some 75 people from the Meadow Lane area (near Glorietta Boulevard) came to the November 19 meeting at City Hall. Sgt. Mohammed Djajakusuma and Public Information Officer Tonya Gilmour also attended.

Neighbors learned that residential burglaries in Orinda were up from 56 in 2012 to 86 in 2013, with grand thefts increasing from seven to 12. Chief Haggard suggested that residents keep the Contra Costa Sheriff's Department dispatch number (925-284-5010) on their cell and home phones for use in emergencies. Orinda Police Department (OPD) contracts with

award on December 9, 2013. The Volunteer of the Year is the Orinda Junior Women's Club (OJWC). Orinda Action Day chairs/co-chairs Kate Rittman (2009 chair), Jessica Smith (co-chair from 2010-2013), April Cotaxis Webber (co-chair 2010),

the Sheriff's Department for 11 officers and two sergeants.

Orinda residents' 911 calls often get routed to the CHP resulting in loss of valuable response time. He said that, if someone calls the OPD and no one is available to answer, the call goes to voicemail, again losing valuable response time.

Haggard also called on citizens to stay vigilant. "If you see something which seems out of the ordinary in your neighborhood, someone who doesn't appear to belong, perhaps even a burglary in progress with goods being loaded into a car, immediately call the dispatch number," said Haggard. "If possible, get a description of the persons or car and, hopefully, a license plate number."

He said police would rather come and find out there isn't a problem, than miss a crime that could have been prevented. "For potential thieves, just seeing the police

[SEE CRIME page 6]



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Volunteers at last year's **Orinda Action Day** with the orange bags they carried around town cleaning up the downtown area.

Mollie Wilson (co-chair 2011), Charles Vollmer (co-chair 2012) and Holly Henkel (co-chair 2013) are the winners of the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental award.

The junior division of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, OJWC is open to any woman residing in Orinda and has been fundraising and engaging the Orinda community for 30 years. The primary focus of the work and monies donated benefit

women and children in a wide variety of programs. Current president Tracy Cummings said, "Our purpose is to improve the community through volunteer services, while also having fun. We are really excited and honored to be nominated as the Volunteer of the Year."

Some of the OJWC community efforts include:

- Orinda Convalescent Home - "We host a lively party and parade for residents of the home with Orinda Juniors' members' children dressed in their Halloween costumes," said Cummings.
- STAND! Against Domestic Violence - OJWC supports this organization by hosting a party for the children who live at the transitional housing facility while the mothers receive counseling. Cummings added, "We also provide backpacks filled with art supplies for each of the children."
- Children's Hospital Family House - OJWC provides Easter baskets to children staying at the Family House. These children are siblings of kids staying at Children's Hospital, often

[SEE AWARDS page 16]

### IN THIS ISSUE

News	
Police Blotter	5
Around Town	
Local Organizations	5, 17, 18
Local Residents	6, 9, 15, 19
Orinda Fitness Guide	10
Performing/Visual Arts	2
Schools/Students	7, 8, 12
Accidental Philanthropist	14
Business Buzz	20
Calendar	17
Car Time	7
Classified	16
Editorial	4
Everyday Changes	13
Orinda Association	3
Something to Howl About	12

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## Take Five - Glass Art, Photographs and Sculpture at Library Gallery

By ELANA O'LOSKEY  
Staff Writer

The new year begins with the work of five artists that will fill the Orinda Library Gallery with evocative photography, glass art using a process spun by NASA and sculptures carved from exotic woods and alabaster.

Why not celebrate the new year by turning off your phone to "Take Five" (à la Dave Brubeck) while visiting the serene gallery for a spell? You will enjoy works by glass artist Vivien Hart, photographers Barbara Lee, Debi Cooper and Aphra Pia and sculptor Anthony Brigance Cook.

Vivien Hart of Orinda is fascinated by the properties of glass and also has a desire for functional art. She grew up in Norway, inspired by the "nordlys" or northern lights whose reflections on the snowy terrain shimmer and sparkle. Now, glass is her canvas and colored glass, when caught by natural light, reminds her of the glimmering northern lights.

"Glass changes so much when you apply heat and different substances to it," said Hart. "I used a little piece of dichroic in the *Dandelion Dream I* piece [17" x 2" centerpiece bowl] because in small amounts it can be very dramatic."

She will be showing centerpiece bowls, drawer pulls and knobs, tiles and possibly a sink, all made right here in Orinda.

Dichroic glass has a reflective quality known as thin film physics that can be seen in the swirling rainbow patterns in a soap bubble, when you look at oil on water or the colors of dragonfly wings. NASA originally developed the technique for use in satellite mirrors and reflective tiles on

space shuttles.

Hart admires two glass artists who work with glass powders: Richard Lalonde of Washington and Narcissus Quagliata of Italy, "who almost draws with glass powders." The two kilns in her garage are used to fire glass between 1,160 and 1,500 degrees.

"Annealing, or bringing the temperature of the glass down properly, makes the glass quite strong," said Hart. "If I drop one of the knobs on the garage floor, it doesn't break." Visit [www.glasshart.com](http://www.glasshart.com).

Barbara Lee of Oakland has always been drawn to photography but jumped into it with both feet when she retired five years ago and joined the Berkeley Camera Club.

As a young woman, she remembers being locked in a darkroom with chemicals; she is grateful for today's digital world. Her spiritual practice is to be out-of-doors, often alone, gazing at her favorite subject: a tree. She derives sustained joy from this practice.

Recently, she gave a talk to the El Cerrito Art League that forced her to look closely at her work. She realized – from comments made by others – that her work has a painterly quality.

"Once at an outdoor festival where I was displaying my photographs, I overheard a dad explaining to his daughter that she should, 'Look at the brush strokes on the painting,'" said Lee.

She hated to spoil the moment but had to tell the dad that it wasn't a painting at all!

"What he thought were brush strokes were eucalyptus trees," said Lee.

Look for about 20 photographs by Lee from California to around the world including many from national parks.

Intimate landscapes, rather than wide vista shots, are her *métier*. She cites Chris-



*Light in the Narrows* by Barbara Lee is a 36" x 51" (framed) ink jet photographic print on Epson hot press natural paper.

topher Burkett of Carmel as an inspiration. Look for 36" x 51" framed *Purple Haze – Pisgah National Forest, North Carolina* and *Light in the Narrows*. Visit [www.barbaraleephotography.com](http://www.barbaraleephotography.com).

Debi Cooper of El Sobrante is sharing the auditorium wall with fellow photographer Aphra Pia; their theme for the show is *Nature's Refrain*. Like Lee, Cooper combines photography and travel.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Anthony Brigance Cook's *The Purple Heart*, utilizing purpleheart wood, will be displayed at the Orinda Gallery during January.

Since getting her first camera in 1976, a gift from her father, she's been in love with photography and its entire process. Capturing an image, processing the film, developing, editing and working on a final print for hours at a time allows her to lose herself in the process.

Cooper belongs to the Bay Area Contemplative Photography Circle and the Alameda, Oakland and Berkeley Digital Photographers. In the circle group, she is learning how to venture outside of the mechanical process of taking a photograph so that subject matter is not forced into preconceived patterns lacking freshness. Cooper hopes her photography sparks a feeling, idea or appreciation of nature in viewers.

Aphra Pia of Oakland has been a photographer for more than 40 years. She likes to photograph places where the overwhelming presence of space and freedom is palpable – Alaska and other parts of the U.S., Antarctica, Africa and Patagonia. Like Lee and Cooper, travel allows her to initiate new ideas and images.

Pia is showing 10 photographs framed out to 20" x 16" on archival photo paper printed with archival inks. Titles include *Yosemite Mist*, *Under Water Color I*, and *Holding Close*. Many images are taken as slides but, lately, she is depending more on her Lumix G2 digital camera. She uses Lightroom and Photoshop for post processing, seldom uses a tripod and always uses available light.

"I want people to see beneath the obvious [of her images] – to feel the cold, to lift their faces to the sky, to cradle the flower in their hand," said Pia. Visit [www.aphrapia.com](http://www.aphrapia.com).

Anthony Brigance Cook of Issaquah, Washington, grew up in the theater where his dad was a set designer. Cook was more interested in the set models his dad designed than the build-out on stage of the final set. Like his dad, Cook worked for many years in set design for film and

[SEE GALLERY page 6]

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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

## A Message From the OA President A New Year in Orinda



Bill Waterman

As we welcome the start of the New Year, the Orinda Association traditionally recognizes and honors the citizens or groups which have made outstanding contributions through volunteer efforts that benefit the community. We do this via the OA's two signature awards: the Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award. This year's Volunteer of the Year award goes to the Orinda Junior Women's Club (OJWC), which is now in its 30th year of helping with numerous community projects, fundraising for other worthy groups, and, generally, benefiting our community. Our William Penn Mott Jr. Environmental Award goes to the Orinda Action Day (OAD) volunteers, and we will recognize the current and past co-chairpersons and project leaders. Now in its fifth year, OAD brings out hundreds of Orindans who spend a Saturday morning in April beautifying and cleaning up our town.

All Orindans are invited to attend the OA's Volunteer of the Year / William Penn Mott, Jr. Awards dinner on Sunday evening, February 9, at the Orinda Community Center. For more information about the event,

and the recipients of the awards, see page one, call the office at 254-0800 or email oa@orindaassociation.org.

And speaking of volunteering in our community, the OA board is currently seeking several enthusiastic people to join our board. We have fun while helping to carry out the OA's mission – to maintain and improve the quality of life here in Orinda, to promote awareness and dialogue on issues of importance to the community, and to mobilize efforts to enhance our community's beauty and character. Board members usually serve for several years, and we are rewarded with the knowledge that we can and do make a positive contribution to Orinda. For more information about our board, please contact me at oa@orindaassociation.org.

Finally, I want to recognize and thank fellow Orindan Steve Stahle, for his dedicated service on the OA board these past several years. Steve worked as our Treasurer and on the Fourth of July celebrations, among other projects. Thank you again for your contributions Steve and good luck with your next endeavor!

Happy New Year!

## Mayor's Awards Recognize Residents from Youth to Seniors



CHARLIE JARRETT

(L-R) Mayor Amy Worth presents the Mayor's Award to OA president Bill Waterman and Seniors Around Town's Eartha Newsong, Jen Villafane and Kate Wiley.

By CHARLIE JARRETT  
Staff Writer

The Orinda City Council paid homage to the citizens of Orinda for their selfless contributions toward the Good of the City in a special awards ceremony held at the December 3 City Council meeting in the auditorium at the Orinda Library. In addition, the city awarded certificates of merit to the winners of the 2013 Lamorinda Idol contest.

Following the opening call to order of the meeting, then Mayor Amy Worth recognized and welcomed Orinda's representative to the Contra Costa County Board Supervisors, Candice Anderson.

One of the first items on the evening's agenda was to publicly thank and honor the 2013 recipients of the Mayor's Good of the City Awards and to congratulate the winners of the Lamorinda Idol contest. This year's winners included:

[SEE MAYOR page 16]

## Seniors Around Town Holiday Party



SALLY HOGARTY

Jan Villafane and Marie Waterman (standing) of Seniors Around Town presented riders with holiday treats.

### 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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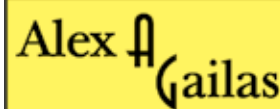
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## The Orinda Association Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Winners!

Congratulations to the  
**Orinda Juniors Women's Club**  
Volunteer of the Year Award for 2013

**Orinda Action Day**  
William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award  
for 2013

These two fine organizations and their members will be honored at a gala dinner on Sunday, February 9, at 6 p.m. Orinda Community Center

Call 254-0800 or email oa@orindaassociation.org to reserve your dinner reservation.



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## Editorial . . . Ringing in the New Year

I hope everyone had some time to relax and enjoy the holidays with family and friends. It seems the pressures of everyday life can easily take over, leaving little time for the truly important things such as those we care about and our own health. I am as guilty of this as anyone, but I hope to do better in 2014!

We at *The Orinda News* begin 2014 with several new additions to our paper. Our first ever Fitness Guide (page 10) debuts this month as well as a new column by Orinda resident Ksenija Olmer (page 14).

The Fitness Guide, compiled by staff writer Elana O’Loskey, will become an annual addition to our January issue, hopefully, expanding to include the Lamorinda area next year. Olmer’s column, entitled *Accidental Philanthropist*, will highlight various volunteer and philanthropic projects undertaken by local residents. For those of you who know Olmer, you are

aware of her many treks around the world helping others. In her column, she will share some of her experiences as well as those of others. I encourage you to contact her with your stories.

The introduction of Olmer’s new column coincides with the Orinda Association’s Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental award announcements. While recipients are often just one person, this year’s winners are both groups – the Orinda Juniors Women’s Club and Orinda Action Day organizers. We hope you will join us in honoring these civic-minded residents and attend the awards dinner on February 9 (see page 3).

We wish all of you a wonderful 2014 and remember to find some time in your busy schedules for those you care about – especially yourself!

– Sally Hogarty, Editor

## Letters to the Editor

### Orinda City Council is consistent about one thing

The personal e-mails of Orinda City Councilmember Sue Severson to and from a developer, concerning a desirable parcel in Orinda Village, have been publicized. The other councilmembers just unanimously elected her to be our next mayor.

These e-mails preceded a tumultuous drafting of Orinda’s Housing Element. An extremely problematic draft in June, written without any public input, enticed several hundred outraged citizens to attend City Council meetings. Many Orindans concerned with preserving the semi-rural character of the city and initiating transparency in City Hall commented publicly and wrote detailed letters. Twelve hundred citizens signed a petition opposing this early draft. A recurrent complaint was that Orinda conceded more than was legally required. Initially, City Council and staff ignored and then insulted these Orinda residents, referring to us as misinformed and paranoid. Eventually, some of our edits were incorporated into the lengthy document. However, the final draft adopted by City Council contains statements that could make Orinda susceptible to manipulation by developers. They are counting on the fact that Orindans are too busy with families and careers to pay attention to these arcane issues.

If you cherish our semi-rural character or just want to have a say in our destiny, stay informed by attending council meetings or listening to the recorded audio afterward. Join a citizen group that focuses on Orinda affairs. Then, have your voice heard by

writing e-mails to council members or speaking at council meetings.

– Bruce London, M.D.

### Level of Distrust in Orinda

In the several years we have lived in Orinda, I have not paid close attention to the discussion of the General Plan and associated issues around development. I have read the process has been transparent and public input has been extensive. I have also heard that many in the community believe that the Orinda government is pro-development and the process is not transparent.

As part of the Montessori/Phairs application, facts came to light that clearly show an example of a lack of transparency that shocks the essence of equity and good governance. I point to emails sent by Councilwoman Severson exposed by Orinda Watch (of which I am not a member or have any association with).

Ms. Severson and Bruce Burrows (according to the City of Orinda website representing developers as a member of the Planning Process Review Task Force) communicated about the Montessori project and agreed that the project should not be approved. As acknowledged by Ms. Severson herself, she then communicated with the head of the Planning Commission on the project and discussed how to defeat the application at the Planning Commission. She then stated that she felt those who disagree with her on development issues are “uninformed.”

The City Council appoints the Planning Commissioners and has in essence appellate authority over their decisions. As an



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	Page		Page
<b>Automotive</b>		Kattenburg Architects	13
Orinda Motors	7	<b>Real Estate</b>	
Orinda Shell	8	AG Realty	
<b>Beauty and Fitness</b>		Alexander Gailas	3
Changes Salon & Day Spa	20	Better Homes & Gardens	
CoreKinetics	10	Lisa Shaffer	7
Gina Khan Salon	1	Coldwell Banker	
In Forma Integral Fitness	5	Laura Abrams	19
Living Lean Exercise & Eating Program	13	Patti Camras	11
<b>Churches</b>		Shellie Kirby	15
Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church	9	Maureen Wilbur	12
<b>Construction and Trades</b>		Frank Woodward	2
Cabrillo Plumbing, Heat and A/C	1	Orinda Oaks	
David Collins Painting	3	Kellie Bequbelle	19
<b>Dental</b>		Pacific Union	
Dr. Kristi L. Doberenz DDS	9	Virginia and Paul Ratto	6
Dr. Mary Smith DDS	11	Leila Schlein	5
<b>Educational/Camp</b>		Village Associates	
Old Firehouse School	14	April Matthews	16
<b>Financial and Insurance Services</b>		Ann Sharf	14
Breedlove Insurance Services	20	Clark Thompson	17
Linney CPA Group Inc.	19	<b>Restaurants/Catering</b>	
RPM Mortgage	14	Baan Thai	6
<b>Garden/Landscaping</b>		Casa Orinda	5
Blue Ridge Landscaping	18	La Mediterranean	14
Garden Lights	18	Loard’s Ice Cream and Candy	15
McDonnell Nursery	15	Siam Orchid	15
Tree Sculpture	6	Szechwan Restaurant	6
<b>Medical</b>		Village Inn Cafe	10
Dr. Brian Clark	8	Zamboni’s Pizza	3
Dr. Kristin Walker	11	<b>Retail Stores</b>	
Medicine Shoppe	15	Morrison’s Jewelers	10
<b>Pet Service</b>		Orinda Florist	10
Animal House Pet Sitting	12	Theatre Square	20
Theatre View Veterinary Clinic	12	<b>Senior Services</b>	
<b>Professional Services</b>		Excellent Care at Home	9
Cruise Adventures Unlimited	2		

appointing and appellate authority over the Planning Commission, it is, in my opinion, inappropriate and unethical for a sitting City Council person to influence them on a project that will be or is pending before them (especially on a project that was most certainly going to be appealed).

We need to upgrade our downtown, and this will involve bringing together many diverse opinions and perspectives. The process needs a high level of trust, open-mindedness, compromise and trans-

parency. Ms. Severson’s continued tenure will only enhance the mistrust and belief by many that the process is stacked in one direction. She has done tremendous good for Orinda, and my daughters enjoy the part of the library that she has generously contributed to. Like she did in recusing herself on the Montessori project appeal, I would encourage her to resign as soon as possible so the air of distrust in Orinda can begin to dissipate.

– Ed Jajeh

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

Send letters to: Editor, *The Orinda News*, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563, fax them to 254-8312, or email to news@orindaassociation.org. Letters to the Editor for the February issue are due January 5, 2014.

For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 or email to jill@aspenconsult.net. The deadline for the February issue is January 5, 2014.

SOCIAL NETWORK / POLICE

# Nextdoor.com Keeps Neighbors In Touch

By Bobbie Dodson  
Staff Writer

Interested in staying in touch with your neighbors?

Several neighborhoods in Orinda are using the Nextdoor social network website (<https://nextdoor.com>) to bring neighbors together. For instance, a recent meeting of Meadow Lane members with Police Chief Scott Haggard, at which 75 people showed up, was initiated through a posting on Nextdoor.

"Nextdoor is a private social network for you, your neighbors and your community," states the website. "It provides an easy way for neighbors to talk on line. Examples of ways people are using Nextdoor are to quickly get the word out about a break-in;

organize a Neighborhood Watch Group; find a trustworthy babysitter; or ask for help in keeping an eye out for a lost dog."

Every neighbor who signs up must verify his or her address and sign in with their real name. The website is protected by password and encrypted by HTTPS. Information is not shared with advertisers.

Based in San Francisco, Nextdoor was founded in 2010 and is funded by grant money from Benchmark, Greylock Partners, Tiger Global Management among others. Its 64 employees focus 100 percent of their efforts on improving Nextdoor and introducing the service to new neighborhoods.

To start a new Nextdoor neighborhood, visit the website and fill out the required [SEE NEIGHBORS page 9]



## POLICE BLOTTER

November 2013

**False Residential Alarms:** Officers responded to 48 false alarm calls throughout the city.

**Auto Burglary:** 1 incident on Camino Pablo/Santa Maria Way and 3 incidents on Bryant Way.

**Burglary – Residential:** 6 incidents on Los Altos Rd., Ironbark Circle, Scenic Dr., Orchard Rd., Orchard Court, and Overhill Rd.

**Felony Vandalism:** 1 incident on Descano Dr.

**Petty Theft from Vehicle:** 1 incident on Orinda Way and 2 incidents on Dalewood Dr.

**Stolen Vehicle Recovery:** 2 incidents on Charles Hill Circle and Dalewood Dr.

**Arrests**

**Auto Burglary:** 1 arrest on Camino Pablo/Santa Maria Way.

**Other Misdemeanor:** 1 arrest on Moraga Way/Los Cerros.

**Possession of Marijuana + 1 oz.:** 1 arrest on Camino Pablo/North Lane.

**Violation of a Court Order - Domestic Violence:** 1 arrest on Lost Valley Dr.

**Warrant Arrest:** 4 arrests on Camino Sobrante, Sleepy Hollow Court, Moraga Way, and Camino Pablo/Santa Maria Way..

**Orinda BART Station**

No stats reported.

– Compiled by Jeanette Irving, Orinda Police Department

### Additional Police Activity During November/December

- The detectives filed 7 misdemeanor cases (3 DUI, 3 public intoxication, and 1 probation violation). They also conducted follow up on prepared supplemental reports for 3 felony cases which were presented to the district attorney's office for filing. They have an additional case filing appointment with the DA's office on an auto burglary arrest for 2 suspects with lengthy criminal histories.
- Detectives also identified a suspect in a May 2013 burglary case and are actively searching for the suspect in various locations in Central and East County.

## Czech Republic Ambassador Hosted by Sister City Foundation



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

(L-R) Ambassador Gandalovic, then Mayor Worth, Hon. Consul General Richard Pivnick and Bobbie Landers.

The Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation co-hosted, along with Hon. Consul General Richard Pivnick, a casual gathering at San Francisco's Café Prague to welcome His Honor Petr Gandalovic, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Czech Republic, to the Bay Area. The ambassador was in San Francisco to present former U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz with the Silver Medal of Jan Masaryk in recognition of Schultz's role in implementing foreign policy that led to the conclusion of the Cold War.

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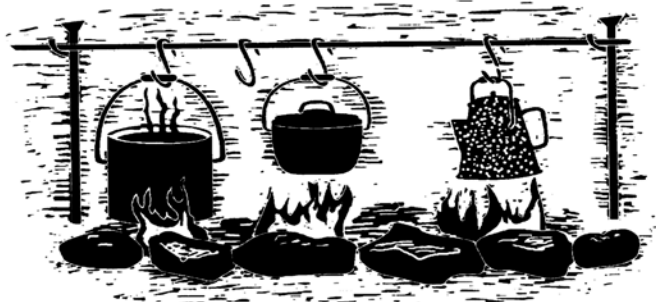
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## LOCAL RESIDENT

## ◆ CRIME from page 1

presence in the neighborhoods is a good deterrent and is reassuring to residents," said Haggard.

The chief said that most home burglaries occur during daylight hours, and often entrance is made from the back yard. One resident related how his home surveillance cameras recorded his house being burglarized around 12:30 p.m. He said two females rang the front door bell. When no one answered, they went back to their car that was parked in the driveway. Two men then came and kicked in the front door. The clock on the camera showed the men were in and out in 35 seconds.

Haggard suggested ways to decrease crime: Put locks on gates; keep doors and windows locked; install an alarm system

and always use it when away; keep a dog; leave the television or radio on when away during the day and add lights after dark; leave a car in the driveway; tell neighbors if you'll be away and make arrangements for pickup of mail and newspapers.

One resident suggested a good alternative to a real dog is a motion-activated dog alarm system. Installing surveillance cameras is also a good idea, said the chief.

"There can be some privacy issues depending on where they are installed, so talk with your neighbors and tell them what you are doing," said Haggard. "Usually they have no problem with it."

Resident Karen Burt urged her neighbors to be proactive. "No one thing works all the time, but if each of us does as much as possible to protect our homes, and also stay on the lookout for suspicious behavior – and reports it - we can be of much help to the police," she said.

Rovetti pointed out that cities such as Piedmont have installed surveillance cameras at select spots around town and report a positive effect in reducing crime. "I know they are expensive, but it's something the Orinda City Council might want to investigate," said Rovetti. "I'm very impressed with our police force and the quick response I have received from them. They are doing a good job, but with our small force, their presence throughout the city is limited. They need everyone's help in reporting anything that doesn't look normal."

Rovetti added that he was impressed with the turnout for the meeting as a result of his posting on the Meadow Lane neighborhood's [www.Nextdoor.com](http://www.Nextdoor.com) website. "Nextdoor.com is an excellent way to keep in touch with a large group, not only for meeting information and crime reports, but for recommendations for service people, babysitters, items for sale and request items," said Rovetti.

## Resident's Brother-in-Law Wins Nobel Prize in Chemistry

By CHARLIE JARRETT  
Staff Writer

Betty Karplus, who has lived in Orinda since 1954, traveled to Stockholm, Sweden, in December to attend the 2013 Nobel Prize ceremony honoring her brother-in-law, Martin Karplus, for his contributions and work in the field of chemistry. Betty was accompanied by two of her children, Andrew and Beverly. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden presented the awards.

The Royal Academy of Sciences awarded the Nobel Prize to Martin (Université de Strasbourg, France and Harvard University, Cambridge), Michael Levitt (Stanford University School of Medicine) and Arieh Warshel (University of Southern California, Los Angeles) for the development of multi-scale models for complex chemical systems.

"The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences presents its Nobel awards on December 10 each year," said Betty. The date is significant in that Alfred Nobel died on December 10, 1896, and is also the anniversary of Human Rights Day. The monetary prize amounts to about \$1.3 million, which is split between the three award recipients.

One of Betty's children, Andrew Karplus, works in the same area of biochemistry as his uncle Martin. "My son Andrew is a biochemistry professor at Oregon State University at Corvallis and my daughter, Beverly Hartline, is the Dean of Graduate Education at Montana Tech in Butte," said Betty. "Martin's work began 40 years ago when chemists used to create models of



CHARLIE JARRETT

Betty Karplus traveled to Stockholm, Sweden, to see her brother-in-law honored as a Nobel Prize winner.

molecules using plastic balls and sticks," she continued. "Today, the modeling is carried out on computers."

In the 1970s, Karplus, Levitt and Warshel laid the foundation for the powerful programs that are used today to understand and predict chemical processes. Computer models mirroring real life have become crucial for most advances in chemistry today.

Although officially retired, Martin Karplus is still a professor at Université de Strasbourg and Harvard University, where he continues to engage in research and study.

## ◆ GALLERY from page 2

theater and then decided to pursue his own work. He now teaches stonework at Pratt Fine Arts Center in Seattle.

Among the two large and three small sculptures he is showing, look for *The Purple Heart* (2' x 1.5" x 10" carved from purpleheart wood) and *Colorado Alabaster* (1' x 1' x 10" carved from Colorado alabaster). He hopes his work will invigorate viewers' curiosity. Cook lends his work to national and international organizations that endeavor to raise awareness about epilepsy. He finds just getting people to talk about epilepsy is a challenge. Visit [www.brigancook.com](http://www.brigancook.com) or [www.pratt.org](http://www.pratt.org).

Lee says her art reminds us that we can travel to a park to enjoy nature with little

effort and that art feeds your soul. Cooper says a community's identity, history and character is revealed in its art and that art allows people who may not otherwise connect to come together and share meaningful experiences. Pia says that art brings people together to appreciate what we have, to see possibilities for exploration and more appreciation for where we live. Cook says starting with children, art spurs curiosity in enormous ways without really trying to – it keeps us thinking and pondering about what we've seen in our environment.

Visit the gallery during normal library hours (closed January 1 and 20) – Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. Call 254-2814 for information.



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CAR TIME / STUDENTS

CAR TIME

Who Can You Really Trust?

by JOHN VANEK



It seems to me that most motorists are very concerned about the cost of automotive repairs more than anything else. A major concern is who is working on your vehicle and how well can you trust them. A recent phenomenon has been recurring that I need to share. It is a common daily occurrence that I get calls looking for a price quote. Sometimes it may be a regular customer, other times not. They ask for a price on a specific repair like brakes. I always ask why they may need that repair? It is often because somebody may have recommended it. Is it somebody that you can trust? What I hear a lot lately is that their vehicle was at the dealer getting warranty work done and the dealer service department noticed additional repairs that need to be done.

First of all, did you authorize an inspection on your vehicle? It is against the rules from the Bureau of Automotive Repair to do anything to your car without your permission, including inspections. You must sign an estimate that explains what will be done and you receive a copy. They will often sneak in a "complimentary inspection." It is OK if you can trust them. We no longer give prices over the phone on such recommendations because the majority of the time we do not agree with the recommended repairs. Owners need to know the realistic urgency on when these repairs really need to be performed. If the brakes really have 40 percent remaining with no problems noticed, we are not going to be recommending brakes. This happens all the time, and it is a shame owners put their trust in local dealerships, and these companies

are willing to charge these customers for work that does not need to be done. It really doesn't matter about the price if the repair really doesn't need to be done right now. I can share a dozen cases in which I convinced the owner into letting me take a look, and I did not agree with the recommendations.

I have always said that what you should be shopping for is a shop you can trust instead of worrying about the exact cost of every repair. By the way, it is difficult to quote a brake job or undetermined repairs over the phone. There are too many variables. All this does is waste everybody's time. If you trust a shop, then the price should not be an issue because they will always give you the best value possible on repairs that really need to be done. If they give you a reason not to trust them, then get a second opinion.

If you get a notice for a warranty repair on your vehicle, be aware of what you are signing. Do not give them permission to inspect your car if you don't want them to. Unfortunately, there is still a certain amount of greed and corruption in this industry. Most dealers work on a commission or a "flat-rate" basis that encourages this kind of behavior. Don't fall for this routine. If you have your car serviced regularly, then you should know the condition of your brakes. If they recommend repairs have it double-checked by your regular shop.

I recommend being a good auto repair consumer. Have your car serviced regularly by your trusted car care provider and work on keeping your vehicle out of the shop.

Local Students Address School Safety

By STEPHEN SCHMIDT, and NICK COUFAL

*Editor's Note: Local high school students recently looked at safety issues, including bullying, at their schools. Here, in their own words, are two students' concerns and projects to help make their school environment a safe place.*

**Stephen Schmidt, Miramonte High School, Class of 2017**

Hearing about the horrific shootings in schools nationwide and the threat of natural disasters, such as wildfires and earthquakes in our area, I wanted my Eagle Scout project for Boy Scout Troop 237 to make a difference and address these issues.

Earlier this summer, I met with Mr. Ken Gallegos, Principal of Sleepy Hollow Elementary School, to discuss school safety ideas. I learned that various public safety agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, had recently met and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Sleepy Hollow principal **Ken Gallegos** and Miramonte student **Stephen Schmidt**.

revised the School's emergency protocols. It was now expected that in an emergency, responders would ask for a directional location to indicate a particular site on campus.

[SEE SAFETY page 15]



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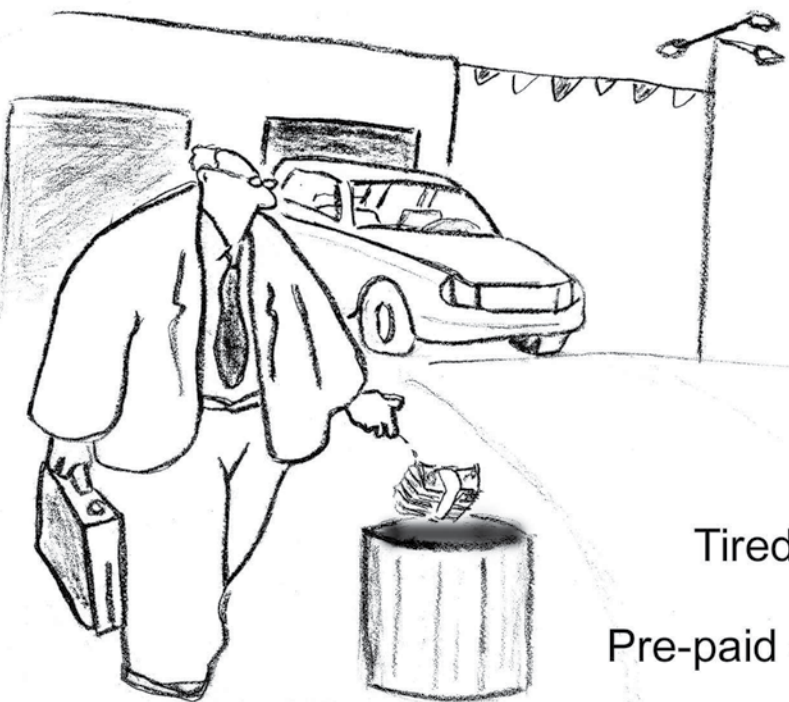
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STUDENTS



(L-R) Twins Niamh and Malia Akazawa and younger sister Fiona are world-class Irish dancers. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

## Three Orinda Sisters Reach for Irish Gold

By MAGGIE SHARPE  
Staff Writer

Three young Orinda sisters competed in the U.S. Western Regional Irish Dance Championships in Sacramento on November 22, and each earned a spot in the 2014 World Championships in London in April.

Twins 12-year-old Malia and Niamh Akazawa took 17<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> place respectively, out of a field of 130 girls in the Under-12 category. Their little sister, 9-year-old Fiona, won third place in the Under-10 from a field of 80 competitors.

“You can’t imagine the excitement, the atmosphere was really electric,” said the girls’ mom Catherine Akazawa, who was born and raised in County Cavan in Ireland. “The girls said they could hear me and my friends scream in the audience!”

Niamh, who attends Orinda Intermediate School with her twin, said the World Championships are very hard. “It’s like the Olympics of Irish dance – people come from all over the world to compete,” said Niamh, who finds competition, “nerve-racking, but really fun.”

Ironically, the sisters won’t be able to take part in this year’s World Championship in London, because one of their teachers at the Butler Fearon O’Connor School of Irish Dance in South San Francisco, where they train, is going to be a judge at

the competition. “Their teacher tried to get out of judging, so that the girls could dance, but it wasn’t possible,” said Catherine. “However, they automatically qualify for the 2015 World Championship, so they’ll definitely go to that.”

Instead, the sisters will compete at the 30<sup>th</sup> All Scotland Irish Dance Championships at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall in February, which also attracts hundreds of world-class Irish dancers. “I can’t wait to see Scotland,” said Niamh, who visited Ireland with her mom, sisters and dad Dean Akazawa four years ago. “I imagine it’s a lot like Ireland with a lot of fields and countryside.”

Fiona said she wasn’t really expecting to win third place in the regional competition. “I was so excited because I’d worked so hard,” said Fiona, a student at Glorietta Elementary School, who has been dancing since she was 3 years old. “We just moved to a different dancing school last year, so I wasn’t expecting to do so well.”

Malia explained that the girls switched from their old school in Walnut Creek because it focused more on ceili and team dances, while she and her sisters wanted to focus on solo dancing. “We practice about four days a week,” said Malia. “A month or two before a major competition, we practice six days a week.”

[SEE IRISH page 14]



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## Sister-to-Sister Summit Extends a Hand to Middle School Girls

By LYNDA LEONARD  
Contributing Writer

What do you get when you put a large group of middle school girls into a room with confident, articulate high school girls? Lots of excitement, fun, sharing of experience and more. Such is the case for the American Association of University Women’s (AAUW) annual Sister-to-Sister Summit (S2S).

Taking place on March 22, the summit enables middle school girls to celebrate

develop leadership skills and become more supportive of each other.

Four students from Miramonte High School (MHS) are among the mentors this year. Ariel McLean, Molly Swain, Maddie Nelson and Elizabeth Chenok and other high school students from the Acalanes High School District have been preparing for six months to make the day a memorable experience for their younger counterparts.

The four MHS students have found the summit so rewarding that they return each year for training in fundraising, publicity,




(L - R) Miramonte students Molly Swain, Maddie Nelson and Elizabeth Chenok will be among the mentors at this year’s Sister-to-Sister summit. LYNDA LEONARD

being a girl by getting together with other middle school girls and high school mentors in the spirit of fun and mutual support. It gives them the opportunity to talk about what is going on in their lives through presentations and small discussion groups. The girls learn to make healthier choices,

marketing and facilitation. This year’s team of high school mentors began to prepare for the March 22 summit back in September. During December’s training, Stefana Serafino of Intuitive Dance recounted her experience with buli-


[SEE GIRLS page 13]




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LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER

# Richard Westin Documents World Travels in Pictures

By Charlie Jarrett  
Staff Writer

Longtime Orinda resident Richard Westin – Orinda’s 2012 ‘Citizen of the Year,’ is also a world traveler. He and his wife Pamela have journeyed to some 100 countries.

A member of the Orinda Community Foundation, Westin says traveling and recording those family journeys in photographs is one of his greatest passions. While he collects a wide variety of photographic images from his travels, he particularly dwells on faces, for it is faces that he loves most of all.

“When I travel I want get to know and understand more personally each country’s native fabric and way of life,” says Westin, who adds that his travels have given him a greater appreciation of family in society.

Westin and his wife recently visited Papua, New Guinea where he took photos of indigenous tribal families. He describes Papua’s lifestyle as entirely male-dominated, polygamous and Pagan.

“There are approximately 700 village communities throughout this part of New

Guinea, 700 different tribal customs and 700 different languages spoken,” said Westin. “Therefore, they cannot communicate very well between tribes and, for that reason, each tribe is very isolated.”

Westin continued, “It’s the most Pagan place I have ever been. It’s an interesting confluence as Christianity and Paganism battle for control of these communities. Practices such as polygamy still exist and the buying of wives still prevails.”

He says a wealthy man is determined by how many pigs he owns, and 30 pigs will get you a wife.

“One guy we met was 87, and he had five wives,” said Westin. “The men sleep in one structure, and the women and pigs sleep elsewhere, which shows you how society is.”

He says the women in Papua do everything - gardening, cooking, catching fish, raising the kids, cleaning the house, while the men sit around and talk.

“This adventure has shown us how far we have come as a diverse world community and how far we have yet to go,” said Westin.

In the coming year, Westin and his wife are planning more trips through Photo Quest Adventures (PQA) out of New York City.

“PQA is a highly specialized travel program designed to provide both a premier photographic adventure and an adventure where mainstream travelers do not or cannot go,” said Westin.

In addition, he says PQA provides financial benefits to the communities visited by travelers.

“While we were in New Guinea, we traveled to four different locations and visited 13 villages,” said Westin. “Each village was given approximately \$1,000 from PQA, which seemed to make them very happy. These are indigenous people who are living in very primitive conditions. This financial gift gave us unique insights into their community’s way of life.”

PQA also mounts small adventure trips

Nextdoor includes a neighborhood map and directory, so users can learn about their neighbors who have joined by reading posted profile information. Members can choose to receive emails about each new post, view the day’s activity in a daily digest or turn off email and check the website when they wish.

Another way to stay informed about Orinda is to subscribe to the city’s weekly email newsletter, *The Orinda Outlook*. In addition, residents can sign up for City Council meeting notifications and special emergency updates such as road closures, power outages and fallen trees. Visit [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org) and click on “subscribe to email notifications.”



RICHARD WESTIN

These are just two of the many images that fascinated photographer **Richard Westin** on his recent trip to New Guinea.

with professional photographers as instructors. Most of these instructors have either been employees or contributors to *National Geographic*, or are of comparable professional caliber.

“These are not the kind of trips where you expect to stay at a luxury hotel,” said Westin. “On this trip to Papua, there were six of us, and my wife and I made up one third of the entire group.”

Since their contingent consisted of such a small group, they were able to get exposure to unique experiences.

“All because we are not riding in the big bus, not your typical tourist group,” said Westin. “For example, we traveled across the country in an eight-seat aircraft that landed on a small grass airstrip.”

After that, the group was picked up by boat from the airstrip and taken to a modest hotel.

“There are no towns as such and few and/or no roads,” said Westin. “The local people generally live on the river and travel by small dugout boats they have hewn themselves.”

Westin says he and his wife took four other photographic adventures with PQA this year, including Holland (for the flowers), Panama, Iceland and Greenland.

“When PQA takes us on a photographic adventure, they even provide us with paid models, because you do not often find locals who are willing to wait hours until ‘the sun is just right’ so that you can get exactly the photographic shot you are striving for,” said Westin. “So, in this case, we hired an entire village to act as our models.”

Westin said the locals put on wonderful welcoming ceremonies.

“If you are in their village when a special event occurs, such as when the one and only road is being repaired, they celebrate and put on a big ceremony,” said Westin. “They put on a dance party and share their joy that something is finally getting done about a problem.”



RICHARD WESTIN

The colorful faces of the tribesmen intrigued Westin.



RICHARD WESTIN

Elaborate decorations adorn this young man in Papua, New Guinea.

## ◆ NEIGHBORS from page 5

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# Orinda Fitness Guide

by Elana O’Loskey  
Staff Writer

What defines fitness for you and your family? One common definition is “the condition of being physically fit and healthy.” Experts agree that regular exercise builds muscles, burns fat, lowers cholesterol, eases stress and anxiety and leads to restful sleep. What’s not to like? January is the cliché month to begin, continue or change up your exercise routine: what’s working, what’s not, what goals fit for right now (pun intended)? Myrna Witt, of the Orinda Arts Council, suggests reading *The Power of Habit* by C. Duhigg (available at Orinda Books), as a way to migrate from where you are to a new place. We hope our guide assists you in exploring how to take exercise beyond routine so that it truly serves the physical well being of you and your family. If you know of a fitness

resource in Orinda we’ve missed, email us at [news@orindassociation.org](mailto:news@orindassociation.org).

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Brittany Benedetto is the official yoga instructor for the Golden State Warriors. She offers classes at Living Lean on Tuesday,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Women in this **Community Center** fitness class make exercising look like fun.

Thursday and Friday. She believes yoga is for everyone and can be made accessible to any person – young, old, big, small, tall, short, fit, no-so-fit, anxious, calm, etc. The physical practice of asanas can take exercise to a whole new level – it can elevate you, connect you and take you through the hard times. Also classes in other locations including 24 Hour Fitness in Moraga and In Forma Gym in Orinda; kids yoga as well.

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[SEE FITNESS page 11]

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FITNESS GUIDE

◆ FITNESS from page 10

Four courts (two are lighted), many clinics, private classes, interclub matches for both adult and junior classes. Women's league participation includes Bay Area Ladies League, Flex Leagues, Contra Costa Spring League and more. Gentlemen participate in recreational weekend play and UTSA and Flex Leagues at all levels. State-of-the-art heated infinity pool with 6 lanes for lap swimming and a shallow area for wading and play (April through October).

**Moraga Valley Pool and Tennis Club**

15 Risa Court  
925-376-4110  
www.moragavalleypool.org

Private club; inquire regarding membership. Member of the Orinda Moraga Pool Assoc., US Aquatics Council and US Tennis Assoc. Pool is open April through October and has 6 lanes, a diving board area and sizeable shallow play area; also a baby pool. Tennis is open all year, 4 courts with observation deck overlooking pool and tennis areas. Many Olympians trained here including: Heather Petri, Water Polo 2012 London; and Matt Biondi, 1992 Barcelona. Family oriented club with many activities year-round.

**Orinda Country Club Tennis & Fitness**

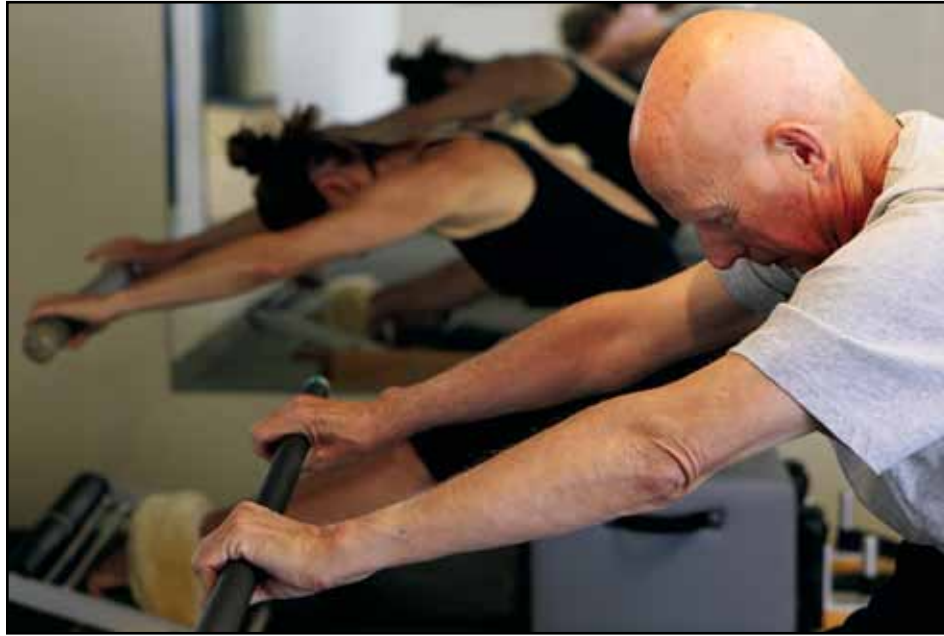
315 Camino Sobrante  
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www.orindacc.org

Private club; inquire regarding membership. Five courts lit for night play overlooking Lake Cascade. Family-friendly calendar of tournaments and other events to complement their competitive league schedule. Fitness center sits on the lake and has cardio equipment, weight machines, dumbbells and stretching area. Also locker rooms, showers, and more. Aquatics program enjoyed by members year-round.

**Orinda Fitness**

15 Altarinda Road  
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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A class of dedicated students at **CoreKinetics** Pilates Studio in Orinda.

with Miramonte coaches and/or ex-athletes for young athletes.

**Orinda Parks and Recreation Department**

Orinda Community Center  
28 Orinda Way  
925-254-2445  
http://www.cityoforinda.org/

Seasonal activity guide available online, also info about parks and trails. Adult sports leagues begin in spring and summer, info online. Dance and Fitness classes offered year-round at the Orinda Parks & Recreation Department including: ballet, Polynesian dance, flamenco, line dancing, ballroom dance, yoga, dancercise, boot camp, Pilates, Nia, Tai Chi Ch'uan/Qigong, meditation and zumba.

**Orindawoods Tennis Club**

650 Orinda Woods Drive  
925-254-1065  
www.orindawoodstennis.com

Private membership club; inquire regarding membership. Seven championship courts, pro shop, locker room, sauna and pool.

**Salsa Dance Lessons With Tomaj**

Orinda Community Center  
28 Orinda Way  
925-254-2445  
www.salsawithtomaj.com

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necessary for salsa dancing lessons on Mondays, Beginners 7-8 p.m., Intermediate/Advanced 8-9:30 p.m. Open Dancing before and after each class - starts at 6:45

p.m. Drop-in rate \$15 per person. Series classes available.

**Sleepy Hollow Swim and Tennis Club**

1 Sunnyside Lane  
925-254-1126  
www.sleepyhollowlegends.net

Private recreational facility; inquire regarding membership. Family oriented facility offering excellent swim, tennis and social programs for members. Recently revitalized Olympic class rim-flow gutter system pool - the gutters reduce turbulence - with eight lanes, a racer's dream. New separate children's activity pool.

**Yoga With Jeanne**

72 Scenic Drive  
925-254-0193  
www.yogawithjeanne.com

Jeanne Dowell teaches public classes at the Orinda and Moraga Community Centers. You can begin a class at any time; first class is complimentary. She is available for private sessions for individuals or small groups, in your home or hers. Try her meditation class as well.

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Something to Howl About...  
Animal Tales  
A Table For Me And My Dog



Jennifer Conroy

It's a new year and, for some of us, a chance for a new outlook. Maybe it's time to think about a diet or clean out that closet or just change our views on companion animals.

What do we mean by "companion animal?" The term has become the politically correct designation of animals that were once referred to as "pets." But have outlooks about companion animals changed? That question was on the forefront of my mind on a recent trip to Italy.

It was while eating a delectable meal at a famed restaurant in Tuscany that divergent views about companion animals crystallized. There, as a spicy arrabiata sauce danced on my tongue, a large and beautiful Alsatian dog entered the restaurant with a young couple. They were shown to a nearby table without a moment's hesitation. The dog was placed on a "down" under the table and only an occasional glimpse of a tawny paw gave any indication there was a dog in the room.

Another evening in Italy, another restaurant, another fabulous meal starting with fresh gnocchi al pesto - enter a pair of tan dachshunds with a foursome of humans. These little guys (yes, they were male dogs)

parked themselves on either side of one man's chair where they quietly remained throughout a long and delicious dinner.

Similar scenes took place at eateries in Italy ranging from neighborhood pizzerias to white-table ristoranti. Humans and dogs together in places one would never see a companion animal in the U.S., unless, of course, it was a service animal with access protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

In Italy, it's not just dogs in restaurants. It's cats in food stores, cats and dogs in wine shops and cafes and hair salons and in many places of commerce and social exchange - places where one would never see a companion animal permitted in this country. Why is it that one country and culture offers such inclusion to animals while another has laws and regulations that prohibit it?

Regulations in this country reflect concerns about disease, uncleanliness and bad behavior as reasons for prohibiting access. In Italy, which has centuries of experience with animals as guards, protectors and hunters, dogs and cats are viewed as partners and coworkers as well as family members.

[SEE HOWL page 16]

# Lamorinda "Lamo" Rugby Club Spotlights 2014 Team Leadership

By STEVE PETERSON  
Contributing Writer

The 2014 Season for our local high school and youth rugby teams is about to start up again in January. Practices and home games are at Wilder Field in Orinda. For more information, see [www.lamorugby.com](http://www.lamorugby.com). Here is an update on three varsity team leaders.

### Peter Golesorkhi, Team Captain - Forwards

Returning starter in the forward pack, Peter Golesorkhi, will again be a force to be reckoned with in 2014. Having two brothers six years older, Golesorkhi was groomed for getting lower than his opponent and rucking them off the ball. He first started playing for Lamorinda Rugby



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Peter Golesorkhi is the forwards team captain.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Luke Lundstrom keeps control of the ball during a game last season.

with his deceptive speed and lightning agility, is ready to light up Wilder Field this coming season. Luke started with the Lamorinda Rugby club in 6th grade, and, more recently, his first two seasons on the Lamo JV team produced two undefeated seasons. During his summers, Luke has fine-tuned his skills at the Cal Rugby Camps. This past fall, Luke set a team example by working responsibly towards recruiting new high school players for the program. On the football field, Luke's teams at Miramonte reached the playoffs all four years of his career. Currently looking to reach Eagle Scout rank and having served as a volunteer for local charities, Luke's collegiate plans include a possible major in Biology, but first, look to see him starring in his final season with Lamo.

in seventh grade. Since then, "Golo" has proven himself as a leader and has been instrumental in Lamo's success over many seasons. His favorite moment was witnessing Lamo win the State Championship in 2012. Along the way, Golesorkhi has been attending Cal Rugby camp in the summer, and he happened to earn all league the last two seasons as a defensive lineman in football for Campo. Golesorkhi clearly has success in mind and has plans to play rugby in college. It's time now, however, for Lamo fans to enjoy one more season locally watching "Golo" on the pitch.

### Luke Lundstrom, Team Captain - Backs

Already having achieved many high school athletic accomplishments, star full-back and 2013 starter, Luke Lundstrom, returns for his senior year and is poised for another stellar season. Luke, having dazzled fans in Lamorinda for many years



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Matt Woolsey is the rugby club's team player president this season.

### Matt Woolsey, Team Player - President

If you have been following Lamo Rugby for the last five years, you have been hard pressed to miss 6'4" senior, Matty Woolsey, [SEE RUGBY page 16]



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**Everyday Changes**  
Successful New Year's Resolutions? Right!

Bonnie Waters



With the intensity of the holidays past, you may be thinking about what you would like to accomplish in 2014. You may have even set a few New Year's Resolutions. Raise your hand if you achieved your 2013 resolutions? Ok, now raise your hand if you find it easy to make difficult lifestyle changes. If you answered yes to both questions, you can stop reading.

On the other hand, if you are like many of us, you may not even remember last year's resolutions. Worse you might be one who gave up on the whole resolutions thing! Statistics show that the majority of people make the same resolution each year. So, what does that tell us about the nature of resolutions? Why is it so difficult to keep resolutions, and what can we do to have greater success? I took these questions to Camala Casco, Career Path Mentor at Changes for her perspective.

**Question:** Camala, why do so many people have a difficult time keeping New Year's Resolutions, and what can we do to have greater success?

**Answer:** Although I don't consider myself an expert in New Year's Resolutions (I am among those who repeat the same resolutions each year), I can pass on ideas that I will try this New Year. In my opinion, the problem with most resolutions is that they are just too big! Frequently, we feel overwhelmed by their immensity and find it difficult to even get started. Big change is difficult to sustain because it takes a lot of time and/or dedication.

1. Make only one resolution. Creating a list of New Year's resolutions is the easy part. Anyone can create a list of goals they'd like to achieve. The hard part is the follow through. Think about the one goal that if you achieve it in 2014, you would feel a huge sense of accomplishment. Rather than dilute your energy just stick to one with laser-like focus.

2. Create the resolution as a positive affirmation and think it, or better yet, express it frequently throughout the day. Although scientists once referred to positive thinkers as "Pollyannish," now according to top brain experts positive thinking can actu-

ally restructure the brain. It seems that human potential author Napoleon Hill had it right with his famous quote, "Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve." Throughout the day, state the resolution according to the intended outcome i.e. instead of saying you want to lose 10 pounds, state the weight you would achieve if you lost those 10 pounds and how you would feel. State your resolution as an affirmation. Example: I feel energetic and healthy at my ideal weight of 140 pounds."

3. Take baby steps daily to get going and soon you will gain momentum. As Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." If a resolution is truly important to you, it is critical that you dedicate sufficient time and energy for the magnitude of the goal. In any case, break down the resolution into doable chunks. If a healthy, energetic body is the intended outcome, what small steps can you do daily, to achieve that outcome?

4. Seek success through progress, not perfection. So you ate the calorie laden cupcake. Don't abandon ship. To paraphrase Winston Churchill "Never, never, never give up." Give yourself permission to be a work in progress. According to my mentor Dr. Deepak Chopra, success is the progressive realization of worthy goals. Just set a worthy goal and keep on keeping on!

To sum it up:

1. Make only one resolution and make it count;
2. State it as an affirmation that you repeat frequently;
3. Take baby steps. Break down your resolution into worthy goals;
4. Remember that positive change is about progress not perfection. Never, never, never give up!

And for those of you who have not yet made a New Year's resolution, it is not too late. After all, who said that January 1 is the only day to set a New Year's resolution.... Chinese New Year is January 31.

Happy New Year to you and yours!

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

Move of the Month

**Legs Hips and Glutes!**

**The Side-Reaching Lunge**

Hold a pair of dumbbells and stand with feet 2-3 feet apart. Lower your body over your left leg until your knee reaches 90 degrees, allow your right leg to extend. As you sink to the left, extend the right dumbbell toward the outside of your left foot, keeping your back rounded.

Return to start and switch sides.



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

◆ **GIRLS** from page 8

mia, striking a chord with the girls.

"This as a huge one, especially in middle school," says McLean. She says girls are pressured by the media and their peers to look a certain way. In places such as Orinda, Moraga, Lafayette and Walnut Creek, appearance is strongly emphasized and there is pressure to fit a certain mold.

"There are many eating disorders that develop in middle school and, oftentimes, they become sort of a 'trend,'" says McLean. "Girls may participate in dieting or eating disorders with their friends to try and keep each other motivated."

Swain says other challenges girls deal with include pressure from boys, mean girls and bullying, and a strong need to excel academically. "There are definitely tons of confusing things about middle school and it's easy to feel lost while going through it," McLean adds.

Nelson says she's been through many challenges as a teen. "As a teenager I have been through a variety of changes and challenging times, and I could share with many

people the lessons I have learned from these obstacles," says Nelson. She sees the need to help young girls find self-confidence so they can have a good social life and be comfortable within themselves.

Swain recalls how satisfying last year's S2S summit was. "It was an awesome experience to see the girls change throughout the day and slowly come out of their shells," says Swain. "The day was fun while still being beneficial emotionally."

Chenok says she discovered last year how scared and unconfident middle school girls can be about their future. "Not a lot of them have mentors that they can go to and talk with about certain things that come up for them," says Chenok.

"S2S provides a safe place for girls to have their ideas and concerns heard," says McLean.

This year's Sister-to-Sister Summit is on Saturday, March 22, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at Bentley School, 1000 Upper Happy Valley Road, Lafayette. Applications must be received by March 17. The cost is \$45. For further information visit [www.aauwoml.org/s2s/](http://www.aauwoml.org/s2s/).

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PHILANTHROPY

◆ IRISH from page 8

It takes about 45 minutes after school to get from Orinda to South San Francisco, which amounts to a lot of driving time every week for mom. "I don't see it as a burden at all, I love to invest my time in their goals and dreams," said Catherine, who is an on-call oncology nurse. "The time in the car is quality time where we talk and catch up."

It's also homework time. "The girls do their homework in the car – we bring the tablets, iPads, phones and Internet connection – and so far they've been keeping up," said Catherine.

However, she also feels fortunate that her three daughters all love Irish dancing and that she isn't torn between driving to soccer or other pursuits. "It's a blessing that all three girls love Irish dancing and

can enjoy it together and all be successful," said Catherine.

The sisters make a lot of sacrifices too, in terms of time spent with friends, missing out on birthday parties and having to watch their diets and always eat healthy – not such a bad thing, according to mom. "We've learned a lot of life lessons about discipline, focus and how to reach our goals," said Malia, who adds that she loves the dressing-up aspect of the Irish dance competition.

Her twin sister agrees that the hard work paid off. "Our goal was to qualify for World, so to qualify from 130 people was so amazing and exciting for us," said Naimh.

Catherine said she loves the Irish dance and music, but also the lessons it's teaching her daughters. "I think it's teaching them that you need to work hard to succeed," said Catherine.

Accidental Philanthropist  
Volunteering is a Selfish Act



Ksenija Olmer

*Editor's Note: This issue, we are debuting this new column on volunteering. Given the amount of volunteer hours logged by Orindans, it seemed an appropriate venue to highlight such endeavors. The column will appear every other month.*

Volunteering is a selfish act. Yes, I said it! And I freely admit I am guilty as charged. There is a lot of talk in volunteering about giving back, building up character, etc., but ultimately it boils down to this: volunteering gives you more than you give. That is the ultimate hook and that's why it can become quite addicting. Among "true" volunteers (those who don't volunteer for other gain, such as padding the university application or gaining power in their social circle), you will find people that get such an emotional high that they return again and again.

That's me and I, not so jokingly, sometimes refer to myself as a professional volunteer. A notice goes up in the local paper for volunteers needed for clean up day or the woman's organization I belong to is looking for a committee chair, and I have to literally sit on my hands so as not to sign up. What has motivated me to volunteer through the years has changed, but the feeling of connectedness to others in a common cause and a sense of a full heart and well being has stayed. And it is not just a feeling, there are plenty of studies and scientific proof that helping others can actually reduce heart rate and blood pressure, increase endorphin production, enhance your immune system, and buffer the impact of stress -- even increase life expectancy while improving the quality of life at the same time. I'll take that as a just reward.

But really, what is the motivation for the myriads of people, some young and some old and many middle aged, that do sign up? In an unofficial poll among my volunteering friends, I found that people volunteered for different reasons: to help in their child's classroom or school or after school activities (moms and dads), to support their political or civic activities (Democrats and Republicans, community minded Lamorindans), to help animals, to use their professional skills in volunteer settings (lawyers, accountants), to strengthen

their faith, because they believed in a cause or simply because a friend asked them to.

Looking back at all my years of volunteering, I must admit that below many of those answers lies a deeper truth. When I first came to America as an immigrant, I only had a spouse visa, not a work visa, so volunteering was a way to get out of the apartment and learn about American society. As I had my children and stayed home with them, I volunteered to get out of the house and use my brain and education for more than changing diapers, cleaning toilets and driving the minivan around. An evening meeting was also a nice excuse to leave my husband to deal with the everyday parenting strife.

As I became more deeply involved, it was the friendship of other very inspiring women that was the amazing benefit and the real reason I kept coming back. Now with my kids grown, I am lucky to be able to combine my biggest passion in life – traveling – with volunteering. It is so much fun to be able to travel around the world, visit a country and learn about the culture through volunteering in the local community! It is for a very selfish reason: the travels and my life are so very enriched by it.

What are your reasons to volunteer?  
To reach Olmer with your comments/ideas, email [xenija@aol.com](mailto:xenija@aol.com).

Have you signed up for the Orinda Outlook?

In an effort to improve city-wide communication, the city has developed a new weekly email newsletter. The newsletter is in addition to the regular email updates on City Council meetings and/or city emergency alerts.

To subscribe online for the Orinda Outlook, City Council meeting notifications and special emergency updates that may include: road closures, power outages, fallen trees and other important emergency information from the city, visit [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org) and click on "subscribe to email notifications."

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LOCAL AUTHOR

# Orinda Resident Swaps Suits and Ties for Literary World

By KATHRYN G. MCCARTY  
Staff Writer

Orinda resident Robert S. Murillo says that after retiring from 31 years of “wearing suits, ties and wingtips,” he did not slow down at all.

Following a successful career as a stockbroker at Wells Fargo, Murillo tackled the literary world and has recently released his first novel, *The Vanity*, which will have a reading at Orinda Books in the near future. “Orinda Books has always been a safe haven for me,” said Murillo. “I love stopping by, wandering around, finding new releases and chatting with the folks who work there.”

Murillo hopes that Orinda residents will enjoy *The Vanity*, which he spent four years writing. “The plot is inspired by Louise

Brooks, the remarkable and hedonistic starlet of the silent movies, as well as a fascination with time and crossing time,” said Murillo. He added that writer Jack Finney, “famous for his wonderful tales of fantasy and time travel,” also served as inspiration.

Murillo says the story is about silent film star Louise Brooks’ desperate attempt to reclaim three negatives that reveal risqué images of her. The character discovers that a modern-day writer with the ability to time travel now lives in her home, and the writer must decide whether or not he will take the risk of changing history by altering the past.

Murillo’s wife Suzanne worked with him on the novel. “I had originally written it as a short story and was ready to move on to other things when she ‘strongly’ suggested that the plot line was strong enough to support something longer,” Murillo said.

◆ SAFETY from page 7

For example, “The earthquake damage is in the playground bathrooms, located on the western part of the campus.” When every second counts for emergency response, imagine the challenge and time delay of not being able to quickly communicate the directional location of the disaster.

Compass Roses at seven strategic locations on the campus provided a solution (as well as a teaching opportunity at the school). I designed a two-foot diameter, five-color compass rose on my computer, and then worked alongside design and production staff at TAP Plastics to produce a set of reusable high density plastic templates. Just last month, over Thanksgiving break, I led a team of other scouts and friends in painting the compasses. The staff and students at Sleepy Hollow Elementary can now easily determine north, south, east and west from several locations on the campus.

I am continuing to drive this initiative. My vision for the campus compass project is for all Lamorinda, and even schools nationwide, to have compass roses on their campuses.

**Nick Coufal, Miramonte High School, Class of 2014**

Returning from a two-week adventure, river rafting the Grand Canyon, we discovered that my sister Sarah had been severely cyber-bullied. Someone stole her identity and opened an Ask.fm account impersonating her. There were hundreds of fraudulent

and appalling posts. Ironically, I had run for Student Body President promising an anti-bully campaign and unexpectedly, bullying had literally hit home.

Though still early summer, Sarah’s bullying motivated me to begin fulfilling my election promise. From a lodge in the Grand Canyon, I posted what happened on Facebook, Instagram and twitter. The perpetrator immediately deleted the account and the screen filled with dozens of “likes” and thoughtful comments in support of Sarah. Returning home, we reported the crime to Ask.fm and to the police.

I had read about a growing national movement, The Bully Project, which disseminates a heart-wrenching film following the tragic stories of five bullied teens. Meant to be a catalyst for change and a starting point for conversations, I purchased the movie and the educational tool kit. I was eager to kick off the school year with the student body watching the film, setting the tone for the year. Then I created a power point presentation to persuade the principal to show the film and conduct a survey that would uncover how and where bullying was taking place. School began and the bully survey overwhelmingly revealed that social, academic and cyber-bullying were common.

Because my leadership responsibilities include running the student-government class and reading the announcements over the PA, we promoted the film by making posters and incorporated a “bully fact” into the daily broadcast. Suddenly, I was

[SEE COUFAL page 16]

“I was retired and had the time.” He said Suzanne served as his “cheerleader, proof-reader and an honest critic.”

Murillo added that although the couple had some differences of opinion, their discussions made the story better while also strengthening their already close marriage of 43 years. “I have always been a huge fan of the movies of the silent era, the ‘30s and the ‘40s,” said Murillo. “Chaplin and Fairbanks, Astaire and Rogers, Powell and Loy, Bogart and Bacall – well, just bring it on. A bag of popcorn, Suzanne at my side, and a Veronica Lake/Alan Ladd movie on the screen, and I’m all set.”

Prior to his work as a stockbroker, Murillo taught English for 11 years in Richmond schools. He plans to publish a short story book next year called *The Thirty Third Floor*, inspired by his work in the financial world. “Each day, I’m becoming more enthused – and surprised – with the enjoyment that the book is bringing,” said Murillo.

To learn more about the Orinda Books reading of *The Vanity*, visit <http://orinda-books.com>. *The Vanity* is available at Orinda Books or online at Amazon.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

When **Robert Murillo** retired from the business world, he started writing. His first novel *The Vanity* is available at Orinda Books.

books.com. *The Vanity* is available at Orinda Books or online at Amazon.



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## CALENDAR

## ON THE CALENDAR

## January

- 1 **Student Art from Afghanistan** will be on display at Lafayette Library and Learning Center, 3491 Mount Diablo Boulevard, through January 13, sponsored by Trust in Education. Visit [www.trustineducation.org](http://www.trustineducation.org).
- Klein Gallery** presents *Prickly Point* through January 12, featuring the work of nine Bay Area artists in a variety of mediums, 50 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. The gallery is open Tuesday through Sunday. Call 360-1335 or [carrie.klein@kleingallery.net](mailto:carrie.klein@kleingallery.net).
- 2 **Story Hour** with Cathy Goshorn for toddlers and their caregivers, Thursdays, Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, 10 to 11 a.m. Call 254-7606.
- 7 **WomenSing**, a premier East Bay women's ensemble, hosts auditions January 7 or by appointment. All voice parts welcome, with scholarships available for qualified singers. Visit [www.womensing.org](http://www.womensing.org), email [audition@womensing.org](mailto:audition@womensing.org) or call the voicemail at 974-9169.
- Orinda POISE** (Parents of Orinda Individuals in Special Education) sponsors a lecture entitled *Anxiety, Attention, Learning & Behavioral Challenges: A Developmental Pediatrician's Perspective*, Lafayette Library Community Room, 3491 Mount Diablo Boulevard, with parent social at 6:30 p.m. and lecture at 7 p.m. RSVP to [info@orindapoise.org](mailto:info@orindapoise.org).
- 8 **Contra Costa Children's Chorus Auditions**, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette, 4 to 6 p.m. Choir levels for boys and girls 6 to 16 years, with local performances and touring opportunities for advanced choirs. For an appointment or questions, call 945-7101, ext. 1, or email [frontdesk@childrenschorus.org](mailto:frontdesk@childrenschorus.org).
- 10 **The International Film Showcase** will screen *Instructions Not Included*, a Mexican-American comedy, through January 16 at the Orinda Theatre. Visit [www.lamorindatheatre.com](http://www.lamorindatheatre.com) for showtimes.
- 15 **Orinda Books** hosts Meg Donohue discussing her novel, *All the Summer Girls*, 276 Village Square, 10 a.m. Call 254-7606.
- 18 **Dungness & Drafts Annual Orinda Rotary Crab Feed**, featuring great food and entertainment, Orinda Masonic Lodge, 9 Altarinda Road, 6 to 9 p.m. Tickets are \$50. Visit [www.orindarotary.org/](http://www.orindarotary.org/) to register.
- 19 **Orinda Books** hosts Elizabeth Cohen discussing her novel, *The Hypothetical Girl*, a lively collection of short stories, 276 Village Square, 1 p.m. Call 254-7606.
- 21 **World Affairs Book Group** will discuss Syria: *The Dictator's Learning Curve: Inside the Global Battle for Democracy* by William J. Dobson, Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, 3 p.m. Call 254-7606.

## AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified. The library will be closed January 1 for New Year's and January 20 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. For more information, call 254-2184 or visit [www.ccclib.org/locations/Orinda.html](http://www.ccclib.org/locations/Orinda.html).

- 4 **Book Sale** sponsored by Friends of the Orinda Library, Book Shop and Sorting Area, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- 9 **ESL Conversation Circle** for adults, practice and improve English conversation skills in a small, informal group, 1 to 2:30 p.m. Registration not required. Also January 16, 23 and 30.
- 14 **Toddler Lapsit**, stories, songs and fingerplays for infants to 3-year-olds and their caregivers, Gallery Room, 10 to 10:30 a.m. and 10:30 to 10:55 a.m. Drop-ins welcome, attendance limited to once per week. Also January 15, 21, 22, 28 and 29.
- Peek-A-Book Time**, songs, stories, rhythms and rhymes for infants to 16 months old and their caregivers, Gallery Room, 11:30 a.m. Also January 21 and 28.
- 15 **Paws to Read**, children in grades 1 through 5 can sign up for a 25-minute session with a friendly dog. Sessions at 3:30 and 4:05 p.m. Also January 22 and 29. Call the library to register.
- 17 **Mystery Book Club** members will read and discuss *Rebecca*, Daphne Du Maurier's classic tale of a woman haunted by the powerful presence of the former mistress of Manderley, Tutoring Room, 3 to 4 p.m. For adults 18 and over.
- 22 **Inspirational Songs to Lift Your Spirits**, featuring standards, jazz, show tunes, rock, R&B, country and bossa nova, performed by Moraga resident Brenda Lin, Fireplace Room, 7 to 8 p.m.
- 25 **Celebrate the Year of the Horse**, Lunar New Year fun for the whole family, Garden Room, 3:30 p.m., sponsored by the Eng family and the Friends of the Orinda Library.

## CLUB MEETINGS

- Diablo Star Chapter #214**, Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 p.m., Orinda Masonic Center. Call Karen Seaborn, 689-0995.
- Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe**. Third Monday, 7:30 p.m., Better Homes and Garden Mason-McDuffie office, 51 Moraga Way, [www.moragaadobe.org](http://www.moragaadobe.org).
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**. Fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library, 253-1997.
- Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition**. Third Wednesday, 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Orinda City Hall Sarge Littlehale Room. Call 687-8844, ext. 227.
- Lamorinda Nature Walk and Birdwatching** for seniors. Wednesdays, 9 to 11 a.m. free. Call 254-2445 for weekly meeting place.
- Lamorinda Sirs** for retired men. Second Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. Luncheon speakers plus golf, tennis, bocce, bridge and astronomy. Call Pete Giers, 254-4667.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**. Every Friday, 7 a.m., Celia's Mexican, 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, 254-0440, ext. 463.
- Lamorinda Toastmasters**. Every Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Temple Isaiah, 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, [www.lamorinda.freetoasthost.net](http://www.lamorinda.freetoasthost.net).
- Orinda Garden Club**. Fourth Thursday, 10 a.m. to noon, September through May, Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante. Visit [www.orindagardenclub.org](http://www.orindagardenclub.org).
- Orinda Juniors Women's Club** community service group. First Tuesday, September through June, 7 p.m. Contact Thama Brentano at [thamascout@gmail.com](mailto:thamascout@gmail.com) or [www.orindajuniors.org](http://www.orindajuniors.org).
- Orinda Rotary**. Every Wednesday, noon, Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, 254-2222.
- Orinda Association**. Second Monday, 7:15 p.m., Orinda Library, May Room, 254-0800.
- Orinda Hiking Club**. Every weekend and first Wednesday. Visit [www.orindahiking.org](http://www.orindahiking.org) or call

## Friday Forum Focuses on Chinese Brain, Language, People and Culture

By BOBBIE DODSON  
Staff Writer

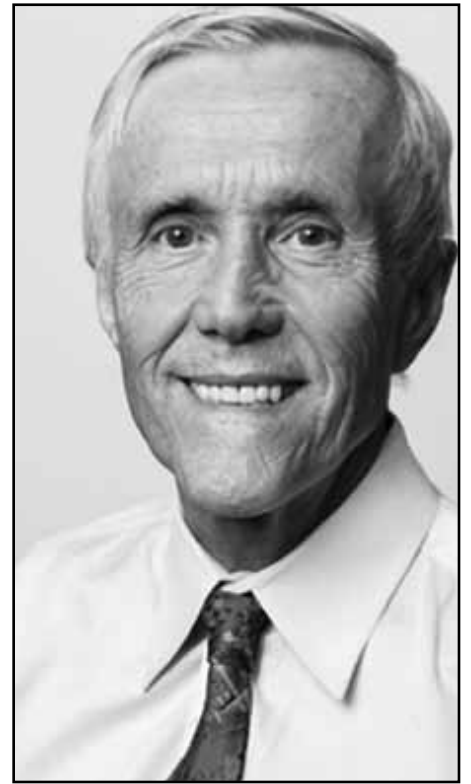
The Chinese Brain, Language, People and Culture is the title of Tom Scovel's First Friday Forum lecture on January 3, at 1:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary of the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church.

"I will try to demonstrate that despite superficial differences in language and culture, the Chinese share much in common with all of humanity," says Scovel, who is Professor Emeritus, San Francisco State University. "It is primarily the repressive control of the Chinese Communist Party that has created divisions and challenges not just for other nations and peoples, but even more for the Chinese themselves."

Scovel says he's included "brain" in the title of his talk since he finds, based on his study of neurolinguistics, that much research on the topic is misleading. "For example," he says, "the notion that there are measurable neurological differences between people from different cultures."

Dr. Scovel was born and raised in China, the son of missionary parents and attended high school in India. He came to the United States where he graduated from the College of Wooster in Ohio. He earned an M.A. in linguistics from Ohio State University and a Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of Michigan. He has written academic articles and books on a wide variety of topics and has spoken at numerous conferences throughout the world.

After retiring from San Francisco State University, Scovel published a book on his life in China called *The Year China*



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tom Scovel will speak at the First Friday Forum on January 3.

*Changed*. In 1979, he and his wife Janene lived and taught in China for a year. They were among the first Americans to be invited to China to work as foreign experts. They also lived and taught in Thailand for seven years.

Refreshments will be served in the church's Fellowship Hall, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette, at 1 p.m., followed by the forum. For more information call 283-8722.

Ian at 254-1465.

**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. Email [orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com).

**Orinda Woman's Club**. Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon, call Jean Barnhart, 254-3881. Visit <https://sites.google.com/site/orindawomansclub>.

## CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

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

**City Council**. First and third Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).

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

**Moraga-Orinda Fire District**. First and third Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m.. Visit [www.mofd.org/board/meetings](http://www.mofd.org/board/meetings) – meeting location will be posted on the agenda.

**Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees**. Second Monday, 6 p.m., OUSD Conference Room, 25 Orinda Way, Suite 200, Orinda. For the latest listing of dates, please check the website at [www.orindaschools.org](http://www.orindaschools.org).

**Planning Commission**. Second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 p.m., Library Auditorium, [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).

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



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LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

# Third Time's the Charm for Holiday Cheering

By SUGAR FILICE  
Contributing Writer

For the third straight year, members of the Orinda Garden Club (OGC), ably assisted by members of Boy Scout Troop 237 and certain stalwart husbands and scout dads, braved the cold to festoon Orinda with 100 cheery wreaths.

Lucky merchants on both the Village and Crossroads sides were decorated with evergreen wreaths assembled by OGC volunteers. From Orinda Motors through the Community Center and library over to Theatre Square and Mechanics Bank, Orinda "dressed up" for Christmas in true holiday fashion.

Chairwomen Sandy Barnett and Mary



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
DD Felton and president Janet Riley of the Orinda Garden Club hold up one of the decorative wreaths the group made and placed around Orinda in December.

Read, along with help from president Janet Riley, organized members and volunteers alike to make the day a success. Julie O'Melveny once again coordinated assistance by the boy scouts of Troop 237 with scout Reider Martinsen in charge. Most recent garden club past president Carole Wolfman provided donuts and coffee for warmth and "fuel."

Then Mayor Amy Worth expressed her gratitude, "The City of Orinda is delighted by the beautification efforts of the Orinda Garden Club. We once again are enjoying the festive decor inspired by their 'The Wreaths Around Town' holiday project."

OGC volunteers gathered at the Orinda Country Club on December 5 to put the wreaths together and enjoy the group's annual tea. Bright and early on December 6, they began hanging the festive creations around town.

Since 1937, the Orinda Garden Club has been involved in beautification projects around Orinda. OGC undertakings include planting next to the Orinda Crossroads off ramp, a major cleanup and re-vamping of the area surrounding Lake Cascade as well as the triangle across from the Phair's building. Orinda's three other garden clubs also provide civic enhancement throughout the year with the four clubs joining for larger projects.

## Garden Clubs Work Together to Beautify Orinda



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Orinda's four garden clubs all contributed funds and volunteer hours to redo the planting beds in front of the Orinda Library and to add a granite walkway at the bus stop. (L-R) Lani Schultz and Judy Martine (Montelindo Garden Club), Gina Field and Julie O'Melveny (Orinda Garden Club), Liz Reed (Orinda Junior Garden Club), Shari Bashin-Sullivan of Enchanting Planting, who designed and installed new plantings and granite walkway (Orinda Garden Club), Joyce Nelson (Orinda Valley Garden Club and Orinda Garden Club), and Janet Riley (president, Orinda Garden Club).

# AAUW Fashion Show Raises Funds for Fellowships and More



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
(L-R) Kelly Claussen, Joan Armstrong, Bobbie Dodson-Nielsen, Diane Bell-Rettger, Eliza Jamkochian (owner of Glamorous Boutique), K. de Groot, Laura Wittenburg, Staci Gerson and (front) Janet Forman.

By CHRIS LASZCZ-DAVIS  
Contributing Writer

"Eliza Jamkochian, owner of Glamorous Boutique, brought her own special glamour to Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette (OML) when the local AAUW branch showcased local women entrepreneurs on October 15, 2013. The event included a buffet lunch provided by Café Hacienda plus MarketPlace, featuring OML artisans. Eliza Jamkochian's infectious energy immediately spoke of the enthusiasm and commitment she puts into promoting her shop, Glamorous Boutique, and in selling her line of specialty dress wear. As the saying goes: the apple doesn't fall far from the tree... In Eliza's case this can be applied both figuratively and literally. Her father is Joseph Jamkochian, owner of Creative Alterations, whose shop happens to be right next-door on Brown Ave. in Lafayette.

Café Hacienda came about when Jill

Keimach, Moraga's town manager, and Jay Ingram, director of Parks and Rec., realized a need to utilize more of Hacienda de las Flores' magnificent assets. Home-made café and bakery owners Aly Dean and Gayle Somers were approached about setting up a café to market their fabulous homemade food. Café Hacienda specializes in delicious, organically inspired and locally sourced breakfast and lunch offerings. The café provided its signature vegetable quiches and an assortment of baked goods for the October Fashion Fundraiser luncheon.

There was an opportunity to purchase fashions and accessories from Glamorous Boutique and other local artisans before and after the fashion show. The October luncheon meeting was a fundraiser benefiting AAUW Funds. The national AAUW Association in Washington DC manages and disburses these funds to provide educational fellowships, grants and legal advocacy support.

## Festival of Trees Raises Almost \$40,000



CHARLIE JARRETT

The fashion show, which combines local residents with professional models, is the highlight of the Orinda Woman's Club's (OWC) annual Festival of Trees fundraiser. This year's show raised approximately \$40,000 and benefits the Contra Costa County Court Appointed Special Advocates (which advocates for the needs of neglected or abused children), Restorative Justice in Schools (which helps create positive school environments), and OWC's Community Service Committee (which donates to local and international nonprofits and awards education grants).

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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 20

**McDonnell's Nursery Celebrates 49 Years Serving Orinda Gardeners**

The original McDonnell's Nursery was first established in Oakland 80 years ago in 1933, with the Moraga Way location opening in 1965. Three generations of the McDonnell family have overseen the business, beginning with Jack McDonnell, his son Dan and, since 1999, Dan's daughter Sarah has been managing the Orinda store.

An all-purpose nursery that maintains in stock a wide variety of plantings, the staff of 15 is enthusiastic about helping customers.

"We have a great staff here and most have been here a very long time – which says a lot about our staff's commitment to customers and to the nursery," said Sarah McDonnell. "In fact, one staff member recently celebrated 33 years with us. Our customers are very knowledgeable about gardening. If we don't have a specific plant in stock, we are happy to take special orders and do what it takes to locate a special plant for our customers."

Throughout the year, a variety of free classes are offered, including sessions on vegetable gardening, tree pruning and caring for houseplants. On Saturday, January 25 at 10 a.m., the East Bay Rose Society will teach a rose pruning class. This sum-

mer a rose workshop will be featured as well.

After taking down holiday decorations this month, houseplants are likely to get some extra attention. Shop McDonnell's for attractive ceramic pots to add as accent pieces. Decorators and gardeners alike will find garden statues galore ranging from sculpted frogs and rabbits to Buddha and the traditional St. Francis of Assisi tending his beloved animals. Wind chimes add a pleasant note to the garden, in addition to outdoor fountains. Decorating motifs change by the season and holiday at McDonnell's, making this a fun place to shop for hostess gifts throughout the year.

"Customers often bring photographs of their yard, and we do as much as we can to help them design and select plants for their garden," said McDonnell, who earned her bachelor's degree in agriculture business from California State University, San Luis Obispo. "There is always an interest in native plants, and we have a small selection in stock. Since these types of plants do not like to be containerized for long periods of time, we take special orders for customers if they want something we do not have immediately available."

Smith is married to Mark Slight, a risk engineering manager at Intel and the couple has two young children, Noah and Heidi.

"Mark helps out at the nursery from time to time and he has been known to help out a lot with the Christmas trees," said McDonnell.



VALERIE HOTZ  
**Sarah McDonnell** is the third generation of the McDonnell family to manage this local business.

McDonnell's Nursery is open 7 days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information about McDonnell's Nursery, call 254-3713 or visit the web site at [www.mcdonnellnursery.com](http://www.mcdonnellnursery.com).

**Ribbon Cutting at Bailey's Orthodontics**



SALLY HOGARTY

Chamber members welcomed the opening of Bailey's Orthodontics' beautiful offices on Altarinda Way in December. (L-R) **Tom Romaneck**, president **Sylvia Jorgensen**, **Jeff Bailey** and **Dr. Melissa Bailey**, **Roy Hodgkinson** and **Candy Kattenburg**.

**Dr. Zeller Receives Distinguished Service Award**

Congratulations to Dr. Scott Zeller.

The Orinda resident and Chief of Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES) at John George Psychiatric Hospital in San Leandro was awarded the Simanek Distinguished Service Award by the California Hospital Association.

Dr. Zeller was recognized for his work in developing, promoting and leading efforts to understand the effectiveness of a PES framework known as the "Alameda Model," which among other things reduces delays for psychiatric care.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Kindergarten Registration in February**

Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten registration for children entering an Orinda public school in August 2014 will be held 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. at each of four elementary schools on the following dates:

- Monday February 3, 2014
- Tuesday February 4, 2014
- Wednesday February 5, 2014
- Thursday February 6, 2014

Kindergarten students must be at least five years of age on or before September 1, 2014, and if a child has their 5th birthday between September 2, 2014 and December 2, 2014, they are eligible for Transitional Kindergarten.

For additional information regarding registration instructions, please check the OUSD website: [www.orindaschools.org](http://www.orindaschools.org).



*Laura Abrams*  
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Valerie Hotz



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### The Advanced Therapy Center at Crossroads

With more than 25 years of clinical experience, Candia Smith, DMH, specializes in a highly effective combination of psychodynamic psychotherapy, integrative psychotherapy and LENS Neurofeedback and Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR). She provides psychological diagnosis and treatment for individuals and couples based on an integrated approach to healing.

It was over 10 years ago that Smith, founding director of the Advanced Therapy Center, suffered a traumatic brain injury while cycling in Italy that ultimately changed her life and her psychotherapy practice.

"The injury was fairly severe and caused me to feel separated from my body," said Smith. "I sought the help of local psychologist Susan Snyder, Ph.D., who introduced me to Low Energy Neurofeedback System (LENS)."

Smith said the effect of the LENS treatment was, "that I literally came back into

my body." She adds that LENS is also a very helpful treatment for Attention Deficit Disorder.

"Basically, neurofeedback is a type of biofeedback that utilizes real-time displays of electroencephalography to illustrate brain activity and teach self-regulation. There are no negative side effects from neurofeedback," said Smith. "I was a traditional talk therapist, which I still incorporate. However, it is great to have a system that can cure conditions rather than teach individuals how to cope with a condition."

Length of treatment varies, depending on how long symptoms have existed for an individual, with the average treatment plan consisting of 20 sessions.

"People use LENS for performance enhancement, including athletes," said Smith. "It is a nontraditional neurofeedback that can't be explained by current science theories. We do not know why it works, but it does."

Giving power to the individual is what Smith really likes about the system.

Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) is a trauma releasing technique, the goal of which is to allow individuals to process disturbing memories

and help them develop effective coping mechanisms.

"My experience as a talk therapist over the years has been that most everything is related to trauma of one type or another, be it physical, emotional, nutritional or environmental," explained Smith.

While she started as a LENS practitioner, Smith is trained in, and can deliver, over 100 different kinds of neurofeedback.

A 23-year resident of Orinda, Smith is married to jewelry designer Jon Winge. The couple has four adult children. You may see Smith on the streets riding her new cycle experiment, a solar-powered electric motor bicycle.



VALERIE HOTZ

Therapist **Candia Smith** provides psychological diagnosis and treatment.

"It looks more like a tricycle and is encased in a shell, so I will be dry when it is raining," she said.

To keep fit Smith practices Pilates twice a week. She has been known to enjoy bowling and shooting pool, but hiking the hills with her dog is probably her favorite way to spend free time.

For information about the Advanced Therapy Center, visit [www.advancedtherapycenter.org](http://www.advancedtherapycenter.org) or call 254-7823. Located at 61 Moraga Way, Suite 6, appointments are available Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

### Animal House Serves Pet Owners in Lamorinda

Pete Ritter celebrates eight years as the small business owner of Animal House, a pet and home care service that makes it comfortable for pet owners to vacation with

no worries about the safety and well being of their pets while they are away. Ritter operates his highly personalized service from his Orinda home office and is available to his clients seven days a week.

After working in commercial property insurance for 30 years, Ritter spent time with a life and career coach to define what he wanted to do professionally.

"Although it was stressful in some ways, it was also a time well spent rediscovering myself and defining my priorities," said Ritter. "I have always enjoyed the company of family pets and Animal House is the natural outcome of this inquiry. Basically, my business has two segments which includes a dog walking service for busy professionals and a pet-sitting service."

With his clients extending throughout the Lamorinda area, Ritter relies on word-of-mouth referrals that keep him booked throughout the year.

Every day is an adventure, depending on the pet interests of children and adults alike.

"I care for everything from turtles to exotic fish, chickens, rabbits, birds and rodents, as well as the obvious dogs and cats," said Ritter. "One client had several adorable pygmy goats. My wife fondly refers to them as petting zoos."

Nothing is considered too exotic. "Bee hives are a growing trend in our area. I learn a little about the variety of animals I care for and do the right thing for them."

The duties of a pet and home care professional vary a lot. Some pets may be sick and require administration of medication while their owner is away. Clients rest assured their home and pets are safe when they are out of the area.

"I look after details of home security that include watering house plants," said Ritter.

Ritter is married to Colleen Lewis, who works in the procurement department at the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**Pete Ritter** of Animal House with his dog **Kai**.

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. The couple moved to Orinda in 2000. They enjoy hiking the local hills and Ritter plays golf whenever he gets a chance.

"We joke that someday I should write a book about the many varied experiences I have encountered caring for these creatures. I have a lifetime of stories to share," said Ritter.

Visit [www.animalhousepetandhomecare.com](http://www.animalhousepetandhomecare.com). Pete Ritter can be reached at 368-8978 or at [animal-house@comcast.net](mailto:animal-house@comcast.net).

[SEE BUZZ page 19]

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