



THE ORINDA NEWS

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Storms, Property Rights Issues Delay Repair Work on Miner Road

Resident Wants Bridge Built, Not Culvert

By MAGGIE SHARPE
Staff Writer

Plans to fix the sinkhole that appeared Jan. 11 over the creek on Miner Road are stalled (as of press time). Work can't proceed until the City gets the right of entry from property owners on both sides of the street – the golf course on one side and private homes on the other.

Orinda's Director of Public Works Larry Thies said (on Feb. 17) that the homeowner at 7 Camino Lenada, one of three homes flooded on Feb. 7 after heavy rainfall caused the creek to overflow, is advocating that a bridge be built, instead of installing a new, bigger culvert, as the City had planned.

"The homeowners have hired their own hydraulic analysis consultant to assess the situation," said Thies, adding that the City is working with that consultant on a solution. "We hope to reach an agreeable conclusion. If we don't agree, the project will be delayed significantly."

Building a bridge that would span the entire creek could take 1-1/2 years, said Thies, mainly due to the maze of federal regulations that has to be navigated. Currently, the City has federal emergency status that allows it to move forward with the current plan to replace the culvert and repair the road. Thies estimates that fix will take six to eight weeks.

"That's assuming good weather and all the property rights issues get squared away," said Thies. "Right now, when storms come in, work has to stop. However, we're hoping to temporarily divert the creek through two

large pipes so work can continue."

So far, work completed includes removal of the old culvert and part of the headwall, to allow for greater flow of water, and removal of some trees. The removal of the culvert and partial headwall also resulted in the removal of the entire width of the roadway above the creek.

Public Works is now proposing to replace the previous 84-inch-wide steel culvert with a concrete "box culvert" that would be between 14 and 16 feet in diameter.

"The City's plan is to install the biggest culvert that fits in that area, without impacting the sewer line that runs above it," said Thies. "That means there's a one-percent chance of a flooding episode over the next 100 years. That plan will give us a very high standard of flood protection."

The City Council, which declared a state of emergency at a special meeting on Jan. 17, awarded the construction contract to Bay Cities Paving and Grading, Inc. of Concord at a cost of \$1,471,717.

"This project is eligible for emergency federal reimbursement at 88.53 percent," said Thies. "The City's contribution is 11.47 percent of the project and any determined betterments."

Thies said engineers are not certain what caused the sinkhole to develop. "The likely cause was that heavy creek flows began traveling between the headwall opening and along the outside of the culvert pipe and eroded the soil," said Thies. "Then it washed down the damaged culvert which created the void space to form under the roadway asphalt."

In the meantime, drivers who normally use Miner Road must take detour streets, including Camino Sobrante. Thies said that

[SEE MINER page 4]



ROB VEDOV

Removing the headwalls and culvert allows Lauterwasser Creek to flow freely and, hopefully, prevent subsequent flooding while repairs are underway.

Pilot Week for Miramonte's New Block Schedule

By CHELSEA PELCHAT
Contributing Writer

The Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) recently had a one week trial of the new block schedule in preparation for its implementation this fall, featuring 90-minute periods Tuesday through Friday, with Monday as an anchor day where students attend all seven classes. Although this may simply seem like a rearrangement of time, it highlights the shifting priorities of the school district, as they work to address the ongoing issue of stress, while also emphasizing increased skill development and on-campus student support.

"What we've heard loud and clear from students is a demand for more choice and opportunity to make decisions on their own, and I think this schedule is going to lend

itself to that," says Principal Julie Parks. She goes on to explain how, whereas the depth of the curriculum is restricted by the current schedule with class discussions often cut short by the bell, the 90-minute class periods will allow students to apply the new material they learn under the guidance of their teachers. Furthermore, there will be 55-minute academy periods occurring twice a week, dedicating a portion of the school day to provide students with support. "It's going to be a combination of student choice and teacher recommendation. For example, if the student bombs an algebra test, the teacher might tag them and ask them to come in during an academy period to make it up," Parks explains. "Other times, it's just going to be open like a study hall, where the kids will choose

[SEE PILOT page 3]

A Very Fond Farewell to Janet Keeter



SALLY HOGARTY

State Senator **Steve Glazer** presented City Manager **Janet Keeter** with a resolution at her retirement party in February.

On Feb. 16, a standing room only crowd packed the Quarry House at Wilder to say goodbye to long-time City Manager Janet Keeter. City Councilmember Amy Worth commented that "Janet is one of the most incredible people I have ever met. She came to the city with such grace and charm and was always so positive." Keeter remarked that her almost 12 years in Orinda was the highlight of her over 33 year career in public service.

Czech Opera and Dinner

As part of its "Year of the Czechs," the Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation presents dinner and opera on Mar. 12 at 5 p.m. at the Orinda Community Center.

The dinner features Czech cuisine followed by Antonin Dvorak's opera *Rusalka* on DVD. It is sung in the original Czech with English subtitles.

One of the most successful Czech operas, Dvorak's lyric fairy tale contains plot elements similar to Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* and Fouque's *Undine*. The opera was made into a film in 1975 and recently released.

Tickets for the event are \$50 (general) and \$20 (student). For reservations, call 925-254-8260. Seating is limited.

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Everyone is flocking to the OA!
See who's involved on pages 7-10.



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Mindful Littles Give Firefighters A Big Boost for Valentine's Day



MOFD Engineer **Evan Ford** (L) and Captain **Mark McCullah** (R) with over 20 Mindful Littles.

By **DAVID DIERKS**
Assistant Editor

Mindful Littles organized a Valentine's Day celebration for Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) firefighters on Feb. 12. Over 20 children, or littles, participated in the event. The littles met with two firefighters. Captain Mark McCullah and Engineer Evan Ford answered questions, gave the children a tour of a fire engine and explained about the equipment and tools that are used by firefighters. After the tour, the littles decorated Valentine's hearts and coffee mugs, which, along with care packages, were sent to all MOFD fire stations.

Created by Tanuka Gordon, Mindful Littles focuses on "helping kids and families become more empathetic and compassionate through educational, meaningful community service." The core purpose of the movement is mindfulness or selfless service. Gordon said, "The word *seva* means selfless service in Sanskrit. Doing *seva* is thought to not only help the community, but also help one's personal growth. What is critical with *seva* is the mindful intention behind this service and the genuine desire to express compassion in the work."

Gordon started Mindful Littles last summer. "Our events are focused on education and teaching children about mindfulness as well as action activities. I want my children to thrive in a community where kids are



MOFD Engineer **Evan Ford** helps children exit a fire engine.

more conscious and aware of themselves and others; where they are compassionate and empathetic and where they can safely, freely and confidently express their authentic selves."

In addition to the MOFD Valentine's event, Mindful Littles held a hygiene kit drive with Youth Homes and sent care packages to Haiti to help orphans. For more information, visit www.mindfullittles.org.



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In 2016 your membership dollars supported these accomplishments:

- 9,000 households received *The Orinda News* monthly for free.
- Free public forums, 4 hosted by the OA last year.
- 170 coats were collected & donated to Bay Area residents in need.
- Over 680 free rides provided for Orinda seniors.
- Your membership supports volunteer opportunities for youth and adults.



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Fitness Tip of the Month

The Fitness Evolution

Our bodies evolve based on the demands that are placed on it. Over time our bodies will adapt to that demand and will stop changing. In order for our bodies to continue to change, our workout has to continue to evolve. Calculated, and focused creativity is the key...both in eating and exercise.



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ORINDA ASSOCIATION

A Message From the OA President
Spring is almost here!



Cindy Powell

Orinda's **State of the City** presentation and **Chamber of Commerce Business Awards** luncheon starts the month off on Mar. 1. Thank you to Orinda Rotary for hosting this event (go to their website to buy tickets). Mayor Phillips will address issues facing Orinda and the Chamber will recognize Land Home Financial as Business of the Year, Sanvitalia Home and Garden as New Business of the Year, and Susan Garell as Ambassador of the Year. The Orinda Association would also like to thank Susan for the Orinda Safety Video she created for our citizens.

Mar. 2 is the **Orinda Library Book Sale** at the Friends of the Library Bookshop and also the Sorting Room downstairs. At their last sale, I purchased some great records (thin plastic disks carrying recorded sound, like music) and a puzzle, in addition to my books.

You can use your new books on Mar. 3, **National Day of Unplugging**. A 24-hour period from sundown to sundown to unplug, unwind, relax and do things other than using today's technology, electronics and social media. Funny part is how we promote the day using social media ... hmm. Also on this day in 1931, President Hoover signed a resolution making *The Star-Spangled Banner* our national anthem. Have you noticed lately that everyone is singing louder at our sporting events?

National Proofreading Day on Mar. 8 brings awareness to the importance of mistake-free writing to make a positive and professional impression. The volunteers who proof this paper every month make a very good impression. Thank you for your dedication.

On Mar. 9, view the film *Sunset Boulevard* for free at the Orinda Theatre and, coincidentally, it is also **Popcorn Lovers Day**. Popcorn is a good snack, when it's made with healthy oil and fun toppings. Go ahead, enjoy some popcorn and share it with others. Not to be confused with

National Potato Chip Day on Mar. 14 ... pace yourself.

On Mar. 12, **Daylight Saving Time** will move an hour of sunlight to the evening hours, great for after-school sports. Set the clock ahead one hour at 2 a.m. Or move your clocks the night before so you have Sunday morning to overcome your lost hour. In the evening enjoy a Czech-themed dinner at the Community Center as you watch *Rusalka*, the opera. Remember 2017 is **Year of the Czech** in Orinda for Tabor, our sister city.

3.14 is **National Pi Day**, created in 1989 at the San Francisco Exploratorium by a local physicist. Are you a pi enthusiast or a pie lover? Enjoy the day.

Mar. 15, **National Kick Butts Day** was started to empower youth to stand out, speak up and seize control against Big Tobacco. Events are organized around the country by teachers, youth leaders and health advocates to help raise awareness of the dangers of tobacco products.

On Mar. 16, **Kevin Farley** (actor and standup comic) will be at the Orinda Theatre. It's **Saint Patrick's Day** on Mar. 17, a day of celebrating Irish history and customs. On this day everyone is a little bit Irish - actually over 34 million Americans are of Irish descent.

Junior Prom is Mar. 18 and would not happen if not for the many volunteer parents and staff. We thank them for making the evening such an exciting and memorable event.

The **First Day of Spring** is on the Vernal Equinox, Mar. 20, 3:29 a.m., Orinda time. As the sun passes the equator, night and day are almost equal, 12 hours each.

Mar. 31, **World Backup Day** is your reminder to secure your files. It just takes minutes to make a backup copy of everything stored in your phone or computer. Especially if it's your JProm photos!

Get out and enjoy our green hills and look for bulbs in bloom. Spring is almost here.

rather than six or seven," says Anika Rawat, a current junior. Other students provided suggestions: "A more useful approach we can take is by moving the anchor day to Friday, as it would allow for more time to finish your work during the week. Then we can turn in everything in a much more organized fashion," sophomore Charlotte Biancardi remarks. As a schedule speaks volumes in regards to the priorities of a school, the reorganization of time within the new block schedule exemplifies how Miramonte is in the process of redefining their approach to education.

◆ PILOT from page 1

how to use their time the possibilities are endless."

After a week of testing the new schedule, students eagerly expressed their positive experiences: "I think it's a beneficial change for a challenging and rigorous high school like Miramonte. When you're juggling multiple APs and a diverse array of extracurriculars, stress is inevitable and sleep and social activities are neglected. The block schedule spreads out school homework so I can focus on three subjects everyday

The Orinda Association

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

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

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Letters to the Editor...

Holding Government Accountable

In his letter to the editor (*The Orinda News*, February 2017), Jonathan Bagg states: "Mr. [Richard] Colman appears to be the mouthpiece for Orinda Watch and its supporters and for Eve Phillips, the Orinda City Councilmember who advocates their positions."

It is a great honor to have Mr. Bagg mention Eve Phillips, now Orinda's mayor, and me in the same sentence.

The purpose of *The Icon*, a periodic, printed publication that is mailed to all Orinda residents is to bring Orindans important news not covered elsewhere. *The Icon* has another goal: to hold the government of Orinda, including the Orinda City Council, accountable for actions taken.

I am the editor and publisher of *The Icon*, a publication that takes no advertising. I live in Orinda, which, in my view, is the finest place anywhere to reside.

Past actions are frequently a strong indicator of future behavior. For the last dozen years, the Orinda City Council, excluding Ms. Phillips, has failed to oppose special interests that seek to turn Orinda from an excellent place to live into some sort of Tokyo or Manhattan.

Orinda's excellent schools are becoming overcrowded. The city has enormous traffic and parking problems. Yet, the majority of the City Council is oblivious to the wreck-

age that has been left in the wake of the City Council's unfortunate decisions not to conserve and preserve Orinda's unique environment.

For too long, the majority of the Orinda City Council has been supportive of real-estate development interests which, in collaboration with the State of California, have produced the Housing Element, a plan to add hundreds of new residences to a city that is essentially full.

The Housing Element permits so-called granny flats – often labeled Second Units – to be placed on an individual's private property. What happens if granny flats become inhabited by teenagers who play loud music and perhaps engage in criminal activities?

Readers of *The Icon* learned about the overwhelming amounts of money contributed to the 2016 campaigns of City Council candidates Darlene Gee and Inga Miller. Sixty-nine percent of all campaign money contributed to all candidates in the 2016 city-council election went to Ms. Gee and Ms. Miller.

Readers also learned that Orinda's garbage-collection rates soared 85 percent between 2005 and 2016.

In a free country like the United States, Mr. Bagg has the opportunity to say what he wants. And so does *The Icon*.

– Richard S. Colman

◆ MINER from page 1

some of the detour streets are showing signs of wear and tear from the increase in traffic.

"There has been increased deterioration on the portions of the detour routes that had already poor pavement conditions," said Thies. "We are accelerating the repaving of the last segment of Camino Sobrante not yet rehabbed, from 2019 to 2017."

If and when all the wrinkles are ironed out, crews plan to work 24/7. The work comes with the added inconvenience of bright lights and loud noise from construction equipment, back-up alarms, along with saws, pumps and generators. The City is offering residents free earplugs, which can be picked up at the front desk at City Hall.

Thies said residents have, in general, been patient about the situation, but also want status updates.

"The main understandable complaints have been the long detour time ... the narrow windy roads are more difficult to navigate with the increased traffic."

A resident, who lives in Sleepy Hollow, said having to detour to get to downtown Orinda adds about five minutes to her drive time – "although it can feel like 10 minutes," she said. "I drive a small car so it's easier for me to maneuver on the tight, winding streets. When there are larger

vehicles or trucks trying to pass each other on any of the many blind turns, it's dicey. You just pray everyone is staying on their side of the lane because you don't know if they really are until you're on top of each other."

Lynn Kalmar and her family also live in Sleepy Hollow – all three of her children attend Sleepy Hollow Elementary School.

"We're lucky to live near the school, so it hasn't affected us getting to and from the school – although I know it's inconvenienced many others, including teachers and staff who don't live in the community and take Miner Road every day to school," said Kalmar. "It's inconvenient if I have to go to the grocery store or post office and have to take Camino Sobrante, which is not in great shape and is very windy and narrow. Sometimes if you meet a big truck on the road, it can feel very tight, like you're going to fall off the road."

People being re-routed from Sleepy Hollow and Orinda Downs are not the only ones with concerns. Residents who live on Camino Sobrante worry about the huge influx of traffic from the detour. Rob Vedovi, who lives on the street, just up the hill from Orinda Country Club, said he's seen a "phenomenal" increase in traffic on his street.

"There's at least a 500-percent increase



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in traffic on Camino Sobrante – probably more," said Vedovi, who is concerned about residents getting in and out of their driveways. "Some people have narrow driveways and can't turn their cars around, so they have to back out onto the street, which is extremely dangerous with this steady stream of traffic. Plus, the road is so narrow and windy, that drivers can't always see what's coming, so people should be extra cautious."

Vedovi said that some large trucks have difficulty negotiating the sharp curve in front of his house, while still leaving room for drivers to get by in the opposite direction.

"Sometimes drivers have to back up to allow a large truck to negotiate that curve,"

said Vedovi. "It's especially dangerous on garbage day, when the garbage and recycling trucks have to stop all the time and cars have to pass them – that's a huge problem, though fortunately I haven't seen any accidents yet."

Vedovi said another problem is people going too fast.

"A lot of the drivers are commuters on their way to work. They're already inconvenienced and in a hurry, so they're driving too fast," he said.

For information, visit the City's website at www.cityoforinda.org and click on Departments, then Public Works or call Public Works at 925-253-4231. Updates from the City are also posted on Nextdoor neighborhood website.

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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, or email to news@orindaassociation.org.
Letters to Editor for the April issue are due March 8, 2017.

For display advertising rates, call Jill Gelster at 925-528-9225 (jill@aspenconsult.net) or Elana O'Loskey at 925-984-1751 (elanao@mac.com). The deadline for the April issue is March 8, 2017.

POLICE / VISUAL ARTS

14th Annual High School Visual Arts Competition at Library Gallery

By ELANA O'LOSKEY
Staff Writer

The Lamorinda Arts Council (LAC) showcases 2D, 3D, photography and digital design work by high school students who live in or attend public or private schools in Orinda, Lafayette or Moraga at this month's Orinda Library Gallery exhibit. The competition is open to students who attend Acalanes Union High School District schools, which includes Acalanes, Campolindo, Las Lomas and

Miramonte high schools, regardless of residence.

The Visual Arts Competition (VAC) features \$3,000 in cash awards, merit citations and a month-long exhibit of entries at the library. The public is invited to attend the awards ceremony at the gallery on Mar. 8, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., when light refreshments will be served. Four categories of work are exhibited: 2D – paintings, drawings, printmaking, mixed media and collage; 3D – sculpture, ceramics, jewelry and construction; and photography – black



ELANA O'LOSKEY

These six high school girls enjoyed showing everyone their artwork at a recent Visual Arts Competition at the Orinda Library Gallery. See www.lamorindaarts.org for details.



POLICE BLOTTER

January 1 through February 11, 2017

Calls for Service

- 911 Hangup: 20 incidents.
- Abandoned Vehicle: 4 incidents.
- Accident Property: 5 incidents.
- Alarm, False: 160 incidents.
- Barking Dog: 1 incident.
- Battery: 2 incidents.
- Burglary, Auto: 3 incidents.
- Burglary, Residential: 2 incidents.
- Civil Disturbance: 12 incidents.
- CVC Moving Violation: 146 incidents.
- CVC Non-Moving Violation: 85 incidents.
- Death Non-Criminal: 7 incidents.
- Dependent Adult Abuse: 1 incident.
- Disturbing the Peace: 1 incident.
- Drunk in Public: 1 incident.
- DUI Misdemeanor: 4 incidents.
- Fire/EMS Response: 1 incident.
- Found Property: 5 incidents.
- Fraud/False Pretenses: 1 incident.
- Grand Theft: 1 incident.
- Grand Theft from Building: 2 incidents.
- Grand Theft from Vehicle: 2 incidents.
- Health & Safety Violation: 1 incident.
- Hit & Run Misdemeanor: 3 incidents.
- Identity Theft: 12 incidents.
- Illegal Entry: 1 incident.
- Juvenile Disturbance: 4 incidents.
- Loitering: 2 incidents.
- Lost Property: 2 incidents.
- Loud Music: 3 incidents.
- Loud Noise: 3 incidents.
- Medical Hospital: 6 incidents.
- Missing Adult: 2 incidents.
- Missing Juvenile: 1 incident.
- Motorist Assist: 1 incident.
- Ordinance Violation: 2 incidents.
- Outside Assist: 30 incidents.
- Parking Detail: 165 incidents.
- Patrol Request: 62 incidents.
- Petty Theft: 2 incidents.
- Petty Theft from Vehicle: 1 incident.
- Petty Theft Shoplift: 1 incident.
- Phone Harass: 3 incidents.

- Public Assembly Check: 5 incidents.
- Public Nuisance: 11 incidents.
- Reckless Driving: 20 incidents.
- Runaway Juvenile: 1 incident.
- School Check: 29 incidents.
- Security Check: 35 incidents.
- Service to Citizen: 237 incidents.
- Suspicious Circumstances: 19 incidents.
- Suspicious Person Stop: 12 incidents.
- Suspicious Subject: 11 incidents.
- Suspicious Vehicle: 30 incidents.
- Suspicious Vehicle Stop: 13 incidents.
- Traffic Collision Property Damage: 3 incidents.
- Tow: 9 incidents.
- Traffic Hazard: 18 incidents.
- Trespass: 3 incidents.
- Unwanted Guest: 1 incident.
- Vacation House Check: 37 incidents.
- Vandalism: 2 incidents.
- Vehicle Theft: 3 incidents.
- Verbal Dispute: 1 incident.
- Welfare Check: 7 incidents.

Arrests

- Battery: 1 arrest.
- Drunk in Public: 2 arrests.
- DUI: 2 arrests.
- DUI Misdemeanor: 3 arrests.
- Misdemeanor: 1 arrest.
- Possession of Controlled Substance: 1 arrest.
- Recovered Stolen Vehicle: 2 recoveries.
- Trespass: 2 arrests.
- Vehicle Theft: 2 arrests.
- Warrant Arrest: 1 arrest.

BART Statistics

- Burglary, Auto: 1 incident.

– Compiled by David Dierks
Assistant Editor

For more incidents details, visit
www.crimereports.com

and white, color, film and digital and digital designs – work produced solely on a computer which may contain photo images.

LAC awards cash prizes in each category as follows: first-place \$300, second-place \$200, third-place \$100, honorable mention \$25 and best in show \$300. Professional artists judge the show, based on creativity and originality, content, and degree of expertise in the chosen medium. Approximately 200 entries are expected from high school students in public, private and home high schools. LAC extends thanks to Lamorinda art teachers who assisted high school students in preparing their entries. At the reception, meet the teachers, students, their families and friends while enjoying the creativity on display.

For over 65 years LAC has been igniting and sustaining artistic expression and

appreciation for all ages throughout Lamorinda by supporting arts in the schools. An event of this scope necessitates liberal amounts of volunteer work. VAC chair Denise Nomura thanks fellow LAC members Lawrence Kohl, president, past VAC chair Natalie Wheeler and many other volunteers. Thanks also to Todd Trimble, Director of Orinda Parks and Recreation, who coordinates gallery events with Maggie Boscoe, gallery chair. Co-sponsors of the event include Lafayette Partners in Education, Moraga Education Foundation, the Education Foundation of Orinda and Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley.

Visit the gallery during library hours, Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. Call 925-254-2814 for more information or visit www.lamorindaarts.org or www.ccclib.org.

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~How to Maximize your Pay Off~



MAUREEN WILBUR

The 2017 Lamorinda real estate market is gearing up and all indications are it will be HOT!

The best-kept secret in the East Bay is Lamorinda and the secret is out. Young families and professionals want to move here for all the reasons we bought here years ago: proximity to San Francisco, great weather, gorgeous surroundings, small town feel, good commute options, and great schools. What should sellers do to maximize their potential sale in this climate? This hot market is occurring especially in the \$1 million to \$1.8 million-price range.

Hire a local full-time professional realtor

who has your best interests in mind and will be your advocate all the way.

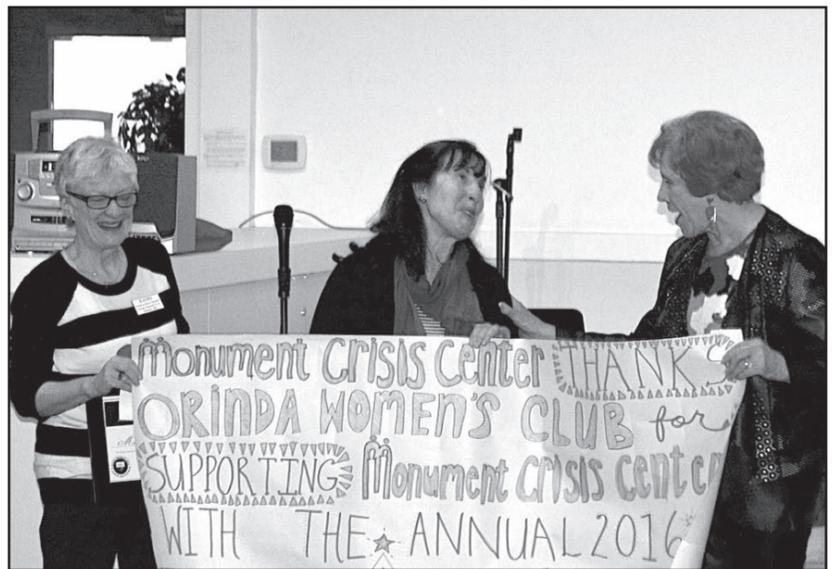
Listen to your realtor's advice carefully. Don't get carried away with the listing price. Listen to your realtor's advice - overpricing is deadly.

Have a plan on where you want to move when your home is sold. Your realtor may ask you if you need time in the property after the sale. If that is important, your realtor will communicate your wishes to potential buyers.

Have pre-sale inspections up-front and include them in your disclosure package.

[SEE REAL ESTATE page 14]

Monument Crisis Center Major Beneficiary



DAVID DIERKS

The Orinda Woman's Club (OWC) made Valentine's Day even sweeter for those utilizing the services of the Monument Crisis Center. The OWC presented the center with a check for \$30,000 representing funds raised at its major fundraiser, the Festival of Trees.

Located in Concord, the Monument Crisis Center offers nutritious food, quality resources and referrals to low-income individuals and families in order to help them become stable and secure in our community.

Shown above are Orinda Woman's Club members Kathy Kerr-Schochet, Sandra Scherer and Adeline McClatchie.



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Crohn's MAP Vaccine Update

By ANNABELLE HALL
Contributing Writer

Last year, the Lamorinda community participated in a gala that raised over \$30,000 to support the research for a Crohn's MAP vaccine to treat Crohn's disease. The local Crohn's MAP Vaccine team wants to thank the community once again for its remarkable support.

Excellent news came out of London recently regarding the funding for human trials of the Crohn's MAP Vaccine. They have reached their fundraising target of \$567,000! Not only did they reach the target, they surpassed it by collecting a total of \$628,000! It was a year ago, on Feb. 6, that three Orinda moms, Dina Fiatarone, Christine Pitt and myself, got together and organized the highly successful Mardi Gras gala to raise money in support of human trials for the vaccine. We are extremely thankful for all of the support garnered from around the world, including our wonderful neighbors in Lamorinda!

What's next? Phase 1 human trials (first-in-man) of the vaccine in healthy volunteers started in late January, run by the Jenner

Institute at Oxford University. Validation of the diagnostic test of Mycobacterium Avium Paratuberculosis (MAP) infection with those who have Crohn's disease and, which will accompany the Phase 2a trials, is estimated to be completed by the end of March 2017. A publication discussing this test and including super high-resolution photos of MAP in the tissues of Crohn's disease patients will follow.

Phase 2a trials on those who have Crohn's are anticipated to start early 2018 and will last a year.

It is not too late to invest. HAV Vaccines, Ltd., is still seeking investors for their Phase 2a trials. Interested individuals can contact the corporate director, Michael Stallibrass, at stalli@hav-vaccines.com.

For information about MAP and the link to Crohn's disease, please visit: <http://crohnsmapvaccine.com>.

Those familiar with the destruction that Crohn's disease can have on the lives of those who unfortunately fall prey, including young children, will welcome this encouraging development. We are one step closer to finding a cure. Thank you again for your support!

Shellie Abbes Kirby

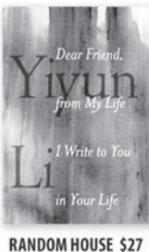
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tions. If you don't see your name on this list, please let us know. Those listed below had joined or renewed by press time.

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[SEE MEMBERSHIP page 8]



SALLY HOGARTY

OA President **Cindy Powell** (standing far right) and OA Vice President **Joe Garvey** (standing left) welcome riders and drivers to the Seniors Around Town annual Holiday Luncheon.



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MORAGA-ORINDA FIRE DISTRICT ISO RATING IMPROVES FROM "3" TO "2"



Dear Neighbors,

Every 4 years, the Insurance Services Office (ISO) reviews the fire protection within your community. The ISO is an international provider of statistical, analytical, technical and other information to the insurance industry and to state insurance regulators. Among other things, it provides a numerical rating for communities. A rating classification between 1 and 10 is given. A "1" is the best rating and a "10" is the poorest. Your Fire District (MOFD) was rated as a "3" from 1997 to present.

On April 1, 2017, MOFD's rating will improve from a "3" to a "2".

Presently, only 2.8% of fire departments nation-wide have a rating of "1" or "2". The Fire District encourages you to contact your insurance company before your next policy period because your fire insurance rates *may* decrease. Often, insurance underwriters will want proof. If this is the case, see the additional information below.

Stephen Healy, Fire Chief
 925-258-4599



Important—Please Read!

- Some insurance companies will consider the improved ISO rating beginning with your next policy term (some will not).
- Check your policy's term, contact your insurance agent, and advise them of the change (effective: April 1, 2017).
- If your insurance company wants proof of your new ISO rating, direct them to our website: www.mofd.org
 - There are several easily found references to the change under: "News", "Announcements", and "About MOFD".
- Your insurance company can also contact ISO directly. They must do this because ISO will not give ratings to property owners; only to insurance companies or the Fire Chief.

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◆ MEMBERSHIP from page 7

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[SEE OA page 9]

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[SEE MEMBERS page 10]



The Orinda Association celebrated 70 years of enhancing life in Orinda at the July 4, 2016 parade and park celebration.



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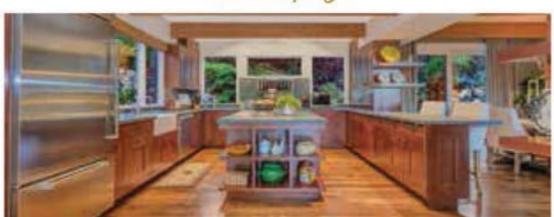
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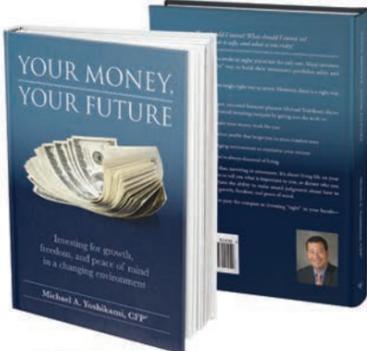
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Something to Howl About... Animal Tales

Whale and Elephants - Then and Now

Jennifer Conroy



Earlier this year Tilikum, the Sea World Orca, passed away. He had been ill for a while and achieved great fame in the documentary "Blackfish." No other marine mammals will be captured by Sea World, as was Tilikum in 1983, for the purpose of entertainment, although some remain in captivity.

Another passage of note is that of the elephants of the Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey Circus. They performed their last acts in May of last year and were then retired to the Center for Elephant Conservation in Florida.

The circus is closing down, in part be-

cause it claims the absence of elephants makes it less of a crowd draw. However, circus owners also realize that times have changed and many kids and adults find digital entertainment in their own homes more convenient and satisfying than heading off to the Big Top or, in more recent times, to arenas.

The world is not an easy place for humans and animals to cohabitate. We want to be close to animals, to observe them, to understand them and, sometimes in doing so, the very essence of what intrigues and fascinates us about them, ends up backfir-

[SEE HOWL page 14]

◆ MEMBERS from page 9

- | | | |
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CARS / SCHOOLS

CAR TIME

Oil Change, and Then Some



By JOHN VANEK

Can you imagine getting your oil change done and you find out, all of a sudden, you need over \$1,000 worth of repairs done to your vehicle?

The first thing you feel is shock. How could this be? I have been driving along just fine. There are a few likely scenarios. The most common situation is something going on with the vehicle that the owner may not be aware of. There is a reason why we take our vehicles in for service. Getting an oil change is important. But, the overall reason for the service is to gauge the overall health of the vehicle.

There is an under-hood inspection for a reason. Vehicles are machines that are subject to wear and tear. Things in the car will leak, wear out or fail somehow. That is why a maintenance schedule is recommended in the owner's manual. It describes the manufacturer's recommendations for maintenance scheduled by mileage or time on the vehicle.

Most of these services are inspections, performed to make sure there are no issues. Anything from leaks to worn belts, brakes, tires, dirty filter and fluids that need attention. The purpose of the inspection is to catch these issues before they become serious problems.

The second scenario is when recommendations are not real or as crucial as described. Greed and dishonesty exist in the automotive repair industry. It is a small minority of shops but includes oil change shops, independent repair shops and dealerships.

To avoid rip-offs, take a look at the

overall health of the vehicle. Has it had an overall inspection in the last year? In the last two years? What is the recent maintenance and repair history? Who needs to keep track of that stuff? That would be the owner/operator of the vehicle.

Do not authorize repairs that don't make sense, but don't automatically think that the shop is trying to take advantage of you. If there is any doubt, then get a second opinion.

The best solution is to establish a relationship with a facility you trust. Select them based on their reputation and recommendations from friends. Pay them a visit and take a look at their shop. Do they make time to talk to you, is their shop clean and do they have certificates hanging on the wall. Do they have affiliations like AAA, ASE, Repair Pal or Diamond Certified?

As usual, I urge you to become a good consumer of auto repair. Pay attention to what is going on with your car so you can relate to these repair suggestions. Be a part of the solution and be a good consumer of auto repair.

John Vanek can be reached at john@orindamotors.com.

Writers/Performers Needed

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Show performs Aug. 26 at Yellow House

Call Bobbie Landers at 925-254-8260

Miramonte Drama Group Brings Theatre-in-Education to OIS

By KATHRYN G. McCARTY
Staff Writer

Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) Principal Michael Randall's commanding presence quieted the room of excited seventh-graders waiting to see guest performers from Miramonte High School (MHS) Drama Department take the stage. Heather Cousins, MHS theatre arts director, founded the Theater-in-Education program in 2000, and it continues to be a biannual part of the Character Ed program at OIS.

Randall said that, while past programs have included topics focusing on bullying and peer pressure, he requested the MHS drama students develop scripts on cultural sensitivity, "especially regarding inclusiveness."

Cousins agreed. "The issue of cultural sensitivity has turned very timely, not just in our schools but in our nation." She directed students to work collaboratively using improvisation and personal storytelling to create original scripts to perform. Thirty-four MHS student actors were involved in the show, performing for the entire OIS student body in February.

"The connection between the age groups is important," said Randall. "The takeaway is much greater than if adults were lecturing to them. They can speak to kids at their level."

For students like MHS Junior Sarah Miller, it was an opportunity to give back to OIS. Miller was enthralled in seventh grade when Cousins' group visited, and was excited for the opportunity to perform for younger students and to "start up a conversation." Miller believes that theatre makes it easier to talk about tough topics.

According to Cousins, after each perfor-



KATHY MCCARTY
Miramonte Drama Teacher **Heather Cousins** (L) and junior **Sarah Miller** and 33 other Miramonte students used theater to engage OIS students in discussions on cultural sensitivity.

mance, OIS students had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the characters from the play. In this "hot-seating" segment, actors stayed in character while answering questions regarding choices made in the drama. Topics from MHS students' scripts included race, religion, gender and transgendered youth.

The high school actors addressed questions from the middle-schoolers, offering personal perspective and good advice. One young actor, exploring methods of handling bullying, explained that it was important to remember, "An insult doesn't make us who we are."

"Other theater-in-education programs exist with adult, paid actors. However, this partnership proves to be more personal and meaningful," said Cousins. "There is something very powerful in having middle school students see high-schoolers from just down the road taking on difficult subject matters that are relevant to their lives."

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Starlight Players Hold Auditions

The Orinda Starlight Village Players (OrSVP) are holding their season auditions on Sunday, April 2, at the Orinda Community Center Park Amphitheater at 4 p.m. and on Tuesday, April 4, at the Orinda Community Center Carpentry Room at 7 p.m. This all volunteer group has been presenting live theater in Orinda for over 30 years and are always looking for new volunteers, both on and off stage.

Productions include Agatha Christie's *The Unexpected Guest* (June 2 - July 1); Malcolm Cowler's adaptation of L. Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz* (July 21 - August 12) and Robert Merrill's comedy *Five Door Farce* (Sept. 1 - 30).

Come prepared to read from the scripts for the directors. No prepared monologues are necessary. For more information, call 925-528-9225 or email info@orsvp.org.

— David Dierks, Assistant Editor



DAVID DIERKS
Ken Sollazzo and Gerardo Paz in last year's production of *Love, Sex and the I.R.S.*

THE REEL LESS TRAVELED

THE TITLE, EXPLAINED

Tom Westlake

When I first started this column, I sat down with my esteemed editor and bandied about various names we could call it. I forgot most of what was discussed that day, but I remember that one of the reasons we came up with "The Reel Less Traveled" was because most of the films written about here don't get nearly as much screen time as they deserve. Also, especially in the case of the International Film Showcase, many of these movies might otherwise go totally unseen, which, in my opinion, is nearly as great a crime as censorship. There was a third, lesser, reason - many of the films shown are well off the beaten path. I'm not just talking about B-list movies like *The Woman in the Window* (which we'll speak of later), but films that are, even today, considered odd or so far from the mainstream that their appeal is limited. Therefore, I am glad to say, March is dedicated exclusively to these films.

We'll start off with the standard by which all other offbeat films should take their cue. *Sunset Boulevard* is as unconventional as they come and there is no easy way to characterize this movie as it throws everything into the mix and still manages to

work. (It should come as no surprise that David Lynch mentioned this film as one of the all-time greats - as well as serving as a major influence for his own distinct style of filmmaking.) Part film noir, part horror, with more than a little *Great Expectations* thrown in, this dark look at what happens when a star's shelf life goes beyond its expiration date is chilling, tragic and even a little humorous. As in all of Lynch's films, there's a surreal quality to the whole thing. This film needs to be seen to be believed. Even then, you might not fully grasp how this was made in the first place. The common wisdom is that Hollywood loves it when it's in the spotlight. This is a notable exception to that wisdom. Your wisdom, however, will be beyond question if you make your way down to the Orinda Theatre on Mar. 9 at 7 p.m. Admission free.

Now to the aforementioned *The Woman in the Window*. There are several reasons I would urge you to make the effort to see this. The first is that the Moraga Movers, who have not graced this column for the last few months, are hosting. The next would be the cast: Edward G. Robinson plays against

[SEE REEL page 14]

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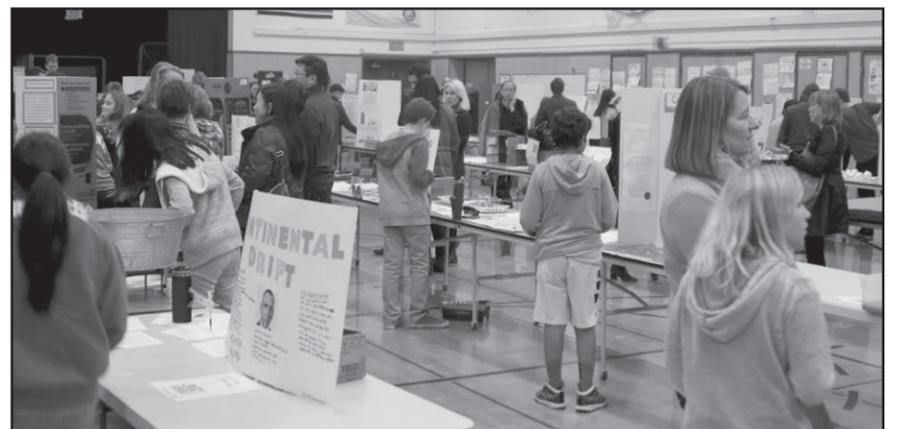
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OIS Holds Seismic Science Fair



Attendees at the OIS Seismic Science Fair take part in interactive displays.

By DAVID DIERKS
Assistant Editor

Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) held its first annual Seismic Science Fair in January. OIS seventh-graders learned about plate tectonics and earthquake engineering through labs and challenges, culminating in the fair for the Orinda community.

Topics covered included: Why are we at risk from earthquakes? How big is the risk? What can we do to stay safe?

The key requirement for students' dis-

plays was to have one component be interactive so that attendees could participate in learning about earthquake issues in the Bay Area.

Over 25 students participated in the fair. One of the standout entries was by Patrick Unick, who used robotics in tandem with diverse soil types and skittles to simulate various types of earth movement and their effects on structures - with the skittles standing in for structures.

For more information, visit ois-orinda-ca.schoolloop.com.

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CALENDAR

ON THE CALENDAR

MARCH

- 1 **Orinda Rotary and Orinda Chamber of Commerce**, luncheon, Orinda Community Center, noon. Mayor Eve Phillips' State of the City address and the Chamber's Business Awards. Contact dick@burkhalternet.net.
- Orinda Library Art Gallery**, Celebrate local high school students at 14th Annual Visual Arts Competition exhibit through Mar. 31. See page 5.
- International Film Showcase** presents Iran's Oscar-nominated *The Salesman*, Orinda Theatre, through Mar. 2. The animated Swiss movie, *My Life as a Zucchini* shows in March. Visit www.lamorindatheatres.com for dates/times.
- 2 **Orinda Books Story Hour** with Cathy Goshorn for children 2 to 4 years, with reading, songs and games, every Thursday, 276 Village Square, 10 to 11 a.m.
- 3 **First Friday Forum** features Dr. Robert Johnson talking on "Will Gene Therapy and Gene Editing Change Your Life?" at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette, 1:30 p.m. Call 925-283-8722. See this page.
- 8 **Orinda Books** hosts an author luncheon with Yiyun Li in conversation with Marilyn Abildskov from the MFA program at St. Mary's, 11:30 a.m. Li will discuss her memoir, *Dear Friend, from My Life I Write to You in Your Life*. \$10. Call 925-254-7606.
- Second Wednesday Book Group** discusses *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang and *Snow Country* by Yasunari Kawabata, Orinda Books, 3 p.m.
- 9 **Orinda Theatre Free Movie Night**, 7 p.m., features *Sunset Boulevard*. Visit <http://lamorindatheatres.com>.
- 16 **Pat's Book Group** (social issues) will discuss Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here*, Orinda Books, 6 p.m.
- 21 **World Affairs Book Group** discusses *The Populist Explosion: How the Great Recession Transformed American and European Politics* by John B. Judis, Orinda Books, 3 p.m.
- 23 **Golden Gate Fields** trip for seniors, sponsored by Orinda Recreation Department, 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., includes reserved view seats, racing programs and buffet lunch. Visit www.cityoforinda.org.
- Maria's Book Club** discusses *Ties* by Dominco Starnone, Orinda Books, 11:30 a.m.
- 29 **Lunch with Victor Lodato**, author of *Edgar and Lucy*, Orinda Books, 11:30 a.m. \$10. Call 925-254-7606.

AT THE LIBRARY

All events are free unless otherwise specified. For information, call 925-254-2184 or visit <http://ccclib.org>.

- 1 **Paws to Read**. Children in grades 1 to 5 practice reading or fulfill their reading requirement with a friendly dog, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Call or visit the library to register. Also Mar. 8, 15 and 22.
- 3 **Teen Tech Week**. Theme is "Be the Source of Change," for high school students, through Mar. 11, with daily activities. Complete four activities on Mar. 11, 4 to 5 p.m., to get a free book and Flying Comics calendar.
- 2 **English as a Second Language Conversation Circle**. Volunteer teachers lead informal group discussions, 1 to 2:30 p.m. Preregistration not required. Also Mar. 9, 16, 23 and 30.
- 3 **Teen Coloring Club**. Join Orinda Library Teen Advisory Group (TAG) to de-stress and relax. Age-appropriate coloring books and colored pencils provided; teens provide inspiration and creativity. Free, 4 to 5 p.m. Also Mar. 10, 17, 24 and 31.
- 7 **Orinda Library Writers Group**. Meet with a friendly group of beginning writers in a supportive environment. Share two pages of your writing (any genre) and get feedback from the group, 6:30 to 8 p.m. Also Mar. 21.
- 17 **Mystery Book Club**. Study Room A, 3 to 4:30 p.m. This month's selection is *One Was a Soldier* by Julia Spencer-Fleming. Adult program.
- 18 **ACT Free Practice Exam**. Get realistic practice (four hours) and receive a personalized score report, for high school students, Garden Room, 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sign up at 510-295-0002 or visit www.princetonreview.com/product/offers/334922.
- 23 **Tai Chi for Better Balance**. Cynthia Black shows how to improve balance through Tai Chi, 1 p.m., Garden Room. Adult program.
- Contra Costa Tale Spinners**. Storytelling for adults with a featured storyteller, Gallery Room, 7 to 9 p.m.
- 27 **Japanese Art**. Asian Art Museum docent talks about the Japanese Art collection, 1 to 2 p.m., Garden Room. Adult program.

CLUB MEETINGS

- Diablo Star** Chapter #214, Order of the Eastern Star. Second Monday, 7:30 p.m. Orinda Masonic Center, Karen Seaborn, 925-689-0995.
- Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe**. Third Monday, 7:30 p.m., Gallery Room, Orinda Library, www.moragaadobe.org.
- Friends of the Orinda Creeks**. Fourth Wednesday, 8:30 a.m., May Room, Orinda Library, 925-253-1997.
- Guided Meditation**. Wednesdays, 9 a.m., St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 451 Moraga Way, Orinda, focuses on health, harmony and wholeness, 925-254-5965.
- Lamorinda Alcohol Policy Coalition**. Third Wednesday, 10 to 11:30 a.m., Orinda City Hall Sarge Littlehale Room, 925-687-8844, ext. 227.
- Lamorinda Meditation**. Every Monday and Thursday, 10:30 a.m., Career Wisdom Institute, 1036 Country Club Drive, Moraga, Suite 100. Meditate in silence for 30 minutes, \$5 donation. Contact Gaby Mozee at gemozee@gmail.com.
- Lamorinda Nature Walk and Bird Watching for Seniors**. Wednesdays, 9 to 11 a.m., free. Call 925-254-2445 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, Pete Giers, 925-254-4667.
- Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary**. Every Friday, 7 a.m., Lafayette Park Hotel, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, <http://www.lamorindasunrise.com/> or 925-283-8288.
- Lamorinda Toastmasters**. Every Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Road, Lafayette, <http://lamorinda.toastmastersclubs.org>.
- Montelindo Garden Club**. Third Friday, 9 a.m., September through May, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephen's Drive, www.montelindogarden.com. March speaker is Heath Bartosh, one of the California Native Plant Society's top rare plant experts and co-founder of Nomad Ecology in Martinez.
- Orinda Garden Club**. Fourth Thursday, 10 a.m. to noon, September through May, Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante.
- Orinda Junior Women's Club** community service group. First Tuesday, September through June, 7 p.m., www.orindajuniors.org.
- Orinda Rotary**. Every Wednesday, noon, Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, 925-254-2222.
- Orinda Association**. Second Monday, 7 p.m., Orinda Library, May Room, 925-254-0800.
- Orinda Hiking Club**. Every weekend and first Wednesday, www.orindahiking.org or Ian at 925-254-1465.
- Orinda Historical Society**. Call 925-254-1353 for times and location of meetings.
- Orinda Job's Daughters**. First and third Monday, 7 p.m., 9 Altarinda Road, 925-283-7176.
- Orinda/Tabor (Czech Republic) Sister City Foundation**. Fourth Thursday, 7 p.m., social, 7:30

Cancer Specialist Talks on Gene Therapy at First Friday Forum

By BOBBIE DODSON
Staff Writer

“Will Gene Therapy and Gene Editing Change Your Life?” is the question posed by Dr. Robert Johnson, the speaker at First Friday Forum on Mar. 3, at 1:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary of Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC).

Johnson's work currently focuses on oncology projects. “It's a very exciting time in oncology as basic science efforts have identified many new targets for drug therapies,” he says. “Cell and gene therapies are at the center of many of the newest and most novel approaches, some of which are directed at the hardest-to-treat cancers.”

To help the public understand something of the process, Johnson explains, “Gene therapy is the introduction of genes into existing cells to prevent, inhibit or cure a wide range of diseases. There are now over 800 gene therapy clinical trials ongoing, two-thirds of them dealing with cancer.”

Johnson holds an M.D. and Ph.D. in biochemistry and biophysics. He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and received his clinical training at Massachusetts General Hospital. After completing his fellowship, he joined the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and was appointed a faculty member at Harvard Medical School. Currently, he is a consultant for the biopharmaceutical industry as well as interim chief scientific officer, chief medical officer and scientific advisory board member of Epeius Biotechnologies, a gene therapy company.

A member of LOPC along with his wife, Margaret Liu - who is also an M.D. - Johnson is proud of his two children, Matthew, who is working on his Ph.D. in moral



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Dr. Robert Johnson will speak on gene therapy at the March 3 First Friday Forum.

philosophy at the University of Cambridge in England, and Ariana, who will graduate from Stanford this year to embark on a career in theater directing, addressing social injustice and cultural understanding.

Johnson says he and his wife have worked in the same departments in academia and at two companies. Both Liu's and Johnson's work schedules require they travel the world extensively and sometimes they meet up at an airport when one is arriving and the other departing.

“While cures are still rare, many patients are living long lives with their cancers under control,” Johnson says. “Epeius is focused on developing a gene delivery system (GDS) for patients. Currently, we are in clinical trials.”

Refreshments will be served in Fellowship Hall prior to the talk, beginning at 1 p.m. LOPC is located at 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. For more information call 925-283-8722. This series is sponsored by Senior Ministries.

p.m., meeting, call 925-254-8260 for location.

Orinda Teen Advisory Council. Second Wednesday, 4 p.m., Community Center, 28 Orinda Way, email orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com.

Orinda Woman's Club. Second Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon, call Jean Barnhart, 925-254-3881, or <https://sites.google.com/site/orindawomansclub>.

CITY/FIRE/SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING SCHEDULE

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

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

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

Moraga-Orinda Fire District. First and third Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m.. Visit www.mofd.org/board/meetings meeting location will be posted on the agenda.

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

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



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BUSINESS BUZZ

◆ BUZZ from page 16

awards during the luncheon.

Business of the Year award goes to Land Home Financial Services, a private mortgage banker headquartered in Concord. With 80 branches nationwide, Land Home Financial Services opened its Orinda office in 2013 on the street level of Theatre Square, next door to Piccolo Napoli.

“Land Home Financial Services’ lending model is driven by local relationships, community prosperity and interconnectedness,” says Angela Erves, Orinda branch manager. “With resources geared for homebuyers, real estate agents, mortgage brokers and builders, our services span the spectrum of commercial and retail lending, offering specialized products to meet the unique needs of the community of Orinda. We feel we serve as a bridge between business and the community.”

Land Home Orinda annually hosts two chamber events, provides their space to the Orinda Action Day committee, in addition to sponsoring Orinda’s Fourth of July Parade, Action Day, and the NorCal Kids Triathlon each year. For more information about Land Home Financial Services, visit www.lhfs.com or www.facebook.com/LandHomeFinancialServices. Erves can be reached at 925-885-6604.

The Orinda Chamber honors Sanvitalia Home & Garden as New Business of the Year. Established by Helen Bentkowski in late 2015, this charming boutique gift shop is located across the way from Sweet Dreams Toy Shop in Theatre Square. Customers always receive excellent, friendly service, as they discover an array of unusual and fine items from far-flung corners of the world. Bentkowski inspires with her enthusiasm for plants, floral arrangements and home and garden decorations.

Leelye Tesfamariam, who has been working for years with Bentkowski, manages the Orinda boutique when the owner is at her other business, Terrace Gifts and Coffee, in Oakland. “Helen and her staff go out of their way to help you find the perfect gift,” says Kate Wiley, Orinda Association membership chair. “They designed a succulent plant arrangement for me after helping me select the perfect vessel. Their orchids are always high quality and long lasting. The staff is extremely friendly and helpful.”

For more information, visit www.sanvitaliahomeandgarden.com, email Bentkowski at sanvitaliahg@gmail.com or call



SALLY HOGARTY
Helen Bentkowski, the owner of Sanvitalia Home and Garden, won the Chamber’s New Business of the Year Award.

925-258-6900. Sanvitalia Home & Garden is open every day, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The Orinda Chamber will honor longtime Orinda resident Susan Garell as Ambassador of the Year. A veteran broadcast news reporter and producer for *Business Now*, and former equity analyst, Garell redesigned her career with the goal of serving her community by producing video shorts for local businesses.

Garell has been a Chamber ambassador for many years and in 2016 went far and beyond all expectations by creating, on a volunteer basis, videos for the Chamber of Commerce, and by conducting a video for small business training for Chamber members. Orinda Chamber member and CPA Susan Hurrell commented about the training, “Absolutely wonderful. Lots and lots of information was presented by a very skilled and talented resource.” View the videos on the Chamber’s YouTube channel at: www.youtube.com/channel/UCeLUzz0FI7r4f23RyfTcXrw.

For more information, visit Garell’s website at www.susangarellvideos.com.

On a completely different note, the world can definitely use more cupcakes. While we are sad to see Republic of Cake owners Peter McNiff and Chih-Chung Fang pull up stakes and wish them well in their travels, readers will be pleased to know they have sold their wonderful bakery to Lindsay Pirkle, who is committed to continuing the founders’ vision. Let there be cupcakes.



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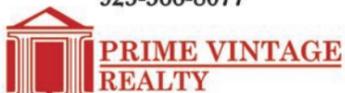


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March Clothing Sale and Swap

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Combining the opportunity to swap or purchase clothing with donations to local worthy nonprofits, two local residents have hit upon a unique fundraising opportunity with their annual clothing Sale and Swap. This year's event takes place on Mar. 4, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., at St. Stephen's Church, 66 St. Stephens Dr., in Orinda.

Pacific Union Realtors Barbara Corsi and Holly Henkel began the venture seven years ago. Since that time, they have not only helped Orinda residents find quality wardrobe items, they have also given cash donations to Wardrobe for Opportunity, the Princess Project, White Pony and St. Stephen's Church.

"We are looking for fancy jewelry, purses, wraps and new or gently used gowns in excellent condition in all fabrics, sizes and colors for the Princess Project," says Henkel. The nonprofit promotes self-confidence and individual beauty by



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Holly Henkel (L) and Barbara Corsi will present the 7th annual Clothing Swap and Sale on Mar. 4 at St. Stephen's Church.

providing prom dresses and accessories to high school girls who cannot otherwise afford them.

The twosome also welcomes business-appropriate clothes for Wardrobe for Opportunity, a nonprofit that empowers low-income individuals with new interview skills, professional clothing and career support.

Henkel and Corsi encourage people to bring quality wardrobe items, freshly laundered, and in very good condition. Shoes and accessories are also welcome.

Those contributing items to swap or sell can drop them off on Mar. 3 from 5 – 7 p.m. The "Happy Hour" drop-off includes a chance to enjoy refreshments while pricing items and participating in a pre-sale.

"We will deliver and donate anything you leave to Wardrobe for Opportunity," adds Corsi.

For more information, email Henkel at holly@hollyhenkel.com.

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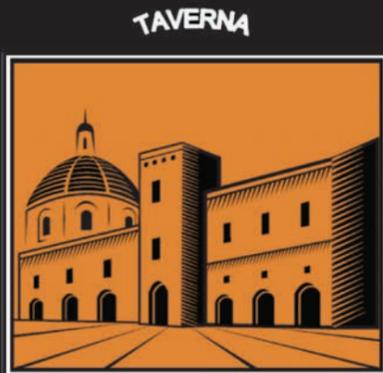
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Business Buzz Putting a Personal Face on Local Business

Valerie Hotz



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

Bamboo Spa Opens in Theatre Square

Just last month Vy (pronounced Vee) Nguyen and her husband Ho Van opened the doors of their premiere spa therapy treatment establishment - Bamboo Spa – on the street level of Theatre Square, next door to Serika and across the way from Coldwell Banker.



VALERIE HOTZ

Vy Nguyen and her husband Ho Van are the owners of Bamboo Spa now in Theatre Square.

The couple owns two other salons in the East Bay and has been in the business since 1991. "We offer manicure, pedicure and waxing services, with an emphasis on a relaxing, therapeutic experience, especially concentrating on our spa services for legs and feet," says Nguyen. The newly remodeled premises feature an abundance of gorgeous pink and yellow orchids, indoor bamboo plants and excellent lighting throughout the spa. The strains of jazz music contribute further to this soothing environment.

"Other salons provide hurried, quick-pace manicures and pedicures, but we prefer our clients to be able to relax, enjoy a glass of wine and spend from 45 minutes to two hours here for their luxurious treatment," she says.

The menu offers a variety of delightful

treatments to select from, including the Lavender Spa Pedicure with lovely aromatic lavender sea salts gently exfoliating and removing dead skin from feet and legs, and the Hot Stone Spa, which incorporates an organic scrub with hot stones gently massaging pressure points along the feet and lower legs, resulting in the easing of stress and tension throughout the body. You definitely want to incorporate the paraffin wax treatment into your pedicure, which involves encasing feet and lower legs in soothing warm paraffin wax.

"For our manicure clients, we offer 14-day-wear long-lasting polish, as well as gel-like polish that requires an LED lamp to cure the finish. Clients like this treatment immensely," points out Nguyen. "At the same time, we place heavy emphasis on our spa experience, providing hot stone treatment, therapeutic neck wrap to soothe muscles and nerves." She says that clients need to try the spa pedicure, because words alone do not do it justice.

Nguyen, and her husband, Ho Van, are outdoor enthusiasts and like to spend time fishing whenever possible. They especially enjoy hiking with their two dogs, Pepper and Banana.

Bamboo Spa is open Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information and to book an appointment, call 925-386-0734.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce Honors Businesses

The annual Orinda Rotary Club and Orinda Chamber of Commerce luncheon takes place on Wednesday, March 1, in the Founders' Auditorium at the Orinda Community Center, featuring the State of the City address by Mayor Eve Phillips. The event gets underway at 11:30 a.m. and concludes at 1:30 p.m. Lunch is \$20 and reservations are required. Purchase tickets now by visiting the Rotary website at <http://orindarotary.org>. The Orinda Chamber of Commerce will present the 2016 business

[SEE BUZZ page 15]



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