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Orinda 2008-A Year for Planning, Paving, and bit of Partying

By Andrea A. Firth

January- The year kicks off with longtime Orinda resident Victoria Smith at the helm of the City Council, which is faced with a \$100 million roads problem. Identifying new sources to fund the city's infrastructure challenges and creating ways to revitalize the Downtown District to keep sales tax revenue in Orinda and turn around the troubled Theater Square are the top orders of business.

February- Council decides to ask voters to extend and increase the Library Parcel Tax and moves to place the measure on the June 3rd Ballot.

March- To make it easier for Orindans to walk, hike and bike around town, the development of a Bike, Trail, and Walkway Master Plan gets underway.

To ease the driving commute, the lower half of Moraga Way gets a facelift as the repaving project begins.

April- The Lamorinda Film and Entertainment Foundation is created to preserve and protect an historic landmark -Orinda's Theater.

May- Cal Shakes celebrates the opening of its 34th season with a party in Theater Square.

The first Farmers' Market marks the start of Summer.

June- Drivers on Moraga Way withstand grit and dust and residents of the street endure some noisy nights as the repaving project continues.

Summer concert series begins the first of 6 free performances in the Community Center Park.

Starlight Players opens their season with an Agatha Christie murder mystery.

Library parcel tax passes with 73% of voters approving.

July- Orindans celebrate the 25th July 4th parade.

Moraga Way repaving project is completed a month early.

The Revenue Enhancement Task Force sets out to find new sources of funds to address the City's infrastructure needs.

Phase I of the Wilder Project is approved which will create 72 homes, a swim center, an art and garden center, playing fields, and interconnected trails.

August- Residents throughout the City come together for Orinda Night Out to promote neighborhood watch groups and disaster preparedness.

The Orinda Grove development project, located on Altarinda Way at the former site of JFK University, is approved by the City Council. The developers, Pulte Homes, will create 73 housing units, including some moderate-income units, a community park, ball field, and a new administration building for the Orinda Union School District.

September- The first annual Restaurant Tour brings diners to try the fare in Theater Square.

Crime wave hits the City neighborhoods with 10 residential burglaries this month.

October- Orinda Police work with Lafayette and the County to apprehend suspects and break up the burglary ring.

Planning Process Review Task Force presents preliminary outline to streamline planning and revitalize downtown with a village-like atmosphere.

November- After two years of public discourse, Ivy Drive gets a bump-or speed cushion in traffic calming lingo.

Revenue Enhancement Task Force presents their ideas for new funding sources for the City.

December- Incumbents Steve Glazer and Victoria Smith are welcomed back to the Council for four more years of voluntary service. Sue Severson is elected to serve as Mayor and Tom McCormick as Vice Mayor for 2009.

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