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## Orinda Rotary Celebrates 60 Years

By Andrea A. Firth



Orinda Rotary celebrating their 60th anniversary in 2009 Photo provided

Doing good works and having a good time in the process are two of the key elements to the success and longevity of the Orinda Rotary Club.

On March 18th, 2009, sixty years to the day from the date the Club established its charter in 1949, Orinda's Rotarians celebrated the six-decade anniversary with a champagne toast and an enormous red, white, and blue sheet cake. The Club's weekly lunch meeting started with the customary acknowledgement of birthdays and anniversaries among the members, as the Club's Sergeant of Arms, Tony Sloane, roamed the Community Center meeting room to collect the "fines" (a.k.a. contributions) the Rotarians are required to pay for their good fortune. President Marshall Johnson's quick wit and Sloane's quips had both the payers and the audience laughing as the money exchanged hands.

Pete Giers then served as the Club historian for the day and coordinated a presentation of photos of the Rotarians in action through the years.

First up was Peirce McKee who shared some colorful history of the Club's fourth President, Leighton MacGregor, a contractor turned liquor store chain owner, who was shown dressed as Santa Claus at the Orinda Theater with another Rotarian propped on his lap. Steve Paddock reviewed some of Orinda Rotary's many service projects including the ongoing Rotary Field Days, which was started in 1952 by Frank Isola-a P.E. teacher and later Principal of Orinda Intermediate School, and the Tom Fitch Annual Fishing Outing, which has treated over 1,000 young people from Oakland to a day at the San Pablo Reservoir annually for the past 16 years. And, Ken Woznak described the significant amount of Rotarian man (and woman) power that was used to dig a lake, build a bridge, and much more at

the Wagner Ranch Nature Center.

The Rotary's service projects reached far beyond the California borders through the support of the exchange student and ambassadorial scholar programs. Giers described how the Rotary's support of a local musician enabled the younger singer to realize her dream of becoming an international opera star. And member Jose Avelar expressed his gratitude for the six trips the club has made to Tala, Mexico to support the people of this region. "That's when you really experience what Rotary is about-the community service," stated Avelar.

The Orinda Rotary Club will continue their 60th Anniversary Celebration with a dinner dance and big band gala on Saturday, April 4th at the Orinda Country Club. To attend the event, contact David Pierce ([david.pierce@prurealty.com](mailto:david.pierce@prurealty.com)).

(See event details in Not to be missed, page 8)

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