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1031 EXCHANGES...

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• Lamorinda Schools •

Local Singers Vie for Winner's Circle at Orinda Idol 2009 By Jennifer Wake



Soul Sisters: from left to right: Neris Newton, Amrita Newton, Jacqueline Garell
 Photo Ohlen Alexander

Sequins, taffeta and even feathered boas adorned many of the more than 60 Lamorinda finalists and runners up who took the stage at the Orinda Theatre last Sunday to compete in the finals competition of Orinda Idol 2009. But the true sparkle came from within when these kids (who ranged in age from 5 to 18) belted out songs that put smiles on faces of the thousands who gathered that day to watch them.

Former Miramonte grad, long-time judge, and Spazmatics drummer and vocalist Matthias Montgomery and Bay Area Cabaret founder and judge Marilyn Levinson

said the caliber of talent in the annual competition keeps getting better.

"I was surprised just at the way these kids have put together acts and worked so hard to get the harmony right," Montgomery said. "We saw such young people this year who were way ahead of their years."

"You can tell music is a part of their lives," Levinson added. "They don't do this just once a year; they're out there performing and doing this year-round. It's a real commitment."

Finalists have spent the summer performing at local venues including the Orinda Farmer's

Market and 4th of July Parade. "I love that they give you so many performances during the summer and so much opportunity to perform and grow as a performer," said finalist Jacqueline Garell, who has competed in Orinda Idol since its inception in 2006.

It's a commitment for parents as well. Paul Ford, whose children Lindsay and Ryan were finalists, had been at the Theatre nearly 11 hours by the time winners were announced on Sunday. "It's really great," he said. "It gives kids the opportunity to work up their musical chops and work on something formative without the high pressure."

Katie Marino (who won in last year's Orinda Idol middle school category) says the competition has gotten a lot more fun to watch. "The first time, there were no kids, but now it's really growing." Sophomores and runners up Sofie Woodlee and Tara Baghdasarian, who have both been singing since they were little, advise other aspiring singers to try Orinda Idol for the experience, to practice more and get better.

For first-time Orinda Idol finalist Layla Wright, age 7 (almost 8), the experience was a thrill. "I was kind of nervous, but really excited at the same time," she said. "I would say [to kids who might be scared to try this], that if they really didn't want to do it, they didn't have to. But if they kind of want to - even just a little bit - to go for it."

And the Winners Are...

- K-2nd Grade:**
Niamh Akazawa
- 3-5th Grade:**
Joe Metheny
- Middle School:**
Maritza Grillo
- High School:**
Erika Henningsen
- Groups K-5th Grade:**
Wicked Girls (Samantha Martin & Isabel Mueller)
- Groups 6-12th Grade:**
Soul Sisters (Jacqueline Garell, Amrita Newton & Neris Newton)
- Audience Award:**
Maritza Grillo



Wicked Girls: Samantha Martin is on the left (white dress) and Isabel Mueller is on the right (black dress).
 Photo Ohlen Alexander

• Living Longer & Loving it •

Arranging for Military Funeral Honors By Cathy Tyson



Photo istockphoto.com

"The rendering of Military Funeral Honors is a way to show the Nation's deep gratitude to those who, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended our country. This ceremonial paying of respect is the final demonstration a grateful Nation can provide to the veterans' families," notes the Military Funeral Honors website.

For eligible veterans nearing the end of life or for folks planning ahead, Colonel Allan Cruz, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.), who is now President of the Lafayette War Veterans Board of Directors, suggests getting some of the paperwork together in advance to arrange Military Funeral Honors. Obviously this is a stressful time for families, even for those putting their affairs in order, but some find comfort in knowing the preliminary steps are in order.

There are various categories of qualification. Military members on active duty or in the selected reserve are eligible, as are former military members who completed at least one term of enlistment. Dishonorably discharged personnel are not eligible, according to Cruz. See <http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil/> for a complete listing of who is eligible.

It all boils down to obtaining a "proof of service document" whether that was for Grandpa back in World War II or for a service member having recently served in Afghanistan. The national archive website is best place to start looking for proof of service documents at <http://www.archives.gov>. In addition, veterans or next of kin of deceased veterans can use the online order form at vetrecs.archives.gov.

The second step is simpler, once you have "proof of service papers," those documents should be delivered to the funeral parlor handling the service; they initiate and coordinate the request said Cruz.

At a graveside service, a special folded flag is presented to the family, three volleys are fired, and finally a bugler plays taps. As a courtesy, organizers generally notify local police about the shots, blanks of course, that are fired. It takes at least a week to complete all the necessary arrangements.

For further information contact Allan Cruz at allanfpcruz@aol.com or via his cell phone at (925) 899-3488. The Veterans Memorial Building on Mount Diablo Boulevard is available for memorial services, for more information call (925) 283-1153.

Not to be missed

Lafayette Senior Services, on-going programs:
 Embracing Aging with Story and Movement - Every other Thursday, 1:00 -2:30 PM, 9/24
 Positive Living Forum- On the second Thursday of each month, 10:30 - noon
 Bi-Monthly Caregiver Support Group - Mondays, 9/28, 1:30 - 2:30 PM
 Tea Dancing with Karen and Michael - every Wednesday, 12:30 - 3:00 PM.
 500 Saint Mary's Road, Lafayette. All event/programs \$1 Members/ \$3 Non-Members. For info call (925)284-5050.

Classical Music Recital, Michael Carroll, Piano - Saint Mary's College Chapel in Moraga. Sunday, September 20 at 2:00 pm. Music of Brahms, Prokofiev, Chopin, Bach, Mozart. Free admission.

A Grief Recovery Workshop for widows/widowers will be held Sept. 22-Nov. 24, 7-9 pm at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church. Find hope, support and successful ways to process this significant life event. Brochures and more information are available by calling (925) 283-9990, ext. 223.

Falling Down is Often Life Changing - Especially for Older Adults: Workshop by Supervisor Gayle Uilkema and Gennifer Mountain, Manager, Contra Costa County Fall Prevention Program. Falls are not accidents if they are preventable and falls don't just happen because you're older. Learn about specific steps and comprehensive solutions by which we can re-design our living spaces, look at the drugs we take, improve our physical well-being, and address other everyday choices we make that could reduce the risk of hurting ourselves through falls. Tues 9/29 10:30 - Noon, Elderberry. Please call (925)284-5050 to reserve a spot. \$1 Members/ \$3 Non-Members. LCC, 500 Saint Mary's Road, Lafayette.

Hearing Loss Association of America-Diablo Valley Chapter, a volunteer nonprofit organization, has monthly meetings that provide information, education, support and advocacy for people who suffer from hearing loss. Join us at 7:00 p.m. on first Wednesdays of the month. Walnut Creek United Methodist Church, 1543 Sunnyvale Ave., Walnut Creek; Education Bldg., Wesley Room. Meeting room and parking at back of church. All ages welcome. Donations accepted. Assistive listening system available for T-coils and most meetings are captioned. For more information, visit www.hearinglossdv.org.

ART FROM OUT OF THIS WORLD TOUR is an exhibit that explores the relationship between space, science, and art, and brings you both real and imagined images of landscapes from our solar system. Docent Heidi Donner, of St. Mary's College, will lead us on a private tour before the gallery opens to the public. This will occur on Friday, October 16, at the Hearst Art Gallery in Saint Mary's College, from 10 - Noon. The cost is \$7 for nonmembers and \$6 for Emeritus College members. To register contact Emeritus College (925) 906-9105.

Glenn Nosse's
STREET DAWG

When not flying high in Bay Area skies, Glenn Nosse hangs out in Lafayette with his two- and four-legged friends.




Photo Glenn Nosse

NAME: Ocho (because he looked like an 8-ball as a pup), a border collie-Australian shepherd mix
AGE: 10
JOB: Greeter and friend of the kids at Hank and Frank Bicycles in Lafayette; been going to work with owner Frank Dryer for ten years.
RESIDENCE: Walnut Creek but vacations yearly in Mexico.
SMART / STUPID PET TRICK: Opens UPS parts boxes.
FAVORITE RIDE: Wake boards. "Seen enough bikes in my life time." Frank offered a photo taken with Ocho on a wake board, however, taken with a cell camera, it did not meet Dawg standards.