



Ballet Classes

WINTER CLASSES FOR ALL AGES
Master Instructor, Jami Fender-Cronin - 32 Years Exp.

SIGNUP NOW

1460 Moraga Road Suite F, Moraga
Moraga Shopping Center, behind McCaulous
www.starpilates.com **376-7500**

Orindans Say No Tax for New Roads

By Andrea A. Firth

A convincing majority of Orinda voters believe that the City's road conditions are among the worst in the Bay Area and that the aged storm drain system is simultaneously collapsing beneath the roads. However, a much less convincing number of voters support new taxes to fix the City's infrastructure problems.

At their February 2nd meeting, the City Council reviewed the results of a public opinion poll of 400 residents who were surveyed to assess their support of ballot measures to finance infrastructure improvements. Although 52% of those polled would likely support an infrastructure bond, the positive responses fell far short of the 2/3 super-majority required to carry the measure. "Given the financial situation of our community, the general obligation bond is not an option," stated Council Member Steve Glazer who noted that polling numbers were higher when the City previously placed infrastructure bond measures on the ballot. In addition, Orindans were starkly opposed to the idea of a \$300 parcel tax to fund road and storm drain repairs with 60% of those surveyed rejecting this approach.

In fact there was no funding mechanism or tax that seemed sufficiently palatable to the residents surveyed to support even a simple

majority for an infrastructure measure. Increasing the real property transfer tax, increasing the local sales tax, and establishing a utility users tax—all measures that require a simple majority for approval—looked unlikely to pass if presented to voters. Slightly less than 50% of surveyed voters supported increasing the real property transfer tax. [This tax would also necessitate that Orinda switch from a general law to an independent charter city, which is an option the City Council has begun to weigh. Lafayette recently polled residents regarding their support of the charter city move, and Orinda's Council plans to look to those results for guidance.] Forty-six percent of those surveyed agreed with increasing the local sales tax by ¼ cent to support infrastructure. Establishing a utility usage tax on water, gas, electric, cable, and phone service was the toughest sell with only 24% of respondents supporting the concept.

With declining revenues and a projected deficit for the upcoming budget year, the poll also asked residents about their support of new taxes to fund city services. Over half, 52% of those polled, would support a \$53 annual parcel tax for this use, but again this was far short of the required 2/3 majority needed to carry the measure. The ¼ cent sales tax, which needs

a simple majority to pass, garnered the support of 53% of residents polled. At current sales levels this tax increase would yield \$370,000 annually; while it would have minimal impact on the City's multi-million dollar infrastructure problem, the Council did feel this could help bridge the City budget's revenue gap. However, Council member Glazer voiced concern that with the margin presented it would take a big effort to push the ¼ cent sales tax through. "I guess my concern is having someone willing to step forward to run a campaign [for the sales tax]," added Vice Mayor Victoria Smith noting that she did not see any obvious interest group to take charge.

Regarding the public's satisfaction with how the City is doing its job, the poll results were more positive. Seventy eight percent of those polled felt the City was doing an average or better job at taking care of business and providing basic services. The Library, the Orinda Union School District (K through 8th grade), and the police department all received approval ratings of 80% or more, and 70% of respondents approved of the Moraga Orinda Fire District's performance. The City Council held its own with 60% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreeing of their performance, which was a 4% bump over poll results from 2008.

Orinda Turns 25—Celebration Plans in the Works

By Andrea A. Firth

July 1st, 2010 marks the 25th anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Orinda, and the City has a long list of events and activities planned to commemorate the event throughout the year (see sidebar). The July 4th parade, which was established about the same time that the City incorporated, will be a focal point for the celebration. Mark Roberts, President of the Orinda Association, and event chairwoman Chris Laszcz-Davis, are busy recruiting volunteers for a fun-filled day of food and music in conjunction with the parade.

Orinda was an unincorporated thriving community for decades, but in the summer of 1985 the residents of the area moved to become a city to take control of health and safety issues. The citizens voted for incorporation to obtain better emergency service coverage and to gain greater control over the planning process, public works, and police services. Now in its 25th year as a city, people are ready to take part in the valued traditions like the parade along with a few special events to mark the occasion.

"Many people may not realize how much the City is involved with supporting community events like the July 4th parade festivities," states City Council Member Sue Severson. "The City covers things like insurance costs, provides police

support, and other financial support," she adds, but with the decline in revenues the City was forced to eliminate its financial support of the events. Severson spearheaded an effort last spring to create fundraising events to support the Orinda Community Fund, which in turn supports community events, the Art in Public Places program, and Orinda Beautification programs, among other things. This effort kicked off with a Kids Triathlon at Miramonte High School last fall, which raised about \$8,000.

Severson is working on two fundraisers associated with Orinda's 25th anniversary. There will be a celebrity golf tournament held at the Orinda Country Club on July 26th. The theme of the outing is "Celebrate Everyday Heroes." Captain C.B. "Sully" Sullenberger,

a Danville resident and the U.S. Airways pilot who made an amazing emergency landing in the Hudson River saving the lives of all 155 people onboard, will serve as honorary chair for the event. There are 120 spots available for the golf tournament, and a dinner dance will be held the evening prior. Along with the Community Fund proceeds will be donated to Boys and Girls Clubs of the Bay Area and the Contra Costa County and Alameda Food Banks. Severson's crew of volunteers has also planned the Silver Ball, an evening of food, wine, art, and music set for October 2nd, again at the Orinda Country Club. Juried artworks from Bay Area artists will be on display and up for auction. For more information about the silver Ball go to <http://orindasilverball.com>.

City Events for Orinda's 25th*

- Time capsule sealing and burial
- Birthday cake in the Community Park (7/29/10)
- Council Proclamation (6/15/10)
- Student writing contest (Spring 2010)
- Ten Dance with a 1980's theme
- Family movie night
- Historical retrospective
- Gallery of Council portraits
- Anniversary give-aways

*City events are proposed; dates are to be confirmed.

To get involved go to: <http://www.orindaassociation.org/>

The Fiery Furnace at Orinda Books

Submitted by Bobbie Dodson

In 1887, to get from Detroit, Michigan to Teheran, Persia was a daunting journey even for eighteen year old Louisa Jordan Merriweather. Thus begins the book, "The Fiery Furnace: Has Teheran Changed Much in 100 Years?" written by Orindan Margaret Wood Little. A book signing for this new novel will take place at the Orinda Book Store, 276 Village Square in Orinda at 4:00 p.m. on February 25.

Little says she chose this setting for her story as her grandfather started the Presbyterian Mission in

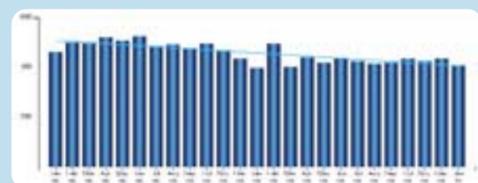
Teheran and served as its head for several years. "Born in Teheran, my mother lived there until she was 12 years old. My siblings and I were intrigued by the stories she told about her life in this far away land. I also had letters my grandfather wrote. Strangely enough, he was a good friend of the Shah."

With this firsthand material, as well as hours spent in research, Little weaves a story of romance with factual information about life in the late 19th century in Persia, which is now known as Iran. Her title poses

the question, "Has Teheran changed much in the last 100 years?" and she wonders what your answer will be.

Margaret Little has been writing for 20 years. Her first published book was Strawberry Stars. She says "I write because I enjoy it, and to re-write several times is even more fun." Currently she is working on "Candy and Jazz," which covers the beginning of the Jazz era. Little has lived in Orinda with her husband, Dr. Jim Little, since 1964, where they raised three sons.

Do You Know What your Home is Worth in 2010?



Monthly Average Price per Square Foot of Homes Sold in Lamorinda

For current local Market Trends data, visit:

www.LamorindaValues.com

For a complimentary market analysis of your specific property, contact Frank today!

Frank Woodward

Specializing in Lamorinda Fine Homes & Property

925.253.4603 Frank@FrankWoodward.com

Orinda • Lafayette • Moraga

WARNING TO MOTORISTS!

All Auto Repair Shops Are Not Created Equal!

Saving money is a ok if you can trust that the shop will use the appropriate parts, offer a comprehensive warranty and replace only what is needed.

- FACT:** Oil Change Bargains often do not use the correct oil viscosity due to the cost of the correct oil for the vehicle.
- FACT:** Using the incorrect viscosity oil may cause engine damage and will void your manufacturers warranty.
- FACT:** Brake components made in China are not created equal. Many shops use sub-standard brake parts to offer low price.
- FACT:** Using poor quality brake parts usually leads to squealing, vibration, premature brake wear and poor brake performance.
- FACT:** Using poor quality parts and untrained personnel may save money but produces sub-standard results in the long run.

Don't sacrifice quality for price!



Orinda Motors Inc. 63 Orinda Way, Orinda, Ca., 94563 (925)254-2012

www.orindamotors.com



Thinking of Lasik surgery? Visit one of these Lamorinda doctors first

The Lamorinda doctors listed below are all close by, ready to help you evaluate the possibility of reducing your need for glasses through Lasik refractive surgery. They are all affiliated with the Refractive Surgery Center at the top-rated UC Berkeley School of Optometry, conveniently located on the Berkeley campus.

Call today for a comprehensive evaluation and see the way to better vision!

Drs. Richard Baker & Nathan Orr
Lamorinda Optometry
3581 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette
925.283.8502

Drs. DiMartino, Tong & Associates
Lafayette Optometric Group
958 Moraga Road, Lafayette
925.283.3821

Drs. K. Eng, W. Eng, & K. Shintani
Orinda Optometry Group
20 Orinda Way, Orinda
925.253.1320

Jeremy Ensor, OD
284 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette
925.284.1500
www.spectaclevision.com

William Schwertscharf, OD
Professional Eyecare Optometry
1030 Country Club Drive, Moraga
925.376.2020

Ronald Yasuda, OD
Moraga Optometry
556 Center Street, Moraga
925.376.7559



UC Berkeley Refractive Surgery Center www.caleyecare.com
Free parking with appointments. 510.643.2860