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**Orinda Civic News**

**Public Meetings**

**City Council**

Tuesday, July 19, 7:00 pm  
Auditorium, Orinda Library,  
26 Orinda Way

**Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission**

Wednesday, July 13 at 6:30 PM  
Community Room, City Hall  
22 Orinda Way

**Planning Commission**

Tuesday, July 12, at 7:00 p.m.  
Orinda Library, Garden Room  
26 Orinda Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

**City of Orinda:**

www.cityoforinda.org

**Chamber of Commerce:**

www.orindachamber.org

**The Orinda Association:**

www.orindaassociation.org



**Police Report**

VP D.U.I. 6/28/11 Not the Vice President, but the Vice Principal of a school across the bridge was stopped for an illegal U-turn at a stop light at 11:30 p.m. Officers noticed the distinct smell of alcohol. Once he flunked his field sobriety test and breathalyzer – he was arrested. For someone who works in the school system, drunk driving is not very smart.

Belligerent drunk, 6/20/11 At 7:30 in the morning an Orinda Way shop employee alerted police to a 19-year-old female who was obviously intoxicated in front of a dry cleaning business. She started kicking police deputies, who eventually picked her up and placed her in their patrol car. Once inside the vehicle, she began spitting. Cops then placed a spit mask on her. Good morning, sunshine – apparently she forgot her charm school training.

Drunk versus tree, 6/17/11 The tree lost. An Orinda Country Club security guard alerted police that a car driven by a local young man went down an embankment and crashed into a tree at the OCC parking lot. Surprisingly he showed signs of intoxication.

Auto burglary at Safeway, 6/17/11 Although the car was locked and the shopper was only in the store for twenty-five minutes, when he returned to his vehicle the rear window was smashed and a briefcase with laptop inside was missing. Brazen thief or thieves struck at around 5:30 in the evening, when presumably lots of folks are picking up a few items for dinner. Attention Safeway shoppers – put your valuables out of sight.

Home burglary, 6/16 Unknown suspect(s) entered a mostly locked Brookside Road home via an unlocked bathroom window sometime between 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.. Jewelry was stolen along with a wallet, cash and credit cards. Estimated loss \$1,000.

**Orinda's Budget—Squeaking by for Now**

By Andrea A. Firth

Staff is presenting a balanced budget, but the process of getting here was not an easy one. We were faced with some difficult decisions," said City Manager Janet Keeter in her opening comments at the June 21st City Council meeting. Keeter and Orinda's Finance Director, Emily Hobdy, presented the Council with a two-year budget for fiscal years 2012 and 2013, which included spending cuts across all city departments and the elimination of an associate planning position.

"It's a revenue issue, not an expenditure problem," said Keeter adding, "If there are no increases in revenue, more serious budget problems will start to occur by 2014." Property tax revenue, which represents half of the city's General Fund

revenue, was down .25% in 2011—the first time Orinda has experienced a decrease in assessed valuations. The City still has an \$88,000 shortfall in its operating budget across the two years, which Keeter says they are trying to resolve through employee negotiations.

Speaking on behalf of the city's 24 unionized employees, Peter Finn, Business Representative from Teamsters Local Union 856, stated, "We've said time and time again that we are willing to look at concessions in order to save jobs." Finn questioned why the City has three interns at work in the Planning Department when he had initially been told that the rationale for eliminating the planning position was reduced workload. Finn then produced a letter from the City, ad-

ressed to him and dated June 21st in response to his request for information. Finn noted the letter states that the City's position regarding the elimination of the planning position was not due to a "lack of work" but an overall budget shortfall. "Is it workload or is it the budget?" asked Finn. "If it's not workload, give us a chance to find the money to save that job." He requested the Council to hold off on its budget vote.

"We looked at different ways of doing things to provide the best service to the public," said Keeter in response, "It's the result of a budget shortfall."

"This is a lean budget for lean times that will provide the basic services that our citizens demand," stated Vice Mayor Steve Glazer. He added that the city continues to underfund its

infrastructure needs given the current revenue constraints.

"Staff has done a very good job with the conservative nature of the projections," added Council Member Dean Orr, "Keeping revenue projections on the small, conservative side is absolutely the direction that we need to be taking now."

"The budget we have before us today is definitely lean and the most prudent thing we can do," said Mayor Victoria Smith adding, "We are cognizant and understand the impact on employees... We hope the mid-year budget review will show better times, but can't plan for that."

The Council voted unanimously to adopt the biennial budget. As of press time, the negotiations between the City and union employees were ongoing.

**Sam Shankland—Orinda's Chess Grandmaster**

By Andrea A. Firth



Sam Shankland Photo provided

Sam Shankland is at the top of his game, and his game is chess. He recently was awarded the title of grandmaster—the highest title a chess player can achieve.

Spend just a brief time with Shankland, and one will see he is a quick study, extremely bright, determined, focused, and highly competitive. He looks and sounds like the world class chess champion that he is. What's surprising about Shankland is how quickly he has reached the pinnacle of the chess world. He is only 19 years old.

"This is just an amazing accomplishment for a teenager. It's almost unheard of," said Mike Hilliard, an

Orinda resident and a member of the Board of the Mechanics' Institute Library and Chess Room in San Francisco. Mechanics' is the oldest chess club in the country and helped to foster Shankland's study of the game. Hilliard was on hand along with Shankland's family and a group of chess supporters when the Orinda City Council recognized his chess accomplishments and in his honor designated June 22nd as Sam Shankland Day.

"He had to achieve several levels before getting to this highest post," said Hilliard, "Now a grandmaster, the next step [in the competitive chess world] would be vying for world champion."

Worldwide there are approximately 1,300 grandmasters, a title held for life. In the United States, there are 20 to 30 active grandmasters. As the newest member of this elite group Shankland, a rising sophomore at Brandeis University in Massachusetts, is taking things one step at a time. "We'll have to see where chess takes me," he says.

Shankland grew up in Orinda where his parents Jim and Leslie and younger brother Alex still reside. His father taught him to play chess when he was five or six years of age, but he gave the game little attention until he

joined the chess club at Glorietta Elementary School in fourth grade. He quickly mastered all Glorietta could offer and began playing in tournaments by age eleven.

"My real strength is my memory," says Shankland who estimates that he is currently ranked about 400 in the world today, but this does not reflect his recent tournament accomplishments. Shankland was the third place winner in the United States 2011 Chess Championships played in St. Louis in April. He was the youngest player in the select field of 16 and lost to the champion, who is 17 years his senior, in the semi-finals.

"I love the game and naturally I am a very competitive person. I have always wanted to push myself as far as possible, but I mostly do it for myself," says Shankland who is simultaneously confident and unassuming about his chess prowess. To train he continually studies the game by reading books, analyzing positions, and memorizing moves. He also works regularly with a training partner, a chess player from Norway who he met during his tournament travels. A big part of each game is determining how best to play against the specific opponent, says Shankland. He's dis-

ciplined in his preparations and says the opening is key.

After taking a year off, once he graduated from high school, to go on the professional chess circuit Shankland settled into university life this past year but was never too far from a chess board. He teaches chess, and because he travels extensively while competing and is otherwise away at school, he works with his students online through Skype. But he also teaches in person and has some high profile clients. He traveled to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates to privately train Prince Sheik Mohammed in the game.

The chess world will have to wait and watch for Shankland's next move. While he plans to complete his undergraduate degree and carry on teaching, the draw of competition continues to pull the young grandmaster to the table. In August, Shankland will compete in the Chess World Cup, in a field entirely populated with grandmasters, to be held in the Russian cities of Khanty and Mansiysk. While it is more likely that preparation, concentration, and inspiration will lead Shankland to the first place prize, we wish Orinda's grandmaster good luck!

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