

# Orinda Historical Society Exhibit Offers Library Visitors Trip Down Memory Lane

By Laurie Snyder



The photographs were taken by Karl Nielson of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and John Huseby of Caltrans.

What do 1960s-era toys, a late 20th century architectural model of the Orinda Community Center, and a framed copy of a Caldecott Tunnel bond have to do with a black and white 1935 photograph of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe? They're all part of an exhibit being presented by the Orinda Historical Society (OHS) at the Orinda Library Art Gallery now through Jan. 28.

Each year, OHS displays selected items from its treasure trove of historic documents and memorabilia at special events as part of its education and outreach programming. OHS

volunteers also help residents to uncover new details about the histories of their neighborhoods, and inspire dozens of Orinda third graders, parents, and teachers to love local history via guided tours of the society's museum which is located on the ground floor of the Orinda Library complex. Armchair genealogists, serious historians, and news reporters have even been known to mine the society's files and newspaper archives for hints about the city's most noteworthy – and notorious – former residents.

The society has been charged with preserving Orinda's history by

protecting and displaying artifacts, documents and images in the OHS museum, and by educating its membership and the general public about the area's history in a manner which enhances the quality of life in and beyond the city. Members come from as far away as Santa Rosa for the society's annual holiday dinner and benefit from fellowship and frequent belly laughs while working on a diverse range of special projects throughout the year.

In addition to the Caldecott Tunnel bond currently on display, the January Library Gallery exhibit also

showcases clay renderings by local artist Dorothy P. Roos of Orinda's first school – known in 1882 as the Moraga School, the Miner Home (1880) and the Orinda Park Hotel (1885), the Santa Maria Chapel (1892), the Bryant Home (1875), and the Bryant Train Station (1893) – Orinda's own stop along the Califor-

nia Nevada Railroad. Roos, a graduate of the California College of Arts and Crafts, created the building models to help local children envision the founding days of their home town.

Future events planned by OHS volunteers include an exhibit of artifacts at the annual Orinda Car Show and a military display to honor the sacrifices made by local veterans for community and country. OHS is asking residents to loan or donate items and gear in support of the project. Uniforms from all service eras and branches are welcome, with Marine and Coast Guard uniforms most desired to diversify the items received to date.

Residents are also needed to assist with everything from data entry to helping organize and archive the museum's collections, and to staff the museum. In addition, a membership drive is currently underway. So, if you're a history buff or an avid genealogist, OHS would welcome your support. For more information, contact Lucy Hupp Williams: (650) 349-3382, or (925) 254-1353. Or swing by to meet the members of the OHS Board of Directors and other volunteers at a special Library Gallery reception for the current exhibits from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 27.

You might just enlighten a child – or help a neighbor to solve a mystery.



Selected images from "Tunnel Vision," an award-winning series of photographs capturing the construction of the new fourth bore for the Caldecott Tunnel, are also currently on display at the Orinda Library Art Gallery this month. Drivers felt a glimmer of hope for easier commutes late last year with the news that eastern and western tunneling operations had finally connected. The new \$402.1 million bore – "one of the largest recipients of Recovery Act funding in the nation," according to regional transportation officials – is expected to open to traffic by late 2013.

## Rheem Closes Three Upstairs Theaters to be ADA Compliant

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"The town wants to help, and different options will be taken to Council in the next weeks," said Keimach. "We were also planning to start a conversation with the community, before the lift incident, and we intend to invite the residents to a meeting in February."

According to Zemrak, the Rheem's situation has improved, operating revenue covers costs but does not generate benefits. "In 2012 the box office increase in revenue from 2011 was over 7 percent; and the theater had a 16 percent increase in attendance, as well as a 23 percent increase in attendance at the November California Independent Film Festival," said Zemrak. "The theater has become a community resource, this partial closure comes at a very bad time."

In the short term, Zemrak believes that local fundraising efforts should allow the Rheem to solve the

lift crisis. "If we can raise \$10,000 we can order the elevator and negotiate with the state to keep the theater open," he said. Two fundraising events have already been planned: an Oscar Night gala on Feb. 24, and this Friday, Jan. 18, Shelby's restaurant in Orinda will give 15 percent of its proceeds to the theater.

"Different people have reached out to ask what they could do to help," said Zemrak, citing a phone call from new Orinda Chamber President Sylvia Jorgensen. Dochterman wants to help, too, and said he would lead a fundraising effort, if asked. "I think this is something we can solve as a community," he said.

The conversation started during the town's Goal Setting session Jan. 12. Mayor Dave Trotter took the lead saying that the council and the town needed to think outside the box to find long-term viability options for the theater.

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