



Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Feb. 4, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org
Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District

TBA
OUSD Office, Vintage Building
25 Orinda Way, Suite 200
www.orindaschools.org

See also AUHSD meeting page A2



Orinda Police
Department crime statistics for the month of January will appear in our Feb. 12 issue.

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Orinda Mayor Steps Out to Help Shape Tomorrow's Leaders

By Laurie Snyder



Mayor of Orinda Sue Severson here to speak to government classes.
#edchat #GoMats
pic.twitter.com/v90TO93Vvw



Principal Adam Clark showed his civic pride Jan. 15, alerting the Twitterverse to Orinda Mayor Sue Severson's talk at Miramonte High School by adding "#edchat" – one of the hashtags used nationwide to help teachers cull tips and ideas from among the millions of messages tweeted daily.

"Mayor of Orinda Sue Severson here to speak to government classes," tweeted Adam Clark, principal of Miramonte High School. With a mere 108 characters, Clark advised locals that the mayor was on campus Jan. 15, and showed educators nationwide why Orinda's schools are so widely respected.

"It's important for students to see the connection between federal, state

and local government. I teach the U.S. federal government through formal instruction and simulation. Students then apply what they learned and research the branches of California state government," explained MHS teacher Meghan Selway when contacted about the tweet. "I close out each branch with students researching another country and discussing similarities and differences." During election

years, this may change with the added influx of current events-type news, but the local component always remains part of the mix.

"This year after a simulation of how a bill becomes a law, I received the most insightful reflections on the legislative process. Students said that they now realize that getting things done in Congress is not as easy as it looks to the general American public." Most, said Selway, felt they "now understood the different directions a legislator can be pulled and why Congress deadlocked on the budget. The students themselves could not agree on funding bills during our simulation. Others were critical of the majority and minority party process and commented on the undemocratic aspect of a majority party's power especially in the House. All of them said what they learned would not have been possible without the simulation."

According to Severson, Selway first reached out for help with the local component about five years ago. Severson begins with a 15-minute PowerPoint, outlining Orinda government operations. Selway adds context. The class then breaks into four groups to analyze real-time problems devised by Severson. Students brainstorm solutions to issues affecting the Parks and Recreation Department, Traffic Safety Advisory Commission and other Orinda government units.

"It's important for students to feel that their civic involvement could have a direct impact. A letter to a legislator may be one of thousands," said Selway, but in Orinda, students have greater interaction and satisfaction because Severson "gets the students' feedback on local issues... which she then summarizes and presents to the Orinda City Council. "It is empowering for students to see their input actually making a difference."

"I've found historically that any time you have a student engaged in their learning they're going to come out better informed on the other side of it," whether in science or government, observed Severson. The last census showed that teens currently make up roughly a third of Orinda's population. "I try to impress upon them that their voices are important."

They've clearly gotten the message. Selway's students have been spotted at recent town hall events sponsored by U.S. Congressman George Miller and California Senator Mark DeSaulnier, and have even spoken up at Orinda City Council meetings.

"We need to be impressed and feel okay about the next generation," stressed Severson. "These are bright kids; they're good kids; they like to volunteer, be charitable. We should be proud of them. They're brave; they're articulate. They're tomorrow's leaders."

J Team Injects Dose of Burglar-Be-Gone into Orinda Neighborhoods

By Laurie Snyder

Criminals take note: Orinda's welcome mat has unceremoniously been rescinded. Orinda Police Chief Scott Haggard recently announced the arrival of new, no nonsense anti-crime crusaders. "Due to the spike in residential burglaries, I requested the help of the Sheriff's Specialized Patrol Services Unit 'J Team' to assist us," said Haggard.

The "J" in J Team stands for justice, he explained, noting that contracts between the Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff and cities of Orinda and Lafayette give both communities a power boost by providing access to special emergency and support personnel, K9

units, helicopters, and other resources at no extra cost.

J Team members have actually been on the case since Christmas, quietly working with the Orinda Police Department to interview informants, conduct surveillance and undercover operations, increase the saturation of police coverage, and help burglars firmly grasp the concept that the "Home Shopping Network" has now closed in America's second friendliest city. While it's still too early to gauge the impact of the extra eyes and ears on Orinda's streets, the last time the J Team helped out, residential burglaries dropped dramatically. So, it's a safe bet to estimate that more

and more burglars will be taking their tools elsewhere – if they haven't already been booked for extended vacation stays at one of the East Bay's finer correctional facilities.

In addition, Orinda police officer Dustin Gregory was recently recognized for helping the district attorney to file charges against a man suspected of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old. According to Sheriff David Livingston's office, "Officer Gregory obtained a confession from the [19-year-old] suspect of two sexual encounters, and presented the case to the D.A., who filed two charges on the suspect."

To help Orinda's finest and

their J Team associates continue to keep Orinda safe, call police as soon as you see anything suspicious: (925) 254-6820.

Correction, issue date Jan. 15, 2014, "Keeping Orinda's Arts in Bloom:"
Due to an oversight, we neglected to include reporter Laurie Snyder's byline on her wonderful article about the Orinda Arts Council that appeared in our last issue and which is now linked on the California Arts Council's website at www.cac.ca.gov/newsroom/whatsnew.php.

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