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Four Candidates Compete for Three School Board Seats

By Laurie Snyder

Three seats are opening on the Orinda Union School District board of trustees. Four accomplished, passionate professionals are running in November, 2014. Each has direct experience volunteering for and sending at least one child through Orinda's schools.

Carol A. Brown

A native of Concord, Carol Brown is a 22-year Orinda resident who advanced through the publishing industry from book editing to marketing before leaving to work at a non-profit agency engaged in finding homes for hard to place foster kids. A former board member for Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children, she continues to volunteer as a child advocate for CASA while leading a team of eight other volunteers who support abused and neglected children. "We have such a nice comfortable life where we are that it often doesn't occur to us that a child down the street could be in danger. These kids have had everything go against them, and have been violated in so many ways. I advocate in court for one particular child at a time, working with his or her therapist and school teachers, often getting to know the child I represent much more deeply than can a social worker who's overburdened. It's the best thing I've ever done outside of having my own kids."

Jason Kaune

The son of a naval officer, Jason Kaune experienced firsthand America's uneven public school landscape while being transferred with his family from one military base to another. Ultimately a product of Orinda's schools, he served as a student member of the Acalanes School Board before heading for Yale and earning graduate degrees from the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government and University of California, Hastings College of the Law. He has worked for Nielsen Merksamer since 1996, and was admitted to the California State Bar in 1999. Currently a partner specializing in political law and ethics, he has advised clients regarding land use, tax and other ballot measures. While chairing the board at St. Stephen's, he helped the church create a legacy fund and retire a capital deficit. In 2014, he also volunteered with Fix Orinda Roads, the committee which helped secure passage of the Measure J roads improvement bond in June. "You have to look at the long term and project."

Julie Rossiter

The only incumbent running, Julie Rossiter was first elected to the OUSD board in 2010, and served as president in 2013. A graduate of the State University of New York at Stony Brook and the University of Southern California's School of Law, she was admitted to the California State Bar in 1991. A business litigator and employment lawyer in the 1990s with Ervin, Cohen & Jessup of Beverly Hills and Stanislaw Ashbaugh, LLP in Seattle, she practiced for seven years before her son was born. Currently on the boards of the Miramonte Parents Club and Friends of the Orinda Library, the 10-year Orinda resident has also been the Acalanes Union School District parcel tax representative for Measures A (2010) and B (2014). "It has been a great privilege serving on the school board and working with so many talented and committed people in this community. I look forward to continuing to work collaboratively to accomplish the board's primary goal: providing Orinda students with the highest quality education."

Hillary Weiner

A graduate of Emory University and the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, Hillary Weiner was admitted to the California State Bar in 1999. While working as a senior associate with Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, she practiced pharmaceutical and medical device product liability law until becoming a full-time mother. After moving from San Francisco to Orinda with her family four years ago, she joined Temple Isaiah's early childhood task force, and helped to start a Tot Shabbat program. As her children grew, she refocused her volunteerism toward Glorietta Elementary, becoming co-president of the Parents' Club in 2013-14. Currently, she also volunteers with the Children's Health Guild to raise funds in support of the UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland and the George Mark Children's House, America's first freestanding pediatric palliative care service. "I'm

someone who brings people together whether through entertaining or schools, or getting my kids together with other people. I'm a listener. I pride myself on being someone who brings community together."

Asked for one to two words each would use to best describe himself or herself, all modestly required prodding until eventually choosing the following: Brown - compassionate; Kaune - kind and fair; Rossiter - pragmatic; and Weiner - a community builder.

OUSD Board Campaign Websites

Carol A. Brown: carolbrown4schoolboard.org

Jason Kaune: jasonkaune.com

Julie Rossiter: julierossiter.org

Hillary Weiner: hillaryweiner.com

Save the Date! OUSD School Board Candidate Forum:

Oct. 16, sponsored by the Orinda Association.

Reach the reporter at: laurie@lamorindaweekly.com

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