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## Candy Kattenburg Retires

By Sophie Braccini



Candy Kattenburg Photo S. Braccini

An icon of the Orinda business community is bowing out of her position as executive director of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. Candy Kattenburg was the anchor of the organization for 10 years, managing it, organizing events, taking care of the members, and serving as the ambassador of the business community in the city.

"It was almost by accident that I got interested in that position 10 years ago," remembers Kattenburg. She lost her flight attendant job with United Airlines after 9/11 and was looking for new opportunities when she was helping with events at the Orinda Chamber of Commerce where her husband, architect Rick Kattenburg, was a board member. "Since I had done recruitment when I was a Revlon sales manager, the executive director at the time, Valerie Holtz, asked me to help her recruit a replacement," says Kattenburg. "I asked to shadow her to understand what the job was, and realized that it was something I would love to do myself. It's been a great 10 years!" The director is now leaving to take care of her 90-year-old mother, who lives by herself in Walnut Creek.

Kattenburg says that the most important task is to maintain and grow the base of the Chamber of Commerce, and to be available for whatever the members need. She manages everyday operations, spends a lot of time on the phone answering all types of questions, "just being available is important, (the members) need to feel that someone is listening." A lot of changes have happened during her tenure, including new events from comedy nights to restaurants tours, a revitalization of the Chamber, a new website and newsletter, the Trivia Bee, and Shop Orinda campaigns. She has also managed the classic luncheons, Fourth of July parties, and more.

With so much happening in Orinda, one might think Kattenburg manages a large staff, but she is "it." Fortunately the chamber board members are active, and Kattenburg works cooperatively with the board and successive presidents, such as Sylvia Jorgensen who has been president for the past several years. "Sylvia has been great. When she came in and gave me the list of things she wanted to do, she blew me away," remembers Kattenburg. She says that she has loved all the presidents she worked with, and particularly appreciated that Jorgensen never had one loose end. She regrets to have to leave just as her good friend Roy Hodgkinson will be taking the presidency.

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce is seeking candidates to replace Candy Kattenburg. The executive director is in charge of membership sales and service, event organization and coordination, and is asked to be in the office one day per week. Like Kattenburg, the executive director will attend monthly board meetings, and attend events as the chamber representative. Interested parties should contact [info@orindachamber.org](mailto:info@orindachamber.org).

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