

Published January 13, 2016

## New President Takes the Helm at Orinda Chamber of Commerce

By Victor Ryerson



New Chamber of Commerce executive director, Sophie Braccini, and new president, Roy Hodgkinson Photo Vic Ryerson

promotes Orinda businesses and business interests by providing information, communication, and activities to enhance the community. Activities include the upcoming March 4 "Live at the Orinda Comedy Night," and right now Hodgkinson says he and the planning team are busy preparing for that event, which attracts national talent. The chamber is also preparing for its annual Business Awards and Recognitions Lunch, to be held this year on Feb. 12 at the Orinda Country Club.

In his role as president of the chamber, the affable Hodgkinson represents a diverse membership in marketing, communicating, and advocating its members' interests, working in cooperation with the City of Orinda. He is careful to take a neutral position on such issues as parking and commercial real estate improvements, but says he is "glad to see something moving" on these concerns. He has faith that Orinda will continue to have a "vital business community," and observes that business owners are smart, responding to demand for retail facilities and professional services elsewhere with complementary and unique offerings in Orinda.

Joining him in the new leadership of the organization is Sophie Braccini, the chamber's incoming executive director. No stranger to Lamorinda Weekly readers, Braccini has been a staff writer for this paper from its start nine years ago, and her byline has appeared on many business stories. She sought the position with the chamber, she says, because she knows and loves the Orinda business community from her exposure as a reporter, and considers it to be a very important aspect of Orinda's character. Originally from France, she came to the United States 25 years ago as an information technology worker in customer service and sales. Later in her career she became the president of a nonprofit company involved in work with newcomers to this area, and in that capacity engaged in volunteer management, event planning, and board decision making, all of which she feels will be helpful experience in her new role. She also believes her background in sales will be

There are a lot of new faces in the leadership of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce this year. At the top of the list is Roy Hodgkinson, who started his three-year term as president on Jan. 1, succeeding Sylvia Jorgensen. Joining him are four new board members, a new chair of the chamber's volunteer ambassadors, and a new executive director. The new faces bring with them "lots of new energy and enthusiasm," Hodgkinson says.

Hodgkinson, who previously served as the chamber's vice president, is a 20-year Orinda resident. He is a retired information technology executive and consultant with four decades of business experience under his belt. He and his wife moved to their home, which they remodeled, in 1995. Their architect, Rick Kattenburg, is the husband of the outgoing executive director of the chamber, Candis Kattenburg, and Hodgkinson first became aware of the organization's activities through that connection.

The chamber is a nonprofit organization that

helpful, as recruitment of new members is an important aspect of the job.

Information about the mission, membership and activities of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce is available at [orindachamber.org](http://orindachamber.org).

Reach the reporter at: [victor@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:victor@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA