

# Rain Fails to Dampen SMC Grads, Families

By Cathy Dausman



Susan Murray spots her newly graduated daughter Alexandra Klepp as Brad Smith photographs the moment. Photos Cathy Dausman

It rained just a bit ahead of their parade as more than 660 newly minted Saint Mary's College graduates, their families and friends endured half an hour of showers at the start of the 2016 undergraduate commencement May 21, but the rain let up as the first undergrads stood to file onstage and receive their diplomas.

They came from across California, across the United States and from overseas—San Diego, San Rafael, Wisconsin, New Jersey, Australia and Saudi Arabia. Class of 1996 SMC graduate Mahershalah Ali ("House of Cards," "The Hun-

ger Games") delivered the commencement address, advising his 20-something audience they were still "a people in process."

An estimated 600 additional students received graduate and professional studies degrees the following day, under slightly improved weather conditions

California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson was their commencement speaker. Saint Mary's College enrolls more than 4,200 students in undergrad and graduate liberal arts and business programs.



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Anticipation, happiness, satisfaction, worry—all emotions on their day of days.

## Orinda

### Is Wilder Getting Wilder?

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The handbook garnered widespread praise. Previously, despite a builder's best intentions to conform to the requirements, it was all too easy to miss one and be sent back to the drawing board. In the past the approval process for Wilder has been acknowledged to be too cumbersome and time consuming, resulting in long delays and fewer homes being built than anticipated. Although initially the Planning Commission expressed some reservations about the changed approval procedure, they did vote unanimously to recommend it to the city council.

#### Art & Garden Center

It was originally envisaged that the Art & Garden Center would be located at the far end of the Gateway Valley, drawing visitors into the valley and making the entire valley seem like an integral part of the city of Orinda. However, as development progressed, there appeared to be good reasons to move the center to the front of the development, near the playing fields. In

agreeing to do so, Orinda saved something in the neighborhood of \$1.25 million, which will be picked up by the developer, OG Property Owner LLC.

The site which would have housed the Art & Garden Center will now be used for depositing soil removed during the grading of building sites, and for a respite area at the trailhead. The Trailhead Respite Area will include picnic tables, an ADA compliant restroom, a drinking fountain, and parking for 19 automobiles and 2 equestrian trailers. The respite area, which will probably be owned and maintained by the East Bay Regional Parks District, attracted the most attention and concern from Wilder residents.

At the conclusion of the hearing the council voted to introduce the ordinance adopting the seventh amendment to the development agreement. It will be up for a vote on adoption at the next regular meeting of the council on June 21.

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