

Council Members Visit City of Sisterly Love

By Sora O'Doherty



Mayor Smith (second from left) and council member Worth accept a gift from Tabor representatives. Photo provided

When Mayor Victoria Smith and council member Amy Worth arrived for a visit to Tabor in the Czech Republic — Orinda's sister city — they weren't quite sure what to expect. When they stepped off the train at Tabor station, they received the warmest of welcomes from two of the Czech men who had been among the 16 students who have come to Orinda over the years to study as part of the sister city program.

From that moment, they were in good hands, as Michal Vasek and Karel Balogh took over and escorted the group, which included Smith's husband Wick Smith and Worth's friend Cornelia Foster, to all the events during the crowded 25th annual "Tabor Meetings Festival" weekend.

Smith described the festival as being similar to a large Renaissance Faire. Tabor has a historic

old town. The population of Tabor is around 35,000, but when you count two nearby towns it swells to around 60,000. One hundred years before Martin Luther, Jan Hus started a movement to reform the Czech Catholic Church. He is memorialized in Tabor with a monument in Hus Square. Tabor has other sister cities as well, and invited each to send a delegation of four representatives to the festival.

The Orinda delegation traveled to Tabor at their own expense and brought with them gifts, including a decorative plate by artist Gerry Wallace, Orinda pins, a calendar and a framed photo of Orinda city hall. Orindans Slavka and Jan Ruzicka were also in Tabor for the festival, staying with the parents of visiting student, Adam Kraus, who is here for the 2016-2017 year.

... continued on page A11



Wishing all of my clients, friends and neighbors a bountiful Thanksgiving and holidays!
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Frank Woodward

Realtor®, Previews Property Specialist
T. 925.788.4963
E. Frank@FrankWoodward.com



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Orinda Officials Drive Home the Need for Personal Responsibility to Combat Crime

By Nick Marnell

Orinda Police Chief Mark Nagel told a concerned audience Nov. 9 that the county sheriff's department will soon hold a press conference regarding the investigation of the September mugging of two city residents. "Our detectives have been working nonstop on this, but as it's an active investigation, I can't say much more," Nagel said.

Nerves have been frayed in the area since the assault in which two masked assailants surprised Orinda Union School District trustee Carol Brown and her husband outside of their Claremont Drive home. As the couple unloaded groceries from their car, the suspects robbed and shot Brown and pistol-whipped her husband, took off and remain on the loose.

Nagel spoke at a public safety forum held by the Orinda Association in response to an outcry from city residents. "I feel less safe than I did seven years ago," said a speaker and Nagel stressed that as good and safe a place as Orinda is, crime does exist. In fact, he said, because of recent legislation criminals may

be getting even bolder. He pointed to Proposition 47, which reduced some drug possession felonies to misdemeanors; Assembly Bill 109, signed to reduce prison population; and Proposition 57, passed just this election, increasing the chance of parole for non-violent criminals.

The chief relayed inmate comments that his fellow deputies overheard at the Richmond jail. "Lamorinda has nice things...Lamorinda does not have security...We have a green light as long as we don't hurt anyone."

"Number two we can fix," Nagel said.

For the home, he stressed the importance of motion-detecting outside lighting, a strong front door and a top-notch security system. "And make sure to turn on the alarm," Nagel said. He advised that the public be aware of their surroundings when alone, especially in places like parking lots, stairwells, ATMs and public parks. If residents sense they are being followed, walk toward other people, or to an open business. If citizens are driving and are followed by

another car, head toward a police station, or a hospital. "Do not drive home," warned the chief.

As for weapons, Nagel cautioned that Orindans be aware of where their weapons are and that they be hidden from children in the home. "A lot of responsibility comes with carrying a firearm," Nagel said. "And know the laws."

The chief told the audience of about 50 that he supports using technology in crime fighting, highlighting the Reconyx cameras installed around the city and the license plate scanners that sit atop two police cars.

The program opened with Moraga-Orinda Fire District's Dennis Rein, the Lamorinda Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, promoting home safety. He alerted the audience to how a simple thing, like a leak in a pipe below the ground surface, can lead to a major disruption like the Moraga sinkhole.

Rein and Nagel agreed on the basic premise of both home and personal security: "You are the first responder," they said.

Correction

In the Nov. 2 issue the Lamorinda weekly incorrectly identified the representatives of the Urban Land Institute who attended the Orinda City Council meeting Oct. 18. The ULI representatives who were present were Executive Director Michelle Malanca Frey, Director Natalie Sandoval and volunteer co-chairs of the TAP Committee Dana Van Galder and Alan Talansky.

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