



# Orinda Historical Society Newsletter

November 2009

P.O. BOX 82, ORINDA, CA 94563

(925) 254-1353

### Museum Location

Lower Level of  
Orinda Library  
26 Orinda Way

### Museum Hours of Operation

Monday,  
Wednesday, &  
Friday 3-5 pm\*\*  
Or by Appointment  
Call 925 254-1353  
Or  
Pres. Lucy Williams at  
650-349-3382

### Web Site

[www.orindahistory.org](http://www.orindahistory.org)

### Newsletter

Editor: Teresa Long  
[teresa@orindausa.com](mailto:teresa@orindausa.com)

\*\* If planning a visit,  
please call ahead to  
confirm museum hours  
We are a volunteer staff  
and thus our hours can  
vary.

## A Vision for Orinda at this Year's Holiday Dinner



The Orinda Historical Society's annual holiday dinner will be held on Wednesday, December 2nd from 6 to 9pm at the Orinda Community Church.. The program will be the *Down-town Orinda - Yesterday and Tomorrow* featuring local architect **Bill Simpson** and the new Orinda Theater owner **Tom Peterson**.

**Bill Simpson** has always wanted a clear vision for Orinda's downtown (including both the village and crossroads). Simpson's firm, which does local residential and commercial projects, has been in Orinda since 1977. Simpson has lived in Orinda for 46 years and wonders, "What could Orinda be for our children?" He has been involved with many projects over the years, including rebuilding Orinda's Frank Lloyd Wright house after a devastating fire. When cartoonist Charles Schulz bought the office building at one Camino Sobrante, Simpson's firm remodeled it with an emphasis on making the streetscape more pleasant. Bill Simpson worked hard to have Orinda become a city and was elected as the new city's first planning commission chairman. Before that he served on the Contra Costa planning commission.

Simpson, Tom Peterson, and other guests will discuss the design and architecture of downtown Orinda from a historical perspective and beyond. Don't miss this informative and fun-filled evening. **RSVPs for the holiday dinner are due back to OHS by Friday, November 27th.**

## Kay Norman Receives Prestigious Award

OHS board member Kay Norman was honored this past June by the Contra Costa Historical Societies. She received a 2009 individual award for outstanding volunteer service and accomplishments. This award is very well-deserved as Kay has been an very active member of the Historical Society for over 20 years. She held many roles at OHS including writing the newsletter, serving as president for two years, conducting oral interviews, and is now the school liaison. She has been a member of the City of Orinda's Historical Landmarks Committee for 15 years. She likes to write about history, and one of her articles about an early Orinda railroad was published in the California Historian magazine.



Kay Norman

Her current passion has been to share the history of Orinda with 3rd graders who study it as part their school curriculum. Starting in 2001, Kay has developed and conducted many walking tours of Orinda's historic sites usually for our local school's 3rd grade classes, but also for others like scout groups.

Kay is thrilled to be honored and thanks OHS President Lucy Hupp Williams who nominated her for this award.

## Upcoming Events

- **OHS Holiday Dinner**  
Wednesday, Dec. 2nd, 6 to 9 pm at the Orinda Community Church - RSVPs due November 27th.
- **January Board Meeting**  
Wednesday Jan 20th,  
3-5pm at OHS Museum

### **Moraga Adobe**

Help preserve the Adobe  
visit [www.MoragaAdobe.org](http://www.MoragaAdobe.org)  
for more info.



# Welcome

## OHS New Members for 2009

- Christy Blackie-Taylor
- Victoria Carter
- Sara & Michael Curran
- The Dreessen Family
- Bekki & Neil Gilbert
- Bill James
- Katie Johnson
- David & Beth Marks
- The Moraga Lions Club
- John Phillips
- Terry Richards
- Melissa Roeder
- Tom Romaneck
- Sandra Steinbeck
- Jon & Colleen Supran
- Dave & Kim Swanson
- Bruce Van Voorhis
- Charles & Doaa Vollmar

## Orinda's Classic Car Show Gives Generously to Historical Society

The Orinda Historical Society worked with **John Vanek** of Orinda Motors to provide a photo exhibit *Orinda Through the Years* for the 2009 Orinda Classic Car show held on September 19th. The show was a big success. It not only raised money for the Educational Foundation of Orinda and the Orinda Association's Seniors Around Town program, but the organizers also generously gave the Historical Society a check for \$2,500.



Porsches on display in front of Orinda Motors



David Watson's 1940s truck on display with part of the OHS photo exhibit

Many thanks to **Chip Herman**, **Allen Pennebaker** and **John Vanek** for including the Historical Society in this fun Orinda tradition.

Graciously helping with the Historical Society's booth at the car show were OHS members: **Erik Andersen**, **Charles Vollmar**, **Bill Judge**, **Betty Karplus**, **Kent** and **Teresa Long**.

## Wagner Ranch Families Make Donations

The 3rd grade history tour, offered by the Orinda Historical Society, is one of the many way that this organization reaches out to the community. In response, the Wagner Ranch Elementary School community has generously reached out to OHS. The families of 3rd graders in Ms. Friend, Ms. Chase, Ms. Gabel, and Ms. Brumis classes kindly made cash donations to the Historical Society. Thank you to all the families who participated. These donations are very appreciated and will help keep Orinda's history accessible for generations to come.



Thank you to Rose Bolin, the owner of Treible's in Orinda, for generously providing the printing of this newsletter.

## Orinda Appraisal Event Coming Soon



Do you have a treasure in your closet or living room and wonder what it is worth? The Orinda Historical Society is partnering with the City of Orinda and the Arts Council to host an event where professional appraisers can answer this question. Proceeds will go to OHS and to Orinda's Art in Public Places fund. The date for the event is still being decided, but we need volunteers to help. If you are interested in getting involved, call the OHS museum at 254-1353.



**From the OHS Archives ...**



**OHS Board Members**  
**2009/2010**

- President:** Lucy Hupp Williams  
(650) 349-3382
- Vice President:** Charles Vollmar  
(925) 368-4181
- Treasurer:** Betty Karplus  
(925) 254-4970
- Recording Secretary:**  
Carl Weber  
(925) 254-8473
- Archivist:** Kent Long  
(925) 258-9771
- Publicity:** Erik Andersen  
(925) 254-8444
- Membership:** Randy Lamont  
(925)-631-0525
- Technology/Publications:**  
Teresa Long  
(925) 258-9771
- School Liaison:** Kay Norman  
(925) 254-9536
- Videographer:** Jerry Vurek  
(925) 253-7995
- At-Large:** Susan Ross  
(925) 254-3720
- At-Large:** Marge Rieger  
(925) 254-2759
- At-Large:** Lindy Phillips  
(925) 254-8478

***Road Names in Orinda***

*In 1947, a pamphlet "Orinda Roads of Spanish or Historical Origin" by Carrie L. Smith Brown and decorated by Marjorie Smith Korn was written about the origin of road names in Orinda. A lot of the early road names are Spanish and begin with "Camino" which means road. While some are named for their function like Moraga Way (the way to Moraga), others are named for a natural feature such as El Toyonal after the toyon plant which is native to California and prevalent in this area. Here is an excerpt from this pamphlet - is your road listed? What does its name mean?*

<u>Road Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Acacia	Greek, meaning thorny
Acalanes	Spanish grant, named after Indians who once lived here
Alta Vista	View from the heights
Ardilla	The squirrel
Avenida de Orinda	Avenue of Orinda
Bien Venida	Welcome
Bonita	Beautiful
Cañon	Ravine
Camino de Encinas	Road of live oaks
Camino del Diablo	Devil's highway
Camino Don Miguel	Road named for Mr. Miguel de Laveaga who bought a large part of the Rancho Sobrante in 1886.
Camino El Ribero	Road of the dam
Camino Lenada	Shady road
Camino Sobrante	The Sobrante Rancho granted to Juan and Victor Castro included the leftover (sobrante) land lying between the ranchos San Antonio, Pinole, San Pablo, Valencia and Moraga
Contra Costa	Land of the shore opposite (opposite SF Presidio)
Cresta Blanca	White peak
Del Valle	The valley
Dias Dorados	Golden days
Dos Osos	The two bears
Dos Posos	The two wells
El Caminito	The little road
El Campanero	The bell ringer or clapper
El Dorado	Gold
El Gavilan	The hawk
El Patio	The courtyard
El Pulgar	The thumb
El Rincon	A little dell in an angle or a corner
El Sereno	Place of serenity
El Toyonal	Toyon or Christmas berry
El Verano	Summer
Encinas de Moraga	Live oaks of Moraga
Haciendas	Agricultural estates
La Bolsita	The little pocket
La Campana	The bell
La Cintilla	The ribbon
La Cuesta	The grade
La Encinal	The live oak
La Espiral	The spiral
La Madronal	The Madrone tree

*Continued on page 4*

**For a color version of  
this newsletter see:  
[www.orindahistory.org](http://www.orindahistory.org)  
select "Newsletters"**

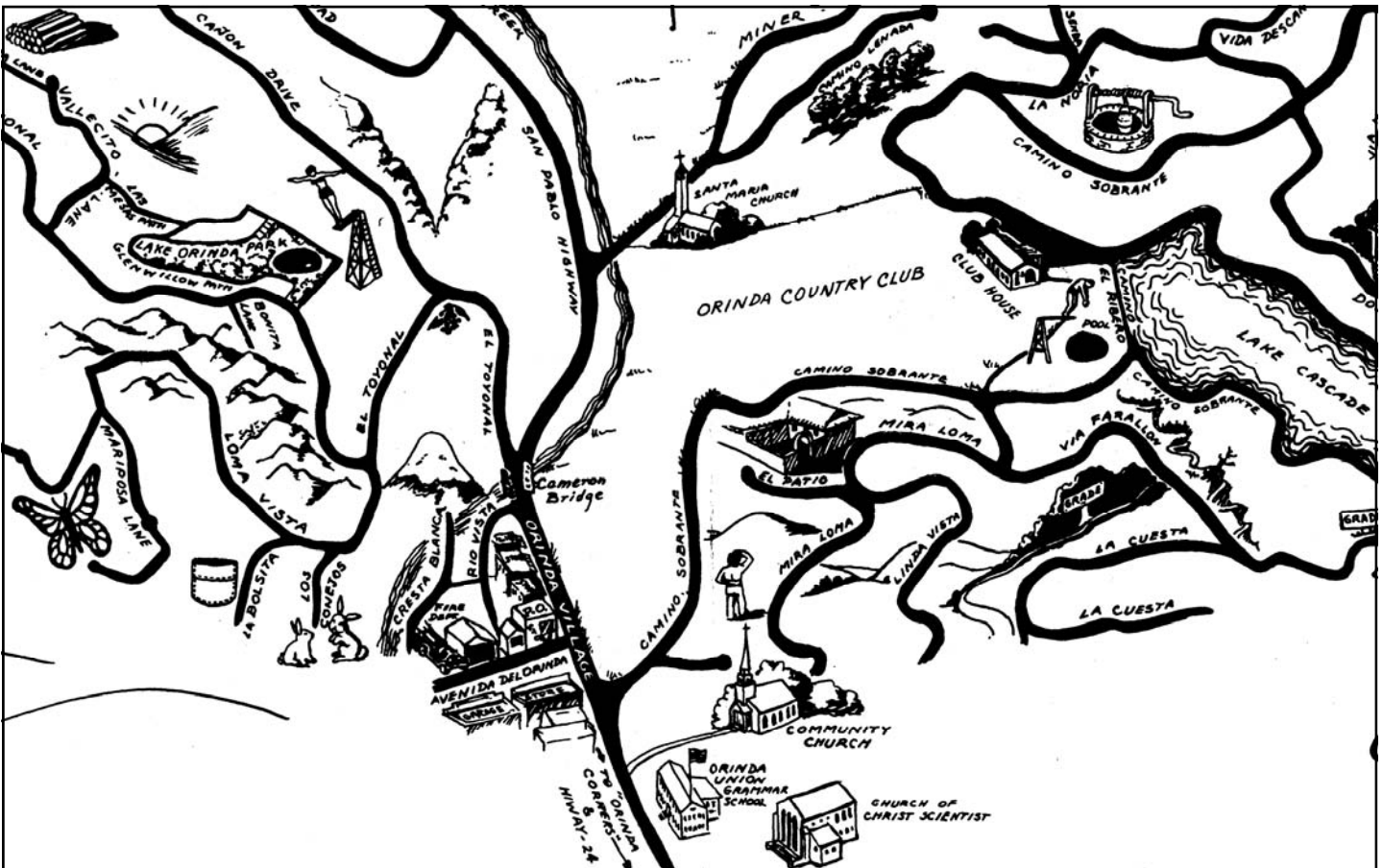




*Road Names in Orinda (continued from Page 3)*

<u>Road Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Road Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Road Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
La Noria	The well draw. There was an old well here that supplied the de Laveaga property.	Las Venados	The deer	Mira Flores	View of the flowers
La Plaza	The plaza or square	Linda Vista	Beautiful view	Mira Loma	View of the hill
La Puenta	The bridge	Loma Vista	View of the hill	Monte Vista	View of the mountain
La Senda	The path	Lomas Cantadas	Singing hills	Orinda Vista	View of Orinda
La Vuelta	The turn	Los Altos	The heights	Rio Vista	View of the river
Las Aromas	Sweet smells	Los Arboles	The trees	San Pablo	Saint Paul
Las Aquilas	The eagles	Los Conejos	The cottontails	Santa Lucia	Saint for whom daughter of Mr. E.I. deLaveaga was named
Las Cascades	The cascades	Los Dedos	The fingers	Vallecito	Little Valley
Las Flores	The flowers	Los Parajos	The birds	Via Farallon	Cliff road
Las Mesas	High flat table lands	Madera	Wood, timber	Via Floreado	The flowered way
Las Piedras	The rocks	Manzanita	Little apple	Vida Descansada	Restful life
Las Palomas	The doves	Mariposa	The butterfly	Via Hermosa	Beautiful road
Las Vegas	The fields	Miner	The Miner family came here in 1879, buying 2600 acres in Sleepy Hollow area.		

Portion of a whimsical illustration from the *Orinda Roads of Spanish or Historic Origin* 1947 pamphlet, “picture-translations” by Marjorie Korn



\*\* The complete illustrations which show “Orinda roads” and “More Orinda roads” can be viewed at the Orinda Historical Society museum. Notice the changes in Orinda since 1947 such as: the Santa Maria Church is no longer on Miner road, Orinda Union Grammar School is now the community center and Lake Orinda Park is now called Orinda Park Pool.