

# THE ORINDA NEWS

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## Theatre Square Gets a Facelift

By PAT RUDEBUSCH  
Assistant Editor

The scaffolding and work crews that have surrounded Theatre Square for the past six months will soon be gone, revealing an updated retail and office complex which the building's owners and tenants hope will draw more foot traffic and enthusiasm for the Square. The major renovation project was precipitated by extensive dry rot due to improper sealing of corners and window and door openings when the building was first constructed.

Todd Gooding, general partner of ScanlonKemperBard, reports that the \$4 million renovation will bring a new roof, siding, lighting, and awnings to the building. ScanlonKemperBard oversees the Theatre Square investment for Orinda Investments, LLC, the majority owner of the project. According to Gooding, the current owners of Theatre Square were unaware of the dry rot problems when they purchased the complex four-and-a-half years ago. Gooding believes that, in addition to the structural improvements, fresh paint, new landscaping, and outdoor furniture will make Theatre Square feel crisper and fresher than it was in the past.

"We want to do right by this project," Gooding claims. "We're hopeful that the city will see that we have both the city's and the project's best interests at heart." He would like to see Theatre Square become the focal point for entertainment in Orinda with a mix of restaurants, perhaps a venue to hear music, and, of course, the landmark Orinda Theater. Gooding muses, "Wouldn't it be great if, for instance, anytime the high school football team won, we could shine a green spotlight from the Orinda Theater signaling people to come down to Theatre Square...come to the pizza parlor."

"We've come to the conclusion that Theatre Square will work best as a community-centered project, making it somewhat altruistic," Gooding continues. "But, in order for us to make any kind of money, I need a stability of tenant mix that will promote family-oriented types of uses."

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## The Orinda Association Announces Awards



Nora Bain

### Nora Bain Wins Mott Award

By VALERIE HOTZ  
Staff Writer

This year's recipient of the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award is educator and bird enthusiast Nora Bain. A 48-year resident of Orinda, Bain is being recognized for her outstanding use of our community's unique ecological assets.

"For over 20 years, Nora visited the nature area every December to conduct the bird count in our area for the Audubon Society. Her enthusiasm is contagious and a lot of people are aware of birds because of Nora's contributions," says Toris Jaeger, teacher for the Orinda Union School District. Not only has Bain worked behind the scenes conducting the bird count, she also shared her extensive environmental knowledge with others by conducting bird watching classes through the Orinda Community Center for 13 years.

A native of England, Bain taught early childhood education in England and San Francisco before moving to Orinda in 1956. She and her husband Hugh have two children and four grandchildren. Although bird watching is a national sport in her

[SEE MOTT page 26]



Past EFO presidents Midge Zischke and Steve Harwood hold graph showing money raised during group's 25-year history.

### Volunteer of the Year Goes To EFO

By VALERIE HOTZ  
Staff Writer

In selecting the Educational Foundation of Orinda (EFO) as Volunteer of the Year for 2004, The Orinda Association (OA) has stepped outside the usual mold of granting the award to a single individual, and instead it is presenting the award to an institution comprised entirely of volunteers.

The 25 year-old nonprofit was created by a group of parents, who recognized the impact the passage of Proposition 13 in the late 1970's would have on public education funding in California. Midge Zischke, Bob Rosenberg and others banded together and raised \$893 during that first year of 1979-1980. Since then, the organization has raised \$11 million for Orinda schools.

"The Orinda Association wanted to recognize the EFO as an organization that has served Orinda schools and students for 25 years. While EFO is not an individual, the OA is honoring a group of volunteer individuals who have made an enduring contribution to our community," says Mark Roberts, a member of the OA board of directors.

"Initially, the objective was to raise funds for the K-8th grade Orinda Union School District (OUSD). In 1995-1996 Miramonte High School became an additional beneficiary, in a successful and very necessary move by the EFO board of directors," says Alison Holland, current president of the EFO board of directors. "It is purely a fundraising organization with most of the funds being raised through our annual phone-a-thon in the fall. For the past 15 years, approximately 100 volunteers make phone calls during the phone-a-thon. Prudential Realty and Village Associates Real Estate generously provide the phones and our volunteers work tirelessly," adds Holland.

An astounding 30 percent of the OUSD

budget is funded through the efforts of EFO, Parents' Clubs and our local parcel tax fund. "EFO is the largest voluntary funding source for electives and special student programs at Miramonte High School," says Holland. The Orinda community as a whole continuously supports public education. "Twelve to fifteen percent of our donations come from non-parents. Our neighbors recognize that the quality of a community is strong when the public schools are strong. Performing arts, playing fields and a well rounded education are vital for our children," Holland says.

"The volunteers who serve on the board are very dedicated and professional. It is truly one of the most impressive groups I have worked with in my entire career," says Karen Gilbert, vice president of the EFO board of directors and a 19-year veteran in the marketing field.

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SALLY HOGARTY

Bia Graceffo's Italian glass art was among the many selections at this year's Orinda Community Center Auxiliary Holiday Bazaar.

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