

68th Annual Rotary Isola Field Day moves to Miramonte

By Sora O'Doherty

For the first time, the Rotary will hold its Isola Field Day for elementary school students to compete in track and field events at Miramonte High School. Co-sponsored by the Miramonte track team, team members will be involved in helping to run the May 5 event and serve as role models for the younger participants.

This free track and field competition, open to all Orinda third-through fifth-graders, was started in 1950 by Frank Isola, a PE teacher and later principal at Orinda Intermediate School, where the gym is named after him. The event was started at the old Pinecrest school, then moved to Del Rey Elementary School where it was held for almost 40 years. Because the event has been running for 68 years, parents and grandparents can watch their children and grandchildren run the same races they did as children.

Students will compete for first, second and third place in individual

events, as well as the title of High Point Boy and High Point Girl. The school with the highest combined point total will keep the Field Day trophy for a full year.

Things will kick off at 8 a.m. with athlete arrival, event prep and race bibs. Rotarians will be on hand selling donuts, coffee, snacks, hamburgers, hot dogs and drinks to help defray the costs of the event. Pre-registration is available on the website, but not necessary. Starting at 8:30 a.m. there will be four events for third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders: the 50m dash, the 200m (400 m for fifth-graders), the softball throw and the long jump, plus, from 10:50 to 11:30 a.m., relay races.

Also new this year, according to Field Day Chair Clay Deanhardt, is a new website for the event, www.orindafieldday.org. While the site is currently pretty bare bones, Deanhardt says he will start adding as historical material soon.

Zoning and general plan amendments for Moraga Adobe parcel approved

By Sora O'Doherty

Although adjacent property owners Charlotte and John Smith urged the Orinda City Council to withhold action on the zoning and general plan amendments for the Moraga Adobe parcel within the J&J Ranch project, the council unanimously adopted the zoning and general plan amendment ordinance and approved by resolution the final map for the J&J Ranch subdivision. The Smiths wanted the council to wait until the Friends of the Moraga Adobe have pur-

chased the site. City attorney Osa Wolff informed the council that it did have the discretion to not act, but that the zoning amendment was appropriate whether the Friends buy the site or it winds up being used as a clubhouse by the future homeowners association. The resolution also approved the subdivision improvement agreement, the stormwater operations and maintenance agreement, and accepted the Grant Open Space and Scenic Easement Deed.

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EBMUD moving trench soil

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The council is concerned not only about the impact of the extremely heavy trucks traversing Bear Creek Road and Camino Pablo at a rate of 17 loads per hour, 130 trucks per day, but especially about this unusual traffic going right by the entrance to and exit from Wagner Ranch Elementary School, and the impact of the morning commute plus school traffic.

Matula indicated that the trench soils may be transported instead to a project at Altamonte, and the council wanted to know if the same urgency applied. After the meeting, EBMUD Community Affairs Representative Reyna Yagi confirmed that the project did not start as planned, but began only on Tuesday, April 24 and that the soil is being taken to Altamont landfill and resource recovery facility in Livermore, which is not a reuse site. EBMUD is still in discussion with Oyster Bay, which is preferred because it is a reuse site.

The city council expressed surprise that the job was being rushed through, even though EBMUD had not finalized the destination of the soil. Matula and Chan ex-

plained that the Briones site has been used since the 1960s to house excess soil that accrues from each time EBMUD lays a pipeline. The last time the soil was removed was in 2003, 15 years ago. Now EBMUD is concerned about the soil going through any further storms, as potentially damaging to Orinda and to the Briones reservoir. When asked why the soil had not been removed before the site was so close to its capacity, EBMUD responded that they didn't want to use trucks inefficiently, as would happen if the trucks were not full. They now anticipate that it will require 130 trucks a day for at least six months to empty the site.

The council expressed concerns that EBMUD was still not communicating properly with the city, that there was no real dialog on matters that the city considers extremely important. Vice Mayor Inga Miller accused EBMUD of planning the operation "under a cloak of darkness," even after Young had promised, following the Orchard Road incident last summer, that this wouldn't happen again. EBMUD responded that because they were not dig-

ging up pipes or closing streets, they hadn't considered that the project would have a great impact on Orinda. They promised to do better in the future.

Council Member Darlene Gee said that EBMUD's lack of sensitivity to the school issue was "really disconcerting."

"EBMUD has a lot to prove to Orinda," Gee concluded. "I hope you are not being disingenuous." Council Member Dean Orr said that he was not optimistic that EBMUD would make changes responsive to the situation, but urged them to be open to changing their plans if the situation warrants.

Young stated that Orinda is the "heart" of EBMUD, where they have their treatment plant that serves two-thirds of its customers. She added that there will also be more pipe replacements because Orinda needs them for fire safety, but conceded that they had underestimated the impact of the current project. She promised even more communication and the presence of staff at Wagner Ranch and Sleepy Hollow during the project.

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