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Location, Location...Plein Air

By Cathy Dausman



The Orinda landscape painting group at an old pear orchard in Moraga last spring. Photo courtesy John Finger

When it comes to class descriptions, art teacher John Finger likes to call it like it is. Because of that the Orinda landscape painting class he's led for the past couple of years will likely undergo a name change from Location Painting to the better known (at least in art circles) name of Plein (fresh) Air. The class once headed by Pam Glover still has a loyal following. Finger, who currently teaches the class, says the group of mostly oil-based painters strives to recreate the beauty of California's hills, trees, nostalgic buildings, streams and bays. They have been meeting Wednesdays in the field from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for the past quarter century to do this. Most "come early and stay late," he says, and enjoy being outdoors encountering bugs, sun, wind and wandering art critics. The fruits of their labor will be on display in the Orinda Library Gallery through the month of January. A reception is planned from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. January 8. Shows at the Orinda Library Gallery are sponsored by the Orinda Arts of California's hills, trees, nostalgic

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letters@lamorindaweekly.com

Lafayette and Orinda Union School Districts Welcome New Directors for Special Education

... continued from page B2

"School psychologists do a lot of analysis and detective work to determine the particular learning strengths and needs of a student, and then put that plan into action with the necessary pieces - such as the methodologies, curriculum, and support personnel," he says. As a psychologist, he has worked with children across the age and developmental spectrum, which gave him a strong understanding of specific developmental milestones, while also teaching him to look ahead and think about how to prepare students to succeed later in school.

Although Inglesby is new to Orinda, it's a home coming of sorts

for the East Bay native, who was born in Walnut Creek and grew up in Pleasanton. Inglesby studied psychology as an undergraduate at UC Santa Cruz, earned a master's in school psychology at San Francisco State University, and is currently working on a doctorate at UC Berkeley's School of Education. His dissertation focuses on school principals and their experience with special education services, because Inglesby believes that principals are the key to success with special education services in schools. "I have learned that principals arrive with a wide range of experience with special education services," he says. "Some have a lot of experience with

services such as IEPs (Individualized Education Plans), while others need more support." One of his primary roles as Special Services Director is to consult with principals and serve as a resource for them, as well as for school staff and families.

Another important part of Inglesby's job is overseeing personnel for the Orinda Union School District. As personnel director he oversees the hiring, regulations, policies, practices for both certificated (e.g., teachers, specialists) and classified (e.g., aides, maintenance, office support staff) personnel.

As special services director, Inglesby participates in many meetings

that bring together teachers, students, parents and specialists, and it's this team aspect of special education that he particularly enjoys. Inglesby notes that complicated cases can have 20 people contributing to a child's education. "It's a powerful experience when a group of people work together over an extended period of time and pool their resources to help a child succeed," he says. "I enjoy building teams and facilitating that process." Orinda parent Anna Tague, who founded a support group for parents of children in special education in the Orinda Union School District, has noticed and appreciated his engagement and willingness to be a team player.

"I appreciate the energy and enthusiasm Brian brings to his role," she says. "At our first meeting he was genuinely interested in learning as much as he could about my daughter so he could help her receive the support she needs."

When asked what professional accomplishment he points to with pride, Inglesby says that in the districts where he's worked, he has been part of collaborative team that helped to significantly increase STAR scores for students with disabilities. He also highlights his work creating a more coherent and comprehensive plan for aligning special education services with regular education standards.

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