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## Czech Visiting Student Settling into Life at Miramonte High School

By Sora O'Doherty



Adam Kraus

Photo provided

When students at Miramonte High School decided to protest the recent presidential election, visiting student Adam Kraus, 17, from Tabor in the Czech Republic joined them.

He knows something about student protests. The Velvet Revolution that led to the establishment of the Czech Republic was 10 years before Adam was born, but his parents were part of it. He felt it was his duty, even though the U.S. is not his country, to protest policies he disagrees with at this historic moment.

But when he isn't protesting, Adam is a pretty normal guy, albeit very talented. Through Jan. 25, Adam will be Orinda's 16th visiting student from sister city Tabor. He left his historic home in the Czech Republic, where he lives with his parents, to stay in Orinda where he is being hosted by artist Eileen Fitz-Faulkner's family. His entry into Miramonte was eased by being introduced by his host's son.

He has enthusiastically joined campus activities, playing the trumpet in both the jazz and symphonic bands, and participating in sports, such as cross country and soccer. He thought playing his trumpet at Miramonte football games was great fun. He has many hobbies, but photography must rank high: he has an exhibition in the Miramonte library of 10 photographs of notable Tabor characters, including himself, which will remain on view through the end of the academic year.

He came to Orinda pretty well prepared, having read the online journals of former visiting students Michal Vasek and Karel

Balogh. Adam is also journaling his experiences online. He is enjoying Miramonte social life, which he finds more school-oriented than his social life in Tabor.

Adam is surprised at how different the food here is from home. He was really surprised to find sweet and sour and salty tastes being mixed, such as serving fish with fruit salad. He is adapting well, but he confesses that he does miss the cooking of his mother and his grandmother, who lives in the next town over from Tabor. He spoke fondly of their weinerschnitzel, which he claims can't be replicated here for reasons that include the type of bread used on the thin slices of meat.

Adam, who speaks Czech, English, French and can understand most Slavic languages, is a junior at Miramonte. At home in Tabor he attends the public grammar school and has two more years of schooling at home before he takes his exams. Students study 14 subjects during their careers, then select five for the leaving examination. Adam will definitely continue on to higher education. Both of his parents at home are architects, which perhaps explains why they live in a 15th-century home built into the castle walls in Tabor.

When students at Miramonte discover that Adam is a visiting European student, they have so many questions for him. Adam highly recommends that everybody should host an exchange student. He is having a great time experiencing life in a different country, and hopes that his host family is enjoying having him.

## Orinda Celebrates Tree of Lights Dec. 3

The annual lighting of the Tree of Lights will take place from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 3 at the Bank of America/Rite Aid Orinda shopping center.

The Tree of Lights ceremony celebrates life and families as well as those that have passed on. The Orinda Elementary School Children's Choir will perform.

Hospice of the East Bay will light the tree, a large oak in the parking lot. Each light in intended to symbolize a memory of a beloved departed person. Hospice will accept donations during the event. The event is also supported by McCaulou's, Bank of America, the City of Orinda and the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. Boy Scout troop 237 provides volunteers. The tree will remain lit throughout the holiday season.

For more information: <https://hospice.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/29thAnnualTreeofLights/OrindaTree/tabid/721403/Default.aspx> —S. O'Doherty

### The Real Estate Market 2016 vs 2015

**SHERRIE B. PERLSTEIN**

Realtor®  
925.766.3030  
Sherrie@OrindaHome.com  
www.OrindaHome.com  
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Housing prices have gone up in 2016 to all time highs, yet the number of houses sold in 2016 has gone down from 2015. This tells us that there was still a lack of inventory to meet demand. That lack of inventory helps drive prices up. Demand stays consistently high in Lamorinda based on our high ranking schools, gorgeous weather, scenic beauty, small town feel, outdoor activities and proximity to San Francisco. The Spring market has been the strongest season over the last several years. So plan ahead if you are thinking of selling.

Call for a confidential **FREE** Market Analysis and Opinion of Value of your home at 925 766-3030.

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DECEMBER 3, 5-8:30 PM

TREE LIGHTING at 7pm  
Performance by Lamorinda Theatre Academy  
Free Santa Visits and Photo Op  
Kids Ornament Workshop  
Horse & Carriage Rides from 6:30-8:30pm

DECEMBER 10, 5-7 PM

Meet the Frozen Princesses  
Photo Booth / Face Painting  
Horse and Carriage Rides  
Free Gourmet Coffee and Hot Chocolate

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