

VC



Orinda Historical Society Newsletter

July 2008

P.O. BOX 82, ORINDA, CA 94563

(925) 254-1353

Orinda Olympians share memories with Historical Society By Dorothy Bowen

Looking ahead to the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, and looking back as far as the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki, four former Olympic athletes shared their memories with the Orinda Historical Society at the meeting in May.

The athletes were introduced by **Erik Andersen**, OHS vice president, who researched the program. He would love to hear from any other Orinda Olympians in time for a window display at the OHS Archives.

Marcy Place Sheehan played field hockey in 1984 in Los Angeles and 1988 in Seoul. Her career in real estate began with an Olympic job training program.

Kirk Everist swam on the water polo teams in 1992 in Barcelona and 1996 in Atlanta. He is now men's water polo head coach at UC Berkeley.

Karen Moe won a Gold in 200 meter breaststroke in 1972 in Munich and swam again in 1976 in Montreal. She shared a film taken at those events that was as thrilling as the day it was made.

Marjorie Larney, although not technically an Orindan, told a great story about going to Helsinki in 1952 as a teenager. At 15, she was the youngest Olympic javelin thrower ever, a record that still stands today. She competed again in Melbourne in 1956.

Diane Dwyer, KNTV news anchor, moderated the program. She covered the 2004 Olympics and is hoping to go to Beijing in August.

Continued on page 3



Orinda Olympians: from top left to bottom right, Marcy Place Sheehan, Kirk Everist, Karen Moe, and Marjorie Larney.

Museum Location

Lower Level of Orinda
Library
26 Orinda Way

Museum Hours of Operation

Monday, Wednesday, &
Friday 3-5 p.m.

Also by Appointment
24 Hour Answering
Machine
925-254-1353

www.orindahistory.org

Upcoming Events

- **August Board Meeting**
Wednesday, August 20th, 3 to 5 pm at the OHS Museum
- **September Board Meeting**
Wednesday, September 17th, 3 to 5 pm at the OHS Museum
- **October Board Meeting**
Wednesday, October 15th, 3 to 5 pm at the OHS Museum

Mark your Calendars

Holiday Bazaar:

OHS will have a booth at the Orinda Community Bazaar held the first weekend in November

Holiday OHS Dinner

OHS will hold its holiday social on Wednesday, December 3rd at 6 pm

Orinda Sign rides in 4th of July Parade



4th of July photos taken by Kent Long

The Historical Society proudly displayed a 1930's era "Orinda" sign in this year's 4th of July parade. This is the first year that OHS has had an entry in this annual Orinda event.

Carried on a trailer, the Orinda sign was ferried through the parade by a car driven by **Art Thompson**. Accompanying Art were **Helen Vurek** (who at 98 looked fabulous in her tiara), OHS President

Lucy Hupp Williams, and OHS board members **Jerry Vurek** and **Susan Ross**.

This large metal sign has been in various places in Orinda since its original location in Orinda Village on a realty office in the "triangle" at the foot of Camino Sobrante.

Continued on page 4

Thank You

Recent donations to OHS

- Kitchen items from the late 1800s were donated by **Marge Williams**.
- **Sarah Douglas** gave a Bill's Drug Store pencil.
- **Joyce Lipovac** donated various items including an Orinda Creamery milk bottle top.
- **Jim Gilwee** contributed many Boy Scout items and photographs.
- **Anna Lee Schneider** donated a Meadow Park Documentary.
- A scrapbook of the day President Bush came to Orinda was donated by **Howard Rose**.

Call the OHS Museum at 254-1353 if you have something of local historic significance to donate to the OHS archives

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

Orinda Masons Speak at March Meeting

Masonry is the world's oldest and largest fraternal organization. It began in the Middle Ages. In 1717, the first Grand Lodge was established in London. Many founders of the U.S. were Masons including Ben Franklin and George Washington.

The Historical Society was treated to description of the traditions of Masonry at its March 12th meeting. Masonic Master **Tom Killgallen** and **Larry Becker** from the Orinda Masonic Lodge spoke about the history and customs of the Masons.

They shared many interesting Masonic artifacts, from swords to black and white marbles, and explained their significance. For example, the term "blackballed" has its origin in the voting methods of the Masons. When voting whether to accept an applicant, all members secretly place either a white marble ("yes" vote) or a black marble ("no" vote) into the ballot box. Just one black marble would keep a person from becoming a Mason; thus, that person would be considered "blackballed." These and other Masonic items have been on display at the OHS front window this past Spring for the public to enjoy.

The Orinda Masons also donated to the Historical Society a comprehensive booklet recounting the 150 years of history from the Alamo Lodge No. 122 in 1857 to the Orinda Lodge No. 122 in 2007.

The Orinda Masonic Lodge was originally founded in the San Ramon Valley as the Alamo Lodge 150 years ago. The Alamo Lodge was relocated several times; in 1878, the lodge moved to downtown Walnut Creek. As membership grew, more lodges were established in the East Bay. In April 1949, approval was given for the formation of a new lodge in Orinda. In 1950, the Orinda Lodge No. 704 was chartered and began operations. A few years later the Masonic Temple was built at 9 Altarinda Road. This Temple is still in use today and has around 370 members. It is now known as Orinda Lodge No. 122 because from 1966 to 1992 various East Bay Lodges including Alamo consolidated into the Orinda Lodge. Mason tradition dictates that when multiple lodges are consolidated, the lowest lodge number is retained.



Masonic Artifacts from the Orinda Lodge



Tom Killgallen



Larry Becker and Lucy Hupp Williams

OHS Board Members 2008/2009

President: Lucy Hupp Williams
(650) 349-3382

Vice President: Erik Andersen
(925) 254-8444

Treasurer: Betty Karplus
(925) 254-4970

Recording Secretary: Carl Weber
(925) 254-8473

Archivist: Kent Long
(925) 258-9771

Assistant Archivist/Database:
Dan Holmes
(925) 254-3360

Membership: Open

At-Large: Charles Blue
(925) 254-2324

At-Large: Susan Ross
(925) 254-3720

Displays: Open

Tours: John Holmgren
(925) 254-5677

Newsletter: Teresa Long
(925) 258-9771

School Liaison: Kay Norman
(925) 254-9536

Videographer: Jerry Vurek
(925) 253-7995

Orinda Olympians *(Continued from page 1)*

Kirk Everist, water polo, 1992 and 1996:

“Orinda was a big part of my life,” said Everist. His family moved here in 1976 when he was 9. His mother started him in competitive swimming when they joined the Orinda Country Club, but he would rather have been playing basketball or baseball and refused to wear the team Speedo. Four years later, he was watching the Olympic hockey team on TV, thinking, “That’s something I want to do.”

In his freshman year at Miramonte, Everist played water polo because, “I wasn’t going to play football, and there was nothing else to do in the fall.” Somewhere along the line, he realized it was possible to go to the Olympics in water polo. There was already a tradition at Miramonte with Jon Svendsen, Drew McDonald, and Peter Schnugg, all Olympians. “They actually got in the water with us. It was part of our reality. Going to the Olympics really changes you – all that hard work, everybody on the same playing field. It was very precious to me.”

Marcy Place Sheehan, field hockey, 1984 (Bronze medal) and 1988:

“There weren’t a lot of choices in sports for women then,” said Marcy Place Sheehan. She grew up on the Peninsula and then in Davis where her mother, Peggy, was pursuing a Ph.D. At Cal, she played field hockey and got really good coaching, she said, plus a jump start by training with men, mostly from India and Pakistan, where field hockey is a big sport. “Field hockey is the second biggest sport in the world,” she said. In her senior year, after the U.S. boycott of the Olympics in ‘80, Sheehan replaced one of the two Californians, Nancy White, on the team that won a Bronze in LA in 1984, and she also went to Seoul in 1988.

Her parents didn’t push her but were very supportive. “It was academics where they were cracking the whip. I just loved being out there, day in, day out, training,” she said. She now works in real estate and coaches lacrosse at Miramonte.

Karen Moe, swimming, 1972 (Gold medal) and 1976:

Karen Moe moved to Orinda when she was 4. She must have had her eye on her goal early, because she wrote a poem about the Olympics when she was only 9. She swam for both Orinda Country Club and Aqua Bears. In the summer of 1970 she broke the 200 meter butterfly record and began thinking seriously about the Olympics. She had to train in Santa Clara because the current Soda Center and Miramonte pools hadn’t been built yet. She won a Gold and a 4th place in Munich in 1972. “I remember walking into the cafeteria and seeing athletes of every skin color, every size and shape – every aspect of humanity. Participating was confidence building and gave me life skills.” She was part of the American sweep of swimming events that will never happen again because the rules changed to allow only two entrants from a country in each event. “What a thrill it was to walk into the stadium and hear the roar of the crowd,” she said. “Even today, when I hear applause, I have a flashback to that moment and feel goose bumps all over again.”

She truly lived through history: That was on the last night of that Olympics when, in the morning, the Israelis were taken hostage. “That taught me that

Continued on page 4

We need volunteers to help us with one-time projects or with our regular programs. Please let us know if you would like to help out and have fun! Just call the OHS museum at 254-1353



Orinda Sign Rides in Parade *(Continued from page 1)*

Now, after its recent arrival at the OHS Museum, the sign was put on rollers so it can be better displayed. Many folks were instrumental in making this happen. Along with the rollers an acknowledgment was added at the base of the sign—it reads: “**July 4, 2008 Resurrected and Mobilized for the Citizens of Orinda by the Orinda Historical Society, Vasco Giannini, Whitney Haist, Steve Gentry, Kirk Allan, the City of Orinda, the Historic Landmarks Committee.**”

OHS President Lucy Williams said, “Many kudos are due **Whitney Haist, Gary Hall and Steve Gentry** for their last minute efforts to get our old green Orinda sign in the parade. The logistics for getting a 10 foot, 400 pound steel sign and dolly with lettering on a trailer connected to a vehicle that could pull it and finding a driver were significant. Many, many thanks!” The OHS now plans to get the sign electrified with lights for the holidays.



4th of July 2008 Parade (left to right): Helen Vurek, Lucy Williams and Steve Gentry, the OHS parade entry

Orinda Olympians *(Continued from page 3)*

sports were important, but other things happen to bring you back to reality.” She later went on a State Department tour of China – part of Ping Pong diplomacy. She placed 4th at the 1976 games in Montreal, coming in after the three East German women on steroids. “Swimming gave me the opportunity to travel around the world. As I watch this summer, I will see the wonder of humanity testing themselves and celebrating life.”

Marjorie Larney, javelin and discus, 1952 and 1956:

Growing up in the inner city in Brooklyn, Marjorie Larney was coached by Sgt. John Brennan in the Police Athletic League. He had studied the film of Finland’s Nikkanen, the men’s javelin world record holder for 14 years and insisted she learn the Finnish style, which ultimately led to her meeting a former Finnish Olympic champion. On opening day of the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki, it was pouring rain, and the athletes had to stand in the downpour for two hours before marching into the stadium. The U.S. team was next to the last in the hour-long parade. “When our flag entered the stadium, the roar went up from the crowd like a rolling wave of thunder. Seventy thousand people were on their feet cheering the American team. The Finns wanted to show their appreciation for what we did in the war to defeat the Nazis and how we were then standing up to the Soviet Union.”

Moderator Diane Dwyer then asked the athletes about their thoughts about boycotts of the past and protests of today.

“Ultimately, nothing was accomplished,” said Moe. “It didn’t solve the problems. It was just grandstanding.”

“Sports need to take precedence,” Everist said, remembering how disappointing it was for swimmers like Peter Schnugg to work so hard and then not be able to compete. He said that the Olympics gave him experiences he might not have had. “Orinda is a very sheltered place. I’ve been to Cuba seven times and had a picture taken with Fidel Castro.” “The Olympics are always political – Berlin before WWII, Munich, Helsinki in the Cold War,” said Sheehan.

Memorabilia from Orinda Olympians will be on display in the window of the OHS Archives below the Orinda Library throughout the summer. The display will include Barbara Stark Jordan’s black bathing suit and jacket from the 1952 Olympics. If you are aware of any other Olympians from the Orinda area who would be willing to loan any items for the exhibit, please contact Erik Andersen at the OHS museum.