

Orcutt *Happy Thanksgiving* FREE PIONEER

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Bond Funds Classroom Complex & Outdoor Lab at RHS



Exciting new things are happening on the Righetti High School campus. An outdoor classroom has taken root thanks to the efforts of teachers, staff, and students that will support science education. The garden, completed by science teachers Laura Branch,

Rebecca Wingerden, and several AP students after the removal of all non-native species, will allow for the collection of environmental data. This outdoor learning space replaces the artificial turf between sections of classrooms in the 100 block and includes a

drip system and other landscaping.

According to Branch, students will be observing biotic and abiotic factors, monitoring pollinators like bees, butterflies, insects, and hummingbirds in and around the garden, and helping with the garden's upkeep.

"[They] will compile their data, share this data with scientists through the Citizen Science Projects, make conclusions about our temperate biome, and see if there are any changes over the next few decades due to climate change," she explains. "The skills students learn from these experiences will result in them being marketable in the science industry around the Santa Maria Valley."

But that's not all. On October 15th, student leaders, the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District Board of Education, and a few select staff members got a sneak peek at the new \$22 million "futuristic" 38-room classroom complex under construction near the tennis courts and football field.

Construction on the project, which uses C-2004 Bond funds, is about 85% complete. The facility includes four classrooms that can create one larger learning area and

will also incorporate many learning tools from the District's demo 'Classroom of the Future', which was first presented at ERHS a few years ago. This demo featured moveable whiteboard walls, mounted big screen monitors with the capacity to display from the teacher's tablet, desks and chairs on wheels that separate easily into different arrangements, and other learning aids.

The goal of the project is to increase permanent classroom capacity, eliminate portable classrooms, and advance new technology. Once completed, small groups of teachers will start moving into the building in late January, with the rest expected to be moved in by spring break.

"As a result of community support for our school bonds, we are excited to bring permanent state-of-the-art classrooms to the Righetti campus," says SMJUHSD School Board member Dominick Palera. "Over the next three years, we will see this building open, the remaining classrooms renovated, and the portables removed to re-claim campus parking. This project will benefit students, staff, and the community."

Rebecca Ross reporting



2017 Griswald Award of Excellence Winner 987 Old Mill Lane

Deadline: December 1 Deck the Halls (and Homes) for This Year's Fa La La Awards

"The Orcutt Fa La La Awards" launch their fifth year of holiday cheer!

The Orcutt Pioneer is looking for our community's best Christmas and holiday lights. If you think your house or a neighbor's house should win an award, e-mail us at OrcuttFaLaLa@gmail.com. In the e-mail include the homeowner's name and address. Only Orcutt residents will be considered and submissions must be received by Saturday, December 1.

On Sunday, December 2, between the hours of 5PM and 9PM our judges will drive by to

evaluate entries. Winners' names and addresses will be published in the December edition of the Pioneer. Prizes for the winning entries include \$100 gas gift card from Orcutt 76, a \$100 gift card to a local restaurant of the winner's choice, and more to be announced.

Some of the honors will include: The Clark Griswold Award of Excellence, Best Lawn Display, Best Animated/Musical Display, and more.

Be safe, and get busy hanging those lights! Orcutt FaLaLa Awards sponsored by Orcutt 76.

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Lisa Griffith, OASIS Exercise Leader, Retires After 27 Years



Lisa Griffith, left, Gretel Reece, right

When Lisa Griffith moved to the Central Coast more than 30 years ago, she knew she wanted to promote healthy lifestyles in the community. For nearly the same amount of time she fulfilled that wish in several ways, including teaching a senior exercise class at Orcutt's Luis OASIS Senior Center.

Griffith, who retired from OASIS in July after 27 years, led exercises that increased cardiovascular strength, improved balance and strengthened muscles and bones.

"I love helping people feel better," she explained. "Exercise makes people happier, and there's so much more they can do in life because of it."

Throughout the years, she has witnessed

her students accomplish many feats: from an 88-year-old who hiked Mount Whitney to other members who have completed simpler hikes with their grandkids. Opportunities to travel and having the strength to catch oneself before a fall are also some common perks.

"Their senior citizen years are so much fuller and happier," she said. "They're able to do things they thought they couldn't do once they got older."

Kay Elliott, who has been going to OASIS for the past five years, said learning from Griffith has been life changing, helping lower her blood pressure and decrease depression.

"It's just been wonderful for me. She's amazing and inspirational," Elliott explained.

The senior exercise class is now led by Gretel Reece, who Griffith calls "a gift" that the class has welcomed with open arms.

"It's an honor to fill in her footsteps," Reece said. "It's a great way for her to retire and a great way for me to step in."

Although Griffith retired to travel and spend more time with family, she plans on keeping in touch with her "OASIS family" and will substitute when needed.

"There's nothing like the OASIS Senior Center," she said.

Jamie Guista reporting

Old Orcutt Holiday Festivities



The holiday season will soon be upon us, with twinkling lights, holiday decorations and the sound of Christmas carols in the air, the spirit of old Orcutt will be shining. On November 30th from 5-8PM, the 5th annual Old Orcutt stroll will fill the streets. Originally the brainchild of Merry Feliz, owner of Vintage Veranda Antique Mall, this event has grown to a fun filled family event in conjunction with the Orcutt Christmas tree lighting at 7PM at the Orcutt Lions Club. Luminaries will light the way as strollers enjoy the carolers, face painting and refreshments. There will be a hayride pulled by a vintage tractor that will taxi shoppers from one end of town to the other. The shops, restaurants and wineries will all be open late.

The annual Old Town Orcutt Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday, December 8 starting at noon, rain or shine, and will march down Clark Avenue. Registration for the parade will be open from Nov 1 - Nov 28. The parade lineup will be announced Dec 4th. For more info or to volunteer, call Kathryn Scott at 805-863-2842 or kat@krse.biz. Register for the parade at orcuttchristmasparade.org.

Come kick off the holiday season and enjoy the home town spirit of Old Town Orcutt!

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Santa Maria Symphony Remembers Alice McGonigal

Last month the music community lost a shining light with the passing of Alice McGonigal at the age of 71. She began playing flute in the Orcutt School band program at a young age, though her instrument and her Navy family would eventually take her all over the world. Alice played in symphonies, orchestras, did live radio and commercial jingles, worked in the television and film industry, and performed everywhere from New York to Japan, Germany to Mexico. In a 2010 interview for the San Luis Obispo Philharmonic she shared lively stories of cracking a whip she bought in El Escorial on a trip to Spain and catching a bug on the plane to Sydney and being sick her whole trip Australia. She talked about playing Carnegie Hall and Walt Disney Concert Hall and having a wardrobe malfunction with an out-of-control slip during a Beethoven symphony. Alice loved the flute, loved music, and loved life.

Carol Houchens knew Alice for 47 years. "She had a profound influence on my life," she says. "I met her in high school, when



she became my first 'real' flute teacher. She was a major motivator in my decision to major in music in college and she infused me with the pure joy and delight in playing the flute. She fulfilled so many roles in my life: teacher, advisor, mentor, colleague, and maybe most importantly, friend. I often felt that Alice was an 'older sister', who always wanted what was best for me. Alice was so easy to play with. She always made it a point to blend with and bring out the best in others. This generosity of spirit extended to other aspects of her life. While not rich in material possessions, she continually gave small, meaningful gifts to friends, showing her constant thought and appreciation of others. Maybe the most impressive of Alice's numerous gifts was her sheer determination to persevere as a flutist, in the face of enormous odds. I will never forget her drive to continue playing the flute after she suffered a major stroke in 2007. I believe it was Alice's determination and enduring faith that got her through the recovery period so

that she could continue giving her beautiful gift of music to us all."

Mike Nowak remembers Alice this way: "[She] was born to play the flute. If it wasn't obvious the moment she showed up at rehearsal with her personal license plate, 'McFlute', it certainly was the second she picked up the instrument and began to play. The flute was Alice's best friend and she was ever eager to let you know how much joy this friend brought to her. It was a life-long love affair, one that she shared with the world. Having known and admired Alice for 25 years, the person I got to know was sensitive, intelligent, and extremely generous. On several occasions, she would come up to me with a little 'gift' that she had collected along the way that had my name on it. It could be a newspaper article, a trinket with some 'spiritual energy', or a series of sketches of Gustav Mahler conducting. And, of course, being a McAnything, she had a wee touch

of the Irish in her. It could be a wink in her eye that she was laughing at a private joke or one that she thought we all knew. Her giggle was contagious. If Alice thought something was funny, then we should laugh too. And we did. Alice was an inspiration to all of us as we watched her overcome one obstacle after another, never wavering from her belief that she and her best friend were on a mission to grace our lives... one not at a time."

Alice was remembered by those that loved her in a memorial service on October 2nd.

Rebecca Ross reporting

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Orcutt 76 Completes 200,000 Repair Services



Cary Mason, left, after winning her \$200 gift card with Dena Earing, manager of Orcutt 76.

For more than 20 years, the Orcutt 76 gas station on East Clark Avenue has been providing the community with smog tests and repairs. On Nov. 1, the 200,000th service was performed, and staff celebrated by giving one lucky customer a \$200 gift card.

Cary Mason, of Orcutt, received the gift card after getting a smog; the 200,000th service. "She had no idea," manager Dena Earing said. "It was so funny. She was so excited about it." Earing, who was born and raised in Orcutt and was working at the station when it began offering services,

estimates the completion of about 40 to 50 services a day.

"To hit 200,000, now that is a lot of services, a lot of smogs," she said. She added that she believes Orcutt 76 has thrived throughout Orcutt's growth and development because of the special relationship staff has with their customers. "One of our main goals is to keep our customers happy and that's why we're here: to serve our community," she explained.

Besides smogs, Orcutt 76 also offers oil changes and repair work.

Jamie Guista reporting

Classified Ads

Sell items for free. Free ads can only be accepted via email to info@orcuttpioneer.com with "classified" in the subject line. 25 word limit. Business ads only \$25/25 words. Mail payments to Orcutt Pioneer, PO Box 2545, Orcutt CA 93457.

Wanted: Model A Ford Cars, Parts, Projects. Let me help clean out your garage. Jay McCord 805-598-8133
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Orcutt Schools Update

‘Vaping’ a Significant Danger to Kids

Dr. Debbie Blow, Superintendent, OUSD

I typically write here about our school district’s accomplishments and upbeat developments. This month, however, I would like to focus on a significant concern – a new practice called “vaping” that endangers our students.

‘Vaping’ refers to the aerosol vapor that one ingests from an electronic cigarette. E-cigarettes come in many shapes and sizes, but most have a battery, a heating element, and a place to hold a liquid. Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine and flavorings, but some contain other harmful substances such as cannabis (marijuana).

An increasing body of research shows that vaping is deleterious to one’s health. Nicotine and cannabis can impede brain development, which continues until approximately age 25. Some e-cigarettes such as the popular JUUL pack a concentrated dose of nicotine that can quickly trigger addiction. And e-cigarettes, which are unregulated by the Food and Drug Administration, can contain harmful chemicals, including some used as pesticides. “The products have all the characteristics of

something that causes cancer,” says Edwin Weaver, executive director of Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley, a nonprofit foundation dedicated to fighting substance abuse and promoting health and safety among local youth and families.

Complicating matters is the way e-cigarettes are marketed. They are advertised by their manufacturers as safer than traditional tobacco-based cigarettes. Meantime, they also are being marketed directly to youth through social media. E-cigarettes are being framed as “cool” and trendy, and users can choose from an assortment of flavorings. The devices also are being made to resemble commonplace objects such as pens, computer flash drives, and cellphone chargers so kids can conceal them from their parents.

The end result is that, even while e-cigarettes are illegal for use by children, vaping is becoming an increasing occurrence in junior high and high school.

“Kids are getting e-cigarettes from their parents, older siblings, or friends,” says Kelly Osborne, principal of Orcutt Junior

High School. “And I don’t think kids are aware of the dangers. Most of the time they don’t know if they are taking in nicotine or marijuana.”

Adds Weaver, “We’ve worked so hard to cut down on tobacco use, and now we are seeing a whole new generation of people who are addicted to nicotine. It’s so sad to watch.”

What is our school district doing to curtail vaping in our community?

For starters, we are working to educate all staff about vaping, e-cigarettes, and the health risks. The more information our educators have about vaping, the more effective they can be in preventing it from happening on campus.

We are partnering with Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley on a three-hour smoking/vaping prevention course that can be taken by students who have been vaping.

Finally, we have planned a community education night called “What You Should Know About Vaping” for Thursday, December 13, at 6:30 p.m. in the Lakeview Junior High School Multi-Use Room. The

presenter will be Edith Perez, an expert on vaping and tobacco use with Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley. Free childcare will be provided, and all parents and community members are welcome to attend.

We have an action plan, but the focus now needs to be on changing the narrative around vaping. We ask for your support in helping our students, parents, and community see vaping for what it is: a significant danger to our kids.

Superintendent Dr. Debbie Blow can be contacted by phone at 938-8900 or by e-mail at dblow@orcutt-schools.net. Follow her on Twitter at @debiblow.



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Community Events

To submit your community event, email 50 words or less to info@orcuttpioneer.com by the second Wednesday of the month. Be sure to include, in this order, the name of the event, location, time, a short description and contact information.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Book Signing Myself, My Responsibility – Tools to Self-Advocate, by local author Lori Ciccarelli Stotko, Saturday, December 1, 11AM. This workbook is for all ages and abilities to inspire and encourage self-advocacy.

Red Oaks Baptist Church Christmas Celebration on December 15, 1-3PM. Music, games, food, fellowship and a cookie exchange! 3600 Pinewood Rd off Black Road and Sandalwood. For more information visit redoaksbaptistchurch.com or call 805-351-2533

Yoga for a Cause - Toys for Tots, Treetop Yoga, 2771 Santa Maria Way, Ste. C, Sunday, December 16, 9AM Slow Flow yoga class for all levels, benefiting Toys for Tots. Bring an unwrapped toy or a cash donation. All cash will go towards gifts for the kids. Nicole Lowe 805-266-6391, nicole@treetopyoga.net

Tri City Sound Chorus, a chapter of Sweet Adelines International, invites women who love to sing to join them for the Christmas season. Women interested in learning about a cappella, barbershop-style music are welcome to join in on the season-end rehearsals and Friends & Family Christmas Show, held at Lutheran Church of Our Savior, 4725 S. Bradley Road, Orcutt. There is no cost to participate. Rehearsals will be held from 6:45 to 9PM. Thursday Oct. 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15, 29 & Dec. 6. The Christmas concert will be held at 7PM on Dec. 13 with donations earmarked for the student scholarship program. www.tricitysound.org or call 736-7572.

Lezlie's Showcase of Talent, January 13. Holding auditions for singers, dancers, musicians etc. Call 805 268 5403. First place prize is \$500 dollars cash. www.Lezliesshowcaseoftalent.com.

MONTHLY OR WEEKLY EVENTS

50+ CLUB LUNCHEON, at St Louis De Montfort Church Hall at 11:30AM on the second Thursday of the month. Event is catered with nominal charge. For reservations call Irene at 934-2511.

ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLIC AND DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY SYSTEMS meets Sundays at 4PM in the conference room of the Marian Extended Care Facility at 1530 Cypress Way off of Palisades and Main. If you have questions, contact Kim at (805) 714-6908.

AA (or Alcoholics Anonymous). If you want to drink, that's your business. If you want to stop, that's ours. Meetings Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 6:30PM Orcutt Presbyterian Church. General information and other meeting times and places, 925-3782.

ALL AMERICA CITY QUILT GUILD meets at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 4380 Orcutt Rd., on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM. except March and July. Info: www.santamariaquilts.com or 937-4024.

ALTRUSA OF THE CENTRAL COAST meets at Noon on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. Altrusa is an international non-profit organization of men and women that strives to make our local communities better through leadership, partnership and service. For more information and meeting location call our president at 805.835.7627 or go to our website: www.altrusaofthecentralcoast.org.

AMERICAN LEGION POST 534 Breakfast 8-11AM on the first Sunday of each month. Public invited. 145 W. Clark Ave.

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- **CONVENTIONAL FINANCING** requires only 3% down payment on primary residences.*
- **FHA LOANS** require 3.5% down payment but may accept a lower FICO score.
- **VA LOANS** for military are available with no minimum down payment.** Can buy with no cash down!

Let our experienced team answer all your questions. We can help determine if buying is the right move for you and walk you through the process from application to closing! Down payment assistance programs are also available!

CALL US TO LEARN ABOUT THESE OR ANY OF OUR OTHER HOME FINANCING SOLUTIONS!



MARTHA A. MORALES

Mortgage Loan Originator - NMLS #260435
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Homebridge

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MICKEY HELLMAN

Branch Manager, Mortgage Loan Originator
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*Additional restrictions may apply. **100% financing up to county loan limits may be available for purchase loans or 1-unit cash-out refinances on primary residences. Minimum FICO score requirements apply.

Following submission of your loan application, please note that the remainder of the loan process, including processing, documentation and closing, will all be conducted in English. We encourage the use of a translator you've provided to assist you.



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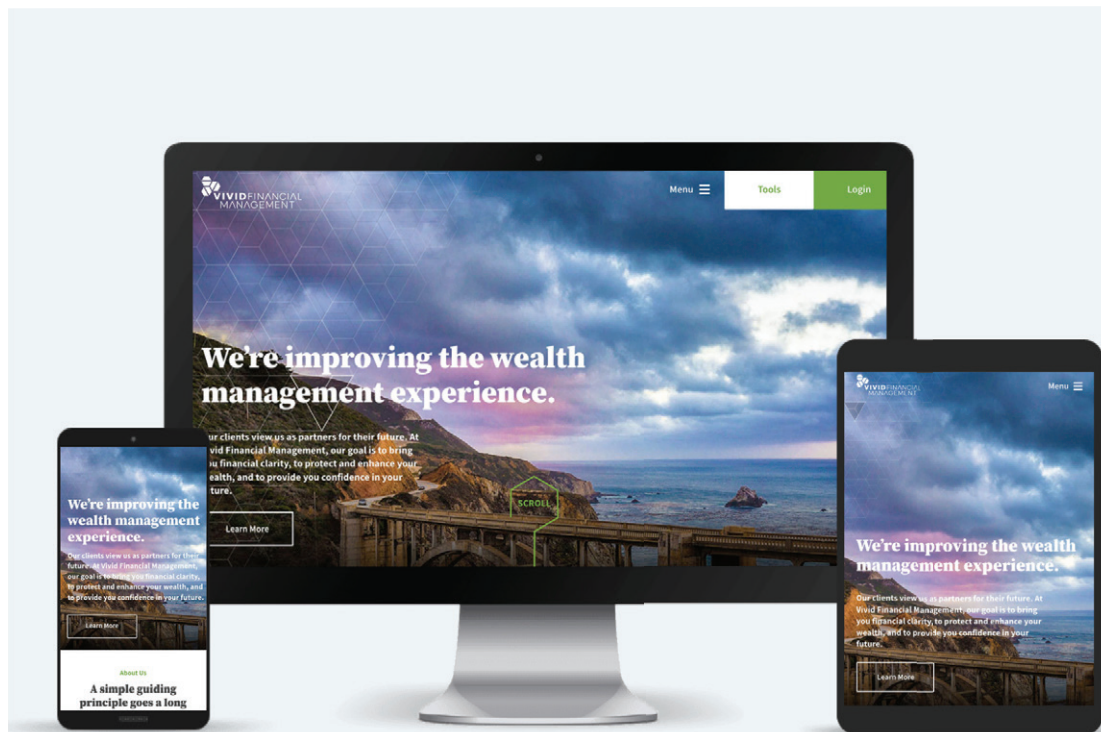
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