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New Classroom Complex Opens at Righetti High

The first students and teachers began classroom studies in the newly completed \$24 million Righetti High School 38-room classroom complex on March 18, and more teachers and students will be moving in to the facility during the next several weeks. The bottom floor will be primarily career technical education and computer lab space, regular education classes will take place primarily on the top two floors.

The project was funded through Measure C-2004 approved by voters 15 years ago.

The project was undertaken to increase permanent classroom capacity, eliminate portable classrooms and advance new technology. “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,” said SMJUHSD School Board Member Dominick Palera.

The facility will incorporate many learning tools from the district’s demo “Classroom of the Future”, which was first envisioned at ERHS through community feedback. It features 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 design of the facility includes four classrooms that can create one learning area.

“Over the next three years, we will see this building open, the remaining classrooms renovated, and the portables removed to reclaim campus parking. This project will benefit students, staff and the community.” The long range plan is to remove all portable classrooms, renovate the permanent structures, including adding air conditioning.



Students head to class at the new classroom complex at Righetti High School.



The new classrooms are designed to be flexible for teachers and students.

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Orcutt Academy Features World Premiere of “Murder in the Peacock Lounge”

This April, the Orcutt Academy High School Drama Class hosts the world premiere of F. C. Shaw's "Murder in the Peacock Lounge" a murder mystery featuring a live jazz band sponsored by the Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation.

The play opens as first-time jazz club owner Dicky Sherman (played by Noah Jackson) invites his four wealthy investors to a preview night at "The Peacock Lounge". Along with the investors, rival nightclub owner Clyde Harrison (played by Soren Rakes) crashes the preview in hopes of scouting out the new competition. After a few acts a murder takes place and Private Investigator Cole Falcon (played by Logan Landress) and his deputy, Harvey Stall (played by Dante Surra), must interrogate the sequestered suspects to uncover the murderer.

Director Michael Shaw shares, "Four years ago we produced Agatha Christie's 'And Then There Were None', so for those who have been with me since their freshman year requested we end their senior year with another murder



Lucille May (played by Alysia Harshbarger) gets ready to sing at The Peacock Lounge. Photo Credit: Jim McManus

mystery." Shaw says he read over a dozen mysteries but couldn't find the right story to tell. So he told his wife, who happens to be a writer, and she crafted a complete two-act play custom made for the school.

"To be completely honest, I almost chickened out!" says playwright F. C. Shaw. Shaw is known for her children's mystery series "Sherlock Academy", but had never ventured into theater. Shaw shares, "I pushed myself to try something new and I'm so happy I did. I had so much fun writing and I cannot wait to

see the final product." Shaw was able to pack the show with everything the drama troupe requested: memorable characters, humor, mystery, a fast-pace, and live jazz music.

During the show a nine-person live band, directed by Orcutt Academy Band Director Josie Coburn, play jazz standards such as "Blue Skies", "In the Mood", and "Mack the Knife", to name a few. The band is made up of students who have volunteered their time before and after school to give this new play its swinging sound. "Everytime we practice I

feel like I should pay money to hear them," Director Coburn lauds.

F.C. Shaw has purposely stayed away from rehearsals so she can fully enjoy their interpretation of her work but has been on hand to offer her opinions on costume and set design.

All of this is made possible by the Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation who have backed the director's stipend for the show. "Without The Santa Barbara Bowl Foundation, there is no way I could have committed the time dedicated to make a show of this scope happen." Shaw shares his work alone on this show totals well over 100 hours of outside of school time, and he estimates each student has put in 60+ hours in rehearsal, singing, choreography, and dialect training.

Tickets are now available from the OAHBS Business office and at Orcutt's Old Town Market. Shows are April 11, 12, 13 at 7 PM with an added matinee on April 13 at 3:30 PM. Tickets are \$10 for regular seats and \$20 for VIP seats. VIP seats include the "intermission experience" where guests will mingle with some of the suspicious characters from the show and enjoy a tasty treat. Seating is limited for each show, so tickets may not be available at the door.

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Central Coast Beach Boardwalkers Plan Inagural Orcutt Event

Why simply walk when you can Volksmarch instead? If you're not familiar with the term "volksmarch" (German for "people's walk") you're probably not alone. But, as luck would have it, you can join the club. Literally! The Central Coast Beach Boardwalkers is a Volksmarching Club based right here in Orcutt that plans walking events from Morro Bay to Ventura.

"The original Volksmarching Club in this area was the Central Coast Peregrine Pathfinders," explains CCBB President Ty Fredriks. "It was started by an Air Force Serviceman who brought it over after being stationed in Germany. The club slowly declined and went defunct after he was transferred to Florida. [My wife] Ginger and I were members back then and decided to bring it back."

They took up the reins with the newly formed Central Coast Beach Boardwalkers in May of 2018 and held their first walk in Pismo Beach in June. The club now meets every 4th Tuesday of the month (with a few exceptions) at Giovanni's Pizza where members conduct business and people can come to ask questions and learn more about Volksmarching.

Since every Volksmarching club is responsible for creating scenic, safe, and enjoyable walks, CCBB took over some of the original 5K and 10K walks that had been kept alive by other California clubs

and created brand new walks in Cambria, Los Olivos, Buellton, and Orcutt that were mapped out and tested by the Fredriks'.

Now that they've hit their stride, the CCBB hosts two walks a month. "[We have] a Mid-Month walk where we don't travel too far, we all meet around 9am, and we all walk together on a 5K or a 10K at 9:15," explains Fredriks. "Our Month-End Group Walks are a little more official, with someone staffing the Registrations Table throughout the event. We sign up new walkers, stamp books for Volksmarching credit, and share the good news of Volksmarching with newcomers."

Though they appreciate when walkers join the club because the dues help to pay the sanctioning fees for new and existing walks, you do not have to be a member to participate in a walk. "Anyone can come to our starting point, sign the official registration log with waiver, pick up a map, and hit the trail," Fredriks says.

Volksmarchers who really get into the club spirit bring Record Books to keep track of walks they've participated in and miles they've traversed. "Walkers that stamp a



Vern and Kathey Heaney, Ty Fredriks and Harvey on a recent Beach Boardwalker Volksmarch.

distance or event pay \$3 per event, regardless of how many books they stamp, and it's a great way to stay motivated to keep walking!" says Fredriks. "Plus, each stamp in your book shows where you walked, so it's a fun way to reminisce about places you've been."

There are a plethora of reasons why Volksmarching Clubs like the Central Coast Beach Boardwalkers are worth joining. There are significant health benefits to walking, but, according to Fredriks, it's about more than just physical fitness.

"Walking with others in a variety of locations makes it more enjoyable to get out on the trail. Walking with friends just makes the shared experience that much more meaningful. Plus," he shares. "Ginger and I like to see new places and very rarely have we ever travelled to a location where there wasn't a volksmarch. Local clubs highlight areas of historical significance as well as particularly scenic areas of town, so the walks are typically well worth taking."

The CCBB planned just such a weekend of scenic walks last fall that took fifty walkers (including two from out of state) through

historic downtown Cambria during their celebrated Scarecrow Festival as well as along the Moonstone Beach Boardwalk and the Santa Rosa Creek Trail. The event was so popular they've decided to host it again this year!

And, as if that weren't enough, the Central Coast Beach Boardwalkers have also added an element of altruism to their excursions. In an effort to leave their walks just a little bit better than they were when they got there, club members collect trash along the way (on a completely volunteer basis) using specially purchased Litter Pickers. Last year they picked up over 20 bags of trash and this year they hope to double that amount.

Wondering if Volksmarching is for you? In just a few days you can try it out for yourself. The club is hosting a walk on Saturday, March 30th in Old Town Orcutt. There will be a 5K Old Town Walk, a 6K Residential Walk, and a 10K Walk that goes through Foxenwoods and Old Town Orcutt.

Registration for this event will be open from 8-11am at Old Town Market, located at 405 E. Clark Ave., and all walks will be completed by 2pm. Sign up for fun, fitness, and friendship!

To find out more, visit www.beachboardwalkers.org or check out the American Volkssport Association at www.ava.org.

Rebecca Ross reporting

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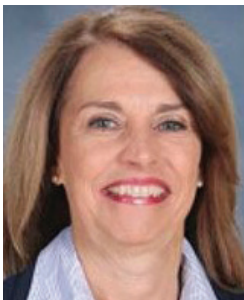
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Orcutt Schools Update

No Question About the State of Our District

Dr. Debbie Blow, Superintendent, OUSD



The Orcutt Union School District hosted its annual State of the District Breakfast on March 12. As superintendent, I was honored to tell attendees that the state of our schools and school district is, without question, STRONG. Here are some key reasons why:

Our students are learning. Orcutt students in grades K-8 are making good academic progress overall as measured by both state tests and our own benchmark tests. Meanwhile, students at Orcutt Academy High School are performing well on state tests, Advanced Placement (AP) exams, and college admittance tests such as the SAT and ACT. Like any other school district, our results can be better in some areas. But we are working to address these areas and are seeing improvements.

Instruction is high-quality. Our district strategic plan prioritizes the "new 3 R's" for education: Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. Our teachers are heeding the call to deliver classroom instruction that is rigorous and challenging, relevant to students' own lives and to the real world, and founded on a strong personal connection between teacher and students.

Classroom learning reflects 21st Century needs. We have established teacher academies for digital media, iPads, Chromebooks, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) that show how the "4 C's" – communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity – can be incorporated into instruction. At our EMI (Education Media Innovation) Awards event on April 17 and our Showcase of Learning on May 8, students will share educational videos and other products they have created using multimedia technology, the latest "apps," and their own ingenuity.

Students are safe. Our principals, teachers, and support staff work hard to closely supervise students and to address issues with behavior and conflict before they become larger problems. Our participation in the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program has our schools recasting their rules, expectations, and policies; improving what they have in place as consequences for misbehavior; and focusing above all else on the importance of giving students clear expectations and positive incentives so as to reduce

misbehavior in the first place.

The arts are flourishing. Our State of the District Breakfast was treated to a performance by the Orcutt Academy High School Band's Drum Line as well as the singing of Spencer Hawes and Cassidy Sullivan, two eighth graders who are starring in our district play, The Sound of Music. As has been detailed here in other columns, we have made amazing progress in affording all students access to either regular instruction and/or opportunities for enrichment in music, dance, theater, and the visual arts.

Measure G projects are under way. Fencing and security improvements at Alice Shaw School have been completed, with fencing/security projects to occur this summer at Patterson Road and Ralph Dunlap schools. New flexible furniture has been provided in all TK-6 classrooms districtwide. And plans are in development for fencing/security projects at other sites, classroom modernization at several sites, and much more.

Our staff is as dedicated as ever. Our teachers, administrators, and Classified employees form an inspiring team. They are second to none in their

focus on doing right by students.

We are blessed with wonderful parent and community support. Our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) units support our schools, students, and families at a high level. And our larger community is always there for our schools when needed.

To be sure, we have some challenges. We face tighter budgets in the years to come due to declining enrollment and increasing financial requirements from the state. We are seeing an increased need to provide social/emotional support for students. And this world of ours demands new skills and – in our case – shifts in how we teach. That said, our district is doing well, and I am confident that we will continue to do what we have done for decades: Make sure kids come first, and do the best job we can do for them.

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 @debblow.

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Orcutt Community Theatre Performing Hitchcock



Ensemble OCT cast takes a bow. Left to right: Lael Hastings and her sister Isa Hastings, Lezlie Thorroddson, Nancy Kunishige, David Campbell and Mia Kidd.

Nearly two years ago, the Orcutt Community Theater was established with the goal of bringing theater and entertainment to locals.

"It had always been a dream of mine to start a community theater here, and it turned out lots of other people thought the same thing," said Dixie Arthur, first president of the board of directors.

The nonprofit's inaugural production was "Miracle in Bedford Falls" and debuted in Jan. 2018. Arthur directed the musical, which was based on the movie "It's a Wonderful Life." Two other plays were produced the first season: farce "Mama Won't Fly" and dinner theater "Murder at Café Noir."

The second and current season featured "Into the Woods," "Rumors," and "The Elephant Man." Directed by Alan Sutterfield, "The Elephant Man" ended on March 10. The last production of the season is "Vintage Hitchcock: A Live Radio Play" directed by Arthur. It is an adaptation of three of Hitchcock's early classics: "The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog," "The 39 steps" and "Sabotage." More than 10 actors play multiple parts, and the sound effects are live. Performances are April 26 through 28 and May 3 to 5 at KleinDance Arts.

"It promises to be an exciting, unique entertainment," Arthur assured.

Arthur—who has been involved in theater for more than 30 years as a performer, director and teacher—is a longtime Orcutt resident. Though she has worked with theaters all over the Central Coast, she says there's no place like home.

"We are Orcutt residents and want to represent the best of our community," she explained. "All are welcome to participate in our organization because, well, we are Orcutt."

The theater is run on volunteers, who do everything from acting to painting, and are of all ages and experience.

"There's nobody we don't need," Arthur laughed.

In the future, she hopes to include original writing in their productions as several volunteers write.

"I think that's our next step to serve the public in a way that's not being served right now," she said.

The theater has been embraced by many community members, according to Arthur, but word still needs to be traveled.

"We hope to make our community proud," Arthur said. "So far we have had only positive responses, and hope to keep it that way!"

For more information, visit orcuttcommunitytheater.com.

Jamie Guista reporting

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SPECIAL EVENTS

CENTRAL COAST ORCHID SHOW & SALE, March 30, 9-5PM, March 31, 10-5PM South County Regional Center, 800 West Branch St., Arroyo Grande. General Admission: \$6 Children 12 and under free. Sponsored by the Five Cities Orchid Society.

SANTA MARIA PHILHARMONIC presents **RHAPSODY** in April. Maestro Nowak will conduct Dvořák's "New World" Symphony inspired by African-American spirituals and Native American music, made popular when Astronaut Neil Armstrong chose to take a

recording of it on Apollo 11 to the first Moon landing in 1969, and Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, the soundtrack for the film Somewhere in Time, featuring world-class pianist Chih-Long Hu. Saturday April 13th, 7:30, Grace Baptist Church, 605 E. McCoy Lane. Tickets \$15-\$45. Family Rate is \$60 (available only at the door). Information or purchase tickets: www.santamariaphilharmonic.org, or call 805-925-0412. The Santa Maria Philharmonic Society is a non-profit organization.

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 1) Sun at 4PM in the conference room of the Marian Extended Care Facility at 1530 Cypress Way and 2) Thur at 6PM in the Casa Del Rio Mobile Estates at 1124 N. Suey Rd. Contact Kim at (805) 714-6908 with questions.

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.santamariaquilters.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.



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