

Orcutt PIONEER

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Tree Trimming Beautifies Old Town Orcutt



Landscaper Danny George trimming a strawberry madrone tree in front of the Far Western Restaurant in Old Town Orcutt.

If you take a drive down Clark Avenue and Broadway in Old Town Orcutt, you may notice about thirty artistically shaped trees in front of many of the stores. A couple of weeks ago, Old Town Orcutt Restoration Association (OTORA) contracted with Danny George, longtime landscape contractor who lives in Old Town Orcutt, to trim the trees.

At a recent meeting of the Old Orcutt Merchants Association, President Mark Stellar told the crowd, "When Danny George trims trees, the result is artwork."

George, with his assistants Edwardo and Rafael Montano, trimmed the madrone trees along Clark Avenue and the olive trees on South Broadway.

George says the strawberry madrone trees along Clark Avenue originated in the Marina district of San Francisco and are a natural hybrid.

George maintains that it is important that the natural shape of the tree is maintained, "so when you look up you can see the entire structure of the tree." He gives most of the credit to his assistants, Edwardo and Rafael. "I taught them twenty years ago and they have artistically enhanced all that I have taught them."

OTORA President Steve Strachan says County Supervisor Bob Nelson was especially helpful in getting the Public Works Department to pick up and grind the clippings after George and his team finished the trimming.

The cost of the project was \$10,700 and some of the cost was offset by donations from the John Will family, Far Western Restaurant, Jack's Restaurant and the Old Town Mexican Cafe.

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Orcutt to Get a Third Fire Station



Vacant land on the north side of Union Valley Parkway east of Hummel Drive will be the location of a new Orcutt fire station.

Fourth District County Supervisor Bob Nelson told a group of about forty residents at a public gathering that Orcutt residents "for a long time have been underserved in fire service. We have had only 2 stations, one on Stillwell and the other in Old Town Orcutt".

At a public meeting at the Church of Christ on Foster Road on March 1st, County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig announced a new fire station would be built off Union Valley Parkway (UVP) about a quarter of a mile east of Hummel Drive.

Supervisor Nelson said the site of the new station 25 will be on the north side of UVP on 5 acres on Key Site 27 in the Orcutt Community Plan. The property was originally scheduled to be the site of houses and apartments. The county purchased the property, and the station will occupy about 2 acres with other county service options added at a future date.

The new station will have at minimum two trucks, one for urban service and the other for wildfires. There will be paramedic service.

Public Information Officer Captain Daniel Bertucelli says that County Fire is bidding for a contract for ambulance service with American Medical Response. If the county wins the contract, AMR will be at the new location.

The speed limit on the Union Valley Parkway is 55MPH. Bertucelli says a traffic light will be installed at the entrance and exit to the station on UVP. When there is a call, the red light will go on.

Hartwig said the station is now in its early planning stage; if all goes as planned, he hopes the new station will be operable in 2 ½ to 3 years.

With rising construction and equipment costs, it is too early to estimate the cost of the new station.

Chief Hartwig told the Orcutt residents that station 21 in Old Town Orcutt is located close to homes. "The station is twelve steps to its next-door neighbor, and we need to replace it." He said eventually the station will be moved west toward Highway 1.

The new dispatch center on Cathedral Oaks Road in Santa Barbara is anticipated to be operational by February of 2024. Borderless dispatching will then go into effect. "The closest resource will be sent to the emergency, regardless of municipal boundaries."

Steve Southwick reporting

BRIAN WILLIAMS GOPHER GUY

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Orcutt Post Office Boxes Recently Broken Into

During the night or early morning hours of March 7th, 12 post office boxes inside the Orcutt Post office were broken into, according to boxholders who reported the damage to the Sheriff's Department. The boxes were either medium or large in size, leading some to believe the thieves were after packages.

Orcutt has seen a recent rash of mail theft, with several homeowners reporting missing mail from their mailboxes. If you suspect that your mail has been stolen or tampered with, contact the Sheriff's Department at (805) 934-6150.

Business Notes

Orcutt Eye Center recently welcomed Dr. Daniel Christensen to replace retiring Dr. William Pimienta. Dr. Christensen received his Bachelor of Science in Psychology at CalPoly and his Doctor of Optometry from Midwestern University Arizona College of Optometry in Glendale, Arizona.

He completed an Optometric Residency in Ocular Disease at the Santa Fe Indian Hospital in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Training was completed with Externships at Capital Eye Consultants in Fairfield, Virginia, Eye Centers of South Florida and Chickasaw Nation Division of Health in Ardmore, Oklahoma.

Dr. Christensen is a member of the American Academy of Optometry and an Alumni Ambassador for Arizona College of Optometry.

When he's not seeing patients, he enjoys spending time with his wife and daughter near their home right here in Orcutt.

To make an appointment with Dr.

Christensen, call 805-937-9532 or stop by the Orcutt Eye Center at 4850 S. Bradley Rd.

California MENTOR is looking for families who want to make a real difference in their life and in the life of a person with disabilities. "California MENTOR offers programs in which individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities live with adult foster families called Mentors," says Recruitment Specialist Gabriel Morales, "It is in these homes that individuals receive the support they need to thrive in our communities and create a future in a family home. California MENTOR Family Home Agency of Santa Maria offers you the opportunity to share your heart and your home by becoming a mentor." And Morales emphasizes, that, "as a mentor, you will receive on-going support and a monthly stipend."

For info about California MENTOR, reach Morales at 805-346-2616 or email Gabriel. Morales@sevitahhealth.com



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Tree Trimming

continued from page 1

The emphasis of OTORA is Old Town Orcutt development which includes working with the county on "bulbouts" (curb extensions on street corners), county infrastructure, replacing dead trees, and developing parking options. Strachan is currently working with owners of the vacant lot at Clark and Marcum Street as a

potential site for additional parking.

Strachan says OTORA is focused on development and infrastructure while the Old Orcutt Merchants Association (OOMA) emphasizes the commercial and business aspects of Old Town Orcutt.

Steve Southwick reporting

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Local Artist's Secret: Pursue Your Artistic Side Every Day!



Orcutt Artist Denise Gimbel

"The habit of painting every day, as well as painting in series, really helped me find my artistic voice and start to tell my story in a coherent way," says Orcutt artist Denise Gimbel. Denise started drawing when she was 5 years old; she started painting only 4 years ago! Take heart and grab your brushes. It's not too late.

Growing up in Calgary, Alberta, tending vegetable gardens and caring for animals in the foothills of the Canadian Rockies, Gimbel absorbed many farm images similar

to local images that inspire her work today. Another source of inspiration is frequent travels to Europe with family. During a college year in France, she was first exposed to original works of impressionism: van Gogh, Monet and Matisse.

Travels continued to China, India, Egypt, Central America, and her favorite destination, France, as she made her living

on the California coast as a nurse and health educator. Impressions of her travels are alive in her sketch books. "Every trip opened up my eyes to new art and beauty and added to the pent-up need to create," says a write up at her latest solo exhibit at the Foxworthy Gallery at Alan Hancock College.

After raising two sons, Gimbel and husband made extended visits to the colorful Mediterranean town of Collioure in France, birthplace of the post-

impressionist Fauve art movement. It was during this trip that she was inspired to buy canvas and paints and begin her painting journey. She inhaled the lives and techniques of her favorite artists, joined multiple artist groups and took in person and online workshops.

Gimbel paints most days, putting on her artist's apron after breakfast and working until mid-afternoon. She has experimented with many styles including nudes, portraits, and intuitive painting, now focusing on colorful abstracts that convey the scenes she loves in different seasons, weather, and time of day. Her barn series may have the top, side, or angle of a barn, relating to various weather outside. Gimbel, a hiker, finds inspiration from views and trees. She starts with the idea, the emotion, the quality of light, and then paints it into an abstract using shapes, quilt patterns and bold colors.

When asked if it is ever a challenge to get up every morning and paint for many hours,

she says, "Definitely! Sometimes there is a struggle in the morning, distractions, discomfort, laziness. Sometimes the painting fights back refusing to become what I intended. Then I need to wait, look, and listen before I decide what to do next." Most of the time a "tweak" here and there will help, she says, "But I'm not afraid to get out the gesso and start over! It's all a part of the process, and the joy is in the journey, not the destination." Gimbel encourages others to "experiment and play. Everybody has an artist within."

To see Gimbel's work or contact her go to denisegimbelcontemporaryartist.com or follow her on Instagram @denisegimbelcontemporaryartist. A video tour and artist interview from her solo exhibit at Foxworthy gallery can be found at <https://www.hancockcollege.edu/gallery>

Katy Jacobson reporting



Samantha Bakke

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Orcutt Community Theater

Steve Martin comedy "Picasso at the Lapin Agile" raps up its Orcutt Community Theater Run this weekend.

The final performances of "Picasso at the Lapin Agile," a play presented by the Orcutt Community Theater (OTC), is this weekend, March 25-27. The play is a comedy by Steve Martin and imagines a fictional meeting between Albert Einstein and Pablo Picasso in a small Paris cafe in 1904, the year before Einstein revolutionized physics with his theory of relativity and two years before Picasso transformed the world of art.

According to the website, "The action

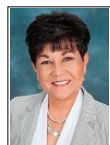
is both hilarious and philosophical, as patrons also become caught up in the musings of these two soon-to-be 20th century titans. However, a surprise visitor arrives."

The show runs Friday, March 25, at 8PM, Saturday, March 26, at 8PM and Sunday March 27, at 1:30PM. Tickets are \$15, students and military \$10, and are available at the door and at Orcuttcommunitytheater.com. The show is directed by Dan Bullard. The performances are at the Klein Dance Arts at the Skyway Center, Building 1, 3558 Skyway Drive.

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Orcutt Gas Station: Attorney Issue Causes Two Month Supervisor Continuance

On March 8th, Supervisors were scheduled to hear an appeal of the Planning Commission approval of the gas station and mini-market from Far Western Liquor Inc. in the Evergreen Shopping Center and PR Investments LLC. However, their attorney, Vincent Martinez, was appointed a County Planning Commissioner replacing Commissioner Dan Blough.

The appointment leaves the appellants without an attorney necessitating a continuance until another attorney could be brought on board.

Brian Tetley, senior planner with Urban Planning Concepts, represents property owners Feras Mawas and Lama Fadel of Santa Maria in their application to construct a gas station and mini-market at the southeast corner of Lakeview Road and the Orcutt Frontage Road and Highway 135. The project has been in the county planning pipeline since 2018.

Tetley expressed frustration with hearing delays his client has experienced the past four years. Referring to Homer's "The

Iliad and the Odyssey," Tetley complained to the County Board of Supervisors, "It took Odysseus 10 years to sail from the battlefields of Troy back home with difficulties along the way. I think our client can claim their own small odyssey navigating the permit process, as this month marks four years and two months since applying for this project---15 of those under appeal."

Both Martinez and Fifth District Supervisor Steve Lavagnino, who appointed Martinez to the Planning Commission, accepted responsibility for what Lavagnino said was "an unusual situation."

Another continuance was granted until Tuesday, May 3, so a new attorney could be brought up to speed.

In their appeal, the appellants are arguing the project does not comply with the Orcutt Community Plan and the additional 1600 vehicle trips will cause major impacts at that intersection.

Steve Southwick reporting

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Orcutt Schools Update District's Early Grades Offering More

Dr. Holly Edds, Superintendent, OUSD

Transitional kindergarten and kindergarten, which serve as most of our students' introduction to elementary school, have become a venue for important improvements locally and statewide.

This school year, the Orcutt Union School District launched a significant change: a full-day schedule for kindergarten. For the first time, all of our kindergartners are in school for the same amount of time as the other elementary grades.

"I think full-day K has been a great thing for everybody," says Joe Nightingale School Principal Kate McInerney, a veteran kindergarten teacher herself. "Teachers have had more time to take a developmental approach to addressing social, emotional, and academic needs. We can take children where they are and help them to progress at a pace

that is comfortable for them."

The new full-day schedule is being applauded by teachers and parents.

"I feel like I can teach everything I want to teach," says longtime kindergarten teacher Yvette Soriano of Patterson Road School. "I have been able to expand on things that previously we only were able to touch upon. And there is enough time for students to explore and have fun with the other children."

"It's gone well for my son," says Erin Salvesen, whose child, Liam, is in Cassidy O'Leary's kindergarten class at Pine Grove School. "I was worried that it might be difficult for him to transition from going to preschool two or three half-days a week to doing full days in kindergarten, but he has done really well. And his teacher (O'Leary) is amazing."

In implementing full-day kindergarten,

Orcutt also hired instructional assistants to support K students. Soriano believes these paraprofessionals are one of the reasons for the initiative's success.

"The instructional assistant I work with, Leslie Griego, just jumped in and is super helpful to students," says Soriano. "Having an extra adult in the room helps us to do small groups and provide extra help to students."

Just prior to the school year, our district piloted another new program: a two-week "jump start" offering for students entering transitional kindergarten and kindergarten. The summer program allowed participating students to become acclimated to school, classroom routines, and the TK or K curriculum.

"Jump start kindergarten made a big difference for Liam," says Salvesen. "After that, he was fully ready. He felt confident about going to kindergarten."

Still another major reform will affect the grade level preceding kindergarten, transitional kindergarten. For the 2022-2023 school year, California is extending the eligibility window for transitional kindergarten so children born between September 1, 2017,

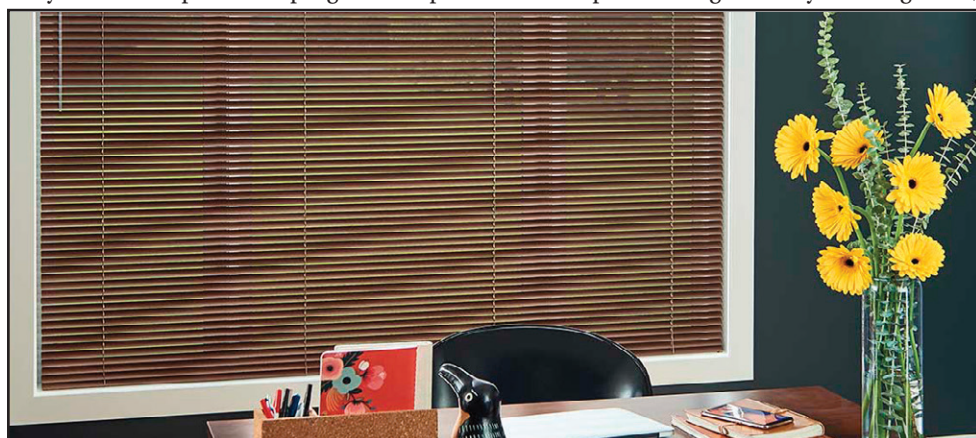
and February 2, 2018, may be enrolled. The state will expand the eligibility window each school year until 2025-2026, when almost all four-year-olds will be able to participate in TK.

While we are not sure exactly how many more transitional kindergartners we will register, we are projecting that TK will grow by around 40 students next school year. For 2022-2023, we plan to have Joe Nightingale School continue to be the site for TK in Orcutt, with Olga Reed School and the Orcutt Academy K-8 campus continuing to offer TK in Los Alamos.

"We are excited about expanding our transitional kindergarten program," says McInerney. "Our staff have worked hard to offer a high quality program. Students will benefit."

Enrollment in both TK and K for 2022-2023 is happening now. If you have a student to enroll in either grade level, please contact your neighborhood school or phone our Enrollment Office at 805-938-8946.

Superintendent Dr. Holly Edds can be contacted by phone at 938-8900 or by e-mail at hedd@orcutt-schools.net. She can be followed on Twitter at @hce101.



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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

QUILTS and MORE! Saturday April 30th at Spring Peddler Faire in Buellton's River View Park 10am-2pm. Wide assortment of handmade items including quilts and other unique items. (Beautiful gifts for moms!) Learn about the fun and fascinating art of quilting from Santa Maria Valley Quilt Guild members!

Sons of the American Legion (S.A.L.) to begin Summer Concert and BBQ Benefit Series on April 16th with Skunk Puppy. Skunk Puppy is a music duo featuring bass guitar, guitar & vocals playing a classic rock, grunge, and blues. They will be followed by That's What She Said, a Central Coast rock and party band on May 21st. Concerts are on the 3rd Saturdays of the month and run from 2-5PM. BBQ will be available for sale. Orcutt Post 534 is located on 145 W. Clark Ave. Concert is open to the public and free.

MONTHLY OR WEEKLY EVENTS

COASTAL VALLEYS MARINE CORPS LEAGUE 1340 monthly meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month held at Veteran's Memorial Bldg at 313 W Tunnell in Santa Maria at 7PM.

COASTAL VOICES is looking for singers to join us! Rehearsals are held Mondays, 6:30PM, at St. Andrew United Methodist Church, 3945 S. Bradley Rd., Santa Maria. All participants must be fully vaccinated against COVID. A love of singing and the willingness to work hard and learn beautiful music is the only requirement. Check our website at <http://www.coastalvoices.info/>. Singers can contact us at coastalvoices@gmail.com or call 937-5827 for additional information.

Community Events

CRESTWOOD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (Non-Denominational) 1265 W. McCoy Lane, Ste A, Santa Maria, CA 93455, 925-7500. An All Volunteer Church concentrating on teaching the word of God and using our resources to help the poor in love thru service. Come find out what it is like to "Do Church Differently."

CUB SCOUT PACK 91 welcomes boys and girls, grades K-5 to join us. Scouting teaches children about their community, citizenship, service to others, and outdoor adventure. To learn more about us visit www.pack91orcutt.org or call us at 253-CUBS. DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF SM VALLEY meets every 3rd Thursday at IHOP, 202 Nicholson Ave, Santa Maria. Social at 6:00 PM, guest speakers at 7:00. Business meeting for members follows. Call 805-349-2708 or visit www.santamariademocrats.info for more information.

EVANGELISTIC SERVICE 105 S. Broadway, Santa Maria, CA 93455 (Old Orcutt), Sundays at 6:30PM, Worship with us. Pastor Jesse Pinheiro (805)937-6536.

EXCITING BIBLE STUDY at Revival Tabernacle, 105 S. Broadway, Santa Maria, CA 93455 (Old Orcutt) Wednesdays at 7PM Join us as we explore God's word. Pastor Jesse Pinheiro

FAMILY FUN NIGHT 6-8PM. Last Friday of the month @ Unity Church, 1165 Stubblefield, Orcutt. Bring games and food to share. (805) 937-3025.

FOUR-PARK BARBERSHOP HARMONY FOR WOMEN who love to sing. For additional information, call 805-736-7572. We love to sing for special occasions. Rehearsals on Thursday nights, 6:45PM, Lutheran Church of Our Savior, 4725 S. Bradley Rd.

GROWING GROUNDS FARM STAND open Thursdays from 12-6PM. Come and enjoy fresh vegetables, flowers and plants. Located on the corner of Foster Rd and California. For more information call 934-2182.

GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND PUPPER RAISERS. Raise a puppy and change someone's life. Meets one Monday a month. For location and more information contact Jack Brey at 805-937-7773 or Jackbrey@verizon.net

HEARTHSTONE EDUCATORS Christian support group for home educators. Meeting for those considering homeschooling on the second Thursday of each month at 7PM. Call Cheryl Kliever for more information (937-7099)

HEALING GRIEF CLASS an 8 week support class for the newly bereaved held 5 times a year (Tues 10AM-Noon at Marian Residence) and a Grief Recovery Support Group every Tues. 3-4:30PM at Marian West, 505 E. Plaza Drive in Santa Maria. Info on either group: Marian Hospice at 739-3830

INTERESTED in attending in-depth healing groups? Led by Pastor and Holy Spirit. Celebrated in members' homes. Info: Pastor Victor at (805) 878-1033 or Carl Buck at (805) 478-6198

INVESTMENT GROUP at The OASIS Center, 420 Soares Ave, Old Orcutt on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month, 9:30-10:30pm. Educational group, no fees.

JOIN THE CLUB SCOUTS. Pack 93 of Orcutt Camping, hiking, lots of outdoor activities. Family oriented pack. Siblings are invited! Join the fun of the most exciting Cub Scout pack around. Contact Cubmaster Paul Rodarte at 478-3538 or for more information check out Pack 93's website: www.lospadrespack93.com

JOIN US FOR THE EPIC: A JOURNEY THROUGH CHURCH HISTORY in Room 2-Parish Community Center, Monday evening, 7:30-9PM. For more information contact Trent Benedetti, 922-4881, trentb@benedetticpa.com or Steve Stanley, 937 1353, ssvs@verizon.net.



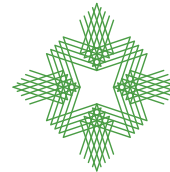
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