

## Planners OK a Continuance on Rancho Maria Development

*Golf club owners agree to work with developers but only on a new proposal.*

To say that the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission is having trouble determining “Findings for Denial” for the 129 housing development among the fairways and Rancho Maria Golf Club is an understatement.

For the third time, on May 11th, the Commission battled with the issue. The five Commissioners unanimously agreed to continue a decision on the Neighborhoods of Willow Creek and Hidden Canyon development until June 30th.

In April, the Planning Commission unanimously denied the project as it currently is proposed, said there

are environmental and agricultural issues that cannot be resolved and requested staff to prepare “Findings for Denial.” At the Wednesday hearing the developer, Orcutt Rancho LLC, requested a continuance until June 30 to present adjustments.

Now Orcutt Rancho LLC has filed for bankruptcy.

The lender is willing to proceed with funding if a project can be approved. The owners of the Rancho Maria Golf Club requested the Commission accept a version of the denial findings and send the denial project to Board of Supervisors. However, representatives

of Rancho Maria Golf Club did support a continuance until lending issues could be worked out and a potentially new development can be initiated.

4th District Commissioner and chairman Larry Ferini of Orcutt was hopeful an acceptable project could be forthcoming. “I’m hopeful a real project can come out of this. I feel the project before us should be denied.”



The motion by third district Commissioner John Parke to continue the item was unanimously approved.

*Steve Southwick reporting*

## Laguna Sanitation \$53 Million Upgrade Moving Along

*Financed by increases in rates and certificates of participation.*

Laguna Sanitation District is about seven months into the first phase of its 53 million dollar construction upgrade to the plant that treats 1.8 million gallons of wastewater per day in Orcutt and the surrounding unincorporated areas of northern Santa Barbara County.

To pay for the state mandated upgrades in 2001 and to build up reserves, rates have increased from below \$200 per year back in the 1990s for service for a single-family residence to \$1,072.56 in the next fiscal year. Commercial and industrial rates have also increased.

The 60-year-old plant was last upgraded in 2001 to comply with regulatory requirements. The first

phase will be complete in 2023 and the plant will comply with Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements. According to Utilities Manager Martin Wilder, 30 million dollars of the funding comes from County Board of Supervisor approval of certificates of participation for a term of not to exceed 21 years. Repayment is through county tax assessments. The balance comes from Laguna Sanitation reserves accumulated over the last two decades from rate increases.

The upgrade improvements include the replacement of structurally deficient and obsolete treatment processes with new screening and biological treatments in addition

to a new laboratory and operations building. The ultra-violet disinfection system and stormwater facilities will also be improved.

The second phase of the project will increase the plant’s treatment capacity to five million gallons per day and coordinate with growth anticipated in the Orcutt Community Plan.

According to Wilder, the 2001 upgrades were necessary because Laguna Sanitation District was in violation of Regional Water Quality Control Board regulations on salts and minerals. “We did not have a good rate structure forty years ago and to deal with a decades old plant and upgraded state regulations, so we had to play

catch-up” with rate increases.

Wilder says Laguna County Sanitation rates are “on par with Lompoc and other locales in the area.” He says Golden State Water Company, which provides water service in the North County, has low rates and with combined water-sewage rates, Orcutt costs are comparable to the county average.

Today the District serves an Orcutt and surrounding area population of approximately 35,000. The recycled water is used for irrigation and industrial needs. The plant is located northwest of the intersection of Black and Dutard Roads near the Tanglewood subdivision.

*Steve Southwick reporting*

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New Cottage Urgent Care Offers Innovations in Service



When you listen to Orcutt resident Michelle Franco, manager of the new Cottage Urgent Care, you hear a new approach to urgent care. "One stop shopping," she says. "No filling out forms in a waiting room and then waiting for service." Franco has been working in San Luis Obispo and is happy to be at the newest Cottage Urgent Care near her Orcutt home. "I am really excited about the innovative procedures we use to serve patients."

In that setting, the patient receives appropriate medical care. "No waiting in a lobby where a secretary asks you fill out forms. All is handled by the clinical concierge in the medical room. That concierge follows you throughout the process up until the time you leave". Cottage Urgent Care offers a room for treating lacerations, administering stitches, handling broken bones and casting. There is a radiology room for x-rays and two negative air pressure rooms for respiratory issues. Laboratory

testing is on site for urinary tract infections, blood sugar levels and other lab issues. Cottage Urgent Care accepts all major insurance carriers. The cost? "That's a major advantage at Cottage \$189.00 total. That's the only charge." Ms. Franco says at most urgent care centers, patients have no idea what the charges are going to be. "With an Xray, some lab work, whatever, the patient gets the bill and it's a surprise. With Cottage Urgent Care, that is all you pay...even if you have broken a bone, need x-rays, need a cast put on or whatever. Out the door for \$189.00. No surprises." Ms. Franco says costs at the pharmacy are often less than what you pay at a local pharmacy. Cottage Urgent Care is located in the Orcutt Hills Plaza at 1606 E. Clark and at Skyway Drive and the Orcutt Expressway (Skyway Drive location opens this week-May 25) and accepts all major insurance carriers including Medicare and senior medical plans. Open 365 days a year; 8am to 8pm. Steve Southwick reporting



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# Orcutt's Janet Scollard—100 Years Serving Country and Children



100-year-old Janet Scollard with friends at her centennial celebration.

During World War II at a time when women serving in the military was a rarity, Orcutt's Janet Scollard, who celebrated her 100th birthday last month, was determined she wanted to serve her country.

Sitting on her front lawn, the nearly speechless Janet could only say, "Thank you all so very, very much!"

In 1958 Janet began serving her second love...children. She was hired by the Santa Maria Elementary School District to teach special education. She traveled from school to school helping children with speech therapy.

After four years she took a similar position in Anaheim, Ca. But she says she did not like Southern California, "too many people; too many lines to stand in".

So in the early 1960's, Janet began a 22-year career in special education with the Orcutt Union School District. "I never married," she says. "But I sure took care of a lot of kids."

About living a century, "I'm glad I don't have to live another hundred years. The first was pretty tough."

*Steve Southwick reporting*

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# "Gurls" Just Want To Have Fun: Orcutt Residents Keeping Theater Alive



John Shade prepares for Civic Theatre's drag show fundraiser.

Our byline is "2020 was a DRAG. 2021-Drag is gonna have FUN," says Maureen Staunton, who has resided in Orcutt for 41 years. Maureen is the event-coordinator for the Santa Maria Civic Theater. Now that COVID

restrictions are lifting, the theater group is hosting a fundraiser-drag show on Saturday, June 26, in alliance with HOPE, House of Pride and Equity, a local LGBTQ group. "With the help of our partners at HOPE, we hope to have fun, food, festivities and fabulous performers," says Maureen. The show will be interactive with drag performers, local actors/emcees and music by renowned local DJ Suzy Lopez.

Four professional drag performers will headline the show, which will include night club-style tables up front. Local actors will dress up as well. "Come in costume or drag or just get your glam on and have some fun," encourages Maureen, who has also been an actor and a stage manager for the Santa Maria Civic Theater. "There's only 100 seats so there's no bad seat in the house."

Theater president and Orcutt resident, Sally Buchanan plans to dress in floor length glitter and glam and emcee the evening with former president

Lynda Mondragon, introducing the performances with "music and banter." Vice-president of the theater board, Kyle Hawkins, another Orcutt resident says, "After being closed for 13 months, I look forward to these fundraisers to get back to a normal season." He's hoping regular performances will start again in the fall.

Stuart Wegner, treasurer of the theater and 21 year resident of Orcutt, underlines the financial needs of non-profits due to COVID. Stuart is a past director and actor and hopes the fundraiser will help so the theatre can afford the production costs of a regular season.

After the fundraiser Stuart will direct a "Readers Theater" in July.

Thanks goes to lifelong Orcutt resident Kathy Brodie, who wants to see live theater stay healthy in the community. Kathy contributed the seed money for this fundraiser. "I have been a theater supporter since 2010. After the death of my son, friends at the Santa Maria Civic Theater helped me with my grieving process. I have a number of friends

in the LGBTQ community who have become very dear to me. I will work hard to get the theater back on its feet by doing what I do best, donating and working behind the scenes."

The June 26 fundraiser will begin with a 6PM outdoor reception for all ticket holders, which includes hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Performers will be available to have their pictures taken with attendees. The night club-style floor show will begin at 7PM inside the theater. The doors will stay open to provide fresh air and people are asked to keep masks on for safety. Tickets are available at [My805tix.com](http://My805tix.com). "So get out of those sweat pants and put on some glitter," says Maureen enthusiastically. "We've been cooped up too long!"

Katy Jacobson reporting



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# Orcutt Schools Update

## Well Deserved Kudos for Four of Our Own

*Dr. Holly Edds, Superintendent, OUSD*

The Orcutt Union School District has many dedicated teachers and Classified employees who give their all each and every day for their students, school, and department. That is why I am excited to report that four of our own have been selected for special honors this school year.

Our district's Teacher of the Year is **Michael Shaw**, Drama and English teacher at Orcutt Academy High School. Shaw, who attended Orcutt schools as a child, is in his 14th year with our district. He worked at Ralph Dunlap School and the Academy's K-8 campus before arriving at OAHS.

"Michael is just born to teach," says OAHS Principal Rhett Carter. "He can make any class relevant and interesting. When I'm in his class, I don't want to leave!"

"I am honored to be recognized among such a brilliant and dynamic group of peers," Shaw says. "It is my honor and joy to serve this community and I am grateful to be recognized for that work."

Lakeview Junior High School Office Manager **Phyllis Jackson** is our district's Classified Employee of the Year. Jackson, now in her 22nd year with Orcutt, was May Grisham School's office manager before moving over to Lakeview.

"Phyllis is one of the most dynamic, professional people I've had the honor of working alongside," says Lakeview Principal Jonathan Dollahite. "She's so dedicated to students, staff, and all who come into the school office."

"It's just an honor to be recognized,"

Jackson says. "I love being around the kids and I love my job. It's very nice to be noticed for that."

District music teacher **Josie Coburn** has garnered the county-wide honor of 2022 Santa Barbara Bowl Performing Arts Teacher of the Year. Under Coburn, the district's band program has tripled in size and enrollment in the OAHS Band has quadrupled. Coburn, now in her sixth year with Orcutt, also has integrated a drumline and jazz ensemble into her offerings.

"Our Band program has grown tremendously because of the enthusiasm and fun that Josie brings to the classroom," says Janet Bertoldi, the district's assistant superintendent of educational services. "From day one, her lessons have been outstanding."

Finally, Pine Grove School first-grade teacher **Elizabeth Tymn** has been chosen to receive the Santa Barbara Teachers Federal Credit Union Crystal Apple Award for exemplary work as an elementary educator. Tymn, now in her 32nd year with the district, taught at May Grisham School before joining Pine Grove.

"Elizabeth is a fabulous teacher who shines each and every day," says Pine Grove Principal Michelle Boyd. "Her kids are always fully engaged – she has the kids in the palm of her hand."

"I will accept this award on behalf of all the teachers in our district who work so hard with their children," says Tymn. "We all make an impact on kids just by our very personal interaction with them. I feel like everybody should get this award."

Tymn is correct – our schools and district are blessed with an abundance of dedicated employees who are most deserving of gratitude and recognition. Here's thanking our teachers and Classified employees for all they do!

*Superintendent Dr. Holly Edds can be contacted by phone at 938-8900 or by e-mail at [hedds@orcutt-schools.net](mailto:hedds@orcutt-schools.net). She can be followed on Twitter at [@hce101](https://twitter.com/hce101).*

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