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Volunteer of the Year and William Penn Mott, Jr. Award Winners



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Orinda Arts Council is this year's Volunteer of the Year. Board Members and Standing Committee Chairs (L-R) **Petra Michel, Jane Greenthal, Steve Harwood, Susan Mautner, Natalie Wheeler, Lisa Johannessen, Susan Garell, Myrna Witt, and Gwen McNeilus.** Not pictured: Maggie Boscoe, Wendy Hamett, and Cathy Wong.



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The four Orinda Garden Clubs have been selected as William Penn Mott, Jr. Award Winners. Above are members of the **Montelindo Garden Club** doing plantings at the mini-park in Orinda. (L-R kneeling) **Sandra Steinbeck, Karoline Doberenz,** (standing) **Louise Rowland,** (with small rake) **Judy Martine,** and (kneeling on right) **Katie Creighton.**

Orinda Arts Council Named 2010 Volunteer of the Year

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Coordinating the monthly Orinda Library Gallery exhibits, organizing the annual high school visual arts competition, providing art supplies for Orinda's elementary schools, and, of course, producing the highly successful Orinda Idol competition are just a few of the accomplishments of the Orinda Arts Council. "The volunteer members of the arts council work tirelessly

to promote the arts in Orinda, and through their efforts, they have helped keep important visual and performing arts programs alive in the schools and in our community," says Orinda Association (OA) president Mark Roberts. "We are very happy to recognize the council as the 2010 Volunteer of the Year."

Originally founded in 1950 as the Orinda Children's Art Center to supplement art instruction in the schools, the council also has a long legacy of supporting the arts in the community. In the 1960s, it began installing art exhibits at the Orinda Library and holding art events at the Orinda Country Club featuring local professional and student artists to raise funds for arts in the schools as well as the community. In the early 1970s, the OAC provided critical financial and organizational support for the opening of the new Orinda Community Center. The 1980s included funding for the Community Center Park Amphitheater and to the California Shakespeare Theater as it moved to Orinda. When the Heart of Orinda plan was

[SEE OAC page 7]

City of Orinda Commission Openings

Volunteers to serve on the following:

Commissions: Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight, Parks and Recreation, and Planning.

Committees: Art in Public Places, Audit and Finance, Finance Advisory, Public Works Aesthetic Review, and Traffic Safety Advisory.

Statement of interest forms are available at the City Clerk's Office, 22 Orinda Way, and must be submitted by January 21 at 5 p.m. Application forms may also be downloaded at www.cityoforinda.org.

Orinda's Garden Clubs Harvest Big Rewards as Mott Winners

By SALLY HOGARTY
Editor

Have you come out of the Caldecott Tunnel and down the Orinda off-ramp to be pleasantly surprised by a profusion of brightly colored daffodils or been walking through the Village and marveled at the large blossoms cascading down from hanging planters, or maybe the street-level planters full of native plants on the Theatre Square side of Orinda has caught your eye? Well, these are not just spontaneous acts of nature nor the work of the City of Orinda staffers. They are the result of countless hours of volunteer work and loving care provided by Orinda's garden clubs – The Orinda Garden Club, The Junior Garden Club of Orinda, Montelindo Garden Club, and Orinda Valley Garden Club.

"It is very fitting that we honor the four garden clubs in Orinda as our William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award winner," says Orinda Association president Mark Roberts. "Not only do they make our community a more beautiful place in

which to live, but they also restore and conserve valuable natural resources. We thoroughly congratulate them and applaud their efforts."

While these busy volunteers have specific projects around town for their clubs, they also join together on a number of projects

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Final "Tiger" Of The Month

It only seemed appropriate to select a cat named Tiger as our final cat of the year. Not only is this handsome Himalayan named Tiger, he is also of Croatian descent. That's a Croatian soccer ball that he is trying to get to or maybe it's the Croatian wine. The wording on the wine label translates as "Tiger's Milk." Tiger is lovingly cared for by Al and Lois Blazic. Now in their 80s, the Blazics have lived in Orinda for 54 years.

The staff of *The Orinda News* would like to thank everyone who submitted their tigers for consideration. I only wish we had more room and time to include them all.



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AWARD WINNERS

◆ GARDENING from page 1

including keeping all of the planters in town looking good. Three of the clubs (Orinda Garden Club, Montelindo and the Junior Garden Club) pooled resources and collective expertise to beautify the Camino Pablo median strip. The three clubs met monthly for over a year to make the median strip landscaping a reality. All four clubs donate plants and flowers to the Orinda Library on a rotating basis throughout the year.

Garden Club manages the triangular garden spot by Camino Sobrante and Orinda Way; The Orinda Junior Garden Club keeps the circular garden by Theatre Square blooming throughout the year; the Valley Garden Club also plants daffodils around town and offers a series of expert speakers to enhance everyone's knowledge, and the Montelindo Garden Club preserves the minipark garden in the Crossroads area. Six years ago, Montelindo members redesigned and replanted the garden with California natives and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Junior Garden Club of Orinda maintains the garden in the turnaround area in front of the Orinda Theatre. They have planted drought tolerant, mostly California native plants, in this demonstration garden.

"They all came together for the project, and we are really pleased with the result," states parks and recreation director Todd Skinner. "This has created one of the longest landscaped medians in the city and was definitely one that needed the most help."

When not working on such joint projects, the clubs each have a separate area of Orinda that they maintain: The Orinda

Mediterranean plants. Recently, they have added hundreds of daffodils to add spring cheer to the Crossroads.

"We are thrilled and very proud to join our fellow Orinda Garden Clubs as recipients of the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award," says Joan Andrews of the Orinda Garden Club. This year, the club made conservation their key goal with the motto "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without." They plant the thousands of daffodils people see as they enter the off-ramp from Oakland. The area, owned by Cal Trans, doesn't have any water so the group plants the daffodil bulbs, and when they are not in bloom, they apply top dressing among the boulders to create an appealing gateway into Orinda. The group also hosted an E-waste recycling event with proceeds benefiting the Educational Foundation of Orinda, but their key project this past year has been the restoration of the Cork Oaks around Lake Cascade in Orinda.

"When the Garden Club of America requested that each club select a Centennial Project, we chose to restore the Cork Oaks on the shoreline of Lake Cascade in Orinda," explains member Heather Dunn. "This privately-owned reservoir and protected bird sanctuary has become a popular recreation area for the community providing over a mile of shoreline for



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Orinda Garden Club spent considerable time restoring and conserving the cork oak trees on the north side of historic Lake Cascade at the Orinda Country Club.

walkers, runners, bikers and bird watchers. Previous members of Orinda Garden Club planted 12 *Quercus subers* (cork oaks) in 1946 around Lake Cascade. Current member Joan Andrews formed a committee to restore these oaks to their majestic form. Thanks to the suggestion of the Garden Club of America, we discovered a part of our history we didn't know existed. Two hundred and seventy-five feet of lake front has been restored to date."

While each club continues its beautification of its own little corner of Orinda, Lani Shepp of the Montelindo Garden Club hopes more joint projects will take place next year. "The shared projects are a very constructive and productive experience, allowing us to get to know members of other clubs who share the same interest. I hope it is something we can continue and build on for next year."

To honor these hardworking Orindans, who often work quietly in the background, attend the Orinda Association's award dinner on January 30 beginning at 6 p.m. at the Orinda Country Club. For more information and reservations, call 254-0800 or go to www.orindaassociation.org.

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proposed in 1989, the OAC advocated for the addition of the Orinda Library Gallery and auditorium. The group also participates on the Art in Public Places committee and has partnered with the Pacific Chamber Symphony, the Orinda Film Festival, and sponsored the California Independent Film Festival's Iron Filmmakers Contest.

"We feel so honored to win this award especially since 2010 marked our 60th anniversary as an organization," says OAC president Susan Garrell. "We've had a remarkable and productive year thanks to all of our hard working and dedicated board members, committee chairs, and hard-working volunteers. And, of course, we couldn't fund our arts programs and events without our generous members, donors and sponsors."

The Orinda Association will present the OAC with the Volunteer of the Year award at a gala dinner on January 30 beginning at 6 p.m. at the Orinda Country Club. For more information and reservations, call the OA at 254-0800 or go to www.orindaassociation.org.

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Thank You Orinda!

I truly appreciate the support of so many of you during the City Council election. With your help, we elevated the dialogue about our downtown's future, which now will be decided by Orinda residents, as it should. Our work is not done; please visit www.cityoforinda.org to give your input on the downtown plans, and remember to log in to www.SaveOrinda.com for regular updates.

Scott Zeller, MD