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Published January 21st, 2008

Lamorinda Garden Clubs Join Forces

By Andrea A. Firth

Gardening has always been a group activity in Orinda. Two hundred and fifty (250!) Orindans are members of three main garden clubs in the City: The Montelindo Garden Club, the Orinda Garden Club, and the Junior Garden Club of Orinda. Recently, the three garden clubs joined forces, pooling their resources and collective expertise to beautify the median strip on Camino Pablo that extends north from the BART station. The impetus for the joint venture was both fortuitous and mysterious.

In September of 2007, the Orinda Parks and Recreation Foundation received an anonymous grant of \$3,000 that was to be provided equally to the three garden clubs with the caveat that the monies be used for a City beautification project designed and implemented by the three groups together. It is not unusual for the Foundation to receive an anonymous grant, according to Parks and Recreation Director Todd Skinner, however the requirement that the project be coordinated among the three groups added a new twist.

Lani Shepp, current President of the Montelindo Garden Club, noted that although many of Orinda's garden club members have lived in the area for a long time, they did not all know each other. However, their common interest in gardening made working together come naturally. The three clubs met monthly for over a year to make the median strip landscaping a reality.

"They all came together for the project, and we are really pleased with the result," states Skinner. "This has created one of the longest landscaped medians in the City, and was definitely one that needed the most help," he adds noting that the median has taken a beating from both the elements and stray cars over the years.

Each of the garden clubs currently maintains a common garden space in Orinda. The Orinda Garden Club manages the triangular garden spot by Camino Sobrante and Orinda Way; The Orinda Junior Garden Club keeps the circular garden by Theater Square blooming throughout the year; and the Montelindo Garden Club preserves the minipark garden. More joint gardening projects throughout the City could be a possibility, according to Shepp.

"The shared project was a constructive and productive experience for the members of Orinda's garden clubs," notes Shepp, and she anticipates that the groups may continue to work together on projects to beautify the common areas of the Orinda.

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