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The Orinda Arts Council Celebrates 60 Years

Submitted by Jane Greenthal



Members of the 2010 High School Visual Arts Competition proudly accepted over 200 entries and awarded \$2500 to winners. (L to R): Maggie Boscoe, Nancy Daniels, Susan Mautner, Gwen McNeilus, CC Klevan (Chair) and Susan Garell. Photos provided

It all started in 1950, when OUSD Superintendent Joseph Sheaff suggested a supplementary children's art program to Orinda artist Doris Fraser. Fraser soon found a cadre of local artists and educators to form the Orinda Children's Art Center (later called Orinda Art Center) with the express purpose of fostering the artistic talents and creativity of Orinda's youth. Over the years, the group expanded to bring a variety of art projects to all local schoolchildren and then morphed into a multi-faceted organization under whose auspices many art advocacy efforts emerged, including raising funds for an arts facility at the Orinda Library, maintaining monthly art exhibits at the Library Art Gallery, procuring art for public display, and supporting various school theater programs as well as hosting Lamorinda-wide art and vocal competitions.

The volunteers at the Orinda Arts Council are driven by a common interest in the arts that has manifested in a dizzying array of programs, events and activities that have greatly enriched the lives of local residents for over 60 years. The most recent High School Visual Arts Competition and OUSD Arts Ambassador Exhibit at the Orinda Library Gallery are just a couple highlights of this unique organization. Later this month, auditions will be held for the 4th Annual Orinda Idol Competition. Since its inception in 2006, Orinda Idol has drawn hundreds of students, thousands of viewers and scores of sponsors to its wildly popular contest, providing an exceptional experience for the young performers.

The OAC has flourished over the past six decades because our local community has realized the value of the arts from the very beginning. Working with the city, school boards, parents clubs, local artists and art patrons, the tireless OAC volunteers constantly seek ways to support and encourage the arts.

"Especially in these times of budget cuts and economic uncertainty, there is not a safeguard for arts education or development," adds Jane Greenthal, VP of Communications for the OAC, "The OAC is the only organization that I know of that is solely committed to advocating the arts in our community. The beauty of the group is that it's open to anyone with an interest in the arts and it's a very entrepreneurial environment where new ideas are welcome and creativity is constantly flourishing."

To celebrate its 60th Anniversary, the Orinda Arts Council is holding a special event on June 13, from 4 to 7pm at the Orinda Country Club. All current and past volunteers and supporters of the OAC are cordially invited. For more information, or to make a special commemorative donation, please visit www.OrindaArtsCouncil.org or call Lisa Johannessen at (925) 254-6695.



Original watercolor sketches by Dorothy Davis are among the beautiful artwork donated by artists for the OAC's 60th Anniversary raffle.

Photos provided



The OAC's annual Orinda Idol competition has drawn enthusiastic participants throughout Lamorinda, including this middle school group of finalists from last year's competition.



OAC Presidents (1980), Frances Bell and Louana Bergez (1981) celebrate the OAC's 30th Anniversary back in 1980.



Two individually framed drawings of European Starlings by renowned wildlife artist Andrew Denman are among the exciting raffle items at the June 13 OAC event.

Photos provided

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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