

Published January 15th, 2014

## Keeping Orinda's Arts in Bloom

*Orinda Arts Council a beloved Muse for creative minds of all ages*

By Laurie Snyder



OIS production of *The Wiz*. Photo Ohlen Alexander

and now offers "a multi-month collection of auditions," workshops and community performances in addition to its well-attended final competition.

Garell, who went on to assume vice president roles in communications and membership before taking the helm as OAC's president, is widely recognized by her fellow board members, city leaders, and the parents of children in Lamorinda for her good works, but is modest in assessing her Muse-like influence, preferring to praise those who came before her and those presently engaged in bringing the arts to life:

Maggie Boscoe and Myrna Witt (library art gallery), Natalie Wheeler and Hillery Patterson (high school visual arts competition and Orinda school art ambassadors program), Steve Harwood (Lamorinda Idol), and others too numerous to list in the short space of this article.

In terms of the community, she says, the library gallery has been one of the really critical contributions made by OAC. Other favorites are Arts in Bloom, the Orinda Jazz Festival, and Lamorinda Idol, which she describes as "a special thing we brought to the community" which "really struck a nerve.... It was just perfectly magical from the first year."

"Susan has done an absolutely fabulous job," says Lawrence Kohl. The founder of the Pacific Chamber Symphony, Kohl is serving with Garell as co-president of the OAC for 2014, and is hoping more Orindans will join the organization as it ramps up its membership drive over the next few months.

OAC's vice president of communications, Kal Deutsch, concurs. "This is an incredibly exciting time with the Arts Council. Numerous new projects and new ways of doing things - everything from coming up with new modes of communication to new events on the horizon and new ways of reaching out to attract more people to the arts. We're all discussing how we can take this incredible foundation we have and bringing everything up to a new level."

Deutsch's first exposure to Orinda's cultural scene was his dawning awareness, when first house hunting in Orinda, of the many art installations popping up across town. Much of that flowering is due, he says, to the city's Art in Public Places Committee (APPC). Susan Mautner currently holds OAC's standing seat on that committee.

"It epitomizes Orinda - the nature, the beauty," says Deutsch. He terms the relationships that Orindans have with their natural and built environments as symbiotic. "Life doesn't have what human life is without art." Adds Kohl, "'Life without music,' said Nietzsche, 'would be a mistake.'"

To learn more, volunteer or become a supporter, visit OAC's website: [www.orindaartscouncil.org/](http://www.orindaartscouncil.org/).

Orinda Library Art Gallery Exhibits - 2014

- January: Glass work (Vivian Hart); sculpture (Anthony Brigancook); photography (Barbara Lee); travel photography (Debi Cooper and Aphra Pia)
- February: Ceramics (David Vanderjagt and Lafayette Gallery artists); gourds (Carole Dwinell); history makers (Kabir Adjare); portraits (Robert Wahrhaftig)
- March: High School Art Competition
- April: Art Ambassadors (Orinda school children)
- May: Ceramics; oil painting (Mark Monsarrat); travel photography (Terry Riggins)

- June: Emerging Oakland Artists
- July: Bay Area Wood Turners; mixed media painting (Ann Marie Tabaloff and Art Connection)
- August: Clay Arts Guild; painting (Leslie Swartz); photography (Wenda Pyman)
- September: Gnomes (Carey Carpenter); painting (Geoffrey Meridith and Krista Borst); sculpture (Lisa Lee)
- October: Plein Air Group (John Finger)
- November: Contra Costa Camera Club
- December: Abstracts and figures (Tina Pressler)

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA