

ORINDA GARDEN CLUB

PRESIDENTIAL HISTORY

EIGHTY-FIVE YEARS OF GARDENING

BOOK ONE: 1978 - 2021

Former President Cathleen Sodos in 2018 had the idea to ensure that the history of the Orinda Garden Club should be preserved in time to be celebrated in 2022, the Club's 85th anniversary.

For each president's term a brief summary of their presidency, combined with photos, will be published. The initial years will be detailed in a separate book.

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Thank you to everyone who assisted with
this project.





SUMMARY OF THE INITIAL YEARS 1937 - 1978

In 1937, nine energetic Orinda women, each with a love of gardening, met for lunch at the Orinda Country Club. The idea of founding a garden club arose that day, but the structure of the club was established later in the garden of Dorothy Lamb. Members sometimes met at the country club to hear a speaker. On other days, often dressed in garden clothes, they went to each other's homes. After two successful years, the club was enlarged as each founder invited two friends to become members.

In the early years, the club joined the community in civic planting projects, one of which placed hundreds of pine seedlings around the Community Church, along Orinda Way, and at the Community Center. In 1946, the club planted cork oak trees and shrubs along Lake Cascade's shoreline. Members carried home many blue ribbons from Oakland Spring Garden Shows.

In 1951, the club formed an affiliation with California Garden Clubs, Inc. In recognition of its early efforts, the club received many California Garden Clubs, Richfield and Sears awards.

In 1980, the club incorporated as a tax-exempt organization and joined the Garden Club of America. The Orinda Garden Club has 80 active members and 50 associate and sustaining members who are dedicated to civic beauty, conservation, and horticultural education. The club selected *Calochortus pulchellus* (Mt. Diablo fairy lantern), a rare and endangered flowering plant endemic to Mt. Diablo, as its club logo.

For the past three decades community work has included the Highway 24 off-ramp, Camino Sobrante triangle, rose garden at Heather Farm, Lake Cascade restoration, Crossroads container plantings, and monthly Bouquets for patients at the county hospital in Martinez. Working with other garden clubs in Orinda, the club also provides flower arrangements for the Orinda Library, maintains containers at the Crossroads, and supports Orinda Library landscaping.

Photo above: Shirley Cranshaw 1958-59, Marjorie Pedersen 1956-57, Ruth Conley 1954-56, Mildred Cole 1952-53, Rose Shurtleff 1951-52, Hilda Everts 1949-51, Ruth Breuner 1946-47, Helen Rodwell 1944-45, Margaret Merrill 1943-44, Catherine Campbell 1942-43, Muir Sorrick 1940-41, and Dorothy Lamb 1938-39. (Not Present: Alexandria Hockenbeamer 1953-54, Truly East 1948-49, Ann Bennett 1947-48, Amy Macomber 1945-46, Do Bee 1941-42, Amy Chapman 1939-40)



1942: top row: Natalie Woolsey, Ruth Breuner, Catherine Campbell, Marian Bottomley, Virginia Genty, unknown, Pearl Rowley.
middle: Dorothy Wold, Muir Sorrick Shank, Alex Hockenbeamer.
bottom: unknown, Madelyn Borden, Dorothy Lamb, Helen Rodwell



1953: Orinda Garden Club boarded a private bus at the Orinda Country Club for a General Meeting at Sunset's Garden Center.



1964: Fresco Fete



President 1937-1939:
Dorothy Lamb



1966: The OGC was awarded the Richfield Award for Conservation of Civic Beauty.



President 1940-1941:
Muir Sorrick



President 1944-1945:
Helen Rodwell



President 1946-1947:
Ruth Breuner



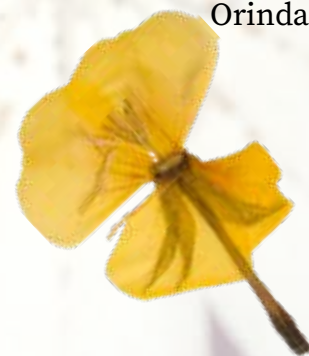
President 1966-1967:
Martha "Muffy" York



President 1972-1973:
Betty Hall



President 1977-1978:
Mary Fields



1978 - 1979

MERLON WILLIAMSON

Merlon wore many hats in the Orinda community. She compiled The History of the Orinda Garden Club 1968-1990 assisted by Ruth Breuner, Muffy York, Do Bell and Dorothy Lamb. Merlon was raised in Klamath Falls, Oregon. Her parents were both offspring of ministers in Minnesota and each was the youngest of 15 and 16 children. Merlon was the only child. She graduated from high school at 16 years of age. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Stanford in 1946 where she met her husband Tommy Howard. They had three children. Tommy died in 1970. Merlon married Thomas Williamson. She supported the schools and Children's Hospital in Oakland. She was instrumental in helping the Orinda Garden Club initiate the process of joining the Garden Club of America. Merlon loved the group and for a time was a regional representative to GCA in New York. Some of her fondest moments involved her years with the garden club, particularly their contributions to Orinda beautification. She was honored with an Orinda Community Service award for her work with the Orinda Historic Landmark Committee, a group she chaired. Some of the projects included: the Orinda Water Treatment Plant, Orinda Community Center (formerly the Orinda School), The Tres Ranchos Del Sur Boundary Marker and Monument, the bridge in the village, 12 Bien Venida, 10 Lombardy Lane (formerly the Miner Ranch), 12 Camino Lenada, Phair's

Store at 10 Avenida de Orinda, the ORINDA sign, The Bryant Station of the California-Nevada Railroad, the historic mural at the BART station, the Wagner Ranch Nature Area and the Orinda Theatre. Merlon was a founding member of the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church. Her twin sons were baptized at the Park Theater in Lafayette in 1955 before LOPC had a sanctuary. OGC donated \$1,000 to the Orinda Foundation for Memorial Tree Grove. The process was started for membership application to the Garden Club of America. The Book Fair/plant sale made money for the Orinda Library. The amount of \$3,300 went to Conservation. Two acres were purchased for the Penny Pines Plantation. FAGS (now Bouquets) continued with enthusiastic participation. A garden tour was held and it rained but it didn't prevent 500 people from attending. The proceeds from the garden tour were used for relandscaping the Orinda Community Center.



Groundbreaking for The Gardens at Heather Farm



Family Home at Bien Venida, an Orinda Landmark

May 11, 1983: Carol Read, Pat Winther, Merlon Williamson, Caroline Read; Orinda Garden Tour, watching from the inside on a rainy day





1979 - 1980 SANDY DENNY

A highlight of Spring was a \$12.50 per person ecology tour and bay cruise with an emphasis on ichthyology, invertebrate biology, seawater chemistry and marine geology. This trip was sponsored by the Marin Ecological Institute. The triangle across from Orinda Motors (Orinda Way and Camino Sobrante) was selected as a place to beautify; the budget was \$943. The triangle was owned by Contra Costa County; Evie Cranston sought permission for this beautification project. Conservation donations were made to the following: The Gardens at Heather Farm, California State Parks Foundation, Audubon Canyon Ranch, UC Botanical Garden in Berkeley, Strybing Arboretum Society (now San Francisco Botanical Garden), Save the Redwoods League, National Audubon Society, and the Planning and Conservation League. Sandy Putnam was Conservation Chair. Membership was 71 active members, 19 associates, 24 sustaining members, and 10 honorary members. The amount of \$68 was collected by passing the box and sent to buy trees for Penny Pines. One-page recipes were sold for 10 to 25 cents per sheet. President Sandy Denny was very active in the Save the Redwoods League and conservation in general. OGC members supplied flowers for the Orinda Library for five months out of the year. Research by Mary Alice Townsend for OGC was completed to join the Garden Club of America. New members would have to serve a provisional year and attend classes in horticulture; dues would increase

from \$15 to \$30. A vote passed to apply to GCA with a two-thirds majority. A pineapple was given to each new member as a symbol of hospitality. A Horticulture Committee was established with Maxine Johnson, Elda Wakefield, Maddy Borden and Dorothy Lamb. Barbara Conley headed up the plant sale at the Book Fair, which netted \$562.64. In January Robin Leher gave a presentation on Bio Dynamics/French Intensive Gardening, a method of growing more food in a smaller space. Activities included the Book Fair, FAGS (now Bouquets), starting the Horticulture Committee, completing the GCA membership application, donating one acre to the Penny Pines Plantation, and donating \$300 for Conservation.



1980: Helen Slattery, Bev Webb, Sandy Denny, Daphne Bertero, unknown



1980 - 1981 BEV WEBB



The most challenging task of the year was the application to the Garden Club of America. The Piedmont, Woodside Atherton, and Hillsborough Garden Clubs sponsored Orinda Garden Club for membership in the GCA. A lot of work was required, culminating in entertaining and showcasing Orinda gardens for a large group of Garden Club of America members. The welcoming committee was surprised as some GCA members brought their husbands too; everyone was accommodated. Members of the sponsoring clubs assisted with entertainment and meals. Maxine Johnson's, Carol and Caroline Read's and Maddie Borden's gardens were featured. During the 1980-1981 year OGC initiated the process to incorporate and to apply for tax-exempt status, which would allow members of OGC a tax deduction for donations. Maxine Johnson's husband Stan completed all the paperwork gratis. Ken Mahler did a presentation on entomology. The Christmas party was held at the home of Mildred "Mickey" Simpson. On April 23, 1981, OGC members were treated to a Walnut Creek Ecology and Garden Tour which

included a talk at Eco House, the new site of The Gardens at Heather Farm, and the Ruth Bancroft Garden. Some of the ongoing projects included: the 16th year of FAGS (Flower Arranging Group), the plant sale at the Book Fair to benefit the Orinda Library, planting the "Triangle" with 23 agapanthus, 73 jasmine, 51 pittosporum, and 4 flats of gazania, the memorial tree fund, new plants for landscape around the library, donation of books on gardening to the library, buying and planting trees in Orinda, landscaping the Orinda Community Center, and donating funds for reforestation of Tahoe National Forest. There were 75 active members of OGC in June of 1981. The amount of \$300 was spent on Conservation.



1980: Connie Bentley, Holly Elliott, Marilyn Watson, Sally Wiser



Bev Webb with ivy and geranium

1981 - 1982 DAPHNE BERTERO



Orinda Garden Club goes All American

The Piedmont Garden Club has sponsored the Orinda Garden Club for membership in the Garden Club of America. Kinside-Adams was the second year. With the acceptance of Orinda and including Ellensburg there are eleven clubs in Zone XII which is comprised of the states of Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, and California. No more than one new club may be admitted to the Garden Club of America every other year.

The Garden Club of America was founded by 12 clubs in 1913. There are now 184 clubs in 37 states and the District of Columbia with over 11,000 members.

Orinda Garden Club has actively pursued many projects some of which are: planting the Orinda Little League; landscaping around the Orinda Library; donating books to gardening in the library; planting trees along highways and elsewhere in the area; donating funds for reforestation of Tahoe National Forest, and many other projects.

1981: Mother-daughter Janet Janesse, Janet Breuner



serious accounting. There were 91 people in attendance. It was especially fun because of all the talented decorating and cooking by our members. OGC submitted two articles to the GCA bulletin. The club was up and running as part of a national organization. OGC completed the landscaping of the village triangle for \$1,500. The Book Fair and plant sale were successful. The Flower Arranging Group continued. It was the first year of an open public meeting on gardening. There was an all Orinda Clean Up Day. The amount of \$300 was spent for Conservation.

As OGC had just joined GCA, it was a busy time. Daphne Bertero and Bev Webb went to the National GCA annual meeting in Cincinnati. It was very fancy and formal with long gowns and lots of jewels. Daphne Bertero also attended the Zone XII meeting in Portland. She didn't have any idea of what GCA expected from her, but Maxine Johnson and Merlon Williamson offered moral support. They called us "their babies" and Daphne told them that "we will be your stars." GCA expected the OGC to be a bit more organized than in the past. "Sleepy little Orinda" had joined a national organization. Daphne believed that the newsletter, Forget Me Nots, and the mini luncheons were started in 1981-1982. At OGC's first flower show at OCC, Piedmont Garden Club members came to judge our entries and gave out lots of encouragement. Tax-exempt status was achieved. Members did an endangered species postcard for a local handsome plant, *Calochortus pulchellus*, or Mt. Diablo fairy-lantern. The picnics and Christmas parties were always in someone's home ... very

1981: Daphne Bertero, Sally Chapman, Mary Fields



Dec. 9, 1981: Betty Hall and Daphne Bertero at the Orinda Triangle

1982 Molist Garden Tour: Betty Hall



Calochortus pulchellus (Mt. Diablo fairy-lantern)

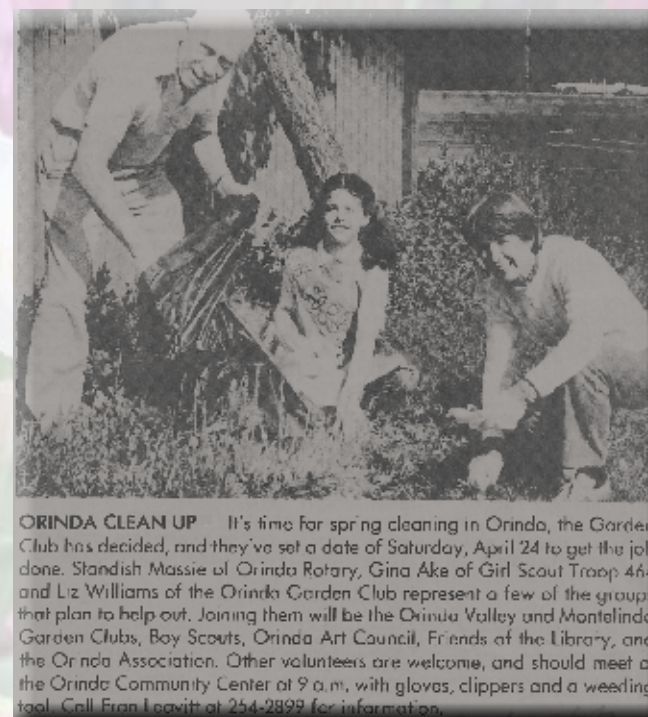


1980: Bev Webb, Sandy Denny, Daphne Bertero



1982 - 1983 MAXINE JOHNSON

The main beautification project for the Orinda Garden Club for 1982-1983 was the renovation and relandscaping of the front of the Community Center. The Orinda Library Book Fair was held in October and a plant sale by the Orinda Garden Club was part of this, with all of the proceeds going to the library. Much of the plant sale income came from the sales of Beryl Plath's "magnificent bonsais." A garden tour was held in May of 1983. Tickets were fifteen dollars each. It was said that this garden tour was the first of its kind in Orinda. Members' gardens that were featured included those of: Betty Hall, Caroline Read, Evie Cranston, Midge Batchelder and Sandy Denny. The FAGS (Flower Arranging Group, now Bouquets) was in its 19th year of making bedside arrangements for patients in the county hospital; Muffy York was chairman. Delegates to the Garden Club of America's Annual Meeting, held in Houston, Texas, were Sandy Denny and Merlon Williamson. The May 1983 general meeting had reports of the successful Garden Tour with \$7,900 raised for our community projects. It was announced that Pat Connolly would serve on the GCA National Conservation Committee and attend four meetings at GCA national headquarters. The gavel was passed to the next OGC president, Evie Cranston. Two acres were donated to Penny Pines Plantation.



2004: Maxine Johnson and June Cunningham at the Farmers' Market at Gina Field's



1983 - 1984 EVIE CRANSTON

carousel horse to set the theme. Two years were spent beautifying the front of the Community Center. OGC raised \$650 for the Orinda Library by selling their plants at the Book Fair. The Orinda Garden Club and its members raised the money to plant four acres through the Penny Pines. Evie Cranston was a very busy president. Some of her awards include: GCA Medal of Merit, OGC Flower Arranging Award, GCA Zone XII Creative Leadership Award, GCA Judge Emeritus Award, 2019 GCA 45 Years of Service Award.



May 11, 1983: Carol Read, Pat Winther, Merlon Williamson, Caroline Read



May 3, 1992: Philadelphia; Blue Ribbons for Emmons and Cranston



1984: Country Carousel



1984: Evie Cranston, Janet Cotter

Evie Cranston became the president in 1983, three years after OGC joined the Garden Club of America. She dove right into GCA and its projects in addition to actively participating locally. Evie's leadership positions included Program Committee Chair, Zone XII Program Representative, and Zone XII Chairperson. She served on the GCA's Nominating, Fundraising and Centennial Planning Committees and was a Flower Arranging Judge. Jenifer Brunk and Evie chaired the Zone XII Flower Show which was held in Denver, Colorado. In March of 1983 OGC members decorated the Orinda Community Center for a flower show called Country Carousel. It was the first show open to the entire community. The room was completely transformed from ceiling to floor and there was even a



Dec 16, 1987: Cranston, Emmons, Bingham



1994: Evie Cranston, Gail Emmons, Dee Seifert



1984 - 1985 HELEN SLATTERY



Founders Fund Award. Helen had traveled to all the earth's continents except Antarctica in her 94½ years. She enjoyed knitting, entertaining, parenting, and reading. Helen also loved going to the opera, symphony, ballet and movies.



1984: Dorothy Lamb receives Medal of Merit for Conservation (her daughter on the left)

Helen became OGC President after her husband Dr. Paul Slattery passed away. June Cunningham reports that Helen Slattery had a gift for storytelling and a good sense of humor. June traveled to Europe with Helen and they always enjoyed a good laugh together. Helen's dog Woofie was mischievous but a joy to Helen and her husband Paul. In 1984 Dorothy Lamb, OGC founding member, was awarded GCA's Medal of Merit in Conservation. Just before Helen's OGC Presidency, she helped with the club's first flower show open to the entire community at the Orinda Community Center. The theme was "Country Carousel." The Orinda Garden Club raised \$900 for Conservation. The FAGS (now called Bouquets) continued making the bouquets for the county hospital. OGC again participated with a plant sale at the Book Fair as a fundraiser for the Orinda Library. The GCA Annual Meeting was held in San Francisco. OGC members hosted GCA delegates in their homes. The proposal was begun for the Heather Farm Teaching Center application for the GCA





1985 - 1986 JANET COTTER

President Janet Cotter helped organize the 1985 GCA Annual Meeting in San Francisco. She proved that an OGC President can have many other interests, as she did, such as bridge, tennis, Children's Hospital, Hospice of the East Bay, Gamma Phi Beta, and traveling. Janet made jams from homegrown fruit, made cookies, roasted nuts, and set a beautiful table. According to Bev Webb, she was a very hard worker and an excellent entertainer. Janet prepared fresh orange juice daily from oranges from her backyard orange trees at 111 Las Vegas. She took great pride in her garden where she spent many hours. In addition to the Orinda Garden Club, Janet was also a dedicated member of the Orinda Valley Garden Club and the Gamma Phi Beta (Eta) scholarship committee, where she served as Gamma Phi Beta Board President. Janet grew up in Berkeley on Alvarado Rd., went to Berkeley High School and then the University of California at Berkeley. Her brother Tom Taylor married the late OGC member Dayna Taylor. "Britain in Bloom" was the title of the 1986 second all-community flower show, which was held at the Orinda Community Center, for which 500 tickets were sold. The event was chaired by Dee Seifert. Orinda became incorporated as a city and the city offices were in the Orinda Community Center. Orinda Garden Club in 1986 won the National Runner Up Founders Fund Award for Civic Improvement and received \$5,000 for the Project at The Gardens at Heather Farm. Nine hundred dollars was spent for conservation. The Book Fair and FAGS (Flower Arranging Group, now called Bouquets,) continued to flourish.



1985: Janet Cotter

1973: Janet Cotter (with watering can), Mrs. Slakey, and Muffy York at the Orinda Book Fair



Top: Marie Krenz, Fran Swanson, Pat Connolly, Mary Bell, Janet Cotter, Margo Heltné;
bottom: Jane Jacobs and Jeanette McClean



1986: Britain In Bloom



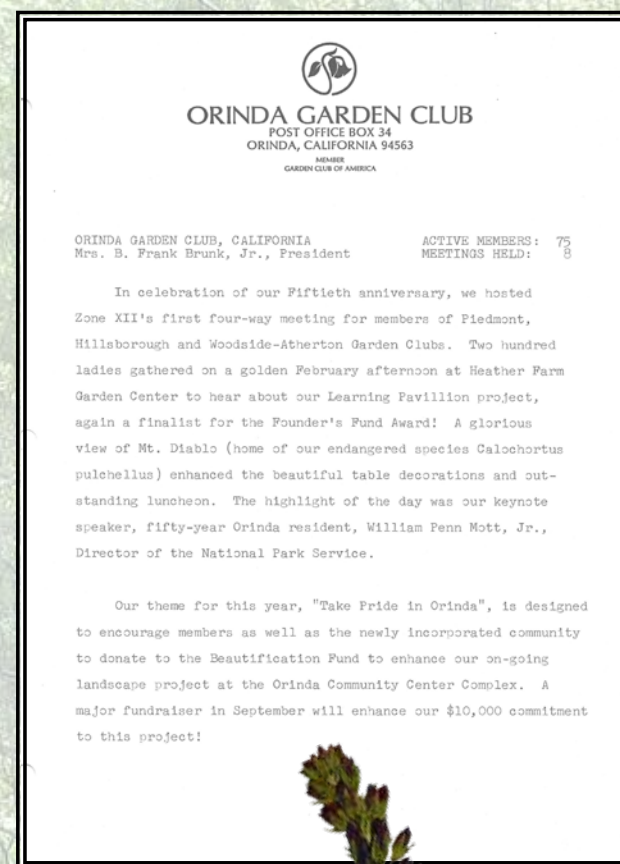
1986: Chair Dee Seifert "Britain In Bloom"



1986 - 1987 JENIFER BRUNK

50-50-50-50. OGC celebrated its 50th anniversary; President Jenifer Brunk celebrated her 50th birthday; William Mott marked his 50th year of residency in Orinda; the Bay Bridge was 50 years old. A fundraiser was held called, "Fiesta al Fresco," to benefit beautification of the Orinda City Office complex area. Jenifer spear-headed a campaign called "Take Pride in Orinda" to beautify the newly incorporated City of Orinda. Jenifer said, "We must realize that our new local government cannot accomplish these tasks alone. This is a perfect opportunity for us to be the caretakers of a community project: to be charitable, to educate and to conserve for future generations and for now, to 'Take Pride in Orinda.'" The OGC sponsored the Pavilion at The Gardens at Heather Farm. The project was a Founders Fund Award finalist. The funds were the initial monies to begin development of the Outdoor Learning Center of which the Orientation Pavilion was a part for hands-on classes in horticulture and a raised planter for a sensory garden. A garden tour was held, raising \$22,000. Beautification projects began at the Camino Sobrante triangle and the Highway 24 off-ramp. A flower show entitled "Images of Orinda" was held at the Orinda Library with five judges' commendations. Bruce Howard, Director of the National Audubon Society and President of the Save the Redwoods League, spoke to OGC members about the greenhouse effect. A Farmer's Market was held in Gina Field's garden. With the help of Piedmont, Hillsborough and Woodside-Atherton Garden Clubs, OGC hosted a Zone XII event with Evie Cranston doing the

table decorations and William Mott attending. Muir Sorrick Shank was awarded the GCA medal of merit. The floral design award went to Diana Kennedy. The club appreciation award went to Sally Chapman and Sue Ann Manners. The GGA Mary Drake award went to Gail Emmons.



1986: Carol Read, Dorothy Lamb at Book Fair



Cherie Pettit, Piedmont, Jenifer Brunk; 50th Muir Sorrick Shank



1987 - 1989 BETSY BINGHAM

Betsy Bingham joined OGC in 1963. She was the first president to serve two years in a row. Before that, presidents served only one year. In September of 1987, Fiesta al Fresco was an evening to raise funds and celebrate Orinda's early heritage and to benefit its future. A lavish spread was presented by "Two Elegant Chefs Restaurant." Painted vistas of Orinda landscapes by local artists were auctioned off. Tickets sold for \$25. The Christmas tea and the party in the evening were held at Gail Emmons' home with an emphasis on natural materials. The arrangements were auctioned off. The 3rd annual flower show was called "Ports of Call." It was held at the Orinda Community Center on March 29, 1988. The event included floral arrangements for Chinese weddings, Japanese tea ceremonies, Hawaiian luaus and a replica a Japanese tea garden bridge. "Ports of Call" received the coveted GCA Small Flower Show Award. In 1988, members met at the Pavilion at The Gardens at Heather Farm that the OGC sponsored with a Founders Fund Grant. On October 20, 1988 members went to the Strybing Arboretum to hear about the New World Cloud Forest. A plant sale took place on a beautiful sunny day on November 9, 1988. In December, restoration of the bridge off Miner Road leading to Camino Don Miguel was spearheaded by Caroline Read and Merlon Williamson. A beautification project was carried out in front of the Orinda Community Center. Sandra Denny attended the NAL conference and supported the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge bill. At the May 25, 1989 meeting at DD Felton's the presidency was turned over to Pat Connolly. William Penn Mott, Jr., an Orinda resident who worked for the San Francisco office of the National Park Service as a landscape architect from 1933 to 1940, was the surprise speaker. From 1946 to 1985, he served successively as Oakland's park superintendent, the East Bay Regional Park District's general manager, and the director of the California Department of Parks

and Recreation under Governor Ronald Reagan. Madelyn Borden and Beryl Plath received the 1984 GCA Medal of Merit, Muir Sorrick Shank received the 1987 Founders Fund Runner Up Award for the project at The Gardens at Heather Farm. In 1988, Sorrick Shank also received the Historic Preservation Award for a small flower show for which the Catherine Beattie Medal and the Judges' Commendation for staging were awarded. Garden History and Design was introduced as a standing committee; Betsy Bingham and Marion Bottomley were the photographers tasked with documenting gardens of notable worth in Orinda and Napa. This was a wonderful committee to head because of the privilege of photographing notable gardens. The Book Fair and FAGS (now called Bouquets) continued to thrive. Sixteen hundred dollars was spent on conservation activities and \$500 was donated for the Center for Plant Observation. The Gardens at Heather Farm received \$1,000 from OGC and \$12,523 was spent on Orinda Community Center landscaping projects. Mrs. Fred Borden received the coveted GCA Small Flower Show Award.



1988: Pacific Ports of Call, Daphne Bertero





1990: Pat Connolly hosts Zone XII Meeting

1989 - 1991 PAT CONNOLLY

In September of 1989, the City of Orinda presented to the Orinda Garden Club a plaque in appreciation for contributions to Orinda beautification activities. The annual Orinda Library Book And Plant Sale was held that September with the garden club members providing many plants for the sale. The amount of \$1000 was donated to the library following the event. Beryl Plath was awarded the Garden Club of America Medal of Merit for 18 years of service to the Orinda Garden Club. An in-house flower show was held with both flower arrangements and horticulture exhibits. The show was a great success and much enjoyed.

A Certificate of Commendation was received from the Penny Pines Restoration Project Management. OGC members contributed monthly to the project by passing a "Penny Pines" basket at each meeting for members to donate pennies or more. A history of the Orinda Garden Club was compiled by Dorothy Lamb, Merlon Williamson, Muffy York, and Fran Bell for the Orinda Historical Society. In May 1990, OGC hosted a Zone XII meeting with delegates from all Zone XII clubs. Ideas, activities, outings, dinners, etc., were shared and enjoyed. In February 1991, DD Felton and Sandy Denny attended the National Affairs and Legislation Meeting in Washington, DC. Both members stressed the importance of contacting our representatives on issues of conservation that concern OGC. The five club flower show "Visions" occurred in April of 1992 at Gumps in San Francisco.



1990: Ruta Hagmann Book Fair and Plant Sale at OCC



1990: Ruta Hagmann, Fran Leavitt, Evie Cranton (from left to right); Peter Newton Garden, Napa

1991 - 1993 JACKIE VOIGT



The Orinda Garden Club was very active in the local community, not only contributing funds, but also participating with hands-on work. The plant sale at the annual book fair featured members' plants that they had propagated from their own gardens. The club not only donated the funds for a new garden in front of the old library but also planted and maintained it. Members participated in funding the fountain and surrounding garden at the Orinda Crossroads and donated \$5,000 towards the Redwood Grove at the Bruns Amphitheater (Shakespeare venue).

Flower shows were an important activity. Three members participated in the Philadelphia Flower Show. Dee Seifert was a featured exhibitor and Evie Cranston and Gail Emmons won a blue ribbon. Orinda Garden Club had its own in-house flower show. The next month brought the first GCA joint flower show with Hillsborough, Woodside-Atherton, Piedmont and Orinda Garden Clubs presenting "Visions of San Francisco" held at Gumps. As president, Jackie Voigt was on the steering committee for this event.

Interesting horticulture programs included a talk by the assistant garden superintendent from Filoli and a trip to the gardens of Green Gulch Farm Zen Center at Muir Beach.

The annual Christmas Coffee was held at Jean Angel's home and the usual cocktail party took place that evening. New members passed the hors d'oeuvres which were made by members. The new members' husbands helped tend bar. This was a great way to get to know each other.

The club was awarded a certificate of appreciation presented by citizens of Oakland for efforts and compassion in assisting their community during the firestorm of October 20, 1991 from Mayor Elihu M. Harris.



1992: Gail Emmons, Evie Cranston;
Philadelphia Blue Ribbons



1998: Jackie Voigt



1993: OGC Plant Sale; Janet Riley, Betsy Bingham,
Sylvia Carter





1993 - 1995 JOAN ANDREWS

OGC was still a member of the California Garden Clubs, Inc. and the Bay Bridges Garden Clubs but was not as active because of now being part of the GCA. In-house flower shows included: Down to Earth, Moonlight Over Tokyo and Sunrise on the Prairie. Pat Paddock organized a Tilden Park walk. She was also the club's NAL representative in Washington, D.C. Gail Emmons suggested having a provisional status for new members. A history of the OGC was written for the Orinda Historical Society. A book by Glenn Keator was published with OGC support and input. Over \$600 was raised at the plant sale; members donated plants to be sold, or donated \$10. Members went on a hike on the grounds of Filoli and then to Marie Krenz's second home in Woodside. The next year, OGC members went again to Filoli and learned about creative planting for special effect gardens. Kirsten Whitsett led a field trip to the Quarryhill Botanical Garden. The Christmas Party was held at D.D. Felton's home. OGC funded half of the cost (with the Orinda Junior Garden Club) of the hanging baskets and helped with planting and upkeep. Toni Fauver won the Horticultural Award at the Zone XII meeting. Toni wrote *Wildflower Walking in the Lakes Basin of the Northern Sierra*, describing the endangered Tahoe yellow cress for Partners 4 Plants (P4P). Toni led a group to Yosemite for her wildflower talks with Andie Thrums' wildflower paintings. There was a trip to the Presidio, another to Carmel, one to Gilroy Gardens and one to Mitchell Canyon. David Hagmann (husband of Ruta Hagmann) gave a program on camellias, and members marveled at



1994: Evie Cranston, Gail Emmons, Dee Seifert



1994: Toni Fauver, Gail Emmons, Joan Andrews, Pat Paddock, Pat Connolly

1994: Gina Field, Midge Zischke



Members toured Keeyla Meadows Garden in Albany. The Orinda Library Demonstration Garden was dedicated in June of 1995. The amount of \$500 was allotted for the restoration of the Miramonte High School flower box. The triangle at the base of Camino Sobrante was enlarged. The Community Center flower boxes were planted. The \$5,000 donation for the Memorial Redwood Grove on the grounds of the Bruns Amphitheater was well-received. GCA awards went to Bobbie Bellamy, Dee Seifert, Merlon Williamson and Gail Emmons.



Ruta's orchid garden. Daphne Bertero invited OGC members to her home to meet UCBG's new director. Joan attended the Shirley Meneice and the March 1994 OGC meeting. The GCA annual meeting was held in Chicago one year and Honolulu the next year. The book, *Always Cut Under Water*, by Gail Emmons was published. The Historical Rose Walk at The Gardens at Heather Farm was begun at the garden center. Zone XII meeting was called "Garden Spaces-City Places." The Visions Flower Show awarded Gail Emmons and Evie Cranston Best in Show. Sandy Denny spoke at the 75th anniversary of Save the Redwoods League noting that the Pfleger Estate south of San Francisco was added to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, GGNRA. There were 76 active members, 4 provisional members, 29 associate members and 17 sustaining or non-resident members. Dee Seifert received an Award of Merit. A field trip was taken to Orchid Ranch at 1330 Isabel Ave. in Livermore. Todd Skinner, director of Orinda Parks and Recreation, led a walk in the new land acquisition area above Orinda Oaks Parks. OGC held a meeting at the Bruns Amphitheater. Members with 25 years or more in OGC were surprised with floral arrangements in honor of their longevity with the club. Sylvia Musso from Upsprout Nursery gave each OGC member a pelargonium.



1995 - 1997 RUTA HAGMANN



President Ruta Hagmann was active in many phases of the club, including the planting of the David Austin Roses at the Rose Garden at The Gardens at Heather Farm, planting and maintaining the Memorial Grove at the Bruns Amphitheater (Shakespeare theater), the Community Center planting, and the Library Book Fair/plant sale. The Flower Arranging Group made monthly bouquets of 90 in number and delivered them to patients in the county hospital. In 1997 with four other garden clubs in the area, OGC participated in a GCA flower show called "Visions of San Francisco" at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. The most successful conservation project of the term was the Orinda Library Demonstration Garden. All the programs and field trips planned by the Horticulture Chairperson were outstanding. Some of the workshops included flower arranging and the GCA plant exchange. In partnership with Conservation Core meetings OGC included a horticulture exhibit at the annual national garden club meeting. OGC had an in-house flower show at the Orinda Library in May of 1996 called "Open Book." Dues were \$95 with \$25 off the top going to GCA. In 1996, OGC resigned after twenty years of membership with California Garden Clubs, Inc. because of the added responsibility of being a member of GCA. Monies that were raised from raffles, the holiday party and gifts paid for the following: Center for Plant Conservation, Student Conservation Association, National Parks and Recreation, Save the Redwoods, Save the Bay, CA Nature Conservancy, Save Mt. Diablo and Interpretive Center, Greenbelt Alliance, East Bay Parks, Bay Area Ridge Trail, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, CA State Parks, Ruth Bancroft Garden, UC Botanical Garden, The Gardens at Heather Farm, Pacific Horticulture, Strybing Arboretum, and Regional Park Botanic Garden at Tilden Park. These gifts ranged from \$50 to \$200, totaling \$2,050. Additionally, Dorothy Lamb asked the OGC to donate \$100 to the Presidio Visitors Center, named for William Penn Mott, Jr. On May 22, 1997, OGC

celebrated 60 years. The Carmel Garden Club members toured the OGC gardens of Joyce Nelson, Carol Read, Evie Cranston, and Jackie Voigt. Sandy Denny served two years as Vice Chair of Save the Redwoods and was given an award by GCA for her presentations of conservation issues on national and local levels. Gail Emmons was awarded a Flower Arranging Certificate for her creativity. The flower show at Gump's marked OGC's 60th anniversary.

Ruta and her husband, David Lowell Hagmann, lived on Camino Sobrante near Miner Rd. for 62 years. She grew up in Westwood Hills in Southern California. Ruta graduated from UCLA with a Bachelor of Arts degree and has a lifetime membership in Alpha Phi Sorority. David earned his PhD in Organic Chemistry at UCLA and was a patent attorney at Chevron. In addition, he served in the Navy during WWII and retired from the Naval Reserves at the rank of Commander. In David's retirement, he was a camellia hybridizer and gained much satisfaction from creating new colors, shapes and forms of camellias. His efforts resulted in the international recognition of the beautiful coral pink reticulata 'Ruta Hagmann' camellia. Ruta's personal interest was raising award-winning orchids. David built her a wonderful orchid house and they shared his greenhouse where they kept their prize specimens.

Sept. 9, 1995: Ruta Hagmann, Caroline Hayes, Judy Cortese



1996: Garden Seminar, Kristen Whitsett, June Cunningham, Joyce Nelson



May 15, 1995: An Open Book flower show, Gail Emmons



Claudia Conger, Ruta Hagmann (in purple), Marie Krenz, Jeanne McCormick, Muffy York, Mary Smith, and Dayna Taylor. At the other table are Jan Bristol and Jean Schommer



1996: Living Chairs at the flower show boutique at the Orinda Library





was donated to nonprofit organizations. Five Bay Area garden clubs donated historic monastery stones in the library garden at Strybing Arboretum (now the San Francisco Botanical Garden). The Forget-Me-Nots newsletter format was changed to a four-page printed newsletter.



March 25, 1992: Isa Mary Ziegler, Joan Andrews



1998: Dayna Taylor, Isa Mary Ziegler



1998: Anne Hetland, Isa Mary Ziegler, Janet Riley



1998: Jackie Voigt



1998: Midge Zischke, Gina Field



1998: Cut flower show specimens

1997 - 1999 ISA MARY ZIEGLER

The 60th anniversary of the founding of the OGC was celebrated by having Midge Zischke and Amy Worth (both Orinda Volunteers of the Year) as grand marshals of the July 4th Orinda parade. Beautification Chair Midge Zischke won an award for the Orinda Library Demonstration Garden. Dan McDonnell received the William Penn Mott, Jr. Award for his contributions for this project. Alice Waters, the first lady of food, came to speak to the OGC and showed her slides of community gardens. Fire and plants were discussed in relation to Orinda's ecosystem. Ron Morgan demonstrated breathtaking floral arrangements. Members of OGC took field trips to Santa Barbara, Portland, and Filoli. Seventy-one members attended mini luncheons at ten different homes with the theme of "butterflies and bees." The May picnic was held at Mary Read's home in Napa. This was the first of many trips to the Read estate. Isa Mary Ziegler was a trustee of Strybing Arboretum and arranged an arboretum tour and picnic in Golden Gate Park. The joint club meeting was held at the Piedmont Community Center featuring a program called Presidio Gateways. Jackie Voigt's lovely garden was the setting for a flower, horticulture and photography show. Visions was the GCA major flower show with five Bay Area garden clubs participating; it was sponsored by Gumps. The holiday party was held at Midge Zischke's. The Spring Garden Tour featured the gardens of Caroline Read, Maddie Borden, Sylvia Carter and Diana Kennedy. Awards included: Pat Connolly's Medal of Merit, Gail Emmons' Certificate of Excellence in Floral Design, Fenwick Medal, Zone Floral Design Achievement Award, two Best in Show Floral Design awards, Evie Cranston's Medal of Merit, and Phoebe Kahl's Best in Show Floral Design. Isa Mary Ziegler stressed that flower shows were not about winning, instead were events to be enjoyed. The FAGS (Flower Arranging Group) name was changed to Bouquets. Visiting Gardens included gardens in Portland and Santa Barbara. The amount of \$12,500

1999 - 2001 BETTY ARGABRIGHT



The September 1999 picnic meeting was held at Blake Garden, a ten-acre Landscape Architecture teaching facility for Cal Berkeley. After the meeting John Norcross gave a brief talk and a tour of the garden. In October Daphne Bertero and Carole Amstutz organized a tomato tasting at Daphne's home. With this and other workshops and tours Daphne and Carole introduced new members to the possibilities of developing the ultimate garden and/or becoming serious horticulturists. Gail Emmons and Ruth Fortune gave flower arranging workshops which encouraged members to climb the ladder of creativity through flower arranging. On December 10, 1999, Gail and Mike Emmons hosted OGC's annual holiday party where members and their husbands celebrated the turn of the century. It was a fabulous millennium event and Diana Kennedy deserves special kudos for chairing it. OGC started the new millennium with a project benefiting both children and awareness of the vital role plants play in all life on earth. When Toris Jaeger came to OGC for help with a program which would do this for the Orinda school system, the members voted to help with funding and volunteers. This was the beginning of the Wagner Ranch greenhouse project. Toris Jaeger received the Elizabeth Abernathy Hull Award for nature education. The 2000 annual general meeting was held in DD Felton's beautiful garden. The September 2000 meeting was held at the Ruth Bancroft Garden. In October OGC celebrated with a Garden Faire and Party at The Garderns at Heather Farm with wine, jazz and a silent auction. Midge Zischke's and Jane Zuercher's hard work with Cal Trans allowed OGC to initiate and maintain the beautification of the Highway 24 off-ramp in Orinda. Phoebe Kahl and

Joyce Nelson were the big winners at the Piedmont GC Fall Flower Show. Mary Read's fundraising tours, Janet Pease's Dan Hinkley event (March 22, 2001) at the Orinda Theater and members' fundraising helped fund both the Beautification of Orinda Fund and the Wagner Ranch Nature Area. OGC's successful in-house flower show on April 26 was hosted by Jean Finch. OUSD Wagner Ranch greenhouse was dedicated May 19, 2000 at 2 PM. Kudos to Cathleen Sodos, chairman of the project for OGC. OGC's May picnic and annual general meeting took place in Nancy Miller's incredible garden. Merlon Williamson was instrumental in the process of awarding Ruth Bancroft the Garden Club of America's Medal of Honor. Jackie Voigt was awarded the Horticulture Achievement Certificate. Working with other Bay Area garden clubs, OGC helped fund the Terrace Gardens at San Francisco's Strybing Arboretum (now the San Francisco Botanical Garden).



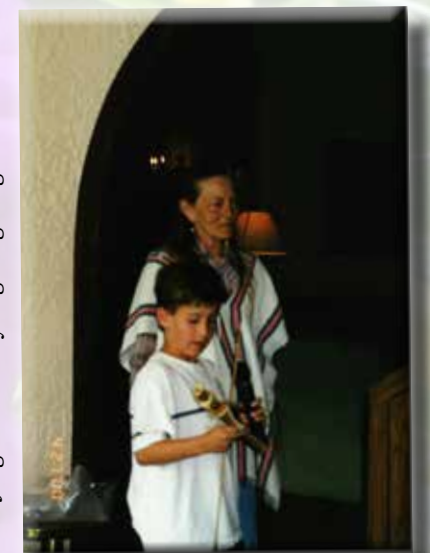
1999: Joyce Nelson, unknown, Betty Argabright, Isa Mary Ziegler, Sylvia Carter



Train station moved again



Mary Read



Toris Jaeger and Betty Argabright's grandson



2001 - 2003 PATRICIA WINTER

Toris Jaeger (OUSD naturalist since 1978) was OGC's speaker at the meeting held at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area. OGC, led by Lani Schulte, initiated the volunteer program at the Nature Area with members working with children in the new greenhouse and tending to the gardens. The OGC received a "Partners in Excellence" award from the Orinda Union School District. A meeting was held at the new Orinda Library; the panel's theme was "Where We've Been and Where We Are Going." To honor Dee Seifert the amount of \$5,000 was used to plant the area in front of the Orinda Community Center. An in-house flower show called "Stroke of the Brush" was held at Jean Finch's home at 4 Oak Arbor Road. In April, the "Visions" flower show was held at the Oakland Museum. In May there was a Carmel Garden Tour. The OGC by-laws were changed to allow a new non-resident membership category. Toni Fauver's William Penn Mott, Jr. award money was donated to OGC. An area-wide meeting was held at Strybing Arboretum. The April meeting took place at Filoli. FAGS (Flower Arranging Group, now Bouquets) met monthly and prepared bouquets for the patients at the county hospital in Martinez. OGC members learned about Sudden Oak Death with Matteo Garbelotto from UC Berkeley and Janet Cobb from California Oaks Foundation. The Dan Hinkley Benefit at the Orinda Theatre raised \$5,000. The Zone XII Presidents' Conference was held in San Francisco at the Metropolitan Club. Daphne Bertero arranged a visit with Annie Hayes of Annie's Annuals. A plan was made to beautify the Highway 24 off-ramp in Orinda with native plants and long-term maintenance. Members removed trash, pulled up the Vinca and other weeds, and spread

an initial 15 yards of donated bark and planted hundreds of daffodil bulbs. OGC helped sponsor the building of the 24' X 28' Santa Barbara greenhouse for the Wagner Ranch Nature Area. Pruning of the roses at The Gardens at Heather Farm took place every two weeks throughout the summer. A Spring picnic was held at Nancy Miller's home at 30 Las Cascadas where Magic Gardens had completed landscaping the almost four acres. Daphne Bertero hosted tomato tasting and Dahlia events. Mary Pilara announced that \$1,300 was raised at the plant sale for the Orinda Library. The "Turn of the Century Coffee and Christmas Party" was held at Pam Goode's home. The Margaret Clover Symonds Award in 2002 went to Evie Cranston for Floral Design. The GCA Bonnylin Woods Martin Medal in 2002 was awarded to Gail Emmons. The Carol Coffey Swift Medal in 2002 went to Gail Emmons for Floral Design. The Best in Show Floral Design in 2002 went to Gail Emmons. OGC awarded a Special Citation for Ruth Bancroft in 2001. The OGC Medal of Merit was given to Midge Zischke in 2001 and to Joan Andrews in 2002. The Floral Design Achievement Award was given to Phoebe Kahl in 2001. The OGC Club Appreciation Award went to Muffy York in 2002.



Toris Jaeger at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area



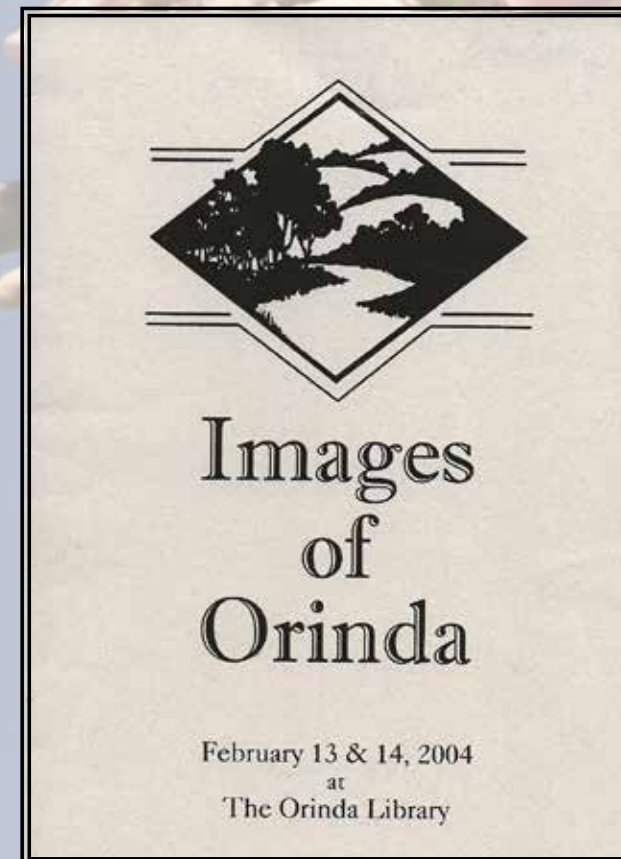
Students examine pond water for tadpoles, larvae and other critters



2003 - 2005 JENIFER BRUNK

September started off with a first-ever farmers' market held at Gina Field's "farmhouse" home. Many fruits and vegetables were available for purchase from a local farm. Another "old-fashioned Christmas" coffee and party were held at the home of Midge Zischke. Our main event of the new year was the "Images of Orinda" flower show, coordinated with the Orinda Historical Society, featuring historical photos from Orinda's earliest days. The venue of the new Orinda Library provided a perfect location for the preview party as well as the floral, horticulture, photographic and educational exhibits open to the public, including a slide show, "Images of Orinda Then and Now," by the Orinda Historical Society. The titles of each of the exhibits represented iconic Orinda locations. The educational exhibit featured the unique propagation program offered to OUSD by OGC and Toris Jaeger at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area. OGC continued to participate at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area where members assisted in planting non-invasive and environmentally safe plant species. The annual May picnic and awards program was held in Margie Murphy's lovely garden. In keeping with GCA's horticulture theme, "Right Plant, Right Place," members sold our own propagated plants at the annual Orinda Library Book Fair. OGC celebrated the 40th anniversary of "Bouquets" (formerly known as the Flower Arranging Group). Our annual coffee and Christmas parties were held at Diana Kennedy's lovely home where the "Soho" influence opened our eyes to beautifully creative contemporary design. Janet Riley and Cathleen Sodos chaired the "Garden Gems" garden tour featuring five Orinda gardens, our most

successful fundraising event to date! Our May meeting concluded the year in June Cunningham's garden with a picnic, annual awards and a photo exhibit of OGC's David Austin rose plantings at The Gardens at Heather Farm.



Christmas 2005: Diana Kennedy, Dena Raffel



2004: At the White House: Gail Emmons, Jane Ryan, Gina Field, Jenifer Brunk, Betty Argabright



2004: Orinda Garden Club volunteers at Sleepy Hollow School (Dayna Taylor)

2005 - 2007 JOYCE NELSON



The Orinda Garden Club was responsible for establishing a greenhouse at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area. OGC members were using the greenhouse for some horticulture projects as well as guiding students in their garden related projects. The Dee Seifert memorial rock was moved to a better spot at the Community Center. The Triangle at the Camino Sobrante/Orinda Way intersection was another civic responsibility that was being maintained by OGC members. Several times a year OGC members cleaned, pruned and planted the area. The amount of \$400 was raised for Penny Pines. In September 2006 a group of members took a trip to the Garden Club of America Redwood Grove in Northern California. This Grove was established in 1931 in Humboldt State Park and was dedicated in 1934. The Christmas House was held in a different member's home each year and was a highlight. The decorations were done by the talented members of the Garden Club and were always outstanding. The food and other refreshments were new members' responsibility. In 2006 a florilegium of botanical art done by our members was staged at the Orinda Country Club and was a big attraction for the community. The local library held a plant and book sale every September. All summer we worked on propagating plants from our own gardens and sold these plants at this event. All proceeds went to the library. OGC members continued to be involved in the rose garden, a Founder's Fund runner-up at The Gardens at Heather Farm. An in-house flower show, "Fiesta," was held on May 4, 2007 at the Orinda Country Club and was open to the public at no charge. This marked the club's 70th

anniversary. There were exhibits in Flower Arranging, Horticulture and Photography. An Education exhibit was also included and was the responsibility of the newer members. At the end of the year, awards and special recognition were given to individuals. In 2005 Midge Zischke won the Toni Fauver Award. Bev Bloodworth won the Medal of Merit Award. Sue Ann Manners won the Club Appreciation Award. In 2006, Helen Richards was given the Club Appreciation Award, Jean Schommer was given the GCA Flower Arranging Certificate, Isa Mary Ziegler was given the GCA Horticulture Achievement Award, Pat Winther won the Club Medal of Merit and Gail Emmons the Zone XII Flower Arrangement Award. In 2007, Heather Dunne won the Floral Design Award, Jean Rowe won the Club Appreciation Award, Jane Ryan and MJ Walburg won the Dorothy Lamb Conservation Award and Joan Andrews won the Toni Fauver Award. The first new OGC honorary member was named: Soho Sakai.





2007 - 2009 VIRGINIA "GINA" FIELD

The September 27, 2007 OGC meeting was at the brand-new Orinda City office building. Speakers were Mayor Amy Worth, City Manager Janet Keeter, and Chief of Police Bill French. A tour of the new facility followed; members enjoyed a picnic lunch in the revamped Orinda Park pavilion. Much of October through December was spent working with the other three Orinda garden clubs to raise money and replant the medians on Camino Pablo going toward the Crossroads. This was a first and very successful project working with the other clubs. Jane Ryan and Nita Roethe were very involved and effective working with the other clubs. Also, at this time thousands of bulbs were planted at the Highway 24 off-ramp and Triangle on the Village side of town. Amy Stewart of *Flower Confidential* fame was our November guest speaker. A wonderful and beautiful Christmas daytime tea and evening party was held at the home of Margie and Kerry Murphy, with members decorating each room. There was a joint meeting at Strybing Arboretum (now San Francisco Botanical Garden) with the four other Bay Area GCA garden clubs in January. The speaker was Alex Reford, owner/manager of the world-famous Reford Gardens in Quebec. The March meeting was guest day featuring honorary member and world-famous Ikebana arranger Soho Sakai doing eleven arrangements. The concrete planters at the Crossroads were completely replanted and a horticulture subcommittee in connection with the other Orinda garden clubs was arranged to maintain them every month. Ruth Bancroft and Dan McDonnell were asked and joined OGC as honorary members. Mrs. Ruth Bancroft was the founder, curator and owner of the drought tolerant succulent garden in Walnut Creek. The garden is now under the auspices of The Garden Conservancy. The Ruth Bancroft Garden was the first garden to be selected for The Garden Conservancy. Dan McDonnell and his family for years had nurseries in the East Bay and greatly contributed to the flora and fauna of the area. Dan now has a nursery

in Orinda, McDonnell Nursery, and has always been most generous in dealing with OGC and the community. September's opening meeting was at The Gardens at Heather Farm where OGC members donated, planted and maintain the David Austin rose garden. Joan Andrews spearheaded this project for many years. October and November meetings were devoted to conservation with Bill Toone and Ecolife Foundation, on the subject of the major loss of butterfly population in the world. A lovely and joyful tea and Christmas party were held at Diana and Bernie Caldwell's home. In 2009 the four Orinda garden clubs again worked together to improve the landscape and ecology of Orinda. More bulbs, more trees, more pots of plants in public places and locations. Many members participated in "Orinda in Action Day." The OGC sponsored three public meetings at the Orinda Library on horticulture and conservation; all were well attended. The GCA announced the Centennial Tree Project to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2013. All clubs were asked to sponsor a special project within their club and community that involved trees. Joan Andrews chaired the committee and came up with the Orinda cork oaks project: the cleaning and trimming of all the native oaks circling the road around Lake Cascade. It was a monumental task

and the results were spectacular. All the walkers, hikers, bikers, bird watchers and drivers were elated with the results. The effort took lots of organization and money. Diana Kennedy did a first-rate job of raising funds. It was a labor of love for the Orinda public.



2007: Soho Sakai, Diana Kennedy, Phoebe Kahl



2007: Fiesta; Heather Dunne, Gina Field



2008: Christmas House decorations



2008: Christmas House decorations, Janet Riley, Cathleen Sodos, Lisa Stefan

2009 - 2011 HEATHER DUNNE



Pam Goode and Heather Dunne attended the GCA annual meeting in Providence Rhode Island, where all GCA Clubs were asked to sponsor a tree project in honor of GCA's 100th anniversary. OGC chose a cork oak restoration around Lake Cascade in Orinda, a privately-owned reservoir and protected bird sanctuary. Joan Andrews formed a committee to restore these oaks to their majestic form. OGC members attended a five-club meeting in Carmel with a presentation by Kualani Lee called "A Sense of Wonder." A highlight was when OGC and Piedmont sponsored a joint GCA Club Flower Show, "In Concert," chaired by Carole Wolfman and Dona Snow and held at Orinda Country Club. This major event was both entertaining and educational for the 400 visitors. OGC also sponsored an in-house auction that raised \$9,000 for the cork oak project. We planted thousands of daffodils on the off-ramp, resulting in an explosion of beautiful yellow color in Spring. Conservation chairs Pamela Stefan's and DD Felton's motto was "Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without." They hosted four meetings with topics of recycling, composting, organic foods and the benefits of using local farmers' markets. They also held a very popular E-waste event, with donations given to the Educational Foundation of Orinda. Dona Snow and Heather Dunne attended the GCA Annual Meeting in East Brunswick, New Jersey. There were many informational lectures and a dinner across the East River in full view of the Statue of Liberty. Heather Dunne judged the flower show. This was followed by a Zone XII Meeting for club presidents at Woodside-Atherton and a delegate from each of the 17 Zone Clubs to share information. Carole Wolfman was the OGC delegate and Heather Dunne presented OGC's conservation and beautification efforts in Orinda. OGC sponsored Marin Garden Club as the 200th member of GCA. A scholarship program was introduced for horticulturists and four deserving recipients from the Merritt College Landscape Horticulture program were awarded \$500 each. Joan Andrews and Isa Mary Ziegler organized a new Horticulture Award to be given at future OGC "in house" flower shows. The award format was designed by Judy Shallat. The cork

Symonds Award to Phoebe Kahl and Heather Dunne



oak underbrush clearing at Lake Cascade was begun after consultations with arborists and help from the management of the Orinda Country Club. OGC received the William Penn Mott, Jr. Environmental Award which was presented by the Orinda Association and the City of Orinda. In addition to receiving the Mott Award, a certificate for \$125 was awarded to our club by the California State Legislature. The annual Christmas tea hosted 203 guests in the morning and 109 members for a members-only party in the evening. Bouquets to Art participants from OGC were: Gail Emmons, Phoebe Kahl, Diana Kennedy, Mari Tischenko and Heather Dunne. In May 2011, a five-club GCA Flower Show named "California on the Cutting Edge" was held at the Sunset Center in Carmel. Orinda Garden Club members served the community with 150 or more hours beautifying Orinda. They pruned roses at the Gardens at Heather Farm for about 150-200 hours. They created 840 small arrangements in cans plus twenty arrangements in vases and two decorated Christmas trees each year for the county hospital and monthly flower arrangements for the Orinda Library. Two \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to landscape design students at Merritt College.



2010: Christmas Party



Cork Oaks at Lake Cascade, Orinda



Gail Emmons's Garden



2011 - 2013 CAROLE WOLFMAN



In the fall of 2011, there was an overwhelming feeling that change was necessary. In years past, the membership at the holidays would decorate a member's home where a tea would be held for members and their guests and where that same evening members would enjoy a cocktail/dinner party. Members decided that doing something for the community was a more positive endeavor. Thus, "Wreaths Around Town" was born in December 2011 under the leadership of Cathleen Sodos and Jane Wiser. Members decorated 50 holiday wreaths with red bows and pine cones, and with the help of the local Boy Scouts, hung the decorated wreaths in public areas of Orinda. The first "Wreaths Around Town" was so well-received that it was decided to increase the number of wreaths to 100 for the next holiday season! Change continued...OGC decided to take on a huge community project. The overgrowth around Lake Cascade, where members in the 1930s and in 1946 had planted cork oaks, was out of control and a blight to the community, even though over the years some attempt had been made to clean up the shoreline. Diana Kennedy, the GCA Centennial Tree chairperson, organized a "Walk About Lake Cascade" to raise funds to clean up the shoreline completely, so once again the cork oaks could show their splendid beauty. Diana solicited local merchants for auction items, wrote letters to neighbors of Lake Cascade and encouraged OGC members to contribute to the effort. Over \$25,000 was raised to clean up the Lake Cascade shoreline. OGC was delighted to recognize Sylvia McLaughlin and make her an honorary member of the Orinda Garden Club. Sylvia and two of her close friends, Kay Kerr and Esther Gulick, founded the Save San Francisco Bay Association, which later became Save the Bay. The Garden Club of America, along with the Orinda and Piedmont Garden Clubs, awarded Sylvia McLaughlin the Zone XII Conservation Commendation for her hard work, dedication and devotion to the environment and the San Francisco

Bay. Further, in the two years of Carol Wolfman's presidency, the program speakers educated members about the state of water in California, regaled members and their guests with beautiful floral arrangements and inspired budding photographers with beautiful garden photography. The club's hands-on work of weeding and bulb planting in city areas, pruning roses in public gardens and creating monthly bouquets for patients at the county hospital was a constant source of accomplishment and satisfaction. On April 10, 2013, Orinda Country Club presented to Orinda Garden Club a boulder and plaque located near the cork oak trees on the north side overlooking Lake Cascade. This generous gift was in appreciation of the major work OGC had completed around the lake. The placement of the large boulder and plaque is special.



Janet Pease, Linda Thompson, Carole Amstutz, Susie Manners, Joyce Nelson, Lisa Jorgens



Pamela, Julie, Margie



2010: Christmas Party



Pat Winther, Diana Caldwell



2013 - 2015 JANET RILEY



The September 2013 meeting was held in Jane Wiser's garden. The Forget-Me-Nots newsletter, edited by Petra Michel, took on a new look this year with monthly features and colorful graphics. To change things up, all Board meetings were moved to the afternoon. At the October meeting, the public enjoyed a program on foraging. As part of a joint clubs' project, OGC improved the landscaping in front of the library. The holiday festivities were held at OCC (instead of a member's home) for the second year. The club traveled to Marin by bus for the first tri-club meeting with Piedmont, Marin and OGC in February 2014. Steered by Nancy Dickmeyer and Nath Schmicker, OGC put on a club flower show called "In Translation" that was open to the public. Book titles described each class and cut up books highlighted the staging. Three judges' commendations were awarded. At the GCA level, OGC approved a \$5000 gift to Save the Redwoods League to help pay off the GCA balance due for the last parcel in the GCA Grove in the Redwoods. At the Zone XII Meeting in Pasadena, Diana Kennedy and Joan Andrews received the Zone XII Civic Improvement Award for restoring the Lake Cascade shoreline. In 2014 the May picnic was held at Lisa Stefan's garden. Members brought plants to participate in a plant exchange and two students from UC Berkeley received OGC scholarships for the first time. The outdoor picnic was rained out in September 2014 and moved indoors to OCC. In conjunction with Save the Bay, OGC joined Piedmont's Partners for Plants Project. With Merlon Williamson speaking to the history of the club, the first OGC Past Presidents' Luncheon was held to honor the 18 past presidents. Created by Marty DeJonghe, a festive scarecrow display at the Highway 24 off-ramp was installed for the first time in October. As an additional joint clubs' project, OGC bought 40 glazed pots to replace the 1960s aggregate containers and planted them with drought resistant materials. For the holidays, members and guests enjoyed The Spirit of Christmas wreath making, coffee and party at OCC. New members worked with their sponsors and created unique table displays. Highlights in the spring of 2015 included a celebration of Bouquet's 50th anniversary, installation of

an OGC Adopt-A-Highway sign, completion of the 2013 Lake Cascade project, adoption of major changes in the by-laws, increased membership participation in Orinda Action Day, receipt of the Freeman Medal Honorable Mention for Arctostaphylos 'Howard McMinn' (only GCA award given to a plant), and major fundraising success of OGC's Orinda in Bloom Garden Tour. Chaired by Cathleen Sodos, the garden tour featured five unique gardens enjoyed by 500 visitors and raised \$50,000 in funds to beautify the Camino Pablo medians. At the annual meeting in May held at the historic Julia Morgan Hall in the UC Botanical Garden, Phoebe Kahl received the Medal of Merit, and Shari Bashin-Sullivan and Julie O'Melveny received the Civic Beautification Award. The OGC and the Piedmont GC started their Partners for Plants Project East Bay on July 1, 2014.



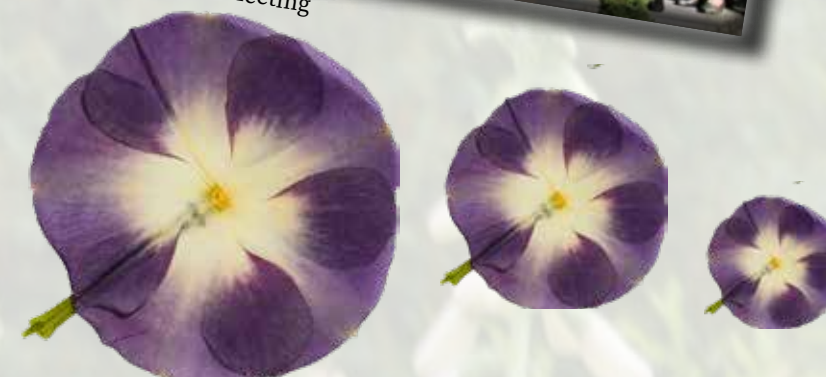
2015: Garden Club Board at Pam Wiley's



Feb 2014: Marin for Tri-Club Meeting



2014: Janet Riley at the Holiday Coffee at the Orinda Country Club





2015 - 2017 MARGIE MURPHY

The September General Meeting/Picnic was held on September 24th in Mary Read's beautiful Lafayette garden. There were eight new members to meet and greet. The goals for the upcoming year were discussed and a lovely box lunch followed. In October there was a tomato tasting from Dirty Girl Produce in Sue Andersen-Berger's garden. A unique Fall workshop was held where members created succulent arrangements in a pumpkin. The Highway 24 off-ramp was decorated with OGC scarecrows and pumpkins. The community was invited for a slide show titled the Art of Transformation. OGC member Shari Bashin-Sullivan dazzled us with her "before and after" landscape designs. On December 3rd members made 100 wreaths to decorate Orinda businesses and public spaces. The Annual Tea and Holiday Party were both held at the Orinda Country Club. New members and their sponsors decorated beautiful holiday tables for all to enjoy. The OGC fundraiser was called Tea in the Garden and chaired by Louise Diracles and Marlene Hallenberger. Two of the gardens were in Lafayette and three were in Orinda. Refreshments were served at two of the gardens. Over \$60,000 was raised; the monies went towards the median project, scholarships, the off-ramp and other established OGC programs. Piedmont Garden Club members came to a luncheon and fashion show after the shared speaker at OCC. Some of their members and ours modeled clothes by Nina McLemore. Sylvia Carter, Cathleen Sodos, Shari Bashin-Sullivan and Margie Murphy worked tirelessly with the City of Orinda Planning Department to make the median project a reality. There were endless hurdles before ground breaking. The Orinda Garden Club members participated in Orinda in Action Day on April 23, 2016. Members spruced up the Triangle and the pots on the Crossroads side of Orinda. Extensive planning took place for the GCA Annual Meeting in San Francisco. OGC did the groundwork for the Flower Show, the Photography and Horticulture displays and the Welcome Party for over 600 guests. Vanessa Crews was awarded the Freeman Medal (Special Recommendation Award) for our club's nomination of the California pipeline plant, *Aristolochia californica*. In concert with over 350 members from six GCA Bay Area garden clubs, OGC members participated in an amazing Bay Visions Program at

the Greek Orthodox Church in Oakland. OGC continued working with Piedmont Garden Club in P4P (Partners for Plants). This involved working on the regional shoreline removing invasive plants, propagating and planting native plants. Margie Murphy asked every member to participate at least once during the year on this P4P project. A commemorative bench was purchased and installed on the southern end of Lake Cascade. On March 15, 2015, the 50th anniversary of Bouquets was celebrated.



Cleaning up in Orinda



Halloween Decoration at the Orinda Triangle



2017: Joan Andrews serving iced tea in Margie's Garden



Garden Tour



A Garden Tour Presented by the Orinda Garden Club
Thursday, May 11, 2017
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



2017 - 2019 CATHLEEN SODOS

The fall meeting/picnic was held in the garden of Connie Leach's beautiful home. OGC's community event, held at the Orinda Community Center, featured Dr. Paul Cox in a premier documentary titled "Toxic Puzzle." The event was a sellout! In early December, well over 150 members and guests enjoyed a festive Holiday Tea complete with a shopping boutique. The tea was chaired by Jane Ryan and held at the Orinda Country Club. Wreaths Around Orinda, chaired by Leslie French and Tina Locke along with the help of Boy Scout Troop 237, decorated our downtown with holiday cheer. In early spring, Ruth Fortune and Barbara Boster chaired the club's annual social event, "All that Jazz," which was held at the Lafayette's Metro Restaurant. Members enjoyed delicious food, cocktails and dancing to live jazz music. The annual GCA meeting was held in San Francisco, with Orinda Garden Club in charge of the flower show. Janet Riley and Gail Emmons, chairpersons of the flower show, along with all active club members and most sustainers and associates, organized a spectacular flower show that received special awards from GCA. In addition, many members received awards for entries in floral design, botanical art, horticulture and photography. William A. McNamara, Executive Director of the Quarryhill Botanical Garden, was awarded honorary membership in GCA at the Annual Meeting thanks to the Orinda Garden Club (Jane Wiser) nomination. Bobbie Wilson and Shari Bashin-Sullivan, chairpersons of Beautification, refreshed the planters on Orinda Way with new soil and plants. The year drew to a close with the spring meeting/picnic held in DD Felton's gorgeous garden. The year began with a fall meeting/picnic in Bonnie Miller's creative and beautiful garden. Awards included: Laurie Smith and Chris Stoneberg for Club Appreciation and Gail Emmons for her 35 years of membership. The annual community event

held at the Orinda Library Auditorium covered the timely topic of Fire Safe Landscaping by Kate Frey. Lisa Kovalik and Gwen Manfrin chaired the Holiday Tea, which was held at Lisa's home. Members and guests enjoyed the festive holiday floral designs created by our new members and their sponsors. Holiday topiaries were available for sale at discounted prices. Once again, Wreaths Around Orinda, chaired by Nancy Dickmeyer and Julie O'Melveny, added special holiday cheer to the downtown. The medians on Camino Pablo were finally landscaped with funding (\$50,000) from the 2015 OGC garden tour fundraiser. The Highway 24 off-ramp was beautifully enriched with olive trees and plantings with \$5,000 in funds from the 2017 garden tour fundraiser. "A Spring Garden Stroll," OGC's 2019 fundraiser, was a huge success, thanks to Chris Stoneberg and Rhonda Zakskorn, the event's chairpersons, and to all the club members who volunteered. The year ended with the spring meeting in the spectacularly stunning garden of Mary Read's Napa home. At the meeting, several special awards were given: Mary Read received the GCA's Medal of Merit award, Joyce Nelson was awarded GCA Judge Emeritus, Deb Stephenson was given the OGC Appreciation award for Communication and Bobbie Wilson received the OGC Appreciation Award for Beautification of Orinda.



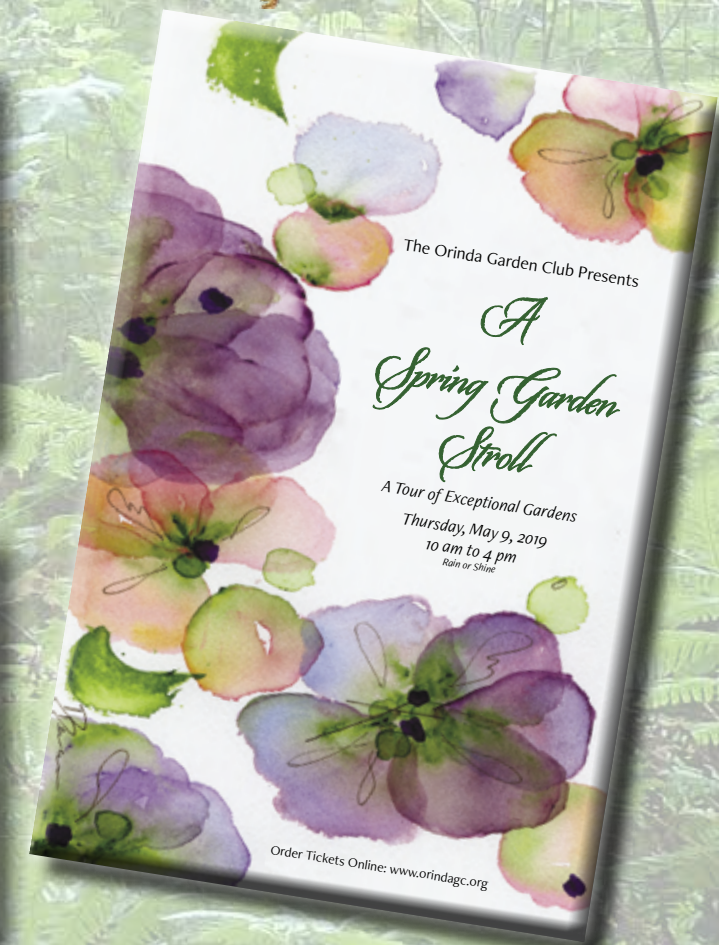
2017: Goodes



May 9, 2019: Spring Garden Stroll Tour



Feb. 2019: Bay Visions, Creek Clean Up





2019 - 2021 JANE WISER

The theme “A 2020 Vision of Home” kicked off the year with clarity and great ambition. Programs focused on infusing pride in Orinda. Seven new members were welcomed at our first meeting. Technical advancements were a key feature. Jean Rowe, Lisa Burlini and Jane built a new OGC website featuring a members’ area that facilitated calendar sign-ups, access to forms, an online marketplace and photo gallery. A new communication system for FMN newsletters and weekly updates on MailChimp were added. “Wiser Words of the Week” kept people informed and a new Instagram account and updated Facebook page aided in social media. Cathleen Sodos and Pam Goode proposed an OGC project to improve the aesthetics of the Miner Road bridge that was destroyed by a flood and it was decided to build a rock façade on the street side. Members planted over 1,000 bulbs at the triangle and off-ramp, had a history walk of downtown Orinda, and hosted a well-attended meeting with city officials to learn about the ConnectOrinda plans. A group from OGC met with Orinda Parks & Recreation personnel to start plans to improve landscape downtown which were thwarted because of local emergencies with power outages. The fires were the first of several natural disasters and curious challenges to the term, and to the world at large. Committee programs included a Bay Visions outing to Crissy Field, picnic at Blake Garden, and a movie night featuring “The Biggest Little Farm.” Bonnie Brusseau trained us on rose pruning at the Gardens at Heather Farm and a Visiting Gardens trip to Santa Fe was planned for June. Plans for an in-club flower show for our May meeting began. The theme was “Let It Bee,” and the book club read *The Honey Bus* to round out the club’s focus on pollinators. Holiday celebrations were spectacular! Wreaths Around Orinda Chair Laurie Goetzl creatively added lighted trees at the off-ramp. “The Apres Ski” was the wintry theme for our successful couples’ dinner soiree at OCC, coordinated by Gwen Manfrin and Caroline LaVoie. Lisa Kovalik and Sarah Montgomery chaired our Holiday Tea at the Ranch House at Wilder Park, complete with a small marketplace; Associates provided greens and floral décor. The annual joint meeting with Piedmont was a special gathering with Eric Haskell entertaining participants with a dynamic performance. The first news of the novel coro-



Propagating plants during the pandemic:
Pam Wiley, Katie Rittmann, Jean Rowe



Miner Bridge walls completed

navirus got serious in early March. OGC’s dreams for the year were altered. Plans were mercurial, safety restrictions were conflicting, and closures prevailed. This was nothing to ignore: life as we knew it changed as quickly as the virus that descended upon us. Jane felt her greatest obligation was to respect the health, safety and comfort of our membership, which is an especially vulnerable demographic. A group of “garden angels” was established to check in on elderly members. All board and general meetings were held via Zoom. GCA directives cancelled all in-person events through the end of 2021. GCA provided tutorials on Zoom and a reluctant membership grew accustomed to the new normal. Jean Rowe created videos to introduce new members, award recipients, and program announcements. Committee leadership stepped up to the challenge of maintaining activities and education.

Weeding, rose pruning, and floral arranging workshops were held in small groups where participants wore face coverings. A mini-Visiting Gardens program with Piedmont GC and a dynamic Zoom presentation by Bay Visions for over 700 guests were very successful. Inspired by the added time OGC members were spending in their gardens during Covid, the Horticulture chairs invited members to revisit an old tradition of a club plant sale in April. Many small workshops for the sale were held to grow plants from seeds and cuttings. The funds raised will help finance education at the Zone XII meeting which we host in May 2022. Zone Award winners from OGC included: Diana Kennedy and Phoebe Kahl for Floral Arts, Sue Andersen-Berger for Horticulture, and Yoni Mayeri for Photography. Jane remained encouraged and inspired each day with the wonderful gifts of friendship, support, good humor and kindness of the OGC members.



Nov. 2020: Visiting gardens
Rhonda Zakskorn



Members decorate 100 wreaths for Orinda



Jane and Chip Wiser at the Apres Ski event



2019: Orinda historical tour led by Laurie Smith





ORINDA GARDEN CLUB

PRESIDENTIAL HISTORY



FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE OGC

Ruth Breuner, June Hadden, Edna Betts Ketchum, Dorothy Lamb
Beatrice Martin, Mrs. D.P. Richardson
Mrs. W.P. Stevenson, Margaret Symes, Natalie Woolsey

1937-1939 Dorothy Lamb	1971-1972 Barbara "Bobbie" Bellamy
1939-1940 Amy Chapman	1972-1973 Betty Hall
1940-1941 Muir Sorrick Shank	1973-1974 Ruth Thompson
1941-1942 Do Bee	1974-1975 Bev Bloodworth
1942-1943 Catherine Campbell	1975-1976 Eugenia Obrecht
1943-1944 Margaret Merrill	1976-1977 Joan McKnight
1944-1945 Helen Rodwell	1977-1978 Mary Fields
1945-1946 Amy Macomber	1978-1979 Merlon Williamson
1946-1947 Ruth Breuner	1979-1980 Sandy Denny
1947-1948 Ann Bennett	1980-1981 Bev Webb
1948-1949 Truly East	1981-1982 Daphne Bertero
1949-1950 Hilda Everts	1982-1983 Maxine Johnson
1950-1951 Hilda Everts	1983-1984 Evie Cranston
1951-1952 Rose Shurtleff	1984-1985 Helen Slattery
1952-1953 Mildred Cole	1985-1986 Janet Cotter
1953-1954 Alexandria Hockenbeamer	1986-1987 Jenifer Brunk
1954-1955 Ruth Conley	1987-1989 Betsy Bingham
1955-1956 Ruth Conley	1989-1991 Pat Connolly
1956-1957 Marjorie Pedersen	1991-1993 Jackie Voigt
1957-1958 Shirley Crawshaw Wiggins	1993-1995 Joan Andrews
1958-1959 Helen Stark	1995-1997 Ruta Hagmann
1959-1960 Lucille "Lu" Lange	1997-1999 Isa Mary Ziegler
1960-1961 Helen Unruh	1999-2001 Betty Argabright
1961-1962 Esther Anderson	2001-2003 Patricia (Pat) Winther
1962-1963 Fran Seaman	2003-2005 Jenifer Brunk
1963-1964 Fran Bell	2005-2007 Joyce Nelson
1964-1965 Van Holmgren	2007-2009 Gina Field
1965-1966 Donna Skaggs	2009-2011 Heather Dunne
1966-1967 Martha "Muffy" York	2011-2013 Carole Wolfman
1967-1968 Geraldine "Gerry" Powell	2013-2015 Janet Riley
1968-1969 Arline Chapman	2015-2017 Margie Murphy
1969-1970 Edith Scatena	2017-2019 Cathleen Sodos
1970-1971 Mildred Simpson	2019-2021 Jane Wiser

