



Independent, locally owned and operated!

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published May 20th, 2015

New Lamorinda Arts Council Supports All the Arts

By Sophie Braccini



The new Lamorinda Arts Council with Moraga councilmember Teresa Onoda (first row, center) and the council's president, Lawrence Kohl (to her right). Photo provided

The official launch reception for the Lamorinda Arts Council, an all-volunteer arts education and advocacy organization born from the long-standing Orinda Arts Council, is planned for May 27. At the kick-off reception, musicians, graphic artists, dancers and literary artists will present their crafts - a perfect way to underscore this citizens' movement that promotes all forms of artistic expression and education in the three Lamorinda communities.

The change from the Orinda Arts Council to the Lamorinda Arts Council is the result of efforts by president Lawrence Kohl, with the support of his board as well as representatives from the two other cities, including Moraga council member and landscape painter Teresa Onoda. Founded in 1950, the Orinda Arts Council is best known as the organizers of the Lamorinda Idol, and of the high school Visual Arts Competition.

Kohl, who is the music director at Pacific Chamber Symphony and an Orinda resident, joined the Orinda Arts Council board in 2014. He became a co-president with Susan Garrel, before taking the helm when she stepped down. "It seemed to me that the arts council had a lot of potential," said Kohl. "The first thing that I did was to establish a strategic planning group, to reflect on several basic issues." During the soul-searching process the

group looked into what the other towns were doing and realized the OAC was the only arts council in Lamorinda. It seemed to the group that expanding the reach to the three communities would multiply the possibilities.

"The Lamorinda Arts Council will be able to achieve far more than the sum of our three towns individually," explained Kohl. "The possibilities are endless." The maestro met with council member Onoda at the Orinda Arts Council holiday luncheon. "She is interested in creating a public art committee like Lafayette and Orinda have," said Kohl. "For this to happen, she needs grass roots support, and that is one of the things an art council can foster."

Onoda started rallying artists and interested parties in Moraga and Lafayette. On April 6 a group of 20 or so artists and patrons came to discuss possibilities.

"(The purpose is to) capture the combined experience, expertise and exuberance of people who enjoy the arts," said Onoda. "For the first time, we intend to create a means to identify, encourage and support all of the arts - performance, literary, painting, singing, etcetera - of all types and kinds. We intend to engage both Saint Mary's College and all of our local schools." Artists from the three cities came: ceramists, painters, gallery owners, musicians, a board member of the Saint Mary's creative writing program, Dr. Lino Rivera, a concert pianist and teacher at the college, as well as three members of the Lafayette Public Arts Committee, a branch of the Lafayette government, who indicated that it would be useful to have a non-government organization to work on some programs.

The next move happened at the April 23 Orinda Arts Council board meeting when a unanimous

vote officially changed the OAC's name to the Lamorinda Arts Council. Those present were asked what their interests were and what projects they would be interested in developing, and they were asked to join the board and the strategic planning group. The launch reception will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. May 27 at Merrill Gardens, 3413 Mt Diablo Blvd., in Lafayette.

The LAC board assured that its commitment to Orinda and its schools will continue, and believes that the expanded Lamorinda Arts Council will enable everyone from the three towns to work together to expand the reach, deepen the impact, and bring more of the arts to the broader community.

Artists and patrons of the arts who are interested and have ideas can come to the party or reach out to the group online at lamorindaarts.org.

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA