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## Maestro Lawrence Kohl Honored for His Contribution to Lamorinda Arts

By Sophie Braccini



From left, Lamorinda Arts Council members Kal Deutsch and Justin Cole, Lynn Seppala from the Pacific Chamber Orchestra, Lawrence Kohl, Supervisor Candace Andersen, and LAC members Erling Horn and Susan Mautner.

Photo provided

Nineteen years ago the Contra Costa County Arts and Culture Commission created an award to recognize those who advance the arts in a way that promotes communication, education, appreciation and collaboration throughout the county. This year, the commission honored Lamorinda's Lawrence Kohl as one of the five winners.

The multi-faceted maestro was selected for his leading role in expanding the Orinda Arts Council to Lamorinda (now LAC or Lamorinda Arts Council) and supporting the addition of several new programs, for the new reach of his chamber orchestra throughout Lamorinda, and for the years of musical education programs that have reached children all over the East Bay and now at Wagner Ranch Elementary School.

Kohl has been the president of the Lamorinda Arts Council for three years. He says that he sees the award as a recognition of what the group is doing for igniting and supporting the arts in Lamorinda.

"The commission is validating with this award the work that we have all done at LAC with the expansion of our reach to the three cities and extending our programs to all the arts," says Kohl. Besides the Lamorinda Idols, the Arts Gallery at the Orinda Library, the visual arts competition for all the Lamorinda schools, LAC initiated this year a very successful short documentary competition for all

ages, conducted the third Art of Mixology, and is now getting approval in the three communities for the creation of a poet laureate position.

"Lafayette and Orinda have already approved it, and Moraga should review the concept in the near future," added Kohl.

Elizabeth Wood, chair of the arts recognition award on the county commission, says that this year they received 11 nominations, all for outstanding groups and individuals. Kohl had been nominated by Lafayette resident Erling Horn. Horn cited on the application all the programs Kohl supported. "He is working diligently to establish a Poet Laureate for our three communities," he adds. Horn, who is on LAC's board, adds that people respond to his cheerful, positive nature, and that Kohl is fun to work with. "He doesn't quit when it comes to the arts," he says.

Kohl is also the founder and Maestro of the Pacific Chamber Orchestra, a 25-year old orchestra that has been playing all over the East Bay and recently expanded to Lamorinda with the creation of a Lamorinda advisory branch of the Livermore board and the presentation of each Livermore concert in Lafayette. The next concert will be on Feb. 25 at the Lafayette Library Community Center. "Global Gems" will present pieces from diverse composers spanning the continents: Shostakovich, Piazzola,

Caliendo and Mozart.

Wood highlights that the criteria listed to select the yearly winners include leadership in the support of the arts in daily life. The last piece of Kohl's multiple contributions to the arts fits this category as he has developed a series of musical awakening and initiation workshops for elementary school-age children.

"It is a program that I developed several years ago and that I constantly update," says Kohl, who loves to share his own enthusiasm for music and to explain its intricacies in simple terms. One of the workshops is called "Postcards From Around the World." It demonstrates the different scales and how they create various atmospheres from diverse traditions. Kohl says that by the end of the workshop the young students are able to recognize the different scales by ear.

The workshop are led by Kohl with two fellow musicians, and teachers get a follow-up activity guide to continue the teaching in the classroom. Thanks to a grant from the Orinda Parks and Recreation Foundation, Kohl was able to start presenting his workshops at Wagner Ranch. The Moraga resident would enjoy doing more in the three communities.

Those interested in knowing more about Kohl and his activities can contact him at LawrenceKohl@gmail.com.

## Volunteers Complete CERT Training

By Cathy Dausman



New CERT graduates practice their training.

Photo Cathy Dausman

Thirty Lamorinda area students recently completed emergency preparedness training as Community Emergency Response Team members.

Their final was a hands-on practice at Moraga-Orinda Fire District station 45 in Orinda involving fire suppression, first aid, victim extrication and search and rescue. Lamorinda CERT program manager Duncan Seibert says CERT training expands to nine weeks beginning with the next series starting Jan. 10 at the Lafayette Community Center.

The January class series will be the last series offered at no charge. Beginning Spring 2017 Lamorinda CERT students pay a \$25 registration fee; however students who attend the first four classes will receive a medical supply kit valued at \$25.

"This is not a first aid kit but much more specifically a CERT medical kit," Seibert says. To register for January classes, go to <http://classes.lamorindacert.org>.

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