

Published February 10th, 2016

You Want to Become a Filmmaker?

By Sophie Braccini



Jason Friedman about to start filming his documentary Photo Kal Deutsch

talked with fellow board member Kal Deutsch, who has filmmaking experience; we thought that it would be a good idea to have all ages engaged in this new program."

The LAC board and its president, Lawrence Kohl, immediately embraced the idea and decided this would be a worthwhile project for the nonprofit to fund.

"We decided on short documentaries, maximum six minutes, because we thought that would be easier for beginners to master, and also because we did not want to compete with the Iron Filmmakers competition put on by the California Independent Film Festival," says Deutsch. The Orinda resident believes that with today's tools, such as the iPhone and iMovie, and some basic training, anyone can start creating interesting documentaries. "You can say a lot in a very short time," adds Friedman. "Just take a look at the news and you'll see some powerful stories told in just a few minutes."

The competition's unique element is beginner training offered by LAC. "Creating a good documentary is about telling a compelling story; it is not just running a camera," says Deutsch. "There are fundamental techniques that will empower kids and adults to make better films, such as composition, editing, how to get music, how to do narration, that we will teach and that will raise the bar of what will be produced."

LAC has planned a free educational seminar that covers the basics of producing a documentary film at 1 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28 for elementary and middle school filmmakers and at 2 p.m. for high school and adult filmmakers. The seminar will be at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

The four competition categories are based on age: Elementary School, Middle School, High School and Adult. "The competition is open to anyone aged 5 and older who lives, attends school or works in Orinda, Lafayette, or Moraga," says Friedman. "Submissions will be accepted March 1 until April 24 and be judged by a panel of professionals."

LAC asks that films be G-rated and it reserves the right to not consider a movie that would be

considered inappropriate. Two to four films will be selected in each category and presented at the festival on May 15. After the screening, winners in each category will be announced, and the audience will be invited to vote to select the public award winner.

Lamorinda filmmakers Vicki Abeles ("Race to Nowhere," "Beyond Measure") and Julie Rubio ("East Side Sushi," "Too Perfect"), and film editor David Santamaria (Early Man Productions; Instructor, Bay Area Video Coalition) will be on the judging panel as well as Los Angeles filmmaker Jon Gun ("My Date with Drew," "Like Dandelion Dust").

"I'm looking forward to being one of the judges," says Rubio. "I hope this festival will help guide the filmmakers on to a special new path of new discoveries, of self awareness and creativity." She adds that in judging the movies she will be looking for films that tell a heartfelt story. "This is, ultimately, what this is all about - storytelling," she says.

"This is our first year and we do not know what to expect," concludes Friedman, "but I am pretty sure that we are going to be blown away by the creativity of the people in the community."

Other LAC volunteers are supporting the project, such as Susan Garell and Lois Mead, who are reaching out to schools and are spreading the word about the competition. More information and registration can be found online at lamorindaarts.org.

LAC free educational seminar on Sunday, Feb. 28 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center:

1 p.m. (elementary and middle school filmmakers) 2 p.m. (high school and adult filmmakers)

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