

# Opera Volunteers International

Volume 29, Number 3

[www.operavol.org](http://www.operavol.org)

Summer 2005

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Dear WONDERFUL OVI Members:

You have proven once more that our organization is not 24 or so Board Members, but all of YOU! Thank you so much for your immediate and generous response to our Sustaining Fund Drive. Our most up to date listing of donors is published in this newsletter. (If you are one who “meant to do it” but our plea is still on your desk, there’s still time... checks in any amount to Opera Volunteers International are gleefully accepted at our office in Chevy Chase, MD.) This “drive” is something new for us... In conference years we ask you for auction items (yes, that’s coming up!) and many more of you join Grantors’ Circle to enjoy the camaraderie with that “elite” (by your own choosing!) group. We had NONE of that financial advantage this year. Your loving gifts truly do sustain us.

Have a fabulous summer. And, again, thank you, from the bottom of my little opera loving heart.

*Sandi Bruns*

President, Opera Volunteers International  
402-556-8425 or 970-668-0651  
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**P.S.** Be sure to read in this issue about the exciting meeting and (“Old GI” Board Reunion) coming up in Houston on November 5; then save March 16-19 for an old fashioned (but “up to date”) Opera Volunteers International Conference in Kansas City. Also save a few opera or “regional specialty” items for our auction, and think right now what people and projects you will nominate for special recognition in K.C. (Partners in Excellence nominations are out already!) Please go to our website [www.operavol.com](http://www.operavol.com)

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*News From  
the Regions*

by Gerald Elijah, Editor

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Connecticut	Delaware	Maine
Massachusetts	New Hampshire	New Jersey
New York	Pennsylvania	Rhode Island
Vermont		

**NEW YORK**

Welcome to **Mercury Opera Guild!** The Opera Theatre Guild of Rochester is in the process of fully merging with Rochester Opera Factory, Opera Rochester and the Rochester Fund for Opera, and as of July 1, 2005 will be the Mercury Opera Guild. **Dr. Agneta Borgstedt** continues as president, and will also serve on the board of Mercury Opera..

**Southeast Region**

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8145 SW 53rd Ave, Miami FL 33143

Alabama	District of Columbia	Florida
Georgia	Kentucky	Maryland
Mississippi	North Carolina	South Carolina
Tennessee	Virginia	West Virginia

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**Summer Opera Guild** reports they were able to present a check for \$10,000 to the Company as the first installment of its pledge for

the Going for the Gold Campaign. While giving sincere thanks to those who made that possible, of course they would still love their other supporters to give serious consideration to adding THEIR pledges.

**Anne-Marie Crawford** has offered to organize the July 17 Cast Party after the final performance of the season. This is a Guild benefit, free to Guild members, but they must call 301-762-7855 before July 12 to make a reservation.

On Friday, May 20th, Anne-Marie, along with Guild members Carole Butler and others enjoyed the final performance of the Met's *Cyrano de Bergerac*. SOTC's 2000 award recipient **Ray Very** sang the role of Christian. He reportedly did a wonderful job, and will return to the Met in the role next year, as well as at Covent Garden. Another SOTC winner (2002), **Fabiana Bravo** sang Mimi to great reviews in San Diego in May, and makes her debut on May 4, 2006 with Eva Queler's Opera Orchestra of New York in *L'amore dei tre Re*.

**FLORIDA**

**Sarasota Opera Guild** was able to donate another \$15,000 to the Opera, \$1,000 to the Youth Opera and two scholarships to Apprentice Artists. The Summer Salon Series is now underway in various venues. For the modest fee of \$25 Guild members are invited to delicious luncheons, plus enlightening entertainment. On June 15 they were entertained by **Lee Dougherty Ross**, soprano "With A Song In My Heart". On July 20, **Karl Hesser** Sarasota Opera's Director of Education will be on hand for "A Sneak Peek at the 2006 Sarasota Opera Season", and on August 17, soprano **Rebecca Price** will be guesting with "Of Nightingales and Roses". For more information, call **Barbara O'Connor** 941-927-9371 or **Juanita Connell**, 941-966-2365.

**TENNESSEE**

**Chattanooga Symphony and Opera Guild** was another recent recipient of an OVI Matching Grant of \$1,000. The Guild utilized the grant to promote the CSO "Operatunity" program, which consists of open final dress rehearsals of CSO mainstage productions. It is open to all middle and high school students in the Chattanooga area.

Following a planning meeting in April 2004, CSO Guild members were selected to serve as docents in area schools (primarily choral classes), introducing professional singers who performed for and interacted with high school music students. Each session not only promoted the upcoming "Operatunity" event but also opera in general. In one such session **Kenneth Overton** who was in town to sing the role of Sharpless in CSO's *Madama Butterfly* sang "The Impossible Dream from *Man of La Mancha* and "I've Got Plenty of Nuthin" from *Porgy and Bess*. Kenneth held the students

spellbound as he talked about his experiences growing up in inner-city Philadelphia and related how he first fell in love with opera after attending a recital by **Jessye Norman**. Students were eager to ask questions, and a cameraman from local TV attended and interviewed Kenneth.

Later one student wrote after attending a performance of *Madama Butterfly* "Going to this opera was a whole new experience for me...I could not believe the way these people could sing...over all of those instruments without even missing a note...The enjoyment of this opera has opened me up to the possibility of seeing many more operas in the future."

Teachers guides were made available to participating teachers. Although not every school was interested, it is believed that sending performers into selected schools will have a long range impact on the lives of students and help to promote the CSO "Operatunity" program.

### Central Region

Ellen & Ann Fusz

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320 Bristol Road, St. Louis, MO 64119

Arkansas	Iowa	Kansas
Minnesota	Missouri	Nebraska
North Dakota	Oklahoma	South Dakota

### MISSOURI

**Lyric Opera Guild** as you know has a very active young person's group **The Bohemians**. They recently held an opening night party for *A Masked Ball* with 60 in attendance, and planned another soon after for *The Marriage of Figaro*—a joint party with the Young Friends of the Symphony and Ballet was next in the works.

**Opera Theatre of St. Louis Guild**' **Eileen Garcia** reports, was well represented at Citizens' Day at the state legislature on February 9. Six volunteers, three Artists-in-Training students, and five staff members traveled to Jefferson City to the important annual Advocacy event. They attended scheduled appointments with eight state senators and twelve state representatives. **Ken Jones**, Advocacy co-chair, reported "the message to the legislators this year was to support the governor's budget recommendations to fund the Missouri Arts Council with \$3.6 million of general revenue."



Pat Seyler, Tani Wolf and Joy Pierce

On April 13 at our Spring Guild Board Meeting, **Pat Seyler**, our Costume Shop Manager, brought some actual costumes and the costume renderings for this season's operas for us to view (see photo). Pat enlightened the Board with the many facets involved in getting the costumes sewn, finding the right materials to be used, meeting deadlines, sewing seams, and replacing buttons when there is an "accident". She was delightful.

### Great Lakes Region

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Eastern Canada	Illinois	Indiana
Michigan	Ohio	Wisconsin

### OHIO

**Opera Guild of Dayton's** Opera Ball 2005 on April 9 was "Star Struck! A salute to Opera Goes to the Movies". It was a totally fabulous evening with a Silent Auction AND a raffle. Dancing was an option at their own "Coconut Grove", listening to jazz at the piano bar, or just relaxing in the intimate "Sunset Lounge". Singles and couples were offered the opportunity of joining a "Friendship Table" with others waiting to expand their social circle.

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**Mountain Region**

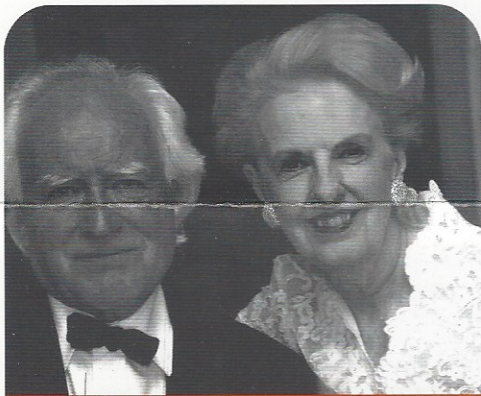
Rose Betty Williams  
 rbetty@austin.rr.com  
 phone 512-327-2281

2400 Camino Alto, Austin TX 78746

Arizona	Colorado	Idaho
Montana	New Mexico	Texas
Utah	Wyoming	

**TEXAS**

Opera Guild of San Antonio (courtesy of Margaret King Stanley, Immediate Past President) History and Projects—The Opera Guild of San Antonio was founded in 1974 as a non-



Left to Right: The Honorable Desmond Gainess of Ireland with Margaret King Stanley, Immediate Past President of the Opera Guild of San Antonio

profit educational and charitable association under the auspices of the Women's Committee of the San Antonio Symphony, now the Symphony League. When the Symphony announced it would no

longer produce opera, the Guild became an independent organization in support of opera-related activities.

The organization's three hundred volunteers support the Guild in fundraising, writing grants and distributing funds to local and national opera companies (Santa Fe, Austin Lyric, and Houston Grand Opera among others). The Guild's Enhancement Evenings feature speakers from major companies as its adult education effort. A Guild-endowed scholarship at the University of Texas, San Antonio (UTSA) assists voice majors.

The Guild's three year old educational program to introduce local students to opera reached almost 10,000 children last year! In this program, UTSA and the Guild select operas suitable for touring (scenery and costumes

included); students attend at no charge and teachers receive a professionally prepared teacher's guide in advance.

In 2005, the Guild presented the world premier of Seymour Barab's *Gods of Mischief*. UTSA's opera students sang the roles and the UTSA student orchestra was in the pit. The composer attended the opening night event and positive publicity was generated for the opera and the Guild.

**Pacific Rim Region**

Robert Brock

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Alaska	Australia	California
Nevada	Oregon	Vancouver
Washington State	Western Canada	

**CALIFORNIA**

Opera League of Los Angeles, as a part of its long range planning following the completion of its recent consultation on how to project a new, more exciting image to current and potential members, is currently working on establishing a written agreement with Los Angeles Opera. Among many other things, we anticipate that there will be a month long program in the fall in cooperation with the company to increase membership and awareness of the League by the opera going community.

**INTERNATIONAL CANADA**

**British Columbia**

Vancouver Opera Guild with its continuously inspiring electronic newsletter prompted your OVI newsletter editor to recently poll OVI members with e-mail addresses known to us to survey interest among members with e-mail availability about possibly receiving a PDF version of the OVI newsletter in lieu of the printed version. No decision has been made as yet—so if you have thoughts, let us know!

Vancouver published a 16-page newsletter PLUS a 17-page Annual Report. With such riches to choose from, an editor finds it difficult to pick and choose—so let me just say, that in this 25th Anniversary year, Vancouver Opera Guild is now on the Worldwide Web. Visit <http://www.vancouveropera.ca/voguild/who.html> and you can obtain information on Guild activities for yourself.

## SUSTAINING FUND DONORS

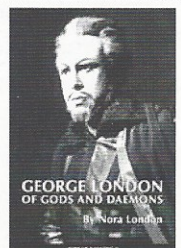
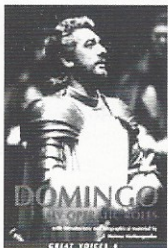
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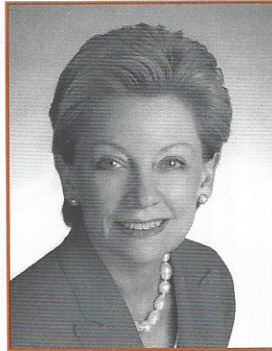
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# Opera Boutique - Attending Tradeshows

*Patte Comstock, V.P. - Houston Grand Opera Boutique*

It is important that your shop look new and fresh at the beginning of each season. You may want to offer one or two outstanding items that connect with the theme of your season productions. It is usually possible to find beautiful silk scarves with designs that relate to opera themes in some way, men's fine silk neckties with relative patterns, evening bags and stoles and shawls galore and wonderful evening jewelry. There are so many tradeshows around the country with vendors offering a wide variety of items and prices and quality. Remember, your shop is considered to be like a museum shop where people expect to find unique, high quality items that are not overpriced. For this reason I do not shop the wholesale markets closest to my city. I travel further than most of the owners of boutiques in my city so I can have an inventory that looks different from the selection in other stores here. If you are going to a market where you are not registered, call the tradeshow "buyers" office and ask what type of identification and credentials you will need to provide to be admitted. Pre-register if it is available, this will save time when you arrive at the tradeshow.



Attending tradeshows can be challenging. There are a few disciplines that need to be observed to make it a successful experience without spending too much time and money. It can be an overwhelming experience and it is very easy to get sidetracked, as there are so many wonderful things to see that have nothing to do with your mission. Before I attend a market, I make notes in a purse size notebook about the items I have in stock, the productions in the upcoming season and any obvious themes that relate to these operas. I make notes about the items that I may need to reorder and new items I want to find. I list the vendors I want to revisit. I take plenty of business cards with all of my contact information. Vendors will keep you informed of new items and shows where they will be exhibiting even if you have not yet placed an order with them. I leave on the earliest flight in the morning so I can have at least a half-day to attend the tradeshow on my first day in the city of my destination. When I arrive at the tradeshow, I use the tradeshow directory book I receive to find the booth numbers of all the vendors I have on my list. I put them in numerical order so I do not have to do any avoidable backtracking. I take at least two pair of very comfortable shoes and a tote bag instead of a purse to carry my notebook, bottled water, snack bars and all of the catalogues and

information I will be collecting. The lights in all of the booths are hot and draw so much moisture out of your body; making you feel very tired. It is very important to drink plenty of water to help compensate for the environment.

First, I visit the vendors I listed in numerical order. As I walk the aisles to their booths, I look for vendors that may have merchandise that relates to the new items I am trying to find. I make notes and return after I have first visited the vendors on my original list. If you don't do this, you may not get to the booths you intended to visit before the show ends or it is time to go home. If you are attending a tradeshow you have not been to before, there is usually an orientation workshop for new buyers which lasts about one hour. This will help you make the most effective use of your time. They will explain the exhibitor categories and layout, refreshment areas, location of special services, etc.

Take lots of notes and collect catalogues and information that may be helpful in the future. It is very difficult to remember everything after you return home. If you see items you think you find interesting but are unsure or are not ready to order, write an order and take all copies with you. If you decide later you want to place the order, you can fax or mail it to the vendor. Call first to find out if it is in stock and can be shipped for the date you need to receive it. I have made use of information and catalogues I have had on file for several years, as I knew these sources would eventually be important. There are certain standard works that every opera company performs in rotation with new or less familiar works. If you see items that relate to standard works, take notes.

Every vendor has a minimum order requirement. It may be a minimum dollar requirement or a minimum number of pieces or a combination of both. As small, seasonal specialty shops that are not open everyday, we have an especially challenging experience in finding what we need in manageable quantities. Most often there is only one item in a vendor's line that we need and it becomes impossible to meet the minimums required to place an order. In these situations, I explain that I am buying for a not-for-profit company and that I am working as a volunteer at my own expense. I ask if I can pay an up-charge fee (usually \$10) to waive the minimum order requirement so I can get the items I want. Most of the time this works. The minimum order requirement is necessary to cover the vendor's cost of handling and shipping the order.

Many vendors have the ability to customize their items with your logo or create a special item for your company. There may be higher minimum requirements for this type of product

development. Be sure to explore these options as these kinds of opportunities will allow you to offer something unique with your company imprint.

After each day at a tradeshow (when you have returned to your hotel room and put your feet up), go through your orders and calculate the items you have purchased according to category and add up the total dollar amount of your orders. This exercise will help you see where there may be category deficiencies or excess. As you receive your orders, watch for items that were not shipped and were placed on back order. Be sure to cancel backordered items if they cannot be shipped for the time you need them. If you forget to do this, you may receive the backordered items several months later when you

no longer need them. Tell the vendor the dates you want the order to be shipped and give them a cancellation date.

Don't miss an important opportunity to network with other opera shop volunteers at the Regional OVI Conference in Houston, November 4-6, 2005. There will be a special 3-hour boutique workshop on Saturday, November 5. There will also be a wholesale market at the workshop where you can place orders or buy inventory and take it with you. After the workshop you will be invited to visit the Houston Grand Opera Boutique in the Wortham Theater Center and attend Boris Godinov starring Samuel Ramey.

If you have any questions, you can write to me at [pattehgo@aol.com](mailto:pattehgo@aol.com). Please title your message "opera boutique question". You can call me at (713) 443-4028. Happy selling!

## Matching Grants

If YOUR guild could use \$1000 for a special project, applications may continue to be submitted, and grants will be awarded on a continuing basis. All it takes is a really good idea, and an application to get the process underway!

The requirements are that the Grant Project be devoted to:

- a. Formation or expansion of programs for recruitment, development and training of volunteers with special consideration for programs which involve the multi-cultural community, or
- b. Creation of programs for recruitment, development and training of volunteers for opera for disadvantaged or underserved groups, or
- c. Development of programs for recruitment, development and training of volunteers which are educational, audience development or recruitment programs of support group members with special consideration for programs which involve the multi-cultural community.

Grants are up to \$1,000 and must be matched dollar for dollar. We hope to have groups develop programs that would encourage participation from those who have traditionally not been associated with opera and to encourage the participation of volunteers in all phases of supporting the opera company.

Information can be obtained from :

MARY EARL,  
7115 PIPER GLEN DRIVE  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62707.  
phone 217 483-6680 or email [Maryoperal@aol.com](mailto:Maryoperal@aol.com)

## Partners in Excellence

Nominations are now being solicited for Partners in Excellence. The award, given by Opera Volunteers International at each annual conference, recognizes both individual volunteers and support groups who have made outstanding contributions to their organizations and communities. The next awards will be given at our conference in Kansas City in March, 2006. Given since 1944-45, the presentation of the awards is an important event at every conference.

To qualify, candidates must be recommended by their Support Group President, who obtains supporting recommendations from the opera company's General Director and from the Board of Trustees. All individual OVI members in good standing are eligible. Support groups marking a significant anniversary (i.e., ten or twenty-five years) or an event may also apply.

Letters requesting nominations have been sent to Support Group Presidents. Replies should be sent to:

**Eunice M. Ganteaume**  
**Partners in Excellence Chair**  
**540 East 20th Street, #1-F**  
**New York, NY 10009-1331**

**Telephone: 212 677-9694**  
**e-mail: [eganteaume@nyc.rr.com](mailto:eganteaume@nyc.rr.com)**

**The deadline is October 15, 2005**

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**Eunice M. Ganteaume**  
**Partners in Excellence Chair**  
**540 East 20th Street, #1-F**  
**New York, NY 10009-1331**

**Telephone: 212 677-9694**  
**e-mail: [eganteaume@nyc.rr.com](mailto:eganteaume@nyc.rr.com)**

**The deadline is October 15, 2005**



## CONSULTANT SERVICES

Consultant Services are available to help guilds resolve a wide range of issues, including membership recruitment, volunteer training, long-range planning, fundraising, marketing, communication, etc.

You can request a consultant by completing the form available by calling or e-mailing the OVI office, or on our website.

## CALLING ALL "OLD OGI" BOARD MEMBERS!

If you are interested in another of our famous "OLD GI" board reunions at the Regional Meeting being held in Houston November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> —we need to hear from you. (It takes planning according to the number attending). These events are always fun, and an opportunity to renew acquaintances.

If you are interested, please contact Mary Dunkle at 607-547-2162 or [maryopera1@aol.com](mailto:maryopera1@aol.com)

### Opera Volunteers International Newsletter

Official Quarterly Publication  
Editor, Gerald Elijah

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#### OVI Newsletter

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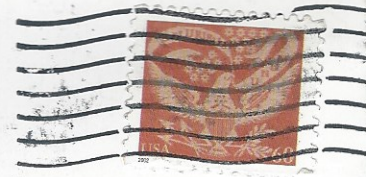
#### All other business & correspondence:

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