

# Opera Volunteers INTERNATIONAL

Expanding the future of Opera through development, mentoring and advancement of volunteer service through the Art of Opera.

Volume 31, Number 4

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Winter 2007

## Board of Directors Officers

*President*

**Fern Grauer-Illinois**

ferngrauer@sbcglobal.net

*Vice-President-Administration*

**Anne-Marie Crawford-Maryland**

kundry55@hotmail.com

*Vice-President-Member Service*

**Carole Bulter-Maryland**

cjbopera@msn.com

*Vice-President-Membership*

**Rhonda Sweeney-Texas**

rjsrochow@aol.com

*Vice-President-Outreach*

**Gerald Eijah-California**

gelijah@msn.com

*Secretary*

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jbenson@unitedlabsinc.com

*Treasurer*

**Evelyn Troughton-Washington**

et1000@msn.com

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**Sandi Bruns-Colorado**

brunsr2go@juno.com

## Opera Volunteers International Matching Grants *(a success story)*

In the fall of 2006, the board of directors of the **Guild of Tulsa Opera** raised concerns about the shrinking membership and lack of young members in The Guild. The board of directors moved to organize a task force to explore a new membership group that would target a diverse group of young professionals between the ages of twenty-five and fifty. The primary goals were to provide social and business networking opportunities for young professionals through the art of opera and to provide performance benefits and educational opportunities. The Guild applied for and was awarded a one thousand dollar (\$1000) grant from Opera Volunteers International with which to launch this experiment. It was decided to name the new group "Amici di Opera", friends of the opera.

Approximately twenty-five individuals attended the first event, a dress rehearsal of *Carmen*, followed by a gathering at Vintage 1740. After this first successful event, interest in the group grew, and by the second event there were one hundred and ten individuals interested in becoming involved. For the second event the Tulsa Opera Company provided orchestra seating at a group rate of thirty dollars (\$30) per ticket. Monies from the Opera Volunteers International grant were used to make these tickets available to "Amici" members for fifteen dollars (\$15).

Since this past summer, The Guild has been making plans for the upcoming season. For the first opera of the season, *Tosca*, Tulsa Opera will provide artists for a salon performance and sit down dinner in an historic private home for current members of "Amici". It is proposed that there will be a forty dollar (\$40) membership fee to become a member of this new group.

If you have an interesting idea and need assistance getting it off the ground please contact the Opera Volunteers International Matching Grants Chairperson, Mary Earl, at maryopera1@aol.com or ask your Regional Director for more information.

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## OPERA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL INTRODUCE INDIVIDUALS NEW TO THE BOARD

### NANCIE DOMINIC

Nancie brings a wealth of experience and expertise in education to Opera Volunteers International. Having taught in 4 states for twenty years, she is currently working as a part-time teacher and volunteer in music and drama. Like so many members of our active board, Nancie, not only worked full time while raising a family of 5, but over the years was able to steal time from her busy days to become active in the volunteer world of education and the arts: President of the Rosswell Guild of Santa Fe Opera, Rosswell Symphony, Rosswell Arts Council and the Special Education Advisory Council.

Currently living in Santa Fe, Nancie, continues her involvement in the community, and fortunately, for us, the arts. Within the Guilds of Santa Fe Opera, Inc. she has chaired Opera Day at the Ranch and is now completing a two year term as President. The community benefits from her board involvement in the Villa Theresa Clinic (where she was involved in fundraising and the nominations) and membership in the Santa Fe Garden Club. Last but not least, Nancie, has begun a new business which you can quiz her about when you meet her.

### ORPHA HARNISH

Orpha has been an active volunteer most of her life with opera holding her interest since childhood. Like many of us she grew up listening to the Met broadcasts. Recently her focus has been with The Guild of Tulsa Opera, serving as President and many years as a board member. She has served as President or on the board of many organizations, including President of the Auxiliary to the American Osteopathic Assn., from which she received the Millennium Award in 1999. She is a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians, Tulsa Garden Club, Questers and PEO. She has been instrumental in the creation of endowment funds for several organizations, and actively involved in fundraising for the Tulsa Guild and Tulsa Opera. She has one daughter, Jill Lawrence, a resident of Anchorage, Alaska.

### VERNIE JONES

Vernie comes to Opera Volunteers International with a rich history of community volunteering. She has held executive board positions with the Omaha Opera Guild including that of President. She has also chaired their numerous fundraising events. Other community groups which have benefited from her time and expertise are Joslyn Castle, On Track (Western Heritage Museum), Joslyn Art Museum and Act II (Omaha Community Playhouse) where she currently serves as President Elect.

## OUTREACH

Fall is a busy time for Opera Volunteers everywhere, and sometimes renewing your Opera Volunteers International membership gets delayed. Please, if you haven't already, renew now - and while you are at it-spread the good news to your opera friends, Opera Volunteers international is an exciting and highly valuable asset to support groups and individuals working to make a difference in the world of opera volunteerism.

*Vice-President Outreach, Gerald Elijah*

## NOMINATIONS FOR OPERA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL BOARD

A nominating committee has been formed to select candidates for the Opera Volunteers International Board of Directors. Members of the committee are: Evelyn Troughton-Chair, Sandi Bruns, Mary Earl, Gerald Elijah and Melody Schubert.

*If you or someone you know, would be interested in being nominated to our board please contact Evelyn Troughton, via e-mail at [et1000@msn.com](mailto:et1000@msn.com), or by phone at 206/282-6191.*





Beginning a new fiscal year is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the past one! 2006/7 certainly saw some of exciting events, accomplishments and interesting changes for OVI.

We awarded Matching Grant funds to 3 Support Groups for excellent projects. We presented our Partners in Excellence Award to 8 deserving recipients. We became official certifiers of the President's Volunteer Service Award. We recognized 11 special "Projects of Merit" submitted by our members. We welcomed new Support Group members from Mexico and England. We elected a strong, motivated new OVI Board of Directors. We accomplished and enjoyed another wonderful OBI conference.

and...

We made a big move (literally) and closed our Chevy Chase office in favor of having each OVI Chairman personally manage their own field. Communicate with our board members individually; communicate with them directly! It is so easy in this electronic age.

COMMUNICATE WITH US! It takes just a simple click on [www.operavol.org](http://www.operavol.org).

Fern Grauer

President

## MATCHING GRANTS AWARDED IN DENVER

### CHATTANOOGA SYMPHONY AND OPERA GUILD

"Ready, Set, Opera"! This unique program is an interactive introduction for elementary school children to opera. Students learn about how music tells a story, how voice types add to character development, how music can cue action and about how music can spark our imagination. The arias were selected to complement the language arts, social studies and music curricula of the Hamilton County Schools. They highlight Tennessee culture, folk songs, the California Gold Rush, and standard operatic repertoire through singing, dialogue and listening segments. Students will participate as scene partners, sound effects and even chorus, and will be staged into a famous operatic thunderstorm scene from Rossini's Opera, *La Cenerentola*. This forty-five minute presentation is fully staged, has costumes and set, and is intended for classroom presentation to groups of about fifty children.

### CINCINNATI OPERA GUILD

"Two Trips to Ripley"! Cincinnati Opera has commissioned a new family opera *Rise to Freedom: The John P. Parker Story*, which is based on the life of a former slave. John P. Parker is celebrated as one of the leading local conductors of the Underground Railroad. The Cincinnati Guild will organize two trips to the town of Ripley, Ohio, to undergo training to promote this work; the trips will also include tours of the Parker home. Cincinnati Opera Guild members will promote this new opera as a way to recruit new and diverse Guild memberships. This training will also include a moderated diversity discussion. All training attendees will receive a package that will consist of information about Mr. Parker, promotional materials and a CD of the opera score. Fifty individuals are expected to make each trip.

### THE GUILD OF TULSA OPERA

"The Young Puccini Society"! As a result of a special ad hoc committee of The Guild of Tulsa Opera members to address the problem of declining membership, The Young Puccini Society was formed. The goal is to attract young individuals, raise awareness of arts among young professionals, and to establish a solid young Guild membership base. (See page 1 for more information on "The Young Puccini Society")



## Northeast Region

Walter Briggs *walterbriggs@earthlink.net*  
 phone 607-264-9312  
 115 Fish and Game Road, Cherry Valley, NY 13320

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

### NEW YORK

On Sunday, August 26, following the matinee performance of Orpheus in the Underworld, the company honored the **Glimmerglass Opera Guild's** volunteers at a reception in the Thaw Pavilion. Among the many skills which the Guild brings to the opera company is fundraising. This year they again sponsored an intern at Glimmerglass Opera. This internship is a continuing Guild memorial to Doris P. Shields.

## Southeast Region

Shelley C. Page *Spag813@comcast.net*  
 phone 615-665-1957  
 1813 Tyne Boulevard, Nashville, TN 37215

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



Washington DC Guild President Johanna Thompson with Conductor Kate Tamarkin at Annual Meeting/Brunch

### FLORIDA

The **Sarasota Opera Guild** has been without an opera house for almost a year. The exciting news is that the brand new opera house will be ready for performances in early March 2008. The Guild remains active; new mem-

ber coffees are scheduled. With new members being encouraged to attend. It is the perfect way for them to meet other members of The Guild and to start planning activities together

### MARYLAND

The **Summer Opera Guild** held their annual meeting and brunch on September 30th. Conductor, Kate Tamarkin, was the guest speaker. Plans are well underway The Guild's annual Holiday Party.

### TENNESSEE

At their annual membership meeting last May, Dr. Helen Brown, president of the **Nashville Opera Guild** presented Nashville Opera's General Director, Carol Penterman and Artistic Director, John Hoomes, with a check for \$110,000 which represented the monies raised by The Guild during the past year. At the same meeting the past presidents of The Guild, which celebrated its twentieth anniversary, were honored.



Past Presidents of Nashville Opera Guild



Nashville Opera Guild President, Helen Brown presenting Nashville Opera Artistic Director, John Hoomes and Executive Director, Carol Penterman with a check for \$110,000.



## Central Region

Wilma Wilcox *wilmawilcox@yahoo.com*  
 phone 913-302-9789  
 16314 West Saddletree Lane, Olathe, KS 66062

Arkansas	Iowa	Kansas
Minnesota	Missouri	Nebraska
North Dakota	Oklahoma	South Dakota

### IOWA

The **Des Moines Metro Opera Guild Council**, the body that oversees the three individual chapters, belongs to a large organization called Opera Volunteers International. This past spring we were invited to submit some of the Guild's fundraising ideas to OVI for evaluation. The Ames chapter submitted "Arias in Ames", Des Moines submitted "Choose Your Own Fundraiser", Indianola submitted "Peanut Butter and Puccini", and The Guild Council submitted "Threads and Trills". All four entries were selected as "Projects of Special Merit" by the Opera Volunteers International board of directors. Special congratulations go to the Indianola Chapter because their project received an award of \$250.00.

### KANSAS

For the past two years The **Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild** fundraising Fashion Show has included men as well as women Guild members. This year we were again fortunate to have General Director, Evan Luskin, modeling for Stein Mart. Wilma Wilcox, Regional Coordinator for Opera Volunteers International, was the chair of this event held at the Indian Hills Country Club. The Guild recently hosted a dinner for one hundred and fifty cast members of this fall's production of Aida. The dinner was held between back to back rehearsals. Guild members were invited to stay for the piano dress rehearsal.

### MISSOURI

The **Opera Theater of Saint Louis Guild** reports some very good numbers. First of all, our boutique, with a nice assortment of new items available, netted \$19,000.



*Opera Theatre of St. Louis Head Ushers: Charlotte Lubbock, Irene Sokol, and Martha Roux*

The other great number is the 16,246 hours our 300 volunteers contributed during the year. That translates into a savings of \$304,906.

Earlier this summer our archdiocesan newspaper had an interview with one of our faithful Guild members, Lee Meyer. The paper was saluting seniors for all of their volunteer activities and the contributions they make to the community. Lee is chairperson of The Guild's mailing committee. She says she may have retired from teaching music, but she does not plan to retire from doing volunteer work, because, as she so eloquently put it, "I feel like I receive more good than I give, and I think that every volunteer will tell you the same thing. I've made many great friends and had many great experiences because of my volunteer work". At ninety-three she continues to sing the praises of remaining as active as possible.

### NEBRASKA

The **Opera Omaha Guild** invites you to celebrate Opera Omaha's fiftieth anniversary season by reminiscing and sharing stories of performances, artists and events you have been a part of during that period. A special "Share Your Memories" page has been set up on the website ([www.operaomaha.org](http://www.operaomaha.org)). You can view memories that have already been posted and add your own by clicking on "Post Reply: Digital Images", to go along with the memories you may want to attach.

### OKLAHOMA

Dixie Reppe, a former **Tulsa Opera Guild** president, has been selected to be the new Interim General Director of Tulsa Opera. Dixie has been a long time member of Opera Volunteers International and served as its president under its previous name, Opera Guilds International. In 1996 she received their Partners In Excellence award.

## Great Lakes Region

Teresa Franklin *Dfrank1430@aol.com*  
 phone 937-848-6958  
 1430 Soaring Heights Drive, Dayton, OH 45440

Eastern Canada	Illinois	Indiana
Michigan	Ohio	Wisconsin

### ILLINOIS

Opera Volunteers International welcomes the **Elgin Opera Support Group**. Artistic Director, Solange Sior, and Administrative Assistant, Susan Dennis, have formed this group in Elgin, Illinois, a city just northwest of Chicago. They have also started a children's opera which takes in all of the surrounding areas. Their first production will be L'Elisir D'Amore next February.



## Old West/Mountain/Desert Region

Shirley Litchfield-Bird [shirleylichfieldbird@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shirleylichfieldbird@sbcglobal.net)  
phone 480-515-3725

10333 Buckskin Trail, Scottsdale, AZ 85255

and

phone 630-837-6071

8 N 190 Naperville Road, Bartlett, IL 60103

Arizona  
Montana  
Utah

Colorado  
New Mexico  
Wyoming

Idaho  
Texas

### TEXAS

This past September more than one hundred seventy-five people gathered at the Omni Houston to honor significant volunteer efforts and individuals who have contributed to

**Houston Grand Opera Guild's** success this past year. Honored were, Dr. Jo Lyday, as Volunteer of the Year, Diane Zola, Bravo winner, Continental Airlines as Crescendo



*Adelma Graham, Maria Koegel and Steve Brenner*

Award winner, and Jane Egner, Wendy and Neil Hershey, Maria Koegel, Allan MacKinnon, Janet Sims and Janet Upole as Volunteers of Distinction. The volunteers of Houston Grand Opera Guild have supported the Houston Grand Opera since its inception in 1955. There are, at present, more than 2,200 Guild members

**Austin Lyric Opera** Guild hosts a dinner before the opening night of each production by Austin Lyric Opera. The Barber of Seville was the final production of the 2006-2007 season and a very "Rossini-esque" menu was created. The

Guild applauded Curby Conoley for her work in chairing the very successful Austin Lyric Garden Festival. The opening of the new home of Austin Lyric Opera at Long Center has



*Rose Betty Williams and Curby Conoley, chair of Austin Lyric Garden Festival*

every ones attention these day. Carmen will open the opera season there on April 18.

## Pacific Rim Region

For the time being send all updated information to Gerald Elijah [gelijah@msn.com](mailto:gelijah@msn.com)

Alaska  
California  
Nevada

Australia  
Hawaii  
Washington State

Baja California  
Oregon  
Western Canada

### ALASKA

The **Anchorage Opera Guild** is dedicated to furthering opera in Anchorage, educating others about opera and raising money for opera and for scholarships to singers. At the same time they believe in enjoying themselves while working towards those goals. The Guild has just held "Lunch with the Stars" of The Abduction from the Seraglia. When you visit their web site [www.aoguild.org](http://www.aoguild.org) take a look at the photo galley of past events. More activities are set to follow for the remainder of this year and into 2008.

### CALIFORNIA

The **Opera League of Los Angeles** is busy with the usual cast dinners, airport pickups, staffing their boutique, conducting seminars, musicals and supporting the opera company's Education Department. At the same time they are preparing for January 7, 2008 when Placido Domingo will announce the 2008-2009 L A Opera season at a reception for League members.

The **Opera Pacific Guild Alliance** sponsors the invaluable Docent Program. The program is growing in size and is a very important part of Opera Pacific's Education Program. Docents share their enthusiasm and knowledge of opera with a variety of audiences including student groups, business organizations, senior citizens groups and anyone interested in opera.

**San Francisco Opera Guild** is active through education, outreach programs and special events. It provides financial support to the San Francisco Opera Association through six Bay Area Chapters. One of their programs, Guild Insights, features renowned artists and personalities from the world of opera conducting informal panel discussions dealing with the season's operas. Guild volunteers are involved in support of both the SFOG and San Francisco Opera.

The **Stockton Opera Guild** provides important financial support to the Stockton Opera Association through a variety of fundraising activities. The next major event will be their thirty-third Annual Gala set for April 6, 2008. At the recent Opera Guild Installation Dinner the group presented a check for \$15,000 to the president of Stockton Opera.



NEVADA

Temporarily renamed the **Bravo Circle**, The Nevada Opera Guild (Reno, NV) was reorganized in January 2006. Since that time the Guild, consisting of less than 100 members, under the leadership of President Ms. Katie Johnson, has hosted several successful fund raisers and was able to donate over \$33,000 to the Nevada Opera Company in the fiscal year ending July 30, 2007. The 2007-2008 season will find the Guild involved in the celebration of Nevada Opera's 40th anniversary as the oldest performing arts organization in the state of Nevada.

OREGON

The **Portland Opera Guild**, in addition to supporting the work of Portland Opera Association, has a portfolio of unique events for Guild membership - luncheons where the details of the upcoming operas are explained, volunteering for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and blending social time and networking with many other educational and philanthropic programs. Already concluded are the Metropolitan Auditions and the Cinderella luncheon. On tap is the Rodelinda luncheon on February 1, 2008

WASHINGTON STATE

The **Seattle Opera Guild**, through its fundraising activities, provides over \$65,000 annually to opera-related organizations with the bulk of the monies allocated to Seattle Opera. Other organizations include the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions-Northwest Region, King County Libraries and Northwest Opera in Schools Etc. (NOISE). On their current fundraising schedule is a cocktail and fashion show with a Curatorial Tour of the Audubon exhibit at the Museum of Natural History. Next month The Holiday Soiree and the Holiday Luncheon will keep Guild members hopping.

WESTERN CANADA

**Vancouver Opera Guild** publishes an electronic (e-mail) newsletter that is both extensive (nineteen pages in the current issue) and usefully informative. Vancouver Opera in the Schools is offering an adaptation of The Barber of Seville, retitled The Barber of Barkerville, with a gold rush theme. The opera was performed December 2 at the Vancouver Academy of Music as the Guilds annual Christmas fundraiser. Another interesting fundraiser for the festive season is "Bake to Order". Cookies and a limited number of plum puddings baked by Guild volunteers will be available for sale.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS****Opera Volunteers International****Committee Chairs**

**Consultant Services** - Rose betty Williams  
512-327-2281, rbetty@austin.rr.com

**Conference/Meeting Planning**  
Ann & Ellen Fusz  
314-961-5094, aandefusz@aol.com

**Grants** - Mary Earl  
217-483-6680, maryopera1@aol.com

**Publications**- Barbara Eckel  
847-475-5345, bmeckel43@aol.com

**Education** - Roy Fisher  
847-733-8910, yorhc@aol.com

**Newsletter Editors** - Warren & Melody Schubert  
207-236-2162, wschubert4@aol.com

**Website/Tech Assistant** - David Yuen  
954-432-3743, dyuen@trapsystems.com

**Projects of Merit Chair** - Orpha Harnish  
918-742-8393, ojharnish@sbcglobal.net

**AT LARGE:**

**Roger Bessey** - 210-434-9592;  
rbessey@texas.net

**Christa Cooper** - 713-278-8996;  
wein1945@aol.com

**Gene Cropsey** - 813-961-6070;  
ecropsey1@verizon.net

**Nancie Dominic** - 505-820-6727;  
dominic2701@msn.com

**Vernie Jones** - 402-330-2384;  
vsjones3@hotmail.com



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918-742-8393, ojharnish@sbcglobal.net

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**Roger Bessey** - 210-434-9592;  
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**Christa Cooper** - 713-278-8996;  
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ecropsey1@verizon.net

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dominic2701@msn.com

**Vernie Jones** - 402-330-2384;  
vsjones3@hotmail.com



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## NEWSLETTER

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Editor, Warne & Melody Schubert

Please send Guild & Volunteer news,  
articles, comments and suggestions to:

OVI Newsletter  
31 Barrett Drive  
Rockport, ME 04856-5156  
Telephone: 207-236-2162  
E-mail: wschubert4@aol.com

All other correspondence  
should be sent to the website:

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

# Opera Volunteers INTERNATIONAL

31 Barrett Drive  
Rockport, ME 04856-5156



Barbara M. Echel  
2624 Thayer Street  
Evanston, IL 60201

60201\$1322 0055



## TRAVELS WITH WILMA

I have always been drawn to opera and languages, and this has been an exciting year for opera travel. In January I started studying Chinese in preparation for a two week trip to China, in May, with my Johnson County Community College group. I attended the Beijing Opera and then went on to two more Chinese operas performed in Colorado and New Mexico. The first was during the Opera Volunteers International conference in Denver in July. Shirley Bird (another Opera Volunteers International Regional Coordinator), her husband and I traveled to Central City for the world premier of *The Poet Li Bai*, sung entirely in Chinese with Chinese principals. I had visited the monument to Li Bai during my May trip to China. The chorus, for this work, was composed of resident opera students in Central City's apprentice program and University of Denver's Lamont School of Music students. They all had to learn Chinese to sing this haunting opera. The composer of this opera was, Guo Wenjing. Li Bai's "flower poetry" was considered political, at the time, and he was executed during the China's Cultural Revolution.

In August I traveled to Santa Fe for their summer opera festival and a performance of Tan Dun's opera *Tea: A Mirror of the Soul*. This folk tale involves the elemental powers of earth, air, water and fire and their effect on the lives of the two young lovers. This production was sung in English. I bought a tee shirt in their gift shop which read "Though bowl is empty, scent glows; Though shadow is gone, dream grows".

Later this year I traveled to Spain to attend the music festival in Granada. The opera, *Il Califfo di Bagdad*, was performed in the palace of Carlos V in the beautiful Alhambra. The opera was composed by Manuel Garcia, a Spanish contemporary of Mozart, as an opera buffo in 2 acts. It reminded me of a mini version of *The Barber of Seville*. It was performed on a small stage with full orchestra with elaborate costumes. It truly was a night to remember. Another event at this festival included a ballet in the gardens in the moonlight. Before returning home I traveled to Fuengirola, Spain for a recital by Montserrat Caballe.

It was another great year for opera.

*Wilma Wilcox is the Regional Coordinator for the Central Region.*