

Opera Volunteers INTERNATIONAL

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

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INSIDE

OVI Interview	1
Conference 2009	2
President's Letter	3
Whatever Happened to...	3
News From the Regions	4
Focus Meeting	6
Mary Earl	8

The following is the third in a series of articles profiling Life and long term members of Opera Volunteers International.

JOANNE KOLENDA

A Special Friend

By Fern Grauer

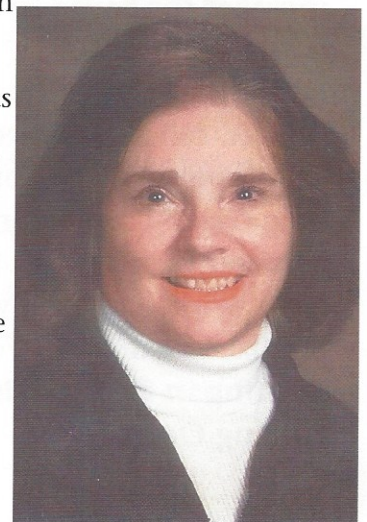
How fortunate we are to have Joanne Kolenda as a friend of OVI, of Opera Omaha, of the Opera Omaha Guild, and of opera and the arts everywhere!

Her dedicated service and staunch support of Opera Omaha and Opera Omaha Guild spans many years and includes varied jobs and accomplishments. She considers her participation in the growth of both organizations one of her most gratifying experiences.

She mentions many memorable performances that have helped make her such a devoted fan. In particular there were a dear ticket to a *Turandot* at Covent Garden at a time when she was a self-supporting student at Oxford, a wonderful 1976 production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Beverly Sills, and more recently, the exceptional 2005 Opera/Omaha production of *Madama Butterfly* designed by Jun Kaneko.

When she was President of Opera Omaha Angels, she was a delegate to the 1979 Opera Guilds International Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She was introduced to our mission and shared the weekend of education and entertainment with interesting new contacts and friends. OGI was promptly added to the list of organizations that she felt were "worthy of time, talent and treasury". She backed it up by joining us as an Individual Member at the Sustaining level in 1990 and then raising her contribution in 1993 to become a very special Life Member.

Although Joanne stays busy and active with interests in many organizations, she makes sure that our OVI Conferences are always on her calendar. Over the years, she has frequently attended conferences and has collected some wonderful memories: Participating in a meeting with OGI to plan the Omaha Conference in 1974, staying in sight of the Governor's mansion where George Bush was awaiting election results in Austin (2000), waking up to the beauty of Puget Sound in Vancouver (1999), meeting with OPERAmerica and hearing reports on opera around the world in St. Louis (2003), and recently, having Catherine Malfitano autograph her photograph in an old copy of Opera News magazine in Central City (2007).



We admire and applaud her philosophy which holds that "in the world of volunteerism, supported by the time, talent and treasure of many, it is required that service be to the level of which we are capable in the support of that which we deem worthy of preservation. Support of the arts is both a requirement and a privilege".

What better friend of the arts could we ask?

PLANNING FOR OVI CONFERENCE IN JULY 2009

THE SANTA FE OPERA GUILDS ARE PLANNING FOR OPERA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL'S CONFERENCE IN JULY 2009

Hard at work already, The Guilds Inc. (the eight Guilds which make up The Guilds of The Santa Fe Opera) planning group, co-chaired by Nancie Dominic, Immediate Past President of the organization and presently serving on the board of OVI, and John Webber, president of the Santa Fe chapter have formed about a dozen committees in order to share the planning load for the conference across the entire state.

Under the leadership of the current Guilds Inc., president, Ursel Albers, regular bi-monthly meetings are being held in different parts of the state. The Guilds in Albuquerque, Las Vegas, and Taos have been visited so far. The planning group, besides the above mentioned individuals, also includes the Santa Fe Opera's Education Department Director, Andrea Fellows-Walters and their Volunteer Liaison, Kyle Gray. Preliminary conference schedules have been worked on and will be finalized at the OVI Focus Meeting in Seattle this coming October.



Opera Volunteers
INTERNATIONAL

Hold the dates for
CONFERENCE
2009
to be held in
Santa Fe, New Mexico



The Crosby Theatre at The Santa Fe Opera



A legendary Santa Fe sunset



East Palace Avenue near the Plaza



San Francisco Street and the Basilica

***Come join us in Santa Fe for lively discussions,
outstanding performances and special events!***
Thursday, 9th to Sunday, 12th July 2009

- * Stay at the beautiful **Hotel Santa Fe** in downtown Santa Fe.
- * At **The Santa Fe Opera**, see internationally-famous soprano Natalie Dessay in Verdi's **La traviata** (Saturday evening) preceded by an elegant buffet dinner at the cantina.
- * See SFO's **The Elixir of Love** by Donizetti (Friday evening, optional).
 - * Enjoy **garden tours** of Santa Fe's finest homes.
 - * Savor the city's world famous and **distinctive cuisine**.
 - * Pre-conference day trip to Taos (July 9, optional).

Hello Everyone

As we start closing the book on our 2007/2008 OVI year, my thoughts drift back to some of our earlier chapters.

Our story began in 1972 with a dedicated volunteer, Leta Autry, whose far-sighted vision brought opera volunteers from around the country together in Seattle for the first time. I can only imagine the excitement of bringing opera support groups, individual volunteers, donors, company staff and opera lovers together for a few days of education and entertainment! After the success in Seattle, interest and enthusiasm increased with each meeting and conference: St. Paul, Toronto, Fort Worth, Glen Falls, Milwaukee and San Francisco.

Then 1982 brought the conference to Charlotte, NC, my first conference, my first chance to absorb the significant content of the workshops and sessions and discover the camaraderie of fellow delegates. As I read down the list of past conferences, I am reminded of the good friends I've made and the great ideas we have shared. I'm filled with wonderful memories of fun, friends, experiences and education.

How fitting that our next meeting takes us back to our remarkable beginning, Seattle. I hope you all will join us for our Focus Meeting weekend there October 24 and 25. It will be another terrific opportunity to meet opera staff, opera volunteers and opera lovers. We'll promise you entertainment, education and excitement again!



Fern Grauer
President

What Ever Happened to...

"Whatever happened to" is a phrase we hear and use regularly. Almost always it is used in reference to someone we have known slightly and who, for some reason, beauty, personality, job skills or a whole myriad of reasons, is memorable. In my case it was "Whatever happened to Dixie Reppe?" and for all of the before mentioned reasons. Dixie was the president of Opera Guilds International (now OVI) when I went to my first conference in Santa Fe back in 1992. That I was impressed is putting it mildly. But, shortly after her term as president was over, and although she continued to be a member, she was no longer visible. I knew that she was in Tulsa, but what she was doing that kept her away from our conferences was a mystery. A few months ago I received an e-mail from Dixie which cleared up that mystery. Following, in almost all her own words, is the answer to "Whatever happened to Dixie Reppe".

"My life after OGI took a difficult turn. My husband suffered a stroke fourteen years ago and eventually had to close his business. I had to resign my volunteer assignments and find a job. Initially, I went to work for the YWCA Tulsa as Director of Marketing and Development and four years later became their Executive Director. I retired from that job in December, 2006, and 6 months later was asked by Tulsa Opera to help them through a transition. I thoroughly enjoyed my brief retirement and wouldn't have done this for anyone but Tulsa Opera. They were moving from a General Director-in-charge-of everything governance model to an executive Director/Artistic Director model. It was to be a three-month assignment, but it has grown to one year. I've served as Interim Executive Director since mid-July 2007 and my replacement comes to town on July 17, 2008.

Between working at the YW and caring for my husband, I simply didn't have the time or resources to do anything more for many years. Raising money and cleaning up internal systems for Tulsa Opera this past year has been challenging, but the wonderful part is that it brought me back to the art form I love. I think I must have blocked out how much I missed it until I was back in the middle of all this wonderful music. Being here when the artists come in and hearing their voices up and down the halls, listening to the Youth Opera Chorus rehearse, and having the luxury of immersing myself in the entire experience has been incredible. I'm very much ready to retire again, and my husband needs more of my time - but the thing I've promised myself is that I will always make time for opera in the future. It feeds my soul."

Dixie closed her letter with this sentence, "The only thing better than opera is the wonderful people you meet who share your passion."

VP - OUTREACH INTRODUCTION TO THE REGIONAL NEWS REPORTS

By Gerald Elijah

Now is the time of year when most of our members are catching their breaths, having just finished a busy volunteer season, and often with a new slate of officers, begin planning for the next season; others, of course, who support summer performances are in full swing with their seasonal activities. Whatever your calendar, please remember that OVI and your Regional Coordinators are on your team. Your bright ideas get shared across the membership spectrum, but you need to keep us up to date. Be sure to report any changes in your officers to the OVI membership chair. Be sure that you keep up on your mail and e-mail distribution lists, and when something special is in your future, let us help publicize or celebrate it with you!

Lastly, and certainly not least, do plan to join in the October Focus Meeting in Seattle. It is going to be a wonderful opera experience as well as an informative meeting. The opera will be Strauss' *Elektra* with a world class cast

Northeast Region

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

Southeast Region

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

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The Summer Opera Guild will hold their annual Guild meeting on October 5, 2008, at the Army and Navy Club. Their featured speaker will be Anne Midgette, the chief classical music critic for the Washington Post. The Guild is planning a trip to Sarasota, Florida, March 5 - 9, 2009, as a few days escape from winter. The group will attend performances of *L'Amico Fritz* and *Tosca*. The opera *Don Carlo* will also be an option. The trip is still in the planning stages.

FLORIDA

The Sarasota Opera Guild celebrates the 50th anniversary of Sarasota Opera when *The Barber of Seville* inaugurates the

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

2008-2009 season in November. Guild President Carol von Allmen announced that SOG was very successful in their fundraising efforts this year and presented the opera company with over \$50,000 for its diverse programs.

TENNESSEE

As mentioned in the previous Opera Volunteers International newsletter, the Nashville Opera Guild was planning a trip to Italy. That trip has now been successfully completed. Twenty-two happy opera lovers participated in the Guild sponsored trip in July. The group enjoyed third row seats for spectacular performances of *Aida* and *Carmen* in the enormous outdoor Roman Arena in Verona. The scheduled *La Boheme* performance at Milan's La Scala Opera House was cancelled due to an orchestra strike. Although extremely disappointed, the group did enjoy a tour of the opera house and an interesting Maria Callas exhibit. Other events included side trips to Venice, Vincenza, Stressa and Bergamo.

Central Region

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16314 West Saddletree Lane, Olathe, KS 66062

Arkansas	Iowa	Kansas
Minnesota	Missouri	Nebraska
North Dakota	Oklahoma	South Dakota

MISSOURI

The Opera Theatre of St. Louis Guild has been very involved in their new individual study groups. Members of the group were assigned one of the season's operas and they must develop a talk on a particular subject related to that opera. The topics were composer, librettist, historical background at the time the opera was set, and events happening at the time the opera was premiered. The docents who were members of the group then took their talks out to the community. At the annual May meeting the docents were once again treated to a luncheon hosted and prepared by Erika Goldberg. The dessert was attending the dress rehearsal of *Tales of Hoffmann*.



Erika Goldberg, Karen Kroenemer and Gayla Barker at the Docent Luncheon.

Great Lakes Region

For the time being send all updated information to Warren Schubert at wshubert4@aol.com or Gerald Elijah at gelijah@msn.com

Eastern Canada	Illinois	Indiana
Michigan	Ohio	Wisconsin

EASTERN CANADA

Toronto's Canadian Opera Volunteers Committee fundraising plans are well underway for fall 2008, with the COVC "Operalicious Gala 2008" first on the list. The event takes place on Friday, September 19 and raises funds to support opera students. Guests will be entertained by Canada's original "Primadonna" Mary Louise Fallis, the star of television's "Bathroom Divas". Then on October 1, COVC will offer "Bridge for Opera", with the opportunity to see a performance of Samuel Barber's *A Hand of Bridge*, have lunch and play bridge. The last event of the year will be the annual "Scholarship Presentation Concert" on December 1.

ILLINOIS

During July and August evenings, Elgin Opera sponsored "Festival of Singers" at the Villa Verona Ristorante. Patrons enjoyed beautiful voices performing Broadway showstoppers, Italian songs and well known arias from grand opera. All of that took place while enjoying a sumptuous Italian dinner prepared by restaurateur, Pietro Verone. Singers from Elgin OPERA and the winners of Elgin OPERA's 2nd vocal competition performed at the Fox Fire Festival on August 1.

The Opera Illinois League in Peoria sponsored a bus trip to Watseka, Illinois, on August 3rd to attend a performance of *The Elixir of Love*.

OHIO

This past spring the Opera Guild of Dayton announced winners of the 2008 Tri-State College Vocal Competitions. The Guild's college vocal competition began in 1989, and was expanded last year to include students from or attending schools in Indiana and Kentucky as well as Ohio. Proceeds from the Guild's many fundraising events support this competition as well as contributing to Dayton Opera productions. The Guild is also responsible for busing hundreds of high school children to a final dress rehearsal. This year it will be on October 16 and the opera will be *Turandot*.

Old West/Mountain/Desert Region

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8 N 190 Naperville Road, Bartlett, IL 60103

Arizona	Colorado	Idaho
Montana	New Mexico	Texas
Utah	Wyoming	

TEXAS

On May 30, Christa Cooper, a member of the Houston Opera Guild, was honored by The Republic of Austria with the Medal in Silver for her twenty plus years of service to Austria as the founder of the Austroes Organization, editor and publisher of the Austroes Newsletter and service as the Honorary Vice Consul since 1992.



Austrian Consul General,
Gernot Weidner and Crista Ludwig

Pacific Rim Region

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1151 Heatherside Road, Pasadena, CA 91105-1115

Alaska	Australia	Baja California
California	Hawaii	Oregon
Nevada	Washington State	Western Canada

ALASKA

The Anchorage Opera Guild will host "Luncheon with the Stars" on Sunday, October 26. The venue will be an intimate restaurant with great food, spectacular views and extraordinary entertainment provided by the cast of Anchorage Opera's production of *Carmen*.

CALIFORNIA

The Opera Pacific Guild Alliance docents have been working overtime to prepare for next season's production of *Grapes of Wrath*. Sylvia Traub and Lynn Kukes traveled to Salinas, CA, to visit the Steinbeck Museum to view pictures of the dustbowl era which motivated Steinbeck to write the novel, and to get a better feel for the author. Sylvia also paid a visit to the Steinbeck home. Other docents are rereading the novel and viewing the old Henry Fonda movie.

On Father's Day 2008, African-Americans for Los Angeles Opera (AALAO), a chapter of the Opera League of Los Angeles, held its annual membership recital. The program of arias, songs and duets featured Haqumai Sharp, tenor, Ralph Cato, baritone, with Frank Fetta, as their accompanist. Alice Coulombe, one of the founders of the League and a charter member of AALOA, presented Dr. Eva Grant with a trophy acknowledging her efforts in establishing, developing and guiding AALOA since its inception in 1993.



Michael Melton, Chair; Frank Fetta, Accompanist; Ralph Cato, Bass; Eva Grant, Former President; Haqumai Sharpe, Tenor

The Festival Opera Guild in Walnut Creek continued six years of assisting summer productions by serving as dressers, and planning and setting up the cast party after the final opera performances. At this year's June meeting/dinner event, the opera's makeup and costume designers spoke about their individual roles in getting the production on the stage. To demonstrate their skills they costumed and made up Guild member Catherine Oetjen as Azucena.



WESTERN CANADA

The Vancouver Opera Guild supported the Vancouver Opera's Education Program with a gift of \$10,000 for the development of a new opera, *Jack Pine*, which is to be premiered in the area schools in 2009.

Past President Heather Clarke, has been awarded the prestigious Partners in Excellence certificate from Opera Volunteers International.

Heather will be honored at the OVI Focus Meeting in Seattle, October 25-26, 2008. We hope that many VOG members will be able to join us and acknowledge and celebrate Heather's well deserved award.



Anne Pearson - Director & Chair of Special Events at the Pasta & Puccini Fundraiser

Opera Volunteers International is your organization and it is growing. The following are our newest members, listed by region. Welcome!

NEW INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF OPERA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL

SOUTHEAST REGION

- Sandra Frank, Nashville, TN
- Dr. Frank Simon, Tampa, FL

CENTRAL REGION

- Marilyn Strange, Tulsa, OK
- Elizabeth Geer, Tulsa, OK

MOUNTAIN REGION

- Dr. Elizabeth Neeld, Austin, TX
- Desiree Mays, Santa Fe, NM
- Opera Southwest Guild, Albuquerque, NM

PACIFIC RIM REGION

- Fred Dear, South Pasadena, CA
- Sandra & William Dunn, Mercer Island, WA
- Dale Ann Ross, Burbank, CA
- Pacific Opera Victoria, Victoria, BC

Alert!!! Alert!!! Focus Meeting

Opera Volunteers International Focus Meeting Seattle, October 24 & 25

Deadline for registration is September 20.

For more information e-mail : Evelyn Troughton at Et1000@msn.com

ADVERTISING RATES

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Quarter Page	\$80	\$300	\$20
Half Page	\$130	\$500	\$20
Full Page	\$250	\$850	\$150

Full Color Full Page Ad or Flyer \$1000.

Prices are for camera ready copy or copy on computer disk (pdf, tif or jpeg formats).

Deadline for the Winter 2008 edition is October 31, 2008

HONORS AND AWARDS

By Roger Bessey

The Opera Guild of San Antonio finished the sixth season of our Opera in the Schools program the end of May. Our program, provided free of charge to the schools and the children, has grown from reaching about 1000 children in the initial 02-03 season to reaching more than 15,000 children this year!

Our traveling opera this year was a version of Humperdink's *Hansel and Gretel* edited to fit a school class period. The singers were voice majors from the University of Texas San Antonio Music Department, and the chorus was made up of children from the music classes of the schools we visited. The participating children were costumed and coached prior to a performance by the college students. Scenery was transported from school to school and a total of 29 performances were given at 25 schools throughout



the city, mostly in combination cafeteria/auditoriums (cafeteriums). Musical accompaniment was provided by AV equipment and computer recorded piano. In addition the Opera Guild brought 2000 students to performances of *Magic Flute* and a San Antonio Opera dress rehearsal of *Elixir of Love* at theater venues in the inner city.

The Opera Guild of San Antonio's Opera in the Schools program is designed to bring performance arts back into the schools, to expose children to opera (many for the first time), and to develop a future audience for opera in our area. The rapid growth of the program is a testimony to its popularity. The Opera Guild supports the program through fundraisers, donations, and through grant money from local grantors. The Guild's combined opera education programs for students and adults continues to grow and helps keep interest in opera alive. An effort which may have contributed to the recent passage of public funding for a city venue for opera performances in San Antonio.

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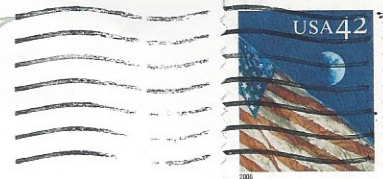
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Mary Earl Received the OVI Partners in Excellence Award

Chattanooga Symphony and Opera Guild member Mary Earl recently received the Opera Volunteers International Partners in Excellence Award which honors member organizations' most valuable volunteers. The award recognizes individuals for their exceptional contribution to opera and honors support groups for completing outstanding projects and attaining special goals.

"I feel receiving the esteemed Partners in Excellence Award is especially important because you must be nominated by your Guild President, CSO Board Chair and the CSO Executive Director. This is the highest award given to volunteers and I am very honored to receive it," said Earl.

Mary Earl has been active in the CSO Guild for nearly 20 years, and has served in many different capacities including the role of President from 1995-1997. She is currently serving on the CSOG Board as Opera Volunteers International Representative and on the Opera Volunteers International Board as Chair of Grants.

"I enjoy working with the CSO Guild because of the dedication of the members and the wonderful things that are accomplished," she said. "Since serving on the OVI Board, I have been able to work with guilds all over the country and Canada, and I know the CSOG is one of the most accomplished groups I have seen."

Earl believes that being part of such a successful Guild means the quality of life in Chattanooga is greater. "More children have been exposed to music that would not have been available to them without our wonderful education programs. Helping to make music and especially opera more available has truly been one of the joys of my life," she continued.

Mary Earl feels that her greatest accomplishment while working with the CSO Guild is the establishment of the annual Vocal Competition and watching it grow throughout the years. "After the 10th year, many of the winners came back to celebrate with us. The stories we heard about how winning the competition and how their lives have changed because of it, is especially important to me," she said. "Three years ago, I began funding the Mary Earl Award to encourage young singers to continue to pursue a career in singing. We will be entering our 15th year when the competition is held in 2009. The Vocal Competition will always be special to me."

