



O.P.E.R.A. Inc.

Winter 2008

## 100 YEARS OF MEMORIES

The Opera House is celebrating 100 years of business and memories. The magnificent 3-story brick structure which was called the Opera House Block was built in 1908, one hundred years ago. A committee has been formed to plan for and carry out activities to commemorate its Centennial. Some items on the agenda are a new cookbook with old and new recipes and Opera House memories, postcards, a wine-tasting evening with Tom Isern doing a storytelling and song presentation, and a pageant, "If These Walls Could Talk" to be presented twice. The first performance will be in February, 2009, one hundred years after the Grand Opening, which was held on February 5, 1909. A second performance will be in June with several guests whose families had ties to the Opera House and the Main Street businesses.

If you would like to assist the committee in any way or have an idea or suggestion, contact Chairman Ken Schmierer at 701-349-2490 or e-mail at [kschm1965@drtel.net](mailto:kschm1965@drtel.net)

### "IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK"

A pageant, "IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK" is being written to celebrate the Opera House's 100 years. Grant and Jeanette are asking for your input and recollections of events that were held in the auditorium or memories about the Main Street businesses. They will also need help with costumes, props, actors and actresses, narrators, music and staging. If you would like to assist in any way, please call Grant at 701-349-3633 or Jeanette at 701-349-4329.

## NEW O.P.E.R.A., INC. COOKBOOK

O.P.E.R.A., INC. is planning to print a new cookbook and is asking you to submit your favorite recipes for this new edition. All types of recipes are needed. At the same time, they will be including history of events that took place in the building, as well as information about the retail stores at the street level. So if you have memories of dances, roller skating, meetings, social gatherings or other events that took place in the auditorium, please take a few minutes to jot them down along with your recipes. Also if you have recollections of the different businesses that occupied the street level spaces, those would be most welcome. The new deadline for submitting recipes is Dec. 15, 2008.

Recipes can be sent to OPERA, PO Box 334, Ellendale, ND 58436, dropped off at Crabtree Insurance or the Calico Cat or e-mailed to Jeanette at [jrbuenz@drtel.net](mailto:jrbuenz@drtel.net)

Forms are available to Crabtree Insurance or the Calico Cat.

### "JUST DESSERTS COMING TO OPERA HOUSE"

OPERA, Inc.'s next theatre production, a comedy murder mystery entitled "Just Desserts" will be performed at the Opera House on November 21, 22 and 23. The play is set at a dessert bake-off that finds three finalists competing for the top prize. The competition is fierce and even turns deadly. Without revealing too much of the plot, clues are discovered, past

histories of the characters are revealed and with help from the audience, the mystery is solved.

The cast consists of Brenda Rekow who plays Miss Peabody, the organizer and host of the bakeoff; Grant Crabtree as Judge Cogsworth, an actual jurist who is asked to pick the winner; Val Wagner as Edna Mae Carter, local librarian and bakeoff finalist; Cindy Axt is Lucy "Scooter" Bright, nail salon owner and finalist; and Jolene Maunu portrays the third finalist, the richest lady in town, Margaret Mason.

Performances will be at 7:00 pm on Friday and Saturday, November 21 & 22 and at 4:00 pm on Sunday, November 23. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for those 18 & under. Tickets will be available at the door, but advanced tickets are recommended as there is limited seating. Hors d'oeuvres and beverages are included in the ticket price. For ticket reservations, contact Grant Crabtree at 349-3633 or Betty Martin at 349-4282.

"Just Desserts" is written by Craig Sodaro and produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Publishing Company.

## **DONOR RECOGNITION PROGRAM**

OPERA, Inc. reminds you that we are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and that any donations made to OPERA, Inc. are tax deductible. We have an ongoing recognition program whereby your name is listed in the Opera House Lobby as well as in our newsletters, theatre production programs and other OPERA literature. Donations accumulate, meaning that all contributions from the start of the program are added together to place donors into one of our five categories. Donors move up into the different categories once

they meet the minimum amount required. Here is our current list:

### Supporting Players

(\$1,000 - \$2,499)

Dorothy Mouw Brown  
J.D. & Esther Crabtree  
Mary Jane Davidson  
Tom & Mary Denison  
Ellendale Gaming Association  
Ellendale Pharmacy  
Jay & Pat Kendall  
Glenn Mastel  
Duane & Beverly Mattheis  
Warren & Lana Schlecht  
A.J. Wedell  
John & Clara Wheelihan

### Leading Players

(\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Anonymous  
Grant Crabtree  
Ellendale Area Foundation  
Jeanette Robb-Ruenz

### Directors

(\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Greg & Judy Gackle

### Producers

(\$10,000 - \$19,999)

Ned Leiby

### Angels

(\$20,000 & Above)

None

OPERA would also like to recognize all those who donated thus far during 2008. Many thanks to:

Laura Lee Barry  
Albert & Betty Bauder  
Marilyn Burow  
Deb & Gene Elhard  
Ellendale Area Foundation  
Ellendale Gaming Association  
Betty Haussler  
June Jantze  
Ted Kneebone  
Pat Kendall  
Glenn Mastel  
Duane & Beverly Mattheis  
Judy Nicholson

Jeanette Robb-Ruenz  
 Orpha Steinwand  
 Dave Schumacher - Elm Lake Resort  
 Charles & Sandra Taskerud  
 Becky Tatum  
 Joan Toay  
 Dorothy Brown Webb  
 John P. Wheelihan  
 Nancy Wolf  
 Jim & Eileen Zimmerman  
 Rachelle Zimprich

OPERA, Inc. has several current projects in need of funding as mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. Your donation, no matter how large or small are welcome. Donations can be mailed to: OPERA, Inc., PO Box 334, Ellendale ND 58436-0334.

### OPERA HOUSE HISTORY

The auditorium of the Opera House was the site for many dances over the years. In 1925 the Annual Fireman's Ball was held Thanksgiving night with music by Heckelsmiller's Orchestra. A SMOKER was also arranged for to provide entertainment for those who did not dance. "One ticket admits to all" and the dance started at 9 p.m.

The advertisement for a St. Patrick's Dance at the auditorium on Monday, March 17, 1952 featured music by the Kampus Kings, Square Dancing on Request, Paper Hats and Novelties, and Special Entertainment. This was also sponsored by the Ellendale Firemen.

### From the president's desk.....

"The Arts are Alive in Ellendale" I want to take this opportunity to bring you up to date on the activities in the ARTS in Ellendale in 2008. With the organization of the Ellendale Area Arts Council earlier this year, many venues in the Arts have been presented. Some were sponsored by EAAC and held in the Opera House lobby, some were sponsored by OPERA and some were a combined project.

February---World Art Show

March-----"The Kitchen Witches" play in the lobby and a performance in Ashley  
 The Ashley Ladies Choir in the lobby

April-----The Jim River Project by Roddy  
 McInnes---photography

May-----A Show of Mother's Love---Mother's  
 Day art exhibit

June-----A Tribute to Fathers---Father's Day  
 Exhibit

July-----Do and Discover---Arts in the Park for  
 the youth and others  
 Designer Desserts w/ entertainment  
 Community Sing-a-Long in  
 Brandenburger Park

Sept.-----AppleFest Art Show in lobby  
 "The Real Story of Johnny Appleseed"  
 play in the lobby

October----Marking the Land: Jim Dow in North  
 Dakota--- photography

November---Snow Country Prison: Interned in  
 North Dakota---photos/history

November---An Evening at the Opera---wine  
 tasting, music and Tom Isern-Nov 14  
 "Just Desserts" play in the lobby---  
 Nov. 21-23

December---Nativity Display in the lobby---Dec.  
 4-7  
 Christmas Tea in the lobby----Dec.21

Coming up in 2009 will be a weekend in February to celebrate 100 years of Memories of the Opera House and events held there. Watch for more details.

The OPERA board and I would like to express our appreciation to all of you who attend our events and support the continuing restoration project.

## **FUNDING NEEDED FOR PROJECTS**

As was mentioned in our last edition of Opera Notes, OPERA, Inc. received a grant from the North Dakota Historical Society through its Cultural Heritage Grant Program for the purpose of replacing the sub-floor in the upstairs auditorium of the Opera House. The amount of the grant is \$7,795, which is 50% of the cost of this project. OPERA is responsible for raising the matching \$7,795.

The sub-floor of the auditorium is in a condition where it is unsafe to walk on the main portion of the auditorium floor. Over the course of the summer, much of the overlying floorboards have been lifted up and sorted. Surprisingly, many of the 100 year old maple floorboards are in very good shape and they will be put back down. The floor joists also are in very good condition and do not need replacing.

Much of the sub-flooring however, has rotted or is in poor condition. Funds for replacement of the sub-flooring are needed to meet our match . Once the sub-floor has been replaced, further restoration work on the auditorium can proceed. OPERA is asking for your help in reaching our match of \$7,795 for this project.

Another current project in need of funding is the restoration of the exterior of the Randall store front. A design plan is awaiting approval from the North Dakota State Historical Society. This will greatly enhance the exterior of the building which will reflect the historical, original look of the building's exterior. Due to advent of the cold weather season that is upon us, work will not be done until next spring, but OPERA is in need of additional funds in order to complete this project once we receive approval and the warm weather returns.

OPERA thanks all those who have generously donated to our past projects and asks that if you wish to see us continue the great progress we have made over the past few years to please donate funds to these projects. Donations can be sent to: OPERA, Inc., PO Box 334, Ellendale ND 58436-0334. Contributions are tax deductible and are also count toward our Donor Recognition Program which is mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter.