

Quotes

"Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful."
-*Albert Schweitzer*



Officer Election RESULTS

President: Donna Primas, CTG
Vice President: Esther Banike, CTG
Treasurer: Lijana Baehr
Co-Secretaries: Marilyn Brumund, CTG
and Gail Gill, CTG

Thanks for all those Candidate and Certified guides who took the time and energy to mail in their vote.



CTPA officers February 1, 2003-January 31, 2005: *Judy White CTG, Barb Read CTG, Donna Primas CTG and Beverly Livingston CTG*

Thanks "Retiring" Officers

Three Certified Tour Guides: Beverly Livingston Vice President; Judy White, Secretary; and Barbara Read, Treasurer all elected NOT to be on the ballot for the Fall 2004 CTPA elections. Bev had served four years or two terms, and Judy and Barb each served one 2-year term. Many thanks to all three for their efforts and the hours they dedicated to helping shape the CTPA.

Encyclopedia of Chicago Book Sales

In all, more than 60 copies of the *Encyclopedia of Chicago* were sold. If you still have not picked up your paid copy, please call Caron Brennan 630/832-1195 to make arrangements for pick-up or pay for shipping.

If you learn of another book that may be of great interest to the membership, please let us know. We would be happy to research costs and see if another "good deal" book sale can be organized.

**Send in your 2005 Member dues
by January 31 to keep the CTPA news
and program information coming!**

Tour Guides and/or Tour Operators?



Kate Arden (Mom) and Joanne O'Connor (Grandma) with their future tour guides/tour operators?

If you have ever worked for CTPA Associate Member Chicago Is... you may have met owner, Joanne O'Connor. If not, perhaps you know acclaimed author and speaker, **Jerry O'Connor CTG**, who happens to be Joanne's husband? Maybe you know their daughter and sometime Chicago Is... employee, **Kate Arden**?

The little darlings pictured above are TWIN boys, Ethan James and Jack Connor Arden, born on October 8 to Kate and her husband Jamie. The new grandparents (and no doubt the parents!) are over the moon about the births!

"My Best Tour Day of 2004"

In an email plea on December 12, I asked those CTPA guide members on-line to send me an account of their best tour day in 2004—and why it made their list. Below are the first responses received. As I get more stories, I will be happy to publish them!

I took a school group to Chicago and we went to the concert room at the top of the cultural center to see the decor and watch Millennium Park being built. We were extra lucky and a rehearsal was in progress, just winding up. Some of the students were very musical. Several students and the teacher went up to the podium to talk to the pianist. It turned out the pianist was studying with the same coach as one of the students! **Terry Hall**

As tour guides, we are in tune with the visual side of our city. After all, we're "showing" people the sites. Imagine, however, that the group of tourists you are assigned are visually impaired and want to "see" Millennium Park. This was the task of a group of CAF docents. We learned to uncover the other aspects of this visual delight such as the feel of the limestone at the Peristyle, the touch of small jelly beans to emphasize the shape of Cloud Gate, and the wonder of trying to get our arms around the pylons that hold the Trellis at the Pritzker Pavilion. We ran our hands along the shingles on the BP Bridge and felt the twists and turns as we walked across Columbus Drive. The tourees were enthusiastic, adventurous and eager to learn. For me, it was both a challenge and a delight to discover the wonders of the Park through the "eyes" of others. **Bobbi Pinkert**

I was conducting a tour of 50 international students from different areas of the world and their leaders. They did not speak English, but did understand. Being a highlight tour, I asked how many knew of the Chicago Cubs and Wrigley Field; no hands went up. Then Chicago White Sox; no hands went up. Then, Oprah Winfrey, and ½ the hands went up. Then Michael Jordan and about 100% hands were raised. I think the tour DID go well. They loved Millennium Park as I could hear them talking about their touring the park with me. Some did get wet!

Joel Shalin

One of the tours I had in December, went to Big Shoulder's Cafe at the Chicago Historical Society. for lunch. The group was from the Nashville area

and I had them for three days. When Roberta started to play the piano, the husband of the gal that put the trip together got up and sang some of the Christmas Carols Roberta was playing. Everyone else having lunch that day started singing along and it was a real festive way to spend a lunch in Chicago. The group kept mentioning how friendly everyone is in Chicago. P.S. The fellow who started the singing happened to have an excellent voice, which was a bonus. A warm & fuzzy afternoon.

Judy White, CTG

Last week I escorted a senior group to The House on the Rock and The Fireside Dinner Theater. There was the cutest little old lady, a member of a group that has been traveling together for 40 years. They call themselves the "Travelettes." Their fearless leader was named Edna and she informed me she had been a cosmetologist for 62 years. She was rather coy about her actual age, but she was pushing 90, I'm sure. What amazed me about these ladies is that they are still out there, still traveling, and still having a great time. No much of a story, but they were an inspiration to me. **Gigi Trapp**

I took a group to Monument Valley this fall, and a lady asked me "How long did it take the Navajos to build it?" **Lisa Yost**

Happy New Year!

Commentary Notes

A recent **University of Illinois** E-newsletter noted the following facts in an article entitled "**Enrollment Hits Target for Fall: Applications Highest Ever.**" The information was compiled by UIC writer Sabryna Cornish and is paraphrased below.

- Applications from prospective students reached a pinnacle for the 2004 fall semester, requiring a waiting list for the first time in campus history.
- Enrollment is slightly lower in an intentional move. There are 24,407 students on campus. (Last year's total enrollment was 25,228.)
- This year's Latino and African American student enrollment increased to a total of 28.6 percent of the freshmen class. The Asian student population is about 21 percent overall.
- Graduate student enrollment is down to 6,581 this year, mostly due to fewer international students.

Suggested New Column:

"Ya Shoulda Been There!"

Herb Shayman, CTPG, wrote in October in response to an earlier request for newsletter column ideas. He said this:

I have some ideas for submissions to our CTPA newsletter. The suggestion that heads my list is a "Reality-type Column," which tells a different human interest story each issue or, when a suitable story is submitted, which pertains to one of Chicago's significant events, the background story and/or the events surrounding it. Stories like, "Millennium Park: "What would Montgomery Ward say?"

Some suggestions for an interesting article might be something like: "Ghosts of The Iroquois Theater Fire," or "The 50th Anniversary of The Lyric Opera of Chicago," or "The Founding of The National League of Professional Baseball Players," or "The Serial Killer of the Columbian Exposition," or "Sweet Tooth Chicago." to name a few.

Columns done in a "You Are There" style and entitled: "Ya Shoulda Been There!"

Below is the first installment of Herb's new column idea. He was cast, and took part in, the Lyric's 50th Anniversary Gala, so his experience kicks off the series with an exclusive behind-the-scenes story. A big thanks to Herb for the suggestion and for sharing his experience!

Lyric Opera of Chicago 50th Anniversary

"Ya Shoulda Been There!"

The spirits were at work this night, October 30, 2004. It was All Hallows Eve.

The night before Halloween, and *Lyric Opera of Chicago*, one of the jewels in Chicago's cultural crown, was in high spirits celebrating its *50th Anniversary* at a Golden Jubilee Benefit Gala at the magnificent Art Deco Civic Opera House.

What a grand night for singing! Over two dozen world-famous artists performed, such as Samuel Ramey, Frederica von Stade, Bryn Terfel, Renee Fleming, Ben Heppner and James Morris, to name just a few, entralling the assembled white and black tie guests, and their elegantly-gowned ladies, with beloved arias from the *Lyric's* spectacular productions over the past half-century.

Brilliant ensembles, rousing choruses and orchestral gems sparkled during the four-hour concert at the Civic. Afterwards, special benefactors, who contributed over \$12,500, were

whisked away by limousine to a sumptuous celebratory party and dinner at the Ritz-Carlton Chicago.

A far cry from 1954, when Carol Fox, one of the three founders of *Lyric Opera*, took up the gauntlet of the failed Samuel Insull's Chicago Civic Opera, and three other failed opera companies that formerly occupied the Civic Opera House, and introduced her fledgling venture to Chicago. The first season of the *Lyric Theatre*, as it was called then, opened with Mozart's comic morality opera, "Don Giovanni."

And that's where I come in. Three weeks earlier, I was cast to mime the role of Leporello, the clever and mischievous servant to Don Giovanni, at the Gala Party scheduled for after the special concert. What better opera to open *Lyric's 50th Season* than a newly-produced "Don Giovanni," saluting the original "Don" of *Lyric's* first season?

But I had to wait until after the opera closed, October 22, before I could come in for a wig and wardrobe fitting, should there be alterations. The costume fit perfectly. When the wigmaster fit me with an 18th-century wig tied in the back, I looked and felt like I should be on the battlements in "Les Miserables" singing, "One More Day!"

Five other actors were cast, representing characters in other operas produced at *Lyric Opera* over the past fifty years. For example, Cio-Cio San from Puccini's "Madame Butterfly," and Musetta from Puccini's "La Boheme." All were attired in the original costumes from the opera. Very imaginative and very colorful!

All we were told in preparation for our performance, was that each of us would be on our own pedestal with a prop, miming our character in different poses for two hours. Some photographs from the opera, with our character in various poses, would be provided prior to our taking the stage that evening.

The photos provided me were just two-shots, Leporello in similar poses with Donna Elvira. Since I was going to be alone "onstage," it was going to be 'improvisation time!'

Also, the actors were admonished, "Don't talk to the guests, even if they talk to you. And they will. You'll be striking various poses, as arias from your opera will be playing on a continuous loop in the background of each stage. Essentially, you'll be moving mannequins!"

I'm an actor guiding my audience through my character's arias. And I am not allowed to talk.

Imagine tour guiding, not interacting with your group, and mutely gesticulating. I felt like Harpo Marx in "A Night at the Opera!" What fun!

"Oh, life upon the wicked stage ain't ever what a guy supposes."

However, the best of times was yet to come. And were we surprised!

On our way to dinner before the guests arrived, the actors and production people were led through the Promenade, which is about the length of a football field. That's when we first saw our six individual stages lined up down the center, every fifteen yards or so. We were blown away by the artistry! Each was beautifully festooned with floral arrangements surrounding the base of the 2-ft high stage, and a symbolic prop from that opera, suggesting its theme was in the background of the 6'x 6' playing area.

Mine was a giant, foreboding grayish-black cross, ominously suggesting the specter of the imminent fate awaiting Don Giovanni, if he didn't mend his evil womanizing ways, which in the end, he didn't. That elemental truth, not only informed, but enhanced my performance, in the shadow of that sinister, dark cross.

Since Leporello kept a book with all the names, dates and countries of his master's conquests, using it was the natural springboard that propelled all my poses.

Picture this exquisite scene, as the guests enter: Exit the elevator on the 12th floor lobby of the Ritz Carlton, descend to the sunken lobby level, and step onto the red carpet, past the beautiful marble fountain, where 14 costumed soldiers and pages greet you. Seven are on either side of the red carpet, holding 12-foot high staffs capped by colorful flags and pennants.

Enter the Promenade through giant, red velvet curtains and find yourself in a Great Hall on the way to a sumptuous feast. Along the way, you are transported to memories of former favorite operas by six actors on six stages, representing past spectacular *Lyric* productions. You're greeted by a phalanx of photographers and the media. Cameras flash and whirl. You stop for libations, meet and greet friends, pause for an interview or two, pose for photo ops, and take out your *own* camera—for this is an evening to remember!

Even as we actors were warned to stay 'in character' and ignore the guests, our auditory abilities were being enhanced. I heard excited comments from the guests, some hilarious, as they

passed by and posed in front of my stage. Some attempted to engage me in conversation. Some were having conversations of their own. Some asked me to pose with them. And were some just awed by the surroundings. It was like an out-of-body experience! I was there, but I really *wasn't* there.

Can you imagine talking to a life-like mannequin and expecting a response? Many did. Overheard, while in character, "This is the greatest event *Lyric* has ever done! Why don't they do this more often." I'm frozen in my pose, suppressing a smile, and thinking, "A *50th Anniversary* only comes around *once* in *50 years!* See ya in *2054!*"

Two hours later, at midnight, we were told that the Gala dinner had begun, the guests were seated inside, and we were excused for the night. Time to turn in my wig and costume. I felt like Cinderella at the ball.

At last, I left my stage, limped over to a nearby barman for my only libation, and the first words out of my mouth were, "These shoes are *killing* me. Now, I know how *women* feel. Ooohh, boy!"

Two other actors joined me toasting Halloween and our own personal Costume Ball. We were joined by a third, and then, a fourth. After all, the actors and supers were the *only* ones in period costumes. And that made this special evening even more special.

When I rode the Red Line home early Halloween morning, I had misgivings about riding the 'El' with some of my makeup still on, depicting me as this disreputable, comic character...Until I looked around. It was Halloween, and the car was filled with disreputable, comic characters, costumed revelers seducing the night. Nobody was paying attention to me. And that was fine. I had enough attention at the Gala that Halloween eve to last me through to Thanksgiving.

I thought of Don Giovanni...and smiled.

I'll tell you one thing about this Halloween evening, *Ya Shoulda Been There!*

Submitted by Herb Shayman, CTG

SAVE THE DATES!

Upcoming Events & Meetings

- **Tuesday, March 22, 6:30 p.m.**, 2nd quarter meeting at the Chicago Park District Fieldhouse. Directories distributed, Discuss: Touring Millennium Park.
- **Tuesday, June 14, 6:30 p.m.** third quarter meeting.
- **Tuesday, October 4, 6:30 p.m.** fourth quarter meeting.



CTPA Holiday Gathering

Read the enclosed write-up about the CTPA holiday gathering on November 16, hosted at The Melting Pot, a fondue restaurant located at 609 N. Dearborn. All totaled, more than 50 stopped by and every category of member was represented. Our special thanks to Bonnie Gendel, Director Marketing and Public Relations at The Melting Pot. Do you know the CTPA members pictured below? (Sorry I did not get any photos of the *guys* present!)



Pat Birch & Kate Chandler, both of On The Scene



Anna Clara Campbell and Terry Hall



Jean Klauber and Linda Wollschlager



Lijana Baehr and Holly Jenson

**HAVE A SAFE
& PROSPEROUS
2005!**



Donna Primas, CTG, (top), Barb Read, CTG, and new member Gigi Trapp basking in the warmth from the steaming fondue pots.