



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

Winter 2017

### **Art Shows & Book Fair**

Once again the Opera House Lobby & Gallery hosted several art shows in 2017 and each of these exhibitions was very unique. OPERA Inc., the Ellendale Area Arts Council and Ellendale Tourism sponsor North Dakota Gallery exhibitions at the Opera House. These exhibits are free and open to the public on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.

The Leith DeWeese Water Color exhibition was shown in April entitled VIEW FROM THE HIGH PLAINES.

In September the NOTSTOCK exhibition was featured. This is a show that featured silkscreen posters. It has been presented in Minot for the last ten years.

In addition, a new exhibition by local photographer Ken Schmierer, ICONIC DAKOTA RHYTHMS, was shown at the Opera House.

The ART 50 exhibition was featured during the month of October. This show presented the work of the 50 best artists in North Dakota in celebration of the North Dakota Council on the Arts 50th anniversary. It was sponsored by Starion Financial. Brilliant works by artists like Walter Piehl, Susan Morrissey and Butch Thunderhawk were on display. It also included artists who have been featured at the Opera House during the last ten years like Sabrina Hornung, Ryan Stander, Guillermo Guardia and Daphne Johnson Clark.

During October the Opera House hosted a Book Fair with 12 area authors. This was so successful

that they plan to make it a yearly event.

Perennial Opera House favorite Tom Isern along with Brad Weber, Alicia Underlee Nelson, Sharon Chmielarz, Tony Bender and many others participated in this Sunday afternoon event.

### **FOOD WAGON**

The Opera Food Wagon was in business again this summer from May 19 to September 22 every Friday at the corner of Main Street and Hiway 281. We served Walking Tacos and All-Beef Hot Dogs, pop and occasionally specialty items. Early in the season, we offered a rhubarb ice cream dessert and off and on a variety of toppings for the hot dogs. The noon hour was busy as many customers stopped by for lunch and enjoyed it in the gazebo in Brandenburger Park. Several customers took their food home or to their office. Fargo Assembly employees often ordered tacos to go, some days as many as 12. Grant and Marilyn always completed the orders, many with special ingredients and toppings, in time for pick up.

In June we were busy during the All-School Reunion and it was good to see old friends and renew acquaintances.

As in several years past, we had concessions at Auction sales and in May we drove out to Howard Krause's farm to feed the crowd. It was a very good day! In July, the wagon was set up at Jeanette Robb's auction at the farm. Another Very Busy day!!

The wagon was very busy on September 9 during AppleFest. The Fall Festival is a huge success for the Ellendale community and Opera is pleased to be a vital part of the event.

Due to the cooler weather in late September, we served in the Opera House Lobby and still had a good crowd. There is something about the Lobby that entices people to sit and visit while enjoying a meal.

Workers in the wagon were Grant, Marilyn, Jeanette, Bobbi Burow, John Boekelheide, Tom Rude, Larry Davis and Carol Robb.

We look forward to a busy 2018 summer.

## **GERMAN SUPPER PROGRAM**

A very unique event was held at the Opera House Lobby on October 21 when the Ellendale Historical Society held a "German Supper and German Literary Antiques Roadshow". The evening featured German fare like kneophla Soup, Sausage (from Wishek), sauerkraut, mashed potatoes and gravy and kuchen plus coffee or lemonade, along with live accordion music.

Rev. Tim Daub, pastor of the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Hecla, SD who is a highly skilled and knowledgeable German specialist, examined and interpreted items brought in that evening. Letters, baptismal certificates, German Language books were presented and the owners were surprised at the interpretations. Rev. Daub's German Language expertise grew out of his youth in eastern Pennsylvania, where he took six years of German and from his undergraduate work at Harvard University, where he majored in linguistics. Pastoring a predominant German-Russian community in Montana developed his interest in the language and culture, as well as his baking skills. He often prepares and serves ethnic dishes for his parishioners and community.

The next event which the Ellendale Historical Society will sponsor at the Opera House will be in January 2018 when Joe Wiegand, who has appeared as Theodore Roosevelt at the Medora Musical will perform at the Ellendale Public School on January 18 and at the Opera House January 20.

## **JOHN WHEELIHAN'S 100<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY PARTY**

The Opera House Lobby and Gallery was very honored to be the site for John Wheelihan's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party on October 17. Approximately 200 friends joined him for the celebration which consisted of a great dinner and awesome cake. John is well-known in the Ellendale community as farmer, realtor, WWII fighter/bomber pilot, past Postmaster of Ellendale 1964-1980, for being an active member in Masons, American Legion and VFW, and for serving on many boards.

John was honored with a star on Ellendale's WALK OF FAME in 2012 and is an honorary member of the O.P.E.R.A., Inc. Board.

## **SILENT AUCTION**

During the All-School Reunion last June, O.P.E.R.A., Inc. held a Silent Auction as a fundraiser for the continuing restoration of the historic Opera House. Items of a wide variety were displayed at the Ellendale Public School lobby for the bidding process.

Items consisted of a football signed by Carson Wentz, quarterback for NDSU Bison and now Philadelphia Eagles, and two passes to a Bison football game. The football was donated by Konnie Evenson and the passes by Jerry Evenson; doors from the former Blumer Law Office on Main Street, donated by owner Greg Gackle, many paintings, CDs from various noted musicians, books on all topics, one out of print and rare, donated by the ND Humanities Council, an airplane ride donated by Warren Schlecht, handmade greeting cards, hand sewn items, and many baskets filled with speciality items of all sorts. The profits from the auction were above expectations.

O.P.E.R.A., Inc. Appreciates all of the donated items, those who purchased items and the work and effort put into making the auction a success.

## Pi Day and Pie Social

March 14 was 'Pi Day' at the Opera House Lobby. This event, suggested by Grant Crabtree a few years ago, has proved to be a very successful annual event. Pi is 3.1416, thus the day for a pie social. Several kinds of pie with ice cream or whipped topping and a beverage are offered for \$3.14. As usual, customers ate and conversed.

Then on August 15 a Pie Social was held. Many kinds of pie were available and most pieces were sold. Often there are 'take-out' orders. The Opera Board appreciates the support at these fundraisers.

## MUSICAL ACTS AT OPERA HOUSE

Over the past several years, OPERA, Inc. has been able to present some outstanding professional performers at the Opera House and 2017 was no exception. Three such events were held this past year featuring a variety of musical styles.

Balladeer/songwriter Daniel Boling graced the Opera House stage in March and entertained the patrons with his clear tenor voice and deft guitar playing for a night of great

Folk/Americana/Country music. Considered one of the top songwriters currently on the circuit today, his songwriting honors include:

- **GRASSY HILL KERRVILLE NEW FOLK – WINNER**
- Woody Guthrie Folk Festival Songwriter Contest – 1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner
- Santa Fe Bluegrass & Old Time Music Festival Songwriter Contest – Winner
- Walnut Valley Acoustic Music Festival Songwriter Contest – Three-time Winner
- South Florida Folk Festival Songwriter Contest – Five-time Finalist

His performances have drawn comparisons to John Denver and Pete Seeger and OPERA, Inc. was honored to be able to present his talent to the community.

In June, Jeremiah Sundown had a return engagement to the Opera House during his "One

Man, One Guitar" tour. Due largely to his performances on the popular "Midwest Country" television show aired nationally on RFD-TV, Jeremiah is enjoying a new wave of renown and popularity. After a full house performance in 2015, Jeremiah returned to the Opera House with songs that he penned himself along with those made famous by the likes of Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, Waylon Jennings and others. Included in the concert was Jeremiah's special tribute to the late Native American artist Vic Runnels of Aberdeen, who was part of Jeremiah's 2015 Opera House performance.

Also in June, OPERA has another return engagement, this time from New York Kammermusiker. Formed by ND native, Ilonna Pederson, this professional double reed ensemble uses modern instruments to revive Renaissance and Baroque music. In addition to performing the music, historical and cultural context is given making for an evening that is both educational as well as entertaining. The Kammermusiker was in North Dakota on their "Winds of Change" concert tour and this marked the third time that this outstanding group has performed in Ellendale. We look forward to hosting them again in the future.

## A NIGHT OF ONE ACTS

OPERA, Inc. presented a night of one act plays for two nights at the Opera House in May along with another performance at Prince of Peace Care Center. The Opera House audiences saw *The Trouble with Taxes*, an old-fashioned screwball comedy about a little mix-up in filing a tax return looks like it could have dire consequences that featured a cast of Cindy Axt, Grant Crabtree, Tom Davis, Mike Reinke, Brenda Rekow and Tim Steinwand. In *Postponing the Heat Death of Universe*, College freshman Nick lost a scholarship contest and Jackie, the winner, arrives to give condolences. What follows is a funny and reflective conversation along with periodic interruptions from Stacy, who is not Nick's girlfriend, but merely the object of his worship. Chase Nishek, Megan Roehl and Chloe Thurber were cast members. *The Last of Sherlock Holmes* with a cast of Grant Crabtree, Tom Davis, Vicky Crabtree, Cindy Axt and Brenda Rekow was a

clever look at the relationship between Holmes and Watson as Holmes solves one case, but is also foiled once again by his nemesis, Moriarity. In *The Scary Question*, a young couple, Linda and Brian (Megan Roehl and Chase Nishek), have been dating for eight months and Brian proposes a question to Linda. What Linda answers and what follows is sheer laughter.

The Prince of Peace audience was treated to *The Trouble with Taxes*, *The Scary Question* and a different play, *This Is A Test* about a high school student imagination run wild while taking an important test. The cast featured Wren Murphy, Megan Roehl, Chase Nishek, Chloe Thurber, Sam Jacob and Grant Crabtree.

One aspect of putting on these plays that made it a little special for the OPERA family was the participation of Megan Roehl, Chloe Thurber and Chase Nishek. Megan and Chase were in their first OPERA event as fifth graders when they were a part of one of our Comedy Nights. A year later, those two were joined by Chloe (as well as others) in a one act play, *The Spider and the Bee*. In subsequent years they participated in additional plays and Comedy Nights and this performance marked their grand finale as students at Ellendale as the trio graduated from EHS in 2017. Their talents added greatly to our productions and we thank them for their contributions.



## HOLIDAY VENDOR SHOW

The Opera House Lobby & Gallery was filled with nine vendors selling their wares for the Holidays on November 18. The event was the brainchild of former Ellendale resident Kathy Rodin to kickoff the Holiday shopping season and raise funds for the Opera House. Participating vendors came from all over the area and a good crowd of shoppers attended with a wide variety of gift items available. The vendors were: Cocoa Exchange, Lip Sense, LulaRoe, Mia Bella Candles, Norwex, Tastefully Simple, Tastefully Simple, Tupperware, Woodcrafted Items and Young Living Essential Oils. A silent auction with items donated by the vendors was also held with the funds donated to OPERA. OPERA, Inc. also sold a lunch at the event featuring homemade soups and sandwiches made with homemade bread and homemade bars.

## ARIA AWARD BESTOWED TO NED LEIBY

OPERA, Inc. initiated its Aria Award in 2017 naming Ned Leiby as the inaugural recipient. The board of directors decided to create this award as a means of recognizing people or organizations whose efforts have been integral towards the advancement of the restoration of Ellendale's Historic Opera House. A plaque bearing Ned's name is now proudly on display in the Opera House Lobby & Gallery in recognition of his meritorious support. Future Aria awards will be presented upon the discretion of OPERA, Inc.'s board of directors.

## FIND US ON FACEBOOK AND VISIT OUR WEBSITE

If you want to know what is currently going on at the Opera House, news, history or want more information about us, look us up on Facebook (Ellendale Historic Opera House) or visit our website:

[www.ellendaleoperahouse.com](http://www.ellendaleoperahouse.com)

## AND NOW A WORD FOR OUR SPONSORS

OPERA, Inc. would like to thank and recognize the businesses and organizations that sponsored many of our events during 2017. Their support makes it possible to bring professional talent the Opera House and to the Ellendale community, enhancing our quality of life through the arts. We would like to thank Dakota Plains Credit Union, Dickey Rural Networks, Ellendale Area Arts Council, Ellendale Tourism, ND Council on the Arts and Starion Bank.

### SUPPORT OPERA, INC. WITH AMAZONSMILE

Here's an easy way to support OPERA, Inc. monetarily and it won't cost you anything! If you shop on Amazon, please consider using AmazonSmile, a shopping portal that allows users to automatically direct 0.5 percent from the purchase price of any eligible item to OPERA, Inc. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you already know. Same products, same prices, same services. Your shopping experience will be exactly the same as before. There is no additional charge to you for using AmazonSmile. Just visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/45-0426945), sign in with your existing Amazon credentials, search for O.P.E.R.A. Inc. and choose us as your charity. Or, use this link: [smile.amazon.com/ch/45-0426945](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/45-0426945) Spread the word to your friends and family and help our organization. Every little bit helps.

### THIS SPACE FOR RENT

Did you know that the Opera House Lobby & Gallery is available for rent by outside organizations and individuals? Some of the uses of the space this have included graduation parties, birthday celebrations, piano recitals, fund raising breakfasts and dinners (we have a full kitchen facility), meetings and more. The section of the Opera House building many might know as the Coleman Clothing Store is also available for rummage sales. Contact Grant Crabtree for more information and rental fees at 701-349-3633.

A vertical poster for the 2017 NYE Gala. The background is dark with a dense pattern of golden sparkles. At the top, '2017' is written in large, white, outlined numbers. Below it, 'NYE' is in even larger, white, outlined letters. Underneath 'NYE' is the date '12/31/2017' in a smaller white font. To the right of the date, the word 'Gala' is written in a large, elegant, golden cursive script. Below 'Gala', the text 'Ellendale Opera House' is in a white sans-serif font, followed by '8:00 PM - 1:00AM' and 'Formal Attire!' in the same font. Below that, in a smaller white font, is '(Think Adult Prom!)'. To the left of the text, there is an illustration of two champagne flutes filled with golden liquid. To the right of the flutes, the text 'TICKETS \$25' is written in a golden font. At the bottom of the poster, there is a line of small white text: 'Appetizers, Cash Bar, Gambling Tables, Music/DJ, Silent Auction, Photographer & Flowers available for purchase'. Below that, in a smaller golden font, is 'Tickets are available for sale at The Legion or online at TicketBud.com (search opera house gala)'. At the very bottom, in a small white font, is 'No refunds.'

### PAST YEAR DONORS

OPERA, Inc. would like to thank all those who donated to our organization over the past year. OPERA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and donations are tax deductible. Donations can be sent to: OPERA, Inc., PO Box 334, Ellendale ND 58436-0334. Thanks to:

AmazonSmile  
Bickey Bender  
Bobbi Jo Burow  
Char's Food Pride  
Bruce & Vicky Crabtree  
Grant Crabtree  
Linda Crabtree  
Deb & Gene Elhard  
Judy & Greg Gackle  
DeeAnne Gall  
Lucy & Gerry Grueneich  
Ned Leiby  
Glenn Mastel  
Lana & Warren Schlecht  
Ken Schmierer  
Wendy & Jesse Sullivan  
Becky Tatum



Joan Toay  
Walter Vomhof  
AJ Wedell  
John P Wheelihan

## **Donor Recognition Program**

OPERA, Inc. has an ongoing recognition program. Donations that are received over time accumulate toward various donator categories. Donations to OPERA, Inc. a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization are tax deductible. Contributions no matter how large or how small can be mailed to: OPERA, Inc., PO Box 334, Ellendale ND 58436-0334

### Supporting Players

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

Anonymous  
Larry Barry  
Bickey & Frank Bender  
John Boekelheide  
Dorothy Mouw Brown  
Bobbi Jo Burow  
Marilyn Burow  
H. Preston & Robert W Coleman Family  
J.D. & Esther Crabtree  
Dakota Valley Electric  
Mary Jane Davidson  
Dickey County Children's Theatre  
Mary Ewing  
DeeAnne Gall  
Amy Hartman  
Jay & Pat Kendall  
Duane & Beverly Mattheis  
Brad & Kari Nishek  
ND Community Foundation  
Pete Retzlaff  
Daniel Schneck  
Starion Bank  
Orpha Steinwand  
Warren Wedell

### Leading Players

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

American Legion Post #137  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Grant Crabtree  
Tom & Mary Denison  
Ellendale Gaming Association  
Ellendale Pharmacy  
Patricia Wallace Ingraham  
Ken & Betty Kosel  
Glenn Mastel  
Montana Dakota Utilities Co.  
Karl Rekow  
Preservation North Dakota  
Jeanette Ruenz  
Stewart Ruenz

### Directors

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

Deb & Gene Elhard  
Lana & Warren Schlecht  
A.J.Wedell  
Clara & John Wheelihan  
Jim & Eileen Zimmerman

### Producers

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

Ellendale Community Foundation  
ND State Historical Society

### Angels

(\$20,000 & Above)

Greg & Judy Gackle  
Ned Leiby