



# HARRINGTON OPERA HOUSE SOCIETY

*Preserving Our Heritage*

PO Box 618, Harrington, WA 99134 [www.harringtonoperahouse.org](http://www.harringtonoperahouse.org)

## 2016 Review

### President's Letter

The year 2016 is now behind us and 2017 lies before us. As I reflect on the previous 12 months, my thoughts go back 25 years ago this week when a group from Harrington and Davenport met to discuss the possibility of restoring the Harrington Opera House. The roof was gone, rooms were in a shamble and there was a 3 foot snow drift in the auditorium. Some shook their heads and said "impossible". Others had a dream, and with the help of Ms. Douglas Rudkoff, the building was purchased for \$1.00 and our work began.

We have had our ups and downs, but we have done something that is very rare in this day and age. We have never had a paid staff, we have never paid our members to do any work, and we were not afraid of hard work.

Of the in-kind hours I have been able to record, over 15,000 hours of sweat and hard work brings us to where we are today. Donations of items valued at over \$90,000 have been given as in-kind items. Professional groups have donated over \$84,000 in their labor.

The actual cash spent on the building is over \$720,000.00 of which \$347,290.00 has been grants. The rest came from donations, events, memorials and memberships.

For every step back, we went two steps forward. And we did have some setbacks, but we never gave up. It is truly a labor of love for this wonderful historic structure that holds so much history in our small town. Built in 1904, what events it has seen. Always, she was the strong two story building on the corner. She saw two World Wars and several smaller ones, only to watch our soldiers leave and some not come back. Events were brought to the Harrington Opera House during The Great Depression that brought joy during the broken economy.

Laughter made it all bearable. And so the building stood and it was the one stabilizing factor in a community torn by war and strife.

Who else could take \$1.00 and turn it into a million dollar building that will stand the test of time, as it has in the past. It has witnessed and wrapped its arms around plays, lectures, school programs, weddings, musical events and so much more.

Two of the items on our first list in 1992 were to install an elevator and purchase a grand piano for the stage. We close 2016 with those items accomplished.

So, as I step down from the leadership role and look at the talented and able members to carry this forward, I must say how proud I am of all who worked so hard these past 25 years and who still hold that dream we have cultivated over the years.

As I leave, my only word of advice is to never give up and always keep your goal in front of you. And that goal is to provide the community of Harrington and surrounding areas, a place to come, shut out the problems of life, and enjoy what we have to offer. We have been given a treasure and we must treasure it and take care of it. She is worth it!!!

Thank you all for your friendships that we have created with each other that will last a lifetime.

Billie Herron

President, Harrington Opera House Society

*New members and volunteers are needed to share in the future accomplishments of the HOHS.*



### HARRINGTON OPERA HOUSE SOCIETY CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

The Harrington Opera House opened in the new Bank Block Building on December 16, 1904.

The Harrington Opera House Society was founded to save the building on January 11, 1992.

## Building

The year 2016 saw the completion of projects dreamed of for many years. The most exciting and demanding one was the installation of a long awaited elevator that now makes the entire building accessible for all our patrons. Working closely with architects and engineers and skilled contractors the Building Committee oversaw the project from inception to the first ride up to the auditorium.

An ADA approved restroom was completed adjacent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor auditorium and ADA access was built connecting the first floor art/music room to the main lobby. Power and plumbing were added to the service area at the rear of the auditorium and auditorium house lighting was rewired.

Members of the society completed additional painting and millwork in 2016, saving over \$4,000 from the elevator contract.

## Events & Activities

Besides the elevator, one of our major goals of the HOHS has been to acquire a grand piano for the stage in the auditorium. Thanks to the efforts of several HOHS volunteers and MANY supporters, the culmination of several years of effort to acquire a concert grade piano resulted in purchase of a 7'1" Boston designed by Steinway grand piano!

On March 15, 2016, in the midst of the construction for ADA access and the installation of the elevator, the grand piano, finally arrived! This piano is a beautiful asset to our regional performance venue.



Grand piano arrival – March 15, 2016: Left to right: Ed Haugan, Carol G., Linda Wagner, Billie Herron, Gordon Herron, Sheryl Steadman, Mark Stedman.

Even with the delayed start to the event season due to the installation of the elevator, the Harrington Opera House sponsored numerous events and provided a venue for a variety of community activities in 2016.

The season opened on May 21st during Cruizin' Harrington Days, when The Stitchin' Chicks' filled the auditorium and the lobby with beautiful hand-crafted items as well as artwork. Special music on the new Steinway-designed Boston grand piano added to the enjoyment of the day.



The chorus, Bel Canto of Yakima, including former Harrington resident, Jayne Ottmar, returned to the Opera House on June 25<sup>th</sup> to present a concert titled "Music is What Feelings Sound Like." Additional 2016 events included a recital for the piano students of Heather Safe, a violin recital for Sky McCauley and her instructor, Jeanne Bourgeois, and two different bluegrass groups; Bridges Home and Nu-Blu. The Harrington Church of the Nazarene sponsored three Gospel/bluegrass groups; The Needhams on Friday of the Fall Festival and A Country Christmas with The Parks Family and the Dion Family on a December evening.

Our special Gala Event was held on Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup>. to dedicate the elevator and the Boston designed-by-Steinway grand piano. Special guests were Representatives Tom Dent and Matt Manweller as well as Senator Judy Warnick. All three were instrumental in helping the Opera House Society procure a state capital projects grant for the elevator installation and ADA access. Linda Zellmer, Rebecca Hardy and Heather Safe entertained those in attendance with beautiful piano selections. Delicious appetizers as well as wine and other beverages served in commemorative glasses lent a special touch to the day.



Elevator ribbon cutting – October 1, 2016: Left to right: Gordon Herron, Rep. Tom Dent, Senator Judy Warnick, and Rep. Matt Manweller.

Pianist and composer, John Nilsen from Portland, performed on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. playing many of his original compositions as well as familiar songs. It was a fantastic way to showcase the Boston. And in November, pianist and multi-media artist, Scott Kirby from Colorado, performed for the Harrington school students and longer show for a large and very appreciative crowd. One of the premier ragtime pianists in the United States, he played well-known as well as original compositions while showcasing vintage videos, photographs and original artwork on a large screen

The venue was also utilized for numerous meetings, one wedding, and received the annual visit from Santa Clause (aka Charley Colbert!) for pictures and visits with old and young alike with goody bags provided by the Harrington Chamber of Commerce.

As in recent years, The HOHS museum, curated by Ed Haugan, was open on special days, and by appointment for individuals and area tour groups.

Fundraising activities included 5 Rummage Events in 2016 which expanded to include vintage hats and jewelry in addition to the general household items donated by patrons. Donations for items brought in approximately \$2,000.

### Art & Music Education

Piano and Art classes of the 2015-2016 season picked up again in January 2016 and continued until May culminating in the May 22<sup>nd</sup> recital in the auditorium. Heather Safe's piano students played their selected

pieces on our newly acquired 7'1" Boston designed-by-Steinway grand piano.

Heather offered our first summer music classes, held once a month for her students.

During the year, Heather also arranged for her students to perform at the Davenport Retirement Village, at the MAC in Spokane. The 2016-2017 season began in September with Heather continuing as the piano instructor for 7 students.

The piano and art students utilize The Art Room which acquired the addition of a beautiful Yamaha upright piano, graciously loaned by Paul and Lorraine Gilliland. This provides two pianos for the instructor and students to use together. Students are rewarded for special lesson achievements with sessions in the auditorium on the grand piano during warmer weather.

The Art class has a new instructor, Connie King from Harrington. Connie retired after 24 years of teaching art and was looking for a way to offer art to the community. Art classes are on Monday afternoons coinciding with the Music class. There no fee for these lessons.



Rebecca Hardy performs on the 7'1" Boston designed-by Steinway grand piano during the HOHS Gala on October 1, 2016.

The Harrington Opera House Society would like to thank everyone for their support and encouragement and the hundreds of hours of labor provided this year to make all of these wonderful things happen. We have come a long way in 25 years and we're not done! Visit us online for upcoming projects and events. We hope you and others will continue to actively support our efforts in providing programs and a historic venue to enrich our area opportunities for arts, culture, and entertainment.

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