



HARRINGTON OPERA HOUSE SOCIETY

Preserving Our Heritage

PO Box 618, Harrington, WA 99134 www.harringtonoperahouse.org

HARRINGTON OPERA HOUSE SOCIETY PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2016

The year 2016 is now behind us and 2017 lays 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