



SUMMER  
2024

CENTRAL CITY  
**OPERA**  
GUILD

# Grapevine

## SPRING MEMBERSHIP PARTY BOLSTERS GUILD MATTRESS FUND



*Heidi Burose - VP membership, Cathy Groene - Historic Properties, and Nancy Hemming - Immediate Past President.*

A Grand Time was had by all at the revered Grant-Humphreys Mansion Spring Membership Party, a most fitting setting for the Guild's 50th year. Nearly 100 members and guests gathered for hors d'oeuvres and libations to enjoy beautiful musical offerings from our Central City Opera singers (below), camaraderie with one another, and getting the latest Central City Opera updates presented by CEO Scott Finlay.

To bolster the "Mattress Fund," Guild members lined up for a photo shoot on a mattress with Eric Chinn who paraded in patriotic pajamas to help the cause. The George Ann Victor public music teacher award was presented to Armando Contreras and the Ruby Mae Poland Award (in honor of a beloved music teacher of Scott Finlay's) to Donella Iverson for

their extraordinary engagement with students.

Many members renewed their Guild membership that evening. Don't miss out on the fun - you can still join!! - [CentralCityOpera.org/join-the-guild/](http://CentralCityOpera.org/join-the-guild/)



*The Ruby Mae Poland Award is presented to Donella Iverson*

The mattress display was a fun photo opportunity as it bolstered the Mattress Fund during this year's Party. Here is Eric Chinn clad in his patriotic PJ's...



*With Cathy Groene, Karen Christiansen and Kay Fiege*



*With Priscilla Mead and Christy Darling*



*With Anne McDonagle*

**ON SALE NOW!**

**TICKETS START AT JUST \$31**



## PRESIDENTS LETTER

Dear Guild Members,

*It has been a BUSY Spring for the Guild, and I am so appreciative!*

*On the heels of a rescheduled Opera Teaser, the Guild held a wildly successful Spring Membership Party and co-hosted a retroactive exhibit of the Guild's first 25 Years with the Archive at DU. A special shout-out to Membership Co-VPs Heidi Burose and Susan Adams, and Historian Karen Ritz for all their hard work.*

*Those three events were no small feat to produce, but there is no rest for the weary, and so we jumped right into Housewarming Days to prepare the properties up in Central City for our VIP Festival Guests to arrive. Cathy Groene and Kay Fiege (Historic Properties Co-VPs) spent countless hours organizing volunteers and working with the Central City Opera Office and Board of Directors to facilitate our (literal) heaviest task in years - the removal and replacement of over 45 mattresses and bed frames. We must be sure our artists are getting a solid eight hours while here with us!*

*I want to thank Anne McGonagle for helping supplement our mattress drive with a large donation of queen beds from the Westin in Avon.*

*Our last major project to wrap up Spring was Planting Day. Co-Chairs Christina Dinegar and Sally Scott worked with Novacek Gardens again to supply the beautiful blooms, and over 25 volunteers gathered to plant the gardens up at the Opera, Teller, and Johnson Houses.*

*All of this is a lot, right?! So how did we pay for all those beds and plants? Well, thanks to all of you and your incredible networks, the Guild signed up/renewed several members in the Spring and raised over \$15K through our "Money for Mattresses" and Gardens campaigns.*

*As ever, my gratitude to those who have contributed either their time or money to the efforts described above cannot be overstated. I'm really blown away by this wonderful community.*

Gratefully,

Katie Grassby

*PS - If you have any questions or would like to join a Guild committee, please reach out to me directly at [katie.grassby1@gmail.com](mailto:katie.grassby1@gmail.com) or 303.590.5723.*

## 2024 GUILD CALENDAR

### JUNE

29: 2024 Festival Begins + CCO's Colorado Music Hall of Fame induction

### JULY

1: Summer Grapevine Drops

10: Afternoon at the Opera

### AUGUST

4: 2024 Festival Ends

15 & 17: Inventory Days

### SEPTEMBER

4: Guild Board Meeting, 9:30 AM, location TBD

5: Special 50th Anniversary Celebration, time and location TBD

7: Xcel Day of Service

20: Belle Luncheon

### OCTOBER

Artists Auditions, date, time and location TBD

10: Fall Membership Coffee, time and location TBD



## AFTERNOON AT THE OPERA JULY 10TH

This year's "Afternoon at the Opera" event will be held on July 10th. It includes a ticket to enjoy Lunch & A Song at the Teller House prior to the matinee performance of Puccini's ***The Girl of the Golden West***. Tickets are \$120 if you would like to take the Opera Bus up, and \$95 without the bus. Please call the Box Office at 303-292-6700 to purchase tickets and additional details.



## NO GRANDER A PLACE FOR A BOARD MEETING THAN THE TELLER HOUSE!



## THEATRE OF DREAMS GALA A GRAND SUCCESS!

Thank you to everyone who attended Central City Opera's 2024 Theatre of Dreams Gala at the beautiful Cable Center on April 5th! We were thrilled to honor Judy and Newell Grant, as well as celebrate their incredible legacy and dedication to Central City Opera at this event.



The evening was a tremendous success, raising over \$200,000 to support our year-round and Festival programming! Guests enjoyed a delightful dinner prepared by Serendipity Catering, followed by a spectacular performance featuring highlights from the operatic and musical theatre repertoire. The incomparable Sara Gartland headlined the gala, supported by an ensemble of local singers that included Sabina Balsamo, Kristin Gornstein, Eric Botto, Randy Ho, and Brandon Tyler Padgett. They were accompanied by pianist Jeremy Reger. Together, they delivered a stunning performance of selections from *State Fair*, *La Traviata*, *The Secret Garden*, *Les Misérables*, *Rusalka*, and *Anything Goes*.

If you were unable to attend our Theatre of Dreams Gala, Dream Events are still available. These adventurous group activities support Central City Opera. Visit [centralcityopera.org/dreamevents](http://centralcityopera.org/dreamevents) to browse and participate.



Sara Gartland singing to Newell Grant, the 2024 Theatre of Dreams Gala honoree.

## FAREWELL AND THANK YOU

Our cherished, Nancy Parker now lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico near her son, Scott! Nancy began the labor of love – PLANTING DAY for us all in 1985. If you would like her address, please let Christina Dinegar know. Nancy would love to hear from you all!

## 92ND ANNUAL YELLOW ROSE BALL AND FLOWER GIRL PRESENTATION

The dynamite blast from a nearby mine in the City of Central can only mean one thing – it is time for the 92nd annual Central City Opera Yellow Rose Ball and Flower Girl Presentation. The event is the social centerpiece of the Opera's annual summer festival, and reflects the rich history associated with this former mining town and Colorado's early settlers.



Twenty-three rising high school seniors were honored this year on Saturday, June 15. Former Co-Chair of the Central City Opera Board of Directors, Roopesh Aggarwal, introduced the 2024 Flower

Girls. Following the presentation of the Flower Girls in the Teller House Gardens, the young ladies assembled on Eureka Street to dance to the Yellow Rose Waltz before adjourning to the Opera House for a musical performance.

The event continued into the night with dinner and dancing. Money raised at the Yellow Rose Ball, chaired this year by former Flower Girl Kimberly Victor Neckers, helps to support the nation's fifth-oldest professional opera company and its year-round programming that reaches thousands of students, families, and seniors through live performances, workshops, and residencies.



## CENTRAL CITY OPERA EDUCATION NEW INTERN PROGRAM

We are very excited to be expanding our educational programming to nontraditional students and higher education institutions. This year is the first year Central City Opera Education is hosting artists and interns who are gaining credit at institutions of higher education.

Laura Trefethen is one of the General Arts Administration Interns this summer at Central City Opera. She is a graduate student at Colorado State University. Read more about Laura and her profile also in this newsletter. Additionally, one of our apprentice artists, Christian Holden, will be able to complete his undergraduate degree invoice from Utah Valley University through his participation in the training program.



"Hi! My name is Laura Trefethen and I am one of the General Arts Administration Interns this summer at CCO. I am so excited to have this internship and be here with CCO for our amazing festival season! I am also a local mountain girl...my husband and I live

in Evergreen with our three older kids and love everything the mountains and Colorado has to offer, from the outdoor playgrounds to the indoor ones like CCO.

I grew up with a love of music, theater, and education – a life filled with choral, vocal, and piano competitions, dance, and musical theater. I graduated with my bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from Brigham Young University, while also working on a Music Minor. I loved performing with the BYU Women's Chorale and in professional choirs at that time. My education and experiences led me to teaching elementary school, directing and managing an elementary music extra-curricular program, coordinating my own vocal and piano studio, and then becoming a music director for theater high school companies. I am also currently on the board for a local nonprofit theater in Conifer. I have a huge passion for the performing arts and I truly love helping the community increase their opportunities and exposure in this area.

Taking stock of all of my experiences, I decided it was time to explore other ways to continue my education and transition to more administrative roles in the arts. I am currently enrolled in Colorado State University Master's program of Arts Leadership and Cultural Management, set to graduate Fall of 2025. I am loving all of my classes and learning about marketing, fundraising, nonprofit management, technology in the arts, community engagement, and more. This internship at CCO gives me a "baptism by fire" in all things arts administration and gives me credit within my Master's program.

I have really enjoyed working within CCO so far and the opportunities to work directly with directors in their respective fields. It is a great learning environment and I look forward to gleaning everything I can and giving CCO my hard work this summer. "



## GREET-A-SINGER IS BACK!

We are thrilled to report that the Greet-A-Singer program has been reinstated this season. Bette and Dave Poppers came out of retirement per request by Scott Finlay to reboot this beloved program for 2024.

The mission of Greet-A-Singer is to arrange rides for opera artists and staff arriving by air, and drive them to their summer lodging in Central City. This year, we are welcoming a total of 40 arrivals, and all but five have or will be picked up by Greet-A-Singers. With help from the opera office, our Guild president and especially from so many dedicated, flexible, and willing volunteers – some making multiple trips – we have successfully sustained this program once again.

Our drivers love getting to know the people who will actually perform in the operas, whether on stage, backstage, or in the orchestra pit. Such a bond is formed that drivers sometimes treat their person to dinner after a performance and continue to have a connection for years.

We are so grateful for the lengths that our volunteers have gone to in order to make sure this program was successful this year. One couple offered to pick up two arrivals at midnight coming in on different flights and different coasts. Another couple drove five arrivals on three separate trips to CC after a stop for groceries and supplies. Two more volunteers did a double drive, and one did her second drive filling in for a friend who broke her patella two days before. Two veteran retired volunteers, one a very young 90, even offered to drive if absolutely needed. (And they definitely were!)

**We are looking for someone to head this program next year and really would like to have more Guild members involved. The bonus for our volunteers is two complimentary tickets to one performance of EACH production! It's such a rewarding experience!**

If joining the Greet-A-Singer family is something that interests you, please contact:

Bette Poppers at 303-888-1170.



LET'S BUILD THE GUILD FUND!  
In Celebration of Our 50th Anniversary in 2024!

GIFT THE GUILD! 

During 2024, all gifts will be matched, creating a fund that will annually support Guild activities in perpetuity.

Please feel free to reach out to me directly at 303-807-9464 or [amkrritz@comcast.net](mailto:amkrritz@comcast.net) if you have questions or would like more information.

## CCO GUILD AMBASSADOR PROGRAM GETS SET FOR 2ND YEAR

Thanks go to Karen Ritz for starting and coordinating the Ambassador program in 2023. Last season was highly successful with a many ambassador volunteers. The Guild is sponsoring the program again during this summer. We are hoping several Guild members (and friends) will volunteer. There are 28 performances this summer and having two ambassadors for each performance would be optimal.

### Ambassadors will:

- Greet patrons on Eureka Street
- Assist as needed with directions to Box Office, Teller House, Gift Shop, Williams Stables, Lunch & a Song, Gilpin Arts, restrooms, etc.
- Deadhead flowers in our Gardens as time allows if you want to
- Enjoy a complimentary meal from the Face Bar restaurant
- Attend the opera in an unsold seat (see the Box Office). You could see the operas several times!

Ideally, ambassadors should be on Eureka Street by 11:00 am for the matinees and by 5:00 pm for the evening performances.

For the 2024 Festival, John Kure will be coordinating the program. If interested in serving as an ambassador, please contact John via email at: [jwkure@yahoo.com](mailto:jwkure@yahoo.com) or call 303-877-2988.

**WE NEED YOU! As of this printing, most of the performances have no ambassadors.**

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT ERIN OSOVETS, CCO ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF MARKETING



**Tell me a little bit about yourself . . . Where did your love of opera/music begin and how did you end up at Central City Opera?**

I'm originally from the suburbs of Philadelphia and my husband and I moved to Denver in 2010. My love of music started at an early age, as my dad was a musician and hosted a weekly bluegrass radio show. I received a BA in Journalism and Music Business (I wanted to write for *Rolling Stone* magazine) from Belmont University in Nashville and an MA in Urban Studies from Eastern University in Wayne, PA.

For several years, I worked at the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) and in 2011, I founded a public relations firm that managed PR for electronic dance music producers and DJs. I did that for six years until I had my daughter and decided to go back into the nonprofit world, which is how I ended up at Central City Opera in 2019.

**Tell us about your role, and how the Guild can help contribute to the success of what you do.**

I'm the Associate Director of Marketing and I handle the majority of our communications that are distributed to the public. Working closely with our graphic designer, Melissa Rick, I conceptualize what each piece should look like, what the message is and who it will reach. I collaborate with all our internal departments on developing collateral for our summer festival and special events throughout the year, such as the annual Theatre of Dreams Gala, L'Esprit, CCO Presents performances and donor engagement events. I also manage our social media accounts and website.

**What is your favorite part of working at Central City Opera?**

I like the historical aspect of the organization and the Colorado roots. I also love seeing the result of all our year-round hard work when audiences come to Central City to experience the summer festival. The people are also pretty great too!

**Tell us something that would maybe surprise people about you.**

I spend most weekends at our cabin in Florissant, where we are always outside in nature. I also write for a music blog in my spare time.

## CCOG MEMBER SPOTLIGHT CATHY GROENE, CO-VP OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES



**Tell us a little bit about yourself . . . Where did your love of opera begin and how did you end up joining the Guild?**

My mother was an avid music lover, and my parents began taking me to all sorts of musical productions (including Central City Opera) as a young child. Central City fast became one of my favorites. The beautiful mountain towns with all the fun shops, picnics in the cemeteries, and the beautiful music in the Opera House. I was even a Flower Girl at the Yellow Rose Ball with several friends.

After starting a family, I wasn't reunited with Central until 2014, joining the Guild and volunteering for Housewarming and Planting Days. My daughter was a Flower Girl in 2015 and has joined me with her brother and my husband, Greg, for several operas and volunteer days. It has been so rewarding to introduce friends to Central City Opera and the Historic Properties it owns. People are amazed by the talent and fascinated by the history.

**Tell us about the different roles you've held within the Guild.**

I have been Historic Properties Vice President for 8 years, but excitedly joined the new Ambassador program last year. I've also helped write a few articles for the *Grapevine* on Historic Properties. There are so many fun areas of the Guild to become involved in. I'd love to branch out to help with Education opportunities and Greet-a-Singer.

**What is your favorite part about volunteering with the Guild and your favorite part about Central City Opera?**

The Guild is an especially wonderful group of people and I treasure the friends, events, and volunteering we share. It never seems like work! The combination of Central City Opera's world-class music in such a historic venue with artists living right there make it an experience like none other. It truly is a Colorado treasure!

**Tell us something that would maybe surprise people about you.**

*(Written by Katie Grassby, as Cathy was being bashful about this question)*

Cathy Groene is one of the most hardworking individuals I've ever met. Historic Properties is NOT an easy committee to oversee, and she does it with the perfect mix of organization, grace, and grit.

**Anything else you'd like to share?**

EVERYONE SHOULD VOLUNTEER WITH THE GUILD – YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW MUCH FUN IT IS AND HOW MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE YOU CAN MAKE!

## PLANTING DAY: HOW OUR GARDENS GROW



Planting Day actually begins in February when local Novacek Greenhouse Family (parents, daughters, and grandchildren) plant, by seed, our boxes and pots. They personally deliver our flowers each year!

Next, we have Opera Teaser, which Karen Ritz masterfully helps lead the way to create each year. Thank you, Karen!!! We want to extend a very special THANK YOU to all the CCO Guild Members, Board Members, Artists, and Staff who donated at Opera Teaser! We raised nearly \$10,000 to benefit our gardens, tripling what we have raised in past years. This incredible generosity allowed us to begin our gardens preparation in Central City in an "unexpected" Colorado May snowstorm. Justin, co-owner of local Our Family Tree Service, began trimming the CCO gardens trees and shrubs, removing a dead tree, and cleaning endless pine needles. Next, our gardener Katy Gruenbaum, owner of local New Earth and her team prepared our CCO gardens and the Johnson House soils for planting. They mulched, churned, and cleaned the gardens.

Finally, Planting Day arrived on June 5th. We had 90 + volunteers, another banner year. HUGE THANK YOUS to our CCO Guild Members, Board Members – both past and present, our Flower Girls and their Mothers and



Families, and our annual planting day partner, Innovest! We all planted, swept, and watered in record time. Most importantly, we shared our upcoming Festival Season preparation together with old and new friends!

After planting was complete, Kimberly Neckers, our 2024 Yellow Rose Ball Chair, Ann Sparks, our CCO Guild/YRB Family Day Chair, and our incredible CCO team, Billy Higgins, Eric Chinn, created magical tours to educate our Flower Girls and their Mothers and Families about the behind the scenes of CCO!

All enjoyed basket lunches prepared by Nosh Catering, owned by Mallorie Howard, one of our 2003 Flower Girls. President, Katie Grassby held the Guild meeting in the Teller House.



*Continued next page*

## FOR HISTORIC PROPERTIES, THE SPRING MEMBERSHIP FUNDRAISER AND HOUSEWARMING WERE HUGE SUCCESSES!

THANK YOU to all those who donated to the Spring “Money for Mattresses” Drive, which provided 43 mattresses for the Central City Opera Historic homes. Thanks to your generosity, Opera Teaser donations and a donation from The Westin Avon (by way of Denise Sanderson and Anne McGonagle) nearly half of the Festival Staff will rest well!



*Well needed new mattresses!*

For those who may not know, by owning these properties, the Opera is able to save thousands of dollars in housing costs every summer. If you haven't had a chance to contribute, we welcome additional support as more

beds will be replaced next year. You may donate through the website here: [centralcityopera.org/guild-mattress-donation-form](http://centralcityopera.org/guild-mattress-donation-form) or contact the office directly to make a difference in a young artist's sleep!

In addition to moving in the new beds, re-arranging sizes and adding new bedding, Guild volunteers assisted in converting four rooms in the Teller House into bedrooms for Festival Staff.



*RJ Stoye and Sam Hutt installing a new bed in Weckbaugh*

Lots of cleaning out and organization made for fun conversation and laughter, and picnic lunches made a great time to catch up and even enjoy an impromptu song!

A huge thank you to 25 volunteers who collectively spent over 500 hours preparing 23 houses for the arrival of the 100 CCO Festival Staff who are currently living in Central City for the season. We are immensely grateful!



*Planting Day continued from previous page*



Wendy Dominguez, Innovest President and Co-Founder, who plants with her invaluable team each year, was interviewed by our 50th CCO Guild Anniversary film crew. Our filming was organized by Katie

Grassby, Meg Ozaki Graves and Billy Higgins. Thank you all for this special addition!

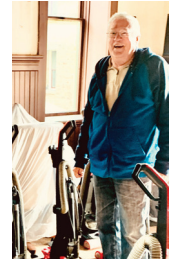
And, an extra special THANK YOU to Eric Chinn, who keeps our flowers blooming all summer long! Please remember to deadhead any time you are in Central City and tell Eric “thank you” for all that he does for our CCO gardens all year long! Thank you, Eric and to our incredible volunteers, who make our gardens grow!



*Hank and Liz Carter preparing for new furniture in Lower D'Albe*



*Kay Fiege playing the organ in Pink house*



*Doug Fiege repairing vacuums.*



*A new bedroom in Teller House!*



*Sue Janssen, Karen Bruggenthuis and Katie Grassby in Newberry House*



*Sue Janssen-cleaning out Teller rooms to become bedrooms*



*Carla Masur and Marilyn Rhodes stocking Pink House*



*Sue Janssen and Carla Masur fixing a table in Nicholas*



*Kay Fiege, Anne McGonagle, Sam Christiansen, RJ Stoyle, Karen Christiansen*

### LOOKING AHEAD TO INVENTORY DAYS

It is hard to believe, but the Opera Season will be ending before we know it! So, we're looking ahead to Inventory Days August 15, 17 (additional dates to follow) where we will take inventory in the houses, preparing them for winter and evaluating needs for 2025. Dates may change or be added so please let us know if you're interested at all in volunteering so you can receive updates. We're looking into adding some fun activities for volunteers to enjoy as well. To register or for information contact Cathy Groene 720-205-9058 or Kay Fiege [kayfiege@gmail.com](mailto:kayfiege@gmail.com).



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Central City Opera Box Office:  
303.292.6700  
centralcityopera.org

## 2024 CCO Guild Summer Newsletter

Coeditors  
Christy Darling and Priscilla Mead

A black rectangular poster for the 2024 Central City Opera Festival. The text is white and yellow. At the top, it says "CENTRAL CITY OPERA" with diamonds on either side, followed by "2024 Festival". Below that, the dates "JUNE 29 - AUGUST 4" are in yellow. The program list includes "GILBERT AND SULLIVAN THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE", "PUCCINI THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST", and "WEILL STREET SCENE". At the bottom, the website "centralcityopera.org" is in yellow.

CENTRAL CITY  
◆ OPERA ◆  
2024 Festival

JUNE 29 - AUGUST 4

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN  
THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

PUCCINI  
THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST

WEILL  
STREET SCENE

centralcityopera.org

