

### **From The Desk Of The President**

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We are now at the end of another spectacular Season of performances by The Sarasota Ballet, so we can look back at the achievements and highlights of this volunteer organization and its ongoing support of The Ballet.

Prior to the company journeying to New York's Joyce Theater, there was a special rehearsal for FSB members. The money raised at this event and all subsequent events was designated to TSB Touring Fund.

The annual Meet Me At the Barre which opens the Season, four Showcase luncheons and the highly successful Holiday Soirée and Silent Auction, together with some generous donations, raised over \$30,000.

It is not only financial contributions which are incredibly valuable to TSB – volunteering in many different areas are equally beneficial, from Box Office /Will Call, DNG, providing Dancers Suppers, and conducting Backstage Tours.

As we look forward to another Season there will be some new faces on the FSB Board:

**Barbara Jacob** and **Laurie Fitch** will be taking over from me as **Co-Presidents**.

**Fran Nitschke**, our **Treasurer** for the past 3 years is stepping down. Her cool professional attitude and legal expertise has been a tremendous asset to the Board. **Elaine Foster**, a new member will be taking over the reins.

**Richard March** will be Vice President.

**Betty Ferguson**, also a new member, will be **Membership Chair** with the assistance of **Jane Sheridan** and **Anna Critchfield**.

**Barbara Fisher Long** will be taking over from **Pat Golemme** as **Volunteer Coordinator**.

**Pat Corson**, who has been **Backstage Tour Coordinator** for three years is also stepping down from this leadership role but will be continuing as a tour guide. This position is still open and a volunteer with marketing skills is urgently needed (see details on page 4).

**Lydia Landa** who has been heading up two areas for many, many years is also stepping aside. Her incredible organizational and data skills have ensured that reservations for events have proceeded without any tribulations. This position will now be undertaken by three people, **Melliss Swenson**, **Mitzi Hogoboom** and **Donna Maytham**.

Lydia is also stepping aside as DNG Liaison but will continue to volunteer with the students. A new liaison is also needed.

As it states on the plaque that The Sarasota Ballet presented to me earlier this month:

“Thank you for your Blood, Sweat and Tears”

The past three years have certainly been a tumultuous journey. But “Friends” have engendered friends which, I hope, will last for a long time. So Thank You for your support on this journey and I wish fair weather and a goodsail to my successors.

### **Reminder to all Friends**

When you complete your renewal (see page 2), please carefully check the 2016-2017 Membership Directory/Source Guide to ensure that the information is current. If there are any changes, please highlight any updates or corrections when you return the envelope with your dues.

If you have an email address, please make sure that you include it as well. That way, we can send you “E-blasts” - alerting you of Friends and TSB events between issues of Talking Pointes which is published three times a Season.

**From The Desk Of The Membership Director**

Laurie Fitch 952-913-2123  
laurieakabb@gmail.com

It's that time of year again – membership renewal! In the coming weeks you'll receive a membership renewal envelope that you can just fill out, toss in a check and pop it all in the mail. The new membership year runs from June 1, 2017-May 31, 2018. We hope you all rejoin this terrific organization that does so much to support The Sarasota Ballet. Remember, your dues can be tax deductible as the Friends of The Sarasota Ballet is a committee of the Board of Directors of The Sarasota Ballet and therefore, a 501-C-3, non-profit corporation. As always, check with your tax advisor.

I will be stepping down as **Membership Chair** on May 31 and the position will be taken over by the very capable **Betty Ferguson**. Betty is a new member and can be reached at 917-885-4699. Please join me in thanking Betty for volunteering to help the Friends and make her life easier by renewing your membership before June 1<sup>st</sup>. That way both you and Betty can relax and enjoy the summer without worrying about whether or not your membership is up-to-date!

**From The Desk Of The Dancers' Suppers Coordinator**

Peggy Sweeney 941-358-1650  
peggysweeney@verizon.net

You -- the indefatigable culinary crew of the Friends of The Sarasota Ballet -- have contributed a total of 340 volunteer hours to the Dancers' Suppers program so far this Season. Since each hour is valued at \$22 when an organization applies for a grant, your work is considered to be a **\$7,480 contribution to The Sarasota Ballet!**

We've noticed that when performances are held at the Opera House, the dancers often elect to take a break and walk to Starbucks, Whole Foods, or other source of sustenance and pack up the Friends food in to-go boxes to take home following the evening performance. Since this is clearly not the purpose for which the supper program was created, the decision was made to turn Felding Hall at the Opera House back to the Sarasota Orchestra (its original purpose) instead of using the space for dancers' food.

As a result, the culinary crew can take a break for the last performance of the Season – along with my heartfelt thanks for your incredible contributions throughout the 2016/2017 Season.

**Sarasota Ballet**  
**2017/2018 Performance Schedule**

***Program 1 – The Secret Garden***  
WILL TUCKETT  
27 - 29 October 2017  
*FSU Center for the Performing Arts*

***Program 2 – Metropolitan***  
ASHTON, GOMES & BALANCHINE  
1 - 2 December 2017  
*Sarasota Opera House\**

***Program 3 – John Ringlings Circus Nutcracker***  
MATTHEW HART  
15 - 16 December 2017  
*Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall\**

***Program 4 – Moving Identities***  
TAYLOR, GRAZIANO & NORTH  
26 - 29 January 2018  
*FSU Center for the Performing Arts*

***Program 5 – Sarasota Ballet Presents***  
23 - 25 February 2018  
*FSU Center for the Performing Arts*

***Program 6 – Dreams of Nature***  
ASHTON & BINTLEY  
2 - 3 March 2018  
*Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall\**

***Program 7 – Great Masters of Dance***  
TUDOR, BALANCHINE & ASHTON  
27 - 28 April 2018  
*Sarasota Opera House\**

**\* All programs at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall and the Sarasota Opera House will include live music.**

**March Showcase Luncheon**

*By Donna Maytham, Peggy Sweeney and Jane Sheridan*

The March luncheon was held at Michael's on East and Friends were in for a treat with our special guest, **Jean Volpe**. The wife of The Sarasota Ballet's Executive Director, Joe Volpe, is a star in her own right. A former principal soloist with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, Jean is a

ballet teacher and a member of the Board of Trustees of American Ballet Theater. Jean delivered a seamless and often humorous autobiographical sketch of her remarkable career. Growing up in a small town in the Midwest, she discussed the difficulties of wanting to dance in an area with limited training opportunities. Initially, she was only able to take class one day a week. To continue to develop her talent, she eventually had to drive to another state to take class.

Her talent, dedication and perseverance ultimately took her to the epicenter of American dance, New York City. Jean achieved personal and professional success on the stage of the New York Met. She achieved artistic success as a principal soloist with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet. It was there that she met her future husband and father to their daughter, Anna.

Her enthusiasm for ballet was both informative and contagious! The attendees were delighted to gain insight on what it means to be a dancer.

### **April Showcase Luncheon**

By Jane Sheridan

The last luncheon of the Season was held at Michael's on East. With a theme of Volunteer Appreciation and End of Season Reports, it was truly a celebration of what makes the Friends of The Sarasota Ballet an integral contributor to The Sarasota Ballet.

Guests included Hilary Steele, Chair of the Board of Directors of The Sarasota Ballet (TSB); Marjorie Floyd, Jason Ettore and Lisa Townsend, staff members of TSB; as well as Sandra Frank and Aundria Castlebury of the All Faiths Food Bank (AFFB) – the human services partner that provides healthy snacks to Dance – the Next Generation (DNG).

As Secretary of the Friends Board, **Peggy Sweeney** noted that the organization benefits from the many volunteers who do outstanding work year after year. However, she noted that the volunteer award guidelines specify that recipients can only be recognized once – regardless of how much time they have contributed.

The 2016-2017 volunteers who were recognized are:

Dancers' Suppers: **Kay Aidlin** and **Laurie Hofheimer**

Info Desk: **Alison Jones**

Luncheon Reservations: **Sheila Vincent**

Box Office: **Phyllis Myers**

Special Events: **Barbara Fisher Long**

Will Call: **Betsy Wollman**

Backstage Tours: **Phyllis Schaeen**

DNG: **the entire team** of 17 volunteers was recognized with a plaque that was accepted on its behalf by **Lydia Landa**.

**Lisa Townsend**, Director of DNG, spoke on behalf of Barbara Epperson to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of **Sandy Miranda**. Utilizing her skills as a librarian, Sandy has been working in the office to organize the archives of The Sarasota Ballet. Lisa also acknowledged the invaluable support of AFFB. Since 100% of the funding for DNG comes from private donations and a few small grants, the snacks that AFFB provides ensures that the children in the program have something healthy to eat after school.

**Sandra Frank**, Chief Executive Officer and self-admitted dancer and ballet lover, spoke about the unique relationship between AFFB and DNG. She noted that it is highly unusual to have a working partnership between a human services organization and the arts. After highlighting the fact that 50% of the children in Sarasota qualify for food assistance during the school year, Sandra commented that the need is great during the summer break. For this reason, she gratefully accepted the generous donations of food and envelopes that Friends brought to the luncheon. She looked forward to the continuing collaboration between AFFB and DNG.

**Jason Ettore**, speaking on behalf of TSB, recognized the invaluable assistance and contributions of the Friends. He noted that the continued support of volunteers has allowed the administrative staff to remain significantly smaller than other arts organizations of a similar size. As he said, "volunteers are the lifeblood of an organization".

**Janice Kunkel** noted that this was her last luncheon as President of the FSB. Two presentations were made in recognition of her contributions to The Sarasota Ballet and the Friends of The Sarasota Ballet.

**From The Desk Of The Volunteer  
Coordinator**

Pat Golemme 1-508-735-7882  
pga155@gmail.com

A heartfelt thank you to all our dedicated volunteers...it's been a pleasure working with all of you for the past two years. I trust that you will enjoy working with your new Volunteer Coordinator, **Barbara Fisher Long**. She will officially take over on May 10th.

In the month of March, you demonstrated your tremendous commitment by volunteering 712 hours. Year to date, the total hours worked is 4,330. Using the \$22.00 per hour rate mentioned earlier, from September through March **this is equivalent to over \$95,000.**

We are seeking volunteers to take over positions for team leaders for Greeters, DNG Liaison, and Marketing/Booking for Backstage Tours. (More information on the Backstage Tours position follows.) If you are interested in any of these, please contact me or Barbara.

Have a wonderful summer and I look forward to seeing you at the ballet.

**From The Desk Of The Info Desk  
Coordinator**

Virginia Tashian 941-966-2515  
veetash@comcast.net

By the end of the current Season, 18 volunteers will have covered the FSB Information Desk at 29 Ballet performances, some 40 shifts in all. These volunteers have helped patrons feel welcome and appreciated, and have offered information about coming events for both the Friends and The Sarasota Ballet, and tried to respond to all manner of questions. We thank them all!

Especially, please join me in congratulating **Alison Jones** who covered the desk for every fall Saturday matinee, a busy assignment at a time of year when many volunteers had not yet arrived in town.

Over the summer, some thought will be given as to how to proceed next Season. The location of the desk and traffic patterns in the 3 performance venues will be considered. Comments,

suggestions (and also offers of future help) are welcome via email or phone.

**From The Desk Of The Backstage Tour  
Coordinators**

Pat Corson 609-876-5776  
Andi Lieberman 630-862-4681  
friends@sarasotaballet.org

What better way to learn about The Sarasota Ballet than by taking a backstage tour! These continue to be very successful. The enthusiasm, knowledge and professionalism of the guides and ballet staff are shared with our guests. After welcoming remarks from **Iain Webb** or **Jason Ettore**, the magic begins. Participants delight in attending class in Studio 1. As they move through the costume, education and backstage rooms they acquire a new understanding of the workings of The Sarasota Ballet. It gives them a far greater appreciation of what it takes to mount the outstanding productions we see on stage.

During the Season, we conducted 20 tours (on select Tuesdays and Thursdays) with between 10 and 22 guests. The seven guides along with the two in training receive applause and words of praise at the end of each tour. A big thank you goes to these special goodwill ambassadors who share The Sarasota Ballet story with our visitors.

**Help Wanted - Backstage Tour  
Coordinator**

It takes two people to manage the backstage tours – one who markets and schedules the tours and the other who arranges for the tour guides. We currently have an opening for the first position on the Friends of the Sarasota Board. This person works closely with the co-chair, as well as with the marketing department of The Sarasota Ballet.

If your field of expertise is marketing, working with groups and managing a schedule, you would be an asset to the Friends. Major responsibilities include community/group outreach, distributing flyers, scheduling tours and confirming with participants.

As a member of the Board of the Friends of The Sarasota Ballet, you will also attend Board Meetings and liaise with other Committee Chairs. A complete job description is available upon request.

If you are interested please contact any of the following individuals:

**Andi Lieberman** - 630 862-4681 or  
andilo24@icloud.com

**Pat Corson** - pmcorson@ gmail.com

**Barbara Jacob** – barbjacob@gmail.com

**Laurie Fitch** – laurieakabb@gmail.com