

# SLOC Spotlight

The Newsletter of the  
Schenectady Light Opera Company  
Volume 40-7  
May 2007

## The Music Man *added to* 2007/2008 Season

In our continuing effort to grow our audience and expand our programs, the SLOC Board has approved the addition of Meredith Wilson's *The Music Man* to the 2007/2008 season as a special production. This production is "special" in a couple of ways. First, the show will be produced with an all student cast. All roles from Harold Hill to Amaryllis will be filled by students in grades 12 and under. Second, the show will be performed at the brand new GE Theater at Proctors. We believe this will be an exciting addition to our season. The performance dates are Wednesday November 14<sup>th</sup> through Sunday November 18<sup>th</sup>. The show is being Co-directed by Joe Fava and Jeffery Scott, Co-produced by Ross Snyder and Marlene Countermine, and Andrea Merrill is the Music Director. Other production team members include Michelle Sousa-Gatta and Regina Baker. If you would like to help with the production, please contact Ross Snyder at 265-5952 or by e-mail at [SLOCMUSICMAN@nycap.rr.com](mailto:SLOCMUSICMAN@nycap.rr.com).

### The Music Man Audition Dates Set

Auditions for the November production of Meredith Wilson's *The Music Man* are to be held on June 4<sup>th</sup> and June 6<sup>th</sup> and the SLOC Opera House at 826 State St. Schenectady, NY. Auditions will start at 6:00 PM. Auditions are limited to students in Grades 12 or under [as of November 2007]. Call back auditions are scheduled for June 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM at the Opera House. Pre-registration for the audition is highly recommended. For further information, please visit the SLOC website and follow *The Music Man* link, send an e-mail to [SLOCMUSICMAN@nycap.rr.com](mailto:SLOCMUSICMAN@nycap.rr.com), or call [877]350-7378.



## TONY Party!

Join SLOC for the 2007 TONY Awards Party, Sunday, June 10! This year's celebration of theater will take place beginning at 7pm at Malt River Brewing Company in the Latham Circle Mall. Don your festive clothes, walk the red carpet and join your fellow SLOCers for an evening of theater thrills! Malt River owners Carrie Bee Weiss and her husband Marc are providing a cash bar and delicious appetizers and finger foods, all prepared by the chefs at Malt River. We'll be watching the TONY Awards telecast on the projection screen, and music and dancing will continue after the program. There's a rumor that there may even be some very special SLOC TONYs awarded during the night - you'll have to attend to find out! Tickets are \$20 per person, cash or check only. To RSVP for this very special event, please respond to Melissa Lacijan at 371-4288, or [mlacijan@earthlink.net](mailto:mlacijan@earthlink.net) by June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Hope to see you there!

*Spotlight on...*

**Annual Meeting/Pot Luck**

**Saturday, June 2  
6:30 PM**

**at the Opera House**

826 State St.  
Schenectady, NY 12307  
393-5732

Web Site:  
[www.sloctheater.com](http://www.sloctheater.com)



#### 2006-2007 Season

The Full Monty  
October 13-15, 19-22  
Oliver!  
December 1-3, 7-10  
Once On This Island  
March 9-11, 15-18  
Hello Dolly  
May 4-6, 10-13



Bonnie Williams  
President

Board of Directors  
Donna Z. Baxter  
Peter Codella  
Marlene Countermine  
Bob Farquharson  
Mary Kozlowski  
Brett Putnam  
Michelle Sausa-Gatta  
Ross Snyder  
Ken Zarnoch



Next Newsletter  
Deadline:  
**August TBA**



# President's Notes... by Bonnie Williams



## 🎵 Goodbye, Dolly!

As I write this, *Hello, Dolly!* still has four more performances. But if the first weekend is any indication, it will be a successful run. Suzanne Rayome assembled "half of Yonkers" on the SLOC stage. Congrats to all involved. Hopefully, you enticed first time audience members to come back for more next season.

A side note: In the band was Ellen Rizzo, back from her auto accident on New Year's Day 2006. It was good to see her doing well and back in "tune".

## 🎵 A Reminder

SLOC's annual meeting is fast approaching. The date is Saturday June 2 at 6:30pm. It's a pot-luck, so plan on bringing your favorite dish and come! Please call Michelle Sausa-Gatta at 377-1905 so we have an idea of how many folks and what kind of food to expect. SLOC will provide the drinks.

We will be voting in new Board members [see the bios starting on page three in this newsletter], receiving VP reports, recapping the season past and looking forward to next season. There will be an opportunity for general discussion and many opportunities to VOLUNTEER!!!! Please plan on attending.

## 🎵 SLOC "Boils" Over

After too many service calls and too many rehearsals in a cold theatre, the board decided it's time to replace the boiler. Even though we are continue to look for a new home, we are assured to be here for this winter and perhaps the next as well. There is just so much patching and praying Ross and helpers can do to keep the old boiler going! The work will be done over the summer and be ready for the heating season in the fall.

## 🎵 Another Birthday Tribute

Thanks to Eunice Chioffi for arranging for the birthday tribute by the Schenectady City Council and Mayor Brian Stratton [see related article].

## 🎵 Condolences

SLOC sends its condolences to Mary Kozlowski and Ted Vickery. Mary's dad, Louis Reda died in April. Ted's father, Theodore Vickery, Sr. passed away earlier this month.

SLOC also notes the passing of Dr. Edwin Brown who died April 28 at age 90. A WWII veteran, Dr. Brown was a strong supporter of many local arts organizations, including SLOC. The establishment of the Dr. Brown Fund has provided income to purchase tickets to SLOC performances for youngsters from Schenectady. His generosity has allowed young people to experience live theatre, perhaps for the very first time by attending a SLOC performance. How many young people have been "turned on" to theatre because of Dr. Brown's commitment, we may never know. But we are appreciative of his support of SLOC over the years and we send our prayers to his family.

## 🎵 A Last Word

This will be my last note to you as president. I have served two years and, as per SLOC's rules, cannot run again. It has been my privilege to serve this Company as President. I hope that whoever comes next will remember why we do what we do: to present quality musical theatre in an atmosphere that is artistically fulfilling, financially rewarding and fun! See you on stage, backstage or in the audience soon!

### Prop Room

The prop room is currently cleaned out but we are need of storage containers. If anyone has any to spare, please contact Donna Z. Baxter (810-4962). Thank you and we wish you all a pleasant summer.

## SLOC Spotlight

SLOC Spotlight is a newsletter of the Schenectady Light Opera Company, P. O. Box 1006, Schenectady, NY 12301. SLOC is a community volunteer musical and theatre arts incorporated, nonprofit organization. Governed by a Board of Directors elected by the membership, SLOC's purpose is to present quality musical theater to the people in and around Schenectady County, NY.

Newsletter Staff: Jill Coloney, Tom Heckert, Greg Rucinski, and Carole Mann. Subscription Rates: \$5 per year, check payable to SLOC. Send subscription inquiries and address changes to the address listed above.

**DEADLINE** for submissions to **Vol. 41 Issue No. 1** of the SLOC SPOTLIGHT will be in August [date to be announced].

Please submit articles to Dave Dixon at [lvvsbabs@yahoo.com](mailto:lvvsbabs@yahoo.com)  
(cc: [dzbaxter@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dzbaxter@nycap.rr.com))

# Board Bios

## Regina T. Baker

I have worked with SLOC for the past three seasons for a total of eight shows. I have been a member for two years and look forward to many more.

I have enjoyed working with the people here both on and off the Board, and look forward to helping the Board further the advancement of the Company in-house and in the community.

## Marlene Counterline

I have been a member of Light Opera for over 30 years and have been onstage, backstage and a member of the Board for 2 years. I have co-produced 3 shows in the past 2 seasons and feel that I bring an objective viewpoint to the Board each month. In addition, I have helped with tickets, ushering, concessions and lighting as well.

I look forward to another stint on the Board and promise to keep the member's best interest at heart when voting on issues.

## Dave Dixon

I have been a part of SLOC's great theatre community since 1995.

My SLOC contributions include: 15 SLOC productions (leads and ensemble roles; TANYs Award recipient, 80th concert performer). I was also Co-Producer of *Nine* (2006); SLOC's High School Musical adjudication/scholarship committee(2005-present); Usher(2000-present); Publicity(responsible for *Hello, Dolly!* feature articles: May, 2007); SLOC's Co-VP: Public Relations/Publicity(2006-present).

Being elected to the Board of Directors would allow me to continue to increase audience ticket sales, maintain necessary relationships with both our current and new media contacts, increase awareness of SLOC to our fellow community theatres, and preserve both our physical building structure and our financial success.

I would do my best to both listen and learn and ultimately maintain SLOC's grand reputation as one of the area's premiere theatre companies.

It would be my honor to be elected to the Board of Directors.

## Michelle Sausa-Gatta

I have been associated with SLOC for twenty-seven years and have served on the Board for the past decade. Presently the Vice President of Artistic Operations, I have been on stage as well as working behind the scenes painting sets and helping with various company operations. A Nationally Board Certified Teacher in the area of music, I teach for Niskayuna Schools and would like to see SLOC provide more educational experiences for younger audiences in performing and technical work. *[continued]*

## Michelle Sausa-Gatta *continued*

I would like to encourage the Company to become more visible throughout the community by integrating with other local artistic venues. I support the Board in seeking a new home for our Company.

## Eric Shovah

I am pleased to be running for the SLOC Board of Directors once again. This past year, I have served as the VP of Company Operations. This experience has given me new insight into the inner workings of the Board. I have worked side by side with the Board throughout the year to help continue SLOC's professional and enjoyable atmosphere. I have worked on several shows at SLOC, most recently as an actor in *Hello, Dolly!* and as the director of *Oliver!* [for which I won a TANYs Award]. I have worked with many groups in the area in addition to SLOC, including, Spotlight Players, C-R Productions, Second Star Players, the Glove Theater, and Family Players, for which I have served as a Board member. I have experience with a variety of school groups as well, including Heatly High School, Voorheesville High School, and Farnsworth Middle School and I am currently working with the Colonie Youth Theater as director. I will also be helping to publish the SLOC newsletter next season. I bring a positive attitude, dedication, and sense of humor to the Company whenever possible and enjoy all aspects of theater, both onstage and off. I would like to be on the Board so that I may more fully put my areas of expertise and understanding of the Company to use. Being a Board member will allow me to more actively aid the Company in anyway possible. I have many hopes and ambitions for the Company, such as:

1.) Helping to actively explore new potential venues now that SLOC has made a decision regarding moving the Company to a new location. I hope to help find a safe, accessible, and suitable space while continuing and preserving the history and rich tradition of this thriving organization.

2.) In much the same vein as the above, I would like to help make the current season (while still in this building) safer and accessible for our actors, production staffs and patrons.

3.) I would like to help continue the development of youth-theater at SLOC. I have played a part in bringing together the current production for 2007 (*The Music Man*) and would like to see this become a tradition which will help outreach to new talent and youth. This will help bring in new volunteers to the Company as well as educate the incoming actors and actresses of tomorrow.

4.) I would also like to engage and organize more outreach opportunities to promote SLOC, as well as raise money for the organization.

These are a few of the ambitions that I have for the Company, should I be elected to the Board. I look forward to the challenge and appreciate your support!

***[Board Bios continue on the next page]***

## Board Bios *continued*

### Ross Snyder

I have served as VP of Facilities since 2004 and an elected Board member since 2005. As a Board member I have been very active, dedicated and energetic. I have served on the show selection committee and the committee to evaluate Box Office software. I have been and will continue to be a strong advocate for expanding SLOC programs. I have been the driving force behind the November 2007 special production of *The Music Man* at Proctors and a strong proponent of other specials such as the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary show, and next season's *Beguiled Again*. I have been an advocate for and led initiatives to upgrade our systems and processes to be more efficient and useful. This summer we will be implementing a new box office system and phone system as a result of these initiatives. My position is that SLOC's long term interest will best be served by moving to a new location, preferably in the developing arts district in downtown Schenectady. If re-elected I will continue to serve as VP of Facilities where I have overseen several Opera House and Taurus Road improvement projects. Upkeep of our aging facilities is a challenge, and improvement projects need to be evaluated from the perspective that we may relocate. I also volunteer as House Manager, Producer, Concessions, Pre-sales and House announcements and perform on stage when the opportunity presents itself. Thank you for your support of SLOC.

### Peter Codella

Peter is also a candidate for the Board. Due to a family emergency Peter's bio was unavailable at press time.



## Absentee Ballots Available

A member qualifying as a Voting Member shall be entitled to personally request one [1] absentee ballot from the Secretary. The request must be made at least two [2] days prior to the Annual Meeting. The Secretary will provide the ballot and a covering envelope with instructions to vote for five [5] candidates. The ballot **must** be marked, sealed in the covering envelope which **must** be signed by the voter on the outside, and returned to the Secretary prior to the Annual Meeting. Any absentee ballots received after the voting process has commenced during the Annual Meeting or in an unsigned covering envelope shall be declared void. Please contact Secretary Melinda Zarnoch at 382-8497 to obtain an absentee ballot. The ballot can be sent either via post or email.

## SLOC receives Resolution from Schenectady City Council

On Monday, April 23, 2007, SLOC was presented a Resolution signed by Mayor Stratton and seven council members. The Resolution reads as follows:

***"Resolved, that the Mayor of the City Of Schenectady wishes SLOC well on its 80th year of productions and also wishes it a bright future in entertaining the residents of Schenectady."***

Joe Fava [VP for Community Relations], Dave Dixon [CO-VP for Public Relations] and Eunice Chioffi [longtime, devoted SLOC member] accepted this certificate and offered their own personal thanks and gratitude on behalf of the entire SLOC Board and membership.

This Resolution will be displayed with pride in our Lobby. Congratulations to all of us!!



Joe Fava, Dave Dixon and Eunice Chioffi accept the Resolution from a City Councilman.

## Spotlight Gets New Team

We at SLOC would like to thank Jill Coloney, Greg Rucinski and Tom Heckert for their outstanding dedication of producing SLOC's Spotlight Newsletter. This is no small task of accepting articles, spelling corrections, checking grammar, formatting, layout, graphics, sending to the printer, picking up from the printer, labeling and mailing, all within a certain deadline.

They will not be easy shoes to fill, but we will try with our new staff. As of the next issue, the new staff will be as follows: Dave Dixon [Newsletter Editor], Eric Shovah [Layout Editor], and Joe and Mary Ann Condra as support staff. So after the May newsletter, please forward all articles to Dave at [lvsbabs@yahoo.com](mailto:lvsbabs@yahoo.com) [cc: [dzbaxter@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dzbaxter@nycap.rr.com)].

Peter and Madeline Codella will continue to maintain the mailing list and print the labels, and Carole Mann will continue to label the newsletters and bring them to the post office. We thank them for their help.

Jill, Greg and Tom - Thank you.

# *SLOC Memories*

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My sweetest memory is fairly recent in 2001 when I was directing a Director's Showcase called "Recess". It was about a bunch of little kids, but I had all adult actors and they all had a blast acting childish - who wouldn't?!?! One adult was very special with a pretty blue dress and huge bow in her hair. It was Marion Foster. She was so sick during this period, but never let on. She was always willing to do the dances and even out danced some of the "younger" adults when it came time to be the child. One time she "accidentally" was late getting back to her place at the end of the song and it was so funny we left it in! Marion always thanked me for giving her the chance to be on stage one last time, but I'm the one who has always been so grateful to have had the chance to direct her in my play. ....*Jennifer Depew*

During *Mack and Mabel*, and following Pat Brady's fabulous "Tap Your Troubles Away" production number, there was a rather intense office scene. During this dramatic scene all that Joe Phillips, Ron Rivers, Jim Kidd and Dave Dixon could hear were giggles and laughter through Pat Brady's mic praising her tap number. Pat's mic was not turned off by the Sound Booth while she was in the Green Room downstairs. So, while not on stage, our dear Pat was with us 'in spirit'.

.....*Dave Dixon*

Dinner Anyone??

My Golden Retriever, Sadie, and I were in SLOC's *Annie* in 1990. While I was on stage, Sadie would stay with the three costume ladies who loved her and fed her anything she wanted - and Sadie enjoyed ALL food! By the last performance, Sadie had gained a bit of weight! When I went to get her for the very last finale, she was lying on the floor looking very fat and contented. I had to coerce her to go with me.

Sadie was put into the big Christmas box for the finale. She usually popped right up when Annie opens it, making the audience cry over the enthusiasm of Annie and Sandy's reunion. BUT on this final night, when Annie removed the lid, Sadie's head slowly raised up as if she was perturbed that her after dinner nap was interrupted! Annie had to nearly pull her out of the box for their big reunion! It was a hilarious way to end the run!!! .....*Pat Brady*

I remember my first SLOC experience. I was "Transportation" for the production of *1776* in 1989. I drove the U-Haul from the Taurus Road facility to Proctor's Theatre with set pieces, lighting hardware and other essentials. Since then I've been "transported" on a journey of musical theatre on which I continue - I have met many wonderful talented people!! What hooked me forever was a passionate rendition of "Molasses To Rum To Slaves" by one of my SLOC heroes, Allan Foster.

.....*Bill Depew*

Friendship

Schenectady Light Opera has been one of the most welcoming and supportive places I have ever been. I am overcome with warmth, comfort and familiarity when I walk through the door. I always know I will have a good time and be entertained - whether as a performer or audience member. It is like a second home that values one of the most important parts of who I am. ....*Elisa Verb*

[continued]

## **Memories** *continued*

That Hurt!!!!

SLOC did "Kiss Me Kate" at Proctor's in 1986 - I had the male lead. In the audience was a couple from Albany, Manuel and Lois Vargas by name.

Fast forward to 2004. Both Manuel and my wife died, and I met, and married his widow, Lois. She has not one recollection of that 1986 show, nor of having seen me as the lead in it.

So here we have a guy straining to the limits on stage, being watched by his future wife and her then-husband - and not making a single impression on either one of them!!!

..... *Allan Foster*

## **Game Show Contestants**

Three long time SLOC veterans, Michael Mensching, Dale Conklin and Michael McDermott, recently returned from a trip to New York City where they competed on the game show Chain Reaction on the Game Show Network.

Chain Reaction is a word game, where a team of three men compete against a team of three women, with the object of completing a series of word chains. The action is lively, with three rounds of word chains followed by three speed rounds eventually determining the winners, who then get to compete in the bonus round.

The three men had quite the experience through the process! Team Leader, Michael Mensching, found the audition notice in an on-line posting and coordinated the application process "They always like catchy names for the teams, so we became The Theater Guys." Auditions were held on a snowy night in Manhattan. The three took a grueling word test, then were videotaped performing a demo round.

Selected to perform, the three ventured to Manhattan again for the taping of the show in March. And then, LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION! it was showtime. "It all went so fast," McDermott commented. How did things turn out? The guys can't say until after the broadcast, The show was broadcast at 10:00 PM on May 9th on the Game Show Network.



**P.O. Box 1006  
Schenectady, NY 12301-1006**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

### **2007-2008 Season**

*Kiss of the Spider Woman*  
September 28-30 and October 4-7  
*The Music Man* @ GE Theater at Proctors  
November 14-18  
*Annie* Nov 30, Dec 1 and 2 and 6-9 & 14-16  
*Beguiled Again* Jan 11-13 & 18-20  
*Bat Boy* March 7-9 & 13-16  
*Anything Goes* May 2-4 & 5-11

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## **SLOC Outreach Update**

SLOC Outreach had a successful appearance at the Brown School Faculty Appreciation Dinner on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Michael Mensching, Kate Kaufman Burns, Peter Lacijan and Melissa Lacijan sang cabaret-style songs for the dinner, with Joanne Mensching accompanying on keyboard. The evening had a French theme so Michael, being fluent in French, hosted the entire event au francais! SLOC member Elisa Verb is on the faculty at Brown School, and she joined the Outreach group to perform a number for her colleagues. A good time was had by all!

## **Ad for Ads!!!**

Do you or anyone you know own your own business? Looking for some extra advertising? If so, SLOC is looking for ad patrons for our playbill. We have a variety of sizes and prices to fit any company or business needs. Since we've added a January special for next season, patrons receive five ads for the price of four. In addition, most packages include complimentary tickets. Advertise for your business and enjoy quality musical theatre. If interested, please contact Heather at [hdarcy78@hotmail.com](mailto:hdarcy78@hotmail.com).



***Don't forget!!!***

**Annual Meeting and  
Pot Luck Supper  
Saturday, June 2, 6:30 PM  
at the Opera House**

**Good Fun! Good Friends!  
Good Food! Good News!**