



# SPOTLITE

Theatrical Protective  
Union Local No. One  
IATSE, AFL-CIO, CLC  
Organized 1886

**WINTER 2012**

## THE MET OPERA AS ONLY WE SEE IT



Donald A. McKay's famous 1966 cut-away drawing of the Metropolitan Opera originally created for the New York Times Sunday Magazine Section.



The Great Stage of the Metropolitan Opera as seen during the changeover from the afternoon rehearsal of Mussorgsky's "Khovanshchina" to the evening performance of Verdi's "Aida" during the current season.

***We can either have  
democracy in this country  
or we can have great  
wealth concentrated in  
the hands of a few,  
but we can't have both.***

***U.S. Supreme Court  
Justice Louis Brandeis***

Many have come to the Metropolitan Opera over the last 40 plus years to watch, listen, tour and be dazzled by the grandeur, sheer size, quality and artistry on display there. But, there is a different view of the Met that not even the tours can show the public. That is our view. What the members of Local One see as they pursue their usual tasks. A view and a technical sophistication that is anything but usual. In a series of photos the Spotlite will try to share that vision.

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## FROM THE DESK OF THE RECORDING-CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I was very fortunate to have my family home with me for Christmas this year. The surprise arrival of my daughter, Faith, on Christmas morning, brought a smile to her younger brother's face that will be a timeless holiday memory. Later that day, after the gifts had been exchanged and colorful wrapping paper with images of snowflakes and reindeer covered the living room floor, I asked my son, Henry, if he had had a good Christmas.

“Yes,” he said. “The best present is having Faith home.”

His answer was the best present I received. At that moment, being safe at home, I could not help but feel extremely lucky. Lucky to have my loving family home. Lucky to have a job. Lucky to have a roof over my head and food on the table. Lucky to be a member of a Union.

And then I could not help but to think of all of those who are not so lucky and not so safe. I thought about our brothers and sisters fighting a war thousands of miles from home, who now have to be worried not only about the enemy, but also about our supposed allies, the army and police of the country we are occupying to free for democracy, turning their guns and bombs on them. I wondered, once again, why we were there, risking the lives of young and old, mother and father, sister and brother in a place of corruption and sorrow. I thought about our brothers and sisters, homeless, jobless and penniless who stood up as citizens throughout the United States asking for answers to the dilemmas our country faces, only to be confronted by power and violence. I wondered if hope still existed.

I was a teenager in the 1960's. I clearly remember the protest marches back then against the war in Vietnam and for civil rights. I remember the division and the tumult and the rage of those days. I also remember a feeling back then that practically anything was possible, and of being hopeful, and I wonder if that is just a faulty memory of youthful desire. I do not know. But when I feel weary and overwhelmed by the strength of those waging wars and stuffing their own pockets, and when I read stories of families so desperate that their children are being abandoned on the streets of our own cities, I look for some light, some truth that will bring back my desire to carry on and confront all that is trying so hard to keep us down, and I remember what my son said on Christmas.

“The best present is having Faith home.”

Fraternally and Sincerely,

Robert C. Score  
Recording-Corresponding Secretary

I hope you all had a healthy holiday and a Happy New Year. The quarterly Funds' Trustees Meeting was held at the Local One offices on November 29th and 30th. Although it was a volatile year on Wall Street, the Trustees are proud that in these difficult times, our Pension Fund is healthy and able to provide benefit improvements. Based upon market performance in the coming year, Trustees Claffey, Score and I will continue to explore opportunities for improvement within the Pension Fund.

As one year ends, a new one begins, so in the spirit of keeping organized, once again, here are a few helpful hints going forward into 2012:

- 1) Check your pay stubs and keep an eye on your income levels. Remember Tier III health care coverage for the July 1, 2012 thru June 30, 2013 Plan Year will be based upon 2011 income of \$75,000;
- 2) Tier's I and II coverage for the July 1, 2012 thru June 30, 2013 Plan Year will be based upon 2011 income of \$37,500 and \$52,500, respectively;
- 3) Based upon the new Affordable Care Act, both the Union and the Fund Office will be covering dependents, who do not have other coverage, who are 26 years of age and under. Both plans began coverage as of January 1st, 2011;
- 4) Credit towards the Local One organizational list is based upon earning a Pension Credit. A Pension Credit is currently \$35,000 in gross earnings per calendar year under Local One collective bargaining agreements;
- 5) Always check your pay stubs to see if dues have been deducted. If dues are not being deducted, your Pension, Annuity and Welfare payments are most likely not being paid as well.

The Executive Board has just completed a separate mailing to the Widows of Local One, reminding them of the additional benefits the Union offers them. Although this information is sent out at the time of the member's death, we feel it is important to continue to keep the real heroes of Local One informed. If you have a Mother, Sister or Aunt who is a widow, please let them know that they are welcome to call us anytime with any questions they may have. They are still, and always will be part of the Local One family.

As I look back on the past year, one can't help but to highlight two big Local One accomplishments. First would be the 125th Anniversary Gala. The event was spectacular and the memories will last forever. The archive footage has been captured and stored appropriately. A complete copy of the event is being made and will be available soon. History, training and trade show videos are being made as well.

Second, from the 125th Anniversary, the Local One Training, Education and Technology (TET) Fund was born. It has been set up as a Taft-Hartley Fund that contains two Management and two Union Trustees. We have received 501(c)(3) tax exempt status.

The Training Coordinator of this Fund is Chairman of Trustees Paul F. Dean, Jr. He has done an amazing job educating both current and potential future members in the areas of ETCP Certification, safety, new technology, as well as the history of the Local. This will keep the Local strong and on the cutting edge of Technology for years to come.

Finally, the entire Local One Family wishes Bookkeeper Lyudmila Vasilchenko a happy and healthy retirement. We will miss you.

The Union remains strong Brothers and Sisters.

As always, if you need any assistance or have any questions, do not hesitate to call.

Fraternally,  
Robert "Toby" McDonough, Treasurer

## TRAINING, EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

### HUDSON AUTOMATION AND CONSOLE TRAINING

On Saturday November 5<sup>th</sup> and Saturday November 12<sup>th</sup> Local One hosted an automation course for 20 brothers and sisters of Local One. The course consisted of two parts, Basic Winch Training and Automation Console Training.

The Winch Course addressed many facets of the Hudson Automation system, including winch components and installation, as well as deck track and line set procedures. This section also focused on basic DWU (Digital Winch Unit) operation, motor re-phasing (in the three phase electrical system) and limit setting procedures.

After completion of the winch course, five members were selected to go on to console training on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup>. Due to overwhelming demand from brothers and sisters who attended the automation course, Local One



Console Class operates winches on lower left and right



Basic Winch Class receives technical instruction by Power Point

It has been three years since Local One has hosted this course and it was time to start it up again. I would personally like to thank Neil Mazzella, Corky Boyd, Walter Murphy, and the course instructors ( Chuck Adomanis, Erik Nelson, Drew Williamson and Kyle Weidner). In addition I would like to thank the Local One Executive Board and the Trustees of the Training Education and Technology (TET) Fund.

Paul F. Dean,  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees



Console Class where each student got hands-on experience working with the equipment.

and trustees of the T.E.T. Fund approved a second round of console classes. This was a first, as in the past, training had always been limited to one round of console training. The Executive board felt this was a great opportunity to get a greater number of members trained on programming and operation on the HMC (Hudson Motion Control) system. As Hudson Scenic has provided the automation for nine Broadway shows of the last season, this training is clearly advantageous to the membership of Local One.



THEATRICAL  
PROTECTIVE UNION  
LOCAL No. ONE,  
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**ALL QUESTIONS, COMMENTS  
AND SUBMISSIONS GREATLY  
APPRECIATED**

Upcoming Monthly Membership  
Meeting dates are:

March 25  
April 22  
May 20  
June 24

Organized in 1886, Local Number One has served the entertainment community in theatre, television, and other entertainment venues proudly and professionally. With over three thousand members covering an expanding jurisdiction throughout the greater New York metropolitan area, our experience and knowledge covers the range of expertise required for any application. From fabrication to installation to safe operation, we can do it.

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT JAMES J. CLAFFEY, JR.; VICE PRESIDENT WILLIE WALTERS; TREASURER ROBERT (TOBY) McDONOUGH; RECORDING-CORRESPONDING SECRETARY ROBERT C. SCORE; THEATRICAL BUSINESS MANAGERS KEVIN MCGARTY AND MICKEY FOX; TELEVISION BUSINESS MANAGERS ROBERT NIMMO AND EDWARD MCMAHON, III; CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES PAUL F. DEAN, JR.; TRUSTEES WILLIAM NGAI AND DANIEL DASHMAN; REPLACEMENT ROOM CHAIR DANIEL THORN; ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY EDMOND SUPPLE, SR. AND FINANCIAL SECRETARY ANTHONY MANNO

“WITH ALL THEIR FAULTS, TRADE UNIONS HAVE DONE MORE FOR HUMANITY THAN ANY OTHER ORGANIZATION OF MEN (AND WOMEN) THAT EVER EXISTED. THEY HAVE DONE MORE FOR DECENCY, FOR HONESTY, FOR EDUCATION, FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE RACE, FOR THE DEVELOPING OF CHARACTER IN MEN (AND WOMEN) THAN ANY OTHER ASSOCIATION.”

EMINENT ATTORNEY  
CLARENCE DARROW  
NOVEMBER 1905

“ALTHOUGH IT IS TRUE THAT ONLY ABOUT [13 PERCENT] OF AMERICAN WORKERS ARE IN UNIONS, THAT [13 PERCENT] SETS THE STANDARDS ACROSS THE BOARD IN SALARIES, BENEFITS AND WORKING CONDITIONS. IF YOU ARE MAKING A DECENT SALARY IN A NON-UNION COMPANY, YOU OWE THAT TO THE UNIONS. ONE THING THAT CORPORATIONS DO NOT DO IS GIVE OUT MONEY OUT OF THE GOODNESS OF THEIR HEARTS.”

SYNDICATED COLUMNIST  
MOLLY IVINS  
JANUARY 9, 2001

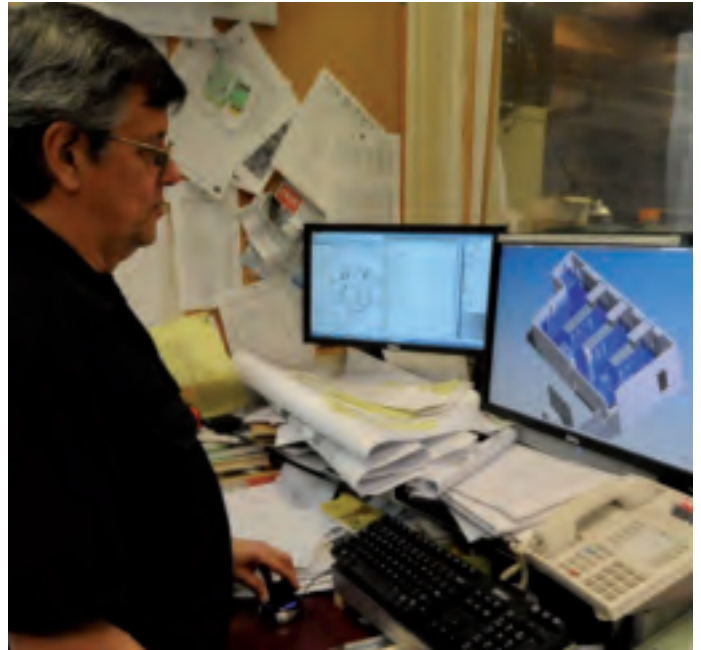
**COME TO YOUR UNION MEETINGS!  
IT'S INFORMATIVE AND PART OF YOUR DUTY AS A MEMBER**

*Continued from page 1*

Recently, the membership of Local One took a strike vote and unanimously voted to support our technically proficient crewmembers in demanding their fair value from the Opera. We build, operate and maintain every technical piece that makes the Met Opera the greatest and most complex theatre in the world. We design how things are built.



Brother Robert Yanez construction drafting in the Carpenter Shop



Brother Joseph Daly drafting a power system in the Electric Arm Office

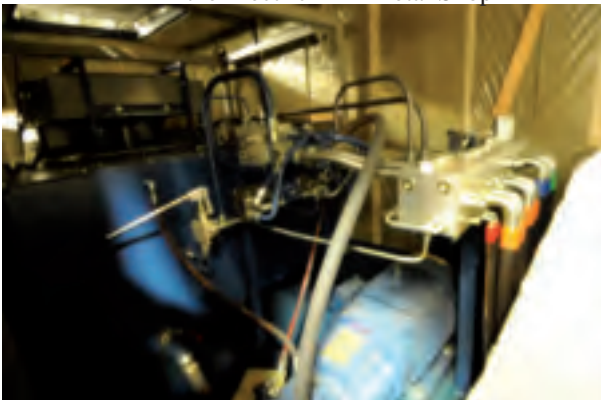
We do the building.



Functional stainless steel prop desk built from scratch in the Electric Arm Metal Shop



Members building scenery in the Carpentry Shop



Hydraulic pump system for the new Production of Wagner's Ring Cycle installed beneath the Stage





When first built in 1966, the Lighting Control Room looked as it is shown at left. It was a ten (10) scene pre-set, 150 dimmer board. The ten banks of potentiometers are to the right and rear of the photo. In front are the ten masters and the master crossfader in the center. The Spotlight believes the Brothers in the photo are Bill Geiger, Jr. (standing), Bill Geiger, Sr. (seated) and Bruce Katzmann (with binoculars).

Below are the GrandMA master lighting control boards used today with multiple video screens to enable the extremely accurate control modern state-of-the-art technology requires. The photos below represent two separate boards that are used together to light the Great Stage. The video screen in the upper right of the lefthand photo is the same screen as in the upper left of the righthand photo. In the center of the left photo is the Great Stage as seen from the master lighting control board.



This is what our members see when running a Front Light at the Met. They are sitting in a booth 105 feet from the stage and 75 feet above the audience.

Depending upon the needs of the opera, our Brothers and Sisters will hit the face of a performer from this distance and not hit their costume or any scenery around the performer.

During the Summer hiatus, the Ballet and other attractions occupy the Opera House. The front light operators have a completely different set of problems keeping the rapidly moving dancers in the proper frames.



Brother Arthur Griffenkranz  
49 years working for the Met Opera



From Gallery 1 the Male Chorus on the OP side (Opposite Prompt in Opera Speak is the same as Stage Left) looks like a group of ants dwarfed by the massive masking drop to their right and the sound-proof Peale door to their left. This view is from about 40 feet above the stage. When the Peale door is raised the OP stage platform can be moved onto the main stage with a completely erected scene on it.

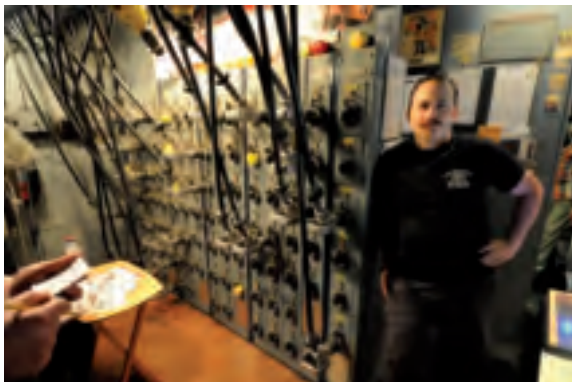


Some of the equipment at the Met Opera is original. Like the motors on the Pipe Grid iron (See photo on page 9) and the motor controllers (See photo below), the control board for the fly system is also original to the Opera House. As was done in the Lighting Control Booth, where the 10 scene preset 150 dimmer board was replaced with twin Grand MA boards, plans are in the works to replace the Pipe Console, controllers and all of the pipe motors. Brother James Shulman is operating the system.

The patch panel for the fly system is also original. Each drive motor controller, like the one to the far right, has a pigtail that can be plugged into the receptacle for any one of the pipe motors on the Pipe Grid. The motors can be ganged together at the console for coordinated moves. Brother Josh Rothenberg, standing next to the panel helped us understand the system. Brother Tim Forestiere only got his hands in the picture.



The motor controller you see here is one of 30 such cabinets each well over 6 feet tall that are patched as needed to the more than 100 pipe motors on the Pipe Grid. This elaborate system has worked for nearly 50 years, but is reaching the end of its life.



So, too, the hydraulic system that operates the vast stage elevators. The Met has attempted to “go green” by replacing the classic petroleum based hydraulic system with 6000 gallons of soy based hydraulic fluid. All of the bugs have not been resolved yet, but all concerned are hopeful that the Met will be able to contribute to the environmental safety of us all. Brother Ken Merkel, one of Local One’s Shop Stewards at the Met, stands in the “Pump Room” where the hydraulics are monitored and maintained.







The Stage under the Stage.  
"Aida" is set up to the left.



The Hydraulic Stage Scenery Lift  
From "C" Level (basement) to the Great Stage



Pipe Motor Grid Iron: 120 feet above the deck



Spot Grid Iron: 113 feet above the deck

A book could be written describing the technical sophistication of the Met Opera Crew. Their ability to work with the oldest of technologies (carpentry and manila rope) to the most modern high definition digital video is at the cutting edge of our world today.

The Spotlight would like to thank Peter Clark Press Director of the Met Opera for the unprecedented access he gave Local One both for this article but also for our videographers to record our work for use in training our new members.

We thank all the crew members of the Met who were so welcoming and eager to explain their crafts and responsibilities. We only mentioned a few as you are far too numerous to name individually but we deeply appreciate all of you.

We must thank Brothers Nick Doumanoff and Robby Weiss for the hours they spent showing us around, also Brother Ken Merkel for his help in planning this article.

And finally, we must thank Brother Mike Terpstra without whose wonderful photography there would be no article.



Underside of the Grid Iron with a Light Bridge on the Lower Right.

## Local One Bookkeeper Lyudmila Vasilchenko Retires

Eleven years ago, a small unassuming woman with a warm smile, a thick accent and a very quick mind became a part of the Local One family. Lyudmila Vasilchenko had been hired to be a bookkeeper. Little did we know what a difference she would make in the lives of all of us.



Treasurer McDonough presenting Lu with her plaque

spreadsheets that have left the Trustees in awe.

It can be truthfully said that Lu has knowledge and expertise in areas of our computer software that the rest of us didn't even suspect existed until she discovered them. When Local 52 was looking for someone for their office Lyudmila coached her daughter in how to serve that Local as well.

Even as she was planning on retiring, she was planning how to make it a smooth transition for Local One. When Kwany Chan was selected from the Local One Fund Office as her replacement, Lu spent her last months on the job bringing Kwany up to speed. Lu did the job so well that the business side of Local One never

Mila has retired. She has faithfully served Local One under three Treasurers, each of whom came to treasure her.

When Local One had to navigate the terrible and sudden loss of our Treasurer Donald Kleinschmidt, it was Mila who made sure that then Financial Secretary Robert "Toby" McDonough got all of the information and support he needed to make Local One thrive.

When our accountant had to be replaced, it was Mila who had everything in such good order that the new accountants had a nearly seamless transition.

As the Treasurer's office grew and computerization became so very important to the day-to-day operations, Lyudmila was the one who became expert in the accounting program, in the spreadsheet program and in the database program. She has been able to create reports that none of us imagined "QuickBooks" could produce. She has done things with Excel



Lu and President Claffey enjoy a laugh





Treasurer's Office Staff, Old and New: Financial Secretary Anthony Manno, Lynn Gratton, Lyudmila Vasilchenko, Cynthia Williamston, Kwany Chan, and Treasurer Toby McDonough.

even noticed the transition.

At her retirement lunch Mila was honored by every elected officer and staff member of Local One, the Corresponding Secretary of Local 52 Bill McGavin, our Accountants Steve Schlapp and Vince Licause, our Banker from TD Bank Joyce Milliner and, of course her husband Anatoliy and her daughter Polina Syniec.

Lyudmila has reached out and touched every one of the over 3100 members of Local One whether they have been aware of it or not and she has touched many other lives in Local One's orbit as well.

It is with the greatest of best wishes and also great sadness that we reluctantly send Mila off to her well-deserved retirement. Good Luck Lu and don't be a stranger. You are and always will be Family.



The main table for Mila's retirement lunch with Lyudmila at the head, her husband Anatoliy to the left and her daughter Polina to the right.

*Photos for this article are courtesy of Brother Anthony Manno*



**SPOTLITE**

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**PRESIDENT OBAMA AT THE APOLLO**



President Barack Obama With Brother Shawn Norgriff On Left And Brother Kevin Dessisso On Right  
On The Stage Of The Apollo Theatre