

"I want to become a Member of the Elks Opera House Guild...."

The Guild is an auxiliary of the Elks Opera House Foundation. Our goal is to **preserve** this historic treasure for future generations of Prescottians, to **promote** the theatre at public events such as local parades and festivals, and to **support** by doing fundraising events including our Annual Bunco Bonanza, fashion shows and historical presentations.

We would like you to attend at least three EOH Guild events (social or general meetings) so you can get a feel for the group.

There is a one-time charge of \$25 (which will include your name badge) to join and then there are regular yearly dues of \$25 for a couple and \$15 for singles

"But I'd like to become a Docent...."

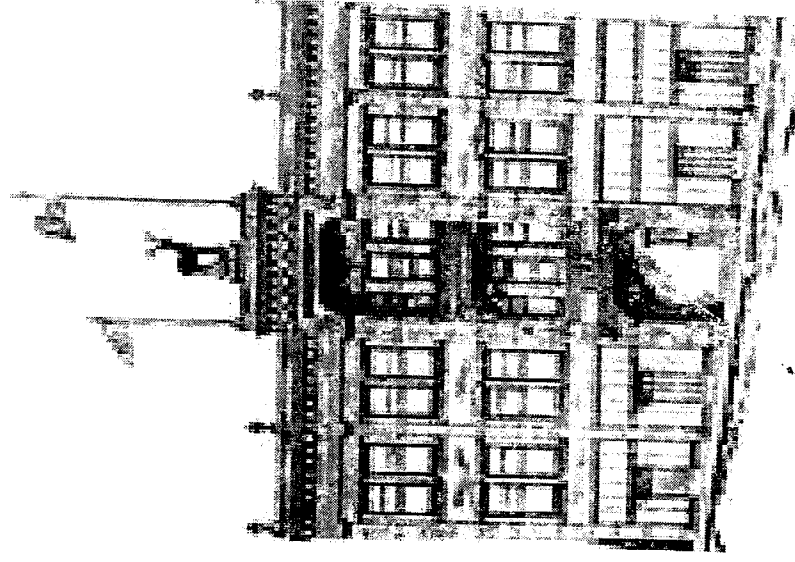
That's wonderful! We'd love to have you! Two of the most important things to remember is that the Elks Opera House is a **business** owned by the City and that we are a **working costume group of volunteers**. Our first responsibility is to the patrons that come in the door. The docent is the first visual experience that a patron has when they walk into the lobby whether it's to see a performance, buy tickets or enjoy a tour and docent appearance to the general public is important. They love and expect to see the docents in costume.

Docents represent clothing eras from the 1860's through the 1940's and for a few events, costuming of the 1950's or 1960's is portrayed. While working in the Opera House, docents are required to be in costume, or in our uniform of a long black walking skirt for ladies or black pants for gentlemen, period correct white blouse for ladies or a long sleeved shirt for gentlemen and a green EOH vest that is provided by the Guild.

Docent Volunteer Hours: Docents are required to volunteer at least 40 work hours per year at Guild events to have their yearly dues waived. The required docent hours include working at a performance, selling tickets or giving tours.

Being a docent is fun but it requires a **commitment**. It is not about just getting to see shows for free. That is a terrific benefit, but there is a lot more to it. The box office is open Tuesday-Friday from 10am-2pm and there are always at least two docents on duty to sell tickets or give tours. Working as a docent in the opera house requires a broad knowledge of the theater history. You will be given costume help and docent training; however, it is your responsibility to gain as much knowledge as possible about the opera house and clothing history through your own research.

For more information, please contact:
www.elksoperahousefoundation.org
and follow the link to the EOH Guild.



A brief history of the Elk's Opera House in historic downtown Prescott, Arizona

The Elk's Opera House

Prescott, Arizona

In 1904, in response to public demand for a community gathering place for the arts and entertainment, the citizens of Prescott raised \$15,000, of the total building cost of \$75,000, to assure that a performance hall would be included in the new Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks Lodge #330 building on Gurley Street, just one half block from the Yavapai County Courthouse Plaza. The February 10, 1905 Arizona Journal-Miner reported: "The entire interior of the theatre is marked by a richness and beauty which attracts the attention of all upon entrance." It was heralded at the time as the premier opera house west of the Mississippi.

On Monday, February 20, 1905 actress Florence "ZaZa" Roberts starred in the opening-night play, *Marta of the Lowlands*, written by Angel Guimera and billed as a romance of old Spain. The orchestra was composed of musicians from Prescott, Jerome and Phoenix. Opera boxes sold for \$20.00 and general admission was \$2.50. The Weekly Arizona Journal headline asserted: "Opening of Elks Theatre Last Night Brilliant Social Event."

Prescott was a convenient stopover for theatre companies traveling between the larger cities to the east and west. Famed performers Sir Harry Lauder, Olivia de

Havilland and John Phillip Sousa were among the notables who appeared at the Elks. Tom Mix and Tony the Wonder Horse also performed at the theatre.

The venue, which at that time boasted 900 seats and 8 dressing rooms, was also used a great deal for balls, civic presentations and high school graduations. The acoustics were considered "superb."

During the silent film era, a small orchestra provided the accompanying music for the movies. By 1929, the silent movie days were over and the "talkies" became a mainstay of the EOH through the 1970's. The first movie shown was the film masterpiece, *Birth of a Nation*, in 1915 and the last was *Indiana Jones, Raiders of the Lost Ark* which was shown in 1981.

Major physical changes started at the EOH in the 1940s when the opera boxes and ornamental finishes were removed to accommodate wide-screen movies. The elk statue atop the roof and an inside box office also eventually disappeared as did a second set of balcony stairs.

The EOH was purchased by the Arizona Community Foundation in 1982 and was managed by Yavapai College and Prescott College, respectively, until 2001 when the City of Prescott acquired it at a cost of \$250,000 in a bid to preserve the historic landmark and ensure its continued use as a community gathering place.

The incorporation of the Elks Opera House Foundation in 2002 ushered in a major fundraising campaign to restore the opera house to its former splendor. Thanks to many generous donors, the EOH closed for a year-long restoration in July 2009 under the direction of the architectural firm of Otwell & Associates. A grand re-opening was celebrated on July 24, 2010 and the sold-out opening night audience was treated to an outstanding adaptation of "Die Fledermaus" performed by the Phoenix Opera Theatre and local artists. Patrons enjoyed new seats, now totaling 494, and a professional restoration of the beautiful opera boxes, paint colors, gold leaf, the elk's heads, proscenium arch and the magnificent replica curtain. In addition, air-conditioning and a state of the art lighting and sound system was installed. The copper elk statue, "Bill", was also returned to his place of honor on the roof of the opera house in 2005, a landmark in downtown Prescott.

Since its re-opening, the Elks Opera House has again emerged as the Grand Lady of Prescott. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and stands as a tribute to the talent that abounds in Prescott and to the deep appreciation our citizens have for the performing arts.

The box office is open and free tours are available Tuesday - Friday, 10am - 2pm. Information can be found on our website: www.elksoperahouse.com