Meet your 1992 candidates for the AGMA Board of Governors

Here are your candidates for the AGMA Board of Governors. This is your opportunity to study the qualifications of those willing to represent you. They are volunteering their time for this responsibility. In turn, it is your responsibility to vote. Responsible union leadership rests with a responsible membership. It's your union - vote and make it work.

Here's how to make your vote count:

Be sure you are an active member in good standing with dues paid up to February 1, 1992.

Be sure you sign your name and address on the return envelope that is enclosed with the ballot.

Mail your ballot in sufficient time to reach the AGMA National office, 1727 Broadway, New York 10019 no later than May 18, 1992.

DO NOT SIGN THE BALLOT.

Signing the ballot will invalidate your vote.

Note: Present incumbents who are running for re-election are indicated by a * next to their names.

NEW YORK AREA

SOLO SINGERS
(6 Vacancies)

* Gabor Carelli

Member 49 years. Past, present Board member. Past service, Nominating, Metropolitan Opera Negotiating, Grievance Committees. With Metropolitan Opera 1951-74. Recorded with Toscanini, Dorati, Leinsdorf, Ferenc Fricsay. Author of My Way to the Metropolitan for Editio Musica, Budapest, Hungary. Member of faculty Manhattan School of Music since 1964. Has taught in Taipei. "As a professor of voice at Manhattan School of Music for 25 years, I am well aware of the problems of young American singers in the professional field."

* Anthea de Forest

Life Member. Board member for eight terms. Member, AFTRA, AEA, SAG. Equally at home in opera, oratorio and musical comedy. Has sung with numerous opera companies, including New York City Opera, where she has also been employed as an Assistant Stage Director. "I feel it essential that the individual segments try to appreciate and respect each other's needs, so we can show a strong front of responsible unionism when negotiating with employers."

* Adib Fazah

Current Board member. Current service, Small Opera Companies Committee. Past delegate, Santa Fe Opera. A leading baritone of the New York City Opera from 1973 to 1989. Has sung with virtually all American opera companies, as well as in Canada, Europe, South America and Mexico. "AGMA needs active soloist representation and I would like to continue to help in that regard."

(continued on page 3)
Discrimination charges are baseless

By Sanford I. Wolff
National Executive Secretary

A letter from the Chairperson of a dancer's committee of one of our major ballet companies suggested that I comment on charges made by Attorney Hilary Miller, Cynthia Gregory's husband.

I think it appropriate to include here pertinent parts of my reply:

"In a document recently filed in Federal Court, Miller states that virtually all dancers lack 'any formal education past high school,' are unsophisticated, and too ignorant to ask 'appropriate questions' of the union, and are 'incompetent,'" (which is defined as "habitually without money").

"These unseemly characterizations clearly do not describe the dancers I have met with, certainly not the committee members I met with on March 3rd...

"I understand that litigation is a rough and tumble business, but I must tell you that I am outraged that Miller alleges in Court that AGMA is a racketeering 'enterprise,' executing a 'scheme to defraud' dancers. I do not believe for a minute that the nine dancers Miller claims to represent really believe that of AGMA or me - and I am absolutely confident that this baseless case will be tossed out. But it is a shame that our time, resources and energy have to be wasted in this manner.

"The AGMA (Pension) Fund is advised by the Martin E. Segal Company, one of the nation's largest and most reputable independent actuarial consultants - and has been so advised since its inception - 24 years ago. Over the years, the Trustees of the Fund have acted on issues of funding and benefit design only upon the advice of its outside, independent, certified, actuaries.

"The question as to whether dancers are best served with pension funds at normal retirement age, as a complement to Social Security benefits, or earlier when a career in dance may be ended, is in part, a philosophical one, and there is room for honest opinions to differ. But to slander AGMA's trustees as 'racketeers' with a 'sinister' motive is unconscionable.

"AGMA has consistently sought from the dancers in every company, expressions of their needs, desires and inquiry. AGMA has negotiated 'Exit Pay,' and 'Severance Pay' in an effort to ease the burden of employment or a career terminating. In succeeding negotiations, efforts will continue to increase the dollar benefits of those provisions.

"In those instances in which the dancers have requested an option to pursue an investment plan such as 403(b), we have negotiated to make that option available. As you know, I have recommended to your committee a combination of both a plan providing for benefits at normal retirement age, and a savings-investment plan."

Save time, make money:
An opportunity for membership

Quoting George Balanchine from the January 1992 AGMAzine article on his conversation of 30 years ago with ballerina Ruthanna Boris praising the benefits that AGMA had brought the stage artists of America he said, "This will save us time and money."

Thirty years later, AGMA is still looking for and finding new ways to help its members save time and money. Maybe this is one solution: Consumer's Byline, Inc., America's largest consumer-oriented purchasing/membership program has been brought to AGMA's attention by a former member, now a retired stage artist.

If you are interested in receiving further information, contact Torres Enterprises, (212) 714-8360.
ELECTION (continued)

• Alan Fischer

Member since 1986. Appeared with Washington, SFO, Dallas Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Spoleto Festival USA. Current service, Soloists, Policy Committees. "Coming from a musical family, I have long been aware of the problems faced by performers. We must strengthen ourselves and our union to protect the benefits we have already earned, and to prepare for what we will need tomorrow. My efforts during my first term have been to help the self-employed artists, like myself, who are not with any one company. I will continue to work for the benefits our union must provide to all its members."

• Leonore Lanzillotti

Member since 1961. Past, present Board member. Present service, Soloists, Small Opera Companies Committees. Leading artist throughout U.S., South America, Central America. Performed on Broadway, Off-Broadway, TV, radio, film, Member, AEA (Film, TV Agency Committee), SAG (Women’s Conference Committee; TV Film and Theatre Committee). Member, Queens County Community Board No. 2 (Department of City Planning, Housing, Youth and Arts Committee). "As a Board member I’m fully aware of what we have achieved and what we need to achieve. My desire is to continue to serve my union and its members as a thoroughly experienced professional."

• Gale Limansky

Member 12 years. Current Board member. Past service, Concert Singers Negotiating Committee. Current service, Concert Singers Committee, Manhattan Plaza Policy Advisory Committee. Soprano soloist with opera companies and orchestras throughout the U.S. and Europe. Recordings, Sony, Deutsche Grammaphon, Greenhays and Mark Records. "My goal has been to attain better working conditions and pay for singers. We have been able to take some steps in that direction in my two and one-half years on the Board and I will continue to work for singers’ continuing strength and growth."

• Dolores Mari-Galdi

AGMA member 34 years. Performed leading roles with NYC Opera (13 years), San Francisco, Philadelphia, Honolulu, Miami, Chautauqua Operas, and many others. Soloist, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Little Orchestra Society, Pittsburgh Symphony; TV appearances in the U.S. and Canada. Current service, Committee IV, Current Board member. "Serving on the AGMA Board of Governors and Committee IV has been an enlightening and fulfilling experience. Hopefully, I’d like to continue contributing whatever I can to promote better understanding between management and performers."

• Eileen Schauler

Member 40 years. Served three terms as First VP. Board member since 1979, Soloists, Policy, Small Opera Companies Committees. Currently Alternate Delegate to Four A’s. Trustee AGMA Staff Pension Plan; Manhattan Plaza Policy Advisory Committee. 23 leading roles, NYC Opera. Member, AEA, AFTRA, Soloist, opera, oratorio, symphony, U.S., Canada; Metropolitan Opera tour; operettas, musicals; TV, radio, Broadway. "I will attend Board meetings, be there for important decisions, voting for fair treatment of each member, budget trimming where necessary, and working for the changes so many AGMA members want for our UNION."

• John Stamford

Member 32 years. Current Board member. Past, present service, Committee "C", Nominating Committee. Currently Pension and Health Trustee. Appeared for 35 years as professional singer with NYC Opera, Miami Opera, Toledo Opera, Kentucky Opera; Avery Fisher Hall, Carnegie Hall, oratorio, etc. Has great interest in strengthening AGMA. Although still performing on occasion, primarily in business world as chartered life underwriter and financial consultant. Also looking and working for more service and benefits for AGMA members.

STAGE DIRECTORS/STAGE MANAGERS/3 Vacancies

• Bruce Donnell

Member since 1974. Currently member of Board of Governors. At the Metropolitan Opera since 1975. Also NYC Opera, San Francisco, Santa Fe, San Diego and Houston Operas. Netherlands, Paris and Canadian Operas and Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires. Past service, Stage Managers/Stage Directors Committee. Current service, Policy Committee, Search Committee, Small Opera Companies Committee, AEA/AGMA Merger Committee. "AGMA is entering an exciting period of development and I would like to contribute to this process."

• Lori Rosecrans

Current Board member, Co-founder AGMA Stage Managers Committee. Current service, AGMA/Equity Merger Committee, Special Policy Committee, ABT Negotiating Committee. Seventh season as Stage Manager for ABT. Vice-Chair Dancers Emergency Fund. Member, AEA and Stage Managers Association. Current delegate, American Ballet Theatre. "Dance and opera management throughout the U.S. need to see that AGMA is serious about reforming itself. AGMA members must be committed to resolving internal issues for the strength and future of our union."

Stephen Pickover

AGMA member eight years. Metropolitan Opera Assistant Stage Director. Productions include the Ring cycle, L’Elisir d’Amore. Artistic Director, the Struthers Library Theatre. (No photo available at press time.)

(continued on next page)
ELECTION (continued)

CHORISTERS (4 Vacancies)

• Betty Baisch
  Life Member. Current Board member. Current service, Concert Chorister Committee, Policy Committee, Committee IV. Member, AFTRA, SAG. "Concert Choristers are on a roll! Due to the undaunted efforts of many concerned people, we’re making good strides toward obtaining recognition and viability in our profession. We need your support to help us maintain this momentum!"

• Lynda Jordan
  Life Member. Past, present Board member. Past service, Roles Classification, Equity Merger, Nominating Committees; Negotiating Committees of NYC, Cincinnati Summer Operas. Past delegate, NYC Opera. Member, AFTRA, AEA, SAG, AGVA, Local 802-AFM. Freelance chorister, singer-guitarist. "Although currently working in films and performing with my husband, Glen Ellsworth, I’m active with the Union for the Performing Arts to get our politicians to be aware of our special needs and the devastating effects of the cuts to the arts and need for a National Health Bill."

• Eleanore Lange
  Life Member. Past service, Metropolitan Opera Chorus Negotiating Committee. Current Board member. Currently New York City Opera Associate Chorister. Past delegate, Metropolitan Opera Extra Chorus. "I would welcome re-election to the Board of Governors as I am vitally interested in working for better conditions and expanded opportunities for my colleagues in AGMA."

• William Lyon Lee
  Member 32 years. Current Board member. Past, present service, AGMA Chorus Committee, Concert Singers Negotiating Committee. Current service, Policy Committee. Past delegate, National Chorale. Founding member of Gregg Smith Singers. Toured U.S., Latin America, Japan, Europe. Member, AFTRA, AEA. "I find the idea of re-organizing AGMA to allow the singers and dancers to explore their individual needs and strengths as the way to go for all of us - new and longterm members. I hope to see this happen soon!"

• Constance Webber
  AGMA member 28 years. Metropolitan Opera chorister, past service, Chorus Committee. Current service, Committee IV; Secretary, Metropolitan Opera Chorus; Secretary/Treasurer, Ladies Chorus. Current Board member, three terms. "Thank you for your past support and, if elected, I will continue my active participation in AGMA and work for the future of our Union."

• Kenneth Young
  Member 12 years. Currently Regular Chorister Metropolitan Opera. Current service, Policy Committee, Committee IV, Search Committee. Current delegate, Metropolitan Opera. "It is reasonable of us to expect some benefit for our dues! I am currently serving on Committee IV (Policy and Finance), the Search Committee and the newly formed Policy Committee. These are truly exciting times for AGMA. I hope to see us become a union truly responsive to its membership and a membership actively involved in running its union."

Pamela Smith
  AGMA member 11 years. Past Fifth Vice President AGMA Board of Governors. Past service, Small Opera Companies Committee, Negotiating Committee. Lobbyist in Albany for increased funding and protection for the arts. Current service, Concert Choristers Committee. "The past two years have seen many changes in the Concert Singers’ branch of AGMA, thanks to a dedicated committee and increased participation of singers at large. I hope this promising trend will continue - and I would like to see a record number of votes counted in this election!"

Robert Manno
  AGMA member 25 years. Currently Chairman, Metropolitan Opera Chorus Committee. Past delegate, New York City Opera, Metropolitan Opera. Former Third Vice-President, AGMA Board of Governors. "AGMA needs a lot of internal work done if it is to be a more credible and viable union. Managements around this country will take AGMA much more seriously when they believe that we are strengthening ourselves. I will work for positive change and growth."

Roger Crouthamel
  AGMA member since 1975. Past service, Chorus Committee. Current Metropolitan Opera Chorus member. Member, AFTRA, New York Local Board member. "We need AGMA reform - now - Elect working artists to Board - now - End Board manipulation by staff - now - Make our union responsive to members - now - Obtain better contracts - now - Reconsider merger - now!"

Karin Grant
  AGMA member since 1977. Member AEA and SAG. Has extensive experience in a variety of performing mediums, from musical comedy to opera. Recently Associate Chorister with New York City Opera. "A union is only as strong as its individual members working together to maintain fair and equitable opportunities for all performers. I desire to be more active in my union and contribute constructive ideas to help achieve this equity."

PLEASE HELP US TO SERVE YOU BETTER BY LETTING AGMA KNOW YOUR CURRENT MAILING ADDRESS!

VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!
A dialogue begins

In an attempt to create a dialogue and to hear from the membership as to the purpose and function of a union, the Reform Policy Committee is beginning a series of articles written by various members and/or authorities in their field for your consideration.

The Committee hopes you will read these articles, think about them, and discuss them with your colleagues. Responses, supporting and differing points of view, are welcome. They should be addressed to AGMA, 1727 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.

Following is the first article, which has been submitted by a New York chorister and includes excerpts from the book, Off Balance, by Suzanne Gordon, a writer and 'devotee of ballet.'

There are at least two opinions in AGMA as to the purpose and function of a union. One group, the larger, work and live in their local communities, have families, and treat their singing/dancing jobs as a secondary income at best, but mostly a hobby. They do it because they love to perform. Many pay their dues but feel similarly to Vase Vesi, a New AGMA Representative from San Francisco, who is quoted as saying: "I don’t necessarily believe in the union — it’s a necessary evil and must be dealt with as such."

In the other group are the lucky ones, those who do what they do full-time. Their performing is their only source of income or at least their primary source. They feel as corps dancer Jackie O’Dell, who said, "We work just as hard as steelworkers, and yet we earn next to nothing. We can’t afford to buy a house or save money. It can’t go on like this." True, some of us are much better off today; the point is we won our benefits the hard way. We fought for them.

The resulting mindset of each group is very different and the demands on the union of each is also very different. This division threatens to pull the union apart. Today, 13 years later, a re-reading of this account of the union’s role during the 1979 American Ballet Theatre strike/lockout and other important events in such companies as Pittsburgh and Houston help put our current crises in perspective. It is important to look at AGMA’s role in helping its members gain a better professional life during these historic events. Ms. Gordon states: "Among its members and in other unions in the arts — AGMA has the reputation of being a ‘Let’s not make waves’ organization which is not much better than a company union."

I submit you will not be surprised to find we still are, for the most part, a union which doesn’t "make waves." Some of the same people are on the staff and on the Board of Governors and still encourage members to have more sympathy for management’s point of view. Ms. Gordon concludes: "Every union worries that unreasonable demands will reduce employment, but AGMA’s position is unusually weak."

From the Houston Ballet comes another example of weak union involvement in their local affairs. "From the Chamber of Commerce point of view, the arts had to be a major attraction of the city," said Eugene Loveland, former Vice President of Shell Oil, who was asked to bring the Houston Ballet up to world class standards. "What we needed was to develop a product; that’s what sells." Ms. Gordon recounts how the company was developed, marketed and financed. "But despite the fact that the Houston Company is one of the richest in America, its dancers reap few of the rewards. Loveland cheerfully counts the passivity of the dancers’ union as one of his blessings."

Is it much different today for most companies of singers or dancers? The Houston Ballet has become one of the best success stories in the country and much credit should be paid to both the dancers and management. But they did it mostly on their own. Still today many companies accept weak contracts even below the standards set by our National Agreement because they hesitate to make too many demands on management.

Job security and working conditions of the Swedish Ballet also are explored in Ms. Gordon’s book. Many of the benefits they enjoyed then still seem unattainable to many companies today. "The argument that security breeds laziness in the individual dancer fails to take into account the hierarchical system that undervalues the contributions and achievements of all but the star dancer." She makes the point that young dancers are encouraged to become stars and when they fail, "... corps dancers tend to be replaced by younger recruits fed on the same dreams of glory." In contrast, the Swedish Ballet dancers enjoy job security, paid vacations, plus health and education benefits. Government support of the arts in European countries notwithstanding, AGMA’s role should be fighting for these same benefits for its members here today.

Ms. Gordon ends Chapter 8 with the statement which summarizes the AGMA Reform Committee’s purpose in proposing these articles and the arduous task of self-evaluation. "If a union is only as militant as its members, it is the union’s task to educate its members."

AGMA responds

The article supplied by the New York chorister and member of the Reform Policy Committee attempts to draw current conclusions by citing selected excerpts from Suzanne Gordon’s 1983 book, Off Balance.

(continued on page 10)

The AGMA Emergency Relief Fund:

Two painless ways to give

If you have some securities (stocks or bonds) which are providing income, you can make a gift of the securities to the Relief Fund, get an income tax credit now and continue to receive the dividends for your lifetime.

You can also remember the Fund in your will. Just one line or a short paragraph will do it. A bequest may well reduce your estate tax.

Don’t take our word for it. Ask your tax advisor before you do anything.
ELECTION (continued)

Phyllis Jo Kubey

Member 13 years. Member, AFTRA, SAG, AGMA Concert Singers Committee. Active concert singer. Past delegate, Musica Sacra. “These are difficult times for performing artists. Through my work with the Concert Singers Committee I have learned that we can work together effectively to bring about change and to help AGMA work for us. Affordable health care and retirement security issues which must be addressed in addition to improving our working conditions and compensation. We can unite toward realizing our goals.”

DANCERS
(7 Vacancies)

• Karen Brown

Member 18 years. Current Board member. Past, present service, Dance Committee. Current Trustee, AGMA Pension and Health. Past delegate, Dance Theatre of Harlem. Participated in Eugene O’Neill Theatre Center’s Choreographers’ Conference, 1977. Selected for leading roles by noted choreographers Glen Tetley, Billy Wilson, Agnes de Mille. “I appreciate the significance of the Board of Governors’ work and am enthusiastic in all its endeavors.”

• Christine Dakin

Member 16 years. Current Board member. Currently on Dance Committee. Past delegate, Martha Graham Dance Company. Principal with Martha Graham Dance Company. Performed with Pearl Lang Company and Kazuko Hirabayashi Company. Toured with solo concert and performed with Yiddish Theatre. “I would like to increase modern and concert dancers’ participation in, and protection, by AGMA.”

• Gerald Otte

AGMA member since 1969. Current Board member. Past delegate, Nikolais Dance Theatre. Current service, Chairman Policy Committee; Computer Committee. “Communication is the key to a responsive union. As Chairman of the new Policy Committee, I will help guide AGMA as a union of strength in the performing arts.”

• Roger Plaut

Member since 1986. Current Board member. Joffrey Ballet Negotiating Committee member since 1987. Current service, Policy Committee. Past delegate, Joffrey Ballet. “We are at a crossroads in the life of AGMA. As a Board member, and especially as a member of the Policy Committee, I will ensure that the views of the membership shape the debate about potential re-organization and the path AGMA should follow.”

• Christine Spizzo-Serrano

AGMA member 20 years. Current Board member. Past service, American Ballet Theatre Advisory Committees 1978-1988; ABT Negotiating Committee 1979 and 1982. Current service, new Policy Committee. “The standard of living for dancers in America has changed dramatically since I’ve been a professional dancer. We must not lose impetus ... Now, more than ever, dancer representation on the AGMA Board of Governors is vital to our integrity.”

• Charles Anderson

Member, New York City Ballet for past seven years. Experienced teacher and choreographer. Started his own dance company, Ballet, Inc., in 1990. Attended NY High School for the Performing Arts, and trained at School of American Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre, Joffrey Ballet and San Francisco Ballet Schools. “I feel strongly that in order for AGMA to become more responsive to its members, we dancers need to become more involved. This is why I have chosen to run for the Board of Governors.”

• Lindsay Fischer


• Diana Brownstone

Member ten years. Member, AEA, SAG, AFTRA. Has danced with Eliot Feld, ABT II, currently Metropolitan Opera Extra Dancer. Represented Metropolitan Opera Extra Dancers during recent negotiations. “In 1990, I represented the Extra Dancers of the Metropolitan Opera in conference with Met management. I’m for merger with other unions. Those not eligible for pension or health benefits in the separate unions could obtain them were their work in all combined and make us one powerful force. I have a strong voice, and would appreciate your vote.”

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AREA

CHORISTERS
(5 Vacancies)

• Natalie Beck

AGMA member five years. Past service, Los Angeles Master Chorale and Los Angeles Music Center Opera Negotiating Committee. Current service, Los Angeles Master Chorale Singers Committee. Current delegate, LA Master Chorale, LA Music Center Opera. Current Board member. “If re-elected, I will continue to work hard for my colleagues in the Southern California area. At this crucial time in AGMA’s history, representation of concerned members is extremely important.”

PLEASE HELP US TO SERVE YOU BETTER BY LETTING AGMA KNOW YOUR CURRENT MAILING ADDRESS!
• John Golitzin

AGMA member since 1982. Current Board member. Past service, Los Angeles Nominating Committee. Member, chorus of Los Angeles Music Center Opera since 1987. “In any useful way, I will try as best I can to maintain and uphold the dignity and rights of all AGMA members, be they soloists, chorus members or dancers, in negotiations with management.”

• Juanita McCollum


Barbara Hancock

AGMA member seven years. Current service, Los Angeles Music Center Opera Negotiating Committee. Past service, Southern California Executive Committee. Past delegate, Los Angeles Music Center Opera.

(No photo available at press time.)

Roger Lindbeck

AGMA member six years. Current member Southern California Executive Committee. Past delegate, Los Angeles Music Center Opera. “In order to protect the rights of the union members, the union must continue to grow, gain strength, and constantly monitor management. I would aim to champion these goals as well as encourage other capable members to join in providing the strongest possible leadership.”

Dru Mc Cain

AGMA member over ten years. Past service, Negotiating Committee for two contracts for San Diego Opera. Present service, Southern California Executive Committee. Currently Assistant Delegate, San Diego Opera. “If elected, I promise to be a thorn in everyone’s side. Let’s shake things up.”

David O’Guinn

AGMA member three years. Past service, Opera Pacific Negotiating Committee. Current service, Southern California Executive Committee. Current delegate, Opera Pacific. “I believe there is a need to establish an understanding of what exactly is the role of our union and how it directly affects each individual member.”

CHICAGO AREA

SOLO SINGERS

(3 Vacancies)

• Arnold Voketaitis

Member since 1958. Current Board member. Current service, AGMA Relief Fund, Search Committee. Past delegate, New York City Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera. Former Director, DePaul University Opera Theatre. Presently Artist-in-Residence for Opera, Auburn University. Has appeared as soloist with NYC Opera, Metropolitan Opera National Company, Chicago Lyric Opera, and many other companies in the U.S., Spain and Mexico, as well as appearances with leading symphony orchestras. “Having been an AGMA member for 35 years and one third of that time involved with union affairs. The national effort by various members in all avenues of business to subtly dehumanize every collective group of workers worries me greatly, especially for the performing artist. The advancement and benefits we’ve struggled to achieve over the years is threatened and can only be reinforced through the strong collective bargaining process which AGMA represents. Since only 16% of the workforce is unionized, we must strive more diligently to remain in that percentile of strength or become a statistic in some history music book! Whether elected or not, I shall continue to do my part to enhance our artistic lives which are threatened daily.”

Mark Nienow

AGMA member 12 years. Past service, Lyric Opera of Chicago Chorus Negotiating Committee. Current service, Chicago Opera Theatre Contract Negotiating Committee. Currently delegate, Chicago Opera Theatre. “Chicago Opera Theatre first became an AGMA house in 1990, and having been involved in every facet of this changeover, I can say AGMA has greatly improved the working conditions and needs of this growing company.”

Robert Hovencamp

Member ten years. Roles with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Opera Theatre, Chamber Opera Chicago, Grant Park Symphony. Lyric Opera School, Lyric Opera Chorus, Grant Park Chorus, COT Chorus. “Escalating costs demand that all our employers contribute enough to make 12 month insurance coverage through AGMA a reality. The minimum wage personnel in opera management offices get full benefits. Why don’t the performers on the stage? We cannot trust sudden health problems to the government. Look at their track record!”

Robert Miles

(No statement or photo available at press time.)

DANCERS

(2 Vacancies)

• Patti Eylan


(continued on next page)
ELECTION (continued)

Alex Sanchez
(No statement or photo available at press time.)

SAN FRANCISCO AREA
SOLO SINGERS
(1 Vacancy)

• Donna Petersen
Member 41 years. Current Board member. Current service, Executive Committee. Past, present delegate San Diego Opera, Guild Opera (Los Angeles), Lyric Opera of Chicago. Soloist with many major symphony orchestras. Active in field of oratorio as well.

CHORISTERS
(1 Vacancy)

• Gregory de Silva
Member seven years. Current Board member. Chairman, SFO Executive Committee; member, AGMA/AEA Merger Committee. "I still believe that strong representation on the West Coast is essential to the future growth, development, and, yes, even existence of AGMA. I have proven myself a strong advocate of members' needs, and I have striven to relay the needs of the organization back to the membership. Only through open discourse and reasoned decision-making can AGMA, and the ideals it represents, survive and flourish into the 21st century.

WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

SOLO SINGERS
(3 Vacancies)

• Patricia Boyd
(No photo available at press time.)

• Robert Williamson
Past, current Board member. Past service, Contract Negotiating Committee Washington Opera. Past delegate, Wolf Trap Farm Park, Kennedy Center. Current delegate, Washington Opera. "In these transitional times, an experienced, objective, fair, and truly representative hand is needed for counsel and leadership"

CHORISTERS
(2 Vacancies)

• Teresa Ann Reid
AGMA member since 1981. Current Board member. Current delegate, Washington Opera. Has appeared with Connecticut Opera, Washington Civic Opera, Opera Theatre of Northern Virginia, Opera Bel Canto, Takoma Park, MD, Baltimore Symphony Youth Concert, Fairfax Symphony, among others. "In the next three years I will strive to strengthen the ties of communication; that all current addresses are on file and that our area membership becomes more unified."

Deceased
Robert Carr
David Eisler
Jose Ferrer
Rodney Griffin
Vasilis Fracledes
Eva Jessye*
Don Junod
Edward M. Love, Jr.
Rafael Ramirez
Roy Reid
Stella Roman
Merle Schmidt
Richard Schuler
William Schuman
Gertrude Shurr
Robert Sidell*
Clark Tippet
Robert Vaucresson
John Wilson
Kenneth Wittner
* Distinguished individual in related profession

Be sure to mail your ballot in sufficient time to reach the AGMA National office by May 18, 1992 at 9:30 a.m.

Michael Consoli
AGMA member since 1974. Past delegate, Washington Opera. "As a long-standing member of AGMA with concurrent membership in AFTRA and SAG, I have found communication and reasonableness go a long way in resolving disputes both within and outside the union. With the knowledge that unions fall from within, not without, I pledge to work within the organization to build a stronger, better AGMA."

Joan Morton
(No statement or photo available at press time.)

• Teresa Ann Reid
AGMA member since 1981. Current Board member. Current delegate, Washington Opera. Has appeared with Connecticut Opera, Washington Civic Opera, Opera Theatre of Northern Virginia, Opera Bel Canto, Takoma Park, MD, Baltimore Symphony Youth Concert, Fairfax Symphony, among others. "In the next three years I will strive to strengthen the ties of communication; that all current addresses are on file and that our area membership becomes more unified."

Nancy Kelso
AGMA member 22 years. Current service, Local Executive Committee, Contract Negotiating Committee. Current delegate, Baltimore Opera. "It is important to establish and maintain a better geographical balance in representation from and for our area. My long and active association with the Baltimore Opera has enabled me to have particular insight into the Baltimore perspective which I would like to extend to the national level."

David Prager
(No statement or photo available at press time.)
PITTSBURGH AREA

CHORISTERS
(1 Vacancy)

• Robert W. Simoni

Member eight years. Past service, Contract Negotiating Committee Pittsburgh Opera. Current delegate, Pittsburgh Opera. Current Board member. "I will work to preserve our standing as a distinct area with a strong regional voice. As your elected delegate to the National Board, my vote will reflect the needs and desires (majority opinion) of the opera chorus (as expressed in a democratic forum). I will also oversee the accountability of elected officials and area representative."

Jessica Flynn

AGMA member 21 years. Current service, Pittsburgh Executive Committee. Member, Pittsburgh Opera Chorus. "It is my desire to facilitate the reinstatement of the democratic union in Pittsburgh, with dues paying members having an informed voice. I would also like to see the elected committees operate without administrative interference."

(No photo available at press time.)

NEW ENGLAND AREA

SOLO SINGERS
(2 Vacancies)

• Andrea Bradford

AGMA member 18 years. Current Board member. Past service, Nominating Committee, Negotiating Committee, Local Executive Committee. Past delegate, Opera Company of Boston. Has sung roles with Opera Company of Boston, Janus Comic Opera, and recitals and oratorio performances around the country. "Our union is our support. I will work to continue to strengthen the AGMA involvement in and for New England."

S. Mark Aliapoulous

Member since 1981, Board of Governors since 1986. Winner 1981 Opera Company of Boston Competition; International Finalist Luciano Pavarotti Competition 1985. Appeared as the Father in the world premiere of The Juniper Tree (Philip Glass); soloist, Opera Company of Boston; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Lyric Opera, Cleveland Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony. Assistant Professor of Voice and Director of Undergraduate Opera Program at Boston University. "I want to help provide more work of the highest quality for AGMA members in our region."

CHORISTERS
(1 Vacancy)

• Robert D. Sheets

AGMA member nine years. Current Board member. Past service, Houston Grand Opera Negotiating Committee; officer of Houston Grand Opera Chorus. Current delegate, Houston Grand Opera. "If we are to be an association of Musical Artists organized to further and maintain our rights and interests through collective bargaining (which is the definition of a union) then we all must work in unity for the common good."

• James Tinkle

Has served three terms on the AGMA Board of Governors. Performer with Houston Grand Opera for 14 years. Past service, Treasurer, Vice-Chairman and Chairman of Local Executive Committee, currently serving as Chairman; participation on four contract negotiation teams. Current delegate, Houston Grand Opera. "Challenges facing the arts in today's economic environment are many. We must support our artists and promote the arts in America. I look forward to continuing to serve the members of AGMA."

TEXAS AREA

SOLO SINGERS
(1 Vacancy)

(Since there is no candidate, the vacancy will be filled by Write-In vote)

AGMA HOTLINES: EAST AND WEST

Call the AGMA Hotline (212) 247-0247, for news of auditions, services available, union business, fellowships, competitions, career assistance and health matters. The Hotline is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day and is updated regularly.

In addition, AGMA shares a Hotline with SAG and AFTRA in San Francisco. The number is (415) 433-6266.

George Elison

Member, Dallas Opera Chorus 11 years. Presently delegate, Dallas Opera Chorus. Company Manager, Lyric Opera of Dallas. Has appeared in roles and chorus with Dallas Opera, Lyric Opera of Dallas, Charlotte Opera, Fort Worth Opera, and others. "The Board of Governors needs input from those singers who regard their wages from singing as necessity, not just extra income. I feel I have a good idea of what these singers want and need from their union. I am more than willing to spend the extra time needed to see that these views are represented fairly."

Be sure to mail your ballot in sufficient time to reach the AGMA National office by May 18, 1992 at 9:30 a.m.
In Ms. Gordon’s Author’s Note she states the following: “This book was researched and written between the winter of 1980 and the summer of 1982. Since that time, many dancers, teachers and choreographers have left companies and schools...Ballet, like everything else in America, seems to be in constant flux...”

In addition, the AGMA member who submitted the article is silent on the AGMA collective bargaining achievements. We include some of these to help set the record straight.

In the early 1970s, as nationwide interest in dance grew, dancers were performing wherever possible, sometimes in gyms as well as theatres that did not have floors that were safe for dancers. AGMA “outlawed” certain theatres and simultaneously engaged an architectural firm to design several prototype dance floors which were tested by groups of dancers from various companies. The floor selected was a “basket-weave” design which became the standard for many of the dance stage and rehearsal floors that have been constructed since that time.

Ms. Gordon is quoted as saying, “But despite the fact that the Houston [Ballet] Company is one of the richest in America, its dancers reap few rewards.” The facts are that the AGMA-negotiated wage rates at Houston Ballet in the ten years prior to Ms. Gordon’s book had almost tripled, and in the period since 1983, have doubled yet again. This is consistent with rates in all of AGMA’s Collective Bargaining Agreements.

The National Dance Basic Agreement has, since the late 1960s, contained medical insurance and pension coverage contributions paid for entirely by the employer. Dancers have up to 21 days paid sick leave, and the most recent agreement contains a clause for non-job related injuries which provides extended sick pay for a possible six-month period. Additionally, there is also a new clause which gives a dancer unpaid leave without loss of seniority for pregnancy and childbirth during which time medical benefits continue to be paid by the employer.

In one company in New York, dancers have seen their AGMA-negotiated wage rates increase by more than 600% in the ten years prior to Ms. Gordon’s book. Under the present contract, corps dancers with four or more years’ seniority will be earning a minimum of $1,080 per week this year.

Further, AGMA continues to achieve new benefits for its dancer members such as “Exit Pay” recently negotiated with several New York dance companies. This provides transition money to a dancer who leaves the company for any reason. A dancer who has been employed five or more years receives one week’s salary (current week’s salary) for each year of employment with a cap of five or ten years depending upon the particular company. This exit pay can be used for retraining for a second career or any other purpose the dancer chooses.

It also should be noted that several years after the publication of Off Balance, in 1986, Vane Vest, who was quoted in Ms. Gordon’s book saying he didn’t “necessarily believe in the union...” was one of five dancers on whose behalf AGMA participated in a successful arbitration. The dancers had been terminated by the San Francisco Ballet. AGMA argued that they had been injured and unable to perform and thus be seen by a new Artistic Director. AGMA sought — and won — one performance year of back pay and benefits for each of the dancers — including Mr. Vest. Without the union, this would not have happened...

AGMA, too, invites responses from the membership. We feel it would be valuable to all segments of us to hear from as many of you as pos-

**Some questions - and answers - about membership**

**Q:** What are my dues obligations if I'm not going to be working for a long time?

**A:** Your basic dues ($39 semi-annual which are billed directly to you) and continue to accrue unless you notify AGMA in writing that you want to be placed on “Honorable Withdrawal” status. You must be paid-up at the time of such request.

While on “Honorable Withdrawal” you are not an “Active Member” and may not take part in AGMA elections nor will you receive AGMA mailings such as notices and AGMAZine.

**Q:** Why can’t this be done automatically whenever I’m not working?

**A:** All changes in membership status, with one exception, must be in writing at the request of the member. The exception is suspension for non-payment of dues or by order of the AGMA Board of Governors in accordance with the AGMA Constitution.

**IMPORTANT:** Please indicate your Social Security number on all correspondence as well as checks for dues remitted directly to AGMA. This will facilitate the crediting of payments as well as keep your records up-to-date.

**What’s in a Name?**

It is a common practice for performers to use a variety of professional names, for their own good reasons. But unless AGMA members notify the AGMA membership department about the various names by which they are known, considerable confusion results. Please take a moment to write or phone the National Office to register with the Membership Department each name by which you are known. It’s in your best interest.

**Congratulations**

Married, Alan Fischer, New York Area Soloist and Board of Governors member, to Carol Meyer, AGMA Soloist.

Tamar Rachelle and Ernest Tolentino of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre will be married on May 17, 1992. The couple will reside in Pittsburgh.

Born, to Brian Bloomquist and Lara Deserie, artists of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, a son, Nathaniel Lawrence, December 15, 1991, weighing 8 lbs. 13 oz.

**And the winner is ...**

**The San Francisco Opera Chorus**

*In the Shadow of the Stars*, an opera film documentary, not about internationally known stars but members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus, won the Oscar in the Documentary Feature Category at the Oscar presentations on Monday, March 30, 1992.

The documentary follows eleven men and women of the San Francisco Opera Chorus in their day-to-day pursuit of excellence preparing for and performing at San Francisco Opera.

AGMA salutes these men and women for bringing to the attention of the public the important and indispensable contribution made by opera choristers around the globe.

AGMA also notes with appreciation that the entire proceeds from its world première benefit showing at the Film Arts Festival have been donated to the AGMA Emergency Relief Fund in support of the Fund’s ongoing efforts to aid all AGMA members in need.
Met Bazaar 1992: A smash hit!!

The Trustees of the AGMA Emergency Relief Fund, together with Chairman Nedda Casei and the staff of the Fund, would like to thank all of the members of the Metropolitan Opera Chorus who helped to make this year’s MET Bazaar such a rousing success.

Under the leadership of Linda Mays, who was ably supported by so many wonderful volunteers, this year’s Bazaar provided fun and interest with the sale of baked goods, jewelry, linens, china, books and clothes, along with the silent auction of memorabilia (donated from the MET archives) and the raffle. Spiro Malas arranged two tickets to Most Happy Fella. The oriental massage even lured Placido Domingo to join in the fun. Sherrill Milnes and Thomas Hampson were on hand to add to the excitement.

At press time, the approximate total brought in from the Bazaar this year was $12,500. Success was due to the cooperation of Joseph Volpe, General Director of the MET; Pamela Rasp, Labor Operations Director and the MET management; and staff from all segments of the Metropolitan Opera Association, as well as the enthusiasm and generosity of private contributors and corporations.

Special thanks to Sony, Deutsche Grammaphon, Cafe des Artistes, Tower Records, The Ginger Man and The Saloon for their valuable support.

Dance Magazine presents Awards

Dance Magazine has announced the recipients of its 1992 Awards, presented to men and women who have made a significant contribution to dance. The Dance Magazine Awards have been given to more than 116 men and women since 1954.

The recipients of the 1992 Awards are: Darci Kistler, principal dancer, New York City Ballet; Meredith Monk, choreographer/composer of experimental theatre, music and dance and Helgi Tomasson, artistic director, San Francisco Ballet.

The selection committee, chaired by Clive Barnes and including John Gruen, Doris Irling, Deborah Jowitt, Joseph Mazo, Richard Philp and Tobi Tobias, chose the awardees from over 100 nominations by Dance Magazine’s 74 correspondents worldwide.

The awards were presented at the Asia Society in New York on April 13.

Speech: A precious right

AGMA Texas legal counsel and Houston Area Representative, Louise J. Gilmore, has won an insurance appeal on behalf of Sophie Li, the bright and beautiful but profoundly hearing impaired three year old daughter of Houston Ballet principal dancer, Li Cunxin, and his wife, Mary McKenry Li, former HBA principal dancer.

The appeal was filed under AGMA’s Group Health Plan to extend insurance for Sophie’s speech therapy benefits beyond a 24-visit per calendar year limitation imposed by Prudential. At stake in this case was the future progress of little Sophie, for whom a two visit per month schedule is completely inadequate and entails an enormous financial burden of paying for the numerous excluded sessions.

The appeal was successful, and as a result, Sophie’s prescribed speech therapy sessions are being covered under the AGMA Group Health Plan.

Eugene Birlenbach: 101 years old!

March 13 marked the 101st birthday of Eugene Birlenbach, an AGMA member since 1940. His outstanding career began in 1919 in Europe and continued in the United States in 1923 when he was signed as first tenor at the Metropolitan Opera.

The American Guild of Musical Artists and The AGMA Emergency Relief Fund are proud to join in this celebration. “Bravo, Mr. Birlenbach! You are an inspiration to us all!”

My balancing act

by Raymond Julian

I am a dancer at the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, and I have known for two years that I am HIV-positive. I am motivated to write this piece primarily by sadness and anger about the HIV-positive men I know who live - and some who have died - in silence. I want to “come out” while I am healthy and share my experiences in the hope that other HIV-positive people can take heart and take control of their lives.

I had been worried about having HIV ever since I lived in Chicago in the mid-80s. In late 1989 I came down with a minor cold that lingered for more than two weeks. I still don’t know if it was HIV-related, but it scared me. Knowing that persistent, low-grade fever is a warning sign of HIV infection, I took my temperature obsessively. The result was always the same: a slight fever. Every time I looked at the thermometer I thought, “This is it. It’s happening.”

During the months that followed I was in a panic. The big questions of my life were crowding in on me. What would I do if I tested positive? Would I be able to dance for much longer? I knew there were things I could do to postpone illness and death, but how would I live?

But the biggest question nagged at me constantly: Did I even want to dance any more? I believe that a ballet career is a balancing act. You’re always walking the line between pain - emotional and physical - and pleasure. When the pain outweighs the reward, when the personal sacrifices aren’t worth it anymore, it’s time to quit. Being honest with myself, I know that I reached that point years ago but, like many dancers, I didn’t stop. I put up with the pain and kept plugging away. I had come far from my ideal. It took a positive HIV test to make me examine my commitment to dance.

I began to cope with the emotional pain and stress of being HIV-positive by joining political and support groups. That involvement helped me face the uncertainty of my future, but it also brought my problems with ballet into sharper focus. I saw that what is often thought of as self-discipline seemed a kind of obsessive obedience; I was tired of seeing situations in which the fear of making a mistake - of “getting into trouble” - was a dancer’s primary motive. Worst of all, I could no longer unquestioningly respect the authority of the person in the front of the room - be it a ballet master, teacher, or choreographer - and I resented the expectation that I should.

Even with these doubts, I was afraid to give up the security of my hard-won career. And I was proud of weathering a traumatic year and of

(continued on next page)
Actors Federal Credit Union transactions increase 400% in four years

The Actors Federal Credit Union has been growing at an incredible rate, according to figures recently released by the Board of Directors.

Figures show that in 1991, the year AGMA voted to affiliate with the Credit Union, transactions made by members totaled $128.8 million. This is nearly four times the dollar amount of transactions in 1987, $35.5 million. In addition, the total number of transactions grew an amazing 402%, from 185,560 in 1987 to 745,272 in 1991.

"This is extremely gratifying evidence of our vigorous growth," said AFCU President Jeff Rodman. "Transaction volume is one of the most reliable indicators of our financial health."

Why is this good news? Because more transactions mean the credit union is becoming more a part of its members' financial lives and more money is available for the credit union's main purpose — making loans to members.

The tremendous growth since 1987, says Rodman, is due to the introduction of new services during those years, such as checking accounts and Visa cards. And, the credit union continues to expand with such services as Direct Deposit, IRAs, Touch Tone Teller banking, CDs and an Auto Buying Service. The most recent addition, announced as this issue of AGMAzine went to press, is an automated bill-paying service.

Now, for members of the credit union, it is possible to "let your fingers do the paying." Members who opt for the $1.99-per-month service can pay bills in a matter of minutes through a single telephone call.

The new nationwide bill-paying service called PayMate — works like this: You call the PayMate 800 number at any time and enter your security code. Then you enter two numbers for each bill you wish to pay: (1) the vendor number provided by PayMate, and (2) the amount you wish to pay. It's that simple. Payments made through the service are automatically deducted from your AFCU checking account and are listed on your monthly statement.

No matter how many payments are made per month, the fee remains only $1.99. This compares very well indeed with rates charged by banks for their telephone bill-paying services.

Members already using the service like it best for its convenience. But it also offers other advantages, as well, including a well-organized reference list of paid bills on your checking account statement. The service will even save you money on stamps and envelopes.

PayMate offers bill-paying to hundreds of vendors across the country. Actors Visa is covered, along with Con Edison, Brooklyn Union Gas, Manhattan Cable, Paragon Cable, Jersey Central Power & Light in the New York area, AT&T, US Sprint and MCI. All major department stores are payable by phone, as are most newspapers.

For more information on PayMate, or to join the Actors' Federal Credit Union and take advantage of all of the many benefits it provides, call (212) 869-8926.

My Balancing Act
(continued from page 11)

Dancing well while HIV-positive. I signed my 1991-92 contract, and in a strange way, I enjoyed dancing more. My motivation was weaker but I danced with more assurance. I fretted less about mistakes and had more fun.

When the time came to re-evaluate my use of AZT, a toxic anti-viral treatment for HIV, I spent a serious morning at my doctor's office weighing the pros and cons of taking the drug. Back at the ballet, however, life went on as usual. We followed our schedule (planned for us), did as we were told (as was expected of us), and voiced no opinions (ballet is not a collaborative venture). The incongruity between my consultation with my doctor (where I was responsible for life-and-death decisions) and my afternoon rehearsal (where I made no choices) struck me hard.

I wanted more control over what I was doing and how I was doing it. I wanted to quit dancing and go to school full-time, but I had to keep my insurance. To do that, I needed my employer's help - and that meant revealing my HIV status at work. That decision fueled another panic. Since I am the Ballet's first openly HIV-positive employee, there were no precedents. I spoke to a lawyer. Legally I was protected; I couldn't be fired. But what kind of support could I expect?

After several sleepless nights, I told the Ballet's Artistic Director that I was HIV-positive and that I wouldn't be returning for the '92-'93 season. Her reaction calmed my fears. She was enthusiastic about the idea of my doing part-time work in order to keep my insurance. As of this writing, however, it remains unclear whether the Ballet can actually offer health insurance coverage to a part-time employee.

Because policies are so ill-defined, HIV-positive dancers are almost entirely dependent upon the accommodations their companies are willing to make for them. So, on the one hand, I'm thrilled about my "new life." On the other, I'm terrified that I may lose both the security of my union-protected job and my medical insurance. Today, I face another balancing act.

Raymond Julian Ricketts is 31 years old and has been a dancer since he was 15. He joined Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre in 1986 and is now pursuing his degree in English.