

### **SWCVB announces 2010 board of directors**

Southwest Washington Convention & Visitors Bureau announces the newly elected directors and officers of their 2010 board of directors. Effective January 1, 2010, **Gerry Link**, general manager of Hilton Vancouver Washington, assumed the position of immediate past chair. **Alison Hite**, general manager of SpringHill Suites, assumed the position of board chair. **Carla Rise**, general manager for Residence Inn, assumed the position of vice chair, and **Brian McClary**, director of operations for The Heathman Lodge, will continue in the position of secretary/treasurer. **Jayson Zimmer**, general manager of Staybridge Suites, and **Patrick Quinlan**, general manager of The Red Lion at the Quay, joined the board as newly elected directors.

The 2010 board of directors is as follows: **Jan Bader**, City of Vancouver; **Kim Bennett**, Southwest Washington Convention & Visitors Bureau; **Dan Himes**, McGrath's Fish House; **Hite**, SpringHill Suites by Marriott; **Kari Jonassen**, Homewood Suites; **Justin Kobluk**, Clark County Event Center; **Link**, Hilton Vancouver Washington & Vancouver Convention Center; **McClary**, The Heathman Lodge; **Quinlan**, Red Lion Hotel at the Quay; **Rise**, Residence Inn by Marriott; **Kelly Sills**, Clark County; **Cindee Stinton-Brown**, Phoenix Inn Suites; **Elson Strahan**, Fort Vancouver National Trust; and **Zimmer**, Staybridge Suites.

### **Lyndee Cunningham's personal ode to joy**

The following piece by **Jane Elder Wulff**, which originally appeared in the *Senior Messenger*, is reprinted with the author's permission:

In the winter peace of Savona, a coffeeshop near Vancouver's river plaza, people glance up as **Lyndee Cunningham** appears on a cold gust from the street. Blond, petite, irrepressible in a bright red ski sweater, black pants and high heels, Lyndee enters talking—her lifelong style. Her words tumble past each other to get said, but her voice is grounded and sure. The peace of Savona settles back around her. Clearly, her natural gift is to shake things up and then watch them settle into place, better than before.

"Lyndee is a gem," says **Rich Brase**, marketing director of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. "She's a tornado. She gives so much of herself to so many different things. She's one of those people who, whatever she's doing, she gives 1,000 percent."

Lyndee does these things for fun, and her best fun lately is with Friends of the Symphony, a group of about 60 volunteers who support the VSO's mission in dozens of ways, from feeding musicians to staging special events to fundraising and music promotion throughout the region. Most of the Friends, including Lyndee, are "mature," as she tactfully puts it (she's 63), and more help is always needed.

Now in her fifth year as a Symphony volunteer, Lyndee has become vitally interested in all the arts, a supporter of Vancouver's galleries and theaters and a passionate advocate for arts education. "The sharing and camaraderie with people who love music can't help but enrich your spirit," she says. "It's about joy. There's so much joy in music. I want people to realize it's right under their nose."

### **Making herself at home**

When **Ed** and Lyndee Cunningham followed his work to Vancouver from Kirkland 11 years ago, she set about finding friends by signing up for the WSU Clark County Extension Master Gardeners program. As a certified paraprofessional with the program, answering home gardeners' questions and leading garden tours, she spent several years becoming well acquainted with her new community.

These friendships, along with articles she wrote for the Master Gardeners website, led her to join the fundraising effort for a new Vancouver library building (scheduled to open next year). Her successes with the library led in turn to fundraising for the Symphony. The Friends are currently preparing to hold their annual dinner auction at the Vancouver Hilton on Feb. 13.

Lyndee sighs at the memory of past auction procurement sagas. This year's event, themed "Stems and Steins" for Valentine's Day, promises to be "more civilized. We're taking a more minimal approach, with larger and fewer items and lower dinner ticket prices."

At the same time, VSO staff and Friends will be busy hosting the conductor and four guest artists during the week leading up to concerts Jan. 16 and 17, followed by another concert a week after the dinner auction Feb. 20 and 21.

**Salvador Brotons**, VSO music director and conductor for the past 19 years, comes here for concerts from his home in Barcelona, on Spain's northern Mediterranean coast. (He also conducts orchestras in his hometown

and in nearby Mallorca, as well as guest conducting in other cities worldwide.) Meanwhile, local and regional artists converge in Vancouver—75 professional musicians in all.

Lyndee explains that Maestro Brotons arrives a week before each concert and takes the performers through five nights of rehearsal: “On Thursday night we bring them refreshments, and they’re so appreciative. Then on Saturday after the concert, we serve them food and drink. There are a lot of hungry ones. They can’t eat before performing—they have to be sharp. So they love that.”

### Living the dream

Lyndee’s delight in musical performance is vicarious. “I’m a social bee, since I can’t do any of the arts myself,” she says. “I’ve been evolving this way for about 10 years, and it seems to be a passion of mine.

I never had the chance to play an instrument, but I always wanted to.”

What she really wanted was to be an entertainer—“a general song-and-dance kind of person”—and the more she talks, the more this sounds like something that could happen any minute. Musical theater scenes abound in her life story: a country kid leaping from the hayloft and raiding the pea patch, setting out on her own at 18, dreaming with her girlfriends of flying around the world, then sending them postcards from faraway places.

While her friends got married and settled down, Lyndee was actually living the dream, becoming a stewardess and flying GIs to Vietnam in the late 1960s, playing volleyball on tropical beaches and dancing in officers’ clubs, chasing glamour, heartbreak and 18-hour workdays across Hawaii, Southeast Asia, Japan.

“The guys coming home were different than when they went over,” she says of those long flights. “The light had gone out of their eyes. Those were old eyes on young men. I started asking about their experiences, and they were eager to talk. They seemed to want to unload before they got home. When they’d signed up or been drafted, their sincere intentions were to serve their country proudly. Too often, that changed. They just wanted to survive—and by then they knew there was no warm welcome waiting for them. It started bothering me that I was taking these guys over there. Finally I didn’t want to do that anymore.”

### Work as play

The irrepressible blonde lived through several more adventures before she and Ed wound up in Vancouver. She might have let any of those types take over (the one she most identifies with is **Dolly Parton**: “That girl’s smart, she’s upbeat, she’s real”), but she was and still is pure Lyndee. The cheerleader stereotype clings to her, along with words like “perky” and “bubbly,” but she laughs it off.

In fact, when a friend in her yoga class finally wrote and published the book he’d had simmering for years, he dedicated it to her as “my cheerleader.” He’s one of many who feel that way. Another friend says, “Lyndee does everything with a spring in her step. She inspires me. She inspires everybody to be better.”

Caught up in the game of life, giving and receiving, she marvels at the unsung dedication that brought the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra from its volunteer beginnings 31 years ago to the stellar organization it is today. As Vancouver comes into its own, claiming with increasing vigor its unique place and identity among Pacific Northwest cities, VSO is a leader in building the local arts community into a major player on the world stage.

As Brase puts it, “There’s room on the playground for everybody”—and, thanks to the Symphony and other well-known and successful arts organizations based in Vancouver and Southwest Washington, the playground keeps expanding.

“It just gets better and better,” Lyndee says. “We’re filling the auditorium at Skyview with 1,000 people, and now we’re looking forward to a new performing arts center, possibly right downtown. It’s so exciting to be part of all that.”

Editor’s note: For tickets to remaining VSO concerts and special events, or to ask about volunteering, senior discounts, and student programs, call the Symphony at **735-7278** or visit the website <http://www.cityofvancouver.us/seniormessenger.asp?issueID=71341>.

Wulff has written monthly profiles for the *Senior Messenger* since August 2004. She can be reached at **687-9872**.

### News Briefs

State Rep. **Tim Probst**, from the 17th legislative district, will be holding a Town Hall meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 7, at the Creekside Estates Neighborhood Association Clubhouse, 5101 BE 121st Avenue. <> Devine Consign is hosting Bunco night from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21, Devine Consign, 904 Main Street.

Cost is \$35 per person; benefits will help support the Fort Vancouver Regional Library Foundation. This event is being sponsored by Ameriprise Financial. For more information or to register, call **695-6443** or visit <http://www.devineconsignfurniture.org>. <> The Washington State Department of Commerce has released guidelines for the second round of competitive financing for the State Energy Program. The Guidelines are available at <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/529/default.aspx>.

### **Calendar**

La Center City Council meets for a work session from 6 to 8 p.m. tonight, Jan. 6, in City Council chambers, 214 E. 4th Street. <> Loaves and Fishes will be providing hot meals for senior citizens from noon to 2 p.m. tomorrow, Jan. 7, in the La Center Community Center, 1000 E. 4th Street. <> A Park Board meeting is being held at 4:30 p.m. today, in the Washougal City Hall Council chambers, 1701 C Street.

### **Wednesday on the air**

Clark County Focus (12-22)--6 p.m. CVTV

Clark County Close Up (1-3)--6:30 p.m. CVTV

City Minutes (1-3)--7:15 p.m. CVTV

Cascade Park Community Library Grand Opening Celebration (12-15)--8:05 p.m. CVTV

Vancouver Land Use Hearings (12-15)--8:40 p.m. CVTV

Clark County World AIDS Day Recognition (12-1)--9 p.m. CVTV

Columbia River Crossing: Tolling Study Committee (12-7)--10:30 p.m. CVTV

### **Town Tabloids and Weather**

**Sam Van Meter** depicting winter life at Multnomah Falls. <> **Despo Varkados** sending much needed words. <> **Wednesday**, showers/ wind, 46-32. **Thursday**, p.m. showers, 41-33.

**Friday**, rain, 41-40.