

2

The Austin Gilbert & Sullivan Society

April 1985 Newsletter

Next Meeting: Will be held Monday, May 6th, at 7:30 pm, at Enid Hallock's; 4001 Cherrywood. For directions call Enid at 477-0858; or Reba at 327-2277.

This will be the last meeting until next September, so we're hoping for a good turnout. We're considering an entirely new schedule and format for our meetings starting in the fall. Please come and contribute to the ideas we've been gathering. We will sing our favorites from G & S, and enjoy sociability and refreshments. Bring your music and your munchies!

Last Meeting: Eight faithful members met at Gail White's on April 1st. Bob Kusnetz was detained in Maryland because of his father's ill health, so Executive Vice President Rosemary Russell-Vines presided. (Actually, Bob made it back to Austin in time to join us midway through the meeting, as you will see below.)

Reba apologized for a mistake in the **Newsletter**: Bob Nelson played the part of Basilio, not Dr. Bartolo, in **The Barber of Seville**.

Reba reported on information given her by Bob over the phone from Maryland. On March 22nd, Bob met with Frances Seidensticker from Zachary Scott Theatre Center, and Jim Williams and two others from the Parks and Recreation Department, for discussion of the final settlement of our financial affairs with ZSTC. As a result, we have since received a check from ZSTC. This check represents a compromise -- it is less than we hoped, but more than we had feared. This will give us something to pay part of Bob's as yet unpaid contract. In discussion of our contract with ZSTC, members felt that we could never again enter into a contract that required us to put up so much money. There was question as to why the unfortunate experiences of the past had been forgotten when the contract was signed. Evidently the people with the experience were not the ones who reviewed this contract and signed it. It was suggested that in the future no contract be signed without a meeting of the officers, and advice from someone who had been involved in previous contracts. The final admonition was: Always get a lawyer to look at any contract. (Not a new idea.)

Jerry Young informs us that the Humanities Research Center at U-T has acquired a bunch of G & S material, including old programs, orchestral parts for one operetta (**Pinafore**, perhaps), and other goodies.

In new business, Liz Opal suggested that we plan to perform G & S excerpts for public schools. The Eanes Independent School District has money to hire a folk singer to perform for the children, for instance. Perhaps they would be interested in paying for a G & S program. This is similar to the idea we've had in the past of preparing scenes and short programs to perform for clubs and other special groups; it might also bring in some much-needed money. This requires organization, a musician to direct and play the piano, and someone to be the business manager. Liz volunteered to make calls to find out what the possibilities are for such performances for next fall -- who would be interested and who has money to spend. We agreed that she should go ahead.

Next we discussed ideas for better meetings. Reba reported several contributed by members unable to be present. One, suggested by Carole Smith, was to have only four major meetings a year, and concentrate on making them interesting. The business of the Society could be carried on by monthly meetings of the Executive Committee, which any interested member could attend. Another idea, suggested by Naomi Hirsch, was that interested members work on scenes to present at a meeting. This would give members a chance to practice directing as well as performing.

4/85-1

Having someone present a prepared talk on some aspect of the G & S operas sounded interesting to the group. It was suggested that one person should be in charge of a meeting and responsible for planning the program, whatever it was. People should start thinking now, about a meeting they'd like to plan for next fall. Volunteers will be welcome.

Bob Kusnetz arrived fresh from the airport. He reported that because of scheduling problems, Linalice Carey expects that her proposed production of The Sorcerer, at Hyde Park Showplace, will be postponed until March, 1986. Members suggested that conflict with the U-T spring break (March 24-28, 1986) be avoided, but otherwise approved of the new date.

Bob mentioned that the new schedule would leave a gap in the Hyde Park Showplace fall program. He is considering directing a drama at that time, or possibly putting on a G & S review. In discussion it was pointed out that a good script is hard to work up. Could we use the script written for An Evening With Gilbert and Sullivan, which we did at ZSTC a few years ago?

Bob explained that both he and Jim Kellogg are on the Board of Hyde Park Showplace. HPS has many needs, including new air-conditioning, new chairs, and carpeting. They need donations of money and volunteer labor. For money, Bob is thinking of applying for an IBM grant. He had hoped to apply for one for the Society, but hasn't had a concrete proposal to make. For labor, maybe our members could pitch in to do the work. Bob plans to discuss this with Linalice Carey (who owns and runs HPS).

The Savoy Operas: a new guide to Gilbert & Sullivan, by Geoffrey Smith, was discussed. Several people would like to order this interesting, new book. It sells for \$14.95, but if we ordered ten or more copies sent to one address, we could get a 35% discount. This would bring the price to \$9.72 for each copy. Anyone interested should sign up.

The meeting was adjourned for food and fun.

News of Members: Bob Kusnetz broke his toe and is hobbling around with a cane.

Naomi Hirsch was in a car accident, and was wearing a neck brace when last seen. This did not prevent her from performing as soloist at a local synagogue in a program in memory of victims of the Holocaust.

Cathy Brock will be one of fifty U-T staff members to receive an Excellence Award (and \$500.00) at a ceremony on May 3rd.

Jim Caldwell, husband of member Sue Ricket Caldwell, is to be honored as the "American Handicapped Employee of the Year". He will receive the award on May 2nd, in Washington, D.C.

And finally, Len and I are planning a trip to Germany, May 13 - June 3.

That is all for now. See you May 6th y'all come!!!!

Reba

Reba Gillman,
Secretary

4/85-2

To all members of the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin:

Well, another year has flown by, this one mixed for the Society. We had some bright points, the Poetry Society concert and the Amster's Soiree among them, and we picked up several new members along the way. Unfortunately, we had some hard times as well. While we were able to produce a major show this year, it seemed to be accursed, what with low turn-out for auditions, abdication of staff, poor timing, laryngitis, and, of course, snow. Still, it seemed to be a rewarding experience for all who worked on it, even if it was not a financial success. Actually, that was our greatest problem this year - due to some poor publicity and especially due to the snow on opening weekend, we almost lost our entire financial base this year. As seems to be tradition, Zach changed their tune at the last minute and tried to back out of all their commitments to us, but some shrewd negotiating got us our money back. We and Zach both still lost a lot however. Fortunately, a number of members have renewed early and several have given additional donations as well. I certainly encourage anyone who can to help us out; we really need your help now.

Next year looks promising - several ideas are in the works. I still hope to do The Sorcerer at Hyde Park Showplace, but it has been rescheduled for the Spring; that should greatly help turnout. I am also working on a Texas Savoyards Weekend where G&S aficionados from all over central Texas could get together for singing and fun. We hope to be invited back to the Amster's, and may do another concert as well. One change will affect everyone: due to popular demand, we will be changing our meetings. We will still likely have business meetings monthly, but we plan to have three or four major meetings during the year. At these meetings we will have group singing as well as prepared scenes. Volunteers would take turns directing scenes and programs throughout the year. Hopefully, this will get more members involved in the singing and producing aspects of the Society. At our May meeting this year we will be finalizing these plans. If you have other ideas for the coming year, please feel free to call any officer; we want and need your ideas.

One request (or plea): We really need volunteers to fill the positions of VP - Publicity and VP - Production. These are extremely important positions and can yield great benefits to the Society. There does not have to be great deal of time involved, but we really need whatever you can do. If you're new to the Society or have not been active in the past, that's OK too; this is a great way to get involved in Austin theatre. We have been invited to help ACOT with a project, but we need someone to help out. Please consider volunteering for either position; if you want to talk about it, please call me. I can't stress enough how important these positions are to the Society at this point. Please help.

Well, we may be getting together over the summer for some fun, but I certainly look forward to seeing you all again for sure in the fall (and, of course at the May meeting!). We have high hopes for the coming year and hope to see as many members as possible involved. You're the Society - you can make it fun!

Best wishes,

Bob Kusnetz

Bob Kusnetz

4/88-3