

The Austin Gilbert & Sullivan Society

October 1987 Newsletter

Next Meeting: On the third Monday of the month, October 19th, at 7:30 pm at Enid Hallock's: 4001 Cherrywood; 477-0858. Full steam ahead! Ideas; Setting New Dues Rates; Restructuring Organization; Establishing an outside Board of Directors; etc., etc.; and bring Munchies to keep us ticking! This meeting will be especially for Society officers to meet with Musical Director Bill Girard for planning. All interested members are cordially invited.

Last Meeting: Thirteen people, including two interested as-yet non-members and Mike Workman, met on September 14th at Enid's. We were happy to welcome new member, Joan Pearsall (from Bijuberti Players), and old member Katharine Shields, back from her year in California. We've been missing her energy and good sense.

To start off, President Bob Kusnetz asked us to introduce ourselves and say which G & S character we would most like to be. That turned out to be hard, when we realized he meant in every day life, not play-acting on the stage. In fact, several people chose to go outside the sacred canon and pick such characters as Elizabeth in Pride and Prejudice and Wagner's Wotan. Enid chose Mad Margaret from Ruddigore. Did you really mean that for day in, day out reality, Enid?

In a review of the summer Bob mentioned that our Northcross Mall performances were very successful, netting us an honorarium, two new members, and a possible spring engagement (entertainment for a Bar Mitzvah). The Austin Children's Museum, who sponsored the Mall performances, has asked us to do two repeat performances on Sunday, October 11th to celebrate the opening of their new home at 1501 West 5th Street. This complex is the home of several art organizations, including ACOT. The performances will be in a tent on the parking lot at 2 pm and 4 pm. Bob volunteered to find a Director, Music Director and Pianist, but asked for help in pulling the cast together and other chores. Enid, Katharine, and visitor Jackie Chapman offered to work on this. (Update: a cast is rehearsing at Enid's, under the direction of pianist Bob Wall.)

After discussion of possible performances and theater spaces we went on to the subject of our agreement with Mike Workman. Nothing had been done during the summer, and as far as we knew Mike had left town. He was present to explain to us that he was still around, and still interested in working with us. However, he said he had decided that August was a poor time to conduct a survey of our members, and therefore had not got started. He wanted to outline a new proposal. This was:



Oh! my name is John Wellington Wells
The Sorcerer

Workshop - Set aside 2 1/2 hours and invite all interested members to attend an October meeting. Mike would serve as the facilitator. He proposed 1 1/2 hours of brainstorming, with 1/2 hour break, followed by at least another hour to tie it all up. He suggested inviting representatives from the Music Umbrella, the Austin Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts, and the City Arts Commission, to meet with us.

Meeting of Officers - In November, hold a refinement meeting of Society officers to work on resulting changes in by-laws, financial patterns, etc.

Meeting of Membership - In December gather the membership together to vote on the resulting proposals.

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Bob then opened the meeting to a question and answer period with Mike. Members were interested in specific suggestions and problems. Mike said brainstorming would help us evolve a policy: how many performances a year, and what type. Also would cover plans to raise money, ways of getting matching funds, and hiring a part-time staff member to coordinate our efforts. We asked but Mike did not tell us, where we would find the person to hire as a part-time staff member.

Reba remarked that our basic problem is to find the people to do the work involved in putting on a show. Whenever we manage to get a show into production people gather around enthusiastically; what is lacking is the person to get it started and keep it going. Katharine said we have two other basic problems:

- 1) We always need to find a performance space; since we don't plan far in advance we have trouble.
- 2) We need a Director and Music Director.

Finally, Mike said he wanted to clear up two points of misunderstanding. He said that during the summer there had been some communication glitches. 1) He had called Bob and left messages, which were apparently not received. Attempts to reach Mike had produced a forwarding out-of-town phone number, but that was his landlord's number, not his. 2) He had volunteered to help work out an agreement with Capitol City Playhouse to use their costumes, which he did. He had not offered to work on selecting those costumes.

Our response to 2) was that several of us have fine relations with Capitol City Playhouse and could easily have made arrangements to use their costumes. We had understood that Mike's offer included the labor of physically selecting the costumes, and were considerably upset when he did not do so.

Mike then left so that we could discuss his proposal. A number of points of dissatisfaction with our relations with Mike came up, and a doubt that he would be any more specific in working with us than he had been so far. We agreed that a "study" was not what we needed, and that it was unlikely that we could get very many members together to brainstorm. The faithful members who come to meetings are the ones who need to figure out how to get the work done. It was moved, seconded and voted unanimously that we not hire Mike Workman.

Katharine then proposed three goals:

- 1) Do one major show a year
- 2) Plan longer ahead so we can get a theater
- 3) Work on getting a larger board and reorganizing our society

It was agreed that we should sign up Bill Girard as Music Director, while we can. He is still interested but getting busier all the time. Right now he is completely tied up with the next Austin Lyric Opera production (*Romeo and Juliet*, to be performed on October 16, 17 and 18). Bob said he would like to call an officers' meeting with Bill before the next membership meeting. Bob also suggested that we needed a business meeting on October 5th to tie up loose ends for our October 11th performances. We then adjourned for refreshments and sociability.

Note: Since a reorganization with higher dues is planned, but not yet worked out, we have not collected this year's dues yet. Setting rates and collecting dues are definitely next on our agenda.

Corrections: Joan Pearsall has two l's in her name. Katharine Shields is at home at:
2001 Big Canyon Drive
Austin 78746 Phone: 327-2488

Final word . . . it's really Muzak.

Reba

Reba Gillman, Secretary

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