

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

June 1994 Newsletter

Reba Gillman, Editor

• Next Meeting -- Our Monthly Musicale •

- On Monday, June 6th, 1994 at 7:30 pm. at Pearl Amster's, 2304 Hartford Road, 472-7028. Please come and bring munchies. Allen Lawshae is in charge of the program. The theme is "Unfamiliar Faces".
- Come and enjoy local talent not usually seen at our gatherings. This is the last Musicale of the Season.
- Next gathering will be Monday, September 12th.

• Last Gathering and Musicale • Monday May 2, 1994

29 people gathered at Pearl's to enjoy the music put together by Janette Jones. A surprise was the simple but attractive printed program, courtesy of Dan Smith, of WordSmith -- he's a professional! We welcomed new members Jean & Chris Buggé attending for the first time, and long time but seldom seen member Katharine Shields. Other members (some old faithfuls and some now-and-then attendees) were Pearl Amster, Reba Gillman, Doug & Sheila Glenn with son 'Topher, Loel Graber, Maxine Hairston & David Cooper, Enid Hallock, Janette Jones, Allen Lawshae, Robert Mellin, Ben & Carmela Nardone, Charles & Diane Radin, Dan Smith, Lord High Pianist Bob Wall, Jess & Emma Walters, Libby & Susan Weed, and Terri Wilson. Guests were Matthew Kaplan, Nancy Owen, and Mark Taylor.

Matt Kaplan opened the program singing the operatic "When the night wind howls" from *Ruddigore*. President Robert Mellin then made some brief announcements:

- 1) Most Important, the next production has finally been set. It will be *The Gondoliers*. When will depend on where, which hasn't yet been arranged -- we're working on it.
 - 2) In May we will move into our own office space, on the second floor of Newman Hall at 21st and Guadalupe. We're open for donations of office furniture. "Deacon" Crain will be our neighbor, moving in soon afterward.
 - 3) Tuesday, May 11th Robert will leave for a much-needed three-week vacation in South America. He'll be back for the June 6th Musicale, the last of the Season.
 - 4) Meetings of the Executive Committee are held at 6:30 pm on the 4th Tuesday of each month, in the O. Henry Room at the Austin History Center. Members are welcome.
- Allen Lawshae announced that he had received a letter from the Houston Gilbert & Sullivan Society; they had enjoyed his audition for their *Gondoliers* (cont. p.2)

• Message from your President •

I will be basking, probably somewhere around Lake Titicaca, in the sun or rain or snow. But bask I will while you will be reading this Newsletter. You see, it's the time for my long-delayed, well-deserved holiday. Yes, I know it can be dangerous in them thar parts, but neither fret nor rejoice because unless the crazies get me, I shall be back in Austin for our June 6 final Musicale of the season. I would not want to miss this one because it will feature some well-known talent performing for the first time at our musicales. They include Linda Nenno, Elizabeth Hodges and Andra Mitchell Harkins.

Taking stock of this past season, our All-Star Revue Fundraiser and our *Pinafore* were big successes. The present shows us with our first time ever rented office space which will be staffed soon after June 1. Bill Hatcher is working on schools to receive G&S mini-concerts in the fall. The Executive Committee decided that our next production will be *The Gondoliers*, possibly playing in late March-April 1995. For a performance space we have looked at the new state of the art, 410 seat theater at the St Stephen's School. However, rental there is very expensive.

Ideas and help are needed for the G&S Regional Conference/Seminar/Celebration/Convention that we will host right here in Austin, probably in the fall of '95. We will be essentially designing this event from the ground up so please start now to think about it and be prepared to offer some tangible input.

***** Robert Mellin *****

• JOB •

PART-TIME CLERICAL HELP WANTED

Prefer someone experienced in theater,
funding, computers, correspondence,
graphic design, good on the telephone,
TO STAFF OUR G&S OFFICE

Call Robert Mellin 345-5950.

G&S Society Office
Saint Austin's Catholic Church
Room 221 in Newman Hall
2026 Guadalupe St., Austin TX 78705

Donations Needed! Tax Deductible!

Office furniture and equipment wanted for our new office

Can you give us something you're not using? Call Allen Lawshae at 459-4858.

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Musicals, May 2nd, cont.

but they did not cast him in this production. Their loss is our gain, however, since this leaves Allen free to produce the G&S program he had promised to the Jane Austen Society. This will be at their picnic in Northwest Park on Sunday afternoon, June 12th. Allen is planning a literary emphasis, and will probably use "Hail Poetry" to start things off. He has lined up a pianist, a sound system, and a keyboard. Now he needs performers and wants to hear from anyone who doesn't mind singing outdoors. Call 459-4858.

On with the music: Enid Hallock and Allen Lawshae sang "There grew a little flower" from *Ruddigore*. From *Gondoliers* Mark Taylor sang "Take a pair of sparkling eyes", and Enid as the Duchess of Plaza Toro explained about married life in "On the day that I was wedded". Matt and Janette Jones sang "If we're weak enough to tarry" from *Iolanthe*. From *Patience* Allen sang "When I first put this uniform on", with rousing chorus provided by the audience. And Loel Graber and Janette sang Bunthorne and Lady Jane's delightful duet "So go to him and say to him with compliment ironical".

After a pause for introductions of all present, the music proceeded: Katharine Shields sang "Oh happy young heart" from *The Sorcerer*, remarking that in our 1977 production she had played the part of Aline. Matt sang Dr. Daly's song "Time was when love and I were well acquainted ... I was a fair young curate then". Next came Mabel's "Poor wand'ring one" from *Pirates*, with Sheila Glenn filling in for the scheduled singer, Judy Scott. The audience provided the ladies' chorus. Next Libby Weed and Dan Smith joined Loel and Janette to sing the a capella quartet from *The Yeomen of the Guard*, "Strange adventure! Maiden wedded To a groom she'd never seen!"

Katharine returned to sing Josephine's aria from *Pinafore*, "The hours creep on apace". Katharine said "It's my favorite aria but I've never gotten to do Josephine." Dan then finished off the program singing "When I was a lad" from *Pinafore*, with all joining in the lusty chorus. With "Now to the banquet we press" we adjourned to the dining room for food and conversation.

Note: Katharine also told us "I met my husband when I was singing the small role of Vittoria in *Gondoliers*, in a Harvard G&S Society production. Greg played the violin; he was the Concert Master. During an intermission he came up and kissed my neck. My next time in *Gondoliers* I played Calsilda, in Austin in 1983; I was pregnant with my second child."

• Meeting of G&S Executive Committee •

The Executive Committee met on Tuesday April 26, 1994 at 6:30 pm in the O. Henry Room at the Austin History Center. All were present except Theresa Wilson and Allen Lawshae.

- Treasurer Diana reported that our bank account was in good shape, but many receipts for *Pinafore* expenses were still lacking. President Robert reported that we have received the promised check for \$500 from Motorola. It was agreed that we would find out what costumes the Society has stored and offer them for sale to interested theatrical groups.
- Bill Hatcher had been talking with various school music people, and will continue to work on setting up mini-G&S concerts in the local schools. Tom Waggoner, in charge of Drama and Instrumental Music for AISD, told Bill that Austin has the best school music program in the state.
- No report on Scholarships or G&S Regional Conference.
- We voted to rent the office available in Newman Hall at St. Austin's Catholic Church at 21st and Guadalupe, and to pursue the hiring of a part-time clerical worker.
- We will not be able to provide G&S programs this summer for the Austin Public Library Summer Reading Program for Children. We will tell them that we would be glad to do this next year.
- Robert reported that Allen Lawshae feels strongly committed to producing a G&S program for the Jane Austen Society picnic on Sunday afternoon, June 12, even though many of our members do not like to perform outdoors. [Note: Since he was not cast in the Houston summer production of *Gondoliers* he will be able to do this.]
- We voted that our next production will be *The Gondoliers*. We would prefer a time slot before Thanksgiving '94, or in May '95, but this will depend on what performance space we can line up. Robert, Patrick and Bill will go to inspect the new theater at St. Stephen's School, and find out about cost and arrangements.
- Because Robert will be away at the usual time, the next Executive Committee meeting will be on Tuesday, June 7th at 6:30 pm, Austin History Center, O. Henry Room.

Officers for 1994

President	Robert Mellin	345-5950
Executive V.P.	Allen Lawshae	459-4858
Production V.P.	Patrick Bennett	442-0528
Publicity V.P.	Bill Hatcher	892-3722
Secretary	Reba Gillman	327-2277
Treasurer	Diana McAlpin	258-0407
Hist.& Parl.	Theresa Wilson	926-4893

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin Dues Structure

Member - \$10.00	Patron - \$25.00	Lord High Patron - \$50.00	Grand Duke - \$100.00
	Major General - \$250.00	Pooh Bah - \$500.00	Savoyard - \$1,000.00

• PRAISE and ACKNOWLEDGMENTS •

Long Overdue

Two essential ingredients go into the success of our monthly gatherings.

- 1. **Meeting Place:** Our eternal gratitude goes to Pearl Amster who welcomes us into her excellent "salon" space every month. It is centrally located, comfortable, spacious, equipped with a fine piano, and hosted by a generous and gracious lady.
- 2. **Lord High Pianist:** Our musicales have flourished ever since we enlisted the aid of the apparently inexhaustible Bob Wall. He is a busy Professor of Linguistics at UT but he gives up a monthly Monday night, rehearses as needed, and plunges with verve and skill into any music we put before him. Best of all he always seems to have fun doing it!
- The third important ingredient is the planning that goes into each program. This responsibility has been carried by different people at different times. Allen Lawshae has probably put together the most programs. Janette Jones has taken on several stints which she acquitted with distinction. And Robert Mellin is an ever-present influence, making contacts and suggestions, planning entire evenings when there's no one else to do it. We thank them and any others not named who have helped us out.
- **Final Note:** You, too, can be part of this process. Do you have ideas, or requests for music? Would you perform? Could you present some interesting material about Gilbert and Sullivan? Don't be shy - let us know! Call Robert at 345-5950. or Reba at 327-2277. We'll pass on the information to the program planners.

• VISIONS •

A great success is reported for Allen Lawshae's most recent production. Allen put together a spirited Gilbert and Sullivan program for the "Over 55" group at his church, Covenant Presbyterian, on Sunday May 15th. "VISIONS" officially stands for Very Interesting Seniors Investigating Our New Season (of life), and they welcomed the musical effort 150 strong, showing their appreciation with a standing ovation. Since Allen felt obligated to use only performers aged 55 and older, and the church members were not very well acquainted with G&S, he called in three of our over-55 Society members to help him out. Harold Gilbert, Enid Hallock and Jim Robinson had a good time doing it, and were much impressed at the audience response.

♪ Austin History ♪

Back in 1893, when *H.M.S. Pinafore* was the latest hit musical, O. Henry and his wife took part in a production here in Austin. The cast performed on a specially built boat floating on Lake McDonald (since replaced by Lake Austin), while the audience sat on shore. Some months ago our President, Robert Mellin, asked if any of our members were descended from people who had performed in those shows. Finally, we have received a call from members Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Miller. His grandfather was in that cast. What part he played is not known, only that he had a good voice and liked to sing. Our Mr. Miller is better known around town as Miller Blue Print, which was founded by his father. He and his wife love G&S and come to all our shows.

Mrs. Miller specially mentioned their enjoyment of "the mama with four boys and the beautiful voice" (Enid Hallock, of course). Mrs. Miller's introduction to *Pinafore* came when she played Josephine as a high school girl in Weatherford, Texas.

Anyone else with some family recollections?

• News of Members and Friends •

- Sheila Glenn is appearing in a Word of Mouth Women's Theatre production, *Hannah Free* by Claudia Allen, at Artspace, 403 Baylor St. It will run for three weekends, Thursday June 9 through Saturday June 25. Call 459-0364.
- We're glad to get news from members Jim and Dorothy Kellogg in Alexandria, VA. They have just finished a two-story addition to their house ("a real guest room at last, so pass the word"), and have been appearing in a local production of *Anything Goes*. Besides that they both work, and have a growing son, Allen. Some of you will remember their performances in our 1985 *Ruddigore*. Jim played Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd, and Dorothy was Mad Margaret. A truly G&S couple, they met and married while rehearsing in our shows.
- Leah Tsamous, the Queen of the Fairies from last year's *Iolanthe*, is living in Houston these days, and singing in the chorus of the Houston Grand Opera Company. Good Luck, Leah!
- Julia Lawshae, who played Hebe in our recent *Pinafore*, will be studying in New York City this fall, at the American Academy of Music and Drama at Hunter College (I got the wrong name last month).

What's your Gilbert and Sullivan story?

How did you learn to love these shows? Did you memorize your mother's part faster than she did? Did you play the Captain in *H.M.S. Pinafore* when you were in 6th grade? Call Reba at 327-2277 with your story.

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• Gilbert and Sullivan on the Information •

• Superhighway •

And why not? Now we, too, can tap into the rage for constant and practically instant communication and exchange choice tidbits with other G&S fans.

SavoyNet, "an Internet bulletin board ... a public, unmoderated mailing list" for discussion of the famous operettas. Those of you who are computer knowledgeable will understand the implications! If you have access to Internet you can get "on line" by sending an "e-mail" request for a free subscription.

Address

<SavoyNet-Request@Bridgewater.Edu>

SavoyNet was founded by William C. Venman at U.Mass., but is now housed at Bridgewater College in Virginia, where it is coordinated by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

We have the honor to list Ralph as one of our long-distance members. He is active in the G&S network, and frequently communicates some new and exciting development to us, as well as to his many other connections.

A question recently under discussion on SavoyNet is: Will G&S last 100 years more? What do you think?

♪♪ UNFAMILIAR FACES ♪♪

Andra Mitchell Harkins
Elizabeth Hodges
Linda Nenno

And others more familiar, singing on
Monday, June 6th at 7:30 pm

♪♪ G&S Musicale ♪♪

Bob Nelson
Denise Parker
Martin Vasquez

At Pearl's
2304 Hartford Road

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin
Reba Gillman, Secretary
1606 The High Road
Austin TX 78746

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