

# The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin

## February 1996 Newsletter

Reba Gillman, Editor

### • Message from your President •

It is a great honor to have been elected president of the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin at the meeting in January. My husband and I were admirers of this organization and its productions for a number of years before becoming members several years ago, and I have enjoyed serving on the board as Historian/Parliamentarian during recent years. I look forward to continued service with the returning board members Reba Gillman and Bill Hatcher, and to working as well with new members Paula Tyler, Chris Buggé, Edward Kluth, and Larry Shepley.

The new board would like to announce that we have hired former president Robert Mellin to serve as our Executive Director, beginning this month. In this role, Robert will work with appropriate board members in the areas of production and publicity, and he will also head up our fundraising and development activities. It is during the four years of Robert's presidency that the Society experienced its strongest growth and many of its greatest successes. The hiring of such an able and experienced person at a modest salary is a cause for celebration; it is also a cause for reflection on the changes that have come about in our Society in the nearly twenty years of its existence.

One of the beauties of an organization such as ours is that it begins as a group of literate, musical, energetic amateurs who desire to raise the artistic level of their community -- especially in an area of the arts they dearly love -- and are willing to invest the time and energy to make this happen. One of the paradoxes of such a society is that if the members are very successful at what they are doing, they find after a time that they are "in over their heads" in a manner of speaking; their grass-roots, voluntary, amateur efforts lead to better, grander, and more polished productions that require greater and greater expertise and finesse.

When this kind of growth and development occurs, a group must stop and take stock of where it is and what it seeks to become in the future. We are at such a point in our history. We have been an organization that operated entirely with volunteer efforts and donated funds, and these will continue to be our mainstays. However, the administration of our organization and the production of our operas have become jobs bigger than volunteers are willing or able to undertake. Also, we need to plan more deliberately for who we will be in the future -- to achieve the appropriate balance between maintaining the strengths of our community origins and building upon the increased stature and excellence we have attained in the recent past. (cont. p.2)

### • Next Meeting -- Our Monthly Musicale •

• Monday • February 5, 1996 at 7:30 pm at Pearl Amster's, 2304 Hartford Road, 472-7028.

Robert Mellin is organizing the Program  
A reprise of *Gondoliers*  
A chance to see some of the video  
from our production  
and singing  
with Lord High Pianist Bob Wall  
at the piano

• Come eat, drink and be merry. Please bring munchies as usual.

### • Coming Events • Be Prepared

The March Meeting and Musicale will take place on Thursday, February 29th, which as everyone knows is Frederic's Birthday, and comes but once every four years. Since this is also the year that we are performing *The Pirates of Penzance* we expect to throw a really exciting Birthday Party. If you have ideas for the celebration please call the Office, 472-4772. Save the date!

February 29, 1996 at 7:30 pm, at Pearl's.

The April Meeting and Musicale will occur on Monday April 1 -- Uh oh! - That ought to be good!

### • Officers Elected Jan 8, 1996 •

President	Libby Weed
Executive V.P.	Paula Tyler
Production V.P.	Chris Buggé
Publicity V.P.	Edward O. Kluth
Secretary	Reba Gillman
Treasurer	Bill Hatcher
Historian-Parliamentarian	Larry Shepley

Gilbert & Sullivan Society Office • Phone: 472-4772

Megan Marsee • New Office Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri, 9 am - 1 pm; Tues, Thurs, 1 - 5 pm  
Newman Hall, Room 309, 2026 Guadalupe St., Austin TX 78705

[Message from your President cont.] Toward this end, we will be reviewing our by-laws and business procedures over the coming months.

The board plans to keep you fully informed and consult with you regularly both through the newsletter and through the monthly business meeting. I would personally enjoy hearing from any of you who would like to make suggestions in regard to these efforts. Please be watching this space for updates -- and don't forget to come to Pearl's on Monday, February 5, for the musicale and business meeting!

\* \* \* \* \* Libby Weed \* \* \* \* \*

- Last Gathering •
- Annual Business Meeting •
- And Monthly Musicales •

31 people helped us start the New Year at Pearl Amster's on **Monday January 8, 1996**. Members present were Pearl Amster, Byron Arnason, Chris Buggé, LaDelle Fuller, Reba Gillman, Loel Graber, Enid Hallock with son Gary, Bill Hatcher, Matt Kaplan, Edward Kluth, Allen Lawshae, Diana McAlpin, Robert Mellin, Lucy Shoe Meritt, Kay Novak, Bee Harris Polomé with Chuck Kraus, R.C. Bob Sharron, Larry Shepley, Katharine Shields, Virginia Storey, Charles Thomas, Bob Wall, Tasha Waring with her mother Lise Waring, Libby Weed, Theresa Wilson, and performing guests Garrett Maddux, and Carrie Skinner with B.J. Heilni. Matt Kaplan started the meeting off with song: "I am a Pirate King" from *Pirates* with Lord High Pianist Bob Wall accompanying.

President Robert Mellin then reported that he had just returned from a very successful vacation in Bolivia, and that our December 2nd Gala made people truly happy. Proceeding to the short business meeting, he remarked that this was his last meeting as President, but a slate of excellent candidates would be presented by the Nominating Committee: Katharine Shields, Chair, Al Rellstab, and Enid Hallock. Katharine then passed out the slate of candidates. (See list of officers on page 1) She said she was probably not authorized but would say anyway, that the Society would be restructuring, and Robert was not leaving us, "he'll be around helping." She made a brief remark about each candidate. There was a little confusion but when it seemed there would be no nominations from the floor, Allen Lawshae moved that the slate be elected as presented. Charles Thomas seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Robert asked the new Board to stand to receive appreciation. Loel Graber asked that we express our appreci-

ation to the people leaving the Board: Robert Mellin, and Allen Lawshae. Robert then turned the proceedings over to Gary Hallock to run the fun and games.

Gary commented that Robert had asked him to run the G&S Trivia Quiz for our Convention in spite of his reputation as MC and organizer of the O. Henry Pun-Off. In preparation he had gone through a lot of books and come up with some interesting trivia. Of our members only Enid and Reba were present at the Convention Quiz, so he would use the same material. "Most G&S fans are pretty well versed in the major shows; you will not be graded or degraded. Questions will be lyric quickies or concern information gleaned from the words." There followed a stream of quotes and questions, which we answered as a group, sometimes easily and occasionally not at all. Sample questions: What should his energetic fist be ever ready to resist? [A dictatorial word - *Pinafore*]. When is your heart in your boots? [When threatened with *emeutes* - *Pirates*]. What is the address of John Wellington Wells (a dealer in magic and spells)? [Number seventy Simmery Axe - *Sorcerer* - which is the usual London pronunciation of St. Mary Axe]. At what time is the clergyman supposed to make Ralph (Rafe) and Josephine one? [Half past ten - *Pinafore*].

After about half an hour of this fun, in which some members came up with really esoteric bits of knowledge about the lesser known G&S operas, we returned to music. Garrett Maddux sang "Take a pair of sparkling eyes" from *Gondoliers*. An impromptu quartet of Diana McAlpin, Carrie Skinner, Garrett Maddux, and Matt Kaplan sang "Brightly dawns our wedding day" from *The Mikado*. Kay Novak asked for a round of applause for Allen Lawshae, who did a fine job as director of our Gala All-Star Revue. Robert noted that Allen had sung a lot, too. Allen explained that baritones kept coming up to him with excuses that they were too busy to learn the words, and so Allen had to sing their songs. He then responded to our request with one of them, the rapid-fire patter song "My name is John Wellington Wells" from *Sorcerer*. Guest B.J. Heilni rose to the occasion and turned pages for Bob Wall. We ended that part of the evening all singing "Now to the banquet we press" from *Sorcerer*, and "Hail Poetry" from *Pirates*.

With sorrow I report the death on January 11th of **Ruth MacPherson**, at the age of 95. She was the mother of Enid Hallock. She lived in a unique Old Family Homestead in northeast Austin, surrounded by her talented and interesting family whom she inspired and nurtured in their passions for learning and creating. Hers was a long and full life, but she will be sorely missed.

- Coming • Auditions for *The Pirates of Penzance* • In Early March •
- Date • Time • Location • Details • To be announced •

Call 472-4772 for information.

• **Members of the Executive Committee** •

• Libby Weed, President. Libby is the Principal of Brentwood Christian School. Her mother sang and played the piano, and had appeared in *Pinafore* in college. When Libby was in first grade her sixth grader brother appeared in a school production of *Pinafore*, and her love for G&S was sealed. The magic came full circle when Libby played the part of an aunt in our production of *Pinafore* in 1994.

• Paula Tyler, Executive Vice-President. Paula is the Director of the AISD Liberal Arts Academy Magnet. Her mother's love of music made Paula a life-long music student. In Junior High School in Fort Worth she directed a school production of *The Mikado*, and has loved G&S ever since. Studying for a Ph.D. in British Literature honed her appreciation of Gilbertian wit.

• Chris Buggé, Production Vice-President. Chris is part owner and Vice-President and Director of Science Affairs of CEDRA, an analytical pharmaceutical company. His parents met as Savoyards in Malaysia, but returned to England because of World War II. Chris and his brothers grew up surrounded by the love of G&S. Chris played the part of Annibale in the Durham NC Savoyards production of *Gondoliers*.

• Edward O. Kluth, Vice-President for Publicity. Ed is a computer consultant. He loves opera: "Gilbert & Sullivan is just opera to me." He played the 'cello in school.

• Reba Gillman, Secretary. Reba is a Child Development Specialist who retired from the Austin Community Nursery Schools in December 1990. She has known and loved G&S from childhood, and became absolutely hooked as a performer in Lafayette, IN, playing in *Pirates*, *Trial by Jury* and *Iolanthe*. She played Josephine in *Pinafore* with the Princeton Savoyards in 1960. She joined the G&S Society of Austin in 1978, performing in our first *Iolanthe*, and also in *Patience*, *Trial by Jury*, *Gondoliers*, and *Ruddigore*. She served as President 1981 through 1983, and has been Secretary ever since.

• Bill Hatcher, Treasurer. Bill is a Computer Systems Programmer for the Veteran's Administration. Bill learned to love G&S as a child, and has performed in our productions of *Pinafore* (1989) and *Gondoliers* (1995), and played the flute for our *Mikado* in 1992. He believes that experience with Gilbert & Sullivan is good for all children, and in particular has been pleased at his daughters' interest. Bill served the Society for several years as V.P. for Publicity before taking over as Treasurer last summer.

• Larry Shepley, Historian-Parliamentarian. Larry was an Associate Professor of Physics at UT, and has just taken early retirement. As a teen-ager in Washington DC he played the flute in the orchestra for productions of *Pinafore*, and *Princess Ida*. Larry undertook to lay out a big flyer mailing for us a few years ago, and has volunteered to do the Playbill program for the coming *Pirates*.

**MEMBERSHIP DRIVE . . . WE RELY ON YOUR SUPPORT!**

Now is the time to renew or upgrade your membership.  
If you're not a member, here's your opportunity to contribute. We need you!

If you like Gilbert and Sullivan, and want to support our efforts ...  
... you can do so by becoming a member of our society for a mere ten dollars.

Members receive a monthly newsletter with information about G&S, our activities and our members.

Our monthly informal G&S musicales are open to the public at no charge.

- Your tax-deductible contribution in any of the other categories are welcome and will help us mount our yearly productions and pay our monthly expenses •

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|--|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Savoyard \$1,000         | <input type="radio"/> Pooh-Bah \$500 - \$999                 | <input type="radio"/> Major General \$250 - \$499             |
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| <input type="radio"/> Member \$10              | <input type="radio"/> I prefer to keep my identity anonymous | <input type="radio"/> I do not wish to receive the Newsletter |

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin and mail with this form to:  
2026 Guadalupe Street, #309  
Austin TX 78705

• Meetings of the G&S Executive Committee •

1) Tuesday, October 24, 1995 at 7 pm in the O. Henry Room, Austin History Center. Loel Graber resigned as Member-at-Large. Brenda Tharp has resigned as Office Manager, and we are placing ads for a new employee. The problem of replacing Robert Mellin as president was thoroughly discussed, reviewing the names of all possible nominees to serve on the Executive Committee. It was suggested that we hire Robert Mellin to continue to do most of the work he has been doing. It would then be easier to find people willing to take on the job of President.

2) Friday, November 10, 1995 at 5 pm in the Society Office, an extra meeting called to discuss the idea of hiring Robert Mellin, with Robert not present. After a thorough discussion of our options, it was agreed by the majority to hire Robert. Details were to be worked out.

3) Monday, November 27, 1995 at 7 pm in the Society Office. At the November 6 Monthly Meeting and Musicales Robert had announced the Nominating Committee of Katharine Shields, Chair, Enid Hallock, and Al Rellstab. Libby Weed has volunteered to serve as President, with the understanding that we would hire Robert to do the work he has been doing. Plans are going ahead for the 3-day Texas Convention and Gala All-Star Revue, and Robert is working with Megan Marsee, our new Office Manager, on a Playbill for the Saturday night fund raiser, All-Star Revue.

ACCOLADES to everyone who worked on the 3-Day Texas Convention, and especially the Gala All-Star Revue • • • Participants, Underwriters, Performers, and Director Allen Lawshae!

• News of Members •

• Bob Kusnetz is leaving us! He will marry Debbie Baumgarten in May 1996. They will live in Saint Louis Park, an Orthodox Jewish community outside of Minneapolis, MN. He will transfer to the IBM there. We wish him all the best in his new life, but we'll miss him.

• Tim and Kristina Havenhill are doing well in New York City. Tim is very busy at Columbia Medical School, but loves it. Kristina goes out on extended tours - she spent three months at the Fireside Theatre in Wisconsin doing a Christmas show. After a month at home she'll be off to the Riverside Theatre in Florida to do six weeks of *My Fair Lady*. They say "Hello to everyone."

Address: 60 Haven Avenue, #10E  
New York, NY 10032  
(212) 928-5640

• Wish List •

For use in the Society Office  
Call 472-4772

TV/VCR

Laser Printer - 17 pages per minute

CD Player

New Touch Tone Telephone

Microwave Oven

Small Refrigerator

Pick Up Truck or Van



NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE PAID  
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AUSTIN, TEXAS

Come to Our Musicales  
on Monday, February 5, 1996 at Pearl's