

THE

# GILBERT & SULLIVAN

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

JANUARY 1999 NEWSLETTER

- Next Meeting - Our monthly Musicale •
- Annual Meeting •

- Monday January 4, 1999 • at 7:30 pm •
- At Pearl Amster's • 2304 Hartford Road • 472-7028 •
- Please bring munchies.

- Robert Mellin is planning the program •
- Hallock Night at G&S •

**Talented Andrew Hallock Will Present Some of His Music**

Some of his relatives are expected to perform

**Short Business Meeting**, will include Election of Officers. Nominating committee will present slate:

President	Libby Weed
Executive V.P.	Larry Shepley
Production V.P.	Benard Laves
Publicity V.P.	Robert Mellin
Secretary	Reba Gillman
Treasurer	Dave Wieckowski
Historian/Parliamentarian	Leland L. Smith

Nominating Committee: Chris Buggé, Chair; Bill Hatcher and Robert Mellin. Nominations may be made from the floor. You must be a paid-up member to vote or run for office. [Bring your cash or check book and pay at the meeting!]

## CHASKI

**Will Perform on Saturday January 9, 1999**  
**at Central Market Café • 6:30 to 9 PM**  
Central Market • 4001 N. Lamar Blvd

Many who heard Adrienne Inglis play the flute with Len Gillman at our special musical reception for Ralph MacPhail last April, were especially interested in **Chaski**, Adrienne's group that plays Latin American music on a variety of authentic instruments. Here is your chance to enjoy the group in a relaxed atmosphere with **no admission charge. Hear this unusual music!**

**Many Thanks to Volunteers**  
**Doug and Yvonne Vautier De Lay**  
**Art DiBianca**  
**Harold and Eve Gilbert**



**Portrait of a Noteworthy Member**  
**Russell Gregory**

by Libby Weed, President

Pulling off the Westlake Hills street onto Gregory Lane, a visitor to the home of Russell and Kay Gregory forms a quick impression of the sort of people who live here. In front of the spacious, woodsy lawn, a short signpost proclaims this to be "Mimi and Papa's House." Beneath are several more notices: "Children spoiled here," "Piggyback rides," and "Warm cookies." On one door of the garage a few feet away is a rustic, hand-lettered sign, "Reserved for Organist."

That organist - the man who played the organ at University Methodist Church during his college years and again after his military service (the sign was saved for him when renovations were done), and who still sings bass in the UMC choir and occasionally plays the organ - is Russell Gregory, known to many people in many different ways.

- To those in the insurance business, he is a distinguished professional, a man who was recently honored as a member of the Million Dollar Round Table.

- To concert-goers, he is a co-founder of (with good friend Dr. Morris Beachy) and featured performer in the Austin Choral Union (now Austin Choral Artists). Cont p 2

Cont. from p. 1 • To fans of musical theater, he is a show-stealer as Teyve in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Alfred P. Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*, Dick Deadeye in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, the Pirate King in *The Pirates of Penzance*, and the emperor himself in *The Mikado*.

- To Austin opera buffs, he was a frequent performer in past years in UT Opera Workshop productions, appearing in a vast repertory including *The Marriage of Figaro*, *La Bohème*, *The Bartered Bride*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and many others.

- To the elderly folk in Westminster Manor, he is part of a wonderful family that sings carols to the residents every Christmas.

- And to the rest of those carolers, the extended Gregory clan, he's just one of the family - every one of whom seems to have remarkable musical talent.

Russell's father, singing with the UMC choir in his own UT days, was asked by the choir director to escort a young lady to practice. The couple soon fell in love and married, and eventually they became the parents of Russell, Peggy (coordinator of the voice faculty at Southwest Texas State University), Carolyn (retired after a career as an AISD music instructor and married to John Gregory, one of our favorite pianists), and Mollie (longtime coordinator of music instruction in Austin public schools, now retired).

Music was always an important part of the Gregorys' family life. Everyone sang, and all four children took piano lessons from age five on. Russell announced at about that age that he wanted to play the organ. He had to wait until his legs grew long enough to reach the pedals, but by age 13 he was ready. Commuting to San Antonio for weekly lessons, he studied with Donald Wiling until graduation from high school.

At Austin High, Russell sang and served as accompanist for Emma Virginia Deckard's renowned choir. When he enrolled at the University of Texas, the young musician declared a business major, but it took him only one semester to find business courses boring and become a music major. He continued to study organ, now with E. William Doty. In 1956 he received his Bachelor of Music degree in sacred music.

During his college years Russell was in ROTC, so upon graduation he faced service in the Air Force. Not particularly excited about the prospect, he decided to make his exile more enjoyable by marrying Kay, whom he had met shortly before graduation. They soon departed Austin for Harlingen, then Waco, and finally Presque Isle, Maine ("Up there with Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island - Kay liked it, and I hated it.")

Returning to Austin, Russell picked up something he had "piddled with" before leaving - the insurance business. He became busier by the day with his office, his post as organist at UMC, and his renewed participation in the UT Opera Workshop. The 1960s, 70s, and 80s were lively years for Russell and Kay, as Gwen, Georgeanne, Rusty, and Garrett came along, adding to the Gregory chorus. These four - grown now,

and in professions including the law, teaching, and fitness training - are all sources of joy to their parents. The eight grandchildren who enjoy piggyback rides and warm cookies at Papa and Mimi's house are objects of much grandparently affection.

Though unacquainted with the works of Gilbert and Sullivan in earlier years, Russell "ate it up" when he first encountered G&S at UT. He and fellow student Allen Lawshae appeared together in *The Mikado* during student days - Russell playing a long, lanky Ko-Ko ("Ezra kept reminding me of myself when I watched him as Ko-Ko this year"). Years later, Russell was substituting as organist at Covenant Presbyterian church and ran into Allen again. They reminisced about the fun they had had as students in *The Mikado*, and Allen talked Russell into auditioning for *H.M.S. Pinafore*. He was cast as Dick Deadeye in that show, the first of his four (so far) with the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin.

Near the end of our recent visit, I talked Russell into a little performance of "Every Day is Ladies' Day" (a Victor Herbert number that he has performed in numerous venues over many years). He led the way to the piano, picking up a book here and a toy there - "remnants from grandchildren" - as we walked. The combination of superb vocals, keyboard artistry, and that hilarious rubber face demonstrated why this song has been such a crowd-pleaser. It also reminded me of why I love to see Russell at auditions and musicales.

"Music has been a wonderful part of my life," he said as we walked to my car. "I'm endlessly grateful to Morris Beachy, who kept me singing for 33 years." He also credits Allen Lawshae for bringing him back to G&S and Robert Mellin, who "primes my pump - he is always on me to audition."

What does the future hold for Russell Gregory? "My experience with Prudential has been a happy union," he says. "From time to time I wonder about how, when, and whether to retire." The family is building a retreat now, and when that is finished he and Kay will decide on their plans.

In the meantime, Russell enjoys his stints on the stage with G&S. And the opera? "It's been a long time, but I would still love to get on the stage with ALO, if the chance came along," he says with a smile.

Many Thanks to Bob Wall for offering his home for Rafe MacPhail's use during rehearsals and the run of *Patience*.

Still Needed • A car for Rafe during that same period • May 20 - June 20, 1999.

All offers welcome! Call the Society office: 472-4772.

### G&S is STILL LOOKING for an EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Please send suggestions and applications to  
President Libby Weed  
11822 Eubank Drive  
Austin, Texas 78758

or call our office for information: 472-4772

## Last Musicale Reba Gillman • Secretary

Over 35 people gathered for a delightful informal holiday evening on Monday December 7, 1998 in the home of Paula Tyler. Present were NEW MEMBERS Michele & Dan Aynsworth with son Max McKay, and Terri Finch-Koinuma; MEMBERS Pearl Amster, Chris & Jean Buggé with sons Colin, Travis & Dominic, Lucian Chimene, Doug & Yvonne Vautier DeLay, Frank Delvy, Art DiBianca, Reba Gillman, John & Carolyn Gregory, Enid Hallock, Kim Hallock, Bill Hatcher, Joyce & George L. John, MD, Janette Jones, Robert Mellin, Lucy Shoe Meritt, Bob Sharron with Barbara Fraus, Larry Shepley, Andrée Sjoberg, Leland L. Smith, Paula & Ron Tyler with niece Caitlin Tyler, Bob Wall (L.H.P.), Libby Weed, David Wieckowski with Brian, and Theresa Wilson; PERFORMING GUESTS Jennifer Arndt, Susan Finnigan, and Leslie Salas.

As we arrived refreshments were already festively displayed on the dining table, with each new contribution quickly set out. Volunteers were passing around cups of Wassail created by Jean and Chris Buggé, and Bill Hatcher and Larry Shepley were tooting their flutes to the strains of Gilbert and Sullivan arranged as flute duets. The program, was planned by Paula and Larry, and announced as "Come and Go; 7 to 9 pm." People arrived at various times, but nobody left until the evening wound down after 9 pm.

At about 7:30 pm President Libby Weed welcomed us all, and introduced the new members, attending for the first time. She held up a bright red announcement of a show that our member Allen Lawshae was in, opening on Thursday December 10th, and running through December 19th. Produced by Round Rock Music Arts and First United Methodist Church, in Round Rock, it is "The Gift of the Magi", a musical version of the O. Henry Christmas story. Libby noted that we were doing things a little differently this time, and invited us to move around, sampling the holiday goodies. She also pointed out the display of tree ornaments and urged each of us to place an ornament on Paula's already partially decorated Christmas tree. She then called on Frank Delvy and the entertainment began.

Frank is part of a small performance group "A Class Act", who perform for schools, at parties, and anywhere they're invited. They specialize in show tunes, add dramatic action to their singing, and perform like the seasoned troupers they are. Frank introduced Jennifer Arndt • soprano, and Janette Jones • mezzo-soprano, with Susan Finnigan at the piano. Their tenor, Andrew Coward, was ill.

They now presented two songs by George Gershwin: in honor of Al Jolson, Frank sang a rapid succession of tunes from *Sinbad*; Jennifer sang "Someone to watch over me." Janette and Frank then sang "Call me Madam" by Irving Berlin. Jennifer brought out two little pointed hats, saying "Our costume budget is low," as she and Janette presented "The Stepsisters' Lament" from *Cinderella*, by Rodgers and Hammerstein, the first musical ever written for TV.

In a complete change of mood Leslie Salas came forward to sing a lovely "Come unto him" from Handel's *Messiah* with our Lord High Pianist Bob Wall at the piano. Next she sang "The Virgin's Slumber Song" by Max Reger. Larry announced that John Gregory had agreed to play, and invited everyone to gather round to sing, or walk around to stock up on refreshments. Carolyn passed out some rhythm instruments, maracas and a tone block, and Robert Mellin ended up playing a pair of small bongo drums. John outdid himself, playing such pieces as "Hernando's Hideaway," "Rum and Coca Cola," and "I want my arms around you," with lusty singing from the audience.

Quickly changing pace, Leslie came to the piano to play a medley of snatches of familiar carols woven into pieces of classical music. Frank and his group returned, and Frank sang "Somehow 'once upon a time' never comes again" from *The All American*, and Janette did her stuff as Lola in *Damn Yankees* - "Whatever Lola wants, Lola gets!" Jennifer told us that last summer their group did a shortened version of the 1980's show *The Secret Garden* at Saint Edwards, and proceeded to sing the haunting "How could I ever know?" "From the sublime to the ridiculous" said Frank as he launched into "Someday you'll be a dentist" from *The Little Shop of Horrors*. Any one who's ever been to the dentist can relate to that song!

With Lord High Pianist Bob Wall back at the piano, Libby then led us in some familiar carols. Janette stepped forward as Pirate Ruth to sing the Pirate King's opening, and we all rose to sing "Hail Poetry" followed at once by "Now to the banquet we press." Then on to the table to sample the treats we may have missed earlier.

In addition to some related adults, families were represented by the three young Buggé boys, and baby Brian Wieckowski content in his father's arms (as long as some tasty morsel was in his mouth). Gilbert & Sullivan were in short supply, represented only at the very beginning (those flute duets) and at the traditional closing "Hail Poetry" and "Now to the banquet we press," but all agreed relaxed good cheer abounded. Thank you, Paula, for a lovely evening!

## New or renewal membership form

We encourage you to join our society. If you are a member, please check your membership renewal date on the top right corner of the mailing label. If expired or near expiration, your membership needs to be updated! To correct your address, renew your membership, or become a member, complete this form, and mail it to us at:

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin  
2026 Guadalupe, #309  
Austin, Texas 78705 Phone: 472-4772

Name (as you want it to appear) \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Night) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
What company do you work for? \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one:

- ☐ Member: \$10-\$24
- ☐ Patron: \$25-\$49
- ☐ Lord High Patron: \$50-\$99
- ☐ Grand Duke: \$100-\$249
- ☐ Major General: \$250-\$499
- ☐ Pooh-Bah: \$500-\$999
- ☐ Savoyard: \$1,000 and over
- ☐ I'm interested in becoming a business sponsor. Please call me.

We thank the following corporate sponsors of our production of

### **THE MIKADO**

Amoco	Armstrong Moving & Storage
BankOne	Benold's Jewelers
Draught Horse Pub & Brewery	Fidelity Investments
Stephen E. Davis	LCRA Employees' United Charities
Mollberg & Associates Piano Restoration	Motorola
Scenic Land Development	Southwest Airlines
Southwestern Bell	United Airlines
William Gammon Insurance	Wilson & Goldrick Realtors

### **The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin**

Since 1976, we have been dedicated  
to spreading the joys of Gilbert & Sullivan  
through performances and in-school programs.

#### What we do

**Annual Grand Production  
School Outreach Concerts  
Free Monthly Musicales  
Musical Scholarships  
Monthly Newsletter  
Holiday Season Show**

#### Executive Board

President	Libby Weed	837-5441
Executive Vice-President	Bill Hatcher	892-3722
Production Vice-President	Chris Buggé	834-7766
Publicity Vice-President	Robert Mellin	345-5950
Secretary	Reba Gillman	327-2277
Treasurer	Dave Wieckowski	477-5566
Historian & Parliamentarian	Larry Shepley	327-1511
Director at Large	Paula Tyler	459-4639
Director at Large	Arthur DiBianca	707-2809

#### Newsletter Editor

Layout

Reba Gillman

Larry Shepley

#### Office Manager

Lara Mardiros

2026 Guadalupe Street, Suite 309  
Austin, Texas 78705  
(512) 472-4772

<http://members.aol.com/mahitabel/gassa/home.html>

THE  
**GILBERT  
&  
SULLIVAN**  
SOCIETY OF AUSTIN  
2026 GUADALUPE ST, #309  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78705  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 2054  
AUSTIN, TEXAS

