

# The GILBERT & SULLIVAN

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2012 NEWSLETTER

SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Libby Weed



What a magnificent start the Austin G&S Society has made this year! Our January annual meeting, chronicled by Reba Gillman on page 2, was so much fun. I believe this is primarily thanks to Leonard Johnson and his animated and virtuosic leadership of our sing-along. We are glad that so many talented and enthusiastic singers showed up, willing and eager to sing.

The following board members were elected and have since been named to the following roles:

- **Chris Buggé**, special projects and master of accommodations
- **Janet Forman**, office manager
- **Reba Gillman**, historian
- **Leonard Johnson**, musicale coordinator
- **David Little**, publicity chair and webmaster
- **Roberta Long**, executive vice president and grants manager
- **Michael Meigs**, secretary and bursar
- **Bob Schneider**, Wand'ring Minstrels coordinator
- **Pat Turpin**, volunteer coordinator
- **Libby Weed**, president
- **Dave Wieckowski**, treasurer and chief financial officer

In my nearly twenty years of association with the leadership of this organization, I have never known a time when we had a more harmonious and dedicated board. Each member takes his or her role seriously, follows through with assignments, and is willing to step in and help wherever help is needed. Besides that, these folks are a lot of fun! Our meeting time is often enhanced by one of Pat's culinary concoctions and peach tea and always by laughter and mutual respect. By the way, Pat Hobbs has belatedly taken her husband's name, and will be known as Pat Turpin from now on.

(continued on page 3)

★ Summer 2012 Grand Production ★

# Patience;

or, Bunthorne's Bride

Auditions  
March 3 & 4



See details on pages 4 and 5!

## Frederic's All-Star Birthday:

### Stars from the G&S Past

Sunday, February 26, 3:00 p.m.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Steck and Mesa

Featuring a scintillating cast of stars from past productions presented by our hosts,  
Artistic Director Ralph MacPhail, Jr., and  
Musical Producer Janette Jones

Please bring munchies to go with our birthday cake!



## Stars from the G&S Past Celebrate Leap Year

On Sunday, February 26, at 3 pm, the Society continues its tradition of a leap year celebration, with music and merriment for Frederic, the hapless reformed pirate from *The Pirates of Penzance*, whose birthday—in a paradoxical twist of fate—is Leap Day.

Come enjoy an exciting afternoon of vocal performances of G&S classics by stars from previous grand productions: **Stacey Amorous**, **Carol Nelson Brown**, **Trey Deason**, **Dan Girardot**, **Debra Johnson**, **Ezra Johnson**, **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**, **Glady Posch**, **Meredith Ruduski**, and **Katharine Shields**, with the undeniable talents of **Marti Dudgeon** at the piano. Yes, you read that right—Jeffrey Jones-Ragona (GSSA Music Director and Conductor)—out of the pit and on the stage! Audience favorite **Janette Jones** is producer, and Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, will serve as Master of Ceremonies.

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## Annual Business Meeting and Sing-Along by Reba Gillman



On Sunday afternoon, January 15, over 40 members showed up to vote on the Society's business and to enjoy one of our best managed sing-alongs. The Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday on Monday may have cut into the attendance, but a comfortable number were there, singing their heads off. We gathered in the welcoming Fellowship Hall of the Genesis Presbyterian Church.

As people entered, they signed in, got name tags, and took copies of the music to be sung. President **Libby Weed** greeted us all and opened the meeting. Reminding us that our important business was to elect our board of directors, she asked each nominee to stand as named. **Reba Gillman** then took the floor as chair of the nominating committee (other members: **David Fontenot** and **Enid Hallock**). Reba spoke briefly, happy that every member of this year's board had agreed to continue to serve, except **Byron Arnason** whose profession takes him away for long stays in Nevada and Oregon. Our board is hard working, but they love the G&S operas and enjoy their volunteer work to keep the Society in business. The great diversity of our Society is an especial attraction. We have been advised to bring younger members into our administration, but that proves to be a difficult task. The younger people are busy earning a living, and often are performing every chance they get. They have limited time for their personal or family lives and they just can't take on any more work. Developing possible future board members is a job that goes on all year, and our eager volunteers are the best resource.

Libby then noted that there was no nominee for the twelfth director, and invited nominations from the floor, including self-nomination. As none appeared, **Bill Hatcher** moved that the nominations be closed, and the slate be elected by acclamation. **Russell Gregory** seconded the motion, which passed. Treasurer **Dave Wieckowski** then reported on our very successful financial year. For the past three years we have adhered stringently to our carefully established budgets and made money on each show. We have reached a new level where we can plan to produce one of the most popular shows (*H. M. S. Pinafore*, *The Mikado*, or *The Pirates of Penzance*) only every third year, able to support lesser financial success, or even a loss, on less well-known operas. Any member may call the Society office (512-472-4772) to request a copy of the financial report. Libby reminded us that *Patience* will be the show this June, and some called up fond memories of the very successful production we did in June 1999.

Finally, our Production Manager, Bill Hatcher, gave us a short report on some of the jobs he has been doing in preparation for this year's *Patience*, which is the fourth production Bill has managed. He has purchased the scores. He has arranged the airplane tickets for Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, to come to Austin for the February musicale and March auditions. (Rafe will arrive in Austin on February 25, and will leave on March 6.) He has been arranging the rehearsal schedule, and hopes to be able to hold all rehearsals in the Genesis Fellowship Hall. He has hired most of the crew but is still working on the costumes and on hiring the costume coordinator. He showed us slides of costumes from three good shops: Houston; Lamplighter

in San Francisco; and New Hampshire. He has information from several other costume shops, as well. The final decision will depend on the costume coordinator, Rafe's opinions, and the cost of the preferred costumes.

Libby then introduced **Leonard Johnson** to direct the sing-along, with **Jean Sasaki** at the piano, and the fun began. Leonard is a very professional Associate Professor of Voice at UT, and has worked with many of our singers. He has also directed many choral groups, and knows exactly how to be encouraging and demanding at the same time. After some discussion with audience members, the voices lined up to support each other, two excellent tenors seated right behind me, basses booming authoritatively from across the aisle. Alas, we women weren't as well suited to the task. On this day the men were superb – confident and dependable – while I felt very insecure myself, singing music I thought I knew. However, we managed and enjoyed it all. First came familiar music from *The Mikado*: the men singing "If you want to know who we are" in four-part harmony. Then ladies alone sang "Three little maids from school are we" followed by "May all good fortune prosper you," sung by all (SATB, for those accustomed to choral singing). Not so familiar, this simple four-part chorus is sung in the first act right after Pooh-Bah says that although Nanki-Poo will die in a month, we should sing "Long life, long life, long life to you till then!"

Next came music from *The Pirates of Penzance*, the ladies (as daughters of the Major-General) all singing "Stay, we must not lose our senses, Men who stick at no offences will anon be here." The pirates arrived singing "Here's a first-rate opportunity To get married with impunity ... You shall quickly be parsonified, Conjugal matrimonified, By a doctor of divinity Who is located in this vicinity." The girls sang, "We have missed our opportunity Of escaping with impunity; So farewell to the felicity of our maiden domesticity! We shall quickly be parsonified, Conjugal matrimonified, ..." and finally all sang in four-part harmony, "By a doctor of divinity, who resides in this vicinity, By a doctor, a doctor, a doctor of divinity, of divinity." Skipping then well into Act II, we undertook the three-part Paradox song, "When you had left our pirate fold," all ladies singing the part of Ruth, with the men divided into the parts of Frederic and the Pirate King. This ended with "A paradox? A paradox, A most ingenious paradox! We've quips and quibbles heard in flocks, But none to beat this paradox!" And of course, although we did not pause to go into it, the paradox is that Frederic was born in Leap Year on Leap Day, and would not reach his twenty-first birthday until well into the next century. Which is why our February Musicale will honor Frederic's birthday in this leap year. Libby said if her math was correct, Frederic would actually celebrate his 39th birthday this year.

Finally, music from *Patience* – our June show. The ladies began with their opening chorus (SA), "Twenty love-sick maidens we, Love-sick all against our will. Twenty years hence we shall be Twenty love-sick maidens still!" They all yearn for the aesthetic poet, Bunthorne, but he loves Patience, the fresh and innocent milk maid, and does not respond to any of the love-sick aesthetic maidens. The Officers of the Dragoon Guards enter singing (TTBB), "The soldiers of our Queen Are linked in friendly tether; Upon the battle scene They fight the foe together. There ev'ry mother's son Prepared to fight and fall is; The enemy of one The enemy of all is!" Their Colonel sings, "If you want a receipt for that popular mystery, Known to the world as a Heavy Dragoon, Take all the remarkable people in history, Rattle them off

(continued next page)

## The G&S Society's Annual Business Meeting and Sing-Along

photos courtesy Steve Schwartzman

see more at [gilbertsullivan.austin.smugmug.com](http://gilbertsullivan.austin.smugmug.com)



### Annual Business Meeting, cont.

to a popular tune.” This leads in to one of the well-known G&S patter songs, which all the men sang finishing up with the final men’s chorus. These Dragoons had been engaged to all the maidens the year before, and are upset and puzzled when this year the ladies mope around about Bunthorne and show no interest in their former soldier sweethearts.

But we did not pause to think about *Patience*. Leonard called on Russell Gregory to come up and sing the Pirate King’s lead-in to our traditional ending, “Hail, Poetry!” - All, SATB. All rose to sing lustily, and then progressed to “Now to the banquet we press” - All, SATB. Leonard stepped forward to acknowledge Jean Sasaki at the piano. She had expertly found her way through all the music, giving pitches for parts, navigating interludes, and never missing a note. A happy throng gathered around the munchy table, their appetites whetted by vigorous singing. A lovely afternoon!

### President’s Message, cont.

Our Society has just concluded what could be described as our greatest year to date. We set all-time records for attendance at *The Mikado*, and the growing success of our shows in the past few years has us poised for a superior production of *Patience* this summer.

But first—plan to be with us at St. Matthew’s on Sunday, February 26, to celebrate Frederic’s leap year natal day with a sparkling cast of G&S stars from the past. We’ll enjoy birthday cake and toast Frederic as he marks, if my math is correct, his 39th birthday. Can you think of a better way to brighten an otherwise beastly month?

*Libby Neal*



## Audition Notes on *Patience*

by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

*Patience* is a high-spirited send-up of artistic affectation. Originally it poked fun at the pre-Raphaelite “brotherhood” in London of the 1870s and ‘80s, but Gilbert’s wit transcends the original target, and Sullivan’s tunes have remained ever funny, martial, sentimental, poignant—whatever the moment in the plot

demands. My purpose here is to provide information for auditionees concerning the auditions and also concerning the hilariously funny and incredibly tuneful show we will present this summer. If you’re planning to audition, please read this in its entirety. And even if you’re *not*, you may find it interesting!

Auditions will be held on Saturday and Sunday, March 3 and 4. Music Director and Conductor **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** and I request that each auditionee memorize a song from Gilbert & Sullivan or something similar that will show their voice and range to best advantage. *It is also mandatory to provide a copy of the music for the auditions accompanist. No a cappella auditions will be heard. An accompanist will be provided, but singers will be welcome to bring their own if they wish.*



If *Patience* is not in your library, you can download the libretto from The Gilbert & Sullivan Archive ([math.boisestate.edu/gas](http://math.boisestate.edu/gas)). You can also download some printed music from the opera from this website, read a plot synopsis, or download audio files. And there’s more, too!

*Patience* is filled with fun-to-act roles, incredible singing opportunities, and requires actors who can sing well as well as singers who can act well. And nowhere was Gilbert more trenchant (and amusing) in his satire of artistic affectation or Sullivan more tuneful. (*Patience*, of course, has another of those wonderful Act I finales—one of the best, in fact.)

**THE CHORUS** is composed of the **Chorus of Dragoon Guards** (12 gentlemen, resplendent in scarlet and gold uniforms, who know how to march and perform facing movements) and the **Chorus of Rapturous Maidens** (12 languid and limp ladies, over-the-top in their expressions of unrequited love, dressed in “aesthetic draperies” of muted colors, playing “archaic instruments,” and speaking with the latest “aesthetic slang,” which is “too, too utter!”).

**Colonel Calverley** (bass or “dark baritone”). He is commanding officer of the Dragoons, stuffy, lacking a sense of humor, “in charge,” and with two challenging patter-songs in Act I, so he must also have excellent diction. A large man. Dances in Act II.

**Major Murgatroyd** (baritone). A rather small part with excellent comic possibilities, such as his leg cramp that gives him so much trouble when he tries to imitate the aesthetic poets! Dances in Act II.

**Lieutenant, the Duke of Dunstable** (tenor). An aristocratic soldier, who joined the army because he wearied of toadies. He finds military a good change-of-pace from aristocratic living. Dances in Act II.

**Reginald Bunthorne** (light baritone). One of Gilbert’s great comic creations, Bunthorne is a sham “aesthetic poet,” who affects the dress, behavior and writing abilities of a poet in order to get the



admiration of the village maidens. The opera centers on Bunthorne’s quest for the love of the village milkmaid, *Patience*, and he is content to change his ways in order to get it. He finds out as so many others do that the path to true love doesn’t run smooth—and in fact, *his* is bumpy indeed. The sub-title of *Patience* is *Bunthorne’s Bride*—but who (or what?) ends up as his bride?

**Archibald Grosvenor** (high baritone). He’s also a poet: “the Apostle of Simplicity.” He loved *Patience* when but a tot, and *Patience* loved him, but his path to true love crosses Bunthorne’s, and for a while it’s equally bumpy. He has better fortune, however, than his rival, even if he has to cast off his poetic trappings and become “an every-day young man” in order to claim his bride.

**Mr. Bunthorne’s Solicitor** (silent role). He appears in the Act I finale to run the raffle (Bunthorne attempts to raffle himself off as a bridegroom to one of the maidens since he can’t have *Patience*!), and in the Act II finale. He has no speaking or singing, but a mobile face and good acting skills are musts.

**The Lady Angela** (mezzo-soprano). An important singing and acting role, she rather sets the tone for the lovesick maidens. Lovely singing and a good comic sense are essential.

**The Lady Saphir** (mezzo-soprano). Another aesthetic maiden, a follower. Something of a scholar and user of arcane expressions. A good actor and singer.

**The Lady Ella** (soprano). Still another aesthetic maiden, with a short but dynamic solo as a part of the opening chorus, calling for a beautiful and strong singing voice.

**The Lady Jane** (contralto). Another of Gilbert’s great creations, the part calls for a commanding contralto voice and a great sense of humor. She’s one of those aging females, but loves to sing about her fading charms and growing proportions while accompanying herself on a ‘cello. She loves Bunthorne, too—much to his chagrin.

**Patience** (lyric soprano). She is a simple and naïve dairy-maid who has no idea “what this love may be” that’s so captured the rapturous maidens, but when she learns that it’s her duty to love, she sets forth to fall in love with all her heart. Alas, the road on which she sets forth is that same bumpy one that Bunthorne and Grosvenor are using, and—well, her perseverance is rewarded.



I’ve often said that there’s only one G&S activity more fun than seeing one of their operas—and that’s actually *working* on one. If you need a little push to encourage you to audition, please consider this it. Jeffrey and I do all we can to make the auditions fun and relaxed.

If you have questions, please push them through cyberspace: [RafeMacPhail@Yahoo.com](mailto:RafeMacPhail@Yahoo.com).

On the next page are details on how you can sign up for an audition slot, so please do it today, and then please encourage a friend or two to audition so that even *more* can share the delight of Gilbert & Sullivan. This show’s a *hoot*!

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

We encourage you to join our Society. If you are a member, please check your membership renewal on the top 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 with your check, payable to "GSSA," or call to join (512) 472-4772 (GSSA).

Please check a membership category:

- Individual** (\$20-\$29)
- Family/Group** (\$30-\$49)
- Patron** (\$50-\$99)
- Grand Duke or Duchess** (\$100-\$249)
- Major General** (\$250-\$499)
- Pooh-Bah** (\$500-\$999)
- Pirate King** (\$1000-\$2499)
- Savoyard** (\$2500 & up)

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I'd like to volunteer. I'm interested in:

We are proud to list our members in our programs, but if you would prefer NOT to be listed in our programs, please check here:

### *Patience Auditions*

The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Austin will hold auditions for its June 7-17 production of *Patience* on Saturday and Sunday, March 3 and 4. **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**, and **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona** will be returning as artistic and musical directors, respectively, and **Bill Hatcher** returns as production manager. Please see Director MacPhail's Audition Notes on the preceding page for a description of the opera and its characters.

Auditions are about 10 minutes long, **by appointment only**. Call **Chuck Antonie** at (512) 733-1006 or (512) 825-5187, or email [cantonie@yahoo.com](mailto:cantonie@yahoo.com) to reserve an audition time slot.

All roles are open for casting, including ten principal roles of various sizes and a chorus of 12 men and 12 women. There is also a small non-speaking, non-singing role for a male to be cast. A small honorarium will be paid to all performers.

A memorized aria or art song (English language preferred) is required. An accompanist will be provided, although singers may bring their own pianist if they wish. Please note that unaccompanied (a cappella) auditions are not permitted, nor are self-accompanied auditions.

A completed Audition Form (available at our website, [www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org)) is required, and a résumé and headshot are requested if available.

Auditions will be held at Genesis Presbyterian Church, 1507 Wilshire Blvd ([www.genesispcusa.org](http://www.genesispcusa.org)). It is east of IH 35, and is between Hancock Center and Airport Boulevard. There is ample parking. For complete details, see [www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org).

### **Send Us Your News!**

The next newsletter should arrive in mid-April; the deadline for submissions is March 30. Please send your news to [news@gilbertsullivan.org](mailto:news@gilbertsullivan.org). Thanks!



### *Zest*

**It is music and laughter that gives to life its zest,  
Why in Gilbert & Sullivan Society I now invest,  
All your productions are superb and just great,  
To both music and laughter they directly relate.**

**I have just printed out your membership form,  
As Family/Group Member will now be the norm,  
The Gilbert & Sullivan Society is to my family,  
The best of musical entertainment in Austin to see.**

**Tony Melli  
01-03-2012**

### **Wand'ring Minstrels**

The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin's Wand'ring Minstrels are ready to entertain for your next event. Have Gilbert and Sullivan tunes performed at your home, party, school, or activity. See our website ([www.gilbertsullivan.org](http://www.gilbertsullivan.org)) for further details.

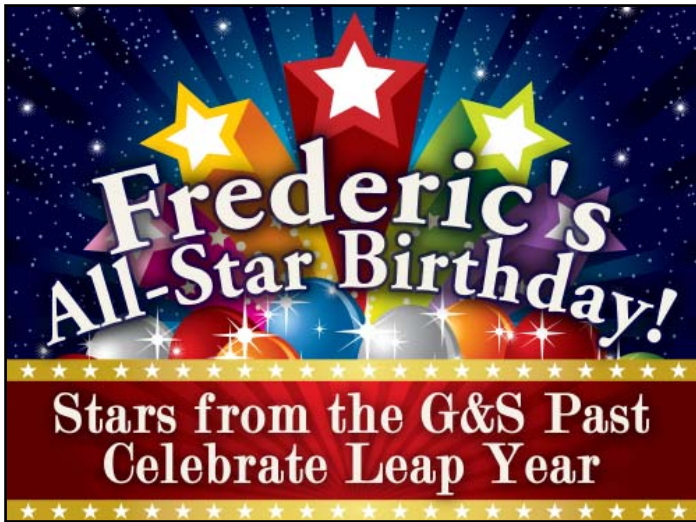
# **Armstrong Moving & Storage**

is the official moving and storage company of The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin. Many thanks, Armstrong!



Top line of mailing label is date when your membership expires.

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2012



*See details on page 1!*

**Coming Events**

- February 26 Happy Birthday, Frederic! musicale (see p. 1)
- March 3-4 *Patience* Auditions (see p. 5)
- May 13 *Patience* Preview musicale
- June 7-17 *Patience* summer production



**The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Austin**

Since 1976, we have been spreading the joys of G&S through

- Annual Grand Productions**
- Educational/Community Outreach**
- Musicales**
- Musical Scholarships**
- Newsletters**
- Holiday Season Shows**

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The Society holds nonprofit status under 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.

Artistic Director **Ralph MacPhail, Jr.**  
 Music Director **Jeffrey Jones-Ragona**

**Board of Directors**

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