

Candidates for the NEGASS Board of directors - 2011

NEGASS will hold its election for incoming Board of Directors on Sunday, May 13, 2011, at 2 pm. The election will take place at the Sudbury United Methodist Church, 251 Old Sudbury Road, Sudbury, MA, and will immediately precede the Sudbury Savoyards 50th Anniversary Sing-Along at 3 pm at the same location. We hope that all NEGASS members will vote in this important election.

Here are the candidates for seven Board positions: President, Program Chairman, Treasurer, and four Members-at-large.

Rebecca Hains, Candidate for President



I have served NEGASS as president since 2009. Prior to that, I enjoyed several terms as member-at-large and as program chair. I am a classical singer and an assistant professor of communications at Salem State University. My research area is children's media culture, and my book, *Growing Up With Girl Power*, will be published by Peter Lang, an academic press, this fall. I teach undergraduate courses in media studies, advertising, and design.

I see NEGASS as a vibrant, multi-faceted organization with room for growth. I believe that by continuously improving the quality of the products and performances we offer our members, we can continue to engage, enlighten, and entertain our core, while also drawing new members. We can also increase our membership by continuing to provide appealing performing opportunities for singers and other musicians who love G&S.

While serving as NEGASS president, I have brought my communications expertise to the table, guiding the development of a new NEGASS logo, redesigning the layout of *The Trumpet Bray*, redesigning our membership forms, and supervising the redesign of NEGASS's web site, which is now nearing completion. I have also recruited undergraduates at Salem State University to digitize NEGASS's archives from the late 1970s and early 1980s, which previously existed only in print form. I have also supported the NEGASS officers' endeavors, empowering them to work autonomously but am always willing to collaborate. For example, I frequently support the NEGASS meeting planning and regularly help proofread the Trumpet Bray. I proposed the Sing-Out for our 35th anniversary capstone event and am serving as its co-chair with Tom Dawkins and Stephanie Mann. I believe the Sing-Out is NEGASS's most ambitious event to date, and I am excited about our ability to offer it to our members and the wider community. It will be an "exciting meeting," indeed!

My interest in G&S began in high school, when I began performing with the Methuen Young People's Theater. I joined NEGASS while studying at Emmanuel College in Boston and performing with the MIT Gilbert & Sullivan Players; I became NEGASS's program chair in 1998. Since then, I have performed with the Savoyard Light Opera Company, Sudbury Savoyards, Mass Theatrica, and other performing groups in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, as well as at the International G&S Festival in Buxton, England. I released a solo CD, *The Gilbert & Sullivan Soprano Arias*, in 2007. For more information about my past and upcoming performances, please see rebeccahains.com.

In short, I am a long-time G&S enthusiast and performer with expertise in other areas that have proven useful to NEGASS. I would be happy to continue serving NEGASS as president for another term. Thank you for your consideration.

Stephanie Mann, Candidate for Program Chairman



Stephanie Mann has been the Program Chair for NEGASS since 2008. An active performer in the area of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, she has brought her organizational contacts and casting experience to NEGASS in continuing their relationship with Longwood Opera. She also helped to start the Last Minute Light Opera collaboration with Mass Theatrica as well as helping to renew the relationship with the New England Opera Club. An enthusiastic member of the NEGASS Board of Directors since 2006, she has been balancing many of the old programming traditions as well as bringing in some new events, new locations, and new partnerships with other local groups who perform and/or appreciate the Gilbert and Sullivan repertoire. She has campaigned for membership growth and has encouraged both traditional and new programming events with the aim to include all of the membership interests.

Her interest in Gilbert and Sullivan began with the Joseph Papp version of *Pirates of Penzance* where she fell in love with Rex Smith and learned 'Poor Wand'ring One' at the tender age of 12. Her interest continued through High School and College and in 1996 she performed as a 'Faerie' in the College Light Opera Company's production of *Iolanthe*. An active performer from that point on, she has since been in productions all over New England of *The Sorcerer*, *Patience*, *Ruddigore*, *The Mikado*, *Iolanthe*, and *The Grand Duke*. Her goal is to eventually perform in all of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas.

Her performance and casting experience comes from sitting 'behind the table' and organizing two successful, fully-staged productions with the Boston Opera Project. She was instrumental in the creation of the opera company and served as one of the Artistic Directors and Board Members of the group. In their two years of existence, they successfully mounted a production of Marc Blitzstein's *Regina*, performed at the Boston University Concert Room and the New England premiere of Mark Adamo's *Little Women* in collaboration with Orchard House. *Little Women* was performed both in Concord and in Boston with special permission by the composer to use a string quartet and piano. She recently directed her first full production, *Iolanthe*, at Mass Theatrica and will be repeating that in the 'revival' production in the Fall of 2011.

In her plans for the upcoming year with NEGASS programming, she is very excited about the 35th Anniversary Sing-Out in June. There has been interest, not only in current NEGASS members, but also Gilbert and Sullivan enthusiasts all over the world! Her continued plans include an end of summer Sing with Longwood Opera, trips to local productions, and continued collaborative events with other local performance and appreciation societies. Her goals are to increase awareness of the Gilbert and Sullivan canon and to introduce new audiences to the whimsy, cleverness, and enjoyment of Gilbert and Sullivan's creations.

Tom Weber, Candidate for Treasurer



"Way back when", Tom performed as Lord Mountararat in *Iolanthe*. Since 1996, Tom has performed in several G&S operettas in Massachusetts, starting with the role of King Hildebrand in Sudbury Savoyards' *Princess Ida*. That was followed by Sir Roderic Murgatroyd in the same group's *Ruddigore*.

Admittedly, he's stuck - in the last two years, he reprised the Sir Roderic role in a concert version sponsored by NEGASS/Longwood Opera, the Hildebrand role, again with

Sudbury, and Lord Mountararat with NEGASS/Longwood and, most recently, with Mass Theatrica. He is slated to revive Lord Mountararat in the Fall.

Tom's technical background includes an MBA and a lifetime of experience in financial administration, including more than seven years with "not for profit" organizations. He also spent more than 20 years acting as CFO for a wide range of smaller, hi-tech and service businesses. He will bring this financial and administrative expertise to the position of Treasurer of NEGASS. Finally, he balances his own checkbook!

Nancy Burstein, Candidate for Member-at-large



As candidate for NEGASS Board Member at Large, my wish is to implement a specific mission which I believe is key for NEGASS, namely increasing awareness and appreciation of the works of Gilbert and Sullivan among the young. If elected, I propose to spearhead an effort to

- collect and analyze data on the presence of G&S activities in the local public and private schools
- ascertain the level of interest in schools for technical assistance from NEGASS in developing G&S activities
- develop materials and resources to assist schools in implementing G&S activities.

Examples of school-based G&S activities could include studying G&S works, watching G&S movies, taking field trips to see performances by local community groups, and especially performances of G&S works by the students themselves.

This is a potentially huge and not yet well-defined idea. My thought is that it would take shape based on the wishes of the NEGASS Board as a whole with regard to priorities and available resources, as well as on the interests of those NEGASSers who joined the effort (e.g. focus on elementary schools? middle schools? high schools?), and on the responses of the schools (lend them scores? advise on stage direction or costumes? provide repetiteurs? etc.)

My experience and qualifications for leading this effort and otherwise serving on the NEGASS Board include the following:

- I have been a devotee of G&S since earliest childhood, when my parents read me the librettos as bedtime stories.
- I was Program Chair and President of NEGASS in ages past. I organized a NEGASS/Sudbury Savoyards expedition to the first ever sing-out in Rockville MD. We chartered a bus, stayed at a motel, and presented "Sorcerer".
- Over the years I performed in numerous local G&S productions, first while a student at MIT and then more recently with Sudbury Savoyards, SLOC, and again with MITGASP.
- I organize and host semi-rehearsed singthroughs in my living room of operas and similar works - most recently "Zauberflöte" and Act II of "Fledermaus".
- As a member of a local piano performing group, Rhapsody, I provided useful organizational structure by creating and filling a variety of roles as the need arose: treasurer, membership policy developer, survey designer and analyst, and recital program coordinator.
- Until a few years ago I worked at Abt Associates, a social science research firm, as a policy analyst, project director, and Managing Fellow - leading a group that was responsible for overseeing quality control of our technical work, assessing best projects and best peer-reviewed journal articles for annual awards, etc. My doctorate is in economics.
- While at Abt I brought about the company's participation in Power Lunch, a program in which our staff would go to a local public school for an hour once a week and read to young children one-on-one.
- I currently teach piano to nearly two dozen young students.

Susan Craft, Candidate for member-at-large



Mezzo soprano Susan Craft (MM in Vocal Performance, University of Wisconsin) has appeared as a soloist with Masterworks Chorale, Longwood Opera, Cambridge Community Chorus, New England Light Opera and First Parish Lexington's Summer Concert Series. Susan has sung lead and supporting roles with several Boston-area companies, including Concord's FOPAC, Mass Theatrica and Savoyard Light Opera Company. Recent performances include Camilla in *Il Giuoco del Quadriglio*, Iolanthe in *Iolanthe*, and a voice recital with Winchester Unitarian Society's concert series. In May, Susan will be singing the Bruckner Mass in d minor (alto soloist) with the Philharmonic Society of Arlington.

Susan is a Choral Artist with the Metropolitan Opera Guild, an early childhood music teacher at Lesley Ellis School in Arlington, and is Education Coordinator for the Cantata Singers in Cambridge. In addition, Susan is an Education Specialist for the Yamaha Music Education System, training and evaluating new teachers, and has been teaching Yamaha's ear training course for 13 years.

Susan's Gilbert & Sullivan experience includes Tessa, Pitti-Sing, Peep-Bo, Kate, Iolanthe, and scenes too numerous to count, most significantly including Rose Maybud, and Mad Margaret. Susan's first exposure to Gilbert and Sullivan was in the audience during a doomed performance at the Wisconsin Union Theater - before the end of the first act, everyone evacuated the theater for a tornado drill.

Susan's extensive theater experience plus her passion for education and performance puts her in an excellent position to promote G&S via NEGASS. She has designed an outreach show introducing elementary students to opera and performed it in numerous schools in southern Wisconsin. In addition to her current teaching posts, she is the Education Coordinator for the Cantata Singers, where she develops and administers their outreach programs, including field trip performances to Jordan Hall, in-class residencies, curriculum development, and more. She is also a licensed k-12 music educator.

Susan Elberger, Candidate for member-at-large



My first exposure to Gilbert and Sullivan was at home. My parents were fans, and took me to see the D'Oyly Carte production of *The Mikado* when they were in New York, where I grew up. What an experience! I was a member of the chorus in my 6th-grade production of *HMS Pinafore*, a many years ago, and had not performed again until I joined the Sudbury Savoyards for this year's production. In between then, I have seen productions in Sudbury, as well as in community theater productions in New York and Falmouth, and the Stratford, Ontario production of *The Mikado* in Boston.

I have served on, chaired, and reported to Boards of Directors for many years, and am currently a consultant to a non-profit arts organization on the North Shore. I have a business as a move manager and home and office organizer, and use skills I developed working as a therapist in that work. I look at organizations from a perspective of trying to help them work well, which I define as comfortably, effectively, and efficiently. I look forward to using my skills and experience in serving on the NEGASS board.

Vance Koven, Candidate for Member-at-large



Vance Koven is an attorney in sole practice in Boston, as well as a composer of chamber and vocal music, whose engagement with G&S began in earnest as pattermonger for the Community Music Center of Boston's G&S Workshop. All three of his children have also taken part in G&S performances.

As a lawyer, Vance specializes in corporate organization, business transactions of all kinds, copyright and arts law, having authored what is considered the definitive article on the Massachusetts Art Preservation Act. As a composer, his work has been performed locally by groups such as Dinosaur Annex, at music festivals, and in venues as scattered as London and Jerusalem. He looks forward to helping NEGASS achieve a further evolution in stability, prominence and engagement with and support for G&S performing groups, professional and amateur, and in fostering an appreciation for the remarkable literary and musical accomplishments represented by the Canon.

[Editor's note: Vance is pictured at Sally Lunn's in Bath, England, holding its eponymous pastry, made famous in Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Sorcerer* – "And now for the gay Sally Lunn!"]