



≈ NEGASS Programs ≈

The Gondoliers and NEGASS Annual Meeting

by Ann Ferentz

The NEGASS annual meeting was held on Sunday, June 26th at Christ Lutheran Church in Natick in conjunction with a read-through of *The Gondoliers* with a full orchestra (see accompanying piece).

During the past year, the NEGASS board has included representatives from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. Current board members John Dreslin, Aldo Fabrizi, Ann Ferentz, Jacqueline Haney, Ben Morse, and Laurie Weissbrot were reelected to two-year terms. Continuing to serve until the 2023 annual meeting are Brad Amidon, Jon Coffin, Elaine Crane, and Lindsey Soboleski. Martha Birnbaum continues to support the Board with communications and general wisdom from many years of service to NEGASS.

Brad Amidon, treasurer, reported that NEGASS is in excellent financial shape. During the past year income from memberships and donations nearly balanced expenses, which were primarily program-related. Expenses exceeded income by \$72.

Ann Ferentz, president, provided a review of the year just past during which, very happily, NEGASS in-person events resumed. Events included a summer sing of *Trial by Jury* (and impromptu *Pirates* sing) at Elaine Crane's home; the large 45th anniversary celebration at Christ Lutheran Church (CLC) in Natick, where NEGASS began; and the *Gondoliers* read-through with orchestra held immediately after the meeting. Renewing ties with CLC has been wonderful, giving NEGASS a meeting place that is more convenient for members in Connecticut and western Massachusetts than venues closer to Boston.

During the coming year, NEGASS looks forward to more in-person programs, starting with a September

barn dance to tunes from the operettas (called by the renowned Tony Parkes – see accompanying piece).

Group outings to operettas throughout New England and operetta sings are also planned.

All are encouraged to share ideas for events with the board; to submit information about G&S happenings to the Trumpet Bray (editor@NEGASS.org); and to join NEGASS or renew their memberships to support these programs. Please email contact@NEGASS.org if you are unsure of your membership status. The NEGASS Website maintains a list of current events. Events are also posted on our Facebook page.



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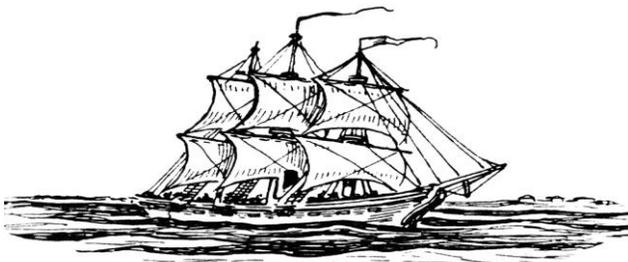
GENERAL NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS AND REVIEWS

Send to editor@negass.org

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DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF MATERIAL: 15th of the months of January, March, May, July, September, and November.



NEGASS will sponsor a G&S Barn Dance on September 17, 2022 at the Payson Park Church, Belmont, MA. Please join us for an evening of dancing to G&S music led by Tony Parkes, contra dance caller

extraordinaire. Tony, who played Don Alhambra at our *Gondoliers* sing-through, has been calling square and contra dances for more than 50 years. Starting in the 1960s, he learned from many of the leading callers and teachers of the day, such as Don Armstrong, Don Durlacher, Michael and Mary Ann Herman, Dick Kraus, Dick Leger and Ralph Page. He has taught at Mainewoods, Mendocino, Ontario, and Texas folk dance camps, as well as at Augusta, Brasstown, Buffalo Gap and Pinewoods square/contra camps, and innumerable state and regional weekend festivals. His calling has taken him to 35 states, Canada, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England and Germany.

Tony specializes in the contra dances and quadrille-type squares of New England and the "transitional" squares of the 1950s, when traditional Western square dancing was developing into the modern variety. Like his illustrious mentors, he believes in keeping these dance forms accessible to as many people as possible. He has beginners doing real dances within seconds, and can keep experienced dancers entertained with a bit of challenge or elegance.

Using traditional basic movements, Tony has composed over 90 square and contra dance routines, some of which have become modern classics. He is the author of a standard text on calling contras and is writing a companion volume on calling squares. Several recordings feature Tony as caller, pianist, director and/or producer. He is a core consultant to the Square Dance History Project (www.squaredancehistory.org), a virtual online museum of over 1,500 videos, audios, photographs, and articles documenting both traditional and modern square dancing.

Tony and his wife Beth, also a caller, live in the Boston area. When not at a camp, they divide their calling time between appearing at weekly and monthly dance series throughout (and beyond) New England, most with live music, and presiding at corporate, civic and private parties for people who are dancing for the first time.

Future NEGASS events:

- G&S Barn Dance, September 17, 2022, Payson Park Church, Belmont, MA. Please join us for an evening of dancing to G&S music led by Tony Parkes, NEGASS member and contra dance caller extraordinaire. There is no dance experience needed to participate and beginners are especially welcome! To reserve your spot, please email our program chair at programs@negass.org.
- Saturday, October 1, 2022 outing to *Iolanthe* (Arlington Friends of the Drama).
- November outing to *Pirates* (SLOC).

❧ NEGASS NEWS ❧

NEGASS Sing of *The Gondoliers*: An Afternoon of Too Much Happiness

by Ann Ferentz

On the afternoon of June 26th, NEGASS held a full read-through of *The Gondoliers* (music and dialogue) with a 20-piece orchestra at Christ Lutheran Church (CLC) in Natick, MA. It was a hot day, but with windows and doors open and CLC members Ruth and Audrey Colson strategically placing fans, we managed to keep air circulating and be reasonably comfortable.

After some shuffling to ensure that everyone in the orchestra had the same version of the score, conductor Aldo Fabrizi launched into the overture, which went splendidly, much to everyone's delight. This was the first time in years that an orchestra had been assembled for a NEGASS event and many thanks are due to Andrew Conway for gathering such a talented group. The orchestra greatly enriched the event for both singers and audience, and we certainly hope to include instrumentalists on a regular basis in future NEGASS programs.

The cast included some late-breaking changes. While we were sorry to lose a couple of participants, we were happy to have some additional cast members. Stephanie Mann played Gianetta in Act I while Kathryn Denney covered Giulia; Laurie Weissbrot,



Ann, Laurie, Brad, & Juliet In a Contemplative Fashion

originally scheduled to share Don Alhambra's role with Tony Parkes, played Giuseppe, so Tony played the Grand Inquisitor in both acts. Martha Birnbaum played

Inez; Andrew Conway took on the speaking role of Annibale; Larry Millner was recruited to play Giorgio as he was walking in the door; and Laurie leaped in to cover Francesco's lines impromptu! The cast was a happy mixture of people who were reprising favorite roles and people who were playing parts for the first time. Any momentary slip-ups were ably righted and great fun was had by all.

In fine NEGASS tradition, intermission brought an array of refreshments and time for catching up with friends, both indoors and outdoors. We look forward to having more in-person NEGASS events in the coming year and hope to see you there!



❧ G&S NEWS ❧

Robert Cumming Memorial Concert by John E. Dreslin

A memorial concert for Connecticut Gilbert and Sullivan Society's founding father Robert (Bob) Cumming, who passed away in 2021, was held at the First Church of Christ Congregational in East Haddam, CT on the afternoon of June 26.

Approximately 50 people, whose lives had been touched by Bob, attended. The hour and a half event featured much music that was dear to Bob, and several testimonials, including ones by NEGASS Board Member, Dr. John E. Dreslin, and presidents of both CG&SS (Ed Kerrigan) and Simsbury Light Opera (Ralph Sherman). Some of the musical highlights included:



the solo "God is My Salvation" that had been composed by Bob, and was beautifully sung by tenor Bill Sorensen; several excerpts from the G&S repertoire; and to finish the concert "The Lost Chord" and "Hail Poetry" sung by all attendees. Sue Sultus provided accompaniment on the organ and John Dreslin on the piano. The event provided a good reunion for both active and retired CG&SS performers. A post-concert reception provided time for renewals of acquaintances and some more anecdotes about various interactions with Bob. The whole event was ably organized by CG&SS Secretary Kathleen Thompson.

The Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society will perform *H.M.S. Pinafore* on Saturday, October 15th 2:00PM and 7:30PM and Sunday October 16th 2:00PM at Valley Regional High School, Deep River, CT. Visit their web site (<http://CTGANDS.ORG>) and Facebook page or call 860-354-2256 for further information on the show.

Savoyard Light Opera Company of Carlisle, MA will do a fully staged performance of *The Pirates of Penzance*. The following information is from their website SavoyardLightOpera.org:

They will set the show in the 1920s - meaning the Pirates will be "Gangsters/Bootleggers" along with some other fun ideas for costumes and more.

Director - Donna DeWitt

Music Director - Barry Singer

Producers - Debbie Crane & Joy Paradissis Playter

Rehearsals take place in Carlisle or the surrounding towns. Performances will be at Carlisle Public Schools in November over the two weekends before Thanksgiving.

Arlington Friends of the Drama will present nine performances of *Iolanthe* from September 16, 2022 through October 2, 2022 to celebrate their centennial. Visit their website: <https://www.afdtheatre.org> for more information, their production schedule, and their code of conduct. And join other NEGASS members at their October 1 performance.

Concord Light Opera Company of Concord, NH will mount a production of *Ruddigore* after going dark for the past few years. Show dates are the weekend of October 14, 15 and 16, 2022. Rehearsals begin August 16 at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 274 Pleasant St. Concord, NH. People are needed for ALL aspects of production. For further information email questions to clocnh@gmail.com.

NEGASS friend Rafe MacPhail posted the following on SavoyNet:

My friend Richard Moore asked me to tell you of his new book (now listed for purchase at Amazon USA). *A Pleasant Institution: Comedy in the Works of W.S. Gilbert*.

This book, the first in a projected series, is a wide-ranging and authoritative examination of some key comic works of W.S. Gilbert. Remembered today primarily for his partnership with Sir Arthur Sullivan, Gilbert was in fact a prolific author of literary pieces of all genres: plays, libretti, short stories, poetry (including nonsense verse) and ballads. Indeed, his short stories and stand-alone comedy lyrics are often more

anarchically sharp than most of the libretti derived from, or linked with, them.

The book begins with a general survey of background, methodology and techniques, followed by detailed analysis of some of the works according to category: his "non-Sullivan" plays; five of the Savoy Operas (*H.M.S. Pinafore*, *Patience*, *Iolanthe*, *Princess Ida* and *The Grand Duke*); nonsense verse; short stories; and finally the *Bab Ballads*. It includes much new research material on all the works considered.

The author's aim is to explore what, in comedy terms, is meant by the category "Gilbertian," placing Gilbert's unique contribution in the history and development of comedic art. The next in sequence will be called *A Pleasant Institution: A Fettered Harlequin*.

The 28TH International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival



opens in Buxton Opera House from Saturday 30 July to Saturday 6 August. The festival is simply pure joy and includes a feast of fabulous, unmissable productions. The festival then moves on to the Royal

Hall in Harrogate from the 10th through the 21st of August. NEGASS Board member Jon Coffin and his wife Jana are in England to attend the festivities. This is a wonderful experience for any G&S aficionado. Here is a preview of what we might be hearing from Jon:

Hello, from England! Very interesting here in Buxton to have the 28th International G&S Festival kicking off tomorrow with two performances of *Iolanthe*, starring some major beloved players. It is fascinating to go by the Opera House and feel the buildup of formidable energy, about to blossom forth. Each player brings a burst of touching and profound stored energy.....Something to keep in mind about OUR OWN presence in our own venues stateside! Jana and I are poised to present ourselves in the town square tomorrow, in black tie and formal attire, selling programs and shaking hands. What a blessing. See you here next year!

Yes, we know it isn't

Greater Worcester Opera continues its *Summer Concerts at the Bandstand* series with *Classic Broadway* on August 3 and *Contemporary Broadway* on August 10. Concerts are at 6:30 PM at the West Boylston Bandstand, Church Street and Route 12. NEGASS Secretary Elaine Crane is the Executive Director,

with several NEGASS members taking part in the performances. The concerts are free, although donations are welcome (encouraged, even!) For more information, visit www.greaterworcesteropera.org

Valley Light Opera of Amherst, MA will present Johann Baptist Strauss II's *Die Fledermaus* as their fall production (performances on November 5, 6, 11, 12, and 13). "The Bat," sometimes called "Revenge of the Bat," premiered in 1874 and was Strauss' third complete operetta. It is a delightful comedy full of love, deception, revelry, and revenge. The production will be set in Vienna, 1905, and will be performed in English.

✧ EDITOR'S CORNER ✧

I had the extreme pleasure of attending a retirement party on July 26 for the long-time accompanist of the Simsbury Light Opera company in Simsbury Connecticut. Elizabeth White has been playing piano for Simsbury's auditions, rehearsals, and performances since 1959, when Dwight Eisenhower was



President. That is a span of eight decades (from the 1950s to the 2020s)! Her first SLOCO show was *The Sorcerer*. She accompanied Martyn Green in his solo concert when he was Artistic Director of the company. She also served as its President, Treasurer (for many years) plus Ticket and Props Chairperson. Elizabeth graduated from NYU, where she was a member of the women's swim and water ballet teams under coach Florence Chadwick (the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions, setting a record each time).

She also served on the Board of Directors of the Hartford Conservatory of Music and Dance (where I first met her) and ultimately became its Executive Director.

When I joined SLOCO in the mid 80's she had already been with the company for over 25 years. Elizabeth is one of those great accompanists who puts the singer totally at ease; you know she will make no mistakes, and if you mess up she'll adjust speed or add measures or jump measures to keep you on track. This keeps the singer totally relaxed

and able to perform at his or her best. Many of the singers who spoke at the party remarked on what a joy it was to have her help them create great musical performances.

For the past few years Elizabeth has been sending emails to former SLOCO members, usually to inform us of the passing of another old friend. Sometimes I made the three hour drive down to attend a memorial service; other times I simply shed a tear or two, sent condolences, and expressed a desire that we meet for a happier occasion. Well this was the happier occasion! It was great to re-connect with singers and actors and tech crew that I haven't seen in decades, to catch up with old friends, and to hear some good, great, or even not so great but still enjoyable performances (including my own, from the first G&S I ever sang in - *Utopia Limited* - in 1983.)

Many G&S companies have a person like this who is the glue that holds the organization together. It was wonderful to be able to say goodbye to Elizabeth. She will be incredibly missed, and we all wish her well in her retirement.



- Laurie Weissbrot

I found the following A THOUGHT FOR TODAY while reading A Word A Day:

One day work is hard, and another day it is easy; but if I had waited for inspiration I am afraid I should have done nothing. The miner does not sit at the top of the shaft waiting for the coal to come bubbling up to the surface. One must go deep down, and work out every vein carefully.

-Arthur Sullivan, composer (13 May 1842-1900)

✧ We Have a Little List ✧

The editor wishes to thank those who contributed to this issue of *The Trumpet Bray* including Ann Ferentz, Julie Martini, John Dreslin, Elaine Crane, Jon Coffin, Joleen Benedict, Rafe MacPhail, and Martha Birnbaum.

(Please forgive any omissions!)

❧ CALENDAR ❧

NEGASS Events

<p>G&S Barn Dance</p> <p><i>Iolanthe</i> Arlington Friends of the Drama show followed by dinner; contact events@negass.org</p> <p><i>Pirates of Penzance</i> Group outing to SLOC show followed by dinner</p> <p><i>The Grand Duke</i> Group outing to Sudbury Savoyards show followed by dinner</p>	<p>Saturday, September 17, 2022</p> <p>Saturday, October 1, 2022</p> <p>November 2022</p> <p>2023</p>	<p>Payson Park Church Belmont, MA</p> <p>22 Academy Street Arlington, MA</p> <p>Carlisle, MA</p> <p>Sudbury MA</p>
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G&S Events

<p>International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival</p>	<p>July 30, 2022 to August 6, 2022</p>	<p>Buxton Opera House Buxton, UK</p>
<p>International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival</p>	<p>August 10, 2022 to August 21, 2022</p>	<p>Royal Hall Harrogate, UK</p>
<p><i>Pirates of Penzance</i> Savoyard Light Opera Company</p>	<p>November 2022</p>	<p>Corey Auditorium 117 Church Street Carlisle, MA</p>
<p><i>Iolanthe</i> Arlington Friends of the Drama</p>	<p>September 16, 2022 to October 2, 2022</p>	<p>22 Academy Street Arlington, MA</p>
<p><i>Ruddigore</i> Concord Light Opera Company</p>	<p>October 14, 15, 16, 2022</p>	<p>Concord, NH</p>
<p><i>H.M.S. Pinafore</i> Connecticut G & S Society</p>	<p>October 15, 2022 2:00 & 7:30PM October 16, 2022 2:00PM.</p>	<p>Valley Regional High School Deep River, CT</p>
<p><i>The Grand Duke</i> Sudbury Savoyards Sudbury, MA</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>Lincoln-Sudbury Regional HS Sudbury, MA</p>
<p>GWO sing-through</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>Worcester, MA</p>