

## **Report of the Chair**

This has been a tumultuous year for the Savoyards. It is our first year as a corporation, with all the legal and financial ramifications that are involved in running a corporation. On top of that, SUMC has undergone a construction project that lasted longer than anyone expected, and that has serious consequences for us. Some of the specific consequences will be discussed in the committee reports. The Board, whose previous work focused on who would produce, direct, or manage shows and other events has seen its role expand to include long-range planning in ways that we would not have expected two years ago when we first realized that we would be paying rent to SUMC and then incorporating.

One of the serious issues we faced this year has been that the sense of community that the Savoyards value has been put to the test. We were unable to gather on tech days in a way that allowed time for people to talk and share as we have before. The parties during the rehearsals for *The Mikado* were poorly attended for a variety of reasons. We need to look at the importance of the sense of community and decide how much effort we want to and are able to put into supporting it.

The reports of the 6 committees that began their work within the last 2 years are below.

Susan Elberger

## **Report of the Audit and Finance Committee**

As a newly organized non-profit corporation, the Audit & Finance (A&F) committee was established consistent with the By-Laws and policies of incorporation. The A&F first meeting was August 17, 2016 and among the first items on the agenda was the discussion of the establishment of an annual fee for membership which was presented to the Board of Trustees in September and passed by the Board (\$25). Membership in the Sudbury Savoyards is required in order for a person to participate as an actor/singer in a Savoyard production.

Levels and benefits of membership were discussed, but no proposal has been enacted by the Board, however Yeomen of Regard (YoR) of the Sudbury Savoyards were voted permanent membership and all annual membership fees for YoR are waived at this time. Performance fees for performing cast members are left to the discretion of the production producer.

The Fiscal Budget FY2017 was established and presented to the Board for approval; the need for a "Development person/Committee" was identified, but has not been established as yet. There is a line item in the FY2017 budget providing for income from this future activity.

As the Savoyards entered the Winter Production schedule in January and the show was presented at the end of April, the A&F committee schedule was interrupted and will restart this month.

With the stepping down of H. Clopper as Trustee and Treasurer, a new person will be chairing the A&F committee starting in next month.

Committee Chair and Treasurer: Herschel Clopper

Committee Members: Andrew Conway; John Gorgone; Jim Ravan; Ellen Simmons

## **Report of the Church Relations Committee**

This year was the first year of our status as a separate corporation, and as such our relationship with SUMC was significantly different from prior years. We spent a good deal of the year discussing a rental agreement with them. The first draft arrived late Friday night, and the Board is just beginning to review it. The basic financial commitment is proposed at \$4200 per year, which we had earlier agreed to in principle. This number is based on year-round storage of materials in the attic and the cellars and an estimated number of uses of the building for rehearsals and other events. The draft includes a large number of conditions and descriptions about financial liability, use of space, and other issues. These will be either agreed upon or modified in the next few weeks.

One of the decisions made by the Board to help keep costs down is that we will not be holding Board meetings at the church but at people's homes. This is how the Savoyards used to hold Board meetings.

Committee Chair, Susan Elberger

Members: Brendon Chetwynd, Dennis O'Brien, Tom Powers

## **Report of the Communications Committee**

The goals of the committee, as originally discussed in 2015, are to coordinate communications and publicity to allow the Sudbury Savoyards to provide clear, compelling communications with their company members and audience (current, former and future), reduce expenses, build and maintain a consistent brand, build alliances with other groups, and increase audience size.

The main activities in the last year have been:

Newsletter – the committee is overseeing the electronic newsletter (Andrew Conway is putting the articles into MailChimp and doing the mailing). We're aiming to send out 3-4 main issues per years. If you'd like to write articles, or help edit we'd welcome your help.

Webpage – the committee has taken on redoing the Sudbury Savoyards main webpage. Steve Malioneck, our current webmaster, is willing to do the coding work in Drupal, which will allow multiple editors to change specified parts of the webpage. Susan Beckett has taken on the design, and the committee will help with overall content revisions and editing. Anyone interested in helping to edit content is more than welcome. We're aiming have work started in July.

List serves – Our list Master, Jamie Cobleigh, is part of the committee and will be making a proposal to the Board about consolidating the current lists - a task that has been long on the list of things to do.

Social Media – the committee oversees postings on social media (just Facebook at the moment) on our main FB page and on the "Cast and Crew" group page. Karen Powers did some wonderful video clips to help promote Mikado.

Company Promoter / Publicist – Andrea Roessler has retired from the position of company publicist. A huge "thank you" to Andrea for the years of work she's put in on publicity – for the company in general and for particular shows. The committee is going through Andrea's debrief reports and the task lists to put together a job description for "Company Promoter" with task list – most of which should be oversee company publicity and be the main contact for the company. IF you've got ideas or interest in helping/filling this position, talk to any one of the committee members.

Committee Chair: Sue Flint

Members: Susan Beckett, Jamie Cobleigh, Karen Powers

## **Report from the Governance Committee to the Annual Membership Meeting of the Sudbury Savoyards, June 4, 2017**

The process of creating The Sudbury Savoyards, Incorporated included the creation of Bylaws for the proposed organization, a task executed by a committee from within the old Board, guided by templates from our lawyer, Liz Reinhardt that included features of the bylaws of the old Savoyards. These Bylaws were approved, as amended, at the final membership meeting of the old Savoyards in June 2016.

One of the principal tasks involved in Governance is interpretation of an organization's bylaws in the context of ordinary operations. Our Bylaws, for example, assign certain responsibilities to the Trustees or the Members; Governance involves the decision-making process of deciding how elections should be called and run, how appointments are made, how committees are convened, and many, many other responsibilities.

The Board of the new Savoyards, who were, by the new Bylaws, the members of the old Savoyard Board, convened for its first meeting on July 7, 2016. At that meeting, the Board elected from among its members Susan Elberger as Chair, Herschel Clopper as Treasurer, and Sue Flint as Secretary. The new Bylaws do not include the position of Church Liaison. While the new Bylaws include provision for the election of a Vice Chair, the Board was understaffed at that time (only seven members, where the new Board was defined to have nine), and that position was left unfilled pending further recruitment.

One of the first tasks of the new Board was to have been to allocate its members into terms of service, with three members whose terms were to expire in 2017, three for terms ending in 2018, and three for terms ending in 2019. This would allow the rolling election of future Trustees on cycling three years terms, for three Trustees at each election. The Board chose to defer these assignments until the two open seats could be filled by appointment. The shortfall was exacerbated by the resignation of Chris Fanger, who was replaced by the appointment of Laura Jacobson. Ongoing recruitment over the course of the year failed to fill the empty seats.

During the preparation for the 2017 Trustee elections, one sitting Trustee, Herschel Clopper, stated his intention to not remain on the Board past the end of the then-current year. The Board chose to then assign the two empty seats and Hersch's seat to the class of terms ending in 2017, allowing for a full three-seat election for the term ending in 2020. The remaining sitting Trustees decided among themselves that the terms of Brendon Chetwynd, Sue Flint, and Karen Powers would end in 2018, and the terms of Tom Powers, Susan Elberger, and the appointed seat held by Laura Jacobson would end in 2019.

In interpreting the Bylaw requirement that Trustee appointments made by the Board are valid only until the next election, the Board decided to treat Laura's appointed seat as open for election for less than the full three year term, and needed to be treated as a separate election.

Other matters of Governance through the year related to the formation of committees and consideration of Staff positions and appointments. Several committees were created and convened anew, or extended from the old Savoyards. Two new committees were created as required by the new Bylaws: Governance, and Audit and Finance. These are mandated by state chartering requirements to protect the

financial and management aspects of the Corporation. Other committees include those reporting at this meeting: Location (seeking alternatives for Company operations), Communications (seeking to remain connected with our Members and the larger community with regard to our activities), Church Relations (our ongoing but now more arms-length connection with SUMC), and Show Selection (what activities the Company should consider and how to plan for them).

It is important to note that while committees are created by and report to the Board, and while they may (or in some cases, must) include Trustees as members, they can only operate and succeed with the participation of Members and other concerned individuals. Similarly, Staff positions such as Theater Liaison, Rental Agents, and List and Web Managers are largely staffed by Savoyards-at-large. Broadly-based involvement remains critical to the success and even the survival of the Company, and must remain a core focus of our being.

Respectively submitted,

Committee Chair, Tom Powers  
Member: Susan Elberger

## **Report of the Location Committee**

Due to the construction at SUMC, which you can see part of here in Hawes Hall, we were unable to use the church for any purpose. We are now going to be able to use it only for rehearsals and meetings such as this one. One of the major changes in the use of Hawes Hall is that we can no longer do anything that might harm the floor.

This means that we will not be able to do performances here that require lighting or use of any equipment that could scratch the floor. We can't do any set construction work. Due to the loss of storage space on this floor, we will probably not be able to do costume or props work here either, since we would have to carry all materials down from and up to the attic each day.

The Locations Committee has been looking for space where we can do all our tech work, preferably in one place. We have looked at several locations, none of which has worked out, talked with 2 people in Sudbury who own barns and both of whom have turned us down, and spoken with an arts organization in Framingham that is also looking for space.

We are continuing our search for new space in which to do tech work, and are taking several approaches: notice signs advertising commercial/warehouse space, work with realtors and/or property managers, and consider collaborating with other theater and arts groups for shared space.

We are likewise looking for other performance space to use for smaller shows. We are considering other churches, schools, theaters, and other options that may arise.

The committee will continue to meet, make phone calls, and look at potential work and performance spaces.

Committee Chair, Susan Elberger

Member: Nancy Powers

## Report of the Show Selection Committee

The committee met for the first time last month, and looked at a variety of issues relating to the selection process. These included

### A. Artistic concerns:

1. Maintain high quality of performance and tech
2. Doing non- G & S shows will almost certainly involve auditioning chorus due to most shows requiring chorus to dance
3. Examine ways to maintain inclusive nature while respecting need for artistic excellence- possibly have auditioned people onstage and unauditioned chorus visible below/on side of stage but not costumed
4. Do not consider plays/shows that require overly large casts, too much tech, gratuitous profanity, nudity. We may aspire to more, but can't do some of this stuff now.
5. Present a variety of shows that address interests of a variety of audiences, casts, and staff

### B. Financial concerns:

1. Shows need to cover their own expenses and some part of company's annual expenses
2. Cost of rights to shows varies with how recently stage, currently in big houses or on tour, size of predicted audience, number of performances, musical v. non-musical

### C. Producer:

1. Having a producer is critical; we must have one before anything else happens
2. Options for enlisting: producer approaches Board with show in mind; company announces season, seeks producers; producer role rotates through Board; ask directors for shows, they bring producers

### D. Other issues/concerns:

1. It is difficult to maintain sense of community when people only gather for one show a year.
2. We should present a season of shows, possibly 3 per year, in different-sized locations. Main show would be in winter in large location, medium show in summer, small show in early fall.
3. Try to shorten length of time required to put on a main stage show, currently about 9 months, to allow for other shows.
4. Consider having shows with children in cast, and determine challenges/advantages of doing so.
5. Decide whether we want to do shows that feel like G & S to ease existing audience into other shows v. doing something more different to encourage other new people. We are planning to do a non-G & S show in 2019, and will be continuing to look at these issues as we decide what other shows to consider.

The committee will be meeting regularly to determine what shows we will be presenting, and when and where we will present them.

Committee Chair: Susan Elberger

Members: Laura Jacobson, Karen Powers, Jim Ravan

## **Final comments**

The Savoyards are dealing with the most basic question of all: who are we as a company? We have to change the way we do things in order to survive. How much can we change and still be the Savoyards?

The company is facing serious challenges. We are not having a summer show this year because nobody was willing to step up as a producer, and we are not having a float in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade because nobody was willing to take responsibility for making it happen. It is not impossible that the company will fold within a few years, not due to lack of money but due to lack of participation in the management, planning, and production aspects of the company, both year-round and for specific events, including shows.

We also have a wonderful opportunity to grow as a company and become wonderful in a different way. The chance to reinvent ourselves is exciting even while it makes us all a bit anxious. What will we be? We don't know yet, but we know this:

The company is only as strong as the people working to make it thrive. Your involvement is absolutely critical. Whether on the Board, on committees, producing shows, and other aspects of what makes a company continue, the people who are now on the Board, committees, who have produced shows and run the backstage aspects of them are stretched to their limits and sometimes beyond. We know that you care enough about the company to be here, and hope that you will decide to participate in some of the areas that I have mentioned. We need your help. Please contact me or with any of the other Board members about what you can do. Our future depends on us all.

Susan Elberger, Board chair