



The Sudbury Savoyards' Sandwich Board

Spring/Summer 2008 - Vol 13, Number 3

So it was February in New England, what could go wrong? “Plenty, and more than ever before” would be the answer to that question, as we note below. But we have put that behind us and look forward to a fun summer and big plans for the fall. We can even talk about *next* February already! First things first, however. There’s a classic Summer Show to take in, and the 4th of July parade. We hope that as your Summer moves into high gear you’ll be able to join us in the fun now, while we also look to October and beyond.

The Yeomen of the Guard

The snow couldn’t stop us. Illness couldn’t stop us. Injuries and absences couldn’t stop us. Yes, it was perhaps the toughest year for impediments in the history of the Savoyards. We lost our opening night performance to a snow cancellation (the first such cancellation in the 47 year history of the Company). We lost our conductor and one of our leads to a week-long malady, while half the rest of the cast was hobbled with intense respiratory distress and various other injuries. But as Yeomen are known to do, we swapped roles and filled gaps and persevered due to (frankly) heroic efforts by the Company as a whole. Oh, the stories we will have to tell our grandchildren... And, still, the effort was a financial success. By the time you read this, we will have presented a check for \$5000 to the Sudbury United Methodist Church for the benefit of the United Methodist Committee on Relief, the Savoyards’ designated charity, in support of the relief of world hunger. Thanks go out to all our supporters: on stage, behind the stage, and (of course!) in the audience.

Arsenic &

kindness to old bachelors by putting them out of their miserable loneliness with fatally spiked elderberry wine. To make things more interesting, Martha and Abby’s nephews represent more bent twigs in the family tree as well. Teddy Brewster imagines himself as Rough Rider Teddy Roosevelt, intent on finishing the Panama Canal.

As community theater “chestnuts” go, there are few more “chestnut-ty” than Joseph Kesselring’s *Arsenic and Old Lace*. A classic in every sense of the word, the play has been a hit since it was first presented in 1941. The story is well-known: two old spinster sisters, Martha and Abby Brewster, do a

Old Lace

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Convicted criminal Jonathan Brewster has his own string of bodies to dispose of, with a plastic surgeon accomplice (Dr. Einstein) to keep him a step ahead of the law. Even the superficially normal Mortimer Brewster has to deal with the conflicts in his career and his relationship with his fiancé, Elaine.

Kesselring wrote the play in 1939, reportedly deriving the premise from actual events and basing the Brewsters' home on a rooming house he once occupied. The Savoyards will be performing this classic in the venue we successfully moved into last summer, Sudbury's Curtis Middle School. Our new summer home has great acoustics, comfortable seats, and AIR CONDITIONING!

Our cast is a mix of veteran Savoyards and welcome newcomers. Our murderous sisters are **Marcia Goldensher** as Martha and **Sharon Kivnik** as Abby Brewster. Marcia has been a member of eleven consecutive choruses in the Savoyards' G&S big shows, and Sharon joined the Savoyards two summers ago as Hannah Warren in the group's production of *California Suite*. **Mike Lague** is appearing in his tenth Savoyard Summer Show, here as the non-AMA-compliant Dr. Einstein. **Ed Fell** raises his Savoyard performance total to an even dozen doubling as Reverend Harper and Mr. Witherspoon. **Graham Daley** makes her Summer Show debut as Elaine Harper, after two years in our G&S casts. **John Gorgone**, **Jon Saul**, and **Randy Divinski** round out our returning Savoyards as Mr. Gibbs/Lieutenant Rooney, Officer Brophy, and Officer Klein, respectively.

We welcome **Adam Gray** as Mortimer Brewster, **Pedro Figueroa** as Jonathan Brewster, **David Dooks** as Teddy Brewster, and **Tom Ostrowski** as Officer O'Hara. Adam is a summer camp director/guidance counselor in Boston who has acted with groups in Lexington, Danvers, and at Stonehill College, his alma mater. Pedro comes to us after a run as Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast* in Lexington. David has been busy with Theater III, Winchester Players, and Vokes, among other companies. Tom has done the gamut from Shakespearean tragedies to Broadway musicals and aspires to G&S as well (he's come to the right place).

And we have a new director this year. **Mario Salinas** has been active in many of areas of community theater throughout the region for several years. How does one approach a classic piece of theater that centers on two dear, charitable little old ladies who happen to be serial killers? Mario offers these observations:

Arsenic and Old Lace is a farce with resonances. As with all good thrillers, murder is real in the play but not at all real outside it. Without this clear distinction such gruesomeness could not become funny. Getting the numbers of bodies in the cellar correct, or the outsmarting of the gangsters (real-life killers) by the 'innocent' old ladies and Teddy would not be funny, but sick. However, as a comedy of manners, the plausibility of the poisoning sisters and their hoodwinking of Reverend Harper and the police with their crinolines and tea-cakes carries a deeper echo of that "nice Miss Smith" who murdered her lover (or did she?). The play points out that we see what we want to see, but in the end all is for the best, in the best of all possible worlds. Ironically, a good murder mystery must have a happy ending. It is a utopia. Wrong-doing is righted, often in the most ingenious ways. But here fate does the righting and the good-man, Mortimer Brewster, seizes what the gods present.

Times, dates, and tickets....

Arsenic and Old Lace will be presented in six performances over the two weekends of late July and early August at the **Curtis Middle School, 22 Pratt's Mill Road, Sudbury**. (Directions are available on our web site.) Hawes Hall remains our home base, and the Sudbury United Methodist Church remains our sponsor, but we are all excited about the prospects of doing even better shows in a more comfortable, technically superior environment. Note that we are down to two performing weekends instead of our former three. The larger, better-appointed venue allows us to reduce our eight-performance schedule to just six, which includes two weekend matinees, and still accommodate more patrons than we could have hosted in Hawes Hall. Our evening performances will be on **Friday, July 25; Saturday, July 26; Friday, August 1; and Saturday,**

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August 2, all at 8:00pm; our matinees will be on **Sunday, July 27** and **Saturday, August 2**, both at 2:00pm. We hope to see you there!

Tickets are **\$15 for adults**, and **\$12 for students and seniors**. **Order by mail** by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope, with your performance and ticket choices and payment, to Arsenic Tickets, 9 Marlboro Rd., Sudbury, MA 01776. A ticket order form is available on our web site. **Reserve by phone** by calling 978-443-8811. **Order by email** by sending a message to tickets@sudburysavoyards.org. Include your ticket choices, and your name, address, and phone number, and your tickets will be held at the box office until ten minutes before show time. **Order from the web** by visiting our web site at www.sudburysavoyards.org. Click on the link to "tickets" from there or via the *Arsenic and Old Lace* page. Web ticketing uses the PayPal on-line payment system. There is a \$3 per order charge, regardless of the number of tickets purchased.

How can you help a Summer Show?

While the cast shuffles bodies about on the stage, a crew of a couple of dozen other folks are running lights, handling props, selling tickets and leading patrons to their seats, and all the other activities that surround a fine theater experience. Would you like to be one of those people? We're always in need of spare hands to help keep the show running. If you can help in any way, from ushering for a performance or two, or donating baked goods for concession snacks, or working on the stage crew, get in touch with Producer Donna Roessler at donnarslr@rcn.com.

Board of Trustees

The Sudbury Savoyards operate under the direction of a seven member Board of Trustees, each member of which serves a two year term. Trustees are chosen by the membership at the general membership meeting held during the run of the mainstage show in the Winter. Completing their terms and leaving the Board this year were **June McKnight** and **Pat Kinney**. **Ellen Simmons** and **Paul Sliney** were elected to second terms. Newly elected Trustees are **Alessandra Kingsford** and **Kirsten Chetwynd**. Continuing Trustees are **Andrea Roessler**, **Jon Saul**, and **John Gorgone**. For the coming year, Ellen will continue as Chair with Paul as Secretary, John as Treasurer, and Alessandra coming in as Church Liaison. Andrea, Jon, and Kirsten will serve as Trustees-at-large. Board meetings are open to the membership. Minutes of Board meetings, which include meeting schedules, are now available on the Savoyards' web site.

Yeoman of Regard: Steve Malionek

Steve Malionek was inducted as the 15th member of the distinguished cadre of Savoyards known as "Yeomen of Regard" at the Company's annual general membership meeting in March, appropriately during the run of the Company's *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Few Savoyards have contributed in so many disciplines as Steve has done over the past twelve years. Most visible as the conductor and music director of seven of the Company's G&S big shows, Steve has also been an usher, graphic designer, master carpenter and construction chief, Trustee, orchestra member, score editor and producer, performing accompanist, videographer/photographer, webmaster/listmaster, and more, and sometimes four or five of these contributors at the same time. Steve was escorted to the podium and serenaded at the induction by the chorus of Yeomen from *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

The Yeomen of Regard program is an ongoing effort to honor Savoyards who have dedicated extraordinary service to the Company. Please see our list of honorees and a more complete description of the program on our web site. The Board of Trustees solicits nominations for Yeomen on a continuing basis. If you would like to suggest a candidate for the honor, send a note identifying yourself, your nominee, and a brief statement of his or her contribution to our Archivist, **Andrea Roessler** at ajr-asid@juno.com.

Fall Craft Fair

The Savoyards will be presenting our 6th Annual Fall Craft Fair in Hawes Hall at the Sudbury United Methodist Church on Saturday, October 11. The organizers, **Donna** and **Andrea Roessler**, are still accepting applications from crafters, with about nine spots still open. They are especially looking for vendors who offer pottery, birdhouses, candles, soap products, or other unusual items. Spaces for jewelry and quilted and knitted items are all taken. The fair will also need baked goods donated for the bake sale table, all proceeds of which go to world hunger relief through UMCOR. Prospective crafters, bakers, and fair staff are encouraged to contact Donna or Andrea at 508-628-9772.

Utopia, Ltd. in 2009

The Board of Trustees has selected the Directors for the winter 2009 production of *Utopia, Ltd.* Our Stage Director will be **Ed Knights**, who has previously directed the Savoyard Summer Shows *The Matchmaker* in 2005 and the very successful *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* last summer. Ed is very excited about directing a main-stage production "on a grand scale" and making it his G&S debut. Ed has directed, performed in, and even written countless musicals and stage plays going all the way back to his college days. Our Music Director will be long-time Sudbury Savoyard **Jim Ravan**, who competently switched roles from Stage Manager to substitute conductor during our recent production of *Yeomen of the Guard*. Jim is one of the few current members who has previous *Utopia* experience, as he was the Assistant Music Director for the 1988 production, the first and only previous time that Sudbury has performed this show. *Utopia, Ltd.* may not be as well known as other G&S shows, but the directors promise to make it a fun and rewarding experience for all. Look for more word on the plans for the show in the Fall issue of this newsletter, and on the Savoyard web site.

Producer Andrea Roessler looking for an Assistant to help this year and gain experience to take on the role of Producer in the future. Technical and Production staff, especially a Technical Director and a Graphic Designer, need to be recruited soon, and soon after that, all the other necessary positions that keep a show of this scale running smoothly. Assistants and Co-Chiefs are very much encouraged, so if you are interested in trying your hand at any of the tasks, you are invited to participate and also learn more about the organization. If you would like more information about the requirements of particular positions, or to volunteer, please email Andrea at producer@sudburysavoyards.org or call 508-628-9772.

Winifred "Winnie" Sheets

The Sudbury Savoyards have lost one of our first "First Ladies." Winnie Sheets died of cancer in Burlington, Vermont, in December. Not only was Winnie a soprano in the very first show (in 1961), she became the female lead in many of the shows thereafter. She always strove for performance excellence that raised the bar for a newly organized theatrical troupe. Always a team player, her strong feeling for the group was a continuing steadying hand. She is survived by husband Dave who was lead tenor in the original Savoyard production and in many more following.

Contacting the Sudbury Savoyards

The Savoyards have an active set of email lists and a vibrant, regularly updated web presence (including general and specific contact information) at www.sudburysavoyards.org. If you're not electronically connected, write to us in care of our sponsor, the **Sudbury United Methodist Church, 251 Old Sudbury Rd., Sudbury, Massachusetts 01776**. You can call the Savoyards' voice message line at **978-443-8811** if you have any questions about any of our activities.