

Precious Nonsense

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWESTERN GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SOCIETY

September 1991 -- Issue 31

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Love that will aye endure, Though the rewards be few,
That is the love that's pure, That is the love that's true!

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Well, you're going to be mad. It's been another unusual summer for Secretary/Archivist Cole, and she is so backlogged that the quiz prizes haven't even been awarded yet. If anyone thinks she owes you a letter, you're probably right. But Fear Not, she is putting her shoulder to the wheel (or her fingers to the keyboard, as the case may be), and all should be caught up presently. In the meantime, this is an admittedly slapdash *Nonsense*. But, we'll do better next time, and we'll need your help to pull it off. We'll talk more about that at the end of the paper, but in the interim, we have some production listings, the answers to the Big Quiz, and some other things. {By the way, aren't these fonts a stitch? I don't know how long we'll use them, but S/A Cole thought they might be fun to try out.} But on to more entertaining things.

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Oh, Members, How Say You, What is it You've Done?

We hear that member **Charlee Hutton** appeared on the game show *Jeopardy* June 24 (1991), and won the second-place prize. Congratulations to her on her success! If only G&S had been her quiz topic.

Member *Lee Kesselman* celebrates his tenth year with the New Classic Singers, a group he founded, and for which he is presently music director. This year's programs are going to be *Mozart* (November 3, 4:00 pm), *Family Christmas Album X* (December 15, 3:00 and 7:00 pm), *Shakespeare to Shearing* (March 7, 1992, 8:00 pm), and *An American Sampler* (May 16, 1992, 8:00 pm). Performances are at the Mainstage at the College of DuPage's Arts Center. For more information (or to pass on congratulations to member Kesselman), contact The College of DuPage, 22d St. and Lambert Rd., Glen Ellyn, IL 60137-6599.

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What Cheer! What Cheer! {Midwestern}

Those of us at the MGS Annual Meeting got something of a surprise about the Savoy-Aires' planned summer production. Due to some casting troubles, they have postponed their production of *The Brigands* indefinitely, and we just got the word that sometime this fall are said to be planning an expanded version of their performance sampler *Gilbert vs. Sullivan*. It should be an expanded version of *A Gilbert and Sullivan Anthology* (what they performed at the Chicago Historical Society in June). The performances will be October 11-

13 (1991), at the St. Scholastica Auditorium in Chicago (7416 N. Ridge Blvd. 2 blocks South of Howard) with 8:00 pm curtains on Friday and Saturday, and a 2:00 curtain on Sunday. Tickets are \$10.00, for adults, and \$9.00 for seniors and students. For more information, call Barb Staffen at (312) 736-0443. For whatever it's worth, the regular address of the Savoy-Aires is still P.O. Box 126, Evanston, IL 60204.

Mentioning this one might be a bit premature, but here it is anyway. The Naperville (Illinois) Park District is planning to present *H.M.S. Pinafore* April 2-5 (1992, I should hope) at the Naperville North High School, according to the September 13, 1991, Aurora (Illinois) Beacon-News. For more information, call (708) 357-9000.

It was decided at the MGS Annual Meeting that the 1992 annual meeting would be held with Light Opera Works' summer G&S production. They are planning to present *The Grand Duke*, so there wasn't really much debate about going. S/A Cole has misplaced the production information, but should have found it in time for the next issue of the *Nonsense*. In any event, it will be held in Evanston at the end of August. In the meantime, the MGS get-together will probably be an evening thing for a change (that is, we'll be going to an evening performance, rather than a matinee), but so far the only detail that has been set is that we're planning on going. For more information (on the production--they don't know any more about the MGS Annual Meeting than S/A Cole does at the moment), Light Opera Works can be reached at 927 Noyes St., Evanston, IL 60201-2799

{(708) 869-6300}. By the way, they're going to be giving a Cole Porter Gala October 23 (2:00 pm) and 26 (8:00 pm) at National-Louis University (2840 Sheridan Rd., Evanston). Do get in touch for them for more information.



What Cheer! What Cheer! {Elsewhere}

The September 1991 issue of the New York G&S Society's *Palace Peeper* reminds us that the Boston Academy of Music is going to be giving a concert version of Sullivan's Ivanhoe November 23, 1991, at the New England Conservatory of Music. This year is its centennial, so they're celebrating by performing it. For more information, contact the Boston Academy of Music, P.O. Box 1116, Boston, MA 02103.

The same issue of *The Peeper* also mentioned that the New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players are going to give a concert version of Princess Ida November 10 (1991) at Symphony Space (95th and Broadway). Ticket prices for non-NYGASSers are uncertain, but they appear to run \$20.00 and upward. They're also planning to give Mikado December 26-January 5, at the same place. We certainly wish them all the success they deserve: many of us have fond memories of their performance of Pirates we saw in 1989. For more information, the *Peeper* says to call (212) 769-1000.

While the performance dates have apparently not been set yet, the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Shreveport (1915 Bayou Dr., Shreveport, LA 71105) is planning to give Pinafore in the fairly near future. Auditions were held at the beginning of September, and that usually means a show is not far off. We'll pass on what we hear as we hear it.

We learn from new members the Farron Family that the Washington Savoyards (P.O. Box 34584; Bethesda, MD 20827/ (301) 946-6250) are celebrating their twentieth anniversary in 1992, and are planning to present The Yeomen of the Guard January 23-26 (1992). This one should be an especially worthwhile performance, since former D'Oyly Cart-er *Geoffrey Shovelton* will be appearing as Col. Fairfax. The Spring Production (May 28-31) is expected to be **The Pirates of Penzance**. All performances are at the Duke Ellington theater in Georgetown. For more information, do contact the company.

By the way, while we have no news of their upcoming productions, the Farrons have pointed out that the Victorian Lyric Opera Co (P.O. Box 10391, Rockville, MD

20849-0391) is still in existence. If we get any word on what their plans are, we'll try and pass them on.

The Gilbert and Sullivan Festival at the University of Boulder, Colorado, is well-known for frequently having former D'Oyly Cart-er John Reed as artistic director. Rumor has it that they and he have been prevailed upon to present The Grand Duke in 1992. We should have more details soon. The group is also interested in hearing from other performing groups who have presented this rarity. If you would like more information, or would like to give *them* some, do contact Dennis Jackson, College of Music, Box 301, University of Colorado/Boulder, Boulder, CO 80309.

We hear from Anne Stanyon, and new member Ronald Lewis, that a mini 1992 Sullivan Festival will held in May, 1992, and the Main Festival will be October 23-25, in Hull, England. The main event is expected to be a concert by the Hull Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras. The concert should include recently-discovered **Thespis** ballet music (which we understand was discovered in Sullivan's music for "Victoria and Merrie England", though we were perhaps misinformed), a concert performance of *Trial by Jury*, and Sullivan's "Festival Te Deum". Other performances should include "The Window", "Day Dreams", chamber pieces, part songs, operatic rarities, and an organ recital. Prices have not yet been set, but the cost is likely to run upwards of £150. Places can be reserved with the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society by sending a check or whatever for £30 to the Society, c/o Stephen Turnbull; Cockfield House; 48 Front Street; Cockfield, Bishop Auckland; Co. Durham DL13 5DS England.

Speaking of big G&S events, The Mansion House at Grim's Dyke (Old Redding, Harrow Weald, Middlesex HA3 6SH, England / Tel.: (081-954-4227)) is planning a number of special events to commemorate the upcoming centenary of *Utopia Limited* in 1993. Details should be forthcoming as the management (of Grim's Dyke, that is) makes them available.



Let the Welkin Ring with the News

The rumors, alas, have been confirmed: the Chicago Gilbert and Sullivan Society is, indeed, no more. Lack of funds and uneven management is believed to have contributed to its demise, but who's to say for certain. Many MGSSers greatly enjoyed their work, as did many non-MGSSers, so its failure wasn't due to a lack of interest. Now, this doesn't mean that there need never be another G&S Society in Chicago--as a matter of fact,

this might be a good opportunity for Chicago G&S enthusiasts to get organized--but for the time being, at least, the Midwestern G&S theatrical scene is without this staple.

As for other pieces of bad news, the Park Ridge Gilbert and Sullivan Society did give Pirates this June (we didn't get any announcements or something would have been said in the last *Nonsense*), and the Madison Savoyards summer production was Patience, which was not mentioned for the same reason. Well, at least we know these groups are still functioning.

Missing this one, though, was S/A Cole's fault. The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Rochester gave Princess Ida weekends through the better part of September. Member **Martin Peterman** also appeared as "King Gama". As usual, she is sorry to have missed out on promoting this one, and we can't even find the Society's address right now, but once we get things straightened out, we'll list that address.

The spirit of Warren Colson just keeps giving. The Framingham State college Department of Chemistry and Food Science, the Kidney Treatment and Dialysis Association, and the New England G&S Society sponsored a concert of Gilbert and Sullivan music September 14 at the College's Auditorium, in his honor. Proceeds went directly to the Kidney Treatment and Dialysis Association, and we expect the concert was as big a success as it certainly deserved to be.

A notice in the September 1991 *Katisha Scream* (G&S Society of Nova Scotia) seems to indicate that the Royal Mail is going to be issuing a set of stamps for the sesquicentennial of Sir Arthur Sullivan. A reprinted note from a John Bliss of Royal Mail Stamps, dated July 18, 1991, says, ". . . I am delighted to confirm that a set of stamps will be issued in 1992 to celebrate this anniversary. . . The designs for these stamps are now underway and details will be announced near to the date of issue." We'll look forward to hearing more about these.

We haven't heard any more about the Savoy-Aires' Chicago G&S Weekend, which last we heard was due to come off sometime in May, 1992. If we do hear anything, though, we'll certainly let you know.

Speaking of having things come off, the July/August 1991 *Trumpet Bray* (New England Gilbert and Sullivan Society) included some news that would be of interest to Floridian G&S enthusiasts. a John Ambler (12500

Ulmerton Road West, #141; Largo, FL 34644/ (813) 596-7293) is trying to get a G&S group organized. It sounds like it might be a performing group, but there are usually room for all kinds of enthusiasts even in a performing group. For more information, get in touch with him (and then you can tell the rest of us).



A Nice Dilemma We Have Here/The Truth is Found

The word on *Patience* videos seems to be that they are most difficult to come by. In the last *Nonsense*, we had wondered where one can get a video of *Patience*. We have learned that, for one thing, the video of the Brent Walker production is no longer available in this country, though one can still (apparently) get it in England. We have also learned from Constance Thompson and Ralph MacPhail that the Lamplighters in California (2350 Turk Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94118) have what is said to be an excellent one available (with piano accompaniment), but that's all we have on it. If anyone can fill in any more details, we'd love to hear them.

Speaking of Videos, we have received some bad news about videos of UMGASS productions. In one of the fairly recent *GASBAGs*, it was announced that videos will only be made available to FUMGASS members, and only for a limited time after the production. The Keeper of the Rolls of the Friends of the University of Michigan Gilbert and Sullivan Society is Jean Lynn Barnard, 1810 Charlton Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48103, and membership at the "Friend" level is \$10.00. Announcements will be made in the "Notes" column in *GASBAG*.

And finally, we learn from Richard Lewis, Anne Stanyon, and Quentin Riggs that a cream tea, contrary to S/A Cole's hopes, does not involve ice cream. You may recall that "cream teas" were one of the events scheduled for the summer season at Grim's Dyke, and that it was wondered aloud what they were. It turns out that a cream tea is one which includes heavy clotted cream to put on whatever is being served. It is said to be very good, and while S/A Cole would still prefer ice cream, it no doubt is very good.



The Answers to the 1991 MGS Big Quiz

At last, here they are. As mentioned earlier, the prizes haven't been awarded yet, so the list of winners and all will have to be in the next issue. Regardless, the

responses look pretty good, and the prizes should be worth the wait. In the meantime, for those who played along at home, the answers to the questions are ***emboldened and in italics***.

1. The mystery novel, ***The Ghost's High Noon*** by John Dickson Carr has a title taken from a Gilbert and Sullivan song.
2. In the Mollie Hardwicke mystery novel ***Perish in July***, the murdered character supposed to play the role of ***Elsie Maynard*** in the local production of ***The Yeomen of the Guard***.
3. ***The Sorcerer*** is the opera is being rehearsed in Charlotte MacLeod's mystery novel ***The Plain Old Man***.
4. In the G&S operas, ***Archibald Grosvenor***, from ***Patience***, is said to have shell-like ears.
5. ***Warren A. Colson*** produced the only affordable concordance to the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas.
6. ***King Gama***, Princess Ida's father, can tell a woman's age in half a minute (and he does).
7. ***The Mikado*** is being performed in the film ***The Girl Said No***.
8. Elsie Maynard's mother's name is ***Bridget Maynard***.
9. ***The Grand Duke*** is being rehearsed in the Sherlock Holmes pastiche (non-Arthur Conan Doyle) novel ***The West End Horror***.
10. In the film ***Raiders of the Lost Ark***, one of Indiana Jones' friends has a tendency to sing G&S songs when he is happy. ***John Rhyes-Davies*** plays that friend, and for what it's worth, the songs he sings (or tries to, anyway) are "I am the Monarch of the Sea" and "A British Tar is a Soaring Soul".
11. W.S. Gilbert adapted the Dickens novel ***Great Expectations*** for the stage.
12. There's no escaping that Dickens: he is referred to in the two G&S operas ***Patience*** ("Narrative powers of *Dickens* and Thackeray", in the Colonel's "If you want a receipt for that popular mystery") and ***Utopia Limited*** (In "Society has quite forsaken all her wicked courses": "Who knows, but we may count among our intellectual chickens/Like you, an Earl of Thackeray or p'raps a Duke of *Dickens*").
13. Mr. Micawber is mentioned in ***Patience***: again, in "If you want a receipt. . ."
14. In Isaac Asimov's short story "Runaround", a robot goes mad. Like other mad individuals, he begins to sing choruses in public, and ***the portions of songs are from the G&S operas***. That was how its supervisors knew the robot was mad.
15. I've always liked this question. What do Nanki-Poo in the 1939 filming of ***The Mikado*** and Artoo-Detoo in the 1977 filming of ***Star Wars*** have in common?

They were both played by actors named Kenny Baker.
16. According to Mr Goldbury (***Utopia Ltd.***), the ideal height and weight for an English Girl is ***Five foot ten (in her dancing shoe) and Eleven stone two (about 156 pounds)***
17. ***Three*** G&S operas opened in March: ***Trial by Jury***, ***The Mikado***, and ***The Grand Duke***.
18. (***The Late***) ***Sir Roderic Murgatroyd*** describes himself as "Practically Alive".
19. His nephew, ***Ruthven Murgatroyd***, a.k.a. Robin Oakapple, is foiled by a Union Jack and a tiger-cat.
20. In the film ***Foul Play***, ***The Pope*** is supposed to be assassinated during a production of ***The Mikado***. He wasn't, of course, and, incidentally, he seemed to be enjoying the presentation.
21. Sir Martin Byfleet is mentioned in ***The Yeomen of the Guard***
22. ***Iolanthe*** went to live among the frogs, and she says she did it ***to be near her son, Strephon***.
23. In the short story, "A Feline Felony", by Lael J. Littke, the hero was taught, among other things, to sing songs from the Gilbert and Sullivan operas - ***because he looks like a cat, and his father knew that condition might give him trouble later*** The idea was that, if he was completely charming, nobody would notice he looked like a cat. By-and-large, it worked, too.
24. ***Little Buttercup (or Mrs. Cripps)*** is described as "A plump and pleasing person".
25. In ***Patience*** (again), Reginald Bunthorne threatens that man with the shell-like ears, ***Archibald Grosvenor***, with a nephew's curse.
26. Ko-Ko was originally condemned to death for ***flirting***.
27. ***The Lord Chancellor*** (in ***Iolanthe***) is described as "a clean old gentleman".
28. Offenbach's ***La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein*** is referred to in the opera ***The Grand Duke***.
29. According to the September 1962 (our quizmaster Arthur Robinson thought it was about then) ***Gilbert & Sullivan Journal***, at one time Gilbert thought of writing a comic opera, to be set by Sullivan, based on ***Frankenstein***. He is supposed to have had ***Rutland Barrington*** in mind to play the Monster.
30. When the action of ***Ruddigore*** begins, Sir Roderic is said to have been dead ***ten years***.
31. The age of Piratical Maid-of-all-Work Ruth is debatable. Some merry wag could no doubt make a case for her being 159, since she, at least admitted to being, forty-seven 112 years ago. But, after 112 years, she is still ***Forty-Seven***, so forty-seven she is.

32. The title of the film in which the famous former D'Oyly Carte-r Martyn Green appeared that was not G&S-related was *A Lovely Way to Die* (1968). Say, has anyone seen this film, and if so, could you let us know what all it's about?
33. S/A Cole's middle initial is *L*. S/A, remember, stands for *Secretary/Archivist*.
34. *John Wellington Wells*, at least claims to, often rolls down One Tree Hill.
35. The Yeomen of the Guard take place in the month of *July*. In the song "Is Life a Boon", Col. Fairfax sings about having to die in July rather than June. Someone pointed out that the month is never actually specified, so a case could be made that Fairfax is singing about the "July" of his life, and not the calendar month. At the same time, a July setting would account for Phoebe's sitting outside spinning, and there still being sunlight at 7:30 pm. But that's for the director to decide, I suppose. In any event, and without doubt, Yeomen takes place in Fairfax's July, take it as you will.
36. In the 1967 film version of The Mikado, the Three Little Maids were played by *Valerie Masterson, P.A. Jones, and Pauline Wales*.
37. In various operas there appear characters of such professions as Lord Chancellor (Iolanthe), Lord Chamberlain (Utopia Ltd.), and solicitor (Patience). The only opera our quizmaster could find in which all of these professions are represented is *The Mikado*, and they're all represented by one character: Pooh-Bah (who else!). He is *Lord Chancellor*, First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief, Lord High Admiral, Master of the Buckhounds, Groom of the Back Stairs, Archbishop of Titipu, Lord Mayor--both acting and elect, *Lord Chamberlain*, Attorney-General, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Privy Purse, Private Secretary and *Solicitor* to Ko-Ko, Leader of the Opposition, Paymaster-General, Lord High Auditor, First Commissioner of State for the Home Department, Commissionaire, Coroner, and Groom of the Second Floor Front.
38. The three G&S operas that contain a character with the knightly degree K.C.B. are *The Sorcerer* (Sir Marmaduke Poindextre (J.W. Wells: "I did not think it meet to see. . .A baronet and K.C.B.. . .All fast asleep al-fresco-ly.")); *H.M.S. Pinafore* (Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B.), and *Utopia Limited* (Captain Sir Edward Corcoran, K.C.B. {"I'm Captain Corcoran, K.C.B., I'll teach you how we rule the sea. . ."}).
39. Princess Ida has converted *Castle Adamant* into her university campus.
40. The song *Three Little Maids from School* is performed in the movie Chariots of Fire, as are also There Lived a King, as I've Been Told (Gondoliers), The Soldiers of Our Queen (Patience), He is an Englishman (Pinafore), and Come, Friends, Who Plow the Sea (Pirates). There is a slim possibility that there are more, but these are the ones that participants caught.
41. Speaking of Chariots of Fire, Savoyard *Sibyl Gordon* married one of the story's heroes, Harold Abrahams.
42. A character named "Hercules" come on stage in *The Sorcerer*.
43. *Sydney Granville* played Pooh-Bah in the 1939 filming of The Mikado.
44. and *Kenneth Sandford* played Pooh-Bah in the 1967 filming of The Mikado.
45. The Opera A La Carte's production of *The Mikado* was recently picketed in California for being racist.
46. *Robert Morley* played Gilbert and *Maurice Evans* played Sullivan in the 1953 film The Gilbert and Sullivan Story.
47. John Philip Sousa, the United States' "March King", wrote a march based on themes from one of the G&S operas. That march is *The Mikado March* (1885).
48. This question was a bonus question a couple of years, and it was something of a sneaky one. The G&S song quoted in Booth Tarkington's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel The Magnificent Ambersons is easy enough to find. The trick was knowing it was a G&S song, because it isn't one from the operas. The song is *Sweethearts* (1875), and the quotation appears in Chapter 35. One of the characters is remembering a lost love, and while thinking of the first time they danced, recalls, "They laughed and sang [the old waltz song] together as they danced to it: 'Oh, love for a year, a week, a day,/But alas for the love that lasts away--'". While the familiar word is "*loves* away", there is still no mistaking the song.
49. *Two* of the G&S operas have plots that hinge upon the switching of children in infancy: H.M.S. Pinafore and The Gondoliers.
50. A snickersnee is *Long Swedish Knife*.
- BONUS QUESTION: Believe it or not, a couple of people got this one right without any coaching from S/A Cole. As we know, in Ruddigore, there is a scene in which the hero is haunted in a picture gallery by his ancestors who accuse him of cowardice, and as you may

recall, the question asked for the name of a film in which this scene is inverted: in which the hero haunts the picture gallery of his "accursed line" and accuses them of cowardice. The film is *The Canterville Ghost* (1943, starring Charles Laughton, Robert Young, and Margaret O'Brien). While the story bears little resemblance to Oscar Wilde's novelette, S/A Cole has always enjoyed the film, about the ghost of a coward who is trying to redeem himself (and his craven line) through the brave deed of a kinsman. Robert Young plays the American GI who turns out to be a distant relative. The night his platoon is scheduled to blow up a Nazi installation, the ghost is parading in the ancestral picture gallery, sneering to the portraits of his cowardly relatives that, no thanks to them, his haunting days are almost over. When the film was released on video, S/A Cole had a chance to see it again, and was most unseemly in her mirth when she realized what she was looking at in this scene.

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Where Can it Be?

Harry Benford's revised **Gilbert and Sullivan Lexicon** is now available from Sarah Jennings Press (2222 Fuller Rd.; Ann Arbor, MI 48105-2313 / (313) 665-7410) for \$20.00. For Canadian addresses, it's \$25.00 Canadian, and for the U.K, £11. All prices include shipping, handling, and sales tax. (If you live somewhere else, the price of the book is US\$19.00, and shipping and all will be billed. Discounts are also available on orders of five or more). We're still working on a review, and Prof. Benford gave us a copy to donate to some worthy library, so if you would care to help out on either (putting together a review or nominating a library), let the MGS know. In the meantime, what we will say of the book is that, if you don't have a copy of the first edition, this one is a good one to have; and if you do have a copy of the first, don't throw it out: it's still a good one to have.

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Welcome New Members

El Hoeffler (Chicago, Ill.), who has only become interested in G&S over the last few years. He's interested in getting involved in come capacity, as part of a stage crew or whatever. We'll have to keep our eyes open for him!

Richard Lewis (Edgware, Middlesex), who does great and wonderful things with the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society.

Barbra Lewis (Ridgewood, N.J.--no relation to the above, as far as I know): The daughter of the founders of the famous Ridgewood Gilbert and Sullivan

Opera Company, she has been a member of the group since the age of fourteen.

Dr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Loewenstein (Solon, OH): The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Shreveport's loss is the MGS's gain. They were charter members of the Shreveport society, and recently moved to Ohio. Alas, there are no G&S societies in the Cleveland area, but since they've had experience with starting one, perhaps they'll be able to get something going.

Martha Sloan (Houghton, MI): a former resident of Aurora (Ill.), she is especially interested in G&S videos.

James, Barbara, and Laura Farron (Springfield, VA), who are a family of many interest. Not only do they enjoy G&S, but Lum and Abner (a very funny vintage radio program, for those of us unfamiliar with the Golden Age of Radio), Star Trek, and other light operas.

and **Richard M. Fishel, Jr.** (Minneapolis, Minn.), who we're also glad to have.



Well, in any event, that's all we have time for at the moment. The rest of it should be out by the end of October. As you've noticed, there was no G&S shopper in this issue, or some more of S/A Cole's descriptions of wild schemes she's had, or any of those other amusing features the *Nonsense* is so well known for. SO! what we need from you is

1.) G&S Information for the next Issue, 2.) Information on G&S-related products, and 3.) Essays and Reports of a G&S nature.

The next *Nonsense* will be mailed by November 1, 1991, if it practically kills S/A Cole (and it may), but it depends on the membership to make it worth the reading. We need the materials by **October 15, 1991**, so we'll be looking forward to hearing from you by then. In the meantime, have a happy autumn!

The Midwestern Gilbert and
Sullivan Society
c/o Miss Sarah Cole
613 W. State St.
North Aurora, IL 60542-1538
(708) 859-2918