

CHIFF CHAT

The Newsletter of the Springfield Chapter of the American Guild of Organists
November 2005

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Rev. William Wallis

Mini Convention

November 12 from 8:30 to 4:00 in South Hadley
(see page 5 and insert)

Dean's Corner

By E. Lary Grossman

It was a joyous afternoon in Hampden on September 18, 2005 when we all gathered at Jerry Lesniak's home for our installation, refreshment and a concert by Allan Taylor, Marc Winer and Karen McCarthy. The setting was right out of *Architectural Digest* magazine and we could have not have asked for more beautiful weather for our outside reception and installation ceremony in the formal gardens and patio. Thank you to all who made this such a wonderful event!

On Columbus Day, we hosted nearly fifty people for the Worcester Chapter's annual organ crawl. Frank Corbin, their Dean, picked Northampton and, with much help from Bill Czelusniak, a wonderful day was planned. Presenters and where they played were: Grant Moss (Helen Hills Hills Chapel & J.M. Greene Hall), Chris Thornley (*continued on page 2*)

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Dean's Corner

(continued from page 1)

Thornley (St. John's Episcopal), Peter Stoltzfus Berton (First Churches), Bill Baker (St. Mary's), and a stunning closing program (and lesson in hymn playing and improvisation) by special guest Robert MacDonald at Immaculate Conception in Easthampton. It was great to meet so many new colleagues, and Frank and I spoke about planning a joint crawl (maybe to New Haven) next year.

This month you are all invited to attend our Mini-Convention on Saturday, November 12, 2005 at 8:30 am at All Saints Episcopal Church in South Hadley. Details of the workshops and programs offered are elsewhere in this newsletter. There is something for everybody's interests including a noon recital by Peter Stoltzfus Berton, and we will end the day in Abbey Chapel at Mt. Holyoke College with a slide show by Greg Bover (Vice President, C.B. Fisk Organs, Gloucester, MA) about the Lausanne, Switzerland organ they recently built and installed. Please register today (while you're thinking about it) by completed the enclosed form (indicating your workshop and lunch choices) and sending with your \$20 fee to Ron Trunzo, chair of the event.

Last month I joined the Dean's from all the New England (District I) chapters at a two-day retreat held in Framingham, Massachusetts. Led by our Regional Councilor, Lois Toepfner, we had two special guests from AGO National in New York City: James Thomashower, the Executive Director of the Guild, and Jennifer Madden, the Manager of Membership and Administration. The focus from National this year is the *Each One – Reach One* initiative. The concept is that each of us, through personal contact with colleagues and associates, will recruit new members. We'll start this in a more formal way soon, but you could start *today* by spreading the word, bringing other organists and buffs to our events, and sending them to our web site for more information about the Chapter.

The executive board of the Chapter meets eight times per year. The meetings are between one-and-one-half to two-hours in length and often scheduled to coincide with a program or musical event that many of us are attending. Our next meeting, beginning at 5:30 p.m., is prior to the organ dedication recital by Edward Clarke at the Second Congregational Church in Westfield (7:30 p.m., Sunday, November 6, 2005). These meetings are always open to our members. As we look for new board members yearly, attending board meetings and helping with programs and other activities are good ways to determine if you would enjoy seeking a leadership role in the Chapter. No permission or notice is necessary – just show up. Please contact me if you would like more information.

Milestones

New member Lucius Weathersby will present a faculty organ recital, Sunday, November 6, 2005, 4 p.m. Johnson Chapel, Amherst College. Music by African and African-American composers and works by Eric Sawyer and Rick Beaudoin. Free admission.

Organs

The Organ Historical Society (OHS) Pipe Organ Database is the most recent manifestation of a practice of cataloging pipe organs that began when the OHS was formed a half-century ago. It is quickly

becoming the world's greatest single repository of organ stoplists and descriptions, providing comprehensive data for organ scholars and aficionados, alike.

The OHS Pipe Organ Database, sponsored by Birmingham–Southern College, opened to the public in May 2005. It currently documents nearly 20,000 organs located in the United States or built by North American organ builders. The database can be accessed from the OHS home page, <www.organsociety.org>. Users can search for instruments based upon a variety of parameters: geographic location,

builder, and date of completion. Members and friends of the AGO are encouraged to contribute information to the database by submitting additions and updates. Full participation by the organ playing and organ building communities will ensure that this database will become the largest and most valuable on-line organ resource in the world.
– F. Anthony Thurman

New Members

Welcome to the following new members:

Jerry Lesniak
Lucius Weathersby

Pioneer Valley Substitute Organists *by John Anderson*

What is it? This website (<http://PioneerValleyOrganists.com>), which is linked to from our Chapter website (see "Sunday Substitutes"), is a quick way for anyone needing a substitute organist to see who is available. Saturdays, Sundays, weddings or funerals, it's all there, along with contact information for all of the substitutes. It's your one-stop resource.

When you visit the site, the first thing you see is a 12-month calendar of Saturdays and Sundays. Any dates in red have no subs available at this time, but green dates are good. Hovering your mouse cursor on a green date will show you who is available, although we can't guarantee that this information is totally up-to-date; you need to contact that person to be sure that they can play for you.

Why is it? When I quit my regular church job a few years ago and became a sub, I wanted to have a way to keep track not only of my subbing schedule, but also of what pieces I've played at which churches. I was discussing this with Ron Shepard one day, and he thought it would be a great idea to create a resource like this for any sub that would like to use it. Once word got out, the Chapter leadership was also interested and had a link added from the Chapter website. *(continued on page 4)*

(continued from page 3)

I'm a sub; what can I do with the site? You can use it to announce your availability (you choose whether you're available Saturdays, Sundays or both, and whether or not you're available for weddings and funerals). Beyond that, you can keep track of your schedule, including reserving dates when you're not interested in subbing at all. Any commitment can be marked as tentative, which means that you'll show up as tentatively available on the main calendar page.

Your personal calendar view comes in two flavors: there is the current schedule, which is a 13-month view consisting of the current calendar month plus the next 12 months. There is also the previous 12 month schedule, which is useful for checking to be sure that you've entered the music you've played.

When you add a subbing commitment, there's a space to add any related information (time of service(s), hymns, info about the choir, organ, etc.). There's also space to enter the music you've played, which causes a visual indicator (a musical note) to appear next to that date on your calendar view. Hovering your mouse cursor on any musical note will show you the pieces you played, or intend to play, on that date. You can also click on the name of the location for that date, and you will get a list of all the music you've played at that church, and the dates that you played it. A separate menu item will display all the pieces you've ever entered, with the dates and locations where you've played them.

Finally, there is an information field connected to every location at which any substitute has played. Not all of these are filled in, but if you're headed someplace unfamiliar, you may find helpful info about the organ or the service. And of course, you can add your own advice to help out other subs.

Are all of the local substitutes members of the site? Unfortunately, no. If you're a regular organist, and your preferred sub(s) are not listed on the website, please encourage them to join! If you're a sub and haven't yet joined the site, or have joined but have never completed the process of becoming available through it, please do so! This site can be a valuable resource for everyone!

OK, how do I join? From the main page of the website, you can click on "Contact the Webmaster" and ask to join, or you can email me directly (john.Anderson@bigfoot.com) and ask to join. I'll send you a login name and initial password (you will have a chance to change it), and you'll be on your way. You will not appear on the public schedule until you're ready to do so; you can enter your information and any already-scheduled commitments at your leisure, then mark yourself as available. Did I mention that it's free? You can't beat that!

And finally ... By the time you read this article, the current substitutes on the site will be leaving a business card with the website's logo and address on the console at each church when they play. That will provide that all-important reminder that the website is here. Share this information with your pastor as well; he or she will appreciate it when that inevitable moment arrives that they have to locate a sub because you are ill or stuck on a beach in the Caribbean because your airline just went out of business. Any suggestions for improving the site are welcome! Send them along via the "Contact the Webmaster" link.

Mini Convention

Saturday, November 12, 2005 – 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM South Hadley, Massachusetts
At All Saints' Episcopal, 7 Woodbridge St. and Abbey Chapel, Mt. Holyoke College

8:30 – 9:00 AM Registration - All Saints' Episcopal
Coffee, Danish
Music Sale table begins, see bottom of page for more information.

9:00 – 10:00 AM – All Saints' Episcopal
Running Summer Church
Music Workshops
Jan Duffé

OR

9:00 – 10:00 AM – All Saints' Episcopal
Anthem Reading – New music
repertoire for choir and organ.
Peter Beardsley

10:15 – 11:15 AM – All Saints' Episcopal
Children's Choirs
Anne Vittoria, director
South Hadley Chorale
Children's Choir

OR

10:15 – 11:15 AM – All Saints' Episcopal
Service Music Repertoire
Peter Stoltzfus Berton

11:30 – Noon – All Saints' Episcopal
Recital at All Saints' on the Austin Organ
Peter Stoltzfus Berton

12:15 – 1:15 PM
Lunch [box lunch from Tailgate--complete order form]

1:30 – 3:00 PM - Abbey Chapel
Greg Bover – Fisk Lausanne Slides and Lecture

3:30 – 4:00 PM – Abbey Chapel
Open console – Fisk Organ

Please complete and return the registration form! REGISTRATION FEE – \$20 includes lunch

MUSIC SALE AT MINI-CONVENTION

Bring ANTHEMS, church-related ORGAN and PIANO music to sell, trade, or give away at the Mini-Convention. 10% goes to the Chapter, the rest to you! ALSO bring anthems (10 c. minimum) that you would like to give, sell or trade for your church. I will be handling the sales, so deliver them to me first thing.

You MUST take back what has not sold at the end of the day! Please provide a COMPLETE LIST of your volumes with PRICES you want, INDICATING if you're willing to have me negotiate for you. Free music is ok, just don't leave it if it doesn't go! PLAN AHEAD and get those anthems and other volumes together now! - Rod Gisick

Job postings

Old First Church in Springfield, MA

Interim Organist/Choir Director

10 hours per week

Three-manual Aeolian Skinner Organ, Opus 1326, which was installed in 1958 consisting of 56 Ranks and 3,241 pipes. In 1998 Foley-Baker, Inc., completely re-leathered the organ, provided a new solid-state combination action, and designed a new case.

1 adult choir (20 singers including several professionals).

Organist and choir director can be two positions, if that's what works best.

The salary is negotiable and based on education, experience, and qualifications.

Contact: Barbara Huber

barbarahuber@yahoo.com

or call 413-737-1411.

St. Rose of Lima

600 Grattan Street
Chicopee, MA 01020

Organist only

5-6 hours weekly work

Salary negotiable

Organ: Allen Digital System 603
contact: Rev. William Tourigny 413-536-4558

**First Parish of Bolton, MA; PO Box 250;
Bolton, MA 01740**

Organist/Choir Director

8-10 hours per week

Estey Pipe Organ

(rebuild/replacement under consideration)

1 Adult choir

Salary: \$13,000

Contact: Rev. Richard F. Jones

email: admin@firstparishofbolton.org

To list a position in Chiff Chat, please contact our professional concerns and placement coordinator, Becky Isaacson, either by phone at (413) 734-1623 or e-mail her: beckyisaacson@aol.com

Report on 2005 AGO National Conference on Organ Pedagogy

by Rodney Gisick

The 2005 AGO National Conference on Organ Pedagogy at the University of Notre Dame was held in the beautiful, new DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, a state-of-the-art facility with in a long, expansive stone and brick building hinting of old Dutch cathedrals and Irish castles (the Fighting Irish, you know!) this conference focused on the works of Dieterich Buxtehude (DB) and the North German baroque organ tradition.

The year-old Reyes Organ and Choral Hall, one of the three splendid performance spaces, was specially designed to contain the latest Paul Fritts and Company organ, Opus 24. This splendid organ sits on the front balcony of the relatively short, narrow but tall three-story hall (seating about 110 people), which includes narrow walkways around the two balconies, tall round columns along both sides, and a high peaked roof that suggests a fine Dutch village church. The audience-level stage also accommodates choral and chamber music performances. (*continued Chiff Chat – November 2005 – p. 6 on page 7*)

Organ Pedagogy (continued from page 6)

Towering high above the ground-floor seating, the organ case of golden, old-growth fir, with wonderful wooden carvings by Jude Fritts, includes a Rueckpositiv hanging over the stage. With two manuals and thirty-five stops, a flat pedal board, and shorter keys, it is a beautiful and well-designed case! The sound of this organ, is incredibly sweet and warm.

Solo and accompaniment passages alike, along with the softer-sounding reeds, often resembled large recorders, and gambas. The fascinating combinations of stops that filled the room gently with gorgeous sound took on more brilliance as I moved further back into the room.

Who can wait to hear the next Fritts organ in Columbus? If you haven't heard one, DO! We can be proud of our fine American organ builders, probably now the finest in the world.

Beginning with a recital by Craig Cramer, the resident Professor of Organ, and the person most responsible for the organ being there (a 15-year project from conception!), we were treated with seven three-quarter hour recitals in three days! What a joy to hear so much Buxtehude played on an organ that was conceived, designed and built around the North German model! And what an experience for the Notre Dame students who have the opportunity to experience this music in an authentic way. Notre Dame does offer a M.M. in Sacred Music.

Several New England organists were among the recitalists: James David Christie, Christa Rakich and William Porter, along with other fine organists from U.S. and Germany. Christa Rakich found the organ easy to register.

Along with these exciting recitals were delightful lectures by Kerala Snyder, author of the definitive book on Buxtehude (unfortunately out of print and hard to come by used!) She also talked about her current research projects as well as the new Broude Trust edition edited by Michael Bellotti.

Dr. Leon Couch, from Texas A&M, presented us with a way to understand the form of the Praeludia (the free works) through his comparisons with courtroom presentations. These ideas were then taken up by Pamela Ruiters-Feenstra, who gave us an easily usable model for starting to learn to improvise in the free style of the baroque praeludia. There were lectures on modes by Michael Dodds, North Carolina School of the Arts, and current scholarship from the German scholar, Ibo Ortgies, who presented controversial research suggesting that because of the meantone tuning of instruments that Buxtehude and his contemporaries supposedly played, the written-down compositions we now have were never actually performed as such then, but were only playable on clavichords and harpsichords that could easily have been tuned to suit the keys. Kerala Snyder postulated that it is possible that they mostly

improvised in performance in keys that worked in the temperament of the organs and later wrote down the music for possible extra income.

Matthew Dirst, from Houston, helped us see how DB's instrumental works (sonatas and solo cantatas) and our knowledge of them and how they are played, can help us understand the freedoms that we can use for this music. His group, Ars Lyrica Houston (violin, gamba and harpsichord/organ) played sonatas, and, along with soprano Melissa Givens, performed two solo cantatas with wonderful effect.

Finally, John Brock, from the University of Tennessee, explained how to teach beginning students the ordinary touch of keyboard technique before 1800, which can help us execute music in a style more sensitive to the baroque era practices, of emulating how a string player naturally has strong and weak notes, and which helps bring the compositions to life musically.

To contribute to Chiff Chat

There will be a single issue for December/January. Please send Calendar items electronically, if possible, by Nov. 15 to chiffchat@aol.com. Or call 413-584-5007, or send to E. Dawson; 60 East St. #2; Hadley, MA 01035 The chapter's website is: www.springfieldago.org.

American Guild of Organists

Springfield, MA Chapter

E. Dawson – Newsletter Editor

60 East St. #2

Hadley, MA 01035

**ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED**

CALENDAR

October 23

3:30 PM

Piano Recital by Eric Himy,
First Congregational
Church, 18 Broad St.,
Westfield

November 6

3:30 PM

Music at First
Manhattan Music Ensemble
violin, cello, piano
Old First Church,
Springfield

7:30 PM

Pipe Organ Dedication
Concert,
Organist Edward E. Clark
Second Congregational,
Westfield

November 12

8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

Mini Convention
Featuring
Repertoire & Recital: Peter
Stolzfus Berton
Fisk Lausanne Show: Greg
Bover
All Saints' Episcopal
and Abbey Chapel,
South Hadley

November 13

2:30 PM

Organ recital
Scott Lamlein
United Congregational
Church, Holyoke

November 19

4:00 PM

Young Singers of Greater
Westfield, Fall Concert
First Congregational Church
Westfield, MA

November 20

10:00 AM

Jazz Service
Christ Church Cathedral,
Springfield

3:00 PM

Hampshire Choral Society
and Young People's Chorus
with Larry Schipull, organist,
Allan Taylor, conductor
Abbey Chapel,
Mt. Holyoke College

3:30 PM

Liturgical Jazz Concert
Deanna Witkowski Quartet
Christ Church Cathedral,
Springfield



Springfield AGO
Chapter events are enclosed
within a box.