

**THE BIRMINGHAM CHIEF**  
**...off the old blockflute**

**Birmingham Chapter of**  
**The American Guild of Organists**  
**June 2012**



Charles Kennedy, Dean

**A WORD FROM THE DEAN**

I trust that each of you is having a good and refreshing summer. In an effort to keep all of you informed about the goings on of the Chapter, we are publishing two newsletters this summer. The work of the officers and Executive Committee members continues throughout the summer as the new season of programs and other activities is planned.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Executive Committee (E.C.) met recently and a central purpose of the meeting was to give an overview of the planning that has taken place in meetings of the newly elected officers through the month of May since their installation. Discussed was the structure and function of Chapter governing bodies, and a new set of operating procedures based on national requirements and/or guidelines. The E.C., at the suggestion of outgoing E.C. member Idabelle Gay, agreed to the creation of a new Student Affairs Committee, to be composed of a student chairperson and an advisor from the Chapter. Idabelle Gay will serve as advisor, while the chair of the new committee will be determined at the next E.C. meeting in July.

Discussed was a proposal for the Birmingham Chapter to sponsor study sessions for preparation with the Service Playing Certification Exam. The work of the Competition and Scholarship Sub-committee was touched on briefly, pending more detailed discussion next month, along with matters pertaining to the Hutton Scholarship. Webmaster Jim Cook gave an overview of changes underway with the Chapter website. By now, most of you will probably have seen the new website since its unveiling on June 14.

The E.C. approved the final version of the chapter survey and accompanying cover letter that you should have all received by now. The final act of business was to approve a partial slate of Pipe Organ Encounter 2013 Steering Committee members. Greg Roberson will serve as director of the POE. Additional slots will be filled as we learn areas of interest from the chapter survey. I would like to thank outgoing E.C. members Sam Burke, Idabelle Gay and Martha Willetts, and I would like to thank our new E.C. members – Jim Cook, Jamie McLemore and Stephen Schaeffer – for their willingness to serve.

**OFFICER MEETINGS**

The Chapter officers have been meeting regularly since the Installation of Officers on May 14 and will continue to meet to plan additional details for the next meeting of the Executive Committee and to analyze the Chapter surveys.

## DUES AND MEMBERSHIP FORMS CHAPTER SURVEYS

Chapter dues and membership forms are due by no later than July 1. Chapter surveys are also due by July 1. The officers and Executive Committee members are anxious for your feedback on how the needs of our Chapter can be met more effectively. Survey responses will be most helpful as we plan the programs and complete the committee assignments for the upcoming year.



### AGO NATIONAL CONVENTION

We are only a few days away from our national convention in Nashville! The convention will take place from July 1-6. I personally am very excited about the variety of recitals, concerts, services, workshops and exhibits to be offered at the convention. National conventions are wonderful opportunities to connect with colleagues from all over the country. We can learn so much from one another by sharing our stories and our experiences. Nashville is a wonderful city for such a convention, and it is most fortunate to have a national convention in such reasonably close proximity to Birmingham. I look forward to see many of you in Nashville.

*Charles M. Kennedy, Dean*

*From the Treasurer . . .*

As of today, we have 37 members that have renewed memberships for the next year and dues are slow to come in. ***Please remember that membership dues are due July 1.***

After much discussion with Samford University, the date for the Birmingham POE 2013 has been set. The POE will take place at Samford University beginning Sunday, July 14 through Friday, July 19, 2013. I will have more information about our POE at the September meeting.

*Gregory Roberson, Treasurer*



**Dan Lawhon, Sub Dean**

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Sub-Dean for the Birmingham AGO chapter. Your officers are looking, with excitement, to the possibilities for the upcoming year. As Sub-Dean, my primary responsibility is shaping the chapter programs for the year. You should have received a form in the last couple of weeks to be completed and returned at your earliest convenience. Some of the input that we would like to get from the chapter "at large" is suggestions for programs that you think would be beneficial to your professional development, musical enrichment and social enjoyment. It is our hope to help the chapter build not only numerically, but also to become more supportive and encouraging of each other and future organists as we try to develop both professionally and personally. If you have already completed your form and returned it, but think of something else you would like to add, please feel free to send me a note [dlawhon@bcoc.net](mailto:dlawhon@bcoc.net) or give me a call 205.602.0597. We are grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

*Daniel E. Lawhon, Sub Dean*

## **GROW THE GUILD**

In the February issue of *The American Organist*, the National Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support issued a challenge to all AGO chapters to increase their membership. To encourage this effort, they established prizes to be awarded to those chapters who meet the requirements of 2% or 2 members net growth. The first prize of \$3500.00 is for a major concert artist recital. This is sponsored by Habersham Funding in honor of Herb Buffington, well-known friend of our chapter, and the Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support. The second prize of \$1000.00 is sponsored by Celebrating Grace and is designated for a Rising Star recital.

Morningstar Music Publishers is sponsoring the third prize of \$500.00 for a chapter to use as it desires.

We are pleased to report that the Birmingham chapter has a qualifying membership increase of 7 members which is 6.84%. We have received confirmation from Justin Storms, Membership Coordinator at National HQ, that we are entered in the drawing for these prizes under the category of chapters with more than 70 members. Winners are expected to be announced at the National Convention in July in Nashville.

## **CHANGES TO OUR WEB SITE**

[www.birminghamago.org](http://www.birminghamago.org)

Organists should be accustomed to change. After all, we move from one instrument to another, from two manuals to four, or from a piano to an organ without any fuss. And we change stops all the time.

But these days, it seems changes come faster and faster. It wasn't that long ago that I changed from buying LPs to buying CDs; now I download music through iTunes, and my CD collection has been given away. That's a sign of the century we live in, just like Encyclopedia Britannica's decision not to publish their

venerable work in "hard copy" format any longer. That reference book icon will now be made available only as an electronic publication. Grove's Dictionary isn't far behind. It's a change that sort of bothers me when I think about how impermanent my music collection really is. On the other hand, I do recognize the convenience of electronic publications, and it sure saves space on my bookshelf!

In this age of increasing use of social media and electronic communications, we are catching up to our neighbors with some recent changes to our web site. A few years ago, we were reprinting official AGO documents in the Yearbook every year, just to be sure we had things like the Code of Ethics and the Bylaws available to every member. Now we put all of those documents on the web site. Anyone, member or not, can read them wherever they happen to be, even if their copy of the Yearbook isn't handy.

There are other changes in the way we will use the web site, and we hope they are changes for the better.

Several new elements are so we can provide a service to the broader community, our goal being to encourage people to think of Birmingham AGO when they think of organists in central Alabama. For example, we have posted in the past a list of members who are willing to serve as substitute organists, or that are available to play weddings. In a new move, we're also offering our web site as a place where churches in the area can post notices of job openings. Though we've held such postings private for our members in the past, we want to use the web site to make us more accessible and useful to everyone. In a similar move, we will begin posting information about our members who teach, making it easier for anyone who wants to know more about playing the organ to find help from a member.

Our pages that describe pipe organs in central Alabama have also had a facelift, with a new

layout, new photographs and easier-to-read stoplists. Photographs are one of the most often searched for elements on the internet, so the more we offer, the more people will find our site useful. And we hope that some of them will want to join us as new members.

We've even added a new link for potential members to the home page. Following that link will take people to an online form where they can join the Birmingham Chapter, and through us, AGO. If you think of people who enjoy the organ and its music, encourage them to visit our web site. We're open to organists, church musicians of all stripes, and anyone else who supports our mission. We hope if we make it easier for them, they'll want to join us.

Sometimes we recognize change by seeing where we've been, as well as looking where we're going. Now we have an online Birmingham AGO Archive, something we've talked about doing before. That's now in place, with back issues of newsletters, a look back at the 1997 Regional Convention, and a growing number of photographs of other events.

Finally, when you see the new web site, you'll find some changes just make things easier for members to get to pages they need. We still protect personal information, but now you can log on from the home page. There's a new "quick look" at upcoming events, always up to date, that just gives the highlights of calendar items. And right below that is a link to the full calendar, where you can get more details about anything we advertise through our web site. Access to the form for adding events to the calendar is also on the home page, and we now offer our web site as a place where anyone can advertise events that are considered in support of our mission. One of the most convenient new features is a form where you'll be able to make your dinner reservations.

All these changes will be useless, of course, unless we use the web site more. If you see something we need to add, let us know. If we don't have a page that describes your favorite

organ, or the one you play every week, send us the details; we'll post photographs and stoplists as soon as we can. Do you have old photographs of AGO members or AGO events? Send them to us; we'll add them to the archives – our very own online family scrapbook.

As we go through the next few years, we'll see other changes, I'm sure. Some of them will be on the web site. With contributions from all of our members, those changes can be great ones.

**Jim Cook,**  
**Birmingham AGO Webmaster**

Here are some quick links, so you can quickly check out the new pages.

New pages about organs in Central Alabama:  
[www.birminghamago.org/organs/index.html](http://www.birminghamago.org/organs/index.html)

Check the substitute list for accuracy:

[www.birminghamago.org/Substitutes.html](http://www.birminghamago.org/Substitutes.html)

Here's one we're not making public yet. If you want your name listed as a keyboard teacher, ask to be added to the list if you're not on it:

[www.birminghamago.org/FindTeacher.html](http://www.birminghamago.org/FindTeacher.html)

Check out the Archives and send us your photos that are just hanging out in a shoe box:

[www.birminghamago.org/archives/index.html](http://www.birminghamago.org/archives/index.html)

Remind your friends that they don't have to be organists to join AGO, then tell them to check out joining online,:

[www.birminghamago.org/JoinUs.html](http://www.birminghamago.org/JoinUs.html)

Finally, check out the Calendar.

Look at the growing list of events first:

[www.birminghamago.org/ViewCalendar01.php](http://www.birminghamago.org/ViewCalendar01.php)

And use this form to send more events to be listed on the web site:

[www.birminghamago.org/AddEvent01.php](http://www.birminghamago.org/AddEvent01.php)