

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

## **Birmingham Chapter of The American Guild of Organists August 2012**



Charles Kennedy, Dean

### **A WORD FROM THE DEAN**

Isn't it amazing how times flies? The summer is nearing its sunset, as schools are back in session, and church program years are about to begin. This is the second of two special summer newsletters, to keep all of you informed of the hard work the Chapter officers and Executive Committee members have been doing this summer.

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Executive Committee met on Monday, July 16, and again on Tuesday, August 14. At the August meeting, a revised set of Chapter Bylaws and Chapter Operating Procedures was approved for consideration by the full Chapter at the next Chapter business meeting, set for September 10 at Birmingham's First United Methodist Church. The full text of both documents will be made available to all Chapter members well in advance of the meeting. The Executive Committee is confident that the revised bylaws and Chapter Operating

Procedures will facilitate smoother operations, open communications, and full inclusion of all members in Chapter programs.

After lengthy discussion at the July meeting, the Executive Committee approved unanimously, with refinements, the recommendations of the Competition and Scholarship Subcommittee (Dan Lawhon, chair; James Cook; and Natalie Tally) for a restructuring and revisions to the Minnie McNeil Carr and Myrtle Jones Steele Organ Scholarship Competitions. These recommendations, along with instructions on awarding the annual Hutton POE scholarship, will be presented to the Chapter (as part of the Chapter Operating Procedures) for final approval.

Standing committee assignments for 2012-2013 were approved at the July meeting, with a few slight adjustments at the August meeting (see below).

### **STANDING COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

Calendar: Mark Hayes  
Competition and Scholarship: Dan Lawhon, Jeff McLelland  
Educational Concerns: Patricia Fitzsimmons  
Finance: Greg Roberson, Bill Richardson, Mike Burt  
Fund Raising: Barry Norris  
Hospitality: Nathan Smock, Josh Coble  
Membership: Karen Krekelberg, Idabelle Gay, Jim Garner, Natalie Tally

Professional Concerns and Development: Paul Mosteller

Newsletter Editor: Linda Gill

Student Affairs Committee: Idabelle Gay, Advisor

Webmaster: Jim Cook

### **DUES AND MEMBERSHIP FORMS, CHAPTER SURVEYS**

Chapter Survey responses have been posted on the Chapter website

(<http://www.birminghamago.org/>) in the members' section (login and password required). Dues and membership forms are still being accepted – quite a few of you have yet to renew! Treasurer Greg Roberson has more to say on this topic.

### **AGO NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Those of us who were fortunate to attend the national convention were greatly rewarded with many hours of inspiring music, a variety of workshops, and plenty of opportunities to meet and converse with colleagues of all types and stripes from all over the country. In spite of the (at times) intensely hot weather, the logistics of the convention went with hardly a hitch. Buses consistently ran on time, and the many volunteers from the Nashville Chapter did a fabulous job keeping things running smoothly. Special congratulations are in order to convention chairman William Gray for his tireless work behind the scenes in planning and coordinating the convention.

The Birmingham Chapter was well represented at the convention. Among the many people who were there (and please forgive me if I've forgotten anyone) included Sherelyn Breland, Sam Burke, Mike Burt, Josh Coble, Jim Dorroh, Pat Fitzsimmons, Faythe Freese, Linda Gill, Firmon Hardenbergh, Christopher Henley, Charles Kennedy, Dan Lawhon, Jeff McLelland, Jamie McLemore, Suzanne Purtee, David Rennaker, Greg Roberson,

David Robertson, Cathy Shelton and Stephen Schaeffer. Jim Cook made the trip to Nashville to hear our former Chapter member Patrick Scott in the Improvisation Competition. Patrick won the Audience Prize that morning. We were also well represented at the Regional meeting for our region, and at the national meeting.

There were many high points during the convention. Special highlights for me included Monday evening's recital at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center by Thomas Trotter; a concert shared by the Nashville Chamber Singers and an early music ensemble including Matthew Dirst, harpsichord; a concert by the choir of Trinity College Cambridge; recitals by Tom Trenney, Cherry Rhodes and Ahreum Han; and the closing concert with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra, featuring Nathan Laube and Todd Wilson. I also mention the pre-convention performances by Christian Lane and Wilma Jensen, who, at the age of 83, is at her artistic height as a performer and is as charged-up as ever to just keep on giving more as a musician and teacher! Finally, I would be remiss in not offering congratulations to the choirs of West End United Methodist Church, Christ Church Cathedral and Westminster Presbyterian Church for the extra time put into preparation for their fine performances during worship services at the convention.

**JOHN MARTIN "JACK" COUCH**  
Congratulations to Chapter member Melanie Martin Couch on the birth of her son, John Martin "Jack" Couch, on June 13 at 2:27 p.m.!

**BETTYE GILL**  
We note with sadness the passing of long-time member Bettye Gill on August 7. She had an active career as a private piano

teacher and church musician, serving at West End Methodist, First Presbyterian Church of East Lake, Avondale Methodist, First Christian Church, and First Church of Christ, Scientist. The Chapter has made a donation in her memory to the Division of Music at Samford University.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our next Chapter meeting on September 10 at First United Methodist Church!

*Charles M. Kennedy, Dean*

*From the Sub Dean . . .*



**Dan Lawhon, Sub Dean**

Greetings,

We are looking forward to an exciting year in the life of the Birmingham AGO. We have several programs/events lined up and are working on finalizing the full year. We will start our year at First United Methodist Church in Birmingham on Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup> with Laura Ellis, the AGO Area IV Councilor. Laura will be sharing with us some of the changes that are occurring at the national level. This is a great opportunity for us to find out more about the AGO programs available and the benefits that we have as AGO members. Our 2012 POE/POEA Scholarship recipients will also be with us to tell us of their exciting POE/POEA experiences this summer.

Two exciting master classes will be a part of this year's programming. The first will be

with Christian Lane, October 20<sup>th</sup>. This event will be held at Reid Chapel at Samford University, who is the co-sponsor. Christian will also play a recital on Sunday afternoon at Reid Chapel with a reception to follow, which we will provide. Boyd Jones, II, Professor of Organ at Stetson University will lead a master class Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at Baptist Church of the Covenant as part of the church's dedication of their Noack Organ, Opus 156 to be installed in March 2013. Dr. Jones will also give a recital at Baptist Church of the Covenant on Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>.

Other events include, but are not limited to, a reading session, hymn festival, dinner with Peter Dubois, Epiphany party, student recital at Independent Presbyterian Church, recital series at IPC and Baptist Church of the Covenant plus a session on the Art of Organ Building where we will actually get to see the Noack Organ, Opus 156 in the process of being installed.

We hope that you will be able to be a part of all of these great events. More details to follow...

### **Scholarship Report**

Jim Cook, Natalie Talley and Dan Lawhon have been working to update our scholarship guidelines. You will receive a copy of these revisions and the revisions will be voted on by the chapter at our September meeting. The basic changes are:

**Minnie McNeil Carr Scholarship** - high school. Any high school student in Alabama is eligible. It used to be limited to Birmingham AGO chapter members. "Honorable mention" may be awarded in lieu of a cash award, if the judges deem that

none of the contestants are playing on a level that merits a “first prize” award.

**Myrtle Jones Steele** - college level

This competition will be held on the years opposite the Regional Competition for Young Artists (RYCO). On the years of RYCO our competition will serve as a preliminary to RYCO and not carry a cash award, since we help with the expenses for our students who advance to RYCO on the regional level. The Myrtle Jones Steele competition will follow the guidelines for RYCO with regard to literature, etc. Honorable mention may be awarded in lieu of a cash award, if the judges deem that none of the contestants are playing on a level that merits a “first prize” award.

*Sincerely,*  
*Daniel E. Lawhon, Sub Dean*

*From the Treasurer . . .*

As of Monday, August 20, 2012, we have 63 members who have joined the Chapter for the upcoming 2012-2013 year. Of these members, 3 are new members. I would like to welcome the following new members to our Birmingham family: Adam Cobb, Kate Heemann and Michael Waters.

Unfortunately, we are still behind in the membership process as far as renewing compared to where we were last year at this time. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so at your earliest convenience. You may find the 2012-2013 membership form on the Chapter website at [www.birminghamago.org](http://www.birminghamago.org).

Some members have expressed concerns about our dinner costs and below is a

breakdown of the dinner costs for the past year:

August	Executive meeting
Cost	\$125.24
Collected	(110.00)
September	Chapter meeting
Cost	237.87
Collected	-0-
November	Chapter meeting
Cost	431.01
Collected	(337.00)
January	Epiphany party
Cost	932.50
Collected	(440.00)
February	Chapter meeting
Cost	235.44
Collected	(138.00)
March	Chapter meeting
Cost	199.47
Collected	(100.00)
April	Chapter meeting
Cost	330.00
Collected	(268.00)
May	Chapter meeting
Cost	637.77
Collected	<u>(540.00)</u>
Net	<u>\$1,196.30</u>

Included in the cost amounts are actual food costs, returned check fees, cash for change and tips.

Please be mindful that when making dinner reservations that you are responsible for the cost of your dinner. After all the reservations have been submitted, we contact the caterers for a set number of

attendees and the cost is based on the number of reservations received. If you do not honor your reservation, you will be billed for the cost of your dinner. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

*Gregory Roberson, Treasurer*

**GREETINGS FROM YOUR  
REGION IV COUNCILLOR!**

I hope everyone had a refreshing summer! My own Gainesville chapter hosted a successful POE and we should all be proud of our friends from Nashville for presenting such a wonderful national convention! Thanks to all that were involved in putting on these events . . . your work is noticed and deeply appreciated. Region IV does a fantastic job!

For more information on these events, please *check out* the Region IV blog at: <http://agoregionivblog.blogspot.com/> or *like* the Region IV facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/AGO-Region-IV/312313912115500?ref=hl>.

In my opinion, the strength of the AGO is in the local chapters and membership. I have been excited to see so many events and photos submitted to the TAO celebrating the great activities going on in Region IV. Thank you for sharing.

Again this year, I plan to host district/state meetings throughout our region. Chapter Deans (or their designate) will be invited to a meeting to share information from national, discuss concerns, and share success stories. District conveners will be contacting Chapter Deans to coordinate.

Don't forget to put the 2013 Columbia regional convention on your calendar for July 3-6, 2013. Registration is already open (and it's easy!):

<http://www.regional2013.org/registration.html>

I hope to visit your chapter soon!

Best,  
Laura Ellis

E-mail me at: [LRELLIS@ufl.edu](mailto:LRELLIS@ufl.edu)

Visit the Region IV Blog:

<http://agoregionivblog.blogspot.com/>

“Like” the Region IV Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/AGO-Region-IV/312313912115500?ref=hl>

**AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS'  
HIGHEST AND MOST PRESTIGIOUS  
AWARDS BESTOWED AT  
AGO NATIONAL CONVENTION**

President's Award Presented to  
Martha Rivers Ingram

Edward A. Hansen Leadership Award  
Given to Peter and Lois Fyfe

NEW YORK CITY — The American Guild of Organists (AGO) bestowed its two highest awards of national distinction in conjunction with the 51st biennial AGO National Convention in Nashville, Tenn. Award presentations were made by AGO President Eileen Guenther.

The AGO President's Award was presented to Martha Rivers Ingram of Nashville. The prestigious award, created in 1988, is presented biennially to recognize outstanding contributions to the art of the organ in the United States. The 2012 President's Award recognized Ms. Ingram “in gratitude for her generous patronage of

the King of Instruments, vision for the Nashville Symphony and the Schermerhorn Symphony Center, and commitment to expanding the musical horizons of the Nashville community.”

Past recipients of the AGO President’s Award include: Clementine Miller Tangeman, Alice Tully, Mr. and Mrs. A.D. Hulings, Amelia Lay Hodges, J. Michael Barone, Roberta Bitgood, FAGO, CHM, Edward A. Hansen, AAGO (posthumously awarded), Anthony Baglivi, Craig R. Whitney, Pleasant T. Rowland, Mr. and Mrs. Wesley C. Dudley, and Messrs. Ronald G. Pogorzelski and Lester D. Yankee (posthumously awarded).

The AGO Edward A. Hansen Leadership Award was presented to Peter and Lois Fyfe, also of Nashville. Created by the AGO National Council in 1999 to honor the memory of the Guild’s distinguished past president, Edward A. Hansen, AAGO, the prestigious award is presented biennially to recognize individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in the AGO. The 2012 Edward A. Hansen Leadership Award was given to the Fyfes “in recognition of their commitment to excellence in music; unparalleled knowledge of sacred music; their roles as teachers and mentors; and their leadership, devoted service, and extraordinary generosity to the AGO.”

Previous Hansen Award recipients include: Karen McFarlane Holtkamp, Ruth M. Caswell, Joyce S. Hesketh, Betty Jean Bartholomew, D. DeWitt Wasson, CHM, Marianne Webb, and Frederick Swann. ■

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### **Service Playing Competition**

Mississippi College is hosting a high-school service playing competition November 2-3, 2012. The repertoire requirement is three hymns, an anthem accompaniment, and piece suitable for a prelude and a postlude. There will be a hymn-playing workshop presented by Dr. John Paul of St. Andrew's Cathedral in Jackson, MS. Cash prizes, sponsored by the District of Columbia AGO Foundation, will be awarded. For more information, please contact Dr. Robert Knupp at [knupp@mc.edu](mailto:knupp@mc.edu) or 601-925-3440.