

# THE BIRMINGHAM CHIFF

...off the old blockflute



## Birmingham Chapter of The American Guild of Organists

September 1, 2010



Jamie McLemore, Dean

September 2010

### **A New Year, A New Look, A New Adventure!**

Greetings!

It seems as if our 81<sup>st</sup> banquet was just last week! I enjoyed seeing so many of you at this important time in our chapter's history. Again, many thanks to those who helped make this an enjoyable evening.

Our year promises lots of excitement and something for everyone. The BIG news is we will host a POE next June 12-17, 2011. The planning committee has been meeting since early summer to get the scheduling and faculty in place. As of now, we have 6 of our chapter members on the faculty with 5 coming from out of state. We do have a guest artist arriving and I will have all of the information regarding this at our first meeting. We will need LOTS of help in getting this ready. If you have not been contacted to do anything yet, please don't worry – you will. This is somewhat like getting ready for a Regional Convention which takes lots of planning. Samford University will be our

“home” base during the week. All of the POE's held this past summer had waiting lists for enrollment. I hope we encounter the same problem.

Our chapter was well represented at our National AGO Convention this summer in Washington. We had 12 members who braved the extremely hot weather for the convention. Linda Gill has done a recap for those who were not able to attend. Please read her article in this newsletter.

Our Sub-Dean Charles Kennedy has a plethora of programs planned for this year. Please read his article and put the dates on your calendar – NOW!! I know that we are all very busy with our jobs, but this is one day a month that you can help make this chapter strong.

While many of us are looking forward to the fall and seeing new friends, we must say a fond goodbye to chapter member Mark Ridings. Mark has accepted the position as Director of Music & The Arts at Centenary United Methodist Church in Winston-Salem, NC. We will certainly miss Mark here in town. Also, please remember Jim Dorroh whose brother passed away recently.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our first meeting on September 13.

Jamie

Dear Members,

It is a true honor to serve as the new Sub Dean for the Birmingham Chapter! I trust that the summer has been a time of refreshment and rejuvenation, as we begin what promises to be an exciting season of guild programs.

We have chosen a variety of programs which promise to be both educational and entertaining this season. You will find a full listing of these programs in the newsletter. Please be sure to take the time to become familiar with these programs, and mark your calendars accordingly! For this season, we have decided to return to Monday evenings as the regular meeting time.

We begin our season with a Guild Service at the Church of the Ascension in Vestavia Hills on Monday, September 13, which will follow the format of a hymn festival. Dinner will be served at 6:00, with a business meeting following at 6:30, and the service in the church at 7:00. The cost of the dinner will be \$8. Please send your reservations to me by noon on Friday, September 10 Please RSVP by calling (205) 226-3505 (church) or (734) 353-0486 (cell), or emailing me: [kennedy@cathedraladvent.com](mailto:kennedy@cathedraladvent.com).

I am really excited about what our season has in store for us, not only for our variety of programs, which will be appreciated by a broad range of guild members, but most especially for what will be perhaps the most important thing we have ever done as a chapter. I am speaking of the Pipe Organ Encounters program, which we will host for the southeastern region next summer, June 12-17. POE is an outreach program the Guild has developed as an outreach to aspiring young organists between the ages of 13 and 18, sponsored by the national organization and hosted by various local chapters.

POE's have been held all over the country for over a decade, and have proven very successful in attracting young people to our profession. It is a special honor for our chapter to have been approved to host this event, and I believe we are up to the challenge. We will be calling upon all of you among the chapter membership to assist us in making the upcoming POE a memorable event. There is so much to be done!

I look forward to seeing many of you at our first meeting!

Charles M. Kennedy, Sub Dean

### **Meetings, Programs and Events**

Monday, September 13

Guild Service

Dinner 6:00 p.m., Business Meeting 6:30 p.m., Program, 7:00 p.m.

Church of the Ascension, Vestavia Hills

Monday, October 11, 2010

Choral Workshop with Dale Adelman

Dinner 6:00 p.m., Business Meeting 6:30 p.m., Program 7:00 p.m.

Cathedral Church of the Advent

Saturday, November 6, 2010

Masterclass with Ludger Lohmann

Time and Place TBA

December – No Meeting

Monday, January 10, 2011

Epiphany Party

Location to be announced

6:00 p.m.

January 21-22

University of Alabama Church Music Workshop

Carole Terry, Guest Clinician

Sunday, February 13, 2011  
Recital: Raymond and Elizabeth Chenault  
Cathedral Church of the Advent  
Recital 4:00 p.m., Reception Following

Monday, March 14, 2011  
Pedaling through Time: The Eastman Conference and the Gleason Method, with H. Edward Tibbs  
Dinner 6:00 p.m., Business Meeting 6:30 p.m., Program 7:00 p.m.  
Southside Baptist Church

Monday, April 11, 2011  
Student Recital and Installation of Officers  
Dinner 6:00 p.m., Business Meeting 6:30 p.m., Program 7:00 p.m.  
St. Paul's Cathedral

Monday, May 9, 2011  
Work Session for Pipe Organ Encounters  
Dinner 6:00 p.m., Business Meeting 6:30 p.m., Work Session 7:00 p.m.

### **Membership Report September 1, 2010**

44 regular members  
19 special members  
6 student members  
1 partner member  
3 dual chapter members

We welcome the following new members:

Ms. Dorothy Smith  
Mr. David Robertson  
Dr. Firmon Hardenbergh  
Mr. Amir Zaheri

We welcome back former members:

Dr. Anthony Pattin  
Ms. Leanne Porter  
Mr. Kenny Lewis

Gregory Roberson, Treasurer



## **Reflections from Our Nation's Capitol 50<sup>th</sup> National Convention of the American Guild of Organists**

**July 4 – 8, 2010**

The following comments reflect only the events that I attended. As always, you make choices concerning your schedule. There were many other excellent events taking place at the same time.

Monday's opening Convocation at Washington National Cathedral featured the Cathedral Choir and Cathedral Voices, and the Washington Symphonic Brass, organist Scott Dettra and homilist Dr. Thomas Troeger. The organ at the Cathedral is a 4 manual, 189 rank E.M. Skinner. Next Jonathan Biggers, Organ Professor at Binghamton University played at the very lovely National Presbyterian Church. Paul Jacobs, Organ Department Head at Juilliard, played an incredible recital – from memory of course- at Saint Ann Roman Catholic Church. The finals for the Guild's National Competition in Organ Improvisation were held at St. Paul's Parish, K Street. Of interest is that Herbert Buffington from Atlanta

won 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Following afternoon workshops and a Bach Vesper service, the evening concert occurred at National Cathedral. Scott Dettra performed Barber's *Toccata Festiva* and the Cathedral Choral Society, accompanied by members of the National Gallery Orchestra presented a little known but lovely work, *Mass for the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Death of Joan of Arc*, by Paul Paray. Day one is over, and will be a hard "act to follow".

Tuesday morning took us downtown for an organ recital at Church of the Ascension and Saint Agnes (Episcopal) by Diane Meredith Belcher and a most inspiring Hymn Festival - We Believe In One God - led by Bruce Neswick, director of music at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. The venue was the beautiful basilica like National City Christian Church, the "cathedral" church for the Disciples of Christ congregation in the U.S. and Canada, and for a long time known as a church of presidents. The E. M. Skinner organ was actually 2 organs – chancel and gallery, 5 manuals with a total of 169 ranks. Tuesday afternoon we travelled to Annapolis where David Higgs, Organ Department Head at Eastman, played a fabulous recital at the impressive U. S. Naval Academy Chapel.

Wednesday morning's events included a Children's Worship Service at Calvary Baptist Church, led by the Children's Chorus of Washington, and a Morning Prayer Service at St. Patrick Roman Catholic Church, the oldest Catholic parish in the Federal city. Afternoon recitals included Isabelle Demers also at St. Patrick's, and Faythe Freese, Organ Professor at the University of Alabama (and our former Dean) who played at Foundry UMC. Faythe's excellent recital included a newly commissioned piece, *Sojourn*, by Craig Phillips which was scored for organ, clarinet, oboe,

French horn, and bassoon. Faythe concluded the recital with the piece that she commissioned and premiered in 2009, *To Call My True Love to My Dance* by Naji Hakim. Wednesday night's event was a Gala Banquet with entertainment by the Capitol Steps, a satire group made up of former Capitol Hill staffers, who have performed for presidents, and on TV and radio stations nationwide.

Thursday morning, 22 year old Nathan Laube, played an electric recital (from memory) at National Presbyterian Church. Nathan, with his brilliant playing, and audience – friendly programs is certainly a rising star among young classical musicians. He is an assistant organist at the Wanamaker Grand Court Organ in Philadelphia and has played in major venues in the U.S. and Europe. The Closing Concert, held at the magnificent Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, preeminent Marian shrine of the Roman Catholic church in the U.S., featured the Choir of the Basilica, the Washington Chorus, and organists Renee Anne Louprette and internationally renowned organist David Briggs

In addition to all of the above there were numerous workshops each afternoon, the Young Artists and the Improvisation Competitions, and a large ballroom full of exhibits to peruse.

This Convention provided many exceptional, out of the ordinary experiences. The performers were outstanding, making full use of the resources available on enormous pipe organs. Spending time on the bus each day among 2,100 people, no one is a stranger and there is always a connecting thread that ties organists together. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to be part of this 50<sup>th</sup> National Convention of the American Guild of Organists.

*Linda Gill*