



THE BIRMINGHAM CHIFF ...off the old blockflute

The Birmingham Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

September 2015

A Word from the Dean

Dear Friends,

I hope you have had a wonderful summer, with plenty of time to relax, reflect and renew energy for the new year. We want to welcome new members student Samantha Warren, James Sloan (dual member with Atlanta chapter), and Lorna Lee Curtis to the Birmingham Chapter of the AGO and look forward to getting to know you better. We have a great year of programs lined up and anticipate seeing all of you at these events. We start the year with an exciting hymn festival “The Birmingham ‘Big Sing’” this Monday, September 14th at Mt. Brook Baptist Church (see article for details). It promises to be a very exciting evening featuring many of our colleagues and led by Nicholas Bowden from Atlanta. In October, we have the opportunity to host Thomas Murray in a master class. We already have several talented players signed-up to play. This will be a great opportunity to hear some fine organ students play and get input from one of the most renowned teachers of organ. Other events of the year include times to socialize, catch up with old friends and meet new ones, times to learn more about choral accompanying, handbells and share literature. Two highlights primarily led by our college and graduate organ students will be our student recital in April and a Pedals, Pipes and Pizza at First United Methodist Church in Anniston, AL. Many of us will be helping in the support of the latter, however, It is exciting to see our talented organ students be willing and interested in encouraging and introducing young keyboard students to the organ.

Our fall business meeting will be held later in the fall, since we need the time before the hymn festival to prepare, and many of our members are involved in the event. Check the website for officers and calendar, and let me know if you have questions or

concerns. We hope to see all of you at each event and hope that you will invite others to join you.

Make sure you check the Birmingham AGO website frequently to remind yourself of the many wonderful programs/recitals presented by various churches/schools throughout our area. You will see from this newsletter there are six such events posted for September alone.

Sincerely,
Dan Lawhon, Dean

September Hymn Festival: the Birmingham “Big Sing”

This chapter year begins with a hymn festival unlike any we’ve held before! Under the leadership of Nicholas Bowden, former organist of Peachtree Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, a choir of over 40 voices from area churches will join with brass and percussion, guest artists, and organists and conductors from our chapter to present an evening of music celebrating great hymns of faith in a variety of styles.

Beginning with the rousing *God of Grace and God of Glory* topped by Simon Johnson’s descant and concluding with Johnnie Carl’s setting of *Standing on the Promises*, there are arrangements by Richard Webster (*Lo, He Comes*), John Rutter (*O Come, All Ye Faithful; Rejoice the Lord Is King*), Mack Wilberg (*Come, Thou Fount*), and Nicholas Bowden (*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*). There’s also a setting of

the text *O Perfect Love* to the tune named LESLIE which Fred Teardo wrote and dedicated to Leslie for their wedding day.

Instrumental music includes an organ solo played by Jim Cook, a flute aria from John Rutter's *Suite Antique* played by guest artist Cain Burgeron and organist Daniel Solberg, and Nick Bowden's *Trumpet Tune* for organ and brass.

Sherrie Lawhon, one of our favorite sopranos, will be soloist for Fanny Crosby's *My Savior First of All* and Daniel Solberg's arrangement of *Softly and Tenderly*. And there are even more music and musicians to be heard!

Please spread the word and help fill the pews of Mountain Brook Baptist Church (3631 Montevallo Road, Birmingham 35213) at 7:00 PM next Monday, Sept. 14th. There's ample parking, plenty of seating, and Nathan will have a delicious reception ready for everyone to enjoy after the concert. We are truly grateful to Kely Hatley and Mountain Brook Baptist Church for their support of this event.

So come out and join in supporting the volunteers who've given their time to learn the music and participate in a Saturday rehearsal, those who've put the program together, and those who've studied and practiced the music to lead it. It truly will be an event like none the Birmingham chapter has hosted before!!!

Sign Up for October Masterclass

On Saturday, October 10th, from 10:00 AM – noon, Thomas Murray, Professor of Organ and University Organist of Yale University, will be holding a masterclass at Reid Chapel, Samford University. If you'd like to play in the class, there's a link on the left side of the chapter website home page labeled "Thomas Murray Master Class Application."

Information needed is your name and school, phone and email address, title and composer of the composition you'd like to play, and the performance time of your selection. Submit the information as soon as possible as players will be chosen on a "first come, first served" basis. The deadline to apply is Sept. 26th. Those selected will be notified by Sept. 30th.

Comings and Goings

Dr. Josh Coble, organist of Mountain Brook Baptist for nine years, has accepted the position of Assistant Organist at Brentwood United Methodist Church in Nashville. His duties there include playing for three services each week and choir accompaniment. Brentwood, a church of 8000 members, has a 4-manual Möller with 71 ranks. Josh is also continuing his organ teaching at Belmont University.

Josh Bullock is now full-time Organist and Assistant Director of Music at First United Methodist in Montgomery. He previously served Holy Spirit Episcopal in Alabaster as Organist and Director of Music. Before earning his Master's degree at Indiana University, Josh was a student member of the chapter and Associate Organist at St. Luke's Episcopal.

Dr. Lorna Lee Curtis, a new member of the chapter, has been named organist of Bluff Park United Methodist Church. Rocket, as she is known, and her husband Eddie recently moved to Jacksonville where they've opened "Summer Dreams," a bed and breakfast. Rocket has degrees in organ performance from Juilliard and extensive experience in church music. She's looking forward to attending Birmingham's musical events and chapter activities.

Matthew Edwards, one of our UA student members, is organist/choirmaster of St. Matthias Episcopal in Tuscaloosa. Matthew had been organist of St. Mark's United Methodist in Northport.

WEBSITE AND NEWSLETTER

The next issue of *The Birmingham Chiff...* will be published October 1. If you have articles or other info to be included, please send it by September 20 to newsletter@birminghamago.org. Thanks!

Want to see what's planned for this year's chapter events? Click on the link in the center of the website home page to view or print the 2015-2016 chapter calendar. And don't forget to check the Positions Available page: There are two openings currently listed for organists in Alabaster and Northport.

2015-2016 Officers and Committees

Dean Dan Lawhon
Sub-Dean Leslie Teardo
Secretary Karen Krekelberg
Treasurer Mike Burt
Executive Committee
 2013-2016 Mark Hayes, Jeff McLelland,
 Nathan Smock
 2014-2017 Sherelyn Breland, Charles
 Kennedy, Bruce Ludwick
 2015-2018 Sam Burke, Bill Richardson,
 Natalie Tally
Calendar Mark Hayes
Competition and Scholarship Awards
 Natalie Tally, Chair;
 Pat Fitzsimmons, Jeff
 McLelland
Educational and Professional Concerns
 Faythe Freese, Chair; Sam
 Burke, Bruce Ludwick
Finance Mike Burt, Chair; David
 Renaker, Bill Richardson
Hospitality Nathan Smock
Membership Barry Norris, Chair; Sherelyn
 Breland, Debby Holmes
Program Leslie Teardo, Chair; Jim Cook,
 Cathy Shelton
Student Affairs Adam Cobb, Chris Henley,
 Fred Teardo, Advisor
Newsletter Editor Sherelyn Breland
Webmaster Sherelyn Breland

Scheduled Chapter Events 2015-2016

September

Hymn Festival

Monday, September 14, 2015
 Mountain Brook Baptist Church
 6:00 PM Pre-concert warm-up
 7:00 PM Concert open to public
 Reception for all following the concert

October

Masterclass with Thomas Murray, Yale University

Saturday, October 10, 2015 10 AM - noon
 Reid Chapel, Samford University

November

Dinner with Scott Detra

Saturday, November 21, 2015
 Home of Fred and Leslie Teardo
 Dinner 6:00 PM; Business meeting will also be held

January

Epiphany Party

Friday, January 8, 2016 6:00 – 8:00 PM
 Home of Sherrie and Dan Lawhon

February

Choral Accompanying in the Anglican Tradition

Monday, February 8, 2016
 Cathedral Church of the Advent
 Dinner 6:00 PM; Business meeting 6:30 PM; Program
 7:00 PM

March

Workshop with Trinity Handbell Quartet, Huntsville

Monday, March 11, 2016
 Trinity United Methodist Church, Homewood
 Dinner 6:00 PM; Business meeting 6:30 PM; Program
 7:00 PM

April

Student Recital

Monday, April 11, 2016
 Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church
 Dinner 6:00 PM; Business meeting 6:30 PM; Program
 7:00 PM

Pedals, Pipes & Pizza

Saturday, April 16, 2016
 Anniston First United Methodist Church
 Time to be announced
 Lunch will be provided

May

Literature Sharing

Monday, May 9, 2016,
 The Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Vestavia
 Dinner at 6:00 PM at area restaurant; Business
 meeting and program following dinner

THIS AND THAT

Online Database Updates

Please take a few minutes to check that your information on the chapter directory is accurate and complete. Several of you have new phone numbers, email addresses, moved and/or changed jobs, and we need that information to keep you posted on chapter events. We also need to know if you're available or no longer available to substitute, so please also check that page on the website to be sure it's current.

For password assistance to log in to the Members' Corner page, please email Mark Hayes at mwhayes@charter.net or the webmaster at webmaster@birminghamago.org. Thanks!

Membership Renewals

If you've not yet renewed your membership for the 2015-16 year, please log onto the National website at <https://www.agohq.org/oncard-login/> to complete the process. You'll need your 5-digit member number which is listed on your TAO address label. In the next few weeks, we will be contacting those who've not yet renewed and will answer questions or provide assistance in the process if you need it.

Organ Teachers and Students

This year's competitions for high school and college students will be held on Saturday, April 2, 2016 at The Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Vestavia. Mark your calendars!

September Opportunities

See Online Calendar of Events for Complete Listing

Sunday, Sept. 13, 2:30 PM

Adam Cobb, Organ Recital – Bluff Park UMC
The program includes literature by Vierne, Reger, Johnson, Langlais, and more.

Monday, Sept. 14, 7:00 PM

Hymn Festival, Mountain Brook Baptist Church
Led by Nick Bowden and other musicians of Atlanta, a choir of singers from several local churches, local brass and percussion players, chapter musicians. Highlights favorite hymns, anthems, and gospel songs.

Sunday, Sept. 20, 2:0 PM

Faythe Freese, Organ Recital – UA School of Music
A slide show of historic instruments in seven European countries Faythe visited during her recent sabbatical will be displayed during the concert.

Sunday, Sept. 20, 3:00 PM

Choral Evensong – Cathedral Church of the Advent

Friday, Sept. 25, 12:30 PM

Mid-Day Music – Cathedral Church of the Advent
Tenor Roderick George and pianist Cynthia MacCrae perform in Clingman Commons.

Sunday, Sept. 27, 3:00 PM

Choral Evensong & Recital- Independent Presbyterian
Service for Young Servants sung by IPC Youth Choirs with closing voluntaries played by Bruce Ludwig of St. Paul's Cathedral