



THE BIRMINGHAM CHIFF ...off the old blockflute

The Birmingham Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

February 2017

A Word from the Dean

Dear friends,

I hope that you have had a wonderful and relaxing holiday season and your new year is off to a good start. Our congratulations to Bruce and Erin Ludwick on the arrival of Maximilian. They now have a budding barbershop quartet. We also welcome Bruce as Sub-Dean of the chapter, as he will be filling the remainder of Leslie Teardo's term.

It was great to see so many of you at the Epiphany Party a couple of weeks ago. Many thanks to Stephen Schaeffer for his hospitality and Nathan Smock and Shereilyn Breland for their help in getting everything ready. The food was wonderful and it was good to spend time with you catching up on what is happening in your life.

We want to continue to remember Jeff McLelland as he recovers at home from heart valve surgery. We hope to see him back among us soon.

Plans are moving ahead full speed for the Pipe Organ Encounter—Advanced which we will be sponsoring on the University of Alabama campus in June. A great schedule of classes and interesting recitals have been set which include a full recital by Isabelle Demers, a day trip to Birmingham to visit the Alabama Theatre, Independent Presbyterian and end with a faculty recital at the Cathedral of the Advent. Let me encourage you to visit the very informative website for this event. You can find the POEA2017 link on our chapter website. As you look into the event, be thinking of ways that you might be involved either in helping during the week or supporting the event financially. This is a much needed opportunity to support and encourage our next generation of organists. We are fortunate to

have been selected as a site. Many thanks to the steering committee members who have spent many hours making plans for this exciting week.

Your Birmingham AGO Executive Committee and officers are in the midst of planning next year's calendar of events. If you have ideas, please let us know.

I hope to see you in a few days at Samford University, where Mark Hayes will present a program on organ maintenance and tuning.

Sincerely,

Dan

FEBRUARY CHAPTER ACTIVITY: ORGAN MAINTENANCE & TUNING WITH MARK HAYES

On Monday, February 13, chapter member **Mark Hayes** will lead a program on organ maintenance and tuning in **Reid Chapel** on the campus of Samford University. Mark is well qualified for this: He stays busy as owner and operator of Hayes Pipe Organ Service, with numerous clients across the Southeast. A long-time church musician, Mark is Assistant Organist at Birmingham's Cathedral of St. Paul.

We hope you'll join us for Dutch treat dinner at **5:30 PM** at **Jason's Deli** at **583 Brookwood Village on Lakeshore Drive**. We'll have a business meeting at 6:30 PM in Reid prior to the 7 PM program. Samford University is located at 800 Lakeshore Drive, Homewood AL 35209.

Greetings from the POEA Steering Committee!

2017 is off to a great start for the POEA, although we were a little deterred by the icy weather! Nonetheless, three brave souls ventured out into the great unknown to meet on Saturday, January 7, at Baptist Church of the Covenant – Faythe Freese, Tyler Canonico, and Dan Lawhon. Mike Burt, our treasurer, also joined via cell-phone.



Dan Lawhon, Tyler Canonico, and Faythe Freese with Mike Burt on the phone for Saturday, January 7th (ice day!) Steering Committee meeting

First! Visit our new POEA website at: www.bhampoea.org. Look at the website on a computer screen, not just your small cell phones, to get the full effect of this stunning site. Sherelyn, Faythe, and Bill Valentine (National Headquarters web designer) were busy designing and working hard over Christmas break to create this masterpiece.

We have many wonderful things lined up for the students of the POEA, including an exceptional faculty, inspiring instruments, and plenty of fun activities! Our POEA will take place at The University of Alabama and in Birmingham, June 25-30, 2017. If you haven't already seen the faculty list, we are fortunate to have **Dr. Joby Bell** (Appalachian State University), **Dr. Lynne Davis** (Wichita State University), **Dr. Isabelle Demers** (Baylor University), our own **Dr. Faythe Freese** (The University of Alabama), **Mr. Nathan Laube** (Eastman School of Music), **Dr. Shelly Moorman-Stahlman** (Lebanon Valley College), and **Mr. Bruce Neswick** (Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Portland, Oregon).

In addition to the very fine faculty listed above, the students will receive a very informative workshop on accompanying Anglican chant led by **Dr. Fred Teardo** of the Cathedral Church of the Advent, here in Birmingham. There will be workshops on improvisation led by Mr. Neswick, practice techniques by Dr. Freese, keyboard technique and body awareness by Dr. Moorman-Stahlman, and an introduction to performance practice by Mr. Laube. The students will also have the opportunity to participate in masterclasses taught by Dr. Stahlman, Dr. Bell, Dr. Demers, Dr. Freese, Dr. Davis, and Mr. Laube. And what Pipe Organ Encounter would be complete without addressing issues that all aspiring (and current) church musicians must face? The **Reverend David Meginniss** will lead a discussion on fostering healthy clergy and musician relationships. Two young artists from our region will also perform a recital at Tuscaloosa First United Methodist Church. Currently a DMA student in organ performance at The University of Alabama, **Tyler Canonico** is no stranger to us in Birmingham. He is the 2012 winner of the Regional Competition for Young Organists (RCYO) for the Mid-Atlantic Region. Our most recent "Rising Star," **Chase Loomer**, is a student at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York.

The students will have a chance to visit Birmingham, too! The Alabama Theatre is an always popular stop with tourists and organists alike. Students will be given an introduction to "Big Bertha" by **Mr. Gary Jones**, one of the staff organists of the Alabama Theatre, and they will have a romp on the Dobson organ at Independent Presbyterian Church. One of the faculty recitals will also take place at the Cathedral Church of the Advent. Our week will close out on Friday, June 30, with a student recital in the concert hall of the School of Music at The University of Alabama. Please come and support the future of our field!

Submitted by Christopher Henley

THIS AND THAT

Two job openings remain on our website

Shades Crest Baptist and Meadow Brook Baptist in Birmingham are still in need of part-time organists. Log onto our website for details:

<http://www.birminghamago.org/OpenPositions.html>

NOMINATING COMMITTEE AT WORK

This year’s committee is at work to form a slate for the 2017-20 Executive Committee class. The Nominating Committee is comprised of chairman **Stephen Schaeffer**, **Pat Fitzsimmons** and **Mark Hayes**. Contact any of them if you have a member you’d like for them to consider.

REMINDER: SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

Our Birmingham chapter **Minnie McNeil Carr Scholarship** is available again this year to a deserving high school student who is currently studying the organ. The competition for this \$500.00 award will be held *on Saturday, April 22, 2017, at 2 PM* at The Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Vestavia Hills.

Deadline for applications is April 1, 2017. All competitors must play a piece by J. S. Bach and a piece written after 1800. Competition guidelines and application forms may be downloaded from <http://www.birminghamago.org/Scholarships.html>.

For details, please consult the above website or email **Ms. Natalie Tally** at ntally@me.com.

Comings and Goings

Cathy Shelton has accepted the position of Organist at Birmingham’s First United Methodist Church. She previously served as organist and handbell choir director at First Presbyterian.

Dr. LornaLee Curtis (aka “Rocket”) is organist at Heflin United Methodist Church. Additionally, she and her husband Eddie run Summer Dreams, a bed and breakfast in Jacksonville, AL.

2017 Southeast Regional Convention

June 11 – 14, 2017

Jacksonville and St. Augustine, FL

Registration is now underway for our region’s convention. Visit <http://www.agojax2017.com/> to check the schedule of events and see what venues and artists will be participating. **March 1** is the deadline to get the early bird rate.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE WEBSITE FOR UPDATES

Please check www.birminghamago.org for calendar updates and other information regarding chapter activities and directory information. We’ll continue to send the chapter emails as changes and other items of interest are received. Please email info to newsletter@birminghamago.org for inclusion in future editions of *The Birmingham Chiff...off the old Blockflute* or for posting on the website.

AND FROM NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS...

AGO YOUNG ORGANISTS (AGOYO) NORTH CENTRAL REGION YOUNG COMPOSERS COMPETITION

Competition for Composers Under the Age of 30 Organized by AGOYO North Central Division

NEW YORK CITY—The **American Guild of Organists** (AGO) is proud to announce a new music competition for composers under the age of 30. Organized and sponsored by the AGO Young Organists in the North Central Region, the competition for a new work for organ solo, 3–6 minutes, is open to any individual who is younger than 30 years of age as of August 31, 2017. U.S. composers need not be AGO members; composers living outside of the U.S. must be AGO members. First prize is \$1,000; second prize is \$500; three honorable mentions will also be announced. All prize winning and honorable mention compositions will be performed at the AGO North Central Regional Convention in Iowa City, Iowa, on June 20, 2017. The submission deadline is March 10. Competition results will be announced on March 31. For complete information and application instructions, visit Agohq.org.

AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS AWARDED \$25,000 GRANT FROM NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

NEA Funding Will Support Educational Programming in 2017 and New Music Commissioned for the 2018 AGO National Convention in Kansas City, Mo.

NEW YORK CITY — The **American Guild of Organists** (AGO) has been awarded a grant by the **National**

Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to support educational programs and career development for organists, choral conductors, and composers in 2017, including new music commissioned for the AGO National Convention in Kansas City, Mo., July 2–6, 2018. While the AGO has received regular support from the NEA since 2005, the \$25,000 “Art Works” award is the largest grant the arts endowment has ever given to the Guild.

“This grant covers the full breadth of the AGO’s educational activities for current and prospective members as well as our programs of outreach to the public,” stated AGO Executive Director James Thomashower. “The NEA’s funding sends an uplifting message to the entire organ community: our instrument and its music are vitally important to the American people. The award validates the AGO’s ongoing efforts to ensure that music for the organ is created by talented composers, performed by skilled musicians, and appreciated by the widest audience possible. It is an honor for the Guild to be recognized by the NEA, the most prestigious independent federal agency in the United States responsible for funding and promoting artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation.”

In December, the NEA announced that it will award more than \$30 million to nonprofit organizations and individuals across the country in 2017. Nearly \$26 million of that will be for Art Works, the NEA’s largest funding category. Art Works focuses on the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and the strengthening of communities through the arts. The NEA will give 970 Art Works grants to organizations in 48 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in 2017.

“The arts are for all of us, and by supporting these projects, the National Endowment for the Arts is providing more opportunities for the public to engage with the arts,” said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. “Whether in a theater, a town square, a museum, or a hospital, the arts are everywhere and make our lives richer.”

For a complete listing of projects recommended for Art Works grant support, please visit the NEA website at Arts.gov. For further information about the AGO’s educational programming, please visit the AGO website at Agohq.org.

AGO PIPE ORGAN ENCOUNTERS PROVIDE YOUTH AND ADULTS WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTENSIVE STUDY OF THE KING OF INSTRUMENTS

Eight Summer Programs for Teenagers and Adults Will Be Supported with Generous Funding from the Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America, the American Institute of Organbuilders, the Jordan Organ Endowment, and the NEA

NEW YORK CITY—The **American Guild of Organists** (AGO) is proud to announce four **PIPE ORGAN ENCOUNTERS** (POEs) for students aged 13–18, two **POE (Advanced)** for students entering grades 9–12; one **POE (Technical)** for students aged 16–23; and one **POE+** for adults in 2017. Complete contact information for each weeklong Pipe Organ Encounter can be found in *THE AMERICAN ORGANIST* Magazine and online at Agohq.org/education/poe.

The summer schedule follows:

POE for ages 13–18

<i>June 11–16</i>	Sioux Center, Iowa
<i>July 16–22</i>	San Diego, Calif.
<i>July 16–21</i>	Hartford, Conn.
<i>July 23–27</i>	Winchester, Va.

POE+ for adults

<i>June 25–30</i>	San Antonio, Tex.
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POE (Advanced) for grades 9–12

<i>June 25–30</i>	Birmingham, Ala.
<i>July 23–28</i>	Seattle, Wash.

POE (Technical) for ages 16–23

<i>July 9–14</i>	Berkeley Lake, Ga.
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The **PIPE ORGAN ENCOUNTER (POE)** is an introduction to the pipe organ through instruction in organ playing, repertoire, history, design, and construction. These regional summer music institutes for teenage students provide private and group instruction in service playing and solo repertoire, opportunities to learn about the musical heritage of various religious denominations, and a chance for young musicians to meet others with similar interests. Piano or organ proficiency ranging from intermediate to advanced is required. Scholarship assistance is available.

The **POE (Advanced)** provides intermediate to advanced classes in areas such as organ literature,

history, pipe organ construction and design, music theory, improvisation, conducting, and service playing for students who have achieved a high level of success in organ study. Scholarship assistance is available.

The **POE (Technical)** is a program designed for students who are interested in learning the art and craft of organ building. The event is hosted in the workshop of an organ builder working in cooperation with a local AGO chapter.

The **POE+** is a summer program filled with practical information and instruction for adult keyboard musicians interested in improving their service-playing skills. Participants will be introduced to basic organ skills through private instruction and classes. The weeklong experience will lead to greater confidence and competence at the organ.

Generous funding from the **Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America (APOBA)**, the **American Institute of Organbuilders (AIO)**, the **Jordan Organ Endowment**, and the **National Endowment for the**

Arts will support the summer programs from coast to coast. "The AGO and APOBA have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship since 1975," declared AGO Executive Director James Thomashower. "Likewise, the AIO has been active in supporting the Guild's educational programs, beginning with their partnership in *Pulling Out All the Stops*, a video produced jointly by the AGO, AIO, APOBA, the Organ Historical Society, and the American Theater Organ Society in 1996. In addition, we are delighted to have received support from the Jordan Organ Endowment at Columbus State University for our POE program, as well as a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts supporting our educational activities this year."

POE site locations are selected by the AGO Committee on Pipe Organ Encounters and approved by the AGO National Council.

Applications are available from AGO National Headquarters and online at Agohq.org. The application deadline is February 1, 2017, for 2018 Pipe Organ Encounters.