



# THE BIRMINGHAM CHIFF ...off the old blockflute

## The Birmingham Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

### March 2017

#### A Word from the Dean

Dear Friends,

I hope this finds you well. We had a wonderful meeting at Samford and enjoyed the program on "Organ Maintenance" presented by Mark Hayes. We had a good group in attendance, including a new member from Ft. Payne. We missed many of you but hope to see you soon.

The slate of folks willing to run for the three seats on the Executive Committee will appear later in this newsletter, and I want to thank all of these folks for their willingness to serve on the committee. If you have other recommendations, please feel free to submit those.

As we enter the Lenten season, which is quite busy for musicians, I hope that you will be able to take time to reflect and through this reflection that you will be filled with peace and encouragement.

Continue to get the word out regarding the POEA 2017 to be held on the University of Alabama campus. There is a wonderful faculty lined up and I hope that we can get a good group of students, but we need your support. Help us think of ways we can spread the word.

Sincerely,  
Dan

#### MARCH CHAPTER ACTIVITY: STUDENT RECITAL

On Monday, March 6, Sarah Heaslett will be our hostess for the annual Student Recital to be held this year at Southside Baptist Church, 1016 19<sup>th</sup> Street South, Birmingham 35205. We'll begin the evening at 6 p.m. with dinner catered by Southern Spoon, followed by a business meeting and then the recital.

The dinner will be served in Drennen Hall located on the first floor. Enter from 10<sup>th</sup> Court which will put you on the first floor. The menu is tossed salad, beef lasagna, Italian green beans, garlic bread, lemon cake, and beverages. Cost per meal is only \$11.00. *Please make your online reservation by Thursday night, March 2<sup>nd</sup>.*

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#### 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](mailto:ntally@me.com).

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### NOMINEES FOR 2017-2020 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CLASS

The Nominating Committee has provided a slate of ten potential members for the next class of the Executive Committee: **Tyler Canonico, Faythe Freese, Debbie Holmes, Rachel Julian, Bill McElwee, Paul Mosteller, Russell Nelson, Brent Nolte, David Robertson, and Cathy Shelton.**

The chapter is invited to submit additional nominations to the secretary **by April 1<sup>st</sup>**, in accordance with the Chapter Operating Procedures Section 8. ELECTION PROCEDURES.

Three members will be elected to serve the three-year term on the Executive Committee.

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### WELCOME NEW MEMBER

We are happy to have Mrs. Frances Brownfield as a new member of the chapter. Frances resides in Fort Payne. A member of the chapter a number of years ago, we are glad she's renewed her affiliation with us and look forward to seeing her at various chapter activities.

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### POEA Steering Committee Update

Dear members of the Birmingham Chapter:

Greetings! The committee members of the Pipe Organ Encounter-Advanced (POEA) met on Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at the home of Dr. Faythe Freese. With June 25<sup>th</sup> approaching rapidly, we are all working at full steam to ensure that the students will have a memorable week! It is exciting to see the small details, from faculty contracts to housing agreements, come together as we prepare to welcome students from around the country to The University of Alabama. We are excited to announce that the deadline for early-bird registration has been moved to March 31! There is still plenty of time for students to register for the POEA.

If you haven't done so already, please visit our website at [www.bhampoea.org](http://www.bhampoea.org). There, you will find a list of instruments for the week and a listing of the faculty, complete with biographies. We're also on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/bhampoea2017/](https://www.facebook.com/bhampoea2017/) which will serve as a social media scrapbook for the week.



*POEA director Faythe Freese and treasurer Mike Burt ponder the financial needs and resources of the POEA*

There are numerous ways that you, the members of the Birmingham chapter, can assist the efforts of the POEA. If you are a member of Facebook, please "like" and "share" the event. When you do this, please send the page to people that you feel may be students who are interested or teachers who have high-school aged students. If you don't have Facebook, people can be directed to the [bhampoea.org](http://bhampoea.org) website to check it out for themselves. We also have plenty of brochures that can be placed in the narthexes of churches.

Please be on the lookout for updates on the POEA as we continue to draw nearer to June!

Sincerely,  
Christopher Henley

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### THIS AND THAT

#### New job opening on our website

*Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church* is looking for a part-time pianist. Log onto our website for details of this and other openings:

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

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## Retirement Congratulations

*Ms. Idabelle Gay has retired after more than 70 years of service as a church musician. We wondered what her career has been, and she shared the following with us.*

Idabelle Gay began organ study at age 14, studying with Thomas H. Webber, Jr. in Memphis. She earned both the Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from Memphis State University, where she was awarded the first Performer’s Certificate given by the Music Department; she also earned the AAGO certification. Her organ teachers included Harry Gay (whom she later married), Warren Hutton, and George Harris.



She began her career as a church musician at age 17 and has played almost continuously every Sunday since. She spent 11 years at the historic First Presbyterian Church in downtown Memphis, first as organist and then adding choir director responsibilities when that position became open.

In 1973 Idabelle moved to Birmingham to become organist/choirmaster at the Episcopal Church of the Advent, now the Cathedral Church of the Advent. She says her crowning achievement while there was the beginning of the installation of the magnificent 100-rank Möller organ. Although completed after she left, she likes to take some small credit for it.

Other venues along the way include seven years as organist/choirmaster at St. Christopher’s Episcopal Church (Pensacola, FL) and 13 years as Jim Dorroh’s associate at St. Luke’s Episcopal (Birmingham). She completed her career February 26 after serving five

and one-half years as director of music and organist at Shades Valley Lutheran Church.

As a recitalist, Ms. Gay played in a variety of settings: St. Thomas in New York City; the National Cathedral and Capitol Hill Methodist in Washington DC; Bruton Parish in Williamsburg VA; as well as churches in Mobile AL, St Louis MO, Little Rock AR, Chattanooga TN, Jackson MS, Memphis TN, Birmingham AL, and Pensacola FL.

A long-time member of the AGO, she has served in various capacities including as dean of the Memphis, Pensacola, and Birmingham chapters.

Now, at 87 years of age, she plans to visit various churches and let other organists have the fun!

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## 2017 Southeast Regional Convention

June 11 – 14, 2017

Jacksonville and St. Augustine, FL

Registration continues 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.

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