



THE BIRMINGHAM CHIFF ...off the old blockflute

The Birmingham Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

May 2017

A Word from the Dean

Greetings friends and colleagues,

I hope you are doing well. If you missed our April meeting at Eastlake UMC, you missed both a wonderful dinner and fine program. Our thanks to Barry Norris and members of his choir, who not only cooked a wonderful meal, but served it and treated us like royalty. The tenderloin was fabulous. John Schwandt and Barry then treated us to a most delightful and informative program. Their passion for the Eastlake organ project made it even more wonderful and you could hear the great results that they have achieved with the organ. If you haven't heard the organ, you need to do so. Barry's pastor was so interested that she attended the session, as well.

Saturday, April 22nd was the date for our Minnie McNeil Carr Scholarship competition. We were excited to have two contestants, since we have not had any contestants for a few years. Both were well prepared and demonstrated promising aptitude for the organ. A first place award was given to Cole Vick and second place to James Kirk. Congratulations also to their teachers who prepared them well, Faythe Freese and Karen Krekelberg, respectively. Many thanks to the scholarship committee, chaired by Natalie Tally, with Pat Fitzsimmons and Jeff McLelland, for a fine job of organizing the event. Michael Sparks was his usual gracious host at Episcopal Church of the Ascension. The students thoroughly enjoyed playing the wonderful Steiner-Reck organ. I also want to thank the judges for the competition: Pat Fitzsimmons, Charles Kennedy and Jeff McLelland.

POEA 2017 is shaping up nicely. Many thanks are due to the steering committee for their hard work. If you are able to help, especially financially, it would be greatly appreciated and tax deductible. We have 12 students, so far, and they play extremely well. I am looking forward to the week. Keep your eyes and ears open for many recital opportunities that week.

Our May meeting will be an adventure to see some interesting organs between here and Tuscaloosa. I hope you can join us. We will drive a van and as many cars as needed. Details are listed below.

Last but not least, let me encourage you to go to our website and vote!!!! We are filling three vacancies on the Executive Committee and your vote is important.

Sincerely,
Dan

BOLO Alert!

Treasurer Mike Burt reminds us to be on the lookout for membership renewal notices from ONCARD (National AGO). Your renewal will arrive either by e-mail or U.S. mail, based on how you've renewed in the past. Dues rates and categories for all membership types changed recently. A comparison of the various membership types and dues for each level is available on the national website at <https://www.agohq.org/membership/membership-comparisons-dues-rates/> and on page 6 of the May issue of *The American Organist*.

MAY CHAPTER EVENT: WEST ALABAMA ORGAN CRAWL

Nathan Smock has arranged an exciting excursion for our May gathering. On **Saturday, May 13th** we will spend the day visiting six organs in our area which are still in use, date from 1900 to 2016, and represent five builders. The group will travel by church bus (and car if needed), **leaving at 7:15 am from Baptist Church of the Covenant and returning there at 4:45pm.** If you would like to join the group, **please make your reservation by completing the "I plan to attend the organ crawl" survey - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QSH5V8R>.**

Itinerary

Greensboro

First United Methodist – Holtkamp, 15 ranks, 1990
St. Paul’s Episcopal – Pilcher, 8 ranks, 1900
First Presbyterian – Pilcher, 10 ranks, 1904

Eutaw

St. Stephen's Episcopal - Karl Wilhelm, 21 ranks, 1994

Tuscaloosa

First United Methodist - Dyer, 45 ranks, 2015
First Presbyterian - Letourneau, 75 ranks, 2016

For further info, please contact Nathan Smock at n.l.smock@gmail.com or 334-559-1982.

ELECTION CONTINUES FOR 2017-20 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CLASS

Voting is underway for the 2017-20 class of the Executive Committee. To cast your ballot online, sign in to the Members’ Corner of the chapter website www.birminghamago.org by midnight Wednesday, May 10th.

If you prefer an absentee ballot or to vote in person, please contact the secretary, Sherelyn Breland, at secretary@birminghamago.org or 205-664-1373 (home) or 251-455-0967 (cell) as soon as possible to arrange this. Absentee ballots are due by midnight Wednesday, May 10th. In person voting ends at 8 PM Thursday, May 11th. We encourage you

to vote online if possible. Results will be announced Saturday, May 13th.

Nominees are **Faythe Freese, Debby Holmes, Rachel Julian, Bill McElwee, Paul Mosteller, Russell Nelson, Brent Nolte, David Robertson, and Cathy Shelton.** From this group, three will be elected to serve a three-year term on the Executive Committee

MMC SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

There were two recipients of the Minnie McNeil Carr Scholarship: **Cole Vick** was awarded \$350.00 and **James Kirk** was awarded \$150.00 The competition was held April 22, 2017, at The Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Vestavia Hills.



Cole Vick, Natalie Tally, and James Kirk

Many thanks to the judges: Dr. Pat Fitzsimmons, Dr. Charles Kennedy, and Dr. Jeff McLelland; to Mike Sparks, Organist and Choir Master of Ascension, for hosting the event; and to Natalie Tally for her work in planning, publicizing and MCing the competition.

2017 Southeast Regional Convention

Registration continues for our region’s convention June 11 -14 in Jacksonville and St. Augustine, FL. Visit <http://www.agojax2017.com/> to check the schedule of events, presenters, venues, and to make your hotel reservation. Donations are being accepted to help defray the expenses of the convention. See the April 18th email from SE Regional councillor Homer Ferguson for specifics.

APRIL CHAPTER ACTIVITY: EAST LAKE ORGAN TOUR



The East Lake choir loft was full of interested members April 3rd when Barry Norris, the church's organist and music director, and Dr. John Schwandt, Associate Professor of Organ and Director of the American Organ Institute (AOI) at the University of Oklahoma School of Music, described the timeline and enhancements to the Norris and Associates organ during recent years. It was quite evident how much Barry and John have enjoyed working on the project which is almost complete. John demonstrated the organ's versatility with the many stops available. It was a most enjoyable and enlightening evening!

POEA Steering Committee Update

The application deadline has been extended through Friday, May 5th to fill the two remaining student openings for the Pipe Organ Encounter Advanced. Please encourage potential applicants to visit www.bhampoea.org as soon as possible to learn what's planned for the week and to connect to the POEA application process on AGO HQ's site.

Our 12 students are from Knoxville, TN; Hendersonville, NC; Harvest, AL; Kentwood, MI; Cunningham, KS; Corvallis, OR; Huntersville, NC; Port Jefferson, NY; Marietta, GA; Centerville, TN; Kewanee, IL; and Fairfax, VA.

The AGO chapters the students represent are Knoxville, Asheville, Huntsville, Grand Rapids, Wichita, Eugene, Charlotte, Suffolk, Atlanta, Nashville, Blackhawk, and Northern Virginia.

As you know, the POEA is for students in grades 9-12 who have already achieved a high level of success in organ study. As part of the application process, prospective students must submit an audition recording. Here are examples of some of the literature the students played for their POEA audition: Bach *Prelude & Fugue in c minor, BWV549*; Dupre *Antiphon III & IV*; Franck *Piece Heroique*; Bach *Pastorale in F, BWV590*; Mendelssohn *Fuga from Second Organ Sonata*; Guilment *Finale from Organ Sonata No. 1*; Franck *Chorale No. 3 in a minor*; Ferkko *Fuge from Mass for Dedication*; Bach *O Lamm Gottes, Unschuldig BWV618*; Matthias *Fanfare*; Dupre *Cortege et Litanie*; and Karg-Elerg *Nun danket allet Gott Op. 65, #59*.

We hope you'll be able to attend some of the recitals scheduled during the week. They are listed on the chapter website under *Coming Events*.