



# THE BIRMINGHAM CHIFF ...off the old blockflute

## The Birmingham Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

Summer 2022

### A Word from the Dean

Well, my last day as chapter dean has arrived. And along with it came my last newsletter to compile and last dean's column to write, my last ONCARD updates, my last (almost) website updates, my last "Dear EC" emails (there have been a lot of those!). *It has been a fast and rewarding four years.*

Over the last few months I've been clearing out the boxes of AGO materials stacked in the attic and storage room and stashed in my office at church. They contain all sorts of memorabilia, eons of chapter newsletters and minutes of chapter and executive committee meetings, the workpapers for the 1997 regional convention, and so on.

It was fun to read those materials and look at the photos. Scrapbooks compiled by co-founder Myrtle Jones Steele recount the chartering of the chapter in 1939 and the first year's programs in which members studied the different denominations and their forms of services. By 1942 there were 25 incredibly active members. Their dedication to sharing the value of organ, choral music and church music ministry continued throughout the decades, eventually achieving a membership of almost 90 members. They hosted and played in recitals galore, attended regional and national conventions, even hosting two regionals. Warren Hutton created the Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza program, long a hallmark of the national AGO educational programs. The groundwork was laid early on and has continued through our time with the two POEs and POEA. We have many members who willingly and continually share their time and talents to benefit the chapter and AGO as a whole.

I'm looking forward to the new Executive Committee leading the way. They've put forth new program topics already and are eager to host activities and invite others to join in. The outlook for next year is bright! You'll find the new EC listed elsewhere; give them a call and ask how you can help!

And finally, thanks for the many varied opportunities you've allowed me during the 17 years I've been a member of this chapter. Thanks even more for the friendships, support, and fun times! You've made life in Birmingham a joy!

Have a wonderful summer. See you in September!

Sherelyn

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### Dues Reminder!!!

As of June 30, 42 members have renewed their membership for 2022-2023. Many of the rest of you have a **July 1<sup>st</sup> renewal date.**

**If you've not yet renewed or are unsure if you have, please check your status by visiting ONCARD <https://www.agohq.org/oncard-login/>. It's easy to renew online and, while you're there, you can update any changes to your membership record.**

**If you need assistance, please contact treasurer Mike Burt. Thanks!**

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## It's a Boy!!!



**Christopher and Haley Henley** welcomed **James Oliver Henley**, their first child, on Monday evening, June 27. Little Ollie weighed 6 lbs. 13 ozs. and is 20.5" long. All are doing well.

Congratulations, Chris and Haley! We look forward to seeing all three of you soon.

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## Change Is Good!!!! Our Social Media Presence Evolves

In the June 2012 newsletter, website creator and long-time webmaster Jim Cook wrote "In this age of increasing use of social media and electronic communications, we are catching up to our neighbors with some recent changes to our web site." He then went on to describe the enormous expansion of the chapter website that was being introduced and which we are accustomed to using.

**It's ten years later and we're transitioning again. Our website format needs modernization, and we've had technical and support issues with our hosting service. We need to move to a development platform that is easy to use and resides on a consistently reliable hosting service.**

You are familiar with the ElectionRunner application we've used for two years to conduct our voting process from start to finish. Similarly, **there are inexpensive (even free) applications available to maintain event calendars, membership data, email functions, etc. - existing applications developed and maintained by other companies that accomplish what we've done on our website.**

**The process to improve and incorporate a broader presence on the web has begun.** You will see **increased use of Facebook** (which costs nothing to use) to promote chapter activities and stay in touch with each other. A Facebook presence will also make it easier for non-members who share our interests to find us and learn more about our chapter and the AGO, possibly leading them to join us. Additionally, there are many capabilities of Facebook we can use. If desired, administrative responsibility to update each capability can be assigned to a different person, rather than one person being responsible for all.

**You will also see a new email format. Access to familiar information may be accomplished via a link to another site rather than being duplicated on our own site.**

**Much of this is still being worked out, and it will take a bit of time to implement. Expect fine-tuning as we use it and tweak it to meet our needs.**

*In a few weeks you may find that the chapter website no longer functions, instead displaying a message indicating it's "down for maintenance, be back soon."*

**Please be patient as this work is accomplished. It will be worth the wait!**

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## Welcome New Member

**Anastasia Rush** joined our chapter as a Young Organist member. She is also a dual member with the Montgomery chapter and resides in Auburn.

Welcome, Anastasia! Hope to meet you soon!

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## Out and About



*Bill McElwee, Thomas Graves, Jeff Binford, Idabelle Gay, and Patrick Scott*

**Dr. Jeff R. McLelland**, Choirmaster, the IPC Camerata, Nick Mathes, Cantor, The Rev. Kevin J. Long, Officiant, and **Dr. Patrick A. Scott**, guest organist from Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Memphis, presented Choral Evensong Sunday, 27 February, at Independent Presbyterian Church, Birmingham.

With music by Craig Phillips, Earnest Hoffman and Herbert Howells, the dignified service concluded with an improvisation by Dr. Scott on the hymn tune "Brewer."

Pictured with Dr. Scott are the nonagenarian and long-time Chapter member **Idabelle Gay**, **Bill McElwee** and **Thomas Graves** from the Anglican Church of the Holy Comforter in Montevallo, and **Jeff Binford**, organist from Tuscaloosa.

*Photo and write-up courtesy of Bill McElwee*

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## Volunteers Needed

Summer is the time committees and other positions are filled. Would you like to host a chapter activity next year? Edit the newsletter? Handle dinner arrangements one month? Serve on a particular committee? There are many ways you can help.

If interested, please contact Charles Kennedy and let him know what you'd like to do. Many thanks!

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## 2022-2023 Executive Committee

Installation of these members of the 2022-2023 Executive Committee will occur at the September chapter meeting. Their terms begin July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

Officers for 2022-2024:

Dean: Dr. Charles Kennedy  
Secretary: Mr. Jason Pedeaux  
Treasurer: Mr. Mike Burt

Executive Committee Class of 2020-2023:

Mr. Sam Burke  
Dr. Jim Cook

Executive Committee Class of 2021-2024:

Mr. Christopher Henley  
Mr. Barry Norris

Executive Committee Class of 2022-2025:

Mr. Jamie McLemore  
Dr. Steven Taranto

Rotating off the Executive Committee on June 30<sup>th</sup> are Dean, Sherelyn Breland; Secretary, Debby Holmes; and Class of 2019-2022 members Mark Hayes and Jeff McLelland. We appreciate the hard work and dedication of these members during their tenures.

# Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of



# July!!!

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## Tentative 2022-2023 Chapter Events

The current and incoming Executive Committees met Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> to work on plans for the coming year's activities. The group had several goals: to include a mix of educational and social activities; to hold chapter events not only on Monday evenings, but (as has been requested by several chapter members) on other weeknights and on weekends, as well; to meet in Tuscaloosa where our membership is growing; and to enjoy a variety of meals and venues during the year.

Months with dates or a presenter listed below are confirmed with the presenter or guest listed. Other months have the topic selected; the presenter(s) are being contacted now. Details for each month (including hosts, venues and meal arrangements) are expected to be complete by September. Watch for announcements in the fall newsletter and chapter emails.

**September:**

Kick-off the New Season – Potluck Dinner Social

**October:** Organ and Choral Music Reading Session

**November 12 (Saturday):**

Workshop with Ken Cowan at IPC

**November 27 (Sunday):**

Dutch Treat Dinner with Ted Davis after His Recital at IPC

**January 13 (Friday):**

Epiphany Party at Norris Residence

**February:**

Workshop at First Presbyterian, Tuscaloosa

**March:** Young Organist Recital by Nicholas Stigall

**April:** TBA

**May:** End of Year Social

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## Religious Arts Festival Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary Columbia, South Carolina July 28 – 30, 2022

Registration is open for the Religious Arts Festival sponsored by the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne University in Columbia, SC. The event will take place July 28-30<sup>th</sup>.

This multi-day course is designed for organists and church musicians seeking to broaden their knowledge in aspects of performance practices of the music of the Baroque era and French Symphonic school. Organ masterclasses and recitals will be given by renowned artists **Peter Sykes** (Julliard and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor) and **Eric Plutz** (Princeton University). **Alicia Walker** (University of South Carolina) will lead choral sessions and **Wayne Leupold** will discuss his most recent publications.

Performers and presenters will join participants in thoughtful discussions and powerful performances. In order to perfectly match the repertoire to the distinct instruments, events will be held at four locations in Columbia, S.C., providing you the opportunity to hear several fine organs.

Visit <https://www.lr.edu/campuses/ltss/lifelong-learning/religious-arts-festival> to view the schedule, see the organ specifications, and to find information on area accommodations and attractions.

The \$105 registration fee includes two recitals, masterclasses and continental breakfast and lunch on July 29. Registration deadline is July 15<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Dr. Patrick Hawkins with any questions.

**Dr. Patrick Hawkins**

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