

# Chiff Chat

Springfield, Massachusetts Chapter  
American Guild of Organists



September 2009

## A Message from the Dean...

Warm (very warm!) greetings to you all in these, the dog days of summer. Though we have had a lot of cool and rainy weather since May, we definitely are enjoying a bit of real summer heat.

I did a quick search of the term "dog days" and found two definitions on Answers.com:

1. The hot, sultry period of summer between early July and early September.
2. A period of stagnation.

Wikipedia, probably the most popular of the online quick references (and one that's often notoriously inaccurate, since it is not monitored by any other than those who write the entries) says, "Dog Days were popularly believed to be an evil time "when the seas boiled, wine turned sour, dogs grew mad, and all creatures became languid, causing to man burning fevers, hysterics, and phrensies" according to Brady's *Clavis Calendarium*, 1813." I would guess, however, that the past few weeks have definitely **not** been a period of stagnation, sour wine, or mad dogs for any of you. This is the time of planning for the coming choir season, the time for cleaning our offices, the time when we can perhaps *think* a bit about where we've been, and what changes we might like to make, musically at least.

Ah, yes, change. My work at Smith requires that I wear several hats, in both the Chapel (Helen Hills Hills) and the Department of Music, as a player and teacher, accompanist and coach. One would think that after 26 years of this, a certain rhythm would obtain, and I could relax a bit and make some musical decisions of my own. But no, there's always *something* to throw me off balance just a little. This year's *something* is the news that the College has decided to reconfigure the religious/spiritual end of things at HHH so that there is no bias toward the three major religious practices represented by the student

body. Though there will be attention paid to spiritual inquiry, religious tolerance, and such, the plan is to do away with regular worship services (Catholic, Protestant and Jewish) and dissolve the three just-mentioned chaplaincies, which have been positions shared with Amherst College. So my chapel organist hat will change into something quite different...what exactly, no one knows yet. So there's plenty to think about!

A summer project that I coordinated this month was the removal to storage of an important historical organ that lived for almost one hundred years in the former Liberty Methodist Church in Springfield, and before that over fifty years at the former Grace Methodist Church. The Johnson organ company of Westfield was one of the very finest builders of tracker-action organs in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the Liberty organ (Opus 440, from 1874) is one of the few unaltered large instruments left. It is an important piece of our cultural heritage, a valuable artifact from right in our own backyard, and a beautiful instrument worthy of preservation. Mark Jacobson was organist at Liberty during the tender, formative years of his musical training, and that instrument was, and is, very important to him. I am so happy that I was able to save the organ, which otherwise would have gone into a dumpster, in the hope that it will someday be renovated for another 135 years of faithful service. Thank you, Mark, for caring for that organ all those years, and for letting me know of the dire situation regarding its possible fate. The good folk of Solid Rock Baptist Church now own the building, and are grateful for new-found space for worship. I can only imagine their surprise last weekend when they went to church

(Dean's letter cont.) and saw an enormous stained glass window and large stage area right in front of their eyes; it's a good thing that it is a west window, or they would have been "blinded by the light." It's a good change for them, and a wonderful opportunity for new life for an old instrument.

Here's hoping that the changes in your life are good ones. All the best to you – Grant

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### Springfield Chapter Leadership

Dean	Grant Moss
Sub Dean	Martha Sienkiewicz
Secretary	Mary Jeanne Tash
Treasurer	James Barnes
Directors	Karen Banta, Don Hooton, John Karalekas, Rev. Jerry True, Larry Picard, Michael-Thomas Gilman
Chaplain	Fr. William Wallis
Education	Martha Sienkiewicz, John Karalekas, Don Hooton
Membership	Charles Page
Chiff Chat Editor	Larry Picard
Yearbook Editor	Peter Beardsley
Investments	Charles Page, E Lary Grossman, William Czelusniak, James Barnes, Michael Thomas Gilman

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### Chapter News...

**Organ Available:** 2 manual, 2 rank, self-contained Austin unit organ from Room 102 at the Hartt School of Music, in generally good condition. Ranks are 8' Capped Flute, 8' Gemshorn and 16' Capped Metal Bass. All pipes are exposed--no shades. A bid of \$2500 takes it, as is, where it is (at Foley-Baker, Tolland). Proceeds will go to Hartt for organ department. Approximate dimensions: 5' deep, 8' high and 10-1/2' long. Good practice organ. 800-621-2624.

**Church Music Scholarship Announced:** In 2010 the Charlotte Hoyt Bagnall Scholarship for Church Musicians will hold a competition for high school musicians. The scholarship will grant awards of \$300 to \$2500 for the study of religious music and liturgy. High school students studying organ with an interest in church music are eligible to apply. The scholarship can be used for organ lessons, high school and college level studies related to organ or religious music, and participation in organ festivals, seminars, music camps, etc. Information and applications are on the scholarship website <http://www.chbscholarship.com>, or by writing "The Charlotte H. Bagnall Scholarship" at 17 Beaverbrook Rd., West Simsbury, CT 06092. Applications due by 12/31/2009.

**Open position:** Mittineague United Methodist Church, West Springfield, beginning Sunday, 9/6. The hours are 10:30a.m. - 12:00p.m. (service begins at 11:00 a.m.). Salary is negotiable. Call the church office at (413)788-0304 or send resume to 800 Amostown Road, W. Springfield, MA 01089.

**Mary J. Guy 1923-2009:** Mary Guy was born in Agawam, graduated from Agawam High School in 1940, and attended Oberlin College and Smith College where she studied Piano and Organ. She was the Organist Emeritus at the Central Baptist Church in Westfield, having played there for 45 years. She also played at other churches in the area as well as Beth El Temple and Curran-Jones Funeral Home. She was known and will be missed by many of our chapter members.

**A response to our forum topic – "Welcoming in the Church," submitted by Joe Geehern:** I love my new position at the First United Methodist Church in Westfield. Everyone here has been so warm and welcoming!!! I played my first service there this past Sunday, June 21 at 10:00. Everyone was pleased with the music. In short it is nice to be treated as an individual, as opposed to being another number on a totem pole. Perhaps you could share this in a future Chiff-Chat. - Blessings/JOE!!!



**Saturday, Sept. 26, 2009, 7:30 PM  
Cathedral of St. Michael, Springfield  
Springfield AGO Chapter Event  
Christopher Houlihan, concert organist**

Guilmant: March on Handel's "Lift Up Your Heads"

Bach: Fantasy and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 542

Vierne: Romance, from Symphony No. 4

Sowerby: Toccata

Mendelssohn: Con Moto Maestoso, Sonata No. 3

Durufly: Suite, opus 5

### *Chapter Events 2009-2010*

**September 26** (Saturday) 7:30 PM at St. Michael's Cathedral, Springfield, organist **Chris Houlihan** in concert. Reception to follow with informal installation of officers.

**October 16** (Friday) 7:00 PM at Abbey Chapel, Mt. Holyoke College, **Almut Rössler**, concert organist from Düsseldorf and renowned interpreter of Messaien.

**November 10** (Tuesday) 7:00 PM at Helen Hills Hills Chapel, Northampton, **Anthem Reading (bring your own) and music tag sale**, followed by coffee and potluck desserts.

**February 13** (Saturday) 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at St. Michael's Cathedral, Springfield, **Mini-convention**, with workshops on Catholic liturgy, Anglican chant, choral direction, hymn playing, and children's choirs. Also, publisher's reps., music giveaway and lunch.

**March 13** (Saturday) 10:00 AM at the Brick Church in Old Deerfield, **Organ Master Class with Stephen Hamilton**.

**March 21** (Sunday) 4:00 PM, **Members' Recital** at St. Patrick's, Monson, reception to follow.

**April 24** (Saturday) 7:00 PM, **Peter Krazinski accompanies the silent movie "For Heaven's Sake"** at United Congregational Church of Holyoke.

**June 7** (Monday) 6:30 PM at St. James Episcopal Church, Greenfield, **Annual Banquet**.

## Upcoming Events

### **September 2009**

#### **Friday, September 11, 2009 at 8:00 p.m.**

Douglas Major plays works of Bach, Mendelssohn, Vierne, Franck and Gershwin at Methuen Memorial Music Hall, 192 Broadway, Methuen. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children and proceeds will benefit the MMMH Scholarship Fund.

#### **Friday, September 18, 2009 at 8:00 p.m.**

Thomas Murray, concert organist, recording artist, and University Organist and Professor of Music at Yale, plays the Austin at the Cathedral of St. Joseph, 140 Farmington Avenue, Hartford. Suggested donation is \$20.00. [www.cathedralofsaintjoseph.com](http://www.cathedralofsaintjoseph.com)

#### **Wednesday, September 23, 2009 at 5:30**

**p.m.** Choral Evensong (Cathedral Choristers, Kevin Jones, Canon Precentor and Director of Music, Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford. No admission charge. [www.cccathedral.org](http://www.cccathedral.org).

#### **Sunday, September 20, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.**

The Cantilena Trio of Connecticut plays at United Congregational Church, 350 High Street, Holyoke. Richard Barnes, clarinetist and director, Thirzah Bendokas, cellist, and Chad Hardin, pianist, will perform. Information at [www.uccholyoke.org](http://www.uccholyoke.org).

#### **Sunday, September 20, 2009 at 4:00p.m.**

The Blue Door Trio performs music of Beethoven at First Congregational Church, Westfield. [www.churchonthegreen.org](http://www.churchonthegreen.org)

#### **Friday, September 25, 2009 at 8 p.m.**

Larry Schipull presents the second recital in a series featuring all of Mendelssohn's organ works published during his lifetime, as well as the Bach works he performed in his 1840 recital at Saint Thomas Church, Leipzig. The concert will take place at Abbey Memorial Chapel, Mount Holyoke College, S. Hadley.

#### **Saturday, Sept. 26th, 2009, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

The Berkshire Chapter will hold a Choral Workshop for organists, choir directors, and singers at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 67 East St, Pittsfield. Clinician will be the well-

known Artistic Director of CONCORA, Richard Coffey. Even is free of charge.

#### **Sunday, September 27, 2009 at 3:00 p.m.**

Alan Schneider, tenor, sings the Schumann song cycle *Dichterliebe*, accompanied by Larry Picard, as part of the Mattunes House Concert series. The series features performances in historic homes in Springfield, the first being held in an 1871 rowhouse on Mattoon Street. Contact Larry Picard, 413-348-3729, or [lawrencepicard@comcast.net](mailto:lawrencepicard@comcast.net).

#### **Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 4 p.m.**

Sue Vaughn Westendorf in recital at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Pittsfield. Ms. Westendorf is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and the University of Notre Dame. The concert will be followed by a reception in the Guild Room.

### **October 2009**

#### **Sunday, October 4, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.**

Larry Schipull plays the third recital in a series (see Sept. 27) this one being performed on the Richards/Fowkes Opus 13 tracker organ at the First Church of Deerfield. The program will feature two of Mendelssohn's organ sonatas as well as one of his preludes and fugues, as well as music by Bach. For admission please bring canned goods for the local food pantry.

#### **Sunday, October 17, 2009 at 3:00 p.m.**

Gail Archer, concert organist, lecturer and recording artist, plays works of Buxtehude, Sweelinck, Bach, Mendelssohn and Barber at the First Church of Deerfield. Suggested donation \$10 with reception.

#### **Sunday, October 25, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.**

Brett Maguire plays a program of French organ music at St. Mary's R. C. Church, 30 Bartlett Street, Westfield on the 1896 Casavant tracker organ, Opus 78. Brett is the Minister of Music/Organist at Wesley United Methodist Church, Worcester, Mass. with academic credentials from Holy Cross College and Oberlin Conservatory. He is a student of James David Christie.

**EACH ONE REACH ONE** by Karen Banta, Membership Chair

Maybe that phrase sounds familiar. AGO National launched a 3-year campaign with this title in 2005 to bolster membership in the Guild, and it worked. Although the official campaign is over, current AGO members--each of you reading this--are still our organization's best ambassadors. The shy or non-joining-type person might really benefit from all of the advantages of membership. But first, that person needs your encouragement to check out our websites, or try out an AGO event.

Think honestly about how or why you decided to join the AGO. For me, this brings back a painful old memory of receiving a committee-of-one unfair evaluation at a long-ago church job. Angry, I immediately joined the AGO as a professional badge. What's your story? Now, think of some of the things you've learned, people you've met, and great music you've heard or bought at AGO events. My list on this one would be very long, and so would yours. Here's an example. Paul Jacobs said something like this to all of us attending his masterclass at our chapter's POE: always appear to be enjoying yourself while playing, because if you don't, why would anyone enjoy listening? Now I monitor my facial expressions at the console! It was one quick remark at one event, yet I try to remember it every time I play.

As your new Membership Chair, I invite you to consider "reaching one." For instance, each time I get a call or email from an unfamiliar organist asking me to substitute, I've begun asking at some point, "By the way, are you a member of the AGO?" Is there an organist and/or music director you know who isn't a Guild member? Consider inviting them to attend a recital, or anthem reading, or the mini-convention, with you. Or suggest they check out our websites (see below.) It's VERY important to remember the Guild's statement: "Membership is open to everyone, regardless of denominational affiliation or musical ability." We know that stereotypes and misinformation still exist, so let's get the facts out. Also keep in mind the "Chapter Friends" category, for the organ-loving fans in your congregation and other special non-organist people.

Please tell potential members that they can find out more on the AGO national website ([www.agohq.org](http://www.agohq.org)) and our own chapter website ([www.springfieldago.org](http://www.springfieldago.org)). To join, new member applications can be printed from our site and mailed to Don Hooton. Or, contact me or any Board member, and we will mail a packet to anyone interested. Thanks!

**POE Student Monica Czausz** by Martha Sienkiewicz

Monica Czausz is a sophomore at Chicopee High School who has thought she might like to enter the medical field, but now that she has completed her second POE, she's not so sure. She sometimes dreams of attending Yale and studying the Organ! Monica became interested in the organ last year when her piano teacher, Diane Lundstrom, offered to register her for the POE. She attended the Worcester POE and absolutely loved it, so she signed up to attend again this year in Manchester, NH. Again, she had a fabulous experience, met many new faces and renewed friendships with those from last year. She is hooked and she says that she would like to "sign up again next year". Her most accomplished work is the piece she played for the closing recital in Manchester which was Bach's transcription of the Vivaldi Concerto in A minor. She is most excited about the piece she is currently learning "Christ ist erstanden" by Schroeder. "I'm so excited about it. It's a really cool piece," Monica said with enthusiasm in her voice. Monica lives in Chicopee with her parents and her older brother. She attends Holy Name of Jesus church and she is thankful to the Guild for helping her to attend the POE, an experience that was really inspiring.



## **CHIFF CHAT**

**American Guild of Organists**

**Springfield, MA Chapter**

Larry Picard, Newsletter Editor

45 Mattoon Street

Springfield, MA 01105

## *Chiff Chat Newsletter*

**Springfield, Massachusetts Chapter of the American Guild of Organists  
Celebrating 62 Years as a chapter!**

To submit information regarding positions, upcoming concerts, recitals, or area events, please email [newsletter@agospringfield.org](mailto:newsletter@agospringfield.org). Submissions for the October 2009 issue are due September 20, 2009.

Also, visit our website at [www.springfieldago.org](http://www.springfieldago.org)!

*September 26 Opening Event - Christopher Houlihan in concert at 7:30 p.m. at St. Michael's Cathedral, Springfield, with reception and installation of officers.*