

Chiff Chat

Springfield, Massachusetts Chapter
American Guild of Organists

November 2011



A message from the Dean...

A fine event was held this month at Church of the Atonement in Westfield when they hosted the anthem-reading session with Paraclete Press. More than thirty singers showed up and we had a lovely pick-up choir with a fine balance in four parts. What a pleasure! I'd almost forgotten how lovely it is to sing with a real choir. Many felt the same way because choirs, like churches, have declined in the last 30 years. The Paraclete Press man, Jim, explained that the publisher has made a major shift in voicing to unison, two-part, and SAB anthems in order to meet the need. Many directors have found that choir members, especially the older ones, simply do not come to mid-week rehearsals anymore. What's happened to the joy of singing?

It's a shift in the entire culture and not a professional failure on your part. No one sings the national anthem any more either. They always hire someone or worse yet, play a recording. In my last years teaching at Westfield High, no one sang the school song or even knew the words. Thirty years ago it was the highlight of every football game. I heard Garrison Keillor bemoaning the fact on his weekly show where he regularly encourages the audience to sing. He noted that one of the last places in the culture where communal singing is encouraged is in churches. Many churches now print only the melody line, however, and congregations that used to sing in four-part harmony are increasingly hard to find. What can we do? It's up to us to keep singing alive! If you only have a choir of five women, so be it. Find exciting music for them to sing. If you or the clergy choose hymns, try to find the ones everyone likes

and play them with enthusiasm, varying verses and getting student instrumentalists involved. Introduce new hymns carefully and curb your desire to choose hymns or anthems that are beyond the reach of your audience. We are on the front lines of an art that is morphing from participation to passivity. Let's give it our every effort to stem the tide.... - **Martha**

Review: Organ Dedication and Concert - Ahlborn Galanti 2100

This event was held in honor of St. Martha Parish's 50th Anniversary and featured organist John Rose. The parish's Director of Music and AGO member Diana McConnell, began a search for the perfect organ last fall after receiving donations from several benefactors. She managed every detail of the purchase including the dedication concert. Benjamin Buckovitch who attends the church, opened the concert with two well-played pieces. He is only seven years old! Following acknowledgements and blessing of the organ by Administrator Fr. Daniel McElheron, Diana introduced John Rose. The program included pieces by Bach, Cesar Franck and Louis Vierne among others. He gave interesting commentaries throughout on the pieces played.

"Reflections of Southern Hymn Tunes" by Louie L. White for example, was written as a thank you for John's help accompanying Mr. White's choral group on short notice. This piece was played from White's original handwritten score. John showcased the new organ's realistic sounds throughout the program splendidly. - **Lori Bouret & Diana McConnell**

Chapter Event, Sunday, Nov. 6 The November chapter meeting will feature visits to two organs in Greenfield: Second Congregational Church (Moller, 1960-62, 3 manuals, 40 ranks) and St. James Episcopal Church (Moller, 1959, 3 manuals, 27 ranks), as well as an opportunity to attend a traditional service of Evensong at St. James. **Please bring music with you, since you will have the opportunity to play both of these organs!**

Second Congregational Church is located at 16 Court Square in the center of Greenfield (where Rt. 2A crosses Rt. 5 & 10). St. James Episcopal Church is located at the corner of Federal and Church Streets, about 2 blocks north of Second Congregational Church. There is parking available on Federal St. (Rt 5 & 10), and ample off-street parking in the lots behind Greenfield Cooperative Bank and Peoples Bank (just south of St. James).

The schedule of events for the afternoon of Nov. 6 is as follows:

2:30-3:30 p.m.: visit and play the organ at Second Congregational Church.

ca. 3:30 p.m.: Travel to St. James Episcopal Church, Federal St. at Church Street.

4 p.m.: Traditional evensong at St. James. Music by Ralph Vaughan Williams, Walter Pelz, and Will Macfarlane. After the service, AGO members are invited to visit and play St. James organ.

And more chapter events...

Monday, March 5, 2012, at 6:00 pm at Grace Lutheran Church, West Springfield:

Pastor-Organist Dinner, Eileen Guenther, AGO President, Guest Speaker

Saturday, April 14, 2012, at 7:00 pm at United Congregational Church of Holyoke:

Silent Movie, "Speedway" Peter Krasinski, Organist

Sunday, May 12, 2012, at 4:00 pm at Trinity Methodist Church, Springfield:

Choral Festival, Allan Taylor, Director, Becky Isaacson, Organist

Friday, June 15, 2012, 6:00 pm at Delaney House, Holyoke, MA

Annual Meeting & End of Year Banquet

Position open: Vibrant, music loving Episcopal church, rich in tradition, seeks part-time (8-12 hours per week) musician to direct and develop choral and congregational singing and enhance worship. Familiarity with liturgical forms, flexibility, and availability for 2 Sunday services and major holy days required. The successful candidate will demonstrate proficiency on organ and piano and in choral conducting and will understand this ministry as a way to glorify God and serve God's people. Salary will be based on experience and AGO guidelines. Please send resume and letter of interest to The Rev. Nancy Webb Stroud at ector@atonementwestfield.net or The Episcopal Church of the Atonement, 36 Court St., Westfield, MA 01085.

Meet Patricia Kapitsky...



Patricia Kapitsky is presently the organist/choir director at Our Lady of the Hills RC church in Haydenville. Born in Schenectady, NY, she attended Pottsdam University and graduated as a music education major, later achieving a Master's degree in voice. She entered public school teaching at Marks Meadow Elementary school. A friend of hers attended UMass Amherst and when she came to visit her for a Halloween party, Pat met her future husband and migrated to western Massachusetts. She began her organ career as a funeral organist for Annunciation Church and studied with Janet Dahlberg. Although she was raised Catholic and remains so today,

Pat's father was Methodist, so she was quite comfortable taking a job as organist at United Methodist in Northampton. When the organist position at St. Mary's RC Church in Northampton opened, however, she took it and remained with that magnificent church for 13 years. You know the one...located on the right as you start up the hill to Smith College. Pat had to keep back the tears as she spoke of its closing and shook her head in disbelief that Smith College had not bought the property saying that it is currently up for sale. Patricia lives in Florence and has two grown children: Laura, a chemist living in Oakland, CA and Robert, a musician who gigs in the Northampton area. Patricia is also a weaver and knows many of the valley's fine weaving community where she says her footwork at the loom is admired, a skill which carries over to her organ technique. Her joy as an organist comes from "getting folks to sing" which is precisely the focus we all need to have. Thanks, Pat and we're glad you are one of the Guild's friends.

Upcoming Events:

November, 2011

Tuesday, November 1, 2011 at 10:30 a.m.

The Tuesday Morning Music Club presents Kirsten Hadden Lipkens, oboe, Sudie Marcuse, soprano and Thomas Slowick, piano, at Trinity Methodist, Springfield. www.tuesdaymorningmusicconcerts.org

Sunday, November 6, 2011, at 2:30 pm

(Chapter Event) Walking Tour of Organs ending with Evensong at St. James Episcopal Church, Greenfield. See p. 2.

Tuesday, November 15, 2011 at 10:30 a.m.

The Tuesday Morning Music Club presents Nancy Babb, piano, Lisa Woods, mezzo-soprano and Ellen Redman, flute, at Trinity United Methodist Church, Springfield. www.tuesdaymorningmusicconcerts.org

Saturday, November 19 at 3 p.m. The Children's Chorus of Springfield with special guests, the Central High School Madrigals. Trinity United Methodist Church, Springfield. www.childrenschorusofspringfield.org

December, 2011

Saturday, December 3, 2011 at 4 p.m.

Novi Cantori performs their Christmas concert at First Congregational Church, Westfield. www.novicantori.org

Saturday, December 3, 2011, evening TBA

Schola Nova performs their service of Lessons and Carols at Blessed Sacrament Church, Holyoke. www.scholanova.org

Sunday, December 4, 2011 at 4 p.m.

Novi Cantori performs their Christmas concert at St. Stanislaus Basilica, Chicopee. www.novicantori.org

Sunday, December 4, 2011 at 3 p.m.

Schola Nova performs their service of Lessons and Carols at the Church in the Acres, Springfield. www.scholanova.org

Tuesday, December 6, 2011 at 10:30 a.m.

The Tuesday Morning Music Club presents Becky Isaacson, organ, Eileen Ruby, mezzo-soprano, and the Page singers of Bay Path College, Michael Rheault, Director, at Trinity United Methodist Church, Springfield. www.tuesdaymorningmusicconcerts.org

Sunday, December 11, 2011 at 1 p.m.

Novi Cantori performs their Christmas concert at the Old Meetinghouse, Granville. www.novicantori.org

Sunday, December 11, 2011 at 2 p.m.

The Holyoke High School Madrigal Singers and Bell Choir perform at United Congregational Church, Holyoke. www.uccholyoke.org

Sunday, December 18, 2011 at 3 p.m.

The Springfield Symphony Youth Orchestra plays a "Messiah" sing at Christ Church Cathedral, Springfield. Presented by City Music Springfield. www.sococho.org

CHIFF CHAT

American Guild of Organists Springfield, MA Chapter

Larry Picard, Newsletter Editor
173 Thompson Street
Springfield, MA 01109-4036

Springfield Chapter Leadership

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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@springfieldago.org. Submissions are due by the 20th of each month. Also, visit our website at www.springfieldago.org!

***November Chapter Event: Organ crawl and Evensong in
Greenfield, Saturday, November 6 at 2:30 p.m. (see p. 2)***