

Chiff Chat

Springfield, Massachusetts Chapter
American Guild of Organists
February 2012



A message from the Dean...

"Lord now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation..." These familiar words, known since the middle ages as the *Nunc Dimittis*, are frequently sung as part of the liturgy, usually after communion. Originally, they were said by Simeon, an old man who was hanging around the temple with an even older woman named Anna (old people hanging around the church...sound familiar?) and it had been promised to him that he would see the Messiah before he died. When he saw the child Jesus in the temple, his exit strategy had been fulfilled and he could die in peace. It was an appropriate gospel lesson for January 1.

As we exit the year 2011 and make the transition into 2012, I hope that you, too, have an exit strategy. Whether exiting from one year to another, from one job to another, from one relationship to another... or even exiting from this life... it's important to depart with class. Assess what you did that was good in 2011 and make a list for improvement in 2012. Tell your boss up front that you are leaving, tidy up the files and offer to help train the replacement. Relationships are trickier but there are classy

ways to take the blame of dysfunction upon yourself and ease the pain by providing comforting words and making sure the bills are all paid.

The toughest exit is the final one. Everyone has great life style but have you thought about a death style? We were all saddened to hear of Rod Gisick's death this past week. Rod, the guy who organed and choir mastered and served on the AGO board. Rod, the guy who was a tremendous musical force in the Valley for many years and gave it all up to run off to the Philippines and follow his bliss. Rod, who evidently found out he had an aneurism, and played his Christmas Eve services anyway; I'll bet the music was glorious. After the final notes were played, the congregation disbursed and the candles snuffed, Rod, his musical affairs in order, exited this life. In his play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Tom Stoppard has the line, "Every exit is an entrance somewhere else". It's a tremendously Christian maxim if you think about it. You can bet that Rod's entrance into his next life will have class because his exit from this one certainly did. - **Martha**

Chapter events for 2012...

Monday, March 5, 2012, at 6:00 pm at Grace Lutheran Church, West Springfield:
Pastor-Organist Dinner, Eileen Guenther, AGO President, Guest Speaker (see insert)

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:
Hymn/Choral Festival with Allan Taylor, Director and Becky Isaacson, organist

Friday, June 15, 2012, 6:00 pm at Delaney House, Holyoke: Annual Meeting & Banquet (Cost \$40)

Springfield Chapter Leadership

Dean	Martha Sienkiewicz
Sub Dean	Don Hooton
Secretary	Mary Jeanne Tash
Treasurer	James Barnes
Directors	Quentin Faulkner, Alan Dickinson, Mark Jacobson, Roger LaCross, Elizabeth Dawson, Lori Bourret
Chaplain	Fr. William Wallis
Education	Martha Sienkiewicz, Don Hooton
Membership	Karen Banta
Chiff Chat Editor	Larry Picard
Web Site	Allan Taylor
Investments	Charles Page, E Lary Grossman, William Czelusniak, James Barnes

Position open: First Church of Christ, Congregational, 81 High Street Suffield, CT 06078
Contact: Anita Wardell, Chairperson of the Worship Ministry Team, 860-660-1477
awardell@cox.net. Approximately 10 hours per week, Adult Choir rehearsal Wednesday 7:00-9:00p.m. Service of Worship Sunday 10:00a.m. Interface and coordinate with directors of Youth and Handbells, Section Leaders and Soloists. Salary shall be based on AGO guidelines. Gress-Miles tracker organ, three manuals, 62 stops, restored by Andover In 2010.

Nunc dimittis...



Rod Gisick, former First Church of Amherst organist and choir director and Springfield AGO member, passed away sometime on Christmas night in the Philippines. He apparently suffered a heart attack or stroke as he was going through his apartment, which had been badly damaged in a fire on Christmas Eve or early Christmas morning there. There will be a memorial service on Saturday, February 18, at 2 pm, at First Congregational, Amherst. There is a memorial website at <http://rodney.gisick.muchloved.com/>.



Stanley Gauger passed away January 3. He was a graduate of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY where was a classmate of Bob Swan and Bob Glasgow. After graduating from Eastman, he taught for almost 40 years at the Allen-Stevenson School in New York City, a private school for boys grades K-9. Stan was director of music for the school and was responsible for the founding of the Allen-Stevenson Orchestra which continues to this day at the school. He directed the orchestra, taught music classes, gave private lessons and directed a Gilbert and Sullivan production for the School every spring. He moved to this area over 20 years ago and had been a member of the Springfield Chapter for many years.

Father Frank Darling, a priest in the Greenfield area and "friend" to the chapter for many years, died recently. No other details were available at the time of this printing. New York City organist **Gerre Hancock**, an honorary member of the Springfield Chapter AGO, died January 21 in Texas.

Yearbook addenda: Karen Banta is NOT a substitute organist as listed in the yearbook. She is most happily employed as minister of music at St. Phillip's Episcopal Church in Easthampton. (Tel: 527-0862)

Upcoming Events:

February, 2011

Saturday, February 4, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

The fourth annual Show Your Heart Benefit Concert at St. Michael's Cathedral in Springfield. Proceeds will go to Baystate Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice. Performances by the Cathedral Choir of Boys and Adults, the Greater Westfield Choral Association, the Accidentals, Klaus Becker, John Nisbet and Lad Pfeifer, Director of the CCBA. Suggested donation \$10, Students and seniors \$5. 413-452-0839. www.diospringfield.org

Tuesday, February 7, 2012 at 10:30 a.m.

The Tuesday Morning Music Club presents Marc Weiner, tenor, Zeke Hecker, oboe and Larry Picard, organ and piano at Trinity United Methodist Church, Springfield. \$10 www.tuesdaymorningmusicconcerts.org

Sunday, February 12, 2012, at 3:00 p.m.

The Brick Church Music Series at the First Church of Deerfield presents Michael Dulac, organ. Works by Sark, Walther, Elmore, Fagioni, Krebs, and Bach. Suggested donation \$10. 413-774-2657. www.firstchurchofdeerfield.org

Sunday, February 12, 2012 at 3:00 p.m.

City Music Springfield presents a trio version of Saint Saëns "Carnival of the Animals" with Kavan Rambukwelle, violin, Jennifer Allen, cello, Larry Picard, piano, and Jayne Newirth, narrator at South Congregational Church, Springfield. Free-will offering. 413-732-0117 or www.sococh.org.

Sunday, February 12, 2012 at 4:00 p.m.

"The Inner World of Feeling: Organ and Vocal Music of J.S. Bach" with Christa Rakich, organist and Miranda Bergmeier, soprano. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church 67 East Street, Pittsfield. \$25 regular or \$20 for BBS and AGO Members; Students Free Tickets available at the door. www.berkshirebach.org

Wednesday, February 15, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.

Smith College sponsors the silent movie,

"Waxworks," at John M. Greene Hall with Peter Krasinski at the organ. Free and open to the public. This is part of a Kahn Liberal Arts Institute project on evil and its function in various places and times. More info at: <http://www.smith.edu/kahninstitute/evil.php>

Tuesday, February 21, 2012 at 10:30 a.m.

The Tuesday Morning Music Club presents Carey Larsen, soprano, Greg Snedeker, cello and Estela Olevsky, at Trinity United Methodist Church, Springfield. \$10 www.tuesdaymorningmusicconcerts.org

March, 2012

Sunday, March 4, 2012 at 2:00 p.m.

The Tuesday Morning Music Club presents a program of music performed by members of the Junior Extension of that organization at United Methodist Church, Springfield. No admission charge. www.tuesdaymorningmusicconcerts.org

Monday, March 5, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.

(Chapter Event): Pastor-Organist Dinner, Eileen Guenther, AGO President, Guest Speaker at Grace Lutheran Church, West Springfield (see insert).

Sunday, March 11, 2012 at 2:00 p.m.

The Mount Holyoke Chamber Singers with Lindsay Pope, Interim Director, perform at United Congregational Church, Holyoke. www.uccholyoke.org

Sunday, March 11, 2012 at 3:00 p.m.

The Brick Church Music Series at the First Church of Deerfield presents Christa Rakich playing the Richards & Fowkes tracker organ. Pieces by Bach, Woodman, Dahl, Sanders and Rakich. Suggested donation \$10. For further info: 413-774-2657. www.firstchurchofdeerfield.org

Tuesday, March 20, 2012 at 10:30 a.m.

The Tuesday Morning Music Club presents Janet Dixon-Metcalf, flute, and Margarita Nuller, piano, at Trinity United Methodist Church, Springfield. \$10 www.tuesdaymorningmusicconcerts.org

A member portrayal: Quentin Faulkner



Bach's *Art of Fugue*: Ticket to a Career

It was Leonard Bernstein's TV program on Bach (part of his "Joy of Music" series) that really turned me on to Bach's music. Of course I'd studied piano and played some of Bach's smaller works, but until then I had no idea as to the magnitude of his genius. By then I was in high school, and I was beginning to fiddle around on the church organ, so I decided to seek out some of Bach's organ works. We lived a couple of miles from a large music store that I used to visit occasionally, so I biked on over and was led to a drawer full of scores of Bach's music—**big** scores with correspondingly **big** prices!

I pawed through the drawer until I came across a volume that only cost \$3. I had \$3, so I bought it. I didn't have a clue what it was, but the title page read: *Art of Fugue* by J.S. Bach, edited by E. Power Biggs. Over the next year or so I began to learn the first piece. It was slow going without a teacher, but I got to the place that I could play it

tolerably—at a slow tempo, of course. (The first few fugues in the collection aren't all that technically difficult.) But there was one spot, about 2/3 of the way through, where the pedal began to move in eighth-notes—waaay beyond my capacities!

A year or two later, having decided to pursue studies in organ and church music (I howl now at my naïveté!), I found myself in the first week of my freshman year at Westminster Choir College, Princeton, NJ. Imagine my fright when I heard that all entering organ majors had to play an audition for placement with a teacher! Nobody had told me about this! (This was 1961—back in the dark ages!) What in the world did I have to play???. Ah, yes—that "Art of Fugue" thing! Dr. Alexander McCurdy, the head of the organ department, asked me (in his famous squeaky tenor voice) "Well, Mr. Faulkner, what are you going to play?" I told him, he pulled some stops for me, and I took off (at a verrrry slow tempo!) All things considered, things were going pretty well—BUT: that spot where I always broke down was looming ever nearer. Dr. McCurdy stopped me precisely 2 measures before it!

When I think of the incident now, I wonder what Dr. McCurdy thought when a green-horn, wet-behind-the-ears freshman marched in and announced he was going to play the first Contrapunctus from Bach's *Art of Fugue*. I'm reasonably sure no entering student had ever played such an audition before! As a result, I was assigned to one of the more demanding teachers in the school. The rest is history.

So you see, I'm grateful to J.S. Bach not only for his glorious music—I'm indebted to him for enabling me to spend my entire life doing what I love to do! - **Quentin Faulkner**

PASTOR-ORGANIST DINNER

Monday, March 5 at 6 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church
1552 Westfield St. West Springfield.

Cost is \$20 per person. Come with or without your clergy person.



Featured speaker is Eileen Guenther, president of the American Guild of Organists.

Menu will include appetizers, fresh green salad, chicken marsala, rice pilaf, green beans, rolls, dessert, wine, coffee/tea and a vegetarian option (seitan marsala).

Email your reservations to martha@sienkiewicz.org, or phone Martha at 413 568-8033 (pay at door) or use the form below and mail with check. Deadline: February 27. Don't delay--do it today!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____ Email: _____

Number of persons attending _____

Vegetarian option? _____

Check enclosed for \$_____

Mail to: Martha Sienkiewicz, 760 Pochassic Rd., Westfield, MA 01085-1519

CHIFF CHAT

**American Guild of Organists
Springfield, MA Chapter**

Larry Picard, Newsletter Editor
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Springfield, MA 01109-4036

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!

March Chapter Event: Pastor/Organist dinner with Eileen Guenther, AGO National president, at Grace Lutheran Church, West Springfield, Monday, March 5 at 6 p.m.