

Chiff Chat **February 2021**



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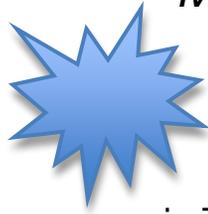
Karen Banta

Chaplain:

Rev. William H. Wallis

Welcome to our Springfield Guild's 75th Anniversary year! The circumstances of the pandemic have made celebrating a challenge but we have plans for some proper events in the Fall. Our actual anniversary date is Nov. 1. Meanwhile, like everyone else, we are enjoying a variety of virtual events. Monthly, there is a 'happy chat' on Zoom and we would like to encourage all to join in. The next chat is on Sunday, Feb. 7 at 5 pm. Details can be found elsewhere in this newsletter and on our website. Another wonderful event that we participated in was a link to our partners in the UK at the Northampton District Organists Association (NDOA) on Sat. Jan. 16 at 12 noon (they met at 5 pm) The subject was a presentation by two fine organists, Anne Marsden Thomas and Frederick Stocken, on their newly published book "The New Oxford Organ Method". You missed it if you weren't there. It was a delightful hour of learning followed by an informal zoom chat of discovering our new partners. Finally, this busy month closed with a virtual Leadership Conference for our board members sponsored by the national AGO, which discussed all sorts of ideas for staying connected to the membership in these difficult times. Do check the national website (AGOHQ) for many notices of virtual learning and concerts. Looking ahead, there will certainly be a banquet, a member's recital and a major organ concert in the Fall. Stay safe and stay tuned.

Membership Profile



Cyrus T. Arwade is member. Cyrus is

the organ. I'm told
AGO member who lives

the Guild's newest and youngest

10 years old and interested in playing
his grandfather, Thomas Clark, is an

in Tucson, AZ where he is a congregant at

St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church. He is a longtime member of the
Guild and gave Cyrus a membership to the Guild as a gift. What a great idea!

(Maybe there's young piano student in your life that might benefit from such a
gift??)

During normal times, Cyrus attends Amherst public schools, but during this
pandemic he's on sabbatical with his parents in Vermont, attending there. Cyrus
preferred to write his answers to the interview questions via email...so along with
the support of his mother, Meri Clark, here's what transpired...

How/when did you get interested in playing the organ?

I got interested in the organ because I play the piano and we are friends with
the organist at church.

Have you taken lessons in piano or organ? Who was/is your teacher?

I do take lessons on the piano and my teacher is Laura Pierce.

What is your favorite song to play?

My favorite song is God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, I can play it with my eyes
closed!

What is it about the organ that makes you excited?

I like the very big sound and the foot pedals.

Where do you go to school? In what grade?

My parents are on sabbatical and we are in Craftsbury, VT, so I go to school
there, I used to go to Fort River Elementary, Amherst, MA, public schools.

When you are not practicing, what other kinds of things do you like to do?

I love to play baseball and cross-country ski.

Editorial note: This interviewer was M. Sienkiewicz.

Cyrus T. Arwade



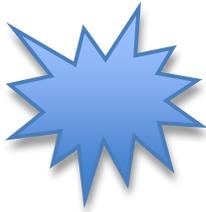
75th Anniversary History Chat

Some time ago, I asked Louise Amerman about her recollections of the beginnings of our AGO chapter. Here's what she wrote:

The whole business was begun by Ruth Perry. She was the organist at Longmeadow Congregational Church and a driving force. In the first years, she got the group chartered by national and ran the show. When Virginia Ring was Dean, she would write notes after each event and send them out as a little newsletter. It was she who called these notes Chiff Chat. She was such a delightful person that she served an unusual 3 year term as Dean. No one wanted her to leave. Warren Amerman was Dean twice 1980-1982 and again 1986-1987. Warren was Dean during the great 1987 Regional Convention which was headlined by the Canterbury Choir and Guy Bovet, drew a great crowd and when it was all over, our chapter found itself \$40,000 richer which was invested and today stands at \$92,000. [our investment today is well over \$100,000]

Do you have recollections of the Springfield AGO from the past? Please write them down and send them to: martha@sienkiewicz.org This column will be a regular feature this year

Our Next AGO Chapter Event



Message from Dianne Rechel

Hello All!

As we continue down this road of never-seen-in-our-lifetime pandemics and a re-imagined Lenten season, your Springfield AGO chapter is bringing you something that we think you will find hopeful and exciting!.

Join us on **Sunday, February 7th** from **5:00-6:15PM** for a fascinating experience via Zoom. You will have the opportunity to meet and chat with other organists. Then our special guest will be Ed Clark, Minister of Music at First Church of Farmington, CT. He will show us his Hauptwerk setup and five organs. He has a fascinating home studio of multiple keyboard instruments. He will share his pre-recorded demo, avoiding the delay time it takes for the computer to load each organ. He will be on live to follow up with questions and answers. You will see how, from one's living room, you can play your choice of organs around the world!

Here is a bit about Ed:

Mr. Clark has been Minister of Music at the historic First Church of Christ, Congregational, Farmington since 1965. He is organist for the Hartford Symphony Orchestra and has been featured in the symphony's performances of the Saint-Saens *Organ Symphony*. For over twenty years he was a member of the organ and harpsichord faculty at the Hartt School of Music, University of Hartford. He has recently rejoined the Hartt faculty teaching continuo playing courses. He has made frequent appearances with the CT Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra, Arcadia Players Baroque Orchestra, the Springfield Symphony, Orchestra New England, the Hartford Chorale,

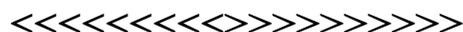
CONCORA, Chorus Angelicus and the Connecticut Choral Society as well as with numerous church choirs. He has performed in recital and with chamber music groups throughout the Northeast. Mr. Clark has been active in the American Guild of Organists, serving as Dean of the Hartford Chapter, education and exam coordinator, judge for local and regional young organist competitions, and currently as the newsletter editor/publisher. He is a founding member of the United Church of Christ Musician's Association, has edited and published program books for its biennial summer conferences and serves as its webmaster. Mr. Clark has made a number of trips studying historic organs of Argentina, Mexico, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. His home instrument collection includes a two manual Franco-Flemish style harpsichord by Carl Fudge, a single manual south German style harpsichord by Carl Dudash, a lautenwerk converted from a Zuckerman Flemish harpsichord, a Hubert style clavichord built by Mr. Clark from a Carl Fudge kit, a Klop continuo organ, a three manual Hauptwerk virtual organ, and a Baldwin grand piano.

We are thrilled to bring Mr. Clark to you! We hope to see you there.

Please indicate your interest in attending by emailing agospringfieldma@gmail.com and the Zoom link will be sent to you.

And if you are a Facebook user, please help us by liking and sharing our page! Much appreciated.

<https://www.facebook.com/Springfield-MA-Chapter-American-Guild-of-Organists-104287924505234/>



Message from Lori Bourret: A survey from your Springfield AGO Board will soon be in your email box. If you do not have email, please contact me, and the postal service will deliver one to you.

We of your Springfield AGO Board are working to schedule online programming that is of interest to you, and we would appreciate your input. What do you desire from your local AGO chapter? Your responses will help the Board to schedule events/programs for your benefit.

Learning to use SurveyMonkey was quite a process done with the help of my Tech Assistant, Bob. Please spend a few moments to complete and return the brief survey. Thanks! Maybe your dream event will materialize!

Lori Bourret
lopobo@cox.net or 860-749-9155



AN ANNIVERSARY GIFT TO ALL MEMBERS

We have a history and a future to celebrate! The 75th anniversary of the Springfield Chapter is November 1, 2021. Jim Barnes, our treasurer, proposed a generous idea to the board, and we have voted yes. Here is your gift: the chapter treasury will pay the 2021 dues of renewing and new members. Wow! This is a gift for you of up to \$105, depending upon your membership category.

The process to implement this gift is being worked out between Jim Barnes and staff at AGO national headquarters. Most likely, you will be able to renew or join without any payment upfront. However, anyone who happens to pay during 2021, such as a new member, will be reimbursed by the Springfield Chapter. Stay tuned!

Karen Banta, Secretary



Sister Cities and Sister Chapters? Read ON!!

Northampton District Organists Association Northampton, UK
Mr. Richard Tapp, president of NDOA, contacted us through our website and presented a proposal that we might partner with them and share our mutual ideas. He chose us because they are already acquainted with Northampton, MA and desired to know more about the organ 'scene' in the area of their namesake. Here's what he wrote:

“I wonder if I am right in thinking that your Chapter covers Northampton, MA? If so, would you allow me to produce an article for our Newsletter about your Chapter, using information from your website? We are celebrating our centenary year in 2021 and I see you also have a special anniversary.”

Delighted to hear that we both have anniversaries, the Board responded enthusiastically. Elsewhere in this newsletter is posted the article they published about our chapter. We were then invited and attended via zoom their event exploring “The New Oxford Organ Method” led by the authors Anne Marsden Thomas and Frederick Stocken. Here’s a link to their website;

www.northamptonorganists.org.uk

We certainly hope to invite them soon to an event of ours. Plans are being made, not only to get to know these new partners but perhaps by virtual acquaintance other guild chapters near us such as Hartford or Berkshire. Check the website for future announcements: agospringfieldma.org

And Here is what the
Northampton District Organist
Association has to say about us! :)

Springfield AGO

Pioneer Valley Massachusetts - Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

Members may well be familiar with Northampton’s namesake in Massachusetts - Northampton MA - but did you know that it also has an active and thriving organist community, served by the Springfield Chapter of the American Guild of Organists?

Northampton is a city of around 30,000 people, and home to the historic Smith College. Springfield itself is only 20 miles from Northampton, and the Chapter area of Pioneer Valley covers a number of other local cities. Like NDOA, the Chapter is itself celebrating a milestone anniversary this year - 75 years in its case - and like us, it is finding new ways to meet whilst it is difficult or impossible to carry out physical events.

A look at Springfield’s website shows it is a very active Chapter, hosting many events and meetings in normal times, and more than making up for the disruption of Covid with online recitals and Zoom calls . Just before lockdown, the Chapter ran an Introduction to Pipe Organ for Pianists event at St John’s Episcopal church in Northampton. - it would be lovely to think our own Reluctant Organists’ Day planned for November at Hardwick would have such an excellent turnout (pictured, below).

There's a regular newsletter - Chiff Chaff, and some fascinating events have been held, including Pedals, Pipes and Pizza, a silent movie night, and a Pastor-Organist Dinner - what a good idea! The last Installation of Officers was combined with an Anthem Reading, where members brought favourite anthems and sang through them with guidance from the member who brought them. Like us, too, the Chapter holds a Members' Recital, encouraging music for organ with other instruments and voices.



In lockdown, the Chapter's Zoom Happy Chat events have ranged from 'How are our non-church music endeavours going' through 'piano music that works well in church services' and 'how to plan church music for the holidays' - and an online Happy Chat Party! Local events include livestreams of a Wednesday online Recital Series, including recitals from the Flentrop Organ at Oberlin Conservatory and St John's Episcopal Church in Hartford.

*Introduction to Pipe Organ for Pianists
St. John Episcopal Church, Northampton*

The Springfield Chapter is led by its Dean, Martha Sienkiewicz, its Treasurer James Barnes and Secretary Karen Banta, together with a Board of Directors. The Chapter is clearly very responsive - your Editor's email to the website was answered within minutes by Joe Geehern, one of the Directors, followed rapidly by emails from two others including the Dean. Very impressive! Like us, the Chapter advertises organist positions in its area, and offers help with cover for members, and clearly its Board and members put a huge amount of work into the running of the Chapter, into promoting the organ to new members - and also to making converts of pianists and 'reluctant' keyboard players. St John's Episcopal Church in Northampton boasts a three-manual Austin organ of 38 ranks, and the Organ Historical Society's Pipe Organ Database records that Northampton has some 25 instruments - six of them at Smith College, as well as St John's just outside the campus.



In fact, five or six of the Northampton instruments hail from Austin Organs - and that brings to light another connection with our own county. Austin Organs has been based in Woodland Street in Hartford, Connecticut - some 25 miles from Northampton MA - since 1899.

Austin Organs was founded by John Turnell Austin, who emigrated from Northamptonshire in 1889, together with his brother Basil. John developed the unique and patented universal air chest system, which is still in use today, and of course worked with Robert Hope-Jones.

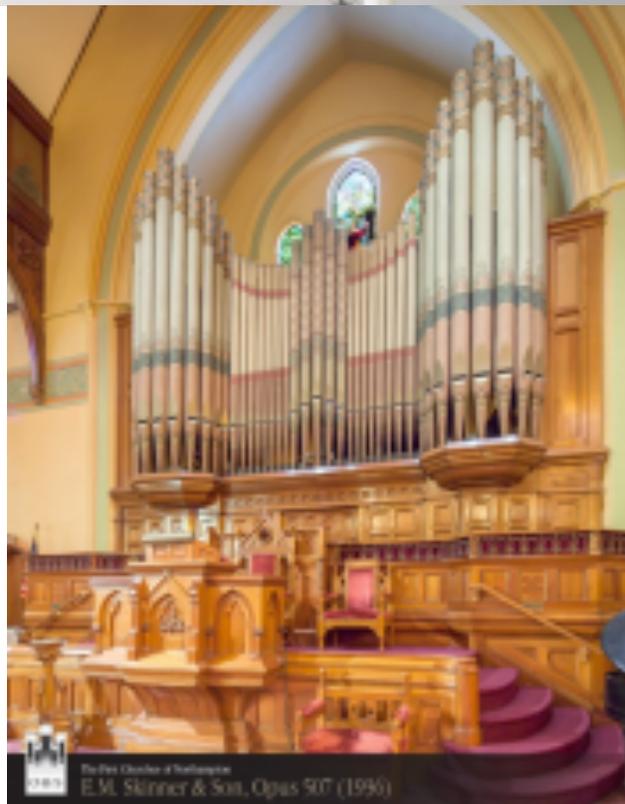
There are still Austin organs locally to us too - the organ at Denton is believed to have been built by J T Austin's father, whilst the organ at Rushden Baptist Church was built by Austin in the US and employs the universal air chest system, having been restored to an excellent standard in recent years. There is much more to be said about Austin Organs - perhaps the subject of a future article.

Sincere thanks are due to our friends at the Springfield Chapter of the AGO for their help in compiling this article, and their permission to use material from their website. We do hope you will have enjoyed learning about all their work - and that if any of their members are ever in 'our' Northampton we will be able to welcome them and let us tell them something about NDOA in return.

You can read all about the Springfield Chapter at agospringfieldma.org, and the American Guild of Organists at agohq.org. More details about Austin Organs can be found at www.austinorgans.com. Livestream recitals from St John's Episcopal Church, Hartford CT can be found at reddoormusic.org.

Pictured below, top to bottom: the AEolian-Skinner Opus 1295/A at Helen Hills Chapel, Smith College, Northampton MA, the E M Skinner & Son Opus 507 from 1936 in the

First Churches of Northampton. Churches of Northampton. And the Austin organ at St John's Episcopal Church, Northampton, MA



A Service of Witness to the Resurrection

CHARLES E. PAGE

JULY 26, 1937 — NOVEMBER 30, 2020



We were all saddened by the news of the passing of Charles Page. The first program that I (Jim Barnes) attended as a member was his presentation on hymn improvisation about 12 years ago. When the obituary was published it showed that a memorial service would be held in Naples, FL. on Saturday January 23, 2021, and that donations could be made to The Community Music School of Springfield and to The Community Foundation of Western MA (for maintaining the organ at Old First Church).

As you may know my husband John Hutchison and I own a condo in Pompano Beach FL. John winters there and I fly down to visit once a month. By coincidence I would be in Florida the day of the memorial service. We drove to Naples and entered the church. This is a picture of the sanctuary.



From the Church's website, the organ has 57 stops, 75 ranks and 4,315 pipes.

We greeted Malcolm and offered our condolences. We told him that the Chapter had voted to give \$250 to both The Community Music School and the Community Foundation.

Four local organists and a soloist provided the music. The Pastor and Mike Foley offered some remembrances. Mike made references to places in our area, such as The Fort restaurant in Springfield and the roller coaster at Lake Compounce.

After the service there was a luncheon in the courtyard of the church. We met some of Charles's/Malcolm's friends, some of whom are "snowbirds" like John. We said good-bye to Malcolm and headed back to Pompano Beach.

submitted by Jim Barnes

ORGAN ACADEMY

Our chapter provides financial assistance to anyone wishing to take organ lessons. This might be a good time to consider doing so. We currently have three students of all ages studying through the Organ Academy. They are
Margaret Patel studying with Klaus Becker, teacher
Paul Dinan studying with Joe DeMarino, teacher
Dianne Rechel studying with Scott Lamlein, teacher
If you are interested in applying for the Organ Academy, please contact us through the website with your information and an application will be sent to you. This opportunity is for members only.

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