



Chiff Chat

April 2021

Dean:

Martha Sienkiewicz

Directors:

Klaus Becker

Lori Bourret

Joe Geehern

Dianne Rechel

Treasurer:

James Barnes

Secretary:

Karen Banta

Chaplain:

Rev. William H. Wallis

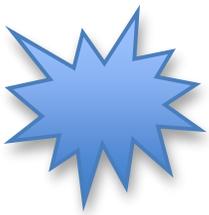
Dean's Message

This coming year is historic for the Springfield AGO which was established 75 years ago on November 1st. A list of all former Deans is included in this newsletter. The charter indicates that every AGO chapter must have at least 3 officers: Dean, Secretary and Treasurer. Our chapter presently has these three officers, (Martha, Karen and Jim) PLUS (lucky us!) 4 fine board members: Dianne, Lori, Joe and Klaus. We also have a skilled Chiff Chat editor (Lad) and a wonderful chaplain (Fr. William Wallis). Most terms are for two years, although some have stayed on for many more years in order to keep things going. Some years we have had sub-deans and up to seven board members. Extra positions can be added or eliminated as the Chapter expands or contracts. I'm telling you all this because our charter also states that we are bound by the charter to hold a biennial election in even years. We have not done

so the last two terms because we were just beating the bushes to find volunteers. The plan is in place to hold an election in April next year. All present members of the board have agreed to stay until then. Here's where you come in: we need people to step up and serve a term in running the chapter. Anyone interested in understudying how the present board is operating is hereby cordially invited to join the board for the upcoming season Fall 2021-Spring 2022. Simply go to the website (agospringfieldma.org) click on "contact us" and submit your name. All others, please think seriously about how you can help to keep the guild alive into the next 75 years.

SPRINGFIELD MA CHAPTER AGO DEANS

1946-1948 Ruth A. Perry	1982-1984 Richard Bennett
1948-1949 Charles Schilling	1984-1986 Peter Beardsley
1949-1951 Anna Callahan	1986-1987 Warren Amerman
1951-1952 Frederick E. Aggerup	1987-1989 Allan Taylor
1952-1954 Eleanor C. Toussaint	1989-1991 Ladislav Pfeifer
1954-1955 Ruth A. Perry	1991-1993 Michael Dulac
1955-1957 Philip O. Buddington	1993-1995 Allan Sittard
1957-1959 G. Leland Nichols	1995-1997 Charles Beeler
1959-1961 Lawrence R. Buddington	1997-1999 Donald Hooton
1961-1962 Lee Flathers	1999-2001 Carol Spinelli
1962-1964 Charles E. Page	2001-2003 Larry Schipull
1964-1966 Lewis G. Martin	2003-2005 Bill Czelusniak
1966-1969 Virginia N. Ring	2005-2007 E. Lary Grossman
1969-1971 Myrtle Regier	2007-2008 Ronald Trunzo
1971-1973 Franklin P. Taplin	2008-2010 Grant Moss
1973-1974 Lawrence R. Buddington	2010-2012 Martha Sienkiewicz
1974-1975 Elizabeth H. Kirk	2012-2014 Donald Hooton
1975-1977 John E. Cheney	2014-2016 Ladislav Pfeifer
1977-1978 Alan C. Dickinson	2016-2018 Lawrence Picard
1978-1980 Barbara Conant	2018-2020 Joseph Geehern
1980-1982 Warren Amerman	2020-2022 Martha Sienkiewicz



Membership Survey Results

Thanks to the fourteen members of our chapter who completed the recent survey! You made a significant contribution to shaping the future of the AGO! Keep in mind that chapter members are (always) welcome to communicate their concerns and ideas to the Board at any time.

(*Tremolo*, please...) The following is a summary of the survey results! Most respondents enjoy the camaraderie and education of Happy Chats. Suggested Chat topics include concerns about our current times, what other chapters are doing, sharing favorite music, resources for locating music, performance tips and asking advice from fellow members. Requested event and program topics include learning, practicing, pedaling and performance techniques, choosing registration, hymn playing, including ways to “dress-up” hymns, basics of organ mechanics, composers of organ music and working with pastors. Desired recitalists range from students of members to world-class professional organists. Activities that you would like to do include organ recitals featuring beginning organists to advanced players, classes and workshops about hymn playing, registration selection, improvisation, specifics of playing tracker organs, organ crawls, anthem sings, music swaps, combined-choir events, bell choir workshops and optimizing communication with pastors. How about sharing delicious refreshments or a meal with friendly colleagues at some of these events when it is safe to do so?

When shall we meet? Saturday and Sunday afternoons are the most preferred times. See you then!

Lori Bourret

75th Anniversary History Chat

by Alan Dickinson, PhD

An AGO event that comes to my mind was probably not considered one of our major events, but for me personally, it was indeed historic. It was in the fall of 1967 and was, I believe, the first Springfield Chapter AGO meeting I ever attended. I had been invited by Larry Buddington who was a physics teacher at Springfield Technical High School where I was teaching chemistry. Larry was also the organist/choir director at Bethesda Lutheran Church, of which I was a member. The event was a Saturday workshop on choir directing and vocal techniques presented by Olive Thompson and held at Bethesda Church. Olive was introduced by the dean, Virginia Ring, and during a break Ginny came over and greeted me with the question: “And what is *your* interest in the guild?” I had studied organ in my high school years and had done some substituting, but while I had sung in choirs from 3rd grade through college, I had no experience in choir directing. Olive Thompson’s informative and inspiring presentation that day, together with encouragement from Ginny and Larry, prompted me to start applying and in January of

1968 I became the organist and choir director at Somers Congregational Church, the first of my three positions. Interestingly, my second position was at Grace Union Church in Wilbraham, and I was followed there by none other than Olive Thompson!



Photo of Alan Dickinson

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

Member Profiles

Springfield AGO chapter sparks interest from two prodigies!

These two girls, twin sisters Kelly and Kathy Roqueza, got their start on the organ at our Introduction to Pipe Organ event last February 29, 2020. It took place at St. John's in Northampton where we were guests of Grant Moss. The Roquezas were among the 21 students that day who tried the organ for the first time. That is also when they met their teacher, Springfield Chapter member Scott Lamlein. Our chapter is responsible

for bringing them to this new instrument which they continued to study though the pandemic. Here is a video clip of each of them performing for you. Give a listen! We can be proud that our chapter is truly expanding our mission of sharing with others the glories of the King of Instruments!

Please click on the link below to watch the youtube interview and performance!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THD1BQfMrEs>

The Dean's Interview with Todd Beckham

Meet Todd Beckham. Todd is the organist and choirmaster for Christ Church Episcopal Cathedral in Springfield. He accepted the position and moved here from Hawaii in October 2019. So the first question was why come to New England from Hawaii?

Todd was located in Falmouth, MA Cape Cod in 2016 and was serving at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church. His new wife, Jennifer (they've been married 5 years), was working at NOAA North East Fisheries in Woods Hole and got a job offer from NOAA Hawaii that was too good to refuse. So in the spirit of adventure, off they went to Hawaii. Todd went totally unemployed, but was hired immediately as a staff singer and substitute organist at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. Andrew in Honolulu and soon got very involved in the entire scene. When they left Hawaii, he was Music Director of the Cathedral and organist or accompanist for several major institutions including Hawaii Pacific University, Kamehameha School and St. Andrew's Priory School. Family ties and an aging parent called them to come back to this area.

How have you acclimated to this new position with the Cathedral and Western MA?

Five months into the responsibility of a major Cathedral, Todd found himself ambushed by Covid 19 restrictions. He was barely getting to know the choir and the people when everything shut down. Currently, they are streaming live from the Sanctuary with just one or two voices; the congregation is virtual. The challenges are the same ones many of us face: aging choir members, trying to reach out to younger people, designing programs to reach a new and diverse generation. Todd and Jennifer like the area and she has accepted the position of Academic Coordinator for the music department at Mt. Holyoke College. She also sings as a cantor at Christ Church Cathedral and with the Illuminati vocal ensemble.

Have you always been Episcopalian? "No. I was born in Pennsylvania and raised American Baptist. Since then, I've really had a tour of various denominations and Jewish temples, but I've been an Episcopalian since 1996 when I was received by Bishop Barbara Harris into the Episcopal Church." While he was touring the religions,

Todd also seems to have been touring the country/world. South Carolina, Ohio, Boston and the UK were mentioned. He seems to like the adventure of life...

Finally, what do you see for the future?

At this Todd's eyes got excited and he became quite animated. There are two great plans in the works which will be of interest for our chapter. The first plan which Todd already had in mind when he first came is a choir tour of the UK, especially to visit Holy Trinity in Stratford-on-Avon (Shakespeare's church) and a choir residency in Truro, Cornwall where Todd has personal contacts. A professional tour group will handle the arrangements and Todd wishes to open it to any interested AGO chapter member who would like to join the choir. The projected date is 2023. The second plan is one acquired when he learned from Bill Czelusniak of the rare historic Whiting Chamber organ that has been re-installed from Otis, MA to the Cathedral under the auspices of the Episcopal diocese and the skills of Czelusniak et Dugal. A Dedication of this authentic piece of history (1833) will take place when it is safe to do so. Stay tuned.

This was a delightful interview with a very engaging gentleman. The chapter wishes him all the best in his mission at the Cathedral and we plan to help support his programs of interest that match the Guild's vision to promote and educate all things Organ.



Photo of Todd & Jennifer Beckham

A Review by Dianne Rechel: On Sunday February 7th a group of AGO members gathered via the miracles of Zoom for a fascinating experience. First we had the opportunity to meet and chat with other organists from various chapters. Then our special guest was Ed Clark, Minister of Music at First Church of Farmington, CT. He demonstrated his Hauptwerk setup with its five organs. He described how he was able to procure the various components and put them together. He has an elaborate home studio of multiple keyboard instruments. He shared a beautiful pre-recorded performance, avoiding the possibility of delay time or technical glitches. The performance was paired with photographs and other visuals. He then fielded live questions and answers. We saw how, from one's living room, you can play your choice of organs around the world!

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 were thrilled to bring Mr. Clark to you and are very grateful that he was able to share his expertise! Thanks, Ed!

This zoom event was attended by nearly 50 participants from the Springfield Chapter and our partner chapter NDOA from the UK, including one brave chap who joined live from New Zealand.

After some technical difficulties at the start (what else is new eh?), Bill fascinated his audience with images and details about his world of organs and city of Northampton. The event was recorded for those who could not attend and can be found on Youtube, but only through the link given below which you are welcome to share with others who might be interested.

Many thanks to Bill for his time and willingness to share a glimpse into his extraordinary world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPMUh5QIKTk>



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.

An Important Update! As mentioned in last month's Chiff Chat the Chapter will be paying for all membership renewals and new memberships from July 1 2021 to June 30 2022. This is being done to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of our Chapter on November 1 1946.. Members should sign in and update information as necessary.

If your membership has recently expired you can renew now, and your renewal will be paid by the Chapter next March/April.

This event will be live streamed, and will be available in-person to a limited audience, with social distancing. Details forthcoming. The concert is free admission, suggested donation \$20. Checks payable to Music at the Red Door.

[PIPES ALIVE! – SEAN MCCARTHY, ORGANIST](#)

The Pipes Alive! series continues with Sean McCarthy playing the St. John's organ on **Sunday, June 6, 2021 at 12:30pm.**

Sean McCarthy is Director of Music and Organist at First Church of Christ in Wethersfield, CT.

This event will be live streamed, and will be available in-person to a limited audience, with social distancing. Details forthcoming. The event is free admission, donations appreciated.

Virtual events:

If you have links to virtual events in your church or community that might be of interest to our members, you are invited to send them to us through our website agospringfieldma.org and we will post them there and in the Chiff Chat.

Here's one that caught our attention. The Westfield Atheneum historical presentation of the Johnson Organ Company presented by Prof. (emeritus) Robert Brown:

<https://www.facebook.com/165344123478381/videos/1228165050904049/>

A Final Gem ☺

Karen Banta noticed this article about our local composer Ronald Perera, printed in *The Hampshire Music Club* and secured permission for it to be available to us via the link below:

<https://mailchi.mp/c58d5b8c4e9c/good-news-122520-5221058?e=2b37ae83c7>



THESE DAYS WE DO NOT NEED HYMN BOOKS
AS ALL OF THE WORDS TO THE SONGS
CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTERNET

CartoonChurch.com

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.

Chiff Chat editor, Lad Pfeifer, may be contacted at ljep@diospringfield.org