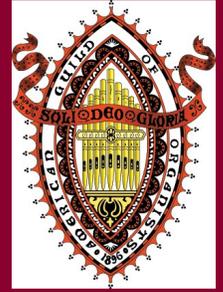


Special Convention Issue!

sforzando

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 1



SEPTEMBER 2019

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER
29 - 4PM
GUILD
SERVICE
AND CLERGY
MUSICIAN
DINNER



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Southwest Jersey Chapter American Guild of Organists



The sanctuary of Haddonfield United Methodist Church on Sunday, June 30 was packed as the processional began for the Opening Convocation of the 2019 Mid-Atlantic Regional AGO Convention. Hosted for the first time ever in South Jersey, this event was an exciting culmination of the collaborative efforts of the SouthWest and SouthEast Jersey chapters. Photo by Joe Routon. (see more photos on pages 4 - 10)

Dean's Message

-- by Vernon Williams

We begin this season in the afterglow of a wonderfully successful and well-appreciated Regional Convention right here in South Jersey. Every aspect of the convention went about as well as we could have hoped. From the Opening Convocation in Haddonfield to the closing recital at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, every event was well prepared and beautifully presented. Even the weather cooperated, and it only rained while we were indoors!

There were far too many notable and excellent moments to list here, but Alan Morrison's astonishing recital at St. Rose of Lima in Haddon Heights, and the indelible experience of seeing our attendees spread out in the enormous Boardwalk Hall listening thoughtfully to Monte Maxwell's expressive performance on the incomparable Atlantic City organ were highlights among highlights for me.

...continued on page 18



Sub-Dean's Report -- by Vicki Nichols



"...on Friday, October 18th....we plan on visiting the organ at West Point, having lunch, going "leaf peeping," and visiting Max at the monastery."

Hi Everyone! I hope you all enjoyed your summer. We have a wonderful program planned for our 2019-2020 season and this year on **Sunday, September 29th** we will have our Annual Guild Service at **4:00 PM** at First Presbyterian Church, 10 Wildwood Avenue in Pitman, hosted by Marilyn Rabbai. Following the service we will have our Clergy Appreciation and Organist dinner at the Italian Affair located at 900 Delsea Drive in Glassboro. Please encourage your pastor to join us, this is a great way for us to show appreciation for them and their ministry. We will send out more information shortly regarding your dinner choices and cost in an upcoming email. You may have noticed that we're having our service

and banquet a little earlier this year. That is because we are planning a day trip to visit Max Esmus at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York on **Friday, October 18th**. As most of you know, Max is in formation with the hopes of becoming a monk at the monastery. That day we plan on visiting the organ at West Point, having lunch, going "leaf peeping," and visiting Max at the monastery. We need to know soon who is interested in attending this trip. If you would like to go, please send me an email or call by **September 15th**. My email is: Sieglinde1776@aol.com, or for those of you who do not have email you can call my cell at #609-364-2042.



Matters of Note



Congratulations to Gail and Jay Gassaway, who are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary this month!

From the Registrar: Please review your current information that is recorded in Oncard. I use that information to compile the annual member directory. We have received several new members in the last year, so check the directory to become familiar with our new and returning members. Also, I will be away (50th anniversary) for most of September, so the directory may not be available until mid October. Please understand.

Position Available: Organist/Choir Director to serve as Minister of Music at St John's Episcopal Church, Salem, NJ. This historic church, founded in 1722 and housed in a beautiful 1838 sanctuary, has a long tradition of excellence in a music program that is an integral part of the liturgy. The church's well-maintained 1937 27-rank, three-manual Kimball/Jacob Gerger & Son organ was enlarged in 1967 and the console was rebuilt in 1999. There is a 12-member chancel choir that includes four paid section leaders. We seek a well-trained, experienced musician to lead the music program, including evensong celebrations, in a collegial and collaborative relationship with the Rector. Familiarity with the Episcopal liturgy will be helpful. The 3/8-time position includes four weeks' paid vacation. Ability to direct a handbell choir will be a plus. A job description will be provided on request. Salary is commensurate with training and experience. Please submit a statement of interest and resumé to Rev. Charles W. Messer at stjohnssalemnj@comcast.net. St. John's Episcopal Church, 76 Market Street, Salem, NJ 08079 Telephone: 856-935-1798.

Friday, October 25 at 6:00pm: "Tunes From the Crypt," a recital of spooky organ music for Halloween. Joanne K. Owen, Organist, plays works by Bach, Williams, Mulet and Böellmann at St. John's Episcopal Church, 76 Market Street, Salem NJ 08079. Admission is Free. Ample parking available. Salem City's annual "Ghost Walk" follows the recital. For further information, call Joanne Owen at 856-769-3212. Sponsored by "Music Around the County/Salem County Arts Alliance" and The Salem County Historical Society.

Wednesdays at 10 am, Boardwalk Hall, Atlantic City, NJ: The curator's tour of the magnificent Midmer-Losh organ will be conducted with a recital following at noon. Check Boardwalkorgans.org for details and schedule updates. These events are free, but there is an opportunity to support the organ restoration project. Come prepared!

Free Demonstrations of the Fred. J. Cooper Memorial Organ at the Kimmel Center: Held on the following Saturdays at 1pm: September 21, October 19, November 9, December 7, January 1, February 8, March 14, April 18. For more information or group reservations, call 215-790-5886.



Programs at a Glance

(See Sub-Dean's Report on page 2 for details)

Saturday, September 29, 2019 at 4PM:
Annual Guild Service - First Presbyterian Church, Pitman, followed by Clergy-Musician Dinner at Italian Affair in Glassboro

Friday, October 18, 2019: Bus Trip to Holy Cross Monastery and West Point -
RSVP needed by September 15 (see page 2)

Saturday, November 8, 2019 at 10AM:
*Masterclass with Alan Morrison
 Haddonfield Methodist Church*

Sunday, November 9, 2019 at 7PM:
Alan Morrison in recital at Haddonfield Methodist Church

January 2020: Potluck Supper and Holiday Party - date and location TBA

Sunday, January 19, 2020:
A musical memorial to Martha Bradley - St. Maria Goretti Church, Runnemede

Saturday, February 16, 2020:
Seipp and Sheets Trumpet and Organ Duo - Moorestown United Methodist Church

Saturday, March 21, 2020 at 10AM:
*Workshop with David Schelat - Music of Wilbur Held
 Haddonfield Presbyterian Church*

Sunday, April 26, 2020:
Annual Members Recital at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Woodbury

May (date TBA) 2020:
Organ Crawl: Girard College, Philadelphia

July 2020:
Picnic and Annual Meeting, date and location TBA



Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York, home to Max Esmus.



Fall foliage in New York.



The West Point Cadet Chapel organ console. Photo by Joe Routon.

CHAPTER EMERGENCY FUND Our Chapter has begun the sponsorship of a fund to provide short-term emergency aid to Chapter members who find themselves temporarily in need of assistance. No dues money will be used for this aid, but tax-deductible contributions will be welcome at any time. A committee of three, consisting of the Dean, the Chair of Professional Concerns, and another member of that committee, will award aid as the need arises. Any Chapter member may recommend a member in good standing who, for reasons such as illness or unemployment, deserves our help, by contacting the Dean or the Chair of Professional Concerns. All cases of course will be confidential. If you would like to contribute to this cause, please send your tax-deductible donation (made out to SWJersey Chapter AGO) to our Treasurer Gail Gassaway, marked for "Musicians' Emergency Fund." Mail to: 241 Night Hawk Circle, West Deptford NJ 08086.

Gallery: Mid-Atlantic Regional Convention



Convention photo gallery continued on the next six pages....

Events of June 29 & 30: Quimby competition at Moorestown United Methodist Church, Choral Evensong at Trinity Episcopal in Moorestown, Convocation at Haddonfield United Methodist Church, registration and opening reception at the Crowne Plaza in Cherry Hill. Photos by Joe Routon.

Regional Convention, continued....



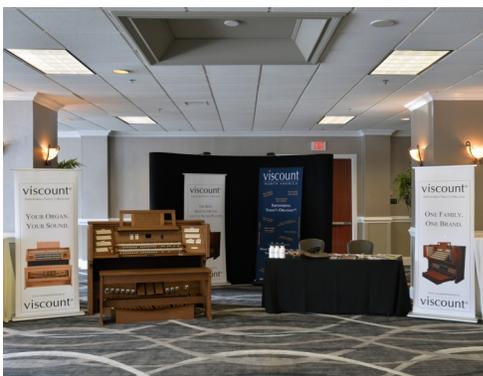
Events of July 1: Workshop presenters Deborah Simpkin King, Eileen Guenther, Alan Morrison, Chris Daly, Victoria Sirota and Glenn Rodgers. Moorestown recitalists Eric Plutz at Trinity Episcopal, Eric and Anna Meyer at Our Lady of Good Counsel (pictured with composer Dan Locklair) and Istvan Ruppert at Moorestown Presbyterian. Photos by Joe Routon.



Regional Convention, continued....



Events of July 1: Lunch at the Moorestown Community Center, composer Dan Locklair's "Angels: Two Short Tone Poems for Organ" premiered by Alan Morrison in recital at St. Rose of Lima in Haddon Heights, Bob Gladden with Daniel Roth, registration, reception and exhibits back at the hotel. Photos by Joe Routon.



Regional Convention, continued...



Events of July 2: Convention Coordinator Evelyn Larter, Mid-Atlantic Councillor Wayne Wold and AGO Executive Director James Thomashower speak at the Regional Breakfast, Monica Czausz recital at St. Mary's Episcopal in Haddon Heights, workshops with Marvin Mills, Ann Labounsky and Istvan Ruppert at Haddonfield Presbyterian and Grace Episcopal Church. Photos by Joe Routon.



Regional Convention, continued....



Events of July 2: Spirituals Service at Haddonfield Friends Meeting House with Eileen Guenther, Eric Plutz and Barbara Dever, an organ demonstration at the Christian Science Church of Haddonfield, concerts by the Philadelphia Organ Quartet, and Daniel Roth at Haddonfield United Methodist Church. Photos by Joe Routon and Gail Gassaway.



Regional Convention, continued....



Events of July 3: Chuck Gibson's presentation on the Boardwalk Hall organs, Carol Williams' noontime recital on the Midmer-Losh organ, Nathan Avakian's recital on the Kimball ballroom organ, panel discussion on the future of the organ in the community moderated by Fred Haas, gala dinner in convention hall, award presentation, and closing recital by Monte Maxwell. Photos by Joe Routon and Gail Gassaway.



Regional Convention: One for the Books!



The Steering Committee celebrates a successful and exciting convention. Many thanks to ALL of you who participated, attended, volunteered, and supported this massive effort. It would not have been possible without you. May we all savor the memories and be enriched with inspiration for many years to come. Photos by Joe Routon, Glenn Rodgers, Dean Metzler and Marilyn Rabbai.



Annual Meeting & Picnic, August Workshop

Glenn and Cindy Rodgers hosted a fabulous July 21 Annual Meeting and Picnic. Several of our members attended the Augsburg-Fortress workshop on August 1 & 2. Photos by Gail Gassaway, Dean Metzler, and Charlene Cranmer. Right, Helen Carrell holds court with Augsburg presenters Jeremy Bankson, Robert Hobby and Andrew Heller.



Opening Convocation

"The Musician's Struggle with Vocation and Call"

"You are the salt of the earth....You are the light of the world." (Matthew 5:13,14)

"Do you realize what you can do with your music?" Paul Hume (1992 AGO Convention)

In the name of God.

Thank you so much for inviting me to be here. I feel so very honored.

I realize there are different kinds of time. There is kronos, which is clock time, and kairos, which is heavenly time, and then there is AGO Convention Time. Right? Conventions go from one to the other, and you sort of forget. You do your work during the year, but then you come back and we're together. And we sing hymns gloriously. We're in heaven. It's amazing.

In 1990 I was the Coordinator for the National AGO Convention in Boston. We were not supposed to do it that year. Worcester Massachusetts was supposed to do it, but two and a half years before the scheduled convention, they found out they were not going to have the big hotels that were supposed to be built in time. So I figured, well only two and a half years, it will just stay within this certain amount of time. It was a killer. We had 2000 people sign up and 3000 showed up. What do you do?

But one of the things that was truly transformative was that our committee really worked hard together and were trying to pay attention to what was going on in the organ world at that time. There was so much death and dying with HIV/AIDS and with people keeping secrets and feeling not safe.

And so we decided to have workshops on HIV/AIDS, on depression and self-care. We had an AIDS Healing Service in the Church of Saint John the Evangelist in Boston. I will never forget singing "God is love" to Abbot's Leigh (Episcopal Hymnal #379, text by Timothy Rees), and, during the second stanza ("and when human hearts are breaking under sorrow's iron rod, then they find that selfsame aching deep within the heart of God"), everybody was crying with God.

There is something about the PRIDE movement, which today celebrates 50 years, that has helped us all no matter where we are with that theologically. Because authenticity, honesty, speaking the truth, being open and being who we are, is the only way that God's light is going to shine through us.

The irony about music is that musicians are often seen as out of touch with the real world, and yet music is constant-- commercials, television, radio programs, movies, ball games and sports, birthday parties, iTunes, podcasts, concerts and, of course, worship. What other kind of communication is used this constantly in all forms of media, even beyond the spoken word? Everybody should be a musician, don't you think?

Music tells us how to feel about something. The music changes our perception, puts us in touch with our emotions. We are annoyed when we cry during a commercial message, but we're also impressed that some composer-musician figured out how to trigger that response in 30 seconds.

When we sing together, we breathe together. The breathe of God is in us and we are indeed one body.

Who are you? Who do you want to be? The Gospel is actually difficult, because losing our saltiness, losing our light are frightening concepts. And yet, we are always struggling with those issues, being the fullness of who we are.

"Convocation"--"vocare"--"call." It's not just a job; it's not just work. We musicians, we certainly don't do it for the money. We struggle with ego, with the temptation to show off or not to use what we've been given, to avoid relationships with people and practice all day or to forget to practice and just "wing it", to choose so much new repertoire for the choir that the anthems never move to a deeper place, or to keep singing the same anthems over and over again with no new insight or vitality.

Our need to be in control is strong, but if we are struggling with a living God who created us and calls us to a deeper and deeper relationship, then this dynamic conversation will not allow us to stand still. We need to grow. We also need to be open to receiving the love of God in our own lives, giving that relationship the time to blossom. This is what will feed others and will actually provide a medium for God's healing grace through our music.

For musicians, there will always be a struggle between perfectionism and giving it over.

You have to hit the right notes, sing the right pitch, play in rhythm. And yet if that is all we are thinking about while we are playing, it sounds like we are painting by numbers.

I remember when Garth Peacock, my organ professor at Oberlin, asked if I had looked at the words of the chorale for the chorale prelude I was playing. "Why?" I asked, "no one's singing it." It was the six-voice "Aus tiefer Noth schrei ich zu dir" ("Out of the depths I cry unto thee, O Lord," Psalm 130). Reading the text, connecting my heart, my mind, and my body with my prayer life and fears and anguish about life and mortality changed how I played it. I began to understand Bach's brilliance, creativity and profound spiritual gifts in an entirely new way, and I saw my teacher in a new way as well.

He said a couple of times that he wanted that played at his funeral. I remembered him saying that to me. Did he say it to anyone else? I don't know. But when Jim Christie asked me to play at Garth Peacock's funeral and I hesitated, I remembered this conversation, and it would not let me go. So I played "Aus tiefer Noth" at my professor's funeral at the Episcopal Church in Oberlin, Ohio.

If we connect our prayer life, our souls and our spirit with the music something else happens. It is not just the idea that something else will happen. You know it. Something really happens.

Music that is lifted up to the true glory of God is infused with heavenly light and love. It not only takes off, it brings us to another dimension, somewhere between heaven and earth. It is a liminal, mountaintop experience. We converse with the saints and the angels.

Practice time is contemplative prayer. It's wasting time with God. It's being open to the Spirit. Not only will you hit the right notes, you'll be in the right place in your soul.

I love that reading from Ezra (Ezra 3:10-13) that James Thomashower read so well. I love the idea that they are building the foundation of this new temple and that the people who remember the old temple are crying and weeping so loudly, and the young people are rejoicing and singing so loudly, that all of it can be heard far away. Because it is a reminder that our congregations are always like that.

Some of us here remember those of us who went to conventions in the past who are now dead. For some, this is your first time and it is thrilling to be in this group, but you want to fit in. There are always all different kinds of people on all different places in our spiritual journeys. There is rejoicing and tears all the time. And we help lift that up and put that on the altar.

Who are we listening to? What voice is important to us? Do we have good spiritual friends? And do we find them throughout the centuries? Saint Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) said, "The important thing about mental prayer is not to think much but to love much." A quote attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi (c. 1181-1226) because it sounds like him, "Preach the Gospel at all times; use words if necessary." Music works. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) wanted to be "a feather on the breath of God." And Anne Lamott (b. 1954) said, "You can safely assume that you've created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people that you do."

The temptations? To think that no one is listening; to think what you do does not matter; to believe the negative, nasty voices; to believe the overly complimentary voices; to be unprepared; to look back and lean on the past; to allow your prejudices about anything to get in the way.

The joys? Standing on holy ground; allowing yourself the luxury of practice time; caring about every note--loving it into being; allowing the breathe of God, the love of God to inspire your playing; beginning practice sessions or rehearsals with silence or prayer; seeking out new music, sharing discoveries with friends; commissioning new music from composers you like--sharing the cost; teaching and passing on what you know--answering enthusiasm with enthusiasm; and allowing that heavenly light to infuse the space with love.

You are a spiritual guide. You are a healer, so you have to take care of yourself. You cannot have divided lives. If you are going to be up there on that liminal place, you also need to prepare for that ascent so that when you come down, you won't fall into depression.

The temptations, the awful and very real temptations are to use this gift for your own pleasure, to misuse the power dynamic between teacher and student--conductor and choir member--organist and congregation--by prioritizing your needs and not listening to those you serve, for not realizing that the relationships you have set up may actually be toxic for someone else, and for NEVER asking for spiritual guidance and help.

You stand on holy ground. You have a sacred charge. You work for no one less than Almighty God.

Paul Hume suggests that "in churches where music is chosen imaginatively, and performed with taste and style and beauty"--like today, "that it is often the music that captures the hearts of many in the congregation. One person is all it takes to make the difference. One person who knows that music can transform a congregation from a passive or indifferent group of listeners into an active, absorbed audience who, through great music, beautifully performed, may find a new approach to God."

You mold the spiritual life--the soul of your congregation--by your music and by the silence you create. When you get it right, you help us feel joy, you comfort us and feed us, you remind us of what is important, you allow us to rest in your spirituality, we can trust you with our frailty and our vulnerability, you help us cry out and complain, weep and rejoice in new life and resurrection.

And finally, you walk us to heaven, again and again. And we are grateful.

Be who you are. Be the light. Amen.



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- Charles-Marie Widor: Symphony No. 3 for Organ & Orchestra

Friends of the Wanamaker Organ - wanamakerorgan.com

Positions Available/Substitute List -- by Peter Homon

Editor's Note: We are updating and hoping to expand our Substitute List. If you are available to substitute, please contact Peter Homon, our Referral/Position Coordinator. Please forward or refer any items concerning positions available or substitute needs to Peter at lapajar@yahoo.com or call 856-665-0149.

Positions Available:

St. John's Episcopal Church, Salem - O/D, adult choir with paid section leaders, bell choir. 27 rank Kimball/Jacob Gerger organ. Helpful if candidate is familiar with Episcopal liturgy. Resume to Rev. Charles W. Messer at stjohnssalemnj@comcast.net. (8/19) see page 2, *Matters of Note*

Christ Church, Episcopal, Woodbury - O/D, Moeller Double Artiste, adult and childrens choirs. Go to website for complete job description. christchurch.woodburyNJ.org (7/19)

First Baptist Church of Haddonfield, Haddonfield – Minister of Music needed. Organist / Choir Director for two choirs: Adults and Children/ Youth. One 11:00 AM Sunday service, Thursday evening adult choir rehearsals, and Sunday children/youth choir rehearsals. For complete job description, please contact Bob Gardner at robertwgardner@verizon.net or (856) 354-0505.

These musicians are available on Sundays and also for weddings and funerals other days:

Charlene Cranmer 609-458-2993 (Southampton, NJ - July and August only) ctcranmer@comcast.net

Patricia Brady-Danzig 973-761-0041 (South Orange) pbradydan@erols.com - organ/piano, cantor, choir director

John Dow 856-327-1739 (Millville) jedowfam@aol.com

Mary Johnson 856-332-8869 (Pine Hill) mebayj47@yahoo.com

George Mitchell 856-795-0970 (Cherry Hill) babayaga430@verizon.com

Irina Nenartovich, CAGO, SPC 856-321-3465 (Cherry Hill) knenartovich@hotmail.com

Mary Sampson 609-220-0864 (Pennsauken) mgsampson@verizon.net

These substitutes are available for weddings and funerals or Saturday work only:

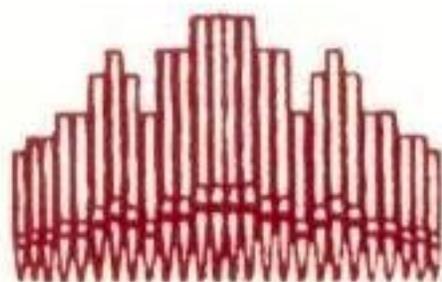
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- Marilyn Rabbai, CAGO, SPC
- David L. Rhody, SPC
- Glenn L. Rodgers, AAGO
- Joyce Ann Routon, CAGO, SPC

For more information on Professional Certification requirements, procedures, materials and deadlines, visit the website of AGO National Headquarters: www.agohq.org

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Thank you,

Patrons, Contributors and Advertisers

Our next issue will be October, 2019.

Deadline for articles, announcements, pictures and reports will be Wednesday, September 25.



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Sforzando is the official publication of the SouthWest Jersey Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. The AGO is a multi-denominational, non-profit organization chartered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York in 1896.

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Dean's Message -- continued from page 1

There are, of course, too many people to thank in this space. The Steering Committee worked very well together as a team, keeping a positive attitude throughout. But I must thank our leader and Convention Coordinator, Evelyn Larter, for her outstanding leadership and dedication. She was utterly unflappable and always came up with solutions to every problem that arose. And I must also thank Glenn Rodgers, without whose vision and leadership this convention would never have happened. With his encouraging enthusiasm and his years of experience as Regional Councillor, Glenn helped everyone have confidence that we would succeed. Moving ahead, our first event this fall will be the Annual Guild Service on Sunday afternoon, September 29, at First Presbyterian Church in Pitman. Marilyn Rabbai will be our host and the service will be followed by the annual banquet. Please see inside for more details. The Guild Service

is usually scheduled for October but this year the Program Committee decided to plan a trip to Holy Cross Monastery and West Point along the Hudson River in New York on October 18 when the fall leaves should be near their peak of color. At the monastery we will visit former chapter member Max Esmus who moved there in January. Max was on the Executive Board and was instrumental in setting up the convention website and registration system before he left.

Please note that anyone planning to make the trip to New York must sign up early. For security reasons, West Point needs to know who will be in our group well ahead of time. Again, please see Vicki's article for more information.

I know I have said this before, but this is a special time in the life of the Southwest Jersey Chapter. I look forward to another year of fellowship with all of you as the season unfolds.



West Point Cadet Chapel. Photo by Gail Gassaway.