



Pipeline

American Organist Guild—Red River Valley Chapter

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April/May/June
2015

Message From the Dean

Hi AGO Friends,

Happy May!

As the program year winds down, we find ourselves relaxing just a little with fewer projects looming on the horizon, and fewer choir anthems in the “to practice” pile. Breathe. Reflect. Rejoice. Summer beckons and longer days are beginning to stretch before us.

I love this time of year. No mosquitos are buzzing in my ears when I sit on the deck in the evenings. We eat our evening meal later. The birds sing in the morning, but not at 4:00 am...yet. The children down the block still have school on weekdays, so they go to bed before I do, and loud outdoor activities cease at sundown. (During June and July they will be out playing later than my bedtime!)

It is also the time of year to renew our AGO memberships. Most of us will have received our ONCARD emails with the reminder to pay our dues, which typically stretch July to June yearly. New to AGO this year is a feature which allows dues to go yearly on a flexible schedule. If your dues have accidentally lapsed, they will be credited for 12 months from the date you renew. New members will be added in the month they first pay and can be renewed on the same month each year. Our reminders to renew will automatically come a month before the due date each year. How much more user-friendly could it get? Tell your friends who have dropped off our rosters that the time has come to get back onboard with ONCARD. For those who would rather

mail a check than pay by credit card, full details are given in the email reminders.

Our AGO Board had a great planning meeting in April. We discussed program ideas for 2015-2016 and came up with some exciting suggestions. What if we had a Halloween themed members’ concert complete with costumes? What if it were held at the Fargo Theater? We’re going to pursue the idea and let you know what happens! AND—What if we took the theme of the William Shakespeare Festival next winter along with the other arts organizations in our communities? Could we do a concert entitled “If Music be the food of love, play on!” and attract a larger audience? What if we combined our organ-playing skills with the FM Chamber Chorale and held a Spring concert together? Choral pieces accompanied by organ interspersed with organ solos...the added interest to potential audience members should draw a nice crowd! We say an enthusiastic “YES!” to that invitation!

Our Christmas sing-along with the FM Area Music Club was so well-received that we thought we’d repeat that collaboration again this year. Monday evening, December 7th at First Presbyterian Church, Fargo, RRV-AGO will join together with the BELLisimo Handbell Choir and the FM Noteables to lead this traditional Christmas Community Celebration.

We’ll need members to come forward to participate. Whether to play a “spooky solo” in October, lead various carols in

December, play a “food of love piece” in the winter, accompany a choral piece in May, or to serve as ushers, ticket-takers, helpers with advertising, etc. All members can provide a service! We are a small group, but committed to sharing our love of organ music.

What can you do to participate? I hope you will come to our May potluck and music exchange! Bring along music you’d like to give away, and take some music (continued on Page 2)

First Friday Luncheon

Who Everyone is Welcome!

When First Friday of the Month at Noon

Where Fryn’ Pan
302 Main Ave, Fargo

Chapter Officers

Dean: Sally Harmon

Sub-Dean: Bill Tweten

Secretary: Robyn Vinje

Treasurer: Jean Roberts

Board Members at Large

2015: Sonia Carlson

2016: Jim Gurney

2017: Alpha Roeszler

Message from the Dean

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home with you. Rub elbows with your organist friends and share a meal together. We will meet in the Social Hall of First Presbyterian Church, Fargo, on Tuesday, May 19 at 6pm.

The compact demonstration pipe organ (portativ) which belongs to our RRV chapter has been assembled for the first time in many years and is ready for display and hands-on experience. Just for fun, you might check YouTube for some short clips of portative organs in performance. I found a fund example at <https://youtu.be/AO6Hsf3xeuM> which you might find. Ours has a motor, but many of these organs need to have a bellows operated by the left hand while the right hand plays the keyboard.

Don't forget to join your colleagues for lunch at noon on the First Friday of each month at the Fargo Fryn' Pan Restaurant on Main Avenue, near the bridge to Moorhead. Come, share a meal and conversation (or wedding horror stories!) at a table with friends.

Let's work together to keep our organization vital.

See you in May!

Sally Harmon, Dean RRV-AGO

Board Meeting Notes

Minutes of the RRV/AGO Board Meeting April 10, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Dean Sally Harmon. Other members present were Jean Roberts, Andrew Steinberg, and Robyn Vinje.

The minutes of the March meeting were previously distributed electronically, and were approved.

Jean reported that we have \$3,804.96 in the treasury (checking account). She stated that we get an \$18 deposit through the Automated Clearing House from AGO when a member pays dues. Sally will write an article in *The Pipeline* regarding the new rolling dues procedure through AGO.

The Basically British program on March 15th was a very enjoyable program, and was attended by about 100

people. Thanks to Andrew for organizing and chairing this program.

Andrew reminded us that Dr. Joel Bacon of Colorado State University will be presenting a concert at Trinity on April 19th at 4:00 PM. The secretary will send an email reminder to members.

Our last meeting of the year will be held Tuesday, May 19th, at 6:00 PM at First Pres. It will be a potluck and music exchange.

We then discussed possible programs for next year:

October 31 The Ominous Organ, with Halloween theme to be presented by AGO members in costume, and chaired by Andrew

December 7 Christmas Sing-a-Long at First Pres with Fargo 7:00 PM Moorhead Area Music Club, with Sally and Jill Post as co-chairs

February The Arts Council will have a Shakespeare theme for the month "If music be the food of love, play on" could be our theme. A central location might be best.

May, 1st weekend FM Choral Artists (formerly Chamber Chorale) would like to partner with AGO for a program of choral/organ pieces, and solo organ pieces. It will be held at First Lutheran. Michael Colliton will direct the choir. (This would be in lieu of our "big" March program)

There, of course, will be further discussion on these programs.

Sally read a letter from Marilyn Schempp, North Central Regional Coordinator, asking for suggestions for a new Coordinator of Professional Development for next year. She also sent another letter reminding chapters that District Conveners and Professional Coordinators are available for their programs during the year. No action was taken on either of these.

Andrew announced that Trinity will be having a program on organ for high school students in June of this year.

Respectfully submitted,
Robyn Vinje, Secretary

From our Regional Councillor

Our Regional Convention is not very far away now. All members are encouraged to attend. It would be fabulous to have all of our regional chapters well represented and able to bring back information and renewed inspiration for each of our chapters. To quote Julie Grindle, ALCM President-Elect: "Our vocation can be difficult, especially if we feel isolated and alone. Perhaps your working relationship with staff is not the best it could be. Perhaps your congregation would be more understanding/flexible/insert your own adjective here. Anytime we can get together and share both achievements and challenges with each other, it is a good thing. When we have the chance to support and encourage one another face to face, the load gets a bit lighter. I encourage you if you have not already, to register for our biennial conference. It will not only be a time of professional development, but of reconnection, renewal, and rest."

There are three specific opportunities I want to point out. Please let me know if you are able to attend the regional leadership lunch so we know how much food to plan for. If you cannot be there, let me know of one of your chapter members who might be able to attend in your place and represent your chapter. It would be fantastic to have all of our chapters represented this year!

Certification breakfast: Tuesday, June 23 at 7:15 am
Regional leadership lunch: Tuesday, June 23 at 12:45 pm
Regional meeting for ALL regional AGO Members:
Tuesday, June 24, 4:00—5:00 pm.

Marilyn Schempp
AGO Region VI Councillor
Sioux Falls, SD

2015 North Central Regional Convention

The 2015 AGO North Central Regional Convention in St. Louis, Missouri is just 2 months away. Have you signed up?

We'll be visiting 12 different locations and hearing from 18 different performers, teachers, lecturers and groups during the three days of the convention. **Registration prices go up in June, but why wait?** Register now and secure your place in St. Louis this summer.

Transportation is included!

Events at the convention will take place at various locations around the St. Louis area. In order to make sure you get to every event safely and on time, transportation to and from the Convention Hotel is included in your registration.

Exhibits

The 2015 convention will allow lots of time for you to browse the exhibit hall and meet vendors, organ builders, and music sellers. The exhibits will be open all three days of the convention. There are still advertising spaces in the convention book available, too. You can purchase ad space online by going to www.ago2015.org/advertise.

Register Today

www.ago2015.org

American Guild of Organists, St. Louis Chapter
6622 Michigan Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63111

Come a day early to hear **Christopher Houlihan in concert at Historic Trinity Lutheran Church, Sunday, June 21.**

DON'T FORGET OUR ANNUAL AGO POTLUCK AND MUSIC EXCHANGE

We will be meeting in the downstairs social hall at First Presbyterian Church, of Fargo, 650 2nd Avenue North, at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, May 19. There will be LOTS of free music to look through, and feel free to bring any music that you no longer use and would like to pass on to someone else to enjoy.

The *portative* organ will be set up for everyone to see and try, if you like.

This will be the last meeting of the year until we meet again in the fall, other than the First Friday Lunches.

Bring you favorite dish to share (and have the recipe ready at hand!) along with a lot of fun conversation.

Hope to see you all there!

LET US KNOW

Let us know what activities are scheduled in your area for the summer that would be of interest to our AGO Chapter members. We would like to publish them in the *PIPELINE*. We appreciate hearing from all our members. If you are attending a seminar, workshop, convention, recital, concert other special event this summer, we would love to hear from you about your experience.

Composer's Corner—Remembering Wilbur Held 1914—2015

Wilbur Held, composer, teacher, and servant “gentle and humble in heart” (Matthew 11:29), died on March 24, 2015 in Claremont, California, a few months shy of his 101st birthday. A deeply thoughtful and meticulous musician, Held crafted elegant preludes, postludes, and hymn settings that remain central to the repertoire of church organists around the globe. Substantial yet accessible, his music reveals the truths of Scripture in the shape of a line, the content of a progression, the evolution of an idea across a work, and in the attitude of humility they embody. His musical language reaches back through the centuries and brings those influences to bear in a style that is distinctively of our time.

Published mostly in seasonal or themed collections, Held’s music is also widely popular for its appeal to beginning – to intermediate-level players. “Wilbur Held makes organists of even moderate ability sound good,” an admirer recently noted. “And he also turns even garden-variety hymn tunes into great musical settings.”

Held’s first collection, the still-popular *Nativity Suite*, was conceived for his students at the Ohio State University as a colorful alternative to the dreary exercises in common organ methods of the day. “I thought of these kids going back to the farm at Christmas time,” he once said, “and Dad takes them over to the church and says, ‘And what will you play?’ ‘Well, how about page 34 in the Gleason book?’”

Students and colleagues urged him to submit the collection for publication, and to his surprise it was accepted. This led to a demand for more, and his catalogue grew rapidly over the next half-century. His final collection, *New Every Morning*, was released in 2014 by his longtime publisher, MorningStar Music Publishers.

Held has said that the gestation of every piece starts with an idea. “I’ll take the hymn and look for distinctive lines in the melody that could be worked into some kind of sequence that would indicate the piece,” he said. “Often there’s a phrase that repeats itself, or maybe it’s just the starting phrase that is distinctive. As the piece develops you can kind of railroad in that starting phrase or sequence.” Held has always been deferential about his music, even with all the success it has enjoyed. “I hope there’s something kind of original about what I’ve done,” he reflected two years ago. “But I don’t think I have much of a claim, really, for originality. Everybody’s done what I’ve done. It’s more a matter of emphasis than originality.”

Wilbur Held was born on August 20, 1914 in Des Plaines, Illinois. He studied piano as a youngster and became serious about the organ in high school, going on to attend the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago where he studied organ and began to develop his compositional voice.

A conscientious objector, Held spent the final years of World War II cooking food without vitamins for a path-breaking project on nutrition now known as the Minnesota Semi-Starvation Experiment. Its findings were later published as *The Biology of Human Starvation*.

In 1946 Held was named professor of organ at the Ohio State University for what became a 30-year tenure. After years of summer study in liturgy and hymnology at Union Theological Seminary, Held was able to significantly expand the church music program at OSU.

Held moved to Southern California in 1997, following the death of his wife Virginia. Visitors to Held’s apartment were often regaled with stories about his extensive collection of Southern California Caliente pottery, crafted in the 1930s and 1940s. Through their efforts the couple’s painstaking work on an intricate cataloguing system for their trove, public awareness of this important part of California’s artistic heritage was restored. Held played for virtually all memorial services at the Claremont Manor, the retirement community in that college town where he last resided. There was a familiar saying around the Manor, that has long rung true: “First you go to the hospital, then you go to the Care Center, and then Wilbur gets you.” Thanks be to God for the long and fruitful life of Wilbur Held, and for a musical legacy that will endure.

(From “In Memoriam—Remembering Wilbur Held” by Nancy M. Raabe published in the May 2015 issue of *The Diapason*)

North Central Regional Convention June 22-24, 2015

The American Guild of Organists is excited to call Saint Louis, Missouri home for the 2015 North Central Regional Convention. If you have not received your registration brochure in the mail, here are some of the highlights:

Performances will be presented by Thomas Murray, John Behnke, Anna Myeong, Christopher Marks, Barbara Raedeke, Daryl Robinson, Mark Gifford, The Gateway Ringers, St. Louis Children's Choir, Choir of St. Peter's Episcopal Church.

Workshops offered will be: *Chant in Latin and English*/Horst Buchholz, *Jazz in Worship*/Steve Schenkel, *What Does the AGO Offer You?*/Marilyn Schempp, *Music Reading Session*/Clifford Hill, *The Music of Herbert Howells*/Jeffrey Carter, *Personal Finance for Church Musicians*/Barbara Adler, *Spirituals*/Duane Martin Foster, *Beginning Improvisation*/Don Rotermond, *Chapter/AGO*/James Thomashower, *Music of Leo Sowerby*/Pat Partridge, *Breathe from the Diaphragm and Other Myths Debunked*/Sheila Dugan, *Historical and Contemporary Women Organ Composers*/Barbara Harbach, *Morningstar Organ Repertoire*/Kelly Dobbs Mickus.

Venues will include Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis (Kilgen/Moller/Wicks 4 manuals, 118 ranks), Christ Church Cathedral (Aeolian-Skinner 4 manuals, 70 ranks), First Presbyterian Church Kirkwood (Casabant 3 manuals, 76 ranks), Fox Theatre (Wurlitzer 4 manuals, 36 ranks), Hope United Church of Christ (Harrison and Harrison 2 manuals, 28 ranks), Kirkwood Baptist Church (Quimby 3 manuals, 43 ranks), St. Mark's Episcopal Church (Mander 3 manuals, 53 ranks), Third Baptist Church (Kilgen/Moller/Reuter 4 manuals, 72 ranks).

Registration fees vary according to sign up dates and membership categories. Daily registration rates are also available. Transportation is included in the listed registration fees.

For complete schedule and information, visit the website WWW.AGO2015.ORG. You can register for the convention and pay signup fees on the website or mail a check payable to "AGO 2015 Regional Convention" to: AGO 2015 Regional Convention, Post Office Box 140159, St. Louis, MO 63114-0159.



Upcoming Events

Tuesday, May 19, 2015, 6:00 PM
RRVAGO Potluck and Music Exchange
First Presbyterian Church, Fargo

Contact Information

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