



THE BIRMINGHAM CHIFF ...off the old blockflute

The Birmingham Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

April 2016

A Word from the Dean

Dear friends,

I hope that your holiday season was filled with beautiful music and meaningful experiences. Speaking of which, the Handbell Quartet from Trinity United Methodist of Huntsville, AL presented an outstanding program for the Birmingham AGO in March. We had a modest crowd of AGO folks but were joined by members of the handbell choirs from Trinity United Methodist, Homewood and Shades Valley Lutheran. It was a wonderful evening and I want to thank our excellent hostess **Debby Holmes**.



The Huntsville Handbell Performers

The next two months' programs will be switched due to uncontrollable conflicts with our students' schedules. The "Music Share" program will be April 11th at Vestavia Hills United Methodist at 7 PM. This will be a fun time for us to share either repertoire we have played recently or new music that you think might interest the chapter or even an "oldie goldie" that you might think needs to be revived. We will have the opportunity to play the newly refurbished Austin Organ at VHUMC. It should be a great evening. I have a few collections which I want to share. I promise I won't play as much as I present.

Our May meeting will be the Student Recital on May 9th at Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Vestavia. I hope you will put it on your calendar and come out to support our students.

Hope to see you soon,
Dan

APRIL CHAPTER EVENT

Please make plans to attend the April 11th chapter meeting at Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church.

The program will be the music literature sharing program originally planned for May. Members are invited to play music that would be of interest to fellow organists. We will enjoy dinner at the church at 6:00 PM followed by a business meeting at 6:30 PM. The menu is Pecan Crusted Chicken Breast, Asparagus, Wild Rice, Roll, and Cheesecake. The cost is only \$8.00 per meal.

Reservations are necessary and the online reservation form will be available shortly. **Reservations will close at midnight Wednesday, April 6, which is earlier than usual, so please make your reservations as soon as possible.**

You'll have the opportunity to peruse the three boxes remaining of Linda Gill's music that are available for purchase. Look forward to seeing you!

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Many thanks to Nominating Committee members **Bruce Ludwick** (chairperson), **Pat Fitzsimmons**, and **Mike Sparks** for their work in preparing the slate of nominees for officers and Executive Committee. Learn more about the nominees in this newsletter.

Comings and Goings

Congratulations to **Dr. Jim Cook** upon his retirement on Easter Sunday after many years in the music ministry of First United Methodist Church, Birmingham. He is a welcome addition to the ranks of our substitute organists.

Mark Hayes has accepted the position of Assistant Organist at the Cathedral of St. Paul, Birmingham. In addition to his new responsibilities there, he continues his active schedule as an organ technician with his company Hayes Pipe Organ Service, Inc.

Items of Note

National Convention in Houston, June 19 – 23, 2016

Online registration is available at the convention website <http://agohouston2016.com/>. For those unable to attend in person, several of the recitals will be broadcast live online.

2016 ELECTION PROCESS CONTINUES

The Nominating Committee has announced its slate for 2016-18 officers and the 2016-19 Class of the Executive Committee. The nominees are Dean: Dan Lawhon; Sub-Dean: Leslie Teardo; Secretary: Sherelyn Breland; Treasurer: Mike Burt; Executive Committee Class (three positions): Tyler Canonico, James Garner, Thomas Graves, Mark Hayes, Jeff McLelland, Nathan Smock, and John Wilson.

Additional nominations from the chapter may be made by petition if each petition is signed by five (5) members of the Guild in good standing and submitted to the Chapter Secretary by April 2.

Here's a look at the schedule for this year's voting process and what happens along the way:

Sat., April 2

Additional nominations made by chapter membership must be received by the secretary today. Secretary combines submitted nominations with slate from the nominating committee and prepares ballots for voting: printed format for absentee and

in-person voting, copy sent to webmaster to prepare online ballot. Webmaster prepares online ballot form, online ballot tally sheet, tests entire online voting process in preparation for actual vote to begin Monday, April 11.

Mon., April 11 (Chapter meeting)

Chapter email with ballot representation and voting instructions is sent to the chapter (mailed to those without email access). The voting procedure is reviewed at the business meeting.

Mon., April 11 – Sat., May 7 (4 weeks)

Online and absentee voting is open.

Sat., May 7

Last date for the Secretary to receive absentee ballots by mail; online voting ends at midnight.

Sun., May 8

Secretary prints the online voting record, verifies the absentee ballots for the auditors, and ensures there are enough printed ballots for in-person voting at the chapter meeting tomorrow night

Mon., May 9 (Chapter meeting)

In-person voting is held at the business meeting. After all ballots are received, the auditors verify and count the ballots and file the report of the voting results with the Secretary. The Dean announces the election results to the chapter. They will also be published on the chapter website and in a chapter email.

(A *plurality* of votes is required for election to a position. If there is a tie for an unfilled position, a run-off for that position is necessary. In such an event, the plans and schedule for that will be announced at the meeting. National AGO requires that elections be completed by May 31).

July 1 Officers and new Executive Committee class begin their terms.

Sept chapter meeting (tentative)

Officers and Executive Committee installed.

Guidelines for nominations and the election process are listed in "Section 4. CHAPTER GOVERNANCE" and "Section 8. ELECTION PROCEDURES" of the Chapter Operating Procedures at <http://www.birminghamago.org/AboutUs.html>.

ABOUT THE NOMINEES

If you're unfamiliar with some of the nominees, here's some info about their qualifications for the positions for which they've been nominated.



Sherelyn Breland
Nominee for Secretary

Since joining the Birmingham chapter in 2006, Sherelyn has worked on the membership committee, served as secretary of the POE2011 and POE2013 steering committees, was elected to two terms as chapter secretary and to two Executive Committee classes. She's currently a member of the 2014-17 class. A past editor, she continues to format and publish the chapter newsletter. She enjoys the chapter webmaster duties, which she assumed on Jim Cook's retirement a couple of years ago. She has been organist at First Church of Christ, Scientist for 11 years. Sherelyn hopes to work on increased member participation to build more active Standing Committees, believing this would strengthen the chapter, develop future leadership, and encourage growth of the chapter membership.



Mike Burt
Incumbent for Treasurer

Mike was organist at First Baptist Church in Talladega, AL, for 29 years, presiding over the 26-rank Moller pipe organ and directing a small ladies ensemble. His keyboard education is concentrated in piano, beginning study at age eight and continuing in college at Samford University. He had organ instruction as a youth from his church organist, Ashley Burrell, a student of Betty Louise Lumby. Mike used his accounting degree during 25 years' employment at Marshall Durbin Companies. He sees our chapter as providing meaningful connections and development for organists in the area, but would like to see a higher member participation rate in chapter activities.



Tyler Canonico
Executive Committee Nominee

Tyler is a graduate student studying Organ Performance at the University of Alabama with Dr. Faythe Freese. He is a graduate of Lebanon Valley College in Annville, PA, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Music with a concentration in Organ Performance and Sacred Music. He studied organ and piano with Dr. Shelly Moorman-Stahlman and orchestral conducting with Dr. Johannes Dietrich.

In 2011 Tyler was awarded first place in the AGO/Quimby Region III Competition for Young Organists. He is a frequent concert artist and a guest conductor throughout the country and has performed at both national and regional AGO conventions.

In addition to his graduate work, Tyler is the Organist and Assistant Director of Music at Christ Episcopal Church in Tuscaloosa and is the collaborative pianist for the Alabama Choir School. He is also the carillonneur for the University of Alabama, and is the accompanist for the Chamber Choir and conducting class. Tyler is a co-founding member of *Allegro con Fuoco*, a duo with Mr. Jordan Markham. Previously, Tyler was the Assistant Organist at the Cathedral of St. Paul in Birmingham and the Director of Music and Organist at Palmyra First United Methodist Church.



James Garner
Executive Committee Nominee

A long-time member of the Birmingham chapter, Jim is a choir member at Shades Valley Lutheran Church. Previously he was choir director of Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church.



Thomas Graves
Executive Committee Nominee

I am a student at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering. I have been studying organ with Dr. Patricia Fitzsimmons privately for three years. At her invitation, I attended my first organ recital when Jonathan Biggers played at First United Methodist, Birmingham on 13 October 2013.

I have been fortunate in being able to play both service music and voluntaries in six Alabama churches. I have also arranged duets for organ and bass clarinet, which I also play.

I have been involved in organ technical work both repairing and troubleshooting with Dr. John Schwandt of the University of Oklahoma, and the legendary Brant Duddy, present Curator of the Atlantic City organ. Besides playing, this is another field that interests me.

The Birmingham Chapter has been a great resource, allowing me to meet and interact with other musicians and to learn about music offerings at different churches. One area of improvement that I have observed would be to allow non-members access to information on our website about organ instructors. Having this available to the public would enhance our ability to reach out to potential students and to those who have an interest in our instrument.

It is an honor for me to be nominated for this position in our Chapter.



Mark Hayes
Executive Committee Nominee

A native of Birmingham, Alabama, Mark Hayes is a 1984 graduate of Birmingham-Southern College, where he earned a degree in organ performance. After graduation, he attended the University of North Texas, where he completed two years of study in organ and

harpichord, while working as an apprentice in a pipe organ shop. After returning to Birmingham in the early 1990's, Mark founded Hayes Pipe Organ Service, Inc. which maintains some sixty instruments in the southeastern states. In addition to his work as an organ technician, Mark is the assistant organist at the Cathedral of St. Paul, downtown.



Dan Lawhon
Incumbent for Dean

Dan Lawhon, a graduate of Belmont University in Nashville, completed the Master of Church Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from the School of Church Music of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. He has been an accompanist, clinician, and organ recitalist in much of the U.S. He has also directed handbell choirs and been active in the Handbell Musicians of America. After serving as Associate Minister of Music and Organist of First Baptist in Huntsville and teaching as an adjunct organ professor for University of Alabama Huntsville, in 2008 Dan became Organist and Choirmaster of the Baptist Church of the Covenant in Birmingham.



Jeff McLelland
Executive Committee Nominee

Jeff McLelland, a church musician for over 40 years, has served the local chapter in many capacities (including past Dean, Executive Committee member, Competition and Scholarship committee member, POE instructor). He has also served at regional and national levels of the AGO. As a recitalist Jeff has played at AGO conventions and many other venues in the U.S. He previously taught organ and other music courses at Mississippi College and William Carey College. He has been the Director of Music and Fine Arts at Independent Presbyterian Church since 2000.



Nathan Smock
Executive Committee Nominee

Nathan is the organist and interim Director of Worship & Arts at Avondale United Methodist Church. He joined the Birmingham chapter as a student in 2003 and has played an active roll in the chapter since making Birmingham home in 2011. He has served as the coordinator of hospitality since 2012, attending to the details of receptions and dinners at all AGO-sponsored events and meetings. Nathan has also served on the Executive Committee since 2015, filling a vacancy left by a member who was unable to complete their term. Most recently, he has accepted the position as editor of the chapter newsletter and agreed to oversee the creation and maintenance of the chapter's Facebook page.



Leslie Teardo
Incumbent for Sub-Dean

Leslie is Associate Organist at St. Luke's Episcopal in Mt. Brook. She earned a Bachelors of Music degree in Organ Performance and Dalcroze Eurhythmics from the Cleveland Institute of Music and a Masters in Music in Organ Performance from Yale. She's a member of the national Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support. Leslie shares her passion and talent for baking through her business Bakesmith, creating and selling to the public a variety of pastries and baked goods.



John Wilson
Executive Committee Nominee

I am a native of Massachusetts and have resided in the Southside of Birmingham for the past eleven years. I studied applied organ and choral conducting at The New England Conservatory of Music in Boston with Yuko Hayashi and Lorna Cooke DeVaron and later attended The Culinary Institute of

America in Hyde Park, NY, receiving an AOS in the culinary arts. I spent twelve years as an organist-choirmaster at three Episcopal churches in the Boston suburbs, beginning at age fifteen. I have pursued a culinary career for the past thirty years and am currently serving as Program Chair of The Academy of Culinary Arts at Wallace State Community College in Hanceville, AL. I am a Certified Executive Chef and active member of The American Culinary Federation.

I am an active member and vestryman at The Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Vestavia Hills, also serving as a lay-reader, substitute organist, chorister, and a member of the pastoral care team. I would love to see the local chapter flourish with new members and extraordinary events by offering a genuine spirit of welcoming and comradery to all of our colleagues.

THIS AND THAT

Instruments Available for Purchase

We have notice of a 1932 Steinway Model M grand piano for sale. It was rebuilt in 2000, is 5'7" with a satin mahogany finish, has been tuned regularly, and is well maintained. Pictures of the instrument, priced at \$28,000, can be seen at <http://bham.craigslist.org/msg/5417005382.html>.

The harpsichord pictured below is also available for \$1,000.



If interested, contact the seller, Kevin P. Boyd, at kevin.p.boyd@gmail.com to arrange to play these instruments and find out more about them.

SCHEDULED CHAPTER EVENTS 2016

April

Literature Sharing

Monday, April 11, 2016
Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church
Dinner 6:00 PM; Business meeting 6:30 PM;
Program 7:00 PM

Pedals, Pipes & Pizza

Saturday, April 16, 2016
Anniston First United Methodist Church
Time to be announced
Lunch will be provided
Info: chrishenleyorganist@yahoo.com

May

Student Recital

Monday, May 9, 2016
The Episcopal Church of the Ascension in
Vestavia
Dinner at 6:00 PM at Newk's; Business meeting
and program following dinner

APRIL OPPORTUNITIES

See Online Calendar of Events for Complete Listing

April 3, 2016: 4:00 PM

Brent Nolte, Organ Recital – DeForest Chapel,
Talladega College
Music of American Composers: Stephen Paulus,
Pamela Decker, Barbara Harbach, Charles Ore
Info: bjntptorgan@gmail.com

April 15, 2016: 12:30 PM

Mid-Day Music series: Charles Kennedy, Organ –
Cathedral Church of the Advent
Music of Bach, Dandrieu, Howells, Whitlock, and
Willan
Info: [http://www.adventbirmingham.org/
kennedy@cathedraladvent.com](http://www.adventbirmingham.org/kennedy@cathedraladvent.com)

April 17, 2016: 2:30 PM

Choral Presentation – Baptist Church of the
Covenant
Covenant Choir, University Chorale of Samford
University and Orchestra
Sherrie Lawhon and Ashley Gilbert, Sopranos,
and Brad Diamond, Tenor
"Hymn of Praise" by Felix Mendelssohn
Info: [http://www.bcoc.net
dlawhon@bcoc.net](http://www.bcoc.net/dlawhon@bcoc.net)

April 17, 2016: 3:00 PM

Choral Evensong and Recital – Independent
Presbyterian Church
IPC Camerata and organist Sherelyn Breland
Service of Easter
Info: [http://www.ipc-usa.org
jmclelland@ipc-usa.org](http://www.ipc-usa.org/jmclelland@ipc-usa.org)

April 17, 2016: 3:00 PM

Choral Evensong – Cathedral Church of the Advent
The Cathedral Choir; Frederick Teardo, Director of
Music and Organist
Info: [http://www.adventbirmingham.org/
kennedy@cathedraladvent.com](http://www.adventbirmingham.org/kennedy@cathedraladvent.com)

April 24, 2016: 4:00 PM

Cathedral Concert Series – Cathedral Church of the
Advent
The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys –
Benjamin Sheen, conductor, and Stephen Buzard,
organist
Tickets: \$25 reserved seating; \$15 general
admission; \$10 student admission
Info: [http://www.adventbirmingham.org/
kennedy@cathedraladvent.com](http://www.adventbirmingham.org/kennedy@cathedraladvent.com)