



EN CHAMADE



Winchester Chapter American Guild of Organists

May 2021 Newsletter

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THE DEAN'S MUSINGS

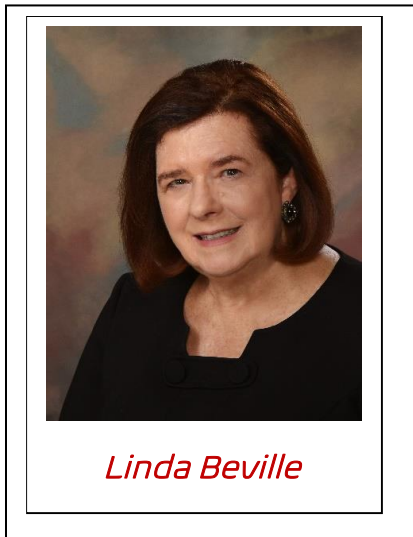
The month of May marks some anniversaries that our Chapter is recognizing.

For several years we have had a Progressive Dinner and Concert Series in May. Because of in-person restrictions we will mark this event with a virtual program called IN MEMORY: Grief, Remembrance, Comfort, Hope. This sensitive production honors the suffering and sacrifice of the Pandemic victims and their families and friends. The title includes front line workers who put their lives on the line, those citizens who have lost their lives through violence and those patriots who gave the ultimate gift of their lives to protect us and our freedoms. Spearheaded by **Marilyn Shenenberger** and **Jim Moon**, the video soundtrack is of our members performing pieces of poignant beauty. In between will be readings by Chapter members including works by local poet **Caroline Devlin**. Visual images suitable for each section will lead the listener through stages of grief towards hope. The program will be online through our Web Site (winchesterago.com) beginning May 15 and be available throughout the summer. **Please broadcast this opportunity to your church congregations, your ministers, pastors and priests, family and friends.**

May has several member birthdays. We have selected **Dr. Steven Cooksey** as our featured guest. He is celebrating his 80th birthday on May 2. I asked Dr. Cooksey to share his memories in a personal interview. After two and a half hours, I was much moved by his stories. I have written a narrative telling of the conversation we had. Our Chapter represented by **Judy Connelly** and **Daniel Miller** will present Dr. Cooksey with a hand-made

binder book of best wishes from students and friends and a photo album of pictures of folks who have known him along the way. There might just be some “Cooksey Cookies” too. On that Sunday evening, May 2 at 7:00 – 8:00 PM we will have a ZOOM for anyone who wishes to give Dr. Cooksey a personal greeting. **Marilyn Shenenberger** will be our host. **Heather Ankerbrand** will send out a reminder a week before and Marilyn will send the link out a day or two before as well.

May is the usual month to prepare a new slate of officers. We are lucky that our stellar Board of committed and exceptional members is willing to continue serving their two-year term until 2022. Gratitude to **Heather Ankerbrand, Alan Moser, Wendy Oesterling, Ricky Gearhart, Steven Cooksey, Marcia Merry Baker, Marilyn Shenenberger** and **Carol Westervelt** who are exceptional in their own ways. I want to add **Mark Lindgren** and **Terry Sisk** who never stop the creative thoughts as members of the Program Committee and the ever-talented **Daniel Hannemann**, our newsletter editor. Terry is also the liaison with our webmaster, **Emily Bentgen**.



I look forward to “seeing” you on June 11 at 7:30 PM when our final program called “Historic Keyboards: variations on a theme” will be presented by **Dr. Steven Cooksey**.

Be Joyful and Be Thankful,

Linda

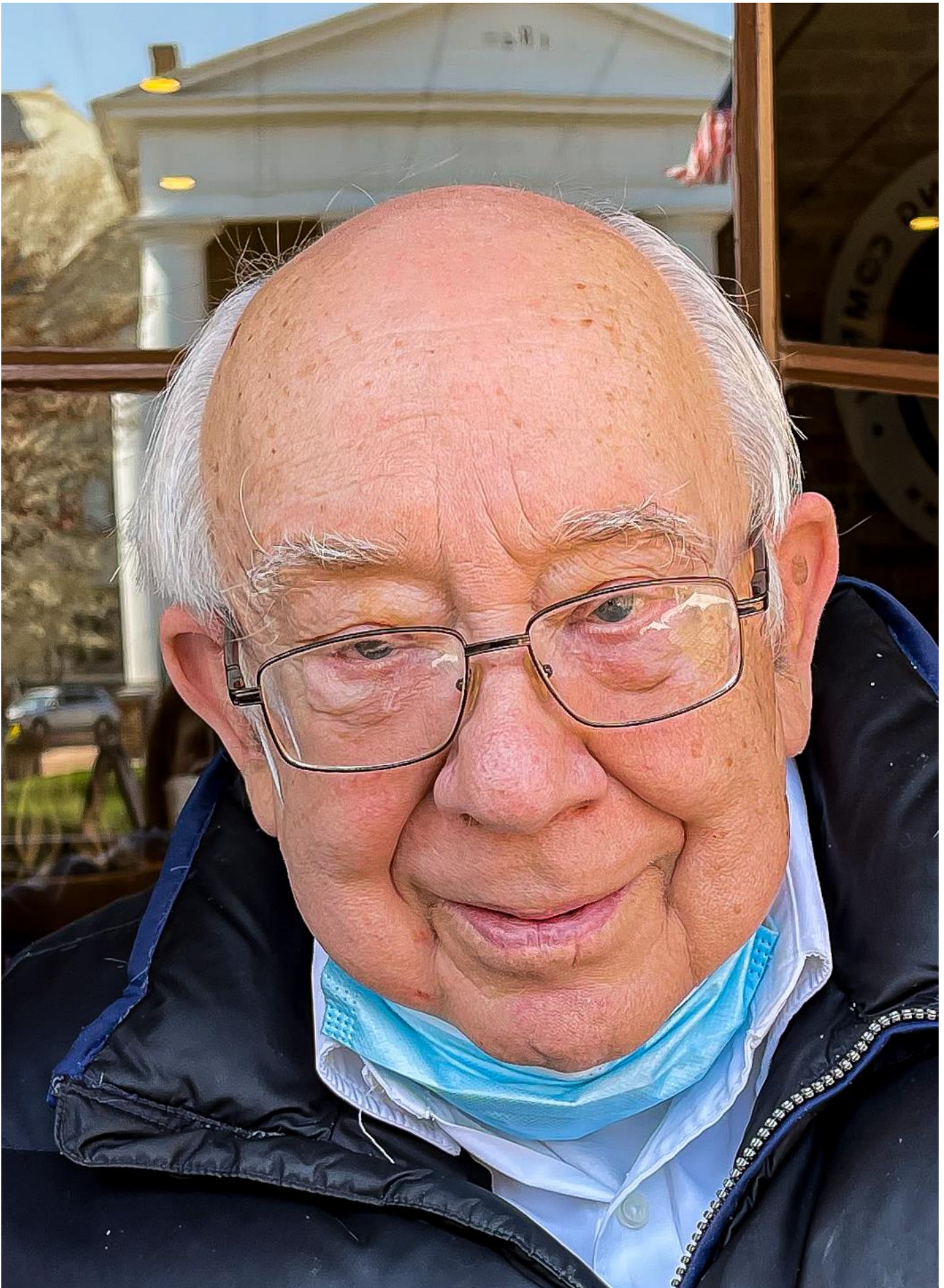
RCYO NEWS

WAGO joined the Potomac Chapter and the Northern Virginia Chapter to sponsor the biennial Regional Competition for Young Organists. First Place Prize of \$1000 went to a student from Silver Spring, MD and the second-place prize of \$500 went to a student from Lovettsville, VA. Once the next level of the competition is held, I will be able to publish these young artists’ names. I want to invite these young students to perform for us sometime this next year. There was brief talk about making a joint invitation. The National AGO has designated the 2021-2022 year as “The Year of the Young Organist”. Honoring and engaging young students nurtures our future. More to come.

NEW MUSICAL MYSTERY NOVEL

AGO President **Michael Bedford** is pleased to announce the publication of his first musical mystery novel. *The C Major Murders* is set in a small East Texas college music department and blends various musical elements into the framework of a traditional mystery. The book is published through Amazon and is available in both Kindle and paperback formats.





STEVEN COOKSEY: a conversation on his 80th birthday

“The Deepest Thinking is Humble” – Albert Schweitzer

On May 2, **Dr. Steven L. Cooksey** celebrates his 80th birthday. Dr. Cooksey has been a central point for church music and a sustaining supporter of the American Guild of Organists in Winchester, Virginia. His connections with Shenandoah University and the Winchester Chapter of the AGO have made these institutions influential and effective in promoting church music in our region. The WAGO wants this birthday anniversary to be special and unique.

I met him in the early 1980's when I returned to teaching after starting a family. He was an adjudicator at the regional middle school choral festival. He was kind, friendly, knowledgeable and fair in his assessment. Even 40 years ago, his reputation preceded him.

I picked up my acquaintance in 2014 when I moved to Winchester. Following my retirement, I needed a musical outlet. Somehow, I was befriended by Dr. Cooksey and through him started my involvement with the WAGO. To honor his birthday, I asked Dr. Cooksey for an interview, thinking the focus would be on his professional career. He generously gave me a morning and we sipped tea and ate pastries from Bonnie Blue on delicate blue and white china. We started by talking about food; he was proud that his hometown of Evansville, IN, is known for having the best BBQ in the Midwest. Then, we debated which farmer's market had the best custom butcher shop and fresh vegetables. The many guests to his home have benefitted from his interest in good, wholesome, fresh food. An “Aha!” moment came with a

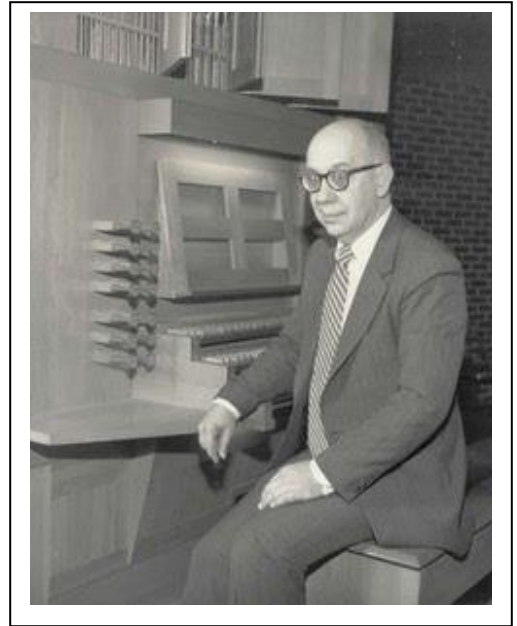


slowly developing awareness that Dr. Cooksey is substantially more than degrees, awards, or accolades. His life has evolved through a self-designed curriculum from life experiences that developed his principled character and built a foundation of personal values that were instilled in him from his Midwestern upbringing. The stories he shares are contemporary teachings on how to invest in a life that represents something of worth.

I could tell there has been a theme about his life: a calling. These words will carry weight with those who see similar threads in their own lives. Artists develop both sides of the brain. I asked why he thought music was a particularly divine gift that belongs to the realms of the angels and the heavenly spheres. He thought the question too “flowery”. As he said, *“(music) is an art and so combines the intellectual with the emotional”*. Like it or not, the details of his life have woven a clear tapestry with threads of people, music and faith -- both the concrete and the sublime. What he has been given has been passed along with enthusiasm to others. He is a teacher.

Steven Lee Cooksey was born in Evansville, Indiana. One of three boys, his mother was a teacher and his father a foreman for a warehouse that supplied parts to the Chrysler auto plant. Well cared for, there was always good food and security but no extravagances. Dr. Cooksey has a genuine gift for hospitality. *“I had nine aunts and we all would get together and there was always something to be shared”*. Everyone was held to high expectations and a belief in a strong work ethic. The boys would alternate evenings cooking for the family. His mother would take over on the weekends. It was a decidedly “Good Life”. His family is of English heritage. While it seems endearing, I mentioned to him that I thought it unique that everyone calls him “Cooksey”; I had never heard his first name mentioned. He told me that in his household both his parents went by “Cooksey”. It created a bit of a roadblock when someone would call and ask for “Cooksey”. The caller had to specify “Which one?”

He found his interest in the organ through his uncle, who was the custodian at the First Presbyterian Church. He would tag along as his uncle had a key, and so had unlimited access to the church. Dr. Cooksey would head for the organ, unbeknownst to the organist. His interests in music led him to study at the University of Evansville. His first job was as a high school choral director around Chicago from 1966–1968. He received his Master's degree from Syracuse and a Ph.D. from Washington University of St. Louis. The latter was in the discipline of Performance Practice, a musicological degree which emphasizes the study of how early music was performed and how these practices might influence how the music is played today. He described it as a blend of a Ph.D. and a DMA and was unique at the time. In 1972, he was searching for a position at the university level. He applied for positions at two schools. He did not get one but got the other: Shenandoah University in Winchester, Virginia where his childhood friend, Dr. Steven Johnson taught and was the person who gave Dr. Cooksey encouragement. He has never considered going anywhere else.



Dr. Cooksey began our shared time with a determined insistence on listing the names of people from the Winchester community who played an important role in the musical life of the city and who most influenced him during the past 50 years.

Mrs. Eugenia Evans: Premier piano teacher. Died at age 103. Came from Russia and Czechoslovakia;. taught at SU. She continued to teach past her 100th birthday. She would sneak piano students (mostly experienced teachers) into her retirement home for lessons on how to improve their teaching. She taught the person; a master teacher.

Jackson Sheats: #1 voice teacher at SU. Tenor; has students all over the US. He came from Koblenz University in Germany. He had an arrogance that was well deserved.

Dorothy Larrick Tillotson: Organist at Braddock Street United Methodist Church for 20 some years; then was organist at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church for 20 some years: upon retirement she followed Cooksey to St. James Episcopal Church in Leesburg and sang in his choir for several years. Very innovative and creative. The family's original name was Laraque (French Huguenot). One of her great + grandfathers married an Indian maid named Sundown whose father, Chief Cornstalk, signed several treaties with George Washington. Their original home, Sundown House, is still standing on the edge of Frederick County.

Jean Pasquet: Local organist and composer who with Cooksey in the 1980's resurrected the Winchester AGO Chapter back to health.

Larry Jones: Organist at Grace Evangelical Lutheran. He was raised in Winchester. As an adult he worked as the organist and choir director at Market Street United Methodist Church. He worked for the Moeller Organ Company.

Janette Ogg: Admired voice teacher at SU; had many students and was beloved.

He had an opportunity to take a sabbatical at George Washington University in arts management. The long list of additional course work includes Westminster Choir College, St. Mary's College, the North German Organ Academy, the International Organ Institute in Haarlem, Holland, Indiana University and Shenandoah University. Dr. Cooksey feels that one stays sharp and humble by continuing to take courses. Most surprising,

he said he held an MBA. *“Back in the 1980’s when organ departments were closing all over the country, I saw the writing on the wall and I decided to take classes at the University which were offered for free to faculty. I wasn’t going to be left without a financial future. What happened was that the Church Music Institute started and it built up the department.”* He continued to chair the department for over 40 years.



Dr. Cooksey’s association with the AGO began when he was a student and helped form the first Chapter of the AGO at the University of Evansville where he is a charter member. When he came to Winchester, he and Jean Pasquet reorganized the Winchester Chapter. I noted that he has carried a confidence to move into spaces where things need to be done. Starting from scratch or picking up from one’s bootstraps has never seemed to daunt him. More to the point, he gets satisfaction from giving his energies to grass roots projects. This is not a person who needs a confidence supplement!

He shared a few tidbits on his discipline:

On professional respect: The University has always supported his department. His colleagues were close friends and maintained a strong belief in its founding principles. There is an historical association with The Evangelical United Brethren Church and the German Methodist Church. Eventually, the two churches merged to form the United Methodist Church. The University, originally a seminary, was established to train ministers and church musicians. As a church school, the Church Music Department was always respected.

On teaching men and women: The only difference between teaching men and women is that *“the men are very interested in the mechanics of the organ. The women not so much in how it works”*.

On his philosophy of teaching: *“(He has) always been interested in teaching as a goal. His academic career choices always led to support (his) teaching”*. He has maintained three jobs: as a church musician, as a college classroom professor and as a private organ teacher. Each has been satisfying. In particular, Dr. Cooksey feels that applying the techniques learned in the classroom makes one the best teacher. *“Working one on one with private students makes you the best teacher. You have to practice what you preach then apply what you teach—no rarified classroom theories!”*

On getting angry: I remarked that he seems to have a steady disposition and wondered if he ever got angry. *“Oh yes, I get angry over politics and policies where there seems no compromise and much hostility and arrogance in positions.”*

Last fall, our WAGO Chapter interviewed five of our members following their retirement as church musicians. Their combined years on the bench were more than 200 years of experience. The stories and insights were fascinating, funny and frank. It shouldn’t have seemed remarkable, but the narratives had less to do with professional achievements and academic leadership. Our Chapter members told stories of what had enriched them personally. The interview with Dr. Cooksey yielded much of a similar voice. Finally came . . .

“This is theoretical, but should the city want to put up a monument honoring you, how would you finish this sentence as an epitaph?

“In Honor of Dr. Steven Cooksey who . . . “was a TEACHER of CHURCH MUSIC”.

Linda Beville
Dean, WAGO
May 2021

SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY'S

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Visit www.su.edu/cmi to learn more and register.



Dr. Wayne L. Wold, Director



From AGO National Headquarters

- Wednesday, May 7, 14, 21, and 28 Young Organists' Recitals
- "The Year of the Young Organist" July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022
National AGO free membership and benefits to young organists under 30
visit: AGOhq.org/free-membership

CHAPTER NEWS

Positions: several positions have become available and some have been filled. Please notify newsletter editor Daniel Hannemann of this important news. If you come into contact with any new organists or Music Directors, please reach out and welcome them.

IMPORTANT Committees NEEDED: Linda Beville would like to gather a small number of members who would be willing to serve for this next year on a Publicity Committee and a Budget Committee. These Chapter areas are of vital importance in sending out the message of our programs and keeping the Chapter expenditures healthy. Expectations are to meet a couple of times to draw up guidelines.

Call (703-887-2681) or email Linda (beville@verizon.net)

Finally . . . **we don't know unless you tell us:** if you have any news or items that would be of interest to our Chapter members, PLEASE pass them along. To a Board member or Daniel Hannemann. (e-mails addresses on page 1)

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IN MEMORY

Online May 15-June 15
Winchesterago.com



Presented by the Winchester Chapter of the American Guild of Organists



Clavichord



Flemish single manual harpsichord

Historic Keyboards:

a Virtual Zoom presentation by **Dr. Steven Cooksey**

at **7:30 p.m.** on **June 11**



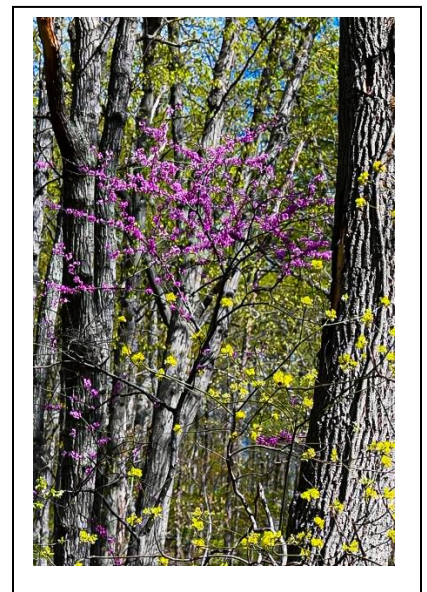
English bentside spinet



English forte-piano

Your Dean, as you may know, is also a photographer. She offers the following blessed evidences of Spring surrounding us: apple orchard and closeup; trillium on Linden Mountain; Virginia bluebells on the Shenandoah River; and forest margin redbud. *Thanks for sharing, Linda!*

Photos by Linda Beville



FROM OUR REGIONAL COUNCILLOR....

Just a few thoughts on our lives these days.

I am so impressed by what I see going on in your chapters. You have taken the lemons of 2020/2021 and turned them into some delicious lemonade. To name just three that come to mind:

I have participated in Zoom socials between one of my own chapters, Central Maryland, and Fairfield West (CT), where many interesting stories have been told, helpful ideas shared, and friendships made. It all began when two friends—a member from each chapter—realized that our chapters were about the same size and thought that we might benefit by connecting with each other. Mission accomplished and ongoing! These connections will endure beyond the pandemic, I am sure.

Just today I viewed the wonderful video made by the Lancaster PA Chapter, where sixteen organists playing thirteen different area organs collaborated to perform Widor's iconic *Toccata* from Symphony #5 as an Easter offering to its members, the community, and, thanks to technology and the technicians, the world.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OEXHtsUm3g>

As many of your chapters have been doing throughout the pandemic, the Kanawha (WV) Chapter has held virtual meetings. But instead of just social events or just presentations, they have combined the two. At each meeting they have a half-hour social time to catch up on each other's lives followed by an open session and discussion with a guest composer or performer. Close to home combined with across the country!

The list goes on. Many thanks to all who plan, perform, produce, and promote these events that inspire our AGO members, keep connections with our scattered congregants, and help bring our mission and vision to the wider world.

I hope you notice that these and other similar events would not have happened without the technology of the present time. And we probably would not have thought to be so creative if not for the quarantine imposed on us by COVID-19. AGO leaders are at their best when we see glasses as half-full and when we focus on the silver linings around those dark clouds. One of my favorite writers in The Washington Post is Megan McArdle, whom I have quoted before. Just this morning a column of hers appeared entitled "The pandemic has been awful. It could have been much worse." She reminds us how science already had in place the means to create and produce in record time the proper vaccine, how modern medicine has kept even more of us from suffering and dying, how technology has reached a point where important meetings can be held remotely, how food and other items can be ordered and delivered quickly and safely, how home entertainment is nearly limitless, and much more. And to this list we musicians can add more examples—in spite of the drawbacks we know all too well—of still being able to keep in touch with our choir members, of still making music together, of still worshipping our God. McArdle closes her essay with these words: "I invite you to step off the treadmill, just for today, and look at how far we've come. We live in an unprecedented age of wonder—and that's the only reason some of us are still here to appreciate wonders to come."

Yes, even more wonders are yet to come! Again, thanks for all you do in making refreshing lemonade from sour lemons. And continue to share your recipes with the rest of us!

Wayne

Wayne L. Wold, DMA, AAGO
Councillor for the Mid-Atlantic Region AGO
woldw@hood.edu wwold@su.edu
240-446-4030

TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

*You should have received the following information by e-mail.
Please renew your membership as early as possible. Thank you!*

Instructions to renew on line by Credit Card:

1. Go to www.agohq.org
2. Click on Member Login (in top right hand corner).
3. Enter your username and password.
4. Click on "Renew Dues and Subscriptions."
5. Follow the prompts.

Payment by Credit Card over the Phone:

Please call us at (212) 870-2310 and we will be happy to assist you in renewing your membership.

Should you choose to renew by check, there could be delays in processing your renewal that may also affect the timeliness of receiving the monthly delivery of TAO.

1. Note any changes to contact or membership information on your invoice.
2. Include your date of birth if you are a Young Organist (29 and under) or Special (65 and over or disabled).
3. If you wish to opt out of the printed copy of **THE AMERICAN ORGANIST** Magazine, check the box at the bottom of the invoice and subtract \$8. You will then have access to the magazine online only at <https://www.agohq.org/current-issue/>.
4. Please make your check or money order payable to the **American Guild of Organists**.
5. Return both invoice and check/money order to national headquarters by the due date.

When you renew your membership, please consider including a tax-deductible contribution to the AGO. The Guild relies on contributions from our members to support and sustain educational programs on both the local and national level. No gift is too small to make a difference.

Thank you for your continuing support by taking a moment to renew today.



SMILE

History of World Religions Review Dept.

Our faithful readers are urged to recall from college or grad school days what they learned regarding the following:

- Zoroastrianism – an ancient Middle Eastern religion heavily into astronomy and astrology. Still alive in Iran, India, and North America.
- Egyptians – had their own peculiar religion based upon multiple gods and focused on the afterlife.
- Aphrodite –the ancient Greek goddess of sexual love and beauty, identified with Venus and worshiped by the Romans.
- Buddha – you know him well from his exploits from childhood on up, imparting wisdom to all.
- Druids -- followed a nature-based indigenous Irish/Celtic religious system which sought to honor plants and trees. Yes, there are still some practicing out and about.

A favorite Gospel Hymn (you know the tune) helps us remember these ancient ‘alternative faiths’:

Chorus:

Gimme that Ole Time Religion,
Gimme that Ole Time Religion,
Gimme that Ole Time Religion,
It’s good enough for me!

We could worship Zoroaster-
Their liturgies are faster!
Worship stars and planets, aster –
Oids, it’s Good Enough For Me! ***Chorus***

We will pray with the Egyptians
Build pyramids to put our crypts in
Drench our subways with inscriptions,
Yes, it’s good enough for me! ***Chorus***

We could worship Aphrodite
In her flimsy, silken nightie;
She’s a floozy and she’s flighty,
But she’s Good Enough For Me! ***Chorus***

We will worship with the Buddha
Among gods, there is none cuta!
Comes in silver, brass and pewta,
And it's good enough for me... ***Chorus***

We could worship like the Druids,
Drink intoxicating fluids,
And run nekkid through the woo-wids,
It’s Good Enough Fer ME! ***Chorus with circle dance.***