



"TO FOSTER A THRIVING COMMUNITY OF MUSICIANS WHO SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND INSPIRE PASSION FOR THE ORGAN."



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Our Investment: Designing the Future

Our WAGO Chapter just had a successful Progressive Dinner and Concert Gala Benefit featuring the work of Women Composers. And, we looked no further than our own friends and colleagues to find some of the best models of intelligence, industry, artistry, and beauty. At first it was Hildegard von Bingham who was the go-to artist to represent this class of composers. I went to online videos many times, letting myself be lifted up by the undulating chants of medieval monody. But, we were too far into the future, admitting that it would have been difficult to learn in the time we had. We found some examples in the later compositions of Clara Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn, moving towards more contemporary works and selecting examples from choir anthems that were in the libraries of the churches where many of us worked. As we are members of the Guild of Organists our music is mostly on display in worship services.

The real, authentic artistry was in the planning and organization of the event. The engine is our Program Committee, and immediately behind them is our Board of Officers. That is where we found our own Hildegard's: Marilyn Shenenberger and Beverly Clark. Their work was fully on display throughout the evening. Now, where do we go from here?

The past six months have called home three of our most treasured members: Beverly Clark, James Kriewald, and Steven Cooksey. ** Treasurers, all of them who invested their time and talents in keeping the WAGO alive. Pat Byers (First Presbyterian Church) told me of the time when Dr. Cooksey first came to Winchester in 1972. He held the position of professor of organ studies, conducting and music literature. organist and music director at FPC for a good number of years. When he first arrived. , he approached Pat and Gloria Harris about starting up the Guild again. She recalled that it was a potluck dinner meeting in Loudoun Hall. and the numbers were small That was over 50 years ago and we have over 40 members.

So, where do we go from here? Our legacy members showed us what it looked like to be a committed participant. Our gift of music is an altruistic one. Over the past 10 years, we have involved a majority of our members. Now we are looking at designing a path through the future without our legacy members. Our programs and, especially the Gala Benefits, have drawn attention to the changing demographics in church attendance and the keyboard artistry of our resident organists.

We can't help but involve ourselves on a personal level when we think about where the future will lead us—or, hopefully, how we are going to design the answer to the question "Who is going to take leadership?"...After a large activity such as the Gala, we are all exhausted. We have missed our personal time as we gallop off to celebrate Easter! . But it has to be us. We know what the art of the organ demands. Shenandoah had the good luck to have had outstanding professionals working in their Music Department. Of the three organists mentioned, Dr. Steven Cooksey shaped the direction of Organ Studies for so many who studied under him. He was always planning something interesting and enriching. We have been the beneficiaries, and now we must take that investment and design a future that opens up a new direction in the future. I hope that we can prepare a legacy for the next generation of organists as Dr. Cooksey modeled for us.

May Easter give you new wisdom, energy to fulfill the dream, and kindness to work together to extend our own legacy for several more generations. Linda

Call for a Scholarship Committee: Our Spring Gala was another grand success. We raised a substantial amount to invest in scholarships for those who would like to better their skills at playing the organ. I invite those who are interested in being on a committee to gather ideas and lay down some guidelines to contact Linda. (bevillel@verizon.net)

A Celebration of Life

A service for Dr. Cooksey will be held at
St. James Episcopal Church in Leesburg on
Saturday, May 10, at 1:00 PM.
Prelude begins at 12:30

Dan Miller is assisting with plans. Many will be performing as well as current and former Clergy who were close to Dr. Cooksey will give eulogies.

Any AGO member who wishes to participate in the choir must contact Bryan Welsh of St. James at 1bwelsh@gmail.com.

The piece is “**Praise be to God Who Reigns Above**” by **James Laster**. The only criteria are having a reasonably competent voice and being comfortable with learning a piece for a same-day performance. I am looking into chartered bus transportation. Please let me know if you would be interested in having that available.

Goodbye to a dedicated member

We will all miss **George Donovan**, our newsletter editor and Program Committee member, for his commitment to doing so much with the programs, in particular, the Celebration of Women Composers Gala last month.

George is relocating to South Carolina where he may put his musical talent to good work.

There will be a reception honoring George on **April 27** at Bethel Lutheran Church , 2077 N. Frederick Pike (rt 522), immediately following the morning service around **11:00 AM**.

Thank you, George, for all you have done.

ARTS CHORALE OF WINCHESTER
PRESENTS
“CENTER STAGE”

Dr. Karen Keating, artistic director

May 16, 2025 , 7 pm

Guest Choir, Sherando High School

Pam Keim, Music Director

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

May 18, 2025 , 3 pm

Guest Choir, John Handley High School

Gloria Law, music director

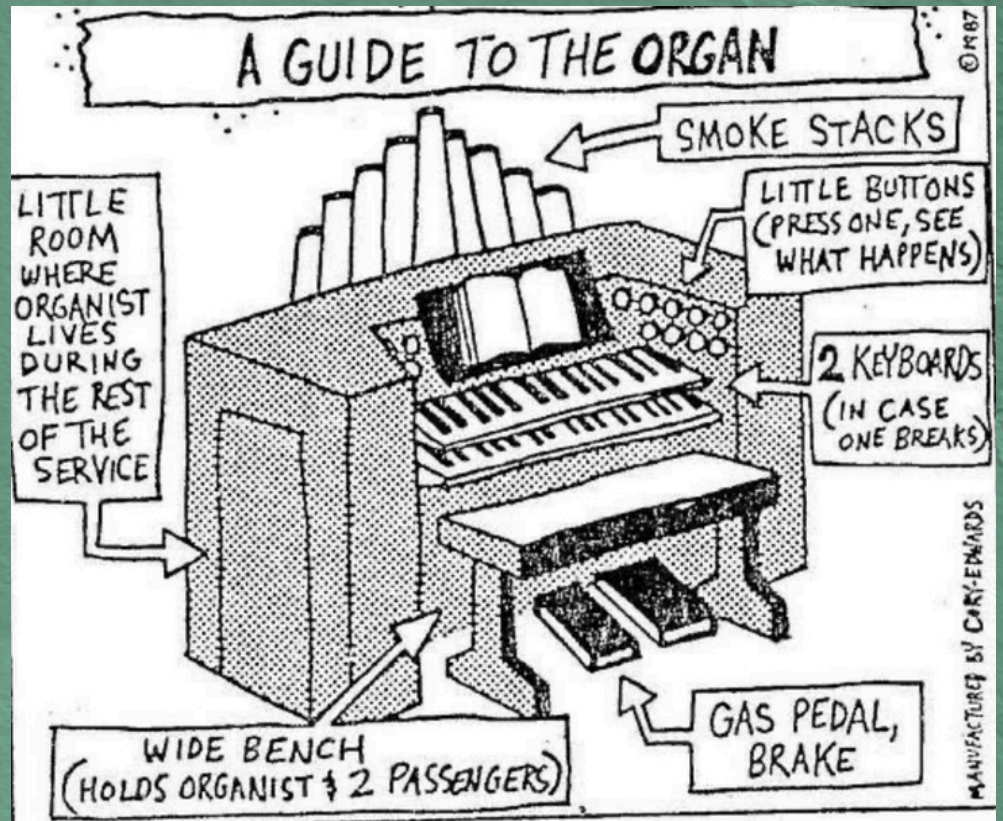
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