

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

THE WINCHESTER CHAPTER AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

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The State of the Chapter 2025

Dear members and friends of the Winchester Chapter of the AGO. It has been a month filled with emotion. My focus has been multi-sided. I recall receiving the text about Dr. Cooksey's hospital admission. From that point through his remaining weeks, I went over in my mind how he had been the pivotal person who welcomed me and introduced me to a very interesting and talented group of people 12 years ago. And, there are so many of you who have stories about your own introduction to a man whose reputation was large and whose power of persuasion was limitless. I envy those in the chapter and beyond who had known him for most of his professional years. Particularly, those who were his students. What a treasured relationship is theirs! This is the third cycle of loss. I very much miss seeing Beverly Clark and Jim Kriewald. But that is the nature of life when we are allowed only so much time on this earth. For all we have gained, we are left with a great deal to be thankful for.

Several times, I would sit and go over in my mind the many satisfying programs, concerts, and social gatherings we have had. And we kept getting better. This year, our members, including the program committee, performers, and guests, came together to make the **Celebration of Women Composers** such a success, including receiving donations to support scholarships from our chapter. How blessed we are to know so many who appreciate serious scholarship. And, at the head was "Cooksey". Many have mastered refined technical skills. Cooksey added to this his generosity and large heart. We are, as the national calls us, a small chapter. However, so many of us refuse to be limited (in our visions (except by exhaustion)...

So in the past several months, I have been turning over in my mind where the next direction should take the WAGO, how we can entice both professional members, appreciators, and passionate students to hop on for a ride to the next destination? June of 2026 should see a new slate of officers. National has set our priorities through its mission statement. I copied what is posted on the Syracuse website:

"The mission of the American Guild of Organists is to enrich lives through organ and choral music."

To achieve this, we:

- Encourage excellence in the performance of organ and choral music**
- Inspire, educate, and offer certification for organists and choral conductors**
- Provide networking, fellowship, and mutual support**
- Nurture future generations of organists**
- Promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles**

We have worked consistently to promote all of the elements in this statement except for nurturing our future generations.

Our young people are few and far between. I am hoping to increase our exposure and encourage young people to be interested in joining the WAGO and in pursuing a more professional study of the organ and choirs.

Thank you for your support. I hope to see you at our Soiree' this Sunday, June 1 at my home for a relaxing afternoon. Blessings,

Linda

NEWS & NOTICES

SOIREE' RSVP: I am hosting a "Thank You" supper this coming Sunday, June 1, from 5:00 to 8:00. My treat. It is called "Salads & Sweets" A hint of what will be served. See the flier attached. Casual. Please consider coming but most of all, RSVP so I know you are alive and well!

A GIFT FOR YOU: Michael Main has presented his collection of hymnals to the Chapter. Over the years, Michael has collected more than 100 hymnals, all unique and very interesting. They will be out for the taking at the Soiree' this Sunday, After that, they will be available at the Board Meeting, the Program Committee meeting or pick-up-at-any-time at Linda's House (1200 Caroline St, Winchester, VA).. Free for the taking!!!!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: Some of our members are on a rotating membership (from the date they first joined); Others are following National's request for renewing your membership in JUNE with July 1 being the first month of the new year. Please help us by renewing promptly. And, invite a new member. The chapter gets a portion of your membership returned to us.

There are different categories of members. Some offer a generous discount if you are a senior, a friend, or a new student. AND, how about becoming a dual member with another chapter? Thank you for your renewal.

IDEAS FOR PROGRAMS: as you travel through the summer, can you pick up interesting topics or programs from other chapters?

REMEMBERING AN EXEMPLARY LEADER: Cooksey's Obituary ran in the June Issue of TAO.

Listed are many of his accomplishments.

Looking for Suggestions for fall, winter, spring programs

Please send me your thoughts on what programs would be most helpful or most interesting to you. The program committee will be meeting later this month to

decide on our WAGO programs for the fall, winter and spring, so please send any ideas you have to

Marilyn Shenenberger: Text to **609-502-3642** or email to **handbelle@comcast.net**

CHURCH MUSIC INSTITUTE:

CMI starting June 16 in Goodson Chapel on the Campus of Shenandoah University.

Registration is right up to the start of the Institute. You may take the class for credit or Audit.

The Musical Source will be bringing its library of music (for voice, organ Handbells, etc)

Week 1 Schedule | June 15–20, 2025 -

Week 2 Schedule | June 22–27, 2025

<https://www.su.edu/conservatory/conferences-institutes-2/church-music-institute/>

SCHOLARSHIP NEWS:

Planning is getting in place to structure formal Scholarship awards that will be sure to be funded annually through donations and our designated Scholarship Fundraiser through our Progressive Dinner and Concerts. There will be an opportunity to donate to a fund honoring Dr. Steven Cooksey. More information to follow.

NEWS ON DR. JAMES LASTER:

For the past several weeks, it was thought that Dr. James Laster (Professor Emeritus at SU) was having serious complications similar to Dr. Cooksey. Here is an excerpt from Hal Laster, Jim's brother: Jim seems to be doing amazingly (and surprisingly) well, which is a totally different description from three or four weeks ago when I (we) honestly thought we were going to lose him. He says he is ready to go back to his apartment(!), but Travis doesn't think that's going to happen.

Wish someone knew exactly what causing his sporadic and drastic downward turns, but grateful that he has been able to bounce back. My most recent conversation with him was Thursday afternoon when he sounded the normal in weeks. Plus, it was the longest chat we're had in quite some time ... maybe 15 minutes! Usually, our chats have been no more than five minutes.

JUNE 1, 2025 from 5:00 to 8:00 PM

For MY WAGO members and guests

PLEASE DROP IN ANYTIME

Salads and Sweet's Soiree'

At the home of Linda Beville and Jim Charest
1200 Caroline Street
Winchester VA 22601

A cool evening on a lovely patio visiting with friends, sharing memories of Beverly, Jim K, and Dr. Cooksey, and being thankful you don't have to lift a finger to have a good time.

Please bring a guest and a lawn chair DRESS CASUALLY!!!!!!

RSVP to Linda @ bevillel@verizon.net

**food allergies, please let me know
**or 540-722-2051 by Friday, May 30.*

A Lighter Side of WACO

