

JULY/AUGUST
2023

Mixtures



Binghamton Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

DEAN'S MESSAGE...



Greetings to you, fellow members of the Binghamton chapter of the American Guild of Organists. As the newly installed dean of the chapter, let me share a bit of information about myself.

I started playing organ when I was in high school. My family was on vacation that summer and happened to visit the church we had attended years before. The organist was a true virtuoso (see <http://twbaker.net/jw.YT.html> and www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/jsonline/name/john-weissrock-obituary?id=3330307). He inspired me to begin lessons with my home organist that fall. I got a Bachelor of Music degree at George Mason University and did some courses at

Westminster Choir College in the years after that.

I served St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Washington, DC in the 1980s, a small church near Basel, Switzerland in the early 1990s, among others since then. I substituted for Peter Browne at Trinity Memorial in Binghamton before acting as interim during his last months and after his passing. Currently, I'm the organist for St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Owego.

When I was younger I played concerts at the National Cathedral (Washington, DC), in Poland, Hungary, Germany, and on Silberman organs in Basel.

I returned to Binghamton almost three years ago, but am still "new" to the Binghamton AGO chapter. So I'd like to get to know each of you better and learn how the chapter can serve you best. To do this I will send out a short survey in the next week or so, which I'd appreciate you filling out.

Thank you, Hilton

UPCOMING EVENTS...

- ♦ Saturday, July 8 - 6:30 pm - High School Senior organ recital at Candor Congregational Church, 134 Main Street, Candor featuring hymns for congregational singing and works by Parry, Samuel & Charles Wesley, and Preludes and Fugues previously attributed to J.S. Bach. The organist is AGO chapter member, Linden Foster. Reception and refreshments will follow.
- ♦ Saturday, August 5 - 2:00 pm - Binghamton AGO Summer Picnic (See below)
- ♦ Wednesday, August 16 - Ithaca Organ Crawl starting at Cornell's Sage Chapel and moving to Annabel Taylor in the morning. After lunch, the Unitarian Wolf and First Presbyterian Russell are being considered. **Times to be determined. Details to follow.** Contact Peggy Sniezek if interested in carpooling sniezeks@yahoo.com or 607-687-3270
- ♦ Friday, September 15 - 5:30 pm - Save the Date (See Below)

SUMMER PICNIC...

WHAT: Binghamton AGO Summer Picnic

WHEN: Saturday, August 5, 2023 at 2:00 pm

WHERE: Dan & Peggy Sniezek

5062 Lisle Road, Owego, NY

HOW: Catered by Phil's Chicken House, \$10 per person

WHO: Chapter members with spouses/partners



RESPOND: Email Peggy at sniezeks@yahoo.com or call 607-687-3270 and leave a message by Monday, July 31 if you plan to attend.



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 - 5:30 PM

POTLUCK DINNER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, JOHNSON CITY

(Corner of Floral Ave & Main Street, next to the EJ arch)

Our first event of the 2023-2024 season

METHUEN MUSIC HALL CONCERT...



An optical illusion? A miniature figure commanding these magnificent organ pipes? OH MY... 'tis our colleague and friend, Randy Steere at his May 31 recital at Methuen Music Hall, Methuen, Massachusetts! The above picture cannot capture the magnificence of the IV/86 Walcker (1863 Ludwigsburg, Germany) which was rebuilt in 1909 (Methuen Organ Co) and again in 1947 (Aeolian-Skinner). Nor does the picture reveal the fascinating history and the beauty of the structure in which it stands, The busts of numerous famous composers peer down upon the player. Herr Bach is staring *directly* at the performer. Additional pressure!!

I had the honor of occupying the Second Best Seat in the House (i.e. page turner) for Randy's spectacular performance which included *Litanies* (Alain), *Danse Macabre* (Saint-Saëns), III. *Allegro Vivace* (from Symphony #1, Vierne), *Sine Nomine* (Weaver) and pieces by Bissinger, Fey, Ireland and Sowande. More info about the music hall and the organ, along with the **Wednesday evening live-streamed and archived concerts** can be found at <https://mmmh.org>. Congratulations, Randy!

Jean Henssler

FROM PATTI O'CONNELL...

To my Dear Friends in the Binghamton AGO,

Thank you all so very much for your recent support as I faced and experienced open heart double bypass surgery! I freely admit it was the scariest thing I think I have ever faced, and it is no longer on my bucket list...LOL!



It was wonderful to see so many of you at the Members' Recital. What a wonderful concert! The variety of performances made for a very interesting and entertaining program. The fellowship at Jonathan's was equally enjoyable. Whether you said a prayer, sent a card or get well gift or just remembered me in your thoughts; please know that you played an important part in my successful recovery, and I am forever grateful.

My goal is to be playing and back in shape on the horn for Beethoven's 5th in September, a lofty goal indeed! I can sing right now at 3 weeks, so playing is the next step!

My best to all of you!

Patti O'Connell

A HISTORY NOTE FROM OUR REGISTRAR...

During the Members' Recital, we were treated to a setting of the hymn tune "His Eye Is On The Sparrow". A Google search revealed some local history. Yes, Lestershire is now called Johnson City and its Bible School was, until recently, Davis College.

Walter Stillwell Martin attended Harvard University where he studied for the ministry and was later ordained as a Baptist minister. He and his wife, Civilla Durfee Holden, came together through a mutual interest in music. As a husband and wife team, Civilla wrote texts for many of the hymns he produced during their travels which included a Bible School in Lestershire, New York. "My husband was at the school, making a songbook for the school," she once reflected. "In 1904 I wrote the song 'His Eye Is on the Sparrow' in the company of a bedridden saint in the city of Elmira, New York. I was reading and singing to her and during our conversation, I chanced to ask her if she did not sometimes get discouraged. This is when she responded about God's care for the sparrow. Her answer prompted me to find paper and pencil, and in a very short time I had completed the poem."

MEMBERS' RECITAL...

June 11 was a beautiful Sunday afternoon as members and friends of the AGO gathered at Northminster Presbyterian Church in Endwell for the annual recital, equally beautiful as the day! Performing on the newly restored organ were Hilton Baxter, Peggy Sniezek, Linden Foster, David Jackson and Tat Baine playing the works of Pachelbel, Franck, Wesley, Vierne and Mendelssohn.

Also on the program was Carolyn Corse performing piano arrangements by Helvey and Hayes. In addition, the singing group BRIO! directed by Craig Johnson and accompanied by Carolyn Corse sang three separate sacred choral pieces by Bullard, McDonald, and Helvey.

Rounding out the performance diversity was the Recorder Ensemble with Peggy Sniezek, Lana Ogden, Margaret Davis and Craig Johnson as accompanist playing works by Purcell and Sammartini.

Following the recital, a dinner was held at Jonathan's Restaurant where John Holt and Jean Henssler were recognized and thanked as outgoing dean and sub-dean. New officers were then installed by our chaplain, Rev. David Werly.



MEMBERS' RECITAL/BANQUET PHOTOS...



TROY, PA ORGAN RECITAL...

A Sunday afternoon trip to the First Presbyterian Church in Troy, PA did not disappoint as the travelers listened to the organ recital given by Jean Hensler on the Aeolian-Skinner Organ, recently renovated by Smith & Gilbert.



The vast tonal palette of the instrument was heard as Jean expertly wove her way through works of Weitz, Widor, Sweelinck, Schumann and Smart. Several times, Jean left the organ bench to share interesting historical facts about the pieces with the audience. Her amazing playing left everyone wanting more ... and so she gifted us with an encore! Thank you, Jean, for your truly splendid performance!

Nancy McNamara



THE OLD PALATINE CHURCH

Presents

Helen Maksymicz

at the organ

“MUSIC FROM LITTLE FALLS”

Sunday, August 6, 2023, 4:00 p.m.

Historic Old Palatine Church

Rt. 5 between Nelliston and St. Johnsville, NY

Event is open to the public. Donations are accepted at the door.

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