

The Monthly Mixture



Austin Chapter AGO ❖ October 2017

From the Dean —

Dear Friends,

This month, I have requested submissions from two of our members. Please see the articles about Frank (Hap) Speller by Jean Fuller, and the review of the Dallas AGO Regional Convention 2017 by Jack Martin. It is always good to have the input of members of the Chapter. If any of you are interested in submitting a piece, it is more than welcome. Please send me an e-mail: gregory@allsaints-austin.org

I was gratified that we had a very good turnout for our Clergy/Musician Dinner in September, and extend my thanks to all who made it possible, in particular Jean Fuller, *Sub-Dean*, and the Rev. Larry Covington, Dan Girardot, and Jack Martin of St. Theresa, our host church. Fr. Covington's talk was both engaging and thought-provoking, and at times, hilarious. It is always a good thing to be able to laugh at, and/or with, ourselves, even while recognizing the gravity of what we do for the worship lives of our congregations.

In particular, please note the **Austin Chapter/Alamo Chapter Organ Crawl in San Antonio**, listed below under Upcoming Chapter Events. I hope that many of you will be able to join us on November 18.

Gregory Eaton, *Dean*

Upcoming Chapter Events

Saturday, November 18 - 9:30 am to 4:00 pm

Organ Crawl to San Antonio; Shelby Simmons, Sub-Dean of the Alamo Chapter AGO, has put together a very interesting roster of churches for us to visit. Those who wish to carpool will meet at St. Alban's Episcopal Church, 11819 IH-35 South, in Austin at 7:30 am, while those who want to meet us there can plan to meet at 9:30 in San Antonio. Full details are below. Contact Sub-Dean Jean Fuller to let us know you are interested in going. jean@stmattsAustin.org

Alamo Chapter Organ Crawl (with Austin Chapter)

Saturday, Nov. 18, 2017

9:30 a.m. University United Methodist Church, Dr. Christopher Keenan, organist
5084 De Zavala Road, San Antonio 78249 ❖ Rosales (1989): II/45

10:15 a.m. First Presbyterian Church, Dr. Jae Ha, organist
404 N. Alamo St., San Antonio 78205 ❖ Robert L Sipe and Assoc. (1999): III/51

11:00 a.m. Travis Park Methodist Church, Dr. Jennifer Seighman, organist
230 E. Travis St., San Antonio 78205 ❖ Helmuth Wolff & Assoc. (1985): III/53

11:45 a.m. Madison Square Presbyterian Church, Mark Marty, organist
319 Camden Street, San Antonio 78215 ❖ Aeolian-Skinner (1945): II/19 unaltered

12:30 p.m. St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Dr. Joseph Causby, organist
315 East Pecan Street, San Antonio 78205 ❖ Austin (1959)/Kegg (2012): III/52

1:15 LUNCH (location TBD)

No Program in December: Have a fulfilling Hanukkah/Christmas!

Saturday, January 6 - 2:00 to 5:00 pm

Twelfth Night Party; We will again gather at the home of Bob Lemmens, 11207 Jones Road, Manor, TX 78653. There will be wonderful food, games, and opportunities to play the astounding house organ! Join us to celebrate the official end of the Christmas season.

Saturday, February 3 - 9:00 am to 8:30 pm

Midwinter Conference; The day's activities will be based at Grace Episcopal Church, 1314 E. University, Georgetown. Our planned schedule is as follows:

9-10 – am Hal Hopson Psalm Workshop — Hymnody, psalms and anthems

10-11 Break – Walk over to University and visit the chapel and the Aeolian Skinner

11-Noon – Faythe Freese – meet and greet

Noon-1pm Lunch at the church (all pay)

1:30 – 2:30 pm – Joon Ho Park (UT interim organ professor) Masterclass

3-4 – Gregory Eaton Organ transcriptions

continued on next page. . .

4:30 – 5:30 – Kathleen Thomerson, studying in Paris

5:30 – 6:30 – Dinner on your own;

7 pm – CONCERT Faythe Freese – Grace Episcopal

Sunday, April 22 - 3:00 pm

Members' Recital; First United Methodist-Round Rock, Charles Mallory, organist; Michael Rosensteel, Director of Music Ministries.

Saturday, May 5 - 6:30 to 9:00 pm

Pedals, Pipes and Pinot; Our take on an adult version of the *Pedals, Pipes and Pizza* program for young people is designed to introduce adults to the organ as an instrument, and to its music. There will be an informative video presentation, a demonstration, and a chance to look inside the organ. And of course, there will be wine and refreshments. Bring your parishioners, curious friends, or anyone else who might be interested to know a bit more about our fascinating instrument. Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2111 Alexander Avenue, Austin.

Remembering Frank Speller —

Dr. Frank (“Hap,” short for Happy) Speller taught organ and harpsichord at the University of Texas, Austin. With degrees from the University of Colorado and Indiana University, he studied with Everett Hilty and Alexander McCurdy in the United States, and Jeanne Demessieux and Pierre Froidebise in France. Having concertized extensively in the United States, he performed organ recitals for three regional conventions and one national convention of the American Guild of Organists. In Europe he presented more than 25 recitals, playing in such cathedrals as those of Notre Dame de Paris, Chartres, Utrecht, Braunschweig and Westminster Abbey. His 1995 appearance on the CBS television network’s *Good Morning America*, demonstrating the Visser-Rowland pipe organ at the University of Texas-Austin, was seen by millions of viewers around the country. In addition, his performances were broadcast nationally on *Pipedreams* and on National Public Radio’s *Performance Today*. Speller’s original compositions and editions of organ music are published by Belwin Mills, Concordia, Alexander Broude, Peer-Southern Organization and Morning Star Music Publishers.



He had a lively studio of talented and dedicated organists. Many of them practiced diligently and learned techniques from the French School of organ playing. I remember I spent 2 years prior to graduate school working on technique alone. He was a master at teaching total relaxed playing achieved by sitting correctly, practicing minute details, advising on literature of historical value and suggesting practical interpretations and friendly weekly lessons. He never missed a lesson and was eager to help all of us as we approached recitals and juries with extra lessons.

I began studying with him in my late 20s and continued to work with him after graduate school to perfect concerts I performed in cathedrals and churches. He had a worn-out 2-manual Wurlitzer at home to give lessons on if we couldn’t get down to UT or to a church. He wrote a lot of his music on that instrument, too. During a short period of time, he wrote organ pieces dedicated to his students which are in print through the publishers listed above. Our organ class grew to be a family of musicians/organists and enjoyed sharing the jokes that Hap would tell us as we began our lessons. Some of them are not printable! Charles Ball, the piano technician/tuner at UT, could tell you many colorful sayings of our teacher, Hap.

His recitals were impeccable and so moving. We all aspired to play that well. He loved the Visser-Rowland at UT and one of his passions to raise money for scholarships was the yearly Silent Movie concerts. He was the best

improviser. As he designed the organ with Pieter Visser, he knew exactly how every pipe sounded. He could register any organ piece at least 3 different ways! He was our mentor and was always a friend to all of us. When I had my first child in graduate school at UT, the baby sitter couldn't take care of my daughter the day of my lesson, so Hap volunteered to hold her and give her a bottle during the lesson!!!! I also gave my qualifying recital 8 months pregnant on the UT Reuter and when it came time to pivot in a Bach piece, Hap would move me over because I was so big!

I remember him playing at an AGO regional in Ft. Worth at TCU. He played his dances and we hired dancers from Ft. Worth to dance and create their own choreography. We couldn't afford professional ballet dancers so we went with what we could get! Some of the dancers were large and made loud clunking noises when they landed but he just played on.

He took the organ class down to Houston to meet Pieter Visser and Jan Rowland to give our approval of the shop and their staff. Back then, we really didn't know anything about building organs but it was nice to see a well-made shop and friendly workers. During the summer of 1983, they hauled the UT organ to Austin in an 18-wheeler and moved all the pipes into Bates and laid them on the chairs until they were ready to install. It was a most glorious sight to watch them build the organ and then to hear it after many years of waiting for it. I waited around to play my graduate recital on it! As I am still in Austin, I am asked to accompany choirs on the organ and always like going back up there to play "Bevo!" You remember the Aeolian-Skinner in Jessen Auditorium was "Mother" and the Visser-Rowland is "Saint Bevo" – named for the beloved UT mascot AND St. Bavo in Haarlem, The Netherlands. Also, if you studied with Hap you all remember what was behind the music rack!!!! As Hap is no longer there, the "object" has vanished!!!! R.I.P. Hap

Jean Fuller
Director of Music and Principal Organist
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
Austin, Texas

Dallas 2017 — Southwest Regional AGO Convention

by Jack Martin

The Dallas 2017 convention has to be one of the best I have ever attended. The quality of the performances was outstanding.

The convention set a new attendance record for AGO regional conventions and several Austin Chapter (ACAGO) members attended including Rick Bocoock, Gregory Eaton, Dottie Norman, Hal Rutz, David Thoresen, and Keith Womer. In addition several former members also attended including Alvez Barkoskie IV, Corey Candler, Aaron Garcia, Thom Pavlechko, and Jordan Peek.

I arrived in Dallas on Sunday evening in time to hear an all-French concert by students from the University of North Texas at Christ the King Catholic Church. Former Austin Chapter member Thom Pavlechko is now the Director of Music and Organist there. The 75-rank Juget-Sinclair (2014) was the perfect instrument for the program.

The RCYO competition began on Monday afternoon at University Park United Methodist Church. Four competitors all performed well on the 69-rank Alfred Kern (1978). This was the oldest organ we heard during the convention.

Stefan Engels performed the first recital of the convention at the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration. My

favorite pieces on his program were the Karg-Elert *Rondo alla campanella* and the Reger *Fantasy and Fugue in D minor*. The organ is a 68-rank instrument by Richards, Fowkes and Co. (2010).

Preceding the Opening Service attendees enjoyed a German meal complete with Shiner Bock beer at King of Glory Lutheran Church. Vespers for Pentecost was lead by Lenora McCroskey and Michael Shake playing the 49-rank Rosales (2002). The exhibits were open at the hotel following the service. The Dallas Chapter had a very well-organized booth of donated music available for purchase.

Tuesday began with a recital by Joel Bacon in the Chapel of St. Mark's School, performing on the 64-rank Letourneau (2014). Bacon studied with Joyce Jones at Baylor and is now teaching at Colorado State University. My favorite piece from the concert was Herman Berlinski's *Shovas Vayeenofash* (Prelude to the Sabbath).

That afternoon we enjoyed an Italian lunch at St. Monica Catholic Church followed by a recital by Monica Czausz on the church's 71-rank Nichols and Simpson organ (2014). She performed works by Mendelssohn, Paulus, Vierne, and Reger.

Tuesday evening's concert was one of the highlights for me—a concert by Organized Rhythm at Christ United Methodist Church, Plano. We have heard and enjoyed several performances by Clive Driskill-Smith in Austin but his duo concert with percussionist Joseph Gramley was outstanding. Opening with Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* and ending with a suite from Holst's *The Planets*, the concert made use of all the resources of the 81-rank Reuter organ (2010) and several percussion instruments.

I had another opportunity to hear the organ at Christ the King Catholic Church on Wednesday morning with a concert by Maxine Thevenot. She played an interesting program that included several pieces by Canadian composers. We enjoyed a harpsichord recital by Elizabeth Farr that afternoon back at University Park United Methodist and then a recital by the RCYO winner later in the afternoon.

Another highlight of the convention was the Wednesday evening concert by Nathan Laube on the massive 84-rank Fisk in the Meyerson Symphony Center. I have heard this organ a few times and I have to say that Nathan Laube played the best performance I have heard on the instrument. He played music by Jongen, Alain, Bach, 2 premieres of pieces composed by George Baker, and the Reubke Sonata on the 94th Psalm.

Thursday began with a much different concert. Rebecca Groom te Velde played a recital on the 22-rank Casavant (2011) in the chapel of Lovers Lane United Methodist Church. I really enjoyed hearing someone make full use of this modest instrument which has a surprisingly full sound. She included pieces composed by her father, Lester Groom, in her program, and I especially enjoyed the Flor Peeters *Toccata, Fugue, and Hymn* based on 'Ave maris stella.'

The only glitch during the convention occurred during the convention lunch Thursday afternoon at Highland Park United Methodist Church. The fire alarm went off and we had to evacuate the building. It turned out to be a real fire, but thankfully no one was injured. At first we were told that Alcee Chris III had agreed to perform his concert without practice time across the parking lot at SMU but then it was announced that the concert could take place as scheduled in the church. Some of you may remember that Alcee won the Austin Chapter Competition a few years back and he was already an exciting player. His concert at Highland Park was another highlight of the convention for me. He made full use of the 95-rank Dobson (2009) that filled the room with sound. I especially enjoyed his organ transcription of *Blue Skies*, by Art Tatum.

Another highlight followed—Solemn Evening for the Feast of Corpus Christi at Church of the Incarnation Episcopal. Scott Dettra and the choir sang a beautiful service. The 1960 Aeolian-Skinner was renovated by Noack in 1994 and then renovated again in 2015. It now has 73 ranks including a Festival Trumpet in the rear gallery.

The convention closed with a stellar performance by Chanticleer at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church. An eclectic program that ranged from Palestrina to Peter Gabriel was performed in the still-generous acoustic even though the church was packed.

Kudos to the Dallas Chapter and especially to Grady Coyle who coordinated the concerts and recitals. This was one of the best conventions (including nationals) that I have ever attended.



AND KEEP THESE AUSTIN CONCERTS/EVENTS IN MIND:

Recurring Events

Every Sunday:

8:00 pm - Compline at St. David's Episcopal Church, 301 E 8th Street; www.stdave.org

First Sunday each month:

7:00 pm - Evensong & Benediction at St. Louis King of France Catholic Church, 7601 Burnet Road; www.st-louis.org

Second Sunday each month:

6:00 pm - Evensong with Eucharist at the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, 3201 Windsor Road; www.gsaustin.org

Last Sunday each month:

4:00 pm - Evensong at All Saints' Episcopal Church, 209 W 27th Street at Whitis Ave.; www.allsaints-austin.org

Organ Events

Tuesday, October 24, 7:30 pm:

Joon-Ho Park, faculty organ recital. Bates Hall, Butler School of Music, UT

Friday, October 27, 7:30 pm:

First United Methodist Church presents *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925), with organ accompaniment. \$30/Senior \$25; Student tickets available at the door with ID for \$5. First United Methodist Church, 1201 Lavaca Street, Austin; www.fumcaustin.org

Friday, November 3, 6:30 pm:

Gregory Eaton in recital, with Brant Pope, *narrator*. Music from Bach to Mother Goose, and echoes of Halloween! Free-will offering. Followed by a fund-raising Wine & Whiskey Tasting in the Parish Hall. All Saints' Episcopal Church, 209 W 27th Street, Austin; www.allsaints-austin.org

Friday, November 3, 7:30 pm:

The Holbrook Organ Series presents organist Chris Keenan. No ticket necessary; donations accepted. Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2111 Alexander Ave., Austin; www.redeemerpres.org

Friday, November 10, 7:30 pm: The Candlelight Concert Series: Organ recital by Joseph Causby of St. Mark's, San Antonio. Free admission. Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, 3201 Windsor Road, Austin; www.gsaustin.org/events/concert-series

Wednesdays, December 6, 13 & 20, 12 noon:

Advent Organ Series. Suggested donation \$15/\$10. St. Louis King of France Catholic Church, 7601 Burnet Rd. (512) 454-0384; www.st-louis.org/concerts

Other Events in Our Houses of Worship

Friday, October 6, 7:30 pm:

The Candlelight Concert Series: Austin Cantorum presents *Alleluia: The Wonders of Life*. Praise, Wisdom, Creation Mystery and Remembrance are thoughtfully explored through music and text. Free admission. Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, 3201 Windsor Road, Austin; www.gsaustin.org/events/concert-series

Saturday, October 7, 7:30 pm:

Austin Cantorum presents *Alleluia: The Wonders of Life*.. Suggested donation \$15/\$10. St. Louis King of France Catholic Church, 7601 Burnet Rd. (512) 454-0384; www.st-louis.org/concerts

Saturday/Sunday, October 7/8:

7:00 pm Saturday; 3:00 pm Sunday - Texas Early Music Project presents *24 Italian Hits: Arias and Art Songs*. \$30/Senior \$25; Student tickets available at the door with ID for \$5. 10/7 at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2111 Alexander Avenue, Austin, and 10/8 at First Presbyterian Church, 8001 Mesa Drive, Austin; www.early-music.org

Saturday/Sunday, October 14/15:

8:00 pm Saturday; 3:00 pm Sunday - La Follia Austin Baroque presents *Chamber Music by Bach*, featuring the Trio Sonata from the Musical Offering, the flute sonata in A major, the solo violin sonata in g minor, and the gamba sonata 2 in D major in their All-Bach 2017/18 season. \$30/Senior \$25; Students \$10. Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2111 Alexander Ave., Austin; www.lafollia.org

Thursday/Friday, October 19/20 at 7:30 pm:

Ensemble VIII presents *Celestial Fire –Masterworks of the Renaissance*. \$45/Senior \$35; Students with ID \$10. 10/19 at Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church, 7127 Bee Cave Road, Austin, and 10/20 at St. Louis King of France Catholic Church, 7601 Burnet Road, Austin; www.ensembleviii.org

Saturday, October 21, 7:30 pm:

The Music of Black Composers, with Dr. Nicole Taylor, soprano, Dr. Nikki Birdsong, accompanist. Suggested donation \$15/\$10. St. Louis King of France Catholic Church, 7601 Burnet Rd. (512) 454-0384; www.st-louis.org/concerts

Saturday/Sunday, November 4 (7:30pm) /November 5 (3:00 pm):

Chorus Austin presents *Art of the Prophets* — works by Bach, Schütz, Brahms, and Mendelssohn to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. \$25/Senior \$20; Students/Active Military with ID \$15. St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 8134 Mesa Dr., Austin; www.chorusaustin.org

Friday, December 1, 7:30 pm:

Redeemer Festival of Music - *Complete Brandenburg Concertos*. \$25, \$10 students. Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2111 Alexander Ave., Austin; www.RedeemerPres.org

Friday, December 1, 7:30 pm:

Drive-a-Senior 25th Anniversary Concert. Free-will offering. St. Louis King of France Catholic Church, 7601 Burnet Rd. (512) 454-0384; www.st-louis.org/concerts

Saturday, December 2, 3:00 pm:

Chorus Austin presents *On a Winter's Eve* — This family-friendly concert will feature Morten Lauridsen's sublime "Lux Aeterna" and an audience singalong. \$25/Senior \$20; Students/Active Military with ID \$15. St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 8134 Mesa Dr., Austin; www.chorusaustin.org

Sunday, December 3, 4:00 pm:

Advent Lessons & Carols. Free-will offering. All Saints' Episcopal Church, 209 W 27th Street, Austin; www.allsaints-austin.org

Sunday, December 3, 5:00 & 7:00 pm:

Redeemer Festival of Music - *Messiah (Christmas Portion)*. \$25, \$10 students. Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2111 Alexander Ave., Austin; www.RedeemerPres.org

Friday, December 15, 7:30 pm:

The Candlelight Concert Series: Austin Cantorum presents *Carols Amid a Starry Night*. Free admission. Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, 3201 Windsor Road, Austin; www.gsaustin.org/events/concert-series

Friday, December 1, 7:30 pm:

Drive-a-Senior 25th Anniversary Concert. Free-will offering. St. Louis King of France Catholic Church, 7601 Burnet Rd. (512) 454-0384; www.st-louis.org/concerts



Job Listings

Christ Our Savior Lutheran (LCMS) Lago Vista — 1 service; 2 rehearsals. No compensation details provided. Wicks-Patterson pipe organ. Contact Pastor Hintze 512-820-7872 for more information.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Cypress Mill. 1 service with music; located about 30 minutes from Bee Cave down Hamilton Pool Road. They do not have a choir, so there is no mid-week rehearsal. They are looking for someone to accompany on Sunday mornings and occasional other times as called for in the Episcopal church. Hymns are selected for each week and sent to the accompanist in advance of Sunday. They have an older Yamaha console organ built around 1990 which has a double register and bass pedals; and a Roland digital keyboard which is on loan to us for an undetermined amount of time. If interested, contact Betsy Stephenson, 512-663-4532