

Stop & Reed

June 2014

San Joaquin Valley Chapter American Guild of Organists
a Member Organization of the Valley Cultural Coalition

From the Dean(s)

The Dean's Message for June 2014 is a dialogue between Dean Laurell Huber and incoming Dean Michael Varlas. Both will be reflecting on the accomplishments of our chapter, and their thoughts about how our chapter can meet the needs of its members as well as gain new members.

How can we grow new organists?

Laurell: As a pre-teen, I was nabbed as a to-be-organist by three different (AGO) organists of my family's church. Each one gently nurtured, encouraged, and gradually included me in worship services. That is the model on which I grew.

It is helpful for AGO organists to be lovingly vigilant in their own church settings -- seeking potential organists. They can ask teachers in the Sunday School, the choir director, choir members, the pastor, and other church leaders to be on the lookout for adept musicians who have keyboard skills. Also, a question of who might be interested in learning the organ could be posted in the church newsletter by the organist. An introduction to and a persuasive conversation with that person who answers "the call" (and/or their parent, if applicable) could follow and, finally, lead toward the organ console. The organist can begin to mentor that person on whatever basis feels comfortable, or direct that "organist-to-be" to our AGO board to help find an instructor. After a period of pulling stops, turning pages, and learning basic organ skills, the student will be able to play a voluntary, then accompany a hymn, then several parts of the service. Pretty soon a capable substitute will be formed, and the organist can take a Sunday off!

Michael: I completely agree with the "home-grown" concept. I have my eye on three young people in my church who are progressing well on the piano, and might be interested in the organ. I hadn't thought about using the church newsletter, but I think that it is a great idea. Our church has a Saturday evening Contemporary Christian "Jam Session" in which anyone is invited to bring their guitar or come to sing. I have started playing the bass guitar with the group. The young musicians are becoming my fellow musicians as well as my friends. As organists, we do seem to have this mystique about us, and maybe young people are afraid to approach us. I think that we need to take the first step to let others know we are after all...mere mortals.

Can our local universities provide more organists?

Laurell: In my view, on our western side of the USA, in our generally more "relaxed" worship style, the demand for church organists has dwindled dramatically over the past 30 years or more. The organ is gradually being replaced by other instruments to accompany worship. Now there is much less probability that a (page 2)

sjvago.org

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Dean(s) Message

university piano major might in the future be asked to play organ for a church that actually uses organ or sings hymns!

It would be advantageous if our various nearby institutions of higher learning required or suggested that at least one semester of the college career of a piano major be devoted to a course that taught basic organ (and/or harpsichord) skills. A well rounded pianist enjoys and benefits from learning keyboard skills and rich repertoire beyond the piano.

We AGO members and chapters should focus on this important issue, and continue to be as creative and current as possible as we educate, invite, and lead by example

Michael: I agree that the universities need to require a semester of basic organ, however, I think that the foundation needs to be laid by us as organists. We need to encourage piano students to consider the organ as a way to make themselves a more rounded musician, and also if they are so inclined, there are positions still available in churches, and being proficient in piano and organ is a huge advantage in landing one of them.

Wouldn't it be nice to be able to attend other services to know what happens in worship among the churches of our chapter members?

Laurell: This may be only a "pipe-dream," but it would be a great learning experience and bring creativity and a fresh approach to our own individual position. To me, it recalls the thrill in being part of the various daily denominational services at the AGO National Conventions that I have attended in years past. Each one was obviously prepared with great care and thoughtfulness, and altogether suggested the great variety of worship possibilities. Maybe we could have a chapter Sunday of musical chairs or "bench hopping" where an organist/choir director could both visit and participate. Patience and flexibility would be required, of course! I think I have gone off the deep end here!

Michael: Bench-hopping would be a really great way to learn about other services. I know from subbing in a few churches, I have gained new perspectives on just how different our worship traditions are. The idea of swapping organists for a service is one that I find intriguing. I would be willing to give it a go. I would also think that some of us would not want to take on the responsibility of playing a service in a different church. Maybe our substitute

organists would help out and cover while we go and assist the home organist, or just watch and listen. There are many ways this could work. I do see it as a valuable learning opportunity.

Laurell, what do you think you have learned specifically about our chapter as you head toward being the "Past-Dean?"

Laurell: I have come to value the great variety of gifts and skills among our members: those who can network, born organizers, those skilled at hospitality, talented performers and improvisers, those who keep careful records, techno geeks, those generous in providing venues, student mentors, and the list goes on. All have blessed, helped, and taught me on this two year adventure. Mike, as chapter Dean you will be amazed at all those who come to your aid when questions arise. You are already so well organized with great leadership skills, thoughtful ideas and goals, plus terrific enthusiasm. What more could we ask for?

Michael, What are some of your ideas as to the direction you would like our chapter to go? Also, what experience do you bring as incoming Dean?

Michael: First off let me say that as a chapter we provide a lot of high quality activities and events that serve both our members and the community. As I look at the Chapter News in *The American Organist* every month I see that we are top-notch in what we do. We have a wealth of very talented people who make things happen. As I look at our membership, I see that we need to bring in new members, specifically younger ones so that we will have the people needed to provide the activities and events that make us a great chapter. I am happy to talk about the experiences that I am bringing to the position as Dean. I invested twenty-five years in education, as a teacher and as an administrator. During those years I learned several lessons that will serve me well as Dean. One of the most valuable lessons I learned is that a healthy organization has a wide generational perspective. We need our veteran member/organists to give us the historical perspective as well as the experiences gained through planning and doing events and activities. The other side of that coin is that we need our younger member/organists to keep us fresh in our thinking and planning so that we attract the next generation of organists and choir directors to the guild. (page 3)

Information

(Dean's Message continued) Perhaps the most valuable lesson that I learned is that change is good. As a Lutheran, I can relate to the joke, "How many Lutherans does it take to change a light bulb?"

None-Lutherans don't like change!" Years ago I was struggling with some changes in a school at which I taught. The Principal called me aside and suggested that I might start viewing change as a good thing. I did, and over time have found that changes are necessary to help an organization become stronger, and to therefor become a better servant to the needs of its members. As we look at trying different ideas, I would hope that we will look at them from the perspective of "how will this make us better?", and then, "how can we make it work?" I am excited about the prospects that lie ahead for us as a chapter of friends!

Part-time Director of Music Ministries First Presbyterian Church of Hanford

The Director of Music Ministries at First Presbyterian Church of Hanford generates corporate worship experiences that glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. With both traditional and contemporary services offered on Sunday, the part-time Director will work together with the Pastor and Worship Committee to provide both new and present day music as well as traditional hymns that engage the diverse congregation. The Director of Music Ministries oversees the worship team and chancel choir, plans special music opportunities, works with community partners on collaborative events, raises up other music leaders, administers the music ministry budget, recruits involvement and communicates worship news, and participates in the creative and collaborative process of planning each service. To apply, please send your resume to office@fpchanford.org and request an official application.

Tentative 2014/2015 Events

September-Season Kick-Off Social

October-Bachtober Organ Concert

November-Member Recital, Episcopal Church of the Saviour in Hanford

January -Twelfth Night Celebration
 -Organ Artist Series Concert
 -Warnore POE and More

February- Hymn Festival

March-May (depending on Organ Artist Series)
 -Hanford II Member Recital
 -Organ Artist Series
 -Choral Workshop

June- Guild Sunday

As soon as the events calendar becomes finalized you will receive a schedule so that you can mark your calendars.



NEXT SJVAGO BOARD MEETING:
Tuesday, June 24, 2014 at 10:00 AM at Huber's home
511 East Brown, Fresno
559.269.1322

Info continued

Guild Sunday- June 1, 2014

Our Annual Guild Sunday was held this year on June 1st at University Presbyterian Church in Fresno (Cactus Harris, Host Organist). New officers for 2014-2016 were introduced, and thanks were expressed to those officers whose terms of office were up. Dean Laurell Huber was presented with a Past-Dean AGO Logo pin. In a chapter first, Kaye Bonner Cummings was recognized with an Honorary Chapter Membership for her years of outstanding support of our chapter. As she was out of state on Guild Sunday day, we will present her with a plaque upon her return.

The highlight of the afternoon was an organ recital given by Joy Leilani Garbutt, a former student of Aran Vartanian, Richard Cencibaugh and Laurell Huber. Joy is a Ph. D. student in Musicology with a minor in sacred music and organ studies with Dr. Jeremy Filsell at the Benjamin T. Rome School of Music at the Catholic University of America. Her program included

Litanies by Jehan Alain

Trio Sonata IV by J. S. Bach
 Adagio/Vivace
 Andante
 Un poco Allegro

Symphony No. 3 by Louis Vierne
 Allegro Maestoso
 Cantilene
 Intermezzo
 Adagio
 Final

Offertory
 Prelude on "Abide With Me" by William Bolcom

A HUGE THANK YOU to Joy for giving us such a wonderfully played recital. A reception was held in the courtyard after the recital. Thank you Jo and Ray Dull and Lynda and Terry Roberts for hosting.

**Substitute Organist Needed:
 First Presbyterian Church, Fresno**

9:30 AM Sunday service
 Traditional/Blended in style
 Wonderful Rodgers' Trillium Organ!
 Contact Dr. Julie Carter at [559-485-6460](tel:559-485-6460)

Welcome new members!

Stephen Vincent, CAGO
 Tony Imperatrice
 Emily Booth, student member
 Andranik Hakobyan, student member
 Eden Van Saun, student member
 Auckland Van Saun, student member

Positions Available

First Presbyterian Church, Fresno, Seeks Organist

The position requires 6-8 hours weekly: one Sunday service with occasional additional church services.

The instrument is a Rogers Trillium 957 three-manual with 33 ranks of pipes. Salary negotiable.

Resumes will be accepted beginning June 7, 2014.
Position is open until filled, with desired start date September 1, 2014 or earlier.

Please send resumes to:
First Presbyterian Church
Attn: Dr. Julie Carter
1540 M Street
Fresno, CA 93721
(559) 485-6460

First Presbyterian Church, Fresno, Seeks Choir Accompanist

The position requires 4-5 hours weekly: choir rehearsal, accompanying choir in Traditional Service, occasional additional church services.
Salary negotiable.

Resumes will be accepted beginning June 7, 2014.
Position is open until filled, with desired start date September 1, 2014.

Please send resumes to:
First Presbyterian Church
Attn: Dr. Julie Carter
1540 M Street
Fresno, CA 93721
(559) 485-6460

Note - It is possible that the two positions may be combined into one position dependent upon the qualifications of the applicant.