



Sherborne Abbey, Gray & Davidson Organ, 1856. Photo: CCA-SA 4.0 International license.

Bombarde



Newsletter of the Greater Kansas City Chapter – AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

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April, 2024

PROGRAM FOR APRIL 15



Featuring Theater Organist Brett Valliant
Grace Cathedral, 701 SW 8th Ave, Topeka KS 66603

Time: Program starts at 7 pm
(free event, open to the public)

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No dinner is scheduled

Brett Valliant regularly performs at

Organ Stop Pizza in Mesa, AZ

Silent Movie: "The Kid" (1921) starring Charlie Chaplin

REMAINING GKCAGO 2023-2024 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

APRIL 2024

Silent Movie – Brett Valliant, organist

April 15, 2024 7:00 pm

Grace Cathedral, Topeka, KS

MAY 2024

Bachathon XLV

Sunday, May 5, 2024 1:30 – 4:00 PM

Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Kansas City, MO

JUNE 2024

Social Event - Food and fun

exploring the 34-rank house organ at Burkfarm

Monday, June 17, 2024 6:00 PM

Burkfarm, Lawrence, KS

MARCH CONCERT REVIEW



The 75th Anniversary to the founding of Village Presbyterian Church in Prairie Village, Kansas was celebrated with a solo organ recital by Principal Organist and Interim Co-Director of Music Dr. Elisa Bickers, FAGO on March 1, 2024. The Greater Kansas City Chapter sponsored the reception at the conclusion of the concert.

Particularly honoring this 75 th Anniversary, Brenda Portman was commissioned in 2023 to write “Fanfare, Chorale and Exaltation.” The World Premiere of Portman’s music was one of many highlights to the program by Elisa Bickers. The program also included music written in 2018 by Carson Cooman, as inspired by aspects of the Richards/Fowkes organ in Village Presbyterian Church. An audience of approximately 600 was present for the program.

Norm Kinnaugh,
GKCAGO Chapter Reporter

Photo: Dr, Elisa Bickers, FAGO. at Village Presbyterian Church

FROM THE REGISTRAR, BOYD AHRENS

Here we are. Going where?

As of March 11, 2024 our Greater Kansas City AGO chapter had 134 members. Our regular membership (under 65 yrs.) was 47. Our special membership totaled 68. You can see we have quite an older group of members these days. Through the years we have generally had between 10 and 20 young organists – under 30. We have 10 young organists at this time. Non-voting members are called Chapter Friends. They are often spouses or non-organists who wish to be a part of our group, but don't want the American Organist magazine. We are fortunate to have one Lifetime Member. They pay a one-time fee, and never have to renew.

Our membership has declined steadily through the years. For some reference I cite February of 2018 when we had 184 members. Back then we had 86 regular members and 75 special members. Young organists and chapter friends were about the same. By 2020 we had gone to 160 members, and the special category was the majority. In September of 2022 we were at 145 members. As a reference, the national AGO membership was 17,000 ten years ago. It is currently about 11,500. This decline follows a general trend of people attending formal worship services throughout the country. The use of the organ during worship services has declined also. Many of us know of organs that are no longer used during worship, having been superseded by a keyboard or other instruments.

The question to ask at this point is, "How relevant are we, and what will become of us?" Our Membership Team recently surveyed our members with questions about our mission, vision, and value. We got 60 responses and were pleased with the high turnout. To the question of "what is important to you to be a member of our chapter?" The top answer was to connect with other organists, enjoy camaraderie, and receive encouragement. The second highest response was to nurture new organists of all ages. It is obvious that for an organization to remain stable or to grow, it must continue to retain members, replace those that leave, and devise ways to increase interest and relevancy to interest new people to join. The complete survey with comments is available at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JDjK0dicZLRfdzy75LC5imUvOS7Y0n7yW4uCiqcod58/edit?usp=sharing>

Any business will tell you it is easier to keep customers than it is to find new ones. The motto: "the customer is always right" is about making shoppers into patrons. Our "business" is about the organ and what we sell is the enjoyment of it. We might feel that all we need to do is have some programs with organs and organists, and all is well. There are others who think we should promote the organ and its music to as many people as possible. In an era where the organ is heard less and less in church and seldom played in public places, we should be concerned about the organ, and us, the people who play it and/or are interested in it.

Our national office recently had a zoom program for chapter officers titled "Grow Your Membership" with Elizabeth George as the moderator. People leave groups when they have bad experiences. What is the main reason regular members do not renew? They don't feel welcomed and included. How do we try to counter that feeling? She suggests a program that works in some chapters called "Ambassadors." The group finds people who are willing to specifically welcome new visitors and encourage regular members to be welcoming to each other also. They serve the function of "greeters" that many churches and organizations use. At events and programs, they may have a badge or identifying tag to help in their promotion of inclusivity. The recital program may specifically state "we have our Ambassadors to be of service to our guests and answer any questions you may have about our concert, artists, and the organ."

We have been a very relevant and vital part of the musical community in Kansas City and our region. Our chapter board has discussed at a recent meeting about joining forces with other musical groups to be more a part of the current musical scene. Today we have looked at ourselves with our recent survey of the members, and now look to the future to see if we can grow and perhaps engage more with other musicians to remain vibrant on into the future.

GKCAGO CHAPTER

Officer Nominations:

Jacob Hofeling – Dean
 Josh Maize – Subdean
 Dan Madura – Treasurer
 Robert Barthel – Registrar
 Elisa Bickers – Secretary

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our Gratitude and Remembrance of June M. Walker

Our chapter recently received a bequest from the estate of our long time former member, June Walker, who passed away in 2010, at the age of 83. June was a faithful member for many years. Our records go back to 1976, and she paid \$18 back then for a year of good fellowship and fine programs! In 1992 she got our “over 65” rate of \$42, rather than \$58. She let her membership lapse in 2009, when she was 82. In settling her estate, our chapter was gifted approximately \$48,000 to be used for education of students. We are exceedingly grateful to June and her heirs for this exceptional gift. Our chapter is now working on how to best use this money to nurture students in the years to come. A portion of her obituary is reprinted below.

June was born June 22, 1927 to Otto Walker and Emma (Hansen) Walker. For nearly 40 years June shared her love and appreciation for music with thousands of her students in many school districts throughout Kansas, Colorado, Missouri and Germany.

*Upon retirement from teaching June also worked as an administrative assistant for Kansas School for the Deaf. In a fifty-year span June was the organist for many churches in Olathe, including Presbyterian, Christian Science and more than 20 years as organist at First Baptist Church. She was a member of the Olathe Historical Society, Delta Kappa Gamma Sorority, National Education Association, **American Guild of Organists** and the American Association of University Women.*

Although June's immediate family was small, she will leave behind a much larger legacy. In addition to her 14 surviving first cousins and her two "boys" Tip and Trapper, it includes a community of lifelong family, friends, colleagues and former students who will always remember her warm smile, love of animals and music, gentle teaching spirit and strong sense of history.

Music Libraries:

Are you Spring Cleaning your music library? Do you have organ music/collections you would like to donate instead of recycling? In the July and August 2023 of *The American Organist* magazine, James Thomashower shared information in the “From the Executive Director” column, about four libraries that would accept your donations:

1. Church Music Institute

Churchmusicinstitute.org

Accepts Sacred choral and organ scores, books, materials and artwork on topics of church music, practice, and history.

2. The Leupold Foundation

TheLeupoldFoundation.org

Accepts organ collections; books on the organ, organists, and organ music; recordings of organ music; and any memorabilia.

3. The Boston AGO (BAGO) organ Library

OrganLibrary.org

Accepts works for the organ, important related literature, and unique archival material. This is a research library, not a lending library.

4. The Organ Historical Society Library and Archives

Organhistoricalsociety.org/archives/about-the-archives

Largest collection of books, artifacts and ephemera relating to the pipe organ in North America

You can go to the AGO magazine archives at <https://www.agohq.org/> and get all the information on these four libraries. I suggest finding the articles and printing a copy to have when you are ready to share your treasures. You will have to pay for shipping; but you also may receive a tax deduction. You can donate to Half Price books, but as Charlotte Krocker, executive director of CMI recently told me “We do everything in our power to avoid HPB!” Let’s do our part and share our libraries.

The Midwestern Music Camp

The University of Kansas Announces the

Kansas Organ Academy for High School and Junior High Students

Bales Organ Recital Hall

The University of Kansas

June 16-20, 2024

Organ lessons, master classes, recitals,

organ literature, hymn playing, harpsichord, choral singing

Faculty: Dr. Michael Bauer, Audrey Pickering

Registration: <https://deptsec.ku.edu/~music/forms/form/133>

Direct all questions to Dr. Michael Bauer

mbauer@ku.edu

402-541-3080 (cell)

Deadline for Registration: May 1, 2024

Announcements need to be submitted to the editor by the 20th of the preceding month.

The newsletter is sent out on the 1st of each month, August—May.

This QR code which will guide you through information needed for the editor.



SUBSTITUTES AVAILABLE

Substitutes listed are members of the local organ guild. The people who hold AGO certificates have passed requirements of the National American Guild of Organists for various levels of service playing and choral conducting. However, the GKCAGO is not an endorsement agency for service provided by the persons listed here. To learn proficiency of substitutes, feel free to ask them for references. Feedback regarding the hiring of GKCAGO substitutes is welcome and encouraged.

Please send feedback to John Schaefer canonjohn40@gmail.com.

Linda Mann, BME, SPC (Weddings/Funerals only)	organ, piano	816-353-4826, c. 816-289-9760
John Pitchford, MM, SPC	organ	913-663-3768 johnpitchford@kc.rr.com
John Schaefer, AAGO, Ch M	organ, piano, lit.	816-520-2084
Rachel Schulz	organ, piano, lit, choral	717-466-8080 rschulz@ku.edu

FAGO = Fellow certification | org = organist | lit = liturgical worship | dir = choral director | piano = pianist

The following also offer their services

Boyd Ahrens	org, lit	816-453-8406 boydlee@aol.com
Betty Bauer	org, lit	913-814-9021 hababab@earthlink.net
Alisa R. Carmichael, BM	org, piano	270-535-4881 charmichael.alisa@gmail.com
Stephanie Henry, DMA Choral	org, piano, dir, lit	816-678-6372 sahenry652@gmail.com
Sharon Hettinger, DMA	org, dir, lit, handbell	785-842-2053 slhett.sunflower.2016@gmail.com
Sarah Lyons, DMA	org, dir, lit, piano	309-333-8745 sarah.orr.lyons@gmail.com
Mark Pichowicz, CAGO	org, piano, choir dir. Avail June 17-Aug 20	trombal6@gmail.com
Ann Marie Rigler, DMA	org, lit	816-808-8663 amrwjc@gmail.com
Rachel Schulz	org, piano, lit, dir	717-466-8080 rschulz@ku.edu
Marilyn VanderLinden	org, lit	816-665-4441

