

The Trompette

The Newsletter of the Westchester Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

JANUARY, 2011

VOLUME 10, #5

From the Dean's Bench

Happy New Year! Happy new decade, too. It feels like a milestone just getting through the first '2000's.' Congratulations to all of us for making it through the holidays.

Before leaving the mistletoe, there is one more holiday event: our own **Twelfth Night Party**, here in Yorktown. I really hope many of you can make it. Please see the information, including directions, printed in this issue. At the Twelfth Night Party we'll have the opportunity to get to know each other more, and share our holiday music stories. Also, we can help each other find music for upcoming seasons and 'lesser festivals.' I'd like to share some choral ideas for February, (Black History Month) to all who are interested.

Recently, a choir member sent me some interesting history about the graveyard attached to our church, the Reformed Church of Cortlandtown in Montrose. A woman buried there, named Sarah Tompkins, had been born into slavery, and lived to the ripe old age of 103! She died in 1861. I so wish the original building still existed, but it was replaced in the 1970's. If we listen with our imagination, we can hear echoes of previous congregations in every worship service, singing the old hymns. We should use more of these hymns, just for the history! Some of the sentimental hymns from the 19th century, even if they sound somewhat dated, are still beautiful, and can make moving choral anthems or solos. And cheap, if you need to save some money! Look up in the balcony, or wherever your house of worship has stored their old hymnals, for "In the Sweet By and By," "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," "Come Ye Disconsolate," "His Eye Is on the Sparrow." Through these songs we connect with our ancestors, and with our long-ago congregation families.

Mark your calendars! Our Regional Convention will be held in Morristown, New Jersey July 3-6, 2011. That's a short distance away! I'm looking forward to it. You can read more about it by visiting www.ago2011nj.com.

You can make a special seasonal gift to the AGO by visiting their website. For the endowment fund, visit Agohq.org, or call them at 212-870-2311, ext. 4308.

The Pipedreams radio program schedule is listed on almost the last page of The American Organist Magazine, or you can read it on-line at Pipedreams.publicradio.org.

We love The Last Page of the TAO! Do you have a last page-worthy story? Please send it to Tom Zachacz, editor of The Trompette, and share it with all of us!

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Sub-list: If you would like to have your name on the sub-list, please contact board member Judith Abel.

Are you sad that holiday baking time is over? Do you love to make yummy cookies and cheese balls? Please consider becoming our new Hospitality Chairperson! We are in need of someone to organize refreshments for our programs, so if you are finding a little extra time on your hands and would like to get more involved with Westchester AGO, please give Alice Avouris a call. That also goes for anyone interested in becoming more involved with the Chapter. Just speak to a board member about your interests and ideas, and how you would like to help.

And, finally . . . **We'd love to hear you!** Our **Members Recital** is coming up extremely fast – February 6th! Remember, the themes are: alternatives for special occasions (weddings, funerals) and Collaboration – so using either of those ideas or both, we should have a very interesting concert. Please contact Judith Abel to let her know what you would like to present.

See you at the 12th Night Party!

Alice Avouris

The Westchester Chapter of the AGO

The Nosey Dean is taking a break.

She doesn't want to be annoying around the holidays!

But you can assuage her appetite by answering the following questions for our next (February) *Trompette*:

- 1) What organ music did you play on the Sunday before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day?
- 2) What special music, if any, are you planning for Black History Month?

Interview with an Organist

Okay, I didn't have the nerve to ask a board member for an interview in crazy, busy December! So I called my mother, Harriet Dearden, who lives three hours away in Woodlawn Commons, an assisted living place in Saratoga Springs, New York. Mom is used to me asking for help over the phone. I'll often play my prelude or postlude on the phone to her, and she'll give me lots of tactful, positive feedback along with her criticism. *Short bio:* Mom has had a lot of education on the organ! Eastman, Julliard and Manhattan Schools. I should know more about her professional life. I know she gave a recital at Town Hall in NYC, because we have a picture, probably from the late 1940's. The rest of her musical story is the story that all of us church or temple musicians share: accompanying, composing, leading congregations in song, working with youth, with children's nativity plays. Changing jobs, and holding her own personal standard of excellence in practice and performance.

Alice Avouris: Mom, what made you decide to play the organ, and when did you start?

Harriet Dearden: I was a junior or senior in high school when I started taking lessons from an organist at the Episcopal Church (Amsterdam, N.Y.) High school age is a good time to begin lessons. I was attracted by the sustained tone.

Alice: Who else did you study with? Did you have a teacher who particularly inspired you?

Harriet: My first teacher after high school was Harold Geer at Vassar College; then Catherine Crosier and Harold Gleason at Eastman School of Music. (Interesting note: They were married after I left Eastman.) E. Power Biggs at Julliard made a big impression. I heard his playing on the radio. His style was very staccato, very detached, and very different to what we had been doing (all legato). I had four to six lessons from him, but he hated the commute from Boston, and also couldn't stand the lousy organ they gave him to use, so he left, and I continued for the next one and a half years with Vernon de Tar, who taught at his church (the Church of the Ascension) which had a good organ.

Alice: It's amazing that E. Power Biggs couldn't have a decent organ to give lessons on!

Harriet: I could have asked him to teach me at Christ Church in Brooklyn where I was the organist, but probably he would not have wanted to travel all the way there, anyway.

Alice: What advice do you have for beginning organists?

Harriet: Keep up your piano technique, do your scales, don't start out on the organ. (*Alice: I think she means practice the piano first, then the organ.*) Coordination of feet and hands is important—go slowly at first. On the bench, keep still, don't be sloppy, keep your knees together except for wide intervals.

Alice: Thanks, Mom!

Harriet: You're welcome! When are you coming up to see me?

Please come to the Westchester AGO

Twelfth Night Party



*Sunday, January 9, 2011 at 4:00 p.m.
at the home of*

Phaedon and Alice Avouris

*Alice's cat **Dinah** says: Don't forget to rsvp! If we get a lot, we'll move to a bigger house. Also, I want to know what you're going to bring to eat!*



Directions to Phaedon and Alice Avouris' house

If you do not get this by mail or e-mail, please look up her address in the directory and use one of the mapping programs to find directions. (MapQuest, AAA, google, etc.)

Our 2010 – 2011 Season

Sunday, January 9, 2010 (snow date: Jan. 16) 4:00 p.m.
Twelfth Night Party at the home of Phaedon and Alice Avouris,
Please RSVP to Alice

Sunday, February 6th, 2011
Members' Recital
First Congregational Church, Chappaqua (Host: Keith Robillard)
Organizer: Judith Abel

Sunday, March 20, 2011, 4:00 p.m.
Creating and Maintaining a Successful Children's Choir
(Presenter: Eileen Laurence)
Katonah Presbyterian Church (Host: Eileen Laurence)

Sunday, May 22, 2011
*The **Toccata** Experience: A Workshop on Analysis and Learning*
Presented by Gavin Black
of the *Princeton Early Keyboard Center*
The Old Dutch Church, Sleepy Hollow (Hosts: Mi-Won and Jeremy Goldsmith)

Saturday, June 4, 2011 (date tentative)
Wanamaker Organ Day, Macy's Department Store, Philadelphia
(Host: Kevin Walsh)
Bus from Westchester to Philadelphia and back

To view the schedule of music events at Grace Church, White Plains: www.dtmusic.org/

To view the schedule of musical events at Hitchcock Presbyterian Church, Scarsdale:
www.hitchcockpresby.org/secondary/4_0.html

Reads & Mixtures

TO THE BOARD:

Realizing that it would be a good idea to meet and discuss our 2011 programs together, and that your calendars are quite full, we will meet before the party at 3:00 p.m. here at my house. **Please let me know if you can make it! Alice Avouris**

ALERT! ALERT! MEMBERS RECITAL PIECES NEEDED!

THIRD REQUEST: Judy hasn't received many responses to the notice in the last *Trompette*. Please get your thinking caps on and let Judy know what you plan to play for the Members' Recital coming up in February. The theme is *SPECIAL OCCASION MUSIC*. Indicate what the music is appropriate for, wedding, funeral, Easter, baptism, or whatever. Remember collaboration would be wonderful, so do not hesitate to plan ensemble pieces. There is a grand piano available for use. Please send your information (but don't send attachments) to Judy Abel.

PROSPECTIVE PERFORMERS : If you are interested in a pdf file of the organ specifications at the First Congregational Church in Chappaqua (where the Members' Recital will take place), please email Thomas Zachacz with your request. It will also be posted on agowestchester.org.

Dear AGO people: The Osborn (retirement facility) in Rye, NY has made a few changes regarding their Sunday afternoon organ concerts. Please announce/share, accordingly, the following information and consider playing. I will still be the contact. Thanks! Jayson

"SECOND SUNDAYS" AT THE OSBORN

The Osborn (retirement residence) in Rye, New York, will present 30-minute afternoon organ concerts on the second Sunday of each month beginning on January 9, 2011. The programs are at 2 o'clock in their chapel. An honorarium will now be paid to each organist. The Osborn chapel contains a small Austin pipe organ from 1961. Dates are available in March, April and May, at the moment. Chapter members are allowed to attend these recitals, but due to the limited number of seats you must reserve ahead by sending an e-mail or calling. If you are interested in playing (or attending), please contact *Jayson Rodovsky-Engquist* by phone or e-mail. Brandon Beachamp (from Christ's Church in Rye [Episcopal]) will be the recitalist on January 9, 2011 @ 2 p.m.

SUBSTITUTE LIST AS OF NOVEMBER, 2010
WESTCHESTER CHAPTER AGO

Judith Abel (Protestant and Catholic services)

Dorothy Beach

Carolyn Karlsrud (winter months only)

Virginia Bender

Michael Goodman (Christian and Jewish

Owen Borda

Marilyn Ballantine

Eileen Laurence (Saturday services, Christian & Jewish)

Richard Piluso (Catholic services)

Margaret Kim

Deborah Jones-Norberto

Timothy Keenan-Devlin (Catholic weddings, funerals, & Saturday night masses)

John Dominick

Rick Tripodi

Jayson Rodovsky –Engquist

Note: If you want your name added or subtracted from this list, please contact Judy Abel,

FROM YOUR NEWSPAPER EDITORS...

Thank you all for your cooperation in getting your material **TO US** by the **20th of each preceding month**. We want to be able to deliver the Newsletter to you on or about the 1st of each month, and it takes a week or more to finalize the copy and layout, get it to and from the printer, and address, stamp and mail all of the copies. *The Trompette* is sent out by email, and by regular mail to those Members without an email address. The electronic versions are sent out immediately after finalization, but processing the printed copies can take a week or more, plus the delivery of the regular postal mail can additionally take a week or more. If you have an email address, but are presently receiving your copy by postal mail, consider receiving it electronically instead, saving the Chapter postage expense. Send your email address to: Lois Simmonds. Kindly do not send in items more than once. For the Concert Calendar, include event, date, time, location, cost (if any) and an information phone number. (Incomplete or unclear submissions cannot be printed.) Due to space constraints, articles and notices are edited.

If you have provided a notice for the “Empty Benches” section, please be advised that postings will be carried for 3 calendar months unless we are advised that the position has either been filled or is still active. Newest listings appear first. Listings carried more than one month will be arranged alphabetically by organization and will indicate the month they were first run. We appreciate your cooperation in keeping *The Trompette* accurate and up.to.date.

Send your concert notices, articles, and other materials to:

E.mail: (preferable): T. Zachacz (Compose in MS Word, if possible)

Postal Mail: T. Zachacz, *The Trompette*,

The Dean and the Executive Board encourage our Members to send informative articles and any other items of interest for publication in the Newsletter.

Thank you!

Lois Simmonds & Thomas Zachacz

Editors,

The Trompette

***Here is the LATEST issue of the
Westchester Chapter AGO Newsletter.....***

Inside:

The Nosey Dean; Yet Another Updated Substitute List; No Empty Benches; Interview with a Noteworthy Organist; Concert Calendar

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The Trompette

Lois Simmonds &

Thomas Zachacz, Editors