

American Guild of Organists Newsletter

Utah Valley Chapter
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Dean's Message

Every year at this time, I think of a silly joke my children used to ask me; "If April showers bring May flowers, what do May flowers bring?" Of course, the answer was always Pilgrims. Funny how the smallest things bring about some of our fondest memories. Now when I call them on the first day of May, I ask them that question. It always brings about a round of fond remembrances of many of the more memorable experiences of our past. Now that they are all adults, we can do that and they don't get embarrassed.

As we come to the close of a wonderful AGO year as a guild, I hope all of us can look back and have many fond memories of our experiences. Some of our experiences have been life changing, some funny, others educational. All of us have another year of life behind us. Hopefully our experiences in our AGO activities have also been growth experiences in many ways. Another year of progress as organists, another year of shared memories. It has gone by so quickly. Very soon, we will be getting together for our closing social. One more time we will get together and share our talents and our friendship as a group. It will be fun, and a little sad.

Our officers will be getting together soon to plan a new year of activities and goals. Take a few minutes to jot down some of what you would like to experience this next year. Think about what worked for you, maybe what didn't. What you would like to see us accomplish in the new AGO year, and even what you may like to see us NOT do again. All of your suggestions would be welcome.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank ALL of the AGO, and especially my fellow officers, who for many months have willingly and so wonderfully picked up the slack for me as I have struggled with poor health and some rather large limitations. You are my right arm, and BOTH legs at this point. THANK YOU! For all you have done, and for all you continue to do. It has been appreciated. I am filled with inexpressible gratitude and love for each and every one of you!

To the rest of our group, thank you for your participation in all of our Guild activities. Without you, there would be no local chapter at all. Your talents and love of everything organ has filled my soul with the music of your hearts. You, too, are appreciated.

I am looking forward to serving you for another wonderful year as Dean. Thank you, all!

Affectionately,

Nancy Christensen, Dean

PIPES IN THE DESERT



THE NEXT MID-WINTER CONCLAVE

EXPERIENCE ORGAN AND
CHORAL MUSIC IN THE
BEAUTIFUL SONORAN DESERT

EXPLORE WAYS TO
RE-ENERGIZE CHURCH MUSIC

ENJOY MUSIC AND HOSPITALITY
WITH A SOUTHWESTERN FLAIR

FOR ADDITIONAL INFO
VISIT: WWW.AGOIXAZ.COM

TUCSON, ARIZONA
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Where and When did the Organ Enter the United States? Submitted by Meg Griffith

Spanish missionaries were eager to convert New World Indians to Christianity so they started music schools in Mexico. The first organs were installed in churches in 1527. Organ building was well underway by 1616. The Spanish had the funds to do the construction and the Indians built the organs under supervision and Indians played them in monasteries and convents.

Franciscan missionary, Cristobal de Quinones entered the territory of New Mexico between 1598 and 1604. "So far as records show, de Quinones holds the distinction of installing the first organ within the boundaries of what is now the United States" (This was at least 3 years before the first permanent English settlement in the New World at Jamestown in Virginia in 1607.) By 1641, there were 17 organs in the missions. At Acoma, there was "an excellent large organ." It is assumed that the other organs reflected the Spanish ancestry and were moderate size.

In New England, the Puritans considered the organ "popish" and were not allowed in churches until the middle of the 19th Century. Anglican churches welcomed the organ. Most of them were imported from England or Germany. In Pennsylvania, the German Lutheran and German Reformed churches had organs installed in their churches as soon as their buildings were progressed enough. Some dissenting churches outlawed the organ but the Moravians encouraged the use of the organ along with other instruments. The Spanish organs have disappeared but there are a few Pennsylvania German organs extant and playable. Most organs had one manual.

In the south, the first organ was imported from England in 1728. It was used for the Coronation of George II. It was used for 95 years! It is surprising that it survived because it was struck by lightning twice in 1744! Virginia and Maryland had English organs. In 1760, Richard Parker was an active organ builder in Maryland so some of their organs became local ones along with those from England.

-From "The History of the Organ in the United States" by Orpha Ochse

Quote of the month

"We recognize the universal power of music to touch the hearts of men and women everywhere and in all generations - to inspire and encourage, to sustain and lift, to comfort and bring peace."

-President Gordon B. Hinckley

May 19 is the date of our closing social. It is still in planning so watch for the e-mail with all the details