



Central Hudson Valley Chapter
of the
American Guild of
Organists

Newsletter – August/September 2023

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Benjamin T. Vise – Dean 330-327-0895	Laura Russell – Sub-Dean 845-232-8601
Nancy Vanderlee – Secretary 914-204-6472	Susan Guse – Treasurer 845-242-1478
Justan Foster – At-Large Member 518-965-2389	Susan LaGrande – Newsletter Editor 845-226-6496
John Vanderlee – At-Large Member 914-475-0444	Eileen Kerkes – At-Large Member 802-309-8407

Chapter Web Site

www.chvago.org

In this issue of our monthly newsletter, we are happy to present a letter from our new CHVAGO Chaplain, Kelly-Rae Meritt. The position of Chaplain was vacant for a long time, but was reinstated on October 2, 2022. Kelly-Ray is a long time clergyman serving The Lutheran Church Missouri-Synod as Director of Pastoral Care at The Lutheran Care Center in Poughkeepsie. Here he gives some insight as to why he is so well-qualified to be our Chaplain.

Unencumbered with the precedents of earlier newsletter essays, uninformed of any upcoming chapter plans, and unequipped with any of the organ technique that would have allowed me to join your company by the usual route, I offer you, gentle organists, nothing more than a sliver of autobiography to introduce myself, hoping that those who invited me to serve as your chaplain will not be too abashed at their support. I will organize my thoughts around the apology, **HOW I FAILED TO BECOME AN ORGANIST, even though I seem to spend inordinate amounts of time with such.** If I fail to inspire, I hope I may at least amuse.

I grew up in the parsonage of a midwestern Pentecostal congregation, with the expectation that I would behave myself in the front pew throughout no fewer than three services each week. The musical life of the congregation unspooled between the Hollywood glamor of

Sister Aimee Semple McPherson's Angeles Temple--at whose Bible College my parents and my father's parents had studied, all four--and the crooning of romantic ballads by my grandfather accompanying himself on his guitar, to texts sanctified by the sensibilities of Radio Gospel quartets. Methodist Holiness and revival hymns of Ira Sankey or Fanny J. Crosby filled the "Song Books" we used. Repetitive "choruses" were permitted, but only as transitional garnishes, say, between the Song Service and the intercessory prayers, but we stopped well short of anything with a back-beat, fearing the allure of the demonic trio Sex, Drugs, and Rock-and-Roll. "We don't smoke, we don't chew, and we won't dance with the girls that do" defined my grandfather's ethics. His world was sorely threatened by "blue notes" and languorous rhythms. Minor chords were deemed unfit for witnessing the joy proper to the Redeemed.

And yet, there were piano lessons. In spite of moving from Minnesota to Nebraska to Colorado to Texas to Indiana before I finished high school, a teacher was found after we settled in each place. Saturday lessons became a joy to me, as much as an ordeal to my little sister, who would have preferred spending her Saturdays on 4-H projects. Miss Vinetta Henning rewarded my happily evaluated entries into the Graded Music Festivals at Concordia Teachers College in Seward with a trip to Omaha to see *Aida* performed. This led to many weeks of work on a simplified transcription of the Triumphal March and a commitment to finish the lesson in time for the Texaco Saturday Opera Broadcast from the Met. The lessons came to an end in high school, when I declined Mrs. Dorothy Treshansky's exercises to break the cartilage around my fourth fingers, and she thought that failure to achieve independence of fingering effectively concluded what she had to teach me.

Imogene Steele, the piano player at one of the Indiana churches we attended, would have me accompany her 'cello-playing on her piano at home, in transcriptions of "Whispering Hope" or Saint-Saens' carnival "Swan," but warned against trying to play Scarlatti or Scriabin among the Saints. I felt brutal frustration at the isolation of my musical discoveries from my religious life. At seventeen I lacked the ability to imagine compromise between the two. This left me completely unprepared for my first Sunday Eucharist at the Chapel of Valparaiso University, where the music department was not exaggerating much to call itself the Department of Bach and Gregorian. Conservative enough to answer my religious reservations confidently, the Lutheran environment of the early 1970s there was able to integrate the various pieces of my young life into something that came to be vocation.

But which vocation? I went there planning to teach Spanish when I grew up. Before long, the habits of a parsonage upbringing suggested--earlier to my friends and teachers than to me--that a pastoral vocation was percolating through. More out of curiosity than real commitment, I enrolled in an introduction to Lutheranism intended for non-Lutheran students affianced to devout classmates, prior to their marriages. But my real catechesis began with my audition to the Schola Cantorum, led by Frederick Telschow. Then the chair of Valpo's Music Department, Doc Fritz had attended the Seminary, left before ordination to take a degree in organ performance, and, following a back injury that limited how long he could sit on the bench, committed himself to choral conducting. We rehearsed for fifty-five minutes, five days a week. The first week he started us on the Sanctus of Bruckner's *Mass (no. 2) in E minor*; when we began reading the Agnus Dei a week later, he began it by asking us to shift from the mysterious abstraction of God's holiness to a devout response to the Lamb now present on the Altar. (To this day I have no better way to think of the power of music in worship.)

Adding a music major to a Spanish major was difficult at Valparaiso. There were sequenced courses demanded in both: Composition and Conversation before Golden Age Literature before Latin American, and several of both before a third language before Pedagogy. Theory before Counterpoint before Keyboard Skills before Organ before Composition before Improvisation. Even one semester out of sync made dual majors nearly impossible, at least in those days. And then, there was the semester abroad in Cambridge, normally reserved for juniors and seniors, but my advisor supported my going in the spring semester of my sophomore year. The Valpo faculty directors on site for four semesters were Gail McGrew Eifrig (then just finishing her doctorate in Victorian literature) and husband William F. Eifrig (another faculty organist); they would help me sort out my vocational confusions. As soon as I was sure of acceptance into the program, I wrote Bill Eifrig, asking to begin organ studies with him that spring in England.

He wrote back that that was impossible. There was no easy access to a practice instrument. He wasn't prepared to carve out extra time from his responsibilities as Program Director. There was no opportunity for a trans-Atlantic audition. Three semesters of choral singing, however well I sight-read, without other music prerequisites did not make me a music student. That one blue onion-skin aerogramme was the end of my aspiration to become an organist; it could well serve as the answer to the first part of my theme: I never became an organist because I lacked the clarity to make up my mind timely and the persistence to pursue the goal effectively. So, I tip my hat to you who have maintained the commitment, managed the ten thousand steps toward mastery, and persist in the discipline of organ performance.

My story does have a second part: After we met in person, Dr. Eifrig reiterated his objections to teaching me, but suggested that I could take advantage of the semester amid a rich variety of instruments of various eras: Listen, and train your ears to detect differences, from organ to organ. Listen to differences when a specific instrument is played by different organists. Listen to differences when an organ is rebuilt and when it has been preserved in its original state. He curated for me a path through the parish churches and college chapels, helping me find examples of early organs and Victorian extravagances and modern recreations around Cambridge and the area as far as Ely. When I traveled farther afield, he helped me learn how to express the differences in what I was hearing. He suggested that I could bridge my heavy-handed piano technique to future organ playing by using a harpsichord, one of which he happened to be assembling from a kit.

But it was Gail Eifrig who discerned that my pastoral skills were to be developed in preference to my musical skills. (Both Doctors Eifrig, as it turned out, came to present me for ordination eight years later, since my call as a "missionary-at-large" had no receiving congregation to fill the role. But that is another story.) My budding Lutheran attitudes concerning Baptism are closely connected to the baptism of the third Eifrig child, born within a week of our group's arrival there in 1972. Besides baby-care and teaching American students about Charles Dickens and Matthew Arnold, Gail Eifrig spent her time in Cambridge learning to play tenor viol and collecting English recipes for sweets.

During my junior year, back in Indiana, although the Eifrings were two more semesters in the UK, I continued his advice to listen to organ music, live and with score in hand, if possible. Church musicians need clergy who understand what they are doing--he had written when I announced my consideration of pastoral vocation--, and how they make decisions, especially

when their criteria are different from the clergy's. I most often heard the mammoth instrument Hermann Schlicker of Buffalo built for Valparaiso's Chapel of the Resurrection, and reckoned that I attended more organ recitals than most music majors, who had to report their attendance. Frequently asked to turn pages, I decided that was even better--and cheaper--than bringing scores with me to recitals. (Reciting conjugations of verbs, in most any language, is no more difficult while counting measures of Buxtehude than merely spoken out of rhythm.)

The Eifrigs had returned to Valparaiso by the time I had reached my senior year and was fully committed to the pre-seminary track. (In those days, the Missouri Synod required incoming seminarians to have reading proficiencies in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and German, so my senior electives were oddly tilted toward the Foreign Language department, as it was then called.) But every Friday of that year, after Schola rehearsal and dinner in the residence hall (I was, of course, a Residence Assistant), I headed across town to the Eifrigs, where we enjoyed a pot of tea with Treacle Sponge or Raspberry Fool, with thin custard, after ninety minutes of my playing recorders, her playing viols, and him playing his now-completed (and well-traveled) harpsichord.

The mid-1970s were a particularly contentious time for my Beloved Synod. Since then, few church bodies have escaped similar times of profound--and often, profoundly silly--disagreement. Meeting clergy-to-clergy can be a wary dance, while discerning where the new colleague stands, with or against a particular jurisdiction. I suppose organists may have similar obstacles to frank conversation: historically-informed *versus* lush anachronism? Neapolitan thirds: never? always? only as a joke? But conversations across vocations seem to me much easier: What do you most like to play? Convince me that you love it!

I had thought to add a second part, **HOW I FAILED TO DESTROY A 1923 SKINNER ORGAN, *in spite of my worst efforts***, but perhaps it should wait. For a penitential season?

Kelly-Ray Meritt
CHVAGO Chaplain

Member News

- Kari Maschhoff has moved into new quarters, now that she has settled in as a Chaplain at West Point. Her new address is: 268A Bowman Loop, West Point, NY 10996

Scholarship Recipients Announced

We are pleased to announce that the Margaret Pecoraro Memorial Scholarship has been awarded to two students this year.

Susie Gilgert is 17 years old, and is a student at Dutchess Community College. She has been a student of Dillon Streifeneder since January 2023. Her scholarship grant includes continued lessons with Dillon Streifeneder, plus a new pair of organ shoes and one year of membership in the American Guild of Organists.

Tommy Leung is 16 years old, and is entering his senior year at Roy C. Ketcham High School. For several years he studied piano with Susan Guse. His scholarship grant will include organ lessons with Dillon Streifeneder, organ shoes, and one year of membership in the American Guild of Organists.

We look forward to meeting these deserving young people at an upcoming event!

Update on the CHVAGO Annual Picnic

The date for the picnic is only a few days away! So far we have heard back from 21 people, and we expect about that number to attend. Food should be awesome, with a good variety of dishes being offered. If you have not yet sent in your RSVP, it's not too late -- just follow [this link](#) to an online form which will automatically tally your response, or send an email to CHVAGOboard@gmail, or call Susan LaGrande at 845-235-7203.

List of Organ Substitutes

The following chapter members have indicated on their membership application that they will serve as substitute organists. Please contact them directly if you would like more information. Please note that only CHVAGO members in good standing are eligible to be included in this list, unless otherwise approved by the Board. More information about each substitute is provided on our web site at www.chvago.org. If you would like your name listed, or if you need to update your information, please contact the editor using the information above.

Meredith Baker	845-565-3321	Eric Hepp	845-489-2625
Joe Bertolozzi	845-337-1216	Wesley Joseph	845-849-0104
Luca Cantone	703-554-5906	Maris Kristapsons	845-635-0411
Greg Citarella	845-559-4013	Timothy M. Lewis	914-374-2608
Richard C. Ehlenberg	845-687-6013	Michael Oosterhout	301-910-5307
James Fitzwilliam	845-849-3606	Edward Palange	914-213-3460
Justan Foster	518-965-2389	Joanne Reed	845-361-3474
Carl J. Geiselhart	845-457-4830	Nancy Vanderlee	845-266-3858
Susan Guse	845-242-1478	Christopher Wynkoop	845-926-7389
Larry Hazard	845-452-0119		

List of Organ Teachers

The following chapter members have indicated on their membership application that they are accepting new organ students. Please note that only CHVAGO members in good standing are eligible to be included in this list. More information about each teacher is provided on our web site at www.chvago.org. If you would like your name listed, please contact the editor using the information above.

Meredith Baker	914-261-0028	Timothy M. Lewis	914-374-2608
Gregory Citarella	845-559-4013	Michael Oosterhout	301-910-5307
Justan Foster	518-965-2389	Dillon Streifeneder	845-532-2488
Larry Hazard	845-452-0119		

Deadline for Next Newsletter

We are always glad to receive input for the chapter newsletter in the form of calendar items, reviews of recent concerts and events, biographies, letters, photographs, etc. In order to make sure these submissions can be processed in a timely fashion, please make sure they are received by the 23rd of each month. However, material such as calendar items may be submitted at any time; even if the material may not make it into the printed newsletter, it can be quickly posted on our web site at www.chvago.org. You may submit newsletter or web site material by mail, e-mail, fax or phone. Just contact the editor, Susan LaGrande, using the

information given above. Remember, the deadline for the next printed newsletter, to be available the first week in October 2023, is September 23.

Editor's Corner

This newsletter is published by the Central Hudson Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. The editor is:

Susan LaGrande

12 Montrose Lane

Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

Phone: 845-226-6496 (home) - e-mail: CHVAGOboard@gmail.com

Position Openings

Editor's Note - Hiring institutions are encouraged to check references from applicants' previous employers. It should not be assumed that applicants who learn of position openings via these listings are endorsed by the Central Hudson Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Position openings are listed without charge for three months unless an extension is requested. If you would like to place a listing, please contact the editor, Susan LaGrande at 845-226-6496 or email chvagoboard@gmail.com.

Editor's Note – Because there are so many new position openings this month, we are choosing not to list all of them in their entirety. If you have questions about a position, please contact the prospective employer directly using the information provided in the complete listing online at http://www.chvago.org/CHVAGO_Positions.php. If you need help accessing the online information, please call Susan LaGrande at 845-226-6496.

ORGANIST/PIANIST - (Part-Time)

SCOTCHTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - MIDDLETOWN, NY

Filled 6/28/23

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC - (Part-Time)

THE CHURCH OF ST MARY - WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY

4/21/2023

PARISH DIRECTOR OF MUSIC - (Part-Time)

**THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY-ST.JOSEPH AND OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL -
POUGHKEEPSIE, NY**

Revised 4/19/2023

ORGANIST/CHOIR DIRECTOR - (Regular Part-Time)

ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH - GOSHEN, NY

3/24/2023

MUSIC LEADER - (Part-Time)

CHRIST'S LUTHERAN CHURCH - WOODSTOCK, NY

11/28/2022

ORGANIST - (Part-Time)

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - NEWBURGH, NY

11/28/2022

CHORAL DIRECTOR - (Part-Time)
CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH - POUGHKEEPSIE, NY
Renewed 4/20/2023

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND ORGANIST - (Part-Time)
ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH - MIDDLETOWN, NY
3/28/2022

Calendar of Events

If you are interested in having an event posted on this calendar, please contact the web site administrator, [Susan LaGrande](#). Events are selected for inclusion based on their relevance and interest to the members of the Central Hudson Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. The chapter reserves the right to decline or withdraw listings at any time.

Tuesdays at
12:15 PM

Noontime Organ Recitals at Goshen Presbyterian Church
First Presbyterian Church in Goshen has recently renovated its 1931 Austin organ, replacing a poorly-built recent console with a rebuilt 1931 Austin console, with drawknobs. The church is launching a free noontime recital series, which will continue weekly on an ongoing basis. The principal organist for the series will be Jonathan B. Hall, DM, FAGO, minister of music of the church. Programs will be held from 12:15 to 12:45 PM every Tuesday. All are welcome, all noontime recitals are free, and there is ample free parking and accessibility. [First Presbyterian Church in Goshen](#), 33 Park Place, Goshen, NY 10924. Info: 845-294-7991.

Saturday,
September 9,
2023
3:30 PM

Organ Recital by Kent Tritle
After a three-year hiatus, the Smithfield Church once again presents New York Philharmonic organist, Kent Tritle. Kent Tritle is an acclaimed choirmaster, Director of Cathedral Music at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and a renowned organ virtuoso. Tritle will be playing works by Buxtehude, Hancock, Coleman and Bach on the 1893 Johnson & Son tracker [organ](#). Suggested donation is \$20 at the door, to benefit the Oratorio Society of New York. Reception will follow. [The Smithfield Church](#), 656 Smithfield Valley Road, Amenia, NY 12501. Info: 718-473-4623 or email: swebb00@icloud.com. The Smithfield Church is handicapped accessible.

Sunday,
September 10,
2023
2:30 - 6:30 PM

Annual Chapter Picnic
This year the picnic will be held at [Bowdoin Park](#), a beautiful riverfront oasis in the Town of Wappinger. The site offers a roofed pavilion, is next to bathrooms, is accessible, is near the grills, and has picnic tables & benches inside. The chapter will be providing meats for grilling and paper goods. We would like members to bring side dishes, beverages, and desserts. If you have not already submitted your RSVP, please use this [link](#) to access an automated form which you can use to indicate whether or not you plan to attend. We hope to see many of you there!

Saturday,
September 17,
2023
2:00 PM

West Point Cadet Chapel Organ Recital by Craig Williams
Craig Williams is Organist and Choirmaster at the Cadet Chapel, USMA, West Point. Venue: [Cadet Chapel, USMA, West Point, NY](#). Featuring works by Works of Bach, Thayer, Sowerby, Macchia, Price, Sowande, Demessieux, and Widor. All recitals require a Department of Defense ID or Visitors' Pass from the Visitor Control Center to enter West Point. Entry to the Cadet Chapel and recital are free to the public. All Cadet Chapel organ recitals and concerts are free to the general public. Info: craig.s.williams58.civ@army.mil

Saturday,
October 7, 2023
Time TBA

SAVE THE DATE! Bach to Broadway Returns
In one of our most popular concerts, this collaboration between CHVAGO and The New York Theatre Organ Society (NYTOS) features the NYTOS Traveling Theatre Organ played by Nathan Avakian and the Christ Church Gress-Miles pipe organ played by James Fitzwilliam. [Christ Episcopal Church](#), 20 Carroll Street, Poughkeepsie, NY. Watch this space for further information!

Saturday,
October 22, 2023
2:00 PM

West Point Cadet Chapel Organ Recital by Jillian Gardner
[Jillian Gardner](#), Concert Organist, University of Alabama at Huntsville. Featuring works by Works of Percy Fletcher, Eurydice Osterman, Herbert Howells, Rachel Laurin, Bach, Widor, and her own transcriptions from Tchaikovsky and John Williams. Venue: [Cadet Chapel, USMA, West Point, NY](#).
All recitals require a Department of Defense ID or Visitors' Pass from the Visitor Control Center to enter West Point. Entry to the Cadet Chapel and recital are free to the public. All Cadet Chapel organ recitals and concerts are free to the general public. Info: craig.s.williams58.civ@army.mil

Sunday,
November 5,
2023
7:30 PM
NOTE TIME
CHANGE

Cappella Festiva Fall Concert - "Journeys & Celebrations"
Laura Ramsey Russell, Conductor; James M. Fitzwilliam, Piano & Organ
Wake Up, My Spirit – Adolphus Hailstork; text: Psalm 57: 6-9
The Gate is Open - Elizabeth Alexander
Choose Something Like a Star - Randall Thompson; text: Robert Frost
I Too, Sing, America - Undine Smith Moore; text: Langston Hughes
Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor - Irving Berlin; text: Emma Lazarus
Christus Natus Est - Rosephanye Powell; text: Countee Cullen
United in Purpose - Rollo Dilworth; text: Maya Angelou
Gloria - Francis Poulenc
[Christ Episcopal Church](#), 20 Carroll Street, Poughkeepsie NY. Info: 845-853-7765

Saturday,
November 11,
2023

Organ Recital by Renée Anne Louprette
[St. Thomas Church](#), 1 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019. More details to be announced.

Saturday,
November 12,
2023
2:00 PM

West Point Cadet Chapel Organ Recital by Jens Korndoerfer
[Jens Korndoerfer](#), Concert Organist, Baylor University. Program to be determined. Venue: [Cadet Chapel, USMA, West Point, NY](#).
All recitals require a Department of Defense ID or Visitors' Pass from the Visitor Control Center to enter West Point. Entry to the Cadet Chapel and recital are free to the public. All Cadet Chapel organ recitals and concerts are free to the general public. Info: craig.s.williams58.civ@army.mil

Sunday,
January 21,
2024
Snow Date:
January 28,
2024

Annual Spuds & Sundaes Social
Spuds & Sundaes Social - Music Sale - Seasonal Organ Music
Three events in one! And a great opportunity to bring a guest.

- Baked potatoes and ice cream, with appropriate toppings for each. A great opportunity for good food and fellowship. If you would like to contribute a topping, please contact Susan LaGrande.
- If you have organ- or choral-related sheet music that you no longer want, bring it here and let other members browse. Take what you want and leave a donation to benefit the Scholarship Fund.
- There will be an opportunity to play/hear seasonal organ music on the [Emmons-Howard tracker organ](#) (1904).

[Hopewell Reformed Church](#), 143 Beekman Road, Hopewell Junction, NY 12533

Friday,
February 2,
2024
SNOW DATE
Saturday,
February 3,
2024
TIME TO BE
ANNOUNCED

Romanian Organ Landscape: Renée Anne Louprette, Lecturer
Renée Anne Louprette ([website](#)) is Assistant Professor of Music and College Organist at Bard College where she directs the Bard Baroque Ensemble and leads an annual Bach cantata series. She spent the Fall 2022 season as a Fulbright scholar in Brasov, Transylvania, surveying the preservation of historic Romanian pipe organs. [St. James Episcopal Church](#), 4526 Albany Post Rd., Hyde Park, NY 12538-1564. Free admission. Reception to follow. Info: 845-229-2820

Saturday, April
14, 2024
2:00 PM

West Point Cadet Chapel Organ Recital by Katelyn Emerson
[Katelyn Emerson](#), Concert Organist. Program to be determined. Venue: [Cadet Chapel, USMA, West Point, NY](#).
All recitals require a Department of Defense ID or Visitors' Pass from the Visitor Control Center to enter West Point. Entry to the Cadet Chapel and recital are free to the public. All Cadet Chapel organ recitals and concerts are free to the general public. Info: craig.s.williams58.civ@army.mil



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Susan LaGrande, Newsletter Editor
12 Montrose Lane
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
www.chvago.org
CHVAGOboard@gmail.com



Soli Deo Gloria