



The Executive Committee of
Grand Rapids AGO
2006-2007

Officers

Howard Slenk, *Dean*
(HowardS@stmarkseiscopalchurch.org)

Lois Ripma, *Secretary*
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Chris Dekker, 2007
(christopher.dekker@hope.edu)

Criss De Vries, 2007
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Helen Hawley, 2008
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Dennis Buteyn, 2009, *Webmaster*
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Cynthia Bristol, 2009
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Members Ex-Officio

Nancy Berger, *Pipelines Coordinator*
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THE CIPHER

The Monthly Newsletter of the Grand Rapids Chapter
American Guild of Organists

April 2007

From the Dean

Martin Luther, a towering figure in the history of Christianity, was also significant in the history of church music. There was even a third realm in which he made a lasting contribution: the German language. Soon after Gutenberg's invention of printing with movable type, Luther translated the Bible into a language that every German who was able to read could understand. Instead of a dialect that only a province or two would find familiar, Luther chose the High German of lawyer and priest, altering it to make it comprehensible to the common man, yet retaining its elegance. Like Shakespeare, Luther was the most important figure in the development of his country's language.

Luther was interested in much more than a common language for his readers. In his many writings on the Bible and society, Luther often used the phrases "the common good" and "the well-being of the community." We think about these concepts often these days when we see so few people participating in community endeavors such as neighborhood organizations, church attendance, and yes, even AGO chapter activities. Attendance has been excellent recently, but there is so much more left to do.

But how can we? How can we find time as we shape and serve our families and homes and professions and neighborhoods? How many hours are left after the long commutes and the struggle to make a living? While we are uneasy with our consumerist, individualistic culture that violates our sense of community and mutual obligation, nonetheless we continue to produce little communities of our own: kids' sports leagues, mothers' groups, school organizations, business clubs, political activities.

Some writers have argued that the very history of our country can be seen as a struggle over how to balance the joys of individual freedom against the necessity for community and commitment. Today the balance is tipping. Our passion for divisive issues, our hours alone with the computer, and the establishment of thousands of small, virtual communities seem to weigh in favor of individualism.

What does this have to do with the AGO? This! We are a real community, not a virtual one; a seasoned community, not an upstart one. We have a sublime goal, the praise of God and the enrichment of our fellow humans by means of the greatest religious art ever produced by humankind. We need not be cultural pessimists in order to share Martin Luther's concerns over the state of our common life. Nor may we be naïve cultural optimists.

We can, however, use the shapes and systems of our community of seventy years, the AGO of Grand Rapids, to find new ways of transmitting old values and virtues. Not just by attending our Monday evening programs, but by combating individualism: supporting our colleagues, attending organ and choral concerts, participating in conventions and conferences, and introducing others to the joys and benefits of our community's artistic and religious efforts. "One holy passion filling all our frames; our hearts the altars, and His love the flames."

Howard Slenk, Dean

April Meeting, in cooperation with the Bach Festival

Our April meeting promises to be outstanding. More than a year ago, our Chapter was approached to see if we would be interested in hosting one of the events of the Bach Festival, and we enthusiastically agreed. In fact, because of our Chapter's support and cooperation, our event this month will be free to all AGO members, even though there will be a charge for others (\$10 for adults, \$8 for students). We're grateful that Paul Jacobs agreed to stay over to play in this wonderfully varied program. He'll open each half of the concert, and the rest will be performed by the Bach Chorale of the Saint Cecilia Society, Martin Werner, director, also with soloists and a professional orchestra of area musicians. Here are the details:

Place: Trinity Lutheran Church, 2700 East Fulton (949-2510), a beautiful setting for this event. The Letourneau organ is exquisite, and the building offers lively, resonant acoustics similar to churches in Germany where Bach's music was originally performed.



Schedule:

6:30 Punch
7:00 Dinner and election of officers
8:00 Program

Sinfonia from Cantata no. 29

Brandenburg Concerto No. 1

Motet: "Der Geist hilft unserer Schwachheit auf"

Intermission

Prelude and Fugue in D Major (BWV 532)

Cantata 140 "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme"

ABSENTEE BALLOT FOR GRAND RAPIDS AGO 2007-2008

OFFICERS

Vote for one for each office. Officers serve a one year term and may be re-elected.

_____ Dean: Howard Slenk
_____ Secretary: Christopher Dekker
_____ Treasurer: Errol Shewman

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Vote for **two**. The two persons receiving the most votes will serve a three year term.

_____ John Dibble
_____ Bruce Klanderaman
_____ James Metzler
_____ Lois Ripma

If you cannot be at the April 16 meeting, please print out and complete this ballot and send by **April 9** in an envelope **which has your name on it** to:

Dennis L. Buteyn
2257 Edington Dr. S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49508

The AGO/Quimby Regional Competition for Young Organists

Congratulations to our two contestants at the past meeting. We were grateful for a good turnout to encourage these young musicians.

1st Prize : Benton James Blasingame (Cash prize \$500)

2nd Prize: Drew Hawkins (Cash prize \$200)

Audience Prize: Benton James Blasingame (Cash prize \$100)

Our judges were Steven Egler of Central Michigan University, Michele Johns of the University of Michigan and Marcia Van Oyen of First United Methodist Church of Plymouth, Michigan.

Ben Blasingame is an organ student of Thomas Bara at Interlochen Arts Academy and was the first performer in the competition. He will represent the Grand Rapids Chapter at the AGO Regional Convention Organ Playing Competition this summer in Columbus Ohio. Prior to attending Interlochen, Ben studied the organ with Dr. John Romeri, Choirmaster and Musical Director of the St. Louis Cathedral Basilica in St. Louis, Missouri. Ben is a member of the St. Louis chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and received his service playing certification in April of 2006. Ben is also a member of the Cherryland AGO. Ben played his first Advent service at his home church, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Collinsville, Illinois at the age of 11. For the past three years, he has been employed as a regular organist for Good Shepherd, a church with a congregation of 2500 members. When he is home from school, Ben also plays at the Cathedral Basilica in St. Louis.

Drew Hawkins is an organ student of Mark Loring in Grand Rapids and performed second in the competition. As a kindergarten student, Drew's mother began teaching him piano at home in North Carolina. After moving to Grand Rapids in second grade, Drew began studying under Mark Loring, Director of Music at First United Methodist Church. In sixth grade, Drew was ready to tackle more complex pieces, but his hands were unable to reach an

octave. Mark suggested challenging Drew with the multiple keyboards and footwork of the organ until his hands grew. He continues to study both instruments. He spent the summer of 2005 studying organ at the Bayview Music Conservatory under the direction of Kelly Hale. Drew performs regularly at First United Methodist Church accompanying the children's choir, playing gathering music and organ during the services. In 2006 he played a recital at Clark Retirement Community as part of their 100th Anniversary series. He has also been a substitute and guest organist at the Waterford FUMC and has performed at weddings and funerals. Drew is a junior at Forest Hills Central High School.

We had a great turnout for this event, and our chapter is grateful to everyone that made this night such a success. THANK YOU to the players, the judges, and to Jim Metzler who hosted and coordinated this event.



Drew Hawkins and Ben Blasingame

For pictures and comments on all our meetings this season, see: <http://www.grago.org/chapter/programs.shtml>



Drew Hawkins, Ben Blasingame, Steven Egler, Michele Johns, Marcia Van Oyen

Executive Committee Nominees for 2007-2008

As you will notice on the first page of the Cipher, several members of the Executive Committee are completing their terms. We annually elect officers and two members-at-large. At our April meeting during dinner, we will elect from the following slate of nominees.

Officers:

Howard Slenk, for Dean (incumbent)



Howard Slenk has served on the Executive Committee since 2003, and was elected Dean this past year for the first time. Howard was born in Holland, Michigan and studied organ there with Martha Bareman Tibbe. He graduated as a music major from Calvin College, where he studied organ with John Hamersma and Shirley Boomsma. As a Fulbright Scholar he studied organ in The Netherlands with Anthon van der Horst, and while pursuing advanced degrees in musicology in this country, studied with Marilyn Mason, John Huston, and Wilbur Held. He taught at Calvin College from 1957-1997, teaching organ (1957-1960) and directing various choirs (1967-1997). Since retirement, he served as Interim Director of Music at Central Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Kalamazoo, and at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Grand Rapids. Howard became a member of the American Guild of Organists in 1948.

Christopher Dekker, for Secretary



Christopher Dekker began organ study at the age of fourteen with Patricia Brummel at Twelfth Avenue Christian Reformed Church of Jenison, MI, where he has recently accepted the position of Worship Director. In September 2005, Chris was appointed both Organ Scholar and Choral Scholar at historic Saint Marks Episcopal Church located in downtown Grand Rapids, where he works alongside the church's interim director of music, Dr. Karl Schrock. Chris is currently serving as a member of the Executive Committee of the Grand Rapids chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Chris is working on his undergraduate degree in organ performance at Hope College of Holland, MI. There he studies organ with Dr. Huw Lewis and voice with Dr. Brad Richmond. Chris, a junior, intends to pursue graduate school after completing his undergraduate degree, and plans to have a career either as a church musician or a college professor.

Errol Shewman, for Treasurer (incumbent)



Errol Shewman has been the faithful treasurer of our Grand Rapids Chapter for many years. He is on the staff of the Frederick Meijer Gardens.

For members-at-large, we will elect two people from the following four nominees:



John Dibble

John graduated from North Park College in 1985 with a B.A. in Music with a trumpet emphasis. He served as Organist at St Paul Lutheran Church in Greenville from 1990-2000 and has been at Rockford United Methodist Church since 2000; he also teaches organ and piano. He studied organ with Henry Mann, Bill Klimas and Ron Krebs, and has also taught trumpet, worked in music retail, played organ for a funeral home, and has been playing trumpet with the Flat River Big Band for the past 20 years. Currently he teaches organ and piano.



Bruce Klanderma

Bruce has been an organist for over fifty years, mainly in churches in Rochester, New York. He recently moved to Grand Rapids after retiring as a research chemist for Eastman Kodak. His organ teachers include Edith Kerstetter, John Davis, John Hamersma, Howard Slenk, and David Craighead, with additional study at the Eastman School of Music. He has been an active member of the AGO since 1963 and has passed both the AGO Service Playing and Colleague Exams. He is currently assistant organist at Calvin Christian Reformed Church.



Jim Metzler

Jim is Organist & Director of Music Ministries at First (Park) Congregational Church in Grand Rapids. Earlier he was Organist and Choirmaster of Trinity Episcopal Church in Toledo, Ohio (1972-1996) and at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Little Rock, Arkansas (1996-2006). Jim was a boy chorister at All Saints' Episcopal Church, Worcester, Massachusetts, where he began lessons on the church's famous Aeolian-Skinner organ of 4 manuals and 135 ranks. He holds degrees from Westminster Choir College, Hartt College of Music at the University of Hartford, and has also taken doctoral studies in organ at the University of Michigan. In 1977, Jim Metzler received the Choirmaster's diploma (Ch.M.) from the AGO, gaining the highest score in the country, and has given recitals in England and France as well as the United States.



Lois Ripma

Lois has just finished a three-year term as member-at-large of the Executive Committee, served last year as Secretary, and also served as Pipelines Co-coordinator. Lois began studying piano at age seven in Grand Rapids, and began organ study at age sixteen. She studied organ for six years at First Methodist Church under Carl Sennema. Her first church job was at First Netherlands Reformed Church for several years. Since 1986 she has been senior organist at Knapp Street Reformed Church, where she accompanies the choir and praise teams, and is involved in worship planning. She has been a member of the AGO for the past thirteen years.

Other Events of Interest for April

Sunday, April 15, 4:00 p.m. GRML Youth Choirs & the Quimby Organ Competition Winner, at First United Methodist Church, 227 E. Fulton. No admission charge. Performance at this Bach Festival event was one of the honors given to Benton James Blasingame, our Quimby competition winner. Consider some young people from your church you might want to take.

Sunday, April 15, 8:00, Paul Jacobs in recital at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. All those who heard Paul Jacobs last fall in Grand Rapids will want to return and take all their friends to hear this outstanding young organist, both this evening in a free recital, and again the next night at our monthly AGO meeting, both part of the Bach Festival. The program for Sunday night will be Sonata in F Minor, Op. 65, No. 1, by Mendelssohn; two Chorale-Preludes by Brahms; Fantasia and Fugue on BACH by Reger; and several pieces by Bach, including the Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor (BWV 542); Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ (BWV 639); Trio Sonata in G Major (BWV 530), and the Prelude and Fugue in A Minor (BWV 543)

Sunday, April 22, 4:00 p.m., Scott Montgomery at St. Gregory's Episcopal Church, 1200 Seminole Road, Muskegon. Scott Montgomery won the 2006 AGO National Artists Competition in Organ Performance; he also won the audience prize. Free will offering.

Friday, April 27, 7:30 p.m., Larry Visser at LaGrave Ave CRC. Larry Visser will present a free recital entitled "LaGrave Organ Favorites," features several favorite pieces of the congregation during Larry's eight-year tenure as organist, including Widor's "Toccata from Symphony No. 5," "Virgil Fox's arrangements of "Come, Sweet Death" and "Now Thank We All Our God," and Vierne's "Carillon de Westminster."

Sunday, April 29, 2007, 5:00 p.m., Park Congregational Church Annual Spring Concert (10 East Park Place NE, Grand Rapids, 616.459.3203, www.parkchurchgr.org). A free concert, including Louis Vierne's "Messe Solennelle in C# minor" for choir and two organs, anthems sung by the Park Church Chancel Choir, and organ solos played by Henry Hokans, a student of Pierre Cochereau at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris as a Fulbright Scholar in 1957-1958. Jim Metzler, Director.

Announcements, Notes, and Letters

David Cherwien Hymn Festival CD and DVD

Recordings of the Feb. 18, 2007 David Cherwien Hymn Festival, "The Lord Is My Song" held at LaGrave Avenue CRC are available in CD and DVD format for a \$5.00 donation by contacting the church's Media Center Coordinator, Jim Kipp (jkipp@lagrave.org). The CD includes the entire service with the exception of the prelude and postlude; the DVD includes the entire service with the exception of the prelude. You may pick up recordings at the church (107 LaGrave Avenue SE), or they can be mailed if you provide Mr. Kipp a mailing address. The \$5 donation includes shipping; checks may be made to "LaGrave Avenue CRC." Please contact Larry Visser if you have further questions (church phone: 454-7204).

Looking for Summer Job:

My name is Michael Schaner and I was a student of Ron Krebs and Cynthia Bristol until this fall, since I now attend St. Olaf College in Minnesota and study under John Ferguson. This next summer I am hoping to sub in different churches throughout the Grand Rapids area as a summer job. I attend Christ Lutheran Church in Wyoming, Michigan and accompanied the Senior Choir and the Junior Choir during my senior year. I also have been the substitute organist since July, 2004 at Christ Lutheran. I also have accompanied for Dutton Elementary's Christmas program and spring musical since I was in seventh grade. I am available to play for services, funerals, weddings, or anything else that may be needed. I am home from the beginning of June until the end of August. My email is schaner@stolaf.edu and my phone number is 616-901-6690.

Thank you very much,
Michael Schaner

Upcoming Chapter Meetings

(For pictures and comments on our earlier meetings, see <http://www.grago.org/chapter/programs.shtml>)

Monday, May 21

Our final meeting of the season will be an organ/choir crawl to St. Adalbert's and St. Mary's Churches, also including a carillon recital by Helen Hawley at the downtown Grand Valley Campus. The program will be preceded by a special German dinner at The Radisson Hotel on Ann St. and US 131.

Convention News

AGO Region V Convention, June 25-28, Columbus, Ohio

Be sure to check out page 59 in the April issue of TAO for complete program and registration information. For those interested, two post-convention organ crawls on June 29 are scheduled, both one-day tours by motor coach, and ending together with a performance by special guest artist Wilber Held. For more information, visit www.agocolumbus.org.

Organ Historical Society Convention, July 11-17, 2007, Indianapolis/Central Indiana

Mark your calendars now for the 2007 National Convention of the Organ Historical Society, to be held in the Indianapolis and Central Indiana region, July 11-17! The Convention will be headquartered at the Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel and Suites, Interstate 465 and Keystone Avenue. Affordable room rates are available at \$103.00 per night/\$143.00 for suites, and parking is plentiful and free!

Indianapolis is conveniently served by Interstate highways for those who wish to drive: I-65 from Chicago, North, and Louisville, South; I-74 from Peoria, Bloomington, Champaign/Urbana, and Danville, Illinois, West, and Cincinnati, East; I-70 from Saint Louis, West and Columbus, Ohio, East; and I-69 from Fort Wayne and Lansing, Michigan, North. The Indianapolis International Airport is conveniently served by many airlines.

Thirty organs will be heard, dating from the 1840's to the most recent years, and ranging in size from one to five manuals. Included will be instruments by builders such as: Skinner, Aeolian-Skinner, Kimball, Holtkamp, Ruggles, Möller, Goulding & Wood, Hook & Hastings, Felgemaker, Barton, Wicks, and Kilgen.



Indianapolis, North United Methodist: 1931 Kimball, with gallery addition 1965 by E. H. Holloway (Indianapolis, IN), rebuilt and modified in 2003 by Reynolds Associates. Photo by William T. Van Pelt

The list of exciting performers includes Ken Cowan, Thomas Murray, Marilyn Keiser, Christopher Young, Carol Williams, Carla Edwards, and Robert Hobby. Events include a hymn sing as well as several lectures. Exhibits will feature numerous items from the OHS catalogue, so that you can see items up close that can be purchased onsite or online. Please visit the Convention website: <http://www.organsociety.org/2007>. At this time, you can download an article from the OHS journal, *The Tracker*, with descriptive information for each day's events as well as a "slide show" of photographs of the organs. A link is provided for further information about the convention hotel, including online reservations. The convention website will be continually updated to include more schedule, performer, and instrument information, as well as online convention registration.

Advance Notice: 2009 Regional Convention in Detroit!

"Detroit AGO 2009—Renaissance on the River" will be June 14-17, 2009 at the Marriott Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit. The planning is already well underway.



Grand Rapids

Bach Festival

A biennial community celebration of the works of the great master

Schedule of Events

For more information go to:

<http://www.grbachfestival.org/>

Tuesday, April 10, 2007, 12 Noon

Bach's Lunch

John Varineau, conducting

Featuring: members of the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony

Dexter Ballroom - St. Cecilia Music Society

No admission charge.

Wednesday, April 11, 2007,

10 a.m.-10 p.m.

12-Hour Bach Around the Clock

Featuring: Ingrid Matthews, violin; Dylana Jenson, violin; and Darren Lael, piano. This event is a 12-hour marathon devoted to the music of J.S. Bach performed by faculty and students from six area colleges and universities. Performances on the hour from 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Cook - DeWitt Center - Grand Valley State University

Allendale Campus

No admission charge

Wednesday, April 11, 2007, 12 noon - 1 p.m.

Arts at Noon Series

Featuring: Ingrid Matthews, Baroque Violin Solo Recital AND Master Class from 3-5 p.m.

Cook - DeWitt Center - Grand Valley State University

Allendale Campus

No admission charge

Wednesday, April 11, 2007, 8 p.m.

Gala Concert

Brian Asher Alhadeff, Conductor

Dylana Jenson, violin soloist, piece to be determined

Darren Lael, piano soloist,

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in A major, BWV 1055

Featuring: the GVSU Chamber Orchestra

Cook - DeWitt Center - Grand Valley State University

Allendale Campus

No admission charge

Thursday, April 12, 2007, 7:30 p.m.

and Friday, April 13, 2007, 8 p.m.

Bach's Magnificat

GR Symphony and the Calvin Alumni Choir

David Lockington, conductor

The Calvin College Alumni Choir

(Pearl Shangkuan, Director), Maria Jette (soprano), Foster

Sommerlad (countertenor), Christopher Cock (tenor), and

Will Nichols (baritone)

Royce Auditorium - St. Cecilia Music Society

This event available in subscription series.

Friday, April 13, 2007, 5:30 p.m.

Bach Baroque Banquet Honoring

Professor Karl Hochreither

A sumptuous feast and musical entertainment

Dexter Ballroom

St. Cecilia Music Society

Tickets: (\$55 individuals; \$100/couple)

Sunday, April 15, 2007, 2:00 p.m.

Youth Keyboard Competition Winners

Mary Scanlan, host

Grand Rapids Community College - Music Building

143 Bostwick Avenue, NE

No admission charge

Sunday, April 15, 2007, 4:00 p.m.

GRML Youth Choirs

Featuring: GRML Youth Choirs & the

Quimby Organ Competition Winner

First United Methodist Church - 227 E. Fulton

No admission charge

Sunday, April 15, 2007, 8:00 p.m.

Paul Jacobs Organ Concert

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

134 Division Avenue NE

No admission charge

Monday, April 16, 2007, 8:00 p.m.

AGO: Bach Chorale and Chamber Orchestra

with Paul Jacobs, organ

Trinity Lutheran Church

2700 E. Fulton

Ticket prices: \$10 adults, \$8 students, AGO no charge

Tuesday, April 17, 2007, 8:00 p.m.

Calvin Music Department: Cantata, Organ, Motet

& Orchestral Piece

Chapel - Calvin College

3201 Burton, SE

Ticket prices: \$10.00 Adults; free Calvin students;

\$5.00 non-Calvin Students; \$5.00 Calvin Faculty/Staff

Tickets available at the Calvin College Box Office, 616-526-6282

Wednesday, April 18, 2007, 4:00 p.m.

Angela Hewitt Master Class

This master class is sponsored by the Artist Series of Calvin College in collaboration with Bach Festival Grand Rapids.

Fine Arts Center - Calvin College

3201 Burton, SE

Open to the public, free of charge.

Please contact the Music Department for further information:

616-526-6253

Thursday, April 19, 2007, 8:00 p.m.

Angela Hewitt, piano

Bach's The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book II

This concert is presented in collaboration with the Artist Series of Calvin College.

Fine Arts Center - Calvin College

3201 Burton, SE

Tickets range in price from \$20-\$30 for adults or \$10 for students