

SOUTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER  
OF THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

# THE DESERT WIND

Editor: Bruce Behnke © 2018      Issue: Spetmeh/October 2018

## Dean's Notes

Dear SNCAGO Members,

I hope you had a delightful summer and are ready to begin another season of organ music with us. I thank you for your support and involvement last year, and look forward to an exciting year ahead.

We had a glorious 50th Anniversary celebration on June 15. Thanks again to Kathi Colman and her committee for all their excellent planning and hard work. I received a nice email from Dr. Michael Bedford, National AGO President, which I share below. Happy 2018-19 to all.

Steven R. Wright, Dean  
SNCAGO

Many thanks for your warm and gracious note. I thought it was an amazing event with a tremendous

turnout. Excellent meal and meeting, fine organ and choral concert, and of course MUCH diligent planning and execution ahead of time.

One of the joys of the AGO presidency is visiting chapters and meeting our constituency. I will always treasure my visit to the great city of Las Vegas and the warm and wonderful welcome I received from members of the Southern Nevada AGO Chapter.

All best as you begin your next 50 years. Full steam ahead!

As ever,

Michael

Michael Bedford, AAGO,  
ChM,DMA  
President, American Guild of Organists



Southern Nevada Chapter  
American Guild of Organists



Michael Bedford



Steven Wright

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# Recital Series Begins with Clara Gerdes

Please join us on Friday, September 14, 2018 at 7:30 P.M. in Doc Rando Hall on the campus of UNLV for the first recital in this year's Organ Recital Series

Clara Gerdes, from Davidson, North Carolina, is a fourth-year student at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia where she studies with Alan Morrison. She received first prizes in the Albert Schweitzer, AGO-Quimby Mid-Atlantic Regional and UNCSEA School of the Arts organ competitions and was the recipient of the first annual AGO Pogorzelski-Yankee scholarship. She has performed on both coasts, including at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York and Washington National Cathedral, and at Spoleto, the Oregon Bach Festival, Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts and most recently the Uncommon Music Festival in Sitka, Alaska. She serves as organ scholar at Saint Mark's Church, Locust Street and has been on the faculties of Curtis Summerfest and the 2018 Philadelphia Pipe Organ Encounter. Clara also enjoys composing, transcribing and playing chamber music on piano and harpsichord. She is a Curtis resident assistant.

**Bruce Behnke** What first started your interest in the pipe organ?

**Clara Gerdes** I started playing in my church at 13 and taking lessons soon afterward, which is what first got me involved with the instrument, but I'd say what first made me passionately interested in it was going to a dedication recital with my teacher and seeing the stoplist for a huge new Ruffati organ in my hometown of Charlotte, NC. I remember being completely fascinated by the list of different sounds and exotic names and reading it over and over again to the point of almost memorizing it!

**Behnke.** How old were you when you first started studying the organ seriously?

**Gerdes** Fourteen or fifteen, once I started thinking about college options.

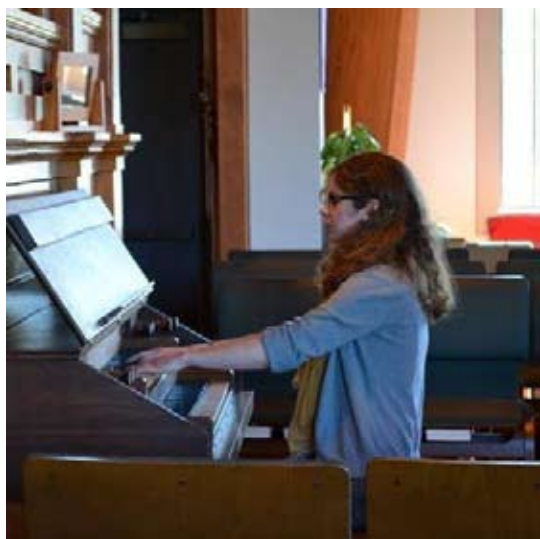
**Behnke.** Who are some of the most influential teachers with whom you have studied?

**Gerdes** I've been very fortunate to work with Alan Morrison for the past five years at Curtis, and he's the best teacher, mentor and life coach I could ask for. Along the way, I have also been very inspired along the way (in masterclasses, POE lessons, etc) by Isabelle Demers, Paul Jacobs and David Higgs.

**Behnke.** What are some of the more interesting venues in which you have played?

**Gerdes** This past summer I had the chance to give a recital on a tiny, nearly original Estonian-built Kessler organ from 1844 in Sitka, Alaska. It was a normal church and everything, but words hardly do justice to describe how cool it was to travel and give a recital in such a beautiful setting, on such a tiny instrument that had to travel over halfway around the world to its permanent home. Also, performing at St John the Divine in New York City my junior year of college was also amazing; the 8 second acoustic completely changed the way I played because the sound kept swirling around for longer than you'd believe possible. And in an organ loft 30 feet up, I literally felt like I was suspended in midair!





**Behnke.** Do you do any improvisation and or have you ever composed music?

**Gerdes** I adore improvisation! I've been studying for a year at Curtis with Dr. Noam Sivan and hope to earn Curtis' Diploma in Improvisation after graduating in 2019. I'm currently working on a couple of choral pieces including a mass cycle. I'm very inspired by plainchant, organum and the work of Yves Castagnet in particular.

**Behnke.** Who are some of your favorite modern composers?

**Gerdes** Gosh! There are so many. David Conte, Rachel Laurin, Ola Gjeilo, Jonathan Dove....I really like Thierry Escaich's and Vincent Dubois' improvisation styles, if that counts as

well.

**Behnke.** What pieces will you be playing for us?

**Gerdes** Dvorak *Carnival Overture*, Peeters *Aria*, Hakim *Gershwin'sca*, Whitlock *Fantasy Chorale in d flat*, Conte *Pastorale and Toccata* and my own transcription of Durufle's *Divertissement from the Trois Danses*. I'm excited :)

## The Program

Carnival Overture, Op. 92, B.169	Antonin Dvorak (1841- 1904) Transcribed Edwin H. Lemare (1865-1934)
Fantasy Chorale in D-flat Major	Percy Whitlock (1903-1946)
Pastorale and Toccata	David Conte (b. 1955)
Divertissement from Trois Danses, Op. 6. I	Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986) Transcribed Clara Gerdes
Gershwin'sca	Naji Hakim (b. 1955)

## 50th Anniversary Celebration

On June 15 members and friends of the chapter gathered in the ballroom of the Blasco Event Wing of the Foundation Building at UNLV for a celebratory program and dinner marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Southern Nevada Chapter. Eighty guests enjoyed an Italian buffet. Guests included representatives from both the Southern Arizona and the Central Arizona AGO Chapters, our District Convener, Dr. Kristin Holton Prouty; our Regional Counsellor, Matthew Burt; as well as our national AGO President, Dr. Michael Bedford, who addressed the gathering: "The AGO: Where the young and not so young come together." Our Dean, Steven Wright, was the Master of Ceremonies for the program which included the awarding of honorary membership in the chapter to Mr. Edward Smith for his magnificent gift of the Maurine Jackson Smith Organ to UNLV, built by the Rudolf von Beckerath Orgelbau of Hamburg, Germany, completed in 2004, and which has changed the organ landscape in Southern Nevada; recognition of our two remaining charter members, Ethelyn Peterson and Margaret Hannah; recognition of Dr. Paul Hesselink for his 13 years of service in chairing the Recital Series Committee and managing the series; and recognition of member Susan Lasher for her spectacular contributions as the chapter's graphic artist. Member, The Reverend Michael Link read the names of the twelve members who have died since 2002. Images of those recognized during the program, and photos of the members who died were projected during a power point on several screens.

A lovely 32-page booklet celebrating the occasion was produced and given to each person attending the dinner. It contained a Proclamation from the Office of the Mayor of Las Vegas; a welcome message from Dean Wright; a letter of congratulation from the AGO's Executive Director, James Thomashower; greetings from Kristin Prouty, our District Convener; and from Dr. Michael Bedford. Other features in the booklet included: "About the von Beckerath Organ;" "Our History in Brief" written in 1998 by Raymond Barnes, our Founding Dean; an article detailing our 30th and 40th anniversary celebrations; "Milestones" and Activities of the chapter – 1998-2018; a listing of the performers in our Organ Recital Series from 2005-2018; "Chapter Members 'In Memoriam';" a listing of Chapter Deans from 1958 to the present. The major portion of the costs of producing the booklet was underwritten by ten advertisers whose ads appeared at the end of the booklet.

A group photo was taken after the dinner.

Following the dinner was the Celebration Recital in Doc Rando Hall. The guest recitalist was hometown boy, Jim Kasen. He was assisted by Choral Artists of Southern Nevada under the direction of Marsha Borovicka. The program included audience singing of two hymns, arranged by Mack Wilberg and Jim Kasen; organ works by Bach, Morricone, and Kasen; and



Steven Wright, Dean and Edward Smith Pipe Organ Donor.



Charter members, Margaret Hannah and Ethelyn Peterson



Tribute table for Raymond Barnes, charter member and many times dean.



Paul Hesselink, Steve Wright and Susan Lasher Chambers.



choral arrangements by Wilberg, Johnson, and Kasen. When Mr. Smith was recognized during the recital for his gift of the organ, the audience spontaneously rose to its feet and applauded at length. Jim Kasen's anthem setting of "*Come, O Thou King of Kings*" which played a special role in the history of the Smith gift, was performed by Choral Artists of Southern Nevada with the composer and Dean Wright playing the four-hand accompaniment.



Everyone felt the celebration was a great success. The people who worked so hard to make it so were: Kathi Colman (Committee Chair), Steven Wright, Dr. David Dorway, Carla Swift and David Zechman.

A limited number of the Celebration booklets are available at \$5.00 each. Contact Paul Hesselink at paulshesselink@gmail.com to reserve a copy.

Steve Wright, dean, Kathi Colman, Anniversary Chair, Doug Lightenheimer, representing SAAGO, Michael Bedford, Matthew Burt, Region Councillor, Dr. Kristin Holton Prouty, District Convener and Skye Hart, representing CAGO.



Group Photo. Please note, all photos with people on these two pages were taken by Dorothy Young Riess

Anniversary Committee, Dr. David Dorway, Steve Wright, Michael Bedford, David Zechman and Kathi Coleman, Chair. Absent was Carla Swift.



# Team Las Vegas Goes to Phoenix

Pipe Organ Encounters, Phoenix  
June 17-22, 2018

The Central Arizona chapter of the AGO hosted a Pipe Organ Encounter (POE) June 17 -22, 2018 in Phoenix Arizona. It was a great event with 16 participants from 6 different states, including 4 youth from southern Nevada. It was a busy week filled with work, practice, lectures, fun and great instructors. The organizers did a fantastic job making each activity, each social, each lesson and each workshop an opportunity to learn about the organ and musicianship.



POE Phoenix – “Team Las Vegas”. (From left to right) Ashlyn Henriod, Everett Minnick, Bella Bindrup and Robyn Fossum.

When I first arrived at POE, as this was my first time attending, I was nervous about the overall experience and what the week would bring. I really wasn’t sure what to expect and whether I would enjoy the experience. Luckily, I arrived with several friends from Las Vegas (Bella Bindrup, Robin Fossum, and Ashlyn Henriod) who were also attending POE for the first time. Collectively we were known as “Team Las Vegas” by the POE organizers.

As the week went on, I felt more comfortable and came to realize my POE experience would be something I would not soon forget. The people I met, both the participants and the instructors, helped me to feel more comfortable and find more enjoyment in the experience. The POE allowed me to meet and create friendships with other organ students (who were my age!!!) I only could meet through an event like POE. I am also thankful that the POE allowed me to meet and create friendships with other professional organists who volunteered their time to help me become a better musician and organist.



POE Phoenix – Students. 16 students from 6 different states (with 4 from Nevada)

Part of the POE experience includes having time to study with a professional organist, along with practice on some of the nicest pipe organs in Phoenix. I studied with Mr. Alex Meszler who is a doctoral student in Organ Performance and Pedagogy at Arizona State University. He has previously completed a Master of Music degree in Organ Performance from University of Kansas, and a Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance from Syracuse University. Alex is an outstanding instructor, and helped me to become a better organist, as well as a better musician. During the week I was able to practice with Alex, he focused a lot on feeling the music while performing. Alex also made sure to make my lesson with him interesting and engaging for me. For example, one of the pieces I practiced with him was a



Mendelsohn slow movement. Practicing a Mendelssohn slow movement for half an hour straight can be dull, so Alex would often stop and let me play through the movement with a full organ registration. Although playing a quiet Mendelssohn movement with a full chorus doesn't sound particularly pleasing in any way, I definitely found this made practice much more fun. I am very glad to have an instructor who taught me that having fun during practice is just as important as the actual practicing.

The organ on which I practiced each morning of POE was located at Pinnacle Presbyterian Church. It was a Richards, Fowkes, & Co. organ, Opus 14, that had 3364 pipes, divided into 72 ranks comprising 49 speaking stops. I was extremely fortunate to be able to play that particular organ as the other POE participants were assigned different locations and organs for their practice times. This organ was without doubt, the best pipe organ, available to POE students, and it was my assigned organ for the week! This particular organ was a massive German style tracker organ. The organ looked like it could have come straight out of an old German cathedral. I was extremely lucky to play such a beautiful instrument. Playing on such a beautiful organ made it extremely underwhelming when I had to go back to playing on the electric Allen organ that I practice on at home.



Team Las Vegas gather at the console. Left to right Robyn Fossum, Ashlyn Henriod, Everett Minnick and Celia Bindrup.

I am very grateful for the great experience I had at the POE, and am grateful for everyone who I met there and all the volunteers who made POE possible. I am equally grateful to Southern Nevada Chapter of the AGO and its' many generous supporters and donors for making it possible for me to attend POE in Phoenix. It was an amazing experience.

-Everett C. Minnick



POE Phoenix – Students, instructors and organizers. It took this entire team to create a great POE experience for the 16 students.

## Members' Recital, May 18, 2018



Here is a photo of all of the participants in the Members' Organ Plus Recital that was held on Friday, May 18, 2018. In the front row from left to right are Nebiyu Samuel, organ; Jim and Becky Aldridge, percussion; Lisa Elliott, director of Grace Presbyterian Church Choir; Paul Hesselink, organ; Yvonne Mendenhall-Rohner, flute; Jane Dye, organ. The two people in the second row peeking over shoulders are left Spencer Baker, piano and right Dr. David Dorway, organ. Back row is Kevin Tague, trumpet; Amy Homer-Smith, organ; Shireen Beaudry, piano; Janis McKay, bassoon; Coreen Levin, oboe; and Bruce Behnke, organ.

The program included a wide variety of styles. Works by Johann Ludwig Krebs, Johann Sebastian Bach, Aaron David Miller, John Karl Hirten, Bernard Wayne Sanders, Uli Roever & Michawl Korb, Craig Courtney, Dino Kartsonakis, and Daniel Pinkham were featured.

*Suite Nederlandish* for bassoon and organ by Aaron David Miller was premiered on the recital. It was commissioned by Paul S. Hesselink for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Southern Nevada AGO Chapter, and was performed by **Janis McKay**, bassoon, and **Paul Hesselink**, organ. The three-movement suite consists of settings of Dutch hymn tunes Kremser, In Babilone, and Vreuchten. A goal of the commissioner was to create a composition of only moderate difficulty reflecting his Dutch heritage, to add to the relatively small repertoire of works for bassoon and organ. The new composition can be heard and the score followed at [aaronda-vidmiller.com](http://aaronda-vidmiller.com)



Janis McKay and Paul S. Hesselink



# Chapter Officers

Thanks to the efforts of William Freeman, a successful election of new officers was held earlier this summer. The new officers will be installed at the chapter potluck and will serve for two years terms.

## Chapter Officers

Steven Wright	Dean
William “Bill” Freeman	Sub Dean
Kathi Colman	Secretary
Dr. David Dorway	Treasurer

## Executive Board Members

Bruce Behnke	Webmaster and Newsletter
Paul Hesselink	Recital Series Chair
David Zechman	Publicity
Jim Kasen	Member at Large
Christian Lentz	Member at Large

# Organist Needed

Grace Community Church in Boulder City is currently looking for an organist for a regular 10:00 am worship service. Salary to be commensurate with experience and ability. We have a Rogers combination pipe/electronic organ. Please call (702) 293 - 2018 and speak with Francyl Gawryn.

# Treasurer’s Report:

We have approximately 50 members in our Southern Nevada Chapter. This number changes weekly because it is now possible to join the Chapter throughout the calendar year. So far we have 21 Patrons for the 2018-2019 Recital Series who have generously donated \$4,065. This will not cover the cost of our recital series artists, artists housing, rental of Doc Rando, etc. If you have not donated, please consider doing so ASAP.

Our Raymond Barnes Scholarship Fund has grown recently due to several contributions, including one from Raymond’s widow, Inga-Britt Barnes who is now living back in her home country of Sweden. I mailed her a copy our of 50th Anniversary Celebration booklet and she was so thrilled to read the section Raymond had written on our chapter that she sent us a donation and asked for 5 more copies of the booklet! We are also indebted to Robert Tall from Rodgers Organs for a very generous donation to the Barnes Fund. This coming year we are going to be able to sponsor multiple students to attend POE’s!

David- Daddocorg@cox.net or 702-468-1371

# POE Recital

Our POE students from this summer went to Phoenix and Los Angeles camps, and will be presenting a recital of the works they prepared on Sunday, September 16th, at the West Charleston and Valley View LDS chapel at 6:00 p.m. Please plan to attend and support the future of our chapter.

# Shrine of the Holy Redeemer

Robert Tall & Associates, Inc., area representatives for Rodgers Organs, is honored to announce the installation of a large 3-manual Rodgers organ in the Shrine of the Most Holy Redeemer, one of Nevada's largest and most celebrated churches, which was built in 1993, and seats 2,200. A 6-rank Paragon Pipe Division will be installed this Fall.



## Opening Potluck Social

Please join us for our season opening potluck social,  
Friday, September 7, at 6:00 p.m.  
at the home of Dr. Paul Hesselink  
7917 Leavorite Dr, Las Vegas, NV (directions below).

In addition to sharing food and socializing, we will be installing our new board members. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet our newest members, to share what exciting adventures you had this summer, and to hear what is planned for the 2018-2019 year.

Please contact David Zechman (dzechman@prodigy.net; (650) 455-6092) by Friday, August 31, to let us know that you and your plus one will attend and what food you will bring to share. Thank you.

Directions to 7917 Leavorite Drive:

Get yourself to Summerlin Parkway and Buffalo Drive. If you come by way of 95 and Summerlin Parkway, exit on Buffalo Drive and head north on Buffalo. The first intersection (there is a traffic light) will be Washington Street. Staying on Buffalo, cross Washington but be in the far left lane where you can make a left turn on to Calico Vista (there is no traffic light but there is a left turn lane, so be careful!). On Calico Vista, take the second possible right turn (counting street lights, go to #8) and turn right on Mica Lane. Mica is about three car lengths long...from Mica turn left on to Leavorite, and 7917 is in the cul-de-sac at about 11 o'clock. The house has a very large Palo Verde tree in the front yard and a blue mailbox. Park in front of the house, in my driveway, or anywhere on the street...anywhere you can find a space.

Thank you.

David Z.

dzechman@prodigy.net;



## Christ Church Episcopal

2000 S. Maryland Pkwy

Las Vegas, NV 89104

presents

### Hans Uwe Hielscher, organ

in a recital on

Sunday, Oct. 14, 2018 at 3:00 P.M.

\$15.00 suggested donation supports the concert series and the music program-  
-all are welcome regardless of donation!

Mr. Hans Hielscher has been organist at the Marktkirche in Wiesbaden (Lutheran Cathedral of Nassau), Germany, since 1979. His studies were at the Detmold State Academy of Music and in Paris/Rouen, France. He also studied carillon at The Nederlandse Beiaardschool in Amersfoort, The Netherlands. Hans has presented more than 3,500 organ recitals around the globe, his concert tours have taken him to all European countries, the United States (58 U.S. tours), Bahamas, Israel, Iceland, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangkok. He has been featured on radio and TV broadcasts, 22 CD recordings on various international labels and is the author of the books “Alexandre Guilmant – Life and Work”, “Famous Organs in the U.S.A.”, “The Organ of Wiesbaden Marktkirche”. He is a published composer of some 50 works for organ. Hans has been honored by the French government in Paris for his worldwide engagement in French organ music and nominated “Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres” in 1985. He is a long-time member of the AGO (American Guild of Organists), OHS (Organ Historical Society), GCNA (Guild of Carillonners in North America) and has presented workshops at various AGO National Conventions in recent years.





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Southern Nevada AGO  
Organ Recital Series  
2018-2019

ALL PROGRAMS WILL BE  
PRESENTED AT 7:30 P.M.

Dr. Rando-Grillot  
Recital Hall in the  
Beam Music Center on  
the UNLV campus

Friday  
September 14, 2018  
*Clara Gerdes*

Friday  
November 2, 2018  
*Bruce Stevens*

Friday  
June 7, 2019  
*Organ and  
Choir  
Festival*

Friday  
January 11, 2019  
*Jillian Gardner*

Friday  
March 29, 2019  
*Florence Jowers*

All programs  
are open to the  
public without  
charge.

*The Recital Series is funded in part by a grant from  
the Nevada Arts Council, and the National  
Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.*

