

SOUTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER  
OF THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

# THE DESERT WIND

Editor: Bruce Behnke © 2014

Issue: Sept/Oct 2014

## Dean's Notes

Dear AGO friends,

Welcome to another AGO year filled with some fun socials and a great recital series! I will serve as Dean for another 2 years. No one stepped up to run against me!

We will have our opening social on Saturday, September 27, at the home of Matt Estes. His address is 633 Backbone Mountain Dr. in Henderson. It's up by Gibson and Horizon Ridge just off the 95 and/or the 215. His cell is 702-374-4223 if you need help with directions. I think 6:00 is a good time. Start thinking about what you want to bring and call ME (not Matt) at 702-898-5455 (home) or 702-274-9495 (cell) so we can "organize" our potluck.

Genie Burkett has been hard at work getting news releases, flyers, and posters ready for our new recital series. Thanks for all your work, Genie! She will have the posters at the social so we can help distribute them.

I'd like to thank, on behalf of all of us, Jane Dye, Mike Link, and Ron Richardson for serving on our board. Jane did our beautiful recital receptions for a year and Mike has served as Chaplain. Steve Wright

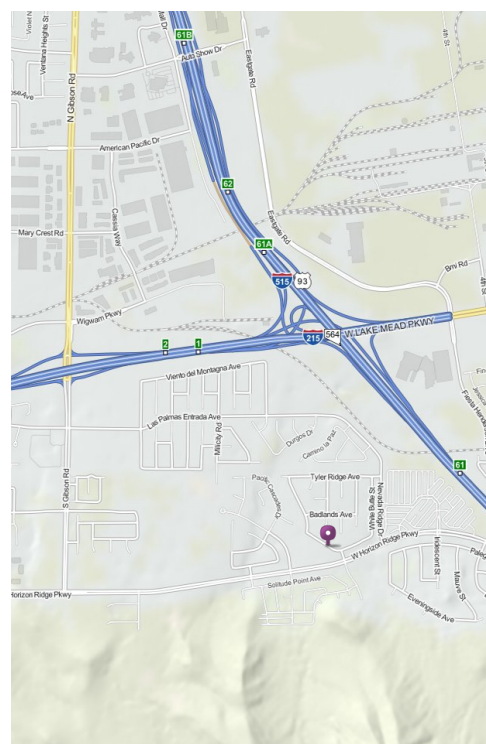
will serve on the board as our Education Coordinator. He might start bugging some of you to think about getting your AGO certification!

We need someone to step up and volunteer to do the receptions this year. There will be 6 concerts this season. It is helpful to have 2 people commit to it so it's an easier job. I don't expect ANYONE to try and do what Jane did last year! Simple is fine, and preferred, because we don't want to budget money for the receptions except to reimburse for paper goods. Call me if you can help or want more information about what is expected. My phone numbers are up there.

Most of you got the email asking about Alice's phone number and Richard Wallace's whereabouts. August 8th was the last time anyone heard from Richard. He was suppose to go to Utah to work on an organ in Ogden. He called Utah and told them he wasn't feeling well and wouldn't be going up. After talking to the Utah people, Richard's brother and sister back East, and having the police check his house 3 times, we have filed a missing persons report with Las Vegas police. If anyone hears from or sees Richard, please

find out where he is and call me.

Thanks! Jan



Location of 633 Backbone Mountain Dr, Henderson in relation to the intersection of the 95 and 215.

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## Final Recital in 201-2014 Series a Stunning Presentation

On Friday, May 23 the 2013-2014 AGO Recital Series was concluded with a stunning program played by one of America's young and performer-to-watch amazing talents, Nathan Laube. Approximately 200 audience members were treated to impeccable performances of works by Widor, Mendelssohn, J.S. Bach, Nicolaus Bruhns, Mozart and Rossini. The Mendelssohn and Rossini works were Mr. Laube's own transcriptions. Already at the peak of his game, one wonders where does this amazing performer go from here? His entirely memorized program was stylish, impeccable and musical. If you missed this recital, be sure to hear Mr. Laube at your next possible opportunity. The Maurine Jackson Smith Organ in Doc Rando Hall on the UNLV campus was in top-notch form. Rolf Miehle, Tonal Director and Holger Redlich, President of the Beckerath Orgelbau had just completed the annual maintenance visit. They were recognized by Mr. Laube at the recital.

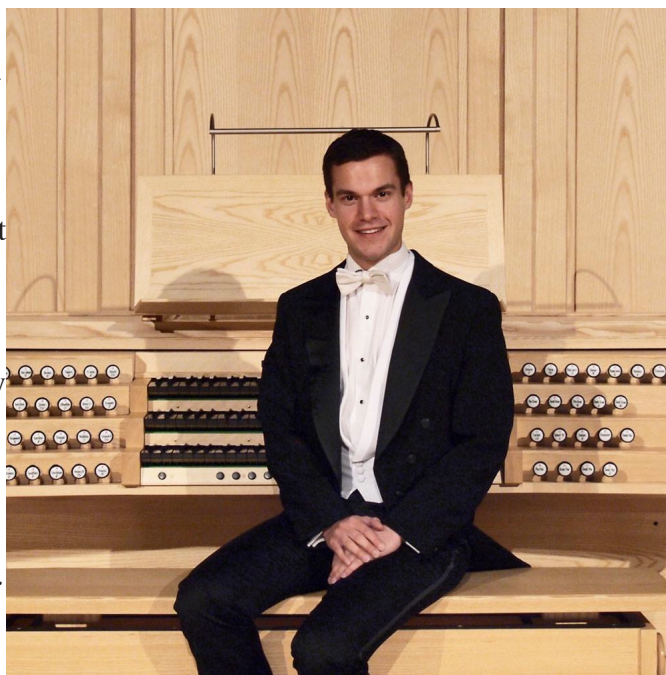


Photo by Dorothy Young Riess

Our evaluation survey of the recital revealed (80 respondents) that we continue to attract a small number of new audience members and that we have continued to maintain our numbers in the area of those who have been before. More than 80% of the respondents indicated they had attended 5 or more recitals in our series though the years.

Here are the numbers:

How did you learn of this recital? e-mail = 38, flyers = 9, radio = 11,  
previous programs = 17, from a friend = 23, other sources = 15

Which statement best describes your feeling about the recital?

Loved it! = 66, Liked it a lot = 10, Found it interesting = 3

Overall rating of the recital?

Superb = 64, Excellent = 14, Average = 0, Fair = 1, Poor = 0, No response = 1

98.7% rated the program as either Superb or Excellent.

21 attendees asked to be added to our e-mail reminder list.

Your Recital Series Committee deliberates carefully and works hard to bring some of the best performers from the United States and abroad to perform on our series. You, the patrons, through your generosity, make it possible for us to select from the very best available. Ideally, one hopes to fill every seat in the house (there are only 299), and it is my personal dream that one day in the future we may routinely attract standing-room only audiences for each recital. With world-class performers and a world-class organ, we can provide quality performances second to none. Your help in advertising each recital, and bringing friends and family with you, can make that happen.

Paul S. Hesselink, Chair

2013-2014 AGO Recital Series

Committee members: Jan Bigler, Shireen Beaudry, Genie Burkett, David Dorway

# Pamela Decker Recital

Our next recitalist, Pamela Decker, was scheduled to play on March 28, 2014 but was forced to cancel at the last minute because of illness. My original interview with her can be found in the May-June 2014 issue which can be found here: (<http://sncago.org/May-Jun-14.pdf>). We are looking forward to her recital Friday, October 3, 2014 at 7:30 P.M. in Doc Rando Hall on the campus of UNLV. She will play works by: Bach, Mendelssohn Litaize, Near and Decker., all in the Prelude and Fugue genre.



**Bruce Behnke** Can you describe your teaching situation at U of A?

**Pamela Decker** My title is “Professor of Organ/Music Theory,” and I am active in teaching organ, harpsichord, music theory, and composition. I always teach 16th-century counterpoint and 18th-century counterpoint, and I have taught other theory-area courses, such as 20th-century theory and analysis (graduate level). I generally have students signed up for composition lessons, as well--often graduate composition minors, and sometimes undergraduate and/or graduate majors. I tend to have 7-10 organ students, but have had as many as 14. Most are graduate students working on the DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) degree, but I do get MM and BM students.

**Behnke** What does the University have for recital instruments and practice instruments? Do your students off campus practice off campus at local church's?

**Decker** The University of Arizona School of Music houses a lovely three-manual Schoenstein pipe organ in Holsclaw Hall, one of two recital halls in the building. Our primary practice instrument is a beautiful J.W. Walker instrument with mechanical action. We have an additional pipe organ that is used for practice; it is the result of materials and collaboration involving several builders and technicians.

**Behnke** Do you play regularly at a local church?

**Decker** I have been serving as organist at Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Tucson for twelve years. We have a large three-manual pipe organ that was initially build by David McDowell and later updated by Grahame Davis.

**Behnke** Can you describe our compositional process?

**Decker** I use many materials and approaches in my work as a composer. My compositional language is typically based on synthetic modes that are of my own design and that are often derived and transformed from the traditional church modes (i.e. Dorian, Phrygian, Aeolian, etc.). I use other modes and scales from various influences in music history, such as the octatonic collection, whole tone scale, and of course, major and minor scales in some contexts. I enjoy designing unusual and



distinctive forms, and I often combine work on a formal design with my collection of motivic and harmonic ideas for a new work. I do, in fact, spend a good amount of time on improvisation, and I find that improvisation is a pathway to new ideas for compositions--and also to ways of developing these ideas as a piece takes shape. I often use the piano and/or organ while composing, but not always. I have worked out many ideas in locations where instruments were not available, and many years ago on one occasion I did take down an idea on a restaurant napkin. I like to use a pencil and manuscript paper, but I have and use Finale for engraving. Most of my publications--and almost all of the publication with Wayne Leupold Editions--are engraved by a professional in the SCORE program. For many years my engraver has been Christina Cogdill, who is a wizard with this sophisticated program. Before working with Christina, I collaborated for many years with John Forbes. I do not know how to use SCORE, and its elegance and sophistication are desirable enough to make it a preference at WLE.

## Celebrating Wilbur Held

Dr. Wilbur Held, well-known teacher and composer, celebrated his 100th birthday on Wednesday, August 20. He is still actively composing and his most recent publication *New Every Morning: Six Settings of Morning Hymns* was copyrighted and published in 2014 by MorningStar Music Publishers. MorningStar has also just released *The Wilbur Held Organ Collection: A Centenary Edition*. This album includes eighteen previously published compositions, favorites of the composer and of the editors.

It was my privilege to be asked to present a 40-minute recital of Dr. Held's compositions on May 4, 2014 at Trinity United Methodist Church in Pomona as part of an early celebration of Dr. Held's birthday. Deciding which works to play on the program was a challenge--there are over 350 from which to choose. Eventually I chose at least one composition from each of the seven decades his compositions have been published. The recital was organized in groupings of original composi-

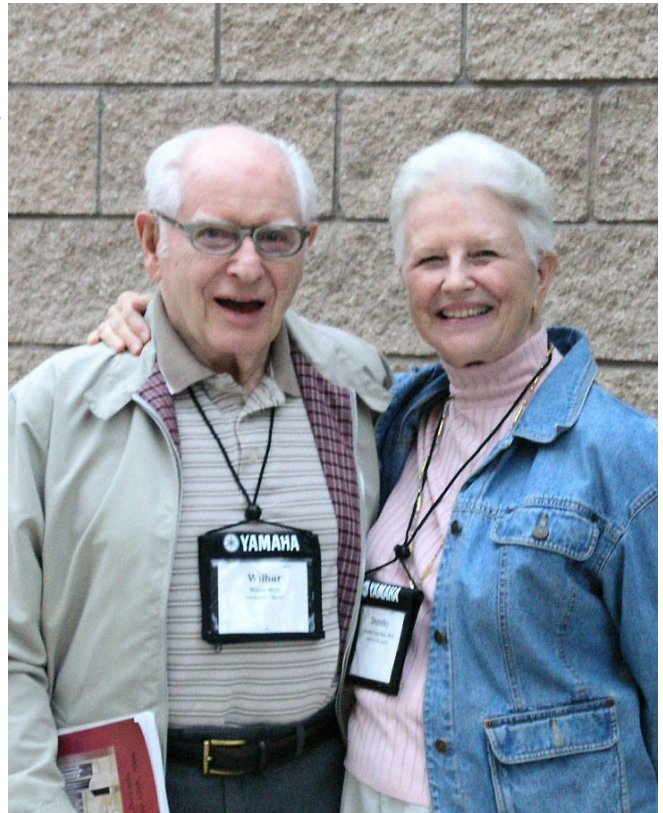
tions; plainchant settings; spirituals, gospel hymns, and American folk hymns; and hymn tune settings. In the August issue of *The Diapason*, Larry Palmer, harpsichord editor, contributed a full-page article "Celebrating Wilbur Held." There are three photos as well as the program I played in Pomona included in the article.

Dr. Held is in good health and he occasionally plays for the vesper services held at Claremont Manor where he lives.

The final paragraph of Dr. Palmer's tribute reads:

It is remarkable to arrive at the age of 100. It is even more remarkable if one still continues to be a productive contributor to the musical needs of one's professional colleagues. Happy Birthday Wilbur Held, and we wish you continued joy and musical fulfillment.

Should any of our members wish to have a copy of Larry Palmer's article, please let me know.



Wilbur Held and Dorothy Riess at the 2006 AGO conclave in Las Vegas

Paul Hesselink



# Matthew Burt, AGO West Regional Councillor

After the reorganization of regions VIII and IX into the West Region and the recent elections, I am happy to introduce Matthew Bert our new Regional Councillor



Born and raised in the United Kingdom, I came to the United States in 1998 to study at Harvard Divinity School. Since moving to northern California ten years ago, I have played in several Episcopal congregations, and am currently the Director of Music Ministry at Christ Church, Portola Valley, and also serve as Chair of the Executive Council of the Diocese of California.

The AGO has played an important part in my education and professional development for many years. I have been privileged to serve the Palo Alto/Peninsula Chapter as Secretary, Dean, and —currently— Treasurer. I was also delighted to be the Treasurer and a chaperone for our 2013

Pipe Organ Encounter at Stanford.

I have especially enjoyed helping to plan the recent Region IX conventions. I served as Logistics Chair for the San Francisco 2011 convention, and the Program Book Editor for both the San Francisco convention and the 2013 Bakersfield convention. I was also the coordinator for the 2013 Palo Alto/Peninsula AGO/Quimby Regional Competition for Young Organists, and was invited to serve on the AGO's National Performance Competitions Review Team last Summer.

Like many organizations, the AGO is in a time of transition. We are learning together how best to use technology to streamline our administrative functions while better reaching a new generation of organists. While I was Dean, the Palo Alto/Peninsula Chapter participated in the national pilot project for online membership renewal, helping to refine a system that now is available to chapters throughout the AGO. Working on our POE, I realized the potential of social media to help connect beginning organists with their colleagues near and far.

As Regional Councillor, I would serve to support our regional chapters primarily by learning from the great things that many of us are already doing. What can we all learn from the San Diego Chapter's work to reach young organists? What can the Palo Alto/Peninsula Chapter share with others about its POE experience? What can the Southern Nevada Chapter teach us about its successful grant-writing to support organ recitals? And what other chapters could benefit from a program like the Utah Valley's Super Saturdays?

At its heart, the AGO is a pastoral organization, and I have often been delighted by our capacity at the local level to support one another through workshops, conferences, and social events. At the same time, we must develop local programs to “engage wider audiences with organ and choral music”, as our mission statement demands. If elected, it would be my honor to support all the chapters of the West region in fulfilling our mission goals and serving both our existing and our future members.

## DUES for 2014-2015!

As of today, the print out from our National AGO shows that many of our Southern Nevada members have not renewed on-line with the system called ONCARD. The process is really very straight forward. You use your first name initial, followed by your last name with no space in between. Then use the 5 digit number which appears above and slightly to the right of your name on the label for your AGO magazine. If you are having any trouble, please call me and I will help you- 702-468-1371. By the way, when you are registering and paying your dues, please consider making a contribution at the same time for our Patron Series for 2014-2015. The entire amount is sent electronically directly into our local bank account. Thank you.

David Dorway

## Rededication ceremonies for St. Augustine's Cultural Center

(formerly St. Augustine's RC Church)

113 Virginia Street

Austin, Nevada

Saturday, September 27, 2014

12:00 - 1:30 p.m. - PowerPoint Presentation and Panel Discussion on the Restoration of the 1884 Henry Kilgen Pipe Organ - Charles M. Ruggles, Howard D. Bennett, and Michael D. Friesen

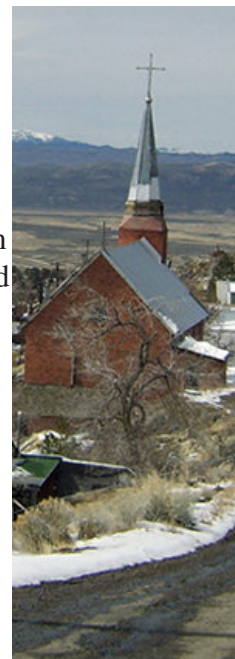


1:30 - 5:00 p.m. - Open House, Building Tours, and Entertainment by the Smilin' Possum String Band

2:00 - 3:00 p.m. - History of Austin and of St. Augustine's - Mella Harmon

5:30 - 7:00 p.m. - Dedication Ceremonies, including Organ Recital by Michael Friesen. Works of Boyce, Scheidt, Pachelbel, Bach, Vierne, Alain, Pepping, and Clarke.

There is no charge for any event. Parking is available on Main Street, one block away. There are three motels and two RV parks in Austin for persons desiring an overnight stay. Austin has many other tourist attractions as a former mining boomtown, and its new visitor center on Main Street just opened in July (775-964-2200). For further information, see [www.austin-nevada.com](http://www.austin-nevada.com) and [www.goaustinnevada.com](http://www.goaustinnevada.com) or call Jan Morrison of St. Augustine's at 775-964-1100.





## Dorothy Young Riess in Concert

Cal Poly Arts in San Luis Obispo presents organist, Dorothy Young Riess, in concert at the Christopher Cohan Center, on the Forbes Pipe Organ, Fisk Opus 129 (III/48/2007), Sunday, November 16 at 3:00 PM.



Considered a “living legend” by those who have heard her artistry, “Dr. Dorothy’s” organ program will feature an interesting, eclectic mix of original compositions, transcriptions and classical organ repertoire, including Bach’s Prelude and Fugue in B Minor, Stravinsky’s “Petrouchka,” and Wagner’s “Pilgrim’s Chorus” - delivered with unique interpretations and dramatic flair. Further information and tickets available at [www.pacslo.org/tickets](http://www.pacslo.org/tickets).



## Syracuse Pipe Organ Holiday – August 10-15, 2014



Two members of the Southern Nevada Chapter, Susan Lasher and Paul Hesselink, attended the Organ Historical Society’s Pipe Organ Holiday in Syracuse, New York. The headquarters for the week-long event was the Genesee Grande Hotel. The week’s events were exceedingly well-organized and executed for the 325 enthusiasts who registered. A pre-convention event on Sunday

was an all-day tour of six wineries in the Finger Lakes Region. The Monday pre-convention events focused on local history and included a fascinating tour of the Erie Canal Museum in downtown Syracuse.

A wide range of organs, both historic and new, were featured through the week, some in wonderful and unique surroundings with fine acoustics. Memorable were the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Syracuse with its 1892 Frank Roosevelt organ, rebuilt by Schantz in 1980; the two Holtkamp organs at the University (associated with the legendary teacher Arthur Poister); the Willard Memorial Chapel in Auburn, New York with its totally Tiffany interior; and St. Mary of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church in Auburn. A day was spent in Ithaca at area churches and at Cornell University and hearing the new GOArt Organ Project of 2009/2010 which is historically modeled on the Arp Schnitger organ in Charlottenburg Castle in Berlin, destroyed in the bombing during World War II. Fine performances included recitals by Christopher Houlihan, 18-year old Bryan Anderson, Will Headlee, Jonathan Ryan and Diane Meredith Belcher to name only a few. Conventioneers heard a total of 23 recitals during the course of the week. Additionally, there were three fine lectures, and of course, there was the conviviality of seeing friends and making new ones.



Paul Hesselink

# AGO BOSTON 2014

by

Dorothy Young Riess

Starting with James David Christie at Symphony Hall and ending with Stephen Tharp at The Mother Church, American Guild of Organists Convention Boston 2014 was a kaleidoscope of brilliant performances on superb instruments. The programs were so extensive that conventioners received five convention books instead of the usual one. It was a walking convention. Small buses were provided for those who could not walk to venues, but the Boston subway was the travel method of choice. Twenty-four venues, multiple organists, instrumentalists and choirs made choices difficult. Workshops and scholarly papers rounded out the full schedule.



Mother Church



Old South Church

Church on the Skinner, Opus 308, 1921. Rising Stars continued to amaze listeners at various venues with their brilliance and maturity, including Region IX Quimby winner, Chinar Merjanian, at Church of the Covenant, Welte-Tripp, Opus 287, 1929.

Jazz Worship on Wednesday evening at Old South Church presented a unique musical experience, followed by a silent movie accompanied by Peter Krasinski.

Thursday, I opted for workshops and papers, and enjoyed Hans Hielscher's work on Guilmant, Margaret Harper's paper on Jean-Louis Florentz, and Brink Bush on Wilhelm Middelschulte. Solemn Evensong by the professional choir of Church of the Advent followed by John Scott in concert, Aeolian-Skinner, Opus 940, 1936, was especially moving spiritually and musically.



Methuen

Friday, Thierry Escaich, at the Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Hutchings, Opus 140, 1897, performed choral preludes by Brahms and Bach followed by his own compositions on the same chorales. Friday afternoon was a trip I anticipated since signing up for the convention, to Methuen, where I was a student at the Organ Institute many years ago. Kola Owolabi played the Walker, Opus 200, 1863, Aeolian-Skinner, Opus 1103, 1947. Then a short distance away, at Shanklin Music Hall, Jonathan Ortloff entertained us with music on the Mighty Wurlitzer, assembled 1999.



Basilica

And finally, a fine performance by Stephen Tharp at the Mother Church, First Church of Christ Scientist, on the massive Aeolian-Skinner, Opus 1203, 1952, featuring his arrangement of Stravinsky "Rite of Spring", for memory! The audience of almost 3,000 stood and cheered for several minutes after.

This is only a brief sample of the many music experiences during convention week. AGO 2016 will be in Houston. You don't want to miss it.





## AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

### 2015 WEST REGION CONVENTION IN SAN DIEGO

JUNE 28TH - JULY 2ND 2015

#### About the Convention

The San Diego chapter is proud to host the 2015 West Region Convention of the American Guild of Organists. The regional conventions are held on odd numbered years and the national conventions are held on even numbered years.

To learn more about the San Diego chapter visit: [www.agosd.org](http://www.agosd.org)

To learn more about the American Guild of Organists visit: [www.agohq.org](http://www.agohq.org)

The 2015 convention is timed to coincide with the Balboa Park centennial celebration, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. The cherished Spreckels Organ Pavilion was built for that exposition.

For more information about Balboa Park visit: [www.balboapark.org](http://www.balboapark.org)

For more information about the Spreckels organ visit: <http://sosorgan.org>

## Brombaugh Opus 4 Destroyed by Fire

On Thursday, August 28, 2014 a fire destroyed First Lutheran Church in Lorain, Ohio. This was the home of John Brombaugh's historic Opus 4. It was an important instrument because it was the first instrument built by an American that used historical techniques such as flexible winding, unequal temperament and hammered pipes and the first large instrument that Brombaugh built. The dedication service and recital were held on June 21, 1970. In 2011,



this instrument was acknowledged as an "instrument of exceptional historical merit" by the Organ Historical Society. Brombaugh is an extremely important organ builder because so many of today's outstanding builders trained in his shop. This is a tragic loss for our profession.

## Live at GVPC Concert Series 15th Season 2014

♪ **20 SEPT.** SATURDAY AT 7:30 PM

**JAMES D'LEON IN RECITAL:** INTERNATIONAL STEINWAY PIANO ARTIST

♪ **11 OCT.** SATURDAY AT 7:30 PM

**AMY HOMER SMITH: SOLO ORGAN RECITAL**  
"TOCCATAS AND TOE TAPPERS", FREE-WILL TO BENEFIT  
GVPC CONCERT SERIES : LIVE !

♪ **25 OCT.** SATURDAY AT 7:30 PM

**UNCHARTED WINDS:** CHAMBER MUSIC RECITAL FEATURING BRAHMS F MINOR  
PIANO QUINTET

♪ **8 NOVEMBER** SATURDAY AT 7:30 PM

**"I KNOW I CAME IN HERE FOR SOMETHING"** : OFF-BROADWAY PLAY  
PRESENTED BY THE GATEWAY SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

♪ **3 DECEMBER** WEDNESDAY AT 7PM

**9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DIY MESSIAH**  
GVPC VALLEY CHORUS, GVPC CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
SPENCER BAKER CONDUCTS FROM THE HARPSICHORD

♪ **14 DECEMBER** SUNDAY AT 2:30 PM

**8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HOLIDAY BRASS AND ORGAN**  
A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION FEATURING RANDY CRAWFORD,  
AMY HOMER-SMITH, SUMMERLIN SAXOPHONE QUARTET



1798 WIGWAM PKWY, 89074

CHECK [WWW.GREENVALLEYPRES.COM](http://WWW.GREENVALLEYPRES.COM) FOR UPDATES

**FREE ADMISSION**

(702) 454-8484

## Green Valley Presbyterian Church Presents

Amy Homer-Smith in Recital

Saturday, October 11 at 7:30 P.M.



### "Toccatas and Toe Tappers"

The church is located at 1798 Wigwam Parkway, Henderson 89074 and there will be a free-will offering supporting GVPC's Concert Series

Amy Homer-Smith currently serves as the organist for Green Valley Presbyterian Church. She is also a collaborative pianist and has worked as an accompanist for school choirs and UNLV choirs, performing both locally and nationally in various festivals and tours. In 2012 Amy had the opportunity to train as a substitute keyboardist in "Phantom! The Las Vegas Spectacular" and then went on to perform on the keyboard for Off-Strip Productions' production of Stephen Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street". While she was enjoying her experiences playing in show ensembles, she also graduated from the Americana Real Estate Academy and spent that year studying pre-nursing at Nevada State College. Amy is also working on finishing her Bachelor's degree in organ performance at UNLV and hopes to complete the degree in spring of 2015. She currently resides in Henderson with her husband Michael. Her favorite part about the organ is the feeling of playing an orchestra, contained within one instrument.



*The Southern Nevada Chapter, American Guild of Organists*

## *Organ Recital Series - 2014-2015*

*Dr. Pamela Decker*

*Friday, October 3, 2014 - 7:30 P.M.*

Dr. Decker was unable to perform on our last season's series but has graciously rescheduled her program to open this season. She is Professor of Organ and Composition at the University of Arizona.

*Advent-Christmas Recital*

*Sunday, December 10, 2014 - 4:00 P.M.*

This holiday season special program by local AGO members will again be presented at Christ Church Episcopal, 2000 S. Maryland Parkway at 4:00 P.M. **Please note different venue.**

*Clayton Roberts*

*Friday, January 9, 2015 - 7:30 P.M.*

Raised in Las Vegas, Clayton Roberts has won several competitions. He is currently the organist at St. John Vianney Catholic Church in Houston.

*Bach Birthday Celebration*

*Friday, March 20, 2015 - 7:30 P.M.*

This all-Bach recital presented by Dr. Paul Hesselink will feature some compositions with choreography. Come celebrate Bach's 330<sup>th</sup>.

*Dr. Angela Kraft Cross*

*Friday, April 10, 2015 - 7:30 P.M.*

Having retired from a 22-year career as an ophthalmologist and eye-surgeon in California Dr. Cross now maintains a very busy organ recital schedule.

*James David Christie*

*Friday, June 5, 2015 - 7:30 P.M.*

One of the most sought after organists of our day, Mr. Christie heads the Organ Department at the Oberlin College and Conservatory.

All recitals are open to the public without charge and are performed on the Maurine Jackson Smith von Beckerath organ in the Beam Music Center's Doc Rando Hall on the UNLV campus.

The Organ Recital Series is underwritten in part by a grant from the Nevada Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

