



AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

## Chapter Leadership News

June 2021

### June is Member Care Month!

*People will forget what you have said,  
people will forget what you did,  
but people will never forget how you made them feel.*  
*Maya Angelou*

Dear Chapter Leaders,

In April 2020, the AGO launched **Member Care Month**. The goal was to strengthen member engagement and connectivity by calling every single member to let them know how much we care about them. This initiative was particularly important during COVID-19, as so many of our members were experiencing a sense of isolation and loneliness. It was a huge success, and in fact, several chapters have continued to do this monthly. **Member Care Month** will continue to be an annual AGO initiative. This year, it will be conducted throughout the month of June. By the time you receive this newsletter, all chapter officers will have received an email with detailed instructions. **Member Care Month** will include participation from the National Council, regional councillors, district conveners, and most importantly, you. AGO staff will also be involved, calling the AGO committees and task forces with whom they liaise, and your membership team will be calling all of our independent members. There are many ways to recognize our members – through emails, newsletters, social media, and chapter websites – but nothing can replace the personal touch of picking up the phone to speak with someone. I look forward to hearing from you regarding the conversations you had with your members, anything special or unique that occurred because of this initiative, or how this may have personally impacted you. Your comments and experiences will be featured in the next issue of this newsletter.

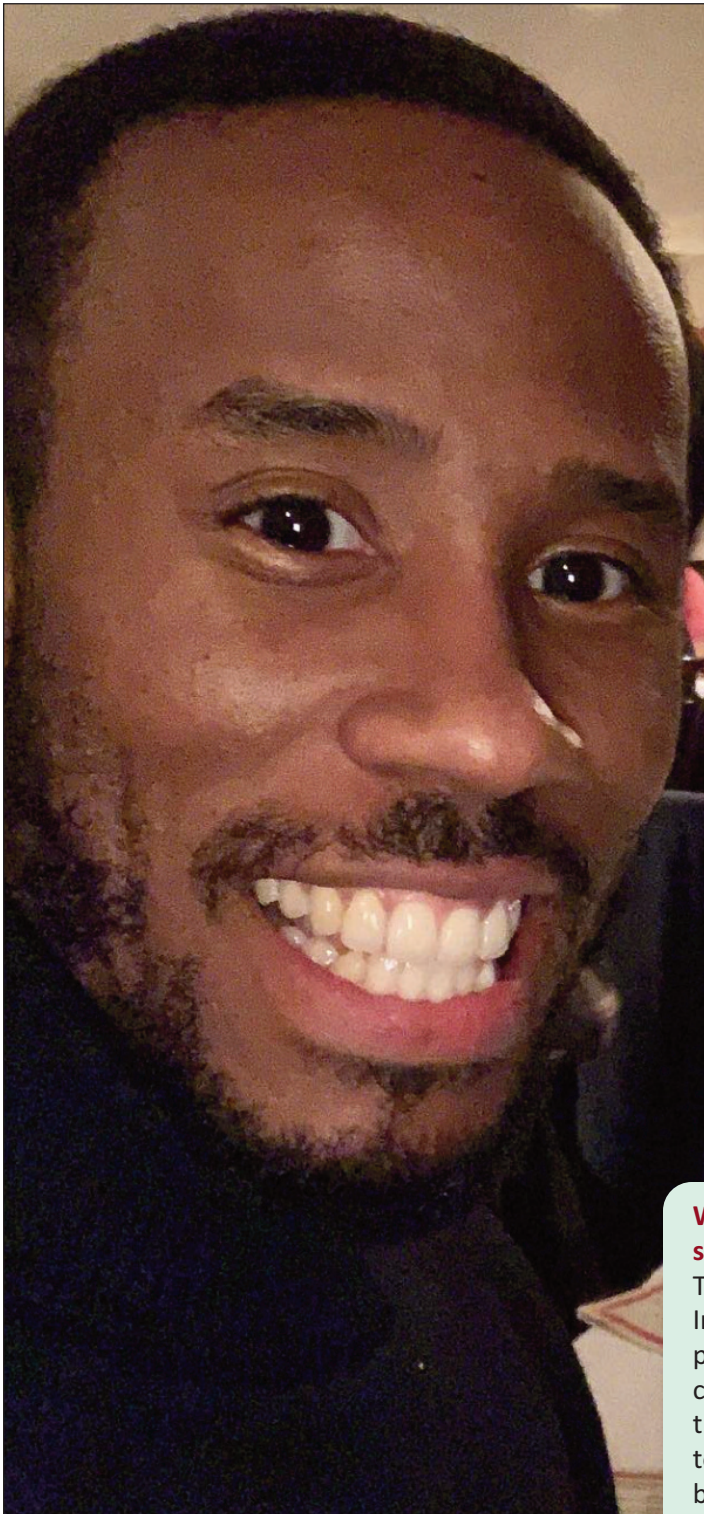
This issue of **Chapter Leadership News** will cover the following:

- ✓ Profile of the Month: Stephen Price, Dean, Indianapolis Chapter
- ✓ Winchester Chapter's **IN MEMORY: Grief – Remembrance – Comfort – Hope**
- ✓ Upcoming Webinars
- ✓ Updating New Officers in ONCARD
- ✓ Southwest Jersey Chapter's Member Recognition: **This Is Your Life**
- ✓ **The Year of the Young Organist** AGOYO Scholarship Program
- ✓ The **Spreckels Organ Loaner Program**
- ✓ Member Spotlight of the Month



Elizabeth George, CMM  
Director of Member Engagement & Chapter Development  
The American Guild of Organists  
[elizabeth.george@agohq.org](mailto:elizabeth.george@agohq.org)  
212-870-2311 ext. 4307

## **Profile of the Month: Dr. Stephen Price** **Dean of the Indianapolis Chapter**



**If I weren't doing this,** I'd be enjoying time outdoors at a park or taking a walk along the water.

**What's sitting on my desk right now:** Music scores and final assignments from my courses at Ball State.

**The best advice I ever got:** You are responsible for your happiness.

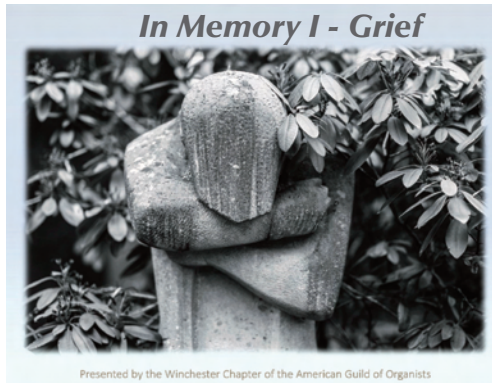
**When I'm not at work I'm** watching a TV series on Amazon Prime or Disney Plus. I love watching a good drama or fantasy!

**What keeps me motivated serving as chapter dean:** The officers in the Indianapolis chapter, both past and present, have contributed significantly to the chapter's success. I hope to do my part and continue building upon the chapter's vibrant history.

# **IN MEMORY: Grief - Remembrance - Comfort - Hope**

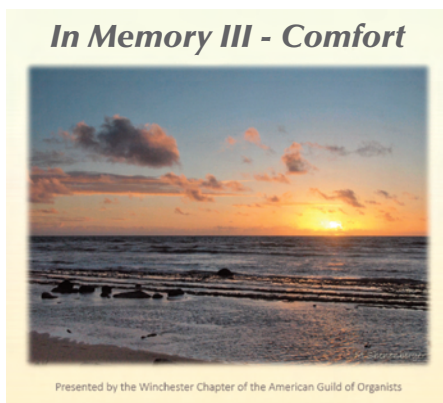
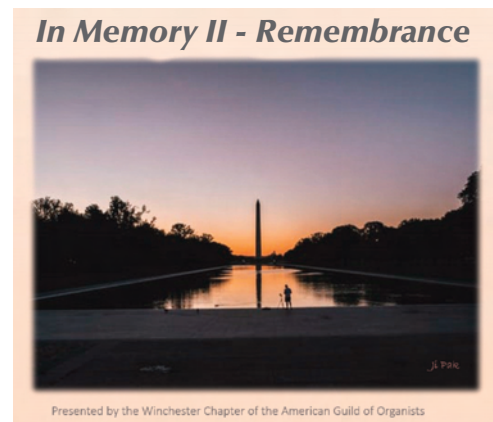
## **Virtual performances honoring loss and celebrating life during the COVID-19 pandemic**

**Linda Beville, Dean, Winchester (VA) Chapter**



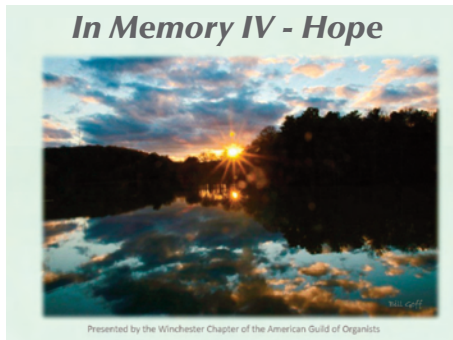
I have read that epidemics and pandemics are a common cyclical occurrence throughout the world. The COVID-19 health crisis felt new and threatening. During the past 15 months, the Winchester chapter struggled to stay viable and functioning. It was almost impossible to relate to the difficulties that our members were experiencing with their jobs and their personal lives. For many, just getting comfortable with a Zoom meeting was a big challenge.

My chapter is lucky to have several talented and generous members who have offered to design and produce virtual programs. Our most recent program, titled **IN MEMORY: Grief – Remembrance – Comfort – Hope**, was designed to honor those who have lost loved ones, those who have tended to the sick, those who have sacrificed their lives through violence, and those who have made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives, so that we might live in a world of freedom. It chronicles the experience of walking the journey of suffering, pain, and loss. During the lowest points in our lives, we tend to reach out to each other, and this shared human connection uplifts the spirit. This program was designed with four segments, each approximately 15 minutes in length. Each segment combines performances by our members and friends with poems, scripture, and narratives. Tying the recordings together are a series of photographs that support the sensitive reflections of each work.



We started this program last December. Fifteen members and their churches were featured in an Advent/Christmas Lessons and Carols. For **IN MEMORY**, the musical selections were performed or directed by our members with guest instrumentalists and singers. The result is a collaboration of more than 90 individuals, playing, ringing, and singing. Chapter member Marilyn Shenenberger designed the program and formatted the selections along with the photographs from members, friends, and copyright-free Unsplash photographs. Member Jim Moon was the technical guru who combined the audio files and PowerPoint slides into videos. Marilyn's friend

and local poet Caroline Boden Devlin passed away in December. Her daughters graciously gave us permission to use several poems from her book, *The Glass Rainbow – a Collection of Contemplative Poems, Prayers, and Reflections*. To further comply with copyright regulations, we used some pieces in public domain, acquired a streaming license through OneLicense, and in one case, we contacted the publisher directly to obtain permission.



I hope you will go to our web page, [WinchesterAGO.com](http://WinchesterAGO.com), where each of the four sections is available for separate viewing. We have shared our talents to honor the struggles of all the world’s citizens and to recognize the loss of friends and family who were much loved. This program is poignant in the segments GRIEF and REMEMBRANCE. The images are raw and unflinching. But, the circle of life turns to a new day. We reach out to one another in COMFORT. HOPE is reflected by joining the beauty of music, poetry, and art together.

## Upcoming Chapter Leader Webinars

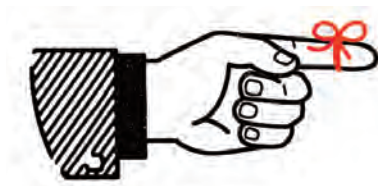


**Monday, June 14th, at 5:00 p.m. EDT**  
**The Top Four Things Your Chapter Must Do to Be Financially Responsible**

This webinar, presented by Jeffrey J. Verkuilen, CPA, former district convener and education coordinator for the Northeast Wisconsin chapter, is targeted to those who will be transitioning into serving as treasurer and those who will be continuing in this officer position. These four steps are essential to support a chapter’s financial health. Register [here](#).

**Monday, June 21st, at 4:00 p.m. EDT**  
**The New Oxford Organ Method**

Join Anne Marsden Thomas and Dr. Frederick Stocken as they present an overview of **The New Oxford Method**, which focuses on using a single piece of repertoire and employs preparatory exercises covering practice methods, registration, fingering and pedaling, and historically informed interpretation. This method is for keyboard players of any age who are taking first steps at the organ, with or without a teacher. It will also serve more experienced organists who want to improve their technique. Sponsored by the Oxford University Press. Register [here](#).



### **IMPORTANT REMINDER:**

**Don’t Forget to Update Your New Officer Roster in ONCARD!**

By now, you have held your chapter’s elections and have a new slate of officers. It is extremely important that you update your

new officer roster in ONCARD. This critical task should be done immediately, since **after June 30th, new officers will no longer be able to access ONCARD.** If you do not do this, the result will be that new officers will not receive any communications from National, nor will they receive this newsletter! Step-by-step instructions for accessing ONCARD and how to update your roster can be found in in the **Chapter Leadership Toolkits** under **Management and Governance**, [here](#).

## Southwest Jersey Chapter's Newsletter Member Recognition

I want to recognize the Southwest Jersey Chapter's innovative **This is Your Life** column, a clever and fun member profile that features interviews and photos in their monthly newsletters. This is a wonderful example of how much you value your chapter members.

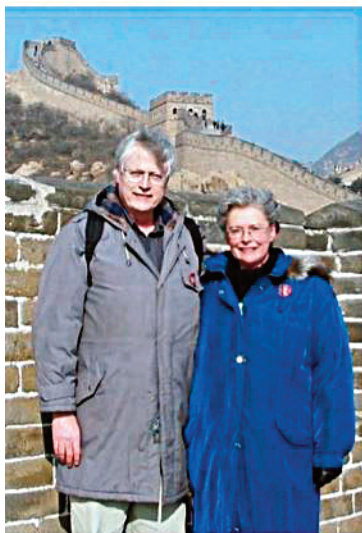


## Joe and Joyce Ann Routon, This is Your Life!

-- by Vernon Williams

*Ever since we published Chuck Gibson's story last fall when he became the chapter's new treasurer, I have wanted to start a series of interviews with various chapter members. Such articles have been written in past years, but there are still so many interesting stories to be told!*

*This month we interview long-time members Joyce Ann and Joe Routon. Joyce Ann was organist at First Presbyterian Church in Haddonfield for 31 years while maintaining a piano and organ studio with 50 students. Joe is a professional portrait painter and photographer whose paintings hang in many buildings in the northeast United States, and whose photographs have been on the covers of The Diapason and The Tracker. His fabulous pipe organ photos grace the cover of our newsletter every month, and Joe is always there with his camera to take group photos at our events. Joyce Ann continues to send Joe's photos with her reports of our chapter events that appear in TAO. Joyce Ann and Joe co-chaired the Program Committee for our 2019 Regional Convention, putting together an amazing three days of exceptionally high-quality events.*



**VW: You met while you were organ students at college. Who was your teacher? Any interesting stories from those years?**

**Joe:** While working on my B.Mus. degree in organ performance at Murray State University, I met Joyce Ann, who was earning her B.Mus. with a double major in organ and piano performance. I wanted to ask her for a date, but she was highly respected as one of the best musicians in the school, and I was afraid she'd turn me down. I figured if I asked her to go to an organ recital, she might consider it. To my delight, she accepted, and we drove to Nashville to hear Flor Peeters perform at Fisk University. Before I graduated, we got married. Our organ professor, John Winter, played for our wedding.

**Joyce Ann:** Mr. Winter encouraged us to join the AGO. The closest chapter was in Nashville, about an hour and a half away, but we attended several meetings and concerts there.

While at Murray, I was organist at Grace Episcopal Church, Paris, Tennessee, Joe's hometown. Since Joe was organist at the Christian and Catholic Churches in Paris, all three churches staggered their Christmas Eve service times so that we could play for all three services.

**VW: You spent part of your honeymoon at the 1964 National AGO Convention in Philadelphia. Do any memories stand out from that convention? Was there more to your honeymoon?**

# The Year of the Young Organist Organ Scholar Program

## **Opportunities for Chapter Participation**

The AGOYO Committee has been working hard to create a year of programming that supports professional development as a young organist begins her or his career. One of the most exciting initiatives planned is **the AGO Organ Scholar Program**, which will offer two young people the opportunity to experience a one-year internship at a significant music ministry program somewhere in the United States. This gap year program will take place during the 2022-23 and 2023-24 program years (one recipient per year for a total of two recipients in two different locations).



**The AGO Organ Scholar Program** features a model of collaborative investment from National Headquarters, the local AGO chapter, and the host church. It envisions an investment of roughly \$10,000 per year from both the local AGO chapter and National. The host church is expected to provide an additional \$10,000 in salary, as well as provide housing and health care for the organ scholar. We feel confident that this type of collaboration will yield the most successful and sustaining result.

Would your chapter be interested in pursuing such an incredible venture? If so, we would like to hear from you! Across the United States, there are model church music programs that would provide an enriching, positive, and challenging environment for a young organ scholar, and we would like to identify these great institutions. Now more than ever, our young people need great training and experience in church music. We appreciate any assistance you can give in helping us identify these mentors.

While this is currently a pilot program, our hope is that this might turn into a permanent part of the AGO's growing scholarship portfolio. We look to you, our chapter leaders, to help us identify the people and places to make our ambitions a reality. Please send all recommendations for host chapters and/or host churches to AGO councillor for young organists, Jillian Gardner [conveneragoyo@gmail.com](mailto:conveneragoyo@gmail.com).

# The Spreckels Organ Society's Loaner Program

Recently, Leslie Wolf Robb, AGO's councillor for communications and education coordinator for the San Diego chapter, sent me an article that appeared in the *Escondido Times-Advocate*, and I wanted to share it with you.

*When the Spreckels Organ Society received the donation of a Hammond organ, they came up with an idea: they would*



match the instrument with a young organist in the San Diego area who would benefit from having the instrument in the organist's home. And so, the **Spreckels Organ Society's Organ Loaner Program** was born.

The donated Hammond was matched with 17-year-old Declan Bohley, a high school senior from Escondido with a passion for the organ, piano, and music as a whole. He's been playing the organ for six years and the piano for 12. He says having this instrument in his home has inspired him to explore the organ in ways he hasn't been able to before.

"Playing the piano is a very precise art in a way that playing the organ is not," Bohley said. "Each organ is unique, and you can't just play organ music straight off the page. This is an awesome instrument and having it available to me whenever I want to practice has given me the opportunity to explore the organ in a more creative way."

Bohley is starting college this fall, and while he isn't planning on pursuing a degree in organ performance, he fully intends to apply what he's learned as an organist as he pursues his goal of composing contemporary music.

Chris Cook, Dean of the San Diego Chapter and Bohley's organ teacher, says that receiving this instrument has not only made a critical difference in Declan's growth as a musician, but could make a big difference within the local organ community.

"I think programs like this one close the gap in the capacity to attract and instruct young students," Cook said. "The organ allows students to encounter the core musical historical arts heritage from Europe. It's a challenging instrument, but that also makes it super gratifying to learn."

If your community has similar programs in place, please email me: [elizabeth.george@agohq.org](mailto:elizabeth.george@agohq.org)



## **Member Spotlight:** **David Nichols** **AGO Seattle Chapter Treasurer**

JoAn Andenes, Seattle chapter membership coordinator shared the following:

*David spends countless hours supporting our chapter and has never been publicly acknowledged before. The Seattle chapter has in past years honored LaDonna Bowers, David Lepse, and me, by making us Lifetime Members, but we have never acknowledged David Nichols. When he arrived here in the late 1990s he immediately focused on digitizing our AGO 2000 National Convention program book. He's been our treasurer for many years and has become our ONCARD expert. If I have a computer-related problem, he's the first person I go to. This past year he has expertly managed our Zoom meetings along with our dean-elect, Tim Beggs. I think that David is very deserving of this honor.*

## Responses to Last Month's Question

### Have You Used Online Voting Platforms for Your Elections?

Fran Johnson, Orange County (CA) chapter dean, and Sherelyn Breland, Birmingham (AL) dean, both shared that this year they used ElectionRunner, <https://electionrunner.com/>. Bill Robinson, Delaware chapter dean, shared that they used SurveyMonkey. Thank you, Fran, Sherelyn, and Bill for sharing this information!



### Question of the Month

Has your chapter made plans to collaborate with other chapters for future programming?

If so, please email me at

[elizabeth.george@agohq.org](mailto:elizabeth.george@agohq.org)