



About Us

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## August Newsletter

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you are all having a fun and restful summer and are able to stay cool. I have been blessed to take considerable time off this summer, visiting Tucson, San Diego, Los Angeles, Boston, Lenox, MA, and Asheville, NC.

While in Los Angeles, I had an opportunity to play the Hazel Wright Organ which was built for the former Crystal Cathedral--now Christ Cathedral, the cathedral of the Catholic diocese of Orange County. If you ever visited Crystal Cathedral or watched "Hour of Power" on TV, you really would hardly recognize the inside. Quatrefoils have been installed to control the amount of light in the room (it used to be a literal greenhouse--not good for organs!), air conditioning has been installed, and the entire ~300 rank organ was refurbished by Ruffatti. The organ is sounding better than it ever has, and it was really fun to play this organ that my "grand-teacher" designed, but died before he got to ever play it. I think my favorite stop was an oboe in the swell that came from Virgil Fox's personal collection--what a unique and resonant sound. I also liked seeing the "Flute d'Arvela" in the solo which was an homage to Arvela Schuller, wife of the pastor of Crystal Cathedral (I think she actually ran the church!). **[Click here to see a video of me playing the Hazel Wright Organ.](#)**

We also stopped by the Spreckles Organ Pavilion, however there wasn't anything going on at the time of our visit.

Please read on for some summer updates from other members, as well as a fun opportunity coming up on Monday next week. If you have any orgel or music-related activities to share with our chapter, please send them over!

I also have some chapter updates to give you as there has actually been a lot going on behind the scenes over the last month. As mentioned at our annual meeting, Susan and Dan Crumpler have decided that they would like to step back from serving the guild after decades of dedicated service due to various personal reasons. I want to profoundly thank them for all of their time given to the guild, serving in probably every role possible at some point.

Secretary Bryan Cordell has graciously agreed to take over managing our website. He is also working through our physical archives to make digital copies of important things and get that all inventoried since it is currently just boxes of papers.

I'm also happy to announce that Michael Bodnyk has agreed to be our Membership Coordinator. Make sure to stay current on your dues, or Michael will be knocking down your door!

As you may or may not have heard, David Patrick had to resign from being our Sub-Dean. While this is unfortunate, I support David in his decision and look forward to seeing him around town and at chapter events. This said, we are in a precarious situation for the future leadership of our chapter. I do not plan to stay on as Dean for a third year and we don't have a Sub-Dean to move up into that role. I am looking for two people--one to be acting Sub-Dean of this year, and then move to Dean; and another person to shadow the Sub-Dean and then become Sub-Dean in the 25-26 season.

If chapter leadership is something you have wanted to do but haven't expressed it or haven't been asked to do so, now is your chance!!

Expect another blast towards the end of the month as we should have our year planned and settled by then.

-Sam Nelson, Dean







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## **ORGAN TRANSPLANT THIS COMING MONDAY, AUGUST 5**

Epiphany Cathedral in Venice is undergoing major renovations so they are moving all worship into their Parish Center. The Parish Center does not have an organ. Therefore, the cathedral has acquired a pipe organ from Alexandria, VA that is supposed to arrive over the weekend.

This is where you come in! We are looking for some able-bodied folks to help load the organ

from the truck into the Parish Center. As you know, there are many, many parts to a pipe organ, especially a tracker instrument, so the more hands we have on deck, the faster it will go. They may even begin some assembly of the organ which may be interesting to see and to help with.

Please contact Secretary Bryan Cordell if you are interested in helping. He can keep you updated as to the timeline and other details:

**email Bryan Cordell**

You can read more about the organ **here**.



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## "It's a Surprise!" by John Behnke premiered at Artis Naples



Organists Jonathan Birner and John Fenstermaker of the Southwest Florida Chapter approached me about writing a piece for a little pipe organ called an Orgelkids. I had never heard of this instrument but was intrigued by the commission proposal. I traveled to Naples to see, play, and understand the Orgelkids instrument. The Orgelkids instrument was designed in the Netherlands to teach people about the workings of a pipe organ.

Then we set about trying to determine what kind of piece should be written. They wanted the piece to be able to be played in schools as well as concert halls, so I proposed a piece based on Franz Joseph Haydn's Symphony No. 94, the Surprise Symphony - 2nd movement. My aim in the arrangement was to show the full musical potential of the Orgelkids, as well as an interesting duet that would give both the Orgelkids and the organ, fun and equal parts.

The piece was premiered on Sunday June 9th at the Artis-Naples in a program called The Festival of Great Organ Music presented by members of the AGO SWFL Chapter. Over 800 people attended this event. John Fenstermaker played the Orgelkids and Jonathan Birner worked the bellows.

The piece is entitled, "It's a Surprise!" and it is available through JW Pepper by [clicking here](#).

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- Sub Dean  
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