



PALO ALTO/PENINSULA CHAPTER AGO

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NEWSLETTER—JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

FROM THE DEAN

Happy New Year! I hope this season evokes wonder and joy in your lives.

The plumber came to my house this week. He asked me what I did for a living, and I told him the truth. He was impressed. Our conversation went like this: “You’re an organist? I saw an organ in Spain, what was it called? Oh, I can’t remember now, you know, that big one?... I don’t know, in Spain? ...Yeah, or, or was it in France? You know, that big one? ...Notre Dame? ... No, the other one, I can’t remember the name... Gee, I don’t know, Saint-Sulpice? ...Yeah, that’s it! Yeah, they took us up the spiral staircase to the top! It was great!... They took YOU up the spiral staircase. They’ve never taken ME up the spiral staircase! ...Yeah, I guess we just got lucky that day.” Only around here would I find a plumber who has been to the console at the church of Saint-Sulpice in Paris.

We have a lot of people who are interested in the organ and whom we could ask to our events. I hope to see you and your friends soon at our first event in 2010, a history lecture on Rolande Falcinelli, the woman who served as titular organist at Sacré Coeur in the early 20th century. Little has been published on this composer, so we will be

some of the first people to learn about her. The talk will be given by Lenore Alford, who researched Falcinelli in her doctoral dissertation. She is an eloquent speaker and consummate organist. This will be at 3 p.m. at First Congregational Church of San Mateo on Sunday January 24. Afterwards we will saunter down the street to Capellini’s for cocktails.

The executive board will meet beforehand at 1:30 p.m. in the choir room at the church. All are welcome, though if you show up, you will be asked to join the board next year, just a warning. Many thanks to these wonderful people for all their hard work and ideas. Special thanks to Matthew for being secretary and newsletter editor, to Jill for being both treasurer and registrar, to Jay for keeping the website current, and to Mary Frances for absorbing all sorts of details which would surely get left behind otherwise. Please thank all the board members next time you see them.

We have some exciting plans for the rest of the season. On Monday February 8 at 7 p.m., we are again privileged to be at Stanford for a masterclass with Robert Huw Morgan. He is delightful and erudite, as you all know. Please let Angela Kraft Cross know if you’d like to play.

On Sunday April 18, we are holding a Certification Fair at my church, St. Bede’s. This is an open house for resources on how to achieve AGO certification, e.g., Service-Playing, CAGO. We will gather our instructional materials, plan support groups, and talk about requirements. There are many of us who would like to attain some form of certification as a personal goal. We just need to muster the courage and make it happen. There are other things in the works, too, a composers’ forum on March 13 and a members’ recital based on 2010 anniversaries sometime in May.

Our major goal this year is to attract a few more members from the community in order to insure a critical mass in our chapter. We will be leaving our business cards at consoles where we serve as substitutes. We also plan to send out a survey to our local chapter asking you what you like the most. Most of all, please invite friends, especially non-members to our events. All our events are free and open to everyone, so there’s no harm in asking. As I am write this, I confess, I didn’t ask my plumber to

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our history lecture, but I still can. The thought didn't occur to me at the time, but I will remedy that soon.

Our next newsletter will have a special report from Lyon, France. Our illustrious sub-dean, Angela, who gives a recital in France every year is allowing me to tag along and play the Cavaillé-Coll in the Cathédrale Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Lyon the first week of January. I'll tell you all about my adventures in the city with the best food in France and secret stone passageways connecting streets called *traboules*. I might even bring you home a truffle, chocolate or fungal, if you so request.

Wishing you every success and happiness in the coming year. See you on January 24!

Yours,

RANI FISCHER

NEWS FROM OUR REGIONAL COUNCILOR

Frances (Frankie) Nobert joined other organ enthusiasts in Adelaide and the Barossa Valley in October for a weeklong conference of the Organ Historical Trust of Australia. The Valley, settled by German speakers from Prussia and Silesia, houses an abundance of churches... many Lutheran, most with one- or two-manual instruments and some with beautifully stenciled façade pipes. The conferees heard 35 organs representing builders from the mid-1800s through 2000. A high point was the glorious 1875 William Hill & Son Grand Organ, formerly in the Adelaide Town Hall and now being restored in its new home, Tanunda Soldiers' Memorial Hall. Frankie was invited to demonstrate an 1886, two-manual, fourteen-rank mechanical instrument by Fincham and Hobday at Christ Church Anglican Church in Kapunda (where she is pictured above). Her journey ended with playing ten Sydney area organs, including the instrument in the Opera House. Officers and other members of the active Region IX AGO Chapter (Sydney Organ Society) served as tour guides, taxi drivers and hosts for a delicious dinner at the end of her glorious stay in Australia.



CHAPTER EVENTS IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY

SUNDAY JANUARY 24

3:00 p.m. Lecture on Rolande Falcinelli by Lenore Alford at First Congregational Church of San Mateo.

REDWOOD CITY ORGAN RESTORED

Chuck Broaddus, a deacon at Redwood Baptist Church, reports that since a fire there the organ there (a Moller) has not been played. However, they have recently restored power to the blower and the organ is now working and has been tuned. (The damage to the rest of the auditorium from the fire has been completely repaired and the renovations have been completed.)

Mr. Broaddus is enthusiastic for the instrument to be played, and is able to make it available for practice or concerts. The auditorium seats about 500, and has 50 foot ceilings with huge pilaster arches over the seating area. The seating is made up of pew chairs that can be reconfigured however desired. The church also has a recording studio located in the basement (sound proofed, digital recording equipment), so it might be possible to do live recordings from the auditorium to the studio. One interesting feature of the auditorium is that there is a large rock on the preaching platform. This rock was present at the site when the church was built and apparently the architect decided it would be less expensive to build around the rock rather than try to break it out.

For more information, contact: Chuck Broaddus, Redwood Baptist Church, 2323 Euclid Ave., Redwood City, CA 94061-2061; tel. (650) 483-6881; email <chuckbroaddus@gmail.com>.

DIGITAL ORGAN PREMIERE

The United States premiere concert of the new Viscount Physis Classic Organ will be on January 18 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Catherine's Catholic Church, El Camino and Bayswater in Burlingame, CA. John West will be the organist, and the Menlo Park Presbyterian Chancel Choir will participate. For more information please visit <www.goldengatepianoandorgan.com>.

PAUL GENZINK

TOUR OF HISTORIC MEXICAN ORGANS

Dr. Robert Bates of the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston is leading a tour of historic organs of Mexico April 7-16. For more information, contact him at (713) 743-3193 or <rbates@uh.edu>.

MONDAY FEBRUARY 8

7:00 p.m. Masterclass at Stanford Memorial Church, led by Robert Huw Morgan.

FOR ADDITIONAL CALENDAR LISTINGS...

please see the San Francisco Chapter's Bay Area Concert Calendar at the following site: <<http://tinyurl.com/yzcqdf>>.