

JUNE–JULY, 2020 BOMBARDE ISSUE



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The Dean's Column



Well, it certainly has been an interesting summer so far and we have just barely begun. Still in the throes of the COVID-19 outbreak but things seem to be calming down in Michigan. An encouraging article this week noted that Michigan is only one of two states to go on record as having contained the virus. We share that with New York, high on the list at one time. Michigan was number three in highest number of cases reported and as Governor Whitmer started opening things up we were number 26. However, unpleasant everything has been, I think our governor was spot on with her decisions about stay at home orders and reopening businesses in a five- phase plan.

Then we had the unprecedented incident of racism rearing its ugly head once again. I will not wax political here, but I believe this is reprehensible at best and I am shocked each time something like this happens to us. It affects all of us at one level or another. Below I share a letter from Michael Bedford, the Chair and President of our national organization outlining the national office posture on Black Lives Matter. I believe this letter expresses the perspective well and I firmly believe that your local board shares these same perspectives. Please read it and ponder your own hearts and minds regarding this issue:

To All AGO Chapter Deans:

The American Guild of Organists recognizes and affirms that Black Lives Matter. We call upon every chapter and all of our members to speak out against racial bias and take action to make the world a better, safer, and more secure place for the members of the Black community.

Now is the time for us to search our souls for ways to be more caring, to be better brothers and sisters to our Black colleagues, and to demonstrate our unwavering support for their professional advancement and success.

The tragic murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, the equally senseless killing of Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta on June 12, and the death and injury of so many others are heartbreaking and inexcusable. We extend our condolences to their families and friends, and we stand in solidarity with the countless thousands of people around the world who have marched to protest systemic racism against the African-American community.

It is our turn to step up to the challenge. We must listen to diverse voices in crafting solutions to our problems. We must reach out to find new partners to help us chart the best path forward. We must engage.

Sincerely yours,



Michael Bedford, AAGO, ChM
President



James E. Thomashower, CAE

On a happier note, I am delighted to announce, and I am sure you will see it in another part of the newsletter, that we had another successful nomination season followed by our annual election. I have the pleasure of announcing that, joining the officers: George Jonte-Crane, Dean; Andrew Herbruck, Sub-Dean; David Stewart, Secretary; Rick Abdo, Treasurer; Pete Townsend, Registrar as well as At-Large Executive Board Members: David Enos, David Wigton, John Potter, Joseph Balistreri and Gerald Furi, the Class of 2023 will be Sarah Simko, Johnny Kash, Jo Vollendorf-Clark and Nathan Costa. We welcome these four to our board and look forward to their service. A huge thank you to Joseph Balistreri for serving as chair of nominations this year.

We bid a bittersweet farewell to Rick Helderop, Glenn Burdette, Carolyn Thibideau and Jean Randall with sincere thanks for their service over the last three years. Jean will remain as chair of examinations and the scholarship auditions and subsequent scholarship/ membership recital.

We know that the COVID-19 outbreak has created some unexpected financial hardships for many as furloughs and other cutbacks were necessary during the pandemic. In light of that, through a unanimous decision by your board, the balance of this year's programming funds are being made available as a one-time scholarship/financial assistance program for those members who find it impossible to meet the dues obligation but wish to retain their membership in the Detroit chapter. These requests will be handled on a case by case and first come/first serve basis. For further information or to make your request, please address the same either by e-mail, or formal written letter to: George Jonte-Crane, Dean Detroit Chapter AGO/13641 Sherwood St/Oak Park, MI 48237. My e-mail is geopau226@yahoo.com.

We all look forward to the day when we can begin the new normal, whatever that ends up being. In the meantime, once again, stay safe and healthy.

kindest regards,
George Jonte-Crane
Dean

Detroit Chapter News

2020 AGO Chapter Board Election Results

Dr. Joann Vollendorf Clark

Dr. Joanne Vollendorf Clark is Minister of Organ at Hartford Memorial Baptist Church, Detroit Michigan where she accompanies 4 choirs and directs the High School Youth Choir. Dr. Clark studied at University of Michigan with Dr. Robert Glasgow, and at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. She has worked for the Presbyterian, Lutheran, Episcopal and Baptist faiths, and taught at Wayne State University, U of D Mercy College; and Marygrove College where she was Chair of the Music Department for 6 years. In the past she has been Dean of AGO Detroit and Ann Arbor Chapters and State Chair of Sacred Music for the American Choral Directors. She has been heard in concert in Texas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Michigan, California, Wisconsin, Austria, Czech Republic, Spain, England and Toronto, Canada.



Nathan Costa

Nathan Costa currently serves as Assistant Director Music and Liturgist at Christ Church Cranbrook, Bloomfield Hills. Prior to moving to Michigan in 2018, he worked in liturgy and music in Roman Catholic and Episcopal parishes in San Diego, Delaware, and Maryland, and at St. Andrew's School, an Episcopal boarding school in Middletown, Delaware, where for 17 years he served in teaching and administrative capacities, including as organist / choirmaster, teacher of Latin and Greek, and academic dean. During that time, Nathan has served the AGO, in San Diego as an at-large member of the board and on the planning committee for the 2017 Pipe Organ Encounter, and on the program committee in Delaware. Nathan received a B.A. in Classics from Yale University and M.A. in Liturgical Music (Organ) and in Theology (Liturgy) from St. John's University School of Theology in Collegeville, Minnesota.



Johnny Kash

Johnny Kash attended Wayne State University in Detroit, studying organ with Ray Ferguson and Gale Kramer. He earned a Bachelor of Music Degree in Organ Performance in 2000 and a Master of Music Degree in Organ Performance in 2005. Johnny has served as the Director of Music & Worship for Ss. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church on Detroit's west-side since 1999.



In addition to overseeing the Music Ministry at Ss. Peter and Paul, he also coordinates their yearly concert series, which he founded, that showcases local, national, and international musicians. Johnny gives concerts periodically throughout the Detroit area, the United States, and Europe, having performed in Poland, Sweden, and Denmark. Johnny recently completed a four year term as charter member of the Archbishop's Academy of Sacred Music, a group that serves as a body furthering the musical vision of Archbishop Allen Vigneron and the Archdiocese of Detroit. Johnny serves as Artist in Residence for Viscount Organs of Michigan, a company that represents Viscount Organs International, the largest builder of digital organs in the world. Johnny resides in Northville with his wife, Gabriela, and their two sons, Sebastian and Dominic. More information can be found at www.johnnykash.net

Sarah Simko

Sarah Simko is a Doctoral student in Organ Performance at the University of Michigan. Ms. Simko studies with Professor James Kibbie. She is the Adjunct Faculty Instructor at Madonna University. Ms. Simko serves the Cathedral Church of St. Paul as Interim Associate Organist. She is the recipient of a Graduate Award from the Presser Foundation, to be used to create a comprehensive set of recordings of organ music by living American female composers. The goal of this project is to expand the accessibility of a rich, and overlooked, body of repertoire. A series of three CDs, titled "Living Voices," will be released in 2020. Ms. Simko has given recitals at such notable venues as Methuen Memorial Music Hall, Methuen, Massachusetts; St. Paul's Cathedral (Anglican), London, Ontario, Canada; Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church, Detroit; the Cathedral Church of St. Paul (Episcopal), Detroit; Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor; among others.



Are Your Dues Coming Due?



The majority of members annual dues will come due in the next 2 months. Emails will be going out but paper notices will not since the staff at National HQ are all working from home until at least June 13. A video with instructions on how to renew through [ONCARD](#) can be found [here](#). The National staff say that if there is a problem with renewal using ONCARD, members are welcome to call 212-870-2311 and follow the prompts for a staff member to take your credit card information. If you prefer to pay by check and mail it to National, your check may not be cashed until July, and the record that you've paid will not be posted until then. AGO HQ has extended a member's expiration date with a three month grace period, however, when a membership becomes inactive, it will result in suspended delivery of TAO because that is the way their computer is set up. Please help National and your Chapter by renewing on time.

AGO National News

Using ONCARD for Renewals and Impexium Software Update

ONCARD. A video with instructions on how to renew through ONCARD can be found [here](#). Please let everyone know that if they are not comfortable using ONCARD through our website, our member services team is here to help! Please call 212-870-2311 and follow the voicemail prompts. We are most happy to help in processing anyone's membership renewal by credit card!

The AGO has decided not to move forward in migrating our database to Impexium software. We do not feel that Impexium will adequately serve our large chapter structure, and most importantly, serve your chapter's needs. I look forward to keeping you updated, as we continue to research other membership software that will provide the capabilities needed to service 287 chapters and their members and leaders.

Resources for Our Members in a Time of Crisis

In last month's Bombarde issue, we published a list of resources from the AGO National HQ for our members who are experiencing hardships because of the shelter-in-place order (Church closings, etc.) Here is a [link to that document](#) for your continued use.

