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Palo Alto/Peninsula and San Jose Chapters Combined Newsletter Spring 2024

A Message from Leadership

*Sumer is icumen in
Lhude sing cuccu
Groweþ sed
and bloweþ med
and springþ þe wde nu
Sing cuccu*

- mid-13th century, anonymous

Even though it's still technically winter, and the literal translation of the Middle-English *Sumer is icumen in* is: 'summer is here', I will take a very liberal interpretation. Never fear, warm weather will be here soon.

We have so many things that we do separately as chapters which benefit everyone in both chapters. For instance, the Frasier Scholarship, a \$1000 award for further organ study is offered each year by the San Jose chapter, and has its deadline for applications this Monday, March 18. It's open to any organist regardless of age, with an accessible audition process involving 3 pieces and a hymn. Details for applying can be viewed [here](#), and last year's awardee, Renee Gastelum, may be heard in concert on May 19 (see the poster below).

Speaking of supporting organ study, in early February Valerie Sterk and Margaret Kvamme hosted a superb *Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza* (see photo below) which was open to all students in both chapters, for a total of 15 children. In mid-February we had an absolutely delightful time 'chez Catha' watching the riveting 3-hour documentary *The Genius of Cavallé-Coll*. Finally, the April 20 members' recital will be held on the fine Casavant at St. Mark's in Palo Alto, 4pm; start preparing and planning to attend now; It's always an enriching time for all.

As you may know, I am responsible for the volunteers at the national AGO convention in the Bay Area from June 30 to July 4, 2024. We need people to greet attendees, assist performers, aid workshops, act as bus monitors, take headcounts, and hand out boxed lunches. We will accept all help, no matter how little. Please fill out [this form](#) so that I can place you where you'd like to be. Thank you in advance for helping over 1000 attendees feel safe, calm, and most welcome here in the Bay Area.

~ Rani Fischer, SubDean, Palo Alto/Peninsula Chapter



Chapter Officer Elections:

The San Jose Chapter publishes the following slate of officers, approved by the current board and to be installed on May 19 at the Renee Gastelum recital (see poster below). Prior to May 5, concerns about the slate may be brought to the attention of any of the current officers (those with asterisks).

Dean: Dick Coulter

SubDean: Vlada Volkova-Moran*

Secretary: Melanie Cervi*

Treasurer: Colin Whitby-Strevens*

Auditors: Cathryn Wilkinson*, Dian Ruder

Newsletter Editor: Margaret Kvamme*

Historian: Valerie Sterk*

Members-at-Large: Michael Cala*, Kay Lee*, David Snook-Luther*

Thank you to the SJ chapter's nominating committee: Joyce Rhodes (chair), Melanie Cervi, Pat Milstead, and to our outgoing Dean, Elisabeth Pintar: good job!

Peninsula/Palo Alto officers are all continuing for a 2nd year per their bylaws, with the modification that Rani Fischer will officially become dean (approved by the board).

Dean: Rani Fischer

Treasurer: Colin Chan

Secretary: Lauren Wittine

Members-at-large, all class of 2026: Jean Cole, Tim Getz, Catha Hall, Rachel Philips



On March 2, members from both chapters and from the community gathered for a morning of inspiration at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Los Gatos. The occasion was a masterclass on Baroque music with Jörg Reddin of Arnstadt, Germany (Mr. Reddin is the holder of J. S. Bach's position as Kappelmeister there some 300 years later).

Masterclass participants above (front: l to r) Ann Thiermann, Duane Soubirous, Elizabeth Kamas and Ruth Kamas are shown with Mr. Reddin behind Ruth, and at far right the builder of the St. Luke's organ, Bill Visscher, who shared handouts and comments about the instrument. Margaret Kvamme and Vlada Moran are pictured in the rear. Comments gathered from masterclass participants and audience are as follows:

"I especially appreciated his exercises to become more centered in one's abdomen while sitting at the bench, and stretches that were offered before playing. Mr. Reddin clearly indicated the power of the vocal lines as the basis of phrasing."

"The class combined insights into phrasing and 'line' gleaned from keyboard and vocal techniques and Baroque dance. Fully aware of studied 'performance practices', he returned repeatedly to the conviction that 'It is only right if it comes from your heart!'"

"The master teacher exuded cheerfulness and joy and used his strengths and experiences to bring out the lyrical nature of the works, while still giving attention to performance practice when applicable."



American Guild of Organists
San Jose
EST. 1923

The San Jose chapter has a new [website](https://www.agosanjose.org): <https://www.agosanjose.org>

Thank you to Duane Soubirous who designed it, and to Colin Whitby-Strevens who has agreed to maintain it temporarily (along with his duties as Treasurer). Also notice the new San Jose chapter logo above, designed by Emily Moran (daughter of Vlada Moran). Please explore the new site and check out the various tabs along the top. Under "Resources", we have some area organs with photos and stop lists. If your church or one of your favorite organs is not there, please try to get that information and a nice clear photo to [Colin](#). We can all contribute to making the SJ website more

complete and a great resource for everyone. Tremendous thanks to David Griffin who donated his time and expertise for 30-some years as our previous webmaster; we are so grateful!

Substitute Organists: please identify yourselves! The San Jose chapter sub list is being updated and can be requested via the website (though lists will be emailed only to legitimate requesters to protect us from scammers). Please reach out to [Pat Milstead](#) if you would like to be added. Palo Alto/Peninsula members who sub, please contact [Rani Fischer](#). Pat Milstead writes:

Help! At this time our substitute list is very short. If you are available even one or two Sundays a month, please let me know. All the churches are VERY appreciative, all pay well, and I have found them easy to work with. It's satisfying, challenging and fun to play on a different organ and share with a new congregation, and to work with a variety of denominations. Soli Deo Gloria!

AGO National Convention Update



So far over seven hundred colleagues have registered to attend the AGO National Convention in San Francisco this summer, June 30-July 4.

Attendees are coming from eleven countries in addition to the United States: Australia, Canada, Columbia, France, Germany, South Korea, New

Zealand, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

If you have not already registered, do it today!



Convention volunteers are needed throughout the convention. If you can help, fill out the **Volunteer Form** found at the bottom of the **Register** section of the convention website, www.sfago2024.org or email Rani Fischer at volunteer@sfago2024.org.

Obituary:

Robert D. Rhoads died at the age of 88 on February 10, 2024, at his Sonoma, CA home. In 1960, he started Robert D. Rhoads Pipe Organ Service. In 1961, he became an M.P. Möller representative, then returned to his alma mater, Simpson College, as head of maintenance and radio station engineer, eventually becoming chief engineer of Family Radio. Later Robert returned to the organ building profession. In 1978, Rhoads Pipe Organ Service was purchased by Schoenstein and Co., where Bob was appointed Factory Manager. In 1996, he was named Vice President and Technical Director, from which he retired in 2003. He is survived by his wife, Dolores, two children, and seven grandchildren. For a full obituary and photo, please contact [Jack](#)

[Bethards](#).



American Guild of Organists San Jose presents

Renee Gastelum

winner of the San Jose Chapter's 2023 Frasier Scholarship,
performing a recital at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church.

Sunday, May 19, 2024

7:00pm - 8:00pm



American Guild of Organists
San Jose
EST. 1921

Free Admission

For more information, visit: agosanjose.org

Concerts and Special Events

**Chapter events (Palo Alto/Peninsula, San Jose, and San Francisco) are noted in red, marked with an asterisk, and are open to members of all 3 chapters. This newsletter uses San Francisco and Berkeley as northern boundaries for event*

listings. In the interest of space, events are now listed chronologically. Addresses and parking info can be found online by searching the venue. Ticketed events are noted, all others are free or freewill donation-funded.

March 17, 4:00 pm: Ben Bachmann, organ, Cathedral of St Mary, San Francisco

March 24, 7:00 pm: Messiah Sing with full orchestra and Colin Whitby-Stevens, organ, Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos

March 29, 12:00 pm: Fauré Requiem, interspersed with readings for Good Friday, Colin Whitby-Stevens, organ; Laura Green, director/pianist, St. Luke's, Los Gatos

March 31, 4:00 pm: Michal Szostak, organ, Cathedral of St Mary, San Francisco

April 7, 4:00 pm: Michal Szostak, organ, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco

April 10, 4:00 pm: Choir School concert, St. Paul's, Burlingame

* **April 20, 4pm:** Palo Alto/Peninsula Chapter Members' Recital, St. Mark's Palo Alto. Contact [Rani Fischer](#) if you would like to perform.

May 5, 4:00. pm: Christopher Keady, organ, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco

May 12, 4:00 pm: Christoph Tietze, organ, Cathedral of St Mary, San Francisco

May 19, 4:00 pm: Choral Evensong for Pentecost, St. Paul's, Burlingame

* **May 19, 7:00 pm** - **Renee Gastelum**, Master of Music candidate at BYU and winner of the San Jose chapter's Frasier scholarship 2023, in recital at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church. We will also install the new SJ chapter officers at this event. Reception to follow.

* **May 25, all day** - **Peninsula organ crawl:** hoping to visit First United Methodist Palo Alto, All Saints' Palo Alto, Carmelite Monastery Santa Clara, and St. Nicholas & St. William Parish Los Altos

May 26, 4:00 pm: David Hirst (UK), organ, Cathedral of St Mary, SF

June 2, 2:00 pm: Alexander Straus-Fausto, organ, Grace Cathedral, SF

* **June 1, 10am - Choral Reading:** anthems for small choirs, St. Bede's Menlo Park. Bring your favorite anthems that are easy & effective.

June 30 - July 4 - National AGO Convention in San Francisco, Berkeley/Oakland, and Palo Alto

Jobs Available

Paid church positions described in previous newsletters, as of yet unfilled:

Music Director: Organist/Pianist. The Episcopal Church in Almaden (ECA), San Jose. [Job Description](#)

Organist/Choir Director. St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, Carmel. [Job Description](#)

The next newsletter will be published in May. The deadline for submitting concert listings, articles, photos, job listings and notices of organs (with standard pedalboards) or harpsichords for sale, is **April 30**. Click on the red button below for a set-up email where you can conveniently type and attach items.

submit newsletter content



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contact: margaret.m.kvamme@gmail.com

c/o Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos

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