



# PIPE NOTES

a publication of the Vermont Chapter  
of The American Guild of Organists

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## VERMONT AGO SPRING EVENTS

Several events have been planned by our AGO Chapter for this April, May, and June. This is a good time to add them to your calendar so you can be sure to attend. Also, please spread the word and invite folks in your communities to come.

### APRIL

Workshops on Saturday, April 11 at Bethany Church in Randolph will include presentations by Kevin Parizo, Marilyn Polson, and David Moore.

Kevin Parizo will lead an open discussion regarding playing piano/keyboard anthem accompaniments at the organ. Also under discussion will be aspects of playing hymns (SATB) from hymnals at the organ.

Marilyn Polson will lead a workshop on playing "last verses", reharmonizations of the last verse of a hymn, and how to approach introducing them to congregations. This will be preceded by "true confessions", a fun discussion of mistakes we have all made.

David Moore will lead a workshop on what to do until the organ technician gets there.

A music exchange will also be set up for members to share music, CDs, and records that they no longer use and others might like to acquire. So, go through your collections of these items and set aside some to bring to this event.

Brown bag lunch.

### MAY

On Sunday, May 17, 2015 at 3:30 p.m. there will be a members' progressive recital in St. Albans. Members are invited to play a piece or two at one of the following churches: Congregational, St. Paul's United Methodist, St. Luke's Episcopal, or St. Mary's/Immaculate Conception R. C. Church. Do consider it and contact Vaughan Watson at (802) 759-2453, [bombardes@aol.com](mailto:bombardes@aol.com)

### JUNE

Artist-of-the-Year Jim Cassarino will present an organ recital with the Annual Meeting of the Vermont Chapter AGO to follow.

## BACH MARATHON MARCH 22 IN MONTPELIER

Carl Schwartz, interim organist/choirmaster at Christ Church Episcopal on State Street in Montpelier, has graciously taken upon himself the task of organizing a Bach Marathon at that church the afternoon of Sunday, March 22. This event is patterned on the long-standing one in Washington D.C. In December Carl sent out an invitation to organists in northern Vermont who might be interested in participating. Based on that response he is working on programming participants every half hour from 1:00 or 1:30 to about 4:30 p.m. that day. While details are still being solidified, participants in approximate order of appearance include: Carl Schwartz, Mark Howe, Lubbert Gnodde, Lisa Willems, Lynnette Combs, Karen Miller, and John and Marianne Weaver. Everyone is cordially invited to attend this event and hear some wonderful Bach music. You can stay as short or as long an interval as you please. Enter and exit as best fits your schedule.

## CHAPTER NOTES

Esther Nui has undergone eye surgery recently. We wish her well in recovery and in looking toward similar work on her second eye. This has understandably slowed the final editing and mailing of the directory. Several members have died and others have chosen not to renew so this directory is substantially different from the previous issue.

We mourn the loss of several people in December and January who were dear to our membership:

Martha (Kane) Tortolano, dear wife of member William Tortolano, passed away on Saturday, December 20, 2014. We offer our heartfelt sympathies to Bill and his children on the loss of a wife, mother, and wonderful musician.

Long-time Vermont AGO member Doris Hughes who has battled an aggressive brain tumor this year passed away on January 9, 2015. Whenever there was an organ event in the St. Albans area, you could count on Doris to be in the midst of helping plan and run it. Her family, church, community, and our AGO Chapter will miss her greatly.

Gertrude Granger Picher, principal organist at Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Winooski for sixty-five years (1930-1995), died peacefully on January 11, 2015 at Our Lady of Providence Residence in Winooski shortly after celebrating her 101st birthday on January 8. She was an active member of the Vermont AGO for many years.

Each of these lovely people who did so much to foster music in their families, churches, and communities are featured in separate articles in this issue of **Pipe Notes**.

### MARTHA KANE TORTOLANO

Martha Kane Tortolano enjoyed an international reputation as a concert singer, including concerts and oratorio in the United States, Canada, Scotland, England, and Italy. Performances included the Vermont Symphony and Philharmonic; the Montreal Chamber Orchestra; soloist at St. Peter's Basilica, Rome; and soprano with Sir David Willcocks, in Mendelssohn's Elijah in England. For many years, Mrs. Tortolano was Voice Instructor at St. Michael's College, as well as managing a private studio of voice and piano. Many of her students went on to professional careers in music. She was a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music (B.Mus.) and the University of Vermont (M.A.). For 15 years, she was a dedicated guide at the Shelburne Museum. Martha's greatest joy was her three children: William Tortolano III, Allegra (Tortolano) Havens, and Jonathan Tortolano. All are professional musicians (violin and cello). With her husband Bill, they performed concerts at many venues including Cambridge University, St. Patrick's Cathedral (NYC), The University of Leeds, England, and the Basilica Santa/Sabrina in Rome. Her master's thesis and recital was on the Twelve Tone Opera, Lulu, by Alban Berg. She made her operatic debut in La Serva Padrona by Pergo Lese. A devout Irish Catholic, she loved her family church, Sacred Heart Church in Portland, Maine, and the family parish, St. Thomas in Underhill, Vt. Martha and William were married for 54 years.

### DORIS S. HUGHES

Doris was born on July 14, 1941 in Schenectady, N.Y., to Lucius and Grace Seeley. Her faith was quiet and deep, sustaining her all her life, especially through the rough times when she knew God carried her. This was especially true when brain cancer was diagnosed last April. She lived every day with grace, humor, and faith.

Music was a gift she developed from an early age. Doris had a magnificent alto voice, excelled at the bassoon, and was an accomplished pianist and accompanist. She attended the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam receiving her BS in Music Education in 1963. She had served six churches since 1981, the last 17+ years at the FCC of St. Albans. She admired the music and organs of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. This past July Doris was given the opportunity to play "Amazing Grace" on the original organ in the Tabernacle, and it was a true highlight in her life.

She is survived by the love of her life, Mara Vijups, MD; her daughters Sharon Morris and husband, Dan, and Sandra Hughes; her brother David Seeley, his wife, Elaine, and their children.

### GERTRUDE GRANGER PICHER

A life-long resident of Winooski, Gertrude Granger Picher dedicated her life to her family, faith, and music. The child of French Canadian immigrants, she spent her entire life in Winooski serving her parish and the larger community with integrity, generosity, and humility. An accomplished pianist, organist, and music teacher whose repertory ranged from the classics and church music to popular music and jazz, her contribution to the cultural vibrancy of Vermont, and of Winooski in particular, is also a tribute to the creative environment of the French-Canadian heritage she both embraced and enriched. In the 1930s and 1940s she played in various popular music and jazz bands, on WCAX radio and at other venues, such as the S.S. Ticonderoga. She was also the musical arranger and accompanist for the popular

Art Dorey Minstrel Show. She continued accompanying numerous classical singers in concert through the 1970s.

A respected organist who also trained with Dr. Eugene Lapierre (Montreal Conservatory of Music) and Dr. Joseph Lechnyr (University of Vermont), Mrs. Picher was for many years an active member of the American Guild of Organists, attending meetings and workshops and performing in concerts. She was instrumental in persuading the Saint Francis Xavier parish to purchase the prestigious Casavant pipe organ that currently graces the choir loft. In 1941, she married Paul J. Picher (1914-1988), an active member of the parish who sang in, and subsequently directed, the choir for many years. They successfully collaborated in the musical direction of the parish, based on a common love of music, religious faith, and commitment to their community. They also shared a love of family and raised two daughter, Claire and Annette, both educator.

In 1995, the Saint Francis Xavier Church Casavant organ was officially dedicated to Mrs. Picher, and a wall plaque honoring her service to the parish was placed in the church vestibule.

#### ORGANIST POSITION OPEN

An organist or pianist to play for 11 a.m. Sunday worship services at the Barton United Church. Directing the choir is also an option. The pipe organ is a recently renovated 1910 Steere. For more information, call Catherine at (802) 525-7048.

#### NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for the March issue of **Pipe Notes** will be February 20.