



CAPE COD and the ISLANDS CHAPTER AMERICAN GUILD of ORGANISTS

October 2023

Dear colleagues,

I read a wonderful article by David Brooks in this month's Atlantic - *How America Got Mean*. His lucid analysis of how we went from a country founded on religious and moral formation of all varieties to a polarized and politically paralyzed country is, to me, essential to anyone working in churches today. I highly recommend it.

Brooks links the collapse of moral education in America (post WW2) with the rise of betterment of the self. Moral education wasn't perfect - it accepted racism and sexism. However, Brooks contends that living and working in a religious community, "*Orienting your heart toward some transcendent love, basing your value system on concern for the underserved*" tend to lead one to a more moral existence.

AGO and many member organizations and these days, most all organizations which rely on volunteers - must make our cases for our own programs to serve - in our case our members, and through these programs to serve your congregations. As church and synagogue musicians, we are part of the moral formation for our congregants. Many church musicians take that responsibility very seriously.

Mr. Brooks describes working early in his career with Jim Lehrer on the PBS newshour. *Every day, with a series of small gestures, he signaled what kind of behavior was valued there and what kind of behavior was unacceptable. In this subtle way, he established a set of norms and practices that still lives on. He and others built a thick and coherent moral ecology, and its way of being was internalized by most of the people who have worked there.*

David Brooks doesn't leave us in the wasteland of our current politics. He sees hope in colleges implementing new core curriculums like Yale's Life worth living, books like Iris Murdoch's The Sovereignty of Good, and the rise of intergenerational service (through schools, religious or community organizations). We as organists are rightfully concerned about the diminishing number of positions. But what if we shifted our concern to working socially for the good of all we serve, or could serve?

In this issue

Thank you to David Martin for his first column - based on his Dutch organ tour. Nancy McCarthy will also join him with interviews of our new and long-time members.

Lightning rounds - November 4, St. Peter's Episcopal, Osterville. See you there!

Job listing, and many more events when you read on!

Cheryl

David Brooks is a contributing writer at The Atlantic and has a book coming out How to know a person: The art of seeing others and being deeply seen.

The Cape & Islands AGO

“Lighting Round” Workshops

November 4th | 9am – 12nn

followed by lunch



St Peter's Osterville

Workshops and Presenters

Improvisation – Richard Bunbury

How to introduce a Hymn – Mark Lawlor

Beer and Hymns – John Read

Building Music Programs – Joe Dudzinski

Forscore Introduction – Cheryl Dueer

Choral Direction – Joe Dudzinski

Choral Anthems – Mark Lawlor

Accessible Organ Pieces – Cheryl Dueer

St Peter's Episcopal Church

421 Wianno Ave

Osterville MA

Call 508-428-3561 to register

(leave voicemail if necessary)

A MEMORABLE ORGAN TOUR OF THE NETHERLANDS

By David S. Martin

Some of our chapter members will recall that last year I made a powerpoint presentation about my participation in a 2012 Organ Tour of Eastern Germany (Leipzig, Dresden, Halle, Brandenburg, and Berlin). In June of 2022 I participated in a different tour—this time of 13 historic organs in various cities of The Netherlands. Tour members were from the Czech Republic, the UK, and the USA, and the organist-leader was from The Netherlands.

Most tours for organists (held annually in several different countries in Europe and elsewhere) occupy a full week. The daily routine involves a visit to at least one and often two different churches or performance venues every day. Upon arrival at the organ venue, the members of the tour—usually about 15 organists and an experienced local leader-organist—first listen to an explanation of the history of the church and its organ; next is a demonstration or brief recital by the local organist; and then as time allows, each member of the tour has an opportunity to play one piece or a section of a piece at the organ. Sometimes tour members opt not to play and just listen or record others' playing. The local organist usually sits with the visitor-player on or at the bench to advise about registration and swell pedals, along with other suggestions such as what for many visitors may be unusual pedalboard configurations. Overall, for an organist, there are few thrills that exceed the sound of hearing oneself playing a supposedly familiar piece on a sometimes VERY different instrument in another country.



This particular tour visited organs located in Amsterdam, The Hague, Gouda, and a number of smaller cities that are less well-known to Americans—Alphen, Breukelen (from which Brooklyn, NY derived its name from 17th century Dutch immigrants), Weesp, Graveland, Benschop (whose organ case is shown in the attached photograph), Naarden, Werden, Montfort, Wassenaar, and Gravenhage.

Transportation from city to city was by two motor vans, except for one railway ride to and from Amsterdam. Meals were at pre-arranged hotels; because The Netherlands is a small country, only three hotels were needed as hubs for reaching all of these organs in various locations. The land portion of the tour, including nearly all meals, transportation, and hotels, cost about \$1500.

Some highlights of the various organs may be of interest. The Oude Kerk (Old Church) of Amsterdam is where Sweelinck played on a rather small instrument; we had a chance to play it briefly. The denominations of the churches included Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed. Several of us visitors had the experience of taking turns in pumping the still-functioning bellows of the Breukelyn church. The Gouda church is the largest in The Netherlands—three manuals—and is located within a large historical museum; Gouda celebrated its 750th anniversary in 2022! Batz is an important organ builder for The Netherlands, but several German organ-builders also built instruments. The Graveland organist explained that for traditional church hymn-singing, the organist always played an interlude between every single verse in order to enable the congregation to catch its breath; and in order to facilitate congregational singing, the organ builders emphasized a clear treble. One of the churches in The Hague had a 300-year-old instrument which had at one point been split into two separate organs, and later rejoined again during the 1970's.

The general impressions from the tour as a whole include several points. As with many very old European organs, the pedalboards are a challenge for those of us used to the AGO standard with the curved pedalboard. These organs, on the other hand, have mostly flat pedalboards, some of which to us seem “off-center”, and the pedals are closer together than we Americans are used to. Unlike some of the German organs, few of the Dutch organs were tuned to mean-tones—understanding and dealing with mean-tone instruments can be a real challenge. The keys on the manuals have often a harder touch than modern American instruments, and so one must play “hard”. All of the organs that we experienced have wooden draw-knobs for the stops—nothing electronic and all manual. By comparison with American organs, there are also few organs with swell pedals. The Dutch seem to be serious about maintaining these instruments and carry out periodic rebuilding or restoration as needed. Separate from the sound, the organ facades are inevitably stunning to view—brightly painted pipes, lovely wood casing, and often complex designs and family crests. And needless to say, the age of these instruments, sometimes dating to medieval times, redefines what “old” really means.

I highly recommend this kind of experience, and I would like to know of others in our

chapter who have done organ tours. And anyone considering a future tour is welcome to contact me for any advice that I might provide at davidmartindr@aol.com.

Ensure Your Listing in our Directory for 2024

Please be sure your annual dues are paid when requested. Lapsed members will not be included. Also, check to see that your information is current. Have you changed your telephone number or accepted a new position? If so, with your four or five digit member number (shown on your TAO mailing label) at hand, go to ONCARD and follow the instructions. We very much appreciate your help in keeping the Directory accurate! Also, review the "sub list" which is attached at the end of the current document. Add or remove your name etc. as appropriate. Thanks. - *Chris Babcock*

Job Listing

St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Osterville is seeking an accompanist (piano and/or organ) for its Chancel Choir. Rehearsals are Wednesdays from 6 - 7:15 pm, and Services are Sundays at 10 am with rehearsal at 9:30 am. Christmas, Easter and other special occasions are required. Pay is \$180 per week with additional remuneration for services/events that do not fall on Sundays. This position is part-time and runs from now until Easter 2024 with the possibility on continuing after that date. Contact Joe Dudzinski at music@stpeters-capecod.org.

Upcoming Local Events

Southeastern Mass. AGO Chapter Carillon Workshop

Monday, October 9th 10:00am - 1:00pm
Galen Stone Tower, Wellesley College, Wellesley
Advance registration required!
[Click here for more information.](#)

Sing For Life: A Choral Sing to benefit Chris Allen

Saturday, October 28th, 2:00pm
St. Christopher's Church, Chatham
[Click here for more information.](#)

Upcoming Regional and National Events

Max Reger Festival 150: Hosted by the Worcester Chapter of the AGO

November 3-5, 2023
Worcester, MA
[Click here for more information.](#)

Guidelines for Submitting Material to the Newsletter

All articles or flyers must be submitted in PDF form as you would like them to appear in the Newsletter.

The ability to advertise our musical events to our colleagues is one of the privileges of membership in the AGO.

All articles about Guild events must be in PDF format.

Articles and flyers must be submitted by the 15th of the previous month to

Thank you

Cape Cod and the Islands AGO 2023-2024 Program

Mark your calendars for these chapter events!

October 7 (Saturday) 32nd annual Nantucket Organ Crawl Members and significant others receive \$20 discount off group ferry cost.

November 4 (Saturday) Speed Workshops
St. Peter's Episcopal Church Osterville

January 5 (Friday), 2024 Potluck and Yankee Swap
St. Mary's Barnstable

February 11 (Sunday) Hymn Sing - Alleluia!
Corpus Christi, Sandwich

April 28 (Sunday) Organ Plus
Dennis Union, Dennis

June 2, (Sunday) Fun annual gathering and meeting
June 9, (Rain) location and activity TBD

Summer Stay tuned for summer 2024 events and further details of these events.

Your 2023-2024 Chapter board is working very hard to bring you exciting programming for the coming year.

Please watch your email for the Chapter Newsletter and further information on these events.

If you would like to help with any of the above events, please contact Cheryl Duerr cduerr@holyredeemerchatham.org or Richard Bunbury rbunbury@me.com

Cape and Islands Chapter Board 2023-2024 Officers

Dean Cheryl Duerr cduerr@holyredeemerchatham.org
Sub-Dean Richard Bunbury rbunbury@me.com
Secretary Charlene Higbe cthighbe@aol.com
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Registrar Chris Babcock chrisbabcock@aol.com

This communication is sent on the 1st of the month, or shortly thereafter. Please submit events by the 20th of the month to be included in the following month's email. Send announcements with complete information in the text of an email, including relevant website links, to Cheryl Duerr, dean and Brittany Lord, newsletter editor, at capeago@gmail.com.

**Local and regional events are received and included in our communications as a member benefit for AGO members only.*

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