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Dean's Message
Many of us will have enjoyed a stupendous celebration of pipe organs, architecture, history, and some of NYC's finest organists during the 2019 Presidents' Day Conference, *On the Avenue*. Sub-Dean James Wetzel and the Program Committee worked tirelessly to organize that and our other events this season, and I want to take this opportunity to thank them. We have great things to look forward to for the remainder of this season, so read on for further details of that.

The NYC Chapter presents two awards, alternating yearly. The International Performer of the Year Award was created in 1978 to recognize excellence in organ performance and to increase public awareness of the organ and its performers. The Distinguished Career Award was created in 2016 to honor people for exemplary service to the organ, choral music, and related fields. I am honored to share with you that **Steven Lawson has been selected as the recipient (posthumous) of the 2018 Distinguished Career Award.** Thank you to the Awards Committee and their chair, Donald Meineke, for their diligent work.

Steve was a dear colleague and friend to many of us, and died just a few months ago. For 21 years, he served as Assisting Organist at The Church of the Heavenly Rest. Steve moved to New York in 1983 to begin a career in information technology starting at the law firm of Rogers and Wells and later as director of information technology for J. P. Stevens & Co., Inc. With his extensive technology skills, Steve gifted the organ community with two significant contributions: **The New York City Organ Project**, which elaborately details the history of an exhaustive list of organs in NYC; and faithfully served for many years as the Webmaster for the New York Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. It is in recognition of his tireless work in creating and maintaining the Organ Project that this award was felt to be a most worthy acknowledgement. This will now be known as the "The New York City Organ Project, in memory of Steven Lawson"
The Board is currently in discernment about the best way to continue the maintenance and updates to the Organ Project. It is certain that we will have to undertake a major website redesign to best accommodate changes in technology and keep Steve's work accessible to all. As a result, the Chapter asks that you consider making a contribution in memory of Steve. The easiest way to do this is via PayPal. Click here for the link. Please add "Lawson Memorial" in the memo line.

What a marvelous way to celebrate a wonderful friend and colleague. Servant, well done!

With my very best wishes,

James Kennerley, Dean
Program News

To continue what James [Kennerley] wrote in his letter above, I am proud to report that the 2019 Presidents' Day Conference *On the Avenue* was a spectacular success. May I offer my sincere thanks to everyone involved: the recitalists, presenters, clergy, volunteers (particularly the program committee and board members), and of course those of you who attended! The size of the appreciative crowd far exceeded our already-high expectations, and we even had a few participants sign-up as new Chapter members! Planning for 2020 is already underway, so if anyone has any comments or suggestions,
But to more immediate events:
The Chapter continues its commitment to education with an **Organ Day for Pianists on Saturday, April 6 from 2:00–4:00 PM at Saint Paul's Chapel** of Trinity Church (Broadway at Fulton Street) (Julian Wachner, Avi Stein, and Janet Yieh, hosts). To prove that this sort of outreach does have a positive impact, two people who attended last year's Organ Day started taking regular lessons, joined the Chapter, and came to this year's Presidents' Day!

April 6th's session is intended for those who have an interest in playing the organ but who might not have any formal training (piano students, keyboardist who are asked to play the organ in a church service, etc.). Trinity's Associate Organist **Janet Yieh** and I will serve as instructors for this fun-filled and informative afternoon, offering practical insight, basic technical instruction, and registrational recommendations. The event is free to all, but we ask that the participants have at least basic keyboard proficiency and be of at least middle-school age. While registration is not required, would you please indicate interest in attending the event to me via email?

The Chapter usually has a social event to conclude the season, and this year we are delighted to announce that we will be taking a **Dinner Cruise** around lower Manhattan aboard the yacht Affinity on **Monday, June 3**, casting-off at 6:30 PM. This sailing, which the Chapter takes biennially (roughly), includes a delicious buffet dinner and an open bar. Tickets - $80 for NYCAGO Members (generously subsidized by the Chapter) and $100 for other guests who are of course invited - will be available online soon!

Finally, the Program Committee is delighted to help promote the annual studio recital of the Juilliard Organ Department (Paul Jacobs, chair), of which I am a proud alumnus. This year, Ken Dake at **Marble Collegiate Church** is hosting them on **Thursday, April 4th at 7:30 PM**. The complete program, which is free, is posted [here](#).
On behalf of the Program Committee, I am looking very forward to seeing you at one of our many events!

Sincerely,

James D. Wetzel, Sub Dean and Chair of the Program Committee

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**Quote of the Month**

"There are only a few notes. Just variations on a theme."

- John Lennon
Won't you be my neighbor?

During last week's public school vacation, my son Christopher (a public school teacher) brought his three-year-old son Samuel to New York for a four-day visit, giving Wendy and me a chance to do the "grandparent thing." (Chris' wife Alessandra and older son Benjamin spent the week in her native Brazil visiting her sister who had her first baby last month.) In preparation for their visit, Wendy, who excels at this sort of thing, dug into books and websites to assemble a list of things we might do and places we might go.

There are hundreds of playgrounds of countless design in New York City, and we were sure to visit a slew of them. Parents as well as grandparents know that it's important to find as many ways for children to burn energy. There would be an ice cream or two, and walking Farley the Golden-doodle was a good diversion. But New York's two carousels were the centerpieces of two of the days we spent on the hoof in the city, hand-in-hand with Sam.

We spent one day in Central Park, an outing that included visits to two playgrounds, a couple great hours at the Central Park Zoo (they feed the penguins at 10:30 AM), a brief encounter with the Balto statue, a simple lunch, and a visit to the Central Park Carousel. According the Park's website, 250,000 people ride the carousel each year, and it looks a little careworn. It's in good working condition, though a few of the horses were out of order, but it was a fun
There's a real "organ" of some variety in the center of the round, and we laughed at its disrepair. It seemed to me that it had forty-five or fifty notes, but that seventeen of them weren't playing, and the wind supply was pretty tired. The effect was spooky sounding, even a little creepy, a sense that was heightened by the ticket seller and round operator who both could have been Mafia hit men sent up from central casting.

The next day we visited Jane's Carousel in Brooklyn Bridge Park. David Walenta, the developer of the park, included a Carousel in his original plan, and he and his wife Jane purchased an historic round at auction. Built in 1922 by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company, the round was originally installed at Idora Park in Youngstown, Ohio. Jane Walenta restored the 48 horses in her DUMBO studio, and she and her husband commissioned a beautiful glass pavilion to house the carousel.

It's a smashing setting, right under the Brooklyn Bridge on the shore of the East River, the centerpiece of a lovely outing. The carved horses are gaily painted according to their original color schemes, and I was excited to see the equally well decorated organ case in the center. After the lugubrious performance we heard at Central Park, I expected a sprightly rendition of Sousa's Gladiator March, but no. Discreetly hidden behind the crown of the organ's facade was a speaker from which spewed canned tripe.

I've not dug deeply enough to learn if the restoration of the organ was just a paint job (like many ballyhooed theatre organ projects), or if we happened to be there on a day when the organ was down. But there you have it. Two carousels in the same city and no decent organ music. Never mind the "L" train, this is an emergency. Please write to your local representative.

It was a great visit. We walked tens of thousands of steps, took lots of subway rides, and had treats to eat. But I'll bet you an ice cream that if you ask Sam what was his favorite part, he'll shout, "the elevators."
Joke of the Month

The church council met to discuss the pastor’s compensation package for the coming year. After the meeting the chair of council told the pastor: “We are very sorry, Pastor, but we decided that we cannot give you a raise next year.”

“But you must give me a raise,” said the pastor. “I am but a poor preacher!”

“I know,” the council chair said. “We hear you every Sunday.”

From the Editor

Help wanted.

In his letter at the top of this issue of the NYC AGO Newsletter, Dean James Kennerley announced the awarding of the 2018 Distinguished Career Award to our friend and colleague Steve Lawson.

Steve's creation of the NYC Organ Project is one of the central achievements that led to this award. Type NYC AGO Organ Project into your browser, and you'll find a comprehensive list of the organs in New York City. Each separate listing includes a history of the parish, and lists, specifications, and photographs of all the organs in each church's history.
Steve was devoted to our AGO Chapter, sharing his considerable tech-skills by serving as webmaster. Less visibly, Steve was one of a small group of proof-readers who reviews a draft of this newsletter each month. His knowledge of writing style, his witty comments about commas, his wry observations about the differences in spelling in British and American English, and his knowledge of the history of the New York Chapter brought clarity and accuracy to each issue.

Steve's are big shoes to fill, but they cannot stay empty. I invite you think of candidates to join the small group of readers who review a draft of each issue of this newsletter. The ideal candidate is versed in literary English and style of writing, fluent in the arcane jargon of the pipe organ, and willing to spend a couple hours a month reading a draft and sending corrections and suggestions to me.

If you're a candidate or you know someone who is, please send me an email.

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