



VOX OCEANA

APR 2023

NEWSLETTER OF THE RHODE ISLAND CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS | VOLUME LVI NO. 1

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2025

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FROM THE DEAN

Hello Dear Friends,

I hope you are ready for Spring! It seems that despite the off and on flurries and sleet, we are holding fast to our warm weather. It will soon be Easter and with the Spring come exciting opportunities in the form of competitions and concerts.

The Annual Conboy Young Artist Awards information and application forms are attached here with this email. If you know a worthy student or young player in need of some funds and recognition, please forward the attached information on the competition. Cash prizes for excellence in musicianship and organ skills are available for the taking.

This May, we will be presenting a wonderful artist, international concert organist Joseph Ripka, on May 6 at 7:30 PM in an exciting full recital program on the Aeolian Skinner pipe organ of Central Congregational Church. Among many accolades and concerts, Mr. Ripka won First Prize at the 2008 Dublin International Organ Competition by unanimous decision of the jury and has performed with the Boston Symphony under Michael Tilson Thomas. This concert, as always, will be free and open to the public through the generosity of the Vitullo Fund. Please do mark your calendars now!

We had a very lovely general meeting for the holidays at The Old Grist Mill in Seekonk MA in January. It was a wonderful time to relax and get to know each other better. People shared stories of their personal lives and what led them to music and about all their incredible talents. We talked about everything from ballroom dancing, to speaking many languages and teaching in South Africa, to projects to make African American artists and their music front and center, to their love for teaching young people the joy of music. I was astounded at the incredible stories I heard when I was trying to discover just what "turned their lights on." We all have many gifts, but there is always that one talent or gift that really makes us shine and makes our lives worth living. It informs our teaching and our music-making and how we relate to those around us. This was truly a beautiful afternoon, and I hope that you out there who couldn't come will soon be able to get to know some of your amazing and gifted members and board members.

The call to action is now. I will be stepping down as Dean at the end of this season and we need people who love what they do and are eager to share it. Please write to any of us to put your name forward to be on the board and make your vision a reality through the vehicle of the American Guild of Organists. The addresses are in the sidebar, and we look forward to hearing from you. We are truly blessed to do what we love in music. I look forward to hearing how you will share your gifts with us soon!

Gigi
Gigi Mitchell-Velasco, MMus, CAGO
Dean

Upcoming Event!

Finally, after so many months (years?) of isolation, we can look forward to meeting together and enjoying the work of fellow organists. Please, come out of hibernation and join us for this season-closing concert:

Saturday, May 6 at 7:30 pm, Central Congregational Church, 296 Angel Street, Providence, RI:
Joseph Ripka in recital on the Aeolian Skinner pipe organ. See Dean's letter for details on Mr. Ripka. Free admission to this Vitullo funded concert.

ELSEWHERE

Sunday, April 16 at 4:00 pm "Pipes and Platter" Organ and Dinner Event at UU Church of Winchendon, 126 Central Street, Winchendon, MA

The church's 1868 E. & G.G. Hook pipe organ will be featured in a "Pipes and Platter" concert/dinner in the north-central town of Winchendon, MA. **George Bozeman**, organist and organ builder, will be performing Chorales of J.S. Bach. Admission is free, thanks to a grant from our local Cultural Council. There is an optional ticketed dinner following the concert to meet the artist. \$15; 10 and under: \$8 for 4-course sit-down dinner at 5:15 pm. At door or <https://uucw.ncmuuc.org>

Friday, April 14, 2023 at 8:00 PM: Groton Hill Music Center announces its brand new 1,000 seat concert hall and organ at 122 Old Ayer Rd, Groton, MA. Especially impressive is the Hauptwerk organ with some 15 organ sample sets and impressive sound system to match the hall. This Inaugural Season features a solo organ concert on the new organ featuring four of the sample sets (Steinmeyer for German Romantic, Cavaille-Coll for French Romantic, Rosales for contemporary American, and Casparini for German Baroque). Works by Camillo, Schumann, Reger, Bingham, Bach and Guilmant will be performed by **Randy Steere**. Tickets at GrotonHill.org. Pre-concert talk about the organ at 7:00 PM: "Back to the Future"

Wednesday, May 31, 7:30 PM: Methuen Memorial Music Hall – Broadway, Methuen (MMMh.org)
"Musical Thoughts on Lives Lived" Works by Bissinger, Fey, Alain, Ireland, Saint-Saëns, Sowande, Vierne, Weaver. Tickets at the door - \$15

CATCHING UP WITH...

Editor's Note: In an effort to connect our members through the newsletter during these days of limited in-person gatherings, we are inviting you to share a brief item about your work, on-the-side or primary; a special interest or accomplishment; a tip you have discovered in your work with colleagues or students. Please send me an email for inclusion in this column, and perhaps recommend another member I might invite to participate in this exchange. Then, when we are able to meet in person, we will not be strangers, but friends in the making.

Thanks,

Althea (altheaallard@gmail.com)

Peter Lamoria is our first contributor:

Busby and Sesma at St. Stephen's

On Sunday October 10th, 2021, a truly rare and memorable musical offering was heard at St. Stephen Church Providence. **James Busby**, organ, and **Megan Sesma**, harp, bonded in mutual talent to perform sonic thrills seldom heard anywhere. Sesma, currently the 1st enlisted principal harpist with the United States Coast Guard, who also holds positions at Connecticut College in New London, University of Connecticut in Storrs, and Wesleyan University in Middletown, Ct. has performed extensively, world wide. She showed "technique to burn" and masterful musicality in the three pieces by French composers Marcel Grandjany, Rene Raby and Maurice Ravel. The latter piece was transcribed for harp and organ by James Busby from Introduction et Allegro (1907) for Harp, Flute, Clarinet and string quartet. James truly "tamed a beast" with his skillful accompaniment of the harp, and showed the resources of the organ to great aplomb in epic organ solo works by Aaron Copland and Leo Sowerby. The concert was an annual offering showcasing the Robert Hale Ives Goddard Memorial Organ, an Austin organ dating from 1955 containing 76 ranks.

Information extracted from the program notes by James Busby, submitted by Peter Lamoria.

PLACEMENT LISTINGS

Contact Gina Vecchio (401-954-2163) to list

St. James Lutheran Church 4/22
49 Middle Highway, Barrington, RI
Andrew Simon 774-262-6025
\$15,000-22,000 Director of Music

Kingston Congregational Church 8/22
2610 Kingstown Road, Kingstown, RI 02881
Margaret Bradley (401) 225-5463
peteandmargaret@verizon.net
Rogers digital Stuart tracker
\$400-500/wk Interim Director of Music

Christ Congregational Church 1/10/22
1350 Pleasant St., Brockton, Ma 02301
Murray Kidd boardofmusic@brocktonmusic.org
Austin \$15-18,000 Organist

Haven United Methodist Church 1/10/22
200 Taunton Ave., East Providence, RI 02914
Joan Klein 401-438-4911 havenumchurch@yahoo.com
Organist/Pianist

St. Andrew's Episcopal 1/21/22
182 Willow Ave., PO box 6, Little Compton, RI 02837
Norman MacLeod 401-314-5671
Allen \$200/wk Interim Organist

First Congregational Church of Sharon 7/22
29 North Main Street, Sharon, MA 02067
Jamie Locke 781-784-2631 jamie.locke@fccofsharon.org
Roche \$10,000-12,000 Organist

St. Matthew Trinity Lutheran Church 5/22
690 Newport Avenue, Pawtucket, RI 02861
Pastor Cheryl Larsen Lawing 401-723-5632; 508-274-6205
smtlc@outlook.com
Allen \$100-150

SUBSTITUTE LISTINGS

Contact Gina Vecchio (954-2163) with changes.

AVAILABLE SUNDAYS & WEEKDAYS

Babbitt, Jonathan 401-864-9009
Clarke, Margaret: 401-726-4128 (all)
Jones, William: 401-848-4327 (all)
MacCubbin, Jay: 401-521-0698
Nicholson, Nancy: 401-521-9097 (all)
Norton-Jackson, Diana 401-714-2700 interim, sub, no weddings
Tagen, Julia L.: 401-225-9594 (all, weddings/funerals/interim)
Taylor, Terry: 401-253-9030 (tutti@fullchannel.net)
Vecchio, Gina: 401-954-2163
Wilson, Lawrence: 860-857-5493 Organ; Sacred Jazz Composer/Arranger

AVAILABLE WEEKDAYS ONLY

Black, John: 401-737-1230 (all, available Saturdays & weekdays)
Cranmer, David: 401-447-9848
Martorella, Philip: 401 243-3431 (no Sun. a.m.)
Seaholm, Edward 401-309-2167
Sobaje, Martha: 401-626-0099 (weddings, funerals)
Westhaver, Verna: 401-683-2636

PLACEMENT LISTINGS, CONTINUED

Original Congregational Church 11/22
East Street Wrentham, MA 02093
United Church of Christ
Ned Ligon 508-505-5865 esligon@gmail.com
Austin Opus \$20,000-24,000 Organist/Director

A PLEA

In this day of rolling AGO registration, when membership renewal is due in the anniversary month of your last dues payment, rather than universally in July, our Membership master, Chris Souza, has had a difficult task in assembling a Directory. Those who missed inclusion in the 2022 Directory can be noted in the newsletter. Please send your information to me at altheaallard@gmail.com.

Dues can be renewed online (perhaps the more efficient, since office staff are working from home). If you need to renew via US mail for reimbursement by your employer or for other reasons, it is especially important to initiate the process in advance to allow for the delay at headquarters. Your Chapter appreciates your support in this effort.

Up for dues renewal? Do it today--please.

Your membership matters!

SUBMISSIONS

DEADLINE: 20th of each month. SUBMISSIONS: Send Word or Text files to altheaallard@gmail.com or to Althea Allard, 166 Suffolk Ave., Pawtucket, RI 02861. ADVERTISING: Word doc, PDF (print ready), JPG (high resolution), or TIFF. All files should be grayscale at 300 dpi resolution. Email to altheaallard@gmail.com

ADVERTISING RATES

1/4-page ad (3.5"W x 5"H): \$18 -or- 1/8-page ad (3.5"W x 2.5"H): \$10
Flyers provided electronically for inclusion with newsletter (for RIAGO members): \$10.
Make checks out to RIAGO and mail to Althea Allard by the 20th. \$25 non-members.



The Fourth Annual Lois Conboy Memorial Awards 2023

The Rhode Island Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (RIAGO) is pleased to announce its **Fourth Annual Lois Conboy Memorial Awards 2023**. The Reverend Thomas Conboy, Jr. wanted to memorialize his wife, Lois, by having RIAGO grant awards in her name. It is the Chapter's desire to support young artists who wish to pursue the organ as a career.

There are three Scholarship Awards: a **Young Artist Award** (\$1,200), an **Encouragement Award** (\$500) and a **Discovery Award** (\$300). The **Young Artist Award** is open to anyone who is a New England native or resident, 30 years old or younger, and is or has been or will be enrolled in a program of organ study at a University, Conservatory or College, or is a graduate of any music program. The **Encouragement Award** is open to any undergraduate or graduate student who is a Rhode Island native or resident, 30 years old or younger, and is or has been or will be enrolled in a program of organ study at a University, Conservatory or College, or is a graduate of any music program. The **Discovery Award** is for anyone in Rhode Island who wants to learn more about the organ, regardless of age. The Award money may be used to pay for organ lessons, Pipe Organ Encounters (POE) workshops or any other program involving organ discovery and learning.

Application deadlines:

- Deadline for submissions for the Young Artist and Encouragement Awards is May 15, 2023. Winners to be announced on or before June 15, 2023.
- The Discovery Award accepts submissions on a rolling basis and is awarded on a first come first served basis. Applications are open until November 2023.
- Only one award per candidate in any given year, and any previous Young Artist Winners are ineligible to apply again.

To apply, email riago.events@gmail.com and we will send you an application form.

Lois Conboy started taking organ lessons in Junior High School. She attended Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, focusing on Organ and Choral Conducting. Her education was interrupted upon marrying The Reverend Thomas Conboy, Jr., and was completed by her graduation with a degree in Education from California State University (PA) and a later Master of Education. Moving to Rhode Island in 1972 when Rev. Conboy became Pastor of Calvin Presbyterian Church in Cumberland, Lois oversaw the selection and installation of the new organ in their newly constructed church. She served as volunteer Organist/Choir Director at Calvin for over 15 years, and during those years spent every "vacation Sunday" playing at other churches. After retiring from Calvin, Lois served as interim, and in her last years in RI served as Organist/Choir Director at the Community Church of Providence. Lois loved RIAGO and was active in workshops and conventions, but most of all, she enjoyed and cherished the friendship and fellowship of the Guild.



The 2023 Lois Conboy Memorial Encouragement Award

The Rhode Island Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (RIAGO) is pleased to announce its **2023 Lois Conboy Encouragement Award**. This prize is open to Rhode Islanders only. If you have already applied to the **Young Artists Award** for this year and you are a Rhode Islander, you will automatically be eligible for this award and do not have to complete a separate application. The Reverend Thomas Conboy, Jr. wanted to memorialize his wife, Lois, by having RIAGO grant awards in her name. Read Lois' biography in the succeeding pages. It is the Chapter's desire to support young artists who wish to pursue the organ as a career.

Eligibility

The Award is open to any Rhode Island native or resident, age 30 or younger of any education, background or training.

Required Application Materials

Digital video recordings may be provided via a private YouTube link, along with all other applications documents in standard email.

1. **Digital video recording:** Prepare a high-quality digital video recording on a pipe organ to include the following repertoire in the order listed. Separate movements may be recorded in separate takes; however, there is to be no splicing or editing within movements or compositions. The player, keyboard and pedal board should be as visible as possible throughout with no camera view changes during the performance. The Baroque selection and the Organist's Choice selection may be recorded on different instruments if desired (please provide specifications for both instruments). Total playing time must not exceed 30 minutes.

Repertoire Guidelines: One complete piece (or movement) from Category A and one from Category B. Please keep in mind that not only will your performance be taken into account but so also will be your choice of repertoire; its level of difficulty and appropriateness of style, so please choose carefully.

- A. **Baroque.** A piece by Bach, Buxtehude or any other Baroque composer.
 - B. **Organist's Choice** from any period or composer. Classical repertoire only, no pop arrangements or easy editions of standard repertoire will be accepted.
2. **Organ Information Sheet.** Please include the location, stop list, number of manuals and stops/ranks, and builder of the pipe organ used for your recording.

3. **Confirmation of Recorded Performance.** Complete the Confirmation of Recorded Performance Page. It must be signed by the performer and a witness to the performance. If two different organs are used, complete a separate form for both recording sessions. This document with signatures can be scanned and sent with other required materials via email or Dropbox.
4. **Written Essay.** Write a brief essay (100-300 words) in which you address the following topic:

The Encouragement Award is created in part to address a decline in the number of young people entering the music profession as organists. How do you envision yourself contributing to the viability of organ performance and/or church music as a sustainable career choice? Are you involved in any such activities at the present time? Please also tell us about your connection to Rhode Island.

5. **References.** Two references from current or recent organ teachers, with their contact information (e-mail and telephone).

Application Checklist

- Digital Video Recording YouTube 'Unlisted' links
- Organ Information Sheet
- Application Form (two pages)
- Confirmation of Recorded Performance
- Written Essay
- References

***PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT MORE THAN THE REQUESTED
MATERIALS/DOCUMENTATION***

Electronic Submission

Contact the Awards Coordinator at RIAGO.Awards@gmail.com if you have any questions on uploading your digital video to YouTube and/or making it an 'Unlisted' link. The email address can also be used any questions you have with the submission process. When sending your application please put "2023 LOIS CONBOY ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD" in the Subject line.

Deadline:

All materials **MUST** be received at the email address above by May 1, 2023. Incomplete/late applications will not be considered.

Judging:

All materials will be reviewed by the Lois Conboy Memorial Awards Committee and a decision will be made on or before June 1, 2023. If, in the opinion of the Committee, no applicant meets the criteria and standards for this award, no award will be given. All applicants will be notified by mail/telephone/email of the results of this award. The judgment of the Committee is final.

Award:

One Encouragement Award of \$500.00 will be given to the applicant who demonstrates the strongest skills as an organist and musician, with regard to musical sensitivity, playing style, appropriate registration for each piece, and potential for future growth and development. The Encouragement Award winner will be asked to submit a photo and short biography for publicity purposes and will be invited to perform in a RIAGO sponsored recital in the fall of 2023 at a mutually convenient date and time in a venue chosen by RIAGO. In addition, in the future the recipient will be asked to write a brief article for the RIAGO Newsletter, telling us about how the award has helped further your organ pursuits.

Questions?

Email RIAGO.Awards@gmail.com and address your questions to the Awards Coordinator regarding requirements of the Awards or any other questions. Type “2023 LOIS CONBOY ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD” in the Subject line.

Lois Conboy started taking organ lessons in Junior High School. She attended Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, focusing on Organ and Choral Conducting. Her education was interrupted upon marrying The Reverend Thomas Conboy, Jr., and was completed by her graduation with a degree in Education from California State University (PA) and a later Master of Education. Moving to Rhode Island in 1972 when Rev. Conboy became Pastor of Calvin Presbyterian Church in Cumberland, Lois oversaw the selection and installation of the new organ in their newly constructed church. She served as volunteer Organist/Choir Director at Calvin for over 15 years, and during those years spent every “vacation Sunday” playing at other churches. After retiring from Calvin, Lois served as interim, and in her last years in RI served as Organist/Choir Director at the Community Church of Providence. Lois loved RIAGO and was active in workshops and conventions, but most of all, she enjoyed and cherished the friendship and fellowship of the Guild.

~ The 2023 Lois Conboy Memorial Encouragement Award ~

APPLICATION FORM

Primary Contact Information

Name	
Date	
Address	
City/State/Zip	
Email	

Student Status (check on and complete)

<input type="radio"/> I am a high school student and have been accepted to attend _____ _____ in the fall of 2023. My intended major is _____. I expect to graduate in (year) _____ with a (degree) _____.
<input type="radio"/> I am enrolled (as of fall 2023) as an undergraduate at _____. My major program is _____. I expect to graduate in (year) _____ with a (degree) _____.
<input type="radio"/> I am enrolled (as of fall 2023) as a graduate student at _____. My major program is _____. I expect to graduate in (year) _____ with a (degree) _____.
<input type="radio"/> Other pertinent information or clarification:

School History (list schools attended, with dates, and names of organ/piano teachers with whom you studied during that time)

High School/end date/teacher(s):
Undergraduate/end date/teacher(s):
Graduate/end date/teacher(s):

Repertoire Submitted

Baroque: Complete title/Edition Used –
Organist's Choice: Title/Composer/Dates/Edition Used –

Personal/ Professional References

Reference No. 1: Name/Relationship to you/Address/Email/Phone –
Reference No. 2: Name/Relationship to you/Address/Email/Phone –

~ The 2023 Lois Conboy Memorial Encouragement Award ~

CONFIRMATION OF RECORDED PERFORMANCE

This is to confirm that the submitted recording of the two required organ pieces being sent to The 2023 Lois Conboy Memorial Scholarship Awards Committee is an unaltered, representative performance made on

(date) _____ at (location) _____

APPLICANT

I, _____ (print name of applicant) hereby declare and confirm that the submitted recording is an unaltered recording of my own performance that is continuous, and that is unedited within each piece.

Applicant Signature

Date

WITNESS

I, _____ (print name of witness) hereby declare and confirm that the submitted recording is an unaltered recording of each piece, the performance that is continuous, and that I was present during the recording session.

Witness Signature

Date

NOTE: If the recordings submitted have been recorded on different dates and locations, please submit this page in multiples as needed.

~ The 2023 Lois Conboy Memorial Encouragement Award ~

WRITTEN ESSAY (100-300 words)