

Dear Spokane AGO-

Who could possibly have guessed a year ago what this past year would bring? At that time we were putting the finishing touches on our plans for our March 8th Concert at Central Lutheran and following that all our plans had to be cancelled and all our lives changed. Churches closed, concerts cancelled, lessons suspended and no singing! How can we live without singing? What to do. Well, many of you have carried on providing music for virtual services or small gatherings. Ed Hurd, Taylor Giese, Floyd Czoski, John Bodinger, Kent Brockelbank, Nisha Coulter, Jonas Malone, Debby McConnell, Drew Olsen, Marie Robel and Byrl Cinnamon. Others have been denied the opportunity to even have an organ to play. Chris Nelson is practicing and composing on Nisha and Taylor's instruments. It has been hard. Some reported spending more time practicing piano. When I called Mary Jo Beck I interrupted Haydn Sonata practice. Karen Stahl, recuperating from serious surgery in November reports both piano and harp practice. Taylor, while playing for Zion Lutheran, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Patrick's is also installing several additional ranks to the St. Francis organ.

Janet and Rose Dempsey are finding ways to keep a few students busy with lessons. Rose reports that Jonas Malone, Organ Academy student, is now playing half time for St. Lukes, Cd'A and will be substituting for Rose while she is visiting family in Colorado. She reports that she is doing well following her hip replacement.

We are thankful that Carla Roland is also doing well following her hip replacement.

We do have two members who need our prayers and attention. Marie Robel fell Christmas Day after she had played 2 Masses, had brunch with her family and was returning home, breaking her pelvis and tail bone when she fell on her back steps. After spending several weeks at Touchmark, she is now home with loving care being provided by her daughter Diane. She probably would love a card or a call.

Jim Wallrabenstein was diagnosed with leukemia in August and now is at the University of Washington Medical Center preparing for a bone marrow transplant. His donor is in Europe, so lots of preparation and coordination with everything in place. He has a new physician whose specialty is this type of leukemia, giving Jim added confidence in his care. He and his caregiver will be staying for 4 months in an apartment for patients who need isolation and continued monitoring. I do not have an address, but you can call him on his cell 995-6431.

Nisha shares with us regarding AGO board member, cellist and dear friend, Germaine Morgan: On October 17, 2020, we had a "family" service of internment for Germaine at New Hope Cemetery in the Palouse. This cemetery is on land given by James Cornwall's family many years ago. Brian, who is Germaine's longtime friend from Seattle days, now condo building mate in Spokane has been in charge of arrangements. Those in attendance were Tiffany, Louis, Brian, James, Burns (her brother from Seattle) and his wife Julie, Nisha, Fleur and Sirena. It was a blustery day but a beautiful site. Brian the preceding day had dug a 12' square hole three feet deep per regulations. He wrapped the ashes in a lovely golden scarf (a gift from a friend). Layered on top was a red Chinese "macramé", taken from the front of her Chinese chest. Tiffany had prepared some words while we all mourned this final physical dispensation.

Germaine touched so many lives during her 5 years in Spokane. She excelled in bringing people together in the interest of music and friendship. Her home was the site of many rehearsals and salon concerts.

We are prepared to have a “proper” memorial service when our world allows. In the meantime, we can all be thankful to have had her in our lives.

I am sure I missed some thing or someone, but I hope this helps us all feel more connected and appreciated during this pandemic time. The Board is planning to have a zoom meeting soon to talk about how we move forward, as time and circumstances allow. If you have ideas, please share with a board member. We will try to keep you posted.

Take care of yourselves and each other.
Stay well.

Carolyn