

[Note: Space was provided at the end of the long-range planning surveys for respondents to add comments. Those directed specifically toward AGO officers or committees, as listed below, were forwarded to the appropriate officials for action. More general comments are contained in a separate document ("General Comments"). Remarks that seemed to fit into multiple categories were divided accordingly. Comments have been lightly edited for spelling and grammar. — Long-Range Planning Task Force.]

Editorial Resource Board

I have enjoyed and learned much from the AGO regional and national conventions, as well as from the TAO articles. I also especially enjoy the articles in the English organ magazines like "You Can Play This" in which actual performance ideas are given for specific pieces. They tend to be very practical and not overly erudite. We need the views of the great teachers and learned research gurgitators, but a more healthy dose of useful practicality would be a useful addition.

We need a respectable publication to represent professional people. Currently, TAO is nothing more than advertising, including many of the articles. It is not an objective publication. I throw it away as soon as it comes without reading it. It is fluff. I prefer the serious tone of The Diapason and Choir and Organ. Until you folks start encouraging organists with dreadful instruments to find those few and lovely stops and use them well, organ playing in this country is doomed.

Would like to see more reviews of organ music and choral music in TAO. Include music for both a smaller situation and large church settings. It seems in many of the musical organizations there are many options for smaller programs, but little help for large church settings.

I wish that TAO could be published in a larger print edition. The content of the magazine is excellent.

TAO is very much in need of redesign. The dated look doesn't encourage the younger generation to relate to the currency of pipe organ.

AGO should become more aware of electronic communications, including the value of publicity for all AGO-related events. TAO is a fancy, costly, old-fashioned method of communication. Fewer issues (6/year) and electronic newsletters much better. Chapters need help publicizing events and educating local public audiences. All organists, no matter what level, need encouragement to improve performance and promote organ music.

I have difficulty with the layout of the present version of TAO magazine--could that be updated? It is difficult to read, but I enjoy most of the content.

I enjoy the letters to the editor and the Chaplain's page.

I enjoy the monthly American Organist magazine to see what is happening in my area as far as concerts are concerned.

The American Organist is mostly filled with news in which I have no interest. I subscribe for articles of interest on improving skills, teaching, other educational resources, not chapter news, reviews of books in a foreign language, etc.

TAO is overly formal, stilted, and at times arrogant in tone. It is one of the most humorless publications I've encountered! Lighten up, Mr. Editor!

I do have to wonder at the space taken in TAO with regard to "fingering of Liszt" and other really (in my opinion) needless information. Some of these articles go on for many pages and I think, by and large, are useless but for a few musicologists who feel we all need to know about these things.

I think making TAO electronic would result in many chapter members hitting delete to get it out of the inbox rather than taking time to read it. This is one publication I welcome in my regular mailbox.

TAO sometimes arrives damaged. Can it be sent in a wrapper or mailing envelope? I know it would cost more, but we already pay \$92 a year and a bit more (\$1 or \$2) wouldn't hurt much in exchange for clean magazines.

TAO, a decidedly undistinguished advertising venture, should be eliminated.

TAO should review more new church organ music.

Although the AGO is a beautiful publication in print, and I would like to keep it--to pass on to others as well--an electronic version would be a good alternative: if done professionally, if members can print articles, if they are available "forever," if index and search functions are available through all issues.

TAO was once a veritable wealth of information and discussion, some of it provocative (and rightly so). Of late one can read it from cover to cover quickly without learning as much of anything new or having one's thoughts much stimulated or challenged. I understand reaching out to the Easy Service Music group, as well as an editorial policy that tries not to alienate, but serving as a forum for disparate views is one of TAO's historical functions--as well as just plain making more interesting reading! Past articles such as "An Interview with Robert Noehren" and "An Emerging American Organbuilding Movement" (John Hamilton) may not have been ones I agreed with in every respect, but they stimulated dialogue and helped strengthen our profession. Where are such articles today? I'm fully prepared to hear that they may simply not be being submitted, but then why is that?

Overall, I have continually found TAO and the entire AGO unable to be creative and innovative in reaching out to organists and church musicians that need practical, "hands-on," and useful assistance in their daily creative work. Not everyone has the luxury of performing the most difficult organ and choral repertoire in their church each week. In contrast, pianists and piano teachers have access to many resources that provide creative, innovative, exciting, and sometimes "fun" and useful ways to reach out to young people, new pianists, amateurs, new audiences, etc. One day in TAO, I'd like to read an article about how some organist in a church somewhere revived a dying music program with wonderful organ music, or combined playing and teaching in creative ways, or has found fun ways to reach out to the community. This would be nourishing to me as a professional. Instead, I get dissertations on Messiaen's bird calls and unnecessary announcements about recent appointments.

For God's sake, improve those terrible chapter photographs in TAO.

A large amount of emphasis by AGO is on the organ's connection to organized religion. However, as a practicing Catholic, I feel left out by the AGO and TAO and at times ignored. Take a good look at the section listing suggested music for service playing, preludes, postludes, hymns, etc., and I think you will see what I mean. Many times I have seen no recommended hymn from the Catholic Book of Worship, which isn't all-inclusive of Catholic hymns, but the hymns are clearly Protestant in nature given the multiple Protestant hymnal references.

More reviews of practical service music and choral compositions would be welcome.

I look forward to reading TAO each month and have used many of the articles and information to help me with my organ-playing and choral directing.

I love the TAO and the Diapason magazines which I have been receiving for as many years as I have been a member of the AGO. My favorite feature in TAO is New Organs. I devour those pages containing the pictures and specifications of the new organs. I also enjoy the other articles and features of TAO each month. I look forward to finding it in my mailbox each month.

TAO--better formatting and layout. Quite frankly, it's not pretty. Font size is very small, even for a younger person. Pictures are not on the same page as the sentences that are describing them. There are way too many articles that are more geared towards music majors. There needs to be sections for aspiring organists. Have a separate scholarly journal for those who wish to submit treatises or notes. More color would be good, too.

I feel that the TAO needs more meaty and scholarly articles that focus on its mission and reduce other glossy and activity related items. I believe regional chapter news should be summarized or even sent in separate "regional" blurbs. Less advertising--if such a thing is possible. New organs are nice for a cover, but I don't think stoplists are as important as developing dialogue that enhances worship, performance, educational development, and substantive creative, artistically satisfying and financially rewarding careers.

Musicological articles are very important; preparation for the exams also are important as they encourage organists or budding organists to learn and understand the full gamut of what being an organist offers as well as demands. Many churches today do not require a high standard of classical music; but organists should at least comprehend those standards. Even if organists join the AGO for social reasons, and to find jobs, offering educational articles and materials in the magazine can help them understand the wonderful world of the organist and its repertoire.

The AGO magazine is most disappointing because it used to be full of well-written articles on pertinent topics; now it has endless articles in tiny type (please!) that tell far more than anyone but the author's mother would care to see on marginally interesting topics. I manage to find a useful nugget in each issue.

I feel the content of TAO has slipped in the last decade. The scholarly appeal of the articles has lessened significantly. Pressing concerns of the profession--musical standards and fair employment practices--are avoided. Many of the best organists I know have left church work forever because of these issues. Many vacant benches are being filled by musicians who have no training as organists. I think this constitutes a crisis in the profession which the TAO should address.

The typeface of The American Organist is much too small. The appearance is boring. While some scholarly articles are appropriate, it sometimes really bogs down. Frankly, I don't read that much of the magazine.

It would be nice to see a regular column on handbells and new music for handbells and organ.

Very good survey, just don't have enough time to read the TAO--maybe online would be easier.

I enjoy the AGO magazine just how it is. I especially use the new music reviews; I also like Vox Humana and the Letters to the Editor, and the Last Page.

TAO is also irrelevant to many members in my area: high percentage of advertisements, unimportant chapter news, and lack of resources for the "ordinary folks" who are serving small churches on a very part-time level. Pleas for more reviews of new organ music have gone unheeded--although that's one of the primary needs in an era when music stores have ceased to exist. The attempt to portray TAO cover stories off as legitimate news rather than advertising is regrettable, as is an apparent lack of screening of advertising in general. Like it or not, either TAO makes it successfully into the lives of AGO members, or AGO isn't worth the cost of membership to the vast majority of organists in my area.

I feel that the TAO, while certainly a labor of love, does a poor job of conveying the business and interests of the AGO. It has a few fun photos, but the overall format of TAO is cluttered and unappealing. It seems like it's just a bunch of advertisements, with just a few short articles tucked in between. It provides very little substantive content. I believe the AGO could realize significant cost savings by publication of an online version/resource. I do understand that a print version of TAO is very important to some of the more senior members of the AGO. (Perhaps those that wish a print copy could order a printout of the online version by paying an added premium to their membership fees?)

From my earliest teen years I have revered AGO. The magazine has always been good; it is now better than ever.

I greatly enjoy reading TAO, but I would like to see more online content at www.agohq.org. With publishing prices continuing to rise, I think it may soon be impractical to publish TAO in its present form, although it is true that a great many AGO members belong to a generation that typically does not use computers and would therefore suffer if TAO and other print communications were discontinued. Our chapter currently has 51 members, of whom all but 13 have provided e-mail addresses indicating that they are at least partially computer-enabled. However, we provide hard copies of our newsletter via U.S. Mail to 24 members, at their request. Perhaps it will be necessary to wean members away gradually from a hard-copy TAO, while at the same time ramping up the online services.

I would like to see more articles in TAO about repertoire selection (especially in terms of liturgical calendars) including reviews, performance tips, and introduction to music that might be assumed to be "common knowledge." This would especially help those who are part-time organists and/or have non-traditional background (i.e., no undergraduate degree in organ performance or related fields; limited years of formal training/lessons; converted pianists; etc.).

AGO articles about other music styles is a great aid to the tradition-based organist to understand another point of preference. It is important to feel that being as organist is not a losing activity.

TAO magazine needs an overhaul. I have showed it to prospective new members who are part time church organists who don't have a degree in music and they feel that the magazine is way over their heads. Even a change in format with some articles especially designed for people who are part-time or who don't have training would be helpful.

I would appreciate more articles about how to learn and practice basic organ repertoire. Example: When learning the Widor Toccata, here are six ways to practice the sixteenths, here are strategies to avoid common pitfalls, and here are three other pieces you might approach similarly.

I am tired of the magazine and read what little I do in about 10 minutes.

Wish the magazine could afford to include short quality pieces that are suitable for worship services--we are repertoire challenged!

TAO has needed a design overhaul for years. The text is blocky and gray and desperately needs better use of white space. I have, for years, fought off utter boredom in reading articles not because of content but because of less-than-reader-friendly layouts.

I think The American Organist could be greatly improved by clearing out uninteresting information about chapters and bland topics and offering more scholarly articles.

TAO is excellent! I look forward to receiving it every month.

It would be great to have the TAO archived and available to download or send articles to others via e-mail.

I would like to see more information about Jewish music and organs in synagogues. As a Protestant, I did not realize how musical the Jewish services were until later in life. I really enjoy TAO, but would like more articles about new and old organs, although I appreciate the articles that are now presented. You should also feature some digital organs. I was discouraged, at times, about the disdain many organists showed toward electronic and digital organs. Also, I miss the want ads and for sale ads. Haven't tried getting them online yet. I have slow dial-up as nothing else is available here.

It could be much more successful if it were to be geared to moderate and advanced skill levels, and if the AGO articles were more useful for regular church musicians as opposed to cathedral musicians. The reviews of music could also be better, they are presently more biased than truthful. It is all right to say a selection is good for low church or high church, etc., just be truthful and factual.

Are we an organization that focuses on highly detailed writings in the magazine of different types of trills in Buxtehude compositions or the type that strives to educate many in basics of playing? It's been a huge factor in many of my dealings.

The layout of TAO is very old-fashioned now and needs updating.

I feel that the TAO has become too much of a "who's doing what" magazine with way too much info on chapters and performers, pictures, etc. I would love to see a more balanced magazine that will also appeal to the more educated musician that includes more articles on music. I rarely consult TAO when writing articles because it lacks substance.

Do not change the format of TAO!

Although I take the magazine in the U.K., I find it very helpful and readable.

And reduce the amount of boring articles in TAO! The Diapason is interesting. For the most part, TAO is not!

The magazine is stuffy and not very well presented. It seems to be aimed at congratulating its own members who are in important positions and therefore rather grand.

I also enjoy The American Organist, except I think it should have many more articles especially scholarly articles and much, much less advertising. I know advertising pays the bills, but there is way too much in the journal.

It would be great to have commissioned pieces suitable for church organists published in the AGO magazine (Etude type)--a great source in two ways: one in submitting meaningful workable pieces for organists and the other for seeing new concepts--a small prize for accepted pieces. It might increase the "down to earth" approach alongside those great articles. Thank you.

I'm dismayed by The American Organist magazine's gradual change over time: remembering and looking over older issues (10+ years) there were longer articles, including a mixture of scholarly topics relating to organ repertoire, composers, performance issues, etc. Now it seems to be incorporate shorter articles that are less interesting to me (and dare I say non-scholarly?), along with a veritable explosion of advertising. Perhaps there should be a limit to the number of full-page ads? I understand that ad revenue is important, but the downside is that content seems to suffer. I find that I often get more "stimulation" reading Choir & Organ, RCO Newsletters, Organists' Review, and even The Diapason.

The magazine is excellent.

The magazine is fabulous.

TAO is the primary reason for my membership. Its current format is good in that it covers a wide range of interests, has articles of a scholarly nature while also having materials, articles, etc., of a wider interest that may be appealing to scholarly members of AGO, students, and organ enthusiasts and builders. Its eclecticism is good.

I think this survey is a good idea. I hope my comments were helpful. I am an RCCO/AGO joint member, so some of the questions I could not answer because of my proximity from the U.S. I am very much enjoying my membership and have always liked the TAO. However, I find that TAO could have a better balance between scholarly articles and resources for the average church musician. I tend to lean toward the scholarly articles (I also get Organ Canada, The Organist Review, Choir and Organ, Organ, and The Diapason) but I think the TAO and the AGO in general would be more attractive to musicians who are not members and who think that perhaps the AGO is only for qualified and trained church musicians. In Canada we have for some time included a composition in each edition of the magazine. I know that some of the British journals do this as well. I think this might be something for TAO as well. Again it could be focused on practical new repertoire for the average musician. It could also be a choral composition.

While I am overall satisfied with being a member of the AGO, I do feel that sometimes the articles in TAO and the ideals and attitudes of some members are a bit esoteric or lofty. Meaning that they are almost above the average person, or a bit arrogant. In light of this, it is no wonder that organists are few and far between. I also believe that all levels of ability should be equally important and that importance made known.

At the same time I enjoy the big blurbs on new organs, I get tired of having them shoved down my throat. Like how many of us will ever get to play on one in our job? There is an element of one-upmanship that turns me off.

Redesign of TAO and much, much tighter editing. Articles often too long and wordy.

Have a regular column in the magazine from a "regular" church musician with "regular" problems and solutions.

Too much space in TAO for Chapter News.

I would very much appreciate an electronic version of the AGO magazine. The print is getting smaller and smaller. Thank you.

I have often wondered why there has not been an ongoing publication of standard repertoire suggestions for the emerging or developing organist.

I love reading The American Organist. Reading it online would not appeal to me at all.

Finding useful articles in TAO is sometimes difficult.

I look forward to each month's AGO and read it cover to cover and then peruse it throughout the month. Now that I have retired and developed neuropathy in my feet, I find pedaling abilities reduced. I wish I could discuss this with others who might have the same problem to find out how they are combating it. Perhaps a short health column could address such issues.

I continue to enjoy TAO, and use it to keep up with organists I've known, both where they are and what they may be doing musically. I am fascinated with features of new and newly rebuilt organs. I've had only limited contact with the AGO organization, and must report that various representatives who purport to contribute to TAO for publication seem to be, at best, preoccupied, and at worst, too egocentric to be effective. My strongest opinion about the AGO is TAO. I think it has so much in it that is unnecessary. I would like it to be much shorter, maybe not put out as frequent, and more educational. Less chapter news, etc. Most of the time it looks so daunting and not very relevant to my job. Maybe you could use the web page more for job postings, AGO resources, chapter news, etc., without having to have the same listings in the magazine every month. Some reflections from either the chaplain or an organist and some educational piece would be sufficient for me!

I am glad there is an AGO, and I am glad to be a member. But I wish the AGO leadership would open their collective eyes and actually the world as it is today. We need sweeping changes. Not minor updates--and certainly don't get rid of the good parts like a printed magazine--but we need a fundamental and comprehensive change in the AGO.

I do not find American Organist beneficial in its current format (content in particular). I also find the layout visually distracting (not clean).

I appreciate the articles on organ technique and specific ideas for playing different kinds of organ music.

TAO layout: It is not extremely attractive, but for me it is 100% OK.

I use the TAO as a learning tool but some of the articles are just too technical.

I really appreciate TAO, but it is too tedious to read with such fine print.

Move to an online version of TAO: too much of member dues due to production costs. Get out of the printed publication business as it's too expensive and there are many online options.

To be honest, I quit reading The American Organist a long time ago. It's not relevant to me. I've taken to just turning to the last page, reading that and tossing the magazine in the recycle. If most of your readers are only interested in big pipe organs with fancy cases, then don't change a thing. For me, they're kind of like BMWs—they're expensive, prestigious, interesting, costly to maintain and fun to drive, but I can't afford to buy one, let alone maintain it. My husband subscribes to Motor Trend. If every cover had a picture of the biggest most expensive car out

there, he'd lose interest and drop the subscription, but as long as he sees cars that he could actually own and use, he'll continue to be a longtime subscriber.

Committee on Career Development and Support

I was very disappointed that after many years being a member (on and off) of the AGO since 1972 or 1973, when I lost my job last December in a malicious and vindictive termination, the Guild did not come to my aid because I'd let my membership lapse a couple years. Ironically, I was actually planning to renew my membership the month (December) I was terminated. I am still hurt by the Guild's lack of support. I am a member on honorary withdrawal and in good standing with AEA, AFTRA & SAG, and I am an active member of AGMA. I've been an Extra Chorister with the Met and at least 20 years Associate Chorister with NYC Opera, but my sacred music job as Director of Liturgy and Music for the past 16 years at a RC Church in the Diocese of Brooklyn was my primary job with which I had medical-dental coverage and a pension plan. Losing this job in the manner and at the time of such an economic crisis has been heartbreaking and devastating. Being offered only two weeks of severance pay after 16 years was an insult. Needless to say, I refused to sign for it. Had the Guild gone to bat for me, I might have at least been able to get a fair severance. NY State is a "right to work state." In spite of being a "blue state," it does not protect employees. As you might imagine, I feel a bit of bitterness towards the AGO. I happen to know that numerous times in the history of the Guild, prominent members have tried to get the Guild to become a union to better protect members. I also know that AGMA has made overtures to the AGO in the past.

Here in Modesto, Calif., the churches dictate the very low salaries (typically 60% less than AGO minimum). They don't care anything about the salary guide. I guess things will never change unless people revolt!

With every change of clergy in all my years of church work, I have had to describe the AGO, what it stands for and why I belong. So many clergy/churches, if they have heard of it at all, think it is a "union." I have done what I can to educate the masses, but am not always successful. We need to be more visible to local churches and clergy. My need for a contract is not thought important, and I am weary of fighting the battle. I need the AGO to help.

It would be helpful to have the National AGO get more quickly involved with members who are wrongfully terminated from an institution. Oftentimes long for AGO to respond when a complaint is filed.

As I substitute, I do get many calls from many church musicians due to my listing in the AGO Handbook, which is a very important reference tool for musicians seeking substitutes. I get many more requests than I can handle and primarily belong to AGO just to be listed as a substitute in the handbook.

More focus on remunerations/salaries would be welcomed. We in the field are sometimes compared with Christian Ed directors, custodians, or substitute school teachers. Churches want to pay as little as possible; but some of us are living close to the crunch line.

As a substitute, I would appreciate more guidance on salary issues for substitutes.

Have always wondered about the legality of AGO "shunning" a church because of their practices. Does AGO really have that right?

I am concerned that the publication of actions by the AGO taken against religious employers, as well as the surrounding publicity, is damaging to the image and the well being of the AGO. The

AGO appears to be a union, even though it is clearly not a union, and therefore might be considered to be an adversary to some churches. Rather than making decisions about where an AGO member may appropriately apply for a position, it would be better for the AGO to provide referrals for legal counsel and assistance to wrongfully terminated members, and leave it at that. Why should the AGO say that someone cannot be employed at an organization because a prior employee was wrongfully terminated? Even in a union shop, if a former employee is fired unjustly, the union doesn't require that no union member ever take that position; at least not forever.

AGO should advocate more for salary support for its members, perhaps by indicating in position listings that the salary does or does not meet AGO guidelines (or only publicizing those listings that do).

AGO listing of substitutes, however no assistance in salary scale for substitute/interim positions.

I wonder if there is a way to separate job listings (as listed online and in TAO) into two categories: AGO compliant and non-AGO compliant. This will expose the overwhelming number of churches that list jobs at ridiculous hours and pay ratios. It may also encourage institutions to revise their ads. Wishful thinking perhaps, but important nonetheless.

Develop and foster an advocacy program similar to unionization, hoping to have some influence on the working arrangements for AGO members.

If I could do away with anything the AGO does, it would be the salary guidelines, assuming those are still being published. So much of what I do in my job to keep the worship music effective, exciting and relevant to today's culture has little to do with whether I have a master's degree in organ or sacred music or professional certification from the Guild. The organ is an instrument among many others that I use in worship; it is not always the primary instrument.

I have often wished that the AGO was more of a union than what it currently is. Somehow all of us have to stand up for what we are worth and demand proper salaries. How can we have those salary suggestions become reality?

For the question on the hours, you should have asked how many hours are you actually working vs. being paid for; are you receiving any additional benefits; are you close to the AGO guidelines for pay?

I would like to see the AGO provide more salary guidelines for use in all parts of the country. Few highly trained organists are paid salaries by churches that actually take into account their many years of study. I know I haven't, which is why I'm not in a permanent church position anymore. I got tired of giving up all of my major holidays and most weekends for a low-paying job.

Return format of "Positions Available" to include descriptions of the openings rather than the current format of providing only contact information.

I think the AGO should hold a stronger position on how members should be treated by churches and clergy. If a church wants an AGO organist there should be an expectation that our membership will be treated fairly and with the utmost respect. Most of the current documents are regarding fees, and the old contract suggestions might be modified to be more specific, i.e. the salary recommendations, I think, should more strongly support the higher rates for experienced and lettered members in inner-city churches. The old days of gently suggesting guidelines do not seem to be taken seriously by churches. Also, an electronic network for members would allow for

exchange of ideas and sharing of personal experiences that might be helpful in working through the ever-present clergy/musician relationship.

Somehow AGO needs to be more of an advocate for members with their congregational contracts, evaluations, and positions. Members need to know the Guild is there to help them with problems in their position--before it gets to a grievance procedure.

I have been a member of the AGO since I joined as a student member in the 1950s. The AGO has been useful to me in establishing salaries at my many and various church jobs over my more than 30 plus year career as a church musician.

I have enjoyed and, at times, loved this kind of musical career but, in retrospect, don't think I would be able to choose it again because the financial sacrifices have been too great. That is the result of working in a denomination that did not choose to treat its employees equally. I'm in a more equitable situation now, but it's too late for any real financial recovery. One thing I wish the AGO would do is be more aggressive/assertive in working with denominations and impressing upon them that low wages with few benefits (particularly pension benefits) are not compatible with their expectations of wanting good musicians with advanced degrees and extensive experience. Nor are these denominational practices of high expectation coupled with low rewards in keeping with the generally held beliefs of any denomination or faith which claims to value everyone, even employees. AGO has a tremendous job ahead of itself in trying to reverse the current situation.

We need to promote our profession more. Very difficult to get the average person to understand the difference between an organist and an organ player.

I believe the AGO could be assisting organists in gaining meaningful employment and fair wages. Wouldn't we have more organists if there were more jobs and career opportunities?

AGO is very important for the organ profession. I appreciate that the AGO is able to set professional standards for organists. The salary schedule, job descriptions, contracts, and other professional development documents are outstanding, and very useful for working in the church arena. The opportunity to network with other organists and to meet together is invaluable.

My biggest concern is to see our Guild help educate and enforce proper reimbursement to *all* musicians full or part-time. Also if this were accomplished and if all religious and non-religious organizations which employed a Guild member adhered to proper and nationally enforced salary guidelines, then I would like to see the certification process become one that isn't so rigid in the demands that currently are part of the tests.

Survey info on salaries, work-load and responsibilities would be helpful.

I value my AGO membership. I do wish it had more meaning, credibility and bargaining power, like belonging to a musician's union would.

One of the greatest challenges facing the AGO at present is the shortage of quality *positions* for organists. Articles in TAO lament the reduced number of organ students, but the Guild does great disservice to students by getting them "addicted" to fine organ music, and then tossing them on the streets, with no places to play (or even practice). Fine organists may be able to trek through major organ symphonies, the works of Mendelssohn and Bach, with repertoire spanning from earliest music to that newly inked, but there are *not* paying positions for them. These musicians may be able to conduct choirs, and improvise beautifully. They may be able to plan the most complex liturgy, faithful to church canons. Yet because they must pay the rent, they are working

full-time outside of music, and cannot find places to play or to practice. Part of the Guild believes the solution is to “dumb down” everything, and only give the general populace “top 40” tunes. But it was trekking through the Duruflé Toccata or the Dupré Passion Symphonie that got the organists excited about the instrument. Where are the opportunities to rehearse and to perform the great works for the instrument? Or are they only to be limited to those small elite of “represented artists” or “full time” musicians?

A church musician may be serving God, but stop this nonsense about not being paid. Many clergy make over \$100,000 per year plus have many benefits (housing, discounts on cars, etc.), yet object to paying church musicians anywhere near their salary. The word for this is hypocrisy. Why should the lowest paid associate clergy make more than a church musician with a doctorate plus a FAGO, who is working for a living, while the clergy is allegedly “called” to a higher... Should not the musician make more? Start being more of a union and less of a Guild.

I struggle with the reality of the salary recommended guidelines, particularly as it relates to part-time musicians. In 46 years, I have *never* been paid what the guidelines say. I have a master's degree in organ.

Committee on Seminary and Denominational Relations

A reverence for religion is also important, and the AGO needs to respect all denominations and recognize the ministries taking place among its membership.

I am building bridges between my church band members and the organ, but I am not sure my colleagues in more “prestigious” positions respect this. Can the organ really survive in its “historic” form?

The future of the church/synagogue musician depends upon the extent to which the clergy and church leadership understand, appreciate and support the importance of good quality sacred music. Anything the AGO can do to foster that goal should take priority at the national level.

As a retired Catholic clergyman, I believe that the AGO could be more influential in encouraging all denominations to give genuine importance to the quality of liturgical music they provide their membership. On paper, the Catholic Church calls for top quality music in its worship and gives a primacy of value to the pipe organ. In practice, it is not always the case. The AGO can advocate for very good music and make clear the benefits to the churches of holding to high standards.

I see the Guild's biggest forthcoming challenge as stemming from one of its greatest successes. The POE program has been a tremendous success. More young people than ever are playing the organ, and the standard of playing continues to rise. With the onset of social networking sites, students who meet at POEs and other organ programs can connect, network, encourage, and challenge each other. The days of being the only person you know who is studying the organ in high school is over, and for all these reasons, the number of young people studying the organ and aspiring to careers in the church has been rising.

That being said, with mainline denominations shrinking, and so many churches resorting to “entertainment” style worship, moving away from organ-led worship services, there are fewer and fewer jobs for the people who aspire to fill them. Some of the nation's most prominent full-time positions have been cut in half or eliminated (same, we know, for university organ programs). Therefore, I see one of the Guild's primary challenges in the next decade to develop some kind of program or outreach that parallels the scale of the POE program that focuses on reaching out to seminaries, churches, clergy, and denominations--promoting the organ, choral music, and traditional worship in general. While I like to think that there will always be good jobs

for talented and hard-working musicians, I worry about the future given what is happening in the Church.

I think one of the best things we can do nationally is to foster a feeling of acceptance of *all* who attempt to be church musicians in a country where the everyday sounds of guitar and percussion and hand-held microphone singers has too long been encroaching in an area where too many congregations do not see the need that their worship be set apart from the everyday. I have heard pastors say that they now come out of seminary very, very ill-equipped and educated about real church music that doesn't sound like it is produced in a sound studio. They admit this, but prefer to call upon the likes of Ray Boltz, video clips and turning the narthex into a coffee house (they do have good food!). But until seminaries are willing to give future pastors some solid food, we are sunk. AGO needs to be working with the seminaries.

The AGO needs to be the greatest advocate of the church music director and/or organist, particularly in these times when many churches are changing their worship styles. Quality always lasts, and it is up to all of us to maintain that quality and to defend it in the face of adversity. Particularly important is the need for stronger relationships with seminaries and degree-granting religious institutions. We cannot expect clergy to make informed choices about worship music styles if their training did not provide them with those tools.

The AGO also needs to do more for denominations, like the RCs, where the principal musician hired by the parish, often full-time, is NOT necessarily a traditional organist, or even a keyboard player. Keep the NPM/AGO conversations alive! RC parishes in SOME places are putting out the bucks to build new organs, rebuild old ones, and hire the truly full-time musicians. Infiltrate and support the C of R.

The AGO membership should be proud of their organization. I would advise any new internal restructuring to include a well-qualified representative from each U.S. denomination, differentiating between LCMS and ELCA, PCUSA and PCA, SBC and ABC, etc. Also, the RC liturgy situation, with the ascendancy of the evangelical wing of Catholicism, is really changing (again). These individuals would need to be vetted in order to avoid any possibility of misuse of their position. They could perhaps receive a small stipend, but should essentially be free of the possibility of bias in their opinions offered to the AGO.

AGO should use its national presence to (1) clarify the role of the church musician-organist in the media and in denominations (they are probably not independent contractors), (2) communicate with denominations to raise awareness of the inadequate pay scale for church musicians, (3) communicate with denominations the proper professional interaction between clergy and musicians, (4) publicize a more rational understanding among denominations about the time required for part-time organists and music directors to carry out assigned duties and practice, (5) publicize nationally the actual educational and performance achievements which many if not most organists and/or directors possess. In short, work to bring prestige to the profession.

As I said in the survey, I think a huge problem is relations with clergy. Too often I've heard the story, in different denominations, how some congregation member can't stand the organist (there's always one). The clergy then is put in the situation of supporting the organist or supporting the congregation member who pays the clergy salary. Most of the time the clergy will side with the congregation member. Congregations and clergy "get" what secretaries and sextons do, but they don't often "get" what organists have to do. More education/involvement with clergy and denominations is a big hole that needs to be filled.

Increase Guild awareness and prestige within denominational organizations (NPM, etc.) and with clergy. I think the Guild is slipping out of prominence.

Your listing of denominational choices might be more inclusive. Groups like Evangelical (Evangelical Free Church, Church of the Nazarene, Wesleyan Church, etc.) and Pentecostal (Assemblies of God, Church of God, United Pentecostal Church, etc.) do not include very many AGO members but are larger (even some of them individually) than some of the other denominations that you list--the Assemblies of God and the Church of God in Christ each have more members than The Episcopal Church. Although it would be cumbersome to list each of these denominations, listing the general category would at least show people that you are aware of these other groups. I realize that you include a space for other, just my two cents.

For the past 30 years, my professional denominational organization has been the most helpful and beneficial organization for a support system and materials. I believe this is a natural happening. The AGO simply cannot be all things to all people/denominationally-speaking. The Association of Anglican Musicians is an incredibly invaluable source for those serving the Episcopal Church. The annual conference of this organization is far more important to me, professionally, than an AGO national convention--which has become too large in all aspects, to the point of being unwieldy. Two days of Minneapolis was quite enough for this convention goer. Too much in too little time.

I am especially interested in the AGO gaining a clearer understanding of the requirements by the different denominations and a greater acceptance of the different styles of music that are used in the churches. Too many organists limit themselves to just the classical styles and will not work with the different church groups to make the organ a valuable part of the new worship experience.

You talk about seminary involvement, but in my time as chapter dean I have seen the number of organist-clergy disputes triple. In one instance the organist was told if she pursued ago intervention due to being dismissed with no notice she would be "blackballed" by the denomination and never play in one of their churches. You are obviously seen as a paper tiger, and thus you are of no assistance to your members. Until seminaries impress on their students the importance of working with their musician rather than managing their musician you are worthless to the musician.

You need to interact more with Seminaries and Church leaders (like the USCCB). Most Priests and Ministers are abysmally ignorant of church music, the logistics of planning and scheduling. Provide courses in hymnology, design of worship services, logistics needed for choirs and organists, etc. How about providing detailed sample worship services, types of music/hymns useful, with timelines of preparation time for the organist, soloist and/or choir? The Minister I currently sub with just fired the previous Director of Music without taking into consideration what would be needed to replace him (hence I'm subbing). I myself was informed on Thursday noon Nov. 12 that I would be in charge of a Xmas Eve Carol Service. (Rehearsal was that Thursday p.m., one of only 4 rehearsals before Xmas). Since I have 50 years of experience, I may be able to do so, but no Minister with such little knowledge of music should be picking hymns and designing worship services. This is the reality that most church organists work with.

Councillor for Conventions

Anything that can be done to bring down the total cost of attending a national convention would be appreciated. I didn't attend the Chicago one because by the time I added up transportation, hotel, pet care while I was away, registration fees, and extra fees for special concerts not included in the registration, the bill came to \$1,800. On top of that, I had heard most of the big-name performers already.

Conventions should be a focal point, socially, artistically, and educationally. I say this as the co-chair of the recent Region III convention and as the newest member of CORC, but not because I feel I *have* to say this! I attended Baltimore in 2007 as well as my own convention and both were invigorating experiences.

At conventions many of us would like to hear music performed suitable to the type of instrument played. In other words, Baroque music should be played on a Baroque instrument. We like to hear some of the new compositions, but a balance of literature. Many of us are serving congregations and want to hear imaginative literature for such purposes.

I don't feel that the AGO adequately represents the interests of part-time musicians. For example, many can't afford the conventions, and it is difficult to get away from the day job when the convention is always scheduled during everyone else's work week.

Although I do attend some chapter events, the Regional and National Conventions are really the reason I remain a member of the AGO. The social atmosphere of the conventions and the opportunity to participate in workshops that interest me and most especially the choral reading sessions are important parts of the convention for me, as well as the major recitals and performances of all types of music.

There is far too much "new" organ music at the conventions.

Due to my age I am not as interested or involved in regional and national conventions as I might be if younger and in better physical condition. Conventions are not friendly to members with physical problems, such as walking long distances.

Again, a blind audition for performances at AGO regional/national conventions will ensure that there's always a "fresh" lineup. Someone who didn't go to the "right" school or know the "right" people will never be asked. Let's be honest about this, please.

I would encourage conference planners at the regional and national levels to openly solicit proposals and performance recordings when choosing presenters and performers. There are good performers and presenters whose work may not be known to those on the planning committees, because their paths have not crossed. Submitting competitive proposals and recordings would level the playing field, so to speak.

National and regional conventions are expensive, so less frequency can be balanced with maintaining the quality and letting area conclaves be more specific to needs.

Most meetings and most workshops at conventions have very little practical information for those of us who are in ministry. Most organs are in churches. It's a simple fact. If the AGO does not want to deal in a constructive way with this reality either in denominational relations, worship, choral arts, etc., then I do not plan to spend the enormous amounts of money it takes to go to conventions.

I would like to see a shared convention with ACDA--unique days at beginning and end for each with overlapping days which provided educational opportunities in technology, teaching tools, repertoire, and other common areas. Those who wished could register and participate in the complete week-long + convention, those who did not could participate in their unique portion + the common days. This would save huge sums, as well as bring together many professional commonalities and provide the vendors with a one-stop exhibition.

I think AGO is a valuable organization. I have used many of the resources available--especially great info in TAO. A suggestion would be to consider combining or working more closely with the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. Because I can only afford to go to one convention a year, I normally choose NPM because it is more focused on the Catholic Church. If there was someway that the conventions could be synced either by some shared activities, or by combining for one big convention, it may be more profitable, you wouldn't have to vie for the same people and the sharing of ideas could be very fruitful--just a thought. Thanks for all you do.

I have never attended any convention because of the cost. I am a retired public school music teacher who had to support my school program with my own funds. I cannot afford to attend conventions after paying for my medical insurance, home, etc.

Coming from a state with one chapter, I love getting together with fellow organists/musicians, learning new techniques, bringing new ideas back to my congregation/area. Conventions are great for this gathering of music lovers, whether it is the national or the regional convention or related gatherings. When chapter members live a great distance apart there is not as much interest in meeting as a group. E-mailings seem to keep the chapter together.

I can't emphasize enough the bias shown in both regional and national performance settings for those few artists with management. It has become repetitive to the point of pointlessness to scan the AGO performance listings. There are scores of gifted organists seeking performance opportunities who are not heard or represented, and this can engender resentment and bitterness, or even merely malaise and withdrawal from the AGO. I also think it's very important *to support* these people who have achieved so very much, and whose artistic gifts are extraordinary. But, please. Let's have some diversity, and more opportunities to build bridges instead of delineate between those few competition winners or recording artists and those who are "in the trenches" more often and bound by liturgical schedules. This country is bristling with gifted organists and organ enthusiasts! The fees for performers are inappropriately high when you consider the quality of some of the performances recently heard at national conventions.

The conventions I have attended for the most part are exceptional.

Living on retirement income makes attending regional and national conventions nearly impossible. Even when employed full-time, I attended only a few national conventions, since my membership in ACDA and attending its conventions was also important. There was only money for one or the other.

In today's economy there may be a great desire on my part (anyway) to attend a convention, but the costs are out of sight for any benefits gained.

These days I do not attend AGO regional or national conventions very often, as I prefer to use my Continuing Ed budget to zero in on specialists and smaller seminars on music I can present in church that sound relevant to our ever-changing and diverse urban congregation. That is not to the exclusion of classical and traditional music, but that genre has become only a part of the many styles that go into worship at my church. I would attend AGO conventions more often if time and money were not an issue, but, as I said, I need to concentrate those resources where I can get the most return.

I have enjoyed the conventions that I have attended, but feel the length of these are too long, and the need to locate meals in a limited time frame is difficult, and the cost is prohibitive, in spite of the wonderful music and information gleaned, as well as the length of these, which requires time away from home and need to work on music for church.

I love the conventions, but I can't always go due to conflicts or cost.

I have favored regional conventions for many years because of the smaller numbers in attendance. I love the OHS Conventions much for that reason and tend to avoid the national AGO gatherings because of their sheer numbers, although I took in 1996.

Strongly consider the question of why are we commissioning so much new music? For what purpose? What is its goal? Fifty years from now, is it going to be held up against that of Dupré and thought of as worth it? If we do not have answers to these questions, then we should start commissioning less music at conventions. It is almost to the point to where we go a convention without hearing Bach. Let's get back to our roots in this area.

Make conventions more family friendly--information for children of participants, things they can do.

The conventions are too expensive to attend.

Thank you for taking the time to do this. I believe that it is important for the AGO (national and local chapters) to reach out to non-member organists and invite them to take part in the AGO. Among other things this includes being welcoming and accepting of others from different "organ backgrounds" (e.g., those who play electronic instruments) and providing important resources and support (e.g., a variety of good chapter programming, more classes and a greater variety of classes at regional and chapter conventions).

Committee on National Conventions

Cost of national conventions is prohibitive (travel, lodging, etc.).

The Association of Anglican Musicians is an incredibly invaluable source for those serving the Episcopal Church. The annual conference of this organization is far more important to me, professionally, than an AGO national convention--which has become too large in all aspects, to the point of being unwieldy. Two days of Minneapolis was quite enough for this convention goer. Too much in too little time.

The AGO seem very nice "as it is" at the moment. The organization does a really great job. Especially the national conventions we attended have been absolutely fantastic. Looking forward for more of this.

Who wants to go to a convention over the 4th of July, especially in someplace hot? And PLEASE stop giving thousands of dollars to someone to write new, crappy organ music that nobody wants to hear and few can, or want, to play. What are you thinking?

Committee on Regional Conventions

I am proud of the AGO and all it stands for! I have found myself complaining, however, at regional conventions, especially, about the number of choral and non-organ workshops. I stopped going to a denominational annual workshop in favor of AGO when I began teaching organ as well as church organ responsibilities and have been dismayed to find so many choral workshops and what I consider in some cases a lack of helpful organ ones. I have in fact, decided not to go to the current midwinter one because I didn't feel like it offered enough organ focus to make it worth the investment.

My wife and I have attended two regional conventions, combining them with vacation travel. We found them very enjoyable, educational, and inspiring. Since we are tied to the bench on nearly every Sunday, they also provide a nice way to be able to meet and network with other musicians. Our local chapter is very small and we have very few formal programs.

Councillor for Competitions and New Music

I would just hope there is some way to generate more interest in the organ via performance and new commissioned works for the organ.

Generally, I feel competitions are too large in our community and at national/regional events. Competition encourages a competitive membership, which manifests itself in stereotypes of uppity organists, concerned only with who studied with whom and where they are playing at any given time. Since I have degrees in piano (BM and MM) and music education (MMEd), and *not* organ, it is only for this reason that I took the AAGO exam. I don't get asked where or with whom I studied anymore, thankfully. I am proud of my playing and my career, and competitions (though I've done and won my fair share in piano during college) seem only to make the amateur or beginner feel unwelcome.

Most of the commissions I have heard are excessively difficult, not worth the effort for the result. Some are downright unpleasant to listen to. To whom are we appealing with this stuff?

Didn't Gleason say in his Method of Organ that a concept of a piece of art is never final? So why the competitions?

Fairness of the regional competitions should be examined--are we helping the performers to succeed, or are we more concerned with a certain professor or school coming out on top?

I wish I were on the committee reviewing submitted competition organ/organ+ compositions! I was very sad to see those two previous selections chosen as pieces that would promote interest in organ music.

Councillor for Communication

Excellent survey. Thank you. The Guild is a member-driven organization, and as such it needs to welcome all members regardless of their background or whether they choose to affiliate with a chapter. The Guild needs to modernize its seal, its thinking, and its approach to communications if it hopes to attract today's young organists and especially if it hopes to attract tomorrow's young organists.

Committee on New Technology

Guild, regions, and chapters should become more adept at handling "perishable" information through electronic means, rather than relying on printed copy (magazines, mailouts, the like).

As a younger AGO member, I think the ideas of using online/electronic resources are wonderful! Facebook seems to be an excellent way of promoting local chapter events (when someone remembers to post them!)

My hope for all our professional organizations is that they will not fall into the trap of "going electronic." Social networks rise and fall with every two-year cycle. Despite the expense of print, professional organizations must continue to offer communication through *all* channels: print, e-mail, Web site, and time-consuming social networks such as Facebook. It has been estimated

that in the present flood of information, a person must be "touched" seven times for one item of information to be effective.

Greatest need is for improved technology, both in collecting dues and in supplying online resources.

The AGO must be more interactive and be more virtual. Everything today is online, and so should the AGO.

Overall, I think the AGO HQ are doing a good job transitioning into the 21st century. It is of utmost importance that we (the AGO) embrace modern tools such as Twitter, Facebook, etc., to reach younger generations, as that generation does not communicate like older generations--as generational studies have shown. Teenagers will not look into a brochure or newspaper to find out what's interesting (unfortunately). Instead, text messaging and other electronic sources are used. The youth pastor at our church communicates mostly by e-mail and texting (with the youth, that is).

I think the future success of the AGO, or any other organization, will lie in its creative use of the Internet. This is especially true in the case of young people.

The AGO also needs to get with the times--more material available on the website, for example. Provide more access to others via modern-day tools like Facebook.

I especially liked the idea of an online AGO chapter. For someone like me, who is an independent student member, it would be very nice to have an online membership forum to go to for help and support. I am always on the road between school (organ major) and church for rehearsal, so it would be nice not to have to schedule another event during the week to travel to like a meeting.

Because our chapter is located 65 miles away, most things are online. I desperately need help on how to use Finale 2008. No one locally can help.

Website is important and should continue to receive your best attention.

Online resources of all kinds would be of most benefit to me, as I am in a semi-rural setting 40 miles from my "home" chapter and am seldom able to make physical meetings.

It is great that the AGO is thinking about moving forward in the online world. This is a great idea.

Every AGO chapter should have a website.

I feel well served by the American Guild of Organists in its present configuration, though I do think that adapting to new technologies such as Facebook, the Internet, etc., is also important.

I would like to see more calendaring on the website that members could contribute to, and more info re chapters on the web--I know, it is up to chapters to provide that.

The AGO must do more online communication and marketing.

Thank you for looking into ways the AGO can use the computer age to increase its visibility and reach more people.

I find the AGO to be a very helpful organization. I'm overall quite pleased with my membership. I love the fact that you seem to be considering greater use of web-based delivery of products and

services. The only thing that bothers me about AGO is the occasional assumption that all members are active in Christian faith traditions. That's simply not true.

I am very pleased with AGO overall. Everything AGO does is of the highest caliber. AGO offers many resources for its members. I am unable to make use of everything AGO has to offer, but I am grateful for availability of its many resources. I think you should continue in the direction you have been going, always giving an example of something for members to aspire to and work towards. It is important that AGO find a way to young organists through the internet. I just am not sure of the way to do it. I am proud to be a member of AGO!

I see, from this survey, that the AGO is starting to think "out of the box." This is good. As a *very* busy music professional (not just organ), I usually cannot attend meetings. I'm in full support of any online opportunities.

I've belonged to the AGO in two different regions, and although my circumstances prevent me from attending chapter events now, I stay connected to colleagues and value their expertise. The AGO needs to seriously update its image and "think younger" to survive the next decade. Online is where these younger musicians are, and we need to reach out to them.

More online news, info and articles would be helpful.

The Guild is doing wonderful work due in part to the excellent leadership during its existence. We are now moving to the virtual world, and organists need to follow in that direction as well.

I'm an advanced MIDI user and there is never anything about MIDI. This is great technology and allows the organ to serve in other capacities other than in a traditional sense. If one can add full orchestra capability to the organ, then the possibilities of performing literature are endless. If we are to keep the public interested in the organ, then we need to use this technology to enhance organ music. I use it frequently in church services and concert settings and people are always blown away, whether it's adding orchestral voices or organ duets or organ/piano duets that I do singlehandedly. Bottom line: Organ purists need to get their head out of the sand on this and embrace it.

Committee on Membership Development and Support

I would be interested in somehow officially connecting the Organists and the Organ (Musical Instrument) group that I created on LinkedIn with the AGO, or having the AGO recognize the group in some way.

You have presented some great ideas for helping to grow the AGO. For those of us that live in flyover country, we appreciate anything that can help with education and chapter programming for the smaller chapter.

One of the questions was regarding a being a member of a virtual chapter in addition to my local chapter. I don't think there should be two memberships--virtual and local. However, I think the local chapters should have an online presence so that it's possible to see the members of your chapter online as well as in person. Also, I think that an updateable and searchable online directory of members would be *really* good. It could also be a way to renew membership and to change mailing address for TAO.

Encourage local chapter members to welcome visitors and new members. I recently attended a different chapter from the one I belong, and not one person ever spoke to or acknowledged my presence except for the one organist to whom I broke the ice and asked if he was an organist. His reply to me was, yes, where he was organist, how long he had been at that church, and how

many and who his teachers had been. He posed not one question about who I was, where I was from, was I an organist, to what chapter do I belong, etc. He then promptly walked away to speak with his buddies who could have cared less about who I was. Needless to say I will not attend that chapter again in the near future. Thanks you for permitting me to get this recent treatment off my chest. In my opinion, the lack of friendliness is a large reason why others are not attracted to the AGO organization.

High cost of membership and conventions are the greatest impediments to growth of AGO among part-time musicians, even while more employers are hiring only part-timers. Tangible benefits such as discounts and online opportunities could help attract more of these people, who are arguably in the greatest need of networking opportunities, AGO advocacy and educational support.

The Dayton, Ohio, Chapter recently offered workshops outside an easy commuting distance of downtown. Eight part-time organists who had never attended an organ workshop or meeting attended.

My main concern about AGO is a lack of support for small chapters. Ours does a fair amount, but has only managed to make it into the Chapter News one in the last several years in spite of submissions--which chapters like Spartanburg (near where I used to live) have been in on an almost monthly basis.

Chapters really need to be welcoming of those who don't attend events often (me). Reach out to engage us--we would come more often if we felt welcomed!

It is time to upgrade the membership process to include online payment of dues and providing space for correcting personal data for each member. As a chapter Registrar, the old method of pasting labels to a Dues Report should be changed ASAP to something done electronically.

A problem not specifically addressed (or if it was I missed it) is the "ingrown-ness" of many of our chapters. I have been a member of three (and dean of two), and they seem to wind up as small groups of friends struggling to make a difference in their communities. National and regional officers are supportive, but it can seem like a struggle.

Between my church and community ensemble rehearsals, I cannot attend any evening events. The virtual chapter is a great idea.

Personal communications with the members of a particular chapter have been found to be of significant importance to individual members of our Clearwater Chapter (Fla.) AGO. For this reason we have a Phone Bank of 4 to 5 members who call every member of our Chapter between 10 and 15 days prior to an event as a reminder, and if a response is not forthcoming in one or two days from the time of having left a message, that individual is called again. This has resulted in a 60% increase of attendance at all events. We have a gathering time of one half-hour before a dinner, followed by the programmed event. All members are grateful for the personal phone call reminders.

When I recently joined, it took over 4 months for my membership to be registered with the National. I still have not received my first copy of the American Organist. There appears to be a great deal of incompetence at all levels of management.

Membership: Should be able to submit via online, regardless if it goes to national or chapter first. Membership should be accepted year-long--none of this, wait until July/August.

As a past chapter treasurer, I found the dues collection process very cumbersome and antiquated. Has it been explored to have it more like a regular subscription handled online and the chapter percentage sent directly to the chapter's bank account by monthly transfer?

I would like to see a "universal membership" policy--and do away with dual membership (i.e. payments).

As the new Dean of the Middlesex Chapter, this survey is particularly timely as we are planning to embark on an aggressive soul-searching "Where does our Chapter want to be two years from now" program in January 2010.

I appreciate the Sacramento Chapter's efforts to provide periodic meetings with nationally recognized organists and choir leaders.

I think our chapter is working hard to find both interesting and useful material for our meetings. But we do need to assure that newer members are included in positions of responsibility.

I have belonged to two AGO Chapters--one in the Midwest and one on the West Coast. The Midwest AGO was a wonderfully cohesive, collegial group that, in my judgement, accepted people at whatever skill level they possessed, yet was supportive and encouraged them to reach for a higher level of musicianship. The West Coast chapter was much more academic in orientation and not geared to the needs of someone working in a church job, although that has changed somewhat through the years. The second chapter, of which I am still a member (and at age 68, one of the younger ones!) is also comprised of good colleagues and friends, but it is getting harder and harder for 10-11 people to keep a 30-member chapter really active. Frankly, I'm tired of being one of those 10-11. On my least optimistic days I wonder if AGO isn't becoming a relic of the past. However, when I hear young performers I am encouraged for the future of the organization. But it's not going to be your grandmother's AGO. Thus, all the interactive online possibilities are great, I think.

Attendance is not a priority for many members, so chapters and AGO nationally needs to incorporate communication via the Internet.

I think the AGO is fantastic and I adore reading TAO magazine, but it's so difficult to get involved in my chapter. I get e-mails about concerts, but I don't know if the chapter has regular meetings, or what they really do. And since I'm relatively new to the area, I don't know anyone here who is a member, so going to the events is very intimidating: at 23 years old, I don't know if I'd be the youngest there by 40 years and have nothing in common with anyone else. Outreach programs for members my age might be helpful--if it was geared toward people in their 20s and 30s I wouldn't feel like I'd be so out-of-place.

I find that chapter programs are most often underprepared and not up to adequate standards of professionalism. I go out of a sense of duty, but often leave disappointed.

I have to travel over an hour to the nearest AGO group. Online additions would greatly enhance my learning and participation when travel is not possible.

I feel chapters need to find more effective ways for members to get to know each other in a structured way and try to break up cliques. Perhaps topical discussions during dinners or in small groups could help people break the ice better. Us introverts would appreciate the structure. I personally do not feel valued by the members of my local chapter to want to go to every meeting. My chapter area is wide and sometimes it is quite a trek to get to a meeting.

I really love the idea of a virtual chapter. I think it could foster communication among people from all over the country. I'm in a very rural area and sometimes feel very isolated from others who share the same interests and passion for the organ as I do. Many organists in our area play for church as a hobby type of thing, which is fine, but they are not interested in pursuing in-depth study or knowledge.

I find my local chapter unfriendly. They always use the same people on boards and for workshops. I have been a member for 43 years and have never been asked to play or do a workshop. If it were not for the placements in the newsletter, I would not be a member any more. When I do attend a meeting, hardly anyone even speaks to me. I would think that at least the Dean would be friendly.

I would appreciate national helping chapters with educational programming. (Perhaps by sponsoring clinicians which could be sent out on tour, or something like that?)

Also, with membership through a chapter, it is inconvenient when one moves, to locate someone in the chapter and to get on board.

Offer more support to chapters as far as programming goes.

I'm concerned about receiving both TAO and chapter info on a timely basis; this has yet to happen--each arrives late, thus, I miss events, et al.

Greater emphasis on individual chapters and their growth. The token "chapter development" workshop at conventions is not working.

Because there is not a local AGO chapter (the closest is 45 minutes away, and I have never received any information from the chapters regarding events/programs), I retain my membership in the chapter I was involved with in seminary. It would be nice if the AGO would provide information to local chapters when someone has an address change so they could be contacted by local chapters regarding membership, events, etc.

I am glad I have reached a stage in life where I have time to be more active in AGO, and am currently Dean of my chapter. I enjoy this tremendously and have met a lot of interesting people, although it takes a lot more time than I anticipated. We have boosted attendance greatly at our events as I have tried to make them more attractive without diluting substance, and have advertised *widely*, including sending everyone we can think of downloadable, printable flyers to post. Also have receptions, nice ones. Also, are connecting with other institutions for joint programs. Organists can be fuddy-duddy, and we have tried to move away from that with good success. Attendance generally has increased 5 to 10 times.

I believe that we get many individuals excited about joining our chapter until they come face to face with the cost. Even current members are having trouble with the close to \$100 rate, as their employers are cutting salaries and dropping benefits-like paying for professional membership. I don't know what the answer is, but different membership levels (perhaps by whether or not one has certification) might work. Also, many members are not interested in receiving the TAO. So, perhaps going to a bimonthly or quarterly magazine might be considered. Also, one can really only join the AGO during the summer months. Renewal comes up much too fast if one joins at any other time--making the expense an even greater concern.

Have proposed this several times over the years. There should be strong incentives and recognition for organ instructors to enroll all students in the AGO, with little or no initial cost to the students—"risk free"--followed by a few years of increasing dues until full cost is reached.

Committee on the New Organist

The AGO has been very welcoming to me, as a new organ student. I have met some very nice people and received a lot of encouragement from a vast number of people. I would like to thank the AGO for everything they have done to inspire me, especially their support of POE.

Besides retention of present members with the many good programs already going, I feel AGO should make special effort to attract the young beginning organ students and the college students considering going into this field.

Our chapter already has scholarships for beginning organists. For several years, we have given 2-4 scholarships each year.

We need more student activities and outreach.

Being an organ teacher, I would love to see more master classes for high school organ students. I realize that there might not be as many high school students in organ; but, this might help. I really am excited about being a part of AGO. I hope to go to a convention someday.

While the AGO is doing a great job, I would like to see more development of young organists. I am worried about the deterioration of classically trained musicians in the church.

I think one of our main issues right now is reaching out to the younger generations of people. The really large chapters have some, however the majority is just older professionals. In the smaller chapters have few and most members are in the older stages of life. Why is this? We need to focus clearly on reconnecting with the younger generation as an organization or we will suffer soon. Best of luck.

I have been organist at large churches until retiring and now substitute. I believe that a portion of our future organists lie in *piano studios* and high school pianists. I operated a large piano studio, and often provided biweekly organ lessons to weekly high school piano students. At one time, I taught biweekly lessons at two churches, alternating locations and students. Pianists are automatically trained to teach. Organists are *not*. I have developed programs which I present to entire piano studios at the pipe organ for purposes of attracting future organists. I also have a 4-session 2-hour weekly group session for four adults or children of *any age*, which was very successful in a large city area. I also believe that *piano teachers* and their students should be targeted at the junior high and senior high school level. I was adjunct organ teacher at a community college for many years and occasionally taught piano majors who had an interest in organ. Most were very adept and interested. I also have taught and do teach adult organ students, some of whom play, and some of whom want to play for their church. Included in the basic organ playing skills, I teach the liturgy or format of *their* own church service and repertoire appropriate for weddings and funerals. I believe AGO is missing out on many educational opportunities! I'd be interested in your response. I am passionate about teaching and education of future organists!

In my view, the future success of the profession of organ playing depends on the recruitment of the tremendous pool of students of classical music. There is a glut on the market of virtually every area of classical music but ours. We must encourage talented teenage/20-something pianists (and others who might have some keyboard skills) to consider the organ as a viable possibility. I don't know exactly what percentage of piano majors in college actually succeed as piano performers, but it must be quite low; the percentage of organ majors working as professional organists must be higher. Efforts by music schools and universities to keep students'

expectations realistic are desperately needed, as far too many students are permitted to focus their studies exclusively on an area in which they will never succeed, but this is largely out of the control of our organization.

The AGO, or an offshoot organization, would do well to focus on young players; use the web to reach them.

I love the Dayton, Ohio, AGO Chapter. It has been wonderful to associate with other organists. I love the organ and want to see it passed to future generations. I have hosted three Pedals, Pipes, and Pizzas. I felt the results were very good with the students (in 2005 = 30 students, 2007 = 57 students, 2009 = 29 students). A number of students hung around after the pizza to keep playing the organ. We have had several who started taking organ lessons due to attending Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza. I have taught about the pipe organ in my public school 7th grade general music classes. Seventh graders appear to genuinely find it an awesome instrument. I think we can improve the younger generation interest in the organ if we can just give them more positive exposure to it.

Please open up the Technical Pipe Organ encounter to more ages. I felt I was not able to attend because I was slightly older (by 1-2 years) than the cutoff. As a recent graduate in engineering, I was very intrigued of learning the inner workings of a pipe organ, and I have been pondering how recent developments in engineering (design tools and even materials) could make an impact on future organs.

We need to attract young organists in the profession and guild.

I am a volunteer church musician, with full time "non music employment". My real music is jazz—that's where I am paid to play. As I get older I see the beauty in the classical church music and am trying to learn the history and performance skills needed to cross over into performing pipe organ. I took the training I had in music recording acoustics and digital keyboard and midi and am working backwards to see the physics and voicings for organ performance. Everything I can remember from my college days piano lessons is being called into use again. The organists in my guild chapter who are my age are very good performers and I am like the student. I have the study notes for the service playing certification exam and hope to take it someday. Private lessons from a pro are really expensive, and the one I want to study with can't give me a set date and time for a course of lessons. She keeps having to reschedule me in between her performances and travel. I wish I could have some home-school course that she could check me on so I know I am getting a curriculum and not just a QA session. It would be great to have a summer course to attend and then some online homework, and have my private teacher serve as a sponsor/mentor/private teacher so I could learn faster. I have read the Gleason method book cover to cover and am trying to master the drills. She thinks the book is too boring to use in lessons, but if I can't get the coordination, I can't play a thing. I think a lot of growth could happen in AGO if they make a path for the musicians who crossover from other instruments to develop proficiency and be a part of the "labor force." I think younger people like organ music sounds, as they incorporate them in arena rock, film scores, etc. Have you heard the film score to Harry Potter and Pirates of the Caribbean? Church music will evolve to "anything you can imagine" in the future, and they are limited by the skill of future musicians in what can be played in church. I think there will be a great decrease in musicianship among church leaders in the future. AGO should be a resource for the churches of all brands. I am having a problem with church leaders who don't understand music now. One church I play for has musician leadership team that cannot read music in notes at all. They only read chord changes and pass out MP3 files to the praise team members. Because of my jazz background I can play with them, and they only use a few chords and they stay in the "guitar player keys." There is a pipe organ in their worship meeting room, but nobody can play it. They want me to play it for them, but they can't name a

song that they want to hear or decide how to fit it into the programming! Recently they wanted "something ambient" for meditation music. I went to my XM Radio selection for "ambient" to get the sound they were looking for, then I built a piano solo based on a gospel hymn melody. They couldn't tell me how many minutes to prepare--just watch the soundboard guy for the signal. Once they turned down the house lights so low and put a spotlight on another part of the stage, I played the whole meditation piece in the dark! They don't think of a light on a music stand, because they don't read music. By being a resource for musicians who want to learn about classical concert and church music and improve the level of performance in American church music, AGO will do a lot of good.

I joined AGO to hopefully participate in chapter events and to find the local organ concerts/recitals. I would like to attend a few master classes for a new organist who will never become a full-time church musician. I enjoy the music, the playing, and the challenge to improve music playing ability.

Generally, I think less formality in recitals would attract new and younger members. We should ask ourselves, "Is this boring?" Let's make music fun!

More emphasis on growing the next generation of organists, please.

Committee on Professional Education

Please recognize adults that come to organ studies later in life. There seems to be a decided slant towards those with a bachelor's degree in music and/or conservatory training. Many of us have had to study independently (privately) because we lacked proximity to a music program/school, or other non-musical professional obligations prevented study in a music program. At 48, I feel largely left out. I am neither a highly trained, highly seasoned professional (although I've done this 15 years) or the hot, newly discovered kid prodigy. I'd sure like to see a lot more focus towards those of us that still strive to learn independently and master the art and profession! The American Organist seems to have little for players like me--material is written for either very advanced musicians or, in some cases, those fairly new to the art and profession. It'd be terrific to think those of us with ambition but studying independently could maybe pass certification one day. It seems geared only towards those that have had benefit of university studies in music. Overall, I find the journals and the professionals I have met through the AGO to be top notch, and they do further my ambitions!

I think there need to be more resources available to young organists. We have hardly any instruments of worth to practice on, and if you ask an older organist to use the instrument at their church or synagogue, they often refuse. Not to mention not really having anyone to talk to about issues we face as young organists who haven't had a lot of experience in the field. Then there are the costs. I'm a full-time seminary student and just don't have the money for organ lessons, sheet music, conventions, etc. So I just can't participate or improve my skills as an organist very often. Bottom line, be more open and flexible. If we want our craft to go on, there need to be more options available.

I'd love to see basic tutorials online (I'm fully trained in the basics--came from a piano background.)

I love AGO as it is. But perhaps more up-to-date online services would follow the rest of the world. I really like the idea of increasing educational opportunities and resources online!

I would love to see the Guild offer more learning opportunities online.

Have many more online resources--free music, links to websites.

I am an adult organ student, beginning to play services in my teacher's church. I would like to see some programs for beginning organists on easy repertoire, similar to what was covered at the 2008 POE+ in Pittsburgh. I attended, and thoroughly enjoyed my lessons and workshops. I wish we had been able to have workshops longer than 90 minutes, and hope to see more similar "classes" at my local level.

I belong to the AGO because I think I should be a member of a professional organization in my field, and it is helpful in finding subs. However, I believe that the AGO at both the national and local (Milwaukee Chapter) levels shows little concern about the problems of the typical church organist. Few have majors in organ, or even in music. Many are pianists who never have had instruction in organ registration, hymn playing style, advice on finding playable music, etc., etc. If the AGO really wanted to promote better acceptance of the organ it would address these issues rather than sponsoring recitals where most of the music is beyond the capabilities of the typical church musician. Have you ever wondered why only a tiny fraction of the church organists in this country are members of the AGO? Answering that question might be helpful in building a more relevant AGO. Church organist since the age of 13 (>60 years). Continued work with local college organ faculty. Degrees are in physics (45 year career teaching physics and chemistry).

I think that anything we can do to attract and retain members, while being mindful of our bottom line, is worth a try--I particularly like the idea of online educational resources and discounts on music. These speak to the overworked and underpaid church musician (I'm thinking that's most of us) and to the beginning organist.

It would be nice if there were something available to help older organists who wish to refresh their skills. So far, all of my inquiries have come up empty.

I have been looking for something which will help older organists who wish to refresh their skills. No response to my inquiries.

Committee on Professional Certification

It seems to me that it would be important to give more positive comments when evaluating candidates for certification. Had I received the comments that were made about my playing when I was in my 20s or 30s, I probably would have quit playing. Are we not trying to keep the organ as a vital instrument for use in churches and the concert hall? Are we not trying to keep interested individuals playing the organ, rather than discouraging them? Where are the evaluators from? Are they so good as not to recognize the potential in most of the players that try to become certified? I would like an answer to my questions.

I'm currently studying for Section 2 of the CAGO exam and would love to hear of any study groups or support groups!

It is long past time to include "how to program a concert" as part of AGO certification. Far too often concerts by Doctors of Music with every AGO certificate in their possession send the audience fleeing for the doors vowing to never, ever attend another organ concert. We need more organists like our past president, Fred Swann, who talked a good game and demonstrated that good game every time he sat at an organ console.

I believe strongly that the Guild needs to really stress to a much greater degree what it takes to pass a Guild examination! Churches and academic institutions hiring organists and musicians and offering advanced degrees in organ need to recognize that holders of Guild Certificates have achieved a skill level equal to the degree level of that examination. The AGO suffers from not

having the word "College" in its name. Therefore, churches do not even know what CAGO, AAGO, and FAGO is, even if they know what the letters stand for. They do recognize the letters MM and DMA, however. I am a member of a chapter in Region III that boasts of almost 400 members, but we have just three FAGOs.

For myself, and many of the organists that I know, certification is a non-starter. I hold a doctoral degree in conducting, with undergrad in organ performance, have been an organist for over 30 years, serve my positions well, and am well respected by musical colleagues and church leaders. I know that I could pass the CAGO, but feel no need to bother with it. In looking at AAGO and FAGO, I see either testing redundant to my academic preparation, or skills required that have utterly no connection to my work and musical life. For example, reading open score with C-clefs just doesn't come up in my day-to-day life, and with too much on my plate already, I see little point in taking time to prepare for an exam for a credential that nobody that I know cares about. In my opinion, the Service Playing Certificate is the most relevant to the real world of church music. Why not have multiple levels--Basic Service Playing, Intermediate Service Playing, and Advanced Service Playing? Over time, with the right presentation and publicity, such certificates, at various levels, could become the standard credential for those seeking church music positions, since standards at various academic institutions vary widely. I know people with DMA who can play fabulous organ repertoire, but who are uninspiring and ineffective at leading congregational singing. Conversely, there are those with not much recital ability beyond the Bach "Little 8," but whose registrations, improvisation, and careful attention to hymn texts makes them wonderful service leaders. Focus on the ability to lead congregational song well--with due attention to the organist's role in leading people to sing with an understanding of the text. Naturally, the various levels would call for increasing sophistication in the repertoire to be played as well, just as the present CAGA, AAGO, and FAGO do. But other more "theological" aspects of the church musician's job--selecting choral and organ repertoire in coordination with the lectionary, pastoral care of choir members, etc., are perhaps better left to denomination organizations like ALCM, PAM, NPM, etc. AGO can serve best by focusing on what we do specifically as *organists*.

I have been Dean of two chapters and a District Convener. Organist since age 10 (now 76). Have always felt that the certification requirements are out of touch with what the organist *needs*. Counterpoint? Ye Gods--Palestrina needed that; who needs it today? Just one example of outdated requirements. In all of my years I have *never* once been asked by a church if I had an AGO certificate. They are irrelevant except as an ego booster for the recipient.

My main problem with the examination started when the AGO magazine editor did not include within one page all the rules and regulations about taking the organ test. As a result, I encountered another problem, which is a judge not being sensitive to me not fulfilling some of the regulations. Therefore, I got the impression that this man was an unqualified judge. As a result, I did not pass the Service Playing Exam for the second time. Therefore, I felt that I wasted my \$80 fee on this exam. The editor *must* include all the necessary information within a page, *please*.

There needs to be more feedback opportunity with regard to professional certification. I have noticed a very uneven treatment of this process across different areas; I find that unprofessional and shameful.

I believe that an increased level of the basic knowledge of design, construction, and maintenance of the organ should be part of a certification program. Perhaps there should be a licensing/certification program for organ consultants, so that churches don't get bad advice from just any "Tom, Dick, or Harry" who happens to play well, but may not really know enough technically to serve as a knowledgeable consultant. While some very fine pipe organs are unquestionably being built, in a day when digital instruments have gotten quite sophisticated,

there is no longer any excuse for the many mediocre pipe organs out there, and yes -- still being built.

As suggestions, more online resources, including self-paced educational courses (improvisation, theory, and all topics covered by the certification exams) and access to online printable music/scores (especially for out-of-print works) would be greatly appreciated. It would also be helpful to have online access to sample questions and answers for the certification exams. And, as already mentioned, having greater scheduling flexibility for taking a higher-level certification exam would be very helpful.

SPC exam must continue to evolve in remaining indicative of current realities of service playing.

I think that the organ literature and written exams need to be rethought. It is my opinion that the requirements are too difficult for AAGO and FAGO and have personally found that with being a full-time church musician, I do *not* have to time to prepare for the exam nor learn the "weird" organ lit required.

Had a bad experience with a student taking the Colleague who was unable to reach anybody at AGO headquarters when there were questions about timing of the exam and the return of results. This included not having calls returned. The AGO should be run like a business, not a machine.

I greatly value my membership in the AGO. I became a "real" organist 13 years ago, when I studied for my SPC exam. Since then, I have made it my goal to advance as far as I can in the certification program. However, I am a bit concerned about the Associate exam requirements--for which I am trying to prepare. What purpose will resurrecting course info from my college days (in the '60s) do for my position as music director now in 2009? I don't use figured bass; I don't need to write on paper a fugue; I don't have the time to re-read Grout's History of Western Music. I'm really concerned that I will not pass the far too extensive written and ear tests, but pass the repertoire. Could the exam be better tailored for working organists instead of graduate students still in class?

Please reflect more of an emphasis in strengthening the certification program coupled with education. These are the core of the Guild and have been since 1896. A special emphasis on hymns, accompanying and service playing is needed. In my opinion, the tendency has been to couple the higher-level education programs with national conventions as showplaces for repertoire played by the most newly anointed young virtuosi. This is not bad in and of itself. But while repertoire, new and old, is important, our "Job #1" must remain service playing. More people are won over to our beloved instrument week by week by excellent hymn-singing. Yes, preludes and postludes and anthems should be wonderful, too, but it's the congregational singing that helps people engage personally. Fewer are won over by the emphasis on large, showy pieces of repertoire. I am concerned that, if the AGO misses this point, we are aiding and abetting poor service playing and creating a vacuum, which will be filled by the proliferating so-called "Contemporary Christian Music" praise band, praise team, whatever you want to call it, thing. Let's reclaim the word Contemporary for ourselves, but we must aid in producing excellent musicians at all levels, especially as concerns part-time organists. Every member can and should hold the Service Playing Certificate as a point of personal pride and as a vote to strengthen the future of church music as we know and love it.

The certification program needs to be done away with. It is becoming more archaic as time goes on. The program has little or no bearing on the job market and salary levels. The fact that individual certification levels are equivalents of academic degrees is very belittling. The tests are too expensive, time consuming, and inconvenient. There may be some merit in retaining the

service playing certificate and NPM certification, but the other certificates are of little or no consequence in the real world. I understand it is a part of the AGO's heritage, but I do not see the worth in continuing it.

Updating the relevance of the AGO certification examinations is a very important item to me.

I have never understood the importance of certification. It is not for everyone, as not all organists are educated musicians.

I think online resources are a great idea, as would be online administration of exams.

Chapter study groups for AGO certification are an important benefit of membership, and should be encouraged.

I feel the cert. program to be extremely important and very well maintained.

As I took no regular music courses as a college student, passing the ChM examination made graduate school in music possible for me. I owe my career to the AGO.

Everything else aside, perhaps the certification program needs the most thought, perhaps making it into an alternative to expensive institutions. The master/apprentice relationship in conjunction with certification is still the best for teaching, learning, and the AGO.

What about certifications in organ history, organ research skills, organ construction, building and maintenance, teaching certifications, etc., etc.?

I would like to help develop a certification program that would more accurately represent the skill set required for church organist/choir directors. The current SPC seems like a stepping stone for the other certificates rather than an opportunity to develop improved skills for success in a distinctly different musical environment. Organist subs, for instance, need to know how to operate a wide variety of instruments, step in to direct choirs, adapt to different liturgy, negotiate fees. I've had to learn about copyright laws, establishing budgets, and fund raising as well as having to produce practice CDs and leaflets. I hope the AGO would encourage those members with these skills to share their experience. I would work towards a certificate that addressed real world needs. I've never been called upon to transpose a hymn, but I regularly have to teach choir members their parts--it would be helpful to have some emphasis on these and other abilities required for Service Playing. Also, a membership certificate that could be hung in the choir room would go a long way in increasing the awareness and value of the AGO.

As I have noted in the survey, the Guild needs to seriously consider the worth of the certification program. Should the Guild continue to fund a program that a small percent of the membership actually uses? Does the Guild really think that an employer understands the certification program? Most importantly, AGO certification does *not* equal an academic degree.

I have wanted to try for the Service or CAGO (those are about my skill level) but have never had the motivation or support from local teachers to persevere. Oftentimes I would hear "what do you want a bunch of letters after your name for anyway?" But I was doing it because the repertoire for those categories always presented a welcome challenge for me, which I did stick with. It was always the modulating, transposing, and interluding that kept me back. That is where I need the work, and my lessons never included that.

I believe that AGO certification is not very relevant, nor important, in today's profession.

The certification publications and guidance have become better organized over the last several years, but there's still room for improvement. Something like a curriculum of preparation would be useful to organize one's personal progress through the assorted reprints of TAO articles sold as preparation materials. There is quite a bit left to personal industry in sorting this out. For this reason, I found the certification workshops at AGO conventions to be very useful (also the cert workshop at the NPM convention along the same lines). Nonetheless, I compliment the cert process and the value of the certificate, as it has given me (at the Colleague level) confidence that I know what I am doing.

Make all exams recorded and judged by a national committee and not through a "good old boy" network. On exams, one idea--have musicians play from a lead sheet or "fake book"--much more practical than reading from a figured bass. Stop having the ear exams--they just keep so many people from taking the exams.

Have just taken the CAGO examination and have not yet heard if I passed.

I am proud to be an AGO member. I believe National and local chapters work hard to help improve members. I would like to see more emphasis on certification--requiring certification for membership? A guild is an association of masters and apprentices (and lot of levels in between) all working to improve/advance. The AGO doesn't do enough to foster advancement, I believe. I would like the more skilled organists to mentor others singly or in small groups, perhaps getting a grant from National for their time.

My organ training did not include much work on modulation, improvisation, transposition or accompanying. I was lacking some of these skills when applying for the CAGO. Now that I am semi-retired I don't really need the certificate, except for the push to refine my skills.

Having a professional organization of this stature is important to me, even though I do not attend chapter meetings often. Although the organ was my instrument for my master's degree, I appreciate having the certification programs. Studying for and taking the exams in my mature years have provided assurance of my ability to continue as an up-to-date church organist. I also enjoy and appreciate TAO.

If I lived in U.S., certification would be more important for me.

Concerning the certification questions: I hold a DMA and MM in organ and think the training I received during these degree programs was sufficient.

My biggest concern is to see our Guild help educate and enforce proper reimbursement to *all* musicians full or part-time. Also if this were accomplished and if all religious and non-religious organizations which employed a Guild member adhered to proper and nationally enforced salary guidelines, then I would like to see the certification process become one that isn't so rigid in the demands that currently are part of the tests. Musical dictation just seems very over the top and not necessary in many of the certifications. Also improvisation doesn't seem to be something that needs to be part of most of the certifications. I believe that the certification process on *any* level needs to have certain requirements that prove that the individual meets standards which allow him/her to be recognized for. However, many of these certifications just seem out-of-date, and more emphases on repertoire and the ability to play hymns properly should be of higher importance. The ear training, dictation, and improvisation just don't seem to be something that each of us would use. While these areas are *wonderful* gifts to have, not all musicians will achieve in these areas, and this may be a downside to those who do not achieve certification. The *only* reason I have *not* achieved the Service Playing Certification is because it would make absolutely no difference in my salary if I obtained any certification and my years of service (43)

and talent speak for themselves and have been the guiding force in obtaining employment throughout my time of serving.

Certification process needs to be changed to address individual circumstances, especially the service playing certification. I have done this for years and believe the process of certification is cumbersome as well as time consuming and expensive. I would recommend someone from HQ come and hear me play for a service, then if a Bach piece needs to be played, play that, collect the fee and say you're certified or grandfathered in as far as this goes, and that is the end of that. For other more advanced certifications, offer a course then grant the certification upon successful completion.

I would like to see some less logistically complicated options for earning some sort of recognition from the AGO (if that would be feasible) as my skills as an organist and pianist are above average, but it would be difficult with limited time, money, and support resources to meet the requirements of any current certifications. Please know this is *not* a suggestion that the standards of the AGO be lowered in any way. Thank you for the valuable support and services you offer to musicians and to those of us who are part-time church musicians.

For the AGO Certification exams, I think more choices of repertoire and more rigorous written tests would make the AGO exams closer to those offered by the RCO in the UK and the RCCO in Canada.

The FAGO abbreviation for certification really needs to be changed maybe to proficient or something, but that is *too* much--embarrassing I'd say.

Committee on Professional Networking and Public Relations

I have been working as newsletter editor for 20+ years to promote mutual respect among various groups of classical musicians--organists (AGO), symphony orchestras, college music departments, and various choral and instrumental groups. I think this area is very important. Some of your questions touched on these relationships (my answers about reciprocal membership questions, however, may not reflect my thoughts expressed above). My method was to develop a community calendar of all classical music events that eventually became the standard source for this information in our community (c. 300,000 people). Naturally I see to it that organ events don't get left out!

I think that the AGO is providing a good service to classical organ music; however, I feel that a partnership with an organization such as the ATOS can be beneficial; this can be as simple as reciprocating website links or something greater, such as a joint program. (I must state here that I am a member of both and Publicity Chair for SFNTOS, the Spokane First Nazarene Theatre Organ Society.)

AGO should become more aware of electronic communications, including the value of publicity for all AGO-related events. TAO is a fancy, costly, old-fashioned method of communication. Fewer issues (6/year) and electronic newsletters much better. Chapters need help publicizing events and educating local public audiences. All organists, no matter what level, need encouragement to improve performance and promote organ music.

In American culture today, organ music has a very small place; and a majority of people have a very limited or even no idea of what you're talking about if you mention organ music. I think the most important thing that the AGO could do for us all in the field is to help the general public's awareness and appreciation of organ music.

The AGO as a whole needs to be more savvy in getting the word out about classically trained pipe organists; for example, by getting into movies and TV! This might make people realize what organists really do and how they play with both feet and hands. (Of course, let's also try to stop allowing the organ to be stereotyped as "spooky," only for Halloween or Phantom of the Opera!) I think this flies over most people's heads. Most people do not know what organists "do," and think that organists are just volunteers who sit down and play in church once a week. They have no idea how much training is required. This is coming from a musician in a small parish--not in a big downtown church or cathedral. People need to be educated, and it could happen from a more national level. Locally it's tough because the local chapter does not have the money to advertise. I often marvel at how Hollywood always includes classical musicians such as violinists, cellists, pianists, etc., but never organists. Just a little pet peeve of mine, thanks for listening!

I was a piano major in school but work primarily as an organist. I am also a member of the National Federation of Music Clubs. Perhaps some type of relationship could be forged with that group.

I would like to see a shared convention with ACDA--unique days at beginning and end for each with overlapping days which provided educational opportunities in technology, teaching tools, repertoire, and other common areas. Those who wished could register and participate in the complete week-long + convention, those who did not could participate in their unique portion + the common days. This would save huge sums, as well as bring together many professional commonalities and provide the vendors with a one-stop exhibition.

I think AGO is a valuable organization. I have used many of the resources available--especially great info in TAO. A suggestion would be to consider combining or working more closely with the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. Because I can only afford to go to one convention a year, I normally choose NPM because it is more focused on the Catholic Church. If there was some way that the conventions could be synced either by some shared activities, or by combining for one big convention, it may be more profitable, you wouldn't have to vie for the same people and the sharing of ideas could be very fruitful--just a thought. Thanks for all you do. I belong to another professional society as well as AGO. I feel there is much we can learn and share among other organizations, even non-musical ones.

Having been dean of a large urban chapter for several years, I feel the future for effective chapter programming is to work in partnerships and co-sponsorships of programs with local concert halls, churches, and music schools. This instantly engages a larger public, gains publicity for the AGO as an organization, and helps both the chapter and the institution to continue to provide high quality programming in these challenging financial times.

We need to find ways to make the general public more aware of the AGO and the significance we can have in sacred as well as secular venues.

I think we need to work to get the general public into the organ--has to happen on the local level, but might be helped by some national strategies/tips.

I think the most important thing the AGO can do is begin to involve with the general public and show them that organ performance is not a lost art or an obsolete, boring experience. We need more artists who can set audiences on fire, such as Nathan Laube or Olivier Latry.

Media: AGO headquarters needs to have media staff whose job it is to keep the AGO online through many media, prepare public service announcements, etc.

I get antsy at the mention of "reciprocal memberships." I find my AAM membership especially relevant in terms of quality programming and collegiality. We constantly fight accusations of elitism, but we also do not want AAM to be just another organization where one pays their money and joins. So, a big *no* from me on those questions!

I feel the denomination music programs are great without too much AGO input.

I'm also a member of NPM: I'm glad for the joint certification efforts, but more could be done with synergy. I'd also say that NPM has more appeal to "grassroots" musicians and younger people.

Detach AGO from the church and religion. We *must* begin to build a new audience for the organ. If Harry Potter had loved to play the organ, our lives would be better. Offer a competition for the best screenplay for a film about the organ, sell it to Hollywood. Combine AGO with ATOS and OHS for a real powerhouse organization with more influence.

I encourage the AGO to promote "high level" organ repertoire and pipe organs to the general public through packaged TV and radio programs. Is there a way to counteract PBS's conclusion that organ music is of little interest to their audiences?

While the AGO is not large enough to have the ubiquitous presence of television and the movies, there is opportunity to leave a mark. Examples: Hallmark Co. Hallmark Theater and Hallmark Hall of Fame; Diane Bish's "Joy of Music" TV series; Crystal Cathedral church services with choir and organ broadcast on TV.

Well thought-out questions. My biggest concern is that the AGO needs to publicize and promote itself, and its programs, more effectively to the general "unchurched" public as well as the church-and-organ-music-oriented public, and that's a tall order! Anything the AGO can do to promote and uphold the traditional roles of the professional (and serious amateur) organist and organ student in the life of the church, the academic and the concert world, is a good thing! In other words, keep up the good work, only make it more apparent to everybody "out there" beyond the realm of church and academia! One example of AGO at its best was the International Year of the Organ--commissioned works, publicity support, etc.

We still need to inform potential new members that it is not necessary to be a full-time musician, concert organist or even be able to play an instrument to be a member of the AGO. There are still many people who enjoy and support organ and classical music. I think the AGO needs to publicize itself more nationally, not just on NPR, college stations or classical stations. Also we need to figure out how to get organ music not only associated with church in the minds of many. Better local publicity of well-known artists and concerts is necessary. We also need more collaboration with other musical organizations and performing organizations, like symphonies, bands, and concert series not associated with a church. We need to encourage education and dialogue for clergy and folks who are pushing non-traditional music in churches and who are for abandoning the organ. That also calls for just compensation for part-time people so they can improve their skills as musicians to better serve their worship communities.