



American Guild of Organists

Chapter Leadership News

June 2020

Dear Chapter Leaders,

As I write this newsletter, I cannot ignore the violence and unrest that are happening throughout our world. Many are marching, kneeling, laying down on streets and on highways in support of those who continue to encounter prejudice, inequality, and racism. We cannot stand by silently while acts of violence explode throughout our nation. I believe that we are our brother's keeper and that we must act with compassion and care to support the dignity of everyone in our society. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." Together, let us use the collective power of our music to help heal the divisiveness, eliminate the fear and eradicate the injustice that pervades our communities.

This issue will cover:

- ✓ Honoring Dr. David K. Lamb, Outgoing Councillor for Membership
- ✓ AGO Twin Cities Chapter Member Relief Fund
- ✓ Northern New Jersey Chapter's Virtual Recital
- ✓ Upcoming webinars
- ✓ Online Programming
- ✓ Reminder to Update Your New Officers in ONCARD



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Honoring David K. Lamb, CAGO, DMus



It is hard to believe that David will be stepping down after serving three terms as Councillor for Membership. In this leadership role he has supported three sub-committees: the Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support, the Committee on Career Development and Support and the Task Force on Member Inclusivity, to Seek Encourage and Respect Musicians Who Serve in Positions with Electronic/Digital Organs. David has also served as Convener of the Regional Councillors, District Convener and Dean of the Southern Indiana Chapter. David leaves a legacy through his passion and motto: “to seek, respect and encourage one person at a time.” He continues to live by the words of Maya Angelou “people will forget what we say, people will forget what we do, but people will always remember the way you made them feel.” David so passionately believes this, that he recently installed these beautiful stained glass windows in his home.



David, on behalf of everyone at the AGO, your colleagues on all of our committees and the many others whose lives you have impacted, we thank you for your dedicated and inspiring leadership!



**Twin Cities Chapter of the
AMERICAN GUILD OF
ORGANISTS
Dues Forgiveness &
Members' Relief Fund**

I want to thank David Jenkins, Dean of the Twin Cities Chapter, for informing me of a very special member care initiative. "The TCAGO Board has approved a plan to pay all chapter members' dues for one year. This initiative was proposed by our treasurer, David Geslin, since some funds were left over, due to canceled events. Our chapter is in a very secure financial position because of excellent leadership and careful stewardship of our chapter's resources over many years. Our hope is to consolidate our membership, and to move ahead with confidence. At the same time, our board realizes that the current pandemic has caused hardship for some of our members. Therefore, we wish to establish a members' relief fund, to assist those who may be dealing with financial hardship or uncertainties. If any of you are able and wish to respond to the forgiveness of your dues, donations may be made to this fund."

David shared that it was not difficult for the board members to support the plan. Because it was going to be difficult to anticipate how many members they might lose this year due to the COVID-19 crisis, they believed that this would be a great way to support their members' needs. They felt that by doing this, it would be good for the long-term sustainability of the chapter, and would encourage people to stay engaged, even during this difficult time. The key part of the plan is to encourage Twin Cities' members to "give back" by donating the amount of their dues to a members' relief fund. The chapter was inspired by the Greater Hartford Chapter's funding for members who have lost their regular church employment or suffered a significant financial loss, to apply for a \$500 one-time grant. Congratulations to everyone on the board of the Twin Cities Chapter for following in the footsteps of the Greater Hartford Chapter to create this commendable program!

Northern New Jersey's Virtual Progressive Recital



Cathie Rupp, Dean, Northern New Jersey Chapter, shared that due to COVID-19, their cancelled members' recital became "Music from Home - A Progressive Recital." In less than 10 days from when an email blast had been sent, they had received enough responses (including interest from new members) to produce the program. The result was that they had one of the best attended events they had seen in quite a while. During a difficult time it provided a tremendous boost to morale for everyone. The opportunity for many members to work together under demanding circumstances, revealed new strengths and abilities that no one previously knew about. "The quarantine gave us the gift of more time to meet, brain storm, organize and serve."

Kudos, to Cathie and the many performers who played the organ, piano and hand bells, as well as to David Macfarlane, for his expertise in recording and editing. Recorded on May 18th, to date, this recital has attracted over 500 views on Facebook and YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9k1rG5qSzNw&feature=youtu.be>.

Save These Dates for Upcoming AGO Webinars

- June 19th, 3:30 pm ET: **Putting it Together: Tools for Choral Collaboration and Recording.** Continuing in our series of technology webinars, featuring Regional Councillor Sue Mitchell-Wallace and Kevin Harris with Harrisland studios, this webinar will cover software for that can be used for recording and editing choral performances.
- June 26th, 3:30 pm ET: **Building on Your Chapter's Best Practices as You Seek, Encourage and Respect - One Member at a Time,** presented by AGO's Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support
- July 10th, 2:30 pm ET:
Planning a Smoother Experience for Substitute Organists and Hosts.
Join Sarah Bereza for a deep dive into what questions to ask and how best to prepare for work as a substitute organist.

This summer, the AGO will also be presenting a series of **Leadership Onboarding Workshops**, to better prepare new officers for their leadership duties. A detailed schedule of these webinars will be sent out very shortly.

Online Library of Recordings and Workshops

In last month's newsletter, I posed the question regarding what topics you would like the AGO to produce to support chapter online programming. I received only a few responses from a few chapters about what they were thinking of doing or would like to see. These included:

- A virtual visit to an organ builder
- A service playing workshop
- An online organ crawl
- A master class

My goal is to create a library of online programs that chapters can use for their monthly programs. If you have already confirmed online speakers, recitals and workshops, please share this information with me.

Crisis Management during the Time of COVID-19

What is a Crisis?

- Any event that is expected to lead to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting individuals, groups, organizations, community
- Crises are deemed to be negative changes, security, economic, political, public health, or environmental affairs, especially when they occur abruptly, with little or no **warning**.
- More loosely, it is a term meaning 'a testing time' or an 'emergency event'.

Crisis management is the process by which an organization deals with a disruptive and unexpected event that threatens to harm the organization or its stakeholders.

Over the last couple of months, I empathize with how discouraging and disappointing it has been for you to have had to cancel the remainder of your spring programming and special events. Some of you are currently being proactive in addressing the “what-ifs,” regarding the uncertainty of whether the Corona virus will return and how it will affect the ability of your members to meet face-to-face. I encourage everyone to take the time now for contingency planning. Prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Begin with assessing which monthly programs could be converted to virtual events. If you have already contracted a recitalist, discuss options for the program to be recorded or live-streamed. What workshops are you planning that could be recorded? What other arts organizations in your area may be planning online events that you can collaborate with? As well, what other chapters can you collaborate with? For those chapters that are geographically challenged, this is the perfect time to engage members who cannot drive long distances through *virtual* programming. Need help with technology? Please review the recordings and handouts from recent Leadership Talks technology webinars [here](#). Don't go it alone; you are each other's best resources, and I encourage you to extend a virtual handshake to another chapter and host a joint online *Happy Hour*.

Don't Forget to Update Your New Officers!

Please **do not forget to access ONCARD to update your officer roster**. This is a critical task that if you haven't done yet, should be done immediately. After June 30th new officers will no longer be able to access ONCARD. Instructions for accessing ONCARD can be found in the Membership toolkit in the Chapter Leadership Toolkits [here](#).

I want to thank the many chapters that have included in their newsletters information regarding renewing their membership by credit card through ONCARD. Please continue to remind everyone that if they are not comfortable renewing through our website, our member services team is here to help. Please call 212-870-2311 and follow the voicemail prompts. We are most happy to help in processing anyone's membership renewal by credit card!

For those of you who have not recently re-visited our COVID-19 resources pages, I encourage you to do so. New information and resources continue to be updated weekly. Responding to COVID-19 information can be found [here](#). We have also added a Q&A page [here](#), that covers questions regarding the stimulus package, copyright information, answers regarding whether an organist can contract the virus through playing the organ, and links to several resources regarding safety for small groups of musicians to gather, as well as choirs singing together during this time.

Thank you all, for your perseverance, your continued outreach to your members and the strong leadership you have shown during these most difficult times. I miss visiting AGO chapters, so in lieu of a face-to-face meeting, let's meet on Zoom. Just let me know when. We will indeed, get through this together. Please know that I can always be reached on the "leadership hotline": 212-870-2311 ext. 4307.

Save the Date! June 24th, 3:00 pm ET
Town Hall Zoom Meeting for Sub-Deans and
Others Involved in Programming
To Discuss Programming for the New Season