



AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

Chapter Leadership News

March 2023

March Happenings

Dear Chapter Leaders,

I write this having just completed post-production of **Leadership 2023**. I was very pleased with this year's conference because our breakout sessions addressed many of the most pressing issues that you have been dealing with. I want to thank Sue Mitchell-Wallace, chair of the Board of Regional Councillors and Southeast regional councillor, and Vicki Schaeffer, councillor for membership, for serving as facilitators for **Board Development and Teamwork: Who's in Charge?** Kudos to David Vogels, past dean of the Denver Rocky Mountain chapter and TAO columnist, for facilitating **Board Meetings: Where the Action Is—Creating Board Policies and Meeting Procedures to Stay on Track**. Mark Andersen, district convener and dean of the Central North Carolina chapter, facilitated one of the most sensitive sessions, **Dealing with the Problem Board Member and Managing Conflict on Your Board**. Rodney Girvin, dean of the San Diego chapter, facilitated **Programming, Member Engagement, and Fostering Inclusivity**. (For those of you who were unable to attend, I know that you will be inspired after hearing Rodney's recap at Monday's closing session). Our own J.W. Arnold, marketing communications specialist, facilitated **The Power of Publicity: Promote Your Events through Media Relations**, and yours truly tackled **Help! Our Nominations Committee Can't Find Anyone Interested in Serving as a Chapter Officer: Creating a Succession Plan to Avoid Leadership Burnout**. Chapter leaders, we have a wonderful resource that addresses these and other critical board management topics in [The Board Team Handbook](#). (This, among many other valuable chapter leader resources, can be found in our [Chapter Leadership Toolkits](#), located under the Chapters tab on our website.) Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank the AGO'S councillor for conventions, Nicole Marane, who served as our charming and amusing game show host for *AGO Jeopardy*. The February 5 opening general session can be viewed [here](#). The February 6 closing session can be viewed [here](#).

This issue of **Chapter Leadership News** will cover the following:

- ✓ Leadership Profile: Rodney Girvin, Dean, San Diego Chapter
- ✓ Baltimore Chapter's SOS Mentoring Program
- ✓ Chapter Deans' Data Privacy Information
- ✓ Timeline for the Chapter Nominations and Elections Process
- ✓ Reinventing Your Member-at-Large Officer Positions
- ✓ Durham-Chapel Hill's E-Blast
- ✓ The Importance of Scheduling Social and Networking Events
- ✓ New Membership Brochures
- ✓ Chapter Specialist Support Teams—Apply Now!
- ✓ Getting Ready for iMIS and IRS Updates
- ✓ Upcoming Webinars



Elizabeth George
Chief Membership Officer
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Profile of the Month: Rodney Girvin, Dean, San Diego Chapter



What's sitting on my desk right now: My computer, phone, and soda water bottle

If I weren't doing this, I'd be: It's late, so I'd be "sleeping dada" with my children.

The best advice I ever got: You learn more from failure than success. Never give up. (My dad)

When I'm not at work: I'm reading, practicing, spending time with family, exercising, and watching the NFL.

What keeps me motivated serving as chapter dean: The satisfaction of seeing chapter members bond at our events, and watching friendships and connections become stronger. Building community is my primary motivation.

Baltimore Chapter's SOS Mentoring Program

I was delighted to learn about this Baltimore chapter initiative in their recent newsletter, and I wanted to share with you what I think is a great idea for a mentoring program.

The objective of the SOS (“Solve the Organist’s Situation”) Program is to share helpful advice among members, in a spirit like the “Dear John” column that was part of our chapter newsletter a few years ago.

Do you have questions related to your profession? Do you have questions related to the organ? Examples might include the following:

- Choir issues (an odd section balance or limited budget)
- Repertoire advice (suggestions needed for a specific liturgy, or for an instrument with limitations, or for a non-SATB choir)
- Organ literature questions (e.g., “Did Reger compose anything easy?” or “Can you suggest some women composers of Baroque organ music?”)
- Advice on purchasing a new organ for your church or on fundraising for your instrument
- Musical ideas for a special nonliturgical service (e.g., a prayer service for a war-torn region or a service for victims of gun violence)
- Wondering what organs to be sure to see when traveling to another country

OPTION 1. Your question will be forwarded (without your name) to the BAGO list. Members reading your question who have something to share will email their responses to the coordinator. When the replies are gathered, the coordinator will send the compiled suggestions back to the person who requested help. Additionally, if anyone else in the community sees the question when it is circulated and has a similar question and/or would like to know the solutions regarding the same issue, they too can write to the coordinator, requesting that they also get a copy of the responses.

OPTION 2. If you have a question and anonymity is critical, and you might even want some follow-up dialogue with mentors on the issue, begin by sending your question to the coordinator. Your question will go out to the community at large (anonymously) in the newsletter. Any member who sees your question, and would like to help, will contact the coordinator to request your contact information, to contact you directly.

Kudos to Baltimore for developing a unique and manageable mentoring platform!

Protecting the Privacy of a Chapter Dean’s Contact Information

In compliance with the new General Data Protection Regulation law, the AGO no longer posts a list of deans by chapter or region. We have created an online form for contacting deans (<https://www.agohq.org/chapter-deans/>), providing you the opportunity to submit your name, email address, region, and message.

Have You Formed Your Chapter's Nominations Committee?

It's that time of the year when every chapter should have its nominations committee in place. The Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support presented a great webinar on this subject, which can be viewed [here](#). Eric Birk, AGO executive assistant, also created a timeline—[What to Do When](#)—as well as important information about the elections process, which begins in March and ends in June: [Chapter Elections](#). Now is the time to get this process started! I strongly recommend that, if you haven't started to work on this, you add it to the agenda for your next board meeting. Please, do not expect a reply to an email that your nominations committee sends out to members asking if anyone is interested in serving as an officer. Start identifying people now, then pick up the phone and call them. In addition to providing a brief description of the duties involved with a specific officer position, be sure to include the value and benefits of serving as a chapter leader. We have created a document that answers the question "What's in it for me?": [The Value and Benefits of Serving as a Chapter Leader](#). There is also an entire section devoted to the nominations and elections processes in the **Management and Governance** menu in the Chapter Leadership Toolkits.

Reinventing Your Member-at-Large Positions and Assigning a National Liaison

During our "creating a chapter pipeline" breakout at Leadership 2023, the subject of how chapters are utilizing the member-at-large position came up. I've always been puzzled about what the purpose of this position is. Leslie Wolf Robb, AGO councillor for communications and a member of the San Diego chapter, shared that, a few years ago, as her chapter was updating its bylaws, it was decided to totally eliminate member-at-large positions and replace them with titles that reflected specific duties. One of them is the **chapter life coordinator**. This person keeps in close contact with members to see how they are doing—something that really demonstrates concern for their welfare. This person can also be responsible for recognizing members in chapter newsletters—noting birth announcements and celebrating member milestones and accomplishments, for example. This concept stimulated some great conversations about why people had assigned a board member the position of member-at-large without giving them any tasks. Giving members-at-large a purpose strengthens their board participation and makes them feel valued. It also helps to form your leadership pipeline, by preparing these volunteers to assume other officer positions, thereby preventing burnout.

Serving as a National Liaison

Thank you to Rodney Girvin for suggesting that chapters could assign a member-at-large to serve as a **national liaison**, whose purpose would be to strengthen communication between individual chapters and AGO Headquarters. Unless I am contacted by a chapter regarding a specific issue, I depend on newsletters for receiving chapter information. Still, I know that I don't receive all of them. Although we do send out a monthly e-blast, there's never enough room to include everything that's happening at AGO Headquarters, so this position would be beneficial for everyone. Are you interested in assigning someone on your board to serve as a national liaison? If so, please email me at elizabeth.george@agohq.org.



Chapter Tuesday E-Blast
February 7, 2023

AGO Durham-Chapel Hill's E-Blast

I want to recognize Lyn Francisco, Durham-Chapel Hill dean, for the message she included in the chapter's first e-blast.

While we await a chapter newsletter editor to come forward from our ranks, we are going to try something different: a regular e-blast of time-sensitive and important information for our membership. In addition to chapter programs, if you are offering a special event that will be of interest to our membership, please send all the details. Were you aware that the only membership requirement of the AGO is to love the organ? We have members who are in this chapter for exactly that reason. We receive many inquiries per month regarding concerts or programs or services. Members and nonmembers enjoy what you are offering.

*This chapter realized that it was vital to stay connected to their members, and rather than wait for someone to assume the newsletter editor position, they sent out important information in an email. If your chapter is experiencing a similar situation, please continue to stay in touch with your members by email. As chapters strive to strengthen inclusivity, Lyn's simple yet powerful statement clearly supports this endeavor. **Were you aware that the only membership requirement of the AGO is to love the organ?***

The Importance of Scheduling Social Events throughout the Year

Does your chapter schedule stand-alone social and networking events? After emerging from COVID, providing your members with opportunities to get together just to chat and/or share a meal is as important as—or even more important than—planning recitals and workshops. In fact, as we continue to acclimate ourselves to the new normal, if you want to strengthen member engagement and gain a larger attendance at your recitals and workshops, networking is crucial. People want to see one another and have meaningful conversations.

I was delighted to see this announcement in the Long Beach (Calif.) chapter's newsletter.

You're invited...

OCAGO Pasta Night Out! (6:30 P.M.)

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

CRIVELLO

Ristorante Italiano

19881 Brookhurst St., Huntington Beach, CA 92646

Appetizers are on us! Dinner, drinks, and dessert are on you!

Please join us and bring a guest(s) if you like.

A recent email from the Worcester (Mass) chapter:



FIRST THURSDAY LUNCH

February 2 at Noon

O'Connors Restaurant & Bar

1160 West Boylston St, Worcester

CLICK HERE TO RSVP

Just a reminder that we are meeting for our First Thursday Lunch on February 2 at noon, at O'Connor's Restaurant & Bar, 1160 West Boylston Street in Worcester (Exit 4 off I-190). This is always a wonderful time of fellowship, networking, and good conversation.

The AGO's New Membership Brochure

They're here! A digital version of the AGO's new membership brochure has been uploaded to the Chapter Leadership Toolkits: https://www.agohq.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/AGO_MembershipBrochure.pdf.

To request hard copies, please contact Stephanie Ricks at stephanie.ricks@agohq.org, or call AGO Headquarters at 212-870-2310.

Express Your Interest in Serving as a Chapter Specialist Support Team Member

In the January issue of this newsletter and in the February issue of TAO, I included detailed information about the formation of AGO **chapter specialist support teams**. Are you interested in sharing your expertise by participating on a team? Detailed information and a submission form can be found [here](#).



Getting Ready for iMIS and IRS Updates

Eric Birk, Executive Assistant

AGO and member email addresses: Are you or your members sharing one?

In preparation for our upcoming migration to a new membership database, we have learned that sharing an email address with another person will not be possible there. The standard practice in modern databases is to

use the email address on a user's record as the unique identifying piece of data on each record. There cannot be two users with the same email address because the necessary online identity authentication becomes impossible. One person changing a password would affect both persons using the same email address, changing the password for both. Also, the system won't be able to send membership renewal information for both persons to one email address.

The reasons behind this are more a matter of data security than any attempt to take away convenience. In May 2018, the European Union implemented the General Data Protection Regulation law, which requires organizations anywhere in the world who keep data provided by citizens of the countries of the EU to follow more stringent guidelines on how personal data is kept and shared. The AGO has members who either live in the European Union or are citizens of one or more of its member nations. Because the Guild must honor the rights and privileges of those in the EU, and because it is almost impossible to have any set of multiple policies followed in a single database, the law's requirements caused the AGO to make some changes for everyone in our membership database regarding what can be shared and how your and your members' data must be kept, made available to them, or, at your or their request, be permanently deleted under the *right of erasure* provision of the EU law.

There are several options for the circumstance of two people in your chapter sharing the same email address:

- Encourage them to set up or use another email address for one of the people currently sharing one.
- Offer assistance by a tech-savvy member of your leadership team to those who might need help setting up a free Gmail, Yahoo, or other no-cost email address.
- Leave one person without an email address in the membership record (believe it or not, some people don't have an email address!).

We don't yet know the exact authentication procedures that the new database will use, but please encourage those who are sharing an email address to let you help them create solutions *before* differences between our current system and the upgraded system that will be replacing it cause them problems.

IRS Reminder: The IRS deadline for submitting the 990-N e-postcard is May 15 for chapters with a fiscal year-end of December 31. If you've had trouble reaching the site, please keep trying.

<https://www.agohq.org/irsfilinghelp/>

March Webinars



Monday, March 6th, 7 pm ET

Chapter Specialist Support Teams. Who, What, Why.

This interactive webinar will cover the purpose and function of Chapter Specialist Support Teams and will answer questions from those who are interested in participating. Please register [here](#).

Certification Webinars

Monday, March 13th at 7 pm ET

The New Aural Perception Test (AAGO)

Please register [here](#).

Monday, March 20th at 7 pm ET

Fugue: Subject, Answer, Countersubject (AAGO and FAGO)

Please register [here](#).

Monday, March 27th at 7 pm ET

Fugue: Modulation, Episode (AAGO and FAGO)

Please register [here](#).