

American Guild of Organists

Chapter Leadership News

September 2019

Thank you, all, for the positive feedback you shared regarding the August issue of **Chapter Leadership News** and the wonderful examples you sent me regarding what you are doing to recognize and engage your members. Several of these have been included in this issue.

The AGOHQ membership team spent much of this summer focused on membership renewals, to renew as many members as possible by August 31, which is the end of our fiscal year. The calls and emails that you sent to your members truly helped us. Membership is everybody's business, so on behalf of everyone at the AGO, I want to say thank you!

For most of the U.S., the month of September signifies "back to school." For me, this used to mean getting a brand new lunch box and begging my parents for the largest box of crayons I could find. As you meet with your board, I hope that you will discuss how to best use your new crayons (board members) to design new initiatives and innovative events and programs to keep your lunchbox full of engaged members. To support your work, this issue will be focus on:

- ✓ **Member Recognition**
- ✓ **Collaboration and Outreach**
- ✓ **AGO Liability Insurance**
- ✓ **Kicking Off the Year with Pedals, Pipes and Pizza**
- ✓ **Chapter Toolkits**
- ✓ **Ask AGO: Bench Fees**
- ✓ **AGO Chapter Websites**
- ✓ **Budgeting for Chapter Leadership Development**

Please know that I am ready to roll up my sleeves to work with you to help make your year of leadership productive, successful and most of all, fun!



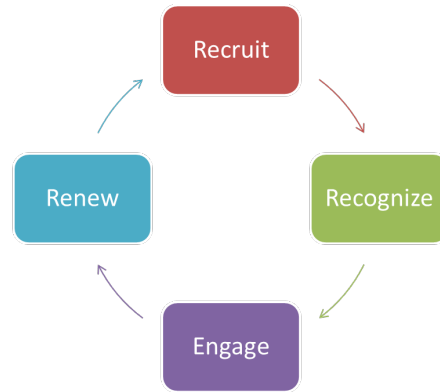
Elizabeth George, CMM

DIRECTOR OF MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT

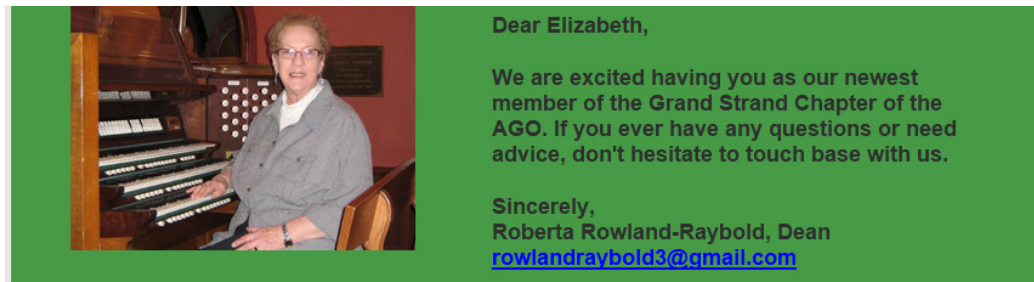
Elizabeth.George@agohq.org

Member Recognition

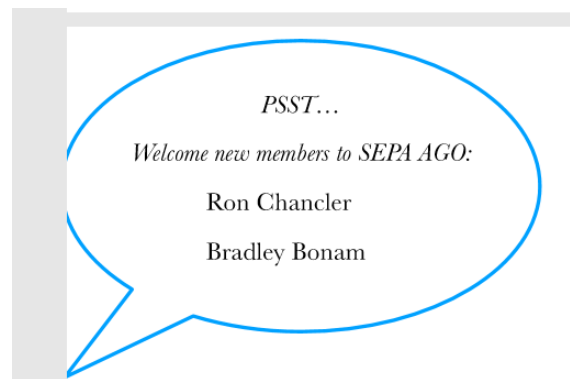
The life cycle of engaging new members begins with recognizing and acknowledging them. Welcoming new members makes them feel valued and respected. It shows that you are excited that they have joined your chapter and prompts them to want to attend upcoming events.



Using Constant Contact, the Grand Strand (S.C.) Chapter sends a personalized welcome email. The email also includes contact information for Grand Strand’s Executive Committee, making it easy for a new member to contact them:



The Southeastern Pennsylvania Chapter recognizes new members in every newsletter:



Collaboration and Outreach

With limited funds for events and programs, keeping a small chapter afloat requires ingenuity and creativity. Barbara Adler, AGO Treasurer and Councillor for Finance and Development and Treasurer for the Ithaca (N.Y.) Chapter shared the following:

Our chapter is now about three years old. We have a little money to put into programs, though not as much as we wish. We are lucky to have Ithaca College and Cornell University as resources and a few really nice organs in town. We invite area chapters to our programs and also attend their programs and special events, such as the Binghamton (N.Y.) Chapter's recent annual picnic. This past spring I attended two recitals hosted by the Syracuse (N.Y.) Chapter and we are planning a joint program with them in the upcoming year.

For smaller chapters, collaborating with other chapters provides opportunities for more robust programming, increased networking and can also save you money.

Reaching beyond your music community

Thank you, Carolyn Hill, dean of the Kern County (Calif.) Chapter for sending me this poster. Producing an event that supports a recognized charity not only demonstrates your commitment to corporate social responsibility and community outreach. It is a powerful marketing tool to present your brand to a wider community. It can also serve as an opportunity to recruit some new members.



AGO Liability Insurance

Did you know that the Guild has a group Chapter Liability Insurance Plan that covers all AGO chapters? The plan, administered by ONI Risk Partners, covers all chapter activities, including regional and national conventions. The policy provides the following comprehensive coverage:

- ✓ Bodily injury or property damage
- ✓ Personal injury, such as libel, slander, defamation of character, false arrest, etc.
- ✓ Events when alcohol is served
- ✓ Use of automobiles not owned by the chapter but used for official chapter business

The plan pays complete legal defense and settlement costs if a coverage charge is brought against your chapter, whether it results in a lawsuit, court judgment, or even out-of-court settlement.

Your chapter, its leaders, and any member acting on behalf of the chapter are covered under this comprehensive Chapter Liability Insurance Plan. The plan provides up to \$1,000,000 per occurrence and a \$2,000,000 annual aggregate to each chapter. There is no deductible. If your chapter is told by a church or facility that it must provide proof of insurance before scheduling an event, the Chapter Request for Certificate must be completed and sent to Abby Grim, the AGO representative at ONI Risk Partners by email abbygrim@onirisk.com or fax to 260-625-7525. If you need assistance completing the form, please call Abby at 260-625-7216.

The Chapter Request for Certificate form can be found on the AGO website:

<https://bit.ly/32c1oEd>

Kicking Off the Year with *Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza*

Congratulations to André Duvallis, dean of the Memphis (Tenn.) chapter and his team for producing a highly successful *Pedals, Pipes and Pizza* on August 17. Twenty-two students attended the event that included an organ crawl, touring the St. George's Episcopal, Germantown United Methodist, and Germantown Presbyterian churches and attending a recital with visiting professor Bob Knupp of Mississippi College. The



event received great coverage by the *Daily Memphian* where André was quoted "I'm (younger) than the average age by about 30 years in this organization so, I don't want, in 30 years, if I'm still living in Memphis, to be the only one in this chapter." The full article can be read here: <https://bit.ly/2ZxAlp8>

Chapter Leadership Toolkits

I am pleased to announce that Chapter Leadership Toolkits are now accessible on our website, www.agohq.org. Click on the Membership Tab at the top of our home page and you will find a link to the toolkit page. Each toolkit provides a variety of templates, job descriptions, best practices and resources to help make your volunteer job easier, so that you do not have to reinvent the wheel. These include:

- ✓ Board Management and Governance
- ✓ Communications
- ✓ Membership
- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Programming

Please email me examples of your chapter's successful practices so that they may also be included in these toolkits: elizabeth.george@agohq.org.

Chapter Programming Resources

REMINDER: Dirk Lindner, sub-dean of the Omaha (Neb.) Chapter has volunteered to compile a list of best practices for chapter programming. Please submit your upcoming programs as well as past programs with a short description of each program. Be specific, i.e., don't send "Member Recital," but do send "Member Recital: Organ and Instruments." Remember to include your chapter name with your information and send this in a Word document or in PDF format to DIRK1ago@cox.net. Once Dirk has compiled this information, it will be posted on the AGO website. This will only work if you participate!

Ask AGO: Bench Fees

One of the most commonly asked questions we receive is regarding whether a Guild member can accept a "bench fee." The answer is "yes," however as an organization the AGO can no longer mandate it.

If the services of an outside, "guest" organist are requested, the incumbent often expects to receive a "bench fee." It's perfectly legal for an organist to receive a bench fee; it's just not a fee that the AGO is permitted to insist upon in our *Code of Ethics* or in any other documentation recommending proposed compensation terms for AGO members.

The church/synagogue and the incumbent organist are at liberty to enter into a formal agreement mandating that the incumbent will always be paid his or her fee for a wedding or funeral regardless of whether the incumbent plays the service. Even though she/he will not play the service, the incumbent may help orient the guest organist to church/synagogue customs, traditions, and special features of the instrument; from the location of the on/off switch to malfunctioning keys or stop tabs or pistons.

This can be implemented through a provision that could be included in your organist's contract or letter of agreement with the church/synagogue. It could also be stipulated in the wedding policy booklet of the church.

AGO Chapter Websites

Many smaller chapters often find that they do not have the volunteer or financial resources to set up their own websites. The good news is that the AGO can create a webpage for your chapter. Using WordPress, your chapter can update their webpage as needed; to share monthly announcements, include posts that welcome new members and to promote upcoming programs. Examples of AGO chapter webpages can be found here:

<https://www.agohq.org/chapters/chippewavalley/>
<https://www.agohq.org/chapters/wilmington/>

As a reminder, it is the chapter's responsibility to keep their AGO webpage up to date. Board leadership can change year over year and the person who was in charge of updating your chapter's information may no longer be responsible for doing so. If your chapter has a webpage through the AGO, I strongly recommend that you review it ASAP. There is nothing worse than a website showing outdated information, such as a *President's Message* that was last posted in 2015 (hint, hint).

A tutorial about how to use WordPress can be accessed here:

<https://vimeo.com/84340990>.

Should you have any questions or need assistance, please contact:

Bill Valentine, Director of Information Technology and Digital Communication
bill.valentine@agohq.org

Budgeting for Leadership Development

Does your chapter's annual operating budget include funds allocated for leadership development? This is one of the most important investments your board can make.

A recent survey was sent to chapter officers regarding their interest in attending a day of leadership development training in conjunction with the 2020 National Convention. One of the questions asked if your chapter has budgeted for you to attend the convention. The response was that less than 10% of AGO chapters had budgeted for a chapter officer to attend an AGO national convention. Attending a national convention offers great opportunities for leadership development through meeting new colleagues, participating in the many peer-to-peer networking receptions and by attending educational workshops that will help you both

professionally and personally. I encourage you to revisit your 2019-2020 annual budget and discuss how you might allocate funds for this purpose.

The AGO is committed to investing in leadership development training and resources to support its chapter leaders. We hope that you will also consider the importance of investing in your chapter officers by adding this line item to your budget.

Leadership development expands the capacity of individuals to perform in leadership roles within organizations. Leadership roles are those that facilitate execution of a company's strategy through building alignment, winning mindshare and growing the capabilities of others. [Wikipedia](#)

Question of the Month:

How does your chapter keep and preserve its important records and archives?

Please reply to elizabeth.george@agohq.org.