



AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

Chapter Leadership News

October 2020

Resiliency

Dear Chapter Leaders,

I recently read a quote that I wanted to share with you; *Tough times don't last. Tough people do.* It seems like what we've all been through over the past six months should have certainly made us more resilient; however, there are times when we get thrown a curve ball that requires you to react and pivot quickly. I truly believe (and hope that you will agree) that your chapters provide you with a group of colleagues who can lift you up, support you and empathize with you. To me, this is why I've always felt so passionate about chapter structured organizations. The opportunity to be recognized, mentored and respected might not often happen at work, so especially during these challenging times, having someone who has got your back can really make a big difference. I encourage you to continue with the *member care* calls that were initiated in April, as these might be needed now, more than ever. Please know that the AGO has always got your back; that we are here to not only help you better serve your members, but also to just listen. Don't go it alone. To quote the Motel 6 commercial, "we'll leave the light on for you."

Lastly and most importantly, get out and **VOTE** on November 3rd! The outcome of this election will affect members of our profession in many ways, known and unknown. If you are a young organist, this may be your first election. Please locate where you can register and do so immediately. For those who are retired, make sure that any change of address you may have made since the last election, has been updated in your voting profile.

In this issue of **Chapter Leadership News** will cover:

- ✓ Chapter Leader Profile of the Month
- ✓ The Vierre Project, October 8th: Schedule a Watch Party!
- ✓ October Leadership Webinars
- ✓ Utah Valley's Program, "Challenges for Organists"
- ✓ John Dixon's Live Recital with the Grand Strand Chapter
- ✓ Chapter Use of the New AGO Logos
- ✓ Membership Is Everybody's Business
- ✓ The OCAGO's Virtual Officer Installation
- ✓ The Winchester Chapter Salutes Retired Members
- ✓ Promoting OrganFest - It may be over but it lives on
- ✓ Volunteer Spotlight: Carol Waltz



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Profile of the Month: James Parrish Smith, Sub-Dean, San Francisco Chapter

What's sitting on my desk right now:

I have several hymnals on my desk for worship planning. I also have flowers in a beautiful vase that my choir gave me after our Christmas concert last year.

What I do when I'm not at work:

I love to walk and explore the unique neighborhoods in San Francisco, often times looking for restaurants and quaint parks

The best advice I ever got:

was to enroll in graduate school and take as many courses as I was comfortable with. The advice was if it took 10 years that would be fine, because 10 years would pass anyway. At the end, I would have my degree. Also, it is helpful to turn the organ on before you begin the prelude, especially on a live streamed service! 😊

If I weren't doing this, I'd:

be out on the beach enjoying the ocean and a good beverage!

What keeps me motivated serving as

Sub-Dean: The amazing people in our chapter keep me motivated. We have wonderful people who enjoy the work of bringing beautiful music to our community.



View the Vierre Project Marathon on October 8th

Chapter leaders, this wonderful initiative provides you with a perfect opportunity to engage your members by scheduling a “watch party,” where you can chat and comment with each other. Please include this information in an email and on your Website and Facebook pages. Invite some friends and non-members to join you. This is a great recruitment tool!



**Watch Video Online At:
[Facebook.com/SevenEightArtists](https://www.facebook.com/SevenEightArtists)**

Eric Plutz,
Organist of Princeton
University, Presents:

**THE VIERNE
PROJECT
MARATHON**

**THURSDAY,
OCTOBER 8,**
Starting at 4:00pm EDT

A free online event
celebrating the 150th birthday
of the composer Louis Vierre
through successive live
recorded performances, one
each hour, of all six organ
symphonies filmed in the
Princeton University Chapel.

October Leadership Webinars

Friday, October 9, 2020: 1:00 pm EDT

Chapter Dues Reconciliation and Keeping Income Records



Panelists: Molly Davey, AGO Membership Coordinator and Eric Birk, AGO Executive Assistant

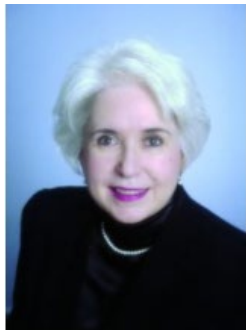
This session will take you step-by-step through the use of ONCARD to make sure that you are correctly tracking membership renewals and accurately keeping income related records. This session is targeted to anyone who is involved with this process, such as treasurers, membership coordinators or others who have been designated to help with these procedures. Register [here](#).

Friday, October 23, 2020: 4:00 pm EDT

Board Leadership: Keeping Chapters Healthy During the Time of COVID-19

Presented by COMDACS; Committee on Membership Development and Chapter Support

What does it take to support and engage your members during this time of social distancing? COMDACS panelists will discuss opportunities to strengthen communication, revise board positions and discuss the importance of initiating a Leadership Pipeline to help secure future officer positions. Register [here](#).



Friday, October 30, 2020 at 2:00 pm EDT

The Benefits and Challenges Serving as a Chapter Dean

This webinar lead by a panel of Regional Councillors, Sue Mitchell-Wallace, Skye Hart and Karl Bruhn, immediate past Great Lakes Regional Councillor, will address the delicate balance of motivating and managing your board, dealing with conflict/resolution and will provide insights to help you be a successful leader! We hope that you will submit some questions, ahead of time. Register [here](#).

AGO Utah Valley's Programming: Challenges for Organists

I was delighted to read Heidi Rodeback's Sub-Dean's Message in the September issue of the chapter's newsletter, regarding their intent to make 2020-2021 a year of programming focused on achieving challenges for organists. Presently, these programs will be held on Zoom.

2020-2021

CHALLENGES FOR ORGANISTS

American Guild of Organists ❖ Utah Valley Chapter

The UVAGO is inviting all organists to learn something new this year. Please look over this list and pick one or more challenges best suited to your needs and circumstances. The chapter will support you each month in various ways: by publishing handouts, hosting roundtable discussions, or providing performance opportunities.

SEPTEMBER

The Organ Console. How well do you know your organ? Do you know how to set the presets? Have you ever wondered how the action of the keys is transferred to the pipes? Have you read through the user's manual, and do you know where to find it online? Take time this month to sort through confusing terminology and get to know your organ individually.

Zoom roundtable discussion hosted by Jack Stoneman
Friday, September 18, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

OCTOBER

Organ Registration. Create a registration plan for a favorite hymn by learning the logic of the build. At the same time, get to know the stops on your organ. Can you classify each by family?

Zoom roundtable discussion hosted by Jennifer Morgan, CAGO. Details TBA

NOVEMBER

The Baroque chorale prelude. The early masters raised the expressive and worshipful aspects of music to an art form in the chorale prelude. In a special video presentation, BYU organ professor Neil Harmon will introduce the genre, share registration conventions and give performance guidance. Organists are encouraged to choose and begin a chorale prelude this month, then to perform it for the chapter in March's Bach recital.

YouTube video presentation by Neil Harmon, DMA

DECEMBER

Christmas Informal. A chapter tradition, the Christmas Informal is an open forum in which members share pieces either mastered or in progress. In 2020, the Informal will be adapted to an online format. All are invited to participate either by preparing and submitting a video recording or by contributing favorite repertoire recommendations to a Google document—or both!

Christmas Informal and roundtable discussion
Details TBA

JANUARY

Create a new prelude sequence. Expand your prelude and postlude repertoire by learning to improvise from the hymnal or by adding a new book to your collection. Share your favorite books via a Google document.

Zoom roundtable discussion hosted by Mike Carson
Details TBA

FEBRUARY

Hymn Plus. Challenge yourself to learn new hymn-playing skills—for example, extending a sacrament hymn, playing a last-verse harmonization, or soloing the melody. Then join us on Zoom for a hymn master class. Facilitator Lella Pomeroy will present hymns recorded by participants and offer comments that can be helpful for everyone.

Zoom master class hosted by Lella Pomeroy, BA, MM, CAGO
Details TBA

MARCH

Bach Recital. By longstanding tradition, the UVAGO celebrates Bach's birthday each March by presenting his works in recital. Any who learned a Baroque chorale prelude are also invited to perform in this event. The recital is scheduled at the Provo Central Stake Center, though we may do part or all of it online.

Bach Recital
Friday, March 19, 2021. 7:00 p.m.

APRIL

Learn something new in the chapter's annual gift to the community, a hymn workshop for all Utah Valley organists. This year's workshop is tentatively planned to be presented online and will include special helps for youth.

Hymn Workshop
Details TBA

MAY

May Informal. All are warmly invited to present something they learned from an organ challenge this year—anything from a new hymn harmonization to a Baroque chorale prelude or a work by a female or minority composer.

May Informal
Details TBA

My Visit and Live Recital with the AGO Grand Strand Chapter

John S. Dixon CAGO, AGO Councillor for Finance and Development

All musicians are yearning to make music for live audiences again, rather than recording for future transmission or broadcasting to remote viewers who are hearing reduced sound quality. On September 18th, I played an organ recital to a live audience at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The occasion was the convocation to start the new chapter year. The evening started with a prelude of several piano pieces beautifully played by chapter member Karen Meeker, followed by a short service of installation conducted by Father Wilmot Merchant, Rector of St. Stephen's. Then I played a program of my own compositions, arranged in groups, with comments between the groups about when and why they were written. An effective sound system allowed everyone to hear me from a distance, and I had no need to wear a mask while performing. The entire event lasted a little less than two hours.

In other words, this was most definitely an AGO chapter program. The audience was mostly chapter members or members of St. Stephens, and the general comfort level was raised because so many of those present knew one another, once they could figure out who was behind each mask. Of course, the wearing of masks was strictly observed, as was spacing in alternate pews. Hand-sanitizer was in abundant supply.

This event was made possible by the careful planning and preparation of Chapter Dean, Roberta Rowland-Raybold, working closely with Father Merchant. Roberta deserves great credit for taking the initiative to schedule a live program, and together we learned some things that might encourage other chapters to start arranging their own events.

- 1. We started small. Capacity in the building was 40 under restricted seating rules. Roberta took bookings, and so we knew how many attendees to expect. It turned out to be exactly a capacity audience.*
- 2. The excitement level was high, and chapter members were delighted to see one another. There were opportunities to chat after the recital, but there was impressive attention to social distancing, continuing to wear masks, sanitizing hands and so forth. Both energy and responsibility were constantly evident.*
- 3. Not everybody feels comfortable participating in an event like this at the moment, and that is perfectly understandable. We put this together for those who wished to attend, and it turned out that many were grateful for the opportunity to sit in a pew and hear live organ music.*
- 4. Practical considerations that avoid complications are important to a project like this. For example, my wife and I were able to drive to North Myrtle Beach from Norfolk, Virginia. I'm not sure we would have been so willing to fly at the moment.*

More than a week after the event, we have not had any reports of sickness affecting anyone who attended. Meanwhile, e-mails have been going back and forth thick and fast based on conversations that evening. The excitement has lingered. It was an evening that made a lot of people happy. Roberta and I hope this event serves as an example to others of what is possible, with thought and careful planning.

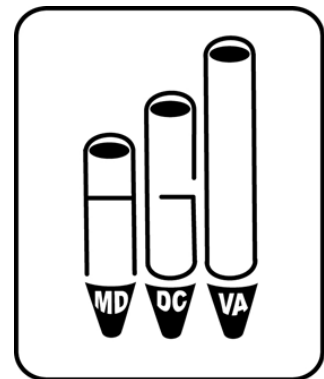
Chapter Usage of the New AGO Logos

The AGO has created new logos in a variety of formats for chapters to use. These can be found on the Chapter Leadership Toolkits page on the AGO website: <https://www.agohq.org/chapter-leadership-toolkits/> . Here you will find a **Logo Identity Style Guide**, along with logo files for screens (digital screen display on web, email, video), and logo files for ink printing (onto paper or other items for publication). We needed to make these password protected, as some deans were being contacted by imposters asking for donations, using our new letterhead and logo. As I believe that you are all upstanding and law-abiding citizens, I am sharing the password with you: AgoBr@nd!ng . Please note that this is case-sensitive. Those who should be authorized to use these logos are people like printers or designers doing graphics work for chapters, as well as those in charge of email notifications, chapter newsletters and websites.



Speaking of AGO branding and messaging, I want to thank Rene Zajner, Sub-Dean of the Gateway Confluence Chapter, who took my message: *Membership Is Everybody's Business*, to heart, by designing this very dynamic graphic. Thank you, Rene!

I also received this graphic from Thomas Cowan, Secretary of the District of Columbia Chapter, intended to represent the alliance between the D.C., Northern Virginia and Potomac chapters.



OCAGO's Officer Installation and Recital

I want to recognize and thank District Convener, Peter Bates, for sending me this beautiful and inspiring video of the Orange County Chapter's virtual service and installation of their chapter officers. Their program can be found [here](#) and the link to the video of the service can be accessed [here](#) .

The Winchester Chapter Salutes Retired Members

On September 20th, I had the pleasure of joining the Winchester Chapter's Zoom meeting during which they featured recorded interviews, celebrating the tenures and achievements with five members who are retiring. I thought to myself, what a remarkable topic to have selected for a chapter program! I want to congratulate all those involved in producing these delightful interviews and for demonstrating how very much they value and care for their members. The videos of interviews can be found here in two separate links:

<https://we.tl/t-EAtZxRfvdW> ; <https://we.tl/t-S8YiXc6AME> .



OrganFest 2020: Keep it going on Facebook!

In speaking with Donna Elkin, Dean of the Williamsport Chapter, she shared that she and some of her members were going to have a “Saturday Night at the Movies,” but instead of watching a movie, they were going to watch various parts of **OrganFest**. What a fun idea! I encourage you to do the same. Invite fellow members, as well as *non-members* to a watch party. The ideal place to promote this would be through your Facebook page. Posting and re-posting important events such as **OrganFest**, increase the potential for the number of people who will experience for the first time, many of the incredible performances, interviews and Pipe Talks. Don’t forget to bring some popcorn, your favorite beverage and add a Zoom after-party to the event! Please note that our [donations tab](#) is still live on our **Organfest** webpage and we plan to continue receiving donations for many months to come, that will help those who cannot afford to renew their memberships, due to work loss from COVID-19. If you know of members in your chapter who need renewal assistance, please contact me: elizabeth.george@agohq.org.



Saluting Carol Waltz
Secretary-Treasurer
Williamsport Chapter



Carol Waltz celebrated her retirement after 56 years as organist in 8 churches in the Williamsport area. She presented a recital “My Tribute” on September 15, 2019 at the Messiah Lutheran Church where she has been organist for the last 19 years. Starting in 1963, Carol served two Presbyterian, two Methodist and four Lutheran churches. Her creative recital paid musical tribute to these churches, to her colleagues, to her teachers, and to the many weddings and memorial services she played during her career. Carol is the Secretary-Treasurer, Membership Coordinator and Chapter Administrator of the Williamsport Chapter where she has been an active and valuable member throughout her career.