



AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

## Chapter Leadership News

April 2022

### Will I See You in Seattle?

Dear Chapter Leaders,

It is hard to believe that the AGO's 2022 National Convention in Seattle is only a few months away. I am particularly excited, as this will be my first national convention with the Guild. We've planned some great workshops targeted to chapter leaders, including the **Chapter Leader Connect and Network** events, which will take place on Tuesday and Thursday of the convention. These will have an open-forum format, so everyone will have the opportunity to discuss key issues impacting their chapters. I hope to see you there! Register and view the full schedule at [AGOseattle2022.com](https://www.agoseattle2022.com).

- Tuesday, July 5
  - 9:00–9:45 a.m.: Harold Stuart, AGO Technology Committee: **Streaming: Best Practices**
  - 9:00–9:45 a.m.: Elizabeth George: **Chapter Leader Connect and Network**
- Wednesday, July 6
  - 8:00–8:45 a.m.: Michelle Klima Thomas, AGO Technology Committee: **Social Media Marketing for Chapters**
  - 9:00–9:45 a.m.: John Dixon: **The Goldilocks Strategy for Chapter Finances**
  - 10:00–10:45 a.m.: Open Forum with the AGOYO Board, Jillian Gardner, chair: **Career Development: You Have Questions, We Have Answers**
  - 10:00–10:45 a.m.: J.W. Arnold, AGO Marketing Committee: **Publicity, Marketing, and Social Media Strategies for Chapters, Churches, and Concert Artists**
  - 10-11:45 am: Joshua Freeman, CTO: **Overview of the New Association Management Software**
- Thursday, July 7
  - 9:00–9:45: Elizabeth George, Molly Davey, and Jillian Gardner: **The Year of the Young Organist: Inspiring Growth**
  - 11:00–11:45: Elizabeth George: **Chapter Leader Connect and Network**

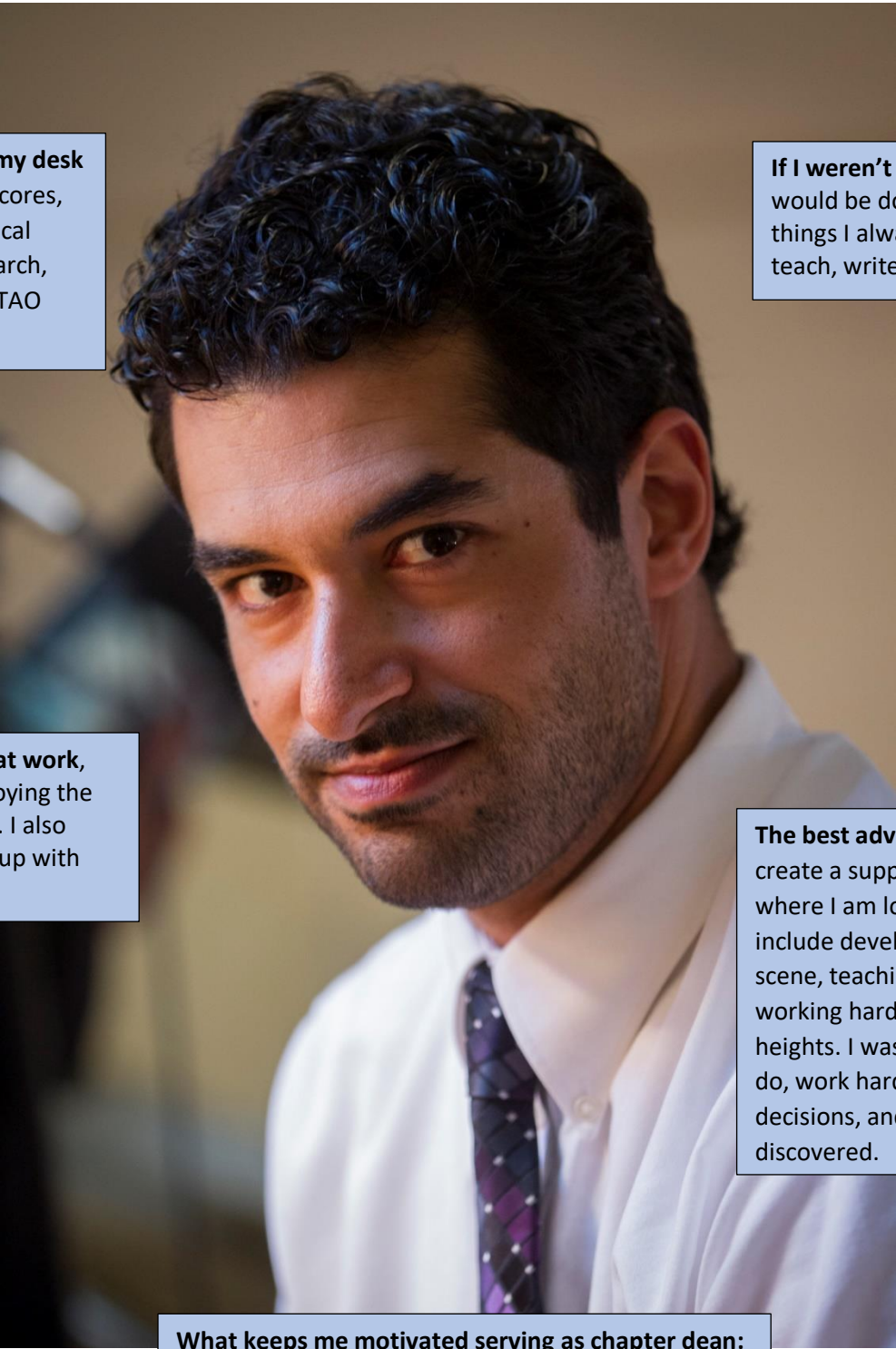
This issue of **Chapter Leadership News** will cover the following:

- ✓ Leadership Profile: Jonathan Bezdegian, Dean, Worcester Chapter
- ✓ Year of the Young Organist Recruitment Tip #10
- ✓ Nassau Chapter's Trivia Contest
- ✓ Chapters Honoring Women's History Month and Women and Minority Composers
- ✓ April 25<sup>th</sup> Webinar: The Power of Publicity: Promote Your Chapter's Events through Media Relations
- ✓ The Ins and Outs of Taking Effective Board Meeting Minutes
- ✓ New Trends in Chapter Leadership



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## Profile of the Month: Jonathan Bezdegian, Dean, Worcester Chapter

A portrait of Jonathan Bezdegian, a man with dark, curly hair and a light beard, wearing a white dress shirt and a patterned tie. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a gentle smile.

**What's sitting on my desk right now:** music scores, staff paper, analytical charts for my research, and past issues of TAO and *The Diapason*

**If I weren't doing this,** I would be doing the same things I always do: study, teach, write, and practice.

**When I'm not at work,** I'm usually enjoying the great outdoors. I also enjoy catching up with friends.

**The best advice I ever got** was to create a supportive musical scene where I am located. This could include developing a church music scene, teaching students, and working hard to push them to new heights. I was told to enjoy what I do, work hard, make smart decisions, and wait to be discovered.

**What keeps me motivated serving as chapter dean:** Creating and maintaining a good organization for upcoming organists to secure the future of our profession and art.



## The Year of the Young Organist Chapter Recruitment Contest Win \$1000 for Your Chapter!

Beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2022, how many young organists can you recruit? Each month, we will be sending you a **new recruitment tip** to help your chapter recruit as many young organists as possible. We've created a page on our website that will include each tip and additional resources: <https://www.agohq.org/year-of-the-young-organist-recruitment-contest-2/>.

### Currently in the lead:

**Small Chapter:** Central North Carolina, with a net growth of 10 new young organists.

**Medium Chapter:** Denver Rocky Mountain, with a net growth of 13 new young organists.

**Large Chapter:** Los Angeles, with a net growth of 12 new young organists.

**TIP #10:** You may not realize it, but you could be sitting on a gold mine! When you access your monthly membership reports in ONCARD, do you review young organists whose memberships were canceled over the past couple of years? They may still be eligible for a free year of membership! In sales, this is what we call low-hanging fruit. Instructions for retrieving the report and sorting it to see those lapsed members can be accessed here: <https://www.agohq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/How-to-Find-Lapsed-Young-Organists.pdf>.

Don't miss out on this easy recruitment opportunity!



## Trivia Contest

*Nassau chapter dean Elizabeth Bailey shared the following:*

A congenial group of people gathered on Zoom for a Nassau (New York) chapter social on Sunday, February 27, that included an organ trivia contest. Twenty-five questions were asked, including the following:

1. What famous Baroque composer had the same eye surgeon as Johann Sebastian Bach?
2. E.M. Skinner was a famous organbuilder. What do the letters E.M. stand for?
3. Which organ has more pipes in it, the Boardwalk Hall Organ in Atlantic City or the Wanamaker Organ at Macy's Department Store in Philadelphia?
4. What musical instrument other than the organ did Wurlitzer make?

Membership coordinator Chris Cusumano and chapter administrator Carol Dort prepared the questions that were used for this event. Everyone was on the honor system to keep track of their own scores. There was a lot of laughter and discussion as the answers were revealed. The winner was Stephan Garamy, a member who joined this year as a Young Organist, with a score of 16 out of 25! He received a \$25 gift certificate to Sheet Music Plus.

*Congrats to the Nassau chapter for creating an engaging and entertaining event for their members on Zoom. I encourage other chapters that are still unable to meet in person to consider planning a program similar to this, as a means to engage and stay connected to your members. (The answers to the questions can be found on the page 9 of this newsletter.)*

Did you know that the AGO has a deck of cards called **Orgel Probe: A Quiz Game of Organ Trivia** that can be used for chapter trivia programs? They can be purchased on line at the AGO store in the Organ Music/Essays/Catalogues section.

## **Recitals Honoring Women's History Month and Women and Minority Composers**

We want to congratulate the Southern Arizona and Indianapolis chapters for their recitals celebrating Women's History Month and women and minority composers



### **Sunday, March 13: Celebrating Women Composers**

*This promotion appeared in the March issue of The Cypher, Southern Arizona's chapter newsletter.*

SAAGO is celebrating Women's History Month with a concert celebrating women composers, who have often been unsung and unrecognized. The United States Congress created Women's History Month in 1987, and each year since 1995, presidents have issued a series of proclamations designating the month of March as Women's History Month. These proclamations celebrate and recognize achievements women have made over the course of American history in a variety of fields. Among the composers to be featured are Fanny Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann, Christina Harmon, Pamela Decker, Janette Fishell, Emma Lou Diemer, Maria Theresia von Paradis, and Margaret Sandresky. Performers include Pamela Decker, Doug Leightenheimer, Wes Moulton, Laura Silva, Bill Kuhlman, and Janet Tolman, performing on St. Michael's 64-rank Aeolian-Skinner organ.



# Indy AGO

American Guild of Organists  
Indianapolis Chapter

## Women & Minority Organ Composers



Saturday, February 12, 2022  
2:00pm

Broadway United Methodist Church  
609 E 29<sup>th</sup> St, Indianapolis, IN.

Sponsored by the Indianapolis Chapter of the  
American Guild of Organists

The Indianapolis chapter recital of music by Women and Minority Composers featured members Jihye Choi, Nicholas Fennig, Laura Bottei, Luke Kessler, Kyoungwha Oh, and Wolff Von Roos, playing works by Rachel Laurin, Emma Lou Diemer, Libby Larsen, Clara Schumann, Elfrida Andrée, Florence Price, Carol Williams, and Carl Haywood.

## Upcoming Webinars

**Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 6 pm EDT**

**The Power of Publicity: Promote Your Chapter's Events through Media Relations**

Speaker: J.W. Arnold, APR, AGO Marketing Committee

As the COVID-19 pandemic recedes and chapters begin offering in-person events again, how do you get the word out to attract new audiences? We may live in a digital world dominated by social media, but traditional outlets such as local radio and television are still effective for promoting your chapter's concerts and events. In this 60-minute webinar, J.W. Arnold, an award-winning publicist with more than 25 years of experience working with arts organizations, will share practical strategies to identify and engage your local radio and television contacts, pitch producers and reporters, and further leverage the coverage on your social media channels. This webinar is targeted to chapter volunteers who do not have previous experience working with the media. Attendees will receive a media relations checklist and templates to personalize for your chapter's concert or event. Register [here](#).



J.W. Arnold, APR, Fellow PRSA is principal of PRDC Public Relations with offices in Washington, DC and South Florida. He has more than 25 years of experience promoting arts and cultural organizations, and his clients (past and present) include the White House Visitor Center, White House Historical Association, National Christmas Tree Lighting, National Musical Arts and National Academy of Education. Prior to launching his company, he was public affairs specialist for “The President’s Own” U.S. Marine Band, where he publicized several sold out national concert tours and planned the band’s bicentennial celebration, including events at the White House and Kennedy Center. He holds a graduate degree in baroque organ performance from Auckland University in New Zealand, where he studied on a Rotary scholarship. Arnold is currently music director at Christ Lutheran Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

## **The Ins and Outs of Taking Effective Board Meeting Minutes**

*I recently read an interesting article in the American Society of Association Executives’ daily e-newsletter, titled “The Ins and Outs of Taking Effective Board Meeting Minutes.” I’d like to share some excerpts with you.*

Imagine this scenario: Your board of directors is having its first meeting of the term. The first item on the agenda is to approve a service contract that was initially discussed six months ago. There’s just one problem. Since all of the directors are newly elected, none of them participated in the original discussion. They can’t reach consensus because they’re missing some key historical details, and the meeting is dragging on. *(Does this sound familiar?)*

Then, the board secretary proposes a simple solution: Check the previous minutes. Good idea. Minutes are an essential part of board meetings because they are an objective historical record of decisions, actions, and spending. They also act as a road map for the board, because reviewing the documents can give excellent detail as to the health of the organization.

Minutes are the official written record of an association’s decisions and actions, based on the meetings of its board of directors and committees. By law, most for-profit and nonprofit entities in the U.S. must maintain meeting minutes as part of their corporate records. Over time, minutes become part of the written history of an association, documenting its past and acting as a guide for the future.

### **What Should Be Included:**

- Names, titles, and affiliations of all participants
- Call to order and adjournment times
- Decisions and their rationale
- Directors who declare a conflict of interest
- Amendments to previous minutes and confirmation that the minutes have been approved
- Motions, including the mover and seconder
- Dollar amounts of contracts and expenses
- Assigned tasks or action items
- Status updates of ongoing items
- Major concerns

## How Minutes Should Be Stored:

Ideally, minutes are digitized and stored in a cloud-based system that is available to board members and staff. This prevents the minutes from being misplaced or lost, and ensures they remain accessible through board and staff turnover. Jurisdiction and the governing legislation for an association determine how long the minutes should be stored.



## New Trends in Chapter Leadership

By this time, I hope that your chapter has prepared its slate of officers and that voting is underway. Congrats to those of you who have already announced the new slate of officers in your newsletters. If you need a refresher, I strongly recommend viewing the recent webinar presented by COMDACS, “Now Is the Time to Form Your Chapter’s Nominations Committee”

([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=np6A\\_i-iBjY&t=26s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=np6A_i-iBjY&t=26s)), which

covers everything you need to know about election and voting procedures. Excellent handouts were created that highlight the March-June timeline, discuss what to do when, and provide election balloting information. These can be found within the **Management and Governance** menu in the **Chapter Leadership Toolkits**: <https://www.agohq.org/chapter-leadership-toolkits/>.

## Creating a Leadership Pipeline

I have received many emails and spoken with several of you about the difficulty of finding members to serve in officer positions. This is a systemic problem that didn’t just appear overnight, and it has been quite successfully self-perpetuating for some time. Leadership should not be a lifelong sentence! Conner McMains, COMDACS chair and sub-dean of the Dallas chapter, recently shared that, when he began serving as an officer, he was told that *now* was the time to identify his replacement. In reviewing recent slates of nominees, I’ve noticed that some chapters have sizable classes of members at large. I’m curious to know what plans you have for these officers. The Dallas chapter assigns them to serve as committee chairs, which is a great practice to engage them and give them management and leadership experience. If you don’t assign specific tasks and duties to your members at large, they will be less likely to want to “move up” in leadership. If your chapter is going to include member-at-large officer positions, they should be part of your *leadership pipeline*, in which *each officer* takes the time to prepare others to assume their officer positions. If not, then why do these positions exist on your



board? During **Leadership 2022**, I asked chapter leaders to re-vision how they wanted their chapters to look. I encourage those of you who were not present to do the same. Take a look at the current leadership structure of your board of officers. Are these positions still necessary? If you were starting your chapter today, how would you want it to look? What would it need—and what would it *not* need? As a reminder, our bylaws state that a chapter must have three officers: dean, treasurer, and secretary, and for many of our smaller chapters, these three officer positions are sufficient. For medium and large chapters, having someone assigned to membership duties that include recruitment (such as a registrar or membership coordinator) is important, as is assigning someone to handle programming (such as a sub-dean and/or program coordinator).

### **Leadership Alternatives: Mergers and AGO Member Communities**

Having recently attended the meetings of some extra-small chapters, I understand that it's a team effort to schedule events, and that everyone is often involved in planning and execution. In many cases, because of the size of the chapter, the same people have been serving for several years, continuing to rotate to different officer positions. Understandably, many are experiencing leadership burnout. How can this be remedied? One solution that several small chapters are currently discussing is merging with other nearby chapters, to support collaboration and to share leadership responsibilities and the duties involved with program planning—thus strengthening member involvement. Other small chapters have realized that at the time their chapter was chartered, it was part of a thriving community with potential for membership growth. In many cases, this potential has been diminished by socioeconomic challenges, as well as the reality that there are fewer churches in the area, and colleges that once had robust organ studies programs have eliminated them.

In the AGO's new three-year strategic plan, key membership goals focus on (1) helping all chapters of all sizes to function efficiently, and (2) assisting members in creating shared-interest groups. **AGO Member Communities** provide members of disbanded chapters the opportunity to stay connected, without any of the responsibilities of chapter leadership. They can still gather whenever they want to and, if desired, collaborate on programs and events. Every member is important to the AGO, and we want to make sure that we are providing them with as many opportunities as possible to stay involved.

The AGO's mission is *to foster a thriving community of musicians who share their knowledge and inspire passion for the organ*. Our vision is *to engage, support, and uplift every organist*. This is why it is vital that we look beyond the current chapter structure, to offer more than just one type of a community experience for member engagement. You can learn more about **AGO Member Communities** in the **Chapter Leadership Toolkits**: <https://www.agohq.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/AGO-Member-Communities-Structure.pdf>. If you would like more information, please contact Molly Davey, manager of member engagement and chapter support, at [molly.davey@agohq.org](mailto:molly.davey@agohq.org).

Please know that if you are feeling frustrated, need help, or just want someone to listen, you can give me a call. Let's talk and find a solution!



***Answers to the Nassau Chapter Quiz:***

1. Handel
2. Ernest Martin
3. The Boardwalk organ has 33,112 pipes. The Wanamaker organ has 28,750 pipes.
4. Harps