



AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

Chapter Leadership News

December 2022

## Feeling Grateful and Counting My Blessings

Dear Chapter Leaders,

Goodbye 2022! This past year, we dealt with new variants of COVID, a recession, and divisiveness in our nation. In light of that, I think we need to focus on the good things we experienced over the past twelve months. With your help, we finished the Year of the Young Organist with over 1,700 members under age 30. Many chapters finally met in person to celebrate anniversary milestones. We presented Leadership 2022, our second annual online conference, with some truly inspiring keynote speakers. And after a four-year hiatus, the AGO produced an in-person national convention that featured diverse performers and offered so many of you the opportunity to reconnect with dear friends and colleagues.

I feel blessed that I was able to schedule chapter visits! In early April, I visited the Clearwater, St. Petersburg, and Tampa chapters. The month ended with a road trip through Massachusetts and New Hampshire to visit with chapter leaders. I attended the Springfield (Mass.) chapter's 75th-anniversary celebration and also met with officers from the Boston, New Hampshire, and Cape Cod and the Islands chapters. In May, I visited the Jacksonville (Fla.) chapter, attending a special dinner to celebrate their first in-person meeting since 2020. In September, my marathon California road trip gave me the opportunity to visit with the San Diego chapter to celebrate their 100th anniversary, as well as the Los Angeles, Palo Alto/Peninsula, San Jose, San Francisco, and Redwood Valley chapters. As I write this newsletter, I am driving through Texas to meet with leaders in the Dallas, ArkLaTex, Central Texas, Austin, and Fort Worth chapters. I never realized how big Texas was until I got behind the wheel!

I am excited about the new software we will have in 2023. We anticipate launching iMIS, our new membership database, in the spring (hasta la vista, ONCARD), which will enable a website makeover and give us the opportunity to develop a new online member community. In closing, I want to thank each of you for your vigilance, fortitude, ingenuity, creativity, and stamina. I am truly grateful to be able to work with you.

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

- ✓ Leadership Profile: Harold H. Stuart, CAGO, Dean, Utah Valley Chapter
- ✓ Tri-Chapter Pipe Spectacular
- ✓ Charlotte Chapter Celebrates Its 75th Anniversary
- ✓ Hong Kong Chapter's Very Franck Birthday Project
- ✓ Get Off That Bench: San Diego's Choral Conducting Workshop
- ✓ Grand Strand Chapter's Spooktacular Halloween Event
- ✓ Save the Date! Leadership 2023, February 5-6



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## Profile of the Month: Harold H. Stuart, CAGO, Dean, Utah Valley Chapter

**What's sitting on my desk right now:** Mostly computer equipment, since that's what I do for a living. My computer desktop, however, has compositions I'm working on, things I need to practice, and several other projects.

**If I weren't doing this, I'd be** practicing and composing.

**When I'm not at work,** I'm adoring my wife and spoiling my grandchildren.

**The best advice I ever got:** Do the best you can to live an honest and ethical life. Always strive to do better.



**What keeps me motivated serving as chapter dean:** I work with an amazing board. We help one another to be successful. We respect one another and work as a team to help promote and nourish something we all love. It's a wonderful opportunity to get to know our chapter members.

## Tri-Chapter Pipe Spectacular



Ronald Butts-Boehmer, dean of the Northern Virginia chapter; Brenda J. Weiser, dean of the Potomac chapter; Joy-Leilani Garbutt; Elizabeth George; and Paul H. Byssainthe, dean of the District of Columbia chapter

On October 14, I traveled to Washington, D.C., to visit with the deans of the District of Columbia, Potomac, and Northern Virginia chapters and attend their annual Tri-Chapter Pipe Spectacular at the National City Christian Church. This year's event, a collaboration with the Boulanger Initiative, featured a spectacular performance by Joy-Leilani Garbutt, who played works by Florence Price, Nadia Boulanger, Jeanne Demessieux, Caterina Assandra, Alice Sauvrezis, and Alexandra Gardner. The Boulanger Initiative advocates for women and gender-marginalized composers.

## Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Charlotte (N.C.) Chapter



The first of a yearlong series of celebrations of the Charlotte chapter's 75th anniversary featured organist Paul Jacobs in concert with the Charlotte Symphony. Southeast regional councillor Sue Mitchell-Wallace presented the anniversary certificate to sub-dean Zach Bowyer and members of the executive board and anniversary committee. Tropical Storm Ian hit the Charlotte area that day, yet over 500 people braved the weather to attend the concert!

## Hong Kong Chapter's "Very Franck Birthday Project"



On October 27, members of the Hong Kong from all over the world chapter played sections from César Franck's Prelude, Fugue, and Variation, Op. 18, to mark the 200th anniversary of the composer's birth. Congratulations to the chapter for their novel celebration and great video editing. You can enjoy the recording on [YouTube](#).

## Get Off That Bench: A Conducting Workshop for Keyboardists



*San Diego sub-dean Lea Schmidt-Rogers shared the following:*

If you think you know everything about conducting, then you missed a great workshop presented by Liz Virkler, choral conductor of Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church. Liz is witty, knowledgeable, and organized. She covered warm-ups, conducting patterns, cutoffs, upbeats, breathing, posture, height of hands, and eye contact with the choir and accompanist. We all learned these basics in an enjoyable, relaxed setting. Four very receptive conductors were cheerful guinea pigs. Special thanks to Ronél Wishnuff and Chris Cook for their musical accompaniments.

## Grand Strand's Pipescreams: An Organ Spooktacular



*Grand Strand (S.C.) dean Roberta Rowland-Raybold submitted this amusing photo and shared the following:*

On October 30, the Grand Strand chapter presented a community Halloween concert at Shepherd of the Sea Lutheran Church in Garden City. It was a successful fundraiser for the church's choral scholars' program. A variety of music—from Bach to Cooman to free improvisations—was played on the Rodgers digital/pipe organ. Supplementing the organ literature were selections on accordion, violin, and piano. All participants performed in their finest Halloween costumes, unbelievably able to play from behind masks and with scary props. A short intermission was filled with a video lesson on the “Monster Mash.” The audience participation brought the house down. Chapter members performing in the event were Kevin Uppercue, Diane Munch, Roberta Rowland-Raybold, Denise Cromer, Judy Barrett, Jessica Eaton, Carlton Niven, Rev. Bud Esper, Al Pittman, and George Giblin.



**Save the Date! Leadership 2023**  
**February 5-6th, 7:00–8:30 p.m. EST**  
**Adventures in Experiencing the New Normal**

**Or is it . . . *Abby Normal?***

It's time to celebrate the new (abby) normal! We will kick off the event with a special version of *Jeopardy* that will feature chapter leaders. Are you interested in being a contestant? If so, email [elizabeth.george@agohq.org](mailto:elizabeth.george@agohq.org).



**Wishing you a cipher-free holiday.**

**Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, and happy Kwanzaa!**