



# American Guild of Organists

## Chapter Leadership News

December 2019

Welcome to the most wonderful time of the year or as church organists might say, “the most hectic time of the year.” As many of you will be knee-deep in numerous musical programs, Advent services and seemingly endless choir rehearsals, I hope that in between all of these frenzied activities, you will take a short break to read this newsletter.

This issue will focus on:

- ✓ **Impexium Update**
- ✓ **Strategic Planning**
- ✓ **Everyone Needs a Budget**
- ✓ **Music That Makes the Community**
- ✓ **Reaching Out to Members in Need**
- ✓ **Muskegon-Lakeshore Chapter Young Artists Recital**
- ✓ **Central Iowa Chapter Scholarship Program**
- ✓ **Disneyland for Organists**
- ✓ **2020 POE registrations**
- ✓ **The AGO Service Playing Certificate**
- ✓ **SCAM Emails**

Over the past six months I have had the opportunity to meet with many chapter leaders and attend some wonderful programs. As we close this year, I want to thank each of you for your passion, determination, resiliency and enduring leadership. *You* are the AGO and without your continuing support, we will not be sustainable, nor can we move forward. As we count our blessings, please know that getting to know you, working with you and supporting your chapters, has made me feel very blessed. I look forward to scheduling many more chapter visits in the coming year and working with you as you engage, uplift and support your members.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and most successful 2020!



Elizabeth George, CMM  
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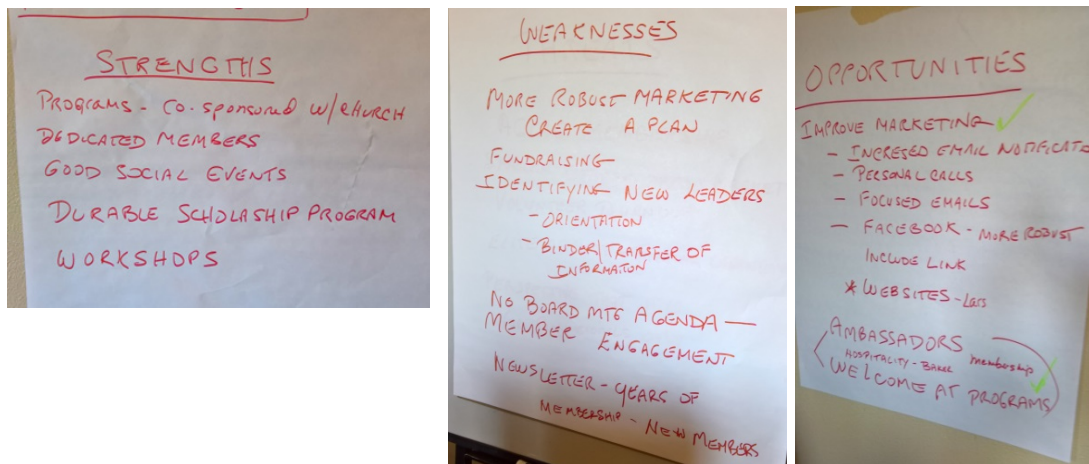
## Impexium Update

We are now at the stage of our database migration to Impexium where we need your assistance. Please check your inbox for emails from the AGO that will require your input regarding chapter specific information that will appear during a member's join and renewal process. Your participation is critical, so I want to thank you for making this a priority!

## Strategic Planning

**If we don't know where we're going, how will we know when we get there?**

This past November I met with the board of the Sacramento Chapter to facilitate a strategic planning session that would create a plan to support increased growth and stronger member engagement. The day began with a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis so that they could better understand their current operating environment.



Through creative brainstorming and blue-sky thinking, the analysis helped the chapter officers identify opportunities where they could be *pro-active* vs. *re-active*. It also provided them with a sense of direction to foresee their future. Volunteer resources and the chapter budget were reviewed, to make sure that they had enough people and funding to achieve what they wanted to accomplish. This resulted in the creation of three **SMART** goals that would align with the AGO's Strategic Growth Plan <https://www.agohq.org/strategic-growth-plan/> and support chapter success.

**SMART = Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely**

1. Initiate a robust member care program that will engage current members and recruit *organ enthusiasts*. (One of their tactics will be initiating an Ambassador Program).
2. Create partnerships with other organizations to enhance brand awareness and attract future members.
3. Implement a strategic marketing plan and create a sponsorship program that will enable stronger PR and create additional funding for chapter events.



## \$\$ Chapter Budgeting \$\$

I recently heard from two chapters that they didn't have a chapter budget, stating "we're a small chapter so we don't need a budget." If you don't have a budget, how can you possibly plan programs or provide any funding to support chapter growth and development? It doesn't matter if you have 20 members or 200 members; every chapter needs to have a budget. Your budget should be developed prior to the beginning of your chapter's fiscal year. Your budget is a living, breathing document that must be monitored and reviewed at every board meeting. Located within the **Finance Toolkit** in the **Chapter Leadership Toolkits**, on the AGO website <https://www.agohq.org/chapter-leadership-toolkits/> you will find a sample worksheet, budget and balance sheet. For those chapters that have not yet created a budget for 2019-2020, there is still time to create one. If you have questions or need help, please let me know.

## Music that Makes the Community

**Northern New Jersey Chapter's October Program**

<http://www.musicthatmakescommunity.org>



Paul Vasile, Executive Director of Music That Makes the Community, led a workshop that demonstrated different ways to build, renew, and re-shape faith communities through music and liturgy. The chapter advertised this workshop extensively through word-of-mouth and posted fliers throughout surrounding communities. Their newsletter was also distributed to many church musicians, pastors and congregations. One member uploaded the flier to a denominational musicians' website

that resulted in a priest, her music director and a parishioner attending the event.

**Congratulations to the Northern New Jersey Chapter for reaching beyond their membership to successfully engage future members!**

## Reaching Out to Members in Need

### Southwest New Jersey Chapter

I was so moved to read this information that appeared in the October issue of *Sforzando*, the Southwest New Jersey Chapter's newsletter. Creating a chapter emergency fund to help members who may be in need, truly demonstrates how much a chapter values its members. Does your chapter have a similar initiative? If so, please share.

**CHAPTER EMERGENCY FUND** Our Chapter has begun the sponsorship of a fund to provide short-term emergency aid to Chapter members who find themselves temporarily in need of assistance. No dues money will be used for this aid, but tax-deductible contributions will be welcome at any time. A committee of three, consisting of the Dean, the Chair of Professional Concerns, and another member of that committee, will award aid as the need arises. Any Chapter member may recommend a member in good standing who, for reasons such as illness or unemployment, deserves our help, by contacting the Dean or the Chair of Professional Concerns. All cases of course will be confidential. If you would like to contribute to this cause, please send your tax-deductible donation (made out to SWJersey Chapter AGO) to our Treasurer Gail Gassaway, marked for "Musicians' Emergency Fund." Mail to: 241 Night Hawk Circle, West Deptford NJ 08086.

## Muskegon-Lakeshore Chapter Young Artists Recital

Richard T, Hoogterp, CAGO

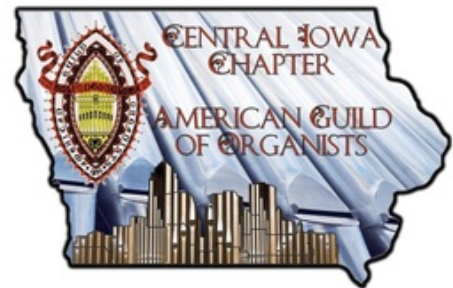
Dean, Muskegon-Lakeshore Chapter

Some years ago, the Muskegon-Lakeshore (Mich.) Chapter decided to encourage and assist young organists by sponsoring them in recitals. In cooperation with area churches, **Young Artist Concerts** are presented annually in October and in March. We offer a substantial honorarium and provide housing and travel expense assistance. Organists who have performed under chapter auspices include Scott Montgomery, Katelyn Emerson, Aaron Tan, Chase Loomer, Monica Csausz, Amanda Mole, Jillian Gardner, and Daniel Chang. It has been rewarding to meet and hear these fine organists who perform in West Michigan and to follow their particular career paths.



## Central Iowa Chapter Scholarship Program

Thank you Priscilla Franken, Central Iowa Chapter, for sharing information about their newly launched **Organ Scholarships Program**, whose mission is to foster musicians of all ages interested in beginning organ study. In planning this program, they began by asking chapter members to identify young pianists who might have the desire to sit at the organ but would need some encouragement. The organ scholarship pays for 10, 1-hour lessons with an approved organ instructor. Zach Hastings, who currently sits on the AGOYO and CIA boards currently serves as one of their four instructors and has been especially supportive and enthusiastic. To maintain eligibility for their scholarships, students receive a document from their instructor that articulates attendance, practice and participatory requirements. Students are required to continue piano and theory lessons, maintain regular attendance at scheduled lessons and to practice regularly, as well as take part in performance opportunities. The board allocated \$2500 to start the program but hopes to achieve \$5000 through donations by the end of the fiscal year. Priscilla shared that the students are not the only ones who have benefited from this new scholarship program. This initiative has also strengthened board collaboration. You can learn more about the CIA scholarship program [here](#).



## Disneyland for Organists

Christopher Cook, Dean, San Diego (Calif.) Chapter



You know the commercial: “Now that you’ve won the gold medal, what are you going to do?” The answer is inevitably, “I’m going to Disneyland!”

You may not be competing for a gold medal, but you are working hard, and you deserve a reward, too. So, after your next concert, or at the completion of one more liturgical year, what are YOU going to do? Why not do what I do? “I’m going to a convention!” Whether a regional (in odd years), or a national (Atlanta, summer 2020), AGO conventions are truly Disneyland for Organists.

Even though you are a chapter leader, you might not feel much connection with the organ culture outside your own chapter. That’s how I was during my first term as dean in 1994. Over the years, attending both kinds of conventions has given me a sense of belonging and a connection with the entire national organization. There are terrific people at the top of our organization for you to meet, along with our wonderful national staff. There are workshops to bolster your leadership perspective. There are concerts to inspire you. Why not give Atlanta a try?

Attending them is not important to you alone, it’s important for the health and well-being of your entire chapter. If you are connected, so will the members of your chapter be. Your increased understanding of the Guild’s missions, along with the boost you get from going, will help you align the goals and programs of your chapter with the rest of our chapters across the nation. Consider attending conventions to be your gift to the members of your chapter. The “Trickle-Down Theory” directly applies here. Everyone will benefit.

Where are you going this summer? Why to Disneyland for Organists—Atlanta! See you there.

*Chapter leaders, as noted in a previous newsletter and I strongly encourage you to allocate money for a chapter dean or officer to attend both regional and national conventions. This is equally as important as the money you allocate for organ scholarships!*

## 2020 POE Registration

See <https://www.agohq.org/education/poe/> to apply to attend a POE (ages 13-18), POE-A (grades 9-12) or POE+ (for adults).

- Long Beach, Calif. (POE) – June 28-July 3
- Winston-Salem, N.C. (POE) – July 19-24
- Manhattan, Kans. (POE) – June 22-27
- Hartford, Conn. (POE) – Aug. 2-7
- Ann Arbor, Mich. (POE Advanced) – June 28-July 3
- Rockford, Ill. (POE+) – June 14-19
- Richmond, Va. (POE+) – July 26-31
- Allentown and Bethlehem, Pa. (POE+) – June 28-July 3

Your chapter can help grow the next generation of organists by:

- ✓ Encouraging pianists and organists of all ages in your area to register for one of the 2020 POEs. Applications to 2020 POE events will open November 1, 2019 at [www.agohq.org/education/poe/](http://www.agohq.org/education/poe/). Scholarship assistance is available for POE, POE-A, and POE-Tech events. See [www.agohq.org/poe-scholarships/](http://www.agohq.org/poe-scholarships/).
- ✓ Making a chapter donation to one of the host chapters to help underwrite some of the costs of producing the POE.
- ✓ Welcoming new members (all POE, POE-A, and POE-Tech participants receive a one-year membership in AGO) to your chapter and helping them get involved.
- ✓ Applying to host a POE in 2021 – it's one of the greatest experiences your chapter will ever have!

Applications to host POE events in 2021 are now being accepted. Chapters interested in sponsoring a POE, POE Advanced, POE+, or POE Technical (Organbuilding POE) in summer 2021 are encouraged to consult the POE Handbook (as revised and updated through 2019) containing application materials. This resource is available [online](#) or it may be obtained directly from AGO Headquarters upon request. For further information, contact Leslie Wolf Robb, director of the Committee on Pipe Organ Encounters, at 858-735-4338, or email [lesliewolfrobb@mac.com](mailto:lesliewolfrobb@mac.com).

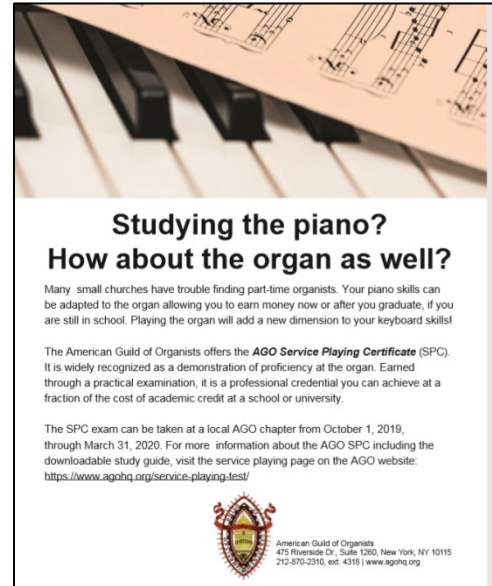
**Please note: The application deadline for hosting a POE, POE Advanced, POE+, or POE Technical in 2021 is February 15, 2020.**

As Daryl Robinson, director of the 2019 POE-A, said: "If you're considering supporting young organists, find a way to support the Pipe Organ Encounter program. Find a way to donate music, organ shoes, recordings, lessons, or any number of other tangible and intangible means. Our profession is a gift to the broader arts community of the U.S. and it is the responsibility of every single member of the AGO to recruit, inspire, and train the next generation."



## AGO Service Playing Certificate

A PDF of this flyer can be found in the **Programming Toolkit** located within the **Chapter Leadership Toolkits** on the AGO website.



## AGO SCAM EMAILS



Chapter Leaders, please be on the lookout for SCAM emails purportedly coming from the AGO asking people to buy charity gift cards or make payments. These are bogus and we have learned that chapter deans, other officers and regional councillors have been spoofed in email solicitations to treasurers and other chapter members. Anyone who receives this type of solicitation should call the person who purportedly send the email to confirm whether it is legitimate. You can learn more about this [here](#).

### Question of the Month:

**How often does your chapter board meet?**  
Please reply to [elizabeth.george@agohq.org](mailto:elizabeth.george@agohq.org).