



AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

Chapter Leadership News

October 2022

Disruption = Opportunity

Dear Chapter Leaders,

A few weeks ago, I attended the annual conference of the American Society of Association Executives. This year's conference had 5,000 attendees; its theme was "Disruption = Opportunity." Over the past two years, we have all experienced disruption in our lives. It's not a comfortable feeling; however, it does provide us with the opportunity to reexamine how we are functioning and what we might do differently. One of the keynote speakers, Safi Bahcall, former CEO of a public biotech firm, spoke about cultivating a willingness to try new things. He talked about how organizations can structure successful experiments—and what happens to organizations when they fail to do so. He asked the audience, "How do you become the initiator and not the victim of innovative surprise?" He referenced Circuit City, the leading electronics retailer of the 1990s—before it was overtaken by Best Buy—as a victim of innovative surprise. "Best Buy ran experiments," he said. "Circuit City was governed by opinions." He stated that organizations that claim to be experimenters can fall short due to three main reasons: a fear of failure that shames people who come with ideas that don't take off; a bureaucracy that makes it hard to launch experiments; and a lack of framework to support new ideas. He shared five ideas for successful innovation. First, celebrate "good fails." Even if your ideas aren't successful, they can provide meaningful information. Second, avoid the idea of the leader of a board serving as the sole generator of brilliant ideas. Rather than being a "Moses" proclaiming wisdom from a mountaintop, the leader should be a "gardener" who coordinates ideas and removes roadblocks from experiments. Third, work to strike a balance between people with big-picture or unusual ideas (whom he calls "artists") with the more pragmatic and detailed-focused people (called "soldiers"). Fourth, manage a supply of experiments that are adjacent to your core mission, along with some that might not be. Fifth, identify allies, skeptics, and blockers (you've all seen these people on your chapter boards, haven't you?). More conservative and risk-averse board members can be quick to shut down an idea. "Experiments don't have to be wide-reaching or expensive." He urged listeners to try conducting five different experiments, with the goal of creating a culture of experimenters and an energy of experimentation within their own associations.

My dear chapter leaders, what small experiments could you conduct with your board that might improve attendance at a chapter program, strengthen member engagement, and, in turn, grow more volunteers? What experiment could you conduct with your board that requires you to say, "What if?" Let's try this experiment together. I challenge each of you to experiment with something new or share one idea that either worked or didn't—and if it didn't, don't be afraid to say why. My experiment is starting a monthly leadership brown bag lunch, which I hope will generate idea sharing, collaboration, and . . . experimentation!

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

- ✓ Leadership Profile: John Massenburg, CAGO, Sub-Dean, Central North Carolina Chapter
- ✓ A New Competitions Manager Shares Her First Experience with Coordinating NYACOP in Seattle
- ✓ October 17 Chapter Leader Town Hall and October 30 Leadership Brown Bag Lunch
- ✓ Worcester Chapter's First Thursday Lunches
- ✓ Chapter Liability Insurance
- ✓ Changes to IRS Requirements
- ✓ Grand Rapids and Muskegon Lakeshore's Summer Organ Experience
- ✓ Toledo Chapter's New Member Outreach Initiative



Elizabeth George
Chief Membership Officer
American Guild of Organists

Profile of the Month: John Massenburg, CAGO, Sub-Dean, Central North Carolina Chapter

What's sitting on my desk right now:

A cordless telephone, a laptop computer with printer, a wire file container, typical writing tools, a few letters, and two hymnals.

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

revisiting Paris (France), listening to organ performances on YouTube and Facebook, or reorganizing my music library.

When I'm not at work:

I am relaxing or practicing and preparing music for upcoming worship services.

The best advice I ever got:

From my dad—always treat everybody right.

What keeps me motivated serving as chapter sub-dean:

The challenge of program planning and incorporating new ideas to keep our young and older members engaged in chapter activities. Also, participating in leadership webinars and working with our wonderful dean, Mark Andersen.

A New Competitions Manager Shares Her First NYACOP Experience in Seattle

Molly Davey, Education Program Manager

The Seattle Convention is one that I'll never forget. Three months into my new role as education program manager, I traveled to Tacoma, Wash., for the NYACOP semifinals, not knowing exactly what to expect. When I arrived at the Tacoma Holiday Inn, I was greeted by the director of the NYACOP Committee, Grady Coyle. During our conversations, I began to understand the dedication, enthusiasm, and organization it takes to lead this committee. Grady and his fellow committee members, Kathrine Handford and Kimberly Marshall, started their work on the 2022 NYACOP in fall 2020, and, due to the pandemic, they started without knowing exactly what the future held for the 2022 competition. They simply got to work, bringing their hearts and souls to the project at hand. It was a delight to meet all of them in person and to see the fruits of their labors come together in a spectacular competition. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the convention's NYACOP liaison—and Tesla-driver extraordinaire—Doug Cleveland, who helped immensely with competition logistics. Long days of turning pages, proctoring rehearsals, coordinating transportation, and troubleshooting lay ahead. A flight cancellation; a COVID-caused, last-minute judge replacement; and a miscommunication about the bus schedule were all in the future when I arrived that Sunday afternoon.

Sunday night, we met seven of the nine NYACOP semifinalists at orientation (two competitors were missing due to a flight cancellation earlier in the day). Paul Tegels gave a magnificent demonstration of the three-manual mechanical-action Paul Fritts organ at Pacific Lutheran University. As I watched the competitors ask questions and take notes, I could see the wheels of their minds whirling with all the possibilities. Each of them would have exactly three hours of preparation on the semifinal organ before the competition. In that time, they had to become familiar with the instrument's unique features and register all five of their semifinal pieces.

In addition to hearing the competition organ for the first time, the competitors were assigned their rehearsal and performance schedules. Everyone chose a letter. The person choosing A had the earliest rehearsal in the competition timeslots, the person choosing B had the second-earliest timeslot, and so on. With only seven competitors present at orientation, they were given two choices about how to handle the assignments of the two competitors who were delayed. One: a committee member would draw a letter for each of the delayed competitors, leaving it to luck if they got early or late timeslots. Two: the two missing competitors would be assigned the last two letters, guaranteeing that neither would miss any precious practice time. Without a moment of hesitation, the semifinalists in attendance chose option two. In this high-pressure environment, I was struck by their kindness and collegial spirit. Although they were competing against one another, they wanted to make sure that everyone had the same advantages.

The semifinal round went off without a hitch. Because it was my task to make sure that each competitor was outside the entrance to the organ at their appointed time, I was able to speak with each of them before they performed. Some were apprehensive, some were excited, some were calm, and some were deep in thought. All of them were focused and ready to compete. I wanted them all to advance to the final round and was glad that I was not serving as a judge!

The finalists weren't announced until we had all traveled to the convention hotel in Seattle. Prior to the announcement of the finalists, you could feel the excitement and energy in the room. After the announcement, hugs and congratulatory handshakes were exchanged, both among those moving on to the next round and those whose competition had come to an end.

On the way to dinner on Saturday night, I learned from Grady and Kathrine that the buses for the final round were scheduled to leave the hotel at 9:20 a.m. The competition was supposed to start at 9:00 a.m., so the award given by the audience was in peril. To vote for the Audience Prize, an audience member is required to be present for the entire competition. If we didn't have an audience at 9:00 a.m., there would be no Audience Prize. The finalists, who had worked so hard to prepare, deserved better. Because of this, I became the loud and squeaky wheel, contacting everyone I could think of to resolve the situation. Twelve hours before the beginning of the final round, due to the miraculous negotiation skills of the convention's incredible Steering Committee and James Thomashower, the AGO's executive director, the bus company was persuaded to arrive early. After that, the final round was a walk in the park—for me at least.

Hosting an AGO competition winner is the perfect chapter event! If this sounds like something your chapter would like to do, please contact me at competitions@agohq.org.

Monday, October 17, 6:00 pm EDT Chapter Leader Town Hall

Get the latest news from AGO Headquarters about membership marketing, new meeting software, and iMIS, our new membership database. This is *your* opportunity to ask questions and share what's happening in your chapter. Participate in a pop quiz and join a breakout room to discuss key leadership challenges and best practices. Don't be left out—register [here](#).



Chapter Leader Brown Bag Lunch

Monday October 24th, 1pm - 5:00 pm EDT

Challenges, Solutions, and Experiments for Recruiting Volunteers

Come lunch, munch, and crunch with other chapter leaders during *your* lunch hour, i.e. 1-2 pm, EDT; 12-1 pm CT; etc. The Zoom hours have been extended so that *no matter what time zone you are located in*, you can join fellow chapter leaders or extend an invitation to officers in your state or region to meet with you. Zoom rooms will be set up for you to join automatically. No registration is needed. Just show up with your thinking caps on, and don't be afraid to share some wild, hairy, and audacious ideas with one another! I'll be popping in and out to make sure everything is going smoothly.

Join [here](#).



First Thursday Lunches

Worcester dean Ronna Davis shared the following:

*Prior to 2010, there were four or five Worcester (downtown) organists who gathered regularly for dinners. In 2010, there was a need for more mingling, so Will Sherwood, chapter dean, instituted **First Thursday Lunches**. The group would hop from restaurant to restaurant, and then found one restaurant that had a separate area where all could be together. Then came the pandemic. As soon as it was determined feasible, last year's dean, Jonathan Bezdegian, reinstated the First Thursday Lunches, and it is now my goal to have First Thursday Lunches every month. Frequently, luncheon attendees will bring along extra music that they want to gift or is a "find." One day, after weeding through their choral collection, one member brought three boxes of SATB anthems for attendees to take. One lunch was themed a "show and tell," where attendees were asked to bring a book of their favorite preludes/postludes. During our last luncheon, there was an active discussion about transposing and improvisation. All shared their levels of expertise and/or discomfort, and much was learned! There is a lot of camaraderie, learning, and laughter at these luncheons, and it is my goal to have First Thursday Lunches every month.*

In reading the September issue of **Organ Pipings**, the Fayetteville-Sandhills chapter's newsletter, I was delighted to see that they have initiated **Third Thursday Musician Lunches**. *Church Musicians face unique stress that few can appreciate. You are invited to join us for fun and fellowship with your colleagues. You need not be an AGO member to attend!*

Kudos to both chapters for realizing that networking experiences for their members are just as important as the programs that they plan!

Chapter Liability Insurance

Did you know that the AGO provides chapter liability insurance? The Guild has a group Chapter Liability Insurance Plan covering all chapters. The plan is administered by EPIC Insurance Midwest (formerly ONI Risk Partners/Old National Insurance). The plan covers all chapter activities, including regional conventions.

If your chapter is told by a church or facility that it must provide proof of insurance before scheduling an event there, the "Chapter Request for Certificate" should be completed and sent to Abby Grim, the AGO representative at EPIC Insurance Midwest, by email, abby.grim@epicbrokers.com, or by fax, 260-625-7525. If you need assistance completing the form, please call Abby for assistance at 260-625-7216. Full details of the liability insurance can be found on the AGO website: <https://www.agohq.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Chapter-Liability-Ins-2020.pdf>. This document can also be accessed within the [Chapter Leadership Toolkits](#) under the Management and Governance menu.

Changes in IRS Filings



Form 990-N filers will use a new sign-in process beginning this summer.

Beginning August 2022, smaller charities that are eligible and choose to file Form 990-N, Electronic Notice for Tax-Exempt Organizations (e-Postcard), must sign into the IRS's modernized authentication platform using either their active IRS username or an account with ID.me, the current IRS credential service provider.

When accessing the [Form 990-N Submission Page](#), Form 990-N filers have three options:

1. Sign in with their active IRS username. Users with an active IRS username have the option to access the Form 990-N submission page using their existing IRS credentials, or they can choose to create a new account with ID.me.
2. Sign in with their existing ID.me account. Users that have an ID.me account to access other IRS online services or from a state or federal agency can sign in using their existing ID.me account.
3. Create a new ID.me account. Users that don't have an active IRS username credential must register and sign in with ID.me.

ID.me account creation requires an email address and multifactor authentication. [Form 990-filers](#) who have an existing IRS username and register for an ID.me account must use the same email address.

For Form 990-N filing instructions, see Publication 5248, [Form 990 Electronic Filing User Guide](#).

The filing process has not changed for organizations that file [Form 990](#), Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, or [Form 990-EZ](#), Short Form Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax.

Free Online Training for Small- to Mid-Sized Section 501(c)(3) Charities

The IRS provides interactive online training to help officers, board members, and volunteers maintain their organization's Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status—including a course on filing Form 990-series annual returns. [The Virtual to Small to Mid-Sized Tax Exempt Workshop at StayExempt.irs.gov](#) is an important resource for all charities, old and new.

Grand Rapids and Muskegon Lakeshore Chapters' Summer Organ Experience

Dick Hoogterp, District Convener

The **Summer Organ Experience** for teenagers was founded by Bob Houskamp, Grand Rapids AGO Chapter member, in June 2013, with two students. In June 2022, seven prospective organists participated in Grand Rapids and three more in Holland, Mich. Bob has developed effective procedures for conducting SOE. Applicants must have some piano background, submit a recommendation from a piano instructor, play an audition, and write a statement of purpose. The four-week program comprises a weekly lesson taught by one of three qualified organ instructors who are compensated by SOE, followed by a recital at the end of the fourth week. Organ repertoire, in accordance with piano ability level, is provided at no cost to the students. Participants are required to practice at least three hours per week, and assistance in locating suitable practice instruments is offered, if necessary. Students are encouraged to continue piano study after completing the SOE program. SOE is privately funded in entirety.

In 2022, three scholarships for continued organ study were awarded to SOE participants. Two students chose to go forward in organ study with SOE instructors. A number of SOE participants have gone on to study organ at the college level. Bob Houskamp has greatly enjoyed meeting and interacting with young people and introducing them to the organ. To put his program into perspective, he refers to the SOE experience as a "Pre-POE." It is noteworthy that participation in the Summer Organ Experience was at its highest level in 2022, the Year of the Young Organist.



Toledo Chapter's New Member Outreach

I was delighted to read about this new initiative in the Toledo chapter's August newsletter. In her dean's message, Charlotte Mariasy highlighted member outreach as a major focus for the chapter year, followed by an article supporting this mission.

Our Executive Committee has approved an exciting program year that is educational, inspirational, and social. Plan to invite colleagues who are not AGO members to these programs. We will be focusing on membership this year. Meeting potential members and sharing the value of membership will be a key source for recruitment.

As we focus on chapter membership, we are hoping to develop a database of church musicians in the area. Marilyn Blackney has agreed to be the point person for gathering this information. If you know of church musicians in your area or denomination who are not members, please ask them if we may have their name and contact information to send a limited number of invitations to programs that may be of interest. Send these names to Marilyn. Include the church where they serve and contact information—email is best.

In developing this list, we hope to share our resources with those who are not members—and hopefully encourage them to join!

For those of you who shrink when you hear the word *recruitment*, I encourage you to follow Toledo’s example of using the term “member outreach.” In the [Chapter Leadership Toolkits](#), located under the **Chapters** tab (now prominently displayed on our website), the **Recruitment** menu includes email templates, follow-up communications to prospective members, and a wonderful letter that could be sent to clergy, encouraging them to have their church musician join the AGO. There’s also a chapter flyer that you can download and add your own chapter’s contact information to. It can be sent digitally or printed as a handout for future programs. Don’t reinvent the wheel—check out the toolkits!

