



AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS

Chapter Leadership News

January 2023

Starting the Year Off With a Bang

Dear Chapter Leaders,

Happy New Year! There are a lot of exciting things in store for us in 2023. I'm counting the days until we launch iMIS, our new membership database, and am looking forward to the redesign of our website (thank you, J.W. Arnold and webmaster Maury Castro)! I'm grateful to have had the chance to do some strategic planning with members of the AGOYO Committee, who are arranging some very creative events to provide opportunities for young organist members to connect with one another.

I am also very excited to present you with information about our new Chapter Specialist Support Teams, which will provide a new leadership support model to assist you in specific areas of need. A detailed article is included in this issue.

Please register for **Leadership 2023**, which will take place the evenings of Sunday, February 5, and Monday, February 6. This conference has been designed to address the many challenges and issues that you have shared with me. This year, there will be no keynote speakers; however, we are planning on kicking off with a *Jeopardy!*-style icebreaker. A Zoom after-party has also been planned. Full program details can be found on page 3 of this newsletter.

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

- ✓ Leadership Profile: AGO Chapters
- ✓ Leadership 2023: Adventures in the New Normal . . . Or Is It *Abby* Normal?
- ✓ New Leadership Support through Chapter Specialist Support Teams



Elizabeth George
Chief Membership Officer
elizabeth.george@agohq.org

Profile of the Month: AGO Chapter Leaders



What's sitting on my desk right now: A ton of music for upcoming church services. My dean's message for the next newsletter that I just can't seem to start. Contingency plans if we have to cancel upcoming chapter programs due to the inclement weather.

If I weren't doing this, right now I'd be:

- Sitting on the beach in Maui with a very large Mai Tai in my hand.
- Sitting on the beach in Cancún with a very large piña colada in my hand.
- Dining at Les Deux Magots in Paris, drinking a fabulous bottle of Burgundy.

What keeps me motivated serving as a chapter officer: Collaborating with my board to provide the best and most inclusive experiences possible for our members. Knowing that I have the ability to make every member feel welcomed, respected, and appreciated.

Adventures in the New Normal... or is it Abby Normal?



Leadership 2023

SUNDAY, FEB. 5 & MONDAY, FEB. 6
7– 8:30 P.M. EST / 4 – 5:30 P.M. PST



Your life has changed—and so has your leadership experience.

Are you facing challenges with your board regarding governing expectations and accountability?

Are you dealing with troublesome board members and attempting to manage conflict?

Are your board meetings *bored* meetings?

Are you struggling to get everyone to work cohesively as a team?

Are you frustrated by low attendance at your programs?

Are you worried that your current officer position is becoming a life sentence?

Find some answers, solutions, and relief by registering for a conference that will focus on these and other issues that are impacting your ability to lead effectively and get things done. We've created the same agenda for both nights to help with any scheduling conflicts you may have.

Sunday and Monday leadership sessions:

Breakout #1: Board Development and Teamwork: Who's in Charge? How do you create one team with one voice out of many diverse voices? Who on your board makes critical decisions that will impact your members? This session will address how a board of officers can work successfully as a team, and how all leadership actions impact this. Sunday's facilitator: Sue Mitchell-Wallace. Monday's facilitator: Vicki Schaeffer. Recommended for all chapter officers. **Please refer to chapters 7, 9, and 11 in *The Board Team Handbook*.**

Breakout #2: Board Meetings—Where the Action Is: Creating Board Policies and Meeting Procedures to Stay on Track. What you do in meetings usually makes the difference between an effective or an ineffective organization. Your bylaws are not your board policies. Learn why it is important to create a set of written policies that anticipate issues and problems, alleviating the need for "crisis management" when problems occur. Facilitator: David Vogels. Recommended for those serving as dean. **Please refer to chapters 22, 26, and 45 in *The Board Team Handbook*.**

Breakout #3: Dealing with the Problem Board Member and Managing Conflict on Your Board. When a diverse group of volunteer leaders comes together, there are bound to be elements of potential conflict, and with it, board disruptors. This session will focus on how to promote healthy debate during your board meetings, and why compromising is not a defeat. It will also provide tactics and solutions to subvert problem board members.

Facilitator: Mark Andersen. Recommended for those serving as dean and sub-dean. **Please refer to chapters 13 and 15 in *The Board Team Handbook*.**

Breakout #4: Programming, Member Engagement, and Fostering Inclusivity. Many chapters continue to struggle with encouraging members who have not had formal training—and fear not being accepted—to attend programs and events. Is your chapter programming focused only on recitals and organ crawls? This session will be an open discussion to identify successful strategies that foster inclusivity. It will share ideas for events that can encourage stronger program attendance. Facilitator: Rodney Girvin. Recommended for sub-deans, registrars, and membership and education coordinators.

Breakout #5: Help! Our Nominations Committee Cannot Find Anyone Interested in Serving as a Chapter Officer: Creating a Succession Plan to Avoid Leadership Burnout. This session will describe how to build a leadership pipeline. It will discuss the importance of creating an ambassador program to strengthen member engagement, and how creating micro-volunteer opportunities can grow your volunteer base. Facilitator: Elizabeth George. Recommended for all those serving in leadership positions.

Breakout #6: The Power of Publicity: Promote Your Events through Media Relations. You presented a spectacular program that should have received larger attendance. How could you have better promoted it to influence more people to attend? AGO’s marketing communications specialist J.W. Arnold 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.

Please register here: <https://onlinexperiences.com/Launch/QReg.htm?ShowUUID=5AB5A4B8-2BE8-4B29-9453-1451E6F43274>

Chapter Specialist Support Teams

One of the key membership goals noted in the AGO’s 2021–24 Strategic Plan is to **help chapters of all sizes function effectively**. The Guild’s regional councillors currently serve all chapters within their region. They are required to wear a variety of hats: serving as mentors, facilitators, HR experts, mediators, and psychologists. They also play a critical and strategic role in chapter development, participating in webinars and conferences as subject knowledge experts. The AGO’s current volunteer structure includes 52 district convener positions. These positions have often been challenging to fill, and with the impact of COVID-19, volunteers now have even less time to work in this capacity. To date, only 39 district conveners have been appointed. A recent survey sent to these conveners asked if they would be willing to work with chapters more closely and on a more consistent basis to provide stronger leadership support. Results indicated that they would not be able to do this, due to increased workloads.

Since the onset of the pandemic, online leadership training has increased through multiple webinars, workshops, town hall meetings, and virtual leadership conferences, but there is still a critical need for additional chapter support. The creation of **chapter specialist support teams** will provide direct support to chapters in key areas, generating solutions and sharing resources as needed. This will help chapters of all sizes work more productively and will support member recruitment and retention. Our district conveners (all of whose terms

end in 2023) will continue to serve in this volunteer position; however, we will be working on the formation of chapter specialist support teams to support those chapters that are not currently served by district conveners, thus providing a smooth transition when the role of district convener is discontinued on July 1 of this year.

Chapter Specialist Support Teams

- Will work in teams of six subject area experts, assisted by standing AGO committees, to address the critical needs of a chapter, and they will report to an appointed team leader.
- Team members can include:
 - Previous district conveners
 - Committee or task force members
 - Chapter leaders
 - Regional or national officers
 - Those with expertise in a specific area
- Team members must be adept at using technologies such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and online collaborative platforms such as Google.
- Team members will *not* be tied to a specific district or region, but will exist as a resource for *all* chapters, based on a chapter's specific needs.
- Volunteers will have the ability to serve on more than one team, based on knowledge and time.

Chapter Specialist Support Teams will address:

- **Marketing and Communications** (working with the AGO's Marketing Committee)
 - Assistance with newsletter design and distribution
 - How to create a marketing campaign
 - How to use social media to increase membership, build community, and promote upcoming events
 - Using effective PR strategies to identify and engage local radio, television, and newspaper contacts
- **Technology** (working with the AGO's Technology Committee)
 - Provide guidance regarding website design and development
 - How to create a Facebook page for your chapter
 - Provide tech support for using Zoom, Google Meet, and other collaborative platforms
 - Provide information about TechSoup for nonprofits
 - How to livestream using Facebook Live and YouTube
- **Programming** (working with regional councillors, committees, and staff)
 - Provide suggestions for virtual and in-person programming that encompasses recitals, workshops, and special events that encourage diversity in programming
 - Ideas for program collaborations with other chapters
 - Help identify opportunities for collaboration with other arts organizations or charities
- **Education and Certification** (working with the Committee for Professional Certification)
 - Educating those who are considering taking one of the AGO certification exams
 - Serving as a resource for those who are studying for a specific certification
 - Helping chapters initiate the Achievement Awards Program

- **Membership** (working with COMDACS and the AGO’s membership team)
 - New member onboarding: engaging new members during their first year of membership and assimilating them into the life of your chapter
 - Recruitment: finding prospective members
 - Engagement:
 - Strategies for recognizing members
 - Creating micro-volunteer opportunities

- **The Responsibilities and Dynamics of Serving as an Officer** (working with regional councillors and the AGO’s chief membership officer)
 - Using *The Board Team Handbook*
 - How to work well as a team
 - How to conduct effective board meetings
 - How to deal with conflict
 - How to create a leadership pipeline
 - Strategic planning (Elizabeth George will assist with training volunteers to serve as facilitators)

- **Financial Development** (working with John Dixon and the Committee on Finance and Development)
 - How to find donors
 - How to ask for money

Timeline for Implementation:

- J.W. Arnold, the AGO’s marketing communications specialist, is currently developing a communications plan via all media to promote the new program.
- Very shortly, an online application form for those who are interested in participating on a specific team will be posted on the AGO’s website; it will include details regarding the time frame for submissions and when team members will be contacted.
- By April 30, applications will be reviewed by the respective AGO committees, staff, and regional councillors. The Board of Regional Councillors, along with a team leader who serves as director of a national committee, will identify those whose skills best meet the requirements of each team. The first term of chapter specialist support teams will begin on July 1, 2023 and will end on June 30, 2024.
- June 1: training begins.
- This program will be monitored through quarterly calls scheduled with regional councillors and staff to share feedback and information about where critical chapter support is needed.

We are excited about the formation of chapter specialist support teams, which will provide direct support based on your chapter’s specific needs. Should you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me at elizabeth.george@agohq.org.