



Pipeline

American Guild of Organists—Red River Valley Chapter

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2020

Message From the Dean

What interesting, strange times are upon us these days. And we don't know how long "these days" are going to last. It would be wonderful if the coronavirus pandemic would be over instantly but, of course, that is not going to happen. We will get through all of this together, and God will see us through.

I attended a Zoom meeting for the North Central regional AGO deans on Wednesday, April 1. It was a very profitable meeting. I will mention some things from that virtual meeting in another article.

As you know, we will not be gathering for the First Friday Lunch at the Fargo Fryn' Pan restaurant until further notice. Bradley Steen will let us know when this resumes again.

We will wait and see what happens with our May potluck and used music exchange. It is always a fun way to end each year, as we have done this for the past several years.

The National AGO election process began on Wednesday, April 1 and will continue through Thursday, April 30. The process is VERY simple.

The chapter AGO election process has begun as well. And that process was SUPER easy!

You will read elsewhere in this PIPELINE edition about the hard work of the Diamond Anniversary committee. We are looking forward to a fantastic upcoming year of programming for the chapter, and we hope that the community will join us in many of the events as well.

The term "virtual worship" has now entered our vocabulary. About a month ago, I never would have dreamed that this is what congregations everywhere would be doing to reach their members and

friends. At First Lutheran in Fargo, we have now had three Lenten services virtually, as well as three Sunday morning virtual services. We are putting the finishing touches on our Holy Week worship. And our Easter virtual worship will be recorded sometime midweek during Holy Week.

We need to keep in touch—or perhaps GET in touch—with each other during this time. The Lord continues to bless our efforts, perhaps even more so during these challenging times. People need worship, people need music, and people need to pray and to be prayed for each day.

Let me know if you need anything. Email me at moslon@flcfargo.org or text me (or call me) at 701-809-3706. God will see us through!!

Sincerely,
Michael Olson, Dean

R.R.V. Chapter Email Address is Again Active

A short public service announcement that the chapter's old email address is now being used and checked again. For those of you who do not remember, it is rrvago@hotmail.com. Members and friends of the chapter are encouraged to add this address to your contacts if you have not done so already.

First Friday Luncheon

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic and for the health and safety of all, the First Friday Luncheons have been indefinitely suspended until further notice. The Fryn' Pan restaurant on Main Avenue in Fargo remains closed. We will re-evaluate going forward and make a decision as to the resumption of this monthly gathering when we see there is more clear resolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and such time as it seems appropriate to begin meeting again.

Chapter Officers

Dean: Michael Olson
Sub-Dean: Robyn Vinje
Secretary: Brad Steen
Treasurer: Brad Steen

RRVAGO Treasurer's Report

Financial Status of the Red River Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists Bell Bank Checking Account for the period of January 1, 2020—March 31, 2020

BEGINNING BALANCE **\$5,519.68**

INCOME:

Date	Description	Amount
2/13	Nat'l AGO for 2 memberships	\$92.00
2/24	Memorial for Dillon Swanson's Great-grandmother	15.00
3/12	Nat'l AGO for 1 membership	36.00
3/23	Memorial for Alpha Roeszler's Sister	15.00
	TOTAL INCOME	<u>\$158.00</u>

EXPENSES:

Date	Check #	Payable To	Amount
1/6	Dbt. Card	USPS for PO Box	\$80.00
1/19	2031	A. Swanson for ND Sec'y of State filing fee	10.00
1/19	2032	MN Sec'y of State/Registered Agent Change	35.00
		TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$125.00</u>

ENDING BALANCE: **\$5,552.68**

It's Time to VOTE for your RRVAGO Chapter Officers for 2020-21!

Yes! It's another election!!

The RRVAGO nominating committee, consisting of Robyn Vinje, Chairperson; Michael Olson and Bradley Steen has met and presents the following slate of candidates for election this month:

Dean	Michael Olson
Sub-Dean	Dillon Swanson
Secretary	Bradley Steen
Treasurer	Alex Swanson

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the annual RRVAGO business meeting, music swap and potluck has been

postponed indefinitely. So, this year the election of officers will take place through a secure website with a secret ballot.

Chapter members should have received an email with directions as to how to access the ballot with the nominated officers for the 2020-2021 Program Year officially beginning this in July.

If you have already voted (and the response has been very good, so far!), THANK YOU!. **If you have not already voted, please do so.**

If you have not received the referenced email, check your spam file.

The online ballot is secure and private and very easy to use.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Bradley Steen at bjls96@yahoo.com

VOTING IS OPEN NOW THROUGH APRIL 16 at 8PM and remember YOUR VOTE COUNTS!

Highlights of Zoom Meeting for North Central Chapter Deans

(from Michael Olson)

Wednesday, April 1

As of right now, all POEs are still happening this summer.

As of right now, the 2020 AGO National Convention in Atlanta is still happening in early July; however, the NYACOP and NCOI competitions have been postponed.

There will be a grace period of THREE months for all AGO membership renewals.

There is a new resource on the national AGO website, at agohq.org, about the coronavirus pandemic. James Thomashower encouraged everyone to check it out.

AGO national elections began online on Wednesday morning, April 1 and will continue through Thursday, April 30.

After the 9/11 event in 2001, we could hug our neighbors and go to church. Now is the antithesis of that (when we NEED and WANT to hug our neighbors and family and friends AND go to church).

There is going to be a national AGO request to call every AGO member. This would be a call chain. AGO is a robust group of volunteers, so we will all be put to work to make this happen. (continued on Page 3)

(continued from Page 2) Chapters were encouraged to take their time in local elections since face-to-face elections are not taking place for the foreseeable future.

A concept called "Program In a Box" was discussed and this might have some merit. This could be a networking event for chapter members via Zoom or some other platform. Stay tuned!

One chapter dean—I got his name, but not where he was from—told us that his church was having Church in the Parking Lot (I'm guessing like Hope Lutheran in Fargo does during the summer months). They are using an FM transmitter, people are sitting in their cars and worshipping, and the organist is playing a digital keyboard. They are going to have seven Easter services! (I think that the parking lot and traffic logistics might be something else!)

The Twin Cities AGO chapter is in the process of calling all of their members—and this is no small task, because it's believed that TCAGO is the largest chapter in the country! It was said that some people were ASTOUNDED that they were contacted by phone by someone from AGO! (Maybe it's time to start TALKING to people again and not just send emails or texts; phone calls used to be "the thing" not all that long ago!).

The North Central regional AGO convention will be in the Twin Cities "sometime" during the summer of 2021. The dates were not mentioned in the conference call.

Happy Birthday to Us! RRVAGO Turns 75 This Month

According to the national AGO records, the Red River Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists was chartered on April 9, 1945 in Fargo, North Dakota. The first set of by-laws were adopted on this date and the 18 charter members of the organization included: Viola Anderson, Joseph Black, Laura Campbell, Leif Christianson, Edith Cleveland, Dorothy Deems, Vincent Dodge, Mrs. R.R. Hartwell, Mrs. R.P. Krueger, Mrs. Oscar Moen, Betty Mark, Clara Pollock, Gertie Lobben, Hazel Stalheim, Rose Liedemann, Myrtle Steen, Mrs. Hugo Wright, and Ruth Berge (who transferred her membership from the Twin Cities Chapter).

I will not go into further detail so as not to spoil the soon-to-be-published chapter history book that I would encourage you all to purchase this fall. It is a wonderful milestone for our chapter to have achieved,

and I look forward to the great year of music and celebration that is in store. - - - Alex Swanson

Chapter Memorabilia Needed

The chapter's Diamond Anniversary Committee is hard at work constructing and implementing a plan for the upcoming year's programming season. Among the primary focuses of this celebration will be recognizing the chapter's history and myself and Jean Hellner are the entirety of the history and archives committee so we will be authoring a history book of the chapter which will be for sale beginning in September and all throughout the anniversary season.

That being said, I would kindly ask anyone with ANY chapter memorabilia (photos, programs, clippings, minutes, newsletters, etc.) to turn them into Jean or I. If you wish to donate them to the chapter's archives, we would welcome this, but if you prefer to have your items returned we will make copies and return them to you. We would like this history book to be a thorough and comprehensive look at our chapter's history so any help you or anyone you know can be is greatly appreciated. Member-submitted stories and anecdotes of the chapter are also welcome. Please pass the word as there are many former chapter members who do not receive this newsletter.

We can be contacted at rrvago@hotmail.com and my phone number is (701) 540-8930. - - - Alex Swanson

RRVAGO Diamond Anniversary Committee Meeting Minutes February 4, 2020

A regular meeting of the Red River Valley Chapter's Diamond Anniversary Committee was held at First Presbyterian Church in Fargo. Those present included Dillon Swanson, Alex Swanson, Michael Olson, Bradley Steen, Jim Gurney, Jean Hellner, and Ryan Hardy. No one was absent. Since the last meeting, Dillon Swanson has been elected Committee Chairman, and Alex Swanson, Secretary.

Dillon Swanson discussed the different committees which will need filling for this anniversary year season. Committee members will not be entirely responsible but will coordinate their respective areas and serve as "point persons" for others who wish to volunteer in those areas. (continued on Page 4)

(continued from Page 3) The following committees and volunteers were created and assigned:

Program and Advertising: Ryan Hardy, Michael Olson, Dillon Swanson

History and Archives: Alex Swanson and Jean Hellner

Hospitality and Volunteer: Dillon Swanson, Michael Olson, Susan Clambey

A review of the programming schedule was had. The anniversary kick-off event will be held at a church in conjunction with a hymn festival, followed by a reception and program which will include a presentation of the chapter's history, recognize long-standing members, and relaying our hope for the future. Some of the longest-standing members of the chapter were mentioned and include (but are not limited to) Lance Johnson, Peter Nygaard, Gaylord Fagerland, Phil Felde, and Judy Sanders.

It was also mentioned that it would be desirable to have a variety of organs featured throughout the program lineup. Several churches were mentioned as possible program venues: Sts. Anne & Joachim Catholic, Trinity Lutheran, First Lutheran of Fargo, First Presbyterian of Fargo, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Gethsemane Episcopal Cathedral, Messiah Lutheran, St. Joseph Catholic, Nativity Catholic, St. John Lutheran.

Dillon Swanson is working with Andrew Steinberg to regain administrative control of our chapter's Facebook page, as it is a vital advertising asset for the chapter. Alex Swanson will contact Lance Johnson about which of his organs he would suggest suitable choices for involvement in the anniversary program lineup. Alex will also put together a Diamond Anniversary Committee contact sheet.

The following schedule was discussed for the 2020-21 anniversary year programming season:

September, 2020: Saturday, September 19th organ crawl (in which Sts. Anne & Joachim Catholic Church is included) followed by a hymn festival at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Moorhead, after which the anniversary celebration program & reception will take place. Alex Swanson will check with former chapter Sub-Dean Anna Goodin-Hayes about the possibility of using St. Joseph for the hymn festival and program venue.

October, 2020: Tentatively Sunday afternoon, October 4th at First Lutheran Church of Fargo—Scott & Frieda Montgomery Organ-Piano duo.

(Secondary event) Date to be determined—Halloween Organ Spooktacular at Trinity Lutheran Church in Moorhead. Andrew Steinberg would like chapter members to be involved with this event.

November, 2020: Date to be determined—Evensong service at Gethsemane Episcopal Cathedral, 4:00 p.m. Three or four English organ pieces would be included as part of the service, with the performers to be local/chapter organists.

December, 2020: Monday, December 7th in the evening—Christmas Carol Ring & Sing with the F-M Area Music Club at First Presbyterian Church of Fargo, and we will ask for some more organ involvement in the program this year.

January, 2021: Sunday, January 24th—French organ music recital at a Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Detroit Lakes.

February, 2021: Church music workshop with former chapter member and Oxford Hymn Series arranger/composer Rebecca Groom te Velde. Dillon Swanson will talk with her regarding a date and preferred venue for the workshop (possibly Sts. Anne & Joachim Catholic Church).

March, 2021: Sunday, March 21st at 4:00 p.m.—Bach Birthday Bash recital at Trinity Lutheran Church in Moorhead. Possibly on Saturday night (March 20th), Concordia Student chamber music, then Sunday afternoon, organ works at Trinity and choral ensemble performing a Bach Cantata.

April, 2021: April 18th at 4:00 p.m.—Dillon Swanson's B.M. Junior Recital, location TBD.

Possibly another RRV Chapter/Red River Theatre Organ Society "Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza" event on April 17th (the Fargo Theatre is not scheduling out that far, so this is tentative).

May, 2021: Date TBS—American organ music recital at Peace Lutheran Church in Fargo.

RRVAGO annual business meeting, potluck, and music exchange, date and location to be determined.

Other discussion regarding the proposed schedule included the NDSU Baroque (continued on Page 5)

(continued from Page 4) Festival being another event which we could possibly be involved with as part of our program lineup and Ryan Hardy will check into this.

Grant-writing and receiving will likely be necessary to offset the costs of some of the upcoming programs, and Jean Hellner, George French, and Dillon Swanson's mother were all discussed as viable grant-writers, especially considering Jean is on the anniversary committee.

Ryan Hardy suggested that we consider selling tickets for the following events:

1. September, 2020 Hymn Festival
2. October, 2020 Organ-Piano Duo Recital
3. March, 2021 Bach Birthday Bash
4. April, 2021 Pedals, Pipes and Pizza
5. May, 2021 American Organ Music Recital

Alex Swanson then moved to accept the proposed schedule for the anniversary year program season, seconded by Michael Olson; motion carried.

Specific Reports:

Rebecca Groom te Velde will state her preference for an organ type to be used for her workshop. Her fee is \$400-500 fee, plus assistance with travel, and she would even stay with someone if they would host her.

The Montgomery Organ-Piano Duo fee is \$2,000-\$3,000, and Michael Olson will check into whether or not this includes their travel and lodging.

Alex Swanson and Jean Hellner will make a Red River Valley Chapter history book to be sold throughout the season, maybe similar to the F-M Area Music Club's book. Alex reported that he and Dillon checked out the chapter's records at both the NDSU and MSUM Archives. Very little is stored at the NDSU Archives and the bulk is being stored at MSUM, but Jean noted that NDSU has better facilities and that we should work on moving the MSUM portion of our records there. Alex added that following the anniversary celebration, we should go through our archives and donate all historical materials that are not currently needed, in an effort to reduce the amount of records to be stored by the chapter officers.

Jean also mentioned that maybe we should consider replicating a historic chapter program from one of the old bulletins found in the MSUM archives (which date back to the 1940s.)

The next meeting of the anniversary committee will be Tuesday, March 24th at First Lutheran Church in Fargo at 8:00 p.m.

There being no further business, Alex Swanson moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Michael Olson. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 9:54 p.m.

Alex P. Swanson, Secretary

Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2020

A second meeting of the Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza Planning Committee was held at First Lutheran Church in Fargo, ND on the above date. Those present included Michael Olson, Ryan Hardy, Bradley Steen, Alex Swanson, and Dillon Swanson. Those absent were Sally Harmon (on leave) and Dillon Thiele (in school).

The meeting was opened by Ryan Hardy at 12:02 p.m. No secretary's report was given as the minutes were sent out in advance via the RRVAGO Pipeline Newsletter.

A review of the event's schedule and budgeting was had. RRTOS (Red River Theatre Organ Society) has a current treasury balance of \$3,031.25 (not including the F-M Area Foundation Fund) and Red River Valley Chapter of the AGO has a current balance of \$5,394.68.

Volunteer duties will need to be filled in several areas, including registration (continued on Page 6)

(continued from Page 5) table/cashier, master class teachers, ushering, among others. It was decided that the number of students who may participate in the event will not be limited.

Expenses were discussed, and as the RRTOS is handling Ryan's concert as a separate event, they will be covering those costs, and therefore any profit from the concert itself will be theirs. Expected expenses for P.P.&P. will include packets containing a page for each venue, and possibly notes pages, contact information for both organ clubs, and possibly some activities such as word finds & crosswords, which will be looked into by Dillon Swanson. Dillon and Alex will be responsible for the publishing and printing of the packets. Passports are also being considered, or at least name tags. The remainder of the expenses will include the pizza, paper supplies, and other miscellaneous supplies such as pens and pocket folders. Bell Bank will be asked if they will donate pens, pencils and paper supplies (cups and plates). Concordia College will be asked for the donation of printing, pocket folders, pens, etc.

A registration fee of \$10.00 per student was decided as appropriate to aid in off-setting costs for the event, and the RRTOS's account with Square, Inc. will be used for payments using cards in person, and online pre-registration will be done through Event Brite. Aside from the pizza, packet, etc. listed above, each student and one guardian will also receive a free ticket to Ryan's concert.

After further discussion, it was decided that RRVAGO would cover the costs of the P.P.&P. event as RRTOS is covering the concert expenses, and furthermore, that any money taken in through registration would be given to RRVAGO.

Frank Henning of the RRTOS will be asked if he could aid in marketing for the event, such as the creation of a flier. Advertising will be done on Facebook, Instagram, www.rrtos.org, in church bulletins (Michael Olson & Dillon Swanson will take care of First Lutheran & First Presbyterian), and a press release will be printed in the Forum. Michael Olson will also attend the F-M Area Music Teachers Association meeting tomorrow and notify them of the event. Ryan Hardy will create a volunteer duty sheet.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

The next and final meeting of this committee will be Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 8:00 p.m. in First Lutheran Church of Fargo.

Alex P. Swanson, Committee Secretary

Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2020

A final meeting of the Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza planning committee was held on the above date at First Lutheran Church in Fargo. Present were Bradley Steen, Michael Olson, Ryan Hardy, Dillon Swanson. Absent: Dylan Thiele and Sally Harmon.

The meeting was called to order by Ryan Hardy at 8:23 p.m.

The following updates were given by various committee members:

1. Student packets are finished and ready to be printed.
2. Pizza may be ordered at Sammy's a day prior to an event, although they will not deliver. A 12" pizza is \$15.65 and a 14" is \$19.19, plus tax.
3. No sponsors have been secured but grant-writing could be looked into for next time.
4. Frank Henning created an attractive flier for the event, a Facebook event has been created, and the rtos.org website already has been used by four people to pre-register. The North Dakota Today television program could do a press release for the event. Dillon Swanson will look into this.
5. Advertising in church bulletins: First Presbyterian Church has been notified. Michael will take care of First Lutheran Church's bulletin.
6. Ryan Hardy has created a volunteer duty list.

RRVAGO and RRTOS members should show up to First Lutheran Church at 8:00 a.m. on the day of the event. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m..

Alex P. Swanson, Committee Secretary

Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza Planning Committee Special Meeting Minutes—March 13, 2020

A special meeting of the P.P.&P. planning committee was held in conjunction with a Red River Theatre Organ Society board meeting via text messaging on the above date. Those represented were Michael Olson, Ryan Hardy, Alex Swanson, and Mark Frisco.

The meeting was called to order at 2:45 p.m. A discussion was had on the rapid spreading of the COVID-19 and the cancellation of many events that has ensued as a result. It was noted that the Fargo Theatre Film Festival has already been cancelled, and that maybe it would be wise to follow suit with regard to the Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza event.

Ryan Hardy moved to postpone the event until August, seconded by Alex Swanson; motion carried.

There being no further business, Alex Swanson moved to adjourn, seconded by Ryan Hardy. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m. ----- Alex P. Swanson, Committee Secretary

Dillon Swanson to Serve as Organ Fellow at Lutheran Summer Music Festival & Academy 2020

RRVAGO member and Concordia College student, Dillon Swanson, has been selected to serve as the 2020 Organ Fellow for this summer's session of LSM Festival and Academy in July. This summer will be the premiere season of the fellowship. Fellowships are offered to full-time undergraduate and graduate students as well as recent college graduates. Fellows serve as role models to LSM students and demonstrate high caliber musicianship and commitment to an inclusive and welcoming community. There is only one fellowship per area of study except for voice and collaborative piano. As a fellow, Dillon will teach an "Intro to the Pipe Organ" studio class, extra or secondary lessons, assist with worship planning and leading, and perform in the recital setting. Along with this work, Dillon will have opportunity to study with Chad Fothergill (Cantor and Fellowship Mentor) and Laura Potratz (Associate Cantor).

"One of the things I'm most thrilled about is the appreciation shown to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach at LSM. Anyone who knows me knows how much I love Bach!! Every year, the LSM community mounts a full Bach Cantata to be offered in the context of Sunday Eucharist. LSM 2020 Bach Cantata will be the first collaboration between LSM and the Bach Institute at Valparaiso University. The Bach Institute, under the direction of Dr. Christopher M. Cock (former LSM choir director) shares the same appreciation and seeks to ensure the legacy of music and theological perspective of Johann Sebastian Bach for future generations. In case you're interested, the livestream of the cantata service will be on Sunday, July 19, 2020 from the Chapel of the Resurrection at Valparaiso University. (I'm unsure of the time of the broadcast and will share that once it's known.)" ----- From Dillon Swanson

Organist Paul Jacobs Performance in Minneapolis Has Been Cancelled

Due to precautions taken regarding the Coronavirus pandemic, the performance of Grammy Award winning organist Paul Jacobs previously scheduled for May 3, 2020 at **Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, MN** has been cancelled.

Rockford, IL POE for Adults

The Rockford Chapter of the American Guild of Organists is pleased to announce that it is hosting its fifth Pipe Organ Encounter For Adults from June 14-19, 2020.

Dr. Isabelle Demers from Baylor University will present the opening concert on Trinity Lutheran Church's Casavant (3man/49rank) organ. Additional concerts will be presented by Tyler Canonico and Peter Yardley-Jones at Court Street UMC (Moller/Berhaus, 4man62s54rank); and Dr. Steven Egler, Dr. Claire Rozier, Victoria Shields, and John Wigal at Our Savior's Lutheran Church (Buzard, 2man/28s/23rank). Their distinguished recitalists will also headline their teaching staff. They will present workshops Monday through Thursday mornings, and be joined by additional faculty to teach private lessons in the afternoons. Organs will be available for student practice time each afternoon. The event will conclude with a celebratory sharing of student accomplishments on Friday morning, followed by lunch.

Registration is available at <https://agohq.org/education/poe/poe-plus/>. Payment can be made online at <https://www.rockfordago.org/poe> or by mailing a check made payable to Rockford AGO POE+2020 to Tim Anderson, 4956 Markell Lane, Cherry Valley, IL 61016. The early bird registration fee (by April 14) is \$250. Full price registration of \$275 is available from April 15th until May 14th. Fees include the cost of all POE+ concerts, classes, and private lessons, as well as a catered lunch Monday through Friday.

Discounted lodging (\$109.95/night plus tax) is available at Staybridge Suites, Bell School Road, Rockford. Lodging must be booked by May 14th to qualify for the discounted rate and should be arranged by phone at 815-397-0200, requesting the AGO POE+ rate.

For further information, please contact event co-chairs Jean Anderson (jeancec@yahoo.com / 815-399-9686) or Trish Rooney (tear Rooney@charter.net / 915-985-0143).

Kansas State University POE

This coming summer, the Kansas State University-Manhattan Chapter of the American Guild of Organists will be sponsoring its second POE, an outreach program for teenagers sponsored by the American Guild of Organists. The POE will be held on the campus of Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas.

Participants will receive instruction from dedicated faculty members Elisa Bickers, Lynn Davis, Jacob Hofeling, David Pickering, Ann Marie Rigler, and Hentus van Rooyen. Participants will broaden their knowledge through masterclasses, performances, and other activities. In addition, participants will interact with their peers who share a love of the organ.

You are invited to go to www.ksupoe.weebly.com to learn more about what participants will experience over the course of their time at the POE. Please feel free to view and distribute the brochure to those who might be interested.

Participants between the ages of 13 and 18 are eligible to apply. Previous organ study is not required, although minimal piano proficiency at the early intermediate level is desired.

Scholarship Assistance is available through the American Guild of Organists (ago.org/poe-scholarships); the application deadline is April 15, 2020. Scholarship decisions will be made by May 1, 2020. In addition, students may also contact AGO chapters or religious institutions if financial assistance is needed.

Please feel free to contact David Pickering, Associate Professor of Music, Kansas State University at dpicker@ksu.edu with any questions you might have.

POEs are still scheduled to occur but may be postponed or cancelled at the discretion of the POE coordinator. Please contact local POE coordinators for up-to-the-minute information at

agohq.org/poe

A Message From AGO National Headquarters

The AGO National Council and Headquarters staff are aware of the harmful impact that the coronavirus pandemic is having on many Guild members. As a result of the New York State governor's mandate, AGO Headquarters office closed on March 20, 2020 to be compliant with the state-wide business restriction and will not open until further notice. However, all AGO staff have begun working remotely from home and will be able to assist our members by telephone and email in the same way as we normally do. We have been taking a variety of measures to listen to our members and help them through this difficult time. Here are just a few:

1. First and most importantly, we are implementing a "Member Care Initiative," a concerted effort to reach by telephone every single member of the Guild during the month of April. This is a check-in call to say, "Hello, how are you?" We expect participation at every level of the Guild, and in particular hope that chapter leaders will take their membership directories in hand and reach out to every member. Earlier this week, to kick off the effort, we conducted Zoom meetings with the AGO leadership teams in each of our seven regions. Approximately 140 chapter leaders participated in these video conferences. We will continue doing Zoom updates in the weeks ahead.

2. Second, the Committee on Career Development and Support has collected and posted myriad resources for organists experiencing financial hardship, isolation, and requests from employers to work remotely during the pandemic. These online resources can be found at www.agohq.org/responding-to-covid-19. The resource page is being updated regularly, so please check back often.

Membership renewal invoices are being prepared and will be sent via email. We have extended the grace period for lapsed members to three months. For example, members who were scheduled to lapse on April 1 will now continue to receive all voting benefits through June 30.

1. Now would be a great time to ensure that we have your complete and accurate contact information in your membership profile. Go to www.agohq.org/oncard-login/ and select "Update Personal Information" from the ONCARD Menu.

2. If you want to reach any member of the AGO staff, please contact us by email or phone. Our contact information can be found at www.agohq/about-the-ago/headquarters/.

LOOKING AHEAD

1. The AGO National and Regional Election is in full swing with nearly 2,000 votes already recorded. Go to <https://secure.intelliscaninc.net/ago/2020> to cast your vote if you have not yet done so. April 20 is the last day to participate.

2. As I write this on Friday afternoon, April 3, 2020, the AGO National Convention in Atlanta, July 6-10, is still scheduled to occur as planned. The hotel contract requires payment of a very substantial, six-figure cancellation fee if we cancel now. If it becomes impossible to hold the convention for any number of reasons stipulated in the *force majeure* clause of the contract, such as continuing government restrictions on the number of people who can congregate together, cancellation will be possible without incurring any penalty.

While the mission of the AGO is to foster a thriving community of musicians, group gatherings are being discouraged or banned across the U.S. in an effort to slow the spread and flatten the curve related to the capacity of our healthcare system to cope with the virus. Social distancing is being recommended by elected officials at all levels of government. Please heed all mandates and recommendations issued by our government and medical professionals.

Above all, be safe and stay well. We care about you.

Sincerely,

Michael Bedford, AAGO ChM, President

James E. Thomashower, CAE, Executive Director



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