

A Letter From the Dean

Dear Members and Friends,

Paul has just sent out the voting email, to vote for AGO board members for the coming year. Of course, here in Holland, in recent years, we haven't really had a competition for board members – but your effort to vote is a “vote of confidence” in this process. And you are also welcome to vote “no” for any candidate as well. So please take the 30 seconds or so that this process entails, and help show your support for your AGO board.

Also - take note of the remaining Pillar Summer Mid-day Concerts throughout July and the beginning of August.. (See the schedule at the end of the newsletter, ed.)

And speaking of elections - this will be my last newsletter column as your dean. I believe I began as dean in the fall of 2013, and I thought I could use part of this newsletter for a glimpse into the past of our chapter. Members have asked me recently who the previous deans were of the Holland chapter. So I've tried to put together a history of Holland AGO deans from the info I've gleaned (much of this from your past deans' memories, so please excuse the approximations!)

Jane Bosco was dean when I arrived in Holland in 2011 – she was dean 2010-2012 ish.

Before her, Elizabeth West was dean for many years (circa 2004-2009)

Before Elizabeth, both Linda Strouf and Huw Lewis were dean for one year (or one term?) each.

Then we have some fuzzy years in the 90's that no one remembers... Though Judy Koeman apparently has a box of old chapter records, so maybe we can hear more later from her about the 90's and the Holland chapter!

I was given some newsletters and board meeting minutes from the first 3 years of the chapter (I believe these came from Joy Huttar, secretary at that time, to Steve Jenkins and Charles Huttar). The first dean in 1985 when the chapter was founded was Thom Gouwens (who now lives in Chicago and plays at 4th Presbyterian.) He played the Huttar Memorial concert at Grace a few years ago. The second dean was Jerry Kuker – who moved partway through his term to take a job in IL. Brian Carder (choir director of Hope Church) took over the rest of Jerry's two-year term.

I also found Member's recital programs from 1987 and 1988 – which I found fascinating! Did you know on Feb 21, 1987 there was a Members Recital at Community Reformed Church, and these organists played: Joy Huttar, Marie Blauwkamp, Norene Walters, Evelyn Slager, Barbara Veurink, Jim Folkert, and Thomas Gouwens.

Feb 20, 1988 at a “Music for Weddings” program held at First Reformed, these organists played:

Rich Van Oss, Stephen Jenkins, Linda Strouf, Jim Folkert.

Lots of familiar names (though some we haven't seen in awhile...)

I definitely want to remind you of the upcoming AGO online OrganFest program. That begins on Sunday, June 27 with an 8pm program, and continues with evening programs through Friday night.

Lots of educational and inspiring content has been planned – from recitals to workshops. You can find details here. <http://agoorganfest2021.org/>

One regret I have as dean (in the category of: things I would have done if I had more time/energy/didn't have to sleep at night, etc) is to put more chapter energy into membership. Your board does notice when members drift away, don't renew their memberships, or stop attending meetings, and we talk about potential members we know – folks in the community who love organ music but aren't organists, or maybe church musicians or organists we know who aren't members – but it takes time and an effective strategy to successfully approach people like this, and grow membership. Mass emails or letters don't do the trick these days. Maybe you have some ideas, or would like to help with more concerted efforts? Contact a board member!

And lastly, I want to thank you for all your participation, involvement, and support of our chapter, both during the years I've been dean, and (for many of you) in the years since 1985, when this chapter was begun. Times have changed greatly since then, and while looking through old minutes can cause me to wonder if that was a "better" time for the AGO, of course, such ponderings are irrelevant. Times change. Some things were better then, and some are better now. Looking back only distracts us from the present – which is all any of us has, right? So here's to a wonderful board, who have volunteered their time to lead us bravely forward into 2021 and beyond. The AGO may not be perfect, and your deans and board members never have been either, but I'm willing to support this organization because of all the good it does, and hope you will continue to feel the same.

Best wishes,
Rhonda

Remaining programs in the Pillar Church 2021 Organ Series

(Concerts start at 12:15 p.m.)

June 30	Bethany Dame
July 7	Dr. Peter Kurdziel
July 14	Jonathan Tuuk
July 21	Rhonda Sider Edgington
July 28	Dr. Norene Walters
August 4	David Schout

Chapter Officers for 2020-2021

Dean - Rhonda Edgington

Sub-Dean - Linda Fulton

Secretary - Karen Howells

Treasurer - Gordon Bruns

Board Member - Rick Van Oss

Student Board Member - Alex Cross

Newsletter Editor - Paul Dalman

Website – hollandareaago.org