

PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS

Committee for Career Development and Support, American Guild of Organists
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Greetings from the new Director

By Marlene Hallstrom, Director

Committee for Career Development and Support

Updates from the Committee

Current projects of Career Development and Support:

- The Committee approved about 15 articles previously published in TAO for placement on the Career Development and Support page at agohq.org. These resources related to starting a career, working conditions and aspects of church music are or soon will be located in a sidebar, grouped by topic and with links to the articles. You can see abstracts of some of the articles in this newsletter on page 4.
- We approved a revised article explaining various tools for dispute resolution for the website. Under the heading "Options for Dealing with Disagreement with Your Employer," the article explains tools such as negotiation, mediation and arbitration which can resolve disputes about your working conditions.
- We began a revision of the current Mentoring Program, which will match an inexperienced member with a local veteran musician who can provide insight into such issues as ethics, dealing with difficult employment situations, effective management of choral ensembles and vocal production, business skills, interpersonal relations and stress management. The program should be ready for Council consideration at their fall meeting.
- Suggestions for Job Applicants, offering tools for career management, will be added to the Positions Available web page.
- The proposed Survey of Compensation was deferred for six months, and the Code of Ethics project was not discussed due to the absence of the subcommittee chair.

Greetings to all Professional Development Officers!

As David Rhody completes his term as Director of this committee, I offer my heartfelt appreciation to him for his wonderful leadership and an excellent newsletter full of pertinent information for professional development.

As incoming committee Director I hope to continue working with the other members to provide support for AGO members in the area of careers and professional development.

Marlene Hallstrom, CAGO, MM, MMusEd

Job Search Links July 2015 — by Cheryl Duerr, Councillor for North East Region AGO

The job market is extremely tight and certain age brackets have an even tougher time than others. A little known fact about job search is that 80 percent of jobs are NOT advertised. This means that everyone who wishes to land a job easily must network. Take your job search even more seriously than your job. The good news is that there is a wealth of resources to help you sell yourself today, both online and books.

I suggest that everyone begin by googling Robin Ryan and begin job search by listening to this video or another one like it on targeted job search. which will help job seekers to have a presentation with POW! 60 Seconds and You're Hired! with Robin Ryan -- [Career Boost Camp 2013](#)

Robin Ryan has covered the market on job search - I suggest looking particularly for these books and resources— [60 Seconds and you're hired](#).

[Over 40 and you're hired](#)

This is a link to a great pdf summarizing many of the [job search/interview principles](#) from Adolphus College

Here's the Eastman Musicians' [Cover letter and resume guides](#) – HOWEVER – I would strongly suggest that with publications like this which are old – in this case, 10 years old - that you take only the kernels of information which are timeless and go to modern resources to help you with your materials.

Most of us know that the internet and technology has changed everything and is changing faster than we can think. Avail

yourself of its wealth and begin brainstorming where you can find the help you need. With any book you pick up – make sure you get the latest version – and make sure to Google the title and find out if there are updates, workshops, lectures, etc by the experts. Use YouTube and your search engine to find examples of great cover letters, resumes, and CVs targeted to your specific job area. Check out University Job resources online, and sites like Indeed.com which will also have up-to-date help sections on job search. Search Forbes magazine and Wall Street Journal which regularly run articles on the job market.

This is a great book for those looking for academic [job searches](#).

A great resource for [CVs](#)

You can also find lots of advice on [what not to do](#).

Networking is the key to a streamlined job search. Everyone looking for a position should have a well-crafted Linked-In profile. Linked-In also has a wealth of resources for job search – study them.

Pick up this resource – or one like it and build [a killer profile](#).

Use Linked-In religiously, but don't neglect in-person networking as well. Job search is work, but it can be exhilarating if done well, because a great job search will reveal your talents not only to your prospective employer, but you will learn a lot as well – and get yourself hired!

Duerr Consulting clduerr@gmail.com

Do You Need a Written Contract? — by David Rhody, Esq.

As you prepare to begin a new season of the church year, it is a good time to review the professional support materials on the AGO website (see the sidebar on p. 4).

Look at the Model Contract Provisions, even if you are not presently considering a written agreement with your employer. Do you or the church own music you create for services? What happens to your pay if the church adds significantly to your duties? Can you carry forward to next year any unused benefits such as vacation time or educational funds? Can the church require you to provide free music for funerals of church members? If you are terminated, are you entitled to severance pay? These questions have no simple answers unless they have been discussed and clarified before they arise.

There is a suggested Time Sheet for explaining to your employer how your week is spent in preparation for services. There is a sample Performance Review form to help your employer with this important part of your work. Notes on compensation, plus the 2015 Salary Guide, are Professional Development 101 for members. And, as a last resort, Positions Available is free to members!



Some Suggestions Before You Apply for a Job

By David Rhody, SPC, Esq.

When you identify several positions in which you have an interest, you should do a little research into the churches—look up their websites on a search site such as Google or Yahoo and see what your first impression is. Can you see yourself as a part of that community? Do you pick up any hidden messages that make you uneasy? Does the presentation of the music program seem a good fit with your philosophy?

When you have narrowed your choices down to one or two, try contacting someone familiar with the church. You can contact the [local AGO officials](#) to see if any members have had good or bad experiences with the prospective employers. The AGO cannot know each church that advertises a Position Available, and some members have reported unpleasant employment experiences with churches listed on our site. While it is not appropriate for the AGO to blacklist advertisers, you can find out a lot with a little research of your own.

Before you contact a prospective employer, you need to prepare a professional presentation of yourself and your qualifications. Read the posted job listing carefully to make sure you meet their expectations – are both parties seeking full-time or part-time employment? Are you both looking for liturgical or non-liturgical experience? Are you sure about the ensembles you will be expected to lead, that is, choral, handbell, contemporary style, etc?

Prepare a [cover letter](#) explaining your qualifications, experience and why you are suited for this position.

Prepare a [resume](#), listing your academic preparation, work experience and other skills you can bring to the position.

If you are a first-time job seeker, you may want to consult [some relevant articles](#). When you submit your application and receive an invitation to an interview, [prepare for your interview](#) by anticipating what questions you may be asked and thinking about your responses. You should also think carefully about the questions you need to ask the committee: Will the facilities be available for private teaching? Will you be able to set your own fees for weddings and funerals, and if not, how will they be set and how may they be revised? To whom are you directly responsible for the performance of your duties, and how often and by what method is your compensation revisited?

Come to the interview prepared to discuss a [contract](#). A written contract will most clearly define your duties and the employer's obligations. A Job Description will list your duties but usually will not include your rights or the church's obligations. An oral agreement is merely a promise of employment on a week-to-week basis. If anything about the situation seems troubling, seek advice from the Guild before you sign!

Chapter Meeting Idea

Duties of the local Professional Concerns officer include planning and carrying out at least one meeting per year devoted to career issues (#5).

Duty number 10 also specifies that members are to be familiar with the Model Contract Provisions and other resources for career management offered by the Guild.

Why not sponsor a forum dedicated to the business aspects of your career? You can access the Guild website at the meeting, or pass out copies downloaded from the site, providing information on contracts, performance evaluation, sample time sheets to be used to educate your employers in your duties, tools for conflict resolution, etc. Invite members to share their employment experiences and frustration—but be sure you have a moderator who can manage the discussion. You can even plan some role-play exercises with members reacting to job performance situations and the audience adding their expertise. Be sure to invite an expert or two from the community if that is practical.

Message to Professional Development Leaders

To all regional and local leaders in Professional Development, especially those whose terms have concluded, thank you so much for your service to the Guild!

Since new appointees are not yet finalized, would you mind distributing this newsletter one more time? You are much appreciated!





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P. 1 Melk Abbey, Austria

P. 2 St. John Lateran, Rome

P. 3 Westerkirk, Amsterdam

P. 4 Sao Fransisco, Brazil

Ask the CDS Committee

Two members recently contacted the AGO with stories of new employment gone bad, and both had secured their positions through JobSearch postings. They asked, in effect, whether the AGO could screen employers listed on our website and weed out the churches who have not lived up to expectation.

The Committee, after discussion, concluded that not only is it impractical to pre-approve every employer posting a Position Available notice on our website, it is probably not in line with recent government actions to promote free employment practices. But while the Guild is not in a position to monitor listings on Job Search, there are ways an individual job-seeker can research future employers. The column "Some Suggestions Before You Apply" (page 3) gives some helpful advice; this information is or soon will be available on the [Positions Available](#) page on the website.

Career-Related Articles from TAO to be Posted

The Committee has searched issues of The American Organist from the past ten years and selected several with career advice or perspectives suitable for posting on the website. They will be listed by category in a sidebar on the [Career Development](#) page. Here is a short sample:

Managing Your Career (and Yourself as Well), by Cheryl Duerr—practical advice for a first-time job seeker

Preparing for a Job Interview, by Marlene Hallstrom—what you need to consider before you meet a prospective employer

To Be an Organist: A Gift from God, by Karl Moyer— a spiritual perspective on an organist's career

Inspired Music Ministry, by Mary Morreale—when your enthusiasm for your career flags, consider the larger picture of your calling

Church Music: Anything Goes? By David Music—a thoughtful, theological response to the suggestion that any and all types of music are appropriate for worship

The Church Growth Movement and its Impact on 21st century Worship, by Robert Olsavicky—a discussion of the role of music in the modern "mega-church" and praise band style of worship

Lizzy Playalot's Advice Column for Substitute Organists, by MJ Nelson—ten practical tips for substitute organists

Grieving the Loss of a Job or Music Position, by Joy Schroeder—suggestions for dealing with termination or forced resignation from a church music position which you were not ready to leave

Esteem and Self-esteem, by James Yeager—dealing with occasional feelings of inadequacy in your music career by forming closer professional bonds with other musicians

Church Music, Congregational Life and Theological Education, by John Witvliet—a thoughtful examination of new ways to serve your particular congregation through music

Bridging Cultures while Creating a Career Niche, by Paul Carmona—consider integrating multicultural music styles (such as Hispanic) into your mainstream music ministry

Passages: Scripture-inspired Tools for Conflict Resolution, by Tamara Albrecht—a 4-part series based on Paul's letter to the Ephesians with advice for resolving job stress and conflict

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PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS

David Rhody, Editor-Publisher

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On Line Resources

At agohq.org/careers you can find the following resources for career development and support—

- [Positions available](#) and musicians seeking employment
- [Salary guide](#), including substitutes, weddings and funerals, plus information about independent contractor qualifications for IRS
- [Model contract](#) provisions in both Word and pdf format for ease in constructing your contract—NEW: Sample Contract for Part-Time Employees
- Information about the Guild [Code of Ethics](#) and Professional Standards, Discipline, and Alternative Dispute Resolution
- [Suggested procedures](#) for job evaluation, time requirements worksheet, sample accounting of time for church musicians
- [Suggestions for chapter meetings](#) dealing with career issues