

A Few Memories of the San Francisco Chapter, AGO

Although it has been quite a while since I was Dean of the San Francisco Chapter, my first memories are of a group of very friendly people. I had not been in Berkeley for much more than a month before Eileen Britten called to invite me to a meeting of the AGO. The first meetings of the year were always relaxed, happy, “How was your summer?” meetings and I appreciated the friendliness of the members.

The thoughts that come flooding when I think about being Dean include the terrific Regional Convention that we put on. It was a great success, I think. For me, the best part was that we had creative, energetic, and enthusiastic committee members who did all the hard work and I just got to enjoy the functions they created.

Two different, creative events occurred during my Deanship:

One was an attempt to interest music critics from the San Francisco papers in organ music. The critics were invited to attend an organ crawl—along with members of the AGO Board. We visited several different organs and answered as many questions as we could about organ music and organists. It helped, at least for a while, to get better coverage in the newspapers of the many recitals that occurred in the Bay Area.

The second creative event happened because Sandra Soderlund and I (among others) felt that we had too many meetings that didn’t attract enough AGO members. This was compounded by the fact that our chapter was so widespread that members often failed to attend meetings that were a long distance away from their home. Consequently, the chapter scheduled a “weekend with organ” during the middle of the year. We had concerts and workshops, along with social events, that lasted from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. The basic concept was to compress a year’s worth of meetings into one weekend. I don’t remember whether it was a success for our chapter members, but I do remember that several people came from outside the Bay Area and we thought that was a good thing!

Again, my memories are positive—of a fine group of very hard-working and creative individuals. It was indeed a great honor to serve two years as Dean.

Respectfully, Richard Coulter