



Sforzando

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 8

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APRIL 2026

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ELECTION BALLOT



Photo of St. Giles
Cathedral, Edinburgh
by Joseph Routon

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Southwest Jersey Chapter American Guild of Organists



Dean's Message



AGO Chapter Membership Management

It didn't used to be easy to join the AGO! When I joined in December 1980, a prospective member had to submit a letter of endorsement from a current AGO member along with their membership application. Before the internet and social media, this wasn't as easy as it might sound. If one is not currently a member of an organization, how does one find out who it's members are in order to ask one of them

to provide a letter of endorsement? It was a fine catch-22! Fortunately the requirement for letters of endorsement is long gone, and anyone who wants to join must fill out an application only and pay the (modest) membership fee .

Member management, the processes by which we track, support, and encourage and solicit membership, is the second of the three key AGO chapter bodies of work I'm writing about this spring. Part of member management is "registration", the procedural aspects of collecting member demographic information, fees, and determining who is and isn't a member at any given time. Prior to AGO's implementation of the ONCARD system in 2014, this process was controlled at the chapter level via an officer called a *registrar* (a position that was often combined with treasurer.) AGO's implementation of centralized member management systems such as ONCARD, and now iMIS, moved the of control registration from chapters to the national HQ. The advantages and disadvantages of such a move could be

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Sub-Dean's Message - by Will Powell



Warm Greetings!

Our spring events calendar has a few events left for the season.

On April 18 we are looking forward to an Organ Crawl in Moorestown. Moorestown is a beautiful community full of wonderful homes and equally wonderful churches. We begin at 10:30 with Donna Banes hosting at First United Methodist Church, followed by Vernon Williams at Trinity Episcopal Church. At each church, we will be given a brief history of the instrument, and of course, hear it in action. Many thanks to those hosting and to their respective churches for making this possible.

May 17 is our Annual Members Recital at First Presbyterian in Bridgeton at 4pm. Kyle Sheppard has graciously opened his church for this event. Their Moller has had recent restoration work, and the Church is elated that it can be of service. We have 5 talented members from our chapter performing. You don't want to miss this!

Finally, our Picnic and Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 28 at 3pm. Bill Mitchell has graciously offered to host. Thank you, Bill! Please consider bringing an item to share. No need for bringing any paper goods as Bill already has that covered. Also, kindly let us know if there are any restrictions or accommodations needed.

Regards,

Will



Dean's Message - by Jonathan Stark, continued from page 1

(and were) debated, but essence is that chapters no longer have control over who the AGO deems to be a member.

However, inefficiencies in these centralized systems sometimes makes it hard for chapters to even be sure about exactly who is a member. So, while in theory the national registration system is sufficient by itself to manage registration, the truth is there is still a role for local chapters to play. Since the centralized registration systems implemented rolling registration, the status of a chapter's membership can change from week to week. Someone in the local chapter needs to monitor who constitutes the chapter's membership at any time. Additionally, experience has shown that the centralized system's notifications of membership expiration do not always work. It's best if local chapter officers proactively monitor membership expiration status, and follow up with members who may be in jeopardy of being terminated by the central registration systems.

Besides registration of current members, member management includes outreach to persons in our chapter area (five counties in southwestern New Jersey) who aren't members but might be interested in the

.....continued on page 9

Chapter Elections for 2026

***The Nominating Committee for the 2026 ballot is pleased to propose
the following candidates to the membership:***

DEAN – Jonathan Stark

SUB-DEAN – Matt Smith

TREASURER/REGISTRAR - Chuck Gibson

SECRETARY – Ken Carson

EXECUTIVE BOARD CLASS OF 2029 –

Mark Dishong

Hugh Kronrot

EXECUTIVE BOARD ONE YEAR UNEXPIRED TERM - Robert Gladden

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn R. Larter, CAGO, Chair

Teresa Savage, Vernon Williams

Please vote and return ballot found at the end of the newsletter.



Organ and Piano Recital

Organ/Piano Recital by William and Edwin Mitchell, Sunday, April 26 at 2 pm – at Pitman United Methodist Church, 758 N. Broadway, Pitman, NJ.

The program will include hymn arrangements, classical favorites, plus spiritual and folk arrangements.

Reception following, free to the public.

Positions Available/Substitute List - by Peter Homon

If you are available to substitute and would like to be included on this list, please contact Peter Homon, our Referral/Position Coordinator.

Please forward or refer any items concerning positions available or substitute needs to Peter at lapajar@yahoo.com or call 856-952-5132.

Positions Available:

Trinity Episcopal Church, Moorestown - Half time position O/D, Bachelor's degree or higher necessary, \$35,000-\$40,000 salary. Additional details on the church website. emellott@trinitymoorestown.org. (3/26)

Saint Isaac Jogues, Roman Catholic Church, Marlton – coordinator of sacred music, O/D. Three weekend masses plus holy days. Choir sings at Sunday 11 AM mass. Salary range \$33,000-\$37,000. Contact Father James Smith at frsmith@sij.org. (3/26)

St. James Lutheran Church, Pitman – o/p, 9:30 service, Thursday evening, rehearsal, pipe instrument. Complete job description is available upon request. Secretary@saintjamespitman.com (10/25)

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Laurel Springs - permanent or interim O/D, Adult Choir, 10 a.m. service. Contact Pastor Dasol Kang at 917-886-7254 or dasolkang@sppres.org. (12/24)

These musicians are available on Sundays and also for weddings and funerals other days:

Mary Johnson 856-332-8869 (Cherry Hill) mebayj47@yahoo.com

Irina Nenartovich 856-321-3465 (Medford) irinanenartovich@gmail.com (after 10:30AM on Sundays)

These substitutes are available for weddings and funerals or Saturday work only:

Evelyn Larter, CAGO 856-358-1112 (Elmer) ERLarter@juno.com

Marilyn Rabbai, CAGO 856-589-3901 (Pitman) mwrabbai@verizon.net

Matthew Smith, 630-800-8967 (Philadelphia) matt.smith2011@att.net

AGO Certified Members

Rae Ann Anderson, CAGO

Miriam Bisbing, SPC

Mark Cole, SPC

Charlene Cranmer, AAGO, CAGO, SPC

Lawrence DePasquale, CAGO

Ethel H. Geist, CAGO

Evelyn Larter, CAGO, SPC

Marilyn Rabbai, CAGO, SPC

David L. Rhody, SPC

Glenn L. Rodgers, AAGO

Joyce Ann Routon, CAGO, SPC

Thank You Patrons & Contributors

Anderson, Rae Ann

Bisbing, Miriam

Cranmer, Charlene

Dishong, Mark

Doan, David

Gardener, Robert

Gassaway, Gail

Hatzold, Renee

Johnson, Mary & Keith

Joshi, Layla

Kolojeichick, Leonard

Larter, Evelyn

Nichols, Victoria

Obarski, Stephen

Powell, Robert "Will"

Rodgers, Glenn

Scara, Robert



CHAPTER EMERGENCY FUND

The SWJAGO Chapter sponsors a fund to provide short-term emergency aid to Chapter members who find themselves temporarily in need of assistance. No dues money will be used for this aid, but tax-deductible contributions will be welcome at any time. The chapter Executive Committee will award aid as the need arises. Any Chapter member may recommend a member in good standing who, for reasons such as illness or unemployment, deserves our help, by contacting the Dean. All cases of course will be confidential, any discussions in the Executive Committee will occur in executive (unrecorded) session. There are two ways to contribute to this cause: 1) when renewing your membership via iMIS, you may elect to contribute an additional amount to the Emergency Fund; you may also contribute via iMIS at any other time by using the "Make a Contribution" option from the iMIS menu; 2) you may also send your tax-deductible donation (as a check made out to SW Jersey Chapter AGO) to our Treasurer Chuck Gibson, marked for "Musicians' Emergency Fund." Mail to: 691 Willow Grove Road, Monroeville, NJ 08343-4529.

Our Chapter's Scholarship Program...

exists to serve area congregations by increasing the number of capable organists and to insure the continuation of the classical church music profession. (Application forms on pages 13 & 14)

As a reminder, the program is structured as 14 one-hour lessons scheduled at the mutual convenience of the instructor and student, ideally on the organ where the student practices, or at least one a month where the student practices. The lessons and public jury *must take place within 4 months*. The practice instrument must have a minimum of two 61-note keyboards and a concave, radiating 32-note pedalboard, with all keys functioning. The student must have legs long enough to reach the pedalboard and have intermediate piano skills (meaning and understanding of meter signatures, chords, key signatures, and the ability to read G and F clefs).

The audition for this program is on piano. Applicants will be asked to prepare and perform a simple Bach keyboard work, also one movement of a sonata by Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Clementi, or Kuhnau, and also one hymn written in traditional four-part harmony. The applicant will be asked to sight-read two short pieces; one will be in common meter.

At the conclusion of the 14 one hour lessons, a jury is required with the teacher and at least two additional chapter members present. The jury will consist of the following:

Two of these three chorales: *Ein feste Burg, Lobe den Herren, Herzlich tut mir verlangen*

A hymn will be sight-read, pedaling not required

The tune *Old Hundredth* in any of its traditional forms, copy provided to the committee

One pedal alone passage of a chorale, minimum 15 measures

A trio chorale

A prelude or fugue from the collection Eight Little Preludes and Fugues

The instructor is appointed by the local chapter. Accepted applicants are responsible for securing a pair of Organmaster shoes and required music. Instruction may happen any time provided all activities are completed within four months. Candidates of all ages who meet the above criteria are welcome. Please contact Lawrence De Pasquale at ldorg59@yahoo.com with questions and to express interest.

HARMONY and HERITAGE: THE POWER OF BLACK SONG

FREE CONCERT

**SUNDAY
APRIL 12, 2026
3:00PM**



 **JULIE-ANN GREEN, SOPRANO**
MOSES POSSIBLE, BARITONE
JOSEPH KRUPA, PIANO

**First Presbyterian Church
88 Market Street
Salem, NJ**

Celebrate the harmony and hertiage of Black composers, Black arrangers, such as William Grant Still, Robert Owens, and pieces such as Cantata of Spirituals by John Carter, and a selection from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. Listen and enjoy the music that has influenced the Black experience and society.



This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, through the Salem County Board of County Commissioners, and Salem County Cultural and Heritage Commission.



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SCAN ME

~The Delaware Chapter of The American Guild of Organists Presents~

The King of Instruments and the Instrument of Kings

The Seipp/Fickley Duo

St. Anthony of Padua Roman Catholic Church

Ninth and Dupont Streets, Wilmington, DE

7PM Friday, April 24, 2026

Chuck Seipp, Trumpet

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Todd Fickley, Organ

National Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C.

The Seipp/Fickley Duo craft an entertaining and engaging program to moving videos making this an enjoyable concert for all ages.



Fanfare for the Common Man	Aaron Copland
Procession of the Nobles	Rinsky-Korsakov
Suite, from <i>The Four Seasons</i> Fall/Winter/Spring/Summer	Vivaldi
Fugue in Eb Major, BWV 552 (solo organ)	J.S. Bach
Suite, from <i>Carnival of the Animals</i>	Camille Saint-Saëns
America (Arlington National Cemetery military funeral video)	
Teddy at the Throttle (Silent Movie)	Clarence Badger
Pictures at an Exhibition, Excerpts	Mussorgsky

This program is supported, in part, by a grant from the Delaware Division of the Arts, a state agency, in partnership with the National Endowment of the Arts. The Division promotes Delaware arts events on DelawareScene.com.

MUSIC AROUND THE COUNTY PRESENTS
**THE GREATER PHILADELPHIA
CHORAL SOCIETY**



**FOUNDING
ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR,
WILLIAM GORTON**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2026 | 3:00PM
SALEM COMMUNITY COLLEGE
460 HOLLYWOOD AVENUE
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FREE CONCERT!

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FEATURED WILL BE BELOVED SONGS FROM BROADWAY'S "GOLDEN
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This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, through the Salem County Board of County Commissioners, and Salem County Cultural and Heritage Commission.



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SCAN ME

Dean's Message, continued from page 2



mission of the AGO. In the December Sforzando I wrote about some of the gaps in our outreach to young people, gaps revealed to me through my response to the recent AGOYO survey. The truth is our chapter has no current organized systematic outreach to musicians of any age who might conceivably wish to become AGO members. Once upon a time our chapter had an appointed officer position called “membership chairperson.” This position is not defined in our Chapter Operating Procedures, so I don’t know what the duties were. The position has been vacant for a long time.

Another aspect of member management is discovering why people leave our chapter. Some folks leave for easily discernable reasons: they’ve moved away from the area, or they’ve become very advanced in years and are no longer able to be active, or they viewed AGO membership as strongly connected to being a practicing professional but have retired. However there are other folks who have left our chapter for less discernable reasons. Did they find membership cost too much? Did they view our programs as not valuable to them, or just not interesting? Was there interpersonal conflict? Feedback on why these folks left often not readily forthcoming, and it takes focused effort to obtain it. Our chapter currently has no organized and systematic way to obtain this feedback, and we need it in order to improve. The process of continuous improvement (you may have read about this in a business context) is mandatory for chapter survival.

A very important part of member management is attending to the cares and concerns of current members. Our lately departed friend and colleague Cathy O’Neill had taken this role upon herself (in addition to her other responsibilities) and did it very well. On a personal note, as much as I miss Cathy’s sharp wit and dry humor, I miss even more the love and dedication she demonstrated as she sent birthday greetings, condolence cards, and other timely greetings to chapter members. It was a calling and a gift she shared freely. As much as excellent programs, education and professional development, and social opportunities, member cares and concerns is part of the glue that binds our chapter together and makes it function. It’s an unmet need since Cathy’s passing last summer.

There you have it: registration, outreach to potential new members, management of member retention and departure, and member cares and concerns: these add up to the member management function. There’s also a few other pieces I haven’t mentioned, such as creation of membership directories. In the next issue of Sforzando I will write about communication, the third main body of chapter work. Although I haven’t been explicit about it, hopefully you’re beginning to see that each of these main bodies of work has many touchpoints and connections to each of the other two. Just as the heart cannot survive without the lungs, and neither without the nutrition provided by the stomach, the work of a healthy AGO chapter is the work of a healthy and dynamic team.

Soli Deo gloria

**The mission of the American Guild of Organists is to foster
a thriving community of musicians who share their
knowledge and inspire passion for the organ.**



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Consecration: Seven Hymn Arrangements ~ for Flute
Consecration: Seven Hymn Arrangements ~ for Violin
Still Be My Vision: Hymn Arrangements ~ for Cello
Hear The News The Angels Bring: Christmas ~ for Cello
A Rose E'er Blooming ~ for Violin
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— David Kim, Concertmaster of The Philadelphia Orchestra



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Robert Gardner - Composer

The Space Coast Chapter of the AGO sponsored a composition contest for organ. Bob's composition has been selected for a prize as one of the three finalists. It will be performed by one of their chapter members at which time the first, second, and third place will be announced. The piece is "Postlude on Come Thou Almighty King." The performance will be live-streamed from Advent Lutheran Church in Melbourne FL. May 3 at 3:00.

Congratulations, Bob!

Sforzando is the official publication of the Southwest Jersey Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. The AGO is a multi-denominational, non-profit organization chartered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York in 1896.

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DEAN: Jonathan Stark, jonstark47@gmail.com

SUB-DEAN: Will Powell, pianoboy88@hotmail.com

TREASURER: Chuck Gibson, gibsonorgntnr@aol.com

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Class of 2026: David Doan, Robert Gardner, Gail Gassaway, Gary Langel

Class of 2027: Misty Fiske, Joanne Owen, David Rhody

Class of 2028: Ken Carson, Renee Hatzold, Terry Savage

WEBSITE: swjago.org

Webmaster: Vernon Williams, vwilliams@trinitymoorestown.org



Sforzando is published on the 1st of the month September through June.

**Please submit all material to be included in the publication by the
25th of the preceding month.**



Application

DATE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____ BEST TIME TO CALL _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Your Place of Practice

NAME OF PRACTICE LOCATION (Church, Temple, etc.) _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE _____

TYPE AND BUILDING OF ORGAN (if known) _____

Your Keyboard Background

YEARS OF PIANO STUDY _____

LIST ANY PREVIOUS CLASSICAL ORGAN STUDY _____

Your Goals and Musical Background

Please include on a separate sheet a brief statement of your goals and objectives for organ study and an outline of your musical background and experience.

Purpose

The organ scholarship awarded by the AGO is necessary in order:

1. To serve the congregations by increasing the roster of capable organists.
2. To foster an appreciation for sacred classical organ repertoire.
3. To encourage more musicians to meet the standards and ideals of the American Guild of Organists.
4. To ensure the continuation of the church music profession.

History

In the 1980's a decline in the number of qualified organists and in the number of new organ students became a concern for churches and Guild chapters across the country.

Inspired by an innovative "floating organ academy" begun in South Dakota and described in an article in *The American Organist*, AGO member Helen Taylor founded the Southwest Jersey Organ Scholarship program in 1988 as a way to help solve this problem. The first committee members were Marilyn Rabbai, Barbara Knight, Joyce Ann Routon, and Larry DePasquale.

Since its inception, more than two dozen organists have successfully completed the program. Many of these new organists have gone on to successful careers in area churches.

The Southwest Jersey Chapter is pleased to continue this tradition of service to its churches and to the art of organ playing.

AGO Code of Ethics

Approved by the AGO National Council January 27, 2017

Preamble/Preface

The American Guild of Organists encourages its members to embrace and practice the following values as core ideals that Guild members aspire to cultivate in their ethical and professional conduct.

Value 1. Responsible Conduct toward Those Whom We Serve (including but not limited to clergy, supervisors, congregants, choir members, students, children, et al.). Members shall:

- o Treat those whom they serve in a professional manner, with dignity, compassion, civility, and respect.
- o Show respect to those whom they serve, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, socio-economic status, disability, or medical condition.
- o Avoid any sort of abusive behavior, whether verbal, physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or other.
- o Refrain from disclosing confidential or sensitive information about others obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law.

Value 2. Respect for Our Professional Colleagues. Members shall:

- o Maintain a professional attitude and act with integrity in relationships with colleagues, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, socio-economic status, disability, or medical condition.

- o Respect the reputation and diversity of colleagues.

Value 3. Integrity in Our Professional Work. Members shall:

- o Honor and abide by the conditions and requirements of the job descriptions and work agreements to which they have knowingly agreed, so long as those provisions are in accord with all applicable federal, state and local laws.
- o Follow, as applicable, the principles of professional conduct that are expressed in the AGO Code of Professional Standards.
- o For the benefit of future generations of musicians and to preserve the instruments of our profession, use care to ensure that when playing an instrument, the institution's expected practices and requirements for the care of the instrument and its venue are met.

Organ Scholarship

for beginning students



presented by

The Southwest Jersey
Chapter

of

The American Guild of
Organists

The Scholarship

The Organ Scholarship of the Southwest Jersey Chapter of the American Guild of Organists provides a term of 14 introductory organ lessons for qualified persons wishing to begin study of the organ.

Eligibility

All applicants must possess the following qualifications:

- ♦ Must reside in the Southwest Jersey geographical area.
- ♦ Must have received little or no previous formal classical organ training.
- ♦ Legs must be long enough to reach the pedalboard.
- ♦ At least an intermediate piano proficiency (see *audition requirements below*).
- ♦ Basic knowledge of theory, including G and F clefs, key signatures, meter signatures, and chords.
- ♦ Must have access to an organ on which to practice. The organ console must either 1) conform to AGO standards having at least two 61-note manuals and a full pedalboard, or 2) conform to historical mechanical action standards.
- ♦ Must commit to completing 14 lessons and the jury within four to six months.

Inquiries

Address questions or inquiries to:

Vernon Williams
email: vwilliams@trinitymoorestown.org
phone: 856-235-0811

Application Procedure

Send completed applications to:

Vernon Williams
Trinity Episcopal Church
207 West Main Street
Moorestown, NJ 08057

In addition to the application form, applicants are asked to include on a separate sheet a brief statement of their goals and objectives for study and a summary of their musical background and experience.

The Audition

The audition is scheduled once the application has been received... Auditions will be played on the piano. No memorization is required.

Prepared pieces

- ♦ Any Bach Two-Part Invention or one selection from the *Anna Magdalena Notebook*
 - ♦ One movement from a sonatina by Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Clementi, or Kuhnau
 - ♦ One hymn written in traditional four-part harmony
- ### Sight-reading
- ♦ Two short pieces: one in common time, the other in another meter

The Lessons

Lessons are arranged at the mutual convenience of the teacher and student, ideally on the organ where the student practices. In any event, at least one lesson per month will take place on the organ where the student practices.

Students will learn how to practice and will become acquainted with registration, articulation, and pedaling, through the practice and preparation of hymns, teaching pieces, and repertoire.

Students will be required to have appropriate shoes (as recommended by their teacher) before the second lesson.

Students will provide at their expense the necessary hymnal and books required by the teacher. (Generally hymnals may be borrowed from the student's church.) Photocopied music is illegal, contrary to the Guild's *Code of Ethics*, and may not be used.

The Jury

At the conclusion of the 14 weeks of study, the student will be required to play before a jury:

- ♦ Two of the following four-part hymns (at least one of the hymns must be played with pedal):

<i>Nicaea</i>	<i>Lobe den Herren</i>
<i>Ein feste Burg</i>	<i>Olivet</i>
<i>Hymn to Joy</i>	
<i>New Britain (Amazing Grace)</i>	
<i>Herzlich tut mich verlangen</i>	
<i>(Passion Chorale)</i>	
- ♦ The Doxology (*Old Hundredth*) in any of the standard forms
- ♦ One pedal-alone passage of a Bach chorale or from a method book, at least 16 measures long
- ♦ A trio exercise or a chorale trio
- ♦ A prelude or fugue from Bach's *Eight Little Preludes and Fugues*

Southwest Jersey Chapter



American Guild of Organists

SOUTHWEST JERSEY CHAPTER
AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS
ELECTION BALLOT 2026

Please complete your ballot, do not sign it. Place it in an envelope,
sign your name across the back flap, and mail *by May 21st* to:

Evelyn R. Larter, CAGO, Teller of the Election
507 Daretown Road
Elmer, NJ 08318-2724

You may also vote by email to Evelyn at erlarter@juno.com by *May 24th*

DEAN – Vote for one

____ Jonathan Stark
____ (write-in choice)_____

SUB-DEAN – Vote for one

____ Matt Smith
____ (write-in choice)_____

TREASURER/REGISTRAR - Vote for one

____ Chuck Gibson
____ (write-in choice)_____

SECRETARY – Vote for one

____ Ken Carson
____ (write-in choice)_____

EXECUTIVE BOARD CLASS OF 2029 – Vote for two

____ Mark Dishong
____ Hugh Kronrot
____ (write-in)_____
____ (write-in)_____

EXECUTIVE BOARD ONE YEAR UNEXPIRED TERM – Vote for one

____ Robert Gladden
____ (write-in)_____