



PIPELINE

American Organist Guild—Red River Valley Chapter

Volume 24, Number 7

November 2006

'Tis the Season!

The Christmas Carol Sing-A-Long will be hosted by Peace Lutheran Church at 1011 12th Avenue North in Fargo on Sunday, December 3 at 7:00PM.

Chapter organists (Marty Baumgartner, Mary Beth Berg, Ruth Discher, Sally Harmon, Peter Nygaard, Michael Olson, Judy Sanders and Ruth Strawn) will perform along with soloists Katie Damico and Daniel Damico, the Doves of Peace (a women's ensemble), the Peace Lutheran Church Men's Quartet, the Festival Choir and a special guest.

Peace Lutheran is one of the first area churches to order and receive the new Lutheran Hymnal, which will be used. Narrators will be Howard Barlow and Jocelyn Burdick.

Come and hear the excellent Rodgers organ, and add your voice to the congregation. As in years past, a free-will offering will be received for the F/M Food Pantry. Please help us publicize this annual event in your church. We want to fill the church with song! A reception will follow in the social hall.

Welcome New and Returning Members!

- Anna Goodin-Hayes
- Lindsay Huwe
- George French
- Peter Nygaard

Message From the Dean

November, the time of Thanksgiving, the forgotten holiday. The holiday that is sandwiched between Halloween and Christmas retail seasons.



Thanksgiving Day is the only special service in the Christian Science Church, the church where I spend my Sundays. It is a time when

the members of the church gather together to express their gratitude. Thanksgiving is also the holiday that commemorates the voyage my ancestor took almost 4 centuries ago. 102 people left England, and on November 21, 1620, on the shores of Plymouth, a group of 41 men (including my ancestor, Edward Fuller) signed their names to the Mayflower Compact, agreeing to work together for the general good of the colony, setting in motion the birth of a great nation, foreshadowing our Declaration of Independence and our American Constitution, which guarantees freedom to all of us today. The pilgrims left

England seeking religious freedom, and their descendents and others provided for freedom of religion in our Bill of Rights. Thanks to their foresight, today we work in a number of different church denominations. We participate in a variety of church services with one common goal, the glory of God. The American Guild of Organists, founded in 1896, shares the same noble goal as those early pilgrims. Our motto, from the AGO seal, *Soli Deo Gloria*, to the Glory of God alone, was used by JS Bach, with SDG signed at the bottom of each of his cantata manuscripts.

May you enjoy a Happy Thanksgiving, filled with grace and gratitude, SDG.

P.S. If you missed the Funeral Music Program in October, it was exceptional, truly lovingly prepared and dedicated SDG.

Regards,

Vicky Wms Sieben, Dean

Organist Guild Lunch Club

- ~First Friday of the month at Noon
- ~Fargo downtown Fryin' Pan Restaurant
- ~Everyone is welcome!

Chapter Officers

- Dean: Vicky Wms Sieben
- Sub-Dean: Robyn Vinje
- Secretary: Ruth Discher
- Treasurer: Lance Johnson

Board Members at Large

- 2007: Brad Steen, Dawn Papenfuss
- 2008: Sue Clambey, Sally Harmon
- 2009: Ruth Strawn, Alpha Roeszler

Letters to the Editor

A Response: The Contemporary Worship

(from February–April 2006)

Apparently the arrival and popularity of Contemporary Worship in churches has threatened organists and other church musicians to the point that fairness flew out the window. It is understandable that the American Guild of Organists has a goal to encourage its members to work for proper wages, high standards of performance, worthy instruments, and teaching youth the challenge and joy of the pipe organ. I wonder, however, exactly when it was that the Guild became so self-centered that there is no room for other styles of music.

Earlier this year Lance Johnson wrote a series of articles for the *Pipeline* that were informative, provocative and at the same time infuriating and offensive. Thankfully, I have waited until my attitude is calmer before I responded. Writing is not easy. Lance is to be commended for the time and effort he spent on the series. But it brought to mind questions and comments. Quotes from the series are in italics and CW is used for Contemporary Worship.

For a frame of reference my organ background dates back to my middle school years, when it was determined that without training I would play the new Hammond organ the church bought. The ensuing years brought many opportunities to study the organ, play for services, learn to enjoy the pipe organ and respect its beauty and capabilities. My college education included a mere music minor. Be that as it may, music has been important to me my entire life. No longer do I play the organ, but the piano is good. I even like to whistle.

Passive participation in worship, or entertainment as it were, did not begin with the Contemporary Worship movement. In Part I with the reference to early church and then Renaissance music, who sang the *incredibly beautiful music*? Did the congregation sing, or were they sung to? Listening to the service seems to go back a long, long way.

Part II refers to the 50s and the event of three popular songs "He," "I Believe," and "Count Your Blessings." "Perhaps the greatest folk group ever, (who) helped to establish this genre as early as 1950 was the Weavers who recorded, "Goodnight, Irene." This puzzles me. Some of us grew up with the catchy and meaningful "campfire" songs of the 40s which were easy for kids to learn and enjoy and which are still meaningful. I do not recall that "Goodnight, Irene" had anything to do with the joyful and rhythmic songs that express God's love for us and the wonder of His love. In the several Lutheran congregations of which I was a member, we learned the beloved "hymns of the church" indicating that it is possible to learn and sing both types of music at the same time. Isn't that amazing?

In Part III was Lance really serious about all the advice for planning contemporary services or was he laughing all along? I agree that the song "How Beautiful" repeated 37 times is revolting, but that does not mean all CW music is that style. One only needs to visit various congregations to learn that many try to have well composed music and well thought out lyrics.

What does this mean: *Do not let the Bible verse from Matthew 18:20 confuse you which reads, 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.' The Lord will not come to your church on Sunday morning unless you invite Him!* I don't understand the relevance of this statement. It is belittling to say that those leading CW are arrogant to believe they invite God to the service. He is already there and I think they know it!

Now we come to the suggestions for your praise band.

1. *Use only self-taught guitar players:* How sad to think that self-taught guitarists should be left out. One area congregation has a guitar-

ist who assists the organist on the hymns as his contribution to worship. Is he self-taught? He may be. Should he have been denied the opportunity to serve his Lord? I don't think so. Let's not forget that traditional worship often includes strings and brass.

2. *If your keyboard has automatic rhythm, use it! The rock and roll and country rhythms work best as it will remind your audience how much fun they had at the Saturday night dance.* This is silly. It would be a surprise if there are many worshippers who go dancing on Saturday night. What about the wondrously rhythmic and joyous music from the Caribbean, South America, Africa and the South Pacific? Some of the most beautiful music I have ever heard came from those places. It is a marvelous experience to hear a rhythmic rendition of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" sung by a choir in their native Tongan language who sing praise to the Lord with all their hearts.

3. *Don't forget to have your song leaders SMILE. This will help everyone feel good.* Are smiles sinful? If we notice anything at all in the traditional worship services, we'd see that smiles are often missing. Why? Is there no joy?

4. *If the service is held in a room other than the sanctuary, do not get carried away with displaying religious symbols. If a cross is used, it should be very small so as to not distract from the band.* If the praise band is such that a cross would distract listeners it wouldn't make one iota of a difference how big the cross is. It may be honest to admit that there are times when organ music is a distraction.

5. *Remember, above all, if you cannot entertain, your audience will not come back.* I agree that sometimes worship services seem like entertainment. However, I know of planners of CW who take much time and effort to choose appropriate worshipful music. One organist (yes, an organist) and his pastor checked out 1000 songs before they decided which ones to choose for the new CW service songbook. Another musician spent many hours of research to be sure the Missouri Synod Lutheran congregation's new CW service should have the best possible music. Horror of all horrors, some not-so-well-trained musicians take part, most of whom have joy and willingness to learn to do the best possible job. Their leader is patient and hopeful. People will come back, and are doing so.

Regarding the kind of people you can attract to this service:

1. *Those who didn't finish high school or did not attend school after high school graduation:* Surely a lack of education should not preclude someone attending a worship service. What does it matter if one does not have a full education? Many of us have ancestors who were successful and worthy without much education. How on earth can education be a requirement for worship? Think about it. There are those who have never played an instrument, to say nothing about having played the pipe organ, and they absolutely love organ music. Please explain that.

2. *Those who came from a school with a poor music education:* How does that fit with people having a poor music education who faithfully attended worship long before there was ever a whisper about Contemporary Worship?

3. *Those who did not take part in high school music programs:* Are we who have an education such snobs that we should look down on those who were not able to be in a music program? How can this be? Those of us who took part in high school music were privileged to participate.

(Continued on page 5)

Board Meeting Notes

October 16, 2006: The meeting of the RRV AGO was called to order by Dean Vicky Wms Sieben. Those present were: Ruth Discher, Lance Johnson, Alpha Roeszler, Victoria Sieben, Ruth Strawn, Robyn Vinje.

Robyn moved to approve the Minutes from the September 21, 2006 Board meeting. Lance seconded the motion and the Minutes were approved as written.

Lance was called on for the Treasurer's report. Two payments to National AGO were made in the amounts of \$54.50 and \$21.00. Two deposits were made (incoming membership dues) in the amounts of \$157.00 and \$197.00. All bills have been paid to date and the balance remaining in the checking account is \$8,913.55.

Membership in the RRV AGO to date is: 27 full time, 3 student, 5 dual, 14 subscribing members = 49 Total

Ruth D. presented comparative information on investment vehicles from four banks in Fargo for the possible placement of \$5,000.00 of the Chapter's checking account balance in an accessible vehicle/account that would generate some interest. Alpha moved to put \$5,000.00 in an 11-month Certificate of Deposit at State Bank & Trust, currently at a rate of 5.30%. Ruth S. seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Robyn moved that \$3,000.00 of the current checking account balance be placed in a money market or other accessible interest-bearing account at State Bank & Trust. Lance seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

In accordance with the *Standing Rules, Policies and Procedures to Govern The Red River Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists* as they appear in the RRV AGO Yearbook and Directory, both the Dean and the Treasurer (items 5h. and 8h. respectively) will be listed on the signature cards for any and all RRV AGO Chapter bank accounts going forward.

Old Business

1. Paul Jacob's Recital - Lance will continue checking on grants from the Lake Regions Art Council and the FM Area Foundation to help cover the expense of the event. Currently, fees for the event are \$3,250.00 for the concert and \$500.00 for the Master Class. If needed, the Board will request Chapter members to underwrite the event. More planning will resume in February.

2. 2006-2007 Programs - 12 RRV AGO members attended the Funeral Music Program held on October 15, 2006 at St. John's Lutheran, Fargo. Dawn Papenfuss compiled and distributed a very helpful list of music suggestions from various Chapter members. The Board agreed on the need to take up discussion among members as to how to improve attendance at these useful workshops.

Marty Baumgartner submitted an itemized budget for the Christmas Carol Sing-A-Long to be held on December 3, 2006 at Peace Lutheran, Fargo. The anticipated total cost to the Guild is not expected to exceed \$70.00. Robyn moved to accept the budget as presented. Alpha seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

3. Memberships - See above mentioned information.

4. List of Churches/Contacts - It was decided to revisit this project after the new year.

5. Review of salary guidelines - Robyn moved that an anonymous member survey be formulated requesting information about current salaries among chapter organists and how they compare to the current guidelines. The motion was seconded by Lance and the motion was approved.

New Business

1. Boulger ad for the *Pipeline* - Lance moved to pay in kind the Boulger ad that appears in the *Pipeline* monthly. Robyn seconded the motion and it was passed. There are currently five categories of advertisements available for placement in the *Pipeline*.

2. As a matter of awareness and review, there was a brief discussion regarding the *Code of Ethics* and the procedure outlined for filing an ethical or procedural complaint as set forth in the *Discipline* section of the Bylaws printed in the Red River Valley Chapter 2006-2007 Year book and Directory.

3. It was brought to the Board's attention that not all members prefer receiving the *Pipeline* via e-mail. Upon notification, the Board will gladly mail a copy to those who prefer to receive a hard copy.

4. Lake Agassiz Arts Council dues for membership are due. Robyn is the RRV AGO member representative to the LAAC. Alpha moved that LAAC membership dues of \$80.00 be paid. Ruth S. seconded the motion and it was passed.

5. There was discussion about the use of recorded music for services. Robyn moved to have the Board appoint an ad hoc committee to discuss the issue and survey area churches to see if any have policies regarding the use of recorded music. Ruth S. seconded the motion. It was suggested that the issue could be an interesting topic for a panel discussion. The motion was carried. Robyn will appoint an ad-hoc committee.

The next RRV AGO Board meeting will be held on November 16, 2006 at the Boulger Funeral Home at 4:00PM.

Lance moved to adjourn the meeting. Robyn seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 5:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Discher, Secretary

If you are interested in getting the *Pipeline* delivered right to your email box, please send a message to rrvago@hotmail.com and include the email address that the newsletter should be sent to. For those without email, we will send a printed copy. Please send your information to the address at the end of the newsletter. We encourage feedback as well as submission of articles for publication. Please send your articles by the 20th of each month to rrvago@hotmail.com. We reserve the right to accept, reject, edit or modify any submission.

Pipeline Profile

Ruth Discher, Secretary



It was my good fortune to be born into a family and raised in a home where music was an important part of our daily lives. I grew up in Chaska, Minnesota, a small Minnesota River Valley town, now a suburb about 27 miles southwest of Minneapolis. My father played the violin, trombone and percussion, and throughout his lifetime played in area dance bands and community bands in addition to his real job. My mother, who began playing the organ for church services at a very young age, also played clarinet and violin and taught piano, voice and organ. Many Sunday afternoons at our home were spent with family friends visiting and for hours playing through flute and violin ensemble music, singing through oratorios and playing piano duets. Throughout my mother's more than 50 year career of teaching, over 400 piano students visited our home regularly for lessons. She retired from playing organ, directing church choirs and teaching piano at the age of 78. It was her influence and nurturing that grew my passion for church music and the pipe organ.

I grew up in the Moravian Church and at an early age was introduced to the wonderful musical heritage of the Moravians and the valuable contribution they made to early American music history. I began playing the organ for church services at the age of 14 and played the flute (mainly because it was easy to carry in the marching band) throughout my school years, taking advantage of any opportunity to play piano for or sing with musical groups within the community, schools, and churches. I would also accompany my mother to countless choir and organ clinics, workshops, master classes, lectures, concerts, etc. sponsored by the Twin Cities Choirmasters Association (TCCA), Schmitt Music Company, and various area colleges and universities such as St. Olaf, U of MN, Augsburg and Concordia.

After graduation from high school I attended and graduated from the Abbott Hospital School of Nursing. I worked as an RN in psychiatric nursing at the Veterans Administration Hospital in St. Cloud, MN and as a medical nurse at Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids, MN. Although I always had a great interest in the medical sciences, my passion remained with music. I continued to play for and sing in various vocal groups that would perform concerts in churches throughout the Twin Cities area and the state. After completing a course in Piano Pedagogy under the instruction of Maxine Posegate and a semester of Piano with Mary Duncan at Northwestern College in Roseville, MN, I started a career in piano teaching which continued for the following 10 years and included 2 years of

teaching piano at St. Paul Bible College. It was during this time that I began a 5½ year term of private study in organ with Dr. Edward Berryman who was at the time Organist and Choirmaster at Westminster Presbyterian Church in downtown Minneapolis as well as professor of organ and piano at Macalaster College, Northwestern College and Normandale Junior College in the Twin Cities Area. My passion for the organ peaked during this very inspiring period, having the opportunity to play on two different 4-manual organs at Westminster Presbyterian while I studied there. I was introduced to wonderful organ literature that spanned from Sweelink to Buxtehude, Bach, Mozart, Franck, Mendelssohn, Liszt and on through Hindemith and Durufle and more.

With my two daughters growing older and the prospect of college tuitions looming in the near future I embarked on a new career and began working for Alliance Capital Management, an investment firm in downtown Minneapolis, and continued there for 14 years, most recently as Marketing/Administrative Assistant to the Senior Vice President of Domestic Hedge Funds.

In 1997, while still working at Alliance, I retired from approximately 20 years of having served "full-time" as organist for a number of downtown Minneapolis and suburban congregations. I moved to Fargo in 2001 and worked for a short while at Piper Jaffray before retiring to pursue my interests in travel and photography with my husband, Jack. I am currently serving as "permanent substitute" organist at Glyndon Lutheran Church. This position has generously offered me the flexibility to spend time with my husband and family, especially with our two beautiful grandchildren. Time spent on the organ has diminished somewhat compared to earlier years, but the passion certainly has not. As we travel, in addition to carrying multiple cameras and photography equipment of all sorts, we are always accompanied by a notebook filled with favorite organ selections and a pair of old organ shoes. Our goal is to seek out not only breathtaking photo ops, but also the opportunity to play an interesting organ in a new breathtaking acoustical setting.

It is a privilege for me to be a part of the Red River Valley Chapter of the AGO. It has been very rewarding and encouraging to be among many who sincerely share the passion.

~Ruth Discher, Secretary

NOTE: The "Pipeline Profile" has been created so members can get to know more about each other. We encourage everyone to write their own profile and send it along with a picture of yourself (.jpg or .bmp format) to us at rvago@hotmail.com. We may need to edit content if necessary and will feature a member in each edition (space permitting). We look forward to meeting each of you!

Event Updates

October Program: Funeral Music



Dawn Papenfuss leads the funeral music program.



Ruth Strawn, Ruth Discher, Gerald Parker and a guest listen to Dawn's presentation of the funeral music program.

Ruth Strawn Recital

One of RRV-AGO's newest members will be playing on Wednesday, November 15 at 12:45PM at First Lutheran Church in Fargo. Ruth is one of Michael Olson's organ students and has kindly agreed to share her gift of music during the regularly scheduled concerts. Come and show your support to Ruth. For more information, please contact the church at 235-7389.

JOYSONG ~ Susan M. Clambey in Concert

Join Susan at the Fergus Falls Center for the Arts, Fergus Falls, MN on Sunday December 10 at 4:00PM for a concert featuring the Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Organ along with vocal selections. Susan has been asked to return to her home town to give this holiday concert. The Fergus Falls Center for the Arts has a concert admission fee of \$10 for the event.

Christine Anderson, world-renowned handbell soloist will play a concert November 19 at 7:00PM at St. John Lutheran Church, Fargo. This is a free will offering and refreshments will follow.

Thank you to Roy and Peggy Hammerling for sponsoring this special concert event.

If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Westgard, St. John Handbell Director at 281-4588.

(Letters to the Editor, continued from page 2)

4. *Young married couples:* Most of these people left church after being confirmed and now that they are raising families want to get back into the swing of things again. There is no way this can be a negative. It is great that young families come back. Thank God that He leads them to do so.

5. *People who hold local popular radio stations music in their highest regard, and do not have any use for public radio.* I think I missed the surveys that discovered this fact.

6. *Those who never heard traditional church music growing up:* This doesn't necessarily keep them from attending traditional worship. Furthermore, some who have loved the traditional may like a respite and enjoy a change.

In conclusion, if you can transfer your church into more of say a theatre atmosphere, you will draw the most people. This includes the popular sing along with words on screens. It really wouldn't hurt to have a sing

along from the hymnal, now would it?

Use only the simplest music with three major chords. Don't write out the score in four parts. People won't be able to read it. It is strange; many folks can't read music at all, whether it is a single line or four parts. In spite of that they learned the powerful old hymns by rote, after singing them many times over.

So I leave my readers with this question: As you begin your worship, and Christ is in your presence with His hand outstretched showing the scars from His crucifixion, should He be greeted by guitars and amplifiers or a congregation singing hymns of praise accompanied by a mighty pipe organ? This question is overdramatic. Do you ever wonder what the difference is in hearing a praise band and hearing a mighty pipe organ playing a French composition with total dissonance that it makes one grind one's teeth?

People are funny and organists are not exempt.

~Mary V. Tangen

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Upcoming Events

December 3, 2006, 7:00 PM

Christmas Hymn Sing
Peace Lutheran, Fargo

February 11, 2007, 4:00 PM

Wedding Music Program
Grace United Methodist, Moorhead

March 25, 2007, 4:00 PM

Piano/Organ Duet Program
First United Methodist, Fargo

May 6, 2007, 4:00 PM

Membership Potluck
Vicky Wms Sieben Home, Moorhead



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