



PIPELINE

American Organist Guild—Red River Valley Chapter

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January 2006

Christmas Carol Sing-A-Long—A Wonderful Evening!

The Christmas Carol Sing-A-Long provided a wonderful evening of singing all the old favorites! If you hadn't captured the Christmas spirit before December 4, you certainly left First Lutheran with a new sense of wonder and awe of Christmas. The familiar carols were wrapped in thoughtful readings, interesting song backgrounds and timeless quotes. The narration was shared by Judy Lee and Curt Tjon. They did a great job.

A big thank you goes to Michael Olson, Carolyn Hensrud and Mavis Tjon for planning and helping to orchestrate the event! It was great fun to hear the other organists involved as well. Those organists helping to make the program such as success were Michael Olson, Susan Clambey, Mavis Tjon, Sally Harmon Dawn Papenfuss, Norma Halverson, Gary Fiske, Marty Baumgartner, and Carolyn Hensrud.

The program was also blessed with the addition of the Women's Choir from First Lutheran. One of the highlights was the lovely "In the Bleak Midwinter" sung so beautifully from this talented choir. It certainly was a magical night—starting with the lovely backdrop of the tress and stars wonderfully arranged behind the altar. And besides singing all the familiar carols, we were treated to singing together some of the less familiar

hymns—"I Wonder As I Wander," and "Holy Child Within the Manger."

And I can't forget to mention, that aside from all of the talented organists playing, we were treated to some incredible piano work as well. The prelude featured Carolyn on piano and Mavis for a collection of carols from Fred Bock. (We all need to order this book—they were great!) Dawn Papenfuss treated us to some secular fun with "Silver Bells" (featuring real bells by Lois Nelson and Jessica Westgard) and "The Christmas Song... (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire...)." Also joining the fun on the piano was David Ferreira tickling the ivories as only he can do! A rousing arrangement of "Soon and Very Soon" had us all singing at the top of our lungs!

A wonderful evening indeed! We got to sing "Jeg er saa glad".....hear so many wonderful Christmas songs.....and sing together as one "jammed packed" congregation. Everyone left grateful for the Christ Child, and grateful that we live in a community where Christmas is so alive!

~Bill Tweten, Secretary, RRV AGO

Pipeline Gets Tuned Up

Welcome to the *Pipeline*, the 'refreshed' Red River Valley Organist Guild newsletter!

The *Pipeline* is now available for delivery via email. If you are able to receive an electronic version of this newsletter, please send a message to rvago@hotmail.com and include the email address that we should send your newsletter to. For those without email, we will continue to mail the newsletter as we have in the past.

We encourage feedback as well as submission of articles for publication. We reserve the right to accept, reject, edit or modify any submission. Please send your articles by the 15th of each month to rvago@hotmail.com.

We hope that you find this newsletter informative and interesting!

Message From the Dean



In Appreciation ... I would be remiss if I didn't express the profound gratitude to Gerry Parker for all the years he spent on the Pipeline newsletter. Gerry and I spent much time with phone conversations to complete the master copies so they could get to the printer on time. Gerry was also at a disadvantage not living in Fargo-Moorhead which meant having him make a special trip to deliver the copy. Gerry is an example of outstanding volunteerism that brings credit to our chapter. Thank you, Gerry!

~Lance E. Johnson, Dean, RRV AGO

Chapter Officers

Dean: Lance Johnson

Sub-Dean: Vicky Sieben

Secretary: Bill Tweten

Treasurer: Marty Baumgartner

Board Members at Large

2006: Michael Olson, Robyn Vinje

2007: Brad Steen, Dawn Papenfuss

2008: Sue Clambey, Sally Harmon

Looking for Hot Topics and Funny Stories

The search is on! RRV AGO is looking for *Hot Topics* and *Funny Stories*. We are requesting your questions and your stories...

Serious *Hot Topics* that have come up in conversation lately:

- How often is it ok to repeat music?
- Share some of your favorite music.
- Where do you buy music?
- Where do you get the book bindings cut and spiral bound or 3-ring set-up? How much money is that?
- How much time do you prepare for a one hour service?
- Do you sight read music during services?

Stories we want to hear:

- What is the strangest wedding request you've had?

- What is the strangest funeral request you've had?

- Best weddings? Worst weddings?
- Have you ever fallen off the organ bench?
- Have you ever gotten the giggles? What happened?

OK, those are some examples—now it's your turn! The editors will select a new *Hot Topic* and a new *Story Line* each month.

January's *Hot Topic*: Crazy Wedding Stories

January's *Story Line*: What was your best Christmas service experience?

Email your *Hot Topic* questions and *Story Lines* to rrvago@hotmail.com.

Friday Lunch Club

Join the Organist Lunch Club! This group meets every first Friday of the month at the Fargo downtown Fryin' Pan restaurant. You do not need to be an AGO member to participate.

It is a great time for organists to get together.

Financial Committee Report

December 15, 2005: The financial committee was appointed by the executive board in October, held their first meeting November 15, 2005, and a second meeting on December 12, 2005. The committee has been assembling and reviewing the RRV AGO financial records from the past five years in order to obtain history to be used in establishing a budget for present and future years.

The committee has been reviewing the national AGO website for assistance and guidance in this work. They are utilizing the AGO guidelines to make recommendations to the board and assisting the board in making informed financial decisions. The first recommendation from the financial committee was to reduce newsletter costs, a significant annual expense to the RRV AGO, by distributing the RRV AGO newsletter by electronic mail. The committee goal is to fulfill the duties as listed in the RRV AGO Standing Rules.

Sub-Dean Activity Report

A very big "Thank You" is extended to Sue Clambey for the time she has spent assembling a list of area churches. This information will be used in creating a newsletter and contact list of area churches, also for recruiting new member organists at these churches.

We have the list of churches. Now, the next step. Volunteers are needed to contact a small number of churches to get their music committee contact information. If we have enough volunteers, the job will not seem nearly so large. If you are willing to help call for this information, please email rrvago@hotmail.com or contact any member of the executive committee. Lists will be distributed in January. Our goal is to have the list completed by spring.

~Vicky Wms Sieben, Sub-Dean, RRV AGO

Pipeline Profile

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 an (optional) 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!

Lance E. Johnson, Organ Builder



Lance E. Johnson was born and raised in Fergus Falls, MN. His parents are Ardis R. and the late Leonard G. Johnson who until his death was vice-president of Olson Securities. (Now Dorn & Company).

When Lance was about 4 years old, he would insist his family sit behind the organist during Sunday worship at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. His fascination with pipe organs began here where he would watch the organist play with both her hands and feet.

For Christmas 1952 he received an old reed organ from his parents, which he promptly took apart, to see how it worked. He later acquired several more reed organs and restored them.

That same year he began classical organ studies with Dorothy Preus who was the organist the First Lutheran Church in Fergus Falls. He gave up his piano lessons because organs had become an all-consuming passion.

After high school, he studied three years of electrical and architectural engineering at NDSY transferring to music at Concordia College of Moorhead where he graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree in organ performance in 1964. By this time, he was a full time organ builder.

In the spring of that year, he was selected sales engineer for the M.P. Moller company of Hagertown, MD where the two Dakotas constituted his sales territory.

In January 1967, he resigned from Moller to set up his own shop in Moorhead to build the "Johnson" pipe organ. In 1968 having outgrown his shop, he moved to the Moorhead Industrial Park. In 1971, his shop was moved to Fargo. Meanwhile the firm had already designed and built church pipe organs in six states.

The Johnson Organ Company Inc. has 7,000 square feet of space located at 806 N.P. Avenue in downtown Fargo and can arrange shop tours. The facility has from 4 to 10 employees including part timers. Performance bonds are available for the construction of new organs.

The Johnson Organ Company also furnishes materials for other organ firms. Gerald Schjelderup, who started with Johnson Organ Company in 1967, builds the wood pipes for Johnson Organ Company as well as the wood pipes for several other companies under his own name.

In 1973, Lance along with other organ builders from around the nation gathered in Washington D.C. and formed a new professional organization called the American Institute of Organ Builders (AIO). Lance was elected vice president, and has since lectured at three conventions. The AIO publishes their own

professional journal which Lance has had feature articles published. In 1978, the AIO national convention was held in Fargo-Moorhead. The Johnson pipe organ located at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Hillsboro was sited as an outstanding example of the small church organ.

Lance has also lectured at numerous other organ conventions and served 10 years as the technical writer for Theater Organ magazine, with over 60 published articles on organ building.

In 1990, the tracker organ in Dilworth Lutheran Church was featured in the book, *The Church Organ: A Guide to the Selection and Purchase* by John Ogasapian. The June 1997 issue of *The American Organist* magazine, the largest and most prestigious organ publication in the world, featured the Johnson pipe organ at Our Savior's Lutheran Church (LCMS) at Crookston, MN on its cover. Only those instruments considered outstanding examples of American organ building are considered for the cover of this publication.

He has traveled to Europe on two occasions where he studied the 19th century English cathedral organ and in Holland for studies in Dutch organ restoration.

In 1999, he and his staff built one of North Dakota's largest and most prestigious instruments. The three manual, forty rank pipe organ for Voorhees Chapel / Recital Hall on the campus of Jamestown College in Jamestown, ND.

Lance's other activities include playing organ scores for silent films, playing organ concerts, teaching organ, and teaching sailing.

His hobbies include writings on regional history and classic boating. He has published two regional best sellers, *The Great Fergus Falls Cyclone of June 22, 1919* and *Memories of Otter Tail Lake*, both in their second printing. He is currently helping to write the history of Pelican Lake. He has built seven boats of which three were his own design. He and his family enjoy spending their summers at their lake home on Pelican Lake where he leads the annual 4th of July parade in his restored 1946 Century Mahogany speed boat.

Lance and his wife Judy have seven children: Marilou Johnson MD; Michael, service director for Johnson Organ Company; Gregg, zone manager for E.W. Wylie Corporation in Fargo; Suzanne, officer with US Bancorp in Fargo; Joseph, electronic seismologist for Western Geophysical in Houston, TX; Lance II, apprentice at Johnson Organ Company; and Nichole (deceased).

Lance and Judy are members of Dilworth Lutheran Church where they both sing in the choir.

A very special thank you to our supporters ...



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Colleen Lanners
Thomas Pence
Sherman Syverson

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Upcoming Events

April 2, 2006

Tim Olson Concert ~ 4:00PM

Trinity Lutheran Church, Moorhead, MN

May 7, 2006

Family Potluck Dinner

Marty & Sheila Baumgartner res. ~ 4:00PM

2709 - 39th Ave SW, Fargo, ND



Contact Information

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Useful Links

<http://www.agohq.org/home.html>

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