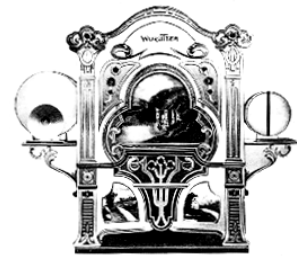




Issue No. 2
January, 2000

CAROUSEL ORGAN



The Official Publication of the
Carousel Organ Association of America (COAA)

Devoted to the enjoyment, preservation and education of all outdoor mechanical musical instruments, including band, fair and street organs, circus calliopes, and hand-cranked organs of all sizes.

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Editor/Publisher — Ron Bopp
Assist. Editor — Angelo Rulli

The *Carousel Organ* and the COAA expand!

The membership of the COAA has increased 60% with many memberships coming from European collectors. The production of the *Carousel Organ* is responsible for many of these and good things are in the forecast with an inflow of interesting articles. For more details, read on!



Display pipes abound in the 57 key Gavioli in the Neilson collection. See page three for a brief story and more photographs of this interesting organ.

The President Speaks . . .

The 1999 organ season was a very successful venture for the COAA. Our fall rally in North Tonawanda, New York, was a huge success with great memories for all that attended. The reception of the townspeople was outstanding as usual – a very unique town with a very unique history.

The COAA has three rallies lined up for the year 2000. They all have potential of being great ones, so mark your calendars and plan to attend. Your support is what keeps the organization going. Note the rally dates are posted in back of this issue.

Looking ahead to 2001/2002, we have no rallies planned as of yet. we need some individuals to come forward with some new rally sites. If you would like to host a rally please get in touch with Marge Waters, Ron Bopp or myself, and we will help you plan and promote the event.

This is the second year for the COAA and I must say the organization is alive and well. We are now over 225 strong with new members joining our group monthly. Thank you for all your support! It is people like you that make this organization so much fun.

Last but not least, our new publication THE CAROUSEL ORGAN, which is really our link to each other, is coming along very nicely. The staff has worked very hard to give the members a quality publication. I think this issue is a testament of their efforts. As we further improve the publication it's obvious that our \$5.00 annual dues will not cover all the expenses. It is imperative that our dues will have to increase to support the publication. Your comments are welcome and I strongly encourage you to do that with the enclosed "mail-back" insert.

Terry

From The Editor's Loft...

We are into our second edition of the *Carousel Organ* and apparently it is a success, measured not only from the increased number of members joining but also from the volume of material received for inclusion. This issue provides a nice mix of old and new, plus American and European organs. I would like to see some more interest in smaller organs but I am sure those articles will come in as well.

As promised in the first issue, we have received a great article from Bill Black on the Wurlitzer Monster. His inclusion of many photos makes this article a real treat. Not to show favoritism, however, all of the articles really show class. I received help from Neil Smith and Mike Kitner with photos to embellish the 18 year old article by Dave Bowers which really makes it historically significant today. And last, but not least, is the really neat treatise on the Gavioli formerly owned by Herb Brabandt. Not only is the story interesting, but Herb dove into his file cabinet to come up with a lot of supporting photos and documents to make this stand out. The two and one half weeks travel time (in the mail) for a first class envelope, however, gave both of us a few more gray hairs.

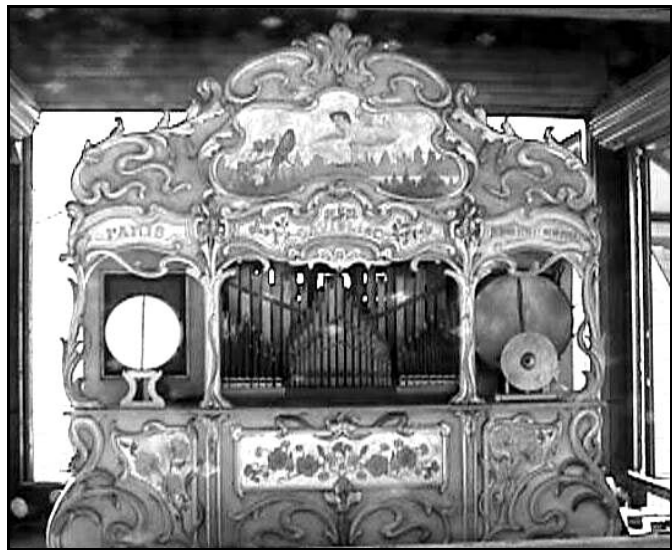
I have chosen to print this second edition on glossy paper. This will let the photos stand out even more and add some "class" to what I and the other officers of the COAA believe the *Carousel Organ* should have. If we continue to have the influx of great articles then I would expect that we certainly will have three, and maybe four, issues per year, each with 24 pages.

The success of this publication, however, comes with a price tag and this is important for our COAA members to ponder. The printing and mailing of each issue is close to \$3.00 for each American member. To have four issues per year plus allow for some monies for administrative cost (meeting mailings, membership lists, etc.) will necessitate an increase in dues to \$15.00 per year. If we were to limit production to three issues then the dues would be \$12.00 per year.

I have talked with a few members who are 100% in favor of the increase in order to have a publication that is devoted to the subject that we all love dearly. The COAA officers need feedback, however and a separate sheet of paper is included with feedback questions — please mail this back. We need the entire participation of our members to evaluate the future of the *Carousel Organ*. Thanks!

The Colosseum Gavioli

By
Ron Bopp



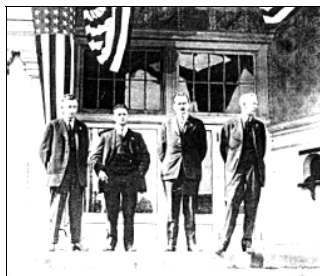
The Neilson 57 key Gavioli fairground organ, awaiting restoration.

every skating rink owner knew at the time, skaters come back for more with good music and a brand new 57 key Gavioli provided just that. The Gavioli façade stands over nine feet tall and also as wide (9'2" x 9'6") whereas the case itself is 32" deep.

Apparently built in 1906, this organ played the Gavioli system until October 22, 1922 when it was converted by the Artizan Factories, Inc., to play the Artizan D roll (a keyless, pressurized roll system). Note: the Artizan Factories, Inc. opened its doors in 1922 so this would have been a very early piece of work for this American band organ factory that was facing the odds competing against the across-the-town industry giant, The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company.

Both the Colosseum and the Gavioli closed up in December, 1931. James Elliott passed away on October 12, 1931. The organ was moved to a small garage where it remained until July, 1962 when purchased by Harold Knieriem of Perkasie, PA. Less than a month later the organ was playing again and was displayed at a local antique and sports car shows. In October, 1990, Don Neilson (now the third owner) obtained the organ from Mrs. Knieriem.

The organ is on schedule for full restoration. If one can judge by a similar 57 key Gavioli Fair Organ owned by Harvey and Marian Roehl, the Colosseum Gavioli will also be a real "winner."



*Photos and information courtesy of Don Neilson.

Harry Elliott (far left) and his son, Jim Elliott (far right) stand ready for action in front the main entrance of the Colosseum on Broadway and Carton Ave., South Bethlehem,

The recent journey by Mary Jo and myself to Eastern Pennsylvania to attend the annual meeting of the Musical Box Society International gave us the chance to visit the home and collection of Don and Mary Lou Neilson of Norristown, PA. Don is a recent addition to the collecting brotherhood of mechanical musical instruments, and while specializing in American coin-operated pianos, he has acquired a few band organs as well. A most interesting organ in this vast collection is a 57 key Gavioli fairground organ. The organ is mounted in a large trailer with roll-top doors on all four sides. It seems to be in very good condition and currently is equipped to play with the Artizan D pressurized roll system. A capsular history of this organ follows.

In the late 1900th century James Elliott was born in France and eight years later emigrated to America. Being an enterprising person, James (who was already into automobile displays and poultry shows) planned on building a skating rink. In 1908 the Colosseum Skating Rink of South Bethlehem, PA, was completed (built in the interest of Roller Skating, Roller Polo, Basket Ball and Sports in General) and the doors opened for business. As



A March 7, 1908, Colosseum newsletter (which claimed that it was published once in a while; 'Third Spasm') noted "the accompanying picture is that of James L. Elliott, the man who originated the idea of building a Rink in South Bethlehem. . . ."

Mr. Harold Knieriem (right) poses in July 1962, with his newly purchased Gavioli organ.*



WURLITZER'S MONSTER AND OTHER GOOD TIMES

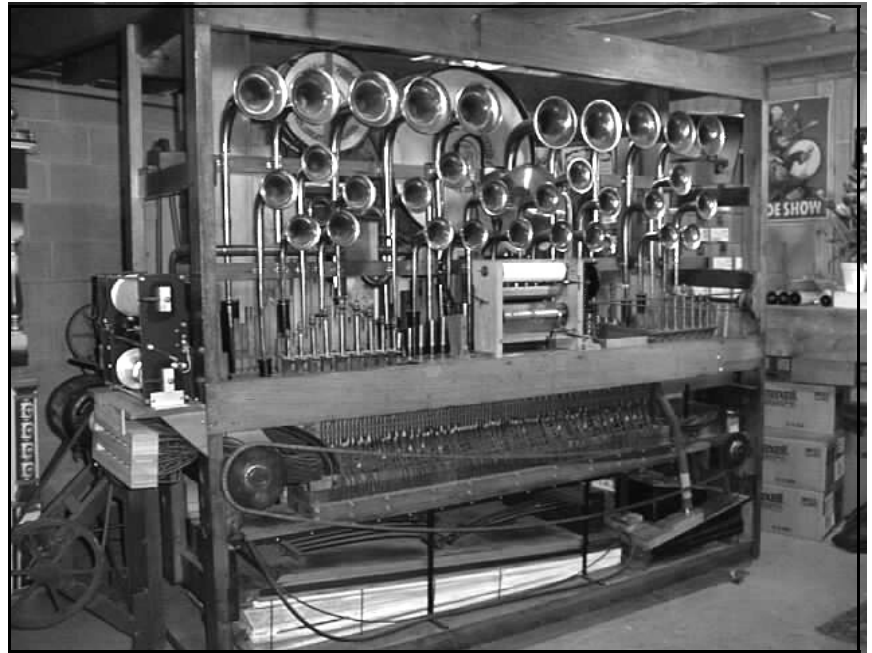
by Bill Black

Back in 1972 when I first visited Mike Kitner's shop, there it was! The Monster! Of course I'd never seen a band organ that big before in person and it was very impressive. Mike had placed a sign on the top which said, *Gee Dad, It's A Wurlitzer*. Also by the side of the organ was a box with a sign which said, "Eye Teeth." That was for the folks who would give their eye teeth for that organ.

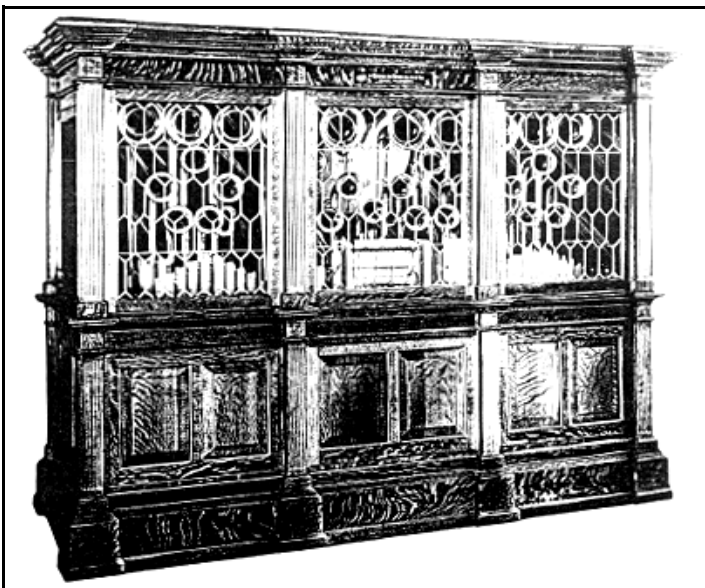
To go back a bit in time, my interest in band organs went to the period when I was in school and worked at Hersheypark during the summers. I was hired to be a cashier in a food stand. It was within earshot of their carousel and in the evenings when things calmed down a bit on the rides, I could sit in my booth and listen to the sound of the band organ. It was captivating! So, at the end of the season, I asked the boss if I could work on the carousel next year. He said, "sure."

For the next seven years, I worked on the carousel. There were usually four of us working on the ride, taking turns operating it, taking tickets or as cashier. The only thing we were allowed to do in regard to the organ was to change the music rolls. During the first few years, the Wurlitzer 153 played pretty well. It was being maintained by a fellow by the name of Buckley from Philadelphia, I believe.

The park usually opened at noontime. Employees came to work about a half hour before opening and once in a while Buckley would be there working on the organ. I always tried to look over his shoulder. Occasionally he would bring a new roll or two for the organ. These were Ralph Tussing rolls. He would throw the rolls he took off in the trash can, box and all. Of course, after he departed I would promptly retrieve them. You never know when you might need something like this. Actually, if you can't have a band organ, some satisfaction can be achieved by owning the music roll!



The Wurlitzer Monster as it appears today. Even without the decorative case this organ gives a massive appearance.



The Wurlitzer Style 155 (Monster) as depicted in an original factory photograph.

Over this period of time, I tried to quell the desire to own a band organ by collecting records. Having discovered a Paul Eakins record in a music store in Philadelphia, I tried to collect all his recordings. The recording of his 153 was my favorite, listening was just like going back to the park. I also traveled around to various places where organs were located to make tapes. One particular experience sticks in mind. As a child, the family would spend our vacation at Ocean Grove, NJ. Next door was Asbury Park. They had several organs back in the 1940s. This was now around the late 1950s and the Palace Amusements in Asbury Park still had two operating band organs on their carousel. I paid a visit and asked permission to make a recording of the organ just for my personal use. They said "yes" and I set up the machine. Next to the carousel was a scooter bumper car ride which was making a terrible racket. The park manager actually shut down this ride so I could record the organs. A courtesy which I remember to this day.



Viewing the Monster from the back we can see the large amount of pipework and the conspicuous absence of a spool frame.

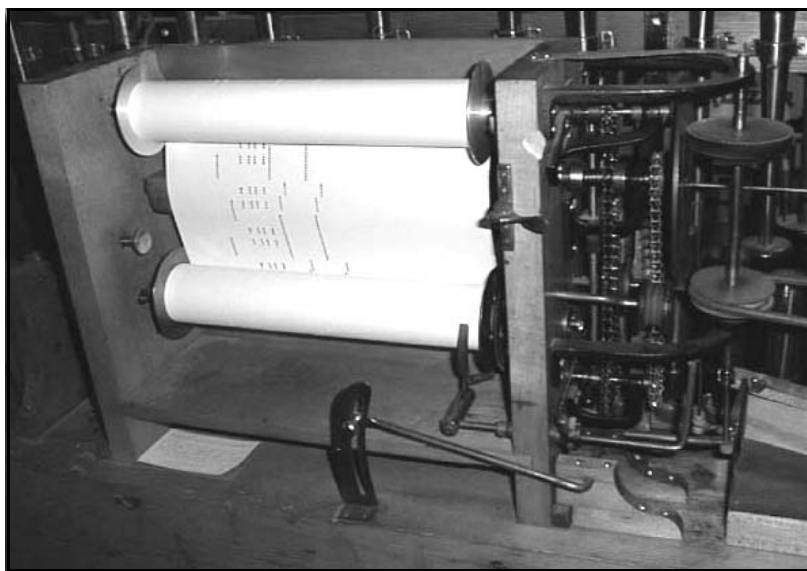
my own. He said "Well, here's where you can get one." He handed me a copy of G.W. MacKinnon's catalog. WOW! Look at all this stuff! The desire was again only dampened by the constraint of my pocketbook. My purse would just barely permit the purchase of a Wurlitzer 146. They played the organ over the phone for me and I was sold. The princely sum was \$3500. After all, I had several rolls retrieved from the trash can which would play on that machine.

Now, with the 146 in my basement, I realized that it would need some work to make it perfect. Although it would play with the help of a vacuum box, I wanted it to be the best it could be. I had discovered that there was a museum close to Harrisburg which had a large collection of mechanical music machines and antique cars. It was Zimmerman's Automobile Museum. I went to visit and found a Wurlitzer 125, a calliope and a large assortment of automatic pianos and orchestrions. Everything was in beautiful condition and perfect playing order. Each machine had a small business card attached. "Mike Kitner's Mechanical Music Instrument Restoration." Curtis had already met Mike and said I should talk to him, because he does excellent work.

I called Mike and told him I had purchased a band organ which needed some work. He invited me to visit. As mentioned above, he had the monster in his workshop, owned by Jim Wells. Mike worked on my 146 and we became good friends over the years. I often traveled with Mike when he made calls to work on machines or to lend a hand with loading machines on to his truck to take back to his shop for restoration. Mike and Jim are good friends and Mike would often go to Jim's. I would tag along and always looked forward to seeing the huge collection of organs, pianos, amusement park stuff etc. which he had collected. There was always something new to see as Jim was constantly searching out these things and buying them. Each time I looked at the Monster which was relegated to a spot sort of in the back of the huge building. Mike and I had discussed this machine many times and I knew that there were only 17 music rolls for it. It also had no case, just the chassis. But, it was all intact in regard to the mechanics. 100 keys! This machine had been located in a skating rink in Flat Rock, Michigan. When the organ was sold, the cabinet remained with the rink as part of the wall.

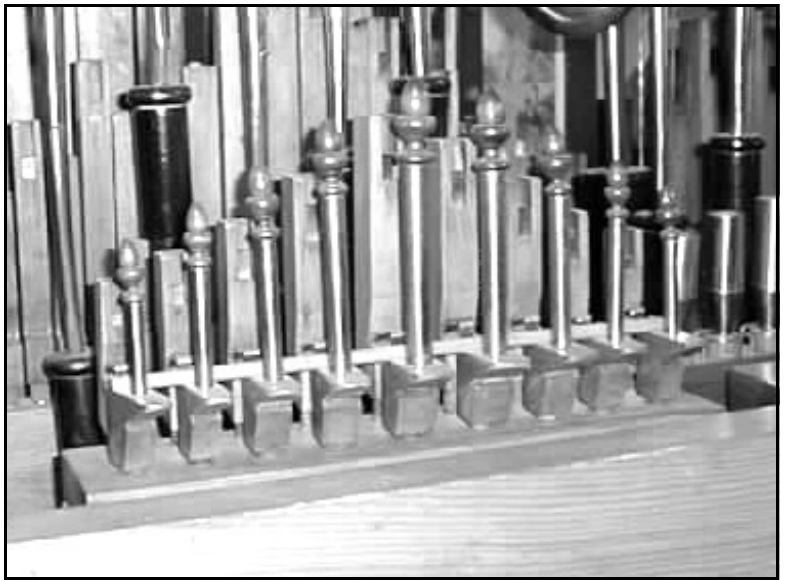
Having completed my schooling, I moved back to my boyhood town to begin working. I learned that there had been a small local park which had a carousel and an organ. Checking around, I found the name of the man who had bought it. A call to him produced the name of the man he had sold it to — Jim Wells. A call to Jim produced an invitation to see what he had for sale. Lots of stuff to see! There were several 153s. However, the price was beyond the budget in those days. So, it was a very enjoyable visit but no band organ returned with us. While we were listening to a 153, my wife made the comment, "It might be nice to have one of those." Oops! A remark she now wishes she could take back! I continued to buy records and books on the subject.

One day I was reading the local paper and saw an article about a local man who was restoring a BAND ORGAN. I couldn't believe it! Here's a band organ right in town. Curtis Lawyer was his name. He was an electrical contractor and the organ was in his business office. I went to visit and we became friends. I expressed my dream of having a band organ of



The original Monster spoolframe playing 100 note music.

It didn't seem that there was much interest in the machine by collectors back then. I guessed that it was due to the small supply of music and the likelihood that no more would turn up. The existing music rolls were not in good condition with parts missing and some had the paper stretched so that it would "snake" all over the place when you tried to play it. You could play them if you "rode" the tracker bar to compensate. During one of our discussions, I asked Mike if he thought the organ could be made to play a 165 roll and the 155 rolls both without changing anything on the machine except "teeing" into the tracker bar tubing. We compared the scales of both rolls and Mike said he could build a "coupler" which would do this using an external 165 roll frame. A deal was struck with Jim and I was the owner of the Monster. Jim was kind enough to deliver it to me with one of his trucks. After unloading it in the driveway, we found it was just a bit too tall to pass under the garage door. Oops! We decided to lay it on it's back and move it into the garage that way. We could then stand it up again. I keep my organs in my basement where I have them at home and can play them. We completely dismantled it and took it to the basement piece by piece where we reassembled it. Fortunately, the frame for the chassis is assembled with screws.

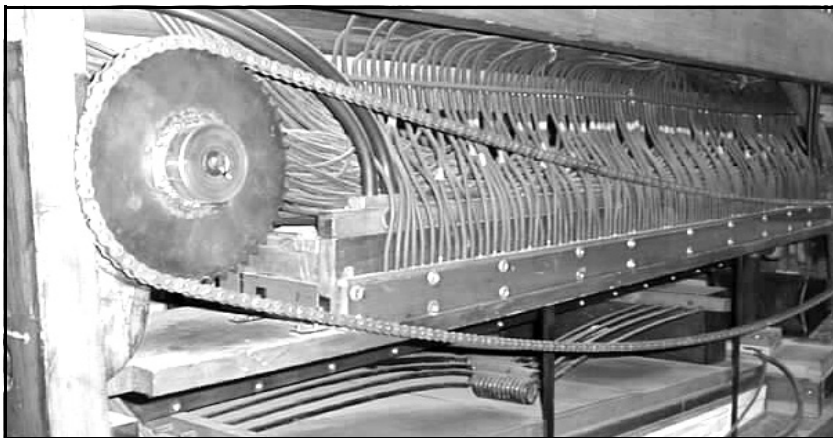


One half of the 18 note piccolo section which had its own countermelody ability.

Now I could examine it more closely. I had already heard all of the music that was with the organ. Mike had recorded the rolls when it was in his shop. There are 17 original music rolls. Three rolls have a single song, eleven rolls have two songs and two rolls have three songs. A total of 32 songs. Only a few were in decent shape and the others have portions of the beginning of the roll missing. Quite a few were the red paper rolls. Some were on tan colored paper, fairly fragile. Songs which we could identify were: *Merry Widow*, *Aloha De*, *Turkey in the Straw*, *Dixie*, *The Diplomat*, *Royal Trumpeters*, *Waltz from Coppelia Ballet*, *By the Light of the Silvery Moon*, *Over the Waves* and *Begin*. I first thought that these rolls were not speed compensated, but measurement with a caliper showed that they are.

The main crankshaft had a wooden pulley which was connected to another wooden pulley on a smaller crankshaft by a flat leather belt. This smaller crankshaft served to drive the vacuum pump which was on the other end of the organ. Despite the addition of an intermediate pulley to put more tension on the belt, it was always slipping. Belt dressing helped for awhile. Mike said over the years, a piece would be taken out now and then to shorten it up to compensate for the stretching of the leather. He estimates about a foot was removed over a period of time. So, we decided to replace this arrangement with sprockets and a chain. This solved the problem. (I saved the wooden pulleys).

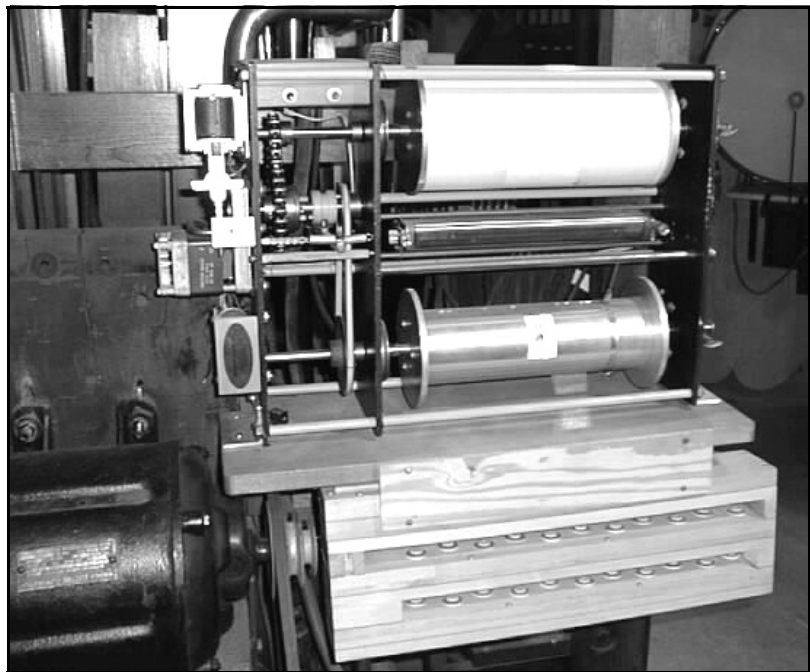
One unique feature of the organ is the separate piccolo section. This 18 note section enables music arrangements which allow this section to play separately from the 25 note melody section. Each note in this piccolo section operates 4 pipes. The organ has lots of brass, 10 trombones, 21 trumpets, 25 clarinets and 18 piccolos. It's loud, you need some ear protection when standing in front of the organ.



The long chain drive at the front and bottom of the case.

There are no automatic register controls on the organ. There are 5 manual draw stops: one for the brass piccolos and violins, a second for the clarinet rank, a third for the trumpet section, a fourth for the flageolet and stopped flute and a fifth for the trombone rank. This makes it possible to turn off all the brass pipes. As there are a lot of wooden pipes in the organ, you can play it just "on the wood" and it is not loud and has a very pleasing sound.

The tracker-bar is wooden and has 100 holes. The wind-chest has 95 keys and has two levels.



The additional Wurlitzer Style 165 roll frame coupled to the side of the organ chassis.

The pressure pump runs about two-thirds the length of the case and can't be removed without a major disassembly of the organ.

Ron Bopp's book, *The American Carousel Organ* and the section written by Art Reblitz, offers more detailed information on the mechanics of the Monster.

As I wanted to be able to just turn the organ on while working on a project and not keep adjusting the roll, the installation of the 165 roll frame was accomplished. Mike designed and built the coupler and the machine now has a good supply of 165 music. Of course, some of the pipe-work would not be used by the 165 scale. However, the 165 music sounded good on the machine, sort of similar to a 164. Since the case is missing, the 165 roll frame and coupler was mounted temporarily on the side of the organ chassis.

My machine is one of three known to survive. I'm told it was made around 1907. Another is located on a carousel in Burlington, CO and is under the care of Art Reblitz (see photograph below). That machine is the only one which still has the original cabinet. It was playing 165 rolls but has recently been converted back to the original 155 roll format

in a project conducted by Art. Also included in this project was the repair, restoration and re-cutting of some of my original music rolls. Art also arranged some new music in the 155 format. So, the original music for the organ will be preserved in the re-cut rolls. This project was an interesting story involving a number of people. Since this was Art's project, perhaps he will relate it in a later article.

The third example to survive is the one owned by Gordon Forcier. This machine lacks the cabinet and has been converted to play BAB rolls.



It's unfortunate that the case for my 155 and the chassis were separated. I often wonder what became of the case. . .

The Burlington, Colorado carousel and complete Wurlitzer Monster (Style 155). Art Reblitz had restored this organ for placement on the carousel and recently converted it back to play the original Wurlitzer Style 155 music roll.

Bill Black, Chambersberg, PA, is well known for his recordings of band and fairground organs.

Figurines on an Organ

By

Hendrik H. Strengers

There has always been a strong relationship between magic and automata. More than 2000 years ago some automata were made to imitate the movements of human beings. On one hand the makers had the intention to create automata which could take the place of servants or slaves and, on the other hand, they sought after an effect of surprise, magic or even horror.

A famous example in the Middle Ages was the clock in the Near East – every hour the figurine of a prisoner-of-war was beheaded to indicate the course of time! In the 14th century we can find in Europe a more peace-loving method to strike the hours – a life-size figurine (frequently a blackamoor or a Turk) strikes a church bell with a hammer. We call these automata *Jaquemart*, or ‘Jack-of-the-clock.’

In many Western European towers you can still find these marvelous old automata. Famous examples are found in Venice (Italy) and Dijon (France). After the invention of the clockwork with wheels in the 13th century smaller clocks were built for very rich people to use in palaces, churches and so on. The 14th century showed the expansion of great clocks with automata, mostly with a religious background – the apostles bowing for Christ; the three Magi kneeling for the Holy Virgin and so on. Another example was the seven electors honoring their emperor Charles IV in Nuremberg (16th century).

A tendency came into being to create such presentations on a smaller scale. It is remarkable that technicians made so-called androids (human-like figurines) without clocks, but in the 16th and 17th century they combined these figurines with ships, animals and real showpieces. A highlight was the musician, the draftsman and the writer, constructed by Jaquet-Droz in the 18th century. At that time the first barrel organ showed up and after some period Ignaz Blasius Bruder I (1780 – 1845) made his now famous barrel organs with small moving figurines in the Black Forest in Germany. In wintertime the farmers could not work on the fields, so they made cuckoo clocks and clocks with automata, carved by hand from native kinds of wood.



De Bloemenmeid (the flower girl) – originally a Gavioli orchestration (pre 1914). This was then rebuilt by the Bursens firm of Antwerp, Belgium as a 67-key street organ in 1920. It was later converted to the 72-key Carl Frei system.



De Grote Radiokast (the large radio cabinet) – ordered from Carl Frei in Breda in 1929 by the firm of Möhlmann-Warnies. It is a 72-key street organ. Many parts came from the Bruder factory – the pipes came from Schön-

We do not know exactly the names of the wood-carvers but it is likely that organ-builders like the families of Bruder, Ruth, Gavioli and many others had their own carvers of figurines and automata. In the course of time the methods to set the automata in motion varied frequently: weights, ropes, pulleys (wheels and springs), pneumatic and even electric engines (don't forget hydraulic instruments of antiquity).

(Right) — *De Pallieter* – built by Alfred Bruder. This is playing the Ruth Style 33 scale. It was originally a fair organ.



The most famous carver of figurines was the firm of Demetz at St. Ulrich in South-Tyrol. Ferdinand Demetz (born on October 7, 1847 and died probably in 1896) studied at the Kunstakademie (Academy of Arts) in Vienna. He had 13 children including Vinzenz (1876-1951), who has created unequalled figurines, which are now in great demand because of their beauty and splendid colors. After the First World War the region of South-Tyrol was disconnected from Austria and added to Italy; so St. Ulrich is now named Ortisei.



Omke Romke ---originally built in 1912 by Limonaire as the "Spanish Lady." It was restored by the famous firm of Perlee in Amsterdam and in 1959 renamed after the mentor of the Dutch authors on mechanical musical instruments Mr. Romke de Waard.

In the Black Forest there were many independent wood-carvers: Joseph Dopp (1860-1948), Balser, Leonhard Dufner, Karl Friedrich Böhler (1861-1927) and Magnus Seeger. Fronts of organs were made by Robert Bichweiler (active 1883-1908), Willi List (worked for Carl Frei) and Fidel Heer (ca. 1808 in Vöhrenback) had already carved small figurines of wood nearly two centuries ago. This tradition still lives on. There are modern makers of figurines and capable restorers. A well-known maker of fair organ figurines is Mike Hart from England. Interesting is the use of new materials like polyester and other kinds of plastic, cast in molds and finished off in beautiful colors.

On organs the movements are limited to moving the head, playing bells, drums and triangles, all beating the time. The action is achieved by rather simple pneumatics and levers, but how effective it is! In my point of view there is still some magic in these almost living automata.

To give some examples I have included some photos made in the Netherlands in 1999 at organ gatherings in Delft (June 5th) and in the Open-Air-Museum in Arnhem (June 6th). The origin of most figurines is unknown but there are some very old ones showing their splendor for more than three generations!



A. Ruth & Sohn, model 36 fair organ – built before 1928. It was used originally in the autoscooter (ride) of Kunkels. It was restored in 1987 and owned by Verdonk.



De Brandweer (the fire brigade) – it was built in 1885 as a cylinder organ and named after a figurine looking like a fireman in 1910. It is a 56-key Limonaire organ, owned and restored by Perlee.

Hendrick Strengers resides in Delft, Netherlands, and frequently contributes to mechanical musical publications.

Future COAA Rallies

The **Emmett Kelly Clown Festival** in Houston, MO, will be the first time for COAA members to enjoy a rally in 2000. 30 to 40 clowns converge on this small Missouri town to help celebrate Emmett Kelly Jr.'s birthplace. We will have a "dude" ranch motel all to ourselves as well as their mess hall for use. The dates are May 5th and 6th and more information will be sent by separate flyer. **Dutch Village** in Holland, MI, will be a repeat tour for the COAA rally group and as always, will provide the perfect setting for our organs, both large and small. The Dutch Village family, as usual, extends their hospitality and this should be a fun rally. The dates will be June 23– 25, 2000 (Friday through Sunday). For more rally information, see page 22.

Repeated Tunes on Wurlitzer and B.A.B. Rolls

By
Matthew Caulfield

Both B.A.B. band organ rolls and Wurlitzer rolls sometimes repeated tunes from roll to roll, but for very different reasons, based entirely on operational considerations in each case.

Original B.A.B. rolls never repeated tunes, as far as I know, except for one 66-key roll issued late in the game, when because of apparent production/arranging delays, the company met its timetable by issuing a roll made up entirely of tunes previously used on earlier rolls.

In the late 1950's Ozzie Wurdeman took over the B.A.B. roll business and a large part of the roll masters. He made up custom rolls, numbering them consecutively without regard to key-size (roll size), beginning with roll no. 300 and going up to the 500s. Any customer willing to pay a premium price for the privilege could order any combination of tunes from the masters Ozzie had access to (some masters remained with Senator Bovey in Virginia City, Montana). Ozzie then sold off the surplus copies to others at a reduced price.

The result of this "let the customer make up the program" practice was a huge amount of repetition of tunes from roll to roll and rather bad musical programs on some rolls, since the customer often wasn't knowledgeable enough about the music to choose tunes that went together well.

Wurlitzer, to its credit, never issued a custom roll to my knowledge and tightly controlled the program of each roll. Style 125 and 150 rolls had little actual repetition except for the occasional appearance of clearly labelled "special review rolls," containing tunes of a given type selected from earlier rolls.

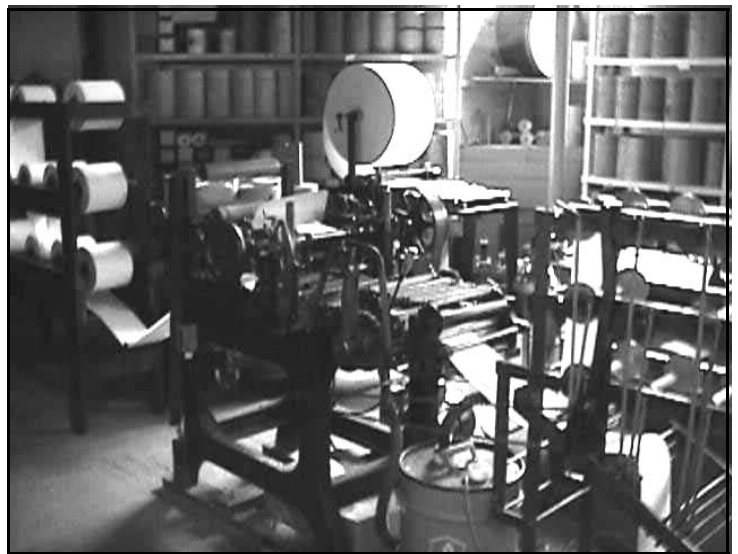
Between October 1913 and August 1925, style 125 and 150 rolls did see "repetition" of a sort. During those years Wurlitzer was issuing 125 rolls and 150 rolls in two formats: 4-tune rolls for the small tracker frame the company originally came out with, and 10-tune rolls for its "long roll tracker frame," which was apparently introduced in 1913 and gradually supplanted the smaller frame. Nevertheless, it wasn't until September 1925 that Wurlitzer ceased offering the shorter 4-tune roll for sale. Wurlitzer's practice was to issue concurrently the same 20 tunes that it put on two new 10-tune rolls or five 4-tune rolls. Fortunately, the company used discrete numberings for the 4-tune and the 10-tune series. The 4-tune style 125 rolls were numbered in the 1xxx's (with the last one being roll 1413) and the 10-tuners in the 3xxx's. Four-tune style 150 rolls were numbered in the 10xxx's (with the last one being roll 10380) and 10-tuners in the 13xxx's.

When it comes to style 165 rolls, there was considerable duplication. While the reason for the duplication is now obvious and Wurlitzer's marketing strategy is now understood, Wurlitzer roll historians were baffled until enough pieces of the puzzle were in place to see the whole picture. What emerges is a very systematic, yet confusing numbering system, wherein the first 37 roll numbers (6501 to 6537) were each used twice for two series of rolls of differing character.

Since all organs playing the 165 roll were equipped with the long roll tracker frame, there was no need for 4-tune rolls, although a few such rolls were issued, numbered right along with the normal 10-tune rolls in the 65xx's. But from the start (around 1914) the typical style 165 roll contained 10 tunes, all new tunes at the height of their popularity. One or two of the 10 might be an old standard waltz or march from bygone days, but the majority were "hot hits" of the moment. Wurlitzer did not keep these popular-tune rolls in stock very long after their popularity waned: Wurlitzer periodically advertised roll clearance sales in their roll bulletins. The company encouraged rapid roll turnover and the regular purchase of the latest hits.

These style 165 rolls were probably numbered from 6501 upwards. The earliest known roll is 6505, issued in 1914 or early 1915; this fact, combined with the fact that extant information about several other Wurlitzer roll series leaves a blank for the first four rolls in a given series, suggests that the company may have, for some still unknown reason, have begun numbering from the fifth number up from zero. Thus the word "probably" in predicating the existence of an original roll 6501, 6502, 6503, and 6504. Rolls 6505 and upwards did exist (many still do), and they were stocked until their popularity waned.

About 1920 Wurlitzer realized the advantage of creating a group of rolls having lasting appeal that they could permanently stock and offer for sale year in and year out. So the company culled the best of its previously issued tunes from the stock of masters and re-issued them on new 10-tune rolls numbered from 6501 to 6537, re-using old numbers for new rolls with no inkling of the problem that would cause decades later.



One of two remaining Wurlitzer perforators now in use at the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum in North Tonawanda, NY.

In 1920 Wurlitzer's 165 popular roll series numbering stood at about roll 6568; its re-use of obsolete roll numbers 6501 to 6537 caused no problem for the company or its customers -- only immense confusion for us later guys trying to figure out by inference alone what was going on at Wurlitzer. (This *IS* inference, though very sound inference, based on considerable study).

Whereas Wurlitzer's ephemeral popular-tune rolls were advertised in its "Monthly Roll Bulletins," the contents of these new "evergreen" rolls 6501 to 6537 were published in a special permanent Wurlitzer roll catalog, a copy of which, bound in bright red paper, was once owned by the late Ross R. Davis, though it has since disappeared. Proof that these rolls were kept in stock by Wurlitzer over the decades is the fact that it was still possible to buy them at the end of Wurlitzer's band organ operation in 1945. Many of the 37 rolls are found today in roll collections, and many of the masters still survive as part of the Herschell Carousel Factory Museum's holdings, unlike the masters for the popular rolls, which were destroyed or sold off at some point, possibly to C.W. Parker, of Leavenworth, Kansas.

Today it is impossible to know precisely how many of the tunes in the "evergreen" 6501-6537 series were repeats of earlier tunes and how many were especially arranged for the series. That will be possible only if and when we find information on every style 165 roll from the original 6501 to roll 6568; right now there are too many gaps in the sequence. But almost every time a new discovery of an old roll is made, the roll turns out to contain one or more of the tunes on the "evergreen" rolls. For example, when collector Bill Black unearthed the earliest known style 165 roll, roll 6505 (1914 or early 1915), it was found to contain "Hands Across The Sea," "King Of The Air," and "Zaraida," tunes re-issued later on rolls 6501, 6502, and 6522 respectively and believed until then to be unique to those rolls.

Similarly, the 1920's evergreen roll 6519, titled "Old Favorites" (the familiar "Little Annie Rooney" roll found in almost every 165 roll collection), for years believed to be the original issue of that roll, is now known to have originally been issued note-for-note in April 1919 as roll 6551, titled "Old-Time Familiar Songs."

The practice of repeating style 165 tunes ceased when Wurlitzer got to the 6600 series shortly after 1920. The fox-trots and waltzes of that later period were virtually all unique. The one exception that comes to mind is "Peggy O'Neil," which is found on two different rolls, but in two completely different arrangements separated by two decades in time, the first appearing in August 1921 and the second in February 1941. Did someone at Wurlitzer, distracted by the war in Europe, forget to check?

When Ralph Tussing took over the Wurlitzer roll business in the 1940s, he did re-issue the old "evergreen" masters as 6-tune rolls concurrently with his own new 6-tune rolls. The numbering of Ralph's new rolls continued, at 6692, Wurlitzer's roll numbering, which ceased at 6691 (a roll actually issued by the Allan Herschell Company, which briefly succeeded Wurlitzer in 1946). Those new rolls typically contained 5 current rock-and-roll tunes and one old, moldy march out of his personal sheet music library from Tussing's days as a bandmaster. For the re-issue of the old Wurlitzer masters in 6-tune format Ralph chose to re-use roll numbers 6668 to 6676, numbers previously used by Wurlitzer for other rolls issued between 1932 and 1937. It is not clear from examination of known data why he chose to do this and why he chose those particular numbers.

For some questions we may never have sure answers!

Matthew Caulfield, a historian of Wurlitzer band organ music, lives in Rochester, NY.



An A. Ruth factory worker by the name of Mr. Haberstroh punching Style 33 Ruth book music (information from Wolfgang Brommer).

Improving Bell Control on the Caliola

by
Robert F. Gellerman

Wurlitzer's version of the calliope, the Caliola, never achieved the popularity of the Tangley -- only 62 of these instruments were built. But because of its simplicity and because of its chromatic scale, hobbyists have made many copies. The Stinson Organ Co. has also built a number of these instruments. The typical original Caliola had 44 wooden pipes and no percussion, but bass and snare drums were available as options, making it a mini-band organ. I built my own version in 1978 with snare and bass drums and a cymbal, and put it into a case decorated to look like a small band organ. Since the rolls have the perforations available, I added a 13 note set of bells. In this version, the wooden flute pipes came from an old church organ and are voiced on 3 « inches of water pressure, resulting in an instrument quiet enough to be played comfortably indoors. This organ has been a favorite over the years with visitors, and has frequently appeared at local festivals.



Fig. 1. "The Old Dominion Marching Society," a small band organ based on the Wurlitzer Caliola roll, built by the author in

Builder's Manual, page 112. Cutouts are unamplified, or passive, devices. AND gates can also be made using pneumatic valves. Both types of multiplexer require three devices for the ON and three for the OFF function, a total of six devices, not including the lock-and-cancel valve. The cutout-based multiplexer uses six cutouts; the valve-based multiplexer uses four conventional valves and two check valves. (The check valves are also passive devices.) On the surface it appears that the valve based multiplexer is a little more complex because it requires a source of suction for the valves. A brief study of the fine print corresponding to the cutouts reveals that they also need suction to bleed the pouches, so the advantage of the cutouts is minimal. After a little experimentation I found the cutouts to be unreliable in operation and used valves, which give reliable, positive control.

A type of pneumatic unit valve popular with professional and amateur builders alike are those made and sold by Doyle Lane. These valves are an injection-molded plastic copy of the Lauter-Humana player piano valves. They can be bought unassembled and made into a variety of valve types. They are easy to mount and replace, should one become defective. Lane provides an Idea Booklet showing how to assemble the different valve types as well as the circuitry for a variety of pneumatic valve devices. The circuit shown in Figure 2 is adapted from the section on multiplexing in the Idea Booklet.

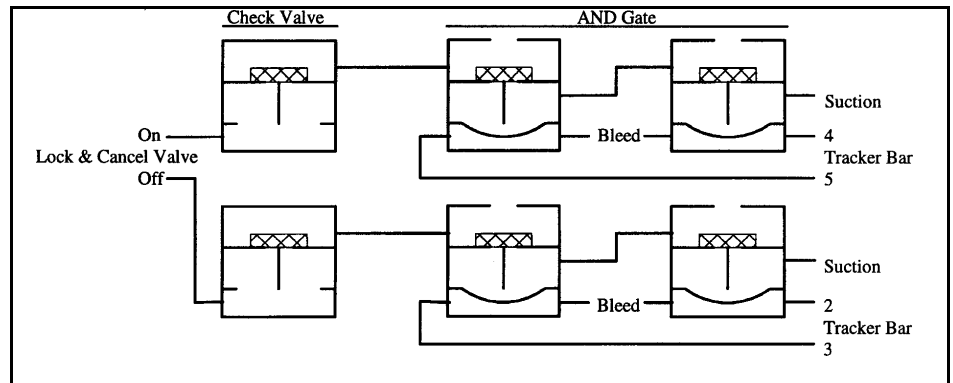


Figure 2. Circuit diagram for the Caliola bell multiplexer. (The location of the valves coincides with the layout of Figure 3.)

The upper and lower sections of the circuit are identical. Each consists of two conventional pneumatic valves connected as an AND gate, followed by a check valve. When tracker slot 4 is uncovered, the first valve operates, putting suction on the second valve. If slot 5 is covered, the second valve doesn't operate, so there is no output. If slot 5 is then uncovered, the second valve in the top section operates and the check valve opens, allowing air to flow through it, and causing the lock and cancel to operate to the on position. If slot 4 remains covered and slot 5 is open, the second valve operates, but since it has atmospheric air coming from the first valve, it doesn't operate and there is no output. Then if the first valve opens, suction is placed on the second valve, causing the check valve to open and air to flow from the lock and cancel, turning it on. If either slot 4 or 5 is uncovered alone, there is no output to the lock and cancel valve. If both are uncovered, air flows from the lock & cancel valve. In the same way, when both slots 2 and 3 are uncovered, all three lower valves operate and the lock and cancel turns off.

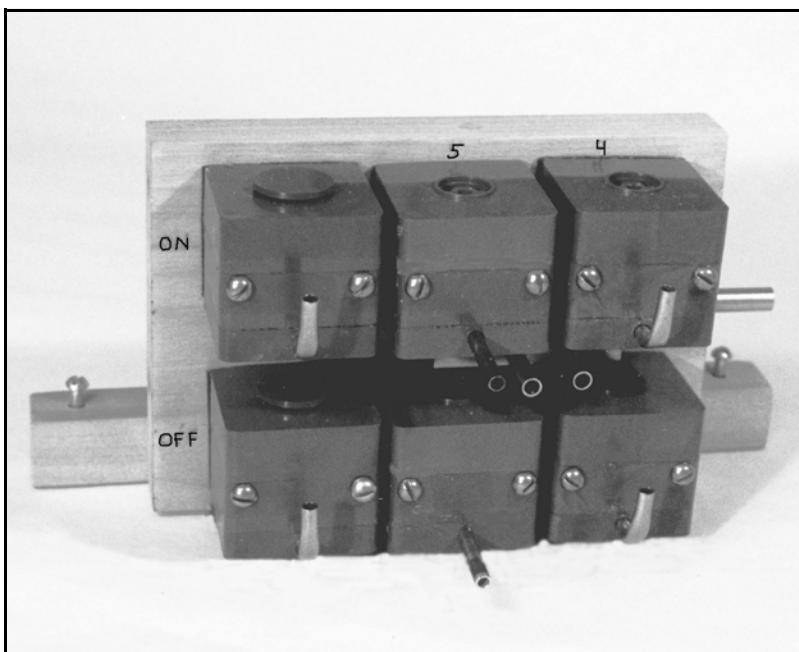


Figure 3. Multiplexer for Caliola bells using Doyle Lane valves.

Two details of the multiplexer are not explained in the Idea Booklet. First, all four conventional valves must have bleed supplied to the pouches. Since the valves on the left in Figure 3 have suction on them at all times, bleed cups can be inserted directly into the holes provided for them in the valves. The middle valves are normally at atmospheric air pressure, so the bleed holes must be plugged with the plastic plugs supplied with the Doyle Lane valves, and the bleed is then teed into the pouch nipple. Second, since the multiplexer output when energized is suction rather than atmospheric pressure, the polarity of the lock and cancel valve is reversed. That is, the normally relaxed side of the lock and cancel is the "OFF" side and the normally energized side is the "ON" side. See Figure 4.

The check valves are made from Doyle Lane valves. The pouch is removed and the upper opening is sealed.

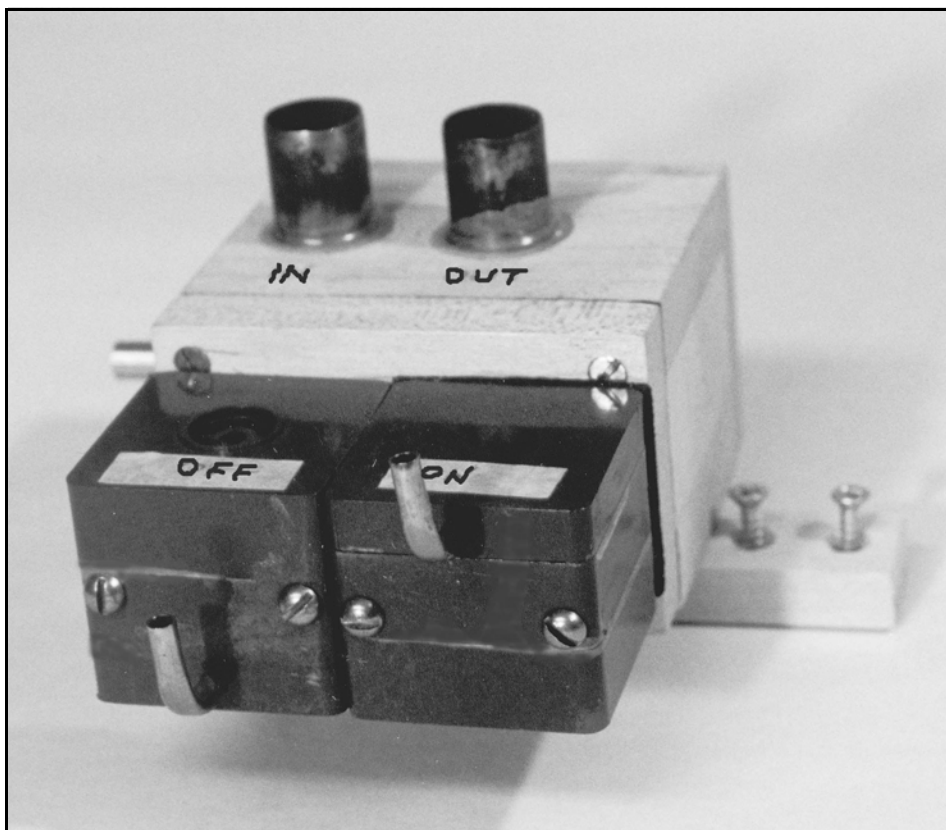


Figure 4. Cutout valve with lock & cancel.

Fritz Gellerman of Deland, FL, is a frequent participant in organ rallies throughout the country.

Archival Article

Some Comments from an American Collector (from the Fair Organ Preservation Society *The Key Frame*, 1981)

By
Q. David Bowers

My Ruth organ, a Style 38 of 96-key specification, was used for many years by the Gooding Amusement Company of Columbus, Ohio. The organ, mounted on a large trailer with folding side doors, would be put into place, the doors opened, and a fence put around the front so that spectators could not get too close. On the backside of the doors was (and still is) lettered a program of hundreds of different tunes. With the doors in the open position the program could be easily read. The music books were numbered, and a special “tune indicator” on the front would tell the viewers which music book was playing at a given time. The listener could then refer to the program and determine what tunes were going to be played. Each music book was made as a composite of a dozen or so tunes pasted together end to end in a stack of folding cardboard music about four feet high (and weighing it seems, 100 pounds or more!).



The Gooding Ruth as it appeared in 1972. Note the cut-out at the top of the trailer extension to allow for display of the total façade.

Photo courtesy of Neil Smith

Although no admission fee was charged to listen to the organ, recordings were available for sale nearby, and this produced additional revenue. The music books were arranged by Carl Frei and Heinrich Voight and are in the “popular” style. There are, to be sure, a number of well-known classical and semiclassical tunes, but there are also enough old-time popular melodies including, believe it or not, cowboy songs, as well as Stephen Foster melodies and the like.

Central amongst the massive façade of the Gooding Ruth was this conductor figure.

Photo courtesy of Neil Smith



Mr. Gooding prized the organ so highly that he directed in his will that it be played at his funeral, which it was. Following his death the instrument passed to the Miller Collection, then to a deal in Texas, from whom I acquired it. Last year the instrument in all its glory was on display at Clark’s Trading Post, a tourist attraction in Lincoln, New Hampshire, in the heart of the White Mountains district.

Clark’s Trading Post is no stranger to automatic musical instruments. On display there are many fine pieces, including examples of Wurlitzer and Artizan band organs, a model CA-43 Tanglely calliope, and a goodly number of orchestrions and coin-operated pianos. The gift shop at Clark’s, said to be the largest in the State of New Hampshire, is dominated by a magnificent Wurlitzer Style LX orchestrion which plays upon receipt of a quarter. I don’t know how much the instrument earns in a given month, but it seems that each time I visit there it is playing almost continuously!

Dave Bower’s Ruth organ as it appears today in the Bob Gilson collection. The organ has recently been restored to its former glory.



At Clark's the organ is positioned with its doors open facing an arena in which trained bears give a show under the direction of the owner, Murray Clark. Before the bear show begins the organ plays. The volume is such that it can be heard all over the place. While it is difficult to describe the total quality of any organ in words – listening to one tune is worth many paragraphs of text – I can say that it has a very “full organ” sound, quite well balanced, perhaps more so than the typical Gavioli organ (which has dominant violin and string tones) or the typical Bruder (which tends to have dominant flute tones). For want of a better comparison it sounds quite a bit like a theatre pipe organ. There are enough pipes and enough wind pressure that the instrument is ‘full’ and has a complete ‘presence’ without being overly loud. That is, one can stand ten feet from the front of the organ and while conversation is not possible at this distance, the music is not uncomfortable either.

Murray Clark has told me that on several occasions people have come to him after seeing the organ, with its doors open and ready to play, and have said: “When will you be playing the organ? I want to take a picture of it.” Seeing that the people in question had still cameras, it really made no difference whether the instrument was playing or not playing or, for that matter, whether or not it was even capable of playing! But, for some reason, people don't like to take pictures of the instrument unless they can listen to it at the same time!



The Gebr. Bruder Military Symphony Orchestra “Selection” as seen this year in the Museum Mechanischer Musik-Instrumente in Bruchsal, Germany. Completely restored it conveys the grandeur of those first wonderful days of its life on

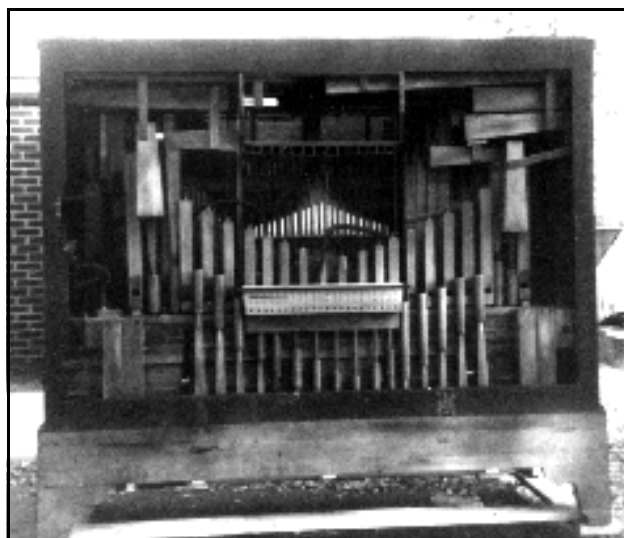
In my collection I have another large and interesting organ, a 94-key Gebr. Bruder “Military Symphony Orchestra-Selection” originally sold for use on a merry-go-round in Coney Island. At the time of installation, shortly after 1910, the instrument cost \$10,000, a tremendous sum for that era. The unit played for many years and, according to carousel historian Frederick Fried, “You could hear it a block away as you came down Surf Avenue, the main street of Coney Island.” The instrument eventually fell into disrepair, the organ changed hands, and its melodies were forgotten. A number of years ago, the unit was stripped of the tiny mechanical figures, 15 in all, which formed a “band stand” on the front and which moved their eyes and instruments as the organ played. And, the music books for it disap-

peared.

Two owners later I acquired the instrument, missing the small figures and without any music. The organ is now presently being restored by Mike Kitner of Pennsylvania, and experienced craftsman who has worked on many fine units. As luck would have it, recently I received information from John Hovancak, a Wisconsin organ fancier, that the tiny figures might still exist. I tracked down his lead and before long I acquired them! It seemed as though they had been sold to a man who had intended to mount them on a display wagon. His ideas changed, and the figures were never used. So, now I have a couple of cardboard boxes full of mechanical dolls and parts and am looking for a restorer for them.

The Bruder “Selection” sans façade in restoration at Mike Kitner's workshop in the early 1980s.

Photo courtesy of Mike Kitner



(left) One of three ranks of trumpets in the ‘Selection,’ this set rested on top of the case and was hidden by the top of the façade.

Photo courtesy of Mike Kitner



The Bruder "Selection" Military Band, now restored and playing for any crowd.

The music? There was one tiny leaf, a six-inch section of one of the music books remaining – but that was it. I wrote to Carl Frei in Waldkirch, to Marcel Von Boxel in Holland, Arthur Prinsen in Belgium, and a couple of others, but so far I have not come across any *original* 94-key Bruder music or masters for it. (I might say here that if any Key Frame readers know of such, I would be very grateful. I can be reached at: Dave Bowers, Box 1224, Wolfeboro, New Hampshire 03894, USA). Marcel Von Boxel is, however, arranging new music for the instrument, so when the restoration is completed, probably two or three years from now, there will at least be some nice melodies to play. But, unquestionably it would be nice to have some original music arrangements from years ago.

In America, Wurlitzer band organs achieved the greatest fame. While most really large rides and parks imported Gavioli, Bruder, or other instruments, the need for organs for hundreds of travelling shows, skating rinks and other installations was filled by several domestic manufacturers, the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company dominant among them. Wurlitzer organ music found in several popular sizes known as Style 125, 150, 165 and Caliola rolls. These are the four main types. In addition, limited numbers of other rolls were made for such now-rare organs as the "Monster," "Mammoth," "Style 180," and so on. In my collection I have an instrument to take each of the popular roll types.

The smallest, a Caliola, was used for many years at Randall's Skating Rink in Chenango Bridge, near Binghamton, New York. It was 'rescued' from that location by Roy Haning and Neil White, prominent Ohio collectors and connoisseurs of the field (they had had some of the finest organs I have ever seen!), who restored it. From them I acquired it a number of years ago. Interesting, the exterior, painted in green with black crackle finish, is just about in the same condition as when the instrument was first made.

The Style 125 Military Band Organ has brass trumpets on the front and was apparently used years ago in New England. I don't have much information concerning its origin, but one of these days I will visit Tim Westman, who restored it, and find out what he knows. I have always found that learning the history of an instrument adds quite a bit to its sentimental value. The Wurlitzer 125 organ, logically, uses Style 125 paper rolls.

Next up the scale in my Wurlitzer collection is a Style 150 with brass trumpets and horns on the front. The instrument is quite unrestored and awaits some future effort, if indeed I decide to keep it in my collection. Why would I dispose of it? Because I recently acquired a Wurlitzer Style 153 organ, which also uses the same 150 rolls, which was used on the merry-go-round at Rock Springs Park, Chester, West Virginia. As a collector of merry-go-round memorabilia I find that his connection is quite fascinating, so this may be the organ I elect to keep. Incidentally, I might mention at this point that the Play-Rite Music Roll Company, of Turlock, California, recuts and makes available at reasonable prices new rolls for the Wurlitzer Style 125, 150, 165 and Caliola. Now, no collector with these instruments will ever be without a truly large collection of music.

Next up the line is a beautiful Wurlitzer 165 Military Band Organ being restored by Hayes McClaran, himself a very dedicated and knowledgeable collector. This instrument was originally sold in 1918 to the merry-go-round at Playland at the Beach, San Francisco, California right next to the world-famous Cliff House (a restaurant and seaside resort). So, that is an overview of my Wurlitzer collection. To round out my collection of band organs I am in the market for a large Gavioli. This would go nicely with the Style 38 Ruth and 94-key Bruder. I guess that no one ever really has a truly complete collection, for part of the fun of the hobby is adding new things now and then.

Q. David Bowers of Wolfeboro, NH, has authored many publications on mechanical music including the *Encyclopedia Of Automatic Musical Instruments*

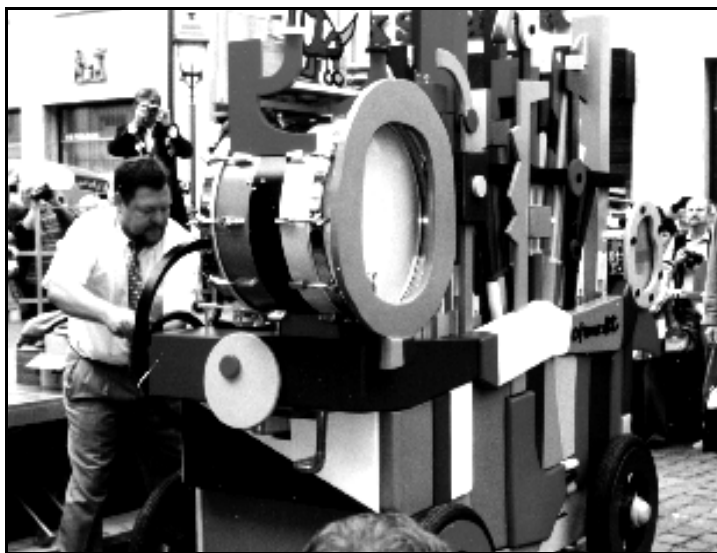
The Tradition in Waldkirch and A Review of the 200 year Orgelfest

By
Wolfgang Brommer and Peter Scherle

The city of Waldkirch, Germany, has been considered the capital city of mechanical organs for more than a century. The history of some of the great organ builders has been well documented; however, there are some others about which we know little or nothing. Such names as Bruder and Frei are well known, names such as Martin are not.

Among the most intriguing aspects of the Martin brothers, Joseph and Martin, is that they both took their lives on the same day, the 20th of January 1837. By that time the inheritance of their father, Mathias Martin (1759-1825), had long since been wasted by them. Mathias Martin had amassed a considerable fortune building organs in Waldkirch, but his skill as a craftsman was only passed onto the eldest son, who had passed on a dozen years before. Rumor had it that he had been poisoned, but this was never proved. The two younger brothers were not blessed with successful careers as were their father and older brother. Some of Mathias Martin's instruments can still be heard in churches in the Breisgau area around Freiburg.

Mathias Martin had moved, lock, stock and barrel, to Elztal in 1799, at which time the village was still a part of Austria. He wanted to get away from the dioceses of Strasburg, where he had his workshop. Nobody knows why he moved, but it is suspected that his excellent reputation as an organ builder was damaged when he fathered the child of an unmarried middle-class daughter.



Richard Leibinger, Waldkirch's Mayor, was the first to officially crank the 1999 Jubilee fair organ. This 43 key, hand-cranked and book-operated organ was made especially for the town of Waldkirch.

The scandal surrounding the Martins would have ruined Waldkirch's reputation as an "organ building town" had it not been for one Ignaz Bruder, a journeyman bricklayer, watchmaker and self-educated man from the harmersbach valley who had moved to the small town of Waldkirch in the Black Forest in 1834. Here the patriarch amassed a dynasty of organ builders to build barrel and fair organs. It was from here that such organs made their triumphal march around the world. For a hundred years the citizens of Waldkirch lived well from the proceeds of this small but impressive industry. Then in 1937 this happy state came to an end as phonographs and radios dealt the deathblow to organs and orchestrons. Apart for a handful of jobs — today there are about 20 such jobs again — all were lost to the popularity of these new entertainment devices.

Yet, in spite of all this travail, the city of Waldkirch celebrated in 1999 the 200th anniversary of organ building. Without Carl Frei, and his son Carl, Jr., the memory of Mathias Martin, the first organ builder in town, would have been lost forever. But, as it was, the organ building and orchestration workshops of Bruder, Ruth, and Weber were so significant that the renowned rivals Gavioli and the Limonaire Brothers from Paris and Berlin actually set up branches in Waldkirch!

The Freis, along with the descendents of Ruth and Bruder, were among the small number who continued making their living principally from the repair and restoration of older barrel organs. Waldkirch owes much to them for preserving the art of organ building. Carl Sr., kept the tradition going until his death in 1984 as did Carl Jr., who died in 1998. The new instruments that they built, and those they restored, have preserved not only the instruments but also the skills and knowledge in this nearly lost artcraft. And, of course, they saved some precious instruments from extinction.

The most important of the techniques that the Freis preserved — and still in practice today — operates by means of perforated rolls in place of pin rollers. This is based on the invention of the French textile manufacturer Joseph-Marie Jacquard (1752-1834), famous for the Jacquard fabric with its bold, patterned weave. Beginning in 1805 Jacquard operated his looms with perfo-

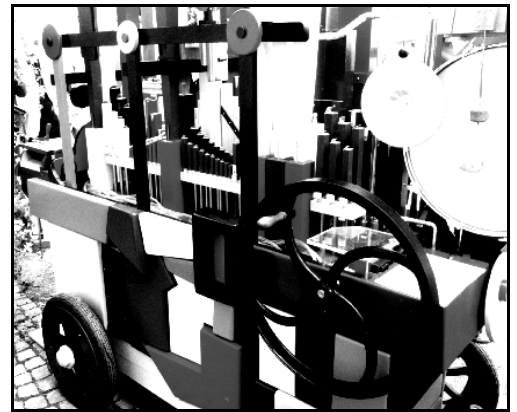
rated cardboard, the forerunner of the perforated strips (otherwise known as “books”) used in the operation of mechanical organs and, much later, such perforated strips, or cards, were utilized in the first generation of electronic computers.

The 1999 Jubilee, celebrating the bicentennial of organ building in Waldkirch, was an astounding success, but not without a price. The cost was well in advance of 200,000 German marks (\$104,000) just for the design and construction of a new fair organ, which was the centerpiece and the logo for this celebration. The design of the organ came from the painter Otmar Alt who made headlines three years ago with his Advent calendar in the 24 windows of the Baroque town hall in the village of Gengenback, Germany. The Waldkirch municipality set only one condition for its support: all four organ-building workshops, Jager & Brommer, Paul Fleck and Sons, Wolfram Stutzle, and Rainer Pitt, were to work on the project together. When the brightly-colored organ, the only one of its kind, was unveiled on the market place at the Marien fountain on the opening of the 6th International Organ Festival in June, 1999, the public acclaimed it as a huge success. The city mayor cranked out *Rosamude* and Dave Brubeck’s *Take Five* as the opening tunes.

Donations were the main source of funding for this project and interested supporters, organ fans and others alike, contributed to the success of this effort. As further evidence of the enthusiastic support of this celebration, Waldkirch’s Friends of the Barrel Organ, a loosely-defined group of organists, raised and collected the money to buy a figured organ from Xaver Bruder, a son of Ignaz Blasius Bruder, for the town’s imposing organ collection in the Elztal Museum. Almost overnight, the group drummed up the purchase price for the 150 year-old signed barrel organ, and a bit more to begin the restoration. All in all, well over 50,000 marks (\$26,000) was raised. The state of Baden-Wurtemberg will contribute the rest to complete the restoration. The citizens of Waldkirch still haven’t given up hope that the state will also help them to purchase the Jan-Carlson organ collection, which is going at a very reasonable price. For this project they need 12 million marks (\$6,282,000). The Minister of Science, Klaus von Trotha, and Michael Sieber, the State Secretary from the Ministry of Education and the Arts in Stuttgart, have shown an interest as well.

Waldkirch offered the 50,000 visitors to the 6th International Organ Festival plenty of variety and entertainment. The jubilee year event was launched by an organ recital in the Evangelical Church which was filled to overflowing. The composer Adrian Oswald from Rottenburg contributed a premier of *Go, Tell it on the Mountain*. The local newspaper, the *Badische Zeitung*, wrote: “Adrian Oswald’s specially-composed piece elegantly managed to bridge the gap between various musical demands. The fragmentized dialogue at the beginning brought out the best in the contrasting traditions of barrel organs and church organ without sacrificing itself to them. Those elements of the gospels which stand diametrically opposed to the nature of the hurdy-gurdy — dynamic liveliness, spontaneity and improvisation — were delegated to the singing auditorium and the jazzing organist and local choirmaster, Thilo Frank.”

“Waldkirch Sounds Good.” It certainly does!



The back of the Jubilee organ reveals even more pipes and the hand crank.

Wolfgang Brommer and Peter Scherle, Waldkirch, Germany,
played an integral part in the 200 year celebration

Style 38 Ruth Moves to Holland!

In a story reported on the KDV (Kring van Draalorgelvrienden) web page (Oct. 24, 1999) Hans van Oost Noted: “Recently, Mr. Vader of Kolhorn in Holland managed to fulfill a long-cherished wish: the purchase of a Ruth style 38 fairground organ. This great instrument, built in 1908, was new to Mr. Klings Bioscope Show, and played for decades in Sweden, in the ownership of Mr. Ericsson of Stockholm. About 10 years ago the organ was sold to Mr. Maier in Switzerland, who proudly presented it at the Waldkirch festivals of 1993 and 1996. The instrument was recently serviced by Mr. Fleck of Waldkirch. We expect that the *Swedish Ruth*, as we like to call this magnificent instrument, will be present on the main events in the Netherlands during the coming years.”

This is of interest to the editor as well as many COAA members as we had chance to see this wonderful organ on our Bumbling Bruder Tour in June, 1999. The organ and trailer are perfectly detailed and make a most spectacular appearance.



Resurrection of the Heller Gavioli

By
Herb Brabandt

This is the story of a large, dilapidated Gavioli fair organ from discovery to completed restoration. It chronicles the rescue, acquisition, initial restoration efforts, description of organ, its history and some interesting discoveries, along with the final major restoration efforts and a happy ending.

Finding, Acquiring and Restoring

The organ was found sometime in the late 60's, which was the earlier period of my organ collecting pursuits. When I first heard the story (almost like a legend amongst collectors – the elusive “Heller Hoard”) it was rumored that an old gentleman by the name of Erwin Heller had a barn “full” of fair and band organs somewhere in Ohio, and that some of them were amongst the largest made with exquisitely carved facades. I had always wanted a large fair organ but when an 89 key(less) Carl Frei Fair Organ became available, I managed to acquire it and the “legend” of the “Heller Hoard” faded into obscurity (at least for the time being).

Several years later it was learned that a gentleman living in Canada had acquired several large organs from the Heller collection. He did not want to sell them when initially approached, but several years later after viewing photos of one of the organs, realizing its potential, and learning that it might be for sale, travel was arranged to determine the possibility of acquisition. The organ was in wretched condition: it had been stored in a leaky barn for quite some time, and then was moved to a semi-trailer (Fig. 1).



Fig. 2 One of four carvings with inset paintings present on the façade.



Fig. 1 The 87/89 key Gavioli as it was presented in Erwin Heller's trailer in the 1960s.

Fig. 3 A view of the mangled pipework.



Most of the bottom pipes were in pieces, the case was broken and rotted, there was no usable key-frame, there were splits in the wind chest, and generally the organ was in sad shape. But, the facade was magnificent – all the carvings in excellent condition (Fig. 2) and I knew it would be a magnificent instrument when properly restored. The organ was carefully dismantled and brought home. Many of the pipes were just pieces and it took quite some time to piece everything together much like a giant jigsaw puzzle (Fig. 3). Construction was started on a new main case as a solid and sound case is fundamental to the timbre of an organ. The huge pump was sent to Durward Center for a complete rebuild and returned looking as though it was brand new out of the factory workshop.

The Gavioli sat dormant for many years and it soon became apparent it was no longer a practical project for me to complete, so the organ was offered for sale. Not being able to persuade anyone in the U.S. to tackle this project, I knew that Andrew Pilmer in England recognized the organ's potential. After an exchange of photos and discussions, Andrew was commissioned by Brian Wells of Banbury to acquire the organ. Arrangements were made for a shipping container and Andrew flew in to oversee the packing in late 1997. It took several days of careful attention to load the container and the organ was en route to its new home.



Fig. 5 A similar organ to the one described in this article is the Herbert Slack organ formerly in the Darley Dale museum.

As to the organ's history: logo stamps of Charles van der Mueren of Anvers were found on several of the pipe risers (Fig. 6), so we know the organ passed through his shop before coming to the U.S. The earliest date indicator found was on a hidden certificate issued by the New York Board of Fire Underwriters (Fig. 7). This was issued sometime between 1900 and 1909 where the organ played "outside" at the premises of M. Scherrel at 196th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. The certificate stated the organ was certified to use a "20 H.P. motor."



Fig. 6 The Charles van der Mueren Stamp (Anvers) found several places.

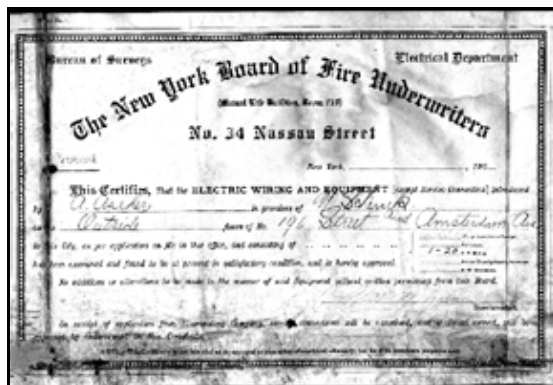


Fig. 7 The New York Board of Fire Underwriters certificate.

The organ appears in a Smithsonian archive photo (Fig 8) taken in 1907 on the Philadelphia Toboggan Company carousel number 15. This was a four abreast carousel which must have been a spectacle to behold with this organ as the musical source. Speculation is the organ went to the Berni Factory for conversion and preparation and then to the carousel. The water is somewhat muddied by a label found when the pump was re-built by D. Center (Fig 9). It reads L. Bacigalupo, 244 Ainslie Street, Brooklyn, NY, is dated October 27, 1913, and signed by L. Bacigalupo and Tony Crescio. My guess is this is when the organ was converted to the roll system as their business produced numerous roll conversions. I understand the organ was removed from the carousel in 1923 and this is possibly when it was acquired by Mr. Heller.



Fig. 8. The 87/89 key Gavioli on location with the PTC #15 carousel after the turn-of-the-century.



Figure 9 L. Bacigalupo and Tony Crescio's signature decal found on the pump.

Back to the Restoration

Brian Wells received the organ in November of 1997, and immediately went to work on the restoration. It was decided to make a new wind chest (an exact duplicate of the original). He engaged the services of well-known restorer, Andrew Whitehead and it was decided to operate the organ using the 89 key VB scale. This was probably the original scale of the organ and certainly the most popular 89 key scale in

the U.K. A new keyframe was built, the case was finished, pipes re-glued and re-made in some cases, baritone register added, and the monumental task of stripping the paints to their original colors was done by Brian's wife, Christine.

The paintings were especially delicate and delightfully detailed figural and ballroom dance scenes. Christine, who is an accomplished artist, along with one of her daughters, did a masterful job and could be seen doing some of this work at the Great Dorset Steam Fair in 1998 where the organ appeared in its unfinished condition.

The Happy Ending

In June of 1999, the Black Forest town of Waldkirch in southern Germany held an "all out" bicentennial celebration to commemorate 200 years of organ building in Waldkirch. Brian and Christine decided to travel the 622 miles (one-way) to share their treasure and handiwork at this world organ event. It was there we met with Brian and Christine and had the opportunity to see and hear the Gavioli (Fig. 10). It sounded just as I had imagined, had traveled extremely well, and the restoration was absolutely first class.



Fig. 10 The Heller-Brabandt-Wells' Gavioli as it appeared at the Waldkirch Orgenfest in June, 1999. The complete restoration was well worth the time and effort as it commanded large crowds on the main avenue of downtown Waldkirch.

The Gavioli could not possibly have ended up in a better place with any better caretakers. The organ is destined to travel to many of the rallies in England and is sure to become a regular at the annual Great Dorset Steam Fair. Brian plans to have a commercial recording available in the spring of 2000 and I'm sure it will be well received.

Herb Brabandt and his wife, Jo Ann, live in Louisville, KY, and have collected fair organs for many years.

Meet your COAA Member

My first music box was a four-tune cylinder “souvenir” type of thing that my parents bought for me in Switzerland when I was four years old. I played with this a lot as a kid. The big “breakthrough” came when I was 10 and I heard my first player piano, and it seemed like the greatest thing I’d ever seen, much less heard! But it wasn’t until 1946 after returning from WWII service that I could have one of my own.

One other little piece of background: one day a small circus came to my hometown of Ithaca, New York, (this would have been around 1940) and they needed someone to play the calliope for the parade through town. They engaged one of my high school classmates, and Art Buckingham got to tootle what I guess was a Tanglely all through downtown Ithaca. Golly, was I envious! Since 1981, when we got our own Tanglely, we’ve played at lots of events and parades and I can only hope that I make a lot of youngsters envious enough to want to carry on the tradition.

Larry Givens gets the credit for inspiring us to build a collection of music machines. We saw what he had in the mid-fifties and figured we’d better try to accumulate some for ourselves. We



Harvey and Marion Roehl relaxing at a recent COAA rally. Harvey is well known for his manual playing of their Tanglely Calliope.

sought out all the enthusiasts we could learn about and visited many of them, read all the information we could dig up from a wide variety of sources, and did all the other things one does when the “bug” bites. We looked for machines and bought what we could afford. The first band organ was a WurliTzer 146A which over the years has been featured on a number of successful recordings.

Of course we had to get across the Atlantic to see fair organs, and our first visit there was with Mr. William Barlow who invited us to see and hear what he had in his English country home. What a thrill it was to hear not one, but five of them! It was a few years before we acquired one of our own. Dave Bow-

ers and Terry Hathaway were then dealing in machines in California, and one day Dave sent me a picture showing six that had just come in from Europe. He offered any one of them in exchange for our Welte Philharmonic Pipe Organ. We picked the 57-key Gavioli, and the Welte organ found its way through them to the Nethercutt collection. The Gavioli has been restored to nice condition and it, too, has been recorded for the public to enjoy if they can’t get to Vestal to listen in person!

Meet Your COAA Member

Each issue we will feature one of the COAA members who have provided familiar faces, organs and music for the many organ rallies of the past. This way, new and not-so-new COAA members can learn what others have contributed to the field of outdoor mechanical music.

Do you have a suggestion for someone you would like to see featured in this section? If so, contact the editor.

Correction!

Last issue’s “Meet Your COAA Member” column featured **Cliff and Roberta Gray** and the last sentence was cut off. Here it is in its complete form:

Since retiring and moving back to Texas — the little Piney Woods town of Jefferson — Cliff and Robbie have hosted a rally in Jefferson, and have attended most every rally they’ve heard about.

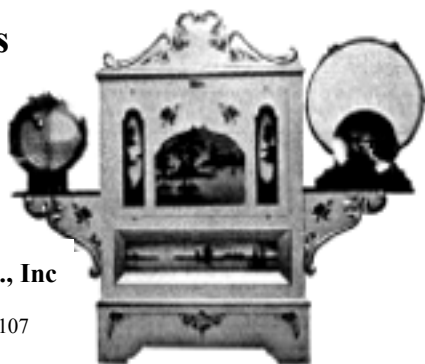
Future COAA Rally

The third COAA rally of the year will be in conjunction with the Snow Belt chapter of the MBSI. The rally will be at **Pioneer Power**, a steam and gas tractor show (going on for 26 years), in LeSueur county, Minnesota. We will play our organs on Saturday and Sunday, August 26th and 27th. Organizer, Ralph Schultz, has planned many additional activities. These include an open house/picnic at his house on Friday along with a tour of Albrecht’s carousel; a trip to view the Artizan organ on the Allan Herschell carousel at Valley Fair; and also a chance to see the newly restored Wurlitzer 153 on the Cafesjian’s carousel in Como Park in St. Paul. Of course, there is the famous Mall of America with its endless shopping facility (and a Stinson organ

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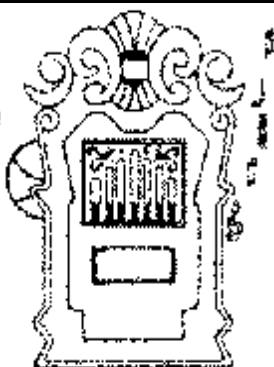
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Schedule of Rallies (2000)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Dates</u>
COAA <i>Emmett Kelly Clown Festival</i>	Houston, MO	Ron Bopp 918-786-4988	May 5 – 6, 2000
Southern California Band Organ Rally	Temecula, CA	Frank Nix 818-884-6849	Mid-May, 2000
Heart of America (AMICA) <i>Great American Midway</i>	Kinsley, KS	Tom Griffith 785-625-9677	May 19 – 21, 2000
Milestone Father's Day <i>Car Classic & Organ Rally</i>	Thousand Oaks, CA	Frank Nix 818-884-6849	June 18, 2000
COAA Dutch Village	Holland, MI	Terry Haughawout 419-454-3671	June 25 – 26, 2000
Mid-America (MBSI) Annual Band Organ Rally	Flint, MI	Sharon & Carl Curtis 734-428-0268	July 20 – 22, 2000
COAA/Snowbelt Chapter (MBSI)	LeSueur, MN	Ralph Schultz 612-873-6704	August 26 – 27, 2000
Heart of America (AMICA) <i>Old Threshers Reunion</i>	Mt. Pleasant, IA	Gary Craig 314-771-1244	September 1 – 3, 2000
Mid-America (MBSI) Monkey Organ Rally	Sandusky, OH	Bill & Marge Waters 330-334-1344	September 8 – 9, 2000
Fullerton Arborfest & Band Organ Rally	Fullerton, CA	Frank Nix 818-884-6849	Mid-October, 2000

Do You Have Something For The Carousel Organ?

All items (of interest to our readers) are welcome for inclusion in one of the forthcoming issues of the *Carousel Organ*. Please submit photos, articles, newspaper clippings, or what-have-you to the Editor (address above or by email: bopp@rectec.net). Questions? Phone: 918-786-4988.