



# Newsletter

## American Guild of Organists Utah Valley Chapter 2011-2012

*The purpose of the American Guild of Organists is to promote the organ in its historic and evolving roles, to encourage excellence in the performance of organ and choral music, and to provide a forum for mutual support, inspiration, education, and certification of Guild members.*

December, 2011

No. 4

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### **Dean's Message**

When I was young and would vocalize my Christmas wish list, I was often reminded that it was better to give than to receive. Though I'm sure my parents were just trying to help me think beyond my own childish self-centeredness, I sometimes thought I was being told that it was bad to receive. This idea was perpetuated throughout my adult life with the occasional misunderstanding of words such as *independent* and *self-sufficient*—bringing the message that to receive help or assistance was not good and was, in fact, an indication of my own lack of moral character.

The holidays bring many opportunities for giving. As musicians we may feel a particular need and desire to give of ourselves at this time since Christmas is so closely connected with music in our culture. I appreciate those who bring the Spirit of Christmas into my heart by sharing their musical gifts. We learn through the life of the One whose birth we celebrate that sharing our gifts with those around us is one way we can show our love for Him.

I have been taught that when we are serving our fellow beings we are serving our God. Generally this doctrine is discussed from the point of the giver. The take-home message is that giving is good. And it's true. Giving *is* good. There is much joy to be found in being generous and kind. But is it really better to give than to receive?

Let's look at that concept again—*when we are serving our fellow beings we are serving our God*. To me it means that when we are the one being served we stand as representatives of God. This suggests that we have the responsibility and opportunity to receive gifts from others in a similar way that He would receive them—with joy, acceptance, gratitude, and appreciation. He does not respond this way because the gift is perfect, but because His love is perfect.

Thank you for the service you give this season to those around you—to your family, friends, church congregations and community. This is a wonderful season of giving and receiving. My Christmas wish for you is that you may feel the joy of giving *and* receiving in your heart—this Season and always.

Merry Christmas!

Florence

## Upcoming Events

- Dec. 2 December Informal, Friday, 7:30 p.m., 1402 S. 570 W., Provo (directions follow on pg. 4)
- Dec. 5 Combined BYU Organ Master Class Recital, 5:00 p.m., Madsen Recital Hall, BYU
- Dec. 16 Lorelea Anderson Recital of Christmas Music – Organ and Harp, Thursday, 7:00 p.m., church at 1120 E. 600 N., Orem
- Dec. 18 Community Christmas Choir, under the direction of Douglas Bush, Sunday, 7:00 p.m., Provo Central Stake Center, 5<sup>th</sup> N. 12<sup>th</sup> W.
- Jan. 20 January Chapter Meeting – “The Organ: Acoustics & Architecture”/St. Mark’s Tour, Friday, 7:30 p.m., St. Mark’s Episcopal Cathedral, 231 E. 100 S., SLC
- Jan. 21 Faculty Recital – Alex Wood, Monte Belknap (violins), Geralyn Giovanetti (oboe), and Douglas Bush (keyboard), Saturday, 7:30 p.m., Madsen Recital Hall, BYU. Program will include music by Bach, Handel, Corelli
- Feb. February Chapter Meeting – “What Makes Romantic Music Romantic?”
- Feb. 15 Neil Thornock Faculty Organ Recital, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Madsen Recital Hall, BYU
- Mar. Bach Member Recital
- Apr. Super Saturday
- May May Chapter Meeting – “The American Organist”

**Editor’s note:** Neil Harmon and I became good friends starting back in the early 1990’s when he was finishing his bachelor in organ performance and pedagogy and I was working on prerequisites to start my masters in the same at BYU. We both studied with Richard Elliott, the almost two years he was at BYU as an Assistant Professor starting the group organ program, teaching organ classes, and giving private lessons, prior to his taking the slot as Salt Lake Tabernacle organist left open when Robert Cundick retired in 1991.

During the time Neil was working on Bach’s *Passacaglia* with Dr. Bush in preparation for his audition at Eastman, he also wrote a passacaglia for me based on my Uncle Harry Dean’s hymn tune *Lynn* (Hymn 162 “Lord, We Come before Thee Now”). Neil knew that Hymn 162 was my favorite of Uncle Harry’s (my mother’s uncle--her maiden name was Dean) three hymn tunes in the LDS Hymnal.

I was thrilled when an article about Neil showed up in last weekend’s *Church News*. Neil is one of the most talented and caring individuals I know, and we felt it very appropriate to include this article here as many of our newsletter readership know Neil. If you want to see the actual article online, the link is:

<http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/61737/Serving-Methodist-congregation-through-playing-the-organ-full-time.html>

## Serving Methodist congregation through playing the organ full time

By Laurie Williams Sowby, *Church News* contributor  
Published: Friday, Nov. 25, 2011

When he was a 12-year-old deacon in Midvale, Utah, Neil Harmon's piano teacher encouraged him to learn to play the

organ for priesthood meeting. Three decades later, he's still playing.

Every Sunday morning, as well as for special services, Brother Harmon is at the organ at Grace United Methodist Church in downtown Wilmington, Del., where he is employed full time. Besides providing organ solos, interludes and accompaniment for services, his weekly duties include conducting three hand bell choirs and a semi-professional choir.



Photo by Laurie Williams Sowby

Neil Harmon plays 3,000-pipe organ for sanctuary of Grace United Methodist Church in Wilmington, Del., for Sunday services. "I never imagined playing the organ as a profession, but I love it," said Brother Harmon. Surveying the organ's long pipes at the front of the church's sanctuary, he added, "I love all the colors you can get from it."

The coming holiday season is an especially busy time for church musicians. Christmas Eve five years ago stands out in the Harmon family's memory. Anese Harmon was pregnant with the couple's fifth child but managed to play the harp in the fourth of five Christmas Eve services, accompanied by her husband on the organ. They made it through the duet, but just barely. Brother Harmon had to enlist the aid of a substitute organist for the midnight service as he rushed his wife to the hospital. A daughter was born a few hours later, on Christmas Day.

Taking first place in a Utah State Fair competition when he was a senior in high school opened the door to organ studies at Utah State University, where he attended his freshman year. After serving in the Brazil Sao Paulo Mission, he was offered a music scholarship at BYU. He studied organ with Parley Belnap and Tabernacle organist Richard Elliott and was assistant director of the BYU Men's Chorus under Mack Wilberg.

He decided to pursue a doctorate at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., where he met his wife-to-be. He planned to teach, but a lack of teaching jobs and a surprising offer from a Methodist church in Delaware led him in a different direction with his music. "It seemed like a good fit," he said of taking the full-time position with Grace United Methodist Church in 1999. "Protestant churches value music highly. I love organ music, and I love choir music."

He works with Pastor Anne Pruett-Barnett to select themes for each week's services. "I select a Biblical text," she explained, "and he plans his music around those themes so that it interfaces with the worship liturgy." The music plays a

critical role, she said, as it makes up 40 to 60 percent of a worship celebration.

Pastor Pruett-Barnett calls Brother Harmon "a gifted and talented church musician and a humble man of faith" whose "ability to select music thematically enriches the worship experience and offers persons a way to connect more intimately with God." In coordinating music to fit the theme chosen for the week, Brother Harmon often ends up arranging bell choir and choral music. Many of his solo organ arrangements have been published. His "Jig in A Minor" was written to commemorate the retirement of John Longhurst, organist for the Tabernacle Choir for 30 years.

In addition to working as music director and organist five full days a week, he also serves as choir director in his ward and music chairman for the Wilmington Delaware Stake. He is over a combined choir and orchestra concert during Christmastime — a challenge in a stake with broad boundaries and long travel, he notes. The Harmon's open their Wilmington home for ward choir rehearsals. During his 12 years at Grace United Methodist Church, Brother Harmon has been able to attend all three hours of whichever ward meets in the afternoon in the LDS meetinghouse in Wilmington.

BYU and Eastman School of music graduate Neil Harmon has been full-time music director and organist at Grace Methodist since 1999. He views his work as a way of breaking down religious barriers and building bridges. He has been invited to make hospital visits with the pastor and lead the weekday Bible study class, pray with the church staff and go with them on humanitarian mission trips to Mississippi and Tennessee. He said his LDS priesthood leaders have also been supportive of him and his family.

Brother Harmon, who has served two terms as dean of the Delaware Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and served as the worship and music chair of the American Choral Directors Association, was invited to perform a recital on the newly renovated 10,000-pipe Aeolian organ at Longwood Gardens near Kennet Square, PA, (about 30 miles west of Philadelphia) in its November concert series. His goal consisted of playing the organ transcriptions of well-known works from memory.

"It's exhilarating when it all comes together," he said. "I don't want to stop playing."

### ***The Organ, an Encyclopedia***

Douglas E. Bush, Editor

Richard Kassel, Associate Editor

(Following are two short articles from the "L" section.)

#### **Leather**

Leather comes from the hide (occasionally other parts) of sheep, goat, cabretta (a hybrid of sheep and goat), lamb, deer, elk, cow, and kangaroo; suede and gut are also used. Tanned (aged) animal hide has served many purposes in organ building for well over a millennium. Leather acts to seal connections so they will be airtight, and to protect parts from damage. The surfaces to which the leather attaches have to be sanded, sized with fish glue or other adhesive, or otherwise prepared for a successful fixing. There are two thicknesses of leather divided among three categories: heavy, fixed leather for connections between larger valves; heavy, flexible leather for bellows, larger electro-pneumatic pouches, and other flexible joints; and thin, flexible leather for use in small electro-pneumatic motor pouches. The thin

leathers are subject to faster wear; silicone coating increases their longevity. Felt is sometimes added to thin leathers.

Organ builders need materials that can withstand thousands of bellows blows, key and pedal movements, slider and tracker actions, pallet ups and downs, pneumatic air transmissions, and other repetitive motions. Most builders will have nothing to do with plastics, although such products exist; the materials are in their experience not durable enough. Longevity is also a concern for the owner of an instrument; builders' expectations are that leathering should last at least twenty years in polluted urban areas, and perhaps up to fifty years in suburban and rural areas. Besides poor air quality, excessive heat and cold and rapid temperature changes will hasten the deterioration of the material.

The premature failure of leathering, or the necessary reupholstering as part of restoration after decades of neglect, can prove both expensive and demanding. Depending on the instrument, one may have to remove old leather from and put in new leather for reservoirs, bellows, schwimmers, and other regulators, electro-pneumatic motor pouches that open pipes or initiate other actions (e.g., combination action, swell shade, pallet box purse), tremulants, or relay and console switches.

--Richard Kassel

#### **Long Compass**

The standard compass in English and Anglo-American keyboards from the late seventeenth through the early nineteenth centuries, which descended to GGG (=modern GG) except in the smallest chamber organs; also known as long octaves. Continental organs, like modern ones, usually had keyboards extending down to CC (C; etc.) with a short octave in the bass until the eighteenth century. In rare instances the long compass descended a whole step lower, to FFF; the GGG# (or FFF#) was usually missing. This unique compass may have been meant to compensate for the lack of pedal keys in most English organs before the early nineteenth century, or possibly due to the influence of the harpsichord. Another possibility is that it was somehow connected with the conversion from the old 12' "C" (modern g) to the newer 8' "C" (c') during the Restoration. Growing Continental influence brought an end to the practice in England during the 1830s and '40s, although long compass organs continued to be built in some parts of the United States, notably the Boston area, until 1850. Organ voluntaries whose compass descends below CC are not uncommon in the literature of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; on modern instruments the notes below CC can usually be played on the pedal.

--Barbara Owen

#### **Blaine Olsen working with youth in his stake**

Submitted by Florence Hawkinson

Blaine Olson has been conducting several organ workshops for youth in his stake. Our Pedal, Pipes, and Pizza event in September was one of their kick-off events. He is inviting chapter members to meet his students at the last two events of his workshop.

The December 3<sup>rd</sup> event is at 4:00 p.m. in the same chapel as was the recital and Don Cook Recognition Evening in October. These young students will be exploring the Wicks organ. The December 10<sup>th</sup> event, held at 9:00 a.m., needs a venue (contact Blaine if you have one to suggest). Technically, it is an "organ exploration experience," but the younger ones like to call it a "recital." I would encourage anyone who is able to attend to show support and encouragement to these young organists who have worked so hard the past

several months. Any questions, contact Blaine Olson at [PipeOrganGuy@bmi.net](mailto:PipeOrganGuy@bmi.net).

### December Informal

The December Informal will be held at 1402 S. 570 W., Provo, this Friday evening, December 2nd, at 7:30 p.m. and will be hosted by Miranda Wilcox, our Chapter Secretary. The organ is a Rodgers, the same model as the ones in the BYU Organ Lab.

**Directions:** Travel west on 920 S under I-15. Turn left on Frontage Road. Turn right on 680 W. Turn left on 1340 S. and follow the curve onto 560 W. Please enter through the north doors.

### Report on November Chapter Meeting By David Chamberlin

On November 8th about twenty of us met in a chapel in Orem and listened to Dr. Rulon Christiansen share memories of his studies with Alexander Schreiner and J. J. Keeler. There was no shortage of interesting insights and humorous anecdotes. As a continuation of their legacy as Utah "organ pioneers," Dr. Christiansen ended by playing some of his own compositions. The meeting was interesting, insightful, educational, and enjoyable.

### Organ for Sale

Carol Gwynn, SL Chapter member, has a Rodgers Model 740 organ in perfect condition for sale. There is not a scratch on the organ; she is simply downsizing to a smaller instrument.  
AGO pedalboard  
External speakers and music storage bench included  
Must see! Perfect for a home or small church. Currently stored in South Jordan, UT, an easy drive from Utah County  
\$3,000

Contact Carol Gwynn at 801-487-8839 or email: [cqwynn1210@gmail.com](mailto:cqwynn1210@gmail.com)

### Reed organ needs a home

A couple in Ruth Eldredge's ward has an antique reed organ which belongs to their son who is on a mission. They would like it used, as well as cared for, for a couple of years. It has one full manual, no pedal board. It measures about 44" x 23". If interested, contact Ruth at [ruth.eldredge@gmail.com](mailto:ruth.eldredge@gmail.com).

### House and Organ for Sale

Kelvin Smith <[kelvins@dcdi.net](mailto:kelvins@dcdi.net)> is considering selling his house and pipe organ. The organ has about 36 ranks playing (and at least that many more in storage) on a 4-manual draw knob console, and is in a room 50 feet long, 20 feet wide and 30 feet tall. It is located in the beautiful Bear Lake Valley at 6,000 feet in the mountains of Idaho. The Bear Lake area is a recreational resort area, but it is rural with a small population. The price is \$600,000. You can see specs, pictures and hear mp3 files at: <http://music.untraveledroad.com/Residence/Organ.htm>.

### Recipe of the Month Submitted by Sheri Peterson

#### Sausage Stuffing

1 lb . sausage  
1/2 cup butter  
4 large celery stalks, diced  
1/2 cup onion, diced  
12 cups white bread cubes (about 24 slices)  
3 eggs  
1/2 cup milk  
1/2 cup minced parsley (1/4 c. if using dehydrated)  
1 1/2 tsp. rosemary  
1/2 tsp. pepper  
1 tsp sage  
1/2 tsp. salt  
(May need to add 1/2 cup to 1 cup water depending on your preferences.)  
In a large skillet, brown sausage over medium heat, stirring frequently to break it up. With slotted spoon, remove sausage to bowl. To drippings in skillet, add butter, celery, and onion, and cook until tender, stirring occasionally. Remove skillet from heat; add cooked sausage, bread cubes, eggs, milk, parsley, rosemary, salt and pepper; toss to mix well. Spoon stuffing into a 9" x 13" baking dish; cover with foil and bake in a preheated 325 degree oven 45 minutes or until heated through. (Can also be used to stuff a 12-16 pound turkey.)

#### Important Websites:

David Chamberlin's music  
[www.chamberlinmusic.com](http://www.chamberlinmusic.com)

Free music for the LDS organist:  
[www.ldsorganist.org](http://www.ldsorganist.org)

Resources for LDS organist  
[www.ldsorganists.info](http://www.ldsorganists.info)

Source of music for the LDS organist:  
[www.wardorganist.com](http://www.wardorganist.com)

Utah Valley Chapter AGO website:  
[www.uvago.org](http://www.uvago.org)

BYU organ information  
(including off-campus programs):  
[www.organ.byu.edu](http://www.organ.byu.edu)

Salt Lake Chapter AGO website:  
[www.slicago.org](http://www.slicago.org)

Region IX Blog address:  
[www.agoregion9blog.blogspot.com](http://www.agoregion9blog.blogspot.com)

National AGO website:  
[www.agohq.org](http://www.agohq.org)