

THE SESQUIALTERA

WINTER 2009

JANUARY 23, 2009

FEATURED ORGANIST: DR. ROBERT EBERT



Robert R. Ebert is Professor of Economics and holder of the Buckhorn Endowed-Chair in Economics at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio where he has taught since 1967 and where his professional interests include the economics of the automotive and pipe organ industries. A graduate of Baldwin-Wallace College, he studied organ there during his high school and college years.

What inspired you to want to become an organist? Who was your first teacher?

West Park UCC is 100% responsible for my interest in the organ. I became enamored with the old Vottler-Holtkamp-Sparling pipe organ that was in the old sanctuary prior to its being torn down in the mid 1950s.

Helen Sullivan, then organist at West Park, cultivated my interest by talking to me and showing me some things about the organ. As a result, I began piano lessons with the express purpose of developing enough skill at the piano to eventually study the organ.

How are you involved in the greater music community?

In the past, I have been a board member of the Cleveland Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and at present I am Secretary of the Lorain Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Although I officially “retired” from being a regular church organist at the end of 2005, I

continue to substitute at churches in the Lorain County and western Cuyahoga County area. I continue to be involved in music as a choir member and director of the handbell choir at our church, St. Paul UCC in Elyria. Also, I serve as an economic consultant to the Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America and the American Institute of Organ-builders.

Who is your favorite organ composer and/or work?

It is difficult to say who my single most favorite composer is – it is a “tie” between J.S. Bach and Cesar Franck. Surprisingly, though, my favorite organ work is by neither of them – it is the Widor Toccata from the 5th Symphony.

What is your fondest memory as you look back on your years of service?

In having served four churches as their organist and choir director, it is difficult to not ramble on for pages

about all the wonderful memories. From 1961 to 1967, I was organist and choir director at Olivet Baptist Church at W. 52 St and Bridge Avenue. At Olivet I was able to really put my musical training to use as we performed major works such as the Faure Requiem. However, the most memorable thing from my days at Olivet is that it was there that I met my wife Marcia.

What advice do you have for young organists as they begin their careers?

The most important thing for any organist who serves a church to remember is that his or her primary responsibility is to lead the congregation’s worship of Almighty God through music. In that regard, while it is fun and important to play the works of J.S. Bach, Franck, Widor, Brahms, and others, it remains that the most important thing an organist will do in a church service is to lead the congregation in singing the hymns in a vibrant, enthusiastic, and worshipful manner. †

EVENTS

- Solid State Workshop at the Leek Pipe Organ Company. Learn tips and tricks from Mark Gilliam, Representative of Solid State Organ Systems. Mark will speak on the company’s latest product line and answer any questions you ever had about the “brains” of your pipe organ. Monday, April 20, 2009 @ 2:00pm.
- James D. Clouser in Recital. Sunday, February 8, 2009 @ 2:00pm. Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church. 2013 Seymour Avenue—Cleveland, OH. Free and open to the public.

Please submit your event and concert listings to jpleek@att.net.

LEEK XMAS OPEN HOUSE A SUCCESS

On December 23, 2007 the Leek Pipe Organ Company hosted a *Staff and Friends Christmas Party*.

In addition to holiday treats, guests heard a short recital by staff organist Jim Clouser on the recently acquired Laukhuff pipe organ.

Five raffle prizes were awarded, including a complimentary tuning for Pat Dillon of Ascension Luthern Church in North Olmsted.

Thanks to all who came!

PROVIDING PROPER HEATING OR COOLING FOR TUNING

As an organist, pastor, or church staff member you're probably familiar with the request to have the heat or air conditioning on for your tuner. What this means, however, isn't always completely understood. The following are tips for providing the best environmental conditions for seasonal tuning:

- ◆ Keep it at the right Temperature

A good rule of thumb is: if

you aren't comfortable in the room, neither is the organ.

Temperature for tuning should always equal the temperature used for Worship.

- ◆ 12 Hour Rule

Allow the organ to settle into the heated or cooled (at peak temperature) environment for 12-24 hours prior to tuning. This allows every pipe enough time to settle into pitch at the operating temperature.

- ◆ When in Doubt, Keep COOL

If the tuner is scheduled to arrive in 1/2 hour and the heat hasn't been turned on, keep it off. The rise of temperature during tuning will cause the pitch of the organ to continually change, making correct tuning impossible.

Practicing these tips will help ensure that you receive the best tuning possible. †

PIPE MYTHS AND ELECTRONIC FABLES



by Jim Clouser

One sales tactic of electronic organ dealers is to show that their product is "just like a pipe organ." In a depressed economy, buyers are concerned with the bottom line and assume that the cost of any pipe organ would be financially crippling for their modest congregation. Yet, it is a fact that of the smallest and least resourced congregations, authentic pipe organs have been obtained and/or maintained. In doing so, even with limited means, they have preserved a piece of their common history and have left a treasure for the next generation. With this in mind, consider the following points:

If your church already owns a pipe organ, consider restoration as an alternative to replacement. In restoration, all components of the instrument are brought back to a condition of newness that ensures perfectly reliable operation. The restoration of a pipe organ is a team achievement, involving: craftsmen, musicians, and church members alike. It is well attested that the celebration of this achievement has the ability to foster a greater sense of community.

If you don't already own a pipe organ: many older instruments are being sold in order to make way for new commissions. These treasures cost a fraction of that for a new instrument.

Electronics may be able to reproduce the sounds (however mediocre) of a pipe organ, but they cannot repro-

duce the experience of one. The frills and newness of technological innovation eventually give way to a want for greater depth and beauty "in the details" of tone and acoustical collaboration.

The feel of fine ebony on the manuals, the authentic chuff of a Rohr Flute, and the feeling of resolution you get once the organ has been tuned for Christmas —such is why Mozart called the pipe organ the "King of Instruments." †

Jim Clouser is an Assistant to the Organbuilder and staff organist at the Leek Pipe Organ Company.

"...OF THE SMALLEST AND LEAST RESOURCED CONGREGATIONS, AUTHENTIC PIPE ORGANS HAVE BEEN OBTAINED AND/OR MAINTAINED."

ST. MARY AND ST. STEPHEN PROJECTS UNDERWAY

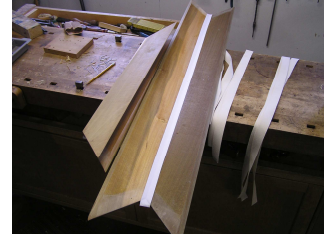
This month, two churches—St. Mary Catholic Church in Elyria and St. Stephen Catholic Church in Toledo—will begin the new year with a renewed instrument. For St. Mary, this means new slider seals and cleaning/repair of pipe work for their late 19th century Johnson and Sons pipe organ. This organ is currently being considered for feature in the upcoming Organ Historical Society national convention. Director

of Music Mike Moore has worked hard and diligently with fundraisers over the past year to see through the needed work and keep a piece of Elyria history alive.

At St. Stephen, the re-leathering of two large bellows and a swell expression machine is in order. The photo to the right shows a recently completed rib for the first bellows, alongside freshly cut belts of leather.

We will be working alongside contractors in an effort by the church to maintain and preserve the building and grounds of the church. In addition to interior upkeep, they will repaint the case work of the organ. †

Please see our website for upcoming photos and sound bytes of these and more projects.



Bellows rib re-leathered.

What's on your mind?

Do you have a question about Organbuilding?

Want to respond to a recent article?

Send us a "Staff Memo" at jpleek@att.net

Entries will be chosen and published quarterly. Please indicate whether or not your material requires a response in publication.



JAMES P. LEEK, PRESIDENT &
ORGANBUILDER
14477 STATE ROUTE 58

We expect the readership of this publication to include clergy, pastoral musicians, and pipe organ enthusiasts.

As a firm committed to community awareness, we are pleased to publish organ-related information related to our customers' churches, including position openings, concert events, etc.

To send comments or announcements, or to unsubscribe visit our website and click on the contact button.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.LEEKPIPEORGANS.COM



«First Name» «Last Name»

«Company Name»

«Address Line 1»

«City», «State» «ZIP Code»

The Leek Pipe Organ Company is a full-service provider, combining the latest technology with old-world craftsmanship. We look forward to serving all of your pipe organ needs.



THE SESQUIALTERA

The Leek Pipe Organ Company Quarterly

Preserving our Musical and Spiritual Heritage
Craftsmanship ~ Technology