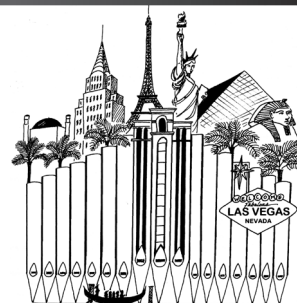


# THE DESERT WIND

Editor: Bruce Behnke © 2007

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Southern Nevada Chapter  
American Guild of Organists

## Dean's Notes

Dear Colleagues,

It is hard to believe that 2007 is about to become just a memory. At this time every year we can look back and rejoice over accomplishments, and we make resolutions to improve on things not so successful.

I feel that our rejoicing can go back to January of 2006 when we did ourselves proud in hosting our very successful Conclave. This energized us to move forward to become a more active chapter.

During 2007 some real strides were made as we continued our outreach to bring the pipe organ to an ever larger audience: our chapter's continued sponsorship of the award-winning Pipe-dreams heard every Sunday evening from 8:00 to 9:30 P.M. on KCNV – 89.7 FM, presentations to students in Clark County School classes to introduce them to the organ, our sessions for

piano students in our “Organ-izing from the Piano” workshops, and presentation of our Organ Recital Series at Doc Rando Hall. This season each visiting artist is being presented on Saturday mornings in workshops following their recitals, giving members and interested others from the community the opportunity to increase and enhance their understanding of the vast body of organ literature.

The next events in 2008 provide more opportunities for increased knowledge and enjoyment of the repertoire and the organ itself: John Karl Hirten, a splendid organist from the San Francisco area, will begin the year with an exciting recital on Friday, January 18, 2008 at 7:30 P.M. You won't want to miss it. His Saturday morning workshop the following day will present some of his own published compositions and we will also explore new compositions for the organ written by local people with

discussion of the topic “Composing for the Organ.” More opportunities for growth will be provided at the Tucson Mid-Winter “Pipes in the Desert.” January 20-24. Have YOU made your reservation to attend? On February 21 and 22, Dr. Francis Nobert will present a recital and workshop featuring organ compositions by women. The recital series will close April 11 and 12 with a recital and workshop by the Watanabe Organ Duo. The final event of the season will be a trip to Salt Lake City for a full schedule of activities and events. All of these programs should help expand our horizons.

We do need to look ahead in this New Year to resolve to conquer some challenges we face: 1) How to increase our audience attendance numbers by devising different and creative ways to advertise; 2) Seeking ways to encourage the University to develop a larger audience base and helping to sponsor organ events, 3) Raising awareness by the city's movers and shakers to include a pipe  
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# JOHN KARL HIRTEN RECITAL AND WORKSHOP

January 18 & 19, 2008



Mark your calendars and start January out by attending the John Karl Hirten recital and workshop January 18 and 19. These are two events you will most DEFINITELY not want to miss!

John Karl Hirten is a well-known performer in the San Francisco Bay area, regularly performing in such venues as Grace Cathedral, St. Mary's Cathedral, St. Mark's church – Berkeley, and the National Shrine of St. Francis. He has been staff organist at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, playing monthly recitals on the museum's E. M. Skinner organ, and has also appeared with the San Francisco Symphony, the Oakland-East Bay Symphony, the Oakland Ballet, the Berkeley Symphony, and American Bach Soloists, among others. A published composer, his music is featured on various recordings by choirs and performers around the country. He was one of three finalists in the 2006

National Improvisation Competition held in Chicago.

The recital on Friday evening at 7:30 P.M. in Doc Rando Recital Hall in the Beam Music Center on the UNLV campus has something for everyone. Opening with the Bach G Minor Prelude and Fugue (BWV 535), the program includes a transcription of a 3-movement lute concerto by Vivaldi, "Pastorale" by Dieter Schottelius (born 1922, a mostly unknown composer to organists), the César Franck "Pastorale," one of his own compositions "Carillon" by John Karl Hirten, "Andante sostenute" from *Symphonie Gothique* by Widor, "Weeping Willow" by Scott Joplin, a short improvisation on a theme created by the audience (should be fun!), and closing with the well-known pot boiler, "Carillon de Westminster" by Vierne. Some of you have heard John Karl perform in Doc Rando in January of 2006 when he was one of the performers featured in our Pipedreams Live presentations. His performance of a difficult Mozart transcription made us who planned the Recital Series want to hear more and so invited him to appear on our series.

Saturday's morning workshop (Doc Rando, on stage, from 10:00 A.M. to noon) promises to be a first for our chapter in workshops presented. At John Karl's suggestion, the workshop will address the topic of "Composing for the Organ" and will present a number of world premiere performances of new unpublished organ compositions written by Las Vegans! We don't know how many new compositions there will be, but at the time of this writing we already have in hand completed works by Brian Babcock (former UNLV composition masters degree student who has written a new piece for the occasion---it will be performed by Doris Francis), Laurie Swain (one of our chapter members), Carlos Carrasco (current UNLV composition student), Bruce Behnke (another of our chapter members) and Don Hannah (husband of chapter member Margaret Hannah). There may still be more works added to this list. You won't want to miss this event!

Please help advertise this recital and workshop. Send an e-mail to your circle of friends encouraging them to come. Our Advent – Christmas Recital December 2 was evidence of the effectiveness of word of mouth advertising. We had 135 people in attendance! There is still room for improvement—the hall seats 300! To quote a well-known source: "Go out into the highways and byways, and compel them to come in!" Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could fill the hall to capacity for our organ recitals?

## Members Advent Christmas Recital, December 2, 2007



Recital participants from L to R. Paul Hesselink, Dorothy Young Riess, Doris Francis, Bede Parry, Cherrill Hoeft, Douglas Wilson, Allison Stewart, Alice Hohenthauer and Bruce Behnke  
Photo by Dorothy Young Riess

### SOME RESULTS FROM THE ADVENT CHRISTMAS RECITAL QUESTIONNAIRE

One of the requirements coming with a grant from the Nevada Arts Council is the need to have some system of evaluation to report at the end of the grant project. In support of that objective, we will be asking for audience evaluation through questionnaires for each of the recitals and workshops presented on our Organ Recital Series.

While there is still additional work to fully benefit from our first such attempt, here are some preliminary results:

- Number of questionnaires completed: 81
- Number attending an AGO Recital for the first time: 43
- Number hearing the organ for the first time: 36
- Almost every work performed on the program was someone's "favorite"
- Rating of the event:
  - Of the "first timers:"
    - Superb: 16 (37%)
    - Excellent 25 (58%)
    - Average 2 ( 5%)
    - No one checked "fair" or "poor" categories

*(Continued on page 4)*



*Survey results continued from page 3*

Of those for whom this was not their first AGO Recital

Superb 21 (58%)

Excellent 14 (39%)

Average 1 (3%)

No one checked “fair” or “poor categories

Two respondents did not check any category

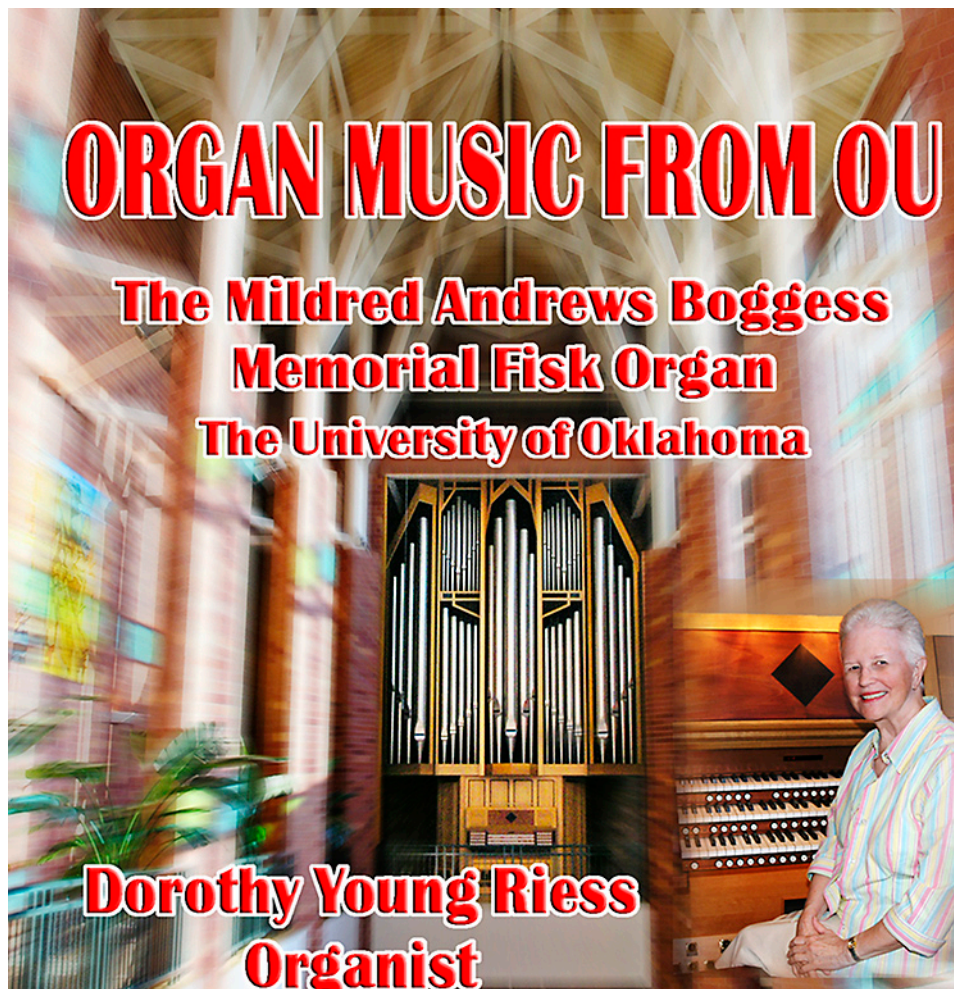
All respondents:

Superb (47%)

Excellent (49%)

Average ( 4%)

A 96% total for all replies rating the program as either “superb” or “excellent” is really quite phenomenal. Sometimes when you ask for feedback, you get some puzzling responses like “there needed to be a microphone” (there was one), and one person complained about the odor in Doc Rando (totally beyond our control—the problem has now been solved---and contrary to rumor, it was NOT a rat, mouse or some other critter



Dr. Dorothy Young Riess recently released “Organ Music from OU” recorded at the University of Oklahoma in May 2005. This is a reissue of “Organ Masters Series Volume 5” released Dec 2006. The program is the same as the recital she played at All Saints Episcopal here in Las Vegas in June 2005 with music by Gabrieli, Buxtehude, Bach, Saint Saëns, Dupré and Janca. The organ is by C.B. Fisk, Opus 111 (III/38/1999) and is the Memorial Organ to Dorothy’s teacher, Mildred Andrews. Copies of the CD are available from Dorothy personally or CD BABY at <http://cdbaby.com/all/raecd>. Check out Dorothy’s other CDs at her web site [www.jdotpro.com](http://www.jdotpro.com).

# TWELFTH NIGHT HANDBELL FESTIVAL

The Sixteenth Annual Las Vegas Twelfth Night Handbell Festival will be presented on Sunday, January 13, 2008, at 4:00 PM. It will be held again at the Faith Lutheran Senior High School Gymnasium, on 2015 Hualapai Way between Charleston and Sahara. At this writing, there are 140 ringers registered. Admission to the concert is free. There will be a freewill offering for the support of the festival.

This Las Vegas Twelfth Night Handbell Festival was begun by Janet Ty when she moved to Nevada. She has been the driving force behind the festival since its inception, and she is now assisted by others who have wanted to be a part of organizing this annual event. The festival has become a Las Vegas holiday tradition.

The festival features handbell ringers and directors from choirs in Las Vegas, and has also attracted participating ensembles from Utah, northern Nevada and California. The clinicians over the years have featured some of the most active clinicians and composers of the handbell world. Every other year, a new work for handbells has been commissioned for presentation in world premieres at the festival. The 2006 festival was a pre-convention event for the Midwinter Conclave of Region IX's convention here in Las Vegas.

The handbell clinician this year is Michael Joy from Philadelphia, PA. He has been directing handbell choirs in churches since 1978 and in schools since 1983. He studied handbells with Donald Allured and handbell composition with Arnold Sherman. Michael is currently the middle school music teacher at The Shipley School in Bryn Mawr, PA where he conducts 15 different handbell groups. For the last 31 years he has also been the Music Director at First Presbyterian Church in Ambler, PA.



Mr. Joy is a published composer and has taught at American Guild of English Handbell Ringers (AGEHR) Area II and III festivals, Pennsylvania Music Educators Association district and state conferences, Handbell Exploration and the AGEHR National Seminar. He was named Composer of the Year in 2004 by Jeffers Publishing Company for his composition Dorian Dance. Michael served two terms as the Secretary for AGEHR Area II. He is also a ringer and Composer-In-Residence for the Philadelphia Handbell Ensemble.

You won't want to miss this very special and joyous event.

*Dean's message continued from page 1*

organ in the proposed "state of the art" Smith Performing Arts Center.

We must not let the light of our glorious repertoire to be hidden under the bushel of apathy and ignorance. We need to continue to work together to continue our outreach to even greater numbers of people of all ages in the community. I look forward to this New Year, beginning anew with you this important work.

Respectfully,  
Shireen

# UNLV ORGAN DEMONSTRATED TO NEVADA BOARD OF REGENTS

by Paul S. Hesselink

On Thursday afternoon, November 29 members of the Nevada Board of Regents were introduced to the Maurine Jackson Smith Memorial Organ in Doc Rando Hall. A group of 35 invited guests, Regents and others from the Nevada higher education community, were met by me for a short program and informative session.

The wheels were set in motion for this event when I gave two copies of the August issue of the Diapason to Regent Michael Wixom. That issue of the magazine featured a new photo of the organ (taken by chapter member Dorothy Riess) on the cover of the magazine, with an article and more photos on a two-page spread inside the issue. It was my intent to have the two copies passed around at the next Regent's meeting so at least they would be aware of the organ's existence on campus. Mr. Wixom and his wife Heidi have been long-time acquaintances through my association with Nevada School of the Arts where over the years their six daughters have been involved in NSA programs. Michael and Heidi are also both members of the Desert Chorale and so had first-hand knowledge of the magnificence of the organ through programs presented in Doc Rando Hall. It was Mr. Wixom, Chair of the Board of Regents, who eventually asked whether I could do a short demonstration of the organ for the Regents at their November meeting.

Because I believe the organ speaks very well on its own behalf, I wanted to play more than to talk. I prepared a program with notes and tips on what to listen for in each composition (works by Bach---yes! The well-known Toccata in D Minor, Couperin, Pinkham, Lindberg and Held were presented) and I also developed a two-page fact sheet "About the Organ." They were also given our schedule of organ recitals in Doc Rando for the rest of the season, and the list of donors with an invitation to become a Patron. Dean Jeff Koep had reproduced copies of the two-page article in the magazine which he handed to each of the thirteen Regents. After the presentation, those attending were invited to come on stage for a closer inspection of the organ console and where I answered any questions they had.

There were some definite benefits that I know about. One person coming through the door and seeing the organ for the first time exclaimed, "Oh my God, I had no idea!" When receiving the handouts, one Regent said he had a friend who had already been to an organ performance and just wouldn't stop talking about it; his friend would be very happy to get the information. One of the Regents identified himself as a personal friend of Maurine's and when I asked him what he thought she might say about the organ, his response was, "She would be so proud!" Another Regent asked, "How do you manage all those keyboards, the pedals and all the buttons you have to push?" I assured her that we have to work at it. One of those attending came with his wife to the Advent-Christmas Program four days later and also became a Series Patron. Other questions had to do with where were all the other pipes of the 2,802 mentioned---the person thought that what they saw was what there was. To a question about how long the organ might last, I responded with "as long as the building stands," and added that an organ in Switzerland was still playing after 650 years. His response was, "You have to be kidding me!"

All in all, I felt the event had just the right balance of formality and informality. Those attending were appreciative, and Michael Wixom was effusive in his thanks. We all have to continue to promote our cause, and I was grateful to have had this opportunity.

## FUTURE RECITALS AND WORKSHOPS IN 2008

February 22, 2008 (Friday Recital) 7:30 p.m.  
February 23, 2008 (Saturday workshop) 10:00 a.m.  
“Music She Wrote: Organ Compositions by Women”  
Dr. Frances Nobert, organist

Frances Nobert is Professor Emerita of Music and College Organist at Whittier College. She is also serving as Region IX Councillor of the American Guild of Organists. Dr. Nobert earned the degrees Bachelor of Music from Salem College, Master of Music from Syracuse University and Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Southern California. As a recipient of a Fulbright Grant, she studied organ, harpsichord and piano in Germany. Her organ teachers have included John Mueller, Helmut Walcha and Arthur Poister. She has performed for conventions of the American Guild of Organists and the Organ Historical Society, as well as for national and international festivals and conferences related to the position of women in the music profession. She has appeared as recitalist in many American cities and in China, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Korea and Spain. Dr. Nobert may be heard on Organ Historical Society’s recordings of the Organs of Maine and on the Raven-label release of Music, She Wrote: Organ Compositions by Women.

April 11, 2008 (Friday Recital) 7:30 p.m.  
April 12, 2008 (Saturday workshop) 10:00 a.m.  
Watanabe Organ Duo, organists  
Workshop: The Organ Literature for Four Hands and Four Feet

Kiyo and Chiemi Watanabe, an exciting young husband and wife duo-organ team, hold separate organ positions in two churches in Wichita Falls, Kansas. Natives of Japan, they have studied and settled in the U.S. Their teachers have included McNeil Robinson, Joyce Jones, John Weaver and others, and they have earned degrees in organ from Manhattan School of Music and Baylor University. They have presented concerts throughout the United States, Mexico and Japan.

## BECOME A PATRON FOR THE 2007-2008 ORGAN RECITAL SERIES

It isn’t too late to add your name to the list of recital Patrons for the current season.

Your gift will help maintain this series as “open to the public without charge.” Choose as “loud” or as “soft” a category below as is comfortable for you. You will be listed in all subsequent recital programs in the series.

***ff – fortissimo***  
\$250 and above

***f – forte***  
\$200 to \$249

***mf – mezzo forte***  
\$150 to \$199

***p – piano***  
\$50 to \$99

***pp – pianissimo***  
\$25 to \$49

We are pleased to welcome and recognize as new Patrons: Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence P. Rudd, Krista Weber and Bryan Swiney

Donations are tax-deductible, and checks made to “Southern Nevada Chapter AGO” may be sent to Dr. David Dorway, Treasurer – 10613 Shoalhaven Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89134



## CHAPTER MEMBER NEWS



**ALICE HOHENTHANER** has completed a 17-year tenure as organist at Christ Church Episcopal. Her last Sunday as organist at the church was November 18. She chose an auspicious time to retire since that Sunday was the official celebration of the 100th anniversary of the church. Dignitaries at the occasion included both the newly elected Bishop of Nevada and the immediate past Bishop of Nevada who is currently the National Bishop of the Episcopal Church. In her retirement, Alice hopes to be active in the organ world, continuing to study and to “spend my practice time on things I want to learn and play.” Also, she will this Christmas season for the first time in many years spend the holidays with her family and friends in her native South Dakota. We add our best wishes as Alice hopes for more “time” to do other things.

Chaplain of the Southern Nevada Chapter, member **BEDE PARRY** played an organ recital at All Saints Episcopal Church where he serves as Director of Music, Organist and Associate Priest on November 18 after Evensong. His program included works by Mendelssohn, Buxtehude, Bach, Sowerby, Purvis and Alain. A week later he performed the program at St. Luke’s Church in Evanston, Illinois.

On November 18, Dr. **PAUL HESSELINK**, was honored to present, with Maxine Brechbiel, a recital in tribute to their former teacher Wilbur Held at Trinity United Methodist Church, Pomona. The program was comprised of all Wilbur Held compositions. Paul’s half of the program included the “Partita on ‘O God, Thou Faithful God,’” “Flourish,” “Six Settings of Hymns on 23rd Psalm Texts,” and his 2004 setting of the hymn-tune, Engelberg, “When in Our Music, God is Glorified”. The recital was organized by Maxine, the organist of Trinity Church in Pomona.

On November 1, chapter members who are also organ students at UNLV, joined in presenting a recital which observed the 300th anniversary of the death of Dietrich Buxtehude. Members participating were **ALICE HOEHNTANER, LAURIE SWAIN, DORIS FRANCIS, BARBARA FINN, NANCY WEST, CHERRIE HOEFT** and **CARLA SWIFT**. Commentary about the life and works of Buxtehude was presented by Paul Hesselink. Nine of Buxtehude’s “free works” and four of the chorale prelude settings were performed in what turned out to be a marathon of an hour and forty-five minutes! No one complained afterward, and each attendee probably heard more Buxtehude than they will ever hear again in one sitting!

Sub-Dean **DORIS FRANCIS** has taken the position of Music Director at Grace in the Desert Episcopal Church. In addition to playing for the services, Doris will direct a choir which she has already organized. Sixteen people turned out for the first choir rehearsal, and the group has continued to grow. We wish her well in her new music ministry.



## Miscellany

Please reserve Saturday, April 26, 2008 for a workshop open to all organists, church accompanists and cantors presented by chapter member Timothy Cooper at Saint Elizabeth Anne Seton Church. The two hour session begins at 10:00 AM and will be preceded by coffee and doughnuts. A hymn sing will follow that evening at 7:00. Details will follow in our next bulletin.

The Las Vegas Academy had its first ever composition contest this fall. A request was made for an organ composition in conjunction with John Karl Hirten's workshop in January. A cash prize as well as a performance and critique by Mr. Hirten was the inducement. Twelve students completed the assignment and four have made it to a second round of judging. We look forward to picking a winner and hearing an interesting composition. Hopefully this could be the first of many such contests.

### Chapter Officers

Shireen Beaudry	Dean	sadras@aol.com
Doris Franics	Sub Dean	lvdbf2@embarqmail.com
Barbara Giles	Secretary	barbaragiles@gmail.com
Dr. David Dorway	Treasurer	dbdor@aol.com
Bruce Behnke	Webmaster and Newsletter	subbass16@cox.net
Jan Bigler	Member at Large	gmajam@juno.com
Kym Cushing	Member at Large	kymc1111@aol.com
Dr. Paul Hesselink	Ex-Officio	paulshesselink@peoplepc.com
Alice Hohenthauer	Membership	aliallen@cox.net
The Rev. Bede Parry	Chaplain	bedeparry@aol.com
Carla Swift	Publicity	carlaswift@cox.net

Please note that the deadline for submission of materials to the March/April 2008 edition of the Desertwind will be February 15, 2008. Please send your information to Paul Hesselink or Bruce Behnke at the above email addresses

