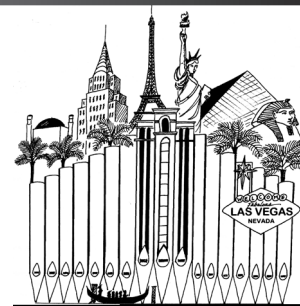


# THE DESERT WIND

Editor: Bruce Behnke © 2008

Issue: May/June 2008



Southern Nevada Chapter  
American Guild of Organists

## Dean's Notes

Dear Colleagues,

It's been quite a busy year for concerts and activities from the Dean's perspective. Thanks to all those who pitched in to make things flow smoothly. Many hands make light the work.

The "Story of the Stone Soup" says it another way:

Once upon a time, somewhere in post-war Eastern Europe, there was a great famine in which people jealously hoarded whatever food they could find, hiding it from even their friends and neighbors. One day a wandering soldier came into a village and began asking questions as if he planned to say for the night.

"There's not a bite to eat in the whole province," he was told. "Better keep moving on."

"Oh, I have everything I need," he said. "In fact, I was thinking of making some stone soup to share

with all of you." He pulled an iron cauldron from his wagon, filled it with water, and built a fire under it. Then, with great ceremony, he drew an ordinary-looking stone from a velvet bag and dropped it into the water.

By now, hearing the rumor of food, most of the villagers had come to the square or watched from their windows. As the soldier sniffed the "broth" and licked his lips in anticipation, hunger began to overcome their skepticism.

"Ahh," the soldier said to himself rather loudly, "I do like a tasty stone soup. Of course, stone soup with CABBAGE -- that's hard to beat."

Soon a villager approached hesitantly, holding a cabbage he'd retrieved from its hiding place, and added it to the pot. "Capital!" cried the soldier. "You know, I once had stone soup with cabbage and a bit of salt beef as well, and it was fit for a king."

The village butcher managed to find some salt beef . . . and so it went, through potatoes, onions, carrots, mushrooms, and so on, until there was indeed a delicious meal for all. The villagers offered the soldier a great deal of money for the magic stone, but he refused to sell and traveled on the next day. The moral is that by working together, with everyone contributing what they can, a greater good is achieved.

We had four new brave souls step forward to be nominated for positions on the board. They certainly made our Chapter soup the tastier. As we think and prepare for next year's events, I'm looking for more of you to add to the ingredients of your talents to our Chapter's Soup and help keep a wonderful pot brewing for all of 2008-2009.

Shireen Beaudry-Johnson, Dean

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## **CHAPTER ELECTIONS:**

25 Ballots have been tallied, and we have reconfigured the Executive Board as follows:

Dean: Shireen Beaudry-Johnson

Sub-Dean: Jan Bigler

Secretary: Cherrill Hoeft

Treasurer: David Dorway

Web-Master and Newsletter: Bruce Behnke

Publicity: Carla Swift

Membership: Alice Hohenthanner

Chaplain: Bede Parry

Members-at-Large:

Margaret Hannah, Doris Francis, and Robert Frantzen

Ex-Officio Member: Paul Hesselink

Alice Hohenthanner, who worked so hard to put together the nomination slate, sends this message:

“Many thanks to those of you who expressed willingness to serve as officers of the Southern Nevada Chapter of the AGO, and congratulations to those who were elected. Thanks also to those of you who responded by casting ballots for the election. This next year promises to be a good one.”

## **MEMBERSHIP DUES!**

Can you believe it is almost time to write your check for 2008-2009 AGO membership dues! You can look forward to your renewal letter in May. You could use some of your tax refund check to stimulate the economy of the AGO. David

## **\*\*\*Friday the 13th of June\*\*\***

Mark your calendar for 6pm on 6/13/08 for our end of the year event to be held at the First Presbyterian Church, 1515 W Charleston Blvd. We are celebrating our 40th year as a chapter of the AGO with a catered dinner for only \$13 complete with live piano music during dinner. Spouses and significant others are invited. We will install our new officers in a brief ceremony and then have a professional group photograph taken by Dorothy Riess of all the attending members. We will then move to the sanctuary for an organ recital that is open to all at 7:30pm, featuring four of our members. Call David Dorway 873-3655 with any questions.

Thanks, David

## **Trip to Salt Lake City May 8 - 10**

Our trip to Salt Lake is fast approaching. I have a packet of information ready to mail to each of you that is going. In it you'll find information on each of the organs we will be playing and an itinerary of our trip. I'll also let you know how much more money you need to bring to help pay for the van rental and gas.

Each of the 5 organs that we will play is unique. You might want to give some thought to the pieces that you'll play on each one of them. Don't forget your organ shoes.

Call me if you have any questions!

Jan

## **Las Vegas Premier**

John Karl Hirten premiered his new composition for organ solo, "Angels of Grace," during a recital at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas on January 18, 2008. . . The piece is in the form of a carillon based on the clock chimes of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, a theme written by Richard Purvis. The title is a reference to the bells of the cathedral as ever-present angels. . ."

## **ORGANIST POSITION AVAILABLE**

Local church seeking a qualified organist to fill a part-time position.

Primary responsibilities to include: Accompany the Adult Choir at Wednesday evening rehearsals and Sunday morning liturgies (organ only at 8:00 service, sung liturgy with Choir at 10:30 service), service music, weekly prelude and postlude, and incidental music. In addition Christ Church observes Holy Days that do not fall on a Sunday (e.g. Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Ascension). Organist should be available for wedding and funerals, if needed

Must have excellent accompanying skills and a knowledge of the music of the Episcopal Church. Prefer Masters of Music or equivalent certification.

We have a Moller double artiste organ (II/6) and a new Yamaha C2 (5'8") piano in the sanctuary but we are starting an organ project that will result in the installation of a new Schantz organ (IV/45).

Applicants will accompany the choir for their Wednesday night rehearsal and play both services the following Sunday.

Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Interested applicants should submit a complete resume with three references to the attention of Kathi Colman, Director of Music, Christ Church Episcopal, 2000 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89104. If you prefer, you may e-mail your resume to [jkcolman@peoplepc.com](mailto:jkcolman@peoplepc.com).

# REPORT FROM “DOWNUNDER”

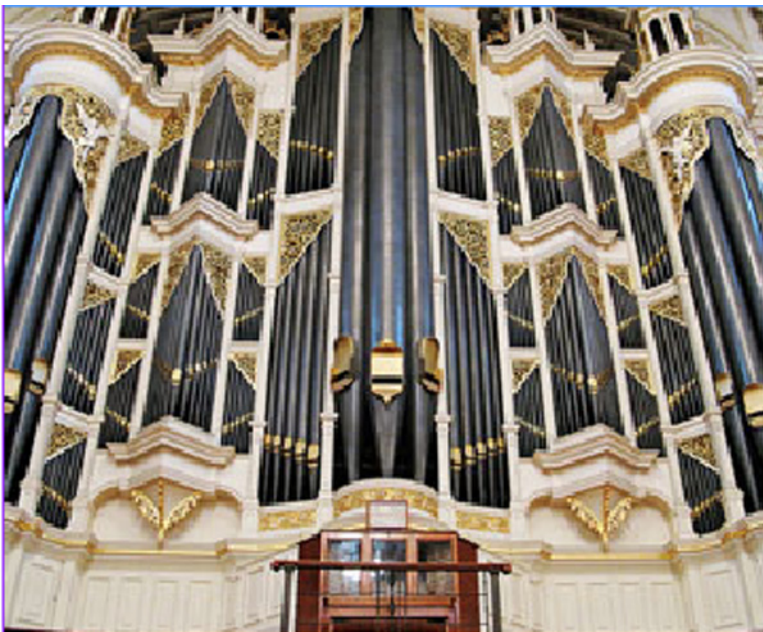
by  
Dorothy Young Riess, M.D.

I recently completed a 5-week Elderhostel trip to New Zealand, Tasmania, Kangaroo Island, and Sydney, Australia. In addition to the beautiful scenery, close encounters with kangaroos, koalas and wombats, I had the extraordinary privilege of playing three great pipe organs. AGO National President, Fred Swann, kindly provided contact names and e-mails prior to the trip. Responses were gracious and friendly and Fred's name was like magic to open doors!



Sydney Opera House

After touring North Island, NZ, we flew to the South Island. The minute we arrived in Christchurch, we walked to Town Hall to see the organ - only half block from our hotel. Town Hall seats 2,800 and the organ, built by Rieger (III/42/1997), is voiced to fill the huge building. The top manual is exclusively high pressure Solo Reeds, making the instrument effectively a two manual. The Pedal section contains a 32' Kontraposaune that shakes the floor! I played an impromptu recital of Bach, Buxtehude and improvisation for my tour group who had raced back from whale watching just to hear the organ! A passerby - a member of the symphony - commented that he had never heard the organ “let out” like that before!



Sydney Town Hall organ pipes

After visiting Tasmania and Kangaroo Island we arrived in Sydney and stayed with friends. When I checked e-mails I found a note from Town Hall organist, Robert Ampt, stating he could meet me the next day, and it would be the only chance for a year. The building was closing for major structural repairs! Town Hall Sydney also seats about 2800. The organ was built by Hill & Son (V/127/1886), and is carefully maintained and beautifully voiced for the room. Robert met us there excitedly waving a copy of the Diapason with my cover photo



of UNLV Organ! He was going through an old stack of magazines and found that issue! He showed us Town Hall organ, and provided registration help - essential for such a large instrument. The four-rank Diapason Chorus on the Great is a beautiful and thrilling sound. The pedal 64' Contra trombone shakes the rafters! Acoustics in the hall are perfect for the instrument, and the visual effect of the massive pipes is stunning.

The next evening we arrived at Sydney Opera House to meet Organ Curator, Mark Fisher. He escorted us and our group of friends for a tour of the back area of the opera house (not open to tourists) and then led us all up the small winding staircase to the organ high above the auditorium. The small console platform barely accommodated our group. I somehow changed to my silver shoes perched on the edge of the bench high in the air! The organ is the largest tracker in the world, made by Ronald Sharp (V/131/1979). Mr. Fisher was one of the builders and maintains the organ today. He provided much-needed registration help, essential for this large instrument. The sound is glorious and easy to hear from the console. I was inspired to improvise as he creatively selected various stops and sounds. Afterwards, he took the group into the pipe chambers, and described some of the mechanics of the organ while I caught my breath and came down from my adrenaline "high".

I recorded most of the playing with my small digital recorder, and a friend videotaped the session at Sydney Opera House. Sound and video clips will be available soon at my web site, [www.jdotpro.com](http://www.jdotpro.com).

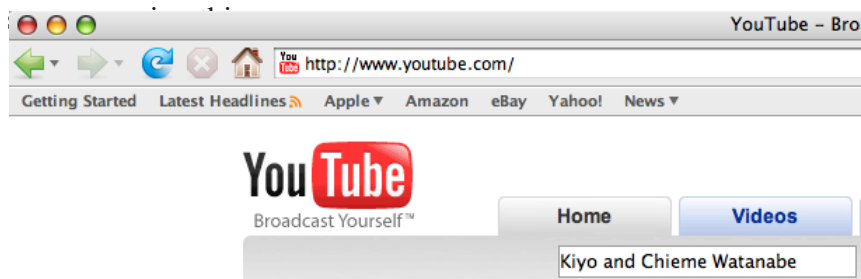
Of course I learned a lot about the geography, flora and fauna of New Zealand and Australia, but playing these great instruments was an experience that made this trip one I shall never forget.



Dorothy at Sydney Opera House

## Editor's Tech Note

For those of you who missed the last organ recital and have a reasonably fast internet connection, I suggest that you fire up your favorite web browser and head over to Youtube. In the search window, type in "Kiyo and Chieme Watanabe". They have posted most of their music as clips here in youtube. I really enjoyed the Kiara Pig Jig by Robin Dinda. There is an increasing library of organ clips that are available. The quality of the performance can vary but check it out and you will find



## Questionnaire Results from the 2007-2008 Recital Series

The Recital Series Committee decided to ask those attending our recitals to complete short questionnaires after each event as a way of evaluating the recitals in our series for our grant application to the Nevada Arts Council. The data for the four recitals of the 2007-2008 series:

### Advent/Christmas Members' Recital – December 2, 2007

Number of questionnaires completed:	81 (135 attending)
Attending an AGO Recital for the first time	43
Hearing the organ for the first time	36
Rating the program as “superb” or “excellent”	96%

### John Karl Hirten Recital – January 18, 2008

Number of questionnaires completed	31 (45 attending)
Attending an AGO Recital for the first time	6
Hearing the organ for the first time	6
Rating the program as “superb” or “excellent”	100%

### Dr. Frances Nobert Recital – February 22, 2008

Number of questionnaires completed	47 (70 attending)
Attending an AGO Recital for the first time	14
Hearing the organ for the first time	11
Rating the program as “superb” or “excellent”	96%

### Watanabe Organ Duo – April 11, 2008

Number of questionnaires completed	52 (110 attending)
Attending an AGO Recital for the first time	14
Hearing the organ for the first time	10
Rating the program as “superb” or “excellent”	100%

The average approval of all four events in the Recital Series is an astounding 97.6 % of respondents rating the recitals either as “superb” or “excellent.”

The final recital questionnaires rating the Watanabe Duo, respondents indicated that “word of mouth” from a friend was the major way they found out about the recital (17 respondents). E-mail notification ran a close second with 14. In the area of choosing a statement which best described their feelings about the program and performers, forty-four checked “I loved it!” another five checked “I liked it a lot and two checked “I found it interesting.” No one checked “I wasn’t really interested,” or “I wouldn’t come again.”

We need the help of every AGO Chapter member in three ways to build the organ recital series. We need your help in advertising. You can assist by forwarding the e-mail announcements you receive to your friends and acquaintances, and you can advertise by personally inviting people in your circle of friends and your associates. We need your help by your own attendance at the

events. Enter the dates of the recitals in your daily planner or mark them on your calendar. The recitals are scheduled well in advance. Placing the dates in your schedule NOW will help avoid scheduling things which will cheat you out of hearing these wonderful programs. And finally, it would be encouraging if every AGO chapter member would make a financial commitment to become a Patron for the next season. The levels for contributing are:

<i>ff</i>	–	fortissimo (\$250 and above)
<i>f</i>	–	forte (\$200 to \$249)
<i>mf</i>	–	mezzo forte (\$150 to \$199)
<i>mp</i>	–	mezzo piano (\$100 to \$149)
<i>p</i>	–	piano (\$50 to \$99)
<i>pp</i>	–	pianissimo (\$25 to \$49)

Your financial support of the series will help maintain our recitals as “open to the public without charge.” Choose as “loud” or “soft” a level of giving as is comfortable. Consider it a part of your missionary efforts to promote the organ in our community and benefit yourself at the same time! Donations are tax-deductible. Checks should be made to “Southern Nevada Chapter AGO” and sent to Dr. David Dorway, Treasurer –10613 Shoalhaven Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89134.

Paul Hesselink Recital Series Chair



Kiyo and Chiemi Watanabe in front of the Maurine Jackson Smith organ in Doc Rando Hall during their recital, April 11, 2008

*The Southern Nevada Chapter, American Guild of Organists*

## ***Organ Recital Series – 2008-2009***

Friday, October 24, 2008

**Felix Hell**, organ

At age 23, this German “wunderkind” continues to awe and inspire the organ world. He has performed more than 750 organ recitals world-wide.

Sunday, December 7, 2008

### **Annual Members’ Advent – Christmas Recital**

Enjoy the music of the season presented by local talent.

Friday, February 20, 2009

**Duo Majoya**, organ and piano

Marnie Giesbrect and Joachim Seeger, as a husband and wife duo from Edmonton, Canada has garnered “rave” reviews wherever they perform.

Thursday, March 26, 2009

**Elizabeth Roloff**, organ

An internationally established concert organist, Ms. Roloff lives and teaches in Israel.

Saturday, May 2, 2009

**Dr. John Walker**, organ

This program will feature the music of distinguished American composer Bruce Saylor. Handbells, voices and brass will be heard with organ.

### **Recitals in Doc Rando Hall - UNLV - 7:30 P.M.**

The Maurine Jackson Smith organ (53-ranks, 38 stops and three manuals and pedal) was completed by the Rudolf von Beckerath of Hamburg Germany in 2004. The organ is the largest pipe organ in Nevada and was a gift to the University and the community by the Edward D. Smith family.

**Help underwrite the series by becoming a Patron. Donations are tax-deductible, and checks made to “Southern Nevada Chapter, AGO” should be sent to Dr. David Dorway, Treasurer, 10613 Shoalhaven Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89134.**

This recital series is funded, in part, by a grant from the Nevada Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.