

From the President

Every time the deadline for writing this column approaches it is easy to plead that I'm too busy to write it. However, the task adds real value to my work and I also find that I have to carefully edit my thoughts in order to get everything I might say into the available space. This time is no exception. 2005 has surely been one of the busiest years of my life and the life of the company.



In good spirits after a summer cook-out at the Dobson residence (left to right): Wolfgang Born & Angelike Hesse of Giesecke & Sohn; John Ourensma & Bill Ayers, Dobson voicers; John Panning, Tonal Director; Lynn Dobson.

This summer has brought the project at the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia to where the installation is complete and voicing has begun. After starting the project in December of 1998, it has occupied our time for so long that working on the organ and traveling to Philadelphia have become a way of life. The installation began in July when Verizon Hall was closed so that the stage and back stage areas were available to us. Since mid-September, with the opening of the new concert season, we've had to work from mid-night to mid-morning. This has proven to be a very challenging schedule. Large installations are almost always somewhat difficult and stressful and this one was perhaps more so than usual. Now our next challenge is to complete the voicing before the dedication festivities which run May 11-25, 2006.

With such a large project we asked some friends to help us on-site to take some strain off of the Dobson crew. Sean O'Donnell joined us for two months. Bill Czelusniak and his crew, Richard Frary Jr. and Aaron LaRose, came on board as well. This was our third experience working with these fine organbuilders; they had helped us in 1997 at Pakachoag Church in Auburn, Mass., and in 2003 at the Cathedral in Los Angeles. It was also good to have Bob McKim working with us for most of the summer. Bob, a retired Methodist pastor, is one of our biggest fans.

In July, Angelika Hesse, President and Managing Director of Giesecke & Sohn of Germany, along with voicer Wolfgang Born, spent a week in our shop giving us a seminar on voicing free-reeds. The Philadelphia organ has the first modern free-reed stop in America, a 16' Aeoline on the Positive inspired by the free-reed voices of 19th century German organ builder Friedrich Ladegast. It was a very rewarding experience to work and socialize with our wonderful German colleagues.

As the installation crew returned to the shop this fall, work has gotten underway on the construction of the next two organs: Op. 82 (11/17), for The Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill, N.C., and Op. 83 (11/27), for the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Lancaster, Pa. After Philadelphia, everyone in the shop agrees that there is virtue in building smaller organs; they marvel at their ability to move the modest windchests with only four people! The most startling thought, however, is that both these organs will be built and installed before the Kimmel Center organ's voicing will be completed! Can you just hear the voicers groaning about working on the road steadily into next summer?

This summer it has been fun to see the coming together of five recording projects involving our newer instruments! A newly released CD of Op. 80 (11/26; 2004) and the choir of St. Paul's Church, Rock Creek, Washington, D.C., is now available from the church (www.rockcreekparish.org). There are four other recordings scheduled for release early next year: two of Op. 75 (1V/105; 2003) at the Cathedral in Los Angeles, one of Op. 69 (11/31; 1997) at Pakachoag Church, Auburn, Mass., and one of Op. 74 (11/22; 2000) at the University of Delaware, Newark, Del.

One of the most exhilarating experiences for me this summer (maybe of my whole career) has been to receive the commission to do design work for a feasibility study for new organs at the Washington National Cathedral. It is probably every organbuilder's dream to design and build an organ in a genuine Gothic cathedral. In America such opportunities are rare, so this has been particularly exciting work.

This summer also offered many opportunities for celebrating and getting together with friends. I traveled to Ellison Bay in June and August for the two thrilling standing-room-only dedicatory events and the socializing that comes with such festive occasions. In June, I attended Graham Elliott's Rock Creek Music Festival at St. Paul's Church in Washington, where, among other events, organist John Scott, of St. Thomas Church, New York, played a stunning recital on our new organ there. At home in July, I enjoyed a memorable cook-out at my house for our German colleagues from Giesecke (see picture above). In Philadelphia, I hosted two dinners for the installation crews as they concluded their "tour of duty" at Verizon Hall. And finally, in September, I attended the surprise festivities for Jamie Garvey's 25th anniversary as Director of Music at St. John United Methodist Church, Augusta, Ga., home of our two-year-old Op. 78.

Being a part of this special weekend in Augusta and all of the activities of this summer brings into focus the most rewarding aspect of my work. It's about building beautiful instruments for great music making, and forging lasting friendships with loving people along the way.

profiles



In the southeast corner of our woodshop one rarely hears much talking or idle chit-chat. But investigate the steady sound of various woodworking tools and the sight of some spectacular console or casework taking shape and you'll find a sawdust-covered cabinetmaker efficiently taking care of business in one of the most productive areas of the Dobson shop. Meet Randy Hausman, a cabinetmaker who's been with the firm for over 17 years and has played a significant part in building the hallmark organ cases that have earned Dobson an enviable reputation.

One of five children, Randy grew up on the family farm in rural Halbur, Iowa. His father and grandfather taught him the hard work of farming, as well as carpentry and woodworking. He fondly remembers the fine cabinetmaking skills he learned from his grandfather, perhaps a holdover from the skills Randy's great-grandfather brought from Germany some years before. High school industrial arts courses rounded out the skills he learned at home. Randy attended a junior college for a few months, but soon determined that wasn't for him. Back at home it was time to decide if he wanted to take over the family farm. But the farm was small, land was expensive, and the work was never-ending. "I just didn't think it was the sort of work I wanted to do for the rest of my life," he recalls. In 1974 he decided instead to start his own carpentry business (coincidentally the same year Lynn Dobson hung out his shingle in Lake City). If his father was inwardly disappointed with Randy's decision, he outwardly affirmed it by buying the newest carpenter in Halbur a radial arm saw.

After some years on his own, Randy met Raylene Wine from Lake City. They were married in 1987 and moved to their present home on Jefferson Street. After learning they were expecting a child in 1988, both became concerned about the up-and-down financial nature of self-employment. Randy began to look for a job, preferably a place where he could put his skills to good use, but mostly for the prospect of a steady income and benefits. After trying a few local builders and cabinetmakers, Raylene suggested he check at Dobson.

He came to the shop in September 1988. It was a busy place: the increasing number of contracts and an employee illness had left the shop short-handed. Then foreman Tom Kult and his crew were hard pressed to take down, finish, pack and ship an organ. Randy spoke with Tom, showed him some pictures of his work, asked if there might be a job available some time. Randy was hired on the spot! It didn't take long for Tom and the others to see Randy's skills and willingness to work, and he was gradually given more and more advanced projects. As he says, "The work was similar to the cabinet-making I had been doing, just on a larger and more ornate scale." Initially he thought he'd stay two or three years, but the steady income, good working conditions and challenging projects have kept him here these 17 years.

Randy's favorite sort of work is the challenge of making some of the unique parts of the casework that Dobson has become known for—the more

unique, the better! He is the shop wood turner, creating on the lathe everything from a delicate knob for a console drawer to a two-foot-tall urn that graces the pediment of our Op. 80 (11/26; 2004) in Washington, D.C. He quickly cites the stage console for Verizon Hall, with its compound curves, extensive veneering and complex structural components, as his most challenging project to date. Randy expresses a sense of pride and accomplishment with the recent large projects that have earned the company international acclaim, but at this writing he's enjoying the building of a modest case for Op. 82 (11/17) for Chapel Hill, N.C.

Randy's favorite pastime is collecting vintage post cards. He has some 5,000 of them in his collection now and favors German-made greeting, birthday and holiday cards from between 1910 and 1920. He regularly attends auctions, garage sales and flea markets in order to add to his collection. Though not his particular favorite sort of postcard, the so called "town view" style is very hot on eBay, and Randy enjoys the challenge and rewards available from buying and selling them.

The first child the Hausmans expected back in 1988 turned out to be twins—two handsome boys, Brent and Trent, now 16. They share Randy's enjoyment of classic rock music and have both become proficient on the guitar. They also keep Raylene a busy stay-at-home mom. Rounding out the Hausman household are Raylene's two dogs, a Pekingese and a Peke-A-Poo (Pekingese/Poodle mix).

A man of few words and happy to avoid the spotlight, Randy would be satisfied if this biography read simply, "Very quiet and hard working." If you'd like a more eloquent description of his character and skills, an examination of a Dobson organ case will tell you all you need to know.



Randy building the Verizon Hall stage console

Philadelphia PHOTO GALLERY

The installation of Op. 76 (IV/125) for Verizon Hall, at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia, has been completed, marking a major milestone after seven years of design and construction. Voicing will continue until early summer 2006.

The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts has announced the Kimmel Center Organ Inaugural Festival, beginning May 11, 2006. Op. 76 will be heard in an inaugural concert by the Philadelphia Orchestra, under the direction of Christoph Eschenbach, with organist Olivier Latry. The program includes Barber's Toccata Festiva, Corrette's Concerto for Organ, No. 4, Saint-Saëns Symphony No. 3, a commissioned work by Gerald Levinson and an improvisation by Mr. Latry. A week-long series of organ events will follow. Information about the week of organ festivities may be found on the recital page at: www.dobsonorgan.com.

Photos by Lynn Dobson, Sean O'Donnell and John Panning



Op. 76 (IV/125) Verizon Hall, Philadelphia



Wolfgang Born of Giesecke & Sohn advises Bill on voicing the free reed



Fitting 32' reed shallots to their blocks 64' A is front left



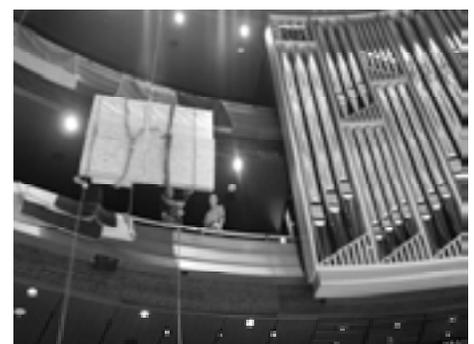
Racking the 32' reed: upper halves of 64' A# and 32' C are too tall for the erecting room



Lifting sequence 4- hoisting up to steel supports



Lifting sequence 3- rolling into side of organ



Lifting sequence 2- hoisting on to balcony



Racking pipes on the Pedal and Great windchests



Lifting sequence 1- securing windchest on stage



Key action from console (at right)



A view of the taller pipes on the Great



The steel framework in 2007



Wiring the electronic control panels



A view of pipes in the Solo



Installing the façade in 2007



The stage console on its lift



Installing the mechanical console in 2004



Installing reservoirs



Organ parts on the Verizon Hall stage

Newsbits

Our Lady of the Assumption Church, Atlanta, Ga., recently purchased Op. 19 (I/6; 1982) as an interim instrument for their new sanctuary. Built as a twin to Op. 18 at Bethany College, Mankato, Minn., the portative first resided at Lake City Union Church just down the street from the Dobson shop. In 1986, **Fr. Robert Wurm** purchased the organ for use at his church, St. James Parish, Ferndale, Mich. It was used extensively as a continuo instrument by various ensembles in Detroit, including the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Upon his recent retirement, Fr. Wurm inquired if Dobson might help him locate a buyer. He then personally transported Op. 19 to the Dobson shop where it received a complete mechanical and tonal tune-up. After several months, various circumstances converged and the sale was made. Op. 19 was shipped to its new home in September.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Brillion, Wisc., moved in to spacious new facilities this fall. The only item saved from their previous historic sanctuary was Dobson Op. 26 (II/19; 1984). The organ was dismantled, cleaned, moved and re-assembled within a week's time by a two-man Dobson crew, assisted by **Wahl Organbuilders**, from nearby Appleton, and church volunteers.

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Neenah, Wisc., was part of the 10th annual "Lunchtime Organ Recital Series" held each summer in the cities of Appleton, Neenah and Kaukauna. St. Paul resident organist **Marillyn Freeman** played Op. 32 (II/31; 1986) on June 22, featuring works of Bach.

Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., was the site for a master class by **Dame Gillian Weir**, offered as part of the Region V Convention of the American Guild of Organists this summer. Op. 44 (III/49; 1988) is located in the college chapel.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Manhattan Beach, Calif., has announced its 2005-2006 concert series, with many programs featuring Op. 56 (II/17; 1992). UCLA University Organist, **Christoph Bull**, assisted by mezzo-soprano **I-Chin Lee** and live painter **Norton Wisdom**, will be presenting the "13th Anniversary of the Organ Concert" on November 13 at 4:00 p.m. **Karla Devine**, Director of Music at Trinity, will present her annual Christmas program on Sunday, December 18 at 11:00 a.m. First Friday of the month "Bach's Lunch" noontime series programs this fall include area organists **Russ Litchfield**, Pasadena, and **David York**, Long Beach.

McKinley Presbyterian Church, Champaign, Ill., was host to an organ recital during the Spring 2005 meeting of the **Associated Pipe Organ Builders of America**. Resident organist **Michael Keeley** played a program on Op. 63 (II/21; 1994).

Presbyterian Homes, Evanston Ill., has announced its 2005-2006 "Gift of Music" series featuring recitals on Op. 64 (II/24; 1994). This season's fall recitalists include: 8/26, **Stephen Alltop**, Alice Millar Chapel, Northwestern University; 10/24, **Todd Gresick**, Sacred Heart Church, Winnetka; 11/28, **Yeo Jung Kim**, McFarlin Memorial UMC, Norman, Okla. Featured in an evening program at 7:15 p.m. on 11/8 will be **Volodymyr Koshuba**, organ, and **Viktoriya Koshuba**, piano, both of Kiev, Ukraine.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, Minn., presented **Raymond Johnston**, St. Mark's Cathedral, Minneapolis, in a recital on November 19, one of several programs featuring Op. 70 (II/45; 1998) during the church's 125th anniversary year.

West Market Street United Methodist Church, Greensboro, N.C., presented resident organist **Susan Bates** playing Op. 71 (III/58; 1999) in a solo recital this past April. In May the church's "Tuesday Music" series featured area organists **Christina Johnson**, **James Jones**, **Weil Sawyer**, **Scott Carpenter** and a duo program by Susan Bates and Director of Music, **Alice Ann Johnson**.

The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, Los Angeles, Calif., recently presented organist **Paul Jacobs**, The Juilliard School, New York, playing the complete works of Olivier Messiaen in a single program. Op. 75 (IV/105; 2003) is heard in recital each Wednesday following the 12:10 Mass.

St. John United Methodist Church, Augusta, Ga., has begun its third season of "Concerts with a Cause" series featuring Op. 78 (III/42; 2003). Programs this fall include: 9/18, **Paul Jacobs** in recital; 11/6, **Bruce Neswick**, Cathedral of St. Philip, Atlanta, leading a hymn festival for All Saints Day; 12/18, a program of Christmas music for brass, organ and choir; 12/24, the annual "Christmas Eve Concert and Lessons and Carols" with the St. John Choir, **Jamie Council Garvey**, Director of Music and Organist. On September 11 the church celebrated Jamie's twenty-five year tenure with a festival service and reception. Included were two commissions dedicated to Jamie: the hymn "Who Shall Sound the Glory?" by **Don Saliers** and **Douglas B. Leightenheimer**, and the anthem "Sing God's Glory in Accent New" by Don Saliers and **Carlton R. Young**. **Lynn Dobson** joined the many friends and admirers in attendance.

Shepherd of the Bay Lutheran Church, Ellison Bay, Wisc., celebrated the installation of Op. 79 (II/23; 2004) with two major events this summer: 6/26, **John Ferguson**, St. Olaf College, in a hymn festival; 8/17, **Erik Wm. Suter**, Washington National Cathedral, playing the inaugural recital.

Kenilworth Union Church, Kenilworth, Ill., presented **Richard Hbskins**, St. Chrysostom's Episcopal Church, Chicago, in a recital on November 6. Op. 81 (II/29) was installed in 2003.

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind., presented a series of fall events featuring the Reddel Memorial Organ (IV/102) at the Chapel of the Resurrection, rebuilt by Dobson in 1996: 9/17, **Johannes Unger**, Thomaskirche, Leipzig, Master Class; 9/17, Unger recital; 9/25, Faculty Recital with **Lorraine Brugh**, organ and **Joseph Bognar**, piano; 10/30, Reformation Vespers with **Donald Busarow**, Wittenberg University.

Two Dobson instruments are located in the area recently devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Op. 50 (II/35; 1990), at **First Presbyterian Church**, Hattiesburg, Miss., was itself not touched although the church suffered some water damage. Op. 73 (III/38; 2000), at **St. Joseph Abbey**, Saint Benedict, La., just north of New Orleans, also survived unscathed, but the Abbey grounds and some buildings were damaged.

THE ORGANBUILDER NEWSLETTER

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LOOKING BACK

25 Years ~ Op. 13 (II/29), for Lake City Union Church, Lake City, Ia., was installed and finished near the end of the year. A service of dedication was held on Sunday, March 15 with Jon Thieszen, Dobson technical designer and Union Church organist since that time, at the organ. The dedication recital was performed later that day by Lake City native Jeffrey Brillhart, currently Organist/Director of Music and Fine Arts at Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, Bryn Mawr, Pa. The instrument has been seen and played by many prospective clients over the years. It was featured in a recital by Guy Bovet at the firm's Tenth Anniversary celebration in 1984.

20 Years ~ Op. 29 (III/42), for Studio A, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn., was installed during the summer and completed by the beginning of the fall school term. Then recently appointed college organist, John Ferguson, played the dedication recital three times over two days that October. Recitalists featured during the organ's first season included Wolfgang Dallman, David Craighead, William Albright, and a master class with the late Russell Saunders. Located in a newly renovated space, Op. 29 has served as the main teaching instrument at St. Olaf since its installation. It was the first mechanical three manual organ by Dobson as well as the first of several subsequent collaborations with Northfield architect Ed Søvik. Of particular interest was that preliminary discussions and the design of the instrument took place during the tenure of Robert Thompson, Professor of Organ.

However, final design and installation of Op. 29 took place after John Ferguson arrived. **Op. 30 (II/33)**, for Ascension Lutheran Church, Stillwater, Minn., was installed by the end of the year. A service of dedication took place on December 22 with Nancy Whipkey, organist then and now, at the organ. A recital and Service of Lessons of Carols took place later in the day. It was the second Dobson instrument installed in a divided chancel arrangement; the free standing case is to the right of the choir and speaks directly across the chancel.

1985 is also a year remembered around the Dobson shop as the beginning of a prolific period in which the company built over 20 new organs in five years, nearly half of them for university/college campuses and in locations in an ever widening circle beyond the Midwest.

10 Years ~ Op. 65 (II/36), for the new music building at the University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C., was completed in the fall of the year. Its thirty-foot-tall case is made of solid maple stained white with garnet trim. The inaugural recitals, by William Bates, Professor of Organ, took place in November of the following year. **Op. 66 (II/19)**, for Eastminster Presbyterian Church, East Lansing, Mich., was finished by the end of the year and was inaugurated with a recital by organist Bruce Campbell on December 17. It was the fifth Dobson organ in Michigan in just seven years.