

Third Bumbling Bruder Tour (Organ Tour of Europe)

Ron Bopp

Preface: While this was, of course, a social trip for 40 plus COAA members, the body of this report is not to detail the social activities but rather, analyze and enjoy the fruits of the primary purpose of the trip, that being, to see and hear as many organs as possible in a 12 day time frame. And, after you read and look at the photos of the following article, I think the interested reader will realize that I have accomplished that.

A brief description of the tour follows, and then most of this article will be devoted to the many different organs seen. Forty four members flew over to Holland and arrived in Amsterdam on June 6, 2002. We spent our first four nights in Utrecht at a comfortable Ibis Hotel. Utrecht was chosen because of its location regarding the collections in the central Holland region. Upon arrival most members toured different aspects of Amsterdam including the many canals, shops, red light district, Anne Frank's home and some even ended up in the Perlee workshop (Figure 1).



Figure 1. An overall view of the Perlee workshop in Amsterdam.

At this time I must give credit to several of our regional “tour guides.” The first is a dear friend to mechanical music whether in his country of Holland or our country, and that is **Maarten van der Vlugt**. (Figure 2 for Maarten and others mentioned below). Maarten took time away from his music arranging and spent several days with us, riding shotgun on the bus and helping negotiate the entrance to several collections. Second was my good friend (and a good friend to many on the tour) **Arthur Prinsen**, and of course, his lovely wife, **Paula**. Arthur accompanied us to the Belgium collection of his friend and partner, **Jef and Jeannine Ghysels**, as well as the Waldkirch Orgelfest.

Of course, we had excellent help from other collector/owner guides of mechanical museums and collections including our new COAA members **JanKees de Ruijter**, who expertly guided us through the Draaiorgelmuseum in Haarlem

(see the article *Deafening Protest (Street Organs in Haarlem)* on page 11 of this issue of the *Carousel Organ*); and **Henk Veeningen** who operates a very, very nice organ museum (personal collection) in De Wijk, Holland. **Gerrit Hulsef** who is curator of the Draaiorgel Museum in Assen, Holland, played the many organs in this museum while we enjoyed a catered lunch; **Jef & Jeannine Ghysels** (mentioned previously) displayed their museum collection of large organs; **Dr. Jan Jaap Haspels**, director of Utrecht’s museum, National Museum from Musical

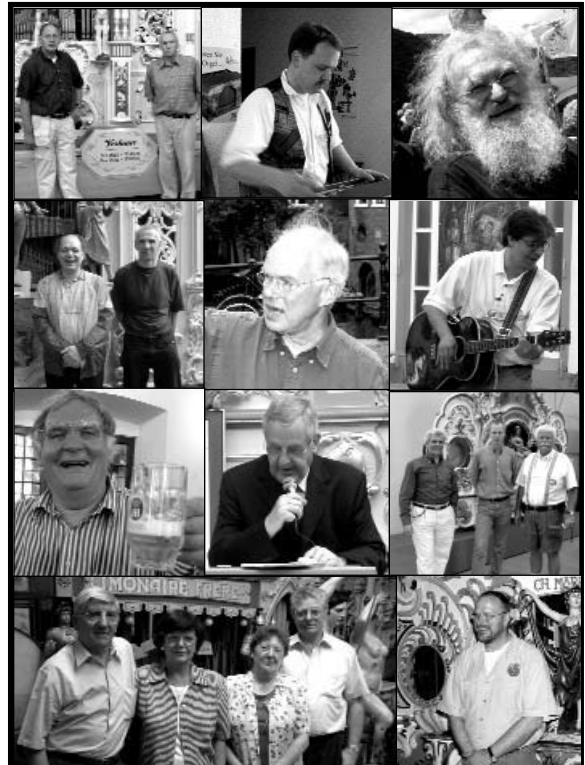


Figure 2. “Tour Guides”, curators and collection owners: Henk Veeningen (De Wijk) and Gerrit Hulsef (Assen), top left; Wolfgang Brommer (Waldkirch), top middle; Siegfried Wendel (Rudesheim), top right; Maarten van der Vlugt (Tilburg) and JanKees de Ruijter (Haarlem), 2nd row left; Dr. Jan Jaap Haspels (Utrecht), 2nd row middle; Heinz Jaeger (Waldkirch), 2nd row, right; Fredy Gerer (Munich) 3rd row left; Jan van Dinteren (Geleen), 3rd row middle; Angelo Rulli, Eduard Saluz (Seewen) and Ron Bopp, 3rd row, right; Arthur and Paul Prinsen (Schoten) and Jeannine and Jef Ghysels (Brussels), 4th row left and Chris Van Laarhoven (Hilvarenbeek), 4th row right.

Clock to Street Organ spent a good part of the day showing us not only the museum (**Figure 3**) but also the workshop; **Siegfried Wendel** who is curator of his museum in Rudesheim, as always a gracious host, took two days to guide us through his museum and workshop; and **Eduard Saluz**, director of the Museum of Mechanical Music Instruments, who allowed us to tour this huge collection, formerly belonging to Dr. Heinrich Weiss-Stauffacher and his daughter, Susanne Weiss.



Figure 3. A view of the smaller organ hall in Utrecht's National Museum from Musical Clock to Street Organ

While not a museum director or collector of organs *per se*, **Fredy Gerer** of Munich spent two days with our group ensuring that we enjoyed a cultural and spirited education of Munich. Finally, **Wolfgang Brommer** and **Heinz Jaeger** welcomed us to Waldkirch and to their workshop, and guaranteed that our last days of the Bumbling Bruder Tour would not be ones that we would forget.

Bumbling Bruder Tour Summary		
Holland	Haarlem	Draaiorgelmuseum
	Tilberg	De Voer Brothers
		Willem Van Vanrouij (Topcars)
		Kes Andriaans
		Theo Heesben
		Chris Van Laarhoven
	De Wijk	Draaiorgelmuseum
	Assen	Draaiorgel Museum
	Utrecht	National Museum from Musical
		Clock to Street Organ
Belgium	Brussels	Ghysel's Collection
Switzerland	Seewen	Museum of Music Automats
Germany	Munich	City Museum
	Rudesheim	Siegfried's Mechanisches
		Musikkabinett
	Waldkirch	Elztalmuseum
		Orgelbauersaal (Hall of the Organ Foundation)
	7th International Orgelfest	

Figure 4. A table depicting the various museums, collections and events attended by the Bumbling Bruder Tour.

Following our visit to the Holland and Belgian collections the Bumbling Bruder Tour group went to Rudesheim for two nights stay; Munich for one night; and finished with four nights in Waldkirch to take part in the 7th International Orgelfest held in Waldkirch, June 14 through 16th, 2002. Exposure to these many collections, museums and the International Orgelfest can leave most attendees numb to the presence of just another organ. Therefore, the need for this article attempting to detail and summarize the many organs viewed (**Figures 4 & 5**).

Summary of Organs Viewed
Dutch Street Organs (35)
Belgian Dance Organs (28)
French Fair Organs (14)
German Fair Organs (59)

Figure 5. A summary of the large organ types viewed on the tour

But, before I do that let me tell you a little about the 7th International Orgelfest 02, which is the basis for the timing of our tour. This is a celebration of organ-making in the town of Waldkirch, deep in the region of the Black Forest. The International Orgelfest is held every three years. There is an annual Orgelfest in Waldkirch but it doesn't draw the crowd like this "mega-event" does. What does one do in a hamlet tucked away in the valleys surrounded by black walnut and cherry and fir and pine trees? Well, along with several thousand regional inhabitants, we walked and shopped the local stores for their linen and lace; ate the brats and pastries; drank the local Hirschen-Brau bier "aus Waldkirch;" listened and viewed the moritoten singers and hand-organ players; enjoyed the large organ concerts; went to the local Catholic church where mechanical music on hand organs was incorporated into the service; listened to the local mayor Burgermeister Richard Leiginger praise the local organ builders (I have met him before and he is an organ enthusiast); attend several events outside of the Elztalmuseum including "Restoring the Xavier-Bruder Organ" and "Transformation of the Voigt and Ruth organ companies" (by Jan van Dinteren); listen to several organs highlighted in the Elztalmuseum; eat and drink in the Jaeger und Brommer biergarten; drink more Hirshen-Brau bier "aus Waldkirch;" and etc. etc. etc. till its all over. And even then, you want some more.

Dutch Street Organs

It is almost impossible to describe the amount and beauty of the Dutch Street Organs seen on our tour. I have been over to Europe on other tours and private trips but never have I seen as many well-restored and excellent-sounding organs. A description of the Dutch Street Organ and its natural history is well documented in Hans van Oost's article *Dutch Street Organs (A Brief History)* on page four of this issue of the *Carousel Organ*. I will attempt to describe a few of the 35 or so organs that we encountered.

As outlined in Hans van Oost's article, these organs are tonally much different than their original component organ. It is the different sound, made so prevalent by the violin celeste and bourdon celeste ranks of pipes, that make these organs so attractive. Arrangements were originally done by Carl Frei Sr. and now, by many talented arrangers such as JanKees de Ruijter, Rene Schenk, Johan Weima, Tom Meijer and others.



Figure 6. *Rosita*, a 90-key Dutch street organ rebuilt by Anton Pluer in 1974.

Between our 2nd and 4th day in Holland we saw 33 of the 35 Dutch street organs. And, each and every one of these organs was perfect in every way. What a treat! The Draaiorgelmuseum in Haarlem has five of the Dutch Street organs (two are illustrated here); Willem Van Wanrouij, an automotive dealer (Topcars) who has an interest also in 1950's American automobiles, had a respectable collection of seven Dutch Street Organs; Henk Veeningen's Draaiorgelmuseum in De Wijk contained five Dutch street organs including *De Engelenkast*, a 56-key (originally *Limonaire*) organ featured on the back cover of this issue of the *Carousel Organ*; Assen's Draaiorgel Museum had five as well; and the National Museum from Musical Clock to Street Organ in Utrecht also featured five Dutch street organs.



Figure 7. *Jupiter*, a 68-key 1900 Gavioli fair organ, now converted to a Dutch street organ by DeVreese.

First is *Rosita*, a 90-key organ that was originally a Decap dance organ (Figure 6). This was rebuilt in 1974 by Anton Pluer who used the 90-key Carl Frei scale. This organ is currently housed in the Haarlem Draaiorgelmuseum but leaves the premises on a weekly basis to serenade the streets of Haarlem.

The façade is attractively painted in pastel colors, the organ sits on a three-wheeled cart, which has a gasoline-propelled drive wheel at the tongue of the cart.



Figure 8. *De Pod*, an original Dutch street organ built by Carl Frei Sr. and rebuilt by the Perlee firm of Amsterdam.

The second Dutch street organ is the 68-key *Jupiter*, originally a 1900 Gavioli fair organ (Figure 7). This organ played in a dance hall until it was converted by the Dutch organ builder (from Antwerp) DeVreese to a Dutch street organ. It was later altered by the Minning firm. As with many of these type of organs, several changes were encountered over the years to its current form. It has been re-restored from 2001 to 2002 and was recently on the front and back cover of the July, 2002 issue of "Het Pierement."

A third and most delightful organ is *De Pod*, an 89-key Carl Frei organ (built originally by Carl Frei Sr. in 1937 as a Dutch street organ) and then rebuilt recently by the Gijs. Perlee firm of Amsterdam (Figure 8). The organ was displayed by Mr. Perlee's daughter, Tina Van Leeuwen, and Leon (his grandson) at the International Orgelfest in Waldkirch.



Figure 9. *De Klinkhamer*, a Dutch street organ which was originally a Henri Daneels organ and converted in 1971. Photo: Mike Barnhart

The fourth Dutch street organ to comment on is *De Klinkhamer*, a 90-key Henri Daneels/Mortier organ made in 1924 (Figure 9). It was converted in 1971 and is quite large in volume with 534 pipes. This organ is in the collection of Henk

Veeningen and Henk plays primarily classical music on it, which, with the Dutch street organ sound, makes for very listenable music.



Figure 10. *De Stolwuker* is a 72-key Carl Frei-built Dutch street organ in the Assen museum collection.

The last Dutch street organ is my favorite of all and it is a Carl Frei-built organ, *De Stolwuker* (Figure 10). This is a 72-key organ which is now housed in the Draaiorgel Museum in Assen. The organ was destined a few years ago to be imported to the United States. It was on the ship when the buyer, G. W. McKinnon, passed away. Henk Veeningen went to the shipyard and negotiated for the organ; donated it (circa 1975) to the organ foundation at Assen (Stichting Draaiorgelvrienden Assen) and according to both Henk and Maarten van der Vlucht, is one of the best examples of a Dutch street organ. I had the chance to hear this organ three years ago and was looking forward to seeing it again—my wishes became fulfilled and I was not disappointed, as were the other members of our tour group.



Figure 11. A 73-key Fasano dance organ in the Jef Ghysels collection in Brussels. Presenting with a large facade, this organ has the appearance of an even larger organ. Photo: Len

Belgian Dance Organs

We encountered 28 Belgian dance organs including the less-often-seen Fasano, Hooghuys and a rare Razenberg (in the Draaiorgel Museum at Assen, Holland). These organs, as the name implies, were built for the dance hall and are, therefore, softly voiced and able to play dance music. Of course Mortier, of Antwerp, was the brand most often encountered, but we saw several Decaps and Bursens as well.

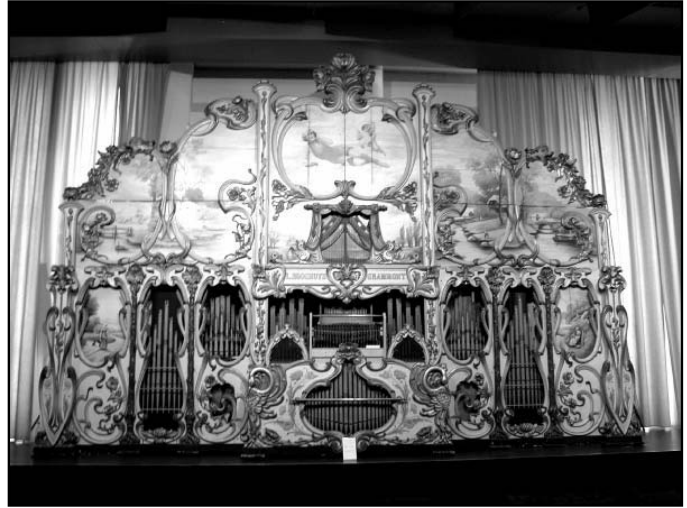


Figure 12. A 90-key Hooghuys in the National Museum from Musical Clock to Street Organ in Utrecht.

The 73-key Fasano organ in Jef Ghysels collection is a good example of this firm's production (Figure 11). According to Arthur Prinsen (in a communication that will soon be printed in the *Carousel Organ*) Fasano was not too active a builder, apparently starting his workday in the late morning. Therefore, there was not a lot of production from this Belgian builder who emigrated from Italy prior to starting the business. Fasano organs are rather scarce—we saw two on our trip—the one mentioned here and an 84-key in the Kes Adriaanse collection in Tilberg.



Figure 13. The 121-key *Swinging Lady* in the Topcar collection. This is a Decap organ built in 1978 and features four accordions.

Likewise, large Hooghuis organs are rather rare—we encountered a smaller 57-key in the Ghysels collection and the 90-key Hooghuis (**Figure 12**) in the National Museum from Musical Clock to Street Organ in Utrecht. Although smaller Hooghuis sometimes are the loudest organs “on the block” the 90-key Hooghuis in Utrecht is somewhat softer voiced, again for the dancing crowd.



Figure 13. A 78-key Mortier dance organ owned by Johan Weima and housed in the Haarlem organ collection.

A spectacular dance organ was one featured in the Topcar showroom of Willem Van Wanrouijon on our Tilberg collection tour. This was the 121-key *Swinging Lady* (**Figure 12**) which was a Decap organ built in 1978. It features four accordions and is well lit with neon lighting effects. No surprise, the organ plays from a MIDI system. This is a huge organ and needs a large truck to haul it around.



Figure 14. The *Black Madonna* (*Zwarte Madonna*) is a 84-key Mortier dance orchestrion. It has 311 pipes.

Two Mortier dance organs in the Haarlem group of organs are worthy of mentioning. First is the 78-key Mortier dance organ owned by Johan Weima—board member of the organ foundation (**Figure 13**). This organ was built around 1912 and spent its earlier life in the northern portion of the Netherlands.

Besides being a part of the collection, it participates with a traveling singing production. Second is the *Zwarte Madonna* (Black Madonna) owned by JanKees de Ruijter (**Figure 14**). It is an 84-key Mortier dance orchestrion which was built in 1927. It originally played in a café in the Belgian town of Zandvliet. The organ is small for its large number of keys and contains 311 pipes.

French Fair Organs

Having owned a 49-key Limonaire organ in the past leaves a soft spot in my heart for French organs so I was happy to see the 14 or so French organs on our tour. We came across two



Figure 15. A 52-key Gasparini found in the museum in Utrecht.

Gasparinis, seven Gaviolis, three Limonaires and two Marenghis. A 52-key Gasparini, mounted on a three-wheeled cart, was present and playing at the National Museum from



Figure 16. *De Phoenix*, a 89-key Gavioli in Henk Veenigen's collection of organs in De Wijk, Holland.

Musical Clock to Street Organ in Utrecht (**Figure 15**). The French organs, as most of the preceding organs did, played with book music. Most French organs have a somewhat nasal tone to them and the Gasparinis were no different. One of the most spectacular Gavioli organs was the 89-key Gavioli, *De Phoenix*, in the collection of Henk Veenigen of De Wijk, Netherlands (**Figure 16**). This organ was built in 1905 and recently had been stored in a kitchen where it took on the flavor (so to speak) of its environment. Taking over 6 ½ years to repaint (by a noted local façade painter, de Boer) it is now looking and playing to its former beauty. The organ has 309 pipes and is quite listenable.



Figure 17. A Waldkirch-manufactured 50-key Limonaire the Elztalmuseum in Waldkirch.

In the basement of the Elztalmuseum in Waldkirch sat three organs that many of our tour members missed because the organs weren't easy to find (and weren't necessarily advertised). There was an 89-key Gavioli, a 76-key Richter (German) and a 50-key Waldkirch-manufactured Limonaire (**Figure 17**). While

most Limonaire organs were made in Paris the Limonaire firm did have a manufacturing plant in Waldkirch (as did Gavioli) and those organs that were made in Waldkirch had a deeper, German-like sound to them, somewhat imitating that of the Bruder and Ruth organs.

Marenghi organs are unusual to find in America but we came across three of them in Europe, two being of the fair organ variety—one a 70-key organ in the Harlem collection belonging to JanKees de Ruijter (built in 1912 for a Dance hall and recently rebuilt to play again) and a spectacular 59-key Marenghi fair organ in the collection of Chris Van Laarhoven (**Figure 18**). Chris is a collector/dealer of antique Harley Davidson motorcycles but also has a wonderful collection of organs including both a Decap and Perlee Dutch street organ, a small Bursens dance organ, two large Mortier dance organs and this lovely 59-key Marenghi. One piece that I enjoyed hearing was the "Dodge Brothers March," a tune arranged and cut by Tom Meijer (some of you will remember how proud and excited Harvey Roehl was when he got his arrangement of this same tune from Tom Meijer for his 57-key Gavioli).



Figure 19. A 79-key Richter organ in the De Voer collection.



Figure 18. A beautifully restored 59-key Marenghi fair organ in Chris Van Laarhoven's collection.

German Fair Organs

We ended up enjoying more German fair organs than other organs (as one would expect). Over 59 large German organs were encountered including 17 made by one of three Bruder firms, 17 made by the Ruth firm and many produced by Frei, Frati, Richter, Voigt and Wrede. There were 10 Wellershaus organs found, which seems to me as quite a lot. The German organs have a more guttural voicing to them and of course, make up some of the foundation for the early Wurlitzer organs (such as the popular Style 165). One collection in Holland, the de Voer brothers, featured only German organs with a 1925 59-keyless Wrede, a 78-key Wellershaus playing 36er Ruth music; a 68-key Wellershaus; a Wilhelm Bruder Söhne playing 35er Ruth music; a 79-key Richter (**Figure 19**); a 41-key Wilhelm Bruder Söhne;

Gebrüder Bruder (donated by organ scholar Jan van Dinteren); a splendid 61-key Wilhelm Bruder Söhne (**Figure 22**); a 79-key Richter (Richter van Siphema); a massive Style 39 (De Dubblele Ruth) Ruth organ and both a 50-key and 81-key Wellershaus.



Figure 20. A 52-key Alfred Bruder in the DeVoe Collection.

and an Alfred Bruder playing 33er Ruth music (**Figure 20**). And, all of these organs were trailer-mounted, housed in a structure similar to our “pole barns,” all ready to be towed out and played on location.



Figure 21. A 80-key Gebrüder Bruder in an oriental motif in the collection of Siegfried Wendel.

Of course, German organs were prevalent in Siegfried's Mechanisches Musikkabinett in Rudesheim where Siegfried Wendel has accumulated a very well-rounded collection of mechanical musical instruments. His large organ collection consists of three to four organs and they were certainly nice, the top-of-the-collection being his 80-key Gebrüder Bruder with an oriental façade (**Figure 21**) made for a carousel in Budapest, Hungary. Other organs in the Wendel collection included a 56-key Gebrüder Wellershaus, a 52-key (Style 107) Gebrüder Bruder and a 1890 50-key Cocchi, Bacigalupo & Graffigna barrel organ.

The National Museum from Musical Clock to Street Organ in Utrecht features several German organs including a 52-key



Figure 22. This is a splendid example of a Wilhelm Bruder Söhne fairground organ. It is a 61-key organ in the “National Museum from Musical Clock to Street Organ” in Utrecht.

We came across many Ruth organs and of those all were very fine examples. There was a covey of Style 33 organs (52-keys), two of which were playing in the Elztalmuseum in Waldkirch. Blome's Style 35 played in the park at Waldkirch as did Verdonk's Style 36 Ruth. Along with a Style 35 owned by Roland Renner it made a trip to the park a most enjoyable event. And, if one sipped a German bier along with the Ruth music it made it even more enjoyable! Yes, fond memories!



Figures 23 & 24. Hoefnagel's Style 36 Ruth organ is pictured above. On the right is a photo of the tractor-trailer rig plus generator system for the organ. Photos: Dick Hack





Figure 25. The Style 38 Ruth organ now owned by Dram Vader.

A most interesting package was Hoefnagel's Style 36 Ruth (Figures 23 & 24). His tractor/trailer rig is as interesting as his well-packaged and well-playing German organ. Certainly this is the "way to go." Also as interesting and certainly musical if not more so is the Style 38 Ruth fair organ (Figure 25) now owned by Dram Vader (previously owned by Romy Maier of Switzerland). I have encountered this organ three years ago and also nine years ago when owned by Romy Maier and it is one fine-sounding organ. The Style 38 Ruth organs are near the pinnacle of organ playing and when one has chance to listen to one, it is a thrill of a lifetime.

Other German organs encountered were a 56-key Frati in the Henk Veeningen collection which had been converted to play 56-key German-scale Limonaire music—one fine organ. There were a few Henr. Voigt organs found with the most outstanding being the Style 38 (AOXS) owned by Mueller. This organ is massive and capable of playing the most serious of classical music. It plays 97-key Ruth music and because of the pipe mixture, sounds slightly more like a concert organ and less like a fair organ (but then, so does the Style 39 or Dubblele Ruth in the museum in Utrecht).

Many Wellershaus organs were present including a 50-key, 55-key, 56-key, 58-key, 68-key, 72-key, 78-key, 81-key and two



Figure 26. An 83-key Wellershaus fair organ in Waldkirch

83-key organs. Of course, the 83-key Wellershaus present at the Orgelfest (Figure 26) was the most musical but I could have listened to any of them for awhile. The last of the German organs found on our tour was a 59-key Wrede organ (Figure 27) which was part of the DeVoe Brother's collection in Holland and also trailed to Waldkirch. Fritz Wrede organs are most uncommon. The organs were made in Hannover, Germany. There is an article about Fritz Wrede, Hannover in the July issue of *Het Pierement* authored by Jan van Dinteren.

Well, that in a nutshell is the scope of the organs encountered. I have presented 22 organ photos representing just some of the 136 or more large organs we viewed and listened to. There were an equal number of small organs encountered which I have not included. In addition, we encountered a great, rare and unusual collection of German Hackbretts (upright outdoor stringed instruments which were carried on the back and played much like a hand organ) in the hall of the Organ Foundation, which I am sure will be covered in another article.



Figure 27. A 59-key Wrede organ brought by the DeVoe brothers from Holland to the Orgelfest in Waldkirch.

I hope this article will serve to whet the appetites of American organ owners and organ lovers for more information and more on European organs. The amount of material is immense in a trip like this. It would not be possible except for rare individuals such as those mentioned at the first of the article who made it possible for 44 of us Americans (and by and large, mostly COAA members) to get into some of these never-before-seen collections of organs. I know that I have had a new appreciation for the Dutch street organ. I hope that we can somehow be able to have more of these fine machines in this country for our and for our public's enjoyment.

While 95% or more of the photographs to choose from were taken by me I do wish to express my appreciation to Mike Barnhart, Dick Hack and Len Railsback for supplementing my photo inventory of organs of this trip. The material available has spawned a PowerPoint presentation given at the recent MBSI annual meeting and to be given at several upcoming COAA rallies.

Ron Bopp was tour director for the Bumbling Bruder Tour in June, 2002. This is the second time he has taken over large organ enthusiasts to see organs in conjunction with the International Orgelfest in Waldkirch. He is also editor of the *Carousel Organ*.