

“Happy 10th Birthday, COAA!” The First COAA Organ Rally Trolleyville (Olmstead Falls, Ohio)

Ron Bopp

What began as a small group of organ enthusiasts getting together to play their organs twice a year has blossomed now to a near 500 member organization sponsoring from five to seven rallies a year and enjoys a publication rivaled only by those of similar groups of longer duration. The Carousel Organ Association of America (COAA) had its beginnings with invitations to organ owners in February, 1998. Nearly 200 soon-to-be members responded.



Figure 1. The late Harvey Roehl hand-playing his original Tanglely Calliope. Harvey and Marion attended many rallies.

The first official membership meeting of the COAA was June 20th, 1998. This was held in conjunction with our first organ rally at Trolleyville, a converted mobile home community, in Olmstead Falls, Ohio held June 19 - 21, 1998. Terry and Joan Haughawout organized the rally. Eighteen large band and fairground organs, a Tanglely calliope plus fourteen cart-mounted hand organs helped make this first rally a great start for the fledgling organization. So committed to the cause, members came from eleven states, and as far away as Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and New Jersey. One member even came from Canada.



Figure 2. Mary Pollock's Wurlitzer 125 Military Band Organ.



Figures 3 & 4. Among the 14 hand organs played were the Hofbauer Harmonipan (by Tim Wagner) and a Pell “Belly” organ (by Angelo Rulli).

Officers elected at the first meeting included Terry Haughawout as President, Ron Bopp as Vice President and Marge Waters as Secretary-Treasurer. Hope Rider volunteered to be reporter and Ron and Angelo Rulli offered to help with a newsletter (which quickly grew into the much-respected *Carousel Organ*).



Figure 5. A Stinson-made organ playing 165 Wurlitzer rolls was brought by Bill and Marge Waters. Marge served for many years as our Secretary/Treasurer and later as our Treasurer.



Figure 6. The late Frank Rider polishes his newly acquired Stinson Dutch organ and trailer.

The Executive Committee met later in the evening and spelled out the goals for the organization: *to promote, enhance and enjoy the hobby of mechanical organs whether they be band, carousel or fairground organs; air or steam calliopes; or monkey or street organs.* In addition it was noted that: *The rallies should be open to the public for their entertainment and education.*

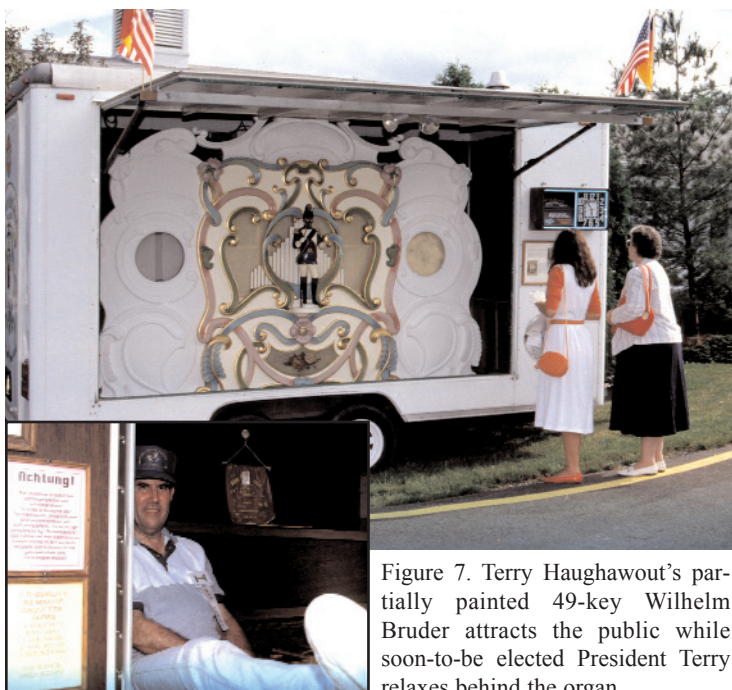


Figure 7. Terry Haughwout's partially painted 49-key Wilhelm Bruder attracts the public while soon-to-be elected President Terry relaxes behind the organ.

As expected the rally became a success and the first of many to be held by the COAA. Special memories included Harvey Roehl hand-playing his Tangle Calliopo; Frank and Hope Rider unveiling their new Stinson organ; and the attendees riding the trolley (en mass) to dinner and, of course, the first-ever COAA business meeting.

The First COAA Rally

Captured sounds and images are ideal for coaxing memories forth. *Lassus Trombone*, played on John Prtljaga's handcrafted 165+, croons forth from my boom box, accompanied by tunes from Stinson, Wurlitzer, Bruder and Raffin organs. Add a hand-played Tangle Calliophone by the inimitable Harvey Roehl and you've got yourself a blast from the past, the very first C.O.A.A. rally. The most amusing audio recording captures a cacophony of organs, as they faced off inside a train loop. Violins trumping the flutes, then beaten by the drums, only to be topped by brass trumpets, which always have the last word! Reviewing my 35mm slides from the rally brings many more memories. Riding a trolley through a shady, landscaped mobile home community is a unique experience I'll never forget. Reaching the return loop, encircling 18 band organs and a dozen+ crank organs etches the memory further in stone. Standing in the middle, listening to most of the organs at once, is really something you just can't forget, even though you'd like to!

Being new to the hobby, every organ encounter was exciting, every enthusiast introduction was delightful and every hour spent went way too quickly. I recall the "fresh lumber" smell from Frank & Hope Ryder's brand new *Het Grote Ruiteroergel* organ with its art nouveau façade, and delighting in the *Wizard of Oz Medley*. They had just picked the organ up from the Stinson company on their way to the rally! I recall Dan Wilke going mobile as he cranked his Hofbauer organ on the open-air trolley. I remember the steam powered washing machine on display and the hand-powered rail car that all the "boys" just had to try. I remember photographing Harvey Roehl as he played the Tangle, and my first exposure to the sweet-voiced Raffin organs. I recall meeting Len Railsback for the first time and being captivated by John Prtljaga's unique 165+ organ. Cranking Richard Pauly's new Raffin trumpet organ was a real thrill. Photographing vacuum roll frames, pressure trackers and cardboard book key frames was a necessity. Hauling out more equipment to make cassette recordings seemed like the right thing to do. I was having the time of my life! Three days went by in a flash. Most importantly, I remember attending the first meeting of the COAA and witnessing the birth of something special.

Tim Wagner

Tim Wagner's memories of our first rally and meeting.



Figures 8 & 9. Leonard Railsback's Stinson organ with well-designed Dutch trailer scenes on the left and Cliff Gray's 52-key Gebr. Bruder on the right.

Carousel Organ Association of America

Newsletter #1 Trolleyville, USA

Terry and Joan Haughwout arranged the first organ rally and meeting of C.O.A.A. (Carousel Organ Association of America) with the help of Dale and Dean Ridenour and the *Euclid Beach Nuts* organization.

The rally was held in Olmstead Falls, Ohio, at TROLLEYVILLE, U.S.A., on June 19, 20 and 21, 1998. Members brought organs from eleven states, some as far away as Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma, and New Jersey, as well as from Canada.



President-elect, Terry Haughwout, lays down the rules of the newly-formed COAA.

Ohio railroad station. As "exhibitors" we were allowed to "ride the rails" to our hearts content.

Many fellow collectors, friends and the general public stopped by over the three day period to see the park and hear the organs. Mike Gorski drove in with his Shay Model A Ford pulling his North Tonawanda Musical Instruments Works Organ.

As always, people enjoyed live calliope music played by Harvey Roehl. Frank and Hope Rider introduced their new Stinson organ, playing both Wurlitzer 165 and Stinson rolls.

We were glad to have Jefferson, Texas', Cliff and Robbie Gray back again with their great 52-key Bruder fairground organ.

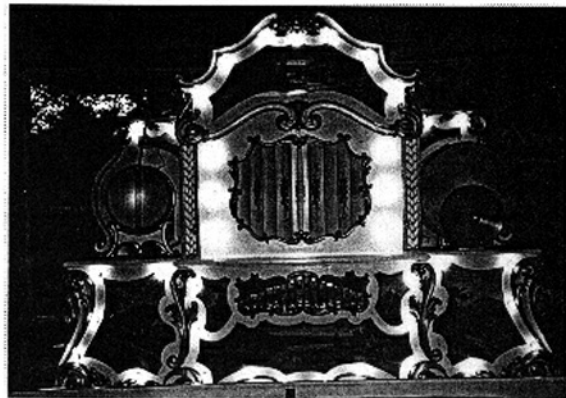
The *Euclid Beach Nuts* cordially provided us with lunch Saturday and that evening we enjoyed riding the trolley as a group to dinner and the business meeting of the COAA.

Officers were elected as follows: President, Terry Haughwout; Vice-President, Ron Bopp; Secretary-Treasurer, Marge Waters. Our next rally will be at the Dutch Village in Holland, Michigan on August 7, 8 and 9, 1998.

Hope Rider
Reporter
7/6/98

For the enjoyment of all, at this small park, eighteen fairground and band organs, a Tanglely calliope, and fourteen cart-mounted *Monkey Organs* played for most of three days. An oasis in suburbia, this unique park seems like one of the Cleveland area's best kept secrets!

Gerold E. Brookins started Columbia Park, a mobile home community some years ago. As it prospered, fellow railroad "Bufs" and transportation hobbyists helped to add rails, streetcars, trolleys and interurbans: thirty-one to date. To top it off they added the Berea,



Ed and Carol Kraus' Wurlitzer 153 organ displays nicely with the addition of lights.



Figure 11. Dan Wilke playing his Hofbauer hand organ on the trolley car.

Figure 12. Below, Richard Pauly cranks his Raffin trumpet organ



Figure 10. COAA's first newsletter, which two editions later, led to the formation of the *Carousel Organ*.

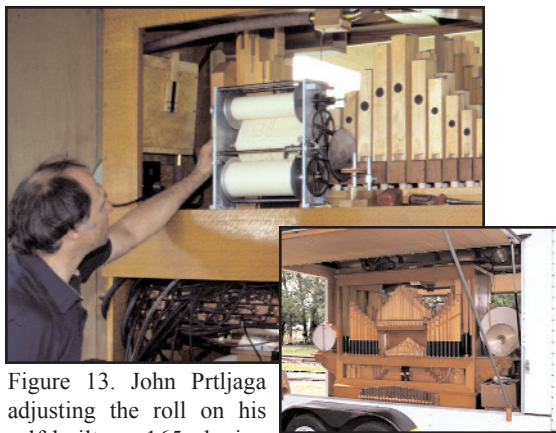


Figure 13. John Prtljaga adjusting the roll on his self-built, 165-playing band organ (inset).



Figure 14 (above). John Grant picks from one of several Wurlitzer Style 125 rolls to play on his organ.



Figure 15 (above, right). Dave Rohe brought a trailer full of organs: an Artizan A; a Niagara 180 and a Wurlitzer 146a.