

# An Update on the Organs of the Keweenaw

Janet Anuta Dalquist



Felgemaker keydesk, St. Albert the Great Roman Catholic Church

The Keweenaw (the Copper Country) of Michigan's Upper Peninsula has seen a change in their functioning pipe organs. Since the catalog of the Keweenaw organs was published (*THE DIAPASON*, February 2007<sup>1</sup>), two of the organs have been dismantled and removed from the area. However, the Barckhoff organ (*THE DIAPASON*, October 2009<sup>2</sup>) added to the count, and one instrument, the ca. 1900 Felgemaker organ, has been moved.

The A. B. Felgemaker had been built in 1882 for a Lutheran church in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The organ was moved to St. Cecilia's Catholic Church in Hubbell, Michigan sometime after 1905. After they learned that St. Cecilia's was to close in October 2007, the Organists of Keweenaw played a recital in the church in August 2007. There was an ongoing discussion among the Upper Peninsula's Catholic clergy and organists that the instrument should remain within the Marquette Diocese. The organ lay dormant until 2011.

In Houghton, a student Catholic church grew out of a very active Newman Club, which had first organized in 1946. St. Albert the Great Parish was established in 1963 and, with the exception of the priest, is maintained and "run" by student residents. The parish boasts almost 1,000 members.

In 2011, with approval of Bishop Alex Sample, St. Albert's priest, Father Al Mott, and organist John Ignatowski of St. Joseph and St. Patrick Parish of Escanaba, dismantled the St. Cecilia Felgemaker and moved it to St. Albert's. Assistance was sought from organbuilder James Lauck of Otsego, Michigan. It should be mentioned that Ignatowski had experience in moving and building an organ of his own.

The organ reservoir, keyboards, pedalboard and all the wooden pipes were sent to the Lauck shop. There, according to Lauck, "We rebuilt all of that equipment and repacked the stoppers on all of the wooden pipes. [On the very badly worn pedalboard] new walnut caps were made for the sharps and new maple key tops were made for the natural keys, all according to the original specifications. The reservoir was rebuilt and releathered. At some point, probably when the organ had an electric blower installed 90 or 100 years ago, the hand-pumped feeder bellows were removed from the reservoir and discarded. We built a new feeder bellows and pump handle and re-

stored the winding system to the original form. . . . The keyboards were rebuilt, and a new knee panel directly above the pedalboard was new, made to exactly match the other woodwork of the case, [and] a new blower was installed."

According to Lauck, the Felgemaker had probably been electrified when it was moved from the Wisconsin church to St. Cecilia's. The casework did not fit right, according to Lauck, because it had not been made for that church. Further, it had been varnished a dark brown color, which was not the original finish. At St. Albert's, Father Mott's mother, Jan, stripped the wood down to its original white oak and refinished the entire casework. In keeping with the Copper Country history, the façade pipes are painted copper.

The Keweenaw has fifteen working pipe organs, most dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Five are trackers, four of which retain hand pumps. Having played the last recital on the Felgemaker in August 2007, members of the Organists of Keweenaw played a recital again on the newly placed instrument on April 22.

The stoplist:

**St. Albert the Great Roman Catholic Church, Houghton, Michigan**  
**A. B. Felgemaker, Erie, Pennsylvania, ca. 1882, 2011**  
**Placement: loft, rear of sanctuary**

**GREAT**  
 16' Bourdon  
 8' Open Diapason  
 8' Flute  
 8' Dulciana  
 4' Octave  
 2' Super Octave  
 Bellows Signal

**SWELL**  
 8' Diapason  
 8' Viola  
 8' Aolina  
 4' Flute Harmonique  
 8' Oboe

**PEDAL**  
 16' Bourdon

**Couplers**  
 Swell to Great  
 Swell to Pedal  
 Great to Pedal

Swell pedal  
 Piano combination pedal  
 Forte combination pedal  
 Tremolo  
 780 pipes



A. B. Felgemaker, St. Albert the Great Roman Catholic Church, Houghton, Michigan



Bellows

## Notes

1. Janet Anuta Dalquist, "Pipe Organs of the Keweenaw: Houghton County, Michigan," *THE DIAPASON*, February 2007, pp. 20-26.

2. Anita Campbell, "A Pipe Dream Comes True: The Keweenaw Heritage Center's Barckhoff Organ," *THE DIAPASON*, October 2009, pp. 24-25.

Janet Anuta Dalquist holds degrees from Macalester College, McCormick Theological Seminary, and the University of Michigan. She began playing for church services at the age of 12, served as a substitute organist in various churches from 1956-1988, and in 1989 was appointed organist at Portage Lake United Church (UPUSA/UCC), Houghton, Michigan. She retired from Portage Lake Church in May 2011, and continues as a substitute organist. She is a co-founder of the Organists of the Keweenaw and holds memberships in the AGO, PAM, ALCM, OHS, and the Hymn Society. As a professional academic librarian, she served as director of the Suomi College (now Finlandia University) library from 1968 to 1984 and



Stop knobs

as collection manager of the J. Robert Van Pelt Library at Michigan Technological University in Houghton from 1984 to 1994.

The author thanks James Lauck for providing information about his work and her son David Dalquist for "tweaking" the photos up to an acceptable publishing standard.

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