

ORGAN OF MANY BRANDS FINDS HOME IN MICHIGAN

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It's a strange hobby for a sailor -- er -- seaman. But his interest in theatre organs started long before Jon Habermaas decided to view the world through a porthole.

That was when the Habermaas family lived in Chicago. Young Jon got a job with an organ installer and learned how to assemble and install organs, mostly in churches but many were ex-theatre organs. During this period his interest was kept alive by a 2-6 Barton which he had repaired in the Jeffery Theatre, in Chicago's south shore district. When the Barton was sold to a church, Jon was given the percussions and noise-makers. Then he started horse trading for parts in earnest. After acquiring a small Morton organ from a dark theatre, Jon was nearly ready to assemble the "thing," which by now had mushroomed all over the basement of the Habermaas dwelling.

Part of Jon's good fortune in locating organ parts was his long association with D. S. Wentz, the organ installer who had hired Jon just for a summer and then kept him on the payroll for over three years. When an instrument would come into the shop as part of a trade and there were parts that Wentz couldn't use (such as purely theatre organ ranks

and percussions), he would offer them to Jon for a pittance, often for free. For example, a 2-5 Robert Morton console which had not survived a New Year's

Eve party in a lodge hall came into the shop. The woodwork caught Jon's eye. "It was such a handsome looking console, mahogany. I just had to have it." Because it was to be replaced (presumably by a celebration-proof console) Mr. Wentz gave the beat console to Jon who dragged it home to further clutter the basement. As was customary on small Mortons, this console was equipped with switches for unification. Slowly the pile of ill-matched parts was accumulating the basics of an organ.

The Habermaas family has a history of music and a continuing interest. Dad Charles is a professional organist known as "Bill Charles." And besides Jon there is brother Bill, now 19, and sister Joanne, now 15. It was Joanne who became what Jon refers to as his "right hand man." That started when she was only nine years old. At the ripe old age of 15 the little sister has gained a good



LITTLE SISTER — Joanne Habermass is an experienced organ technician — at 15.

technical background of how an organ works; she's rarely had a soldering iron out of her hand since 1961.

So Jon assembled the organ in the cellar. He had many brands of parts — Barton, Robert Morton, Kimball, Wur-litzer, Page and Gottfried, or "Bar Mor-KimblitzerPaGot" for short. He enjoyed his few ranks for awhile and then started to enlarge. At nine ranks the beast in Jon's basement was starting to shoot tendrils up the cellar stairway. The laundry was first to go upstairs. It was time to move. Meanwhile Jon had joined the Navy.

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Above. Some of Jon's pipework, percussors and toy counter as installed in the Fennville home. Note the horizontal installation of the bass flute pipes — pit organ style.

Left: THIS IS A STEPMOTHER? This shot, made four years ago, shows Jon (background) and Joanne looking on as Doris (Mrs. Charles) Habermaas packs Vox pipes. The enthusiasm of the children and husband soon "got through" to Doris, making the organ a family affair.

The decision to find a larger pasture for the growing organ was made while Jon was bobbing about on a sea-going tug in Puget Sound; so much of the job of disassembly fell to Dad and Sis. Jon was thankful he had trained them well. He could work on the job only during infrequent leaves, one of which got him home to pack the pipework. That was in 1963. The organ then went into storage.

It had been a lot of work. "I'll never refer to it as a 'small' organ again," said dad after all parts had been stashed safely.

Finding a spacious house was the next problem. There was considerable searching which fanned out from Chicago, and finally a suitable 3-story house, one with lots of upstairs and attic space, was located in Fennville, Michigan.

Neighbors watched in amazement as the movers started littering the newcomer's lawn with chests, wind conductor, regulators, swell shutters, floor frame, a



HE STARTED IT — Electronics Tech. 1st Class Jon C. Habermass is now at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center (Illinois) — much closer to Fennville than Seattle or San Diego.

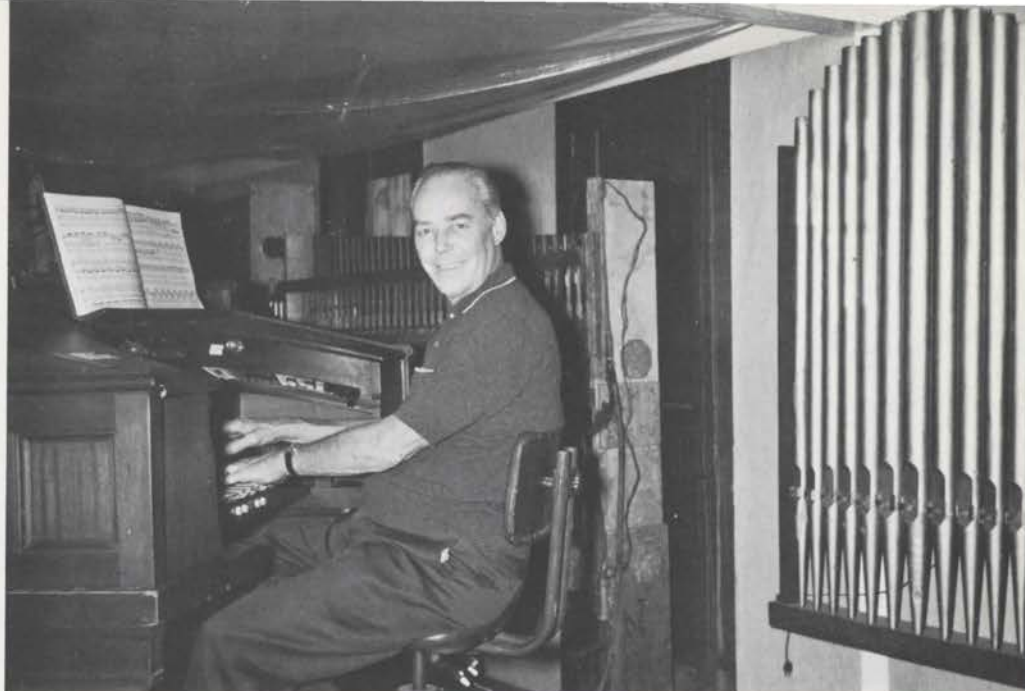
blower, console and a mess of bass pipes too large to pack.

"Them new folks sure have a lot of funny-looking furniture" remarked a native to one of the movers.

The man replied, "I don't know about their furniture. Haven't seen it. Gotta get the pipe organ moved first!"

The native retreated in bewilderment. Five tons of organ was too much to accept on short notice.

All this activity took place while Electronics Technician 1st Class Jon Habermass was exercising his sea legs aboard the USS Tanuck, off Bremerton, Washington.



Jon's dad, Charles Habermass (Bill Charles professionally), plays the three ranks winded so far. Note the display pipes behind him.

Currently the Habermass "organ installation unit" has three ranks of pipes installed unenclosed and playing in a second floor 10' x 30' glass-enclosed sun porch. That's while the huge attic is being remodeled to cram in the better than 800 pipes, chests, relays — even the blower. The console will remain where it is, on the sun porch. Swell shutters may be installed in the ceiling or ducts built to conduct the sound down from the attic.

Jon admits that work will be slow because Dad and Sis must work shorthanded except when he can talk the Navy into a leave. But he's happy to have room enough now in which to install a maximum (maybe!) of twelve ranks properly. And then there's that day when he'll kiss the briny goodby and come ashore permanently. Something good will be waiting.

In the meantime it's just three ranks — or a "MorKimBart."

STOP LIST

Installation Plan for the Habermass "BarMorKimbliTzerPaGott"

PEDAL

- 16' Tibia
- 16' Flute
- 8' Tibia
- 8' Flute
- 8' Diapason
- 8' Cello
- 8' Trumpet
- 8' Posthorn
- 4' Octave Diapason

(Pedal Second Touch)

- Bass Drum (Morton)
- Tympani (Morton)
- Snare Drum (Barton)
- Cymbal (Morton)
- Triangle (Morton)
- Chimes (Morton)

ACCOMPANIMENT

- 16' Tibia
- 16' Violin
- 8' Tibia Clausa (Morton)
- 8' Flute (Morton)
- 8' Violin (Morton)
- 8' Viole Celeste (Gottfried)
- 8' Diapason (Kilgen)
- 8' Trumpet (Kimball)
- 8' Posthorn (revoiced Kimball Oboe Horn)
- 8' Vox Humana (Kimball)
- 8' French Horn (Page)
- 4' Tibia
- 4' Flute
- 4' Violin

- 4' Viole Celeste
- 4' Diapason
- 2-2/3' Tibia Twelfth
- 2' Tibia Piccolo
- Marimba Harp (Barton)
- Chrysoglott Harp (Barton)
- (An 8' Dulciana and 8' Unda Maris will be added to improve accompaniment capabilities, probably on the accompaniment manual only.)

(Acc. Second Touch)

- Castanets (Barton)
- Tambourine, I (Barton)
- Tambourine II (Morton)
- Wood Block (Barton)
- Tom Tom (Barton)
- Triangle (Morton)
- Snare Drum (Barton)
- 8' Tibia
- 8' Diapason
- 8' Trumpet
- 8' Posthorn
- Chimes

SOLO

- 16' Tibia
- 16' Flute
- 16' Viole (TC)
- 8' Tibia Clausa
- 8' Concert Flute
- 8' Violin
- 8' Viole Celeste
- 8' Diapason
- 8' Trumpet
- 8' Posthorn
- 8' Vox Humana

- 8' French Horn
- 4' Tibia
- 4' Orch. Flute
- 4' Violin
- 4' Viole Celeste
- 4' Diapason
- 4' Trumpet Clarion
- 4' Posthorn
- 4' Vox Humana
- 4' French Horn
- 2-2/3' Tibia Twelfth
- 2-2/3' Flute Nazard
- 2' Tibia Piccolo
- 2' Flute Piccolo
- 1-3/5' Tibia Tierce
- Marimba Harp
- Chrysoglott Harp
- Xylophone
- Orchestral Bells

(Solo Second Touch)

- 16' Tibia
- 8' Diapason
- 16' Trumpet (TC)

Effects available on the toe pistons are:

1. Drums
2. Cymbals
3. Trolley Bell (Chicago Authority)
4. Auto Horn (Chevrolet)
5. Bird Call I (Morton)
6. Bird Call II (Barton)

Blower is a 3 horsepower Orgoblo with 12-1/2" static wind pressure. Solo voices are on 9" wind, others on 5".