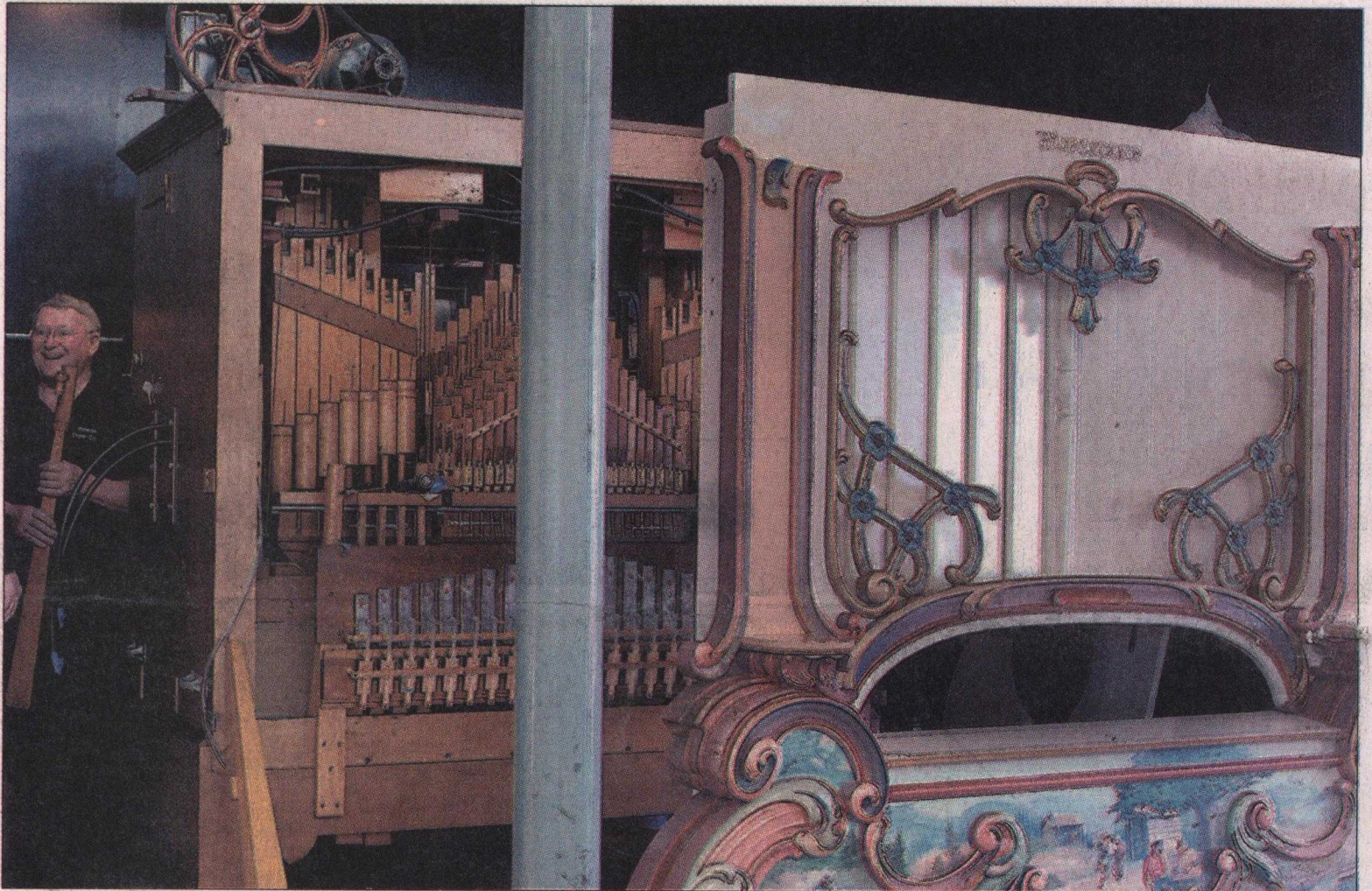


# Hearing history

The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk acquires rare antique band organ



Shaminder Dulai/Sentinel photos

**ABOVE:** Organ architect Don Stinson, 75, came from Ohio to help tune the 1918 Wurlitzer band organ for the Boardwalk. The carousel building is getting a makeover that will make room for all three organs owned by the Boardwalk: the original 1894 Ruth und Sohn, a Wurlitzer 146 and the newest acquisition, a Wurlitzer 165. **TOP:** Stinson tunes the organ at the carousel Friday.

## Boardwalk Wurlitzer 165 once part of S.F.'s Playland at the Beach

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The Boardwalk celebrates its centennial this year. In an occasional series through summer, the Sentinel will examine the park's cultural, political and economic role in the community.

By **JONDI GUMZ**  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

SANTA CRUZ — Behind the scenes at the Beach Boardwalk, sound engineer

Donaven Staab is getting the amusement park's newest attraction ready for a closeup. It's a 1918 Wurlitzer "165" band organ, which entertained people at San Francisco's Playland at the Beach until 1972. Fewer than a dozen are known to exist today.

During a tuning session Friday afternoon, the organ loudly played a rollicking melody, a perfect accompaniment for a ride on the landmark Loeff Carousel.

"It was designed for a dance hall with 2,000 people," Staab said. "I can't wait for everybody to hear it."

The \$250,000 antique has been outfitted with MIDI [Musical Instrument Digital Interface], which performs hundreds of songs, from the William Tell Overture to "Under the Boardwalk."

The organ was discovered just in time

### On the Net

Workers get a newly acquired 1918 Wurlitzer organ tuned up and ready to play its part at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk carousel in an audio slideshow. [WWW.SANTACRUZSENTINEL.COM](http://WWW.SANTACRUZSENTINEL.COM).

See **ORGAN** on **PAGE A12**

4-2-07





Shaminder Dulai/Sentinel photos

Donaven Staab looks over the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk's newly purchased 1918 Wurlitzer 165 organ, which will join two others already at the carousel.

# Organ

Continued from Page A1

for this year's centennial of the amusement park, which is run by the Santa Cruz Seaside Co.

Staab, 43, who has worked at the

Boardwalk for 16 years, got a tip from a friend, Dan Horenberger of Carousel News and Trader, that the Wurlitzer was available. The 165 model, produced in upstate New York, is larger than the Boardwalk's Wurlitzer 146.

**'We listened to the organ and fell in love.'**

**DONAVEN STAAB, SOUND ENGINEER, BOARDWALK**

Staab flew to Indiana with Seaside Co. president Charles

Canfield to meet broker Tim Trager, an organ enthusiast. They met restorer Hayes McClaren, who lives in Batesville, outside Indianapolis, and owns a collection of mechanical music machines in a room the size of a basketball court.

"We listened to the organ and fell in love," Staab said.

Staab was impressed by the



Tuning of the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk's newly purchased 1918 Wurlitzer 165 organ began at 8 a.m. and continued throughout the day Friday.

organ's intricate mechanics, a system of motors, pulleys, flywheels and bellows. The exterior is beautifully painted, with a rendering of the Cliff House above the beach in San Francisco, and scenes of 1850s goldmining in California.

McClaren, who is in his 70s, had considered selling before but never found the right owner. He felt that sending the 2,000-pound Wurlitzer back to California made sense.

After all, the Boardwalk paid \$50,000 to acquire "Laughing Sal," another Playland icon, in 2004. She's now chuckling near Neptune's Kingdom.

Canfield, whose family has been in charge of the Boardwalk since 1952, is pleased to preserve another piece of amusement park history.

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