



Some of the strangest and most pitiable sounds which the St. Mary's girl will hear this fall--continuous sighs, squeaks, squeals--will come, not from students desperate in the library, but rather from the organ in St. Mary's Chapel. In fact, the organ has gotten into such bad shape during the last few years that one expert has judged it to be "one of the worst in Christendom." The Chaplain habitually warns future brides who plan to be married in the Chapel that they should be safe and hire a string quartet. I thought that I would inaugurate this year's series of "Behind the Desk" essays by presenting to St. Mary's students an account of how our school owns such a famously-unsuccessful instrument, by telling about recommendations for the future, and then by evaluating these recommendations.

Almost every organist would agree that the present organ, built 30 years ago by the Reuter Company of Lawrence, Kansas, was never a fine instrument, even in its heyday: it lacked the clarity and variety of good organs. And then, time has not treated the Reuter well. Even though it is a real organ--with pipes--it contains much electrical circuitry, and this has deteriorated to the extent that notes disappear, leaving audible holes in chords. The leather sides of the wind reservoirs have rotted: the escaping air causes the "wind-rustling-through-the-trees" effect, audible through the whole Chapel, and produces such shaky wind pressure that the organ cannot be tuned. Squirrels have burrowed into the organ chambers (on the Gospel side of the chancel) and have hidden nuts and built nests among pipes and electrical circuits; the organ repairman has even found pecan hulls in between the keys of the console, all the way on the epistle side.

Back in 1980, Mr. Rice named a committee to study the problem. It concluded that the present organ is not at all salvageable: St. Mary's could spend \$20,000 on a rebuild and still have a radically unsuccessful instrument, one lacking the clarity and proper sounds for playing the organ works of Bach. Instead, the committee recommended the purchase of a completely new organ of modest size, with two manuals and

pedal. The proposed organ would contain 25 ranks or sets of pipes, each rank containing from 32-56 pipes, and would be built by the Gabriel Kney Company of London, Ontario, Canada. This organ would be constructed with mechanical, moving connections between the keys and pipes, unlike the Reuter, which, as I mentioned before, uses the sort of electrical connections which deteriorate after a few decades. The recommended organ would, in both construction and sound, resemble the instruments of the Baroque Period: 1600-1750. Since many of the organs are still playable after three centuries, we may hope that, with proper maintenance, the recommended new organ could last that long--a far better record than the Reuter, virtually unuseable after less than a third of a century. The only drawback is money: such a well-constructed organ, especially built for our Chapel, would require thousands of hours from highly skilled craftsmen; the materials would be of the finest--real woods and special alloys of pure metals. The fee would reflect both this craftsmanship and these materials: it would be about \$170,000.

Unless one is from the U.S. Department of Defense, it is always easy to object to the expenditure of such sums. One could object that the new organ would not be played by St. Mary's girls, since there are no organ students at St. Mary's (there is, I must hasten to add, a very fine organ teacher, Mrs. Sharon Reed). And it is possible to object that the St. Mary's students and alumnae have no interest in organ music: they talk loudly during the organ pieces played during Tuesday-night Chapel and alumnae events. It would be, after all, quite expensive to pay \$170,000 to provide background for gossip and reunions.

Such objections are probably shortsighted. They ignore the fact that people other than the St. Mary's girls would hear the organ: it would be used at weddings and funerals; it would be used as a recital instrument by outside players as well as by Profs. Quinn (of the Religion Department), Reed, and myself. (I know of no other small school, aside from the music conservatories, which can boast of so many organists on its staff.) Then, too, such objections are pessimistic. With a good organ, St. Mary's would perhaps attract organ students. And we may hope that, with music played which is worth listening to, the St. Mary's girls would begin to attend to it: they would then find themselves developing their skills as listeners--one of the most pleasurable things that can befall a creature with ears. And then, probably even more important, they would perhaps begin to experience that

(Continued on Page 4)

CAREER CORNER

ON CHOOSING A MAJOR

How does one go about choosing a major? For seniors at St. Mary's this question becomes extremely important as soon as an application to a senior college sits waiting to be completed. College is expensive, both in terms of money and time, and the choice of a major can be a costly one if made hastily or thoughtlessly. There is abundant help available at St. Mary's in the guidance office in lower Smedes. The trick is to set aside some time on a regular basis--an hour a week or so--to do some exploring and to gain enough information about yourself, the majors being considered, and the world of work.

The first step often is to assess one's interests. Several tools are available to help with self assessment in an organized objective way. One is the Educational Interest Survey which will inventory the kinds of activity one likes and key those interests to various academic majors. The Self Directed Search is another such instrument. Others are available varying in the time and effort needed to use them. Another step is to ascertain that the majors of interest are available at the college or university desired.

The Four Year College Data Service Book lists majors alphabetically and under each major, a list by states of institutions which offer the major.

Once one narrows the majors and institutions of interest down to a manageable size, it is wise to explore what careers related to those choices are available. Reality testing often becomes a great influence at this point.

In the Occupational Outlook Handbook, one can fine up to date, brief descriptions of the nature of the work, working conditions, places of employment, training, other qualifications and advancement, the employment outlook, earnings, and related occupations. The table of contents of this book readily serves as a means of expanding one's choices, pinpointing areas of occupations, or identifying job titles. It also contains a file number which will refer one to additional information in a given field.

The choice of a college major is a vital decision. It should be made carefully, based on sound information about oneself, the educational opportunities available, and the outlook from the world of work. Most women today will join the work force for at least part of their lives. A majority will spend 27.6 or more years in the labor force, according to Broadening Career Options for Women by Caryl Smith, et al. The same source states that today 42 percent of the labor force is women and projects that there will be 52 million women workers by 1990. In 1980 50 percent of all married women were working or looking for work. If one is to spend more than a fourth of her life in the working world, it makes sense to begin

(Continued on Page 4)