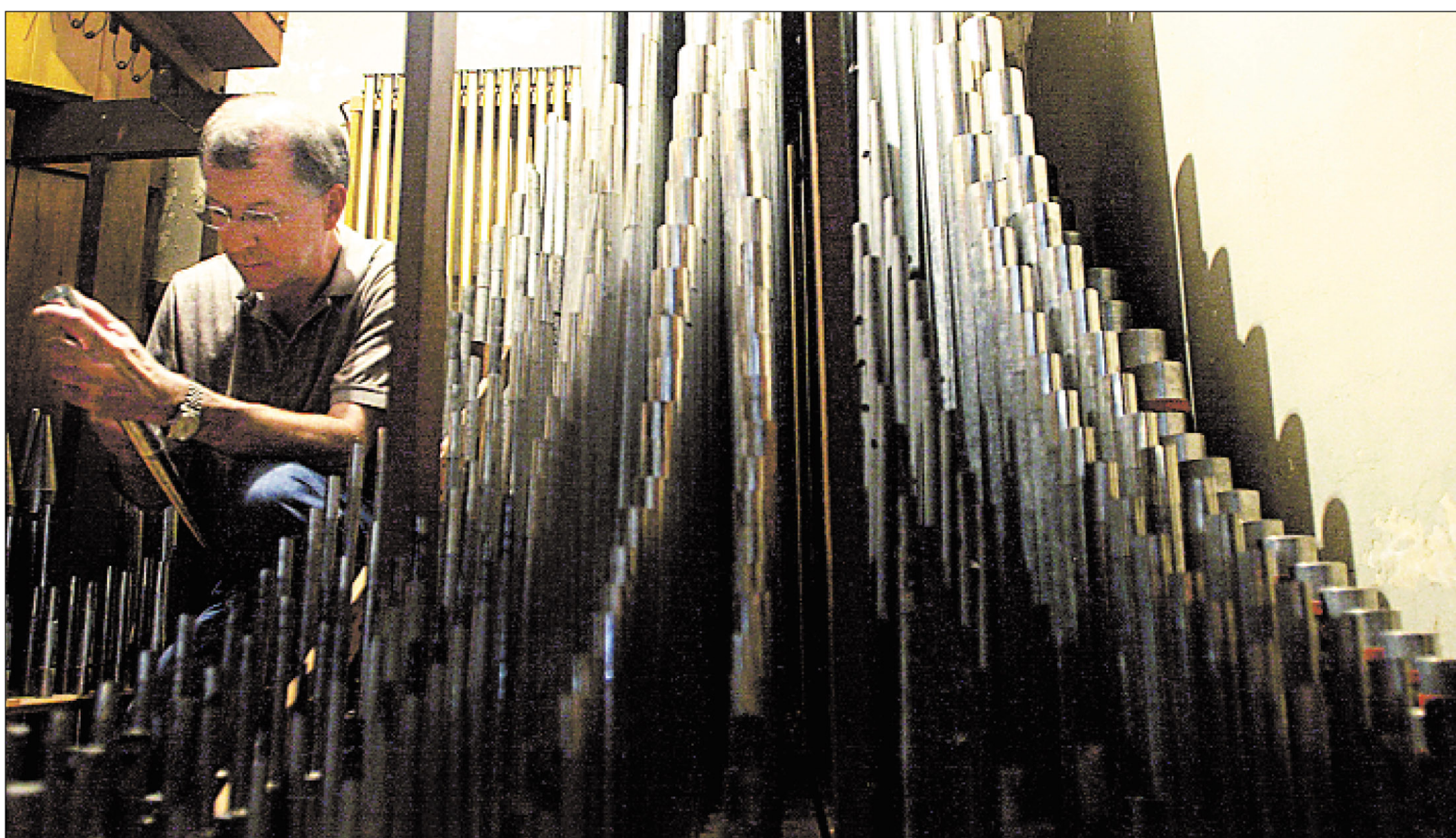


As part of the project to restore the pipe organ at First Presbyterian Church, the console of the organ was gutted and refitted with a microprocessor and other electrical components. Church organist Jeanie Lanneau's hands are reflected in her glasses as she rehearses music for the Sunday service. At right, organ builder and restorer Troy Scott helps adjust the organ, located in the church balcony area.

Pipe dreams

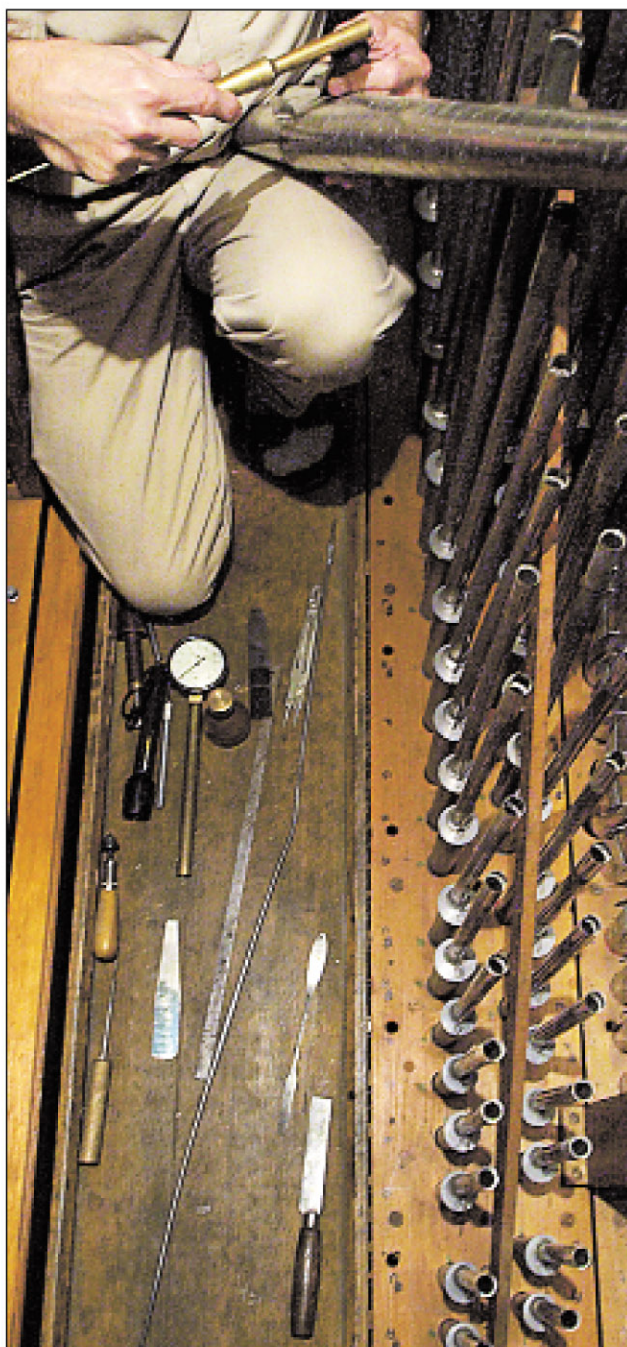
Project to restore organ at First Presbyterian Church completed



Restoring a pipe organ often means working in tight places. Organ builder and restorer Madison Lindsey sits between sets of pipes in one of the pipe chambers at First Presbyterian Church as he adjusts the sound quality of one of the pipes. Lindsey and Troy Scott of Laurel are making adjustments to complete an 18-month project, which will be celebrated with an organ recital May 23.



Madison Lindsey, above, reaches over several tiers of pipes to replace one that has been adjusted for sound and tonal quality. To work on the pipes in all of the three chambers, Lindsey uses numerous tools, including various knives and an air pressure gauge. The tools are used to control the air in the pipes. Inset, all of the old leather valves, like the darker one at left, have deteriorated over time; they have been replaced with valves, such as the one at right, made of kangaroo leather.



The ominous sound was there — was not there, that is. Former First Presbyterian Church organist Anna Rose Davis sounded the warning several years ago and brought evidence with her to meetings of the church governing board.

Small pieces of leather, old and tattered, no longer functioned. The organist played notes and got no response, as the leather pouches could not capture air — part of the pipe organ's complicated workings now gone.

Jeanie Lanneau, organist at the church for the past two years, was on that governing board when the first plea was made for an organ restoration. The estimate to repair the instrument was in the many thousands of dollars.

Lanneau's commitment to continue a plea for organ restoration came to fruition 18 months ago, and today the organ stands like new — new leather pouches, a new computer-driven heart and many other fine and up-to-date features that call for celebration, she said.

"When I started playing two years ago, I noticed the notes that wouldn't play. I called the company that works on the organ, and they told me it was a leather issue," Lanneau said. "They said, 'if you don't do this work now, you'll be calling us in a couple of years to haul the organ away.'"

Looking at different funds available and adding organ work to a recent capital improvement program, the church governing board found the money to hire Pipe Organ Specialties of Laurel to do the necessary work — including replacing all the leather on the pouch boards, thousands of pieces in different sizes.

"It's kangaroo leather. Look at it and feel it," Lanneau said, as she showed off an example of the work, which will be completed with a complete retuning of the organ next week prior to a celebratory recital on May 23 by Mark T. Engelhardt, organist and director of music for the



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