



# William Wood Organ



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## Organ Dream Comes True for Long-Ago Skating Couple

By Monica St. Germain (Special Correspondent)  
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port (special) - Like many young couples of today, when Richard and Mary Pitts were , they skated to the music of a theater organ at the Oaks Roller Skating Rink in . Today, they enjoy the music from the same organ in the living room of their overlooking Yaquina Bay.

not an easy trip for the organ from the to Newport but the instrument, now g its half-century birthday, has found a home.

specially for the Oaks in 1922 by the n Wood Organ Co., the organ panned a galaxy of skaters for about 30 . Then it was moved to the Point Adams Base for a few more years, until it was considered worn out and put into storage in Astoria.

It was about that time Richard Pitts, owner of a Newport boat repair shop, heard about the organ from a customer. At that time, Pitts hobby was steam engines, but he had a soft spot in his heart for pipe organs ever since his boyhood when he paid nickels at the Liberty Theater in Oregon City, not to see pictures, but to listen to pipe organ music.

Mary Pitts recalls that the organ was just a couple truckloads of "junk" when it first arrived at their home.

They knocked out a wall of their living room, built on an extension with a lowered floor and raised ceiling just to accommodate the instrument and the vibrant sounds it produces. Then they converted their garage into a pipe



**Helen Heppner 1934 at the Wm Wood Console**  
Its pipes were originally mounted on North wall of rink

room for some 1,250 pipes, ranging in size from 1/2 inch to 17 feet.

## Bells, Whistles Aplenty

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Richard Pitts used to take his date, now his wife, Mary, to skate at the Oaks Park Roller Skating Rink. They loved the organ music. Now, the same organ is installed in their home at Newport, with 1,250 pipes placed in the garage.

With many weekends of help from friends, most of them also theater organ enthusiasts, more than 50 miles of wire were soldered. The first note was played February 27, 1967, but since each note is individually connected it wasn't until July of the same year that the organ was playable.

The organ has 16 ranks of pipes, with each rank representing one instrument and playing 61 notes. Some additional instruments: drums, xylophone, glockenspiel, tamborine, chimes, and an instrument called "chrysogiot" are also played off the keyboard. A series of large round buttons at the top of the foot pedals produce such delightful sounds as birds, bells, and whistles.

"I guess more people have enjoyed music from this instrument than from any other organ in Oregon," Pitts remarks.

And apparently the Pitts' want to keep it that way, for concerts and parties are scheduled (or impromptu) for friends, and each year the Pitts pay host to a meeting of Oregon theater organ enthusiasts.

In fact, you needn't even be invited to their home to enjoy the organ, for the full rich tones can be heard up and down the street.

Like children following the Pied Piper, strangers often follow the sound of the music up the hill. They may enter as strangers, but usually leave as friends and theater organ enthusiasts.

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Mary  
Pitts  
at the

console, said the organ was a coupe of truck - loads of "junk" when they found it in Astoria.

It was built in 1922 especially for the Oaks by the William Wood Organ Co., used 30 years.

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