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# PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Published monthly by Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society, a non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, preservation and use of the Theatre Pipe Organs of yesteryear. PSTOS is a Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society.

Volume 16 No. 10

October 2005

PUGET SOUND  
THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

A Chapter of American Theatre Organ Society  
Recipient of the Phi Beta Kappa Pathfinder Award for excellence in education

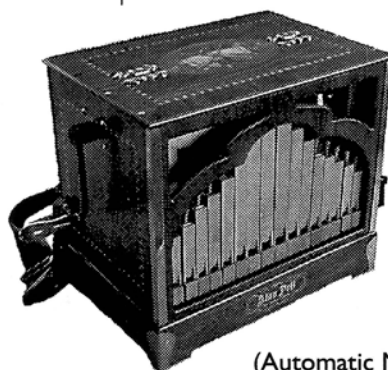
## Coming October 23rd! Another FUN GALA...

# OKTOBERFEST

Spotlighting...



**Professor Hokum W. Jeebs**  
with German/Bavarian festival favorites on  
his famous tuba, AND on the pipe organ!



Also enjoy  
**Rob Wilson** and his  
20-note hand cranked  
portable "monkey  
organ" with bellows to  
provide air for the  
pipes. Rob is a member  
of AMICA

(Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors Assoc.)

## Great German Food

German sausages & rolls, sauerkraut, hot German potato  
salad, apple dessert, SUDS and other beverages.

**Sunday, October 23, 1:30 PM**

Haller Lake Community Club  
12579 Densmore Ave. N. • Seattle

All food and drink plus a full afternoon of wonderful entertainment included.

**JUST \$10 PER PERSON • A GREAT ENTERTAINMENT BARGAIN!**

Food will be ordered based on the number of reservations received.

It's **IMPERATIVE** that you reserve by October 17 at 206-784-7154 or [colmiller@comcast.net](mailto:colmiller@comcast.net)

See Page 6 for DRIVE DIRECTIONS

## PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Vol. 16, No 10 – October 2005

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Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society

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Kenmore, WA 98028-3453

Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is a non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, restoration, and use of the historic Theatre Pipe Organs of the 1920s, through education.

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Sunshine Chairman –Diane Whipple, 253-856-1156

Hospitality, H.L.C.C.—Ellen Sullivan, 206-365-7554

#### Listing of non-PSTOS events in the Pipeline

PSTOS, upon request, will list non-conflicting non-PSTOS theatre organ events in the "Other Events" column of the two Pipelines immediately preceding the event, providing Pipeline editors receive sufficient prior written notification. Venue, artist, type of event, date, and contact information will comprise the included information.

#### Advertising in the Pipeline

Classified-type ads for member-owned electronic, electric, or pipe organs, and/or pipe organ parts, will be published at no charge. Please limit copy to include brief description, contact name and phone number. Prices will not be listed. Ads may be edited for content and length. Mail ad copy to address above. Other advertising is not accepted.

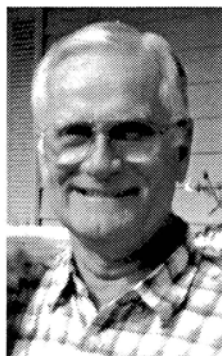
#### Joining Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is quick and easy!

For a one year membership, send a \$15 check payable to PSTOS together with your name(s) as you would like them to appear on your name badges, your address with complete 9-digit ZIP code, and your email address (optional) to:

Norman Miller, Treasurer, 2644 NW Esplanade, Seattle, WA 98117-2527.

## PRESIDENT'S Message

Every PSTOS member has a personal interest in the Wurlitzer at Haller Lake Community Club. After all, it is ours. The maintenance crew has added a Clarinet and replaced the wimpy Violin



Celeste with a perfect match for the Violin. They have taken the time and effort to rearrange the stop tabs on the replacement Marr & Colton console so they are in the exact order one would expect on a Wurlitzer console. There are a couple of issues yet to be solved with a couple of Kinura pipes and one Trumpet, but this instrument is a jewel and is worthy of your attention. Practice and playing times are a little hard to arrange since the building is in constant use, but our goal is to have the available times posted on the PSTOS website by year end. So, if you want to play a real theatre pipe organ, you can do so with a little effort. Just so you know, the organ is a Wurlitzer Style D with three added ranks. The Style D was the most popular Wurlitzer model and every name theatre organist played one at some time in their career. Rumor has it that Andy Crow will put this one through its paces at our annual Christmas Party in December.

If you made it to St. Mark's on the 18th you have heard one of our scholarship recipients in a full classical concert on a major instrument. You should be proud to be part of PSTOS's efforts to get young folk interested in the pipe organ. Don't be concerned that Daniel is playing only classics at this time. There are a lot of top artists who play both theatre and classics. The styles feed off each other. Your Scholarship Committee continues to seek applicants for our scholarships. If you know someone who needs assistance with lessons, please let a board member know.

Check the Coming Events columns. Be part of the action!

## PSTOS Coming Events

### Oktoberfest Celebration

Featuring the always popular Professor Hokum W. Jeebs, great German food, plus music on the Chapter pipe organ. Details on cover page. Haller Lake Community Club.

**Sunday, October 23, 2pm**

### Annual Holiday Celebration

Haller Lake Community Club

**Sunday, December 4**

### What's being planned for 2006?

Events at Kenyon Hall, Haller Lake, Paramount Theatre, an event at the Jack & Mary Lou Becvar home, and other great places. What's on your wish list? Let us know. Send an email to [board@pstos.org](mailto:board@pstos.org)

## Other NW Theatre Organ Events

**Hear the Wurlitzer at WEST SEATTLE'S KENYON HALL (formerly Hokum Hall) every week.**

For program information and reservations phone (206) 937-3613. On the web at [www.kenyonhall.org](http://www.kenyonhall.org)

**WASHINGTON CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS in Olympia announces a silent movie series**

with Dennis James at the Wurlitzer:

**Oct. 31,** Phantom of the Opera (1925) with Lon Chaney, Mary Philbin

**Nov. 7,** The Cat and the Canary (1927) Laura LaPlante, Creighton Hale

**Nov. 14,** The Bells (1926), Lionel Barrymore, Boris Karloff

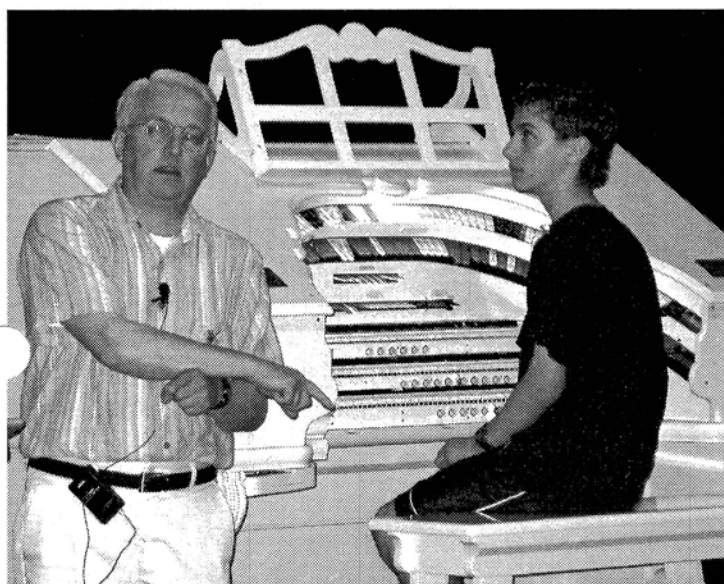
**The Wurlitzer at MT. VERNON'S LINCOLN THEATRE is played prior to the movie on Monday & Tuesday at 7PM, and on Friday & Sunday at 5PM.**

# From The MAILBOX

**Talented young Nathan Avakian's attendance at the Colorado State University Theatre Organ Workshop was made possible by a grant from the PSTOS Scholarship Fund. Nathan shares his experiences with the membership...**

In August I had the tremendous pleasure of attending a theatre organ workshop held in Fort Collins, Colorado, at Colorado State University. Donna Parker, my organ teacher, was the first to interest me in going. By the time she told me it would give me a chance to play in a variety of venues and be critiqued by a world-renowned, skilled and well-respected organist, I had already made up my mind that I wanted to go. Then she told me that the world-renowned organist was Jonas Nordwall! The perfect opportunity was created when PSTOS and CROC (Columbia River Organ Club) each provided a \$500 grant from scholarship funds to pay my expenses. I am extremely grateful for the funds they contributed as it would have been difficult for me to attend the workshop otherwise.

The workshop proved to be very beneficial. I learned more



Nathan's performance is critiqued by Jonas Nordwall at the Colorado State University Theatre Organ Workshop in August.

than I ever thought was possible in five days! I was informed about all the major developments in the theatre organ in the 19th century, how to feel comfortable when playing, how to pick popular songs to play, methods to create rhythms, how to arrange a song, and the concepts of registration. That was just the first day! With all the information crammed into the small time given, it would be very easy for this class to have been turned into a boring lecture, but Mr. Nordwall did an excellent job of keeping me interested by sharing personal stories and using his sense of humor.

There were three evening concerts during the week. It was wonderful to hear Jonas and a variety of other organists play and, with my newfound knowledge gained at the workshop, I realize what went on to prepare and work up to those concerts. Over the course of the week, I was treated to two (very funny, I might add) Laurel and Hardy silent movies. There was even a night of classical music during which we visited two classical organs—one on the CSU campus, and another at a nearby Methodist Church. Doug and Cheryl Thompson, who have organized the annual workshop for many years, made me feel right at home. They even hosted a barbeque at their house for everyone who came for the workshop.

The last day of the week was the most fun. Everyone piled into vans for the drive to the Colorado Springs area to visit three different theatre organs. At each stop Mr. Nordwall gave a short concert, and then there was open console for everyone, where I got a chance to play.

I enjoyed myself very much during this trip—the CSU campus was beautiful. I learned a lot and was exposed to many different organists and styles of playing. I met a lot of great people and made a few friends that I'm still keeping in touch with. Once again, I am very grateful for the scholarships from PSTOS and CROC, and I want to thank everyone who contributed to those scholarship funds that made this opportunity possible.  
...Sincerely, Nathan Avakian

## **Some interesting history about the Mt. Baker Wurlitzer from member Richard Warburton...**

I thought I'd add a bit of correction to the newsletter this time, centering around the myth about Jesse Crawford playing the Wurlitzer in Bellingham. To the best of my knowledge, the only other Crawford who played it was Rosila Scott Crawford. John Dugan knew her and she just happens to have been my great-grandmother.

The bit about Jesse Crawford playing the organ is a good story and I'm sure he would have enjoyed the organ, but he would have had to travel a lot to play it, as he went to New York along about 1927 also.

First off the Mt. Baker organ was not playable at the Grand Opening as the installers had not gotten there.

Secondly Jesse had vanished in the dark of the night and headed for L.A. to work for Syd Grauman more than a year before the Mt. Baker organ was playable. In the time between the opening of the Mt. Baker and the finishing of the organ, Gunnar Anderson and Einor Moen accompanied the films on two Steinway pianos.

My source of information is three-fold. First is John Dugan who was a laborer in the construction of the theatre. John and one other dug the pit for the organ lift. John remained after opening as a janitor until moving to Seattle in 1951. John introduced me to the Wurlitzer when I was 13 and I never forgot my thoughts when I pulled the cover off and there were all those colored teeth waiting to bite me...

Second source is Maymee Rowlands,

who was my teacher and who played relief organ at the Mt. Baker, American and Avalon theatres. She and Anna Spees alternated playing the afternoon matinee. Joyce Brown was the evening organist and played the overture and lead-in. Edwin Ahern, who was conservatory trained, played the 3-manual tubular Kimball at the Grand Theatre and the 5-rank Wurlitzer at the Avalon Theatre. There were two other theatres on Holly St. The one beside the alley just east of the National Bank had a 5-rank Kimball. Gunnar Anderson played it and took lessons from Maymee Rowlands on it. A block and a half west on Holly in what was the Fashion Bootery years later and still exists, also had a 2/5 Kimball. There was also a theatre on the corner of Holly and Cornwall in a basement setting.



# Pages From The Past..

## Interesting excerpts from an early Wurlitzer promotional booklet— First of two parts

Estimated publication date— early 1920s

### *The* **WURLITZER** UNIT ORGAN

THE WURLITZER UNIT ORGAN is the perfect musical instrument for the theatre. It unites the finest cathedral organ in the world with an orchestral section, and novelty and percussion department, which combines into one all the different voices of the symphony orchestra — the woodwind, the brass, percussion and string.

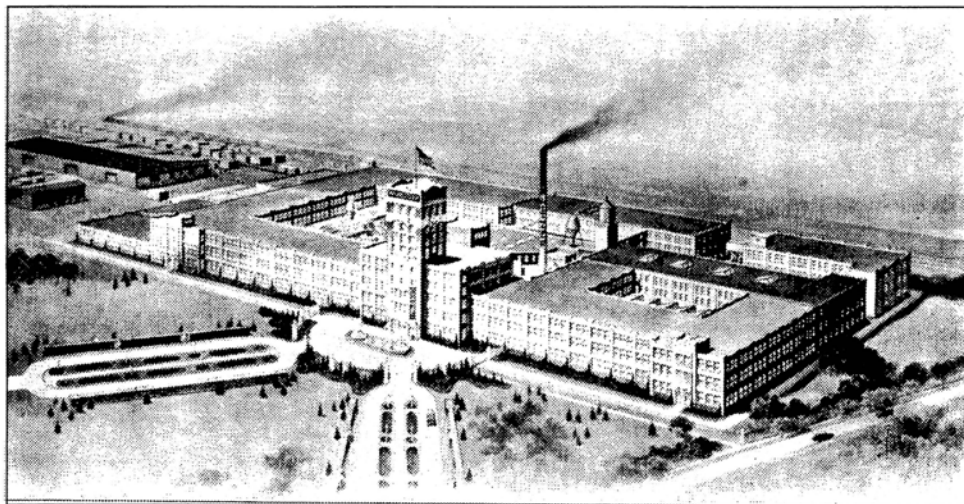
The Wurlitzer is the only organ in the world that presents such an instrumentation with the result that it can be played in a way not possible with any other organ.

The superiority of the Wurlitzer is now well understood. Not only is it found in most of the prominent motion picture theatres in this country, but Wurlitzer fame has spread to foreign countries as well. Many installations have been made in England, Belgium, Spain, and Sweden, and a very great many in Australia.

It has been a problem during the past few years to keep pace with the demand for Wurlitzer Unit organs and the factory is being continually added to.

#### **Points of Difference in the Wurlitzer**

It is the immediate response together with special characteristic voicing for theatre work, made possible by the Wurlitzer Unit System and enabling the organist to play in quick time, that marks the great point of difference between the Wurlitzer and organs built along straight organ lines. It is possible to play any kind of music and especially that which requires rapid technique and quick response that has never been possible of proper performance on the straight organ.



### WURLITZER ORGAN FACTORIES

NORTH TONAWANDA, N. Y.

#### **Box Office Value of the Wurlitzer**

The great appeal of the Wurlitzer to theatre owners lies in its box office value. The public likes Wurlitzer music. Therein lies the value of the Wurlitzer as a box office attraction. Every theatre that has a Wurlitzer features organ solo numbers as one of its major attractions.

The theatre owner buys an organ primarily for its box office value. Wurlitzer organs have box office value to a degree comparable only with that of some outstanding film successes.

Organists like to play on a Wurlitzer because of the musical results they can obtain. There is nothing in the entire gamut of human emotion that cannot be expressed musically on a Wurlitzer better than on any other musical instrument or group of instruments. That is a very broad statement to make, but it is the fact that the Wurlitzer fully measures up to this claim that has given it its tremendous hold on musicians and the public alike.

The old style organ, built on straight organ lines, can never have that prompt, immediate response that is possible with the Wurlitzer unit system, where each pipe has an individual magnet and valve under it. It is often stated by competitors

that the main difference between Wurlitzer organs and their own, and the reason for the success of the Wurlitzer in theatre work, is the addition of percussion instruments. This is not at all the case. The fundamental reason that Wurlitzer Organs are orchestral in character is that immediate, quick response when you touch the keys, and also the very characteristic voicing for theatre work.

While quick response is a vital factor in the superiority of the Wurlitzer Organ, it does not interfere at all with any selection being played *legato*, so as to sound just as the old-fashioned straight organ of slower speech would sound. In this connection the fact should not be lost sight of that much of the best music requires rapid technique and quick response which has never been possible of proper performance on the straight organs.

#### **Unlimited Possibilities in Tone Coloring**

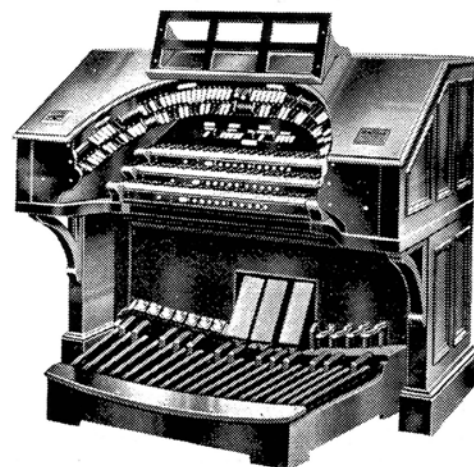
With the unit system as employed in the Wurlitzer Organs the instruments can be played in an extremely flexible way in combining tone colors, something that is not at all possible with the straight organ,

# Pages From The Past...continued

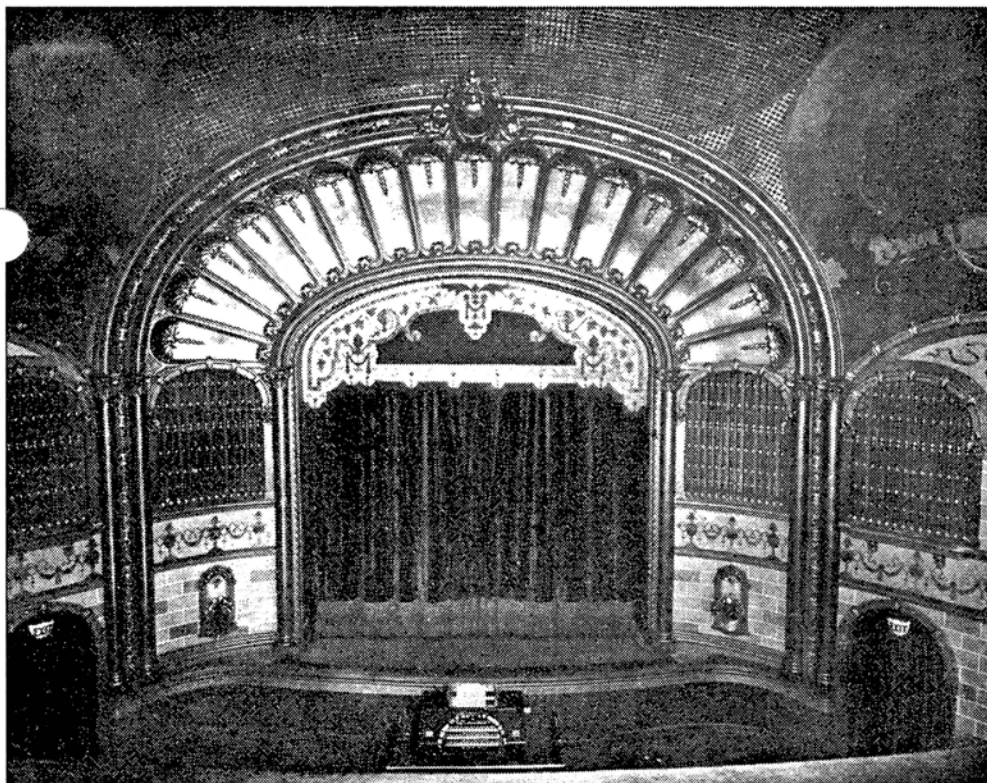
As one does not have the 4-foot, 8-foot and 16-foot tone colors to draw at will with straight organ construction. The use of couplers is not at all the same, and gives very different results. It is only necessary to go to a Wurlitzer organ, taking two stops that are drawn at 16, 8 and 4-foot pitches, and try the various combinations possible with these two stops drawn to see what the change in tone color is, that is, how it will sound when the 16-foot Tibia is drawn with the 4-foot Vox. That will produce a distinct tonal result, and when the order is reversed an entirely different tone color results. And so on through the almost infinite number of combinations that are

possible. It is the wonderful range of tone color that proves such a fascination with organists and causes them to greatly prefer playing a Wurlitzer to a straight organ.

Mr. Hope-Jones often made the comparison between the Wurlitzer organist and the painter who had six fundamental colors to work with. By mixing these six colors he can get a limitless number of various shades, because he can mix them at will. With a straight organ of six stops one is very, very limited in musical results, whereas with the Wurlitzer *unified* Organ of six stops one has a really remarkable number of possible tonal combinations.



Three-Manual Console



The Mighty  
**WURLITZER**  
UNIT ORGAN  
IN THE  
**LIBERTY**  
THEATRE  
Seattle, Wash.

**T**HE first of the Jensen and Von Herberg houses and a pioneer among the large theatres of the Pacific coast to capitalize the wonderful drawing powers of the Wurlitzer Unit Organ. Mr. J. Von Herberg says that the Wurlitzer is one of the foremost attractions which has placed the Liberty in a class by itself both in quality and amount of patronage.

## The Wurlitzer Scales Larger Than That of Other Organs

Where a comparison of individual stops is made between the Wurlitzer and other organs, in workmanship, design and the all important factor of tonal results the superiority of the Wurlitzer is clearly apparent. As an example, in those stops that require body and volume we never use small scales. Our regular scale is larger than the maximum used by the majority of organ builders.

While the success of the Wurlitzer Organ is in no sense of the word built upon the failure of others, it becomes necessary to make comparison because of the fundamental differences between the Wurlitzer Unit Organ and the organs built along old-fashioned straight lines. Numerous instances have been brought to our attention in which makes of organs that were built along the old straight lines have been failures in theatres. That does not mean they were not beautiful according to the standard of the old-fashioned straight organ, but that they failed to please the public because they were beautiful in only one way. The limitations are too strict; they are monotonous and lack expression. They lack life and vivacity, and these are the points in which the Wurlitzer Organ excels.

Watch for Part 2 of this fascinating article in the November Pipeline

## Drive directions to Haller Lake Community Club for OKTOBERFEST.

12579 Densmore Ave. N. • North Seattle

**Northbound I-5:** Use Exit 174 onto NE 130th St., turn left over freeway one long block to 1st Ave. N.E. Turn left (south) one block to 128th. Right on N.E. 128th a few blocks to Densmore. Left on Densmore, clubhouse is on the right. Parking both front and rear. Handicapped entry with elevator at rear of building.

**Southbound I-5:** Use Exit 175 onto N.E. 145th, turn right one block to 1st Ave. N.E. Left (south) through N.E. 130th to N.E. 128th. Continue where underlined above.

## PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors  
6521 N.E. 191st  
Kenmore, WA 98028-3453



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## American Theatre Organ Society 2006 annual convention to be in Tampa, Florida next May

Preliminary plans for the 2006 American Theatre Organ Society annual convention have been announced. It is scheduled for Tampa, Florida beginning with Pre-Glow events May 24, including a theatre pipe organ program in the Orlando area, and tentatively a Walt Disney World, EPCOT or Universal reduced rate visit.

The convention itself will run through Monday, May 29 (Memorial Day) in Tampa. A fantastic lineup of organists and organs is planned, with more news coming soon.

On Tuesday, May 30, there will be an optional After-Glow day on Florida's east coast to visit the Milhous Museum collection, with curator/organist Dave Wickerham. Then onward to the 1925 Olympia Theatre in Miami with Tom Hazleton.

Folks from the west coast may prefer the Miami airport option with many more flights available than from Tampa.

This will be an outstanding event, and a chance to hear numerous top notch organists and organs. The record shop is always an attraction, featuring the largest collection of theatre pipe organ CDs available anywhere!

Why not put it on your calendar?

## New and enjoyable opportunities for you to be involved with PSTOS

Some time ago you were asked if you'd like to become more involved as a PSTOS volunteer. Many of you responded positively, and that list is coming together. *This is a new effort, so please be patient if we haven't yet contacted you.*

In an effort to provide a more focused opportunity for membership involvement, a number of committees have been established. These include Volunteers, Scholarships, Historian/Archivist, Programs, Maintenance & Repair, Development/Fundraising and Promotions & Media.

The Scholarship Committee prospects for qualified students, and administers the funds.

Folks with library or archiving experience are needed to help the Historian/Archivist Committee. Boxes of valuable records, many of which are used for the Pages From the Past articles, need proper cataloging and care for future generations.

Your past experience in fundraising, promotions, media, or organizing programs can be put to good use. And you'll meet lots of great folks!

Your involvement brings new ideas and allows PSTOS to offer more and better activities to our members and the public at large and increases your enjoyment.

If you would like to get involved in any of these specific areas please contact Dan Warner at [dan@pstos.org](mailto:dan@pstos.org) or by

## Get-Well wishes for important PSTOS people!

### Our President, Clint Meadway

Clint is taking a little time off from presidential duties while he recovers from a bit of 'body and fender work' his doc recommended. He is doing well and looks forward to soon being back in the saddle. Get well quickly, Clint—we need you!

Send get well wishes to

**Clint Meadway**

**P.O. Box 706**

**Monroe WA 98272-0706**

Or email to [clint@pstos.org](mailto:clint@pstos.org)

### Adeline Hook

Adeline Hook, long time staunch PSTOS supporter, and person-in-charge of many many Open Console sessions, needs your get well wishes. She recently fell while walking and is suffering serious back pain and problems. Get well soon, Adeline!

Send get well wishes to

**Adeline Hook**

**5620 N. 23rd**

**Tacoma WA 98406-2908**

**Phone 253-759-4308**

phone at **206-632-3723**.

If you have already responded as a volunteer please let us know about any additional interest. And if you haven't, there is no better time than now.