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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 19 No. 7

July 2008

A Chapter of American Theatre Organ Society

Special event coming August 9th!

Don Feely

Will inaugurate Bill Keller's new 5-manual Allen theatre organ!

What a fun day this will be! Hear Don put this one-of-a-kind instrument through its paces with lots of your favorite music. Bill's lovely home in a semi-rural area near Olympia is the perfect spot for an afternoon of delightful organ music and enjoying refreshments on his spacious deck.

Music! Refreshments! Camaraderie! Fun!

Saturday, August 9, 2:00 PM

9914 Hampshire Ct. SE, Olympia

**Admission \$10 • Age 15 and under free with adult
Attendance is limited to 60—reservations required!**

Reserve by email— tibia8and2@comcast.net
Or reserve by phone at 360-438-1341—leave message



DON FEELY began playing the theatre pipe organ as a teen, practicing on the Kimball organ at Benson High School in Portland. For two years he performed on the 5/24 Marr & Colton in the Sherwood Oriental Theatre and then the 3/12 Wurlitzer organ that followed. Following college he traveled for two years across the country as a music director for the Miss Teen America pageants. He was a featured organist at the Organ Grinder Restaurant in Portland for over 10 years, performing on the 4/51 Wurlitzer. Currently he is the music director for St. Andrew's Church in southwest Portland and teaches band and choir at Ackerman Middle School in Canby, Oregon. He and his wife Heidi are in the process of installing a 3/20 Wurlitzer in their home.

DRIVE DIRECTIONS— Please save! Or refer to your favorite internet mapping site, Mapquest, Google Maps, etc.

I-5 Southbound: Take exit 116 - Mounts Rd/Old Nisqually, turn left onto Nisqually Rd/Old Pacific Hwy. Continue to follow Old Pacific Hwy about 7 miles to Hwy 510 (Not signed). This is an intersection with a stop sign and sharp hairpin left turn. Turn left onto Hwy 510, go a half mile to Meridian Road SE (A "Y" to the right). Go .4 mile and turn left at Hampshire Ct. SE. Go to the end of the street. (White fences)

I-5 Northbound: Take exit 111 for WA-510 E/Marvin Rd toward Yelm. Straight through the round-about and follow signs for Marvin Rd N. Turn right at Marvin Rd NE/WA-510, drive 1.6 miles. At the round-about, turn left onto Pacific Ave SE and drive about three miles to Meridian Rd SE (a "Y" to the right). Drive .4 mile and turn left at Hampshire Ct. SE. Go to the end of the street. (White fences)

A good place for lunch The best restaurants are either the Hawks Prairie Restaurant or the Hawks Prairie Casino Restaurant. The casino is behind the restaurant at Exit 111 on the northbound side of I-5. They have good food at reasonable prices.

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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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AMICA & POF—Carl Dodrill • Haller Lake Comm.Club—Bob Zat
Paramount Theatre—Tom Blackwell • Wash. Center—Andy Crow

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 \$20 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:
Bill Keller, Treasurer, 9914 Hampshire Ct. SE,
Olympia, WA 98513-4241.

PRESIDENT'S Message

Hello everyone,
Cedar Rapids Update

I'm sure most of you have heard about the terrible flooding and devastation in Cedar Rapids Iowa, home to the Cedar Rapids chapter of ATOS and two original theatre organs (a Wurlitzer at the Paramount Theatre and the Rhinestone Barton at the Theatre Cedar Rapids). Having been under ten feet of water, the console at the Paramount may be a total loss, but fortunately the pipes fared better since they are mounted high up in the walls of the theatre. The Barton was also affected by the flood, but it sustained far less damage than the Wurlitzer.

Being a Wurlitzer owner myself, this photo of the Paramount console is particularly painful to see.



Because of the delicate mechanisms inside and water soluble glues used in the 1920s, the console is literally falling apart. Thousands of hours of work will be required to get it back in playing condition.

At this point in theatre organ history, the loss of any organ is bad, but the recent losses have been especially disheartening for CRATOS. Some of their members are facing significant personal losses too. If you would like to help, please visit the CRATOS web site to learn more: www.cr-atos.com.

On the bright side, because of work done by the Cedar Rapids chapter over the last 50 years to preserve and present these two theatre organs to the public, their music and cultural value is well understood by the local community. Damage to the Paramount organ was featured on all local Cedar Rapids television stations and several national news programs including CNN. Some money has already starting coming in. So there is hope that these two instruments will play again in the future.

These events make me realize just how lucky we are to have the Seattle Paramount and four other original theatre pipe organ installations in the State of Washington.

PSTOS Coming Events

DON FEELY will inaugurate Bill Keller's exciting 5-manual Allen Theatre Organ in Olympia

THIS WILL BE WORTH THE DRIVE!

(Editor's apology: We failed to advise that Bill Keller's home is in the Olympia area, not in Portland as our June announcement led folks to believe!)

Don Feely is well known among northwest theatre organ aficionados. He was a featured organist at Portland's former Organ Grinder Pizza Restaurant, has performed for several organ conventions, is music director for St. Andrew's Church in Portland and teaches band and choir in Canby, OR. He and his wife Heidi are busy installing a 3/20 Wurlitzer in their home.

Saturday, August 9

To varying degrees, PSTOS members have been involved in preserving, promoting and presenting each of them to the public and we should be proud of our role in that capacity, knowing if we ever face a similar loss situation, we have contributed to the base of community appreciation for these unique instruments which is key to keeping them playing. Of course there is a lot more we can do. I encourage you to get involved with PSTOS and help preserve, promote and present the theatre pipe organ!

Convention update - Call for program planning help

As we approach the 24 month mark before our own Seattle ATOS convention in 2010, it's time to start booking venues and artists. If you have programming ideas you would like to share, please contact me at tom@pstos.org or (206) 784-9203.

Tom Blackwell, President

In Memoriam

Irene Hendele

With sadness we have learned of the death of Irene Hendele on June 19th. Irene, mother of Ellen Sullivan, attended nearly every PSTOS event at Haller Lake, the last few in a wheel chair. Ellen is the member who has always arrived early in the morning to decorate the hall, make the coffee and supervise the food. Sincere PSTOS sympathy goes to Ellen and her family. Irene will be missed.

Other NW Theatre Organ Events

◆ Kenyon Hall in West Seattle

Latest news can be found on the web at www.kenyonhall.org or by email at kenyonhall@earthlink.net

◆ Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon

Hear the Wurlitzer every Mon/Tue at 7PM & Fri/Sat/Sun at 5PM.

◆ Columbia River Organ Club

For info and latest news go to www.croconline.org

◆ Bellingham's Mt Baker Theatre

The Mt. Baker is closed for a few months for upgrading the heating and air conditioning system. Watch this column for reopening date and events.

PSTOS Wurlitzer sounds off at Haller Lake's "Chili Palooza"

An enthusiastic crowd of chili lovers enjoyed the food, the sun and the entertainment at Haller Lake Community Club's *Chili Palooza* Sunday, June 22.

Clint Meadway and Jo Ann Evans opened the day's entertainment lineup with a 40-minute program of organ music on the PSTOS Wurlitzer. Additionally, they provided background music between the other entertainment acts throughout the afternoon.

A young PSTOS member, 10-year-old Nicholas Towle, took his turn at the console, and played several tunes for an appreciative audience. Thank you, Nicholas! How exciting to know we have such an enthusiastic and talented member in our ranks! Keep up the good work.

Larry and Desiree Smith are to be commended for organizing this outstandingly



NICHOLAS TOWLE at the PSTOS Wurlitzer

successful event, which included great chili and other food items, an arts and crafts fair with many quality crafts for sale, as well as some great entertainment.

Paramount Wurlitzer update, June 2008

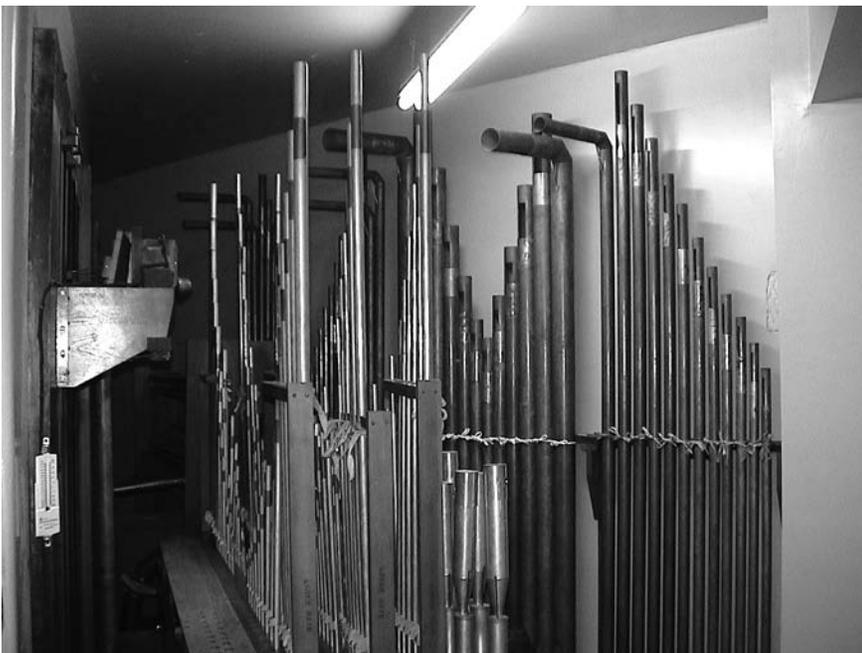
Following nearly 450 hours of work by PSTOS volunteers over the last four months, including an "all-nighter" tuning session on Sunday June 1, the Paramount Wurlitzer is again fully playable. It performed flawlessly under the direction of Dennis James at the first silent film on June 2. The PSTOS crew for this work included: Mark Baratta, Tom Blackwell, Kat Brightwell, Russ Evans, Phil Hargiss, Dave Luttinen, Larry Mayer, Clint Meadway and

Bob Zat.

Work on the Wurlitzer will continue for the next 24 months until the entire mechanism supplying air to the pipes has been restored. This effort is part of a Master Restoration Plan requiring a total of \$105,000 be raised for parts, materials and professional services. So far, our total raised is just over \$40,000, including nearly \$4,000 raised at the recent Donna Parker benefit concert at Gig Harbor's Wurlitzer Manor. It is hoped

that the remaining dollars can be secured within the next 18 months so that the work can be completed in time for the American Theatre Organ Society convention being hosted by PSTOS in Seattle in July, 2010.

Releathering and re-wiring of the five rank String chamber windchest is next up on the task list for July-August-September. This work will primarily be done in the home shops of Russ Evans and Tom Blackwell. Extra help is needed! If you previously attended the organ maintenance boot camp or simply expressed interest in helping out, we will be contacting you shortly.



Completed work, showing the repaired plaster and re-installed pipes



Dave Luttinen reinstalls a windline under one of the regulators

Tale of note

Reprinted from Spokane's
Spokesman-Review, June 1997

Spokane congregation enjoys the sounds of their resurrected Wurlitzer

By Suzanne Pate, Correspondent

Question: What on earth could silent movie stars Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford have in common with a church in north Spokane?

Answer: An organ transplant.

A Mighty Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ, that is—transplanted from the old Liberty Theatre in Seattle by way of the girls' gym at Pacific Lutheran University.

In 1974, the First Church of the Nazarene congregation pulled out all the stops to acquire the organ. They've spent the past 23 years restoring many of its bells and whistles, and will celebrate its renovation June 8 in ceremonies to dedicate expanded church facilities.

"This pipe organ was the whole orchestra for silent movies, and the movies came with scored music," said Ken Fuller, organist at the church, located on Country Homes Boulevard. Fuller said his Mighty Wurlitzer rings sleigh bells, blows train and bird whistles, blasts a "whooga" car horn, and plays wind, reed, string and percussion instruments.

Its music first rose from the orchestra pit in 1914, accompanying flickering silent dramas, Vaudeville and Chautauqua acts until "talkies" struck it dumb. When the Liberty closed in 1959, PLU's organ department salvaged the console and pipes. The Liberty became a parking lot.

"Every major theatre in the United States had an organ," said Fuller, who admitted sneaking into movies when he was a kid in West Seattle. "Some of the organs were rescued or sold for scrap, but most were destroyed—they'd just bulldoze dirt over it and fill in the orchestra pit with cement."

Fuller began playing for the congregation in 1958 at its former location on Napa and Wall, following several years on the nightclub circuit playing jazz keyboard. He married the church's pianist, settled into family life and became co-owner of the Music City stores.

He heard about the Liberty organ from another organist and shared the pipe



Ken Fuller attaches a light to the restored organ, a Mighty Wurlitzer, at Spokane's First Church of the Nazarene

dream with his congregation. "A theatre organ differs from a 'regular' church organ primarily in its power," he explained. "The church organs push air through pipes that are about two and a half to five inches in diameter. Ours has some pipes that are 25 inches across and 32 feet tall. It snorts pretty good."

Washington state apparently appreciates the pipe organ sound. According to the American Theatre Organ Society, Washington ranks fifth in the United States in the number of theatre pipe organs found in public locations (there are 15 statewide). And incidentally, the twin to the organ at Spokane's First Church of the Nazarene can be found at Silverwood in nearby Athol, Idaho.

The church organ's 3,000 pipes are made from a variety of materials for each

kind of sound. For example, tin pipes mimic strings, and wood pipes play flute. The Mighty Wurlitzer plays at full volume at all times to maintain its pitch. The organist controls the volume with wooden shutters on the pipes, which are hidden behind grills.

"We wanted it so we could shake the snow off the roof," said Fuller, smiling. He said blown light bulbs were endemic to movie palaces because deep vibrations made by the organ shook the buildings and broke the bulbs' filaments.

The church raised money with spaghetti dinners and a "Be an Organ Donor" campaign; a delegation traveled to Tacoma in a caravan of U-Haul vans and pickup trucks to pack up the old Wurlitzer.

"It needed a lot of restoration," said Fuller. "We found it suspended on a plat-

Pages From The Past...continued

Typical of the type of writing that might appear in a small weekly neighborhood newspaper, the following article was published in Seattle's *Green Lake Reporter* March 10, 1939

Improvements Made In Funeral Home

Many Innovations Added By Owner Pike C. Stockham

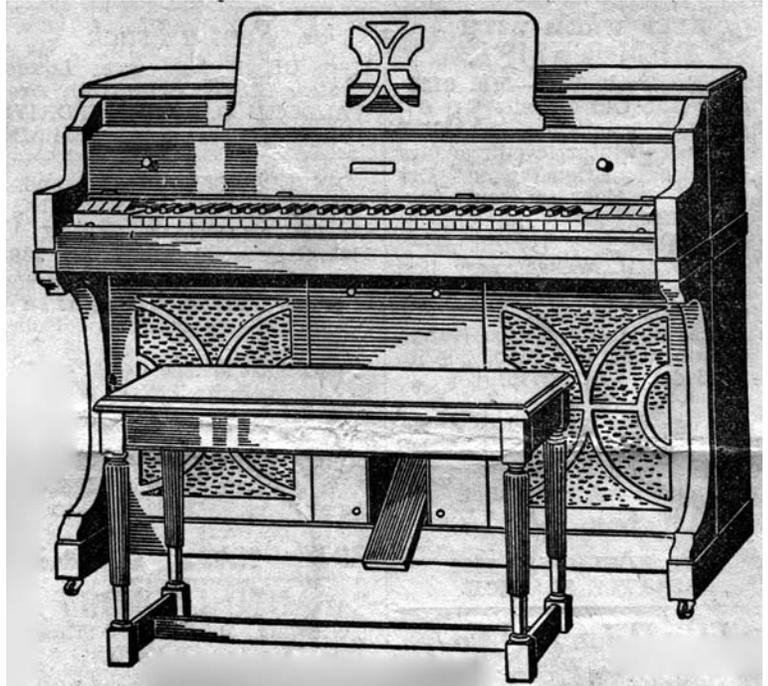
When the Gallup poll is taken for Green Lake's most enterprising citizen there will be little fault found if Pike C. Stockham is found nosing out the leaders. The Green Lake Funeral Home is kept right up to the minute in every respect, but that is not enough for proprietor Stockham, he must be far in the lead of all competitors, and so he has just installed the first Everett Orgatron in the Northwest.

The famous "Maas Cathedral Chimes" have been installed in the front of the chapel because of their beauty. Their contribution to musical facilities are second to none. The non-metallic chime note is produced by a bakelite striker against a bakelite head on the chime which produces a soft, clear bell tone, possessing great depth and warmth, making it very pleasing to the human ear. The installation was made by Balcom and Vaughan of Seattle, factory representatives, well known to thousands of lovers of pipe organ music, both for their fine technique and pleasing personalities.

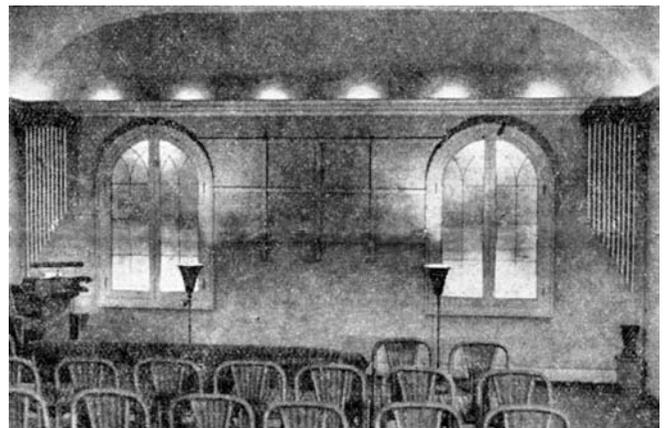
In addition, new floor coverings have been laid with maroon and gold predominating, which gives one a warm and home-like feeling the moment you pass the threshold, whose doors are always open to the public for inspection.

The editor of this paper wishes to congratulate Mr. and Mrs. Stockham for their fine additions and with their fine personnel and reputation for service feel they are among our community's greatest assets.

In line with his policy of constantly seeking to improve the Green Lake Funeral Home, the owner, Pike C. Stockham, recently installed the famous "Maas Cathedral Chimes" in the chapel as shown.



Last week the Green Lake Funeral Home installed a new Everett Orgatron, the first of its model in the Northwest. It is especially adapted for church music and the Mortuary profession. To appreciate the entrancing beauty of Orgatron tones it must be heard. Its manufacturer, The Everett Company, are nationally known as makers of musical instruments of superb quality and musical excellence.



Tale of note...

form of railroad ties near the ceiling of the girls' gym. Many of the pipes were crushed, and we've still got a problem with coal dust in the chests."

Coal dust? He explained that Seattle burned coal in the old days, and the organ sucked in the gritty air through unfiltered vents. "Clogs up the valves in the pipes," Fuller said, "just like cholesterol in your arteries."

Over the years, the church hired profes-

sional technicians for annual maintenance and repairs. The Mighty Wurlitzer blows through newly-fabricated pipes which rest on fresh leather valves, and upgrades include an electrical relay system and rectifiers. To date, Fuller estimates the organ's price tag at \$60,000, including the original purchase.

The church building also needed expansion to accommodate the 32-foot tall pipes. The organ restoration is halfway through the second of seven planned repair phases, projected to cost an additional \$30,000.

"We need to complete the re-leathering in the primary and secondary pneumatics, add several wind chests, straighten or replace some more pipes, and replace the temporary wind lines with permanent ones," he said.

Additional fund raisers are planned, and there is talk of a silent movie concert series.

Although the Mighty Wurlitzer is not yet quite perfect, Fuller said he will continue to "limp around its weak spots" until it's finished, or "until I drop, whichever comes first. This is my ministry."



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

McMahan family members visit Haller Lake C.C. to reminisce about the organ of their youth

Recently Jeff McMahan, son of the former owner of the PSTOS organ at Haller Lake, inquired about once again seeing 'their' organ. An appointment was set up, and Russ and Jo Ann Evans met Jeff, his sister Sally and her husband, Larry Amos, at HLCC. What an interesting time!

It was truly a trip back in time for the siblings, who shared many fond memories of the instrument. They explored the chambers, listened to the organ as it was played for them, even asked to see the blower. They took lots of photos, and told stories of their experiences in the 1960s—forty years ago!

The organ was originally in an Ohio Eagles Hall, and when Mr. McMahan found it, the console was missing entirely, but the rest of the organ was intact. The Eagles wanted to part with it and Mr. McMahan, serving as an advisor, ended up purchasing it himself, even though there were no musicians in the family!

Restoration of the instrument was a family project. Jeff and Sally recalled many evenings as kids sitting around the table re-leathering pneumatics and doing other restoration work. Their father was serious about proper restoration.

A console was acquired—the instrument is a Wurlitzer, but the replacement console is a Marr & Colton—and the organ was then complete, except for a blower, a rank of kinura pipes, and even a siren to complete the toy counter.

Before the instrument was completely installed in Ohio, Mr. McMahan was sud-



Brother and sister, Jeff and Sally McMahan, revisit the organ from their youth. Right is Sally's husband Larry Amos.

denly transferred back to Seattle, and the Wurlitzer was moved by Boeing as a part of the family's household furnishings! It's unlikely Boeing ever before—or since—moved a complete pipe organ when transferring an employee across the country.

The family settled in on Queen Anne and the installation progress was begun anew. Again, there were many family times as the restoration continued, and installation proceeded.

It was at that time, in the late 1960s, that the family left for a vacation trip, was involved in a head-on auto collision, and Mr. McMahan was killed.

Jeff and Sally were in their early teens. Mrs. McMahan didn't quite know what to do with the Wurlitzer.

Russ Evans was then president of Puget Sound Chapter and contacted Mrs. McMahan, offering the Chapter's help in

helping to find a new home for the instrument, should that be her wish. Within a few months, she responded, offering to sell the instrument to the Chapter.

Financing its purchase was the next hurdle, and it was accomplished creatively, by selling non-interest-bearing bonds to Chapter members, and augmenting the fund with a loan from a private party.

But yet another hurdle existed, that of finding a location for installation. Harry Harkness, a Chapter member and president of Haller Lake Improvement Club, forged a cooperative agreement between the two clubs, resulting in the Wurlitzer's having a happy home these past fifty years.

Mrs. McMahan wrote an entertaining account of the family's organ installation adventure. Sally has provided a copy, and photos. It will be published for the enjoyment of all in an upcoming Pipeline.