

# The Organ Spiel

NEWSLETTER FOR THE SIERRA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

## POPS CONCERT AT IRONSTONE VINEYARDS



April – May 2011

SATURDAY,  
April 16



### ABOUT THE ARTIST CHRIS GORSUCH

**COACH LEAVES THE  
CALIFORNIA AUTO  
MUSEUM  
(FORMERLY THE TOWE)  
AT 10:00AM**

Chris Gorsuch began formal studies on the organ at age fourteen. He was soon playing for several different churches in his home town of Springfield, Ohio. At the age of twenty, Chris moved to San Diego, California, to become a staff organist for the Organ

Power Pizza restaurant chain. One of the instruments that Chris played was the famed five-manual Reginald Foort Travelling Moller Theatre Pipe Organ, now installed at the Pasadena Civic Center. While playing for the restaurant, Chris became a student of Lyn Larsen. Chris gained invaluable knowledge from Lyn in the areas of registration and phrasing.

Many musicians have contributed their influence to Chris's musical style. Music of the Big Band era is a particular favorite, as well as classical, jazz and the music of the 1920's and 1930's.

Chris also has a fascination with electronics. In 1979, he formed his own company with the purpose of designing and manufacturing electronic systems for pipe and elec-

tronic organs. His company has created many new and innovative products including digitally sampled sounds and computer software.

Chris is also a sought-after voicer and tonal finisher. He feels as much at home in a pipe organ chamber as he does on the bench playing the finished product. He has been the tonal finisher of several major instruments in the United States.

Chris also functions as a recording engineer and has been responsible for recording and mastering a number of CD's released by several major artists.

In 2008, the American Theatre Organ Society presented Chris with the prestigious Organist Of The Year award.

Developing new arrangements, concertizing, recording, improving the sounds of both electronic and pipe organs, and running a business make for a very interesting life. In all of this, Chris has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to strive for excellence in a demanding profession.



**Your ticket price includes the concert and a full luncheon buffet.**  
Last year, this event sold out quickly, but there is still time to get your tickets  
*At press time, we still have two types of tickets available:*

1. **You can drive yourself for \$39 to 1894 Six Mile Road, Murphys**
2. **Leave the driving to us with a leisurely trip on a luxury coach for \$59.**

You can order and pay for tickets  
directly on our website at [SierraChapterATOS.org](http://SierraChapterATOS.org).

Coach attendees will meet at the California Auto Museum  
no later than 10:00 AM. If driving, arrive early to tour the grounds.

The event begins at **12:30PM** with a specially prepared luncheon buffet, downstairs, in the **Alhambra Music Room**. The full 2 hour concert (with intermission) will follow at **2:00PM**.

*Please stop by the Sierra Chapter Membership desk and pick up your 2011 Directory.*



Ironstone Vineyards is nestled against the Sierra Foothills, in the heart of California's scenic Gold Country. Enjoy its beautiful gardens, History Museum and Gift and Jewelry Shoppe.

The Organ was originally installed in the Alhambra Theatre in Sacramento in 1927. It went from a Baptist Church in Stockton to Bob Hartzell. John Kautz later bought it for his winery and built the Alhambra Music Room to house it (now a 3/14).



# AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY SUMMER YOUTH CAMP July 25-29, 2011

## Sierra Chapter Scholarships Available

ATOS has become very active in promoting young theatre organists, primarily through its work in hosting the ATOS Summer Youth Camp. The ATOS Summer Camp is a week-long educational event aimed at instructing budding, young theatre organists in the art form.

Beginning in 2007, the ATOS Summer Camp has hosted dozens of new, young theatre organists. With the help of its core educational staff of Jonas Nordwall, Donna Parker, Jelani Eddington, and Martin Ellis, the Summer Camp program has developed an extensive and successful curriculum for teaching the art of the theatre organ.

**Sierra Chapter Scholarship Money is available for students attending the 2011 Summer Youth Camp.** ATOS National also has funds available for students needing tuition assistance. For details and application forms go to: <http://atos.org/front-desk/forms/> All applications must be turned in to ATOS by July 1. Contact any of the Officers or Board Members listed below if you know of a student that is interested in attending the 2011 ATOS Summer Youth Camp.

We look forward to hearing other outstanding artists like Nathan Avakian at our concerts!



**Theatre Organ Camp students with Nathan Avakian in 2009**



### May Upcoming Events

**May 7 - It's My Park Day** - Fair Oaks Community Clubhouse - Sierra Chapter Members are invited to show their goodwill and spread the word about our pipe organ by volunteering between 8:00AM and Noon. See the flyer insert for details.

**May 22 - An Afternoon with Laurel & Hardy** - St. John Luthern Church, 4606 Michigan Ave, Valley Home, CA. 3:00PM With Dave Moreno at the 2-manual 4-rank Robert Morton Theatre Organ. Homemade Pie & Ice Cream social after the show. Donation at the door. Information: Lois Hofmann (209) 847-0733.

**May 22 - Old Town Music Hall** - El Segundo - Piano & Pipes Ragtime Trio featuring our own Bill Coale on the Mighty Wurlitzer. 7:30PM Details at [www.oldtownmusichall.org](http://www.oldtownmusichall.org)

#### Chapter Officers

**President**  
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**Carol Zerbo**  
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# PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE — CAROL ZERBO



What to do - what to do. We are beginning the process of finding a new home for the Mendenhall organ - the very thought of which raises multiple questions, both philosophical and practical. Of course, the theatre pipe organ world has been debating this for years but when its OUR organ, the debate becomes a reality.

The ideal location would already have chambers so it might just be a matter of putting the hand back in the glove, so to speak.

Obviously, we're talking about a theatre or school auditorium built prior to about 1939. Assuming said building exists, is it already in use and are the present occupants willing to give up the space necessary to accommodate our little treasure? Does the current interest in restoring the few "palaces of splendor" that are left and renaming them Performing Arts Centers allow for the presence of an instrument that today's promoters may view as complicating rather than complimenting their efforts to entertain? If not a building with chambers intact, what would it take to build them and how might the owners feel

about such construction? And what about a church? Organs can certainly provide "fire and brimstone" but can a theatre pipe organ learn to speak "praise worship"?

And speaking of "learning" - Where, on the long list of priorities, does the installation of an organ fit into a school district's plans for education?

OKAY!! Now that we are awash in cold water - let me heat things up a bit. Where there's a will there's a way. I have no idea who said that but it does apply in this situation. Organs in public venues get there because of "champions": people who feel strongly that the theatre pipe organ is still worthy of the public's attention. They have "experienced" the sight and sound and can see the organ's possibilities. Their enthusiasm opens lines of communication and gets people thinking "This could work" rather than "I don't think so". Do you know such a person? A cinema buff, school principal, church worker, museum director, parks superintendent, politician?

We need the person (Mickey Rooney?) and the place (a barn?) and Sierra Chapter can "put on a show".

Seriously folks, what we have is an instrument that can entertain, uplift and educate all in one, admittedly, large package.

A very big THANK YOU to several people who have come forth with possible venues already set up for performing arts and the Board is looking into them but, perhaps we should consider churches as possible sites. There are some very successful theatre organ installations in churches around the country and we certainly have more churches than theatres in the Sacramento area. The right person in the right place! With a bit of imagination, a good deal of luck and an enormous amount of hard work, the Mendenhall organ can sing again. How's about it?!

Carol



## Sierra Chapter is now on Facebook

Board Member **Bill Coale** has setup and volunteered to be our Facebook Administrator. **Randy Warwick** has volunteered to be co-administrator.

Facebook is an excellent way to connect with others that are interested in Theatre Organs around the world.



### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to New Members:

**Rebecca Collins**  
**David Fallis**

Renewing at the Patron Level:

**Richard Taylor**

Renewing at the Sustaining Level:

**Bob Suffel**

Renewing at the Contributing Level:

**David Beam**

## SPRING BOARD MEETING

Saturday

April 9th 10:00AM

Home of Carol Zerbo

Open to all Regular Members, but please **RSVP to Carol** if you are planning to attend.

916-624-9182



P.O. Box 2017  
Fair Oaks, California 95628

First Class  
Postage  
Stamp

**We are on the Web:**  
**sierrachapterATOS.org**  
**youtube.com/SierraChapterATOS**



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# MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR EVENTS

## SIERRA/NORCAL JOINT EVENT



**Ironstone Vineyards  
1894 Six Mile Road**

**Murphys, California**

**Saturday April 16th  
12:30PM**

**Chris Gorsuch**

**\$39/Drive it yourself  
\$59/Luxury Coach**

## NORCAL CHAPTER EVENT Berkeley Community Theatre 1900 Allston Way

**Sunday May 15th  
2:30 PM**

**JONAS NORDWALL**

### Norcal Members Only!

\$10 Associate Memberships  
available at the door for Sierra  
Chapter Members

**\$15/General**



## STOCKTON FOX EVENT

***GONE WITH THE  
WIND***

**Sunday Apr 10  
1:30PM**

**\$8/Adults**

Featuring  
**Tom Thompson**  
On the Mighty Morton



## Harmony Wynelands Event

9291 East Harney Lane, Lodi

**An Evening with  
Harry Langdon**

Featuring **DAVE MORENO** on  
the Castro Theatre Pipe Organ  
**Friday Apr 8 8:30PM**

**\$12/Adults \$10/Harmony Club**  
Reservations necessary (209) 369-4184

The Chapter was organized in 1968 as a not-for-profit corporation under the statutes of the State of California and is recognized as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and Section 23701d of the California Revenue and Taxation Code. It was organized for the purpose of preservation and promotion of the Theatre Pipe Organ and its music. Membership in the local Chapter also encourages membership in the National Organization, American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS.) [www.atos.org](http://www.atos.org)

# IT'S MY PARK DAY!

Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>

8:00am – 12:00pm

Each year the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District gathers together in the District parks to work with volunteers on making our parks even more beautiful. The day consists of planting, clean-up, painting, repairs, and much more. District employees, along with hundreds of volunteers, work together on this day to clean-up our parks. At the end of the day the District presents an afternoon BBQ and entertainment to show our appreciation.

*BBQ 12:00pm – 1:00pm*  
*Entertainment provided by*



**VOLUNTEER!!!!**  
To sign-up for this event, fill out below and return or contact us for additional details!  
  
Nick Davison  
ndavison@fairoakspark.org

*“Those who can, do.  
Those who can do  
more, volunteer!”*



4150 Temescal St.  
Fair Oaks, CA 95628  
916-966-1036  
[www.fairoakspark.org](http://www.fairoakspark.org)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ T-Shirt Size \_\_\_\_\_

Family Members: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ T-Shirt Size \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ T-Shirt Size \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ T-Shirt Size \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Skills (That pertain to It's My Park Day): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Any limitations you or family member(s) may have: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please return either by email to [ndavison@fairoakspark.org](mailto:ndavison@fairoakspark.org) or by mail to 4150 Temescal St., Fair Oaks, CA 95628

