

# The Organ Spiel

NEWSLETTER FOR THE SIERRA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Year End Edition



December 2020

## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE—Randy Warwick



As just about every other reference we have seen about passing through this year, let me add, "Glad to be nearly done with 2020." I hope all of you, your family, and friends have made it through OK. If you have lost

someone, we extend our condolences. One of our sons did contract COVID-19 in June. However, at age 36 in excellent health with attention from military doctors at Ft. Bragg (he is in the Navy on "loan" to the Special Ops Command), he has fully recovered.

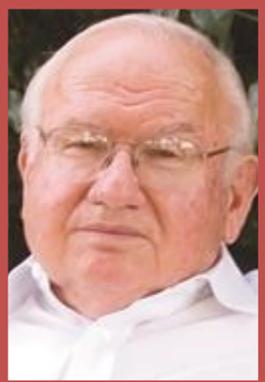
There have been a number of theatre organ streaming concerts on Facebook or YouTube that have been a neat way to hear and see some concerts. Check our Webmaster Gary French's recommendations of some items on our feature-rich website. Also, you can "attend" virtual Sunday services and hear the music of our own Walt Strony at [peacelutherangv.org](http://peacelutherangv.org) where several prior services are posted.

Given what is known about the vaccine distribution, we would hope to resume activities by late summer or early fall of 2021. Let's hope so.

Merry Christmas to everybody and a very, very Happy New Year.



## Closing Chord - Bob Hartzell 1934 - 2020



Robert Pollock Hartzell (86) passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his loved ones on November 21, 2020.

Bob began his university studies at UC Berkeley. He was one of the original "Twinkling Tubas" in the Cal Marching Band. He was co-owner of the Murphy's Historic Hotel in the foothills of California where he led the restoration efforts for the historic prop-

erty. For 18 years, Bob served as Executive Director of the California Association of Wine Grape Growers (CAWG) working tirelessly to promote the wines of California receiving recognition from the United States House of Representatives for his contributions to the wine industry.

One of Bob's personal passions was music, and he was an accomplished pianist and organist. In addition to these instruments, he also played the bass fiddle in the Stockton Symphony Orchestra. He was instrumental in the restoration and installation of the theater pipe organ in the Bob Hope Theater in Stockton as well as the theater pipe organ at Ironstone Vineyards. Bob fulfilled his dream of combining agriculture, wine, and pipe organ music.

In 1987 Bob, Dale Mendenhall, Ray Anderson and Dave Moreno went to see Charlie Davis in Concord, who had a 2/11 Robert Morton Theatre Organ from the Castro Theatre in San Francisco in his backyard music room. Davis made several changes to the organ including replacement of the original two-manual console with a three-manual console from a theatre in Provo, Utah. Bob purchased the organ, followed by the vineyard property on which he built the complex which would house the organ. Mark Hartzell (Bob's son) drew up the plans for the barn. After it was built, Dave Moreno did the layout and specifications for the organ and was soon installing it with Bob. Tim Rickman did all the wiring and computer installation. Tom Delay worked on the tonal work and extra additions. The culmination of this dream was co-founding Harmony Wynelands with his wife Linda.

He loved to entertain family, friends, and visitors by playing requests on the pipe organ.

And for fifteen years, Bob's organ was featured in the highly acclaimed Morton Madness series of concerts. Top name artists came from all over the country and the UK to play for these concerts. His venue was also featured in the ATOS Nor-Cal convention afterglow and the Sierra Chapter sponsored ATOS Regional Convention in 1992.

## Free Barton Lift

The Barton 4 post lift that was donated to the Oroville Organ project way back before we even had an organ has become surplus to the project and the folks storing the bases want them gone by the end of the year—free to a good home!! (or even a bad home) Large enough for a 3 manual console, about 4' of lift.

PLEASE spread the word, I don't want to scrap this!

Thanks

David Dewey djdewey@cncnet.com

## George Wright Anniversary

One hundred years ago in 1920 George Wright was born, and Jesse Crawford, who would be his theatre organ inspiration, was playing at the Million Dollar Theatre in Los Angeles. Crawford's career was really taking off, ultimately landing him - six years later - at the New York Paramount with an annual compensation of nearly \$800,000 in today's money.

## Any vinyl lovers out there?

The Chapter has received a donation of about fifty theatre organ LP's, all in very good to excellent condition. A few are still sealed. Many are quite rare titles (well, given that all theatre organ LP's are now rare). So if you want to join the current hip revival of interest in vinyls, contact Randy Warwick for a specific title. The Chapter will entertain selling the whole lot or individual titles but at a higher price each. We may also use some for raffle prizes. That might be a way to determine who has an LP record player.

## WEBSITE UPDATE

Hear and see organs virtually by visiting the Chapter's feature-rich website. The "Library" section is loaded with bios, Northern California organ information and pictures, and audio recordings. (There is also a link to our YouTube channel.) One of our favorites, located under "Radio Programs" in the "Audio Recordings" section, is the six half-hour programs recorded in 1967 titled "Showtime San Francisco." You'll hear some outstanding playing on a terrific 3/14 Wurlitzer and some informative, witty, and campy announcing. The show was produced by our own Ed Stout.

[www.sierrachapteratos.org](http://www.sierrachapteratos.org)

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)

## Treasurer's Report

As of December 18, the chapter has received a total of:  
\$2,155 in dues and unrestricted donations since 1/1/20.  
\$ 816 in interest  
\$2,971 Total Income

Expenses were:

\$1,158 for insurance (cut down due to the pandemic)  
\$1,223 Organ Maintenance  
\$ 500 Donation to ATOS Youth Program (pre-pandemic)  
\$ 168 Mailbox rental  
\$ 110 Postage  
\$ 50 Dues to Fair Oaks Historical Society  
\$ 40 Department of Justice  
\$ 20 Secretary of State  
\$ 17 PayPal service charges  
\$3,286 Total Expenses  
\$ 315 Estimated Net Loss for 2020

## Membership Adjustments due to the Pandemic

Anyone who renewed their membership in 2020 will be extended through 2021 and not be billed again until their renewal month in 2022.

Members that paid late in 2019 for the next year, 2020, will be treated as if they actually paid in the same month of 2020. Anyone who after about late February in 2020 did not pay dues thinking the Chapter was likely to be unable to hold events will also be extended one year in the anticipation that by their renewal month in 2021 that they will be excited to re-join and pay dues then.

As of now, estimates of wide spread vaccine availability, particularly for seniors, could mean that by late next summer or early fall we should be able to resume Chapter events. The date of being able to use the clubhouse is not yet known but should be available by early summer or fall 2021.

Because the Chapter will continue to have ongoing expenses in 2021 like insurance, postage, website hosting, printing and mailing of the Spiel and membership notices, any contributions will continue to be most welcome.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Renewing at the Benefactor Level:

**William Coale, Ph.D.**  
**Ernest Hartley & Susan Fredericks**  
**Craig Peterson**

Renewing at the Patron Level:

**Jim Jordan**  
**Bill & Alice Kutzer**

Renewing at the Contributing Level:

**David & Linda Dewey**

