

# The Organ Spiel

NEWSLETTER FOR THE SIERRA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

OPEN CONSOLES



July - Aug 2010

SATURDAY,  
July 31st

HUNTER HALL

218 California St.

Rio Vista

WHEN:

11:00AM -

Tours

11:30AM -

Mini Concert

Noon -

Portluck

After Lunch

Open Console

## Rio Vista Wurlitzer Debut

The installation is nearing completion; all ranks are now playing! This is the project that Sierra Chapter technician **Dave Moreno** has been working on for the past year. Come and hear (see) the progress. Your hosts are **Geoffrey Hansen**, owner of the 3/15 Wurlitzer, and **Bill and Jan Hunter**, owners of the former Masons Building in Rio Vista.

The pipe ranks for this organ came from the former Uncle Milts Pizza in Vancouver Washington. The console was originally installed in the St Petersburg Florida Paramount Theatre in 1926.

Guest organist **Jim Wagner**, from Oakley, will entertain us with a mini-concert. Jim was a student of Tom Sheen, and a former organist at the various Pizza & Pipes, in the Bay Area, in the mid '70s.

We are requesting that attendees with last names beginning with:

**A - K bring a main dish**

**L - Z bring either a salad or dessert.**

**Everyone bring their own plate and eating utensils.** Drinks and napkins will be provided.

Directions: Take I-5 towards Lodi and exit at Hwy 12 West towards Rio Vista. When you cross over the Rio Vista Bridge (the big drawbridge) take the first off ramp, keep to the right and go under the bridge and head south (along the river on Front Street). You will come to a 4-way stop sign (Main St.).

Keep going south two more blocks to California Street, turn right and go one block. The Hall is on the right, at the corner of California and Second Street. Hunter Hall is the L shaped building. Parking is on the street. Allow about 1 1/2 hr. from the Sacramento area.



OPEN CONSOLE

FAIR OAKS

Sunday - August 1st

Come anytime between 2:00 - 5:00PM, and sign-in at the door. Members and Friends who wish to play will be limited to three songs, or 15 minutes, whichever comes first. After everyone on the sign-in list has been given a chance to play, the process will be repeated.

**Admission is free.** You may bring your family or friends and play the organ, or just sit and listen. Friends of Sierra Chapter and non-members may play the organ on their first visit. Thereafter they would need to join to play.

If you missed it last year, here's another chance for fun!!

Long time Sierra Chapter member, **Wendell Jacob**, has invited members to an *Open Console* event at his home.

Among the instruments available for your enjoyment are a working Calliope, a Wurlitzer Band Organ, a Ragtime Piano, a Conn Theatre Organ (once owned by Everett Nourse), a Hammond B-3 complete with Leslie Speaker and an Antique Reed Organ.

The show piece of the room is the Moller 3 Manual, 14



Rank Pipe Organ, from the fabulous San Francisco Fox Theatre Lobby, lovingly installed by Dave Moreno. Being a Lobby organ, this instrument lends itself well to a home installation and is easy on the ears. In fact, Wendell will most obligingly give you a tour on the catwalk through the chambers while the organ is playing and your ears will be just fine.

**Bring snacks or finger foods to share.** If you play, bring your favorite tunes and show off your talent on any of these instruments.



Sunday,  
August 22nd

1 - 4 PM

Any time

OPEN CONSOLE

HOME of  
WENDELL  
JACOB

48 COLLEGE  
PARK, DAVIS

(530)753-3916



## Brief Highlights of the 2010 ATOS Seattle Convention

Edward Millington Stout III

Tending to fill my old fountain pen with imported English Green vitriol, which often slides across the pages to an accumulated five thousand words, I was informed by my faithful business partner, Richard Taylor, the Sierra Chapter's newsletter allows for a limit of around five hundred words. Good grief, how to clip the parrot's tongue? Therefore I have started anew with a rare approach of mentioning an overview and a few highlights of the recent gathering of those who still are willing to endure the abuse of tuned tornados.

First of all, after driving two days from California's arid climate and pothole-laden roads into the lush rain forests, the fine convention hotel was a most welcome site. I knew many old duff's bladders would not allow for six hour bus rides and therefore the comfortable lounges and restaurants would be the site of hours of tall tale spinning and sugar-coated lies. This senior technician would choose only the events worthy of leaving fine red wine alone for a few hours.



Dick Taylor and Carol Zerbo rode the lurch mobile for ten hours to hear Dave Wickham play the impressive Seattle Liberty Wurlitzer, which is far from its original configuration. Dave played with energy in keeping with this most important musical treasure. Members of the congregation provided an exceptional lunch for the visiting Kinura hunters.

Tuesday was the "Optional Day" and I opted to share war stories with my old pal Mike Foley, the President of Foley-Baker, Inc. and Mike has the wonderful Wurlitzer from the Lynn Paramount singing forth in his East Coast home. According to our field reporter, Dick Taylor, the Kenyon Hall event featured the gifted Peter Mintun at a non-electronic piano. Also featured were clear-throated singers under the direction of Louis Meager. Clark Wilson provided a well prepared score on the expanded style D for the silent photoplay "Sherlock Jr."

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The official opening night event was held in the magnificent Paramount Theatre, which still resonates with



its original Publix I Wurlitzer. The concert was billed as a "Duo Concert" with Tony Fenelon and John Atwell.



It was clear Tony was firing on all eight cylinders with clean and articulate playing. It was also clear there were problems with the solid state relay now commanding the noble instrument. The "mini-strokes" were causing the pistons and other controls to fire at their pleasure, during his beautifully crafted re-creations of Buddy Cole arrangements. As for the organ, the ensemble suffered from an over zealous and hard-nosed Solo Tibia. It was not doing its job in blending and carrying the colors of the ensemble. For some reason the color reed balance was making your ears "reach" for the Saxophone and Orchestral Oboe.

Wednesday afternoon provided reason enough for the entire journey into the rain-forest and that event featured Nathan Avakian and Friends. First of all,

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Nathan clearly prepared for his program with inventive use of pre-programmed material on his laptop. Under most circumstances that just does not work, but his material was new, upbeat and refreshing and his sense of timing prevented him from being dragged

down by something that had been prepared at another time. His stage presence was delightful and confident, without being full of himself or arrogant. Go Nathan!

That evening we were favored with the very calm Lew Williams on expanded original Wurlitzer. The Mt. Baker Theatre was in perfect condition due to management of the highest professional degree.

Due to some minor health issues, this creaky sage joined the Indoor Bird Watchers Society, which mandated identifying specific species through the bottom of a Martini glass. Again, Dick Taylor's experienced ear and eye provided an overview of the trip to Portland. The highlight of the day for Dick was hearing

School Kimball featured popular tunes from the 1970s and the very special music of Richard Purvis. The organ has received loving care from the dedicated crew led by the very musical Rob Kingdom, who in his youth received coaching from Tom Hazleton.



The final target for the day was the First United Methodist Church where Jonas Nordwall has held forth since God's Dog Had Teeth. His 4/107 dream machine seemed to be inspired by a super charged Corvette. With Jonas alone behind the wheel, winning the drag race was assured. His dazzling program proved once again, in the right hands a recital on a "church organ" can be exciting and uplifting. Jonas' son Chris and his partner Michael conducted the rebuilding of the organ.

On Thursday morning I put my Geritol on the stove and brought it to a boil in order to attend Simon Gledhill's concert at the Washington Center in Olympia. The Dean of the Pacific Northwest's Theatre Organ activity, Andy Crow, was responsible for seeing the 3/25 Wurlitzer installed in the new theatre. Like the Oaks Rink, this wonderful instrument is in the auditorium above the proscenium arch and it all gets out. This instrument was the perfect choice for the amazing talent of Simon Gledhill. He is one of those special musicians who occupies his very own box seat. His program was well balanced and consisted of material not yet shared in the United States. Again, Simon's concert was worth the long trip and the organ was in very good tune, thanks to Ed and Patti Zollman.



and studying the one of a kind 4/18 Wurlitzer hanging from the ceiling of the famous Oaks Rink. That magnificent old organ with its out-dated mechanisms was just thrilling with Dean Lemire at the console. The phrase "out-dated" mechanisms was used because they are at odds with today's throw away society. The original relays can and should be rebuilt every forty years instead of installing the temporary "mini-stroke" trash. The Oaks Rink organ is GREEN friendly!

Donna Parker's fine musicianship has never let her fans down and her concert on the Cleveland High

The closing concert for the convention was held in the Paramount Theatre following dinner on the leveled auditorium floor. Jim Riggs was well suited to the organ because he is the featured organist there several times each year. In search of some color reeds, we sat in the balcony where the instrument seemed to have more clarity. Someone had improved the Solo Tibia with good effect on the ensemble. Jim Riggs has a most expressive style where his "Sleepy Time Down South" still swings. Jim creates the effect of each chord having a gentle "pneumatic bloom." It was a very nice evening indeed.

The "Encore Day" was also well worth the extra day and it began, for the red ticket holders, at Wurlitzer Manor with the brilliant organist, Richard Hills at the four manual Wurlitzer-Kimball-?????and friends concert organ.



dash relay's insisting on having a nervous breakdown. It is a tribute to Richard's great musical taste and skill that most of the guests were unaware of the technical problems. What a professional!

The last program took place in a large red barn, without the livestock. The organ was thoughtfully spread along the very long wall, thereby giving the guests a choice of hearing either the Solo or the Main. Walt Strony played very



well and was most entertaining. Walt mentioned he loves playing silent films and it is hoped he might be given the opportunity within the community. The organ technician, Greg Smith, was kind to let guests without loose toupees or hats peek into the vast chambers at the conclusion of the program. Ok kids, let's pack up and get out of Dodge until next year.

Some wise old person once said, Gledhill and Hills should and often share that very special box seat. Richard played magnificently, in spite of the Balder-

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**Hammond A-100 two manual with Hammond style 25 note Pedalboard.**

This is an "original" model with tone-wheel generators. Owner indicates it is in excellent condition, little used, but has been regularly oiled. Original paperwork included.

\$500 OBO For more information, contact:

**Becky Forster at Phone (916) 381-6241**

**Commentary on the A-100 from captain-foldback.com:**

**A-100 - best in its class** "The best B-3's are A-100's" - now what does this statement mean? It points to the fact that a Hammond A-100 organ is in fact the exact same organ as the legendary B-3, and then some. As many may know, the A-100 is the home version of the B-3/C-3 organs. The cabinets of the A-100 models were all, with one exception, tailored for home use: No locking top, built-in speakers and reverb, and a wider selection of wood finishes and stylings. Today, the A-100 series organs have become increasingly sought after because they are generally well kept and less played than B/C-3 organs previously owned by churches or professional musicians. Also, the slimmer profile of the A-100 cabinet (especially the 'plain Jane' A-100 model) is preferred over the B-style cabinet for taking on the road.



# Music Library Request for Volunteers



It's been two years since our Sierra Chapter's Music Library took a turn for the better. With her librarian skills, Cathy Peterson pitched in and gave us a hand at consulting, reorganizing and updating using the computer to gather data from our massive sheet music and music book collection. Cathy trained me and three other volunteers, Gary French, Jeanne Paquette and Bob Suffel to assist her with computer data inputting which she edited and prepared for filing.

Cathy has accepted new responsibilities and obligations away from the Music Library. She's given me a new challenge, and that is, taking her former job to task. with this agenda, I'm going to need more volunteer assistance.

The Music Library's collection of piano, organ and other orchestral instruments grew through 12 years of donations from past and present members of our chapter.

Our purpose, besides preserving these treasured documents, is to generate a system of lending or loaning music material requested by a member. This system will allow access to the Music Library's database via our website where a search, by song title, composer, genre, publisher year, for a particular piece of music can be found. Arrangements for borrowing the music, once located, can be communicated by email to the librarian.

In order to make all this happen, **I NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS.** Your ability to use a computer is a big plus. However, filing, organizing documents and librarian experience are other assets. Typically, our trained volunteers can perform work at home using their computers to input data and saving that data to a flash drive.

For more information, contact **Jim Leach.**  
 Email: [jleach@surewest.net](mailto:jleach@surewest.net)  
 Home Phone: 916-797-9125



*Barbara Harris is home! She continues to make progress, but is awaiting resolution of other medical issues. You can send her a card:*

5225 Rambler Way Sacramento, CA 95841-2243

## BOARD MEETING

SATURDAY Aug 21 10:00AM  
 Home of Carol Zerbo. Open to all Regular Members, but please RSVP to Carol if you are planning to attend.

## CLOSING CHORD



**Frank Bindt**, Sierra Chapter member, and an ATOS Charter Member, from Walnut Creek, passed away at the age of 93 on July 12th, of pancreatic cancer. Condolences can be sent to his children: Bob Bindt <[loantrain@msn.com](mailto:loantrain@msn.com)> and Bob's siblings: Larry Booth <[Larry\\_Booth@hotmail.com](mailto:Larry_Booth@hotmail.com)> and Martha Fowler <[mafowler@yahoo.com](mailto:mafowler@yahoo.com)> .

### Chapter Officers

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**Recording Library**  
**Beverly Harris**  
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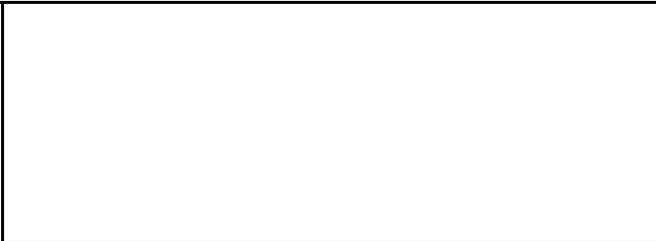




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# MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR EVENTS

## SIERRA CHAPTER EVENT

**Saturday July 31**

Pot Luck/Open Console  
Rio Vista Wurlitzer Debut  
11:00 AM- 4:00 PM



**Sunday August 1**

Open Console  
Fair Oaks  
2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

**Sunday August 22**

Finger Foods/Open Console  
Home of Wendell Jacob  
Davis, CA  
1:00 - 4:00 PM

## SIERRA CHAPTER EVENT

California Auto Museum  
2200 Front Street

**Sunday Sept 19 6:00PM**

***The Iron Mask — 1929***

Silent Film - with

**Bob Salisbury**



## NORCAL CHAPTER EVENT

**Sunday Sept 26**

Picnic/Open Console  
Home of Bert At-wood  
Kelseyville, CA  
11:30AM to Dusk



## Stockton Fox Event

Bob Hope Theatre  
242 E. Main Stockton, CA



**Friday August 13  
6:30PM**

***Singing in the Rain***

Featuring **Tom Thompson**  
On the Mighty Morton

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)