

The Pine Piper



Newsletter of the Pine Tree Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

Second Quarter 2017 Edition

How you can help save a Theatre Organ

Even if you don't have aspirations to install a theatre organ in your home or business, you can be "instrumental" in helping to save or relocate one. There are many important roles to play in saving an instrument and assuring its future. And if you do only one, you are part of the solution. Some examples:

- Keep track of where instruments are and how likely they are to remain safe
- Keep track of people or groups who are looking for an instrument
- Help to "rescue" an instrument on short notice
 - o Rent a truck
 - o Provide lunch for a work party
 - o Offer shelter to the rescued instrument while a new owner or home can be found
- Help with removal and /or reinstallation of an instrument
- Provide expertise for any or all of the above steps to insure the job is done safely and correctly
- Help with expenses

The Pine Tree Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society is a small one indeed but we count among our members some who can do all of the above tasks. Our group has rescued two theatre pipe organs in recent years that were destined for the dump otherwise. And it would have been difficult if not impossible for any one member to do either rescue alone.

One of our members recently heard of an organ that was stored in the basement of a house whose owner had sold it and was about to close and leave. He brought together the homeowner and our youngest chapter member, who agreed to give the organ a new home. We had about a week. The organ was completely disassembled already, so it was mainly a moving task. As it was a small instrument and did not include a relay or blower, most of it fit nicely into a rented 16' U-Haul truck.

Five of us - Pete Haskell, Keith and Ginny Taylor, and Dwight and Pat Burkard - met at the house the day before the closing. We had two

pickup trucks in addition to the big one. Pete and Keith are very knowledgeable about theatre pipe organs and both own their own instruments. I'm a novice by comparison. It took us perhaps four to six hours to haul all of the pieces up through a bulkhead, then pack pipes in trays and load everything up in the trucks.



Taking inventory
(Pat Burkard photo)



The trucks are loaded
(Pat Burkard photo)

The Pine Piper



Newsletter of the Pine Tree Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

Second Quarter 2017 Edition

Keith and Ginny took the chimes movement and a few other pieces to their home to store while Pat and I followed by Pete began the three-hour drive to my house with the rest. We unloaded it that night into my barn and followed up with a work party a few days later to sort it out and get it all stacked up out of the way.

We later learned that the very cool garden railway that ran around the basement of that house and out a window to the yard was actually scrapped since no one could be found who wanted it. So I have no doubt that the same fate would have befallen the RM had we not come together as a group to spirit it away.



“Pipe tray-ler” (groan...)
(Dwight Burkard photo)

Most of the organ is still sitting in my barn now, two years later, but it’s safe and awaiting its next move. We bought it time until a cure to its homelessness can be found.



The console (most of it) in its new home
(Seamus Gethicker photo)

Every day more of these instruments are disappearing because we are not ready to act when the time is short. And it seems like it always is the last minute when we learn of one that “has to go”. So I encourage you to do whatever you can to help save one even if you’re not the one who can install it in your own home. You can help keep it on life support for someone who does – and that’s every bit as important.

-Dwight Burkard

How to Play Hymns:

One of our members plays both piano and organ for nursing homes and restaurants and a church. He also teaches piano. He always wanted to find a book that explained some principles of music in ways that were easy to understand, to make life easier for his students. He couldn’t find one, so he wrote one. Bob Kroepel is now revisiting his book to update it since it was many years ago that it was first created.

It’s a great idea to fill a perceived gap with something of your own creation (that’s why the theatre organ exists, BTW). At the very least, even if such books do exist, it will put a different spin on the subject or may use a new analogy

The Pine Piper



Newsletter of the Pine Tree Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

Second Quarter 2017 Edition

that no one else has thought of. At best, it can be a very useful tool to help many students and teachers alike. And lead to fame, glory, and riches! Maybe... But in any case, if you think there's a dearth of knowledge about a topic near and dear to your heart, you owe it to yourself to put down your thoughts, even if just for your own use. And, if you think it will be useful to the rest of us, publish it. That's what Bob did with his "How to Play Hymns".

What Are Our Members Up To?

Since we last reported on our young rising star, Seamus Gethicker, he has been pretty busy with his senior year at Morse High School and has managed to squeeze in a few organ performances. Perhaps the most notable of these performances was a program he took part in with students of Eastman in Rochester NY on their fabulous [4/23 Wurlitzer](#). He also played a program at Methuen Memorial Music Hall in May at their young organist program.

Seamus will be a guest artist at this summer's ATOS annual convention and will play a program following the Young Theatre Organist competition! He will also be a guest artist (again) in August on the Spreckels organ in Balboa Park, San Diego!

John Clark has a passion and penchant for classical organ music. A couple of years back he was bitten by the Hauptwerk bug and began planning for his own portable and very realistic pipe organ. It has grown to two manuals and an elegantly simple table-top assembly that can be carried in and out of a place in about four trips by one person. It's definitely a proof-of-concept that a very authentic sounding instrument, and possibly authentic looking as well some day, can be made to break down into pieces that can be transported and reassembled by one person – even up a flight of stairs and through a narrow doorway! It's still a work in progress but it has progressed far enough to be a very enjoyable instrument for John.



John's music machine
(Dwight Burkard photo)

Dwight Burkard has a partial rank of rescued Harmonic Flute pipes that he has been planning to use in a façade in his living room. Part of the plan is to collect as many famous, or soon-to-be-famous, artists' signatures on the pipes themselves. To that end, he has showed up at many an organ concert with a pipe in hand and asked the artist for an autograph on the front of the pipe. And they have always kindly obliged. So now he has a nice collection of signed pipes to display.

There are no plans other than those that he drew up several years back. He has a small section of wall available – about 43" wide – so this limited the size of the façade. And he wanted it to be portable enough so that he could move it if a better section of wall freed-up. He

The Pine Piper



Newsletter of the Pine Tree Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

Second Quarter 2017 Edition

also wanted it to match the finish of his Allen R-311 as closely as possible.

Here, finally, is the result. The wood is maple. The finish is Red Mahogany and Sedona Red (both Minwax stains) followed by 3 coats of Minwax “wipe-on” satin polyurethane. It’s still not quite as red as his Allen but it is pretty close.



The Harmonic Flute Façade
(Dwight Burkard photo)

Ray Cornils has been instrumental in the development of Friends of the Kotschmar Organ into an educational power for music and the organ. In early May he played his annual program at the Loranger Middle School in Old Orchard Beach on the 3/13 Wurlitzer for students there. His programs combine hands-on demonstrations of pipes, information about how the organ works (in layman’s terms), and some musical demonstrations to reinforce what was taught, and to just plain please the ear.

This year’s show at Loranger, with some comic relief and assistance from George Shabo, was much enjoyed. Everett saw the moment when the students first saw the swell shades open – priceless! We could see their heads go from the shades on the Main to Ray playing with only his feet (and clapping a rhythm with his hands at the same time) to the shades on the

Solo. They were VERY engaged and well-behaved. Pieces included some theme music from Jurassic Park and Star Wars, Sheep May Safely Graze, and a real pretty piece called Melody in Mauve (Richard Purvis?). Ray and George performed a musical narration called “Rex” describing the King of Instruments. The show ended with Widor’s Toccata in F, one of my favorites and a real thrill to hear on the Wurlitzer. Ray said he plays about 2000 notes a minute in that piece – roughly 30 per second! That’s quite an interesting statistic, I think.

Despina Clark

With sorrow, we note the passing of Pine Tree Chapter member Despina Chatis Clark on April 21, 2017. She was a lifelong musician and teacher, beginning her piano lessons at age six and becoming a church organist while still in grammar school. Despina belonged to countless guilds and associations of piano and organ teachers and artists even late in life.

She is survived by her husband of forty four years John B. Clark, whom she referred to fondly as “John B”. John is also a member of our Pine Tree Chapter. We will all miss her.



The Pine Piper



Newsletter of the Pine Tree Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society

Second Quarter 2017 Edition

News Notes

ATOS Convention is July 3 through 6 in Tampa with encore events on July 7 and 8. The early bird discount rate has been extended to June 15th! For more information, please visit the ATOS convention site [here](#).

Ray Cornils is retiring from his long-standing job as Portland's municipal organist after 27 years! He will leave this post at the end of 2017. The search for his successor has been underway for some time and the interviews are underway. He is also retiring from his position as organist for First Parish Church in Brunswick.

We wish him the very best in his future and his new opportunity to "take the weekend off"!

FOKO's *Orgelfest17* kicks off Tuesday, August 1, 2017 with a performance by concert organist [Monica Czausz](#). See FOKO's [full schedule...](#)

Prez. Says:

We are now in our second year of the digital version of our newsletter. Fortunately, our members are busy enough to give us some stories to put into print. As acting editor, I *really* enjoy the flexibility of being able to drop pictures and links into this to make it a bit interactive. I like to be able to drill down to find details about things and I hope you do too.

As president of a small and aging group, I truly hope we can find ways to attract younger folks to our hobby. We need to find ways to avoid having two distinct groups of people – young and old - and instead have a nice smooth continuum of musical tastes. We won't attract young folks with music so old that their parents never even heard of it, although we might cultivate an interest once they join with us. Remember that most of the earlier Beatles tunes are now a half century old! I really think we need to meet them half way, at least, with music that's at least from their lifetime. And there I just said "we" and "them" without even thinking about it until afterward. But, until we are joined

together in our passion for the instrument and music, it's unavoidable. The success of any society hinges on its being able to change and evolve. Instruments such as John's virtual pipe organ might be key to bringing the TPO sound and experience to large groups of young people. And also key is knowing something about modern music and modern tastes. The theatre pipe organ has changed before to survive, without losing track of its roots. And I believe it can do it again!

ALL our chapters and our national parent organization are fighting this fight. If you have an idea how we can attract younger people, please let us know. Yours may be the idea that everyone has been looking for!

Hit the Links:

ATOS (National):

www.atos.org

ATOS Radio (Streaming theatre organ music):

<http://www.atos.org/radio/>

ATOS Young Organist Competition 2016:

<http://atosradio.org/TOWR2016/YOC>

Eastern MA Chapter ATOS:

www.emcatos.com

Friends of the Kotschmar Organ:

<http://www.foko.org/>

Pine Tree Chapter ATOS:

<http://theatreorgans.com/me/pinetree/>

Contact Us:

We are the Pine Tree Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society.

Our website can be found [here](#).

[Visit us on Facebook](#) 

Or contact Dwight Burkard at jburkard@megalink.net for more information or with your feedback.

Editor pro tem: Dwight Burkard