

Relay Chatter

The Official Newsletter of the Joliet Area Theatre Organ Enthusiasts



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July/August 2004

Next Social - Sunday, July 18, 2004 at 2:00 PM at the Rialto Theatre, Joliet, IL. See page two for details!

August Social - Sunday, August 1. Mark Herman at the Van Der Molen Residence Robert Morton Organ, Wheaton, IL! See Page two for details.

Dave Wickerham weekend to be held August 19-21! Dave will perform at four venues in the Colorado Springs, Co area. There will be time to enjoy the sights of Pikes Peak during the day. Featured instruments include: 3/8 Wurlitzer in the City Auditorium, 3/20 Wurlitzer in the Mt. St. Francis Auditorium, 3/15 Wurlitzer in the Duane Searle Residence, and 4/34 Hybrid at Joel's Organ Barn. Total cost for all concerts is only \$40.00/person! Contact Bob Lillie at 719-635-3703 or Owanah Wick at 719-488-9468 for details and registration information. You may also e-mail Bob or Owanah at organist59@aol.com or dowick@prodigy.net, respectively.

President's Message

I must thank those of you that came to the Social on May 30th. The weather was just terrible. My sister, Mary Jane, was with us from Portland, OR. She said (while we were driving to the theatre in blinding rain) Portland has rain, but not like this. We were happy that 57 hearty souls showed up that day.

Before I forget, I must thank Warren York for donating a humidifier for the blower room. The organ needs humidified air and the one we had was on its last legs. It has been installed in the blower room and is working just fine.

Our organ technician, Jim Gruber, came in with John Peters to assess the Barton to make sure we are on the right track to continue the restoration process. We then met with Randy Green the Rialto's General Manager to report the findings. The meeting was prompted by some of the negative letters received by the WCMEAA. We do have some work to do, since Jim Gruber gave it a grade of B-. The sound of one of the string ranks is being cancelled out by the large rank behind it and we will have to have a different placement for it. Some of the devices that were disconnected will be restored. We are in the process of reconstructing the non-working bass and tympani drums. These were supposedly rebuilt in 2002, but never worked.

Prior to the Extravaganza, Taylor Trimby did some work on the console computer and found some problems with the relay program. Some of this has been overcome with still more to do. We did have the ability to record, but somewhere along the way it disappeared. This will also be resolved.

As a result of the insert we put in to the Extravaganza Program, we have to date received over \$1500 in donations for the organ. We are pleased with that and I'm sure that we will receive more in time.

The production of CD 8 is in process and from what I have heard; it will be of superb quality. We will let everyone know when it is ready.

I guess I have rambled on enough, so we will see you at the next social.

Jim Patak

Directions to Van Der Molen Residence, Wheaton, IL

Coming from the south, take I-355 or IL Rt. 59 north to the Roosevelt Road exit. Proceed west to Main Street in Wheaton (one block west of Naperville Road) (If you are driving from IL Rt. 59 north, follow the signs to turn east on Roosevelt Rd, then left on Main St.) Turn right on Main Street, and proceed north to Harrison St. Turn left on Harrison to Gary Ave. Turn right (North) on Gary to Jewell Road (1st traffic light) Turn left on Jewell Road. Count four (4) streets on the right side of Jewell Road, and turn right on Willow Road. Proceed to the second block. The Van Der Molen residence is the large gray house (3rd) on the left. **Watch for the attendant for parking directions, or park in the driveway, or on the west side of the street only.**

From the north, take I-355, Illinois Rt. 59, or I-290. Exit at North Avenue, Rt. 64. Go west to Gary Avenue. (If traveling from Rt. 59, turn left, going east on North Ave to Gary.) (White Castle is on the SW corner, about 10 miles from I-290) Turn left and go south about 2 miles to Jewell Rd, the fifth traffic light. Turn right and go west. Count four (4) streets on the right side only of Jewell Road. The fourth street is Willow Road. Turn right, go into the second block. Look for the third house on the left side of the street. **Watch for the attendant for parking directions, or park in the driveway, or on the west side of the street only.**

The Van Der Molen residence is located at 0N 468 Willow Road, Wheaton, IL 60187

For Sale: Conn 652 three manual theatre organ. Excellent condition. \$2,500.00 or best offer. Also, music books/sheet music for sale. Contact Bernice Knocke at 708-448-0486.

BOB GERGESZ TO PERFORM ON JULY 18

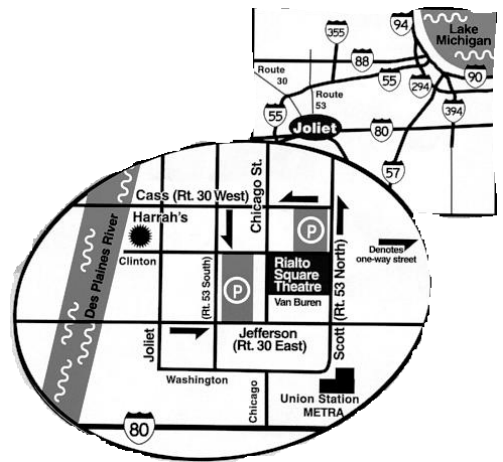
Join us at the Rialto Theatre, Joliet on Sunday, July 18. Doors will open at 1:30PM, and the program will begin promptly at 2:00PM. Please bring refreshments. Open console will follow Bob's performance.

Robert Gergesz began his studies in music at the age of 9 with accordion lessons, followed soon by lessons on the piano. He was introduced to the organ at 13 when he took a series of classes at Joliet Junior College taught by Joyce Height. When Bob was 14, the parish priest at his church (St. Stevens Hungarian Church) learned of his ability to play the organ and asked him to play for mass. That was the "official" launch of his career in music.

During the next few years, up until he went to college, Bob studied organ with Kay McAbee, renowned theater organist in the Joliet area. He feels very fortunate to have had a teacher who instilled in him a love of organ music, both theater and classical as Kay did. Following this training, Bob went on to obtain a Bachelors degree in Music from the Chicago Conservatory of Music. His instructors there included Rev. Stanley Rudcki, classical organ; and his classical piano teacher was Bernice Peck. After college Bob also studied with Mel Libman, classical pianist.

After graduating from college, Bob began teaching music in the Joliet area and to this day still teaches approximately 50 students each week on piano, organ and accordion. He has also been steadily employed as a church musician since his St. Steven's days in several area churches, with a continuous career at the Lemont United Methodist Church in Lemont, IL where he recently celebrated his 25th anniversary.

His list of credits include: playing at the Rialto Theater for various area functions, at McCormick Place in Chicago as pianist for the Stevens Corporation for the national printers convention, fashion show accompanist for Carson Pirie Scott, promotional work for Mel Libman, entertainment for the Festival of Trees in Joliet, and as the "house musician" for many area restaurants and supper clubs.



YOUNG ORGANIST MARK HERMAN TO PERFORM ON AUGUST 1!

Doors to the Van Der Molen residence will open no earlier than 3:00 PM. Please do not arrive early, and wait for the attendant before parking your vehicle! The program will begin promptly at 3:30PM. Please bring refreshments. There will be no open console. We thank Paul and Linda Van Der Molen for their hospitality, and for allowing us to use their Wheaton Fox music studio!

Mark Herman was born on August 25, 1987, and currently lives in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He has been studying the piano since he was seven years old and started classical organ lessons in the sixth grade. His first introduction to the theatre organ was when he was in fourth grade and was at the Embassy Theatre. This was made possible by Bob Goldstine and the local AGO's "Room on the Organ Bench" program. He has been studying theatre organ with John Ferguson of Indianapolis for about three years and piano with Christine Freeman at IPFW for about three and one half years. In the summer of 2003, he was given the opportunity to play a cameo performance at the American Theatre Organ Society's annual convention in Oakland, California. Mark is also still involved heavily with the Embassy Theatre. He is one of the volunteer pianists and organists and serves on the Embassy Organ Committee and the Embassy Organ Crew. He is also currently a sophomore at Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne. In addition to playing the organ, Mark is an avid pianist and loves trying his hand at composing pieces for practice and recreational purposes. Mark feels special gratitude towards his parents, Ron and Andrea, who have supported him from the beginning.

Editors note: I had the pleasure of hearing Mark for the first time at the SanFilipo residence Wurlitzer this past June, and I can assure you that you will not want to miss this social. Mark has the maturity and skill level of organists many times his age! See you there!

Don Walker

