

STOPRAIL

Arizona Chapter of The American Theatre Organ Society

Since 1976

Volume Thirty Four ♦ Issue Nine ♦ September ♦ Two Thousand Nine

Open console afternoon at Fizzell's home

There is no planned official meeting in August so Tom & Beverly are having an open house on Saturday afternoon, **August 29 from 1:00 til 5:00 pm**. Here is your chance to play a less threatening organ than some. Bring your music and a snack to share and have a good time playing with your friends. We will fire up the popcorn machine! There are two pianos in the music room also in case of a duet. We encourage you to bring other instruments to play besides our organs and pianos. Listeners welcome.

Bring sheet music to trade.

Directions to the Fizzell's:

From the corner of 24th street and Baseline Road in Phoenix, go South one mile to Euclid, right 1/8th mile to 22nd Street, left 1/8th mile to the end of the street. We are on the left side of 22nd Street at the end. Our house is not on Siesta. Go on past that street. We are right next to the mountain at the end of the street. House will be cool! See you on Saturday, August 29th at 1:00!



Run for a 2010 Board Spot

The upcoming year holds promise of great things to come. For a full run-down of board responsibilities, Bill Carr can get you a copy of the Bylaws where positions are spelled out in detail. Here is a brief description of positions and their responsibilities:

President: Oversees meetings and committees. Spokesperson for club.

Vice President/Program: Takes over in the absence of the President. Plans programs and events.

Secretary: Takes minutes at meetings, in charge of social correspondence.

Treasurer: Handles the club funds. Pays bills.

Statuary Agent: Files legal papers and maintains records and files.

Member at Large: Two positions. Attend meetings and has a vote. This is a two year position.

Appointed Positions:

Membership Chairman: Keeps track of member lists and accepts dues.

Crew Chief: Oversees work crews on the various organ projects.

Stoprail Editor: Produces and mails and e-mails the Stoprail Newsletter.

As you can see, many members have the necessary skills for these positions. There are also committees to work on if you would like to help make our events successful in other ways.

Revised Bylaws are available.
Contact Bill Carr 623-694-1746
billcarr3.vots.atos@cox.net

Information about the upcoming September meeting will be in the next issue of Stoprail. Meeting will be at Phoenix College, September 27th, 2:30 pm

ATOS Summer Youth Camp *by Madeline LiVolsi*

This year's ATOS Summer Youth Camp was held in the Phoenix area July 27-31. Thirteen young theatre organ enthusiasts spent the week in group and private classes with Donna Parker, Martin Ellis, Jelani Eddington and Lyn Larsen. The majority of these daytime sessions took place at the Adrian Phillips Music Studio symphonic-theatre organ. In addition, the students spent their evenings enjoying the organs at the Orpheum Theatre, Organ Stop Pizza, the Fizzell residence, and the First Christian Church Fellowship Hall.

Some of the attendees arrived in Phoenix early enough to hear Matthewplay at the Orpheum for our chapter meeting on Sunday. After dinner, the young people enjoyed open console on the Orpheum's Wurlitzer — nice way to start the week. Monday night was a fun time listening to Charlie Balogh at Organ Stop. It was such a delight to watch the students enjoying Charlie & the Wurlitzer.

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2009 Elected Officers & Board Members

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Matthew Bason at the Orpheum Theatre



Matthew is an outstanding musician and it is obvious that he loves the pipe organs, because he got carried away and played for two hours. He opened with *Near You* and went right into *Don't Mean A Thing if You Ain't Got That Swing*, *Rock Around the Clock* & *Opus I*. Matthew is a humorous and fun organist and involved us all. He was great on *Embraceable You*, *My Love is Her To Stay*, *Summertime*, *Lady Be Good*. He played some European polkas and pieces from old time shows like Pinocchio and Snow White: *Whistle While You Work*, *It's Off To Work We Go*. He played until almost 5:00 and we never tired of it all

that time. He played *Beer Barrel Polka* and *Tiger Rag*, including a growling sound. *Wind Beneath My Wings* was next. There are too many pieces to list but he went on with another 25 songs. We encouraged an encore and he ended with *We'll Meet Again*, *My Blue Heaven*, *Orange Blossom Special* & *In The Mood*. Thanks, Matthew for a wonderful afternoon! He had dinner at the Arizona Center with some VOTS folks and then left for England.

Youth Summer Camp Students also played the Wurlitzer.

The meeting & concert was delayed waiting for the Youth Summer Camp students to arrive. This was the day they got to town. What an appreciative audience they were! Following the meeting & concert, the students tried their hand at the console. There are some outstanding musicians & we enjoyed them all. On the playback system, they heard Lyn Larsen, Ron Rhode, Walt Strony and Rob Richards. Students played pieces such as *In The Mood*, *Blacksmith Blues*, *Missouri Waltz*, *That's Entertainment*, *Cabaret*, *smile*, *I Love Paris*, *Maple Leaf Rag*, *I Have A Dream*, *Clarinet Polka*, *Green Door*. They played from many eras, old to new. We aren't going to run out of young organists.

We wish you a Happy Birthday!

Birthday time! A slice of cake goes out to our September birthday cake eaters, Ken Resech, Bob Arnold, Jon Gunther, D.L. Hoots, Lon Vanderveer, Jeff Johnson, Don Reasor, Madeline Livolsi, Edwin Rogers, John Weber, Michael Alyn, David Ulate, Bill Irwin & John Sheak. If we missed yours, let us know. So, blow out those candles and have a good time!



The Stoprail

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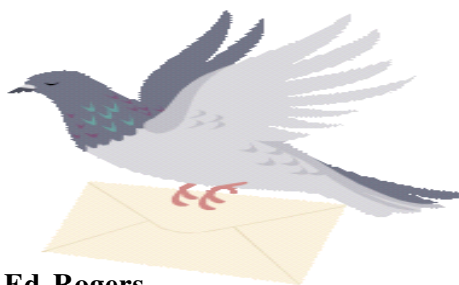
2009 Calendar of Events

Saturday August 29 - 1:00 to 5:00 pm Open console at Fizzell's home
Sunday September 27 - 2:30 pm Phoenix College general meeting
Saturday October 24 - 7:00 pm Fright Night! Phantom to play at Orpheum
November - Annual meeting 2010 election results announced.
December - Christmas Potluck
Silent Films - October 24 & November 21, 2009.
 January 9 & March 20, 2010
For more information : Fred Watson 602-993-7266 mrfgw@cox.net

Phoenix College Organ Work Dates

If you want to work at Phoenix College, call Bill Carr at 623-694-1746 for more information and to let him know you are coming.

Letters to the editor



Ed Rogers

Beverly - Thank you for your email. I rec'd. hard copy of StopRail in the mail yesterday (Tuesday). Another fine, newsy issue. I regret I cannot make it to the next concert, as my only work day nowadays is Sundays. Take care,
Ed Rogers

Tim Kreifels

Hello Beverly! Congratulations on a top notch newsletter. I know things like this take a lot of time and energy but it sure looks professional.

Pete Knobloch

It was great to meet and hear all of the young organists at the ATOS Youth Camp. I sat in the back at Organ Stop Pizza and just listened to everyone play. I am amazed at the young talent that came to the Phoenix area for that special week.
 It was fun seeing our future Theatre Organists exit from the console, some just shaking from the adrenaline rush after playing for their 5-10 minutes at the console.
Pete Knobloch

Donna Parker

Beverly, Thanks again for hosting the kids from the camp. They are still talking about it all!
 Warm regards to you and Tom,
Donna

Letter to the Summer Camp folks:

Hello, Everyone!
 I just wanted to let you all know how much we all enjoyed your visit to the Valley of the Sun. The week went by too quickly. I personally appreciated the opportunity to spend so much time with you and listen to your wonderful talents. It would be great if the ATOS Summer Youth Camp could return to the Valley of the Sun next year.

Parents, I was glad to make your acquaintance as well. I hope we see you again in Phoenix sometime — and you don't have to wait for summer camp to visit!

Good luck in whatever lies ahead for all of you. Maybe I'll see some of you at next year's ATOS national convention in Seattle.

Sincerely,
 Madeline LiVolsi Secretary
 Valley of the Sun Chapter, ATOS

Send letters to beverlyfz2@cox.net or Beverly Fizzell 2201 E Siesta Drive Phoenix Arizona 85042 We can even include photos with your letter!

Organ Reports

Phoenix College organ was playable just in time for the Youth Summer Camp students to enjoy.

Touchup work was done on First Christian Church organ and it was in fine shape for the camp also.

Orpheum Theatre was a big hit with the students. Ongoing gasketing is in progress. If you want to work at the church or the theatre call Tom Fizzell at 602-243-9546

Balboa Theatre SD Concert

On Sept 13th, 2 p.m. Sunday there will be a dedicatory concert on the 'new' 4m/24rank Wonder Morton at the restored Balboa theatre in San Diego. Artists will be Jelani Eddington and Chris Gorsuch. Here is the link for more info and ticket purchases. Tickets are \$20-50.

<http://www.sdbalboa.org>. There is a page you can click into that has a seating chart. Unfortunately the theatre website doesn't give a photo tour of the Balboa. The restoration was about 2 years back. There were photos posted on the net in a San Diego newspaper article and the restoration is stunning. The 4m Morton now in SD Symphony Hall (former Fox theatre) originally came from the Balboa. The new organ is a transplant from back east and probably a much better Morton than the original RM.



Pete Knobloch 10/20/09

This ink drawing was made by a customer while Charlie played last Sunday night at Organ Stop Pizza.

Theatre Historical Society Conclave

Following the ATOS convention in Cleveland I flew to Philadelphia to attend the Theatre Historical Society (THS) conclave for a week. Our goal is to encourage preservation and restoration of historical movie theatres, opera houses, auditoriums, etc. This year we visited about two dozen venues in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware. When there is a pipe organ we are usually given a short program or the organ is turned over to members to try.

At the Capitol/Strand in York, PA, we played the 3/20 Wurlitzer. Being a very small auditorium, the organ comes on like Gangbusters. At the Colonial Theatre in Phoenixville, PA, we were excited to see a 3/14 Wurlitzer being installed on a lift. And at the Rajah Theatre in Reading we saw a four-manual Austin, but were unable to hear this instrument.

The saddest experience was visiting a theatre in suburban Philadelphia where the owner told us there is an original 3/15 Moller. We were excited because the only known original Moller in that part of the U.S. is in New York State. When the owner proudly uncovered the organ and gave us the key, we discovered that a new electronic organ had been installed within the Moller console. Upon inspection of the chambers, there was not a single pipe left. The chambers had been swept clean and obviously an unscrupulous electronic dealer now has a complete Moller pipe organ somewhere (minus a console). We didn't have the courage to tell the theatre owner what had happened to his instrument.

At the Grand Theatre in East Greenville, PA, we enjoyed a beautiful 2/6 Marr & Colton, and at the Roxy in Northampton, PA, we heard the 2/7 Wurlitzer

While on a walking tour of Philadelphia theatres, we attended the noon recital of the amazing organ in the grand court of Wanamaker's (now Macy's) downtown store. Organist that day was Peter Conte. Following the concert THS members were invited to visit the console on the mezzanine. With six manuals and 29,000+ pipes, the console is mammoth.

A new experience for me was attending a sidewalk rally in front of the closed Boyd Theatre in Philadelphia. Our group lent support to locals who are attempting to prevent the destruction of the 2,338 seat Art Deco Palace. Newspaper reports and photographers were present and we hope our support will help save this theatre

Karl R. Warner

Summer Camp *continued from page one*

Tuesday evening, Beverly and Tom Fizzell graciously opened their home to the group. ATOS national president/CEO Ken Double was there to speak about the importance of youth involvement in the organization. Popcorn and ice cream sundaes were gobbled up after open console on the Fizzell's organ.

Wednesday afternoon found everyone at Organ Stop for a salad and pizza buffet. Then the students spent the next three hours learning the intricacies of the 4/75 Wurlitzer. Donna, Jelani and Martin took turns providing assistance when needed. What a joy it was to watch the students' enthusiasm playing this magnificent instrument. One fourteen-year old put it very simply — "I've never been so excited in my whole life!" The group stayed on through the evening to listen to Lew Williams. After closing, he had them all gather around the organ with him for some pointers.

Thursday afternoon, the young people brought some beautiful music out of the Phoenix College Wurlitzer. It may have been the smallest instrument they played all week, but they made it sound very good.

Thursday evening, the VOTS chapter hosted a buffet dinner for the group at the First Christian Church Fellowship Hall. Organized by Cherie Carr, the dinner included plenty to eat, with pie and ice cream for dessert. There was even a birthday cake to celebrate Donna Parker, and Cherie and Bill Carr's birthdays. Parents and chapter members visited after dinner, while the students enjoyed the open console at the Wurlitzer.

Sadly, all good things must come to an end. To wind up the week, Friday evening, Adrian and Deb Phillips hosted a pool party and cookout at their home for the campers and their parents. After dinner, everyone went across the street to the Phillips Music Room for the presentation of certificates, lots of photos, and one last chance to play the organ. Like most summer camps, there was an exchange of e-mail addresses and phone numbers, and promises to stay in touch. We hope that ATOS will choose to return to the Valley of the Sun for next year's summer camp.

Students at Organ Stop with Lew, Jelani & Martin



Martin Ellis, Donna Parker, Jelani Eddington and Ken Double

by Madeline LiVolsi

Summer camp letters from Attendees:

Hi Madeline,

Many thanks to you and the Valley of the Sun Chapter for making all of us feel so very welcome in Phoenix during the ATOS Summer Youth Camp. It was a very enjoyable week for the students and parents alike. We have met so many wonderful people! Justin has not stopped talking about it yet... it was truly an event that he will treasure forever!

Thank you for taking all the wonderful pictures, and for supporting and encouraging all the students during their visits to the various venues. Our sincere thanks to the Chapter for providing the delicious dinner and making us feel so welcome.

We certainly hope that we have an opportunity to visit Phoenix soon...we truly miss the heat!

With appreciation, Vince, Theresa, and Justin LaVoie

Letter from a camp student:

Dear Theatre Organ Friends,

I have recently come home from the 2009 ATOS Summer Youth Camp in Phoenix, AZ, and found it delightfully inspiring and educational! Our instructors this year were Martin Ellis, Donna Parker and Jelani Eddington. They are all forward-thinking visionaries that seem to have endless creativity! A huge thanks is due to them, along with many others that helped us out. Most of our lectures and masterclasses were held at the Phillips residence with the 106-rank Midmer-Losh organ with symphonic and theatre organ stops. It was truly a thrill to hear and play this fabulous instrument!! Our lectures included topics such as registration, arranging, music history and silent film accompaniment. I most enjoyed the lecture about arrangements needing “road maps” to describe not only the form of the piece or medley, but also to plan variations in registration, texture, dynamics, tempo, key and other factors depending on the style of music. This helps to keep things interesting for the listener. One morning after an introductory discussion, some students took turns accompanying various sections of a silent film. I wasn’t planning to do this, because first, I wouldn’t be able to see what is on the screen, and second, I’m not used to improvising at all! But for some strange reason, I let Jelani talk me into going up there anyway! He said, “Why don’t you just give it a try... Just keep a beat with a pedal and chord accompaniment. “ So, I gave it a shot, although not a very good one! Another morning, Jelani shared the process with us for his recording of the Rachmaninov Piano Concerto with the organ as the “orchestra” part. He played both parts and recorded them using multi-track recording software. Donna talked a bit about her work with Trio Con Brio, and Donny Rankin, one of our participants talked about his recording involving an organ, drum set and steel drums! This was fascinating and only fueled my previous desire to one day write or arrange for myself and other musicians.

On our second evening in Phoenix, Beverly and Tom Fizzell invited us into their home for an open console session on their delightful Wurlitzer organ. We also heard a motivating speech from ATOS President Ken Double. We all enjoyed meeting him, as well as our hosts, and of course, we enjoyed playing for them too. On Thursdayafternoon, we had the privilege of visiting the Phoenix College Auditorium where the Valley of the Sun ATOS Chapter has been restoring a Wurlitzer organ which has been rediscovered after a long period of not being used. They are doing a very good job and I admire their dedication. This was a special treat for me since the organ’s caretakers said that they hadn’t heard music played on this organ for a very long time. That evening, the Valley of the Sun Chapter hosted a dinner social at First Christian Church where a Wurlitzer theatre organ resides in the fellowship Hall. I enjoyed meeting some of the members, and of course, we all enjoyed playing the instrument. We are grateful for the chapter’s and the church’s hospitality.

For me, the biggest thrill of all was the chance to enter Organ Stop Pizza when it was closed to the general public, and to take turns playing the Mighty Wurlitzer. There was enough time so that most of us could have two turns! We even got to ride the lift!! Each time someone went up to play, they could play it up and play it down again!! The lift not only raises the console, it also rotates too!! It was akin to an amusement park ride! On my first try, I played “Les Bicyclettes” and “Midnight Hour”. When I returned to the console again, I played “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”, and a Baroque piece. For this music, I rattled the walls with the principle chorus and the 32 ft pedal stops!! The console is beautiful, and I enjoyed looking at it up close and feeling the intricate gold-leaf decorations on it. We also spent two evenings at Organ Stop Pizza listening to Charlie Balogh and Lew Williams play it masterfully. We are very grateful to Charlie and Lew, as well as the owners for affording us this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!

On Friday evening, to top it all off, the Phillips family hosted a pool party and dinner cook-out for all of us. This was a nice chance to relax and bond with all of our new friends. At the end of the evening, we all received our certificates and some surprise goodies, and had the chance to hear our instructors play the Midmer Losh one last time.

All of us enjoyed all of the events very much, and can’t wait for next year! We’d like to thank the Valley of the Sun chapter for all of their work in coordinating the week-long camp. We’d like to give a special thanks to Adrian Phillips III, Lynn Larson, Bob McNeur and Madeline LaVolsi. Of course, we’d like to thank our instructors, Donna Parker, Jelani Eddington and Martin Ellis. We appreciate the input and presentation from Ken Double, and the efforts of the parent volunteers as well. I apologize if I have missed anyone, for I know there were more people “behind the scenes” that help to bring this all together. *Jessica*

VOTS Marketplace

To place your ad, call Beverly Fizzell at 602-243-9546
or e-mail beverlyfz2@cox.net (Deadline is the 20th of next month)

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Add a photo to your ad	\$5.00



For Sale: Real trap unit for Rodgers organs. This unit can be installed on any analog Rodgers organ and with minor changes to the interface board, will work on almost any organ. The actions are all driven by electric solenoids powered by a 15 volt power supply (no blower or wind line). The instruments can be keyed from the tabs on the stop rail or played in patterns using the Rodgers rhythm unit. Gorsuch Enterprises (Chris Gorsuch) in San Diego designed and built only one of these units. Schematic diagram included. Plenty of pictures available upon request. Very unique and a real conversation piece. \$1500 OBO Tim Kreifels Indio, Ca. 760-668-4210 tkgn@aol.com

News from Jim Riggs

Film playing is, for me anyway, a real gas. I've often said it can be the most creative thing one can do on the Unit Orchestra. And from an artists perspective, it's nice to sometimes be just part of a thing rather than the thing itself. My recent move to Wichita and association with Wichita Theatre Organ, Inc. now allows me to pursue this specialty in new and exciting ways. (New projects in the works! News later...)

I'm also very proud to be newly associated with the Seattle Paramount's Silent Movie Mondays series. In addition to having played two film shows there last month, I've been contracted for the November '09 and March '10 shows as well. I feel it's only right to add that Dennis James is to be commended for his characteristically fine work there over the past ten-plus years and for setting the bar quite high. Indeed, I look forward to meeting the challenge and bringing

a new musical voice to silent cinema at the Paramount. I'd also like to recognize the Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society, especially Tom Blackwell and Dave Luttinen, for their efforts to keep the Paramount's Wurlitzer going. We all know it's a difficult thing for a volunteer organization to undertake the maintenance of a large theatre pipe organ in any busy Performing Arts center. PSTOS and its members have given a great deal of time, sweat and money to the cause and absolutely deserve proper recognition and thanks. PLUS—the Paramount organ crew is dedicated to getting what's there working properly before even considering further “improvements” to the organ. I find that attitude both historically sensitive (not slavish, mind you) and delightfully refreshing. Bravo, PSTOS!

So, silent film is still alive, strong and evolving in the great Pacific Northwest. And if any of you happen to be passing through Wichita (or as a certain Wizard once put it, “... the heart of the Western Wilderness.”) please contact me at kinura@earthlink.net and we'll see about getting some ear and/or finger time on two of the most thrilling Wurlitzer pipe organs on the planet. *Musically Yours, Jim Riggs*
One thing that Jim did not mention was that he also played “walk-out” music after the movie after explaining that was how he did for shows at the Oakland Paramount. He played for about 15 minutes AFTER THE MOVIE & a crowd of 50-75 folks hung around the stage enjoying the music & cheering every selection. Not only a fine musician, but a genuinely nice guy in person.
Bob Acker, Dallas



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