



# METROLINA ORGAN Quarterly

A publication of the Metrolina Theatre Organ Society

Come on an

## EXCURSION



Join MTOS on a trip to Davidson on Sunday afternoon, March 17, to visit the shop of Knowlton Organ Company, located in the heart of the college community.

Our host and guide will be the owner of the Knowlton firm, MTOS member Ben Williams. The tour will begin at 2:30, and last about an hour and a half. He will show us all around the shop, describing the several projects underway, and answer all the impertinent questions you will be able to think up. You may even get to play.

The shop is located in an old mill building, one block west of Main Street, opposite the campus. There is plenty of room and much to see. Of particular interest is the renovated 3/45 Möller, built in 1967

for Dana Auditorium at Queens College. In the auditorium it was completely hidden from sight. In Ben's shop it is beautifully displayed in a handsome new case. It is now headed for a Lutheran church in Detroit.

Among Knowlton projects in Mecklenburg County are renovation and additions to the organs at St. Andrew's Episcopal and Caldwell Memorial Presbyterian; restoration of an 1840 Pilcher instrument for the chapel of St. John's Baptist; addition of a 16' stop in the 1895 Johnson/1961 Schlicker organ in the Morrison Chapel of Covenant Presbyterian; and the reworking and extensive expansion of the 1926 3/26 Möller, formerly in Dilworth Methodist, and the Corteze organ from Central Church of God (the former location of Calvary Church) – into a 4/50 instrument for

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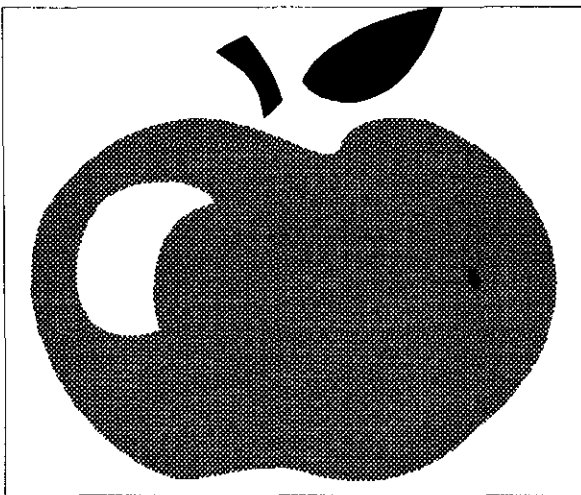
Friendship Missionary Baptist Church on Beatties Ford Road.

The Knowlton shop is a treasure house of organ parts – pipes, consoles, chests, wiring, winding, blowers and tools. The voicing room alone is well worth a visit.

To get there: take I-77 North to the Davidson exit (No. 30), turn right and go to the first stoplight, which is Main Street. Turn right again, and go about three blocks south to Depot Street, just opposite Davidson College Presbyterian Church, and hard by the United Carolina Bank. Right on more, cross the railroad tracks, and the Knowlton shop is at the far end of the large grey brick building on the left. There is a small parking lot just beyond the building. The address is: 217 Depot Street, 892-1548.

After the tour, we will gather for nourishment at the Prime Sirloin Restaurant, just a few minutes away, at 19601 Statesville Road (US 21) in beautiful suburban Cornelius. This convenient address can be accessed via I-77 South to the Cornelius exit (No. 28); or by heading south on Davidson's Main Street to the stoplight at the Square in Cornelius, thence right a few blocks to Statesville Road, and left to the Prime.

[Special thanks to Paul Gelsleichter for his efforts in arranging for this meeting.]



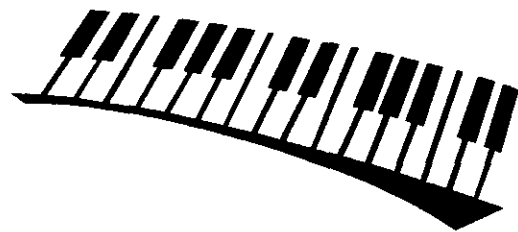
*From Charles Haymaker*

### VIRGIL FOX STORIES

This story is my recollection of a letter Virgil wrote to his friends at Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, where he had served as organist just before going to Riverside. Workers were in the process of changing from the old instrument at Riverside to the new Æolian-Skinner he had designed. The first step was to attach the new console (his design and still there) to the old instrument. This had to be done between one Sunday afternoon and the following Saturday night, due to the service schedule. This meant giving up the usual Friday night choir rehearsal in the sanctuary.

It is now the following Sunday morning, after nearly a week of frantic rewiring. Virgil has had no opportunity to try out the results. He plays the prelude and starts the play-through of the processional hymn, as the choir is proceeding from the side door to the center of the Sanctuary steps.

The choir is now inside the nave, still processing, ready to sing a stanza. The play-through has ended, the time has come for everyone to sing, and Virgil is ready for a full sound to accompany stanza 1. He hits the tutte stud, as he was wont to do. Imagine the complete consternation of everyone when ALL the notes of ALL pedal ranks sounded as he pressed one pedal, being the bass for the first chord of the hymn. His description of this chord was that "it sounded like 50 earth movers breaking wind at once." Need I say more? Let your imagination take over.





## New Home Wurlitzer

by Paul Gelsleichter

Randy Anderson of Greer, S. C., announced to the Piporg-I in December that he has purchased the 3/8 Wurlitzer which was in a warehouse in Greenville. MTOS President John Apple and members, Jim Twyne and Paul Gelsleichter went to Greenville over a year ago to look at the organ which was set up in at the warehouse but not playing.

In Greenville, they spent a few hours with the previous owner, Robert Rigby who was in failing health, but very interesting, none the less. He told us that his organ was a special Wurlitzer with some extra embellishments, since the minister of the Baptist Church where it was installed in 1929 was a personal friend of Fanny Wurlitzer. It appeared to be in excellent shape. Whether it was ever played after its removal from the church is unknown. It was Mr. Rigby's intention to have his children use it and possibly move it to a restaurant or performance hall later.

The organ, which is a church instrument,



is opus 2086. It has a 3 manual single bolster horseshoe console. The organ was sold by the church on February 6, 1963 to Mr. Rigby and has been in storage ever since.

According to Randy Anderson, "This will be a basement installation. I have done a

preliminary layout on AutoCAD. The chamber will be 14'-9" X 12'-6". There is a 9'-3" clearance to the underside of the floor joists. The relay and tremms will be in a separate room. The blower will be located in a 5'-2" X 8'-6" niche in the basement. The house is built on a grade so I can walk out of the basement on to the lower rear deck. This will allow me to move the console, blower etc. around the outside of the house. I now have a garage full of Wurlitzer parts. My wife is taking all this remarkably well although she has suggested that she would like her parking place back in the garage.

"I plan to use one of the original swell shade frames. The swell shade opening is 93-3/8" X 64-1/2" with 12 blades. The organ will speak into a 16'-5" X 22'-8" room with 9' ceilings."

Randy is currently redesigning his basement for the installation. He had to move a water heater and shore up the load bearing wall he plans to use for the swell shades.

He continues, "I am working on the chamber layout drawing in AutoCAD. It will take some careful engineering to make everything fit and still have good access for maintenance. I will have to build new wind trunks for the regulators in order to get things to fit under 9'-3" clearance. The original trunks are huge. The way the organ was winded in the church, all the air from the blower fed through the solo wind trunk. I will split up the supply and feed the main and solo trunks from a

common header. I also plan to put the tibia on its own regulator and trem.

"I hope to have the blower running in a few weeks. I have purchased a rotary phase converter and as soon as I can scrounge up two 3 phase starters and a fused disconnect switch it will be up and running. Once I have air, I can start testing chests to see what shape the leather is in. From what I can see looking into the air holes in the chests, the leather looks to be ok. Only time and 8" of wind will tell.

"This is not my only organ project: I am involved with the Atlanta ATOS chapter's 4/16 Page installation in a new high school in the Atlanta area. The organ is now in Gainesville Ga. at the business of one of the chapter members. We have access to his heated and air conditioned workshop. I have been going to Gainesville every Saturday to work on the organ. We are in the process of stripping leather from regulators. I think there is a total of 12 regulators so its quite a big job. Since I have my own airplane and the shop in Gainesville is only 5 minutes from the airport I can get there in only one hour."

We hope to meet Randy when he comes up to a future concert at Calvary, and will ask him for periodic updates. It looks like we will soon have 3 or 4 nice instruments within a 2 hour drive from Charlotte.

[Specification on page 4]





