



Saturday, September 8

Our next meeting will be at the home of **Don Macdonald**. He has a beautifully maintained **Rodgers Trio** with **Leslie** speaker. We may all have a chance to play his organ, and we hope to present an organist from Charlotte who has never made a public concert appearance here. He is a graduate of Juilliard and a protégé of Lee Erwin. And there will be other instruments and singing!

Because many of us travel during the summer, this next meeting is several weeks away, and therefore this is a tentative date. According to the decision at our last meeting, we will try to have meetings on the second Saturday of each or every other month. And, since our last program at the Clayton Theatre was at night, this

next one at the Macdonald Residence will be a 2:00 PM.

On Sharon Road driving south of Southpark Mall or from Sharon Road driving north from Park Road, turn onto Whistlestop Road. Take the third right turn onto Constitution Lane. Don's residence is the first driveway on the left. For further directions or other information, please call Don at 704-552-2690 or **John Apple** at 704-567-1066. Also, do not let mobility stop you from attending! We can arrange transportation; you need only ask.

Survey Enclosed

As directed at our last meeting, I have prepared a survey for our membership. It was felt that in order to provide meetings and concerts which would appeal to the majority of us that we should collect the opinions and comments through a survey.

As Editor, I will collect and organize the opinions and present them at a future meeting. I hope that we will get each member's thoughts on the chapter's future and programming. Since each opinion is important, please be sure to make it count. I will be glad to speak with you by telephone if that is more convenient.

—Michael Johnston

Officers and Staff

| | | |
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MTOS Communication

Our web-site is mtos.org. Visit often and tell your friends. There are photos, slide shows, videos, history, past issues of our newsletter, and more.

Because of the unreliability of our previous provider, I have changed to Google for our email services. **Google Groups Email** is fast and simple and provides different methods of receiving email. Many of us enjoy the speed of exchanging ideas this way. Members of our previous email system will receive an invitation by email. If you're not already signed up, just visit the web page googlegroups.com/group/mtos and follow the instructions. There is also a link from our website at mtos.org. So, join us online soon!



Treasurer's Report

I propose we invest \$5000 in one of these CDs for 6 months or more to get a better return on our money. This would leave us \$800 plus to cover our expenses for the year.



"The Board agrees with the Treasurer and requests that he use his judgment in getting the best arrangement of our funds for greatest growth. This resolution was decided by telephone on 6/18 and 6/19 of 2007."

- John Apple, President
- Charles Haymaker, Vice-president
- Karen Hite Jacob, Secretary
- Paul Gelsleichter, Treasurer

I, Michael Johnston, editor of MTOS News, witnessed agreement to the resolution.

—Paul Gelsleichter

You Are Invited

July 22, 7:30 PM. Calvary Church, Charlotte. **John Cleaveland.** Franck Pièce Heroïque, Langlais Te Deum, The Stars and Stripes Forever, and others.

July 29, 7:30 PM. Plaza Presbyterian Church, Charlotte. **Charles Austin.** Mendelssohn Wedding March from A Midsummer Night's Dream, Buxtehude Prelude, Fugue and Chaconne, Bach Toccata and Fugue in D minor, Langlais Cantilène from Suite Brève, and others

Please submit items for the schedule as soon as possible. MTOS News is normally sent on even numbered months.

Letters

I saw the "Don't Lose It" video from your home page, and wish the **Carolina Theatre** the best of luck in your restoration. When I was growing up in Spartanburg, SC, we had a **Carolina Theatre**, that, unfortunately, is no longer.

Now I live in Schenectady, NY, where a wonderful old Vaudeville theatre (built in 1926) was saved from the wrecking ball. First it was restored, then, with the help of a grant, the stage was enlarged, without changing the appearance of the inside of the theatre. Last year, the Broadway touring production of The Phantom of the Opera ran the

entire month of "Phebruary." To see what can be done in restoration of an old theatre, go to www.proctors.org.

The final phases are being completed now with the addition of the **GE Theatre**, and the 440 Stage on the opposite side of the arcade.

The original **Mighty Wurlitzer** is long gone, but a **Wurlitzer** theatre organ was purchased from a theatre in Buffalo and restored. There are free, monthly, noon-time concerts given on it. It was one of the featured organs at the Organ Historical Society Convention in Saratoga Springs, NY last year. [John Apple, Michael Johnston, and Paul Gelsleichter were there!]

This theatre has played a big part in re-vitalizing Schenectady. Again, good luck in the **Carolina Theatre** restoration.

—James Hughston

My husband and I attended the MTOS meeting Saturday evening at the Clayton Theatre. I really enjoyed the film clips and the artistry of how they were put together to make a very interesting and entertaining movie. The Clayton's accommodations as well as the popcorn was very good; however, I was most impressed by the talent of Dr **Don Macdonald**. He filled in with organ music where the music was lost. I could hardly watch the film for looking to see if

indeed he was playing, or it was the clip. I'm sure those around me thought I was nuts with my head going back and forth, but it became a guessing game with me. Most of the time I was not even right. He did a marvelous job and I say, "hats off to Dr Macdonald!" Thank you!

—Katie Sigmon

I was surfing the web and ran across your site on the **Carolina Theatre** and was wondering how your project was doing.

Please bear with me for some introductory material, all of which will (hopefully) make a bit more sense later.

I'm an American, living and working abroad for the past several years, and have been a theatre organ nut since I was in high school, many, *many* years ago. I'm a dinosaur — a mainframe assembler programmer. I'm also a tenor and play the viola and stay very busy performing at my church, with a really fine orchestra and playing chamber music and singing the odd Gilbert & Sullivan role.

With an aging and widowed mother living alone in Indianapolis, I'm trying to figure out where I'm going to end up at the end of this chapter — stay in Germany or come back to the US. The nature of my work is so specialized and the airline industry is in such turmoil that it seems best for me financially to stay here until I

retire in 2016. That seems easy enough to figure, but in addition to my mom, there's another wild card that complicates such a decision.

It's a rather large wild card, in the form of about 31 tons of **Wurlitzer!** I purchased the II/7 Style E organ Opus 1857 that was originally installed in the **Imperial Theatre** in Columbia, SC. It was shipped in March of 1928, and as a late organ it therefore has black cap magnets, and a lovely mahogany scroll console, complete with the original inlaid Wurlitzer nameplates.

In the 1940s, I'm told, it was moved to the auditorium of Allen



A close cousin to Opus 1857, the Style F

University, also in Columbia.

Judd Walton's book (or his source, anyway) had an error, saying that it was installed in Benedict College which is directly across the street from Allen University; that clerical error is quite probably the only reason that I have the organ today.

Bob van Camp, then working part time for the Allen Organ

Studio in Atlanta made me aware of the organ because an alumnus had donated an **Allen** to the school, and they wanted to put the tone cabinets in the chambers – which were still full of Wurlitzer! Because nobody really knew it was there – they'd inquire about the organ at Benedict College, where it had never been – it had had no hobbyists tinkering with it. Even those who might have thought to stumble across the street to Allen University and inquire would have been told that the organ was gone. Therefore, the pipework, aside from a little soot, looks like it just came from the factory, with the exception of one missing Open Diapason pipe that was replaced from a broken Wurlitzer set that a friend had.

I put in a bid and got it, with a friend helping with removing it and transporting it back to Atlanta in August of 1985. Providence was with me, as I thought I was only getting the 'innards' as the console was gone. But when I went for my inspection, one of the retired janitors happened to be on campus, and he remembered that in the 70s, after the organ had fallen largely unplayable due to lack of maintenance and the age and condition of the leather, the console had been cut loose (with a hacksaw!) and moved to the basement of another building. It was buried under a bunch of other stuff, including old desks and such, but

there it was, complete with bench and pedalboard. How lucky was that??

The only percussions that survived the move from the theatre were the chimes in the solos and the chrysoglott in the main, though all the traps and tuned percussions have been replaced with Wurlitzer ones along the way. In Atlanta, Texas or Tennessee, it has been in storage ever since, along with a bunch of other components, mostly Wurlitzer, that I've acquired over the years, including additional 'Wurli' chests (two 6-rank), a Clarinet, Orchestral Oboe, 16' Tuba Horn, an **Austin** Quintadena, a **Kilgen** Post Horn and a **Robert-Morton** Horn Diapason. Oh, and a Robert-Morton Bass Flute (*huge* scale) that will go into the Tibia very nicely.

It has been my dream to return to the US and find some nice little theatre somewhere that needs an organ – and most likely a lot of TLC – but I'm starting to realize that waiting for retirement and starting such a project in my mid-60s may not be the most realistic thing I've ever attempted. I've also thought about trying to get the organ over here and do something with it, but real estate prices anywhere near major cities have price tags that are heart attack inducing!! Going far enough out (which is then, of course, too far to commute) I have seen some things that

are more reasonably priced. But even if I can pull a project off here, while I would certainly make it available, it would be a very small thing and would most likely not be widely heard, which saddens me; the TO scene in Europe is rather strange. Also, while I could do the lion's share of the rebuild and installation, there are some things I'd need help with, and I'm just not sure where I'd find it on this continent.

I'm not making any sort of commitment or offer, but merely putting out feelers about your project – or other similar projects that you may be aware of – that would consider some mutually beneficial arrangement for making use of the organ that I have. How large were the chambers? Etc...

I look forward to hearing from you and finding out your status – and, of course, hearing any suggestions that you might have. All best.

–John David Alford, Germany

Please send your letters to:



letters@mtos.org



MTOS News
4146 Sheridan Drive
Charlotte NC 28205

MTOS Business Meeting

We held our annual business meeting at Sharon United Methodist Church on May 20, 2007, at 2:00 PM. **John Apple** wrote minutes for **Karen Jacob**, who could not attend. **Michael Johnston** called the meeting to order for the President. He received communications from **Lawrie Mallett**, **Katie Sigmon**, **Karen Jacob**, and **Paul Gelslichter** containing their opinions and votes and represented them during the meeting.

There being no old business, we began with the Treasurer's Report. Paul asked that we assent to his investigation of a interest-bearing account. We asked that he look into the options, keeping the following in mind: prefer not to tie up \$5000 for a long time; keep up to \$1000 liquid.

Membership renewals: **Don Schoeps** made the motion that we send three notices for dues and make a telephone call before removing a past member. **Don Macdonald** seconded. Passed unanimously.

Newsletter ads: **Don Macdonald** congratulated **Michael** on the quality of **MTOS News** and compared it to the Cinema Organ Society newsletter. **Michael** made the motion to continue accepting small ads from members with no charge. **Don Macdonald** seconded. Passed unanimously

Michael reported that, because of the increase in dues, we could absorb the recent increase in postage.

We discussed several organists who might play here for our meetings as an adjoining concert to one that would be scheduled in Atlanta. We listed all of the possible venues for holding concerts. Three were marked for large audiences: Calvary Church, Central Church of God, Fort Mill Church of God, St Peter's Episcopal Church, Myers Park United Methodist Church. The remainder might serve for smaller concerts and meetings: Residences of Gay, Mallett, Parsons, McCall, Bieri, Clayton, Macdonald, Schoeps, Wood.

Charles Haymaker suggested that a good program might be to bring your favorite cut of organ music on CD or LP to Michael's house and basically have show (listen) and tell.

Don Macdonald suggested making a fixed date for meetings. Michael suggested June for a program at Charlie's house which he often calls the Clayton Theatre. Charlie's house was available in June only on the third Saturday, and the date was set. The consensus was that the second Saturday of each month or alternating months would be best. Charles Haymaker made the motion to set the regular meeting time, at least at this point, for the second Saturday of the

month or of every other month. Michael mentioned that Gil had told him that Sundays were better for him. Charles added that Sunday nights in summer conflict with the very popular AGO Summer Series. It was agreed that we can be flexible in this. Nancy Schoeps seconded. Passed unanimously.

The Schoeps offered to bring drinks and pretzels to the June program, as Charlie usually provides popcorn. They also planned to bring paper products so as not to be an unfair burden on Charlie and Gwen.

The MTOS Rodgers: Michael mentioned that he had placed four ads on various websites, producing two inquiries. One asked for details, but there was no serious interest. In discussion, it was mentioned that the condition of this instrument was not in good condition and not suitable for use with the public.

Michael suggested how we might build an Artist Fund. Highlights of this: We solicit contributions from members each year. Members make these contributions, above the yearly dues, and get a tax deduction. This fund could also receive contributions on a time-to-time basis, resulting in a quicker growth for purposes of meeting a goal which could be used to pay an artist's fee and travel expenses. One member has already donated \$45 to the fund,

and other members have expressed the intention of contributing. There would be a minimum contribution to the fund, in order to be fair to all. For example, three contributing members should not pay for a concert heard by twenty.

It was suggested that Michael develop a survey to gather comments, criticisms, ideas, and anything else so that we could do a better job in serving the members. Michael mentioned that there are some members for whom receiving the newsletter is the complete expectation of their involvement. Others desire concerts, programs, and trips. Don Macdonald said that we need to present varied programs, not just organ by itself. There is a limit to the interest in a program containing only organ music. We should endeavor to include singers, violinists, trumpeters, and such.

John asked that Michael prepare a membership list for distribution with the newsletter. Michael remarked that he had been asked about this and was in the process of preparing it.

Don Schoeps won the door prize of the new DVD of the Great Organ of Methuen. It was suggested that a substantial door prize of perhaps \$1000 might encourage attendance at the business meeting. No motion was made.

Charles made the motion to adjourn at 5:15 PM. Don Macdonald seconded. Passed unanimously.

Our Schools Are Lost

This surreal story comes from Providence, Rhode Island. Though not common in the South, many schools in the North had pipe organs as part of their original construction. Music was considered an important facet of education, and the organ was used for many purposes.

According to the Providence Journal ... The suspicious-looking object that forced the evacuation of Tolman High School on Thursday, May 24, wasn't a pipe bomb — it was part of a pipe organ.

The principal said that a couple of students had pried the pipe loose from the school's circa 1927 pipe organ, which was walled off in a recent renovation of the high school auditorium and forgotten.

Tolman's 1,300 students were sent home and the state fire marshal's bomb squad was called in after a teacher spotted the object in a second-floor locker and alerted school officials.

Bomb squad members couldn't figure out what the object was. They destroyed it as a precaution, applying a small explosive charge.

Because the detonation wasn't followed by a bigger explosion, officials concluded that the object probably wasn't a bomb. But because it looked so sinister, Pawtucket police officials asked the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to get involved, handing the fragments

over to a BATF agent late Thursday afternoon.

School officials learned the object was part of Tolman's decommissioned pipe organ when the two students who took it confessed, saying they had stuck the object in the locker for safekeeping.

"At this time, we are convinced that this was a case of stealing and an attempt to conceal contraband and not an attempt to stage a bomb hoax," he said in a letter sent home to parents yesterday.

The students, both boys, have been suspended for 10 days. Their motive for taking the pipe organ part? They found out was they could make noises by blowing up into it. *Original article by John Castellucci.*

—Michael Johnston

A Hilton Head Tradition

Twice a year I journey to Hilton Head, South Carolina, for a week. This has been a family tradition. Since I was in college, my parents had owned two timeshare weeks on Hilton Head Island.

I keep in touch with my good friend and member **Ray Ackerman** who is Founder and Dean of the Low Country AGO chapter. This group is very active as you may have heard from Ray through our MTOS emails. Each

year, his chapter brings in a "name" musician to play a concert. In the past, they have had Hector Olivera, Felix Hell, Robert Hebble, and many others. Since there is no theatre organ venue on the Island, the group usually uses the IV/48 Zimmer at **Holy Family Catholic Church** where Ray held the position of Director of Music Ministries / Organist for years.

For their February concert, the Low Country Chapter invited John Longhurst, senior organist at the **Mormon Tabernacle** in Salt Lake City, Utah, to play. Since **John Apple** and **Michael Johnston** had met John in Salt Lake City, I invited them to attend with me. John Longhurst gave a master class the day before the concert. Over 400 people in attendance thoroughly enjoyed his performance.

—Paul Gelsleichter

Low Country AGO Chapter

When the chapter began in 1999, our first public event was "The History of Psalm Singing," and more than 700 people attended! The Low Country Chapter was presented with our Charter at that same program.

Since then, in February of each year we have presented a major organ recital with no fewer than 400 in attendance. In addition, on the second Friday of each month, we present "Music at

Noon,” a forty-five minute program given by our members or invited musicians visiting the area. Also, during the year we might present additional recitals.



Photo by Ray Ackerman
Holy Family's Zimmer

The organ at Holy Family Catholic Church is the location of our chapter's major organ recitals. It was built by in 1988 by W Zimmer & Son of Charlotte as Opus 411, a two-manual instrument. In 1992, it was enlarged to 48 ranks, 56 stops, 2,619 pipes, with 415 'controls.' It speaks directly into the sanctuary with authority. An 8' Chamade Trumpet sounds brilliantly from the back wall.

—Ray Ackerman

An Island Surprise!

Later in the week, Ray Ackerman took us to Beaufort to

see the II/24 Taylor and Boody tracker in St Helena's Church which we were unable to hear or play, but we did hear about the history of the church.

Later in the trip, while Ray was busy with his daily duties, we visited briefly with **Phil Prechtel** and



Photos by Paul Gelsleichter

Gary's Allen Renaissance

his wife. And, we found a surprise awaiting us not two miles from the ocean! Michael asked ATOS member Gary Hysner, who had bought organ music from Michael's Music



The Equipment Rack



John Apple Plays Lotus

Service to meet us for lunch. He invited us to his home to play his three manual **Allen**. Wow! We started by listening to disks that Lyn Larsen had made on the instrument. Gary told us that his organ had been Lyn Larsen's personal instrument, although Gary purchased it from a third party.

Next, John played. The organ filled the room nicely. Though it was meant for a much larger room having loads of speakers and amplifiers, Gary and his brother had toned it down so it blended nicely with out blasting you out of the room. This would make a great spot for a meeting. It's only a short 5½ hour drive from Charlotte!

—Paul Gelsleichter

Routine Fox

In the **National City Christian Church** in Washington DC, my Dad and I were attending a recital by Virgil Fox. The organ console was located in the rear balcony. Dad and I were sitting in a side balcony where we could see everything.



After the usual exciting recital, my Dad, who had never seen Virgil before, said, "Did you see what that fellow did? He was changing pistons with his nose and knees!" My comment: Routine Fox.

—Charles Haymaker

Organs, Deutsche & Dutch

A few months ago Marc Erickson and I returned from two weeks in Holland and Germany



Berlin Cathedral's Sauer Organ

visiting family and friends. We saw two organs in Berlin and thought you would enjoy these photos. The one on the right was taken at the **Berlin Cathedral**. It's the largest organ in Berlin with 7,269 pipes, a four manual **Sauer** organ from 1905.

We also visited the **Musical Instruments Museum** in Berlin, Germany, on November 18 and attended the Saturday noon concert. The organist advises if you write in advance it is possible to play the organ.

The **Mighty Wurlitzer** of Berlin, Opus 2064, was originally

a Type 250 Special. The IV/16 **Wurlitzer** is the biggest remaining Wurlitzer organ on the European continent! Let me tell you some of its history.

Werner Ferdinand von Siemens, one of Germany's leading industrialists, lived in a 72 room villa in Berlin where he already had installed a two manual **Christie** organ.

He was a real music enthusiast and a fine conductor, too. For his musical ambitions, he had built a huge concert hall where he often conducted the entire Stadt Opera orchestra as private concerts for his friends!

In 1928, he traveled to America and ordered a II/8 **Wurlitzer**, Type 200 Special, Opus 2019.

When this organ was delivered in 1929, he had already ordered (for approximately



Enjoying the Cathedral Organ

\$85,000) a much bigger organ — the IV/16 Type 250 Special, Opus 2064!

He sold the **Wurlitzer** 200 special to a local movie theatre. The theatre and the organ were destroyed in World War II.



The Berlin Wurlitzer

The Type 250 Special was installed in Siemens' concert hall in 1929. At the end of World War II, the villa, the concert hall and the organ became property of the German government. The **Mighty Wurlitzer** survived the war but was seriously damaged in 1962 by a fire, caused by a careless cigarette smoker.

From February 1963 to December 1963, Marvin E Merchant, a US serviceman stationed in Berlin repaired the organ at his own expense.

In 1982, it was given to the museum where it was restored completely and installed by Eberhard Friedrich Walcker GmbH & Co. in 1984. I am happy to say that the organ is played every Saturday at 12:00 noon.

—**Frank Dunhuber**



Simon Says Dickinson

I'd like to share one of our organ experiences with all of you. As you know, I'm no critic! But I do thrill to the sound of theatre organ. Nancy and I spent an evening a few weeks ago, thrilled beyond description, at the Dickinson **Kimball** organ in Wilmington, Delaware. Simon Gledhill was in from London to play. Now, as many of you know, I'm very taken by Simon's playing — *and* his arranging and registration. While acknowledging that "different strokes for different folks" thing, I think he's the best around these days.

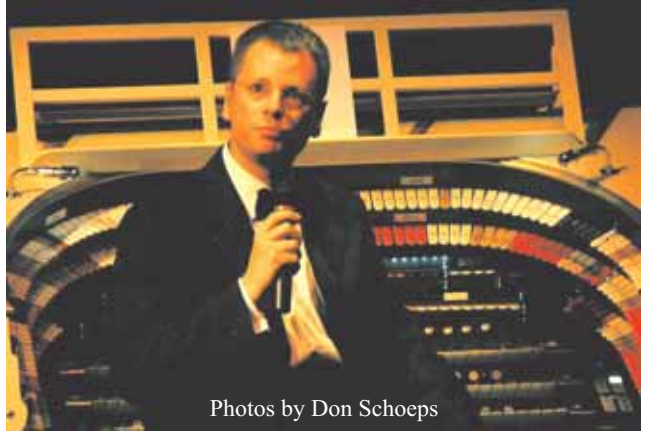
This concert was especially poignant because it was the first time the new console (built from scratch) was played, and they had asked Simon to specify it!

You might get a chuckle from this fragment of the e-mail journal we keep to share our traveling experiences with friends and family. As most of them have no experience with theatre organ, I found myself "explaining" about our enthusiasm for Simon's playing.

The second, and even greater, treat was of course Simon Gledhill's concert at the great **theatre** organ at Dickinson High School. Simon is, in our book, the finest living theatre organist. That's because, Don says, he's the best at using the theatre organ to "render music." That is, if Real

Music lives in some parallel universe, and we get a peek at it only after some fine “composer” glimpses it across The Divide and “writes” a sorry shadow of it down on paper, so that some other brilliant performing artist somehow, using tricks beyond our description and understanding, “renders” it in some fleeting moment — and we are there to “hear” it — well, in **that** sense of what Music “is” (that moment-glimpse we get as we “see” or

one alive today. And **we** were there to catch it all **live** — and to jump up and down and hug him afterward!



Photos by Don Schoeps

What a **great** evening! He described how he felt, upon hearing Judy Garland sing “Alone Together” in that Earth-shaking concert she gave in Carnegie Hall years after everyone thought she was all washed up (I think it became a world record breaking LP.), and then he turned around and played it — it was out of this world! He also played his transcription of two of Holst’s “The Planets” (Mars and



remember that fleeting moment of out-of-this-universe experience of life-beyond-this-world) — in **that** sense, Simon uses the theatre organ to do that better than any-

Jupiter) to give you a glimpse of the evening’s scope. Not too shaggy for a London investment banker! **Peace!**

—Don Schoeps

**New Music Written by
Theatre Organ Legend**

Rosa Rio, who earlier this month announced her age as 105, is still composing. She sent me a new piece to publish. She finished it on May 4, 2007. Michael's Music Service publishes all of Rosa's music in addition to many other organ titles. Look for the premier of *Perky* later this year.



Rosa Rio in 2007

—John Apple

Perky

Rosa Rio

Moderately $\text{♩} = 67$ With a Beat.

British Pathé Well Attended

On Saturday, June 16, the Clayton Theatre held the largest crowd ever for an MTOS program. This group rivaled attendance at our legendary Christmas parties!

Michael Johnston edited together newsreel films from the archive of British Pathé that showed Christies, Comptons, Wurlitzers, and more. Some

organs and some buildings no longer exist. The time when organs would be a subject for newsreels is sadly past and the presentation evoked much nostalgia. Don Macdonald filled in with live organ music where the soundtrack was missing and received an ovation for his efforts! It is hoped that we may present this to the Charlotte Chapter of AGO.

—Michael Johnston



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 Charlotte, NC 28205-5409
 Call **Tom McCall** at 704-344-6494



www.carolinapromusica.org

For tickets and information
 call Karen Hite Jacob
 704-334-3468



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 Call **Cornel Zimmer** or **Jim Twyne**
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How did **you** come to love the theatre organ? Your interest may have begun as a child or as an adult. But, probably it was due to someone else (a parent, relative or friend) sharing with you his interest in theatres and/or the organ – either in live performances or through recordings. You may have become a member of ATOS and of a chapter because someone invited you to attend an event.

It is important for all of us to share our passions with others. Listen to any conversation with people and you will find that they talk about what interests them. Some of these conversations will evolve to where the person new to the topic will participate in it by attending an event that will hook his interest.

I find that even in talking with complete strangers, it is easy to bring up organs and the related topic for Charlotte, our **Carolina Theatre** and its **Wurlitzer**. By this means, I have found numerous fans and advocates for these causes, and enlarged my personal networking as well.

As you engage others – friends, family and strangers, **do** share your love for the theatre organ and its music with them. Remember: someone once shared it with you.

—**John Apple**

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