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# PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Published monthly by Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society, a non-profit organization  
furthering the appreciation, preservation and use of the Theatre Pipe Organs of yesteryear

Volume 13 No.5

May 2002

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## **PSTOS will have an informational booth at the Northwest FolkLife Festival Friday & Saturday of Memorial Day weekend. Join the fun and help out!**

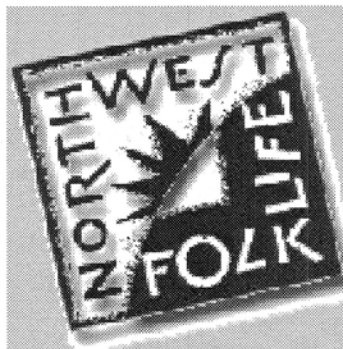
Hello there, fellow theatre pipe organ music lovers. Are we ever going to have a lot of fun in May! The Association of King County Historical Organizations—AKCHO, for short—is going to be part of the Seattle Folk Life Festival. And PSTOS is a member of AKCHO. So we're gonna' be there.

PSTOS will have a display table and booth for two days. There will be a display of Tibia Clausa pipes, and a computer accessing our website so curious minds can get a taste of what we find so fascinating about theatre organs. There will be a professional video showing Jim Riggs and Lyn Larson making the pipes and transistors sing. We will provide copies of the *Pipeline* and membership applications along with a listing of upcoming events and venues where theatre pipe organs can be heard in King County.

The AKCHO exhibit—and our booth—will be at the Maritime heritage Center at the south end of Lake Union. The Festival provides a regular shuttle between the Folk Life street scene and the heritage

Center. This will save shoe leather and sore feet.

Several of your board members will be setting up the display on Friday afternoon, May 24, from 1 to 5 PM. The display opens to the public on Saturday, May 25, at 11 AM and closes at 5 PM. Sunday will be the same schedule.



Here is how you can become involved in this fun Festival. We need help to run the booth, answer questions and hand out applications both Saturday and Sunday. Why not volunteer to spend two or three (or more) hours with your PSTOS friends on either Saturday or Sunday? Clint Meadway is coordinating the booth schedule. You can

leave him a voice mail toll-free at 1-877-843-0953 and tell him on which day you want to help. He will get back to you to confirm the time and provide any last minute instructions.

The weather should be fine, the fun, frolic and food will be great, and our display will be fascinating. With your smiling face and love of theatre organs added to the festivities, we will make more friends for the theatre pipe organ. See you there! [Editor's note: Clint Meadway is enthusiastically chairing this event.]

**CAN YOU HELP OUT FOR JUST 2 OR 3 HOURS?  
Volunteers are needed to help at our booth both Saturday and Sunday. It's fun and your chance to help "spread the word." Phone Clint Meadway toll-free at 1-877-843-0953 to help!**

**PUGET SOUND PIPELINE**

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Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society

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Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is a non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, restoration, and use of the historic Theatre Pipe Organs of the 1920s, through education.

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*Listing of non-PSTOS events  
in the Pipeline*

PSTOS, upon request, will list non-conflicting non-PSTOS theatre organ events in the "Other Events" column of the two Pipelines immediately preceding the event, providing Pipeline editors receive sufficient prior written notification. Venue, artist, type of event, date, and contact information will comprise the included information.

*Advertising in the Pipeline*

Classified-type ads for member-owned electronic, electric, or pipe organs, and/or pipe organ parts, will be published at no charge. Please limit copy to include brief description, contact name and phone number. Prices will not be listed. Ads may be edited for content and length. Mail ad copy to address above. Other advertising is not accepted.

## A clarinet will soon be added to our club pipe organ

Although our PSTOS theatre pipe organ installed in Haller Lake Community Club has three manuals, they handle just eight ranks of pipes—tibia, flute, diapason, two strings, trumpet, vox humana and kinura. (Many 3-manual instruments handle well over 20 ranks!)

The reeds — those with red stop tabs, some of which provide body to an ensemble and others which provide "color," are minimal on our instrument.

The trumpet is self explanatory. The vox humana was created to resemble a chorus of human voices (probably female!) and is quite soft in character, and the kinura is a "bee in a bottle" novelty sound.

Another middle-of-the-road reed rank has always been high on the "wanted" list of pipes, and in that category is a clarinet. (An oboe is another such voice.)

In the process of restoration is a Robert Morton clarinet, which will be added to the Main chamber to complement the flute, diapason and violin. There are 61 metal pipes, all needing a thorough cleaning—the reeds, shallots, everything. Hopefully, by the time of our next HLCC event, the clarinet will be in and playing, ready for a demonstration!

### Become a PSTOS member!

Joining Puget Sound Theatre

Organ Society is fast and easy!

For a one year family membership,

send a \$15 check payable to

PSTOS together with your

name(s) as you would like them to

appear on your name badges,

phone number and your address

with complete 7-digit ZIP code to

Norman Miller, Treasurer,

2644 NW Esplanade

Seattle WA 98117-2527

# PSTOS Coming Events

## PSTOS to sponsor booth at the NW Folklife Festival

An educational booth as part of the AKCHO display during the Festival gives PSTOS an opportunity to "spread the word" about Theatre Organs.

See article on front page.

Sat. & Sun., May 26–27



## Summer Social

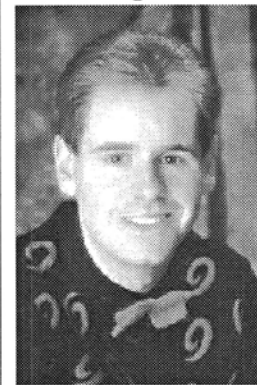
RAY HARRIS will entertain at another summer music event at the Kenmore home of Russ and Jo Ann Evans.

Sat., July 13

## Summer Picnic

Visit the "automatic musical instrument museum" of Bill & Nita Masterman in Tacoma. Then move on to the Bill Keller home for a picnic and music on his custom 3-manual Allen.

Sat., Aug. 10



## CHRIS POWELL Concert

Exciting theatre organist from England will end a world tour here for PSTOS.

Time and venue to be announced.

Sunday, Sept. 8

## Oktoberfest at HLCC

Something new for PSTOS. Come celebrate Autumn with good food, entertainment, and fun. More information coming. Stay tuned.

Haller Lake Community Club

Sunday, October 27

## Annual Christmas Party

Our big annual holiday fun get-together with lots of music, food, and fun.

Sun., Dec. 1

**OTHER***Events of Interest***Columbia River Organ Club Presents LEW WILLIAMS at the Elsinore Theatre in Salem**

Direct from the Organ Stop Pizza restaurant in Mesa, Arizona, Lew is coming to Salem to entertain and please his many fans in the Pacific Northwest. For information phone Shirley Clausen at 503-665-6633.

Sunday afternoon, May 19

**Hokum Hall Vaudeville Fun****The Three Ragtimers**

Dan Grinstead, Eric Shoemaker, Hokum Jeebs

Fri. & Sat., May 17 & 18,  
and May 24 & 25, 8PM

**Laurel & Hardy Laughathon**

Andy Crow at the Wurlitzer with "Putting Pants on Phillip,"

"Big Business,"

"That's My Wife," "Two Tars."

Sat. & Sun., May 18 & 19, 2PM

**"Steamboat Bill" silent movie**

Eric Shoemaker at the Wurlitzer

Sat. & Sun., May 25 & 26, 2PM

**Hokum's Vaudeville Revue**

Featuring performers from the Hall's collection.

Fri. & Sat., May 31 & June 1, and  
June 7 & 8, 8 PM

**"The Lost World"**

Andy Crow accompanies this silent movie, plus the first (1914) animated cartoon, "Gertie The Dinosaur."

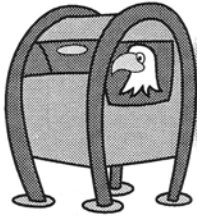
Sat. & Sun., June 1 & 2, 2PM

**"The Great K&A Train Robbery"**

Eric Shoemaker accompanies this 1926 Tom Mix action packed horse opera show on location in the Old West!

Sat. & Sun., Jun. 8 & 9, 2PM

7904 35th Ave. SW, Seattle  
www.hokumhall.org

**From the Mailbox**

Jo Dawson, President of Haller Lake Community Club, praises PSTOS support of their building upgrade...

Dear Barbara,

The party yesterday was such a success! It all just went off like clockwork, with many competent people working together. Your group is talented in so many ways. Everything went smoothly. It takes experience to make it happen that way.

It was generous of your organization to donate the proceeds to our Accessibility Fund. We look forward to finding what the outcome is. Many people used the elevator yesterday and found it a great

"lift." We anticipate many years of its use and our groups' association.

Please extend our gratitude to those who set up the organ, to those who decorated, emceed, served the food (including you), entertained delightfully, cashiered, helped clean up and also to those who attended. It was wonderful to have such a large and enthusiastic crowd. The sing-along was so much fun. Our whole family enjoyed it.



A check in the amount of \$953.52, representing the net proceeds from the St. Patrick's Day Party, is presented to Jo Dawson, President of Haller Lake Community Club, by PSTOS President Barbara Graham.

This was our grandchildren's first time to hear a theatre pipe organ, too. They all seemed fascinated by it.

Let's try to have another joint venture one of these times. It has been a pleasure doing this together. Thank you for the happy afternoon.

Sincerely,  
Jo Dawson, President Haller Lake  
Community Club

**PSTOS member Mae Louise Dopps recognized as "Volunteer Of The Year" at Lincoln Theatre**

PSTOS member Mae Louise Dopps was recently recognized as "Volunteer Of The Year," an award given by the Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon.

Mae Louise, who lives in Anacortes with her husband, Warren, gives much time and energy to the community in

the area. In addition to volunteering at the Lincoln Theatre, she gives much time to the Mt. Baker Theatre Organ Society in Bellingham, and is always ready with a helping hand at PSTOS events, as well.

Congratulations, Mae Louise!

## Another NW movie house closed... Corvallis' Whiteside closes its doors, sells equipment

Member Richard Warburton sends news of the closure of yet another vintage movie house.

On February 24 of this year, another of the Northwest movie houses from the past closed its doors. The Whiteside Theater in Corvallis, OR, ceased operation, and the seats, projection and stage equipment was sold. The building remains, but will no longer be used as a theater.

The Whiteside wasn't a large house—just 1100 seats. It didn't compare with the San Francisco Fox or the Paramount in Seattle in size, and this may well have helped it remain a working house for 80 years.

It has the distinction of having had three openings—its grand opening was in 1922 with Lillian McCoy Hunt at the console of the 2/8 Wurlitzer (a Style "F" Opus 1807, shipped November 1927). The opening film was "The Old Homestead," a tear jerker about the younger set leaving the pure life of the farm for the evils of the city.

In October, 1927, the interior was burned badly, mostly the balcony and the seating on the main floor. Records indicate it reopened in February of 1928 with a "new \$20,000 Wurlitzer." I personally feel this is an error as I don't believe you could get much of anything from the Wurlitzer factory in as little as four months. I feel it's more likely they had the console rebuilt, or got something Wurlitzer had on hand.

Also, the organ I played in that theater in about 1944 had a suitable bass button, standard back in the early 1920s, but not seen much by 1928.

The brothers Samuel and George Whiteside built three theaters in Corvallis beginning with The Palace in 1908, which was an 800-seat "shoot-ing gallery," as the trade referred to a theater with only one aisle down the middle.

In 1913 the brothers built the Majestic Theater, but still had their minds set on a deluxe house, wh

they achieved in 1922 with the Whiteside.

In 1961, Mrs. Samuel Whiteside gave the organ to Gill Coliseum on the campus of Oregon State University. There it was a flop—although its eight ranks tried to fill the place, they didn't succeed. The wind was raised, still no luck. Then off came the shutters.

The organ currently resides in the Benton County Historical Museum and I'm told it is playable. Since the museum is on the route to an aunt's home, I will try it out for myself this coming summer. As I recall, it was a nice sounding Wurlitzer.

The following additional information was received by PSTOS webmaster, Tom Blackwell, from City of Corvallis staff.

When built in 1922, the Whiteside Theatre was the second grandest movie palace in Oregon at that time.



The building is an excellent example of Italian Renaissance architecture applied to a theatre. It is probably Corvallis' best historic commercial building in terms of original design and integrity. The upper story of the exterior of the building retains its original ornamented effect, executed in brick, and glass, cast "stone" and plaster. The original layout of the theatre is intact and numerous interior decorative features remain from the 1920s period.

The Whiteside Theatre (75' x 100')

was built in 1922 in the Italian Renaissance style of architecture. The brick structure rests on a foundation of solid reinforced concrete. There is a basement beneath the building. The theatre front is composed of over 15,000 pressed concrete cream colored face brick.

The front facade is embellished with cast "stone" and plaster ornamentation. Featured are a cornice decorated with an egg and dart design, a central cartouche above a mask (which rest upon a central decorative arch) and two masks atop the cornice on either end. Other decorative features include art-glass windows in arched surrounds with cast keystones, basket weave panels below the two cornice masks, and two plaster patera on either side of the central decorative arch. Small pateras are found directly below the cornice upon projecting brick strips. Garden boxes at the base of these strips are no longer featured. The neon marquee is a 1950s addition, designed to replace the original flat-roofed marquee. The ground floor facade has been somewhat altered.

When the Whiteside Theatre was opened in 1922, it was splendidly decorated befitting the grand movie palace which it was. The foyer was richly carpeted with Wilton rugs and hung with rose color velour hangings. Attractive wall lamps and a marble drinking fountain were featured. Statues, flowers and artistic lighting devices were arranged within alcoves at the bottom of the two, wide staircases which led to the balcony and restrooms. The floors in the foyer were tile, the exterior doors were walnut. Beveled mirrors hung upon the walls.

For more information, go to [www.pstos.org](http://www.pstos.org)  
Click on **N.W. Theatre Organ History**  
Click on **Oregon**  
Scroll down to **Corvallis**  
Click on **Whiteside Theatre**

PHOTO: Corvallis street scene, 1939. Whiteside Theater at left.

## Bellingham's Mt. Baker Theater celebrates its 75th birthday

Michelle Nolan, writing for *The Bellingham Herald*, describes the excitement on April 29, 1927

It was April 29, 1927, the night the Mt. Baker Theater opened, following a 14-month construction project. A massive celebration, estimated at 5,000 people, equaled in emotion and ebullience in Bellingham's past only by parties that marked the end of World Wars I and II.

More than a dozen contractors and 80 craftsmen skilled in stone masonry, plasterwork and carpentry joined forces to create a 130-by-250-foot, \$425,000 state-of-the-art palace designed in a Moorish-Spanish theme. The creation was worthy of Hollywood's finest in an era when Hollywood itself was in its infancy. In today's dollars, the Mount Baker cost more than \$6 million!

Up front, the 42-foot proscenium arch, with a battery of twenty-four 1,000-watt spotlights, curved over an 80-by-30-foot stage—still the largest in northwest Washington—and highlighted a Wurlitzer Style 215 pipe organ, the likes of which is no longer used by any other theater in America.

The pipe organ was built by the Rudolph Wurlitzer Co. and is maintained today by the Mount Baker Theatre Organ Society. The cost was \$25,000 (in 1927 dollars).

According to Dorothy Koert's "A History of Whatcom County Theater" (1979): "Power for the organ is generated in its own motor and blowing plant installed in a specially constructed room in the basement of the theater building."



The opening-night throng was attracted by a spotlight from a Spanish-American war battleship, the U.S.S. Oregon, that reportedly could be seen all over western Whatcom County and beyond, from Blaine and Lynden to Anacortes and Burlington. The 15,000-watt spotlight shone from the 110-foot octagonal Moorish tower, made of steel and stucco.

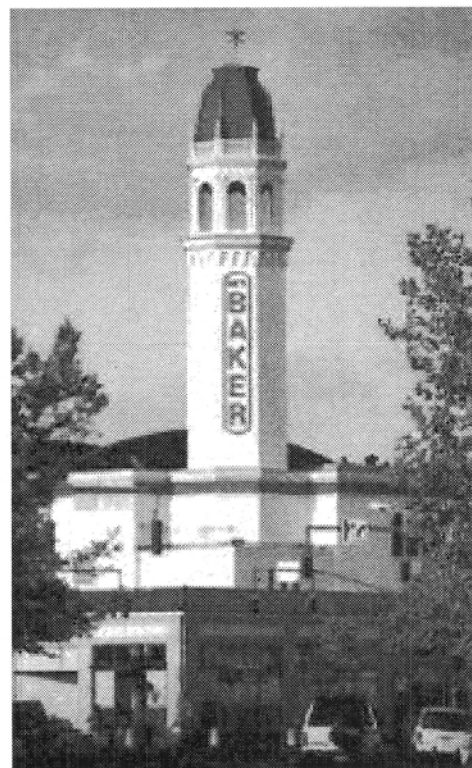
Once in the theater, the audience luxuriated in 2,000 seats of Spanish leather and mahogany in both the balcony and main floor. People looked up in awe at the 80-foot concrete dome, centered with a 600-pound antique bronze and glass chandelier, replete with stained glass, golden chains and golden sunbursts.

The lobby was designed to resemble a captain's cabin in a Spanish galleon. As such, the lobby was designed as the



epitome of elegance, with painted and stenciled plaster ceiling decorations that resembled rich wood, with sculpted cornices and columns of a similar plaster. Moorish arches included ornate hand-blown Italian glass chandeliers with gilt necklaces and glass teardrops.

The wool carpet was thick and rich, masterfully enhanced with symbolic Moorish-Spanish art and jewel colors of red, gold, green, blue and black. The wood furniture looked fit for a Moorish king's palace; several chairs were mindful of thrones.



The original architect was the renowned Robert C. Reamer and the primary construction firm was A.W. Quist, both of Seattle. Reamer is also famed for designing Seattle's classic Chinese-style Fifth Avenue theatre, which opened shortly before the Mount Baker, along with the Bellingham Towers, the Fox Theatre in Spokane and numerous structures at Yellowstone National park.

The *Bellingham Herald* waxed eloquent on the morning of the 1927 opening: "...Every whistle on Bellingham Bay will shriek through the air, complemented by a battery of fire engine sirens. Streetcars will clang their bells while everyone owning an automobile is urged to sound their horns. Pedestrians, entering into the joviality of the occasion, will shout the glad tidings and everyone will cheer as the event will signify the opening of the largest bit of downtown property in the annals of Bellingham."

PHOTO LEFT: The beautiful lobby and stairs leading to mezzanine.

CENTER: Console of the 2-manual Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ.

TOP RIGHT: Mt. Baker tower.

## PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors  
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Kenmore, WA 98028-3453

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### AMICA 2003 convention to feature JONAS NORDWALL at Portland's Oaks Rink

AMICA — Automatic Musical Instrument Collector's Association — is planning its 2003 International Convention in Portland. Our own PSTOS Board Member, Carl Dodrill, is masterminding much of this event and it will be a humdinger!

Running from August 20 – 24, and headquartered at the Double Tree Downtown, it will feature many events of interest to PSTOS members.

Carl gave a lengthy report to the Board about the many exciting plans for this event, and encourages PSTOS members to consider attending. There was talk of organizing train transportation from Seattle to Portland — wouldn't THAT be a fun time!

Jonas' concert at the Oaks Rink will be Saturday, August 23, 2003, at 10:30 a.m. Remember, that's 2003 — a year away. We're just planning well in advance.

More information will be provided to members. Carl is working to include many PSTOS members, plus our good friends from CROC in the Portland area. "Watch this space for further developments!"

### ATOS Annual Theatre Organ Convention will be in San Diego November 29 – December 2. This will be a great event... plan now to attend!



THE THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO  
~ PRESENTS ~

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**4/35 WURLITZER – PLUMMER AUDITORIUM**

**4/24 WURLITZER – SAN DIEGO CHAPTER ORGAN**

**4/73 AUSTIN – SPRECKELS ORGAN PAVILION**

PLAN NOW TO BE A PART OF THIS EXCITING THEATRE ORGAN EVENT! FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL CONVENTION CO-CHAIRMAN, JACKIE PORTER AT 619-286-9979 OR EMAIL CONVENTION REGISTRAR, JEFF JOHNSON AT JEFFB444@AOL.COM