



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 12 No. 6

June 2001

Two fun events coming in July...

INSIDE:

- Coming events
- Fascinating member letter
- Pages From The Past
- Haller Lake Community Club building upgrade
- Theatre organ classes and technical workshops postponed
- And more...

Laurel & Hardy starring in the famous 1928 Silent Movie



"Big Business"

Revisit the silent movie days of the 1920s as these famous slapstick comedians try to succeed at their new big business venture! Do they? Come and laugh at their hilarious antics! With ANDY CROW at the Chapter organ providing live accompaniment for the movie, and a short concert for your afternoon enjoyment.



Sunday July 8, 2:30 PM

Haller Lake Community Club • 12579 Densmore Ave. N.
ADMISSION • Adults \$8 • Couples \$15 • Children 15 & under \$3

PSTOS is partnering with HLCC in this SPECIAL BENEFIT. All proceeds will go toward the matching funds to ensure grant money for upgrading the building. Scheduled improvements include an elevator and a handicapped restroom to aid in making the building accessible to everyone.

And...



A Summer Social with

DON FEELY

at the Evans 3/16 Wurlitzer
Enjoy music, refreshments, camaraderie!

Saturday July 14, 2:00 PM

Home of Russ & Jo Ann Evans • Kenmore
Limited to the first 65 reservations.
425-485-5465 • rjevans@aa.net

Complete driving directions for both events will be published in the July Pipeline.

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Vol. 12, No 6 – June 2001

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Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society

6521 N.E. 191st St.

Kenmore, WA 98028-3453

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.

President's Message



Greetings PSTOS Members...

Ever wonder what your annual \$15.00 membership fee covers? I did. The Pipeline you're reading takes up quite a bit of your annual \$15.00 dues. Printing and mailing costs, even with our bulk rate, aren't cheap. Then there's insurance on our instrument at Haller Lake, and the liability insurance we carry to cover 'accidents' at any events we sponsor. Part of your membership fee underwrites our annual Christmas Party, and pays for any maintenance and upkeep costs for our instrument. As part of our rather ambitious goal to further "the appreciation, preservation and use of the Theatre Pipe Organs of yesteryear" we make occasional donations to venues, events or people we feel are helping to further that goal.

I hope you agree that YOUR annual membership fee goes a L-O-N-G way.

The May 19th Kent Museum Tour and "Organ 'n' Scones" at the Jack and Mary Lou Becvar home was a success. Sixty history/pipe organ buffs joined Jack for a tour of the Kent Museum and continued on to the Becvar residence for a pipe organ concert by Eric Shoemaker (I understand he pulled out all the stops!). Mary Lou served homemade scones to all 60! Thanks Becvars.

Remember the July 14th "Saturday Social" at the Evans. It's limited to 65 people so call soon. Don Feely will play a concert on the Evans' beautiful Wurlitzer.

Have a great summer!

— Barbara Graham

PSTOS Coming Events

**Andy Crow to accompany
Laurel & Hardy film to help
Haller Lake Community Club
fund new elevator**

Laurel & Hardy's "Big Business" will be shown with Andy at the console. He will also play a short concert. PSTOS & HLCC are partnering this event.

Sunday, July 8, 2:30 PM

**Saturday Social at the
Evans residence, Kenmore**

Portland's DON FEELY in concert! Music, food and fun on a Summer Saturday. Enjoy the 3/16 Wurlitzer. Limited to 65. Some folks have already reserved at **425-485-5465**, or **rjevans@aa.net**

Sat., July 14, 2 PM

**Tedde Gibson at the
Pipe Organ, plus the Famous
Yelm Luncheon Buffet**

Mark your calendar now for another memorable day at Yelm, with TEDDE GIBSON at the Robert Morton, and the famous buffet lunch served by the ladies at St. Columban Church.

September 15th, 1:00 PM

**Another great PSTOS
Halloween Party**

A fun event at Haller Lake Community Club. More details later.

Sunday, Oct. 21, 2 PM

**Annual PSTOS
Christmas Party**

Another happy holiday event.

Haller Lake Community Club

Sun., Dec. 2, 2 PM

**Do you know where
your name badge is?
PLEASE wear it!**

OTHER
Events of Interest

**Andy Crow accompanies
"Seven Chances" with Buster
Keaton at the Everett Theatre**

Tickets available at the door or by phone from the theatre box office, (425) 258-6766.
Saturday, June 9, 8 PM

**Paramount Theatre
Monday Night Silent Movie
Series to feature the
women who became
famous in silent films**

La Boheme

The famous Lillian Gish stars in this 1926 movie
Monday, July 9

My Best Girl

This 1927 movie, made the year before sound arrived, stars Mary Pickford.
Monday, July 16

IT

Clara Bow, the famous "It Girl," was the big name in this famous 1927 movie.
Monday, July 23

The Torrent

Greta Garbo stars in this 1926 production.
Monday, July 30

**Kay McAbee in concert at
the Everett Theatre Wurlitzer**

For details phone the theatre box office, (425) 258-6766.
Friday, July 20, 8 PM

To be listed here, a theatre organ event must not conflict with a PSTOS event, and the information must be received by the editors well before the publication date.



**From the
Mailbox**



Dear Pipeline Editors:

What a surprise to open the most recent PSTOS newsletter and find on page 5 the smiling face of my Aunt Betty! Betty Shilton was my mother's sister, born February 17, 1892. She died in New York on April 10, 1971. She was born as Amelia Elizabeth McInturff, but always was known as Betty. She was married to Steve (?) Shilton for awhile, although I do not recall ever meeting him, and they had two daughters, June and Mary Jean.



BETTY SHILTON, aunt of PSTOS member, Maury Lawson.

I understand that the archives of the 5th Avenue Theatre have some pictures of her, and possibly the dates she played there, but I've never been able to get in to see them. She answered an advertisement in the newspaper for a man organist, dressed as a man, got a mannish short haircut, bound up her chest, tried to use her lowest voice—and got the job, masquerading as a male for over a month before she was discovered. She was such a good organist, and so popular with the

patrons, that they kept her on. She played until the "talkies" replaced the silent organ-accompanied pictures.

Betty also played on KMO Radio twice a day, at 7AM and after the last show, about 10 or 11PM, and often announced her numbers to the audience. She bought my folks their first radio, a Philco, so they could "keep in touch," and I remember listening to her play such enchanting and beautiful music I can still recall it.

She told me several interesting happenings from the theatre days. One was having the organ rise unbidden from the pit in the middle of the show, and the maintenance men had to lower it by hand while she played without missing a beat. Another time, she saw a beautiful garden scene in the movie, and turned on the bird call toe button for a very lively active bird warble, only to have the scene change to a thunderstorm, and she couldn't get the button to cancel the bird. It had just been "watered" and sang quite awhile before someone could get up in the loft and silence it!

I would be fascinated to know any other information about her early days. I know she did professional playing in lounges, etc., and knew Tubby Clark well. Eventually she went to the Brooklyn area where she was playing regularly over the air on a theatre organ in the studio when I visited her in 1946 or so. She was a real dear!!

Best regards,
Maury Lawson

Our apology to Maury for misspelling Betty's last name in last month's article.

Pages From The Past...

Wurlitzer Opus 438... a circuitous route to the Whelpley home in Bellevue.

Playland Will Open Saturday

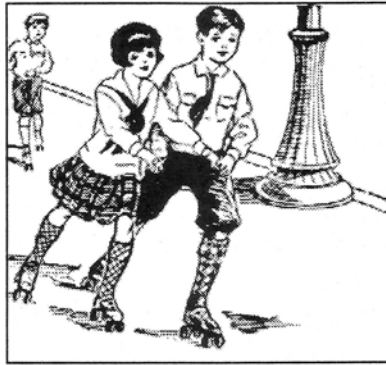
**Roller Rink With Huge
Organ To Be
Feature**

Playland officially opens its third summer season Saturday at 1 o'clock.

Friends of Playland will find all the old, thrill-producing devices as well as many new attractions designed for the most discriminating of pleasure and recreation lovers.

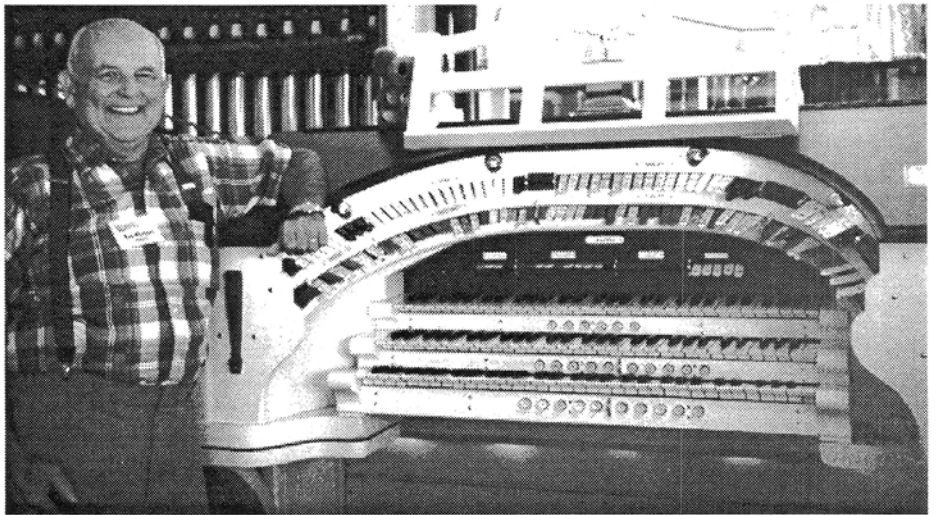
Greenwood-Plinney will be particularly interested in one of Playland's new attractions, the roller skating rink. Elaborate preparations were begun months ago to convert the former dance hall into a modern rink. A \$25,000 organ, the fifth largest in Seattle, has been installed. The rink is under the personal management of S. W. Olson, who has had more than 25 years of actual experience in developing roller skating as a healthful recreation in all principal cities west of Chicago.

The management wishes to impress that Playland is a delightful haven of real, clean recreation, where all may enjoy themselves to the utmost without any fear of embarrassing incidents.



Playland on Aurora Avenue, located between 130th and 135th, installed its first organ in 1938, a 2/9 Wurlitzer from the Winter Garden Theatre. This instrument was removed in 1940 and installed in the Ridge Rink on 85th in North Seattle. The organ was destroyed by fire in approximately 1945-1946.

It is assumed this news clipping refers to the above organ. In 1945 Balcom & Vaughn installed Wurlitzer Opus 438, a 2/5 from the Ellensburg Theatre, in the Playland Skating Rink. In 1956 B & V moved Opus 438 to the Rollerfair Rink in Everett. Nine years later it was removed and became the nucleus of the Ray & Muriel Whelpley residence organ in Bellevue.



Before there were movies and theatre organs in Seattle...

Reprinted from *A History of Variety-Vaudeville in Seattle From the Beginning to 1914*, by Eugene Clinton Elliott

In Seattle in the 1890s, "theatre entertainment" had many facets. Some were not much more than pubs with "entertainment", others were determined to be squeaky clean and "a family home."

Read on for the program notes publicized by John Cordray for his Auditorium Theatre...

"No intoxicating liquors sold or permitted about the building. Eating peanuts is prohibited in the theatre.

Boys are cautioned about making catcalls, whistling and stamping feet.

Profane or boisterous language is not tolerated. Intoxicated or improper characters not admitted. We regard all our patrons as ladies and gentlemen and expect all to conduct themselves as such and anyone who cannot comply with the rules of the house must not be surprised if they are invited by a police officer of the house to vacate immediately."

More **Pages From The Past...**

1928—Wurlitzer goes head to head against Christie Organs in Australia

March, 1928—The first Christie organs began arriving in Australia from England with an announcement in the local trade press. The Wurlitzer representative placed this display advertisement on another page of the same issue. It contained a curious drawing of an organist seated on a piano stool playing an organ console unlike any Wurlitzer yet built (but with a superficial resemblance to those built for Granada Theatres in England from 1936 onwards) and apparently pumping the swell pedals like a harmonium. The perspective is distorted, for the organist would have had to have arms of simian proportions and very long legs to be able to play seated on a stool well behind the pedalboard!

From IAN McIVER, Theatre Organ historian, Brisbane, Australia

**Full house enjoys
“The Kent Experience”**

Over 60 members converged on the Kent Historical Museum on May 19th to tour the lovely restored mansion housing numerous fascinating artifacts from Kent’s early days. Two floors of the three-story mansion are furnished with period pieces. Some rooms contain archival collections. The grounds are well maintained. It’s a tribute to the City of Kent and the group of enthusiastic citizens who spearheaded this effort. Members Jack and Mary Lou Becvar are numbered among them.

From the museum, folks moved on to the unusual and interesting Becvar residence. Not only does it proudly showcase their three manual Wurlitzer, but also a large collection of clocks (no small task to keep them wound!) and other collectibles.

Eric Shoemaker showed off the Wurlitzer with much enthusiasm. His strong jazz and ragtime piano background was evident as he leaned heavily toward that genre with much use of piano and percussions. In contrast, the several ballads he played using only the organ sounds were lovely and conveyed a completely different style with lush harmonies and soft registrations.

Billed as “Organ & Scones,” the day



ERIC SHOEMAKER at the Becvar Wurlitzer

did indeed come to an end with Mary Lou’s offering of scones filled with an assortment of fruit preserves.

Many members were surprised by Jack’s announcement that within the

next four years they plan to sell the organ and the home. Perhaps a lucky organ aficionado will take the package??!

Many thanks to both Jack and Mary Lou for hosting a delightful day!

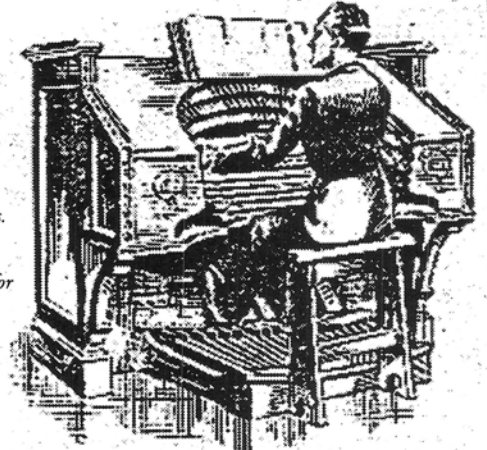
The Mighty Wurlitzer

Your patrons will leave and the scenes they have witnessed will pass from their minds. But the WURLITZER’s dominating beauty they will never forget. Its great beauty of tone and immense latitude in interpreting the music for every scene and emotion make it the screen picture’s perfect accompaniment.

That the leadership of the Wurlitzer ORGAN is an established fact is clearly perceived by its predominance in the finest theatres.

Make your music **DOMINANT.** Install a **WURLITZER**—and ensure your box office receipts...always.

Let us quote for your theatre.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Silent movie and concert proceeds will help Haller Lake Community Club add an elevator and handicapped restroom

A hearty PSTOS welcome to the following new members:

Dale E. Caplin

Tuscon, AZ

Gary & Elaine DuPen

Kenmore

Harry Harkness

San Francisco

Erik McLeod

Olympia

Anyone ever attending a function at Haller Lake Community Club is aware of the challenging entry to the building, especially for those with even slightly impaired mobility.

Well, with a bit of luck and tenacity, that situation will be remedied with the addition of an elevator!

The Club has been awarded grant money to cover half the cost, contingent upon their raising matching funds. The cost of the project, which also will include a handicapped restroom on the main floor, will cost \$140,000, half of which must be raised by the Club.

It goes without saying that PSTOS members will enjoy these additions, and

our Board has agreed to partner with HLCC to sponsor a fund raising event to help meet the goal.

On Sunday afternoon, July 8th, Andy Crow will accompany a Laurel & Hardy silent movie and play a short concert at HLCC. The event will be promoted not only to our members, but to all HLCC members, and to the general public, especially those living in the broad area surrounding the Club.

You are urged to put this date on your calendar and support this very worthwhile cause. PSTOS is underwriting the artist fee, thus enabling ALL the proceeds to go directly into the matching fund coffers.

Little interest expressed for Theatre Organ classes and technical workshops

So few members expressed interest in theatre organ classes and/or theatre organ technical workshops that plans for offering these have not progressed. Several years ago PSTOS sponsored several sessions of such workshops and had a sizeable turnout. However, since so few have expressed an interest at this time, plans have been abandoned for now.

If anyone would be interested in private lessons or coaching, or would appreciate a list of teachers published in the Pipeline, please advise your editors.

