

Relay Chatter



The Official Newsletter of the Joliet Area Theatre Organ Enthusiasts

WWW.JATOE.org

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Sept/Oct 2011

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Sept 18th at the Ri-
alto Theatre, Joliet,
IL as we feature
George Smith at
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open at 1:30 pm
and the program
begins at 2:00
Please bring re-
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President's Message

The JATOE Board thanks all of you for the great attendance and food you bring to the socials. We are trying to build the one of the best ATOS Chapters in the area and maybe in the country. The thanks go to our great membership.

JATOE is again sponsoring a Jelani Eddington workshop/concert/silent movie at the South Suburban Community College in South Holland, IL. This will take place on Wednesday, October 19, 2011. All details are not as yet finalized, however, Jelani will be performing at noon (workshop/concert) mainly for the students at the college. All our members are also invited to attend. He will also do a concert and silent movie at 7:30pm for the public and you our members. This is a fine facility. The college is located at 15800 State Street in South Holland, IL. You may take the Tri-State and get off at Halsted going north to 159th street. You then go east on 159th to the college. There is plenty of parking. I hope you can support this opportunity to show young people the theatre organ art form.

JATOE has had some great artists at their socials and we hope to continue to bring the finest musicians to the Rialto Square Theatre. The Theatre has a new website which is worth looking at. There is a virtual tour, which is fascinating. We also hope you support the Rialto since they have been extremely good to JATOE.

I just had the blower checked for balancing since there seemed to be some vibration. The motor bearings and blower housing were all fine. We did find loosened motor mounting bolts. The bolts were tightened and all is well.

We are still working on our latest CD project. This should be finalized shortly. The longest running show (15 years) will be held again on April 28, 2012. The artist are- Jelani Eddington, Chris Gorsuch, Dave Wickerham and Clark Wilson. The band will be back without any amplification (yeah!!) We will also be at the Sanfilippo Mansion on Sunday the 29th. We hope we do not have to cancel that show.

Dolores and I and about 10 other JATOE members attended the ATOS National Convention in Providence, RI this past summer. There were 9 people from Australia, one from Thailand and some from England. We all had a great time. Some of the organs there had some problems and I'm very happy that our Barton is performing so well.

Be Happy and Healthy (Jim Patak)

Warren York, R.I.P.

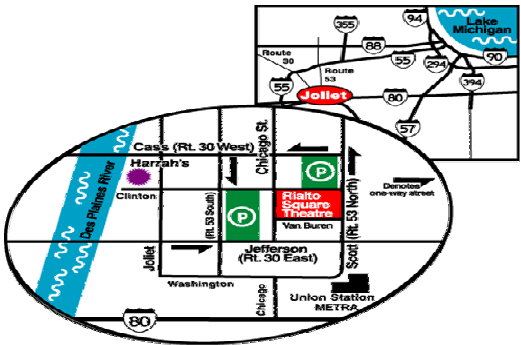
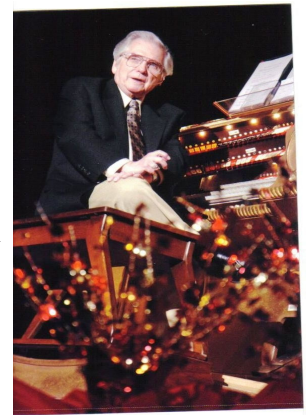
An Urbana native, Mr. York, 73, died at 6:42 a.m. Monday (June 27, 2011) at the Veterans Affairs Illiana Health Care System in Danville, where he had lived the past two and a half years. "He was a huge part of the shows at the Virginia Theater — everyone who came to the theater and knew the organ was going to be part of the show pretty much expected to see Warren at the keyboard, red socks and all," said Laura Auteberry, marketing and development director for the Champaign Park District and Parks Foundation. "It's a huge loss." Donations to the Warren York Wurlitzer Enhancement Fund may be sent to: John Paul Buzard, 112 West Hill Street, Champaign, IL. Checks should be made payable to: The Warren York Wurlitzer Enhancement Fund. (Article excerpts courtesy of The News-Gazette)

George Smith debuts at the Rialto, Sept. 18th!

George is not a stranger to the JATOE and CATOE. He is welcomed back after a 3 year absence due to a fall which injured his arm. After a few weeks off the bench, he was back at it full stem ahead playing concerts and raising monies for the Paramount Theatre in Anderson, Indiana where he remains as house organist and teaching piano/organ/keyboard at George Smith's Music Center, Inc. in Anderson. George developed a love and skill for theatre organ while employed at Skateland Roller Palace in Alexandria, Indiana 1959-1963 at a WurliTzer 4/20 purchased from a theatre in Chicago and a Hammond C2 which drew admirers of skating and organ music from many states.

George and his wife Norma have been married over 55 years, having met at the former Rainbo Roller Rink in Noblesville, Indiana and outside of being apart during his basic Army training have worked together constantly even during his tour of duty in Baumholder, Germany 1956-58 where their oldest son was born. With the help of his wife they opened George Smith's Kimball Music Center in 1966 and it later became known as George Smith's Music Center, Inc. Two of their 3 sons work side by side in the business selling, repairing organs and tuning pianos and delivering the product. They do it all, and remain a leader with Hammond-Suzuki, Inc. U.S.A. in sales & service. George Smith was featured as Official organist/pianist for the Lions International for several years, as well as being Indiana state, district, and local. Wherever he appeared either Kimball or Hammond would furnish their best instruments for him along with Leslie speakers.

Ironically, Don Leslie invited George and sons to his home in California and he along with Tony Monaco played the last concert for Don and his son Jim on the pipe organ which Don built and a grand piano. George worked with and studied theatre organ with the great legend Don Baker. George & Norma have been members of the CIC-ATOS since the beginning and have the complete TO issues including Bombarde. George & Norma Present . . . The George Smith Hour with both husband & wife team each week live at the WHBU studio in the



Mounds Mall Shopping Center in Anderson, and George is part of the Anderson Live 3 hour show aired week days 6-9 a.m. **Editors note: Please welcome our sister chapter, CATOE to this special social event!**

Bob Gergesz return to the Barton on Oct 23rd!

Robert Gergesz began his studies in music at the age of 9 with accordion lessons, followed soon by lessons on the piano. He was introduced to the organ at 13 when he took a series of classes at Joliet Junior College taught by Joyce Height. When Bob was 14, the parish priest at his church (St. Stevens Hungarian Church) learned of his ability to play the organ and asked him to play for mass. That was the "official" launch of his career in music!

During the next few years, up until he went to college, Bob studied organ with Kay McAbee, renowned theater organist in the Joliet area. He feels very fortunate to have had a teacher who instilled in him a love of organ music, both theater and classical as Kay did. Following this training, Bob went on to obtain a Bachelors degree in Music from the Chicago Conservatory of Music. His instructors there included Rev. Stanley Rudcki, classical organ; and his classical piano teacher was Bernice Peck. After college Bob also studied with Mel Libman, classical pianist.

After graduating from college, Bob began teaching music in Joliet and the surrounding area and to this day still teaches 60 students (give or take!) each week on piano, organ and accordion. He has also been steadily employed as a church musician since his St. Steven's days in several area churches, with a continuous career at the Lemont United Methodist Church in Lemont, IL where he recently celebrated his 30th anniversary.

His list of credits include: playing at the Rialto Theater for various area functions, at McCormick Place in Chicago as pianist for the Stevens Corporation for the national printers convention, fashion show accompanist for Carson Pirie Scott, promotional work for Mel Libman, entertainment for the Festival of Trees in Joliet, and as the "house musician" for many area restaurants and supper clubs.

