



RELAY CHATTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE JOLIET AREA THEATER ORGAN ENTHUSIASTS

WWW.JATOE.ORG

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May / June 2025



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Party on the Pipes

Update your information

Page 2

Peacock Theater Concert
and Silent Movie

Page 3

The Survey Says
Membership Update

Page 4

Welcome New Members

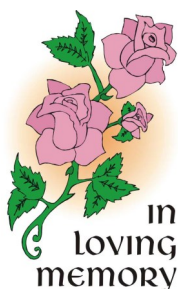
Reels at the Rialto

Page 5

Work Crew Update

Page 6

Silent film organist Dennis Wolkowicz, known professionally as Jay Warren, passes away at 74



Silent Film Society of Chicago's Dennis Wolkowicz loved silent films and paid tribute by learning to play the photoplay organ and keeping the memory of the movies alive. The lifelong Northwest Side resident died suddenly at the age of 74 on Sunday, Feb. 23. "His passion was silent films," his wife Linda Stagner said. "As a kid ... he'd watch them. He thought they were cool." "He played the accordion like all good Polish boys" but eventually learned the organ and in the mid-1980s he gave his first performance at the former Gateway Theater inside the Copernicus Center, 5216 W. Lawrence Ave., in Jefferson Park. Wolkowicz helped manage the theater for 18 years. Wolkowicz was the founder of the Silent Film Society of Chicago, and he performed at theaters, churches and other locations, including City News Cafe, 4018 N. Cicero Ave. He was about to head to the cafe on Sunday, but he passed away a short time before the scheduled performance.

NOTICE

If you have not yet paid your 2025 dues of \$40, please send them in. This will be your last newsletter. We greatly appreciate those who have renewed and your continued support of what we do. While we don't get together as often as we would like to hear the Barton Grande, we still continue to repair and maintain the organ.

MEMORIAL DAY





Featuring

Zach Frame
Nathan Avakian
Nick Renkosik
Elliot Sander
Marvin Faulwell
Bert Kuntz
Brad Kuntz (Percussion)



St. Louis Theatre Organ Society

The Mid-America Theatre Organ Festival

Party on the Pipes

May 3rd - 5th, 2025

Early Bird Registration \$625.00 per person thru 2/28/25

Regular Registration \$660.00 per person thru 4/19/25

NEW

May 6th AFTER GLOW Bus Tour of ST. Louis \$50.00 per person (MEAL NOT INCL.)

Open Console all venues including the Fabulous Fox!

All meals and transportation furnished with pick up at airport, train or bus station.

Home Base: Fairfield Inn & Suites O'Fallon, IL

(618) 206-8869 for hotel reservations

Code: Party On The Pipes
St. Louis Theatre Organ Society

For more information go to

sltos.org

Call (618) 476 3233

Email masching@htc.net

[POP-25-REGISTRATION.doc](#)

CHECKS, MONEY ORDERS and CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED FOR POP 2025 REGISTRATION

Tickets for the two concerts and silent movie at the Lincoln Theatre can

If at any time during the year after renewal time you need to update your info please get ahold of Jim Patak or Joel Martis. It's important that we have the correct information so we can contact you in the event a social has been canceled at the last minute like what happened in February. We don't want someone showing up at the theater and find no one there.



**Update
your
info!** 

Even though our bus trip was canceled, the show must go on as it is said. The Ryans are going ahead with the concert and silent movie in Monticello Indiana. If you are free and want to go, the information is below. We hope that they have a great turn out for their first live performance at the Peacock Theater.

THE PEACOCK PRESENTS

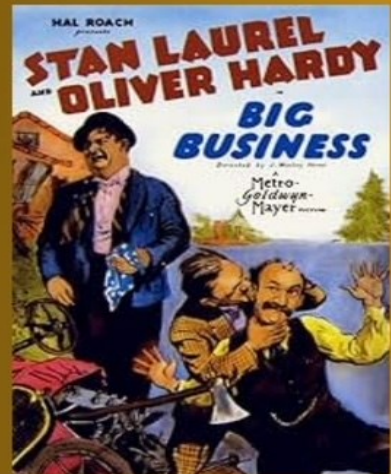


THEATRE ORGANIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

GREG OWEN

IN CONCERT ON
SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2025
3:00PM

JOIN US AT THE PEACOCK THEATRE FOR A DYNAMIC DELIGHT AS GREG PRESENTS A 90-MINUTE THEATRE ORGAN CONCERT. DURING THE PROGRAM, GREG WILL BE ACCOMPANYING THE SILENT FILM BIG BUSINESS WHICH WILL BE SHOWN ON THE BIG SCREEN.



ADMISSION: \$10.00/PERSON

ADVANCED TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED ONLINE AND IS RECOMMENDED AT WWW.THEPEACOCK.ME

PEACOCK THEATRE - 107 S. MAIN ST. - MONTICELLO, IN 47960



The JATOE Board wishes to thank all of those who responded to the survey that was sent out in the middle of February. Out of 104 members, 35 responded. Here is what our members had to say..

1. Would you be willing to have a social at a church? Some of our members have offered to host us. It is not a theater organ and most have a hall for the social part. We don't know how an artist would feel about playing a church organ.

Yes 22 NO 10

2. Would you be willing to attend a social at the Rialto if we are able to have it during the week? (Monday – Friday) Parking will not be free. We would try for permission to use the BMO parking lot that is on the south side of Scott Street. We do not know the availability of artists during the week.

Yes 22 NO 10

3. Would you be willing to attend a social at the Rialto if we are able to have it during the evening? (Monday – Friday) Parking would be free. We do not know the availability of artists during the evening.

Yes 28 NO 3

4. Have socials at members' homes. Attendance would be limited. It would be RSVP first come first serve. There may or may not be an artist. It could be a member playing. Our sister chapters in St Louis, Dairyland and Central Indiana do this most of the time.

Yes 17 NO 13

5. One of our members retirement community is receptive to have an electronic theater organ (Allen) put in on a rolling platform and having socials there. JATOE would have to find and buy an organ. Would you be willing to go to something like this?

Yes 19 NO 9

6. Everything stays the way it is and socials will be what they will be.

Yes 20 NO 8

The board went over the survey and the comments that people left. They greatly appreciate your input. They will continue to explore avenues so the membership can get together and hear the Barton Grande. As you can see by the results above most want to stay at the Rialto. We already checked with the BMO bank and if there is an afternoon social, they said our members could park in their lot that is south of Scott St. (not the main lot behind the bank). No one would have to pay for parking. The Rialto would be open to afternoon socials if nothing is going on at the theater.

Membership Update

Total JATOE Membership	77	74%
Number of ATOS Members	44	42%
Number of Members Lost	28	27%



Please Welcome our newest members!

Reynold Moretti, Reynold comes from Joliet.

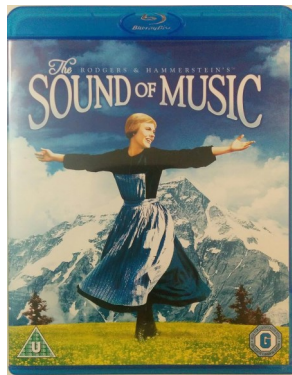


Where there's a will, There's a way.....

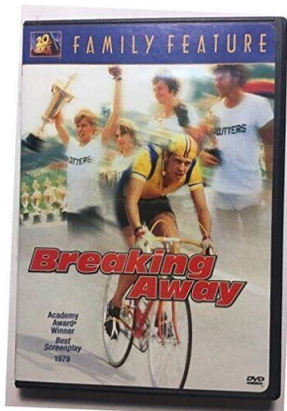
Bequests and other generous, thoughtful gifts do make a difference. When you write or review your will or trust, please consider leaving JATOE a charitable bequest. Ask your attorney to include such wording as this: "I give to the Joliet Area Theater Organ Enthusiasts the sum of _____ dollars to be used for furthering the goals of JATOE for promoting, preservation, care and maintenance of the Barton Grande Theater Pipe Organ." Your loved one will be forever remembered with their name engraved on the plaque that's on the back of the organ.



All seats are \$5, and seating is general admission. Doors will open 30 minutes before showtime. The Barton Grande Theater Pipe Organ plays 30 minutes before each show with house organist Taylor Trimby.



The Sound of Music
Thursday, May 22, 2025 | 7 PM
G | 2 hours 52 minutes
A young novice is sent by her convent in 1930s Austria to become a governess to the seven children of a widowed naval officer.



Breaking Away
Thursday, June 12, 2025 | 7 PM
PG | 1 hour and 41 minutes
A working-class Indiana teen obsessed with the Italian cycling team vies for the affections of a college girl while searching for life goals with his friends.



Work Crew Update

The JATOE work crew is always at it. Every Monday and Tuesday, continually working on repairs, upgrades and maintenance of the Barton Grande. Recently, we are in the process of rearranging and reinstalling all the traps, sound effects and percussions that are in front of the lower solo chamber. Everything was removed and a solid platform was made. Before it was just 2 by 4's which was very hard to walk on and stand on for making repairs. The chimes and sleighbells were taken down and rebuilt. A second shelf was made for the cymbals. The sleighbells were installed where the chimes were and the chimes where the sleighbells were. This was done for the protection of the chime tubes. The ropes have broke before and the chime tubes would fall a considerable distance since they were up by the ceiling of the chamber, so when the ropes break, and they will, the chimes will fall only a very short distance. New wind lines were installed and now it's a matter of rewiring everything so it all works again.



Lee working on the wind lines



Crash Cymbal, Gong, Surf Machine



Dennis passing the chimes



Lee attaching the chimes



Sleighbells up where the chimes

A labor of love that's all that can be said. Not pleasant working conditions in places like this, but it gets done. Our beloved Barton will always be a work in progress. David Rhodes is rebuilding the Diapason chest in the upper main chamber and Toby Washburn will be working on rebuilding the strings in the lower solo chamber in May. There are a lot of chests that need rebuilding, these two professionals technicians will continue one chest at a time.