

**Sunday, April 21st at 3:00 pm  
Gene Stroble at the McKoon residence**

Gene Stroble is a rare Floridian who was actually born in the Sunshine State. A native of Jacksonville, Florida, some of his earliest memories are of his mother telling him stories about the Florida Theatre and late Jimmy Knight at the console.

Gene says: "My fascination for the Theatre Organ caught fire as my mother described the console rising from the pit and the thrilling sounds of the Wurlitzer pipe organ."

As a birthday present someone gave Gene an LP (phonograph record) of the great Paul Mickelson playing Sunday School songs and choruses on the Lorin Whitney Robert Morton pipe organ.

He says: "I must have worn the grooves all the way through to the other side playing that record. I was entranced as only a nine year old could be by the exciting sounds and effects I heard on that disc! I remember he played "Onward Christian Soldiers" as if it were a Sousa march, complete with drum cadences and a piccolo solo. I was already spellbound by the Hammond organ I had heard at church, but this was something else again! I was captivated by the sound of the Theatre Organ from then on. I just had to get my hands on one."

Gene began playing keyboards at such a young age that he does not remember a time that he could not play.

"I gave my mother quite a start! When I was around three years old she had decided to take piano lessons and had bought an old upright. One day she was cooking in the kitchen and she heard someone playing a song on the piano in the living room. Thinking a neighbor had sneaked in to surprise her, she went to see who it was. It was not a neighbor, it was me!"

Gene began playing church organ while in the U.S. Army. "I had just completed my military training and was to leave on a Monday for Viet Nam. I attended chapel services on that Sunday. At the close of the service the chaplain made a humorous, but impassioned plea, 'Our fine organist is leaving the military at the end of this week. I have been asking you, and the Lord, for months for help in finding a replacement. Now, I wish no one bad luck, but if you are an organist, or you know of an organist, and you do not tell me on your way out of the chapel this morning, then you had better watch that last step!' Not thinking I had a chance, I volunteered on my way out, and much to my surprise, I found that a full bird colonel chaplain can change things



with a few phone calls!"

Since then Gene has been a church organist, organ teacher, and traveled extensively as a concert artist/product specialist, and technical writer for the Lowrey Organ Company. Gene graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Brewton-Parker College in Mount Vernon, Georgia.

"My experience at BPC had a profound impact on my life." Gene says, "I had the privilege of attending the school twice; years ago, when I got out of the military, and again much later, after I made a decision to go into teaching. I was fortunate to be twice under the choral direction, and the influence, of Hildegard Stanley, who was continuously the chair of the music department there, and for this I am grateful."

In 1989 he began a whole new career as a public school music educator.

He also has written an online novel, a "netnovelet" of historic fiction about the silent film era and Theatre Organs, which grew out of stories he wrote for the children he teaches. (<http://www.netnovelet.com>)

He relates; "I remembered, that as a child, how much I loved hearing my mother's stories about the 'old-timey' days, and today's children are no less fascinated by those same kinds of stories! So the circle came full around and it was my turn to be the story teller. I interviewed, researched, wrote, and read the stories to my kindergarten through sixth grade students and 'The Glorious Sound' was born!"

Gene has his Masters degree in Education from Valdosta State University and he is recently retired from teaching public school music and art at St. George Elementary School in Charlton County, Georgia, near his home in Hilliard, Florida. Gene is busy; he is a member of the ATOS; American Theatre Organ Society and FCATOS; the First Coast American Theatre Organ Society of the greater First Coast and Jacksonville, Florida area, and frequently plays concerts on the Mighty Magical Music Machine Theatre Organ.

**Directions to the McKoon  
residence on page 6**

**Atlanta Chapter,  
American Theatre Organ Society**

P.O. Box 426  
Marietta, Georgia 30061-0426  
404-725-1155  
[www.atosatlanta.org](http://www.atosatlanta.org)  
[www.facebook.com/ATOSAtlanta](http://www.facebook.com/ATOSAtlanta)

AC/ATOS is recognized as a tax-exempt organization under  
Section 501.c.3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Chapter President - Tim Stephens  
Vice President - James Thrower  
Treasurer - Rick McGee  
Secretary - Kathy Lanegger  
Newsletter Editor - Elbert Fields  
Associate Editor - Wanda Carey Fields  
Chapter Correspondent - Larry Davis

*Ads or announcements for this newsletter:  
Contact Elbert Fields at 770-435-7340 or  
elfields@yahoo.com*

**Notice:**

**Membership Renewals  
Were Due by March 1st**

Calendar-year 2013 dues of \$35 per household (Students \$17.50) are now past due.

Please use the Membership Application on Page 6, noting the instructions included therein.

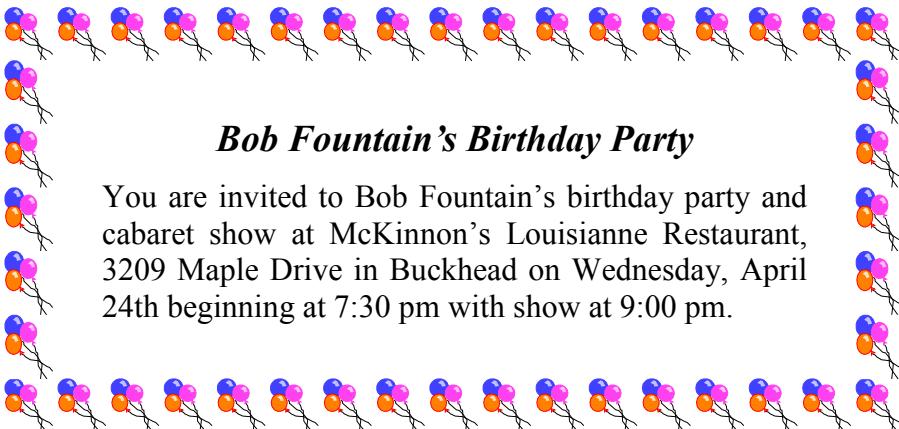
Failure to renew your membership immediately could result in your being dropped from newsletter distribution.

***Improvements and Eight Additional Allen Speaker Cabinets added to Chapter's Strand GW-IV***

Through the efforts of Ron and Donna Carter, eight Allen HR200 speaker cabinets were located and purchased at no cost to the Chapter to add to the twenty-two existing cabinets currently connected the Chapter's GW-IV theatre organ. This will bring the total number of speaker cabinets to thirty! "This is not necessarily for more volume" said Ron Carter "but to distribute the sound more evenly in the auditorium, make it warmer, richer and to move more air! In a room this size you really need 'double audio' which means two cabinets per channel." What makes the Strand digital organ sound so "pipe like" is the fact that all of the speaker cabinets are speaking from pipe organ designed chambers, four of them, and with a mixture of different types of cabinets strategically positioned in the chambers!

The Chapter's GW-IV has been the benefactor of many donated speaker cabinets! Six from Jim and Sarah Ingram; ten from Ron and Donna Carter; six from John Ferguson of Columbus, Ohio and the remainder purchased with Strand Organ donations!

A crew made up of James Thrower, Ron Carter, Phillip Allen, Strand Master Technician Chuck Polasky and Johnny Gravley moved the new eight cabinets into the four chambers on March 14th. The foundation division (the GW redwood tibia and tuned percussions) will now speak from the solo chamber and the solo reeds have been connected to special Allen high-powered cabinets to give them more snap and presence. The organ will sound fantastic for the ATOS Convention this summer!



***Bob Fountain's Birthday Party***

You are invited to Bob Fountain's birthday party and cabaret show at McKinnon's Louisianne Restaurant, 3209 Maple Drive in Buckhead on Wednesday, April 24th beginning at 7:30 pm with show at 9:00 pm.

To: Atlanta Chapter ATOS Members  
From: James Thrower, Vice President/Program Chair

We had an unexpected surprise as our March meeting got transferred from Joe Patten's apartment and Hamm-O-Rama, to the Fox auditorium and a "GO" with Mighty Mo.

There was some confusion about the date of the meeting between Joe and his caretakers, thus, we will postpone Hamm-O-Rama til another date. Our thanks to the folks at the Fox who were so accommodating!

Meanwhile, Joe is fine and looking forward to getting this back on the calendar in the future.

Thanks all,

*James Thrower*

## Tivoli Theatre Heartstrings from Hope

By Larry Davis

"Thank you so much for helping add to the great ambience of our show! I feel like you are a part of the Heartstrings family...wouldn't be the same if you were not there to get things going." And that very gratifying comment from Melissa Wagner of WUSY Radio – US101 – the powerhouse country music radio station in Chattanooga shows the acceptance that the theatre organ has achieved in an entirely new world.

Each year, US101 sponsors a program called Heartstrings from Hope that brings together several country artists for a concert that fills the Tivoli Theatre to overflowing and benefits the legendary St. Jude's Children's Hospital. Three years ago, I contacted the radio station and offered to open the evening with classic country music on the theatre organ. They graciously accepted and since then, I've had the privilege of



Larry Davis



Devon Owens

presenting the Tivoli's Mighty Wurlitzer to an unusual audience, many of whom haven't previously heard a theatre organ.

The organ has been well-received. As Bert Allee observed the first year, people clapping in time and shouting "yee-hah" to a theatre organ is a new thing; last year people stopped me in the lobby to suggest selections for this year; and each year, the country singers have been very complimentary and curious about the music of the Wurlitzer.

This year, we had two newcomers to our world. My ambulance partner Tony Vernetti joined us for the day, got to tour the theatre and

the organ and was able to watch and assist – and photograph – as the day progressed. And as all was being set up, young musician Devon Owens, son of one of the US101 DJ's, took a seat at the organ in short order mastered the use of two keyboards and remarkably, the pedals. I've invited him to learn a country music song and join me next year in the pre-show.

To Melissa, Blakely, Brian, Dex and Mo, Styckman and Gator, Cowboy Kyle, Easton and Jarrod, Randy and Kelly and Lee and all the others, thanks for including us in your program. There could be no greater cause in which to enlist the music of the theatre organ.

## **But Wait, There's "Mo"!**

The sidewalk along Ponce de Leon Avenue filled up early and quickly with Atlanta Chapter members and friends awaiting an afternoon of entertainment in Atlanta's most exclusive residence – the auditorium abode of Joe Patten.

Unfortunately, a slight mismatch in dates had Joe away from his home and a street full of folks with no place to go. While we had the refreshments at hand and ready for a curbside picnic, our search for an accordion or Rolmonica for musical entertainment fell flat. Ken Double and Larry-Douglas Embury became heroes of the month when, in a matter of minutes, they were able to touch base with key individuals at the Fox Theatre who graciously allowed us inside for an unforgettable afternoon with the 4/42 Möller Deluxe affectionately known as "Mighty Mo".



Ken Double, Ron Carter, Bob Fountain, Tim Stewart, Jeff Harbin, Wanda Fields, Jayne Cook, John Baldwin, Rick McGee, Lloyd Hess.

Larry-Douglas gave the crowd a warm welcome to the "Hamm-O-Rama" alternative – the "Beef-O-Rama", and then proceeded into a powerful performance of *Simple Gifts*. One selection by request, *Look for the Silver Lining*, and then he turned the program over for open console from several fortunate members

in attendance. Jeff Harbin said he'd "waited 36 years for this opportunity" and wasn't about to pass it up! With a nod to Easter, Jeff featured a few hymns for the occasion before discovering the Hammond registration and turning on the "Leslie" for a handful of selections prepared for the Hamm-O-Rama. "Mo" was more than up for the task, as was Jeff! Ron Carter joked that he wasn't sure if he'd know how to work the massive console since it wasn't an Allen, but he quickly removed

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

any doubt as he mastered the Möller in a brief medley of tunes that had toes tapping across the floor.

The cavalcade of artists continued with Rick McGee as he masterfully paid tribute with a selection of hits in the Bob Van Camp style, including *Michelle* and *Georgy Girl*, prior to his contribution to the Easter theme with *The Palms*. Wanda Carey Fields took to the bench for a handful of her signature favorites from *Great is Thy Faithfulness* to *Walkin' My Baby Back Home*, and both organ and organist were in great form! Lloyd Hess, whom we don't get to hear from often enough, fulfilled a long-standing desire as he sat down to play "Mighty Mo" for our audience of members and friends. All we can say is that Lloyd and "Mo" were a perfect match! Ken Double followed with a rousing rendition of *Ol' Man River* and concluded with a request by Bob Foreman of *Is It True What They Say About Dixie*.

With our time in the Theatre quickly coming to an end, a few more members took advantage of the

extremely rare opportunity for a little console time. Tim Stewart hadn't touched those keys in many years and delighted the audience with *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. After succumbing to the peer pressure, Bob Fountain played "Mighty Mo" as only he could – giving the percussions a good workout. Bob also noted the special occasion with a wonderful performance of Irving Berlin's *Easter Parade*. Jayne Cook couldn't resist the temptation and bravely took "Mo" for a spin, as did John Baldwin.

Then, just as soon as it began, the dream came to an end. But for one brief afternoon, the majesty and magnificence of the Fox and "Mighty Mo" were all ours to enjoy. Some of the most memorable moments are those which occur without planning, and this very special afternoon was no exception. Our utmost thanks to Ken Double and to Larry-Douglas Embury, Shelly Kleppsattel, and Adina Erwin of the Fox Theatre for making it all possible. The countdown is on for July when we'll be back for "Mo"!

*The Foxy Vox*



## President's Message

With summer still months away, our members enjoyed one sweet batch of lemonade this past weekend as we quickly sought an alternative to our March meeting venue. Our sincere thanks to Ken Double for making the calls and to Larry-Douglas Embury, Shelly Kleppsattel, and Adina Erwin of the Atlanta Fox Theatre for answering them. After later hearing that Joe was just fine, we realized there could not have been a better "Plan B"!

I've recently focused on a lot of news from Stephenson High School and the Page installation, and rightly so. However, while things are coming along very nicely and on schedule out there, I thought I'd turn a little focus to some of the hard work going on across other venues on the Convention lineup. Those in attendance Sunday witnessed the newly rebuilt trems on "Mighty Mo". While yet to be regulated, you can already hear a marked improvement and sounds that haven't been heard in quite some time. George Miller and Associates will be continuing to work on getting "Mo" in top-notch condition over the next few months. Just up the road in Marietta, Ron Carter and crew have been hard at work installing additional speaker cabinets to help fill out the double audio setup. If you thought the GW-IV sounded great before, just wait until they're finished!

Up in Chattanooga, Bert Allee and crew are readying the Wurlitzer 235 Special for the special occasion as well. Over the past couple of years, much work has been done related to the reed ranks (Post Horn, Vox, Kinura, and Trumpet, especially). They're presently working on a few of the percussions as well as some items in and around the console. John Tanner and Rick McGee have been frequenting Americus recently, getting things back in order at the Rylander after the lightning hit last year. The console has received a major overhaul, along with some of the components in the chambers. That work is nearing completion, and the Frank Sheffield Memorial Organ is sounding better than ever before.

Not only is the Convention providing the catalyst to finish the Page installation, it will leave us with all of our area organs in the best condition they've seen in many years. Registration numbers are still looking good, and the seats are filling up. Check the latest issue of *Theatre Organ* or visit [www.atosatlanta2013.org](http://www.atosatlanta2013.org) to register or for additional information.

It's been almost four years since Gene Stroble has been featured at one of our Chapter programs, and we're more than delighted to announce his return in this month's newsletter. Our special thanks to Bob and Elsie McKoon for generously rolling out the red carpet once again for ATOS Atlanta, and I look forward to seeing you down in Newnan on the 21<sup>st</sup>!

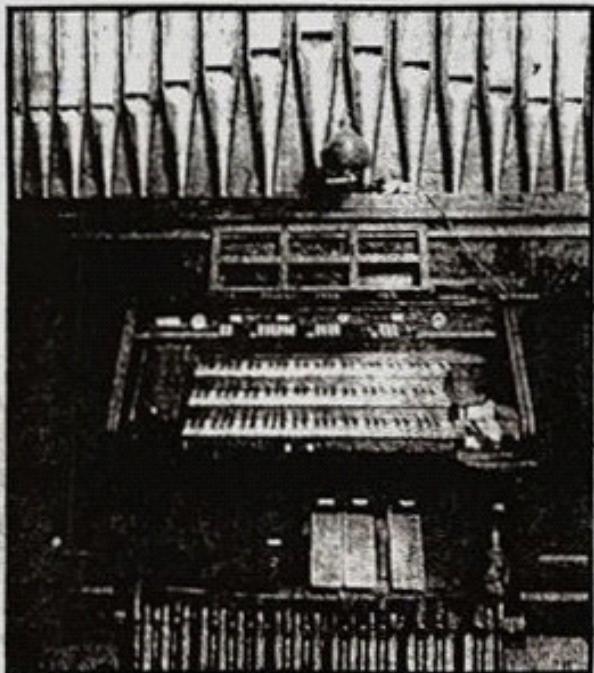
*Tim Stephens*

**Need Organ Lessons?  
Call IVY 3159**

By John Tanner

The following ad appeared in the Atlanta Constitution in 1913.

**The Organ School of Which Miss Eda E. Bartholomew  
Is Director, Announces the Opening of the Spring Session, Beginning March 1**



A thoroughly modern, up-to-date, three-manual organ, built by the H. Hall & Co., of New Haven, Conn. Electro-pneumatic action throughout, equipped with all mechanical accessories, the pedal-keys, concave, radiating, in accordance with the standard of the American Guild of Organists, offers the student every facility for a thorough knowledge of the organ. Miss Bartholomew is well known as an organist and teacher. A four-year course at the Royal Conservatory of Leipzig, Germany, graduating in piano and organ, after which she was director of the organ department at Ilmenau College Conservatory, Gainesville, Ga.; Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Ga., and organist of the First M. E. Church, Atlanta, where her recitals were artistic features of the city's musical life. At present she is a member of the music faculty of Washington Seminary and organist and choir director of St. Mark M. E. Church.

Students contemplating the study of organ must be well advanced in piano. Two years constitute the course of study, with a post-graduate course. Candidates for organ certificate will have the privilege of doing a certain amount of church work, playing for the regular Sunday services at the Harris Street Presbyterian Church.

A special course is arranged for the summer months, during June and July.  
For information address

**MISS EDA E. BARTHOLOMEW**  
**325 PEACHTREE ST.** **PHONE IVY 3159**

Here is the article describing the new Organ School.

"That, women in the professions are becoming each day more confident in their success and in themselves and consequently more aggressive in their enterprises, finds constantly new instances, and the one most recent and striking is the organ school which is shortly to be established by Miss Eda Bartholomew.

"Miss Bartholomew has bought her own pipe organ, which is now in

course of construction by the H. Hall Co. of New Haven, Conn. and is to be completed by June.

"It will be a three manual instrument of electric action and all modern accessories, conforming in every respect to the standard set by

gaining of self confidence.

"The location will be convenient to students from any part of the city, and the organ will be one more valuable acquisition to the collection of the instruments already installed in Atlanta churches.

"Miss Bartholomew is recognized as an exponent of the highest standard of musicianship and coupled with her broad information and artistic attainments is a business capability which has already proved itself, and promises success for the new organ school.

"During her presence in Atlanta, she has been associated with several prominent schools, including Agnes Scott and Washington Seminary, in both of which institutions she still is engaged, but the new venture will be entirely independent and the only school of its kind in the city". (Atlanta Constitution 1913)

Now what does this have to do with theatre organ? Well, really nothing, but during the early days of the motion picture theatres, many of the organists were not only playing the Perils of Pauline, but were on Sundays pumping out preludes, hymns, and postludes. Organists such as Dr. Ben Potter, Anna Mae Norton, and George Lee Hamrick, to name a few, were in the theatre during the week and at the organ console on Sunday morning.

Although Miss Eda never played the organ for movies, she did preside at the Mighty Wurlitzer on one occasion. At the Georgia Theatre (Roxy), on November 1, 1927, during the only concert of the Atlanta Symphony for that year, a section of the program would feature a Harp Ensemble playing Handel's "Largo" accompanied by the string section of the symphony and Miss Eda Bartholomew at the "Golden Voiced Wurlitzer".

the American Guild of Organist, and will cost several thousand dollars.

"It will be installed in the Harris Street Presbyterian church, this institution to have use of it for their religious services in return for Miss Bartholomew's use of the auditorium for the placing of the organ, and another interesting detail of the contract is that while Miss Bartholomew will provide organists for the church services from among her pupils, they will at the same time secure valuable experience in the conduct of church services and the

## Upcoming Meetings & Events (*Mark your Calendars*)

- **April 21 (Sunday) 3:00 pm, Chapter Meeting with Gene Stroble at the McKoon residence in Newnan**
- April 29 (Monday) 7:00 pm, "Monday Night Is Music Night", A show of pops and standards featuring John Clark McCall at the Allen 317 theatre organ with guest pianist Larry Davis. Maguire Center, Westminster Oaks, 4449 Meandering Way, Tallahassee, FL 32308; 7:00 pm, Free Admission. (850-878-1136)
- May 19 (Sunday) 2:30 pm, John McCall in Concert at the Forker Memorial Wurlitzer, Grace Baptist Church, 8000 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, FL 34241. Free Admission. (229-560-7540)
- **May 26 (Sunday) 3:00 pm, John Lauder on the Page at Stephenson High School**

### ***Directions to the McKoon residence, 18 Sherwood Drive, Newnan, GA 30263 Phone 770-251-4284***

- From Atlanta, take I-85 south.
- Take Exit 51 (GA-154) and turn right onto Sharpsburg McCollum Road (GA-154).
- Go about 0.6 mile and cross the railroad crossing.
- Turn left onto US-29/GA-14 at the traffic light.
- Go about 7.3 miles and turn right (West) onto Phillips Street, which is about 0.3 mile past the 3rd traffic light after turning left onto US-29. It is slightly hard to see on the right.
- Phillips Street becomes Sherwood Drive (about 0.2 mile) at the traffic light.
- At the fork, stay to the right. The street winds around and 18 Sherwood is a tan stucco house on the right.

Park anywhere before you get in front of the house. It is on a curve that is not a good place to park directly in front of the house. Driveway of the house will be open for parking for those who have trouble walking.

### **Atlanta Chapter, ATOS - Membership Application**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Do you own an organ? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, description \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Category** (check one):  Patron (\$300 and up)  Sponsor (\$200 - \$299)

Contributor (\$100 - \$199)  Donor (\$36 - \$99)  Basic (\$35)  Student (\$17.50)

Send Newsletter via email:  Yes  No

Please make check payable to **Atlanta Chapter, ATOS**

Mail to: Atlanta Chapter, ATOS, Attn: Treasurer, P.O. Box 426, Marietta, GA 30061-0426