

***NO JUNE MEETING
CONVENTION IN CLEVELAND JUNE 30—JULY 7
REGISTER BY JUNE 9TH FOR SPECIAL RATE.***

Since our usual meeting date is the third Sunday of each month, which falls on June 21st (only a week before the convention in Cleveland, Ohio) it was decided to not have an Atlanta Chapter meeting this month. Our July meeting will be announced in the July newsletter.

**Strolling (*Running ??*)
with Stroble !!**

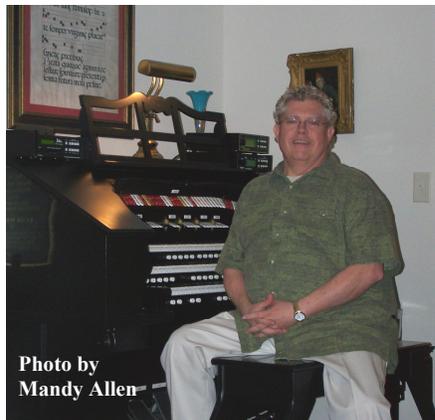
We returned to Newnan, Georgia on Sunday, May 17, 2009 at 3:00 pm for the monthly meeting. This was our first visit to the new residence of members Bob and Ms. Elsie McKoon. We arrived to find a very nice home with all of the McKoon touches intact – Southern charm and tasteful style. The Allen 3/17 is located on the lower level of the home and was ready for its task.

Vice-President Phillip Allen welcomed us to the meeting and encouraged new attendees to introduce themselves (or be ‘given up’ by those who invited them). Phillip then asked Ron Carter to introduce our guest artist.

Our visitor from Florida, Mr. Gene Stroble, then took his station at the Allen and led us through a program filled with energy and a true love of playing the theatre organ. His energy and enthusiasm enveloped the audience and made for a great afternoon of show and music.

The Allen (not Phillip) was thoroughly tested and completely handled the task.

The program started with *There's No Business Like Show Business*, then *A – You're Adorable* led us to *The Very Thought of You*.



A complete change of style, the *St. Louis Blues* showed a totally different side of the artist and instrument.

Since it was Sunday, a rendition of *The Lord is My Shepherd* seemed a perfect choice for another facet of the artists' stylistic ability.

A bow to the classics in the form of the theme from *Masterpiece Theater (Sinfonies du Fanfares by Mouret)* showing some of the alternate classical voices of the Allen, offered yet another style of this versatile artist.

The Sunday Dance contest was under way with a trio of dance-titled selections - *Dancing in the Dark - I Could Have Danced All Night - Dancing on the Ceiling*.

A bow to Disney music was offered with the three selections - *When You Wish Upon a Star - Honor to Us All* (from *Moulan*) –

and *A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes*.

Marches and theatre organ go together very well, and the featured *Under the Double Eagle* filled the bill just fine.

Since Memorial Day was soon coming up, a patriotic segment set the mood. First, *America the Beautiful* and then *God Bless America*, with the audience invited to sing and they did. I think the ceiling may now be loosened due to the vocal response! This was followed by a medley of the Armed Forces service songs.

No chance of getting out without an encore, the favorite selection for console flexibility was *Tico Tico*, a rousing and blazing finale to an afternoon of great fun, and great entertainment by an artist who loves what he does!!

Open console followed and a splendid buffet of light foods, desserts, and other goodies awaited us on the main level. Thanks to Gladys and the McKoons for a memorable afternoon. Can we come back tomorrow???

All comments and observations provided courtesy of **Biz E. Body**, a completely unbiased ear — remember, the walls and antiques have ears!

**Atlanta Chapter,
American Theatre Organ Society**

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Page Organ Progress

By Larry Davis

One of the things that I have learned over the past few years working on pipe organs is something Jack Sandow told me early in the process. You learn to do something, and then do it over and over again countless times. The other thing that I have learned is that whatever you're doing, 1) it is going to take more time, 2) be more trouble, and 3) cost more money than you plan. So right now, we're in the tedious part of our efforts to complete installation of the Page Organ at Stephenson High School.

As those who were there last year know, the stoprails, keyboards and piston rails have been completed. Now we are in the process of wiring them individually and I have discovered that each of the 298 stoptabs and each of the 100 pistons has four wires that must be attached and managed. I myself did the soldering of the wires on the contact blocks to the four keyboards despite shouted warnings from the others to "call the fire department, Davis is loose with a soldering iron." There are two keyboards left to do. Oh, you didn't know that the Page has six manuals? Don't forget the second touch contact blocks on Great and Accompaniment. Ted Barnett has

joined the team and has begun wiring the computer boards. He has now removed the backboard to his home shop where he is doing exquisite work on the wiring. Randy Hendry and Bob Haag have been working on the piston rails and Bob has done wiring on the power wires to the stoprails. Week after week, when we can gain access, wiring is what is being done. In addition, the toy counter has been wired for power, and what these electrical people call "commons" have been wired in the solo chamber.



Photo by
Larry Davis

Meanwhile, John Tanner completed the windline that enabled us to wind the solo side of the organ from the 15" outlet of the blower, which previously had been reserved to provide air to the console, which is unnecessary now that we are using a computer system. Jack Sandow and I completed the rebuild of the Standaard regulator that provides air to the solo percussions and swell shades. Rick McGee has been working on the pedalboard, toe stud assemblies, and the junk drawers. In addition, Rick has inventoried and examined all the pipes in all the chests to make sure each is what it is supposed to be and in the correct order in the chest. And he and I inventoried all the extra



Photo by Rick McGee

ranks of pipes that are at the school. In addition, Rick is helping me to learn how to regulate keyboards and he has installed the rope lighting that will light the stoprails and keyboards.

Meanwhile, we received some bad news from Trivo Company, who was to be repairing the 16' French Horn and 16' Sousaphone/Diaphone pipes. One of the pipe repairers, the one most familiar with "theatre reeds" had some medical problems that took him offline for several months, and then Joe Clipp, who directs the operations, was struck down with a stroke. Thankfully for his family, and incidentally for us, Joe has made a good recovery and is back at work as is the other pipe worker, so we look to have these pipes back soon – but at a greater cost than originally estimated (see #3 above).

So we continue tedious work Saturday after Saturday but the progress is remarkable if not readily visible – unless you know how to look at wiring and be amazed at what has been accomplished. The organ was tuned recently by Jim Wingate and sounds as good as it has since I have been listening to it.

And some more good news. Dr. Angela Pringle, the "new" principal, was most cooperative with us during her tenure, even attending our meeting there last year, but she has been transferred. Dr. Brian Bolden has taken her place and was introduced to the organ at a program given to welcome him. He was very excited about the opportunity to have such an instrument at the high school. "How did we get so lucky as to be the ones chosen for this," he asked, before declaring that he wants to increase public visibility and use of the instrument.

The Page Project is moving ahead. You're welcome to come visit us any Saturday that we are there, though you'll need to contact me in advance about it. We'll be pretty focused on what we're doing but you can see our progress and play a real theatre pipe organ.

Closing Chord

Dr. Edd Simmons, a Remembrance.

By John Tanner

It seems that as one gets older one has to reflect on the passing of dear friends. Such is the case, that I now have to pause and reflect upon the passing of Edd Simmons.

Two of the people that I first met when I joined the Atlanta Chapter, ATOS way back in 1977, were Edd and Norma Simmons, and they quickly became two of my dearest friends. Of course along with Edd and Norma there were two other characters in this family: Charles Walker and Clay Holbrook. Edd, Charles, and Clay seemed to form this triangle of friends that one could quickly become attached too. Now all three ends of that triangle are broken and now there is a large void in my circle of friends.

When you try to figure out why someone is interested in theater organs, you have to go back to Edd's childhood. Edd moved to East Point, Georgia just south of Atlanta as a small child. Edd's parents would bring Edd to Atlanta where he would go to the movies. Edd would have had many opportunities to hear the theater organ. He would have heard the likes of Al Evans at the Paramount Wurlitzer, Bob Hess at the Capitol Robert Morton, or Jimmy Beers and Homer Knowles at the Fox Möller. These experiences must have made quite an impression on Edd, because it seems that he always had a love for the theater organ from that very young age.

A few years later Edd's father helped arrange for the relocation of a Kimball theater organ from the Biscayne theater in Miami, to the Methodist Church in East Point where Edd was member. This is where he got an education on the

inside workings of the organ because he would help the people who were installing the organ.

As the years went by, Edd's attentions had to turn away from the organ and to his education as a Dentist, his military service in the Dental Corps, and to his high school sweetheart Norma, and to soon a growing family.

However in the 1960's his attention was drawn again to the theater organ, when the Fox organ was returned to playing condition and the establishment of the Southeastern Chapter of the American Theater Organ Society.

Also during this time plans were underway to build a new sanctuary at East Point Methodist and a new organ (which has a console on a lift)! By this time the old sanctuary had roof problems and the Kimball organ had been on the receiving end of a leaky roof. A meeting was held at the church, with the condition of the organ as being proclaimed "too far gone to be salvaged" so nobody but Edd bid on the organ and he got it.

Edd removed the organ and started plans of installing the organ in their home, which would mean that all the children would be "convinced" that they would help in the organ's installation. With the help of Charles Walker, Clay Holbrook and Ali Sutherland, and with a lot of sweat equity from Edd and his family, the Kimball was playing again.

While the organ was in the house Edd and Norma would always encourage people to come out and play. They would also host the chapter meetings at the house. During this period, two very young men would be encouraged to get up and play the organ. It didn't matter if the only songs they knew were in the key of C, or if they knew anything about registration, but Edd and Norma's acts of encouragement

and support would make a lasting influence on two individuals by the names of John McCall and Larry Davis.

Edd even gave John an old two manual Hiligreen-Lane console just so he could sit down and begin to figure out the basic techniques of playing. Although Larry's career plans took him away from the theater organ world, when he returned one of the first things that Edd and Norma showed Larry was a photograph of a kid with long hair playing the Kimball back in the early 70's and that they still wanted to encourage Larry's playing.

In the early 70's the Wurlitzer in the Lucas theater in Savannah was acquired by Edd, and again with the help of his children, the organ was removed, and there were soon dreams of combining the two organs.

The present house would not allow for both organs and with the neighborhood changing, Edd and Norma bought some land south of Fayetteville, Georgia, with plenty of room to build a place for both the organs. At this time, Edd and Norma moved their membership to the First UMC Fayetteville, and of course the first order of business was to address the "plug in" at the church. Not long afterwards, he arranged to move the pipe organ out of the old Sanctuary of Chamblee Methodist and installed it in Fayetteville. When plans were being drawn up for a new Sanctuary, again Edd was going to make sure that there was only going to be a pipe organ in the new church and as chairman of the organ committee he directed the church in that direction.

This is the time that I really got to know Edd, since I was his contact with one of the organ companies being considered. There were many, many hours of discussions about the new organ. One of my memoirs is

(Continued on page 4)

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Don't forget !!!

- **Ron Carter** will be accompanying the silent film *Pandora's Box* at the **Alabama Theatre** in Birmingham on Sunday, May 31st at 2 pm CST.
- Register for the **54th Annual Convention of ATOS in Cleveland, Ohio**, Tuesday, June 30 — Monday, July 6, 2009. Special rates available only until June 9th.



Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your lovely standing spray of flowers in Edd's memory. They were lovely. Also, thank so many of you for coming all the way to Fayetteville to be with us. You mean so much to us.

Love,

Norma Simmons and Family

(Continued from page 3)

when Edd and Norma went to the Wicks Organ factory to see the new organ.

Edd took with him a rather large cassette recorder, to record the organ, so that church members could get a glimpse of the sound of the instrument. I think there were three seats on the plane, one for Edd, one for Norma, and one for the recorder!

As the years went by Edd was always busy in many different interests. He was very involved in:

- the North Georgia Conference of the Methodist Church as well as his church in Fayetteville
- his dental practice and professional concerns
- antique radios
- his growing family, now including grandchildren and great grandchildren.

When he had time, he would be help on organ projects at Grant Park, Stephenson High School and anywhere else there was an organ in need of help, as well as being at

most of the Atlanta Chapter, ATOS chapter meetings.

With all of Edd's other interests, the dream for the "WurlKimball" never seemed to get off the ground. When the possibility of the Wurlitzer going back to the Lucas, Edd felt that the organ should go back to the theater and he donated the Wurlitzer so that it might happen. As we all know, that did not happen, but the organ seems now to be destined for the Strand Theatre in Marietta.

Edd was diagnosed with cancer several years ago and it made it much more difficult for him to make meetings and help out in organ projects. But until just about a year ago he and Norma would always manage to make it to programs that the chapter held and was almost always a member of the audience at organ programs being presented at the Rylander Theatre in Americus, Georgia.

Music was always one of the major interests in life and Edd can be most proud of the musical talents

that his children and grandchildren have shared with all of those who have heard them.

Although some of Edd's own personal dreams did not come true in his lifetime, he and Norma through their friendship, support, and encouragement have helped the dreams of many others come true. Many of our own chapter members have received words of encouragement and support as they have developed their playing skills and many of them can all look back and recall that time when Edd and Norma let them have that opportunity to sit down and play a real theater organ.

Edd and Norma were married for 63 years and we will miss seeing both of them at meetings. Hopefully Norma can continue to come and enjoy hearing "their other children" playing music on the instrument that meant so much to Edd.

Dr. Edd Lewis Simmons
Sept. 5, 1926—May 5, 2009