

# ATOS Atlanta

Official Newsletter of The Atlanta Chapter of the  
American Theatre Organ Society



## Another Organ Transplant in the Atlanta Chapter ATOS!

Your newsletter editor is a happy girl!

Some of you may remember the beautiful Allen MDS TH3 Deluxe that was for sale in the fall. I was very intrigued by this particular instrument, but knew our little retirement home would not accommodate it. Daryl and I half heartedly talked about buying it, but assumed it was a lost cause.

However, we asked our neighborhood association about installing it in our Meeting House. We were met with overwhelming excitement and approval and the wheels began to turn. The only stipulation - the organ would have to go in the balcony. **Ugh!** But it turns out, that is the perfect place for it and the sound is amazing!



Special thanks to Ron Carter for providing so much insight into the proper installation. We couldn't have done this without Ron's expertise! Allen Organ Studios provided technical assistance and DC Moore & Son did the "heavy lifting" and transport. You just have to see it!

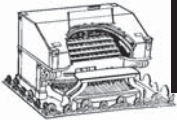
Our little community began church services the first of January and the new instrument has added so much to our worship service. We are looking forward to having a Chapter Meeting in the fall where you can see and hear it for yourself.

Debbie Chambless

Please renew your ATOS Chapter membership if you haven't done so.



Level	Base	Cap
Student	\$17.50	
Basic	\$35.00	
Donor	\$36.00	\$99.00
Contributor	\$100.00	\$199.00
Sponsor	\$200.00	\$299.00
Patron	\$300.00	And up



## A Letter from your President



Atlanta Chapter,  
 American Theatre Organ Society  
 P.O. Box 426  
 Marietta, Georgia 30061-0426  
 404-790-5400  
[www.atosatlanta.org](http://www.atosatlanta.org)  
[www.facebook.com/ATOSAtlanta](https://www.facebook.com/ATOSAtlanta)

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

Chapter President - Ken Double  
 Vice President - Ron Carter  
 Treasurer - Paul Beavin  
 Secretary - Larry Davis  
 Newsletter Editor - Debbie Chambless  
 Chapter Correspondent - Larry Davis  
 Membership Director - Janis Beavin  
 Board members:  
 John Tanner  
 Eddie Hulsey, Jr.  
 Larry Davis  
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 Lee Lanier  
 Rick McGee  
 David Yackman  
 Strand Project – Ron Carter  
 Page Project – Jack Sandow

### PLENTY TO TALK ABOUT; LOTS GOING ON EVEN WITHOUT MONTHLY MEETINGS!

Those with the eagle-eye will note the new photo accompanying this monthly missive. It's me at the NEW console of *Mighty Mo*. Several song titles come to mind, including *Ain't She Sweet*; *Hey Look Me Over*; *You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby (But Baby Look at You Now)*!!! That's all about the CONSOLE!!!! Not me!!!

There is a lot to like in this issue of the ACATOS chapter news. Our editor, Debbie Chambless – who is just terrific – has a wonderful story about a transplanted organ that will soon be the focus of a chapter road trip. In her backyard in a splendid acoustical environment, it seems Debbie has forsaken the normal activities of life, and can be found smiling while sitting at the console for hours every day! You'll enjoy the read!

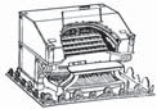
Meanwhile, Larry Davis has a fine update on many issues the chapter and your board of directors are dealing with, dispelling any thoughts of "there's nothing going on." Just the opposite. The only thing not going on are monthly meetings, which we hope will resume soon.

One of Larry's items involves a potential adjustment to the chapter's bylaws, which most definitely involves all of YOU as members. So do read on. And Treasurer Paul Beavin has an update on membership, in addition to information that his lovely bride Janis is now in the new role of Membership Director, and will help the chapter immensely in terms of general communications with all of you.

If you have not yet seen the latest video presentation from the Fox, it is available via YouTube. Simply get to the YouTube page; type in Fox Theatre Love Notes; and up will pop 55 minutes of the thrilling sounds of *Mighty Mo* in a Valentine's Day program.

And John McCall is once again putting his talents as author, historian and storyteller on display. See the news of his latest writings. All of this in this current issue of the chapter news. Who says there is nothing going on?

We are hoping to announce dates for the resumption of chapter meetings and public concerts very soon, pending the full green light to bring us all together again. I know I'm tired of the hermit-like existence we have suffered due to Covid-19. Soon. VERY soon, we will be back together again. Thanks so much for your membership, support and patience.



## From the Secretary – How Have Things Been Going?

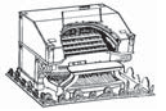
In March of last year, we were scheduled to present Clark Wilson at the Strand Theatre accompanying the famed silent film *Metropolis*. On that Saturday morning, with Clark here, the organ ready, tickets sold, and excitement building, state and county health officials properly closed public accommodations due to concerns over the emerging Coronavirus. Since then, our public meetings have been suspended, save for one small gathering at the Strand.

But that doesn't mean nothing at all has been happening. As you know, that Strand meeting event was streamed online via their website. Recently, the Strand has hosted a handful of private events at which the organ was a part, and the Allen was prominently featured on a Fox 5 Atlanta segment filmed at the Strand. Silent films have been streamed from the Plaza, and some of the Page Organ crew have been able to work safely on the pipe organ during down time at the high school. Most significantly, three organ shows have been seen on YouTube with Ken Double on the mighty Moller organ at the Fox Theatre. The response to these concerts has been tremendous and very eye-opening to those at the theatre.

Through this time, your officers and Board of Directors have continued to handle the ongoing business of the chapter. This has included arranging the financing for the three Fox Theatre programs, reviewing and updating our chapter insurance, and exploring ways to re-emerge when it is safe to do so. In the process, we have communicated by email and met via Zoom. While conducting business in this manner, we have discovered that our chapter bylaws have no provision in them for us to meet other than in person. When Mr. Foreman and I revised them fifteen years ago, we did not anticipate the circumstances we have faced in the past year. Although our attorney advises us that we have been on sound legal ground conducting our meetings in this way, at our next in-person chapter meeting we will be asking you to approve a small revision to the bylaws that will authorize us to meet electronically as necessary.

We will see you again “when the lights come on again all over the world.”

Larry Davis



## Welcome New Members!

A big Atlanta Chapter welcome to Deborah Ingram and Joe Baxter! We really appreciate you joining us! As soon as this pesky pandemic is over, we'll return to our grand monthly meetings in and around Atlanta. We'd love to see you there!

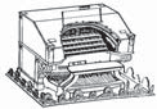
And---as a gentle reminder---the extended grace period for getting your dues paid is nearly OVER! So---if you've not paid yet, please send in your check. The Chapter needs all its members! Address is the same: AC-ATOS, PO Box 426, Marietta, GA 30061.

Thanks!

Paul Beavin, Treasurer







## THE MEETING HOUSE ALLEN THEATRE ORGAN

Pisgah, Alabama

Proud owners Daryl and Debbie Chambless

by Ron Carter

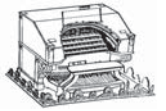


I was privileged to be involved in helping Chapter Members Debbie and Daryl Chambless acquire a wonderful custom Allen Theatre III Deluxe theatre organ that they have lovingly placed in a wonderful building in the craftsman style neighborhood of Gorham's Bluff located in Pisgah, Alabama. As many of you know Debbie is our wonderful Chapter newsletter editor and Strand Associate Organist. Debbie is also the former organist at Peachtree City Christian Church and at Callaway Gardens. Her husband is retired from the FAA and an accomplished pianist. To put it mildly they are both just warm loving folks!!

An ATOS Member living in Ocala Florida, who I had met at one of my Sarasota Theatre Organ Concerts, contacted me asking for help in selling her wonderful Allen Theatre Organ. She said her arthritis had gotten to where she could not play anymore. You may remember that this instrument with photo was advertised in our chapter newsletter.

Debbie contacted me wanting some advice on the purchase of the organ and I suggested we meet at the Ocala residence of the owner, Jan Bresnick, and inspect the instrument. So this past January, while Donna and I were in St. Simons, I made the short 3 hour drive and met with Debbie and Daryl to try out and inspect the organ. Well, the rest is history. I was impressed with the overall condition of the organ. There is some reconing of the 15" woofers that needs to be done but the organ still sounded marvelous. Being a custom instrument designed by Tom Hazelton, it is 9 channels with a big subwoofer cabinet and the case was in excellent condition. It also came with a smart recorder and MIDI Division II which can add additional voices to the already well laid out specification. The Chambless's made a deposit and we both returned home with Daryl and Debbie beginning to make arrangements for the organ to be picked up and transported to Gorham's Bluff.

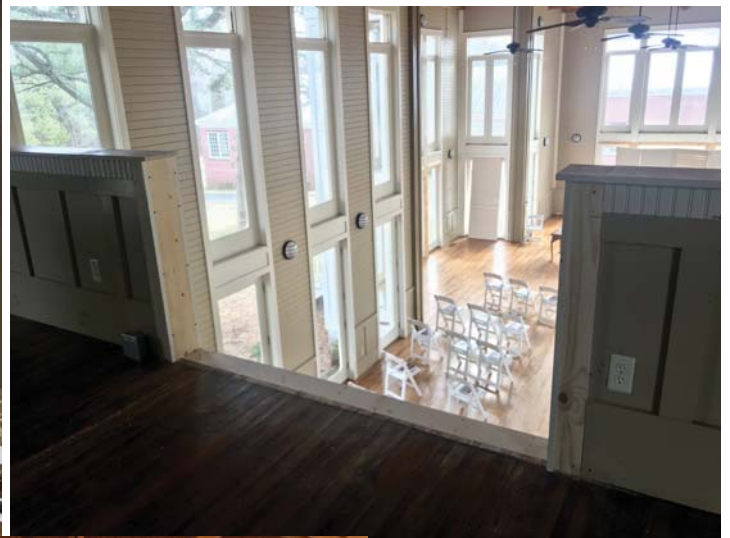




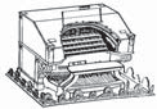
Before the organ was delivered I made a trip to Gorham's Bluff to inspect where the organ was to be installed. To say I was impressed with the community center "Meeting House" is a real understatement. Wonderful vaulted ceiling, all hard surfaces in a beautiful location. After much consultation Debbie and Daryl decided to use Moore and Son Movers to pick up the instrument and deliver it to Pisgah. Moore and Son have moved several instruments for the Chapter and our members. They are great folks and know what they are doing!! I also recommended they hire Allen Organ Studios to come install the instrument (with my help and consultation). Just a side note that we are fortunate to have Jeff Ayers, President of AOS and Alan Buchanan (tech extraordinaire) who have supported the Atlanta Chapter and its members for many years in our theatre organ ventures!!

At my initial meeting at the Meeting House and because of the HOA's requirements, it was decided to place the entire instrument in the balcony. At first look I was concerned about this decision, but now in retrospect it was a good one. The balcony is very large and is able to handle the placement of the console and speakers with no problem. It is also secure so the organ will be well protected.

Daryl and his carpenter cut out a 6' wide section of the balcony front all the way to the balcony floor, installed a decorative railing, and ran two 20 amp electrical circuits. The console is very visible from the audience floor and also sits on a 6" elevated movable platform.







Just a side note concerning Gorham's Bluff. It is a beautifully designed craftsman style neighborhood of only 35 or so homes. Daryl took me over to the "escarpment" where one can look out on the Tennessee River. What a view. Gorham's Bluff sits on a plateau above the river! Now, I felt like Johnny Weissmuller from the Tarzan movies. Does anyone remember the escarpment in the African jungle where Tarzan lived. It is hundreds of feet down to the bottom from the edge and quite frankly I felt my knees kind of shaking!!

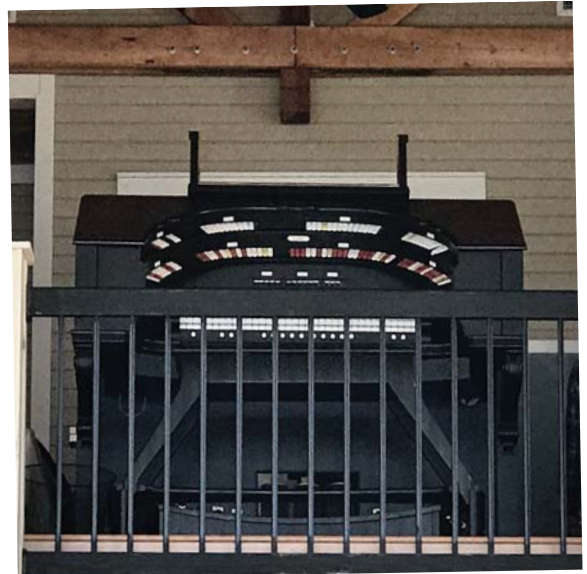
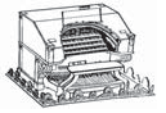


On February 17th I returned to Gorham's Bluff to help in the installation. Moore and Son had already placed the 8 HC18 Allen Speaker cabinets in the balcony before I arrived. These things are big and heavy and must weight 90 or so pounds each. And the bass cabinet is the older B40 which really gets those bass frequencies out!! It was my first time hearing this cabinet and I really liked it. Alan Buchanan is such a hard worker and so knowledgeable. He began immediately with my help determining which speakers went to which amplifiers. This instrument, unlike mine in St. Simons has those two extra channels, so it comes with an external amp rack. The Bresnicks had a very nice custom cabinet made for the amps. Alan also had to make some additional speaker cable on site because some of the cables that came with the organ were not long enough.

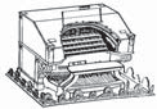


After everything was hooked up Alan and I determined which audio boards controlled each of the ranks. We then experimented with speaker placement and spent a couple of hours doing some preliminary rank balancing with me holding keys and Alan sitting in the back of the console making adjustments to the board controls. Interestingly this vintage instrument had not only gain, treble and bass adjustments but also mid range and because it has the extra boards there is more opportunity to scale individual ranks. The organ started to really come together and at this point sounds pretty darn good!!

I need to make one more trip and spend about a day on the organ voicing. With that done and the repair of the speakers this will truly be a spectacular sounding theatre organ in a beautiful acoustical setting.







### **You Might Be Interested!**

It is always interesting to find out about the wide range of talents and interests among our members. We have enjoyed the music of John McCall often over the years. Now we have the opportunity to enjoy his talents as historian and author. John has written three books with theatre organ as a focal point, and they are listed herein for those who might wish to enjoy John's work. There is much to be learned, and all presented with detail, charm and wit, just as we would expect from our friend John McCall. (All available on Amazon.com and most are in Kindle electronic versions formats also.)

Here is some information on the first of the three books with more to come in future newsletters.



#### ***The Paramount, The Palazzo, and The Passion***

The Atlanta Paramount Theatre, which opened in 1920, was perhaps the finest example of Palladian architecture ever adapted as a motion picture theatre. Originally conceived by Troup Howard and designed by architects Neel Reid and Philip Trammell Shurtze, the theatre was razed in 1960. However, its facade lives on in a gracious Palazzo-styled residence in Moultrie, GA. This is the story through written accounts and photographs of the theatre's unique journey and the vision of Robert Byrd Wright, Jr., owner and architect William Frank McCall, Jr. who brilliantly adapted hundred of pieces of limestone into one of the finest essays in America based on the Italian master, Andrea Palladio. Member John Tanner contributed numerous photographs and other memorabilia from his many years of research on Atlanta theatres.

A full chapter is given to the Paramount's organs: the original Robert Morton, and later a Wurlitzer 260-Special, Opus 1097, which has now been completely restored and is slated for installation in Milwaukee's Oriental Theatre.