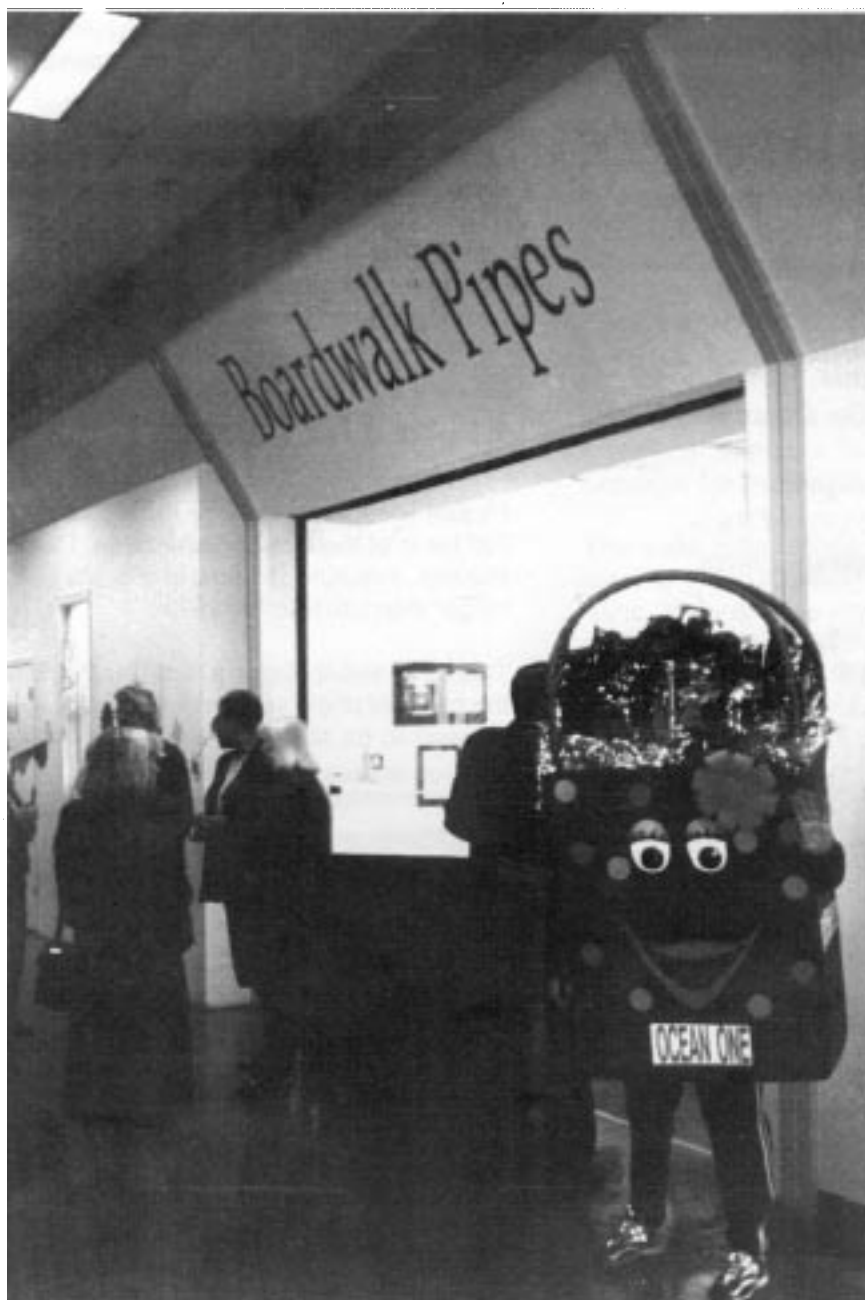


the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

Journal of the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc.

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Journal of the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc.

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The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) corporation founded in 1997 and dedicated to the use, preservation and restoration of the organs in the Atlantic City Boardwalk Convention Hall.

the GRAND OPHICLEIDE is published quarterly for its members by The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc.

Opinions expressed are those of individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Society.

From The Editor

Please accept my apology for the delay in publishing this Fall Issue of *the Grand Ophicleide*. Due to several circumstances, including the size of this issue, it has taken much longer than usual to complete.

This issue also includes a "first" for *the Grand Ophicleide* – the full color photo section in the center of this issue. We are pleased to be able to include the color photos, and hope that you will enjoy seeing them.

David Scribner

Cover Photo

The cover picture is the Mall entrance to the **BOARDWALK PIPES** exhibit at Ocean One Mall, taken at the opening of the exhibit (see story next page). The official Ocean One "Gift Bag" mascot even joined in the festivities.

Photo Credits

The photos in this issue were taken by Antoni Scott, Harry Bellangy, Tim Bovard, David Scribner and Stéphen Smith during the week of October 10, 1999.

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ACCHOS Exhibit Opens at Ocean One Mall

BOARDWALK PIPES is the headline banner above the entrance to a new museum-quality exhibit celebrating the organs of the ACCH. The display was officially opened at Ocean One Mall on Wednesday Oct 13th.

The exhibit space has been donated by the Ocean One Mall Management as a benefit to the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc. Ocean One Mall is located on the Boardwalk a couple of blocks from the Convention Hall, and attracts several million visitors every year.

The exhibit space is on the second floor of the mall in Space 203. A storefront, the space is around 14' wide and 24' deep. In the center of the space, a large Plexiglas case contains a dozen original sample pipes specially commissioned by Emerson Richards during the design of the organ. The specific pipes, which have a wonderful antique look and are pictured here and elsewhere in this newsletter, are as follows:

MUTED TRUMPET
VOX HUMANA
MAJOR OBOE
MILITARY BUGLE
BASSOON
"VIOL"
"PICCOLO"
GAMBA TUBA
JUBAFLOTE
SILVER FLUTE #1
SILVER FLUTE #2
DOPPEL SPITZFLUTE



The following credit is placed in the exhibit case:

"The ACCHOS wants to extend a sincere "Thank You" to Nichols & Simpson, Inc., Organbuilders of Little Rock, Arkansas and ACCHOS member Timothy M. Bovard of that firm, for the donation of time and materials to clean, prepare, and fabricate display racks for the 12 sample pipes seen here. These experimental pipes were originally commissioned by Emerson Richards during the construction of the Midmer-Losh organ.

These pipes came from a set of 19 sample pipes that have been donated to the ACCHOS by Stephen Adams, who also is graciously thanked for his kindness."

Tim Bovard did an outstanding job with the pipe display and it is a "must see" for anyone visiting Atlantic City.

The effect of the exhibit is quite dramatic, and nicely complements the "Welcome To Atlantic City" display which already occupies the mall space next door to **Boardwalk Pipes**.

The walls of the exhibit space are covered with an assortment of photographs and articles relating to the ACCH Organs. Many of these are enlargements of original Fred Hess and Son black-and-white photographs; others are contemporary color photos. Each item displayed is identified with an explanatory placard.



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Exhibit Opens Continued

These enlargements were created by Michael Hager of Museum Photographics in Rochester, New York, and are works of art in and of themselves. The fully enlarged detail from the original 8x10 nitrate negatives is amazing. It is well worth a visit just to see these extraordinary large images as pure photographic art.

The centerpieces on the left and right walls are 30x30 enlargements of Antoni Scott's excellent color photos taken in November, 1998 of the console in its kiosk and Jack Clotworthy seated at the console.

The back wall contains a display of the T-shirts, coffee mugs, ornaments, and other gift items prepared by Cre8iviTee, sales of which benefit the work of the ACCHOS.

In order to provide the sounds of the organ, a CD changer, amplifier, stereo speakers and sub-woofer were installed at the far end of the room. Music tracks are randomly shuffled during the day by the CD changer.

Printed leaflets are located in plastic holders throughout the exhibit that introduce the work of the ACCHOS and invite membership in the Society.

Overall, the exhibit is very striking and attractive. Lit with halogen floodlights on track lighting, the photos, pipes, and gift merchandise are all nicely highlighted. Since its opening on October 13, 1999, the exhibit has seen a steady stream of daily visitors.

Charles Swisher



Photo of the Board of Directors plus one taken following the town-hall meeting on October 13, 1999
From Left: Jack Clotworthy, Harry Bellangy, Stephen Smith, David Scribner, Charles Swisher and Tim Bovard

Report from the Board of Directors

October 13th was a very special day for the Society, the events reflecting a great deal of work by your Board of Directors and a number of very dedicated individuals. At 1 PM our permanent exhibit in the Ocean One Mall opened with a brief ceremony conducted by Mall Manager Julie Bader and Marketing Director Lisa Thompson, with responses by Stephen Smith and Charles Swisher. Ocean One Mall is providing the prime retail space for the exhibit at no cost to the Society. Redenia Gilliam-Mosee, Senior Vice President of the Atlantic City Hilton and Bally's Park Place Casino, then presented a check for \$10,000 from the Hilton/Bally's Charitable Contributions Committee to ACCHOS Treasurer Jack Clotworthy. This donation came in response to the Society's request for financial help in conducting an examination of the Midmer-Losh and preparation of a program plan and budget for restoration. Jack Bethards and Douglass Hunt, the consultants retained for the examination, were present after having been at work for nearly three days. Local TV and print media covered the opening.

That evening a small group of interested individuals gathered at The Historic Church of the Ascension to hear Stephen Smith speak about the Midmer-Losh organ and our hopes for its restoration. Dennis Cook, Registrar of the Atlantic City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists arranged and hosted the evening. W. Leon Pope, a staff writer from the *Press of Atlantic City* was present and published a thoughtful account of the discussion the following day.

Over lunch October 14th, local Kiwanians heard Stephen Smith create a marvelous historical perspective of Atlantic City "firsts" - not the least of which is providing a home for the world's largest pipe organ in Boardwalk Convention Hall. He made the case for restoration of the instrument citing its important cultural and entertainment role as Atlantic City implements plans to once more become a major family destination resort.

Though board members and volunteers involved in the busy week were working in several locations on individual projects, everyone came together at breakfast, lunch and dinner. This afforded plenty of opportunity for valuable exchanges of information and future planning direction. Bally's Park Place generously provided hotel accommodations and meals for the entire group for several days thus eliminating many logistic problems.

Jack Clotworthy

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Editorial in the *Press of Atlantic City*

The following editorial from the Press of Atlantic City is reproduced with permission.

News | Wednesday, October 20, 1999

A.C.'S PIPE ORGAN Hitting the right note

Among the quirky facts and anecdotes that make up Atlantic City history -- from diving horses to the first use of the term "airport" -- is the fact that Convention Hall houses the largest musical instrument in the entire world.

And it's not at Ripley's Believe It Or Not Museum, either. It's the pipe organ at the old Convention Hall.

Last week, the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, an international group, met to discuss ways to generate local interest in the organ to drum up money to restore it. A complete restoration is an expensive undertaking that could run into several million dollars.

The Casino Reinvestment Development Authority is protecting the organ -- and its more than 33,000 pipes housed in eight chambers above and around the hall's main auditorium -- during the \$76 million renovation of Convention Hall, according to CRDA Executive Director James Kennedy.

But CRDA isn't planning to finance the restoration. Currently, the organ is playable, but isn't up to its full musical quality. Much of it just doesn't work.

Let's hope the organ society hits the right chord with its restoration project. And the CRDA should keep an open mind about chiming in with some funding, if the society comes up just a little short.

The sound of that massive pipe organ could be just the fun, kitschy note needed to make sports and other events at Convention Hall sound uniquely Atlantic City. And it well could be an attraction in its own right -- something else to list in the tourism brochures for visitors to do and see outside the casino floor.

Let's put it this way: You won't hear sounds like that in Vegas.

ACCHOS Presented With Grant for Study Of Organ

At a Press Conference in Atlantic City on October 13, 1999, during the dedication of the new ACCHOS exhibit at Ocean One Mall, Redenia Gilliam-Mosee, Senior Vice-President of Bally's Park Place Casino Resort and the Atlantic City Hilton, presented a check for \$10,000 to ACCHOS Secretary, Jack Clotworthy. This grant from the Charitable Contributions Committee of Bally's Park Place Casino Resort and the Atlantic City Hilton will be used to undertake a professional analysis of the Midmer-Losh organ and preparation of a "management" report with cost estimates for the restoration of the organ.

Work on the study has begun headed by Jack Bethards, President of Schoenstein & Co. Organ Builders of San Francisco in collaboration with Douglass Hunt, Curator of Organs at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City. Three days of investigation led by Stephen Smith have provided the team with a great deal of fundamental information on the condition of the entire organ. For the first time in many years it was possible to access the Echo and Fanfare organs in the ceiling, now that the asbestos removal program has been completed.

See Photos in the Center Section of this issue.

ACCHOS Introduced at Atlantic City Art Center Meeting

On October 10, 1999 a celebration of National Arts & Humanities Month was held at the Atlantic City Art Center and Historical Museum on Garden Pier. During a special 2PM ceremony in the Museum Gallery, ACCHOS Board Members Jack Clotworthy, Stephen Smith, and Charles Swisher were introduced to an audience of many prominent members of the local arts community.

Stephen Smith made a few brief remarks and a great deal of warm applause was received. Following the presentation, a number of individuals spoke with the Board Members expressing their enthusiasm for the work being accomplished on the restoration of the Midmer-Losh organ. Local interest in the restoration project is unquestionable, and the expressions of support and excitement are good news for the ACCHOS.

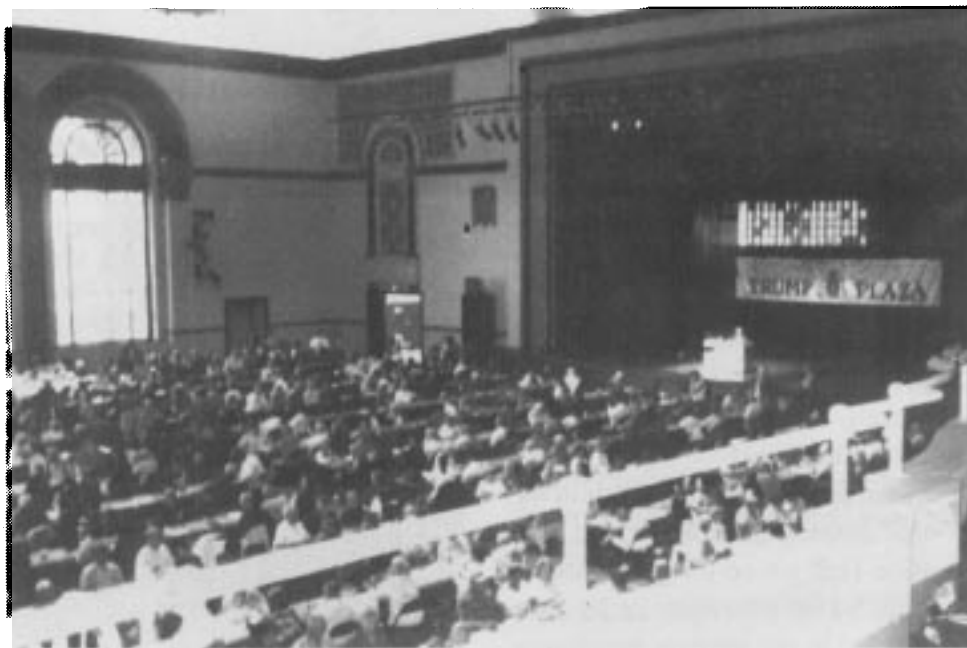
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An old, historic postcard that was donated to the Society showing the Main Hall's interior prior to the installation of the 7 manual console kiosk and also showing the original lighting in the ceiling. This lighting will hopefully be restored as part of the current renovations of the hall.

The caption on the postcard reads as follows:

"All of Atlantic City's population, 66,000, could be seated in this building at one time in the main auditorium. The longest home run Babe Ruth ever hit would stay inside the walls. Football is played on a full sized field indoors, and the building is indeed the Convention Capitol of the world."



Although the Main Hall is closed for construction, the Ballroom is used periodically for bingo games sponsored by Trump Plaza. This photo was taken from the Organ Gallery during the game that took place during our visit to the Convention Hall.

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Impressions of The “LITTLE” ACCH Organ...

As many reading this will undoubtedly know, the Adrian Phillips Ballroom of the Atlantic City Convention Hall contains its own pipe organ apart from the big Midmer-Losh – Opus 7073 of the W.W. Kimball Co., of Chicago. This instrument, completed in 1931 comprises 55 ranks of pipes across 4 manuals and pedal, and is designed to be a “hybrid” instrument – capable of performing both popular music, and the ‘organ repertoire’. Like its big brother in the Convention Hall Auditorium, it was designed by Senator Emerson Richards, and bears his nameplate as well. Amongst other notable features, the organ includes a “Soloist” paper-roll player, and the largest ‘horseshoe-type’ console ever constructed by Kimball. There is a full-length 32’ stop (plus two resultants) and a generous assortment of traps and percussions. There are ‘theatre’ voices in the instrument (Tibia Clausa, Kinura, Brass Trumpet, etc.), and ‘classic Diapason choruses’ (to mixtures, one of which has 7 ranks of pipes!). The famous Kimball string stops are here in several “flavors”, as are numerous lush flute stops of various dispositions. All in all, this is a complete and unusually versatile instrument located in a wonderful acoustical environment with a lovely view of the Atlantic Ocean through the windows across the room!

During the week starting October 9th, I was privileged to have been given the chance to be part of a group getting to know this Kimball Organ firsthand – inside out, and upside down (at times!). We examined every inch of the instrument from the blower room to the furthest reaches of both chambers – from the console and roll player to the relay room. I will attempt to report what we found below, but beware that I have mostly good news to report!!

To an organ technician, an old Kimball organ can be a dream come true. The Kimball Company built their instruments to such high standards of quality that it is usually a true pleasure to work on them. Craftsmanship, materials, and mechanical engineering of the instruments are superb. The Atlantic City Kimball is no exception to this rule. We arrived to find the console under its thick green velvet cover, probably unplayed for months. Upon uncovering it and switching it on, we found the organ to be quite playable, but with many obvious minor technical glitches. Odd dead notes here and there, a few obstinant stop tabs that just didn’t want to behave, an erratic key or pedal once in awhile. Some really out-of-tune treble octaves, and the requisite ripe reed note every so often. On the other hand, there were no catastrophic wind leaks, raging cyphers, or unexplained crashing noises from the chamber grilles. We all took the chance to play/play with the wide variety of sounds available from the organ, and spent several hours doing so. During this period, a

phenomenon slowly started which would continue throughout the week – the longer we actually used the organ, the more of the ‘glitches’ would resolve themselves!!

This, it would seem, is an instrument that **wants** to be played, and will reward the efforts by trying to perform to its best, despite the years of ‘lack of interest’. Fortunately, we had no shortage of personnel willing to sit down and ‘give it a go’ – all agreed that it is a most enjoyable experience to do so.

Before long, however, it was time to start to explore the chambers, and to again be reminded of the inner quality of a Kimball organ. Time has been kind to this instrument, and the chambers are in overall very good condition, and remarkably clean. Some chestwork in one chamber has suffered under a minor roof leak, and will require spot releathering. Also, some of the percussions and traps are in need of new leather. The winding system is intact and functional, albeit with the occasional leaky windline or reservoir gusset. Pipework is in excellent condition, in most cases only in need of a thorough tuning. All swell shade mechanisms have been releathered, and appear to operate perfectly (and very effectively!).

The relay room was next on the exploratory journey, and was found to be another monument to the level of craftsmanship of a Kimball Organ. The relay and electrical system of this instrument is, like the rest of the organ, thoroughly original and intact. Some spot releathering has obviously occurred through the years, and a bit more is required now. Other than that, and again, only minor maintenance seems necessary to restore this equipment to full functionality. Due to the fact that the relay room adjoins an office, it has accumulated a goodly collection of ‘stored material’ other than organ items, but this is a typical situation that presents no real hazard to the organ at this time.

The console of the Kimball is probably the one single part of the organ in need of the largest amount of restorative work, simply due to the fact that it is the single part having received the most overall usage over the almost 70 year life of the organ. Even here, however, the situation is not overly grim. Being the largest Kimball horseshoe console, its original pneumatic combination action contains literally thousands of magnets, valves, and switch contacts. Many of these are in need of cleaning, renewal, or adjustment. Keys and pedals are loose and in need of rebushing, and their electrical contacts are worn. The walnut cabinetry is showing the effects of the years, but responded well to a good dose of furniture oil and elbow grease. Overall, though, the console is currently in workable condition and is certainly an obvious candidate for a thorough and complete restoration to original condition.

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Impressions Continued

Located next to the console in the gallery is the device that proved to give the greatest happy surprise of the whole 'Kimball experience' – the "Soloist" Roll Player. This machine had been unused for a great long time (nobody really knows how many decades), and its windline from the console had been removed. The electrical cable was still there, however, and apparently still connected to the organ, for we were pleasantly surprised to find that the spoolbox lights came on when opening the lid to the cabinet (revealing a roll still threaded onto the mechanism!). Upon opening the access panels to the inside of the machine, we found all to appear complete and intact. A couple of hours and a length of flexhose later, the machine had its wind again, and it was time to answer the BIG question: "DOES IT STILL WORK???"

After a few brief 'test pulses' of newly-connected wind, it seemed as though the leathers of the machine were still sturdy enough to be functional, and the wind was turned on and left on. Happily, upon starting to experiment with the controls, the internal mechanisms could be seen and heard trying to again do their work, after so many years of inactivity. We rewound the roll that had been left in the spoolbox (Indian Love Call, played by Edward Benedict), and prepared to restart it. (We all felt that it would be appropriate to let the machine finish the music that it had been in process of playing when so rudely interrupted in years past.)

Now, with personnel stationed at the player cabinet, the console, and the relay room, it was finally time for the big "smoke test". The glass cover over the spoolbox was closed, and the roll started to run. As its perforations started to pass over the tracker bar, the sounds of magnets operating and mechanisms working were heard from the back of the player cabinet, and our relay room observer reported a great mass of electrical activity there. Unfortunately, however, there was still silence from the chambers. Someone at the console turned on a few stops, and we suddenly had MUSIC!!! There were many missing notes, and a few snafus in manipulating the controls, but we were ultimately successful in our quest to have the Soloist finish playing the Indian Love Call. Much happiness throughout the crew now, and big smiles all around.

In the many successive runs of the machine throughout the rest of the week, it (like the rest of the organ) seemed to start to steadily repair itself, as electrical contacts cleaned themselves and long-unused mechanisms began to loosen up. We were not successful in getting the Soloist to register its own stop combinations, but all feel that, had more time been available, we would certainly have been able to do so. This Soloist Roll Player, like the rest of the Kimball Organ, appears to **want** to be used and enjoyed. None of our crew

observed any aspect of the player (or the rest of the organ, for that matter) that would appear catastrophic in nature.

One final minor triumph bears reporting here: During the course of the week spent at Convention Hall, a previously unknown cache of player rolls for the Soloist was discovered, adding by a third to the available repertoire of music rolls. These rolls represent a priceless chunk of organ music history, with such artists represented as Chandler Goldthwaite, Charles Courboin, Edward Eigenschenk, Allen W. Bogen, and numerous others. Amongst the composers represented are Bach, Schubert, Elgar, Chopin, Debussy, Wagner, Sullivan, Swinnen, Kreisler, Sousa, and many others. The musical selections include an assortment of popular music, transcriptions, and classic organ works. These performances cry out to be preserved for future generations to enjoy, as they have been enjoyed by past generations.

In conclusion, I will offer the one of my own personal feelings about the Kimball Organ that recurred more often than any other throughout the week we all spent with the instrument: This outstanding organ is ripe for a complete and thorough restoration to its original splendor; additionally, this restoration would not by any means be an overly difficult task to accomplish. Members and Friends of ACCHOS should not neglect the Ballroom Kimball Organ in future plans to preserve BOTH magnificent pipe organs housed at the Convention Hall in Atlantic City.

Timothy M. Bovard, pipe organ technician
Nichols and Simpson Inc., Organbuilders
Little Rock, AR
November 1999



Tim Bovard beneath the Kimball "Soloist" roll player cabinet replacing a wind line that has been missing for years.

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Secretary/Treasurer Jack Clotworthy accepts the \$10,000 Grant from Redenia Gilliam-Mosee. The funds will be used to prepare an "Action Plan" for the restoration of the Midmer-Losh Organ.



Stephen Smith, Redenia Gilliam-Mosee and Ocean One Mall Manager Julie Bader cutting the ribbon to officially open the "BOARDWALK PIPES" exhibit.

Tim Bovard, Board Member David Scribner, and Douglass Hunt at the opening of "BOARDWALK PIPES".



Vice-President Charles Swisher introduces President Stephen Smith to the audience. In Charles' hand is a "draft copy" of Stephen's forthcoming book documenting the history of the Convention Hall Organs.



One of our Patrons, Jean-Louis Coignet, being introduced to the audience at the Exhibit opening. To his left is Board Member Harry Bellangy.

Another view of the Sample Pipes in their display case at the Exhibit. Visible in the background are some of the large photographs lining the walls of the Exhibit Space.



Following the Opening of BOARDWALK PIPES, the Board of Directors were pleased to offer Redenia a brief tour of the Convention Hall and a short demonstration of the Ballroom Kimball Organ.

At the right, several members of the group view the 7-Manual Console of the Midmer-Losh Organ in the Main Hall.

To the left, Redenia is pictured at the Console of the Kimball. This was not the first time for her to be seated here, as she had played this instrument for her high school graduation ceremonies several years ago.



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Far left: Douglass Hunt and Jack Bethards pose at the 7-manual console of the Midmer-Losh Organ. To the right: Jack and Doug stand next to low CCCC of the 32' Metal Diapason in the Left Stage Chamber.



Jack expressing his amazement at the size and construction of the Pedal Left Diaphone.



Doug and Jack examine treble pipes of the 100" Grand Ophicleide. In the foreground are other Great reeds.



Jack and Doug inside the "keyer" relay in the Right Stage Chamber. This is a smaller, pressurized room, within the actual "relay room".



Stephen, Jack, and Doug inspect the method of wiring the windchest of the Pedal Right 64' Diaphone.



Amongst the Great organ's pipes, peering through the shades into swell boxes of the two Great-Solo divisions.



Jack and Doug inspected ALL areas of the Midmer-Losh Organ -- here, they are pictured in one of the sub-stage rooms housing the remains of the combination action equipment.

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A "Formal" portrait of the Kimball Console

*The lower right chest in the Left Chamber of the Kimball.
From the right: Kinura, English Horn, Contra Fagotto with the metal Bourdon barely seen behind on the left.*



*The lower-level chests in the Right Chamber of the Kimball.
In the foreground: From the right: Major Octave, Mixture VII and Major Fifteenth.
In the background : From the right: French Horn, Saxophone, Orchestral Oboe and Brass Trumpet.*

Harry Bellangy in front of the Diaphone in the Right Chamber of the Kimball. He is holding the "lifter" for the Diaphone resonators. Inscribed on it, in script from the factory, is "Atlantic City #1 Diaphone"



Below, part of the Kimball Traps in the Left Chamber.

The spoolbox of the Kimball "Soloist" roll player.



David Scribner and Harry Bellangy at the "Soloist" roll player cabinet with Tim Bovard (out of view) working the registration from the console.

Tim Bovard takes a moment to enjoy playing the Kimball Organ



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Two views of the interior of the Ballroom, taken from its balcony. On the left, the Console can be seen in its gallery. The Roll-Player cabinet sits to its left. On the right, the stage with organ grilles high on either side. The windows seen on the left side of this photo look out over the Boardwalk to the Atlantic Ocean.



The tuning keyboard for the Right Stage Chamber of the Midmer-Losh.



The "portable" 5 manual console of the Midmer-Losh. It is currently on display in the Lobby of the Convention Hall.



Our faithful photographer, Antoni Scott, caught in front of a camera lens. The photo was taken in the Left Chamber of the Kimball.

Dennis McGurk, former Curator, in the process of dismantling the original relay for the Left Stage Chamber of the Midmer-Losh. This equipment was removed from the organ due to the ongoing reconstruction project in the Main Hall, and has been safely stored for future reference/relocation.



Tim Bovard atop the windchest of the 32' Fanfare Trombone. This rank is installed horizontally amongst the girders of the Hall ceiling, outside of the actual Fanfare Chamber. Tim reports that, without the ceiling in place below, it is a VERY long way down to the floor of the Hall!



To give a typical example of the pipe scaling found in the Midmer-Losh Organ, Tim Bovard holds a pipe of Voice 64. Believe it or not, it isn't a "Tibia" -- it is the Great-Solo "Flute Nazard 2 2/3"! The pipe is low D#.

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Three Days in Eight Chambers

As other articles in this edition of *the Grand Ophicleide* illustrate, this year's visit to Atlantic City involved a fairly hectic, even punishing, schedule. This meant that my continuing research into the Midmer-Losh organ had to be fitted in between the various planned meetings, etc. So, whenever possible, I snatched an hour or so between events and, if I was *really* lucky, I'd have a whole morning or afternoon in the Hall. More than one late night was spent there. However, later in the week, when everyone else had gone home, I had the place to myself for a couple of days.

Nevertheless, I did manage to spend quite a bit of time in the Hall during the weekend before the schedule became too busy, but I was disappointed to find that the trusses which contain the ladders to the Fanfare and Echo chambers were still in use as part of the asbestos removal program. Frustratingly, out of all the trusses in the Main Auditorium, only the ones which we needed to use were inaccessible! The ceiling had been removed, however, so it was possible to view both Upper chambers from "down below". The windlines were visible, as were the regulators underneath the chambers. Also on show, to the right of the Fanfare chamber, were the larger pipes of the department's Trombone rank which is installed horizontally on top of a mass of steel girders. The largest pipe is 32-foot long and almost 20 inches square in scale, but from the main floor – and even from the balcony – the collection of pipes looked like so many matchsticks. These views of the Fanfare and Echo organs are unique, of course, because it has not been possible to obtain them since the Hall was completed. By this time next year, the new ceiling will probably be in place and the only visible part of the Upper chambers will be the grilles – as the regulators, the windlines, and the 32-foot Trombone will all be hidden, once again, above the ceiling.

Having spent a couple of days reacquainting myself with the organ and checking round to see what, if anything, had changed since last year, I felt ready for the main event. That main event was conducting Jack Bethards and Douglass Hunt around the instrument so that they could report on its condition and make recommendations regarding its future. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday had been scheduled for their survey.

Over breakfast on Monday morning, we agreed that a *whistle-stop* tour of each chamber would be best to start with, so that Jack and Doug could (a) see everything, albeit briefly, and (b) start to familiarize themselves with the layout. On arrival at the hall that day, it was apparent that the Fanfare and Echo chambers remained inaccessible. However, there was still more than enough to keep us occupied for the time being.

We started in the organ shop, located behind the Right Stage chamber. The tuning keyboard for the stops on the front right side drew our attention first. It is connected to the instrument by a very long cable which allows it to be taken out of the shop and onto the gallery where it can be positioned between the Stage and Forward chambers. There is a similar keyboard for the front Left side but it too was in the organ shop, together with the disassembled relay room for the Left side's departments (Pedal Left, Choir, Swell, Swell-Choir, and String I). This was in the process of being carefully removed by former organ curator Dennis McGurk who was labeling each and every part and connection. ACCHOS registered its protest about the removal of what we called "the nerve center" for this portion of the instrument but there was nothing that could be done. The Hall's re-fit plans had been drawn-up and agreed to at the very highest levels, and even General Manager Robert McClintock couldn't get them changed. The problem is that the relay room was located in an area beneath the seats at the front of the left balcony. It was accessed through a hole in the wall adjacent to the CCCC pipe of the Pedal Left's Diapason (this hole is visible in the Fred Hess & Son photographs of this stop). The space was to be used for another purpose in the redesigned building. In fact, if I understand the proposals correctly, the present balcony will go altogether, to be replaced by another of stadium-plan design. Although it may be possible to relocate the relay room on the main floor of the Left Stage chamber, in front of the 32-foot metal, some of the smaller pipes in this area will need to be moved first.

After a good look round the organ shop at the various bits and pieces it contained, we moved into the lower level of the Right Stage chamber, taking-in the Pedal Right's basses including the 64-foot stop. Then, it was up the stairs (yes, "stairs", not a mere ladder!) and into the Great, Solo, and Great-Solo departments. The Right Stage chamber is the best kept of the eight and everything in it seems to sparkle. Fortunately, the layout of rooms and chambers on the right side of the Hall is not a mirror image of the left, otherwise the relays for the front Right departments would also have been in the process of being removed. However, they are accommodated more-or-less in the chamber itself, so we took a look at them too.

I'm sure that Jack and Doug won't mind me saying that they were astonished by much of what they saw. They considered the workmanship to be of a very high standard and they described many of the instrument's mechanisms as ingeniously simple. The thickness of the pipe metal and the extensive use of hardwood in the construction of the chests and pipes were just a couple of the many things that left these seasoned organ builders bug-eyed and open-mouthed.

the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

Three Days Continued

Although Jack and Doug had anticipated seeing large scale pipes, their expressions indicated that what they saw exceeded even their wildest expectations! Neither had seen anything like it before. Anywhere.

So much for the "whistle-stop tour"; all of that took the best part of three hours! It was followed by a welcome break for lunch. I say "welcome break" because, believe it or not, it is possible to have *too much* of the Convention Hall organ. It is a very tiring instrument. There's so much that catches the eye and begs questions; there's a lot of information to absorb; and climbing around the chambers is like an obstacle course in places. The result is that one feels quite wiped-out after a while, and I know that I'm not alone in this experience. After a few days – bearing in mind that I'd been there since Saturday – even the *thought* of walking from one side of the building to the other is tiring.

After lunch we moved over to the Left Stage chamber. This contains fewer pipes than the opposite side, but the layout of swell boxes and chests is rather more cramped. This is, in part, due to the fact that the regulators are also in the chamber, whereas on the Right they're located in the organ shop, i.e. behind the chamber. The Left Stage chamber hasn't played for about 20 years and it is noticeably dirtier than the Right. Nevertheless, almost all of the pipes are upright and in good condition and one gets the impression – rightly or wrongly – that after a thorough clean-up, most of it would work. However, when we saw the low-pressure blower for this section of the instrument there was considerable rust on the horizontal girders on which it stands. This rust may be on the surface only but until the integrity, or not, of the metal is established, it would be a mistake to switch on this device as the vibration may cause it to drop straight to the floor!

By about 9pm, we had toured all of the five blower rooms and the six accessible pipe chambers. Relay rooms and the sub-stage areas which house the main console's combination action had been visited too. Dozens of photographs were taken by everyone and many pages of notes had been made. I felt shattered, and I know Jack and Doug did too, so we headed back to the hotel.

Tuesday and Wednesday were set aside for more detailed examination, and we spent many hours revisiting the entire instrument as well as paying detailed attention to particular items which Jack and Doug wanted to see again. On a number of occasions we "borrowed" Dennis McGurk (who, technically, was working for the building's architectural contractor) to remove the underside of a chest or to take the cover off the boot of a larger pipe.

Quite a considerable amount of time was taken-up tracing windlines. This involved following them from room to room and area to area, in as far as it was possible to do so. In the Auditorium itself, our task was aided to some extent by the fact that the majority of windlines are of galvanized steel, whereas pipes for the air-exchange system, etc. were mainly black. Also, the fact that the ceiling had been removed was of benefit. In particular, we wanted to establish which windlines came from the Stage chambers and went along to the Gallery ones. Although it is known that the 100-inch Gallery I reeds are supplied by a line which travels along the right side of the hall, there also appeared to be a similar line on the left side. After much deliberation, we concluded that this came from the high pressure blower for the Left Stage chamber and fed the four 50-inch reeds in the Fanfare, although, at present, we cannot be 100 percent sure of this. Rather curiously, the windlines from the Fanfare and Echo blowers seem to rise from their basement rooms all the way up to the roof and then drop back down to the regulators. Perhaps this "long way round" was provided in order to give the air some space in which to cool before reaching the chests?

On occasions, we went our separate ways to investigate whatever was on our minds. Then, later, we'd meet up to compare notes, etc. I might add that for some of the time we were joined by ACCHOS patron Jean-Louis Coignet whose almost constant exclamations of "C'est incredible" not only provided us with some amusement but also put into words what we were all thinking.

It wasn't until late on Wednesday that we finally got into the Upper chambers. To the best of my knowledge, when I set foot in the Echo organ that evening, I was the first person to do so in at least seven years. Jack was first over the threshold into the Fanfare organ. Full reports about the condition of the Fanfare and Echo organs will appear in future editions of *the Grand Ophicleide* but, on the whole, neither was in too bad a condition.

What most impressed me about the Echo organ was the amount of free space. I'm sure there would be enough room to accommodate the 19 stops that Emerson Richards deleted from this department's original scheme but I wouldn't seriously advocate their inclusion now. Among the discarded voices were five free-reed stops (16-8-8-8-4) with no resonators, a unified Lieblich Gedeckt which included a 32-foot octave, and a pair of two-rank string celestes. The other deleted stops were mainly flutes. There *are* damaged pipes in the Echo and there is evidence of roof leaks but, on the whole, the damage was not as extensive as I thought it might be.

the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

Three Days Continued

Damage in the chambers can be categorized as either (a) accidental, (b) deliberate, or (c) due to natural processes, i.e. the effects of water or age. Sadly, the Fanfare organ has had its fair share of all three. Water damage has certainly taken its toll here, with some pipes and chests having been rotted away almost completely. Some pipes have been stepped on, presumably by accident, whilst other damage seems to be wanton vandalism. Even so, thankfully, the majority of pipes are in a reasonable condition, although a number have stoppers or tuning collars which have slipped down.

The real gem here is the String III organ. It nestles at the rear center of the chamber and is a beautiful sight. It stands very proud and, somehow, still looks very new. Many of the spotted metal and tin pipes almost gleam, but there is evidence of water damage to the chest. Despite the 15-inch pressure on which this department speaks, I'm not convinced that the gamut of overtones sounded by some of its stops, with their extraordinarily thin scales, would be audible at the main console over 325 feet way.

Pipes from the 16-foot octave of the Fanfare's Major Flute stop are installed diagonally against the side walls at each end of the chamber and a hole in the west end wall gives access to the horizontal Trombone pipes. There is virtually no free space in the Left Upper chamber, as it has almost double the number of pipes found in the Right (3,581 as opposed to 1,896) and, generally, they're of much larger scale.

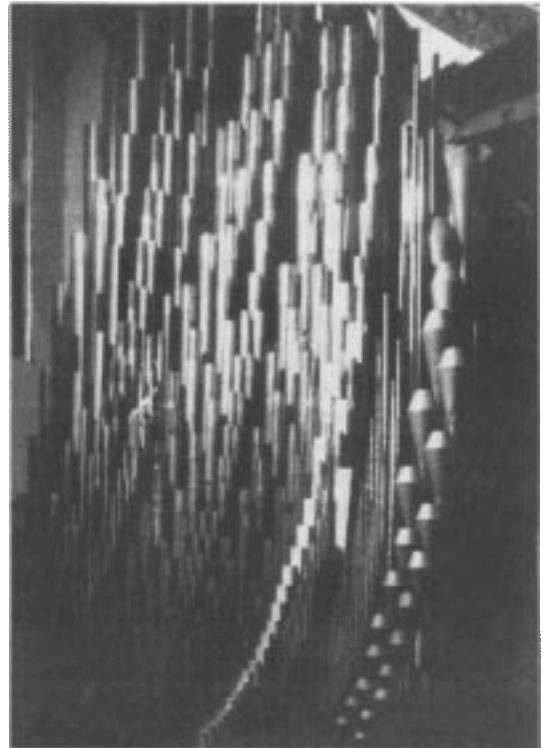
It was a both a pleasure and a privilege for me to tour the organ with Jack and Doug, and I very much enjoyed showing them round. I was able to answer some of their questions about the instrument and they were able to answer some of mine. It was a learning event for all of us. Jack and Doug have already sent a preliminary report – containing urgent and/or important recommendations – to Robert McClintock. Their main report will be sent to ACCHOS in the near future.

Before closing, I should like to thank Bob McClintock and his staff for allowing us, once again, such "unprecedented access" (as it was called on a radio show on which I was interviewed) to the organs. To be able to walk in and be given "the keys to the kingdom" (to use a phrase coined by Jack Clotworthy) and to have free reign on the place day and night is nothing short of amazing. I'll wager there aren't many "organ locations" in the world where the bosses – whether they be managers, priests, or whatever – are so accommodating. All of this goes to prove that Atlantic City is *undoubtedly* interested in its heritage and, of course, in the remarkable pipe organs in its Boardwalk Convention Hall.

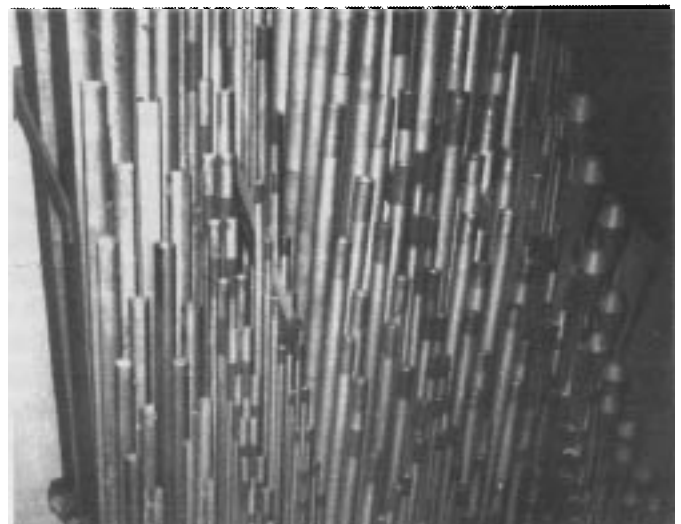
Stephen D. Smith

A Very Special Thank You...

to Frederick Morrison and the staff of Eastern Organ Pipes of Hagerstown, Maryland for their "emergency" repairs to the Military Bugle sample pipe. Despite our best efforts, the pipe was damaged in shipment to Atlantic City, and the damage was not discovered until the pipes were unpacked while setting up the exhibit (48 hours before the opening of the display). Thanks to Federal Express and the quick work of Eastern Organ Pipes, the Bugle was sent to Maryland, repaired, and returned to Atlantic City in time for the opening. Thank you, Rick, for your help!



Then and Now – Two views of the String III organ. Above, as it appears in the Fred Hess and Son photo series in the early 1930's, and below, as it appears today. English Horn pipes are seen on the far right side of both photos.



the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

A Good Time Was Had By All!

The Board of Directors and their guests had a very busy and a very productive week during the October visit to the Convention Hall in Atlantic City. Since each report in this issue relates to a specific area, I will attempt to give a general overview of the entire week to tie everything together — along with some “Thank Yous” to various people for their help in making it a good week for all of us.

Since only one of our group (Harry Bellangy) is local to the area, most of us spent Friday, October 8th traveling to Atlantic City from our respective locations. Stephen Smith flew in from London and Charles Swisher from his (then) home in Oregon. Jack Clotworthy drove up from Maryland and Tim Bovard and I drove in from Canton, OH where we had attended the annual convention of the American Institute of Organbuilders. (where, I may add, we were able to spread the word about ACCHOS, and gained interest from various organbuilders along with several new memberships) I know that in my case I was really wondering how all of our planning and preparation for this trip would really work out. There were numerous unknowns that we would face once we got together in Atlantic City.

I think the biggest unknown in my mind as we drove across the state of Pennsylvania was getting access to everything that we needed in our quest to work on the Kimball. As I think you can see from Tim’s article, we were successful! The cooperation of the Hall Staff was outstanding — we were treated like “honored guests”!

We owe a very special “Thank You” to Robert McClintock, the General Manager of the Atlantic City Convention Halls, and Nick Klein, the Director of Construction for the Boardwalk Convention Hall, for smoothing our way with unlimited access. I hope that they will thank the rest of their staffs for us. The Security Guards and Hall Maintenance Personnel were (to put it simply) “wonderful”!! That not only goes for our access to the Kimball but also for the access to the Midmer-Losh. Tim and I went back to the Ballroom following dinner on Tuesday night to do some tuning on the Kimball, and just as we were ready to leave (1AM or so), the night security guard came along to check the Ballroom. When he discovered us there, his first words were “If I would have known you were coming, I would have put on a pot of coffee for you”! All in all, I got a feeling of appreciation from the various staff members for what we are doing to preserve and restore these instruments. The Hall staff is VERY PROUD of their pipe organs, and they know that they are valuable treasures.

When we arrived at the Hall, we found the access to the ceiling chambers of the big organ was still blocked due to the final stages of the asbestos removal project in the ceiling. Mr. McClintock was able to arrange to have an enormous suspended scaffolding moved into place such that by Wednesday we had access to those chambers, so that Jack Bethards and Douglass Hunt could inspect them for their report to the Board. For this help, we must thank not only Mr. McClintock and Mr. Klein, but the entire Hall Construction Crew.

On Saturday morning all of us, after a visit to the Hall itself to see what had happened in the past year, went our separate ways to our appointed tasks. Jack and Charles went off to Ocean One Mall to get started with setting up the exhibit. Stephen went off into the chambers of the Midmer-Losh to continue his research for his book, and to get ready for the arrival of Jack Bethards and Douglass Hunt on Monday. Tim, Harry and I went off to tackle the Kimball. This pattern followed for the next several days.

Some of the most enjoyable times of each day were our breakfasts and dinners together — especially the dinners, where we could each relax and share with the others our “interesting” finds and successes of that day. In some of these cases, we figured out some answers to puzzling questions that had arisen during the day.

As our time in Atlantic City progressed, we were joined by Antoni Scott — who in his quest to document the week on film, probably drove all of us a little nuts with his constant requests for poses and photographs. But his work was wonderful, and some of it graces this issue of *the Grand Ophicleide* (more will be seen in future issues). We were also joined again this year by our Patron, Jean-Louis Coignet, who seemed to be everywhere all the time!

During the course of the week there were other opportunities for PR with the local community besides the Grand Opening of the Boardwalk Pipes Exhibit. On Sunday afternoon, Stephen, Charles, and Jack got dressed up and attended an opening at the Museum Gallery, where they were introduced to the local arts community. One morning Stephen got up extra early (after a late night at the Hall the previous evening), to answer questions on a local radio call-in show. We all appeared on Wednesday at a “town-hall” meeting arranged by Dennis Cook, the organist of the Historic Church of the Ascension (the church that Emerson Richards attended during his lifetime). And on Thursday, Stephen presented a talk to the local Kiwanis Club.

the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

And a Good Time Continued

Additional "Thanks" need to go to Dennis Cook and Larry Fuerman of Atlantic City for all of their help. The two of them acted as local contacts who were able to provide us with constant information and direction when we were in search of various things needed for our projects (everything from 'hardware stores' to 'good greasy burgers!'). Larry graciously allowed his office to be our "receiving station" for all the materials we had shipped to Atlantic City for our visit. Dennis has also volunteered to keep a continuing watch over the Exhibit to make sure that the Society's brochures are kept in stock for visitors.

I think that Wednesday was a highlight for all of us with the opening of the Boardwalk Pipes Exhibit and the presentation of the grant from Bally's Park Place and the Atlantic City Hilton. But that was only part of the highlights for the day. Following the exhibit opening, we were able to take Redenia Gilliam-Mosee over to the Hall and provide a private "mini-concert" for her on the Kimball — both live, and with rolls on the roll player. It turns out that Redenia has a special place in her heart for the organs in the Convention Hall — especially the Kimball, since she played it for her high school graduation, which was held in the Ballroom. At the time of that performance, there were no photos taken of her at the console, so we were glad to have Antoni take her photograph seated at the keys. Even after the busy afternoon with us, Redenia also made an appearance at the "town-hall" meeting that night. She really went the extra mile for us, and for that we graciously thank her.

Besides the "Thank You's" to Redenia and Bally's Park Place for the grant, we also owe Bally's more "Thanks" for housing us at their casino hotel. The accommodations and meals they provided could only be described as "sumptuous". Also, it made our lives much easier to just be able to walk a couple of blocks down the Boardwalk to the Convention Hall and Ocean One.

I don't know how the other members of the Board felt as they winged their way back to their respective homes, but I know that by Thursday, as Tim and I headed back down Interstate 95 (after a brief stop to hear the 11:15 AM recital on the Wanamaker organ in Philadelphia), I felt really wonderful. A good time **WAS** had by all of us.

David Scribner

IT'S THAT TIME — (to ask questions)!!

Do you want to continue receiving *the Grand Ophicleide*????

Have you renewed your ACCHOS membership???

We really don't expect you to answer the second question. It's up to the Society to ask for your continued support each year near your membership anniversary date. We are now in the midst of this subscription renewal process, and are having mixed results -- sometimes we're delighted, and other times dismayed. A special surprise comes when members send renewal checks before we have asked for them, or when members voluntarily raise the level of their support. We're disappointed, however, when months go by after notice is mailed and we hear nothing.

Membership income is the Society's life-blood. Not only does it pay the ongoing cost of daily operations (quite minimal because the principal staff are volunteers), but also the printing and mailing of *the Grand Ophicleide*. The newsletter is a major expenditure, but a necessary one if we are to keep you informed of our progress towards the goal of restoring the Midmer-Losh and the Kimball to their original grandeur.

Memberships also pay for preparation of grant applications and fund-raising materials and activities. The \$10,000 donation from Bally's Park Place Casino Resort and the Atlantic City Hilton is an excellent example of the leveraging power of your membership dollar. The "Boardwalk Pipes" Exhibit at Ocean One Mall is a fine example of the fund-raising power of your membership dollar.

If your membership is due for renewal and we haven't heard from you, you'll find an envelope tucked into this issue. Within is a card and self-addressed envelope for your use in helping to "brighten our day". Please use it, and please consider advancing your support level a category or two if you are able. We have much work to do to preserve these two magnificent pipe organs, and we appreciate your confidence and your support of our endeavor. We hope to hear from you soon.

the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

Cre8iviTee

ACCHO Gift Items Available Online!

Cre8iviTee and ACCHOS Member Brain Tricoli have produced a line of gift items to benefit the restoration of the Convention Hall Organs. Among the assortment of items available are colorful T shirts and sweatshirts, tote bags, mouse pads, and a series of coffee mugs -- all bearing images of the ACCH Organ. Cre8iviTee has pledged to donate 20 percent of the profits from sales of these items directly to ACCHOS.

Cre8iviTee maintains an online store, which can be found at: www.cre8ivitee.com/worldslargestpipeorgan.htm.

The merchandise is also available at **Picture This...** at the Ocean One Mall in Atlantic City, where a display of the items is featured in the new Boardwalk Pipes Exhibit, pictured at left.

ACCHOS is working with Cre8iviTee to produce a continuing series of limited-edition coffee mugs which will feature a number of the historic Fred Hess and Son Photographs of the Midmer Losh Organ. Information about these is also available at the Cre8iviTee Website.



New Booklet Available

A new 60-page booklet is available entitled:

THE ATLANTIC CITY CONVENTION HALL ORGAN.

It contains four essays by Stephen D. Smith as follows:

- An introduction to THE WORLD'S LARGEST PIPE ORGAN
- THE WORLD'S LARGEST PIPE ORGAN
- INDEX OF STOPS ON THE MAIN AUDITORIUM ORGAN IN THE CONVENTION HALL, ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY, U.S.A.
- THE FIVE MANUAL CONSOLE OF THE MAIN AUDITORIUM IN THE CONVENTION HALL, ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY, U.S.A.

This booklet replaces all the previously issued separate pamphlets which are no longer available. It provides a comprehensive overview of the Midmer-Losh organ with complete stop lists, illustrations, and photographs. The booklet sells for \$15 postpaid in the U.S. or \$17 overseas.

ORDER FORM

Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc.
1009 Bay Ridge Avenue, PMB 108, Annapolis, Maryland 21403

I would like to order _____ copies of "*THE AUDITORIUM ORGAN*" at the price of \$15.00 each. \$ _____

SHIPPING AND HANDLING - \$2.50 shipping in the U.S. or \$4 overseas regular/
\$7.50 global priority per CD. \$ _____

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All funds received from the sale of these items are used in furtherance of **ACCHOS** goals.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc.
1009 Bay Ridge Avenue, PMB 108, Annapolis, Maryland 21403

Please copy and pass this form along to your friends.

Statement of Purpose

The Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc. was formed in 1997 and exists to:
Create a greater public awareness of and interest in the Convention Hall's organs, especially in terms of their future potential.

Promote public awareness of both instruments through newsletters, magazine articles, and recordings; both audio and video.

Arrange periodic organ recitals, and organize regular meetings of ACCHOS members.

Encourage ongoing maintenance of the instruments, and seek funding for crucial restoration at local, state, federal, and international levels.

Benefits include: ***the Grand Opicleide*** - published 4 times a year containing the latest news and developments concerning both the great Auditorium Midmer-Losh and the Kimball in the Ballroom, and the chance to help support the efforts of the Society in fulfilling the Statement of Purpose printed above.

Yearly ACCHOS membership dues are as follows:

Regular - \$20

Seniors & Students \$15

Contributor - \$40

Donor - \$75

Supporter - \$100

Benefactor - \$250

Sponsor - \$500

LIFE MEMBERSHIP - \$1,000

Enclosed is \$ _____ for membership in the ACCHOS. Dated _____
Only checks or money orders in U.S. funds can be processed at this time

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The ACCHOS is a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in the State of Maryland.