

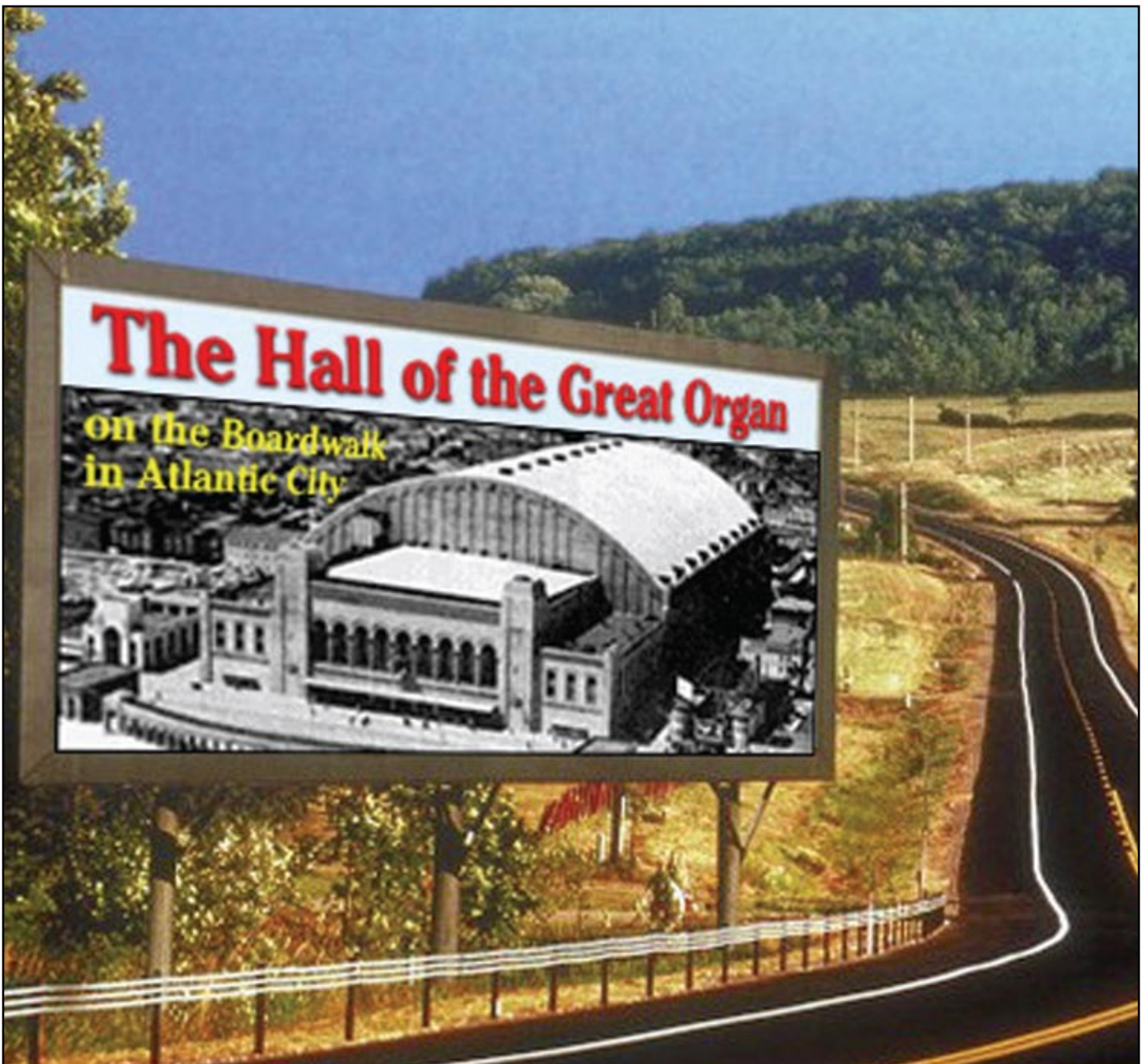
ATLANTIC CITY CONVENTION HALL ORGAN SOCIETY INC.
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the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

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

Issue 24

Summer 2004



the **GRAND OPHICLEIDE**

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

1009 Bay Ridge Avenue, PMB 108, Annapolis, Maryland 21403
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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 Atlan-
tic City Convention Hall Organ Society,
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Design & Layout
Dunlap Design Studio, Inc.
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On The Cover – Ronald Gehrman of Metaglyph in Portsmouth, New Hampshire created this image in 2000. Ron is the designer and Webmaster of the ACCHOS website at acchos.org and he did this as a creative favor for ACCHOS. He designed a similar image that appeared on the cover of Issue 13 – Fall 2001.

Special Thanks to Allen "Boo" Pergament, Atlantic City Historian, for the Stanley and Warner Theater photos in this issue plus other helpful historical information, references and details provided.

A Milestone Has Been Reached!

Dear Members,

A milestone has been reached, as you will read in the following news article. This success has, in large part, been due to your interest and support of the work of ACCHOS. We are

going to re-dedicate our ongoing efforts now that more than a glimmer of light can be seen at the end of the tunnel. The next meeting of the Trustees is set for September 30, 2004.

The Press

OF ATLANTIC CITY

May 20, 2004

In A-Chord: Famous Atlantic City Pipe Organ To Be Saved

DONALD WITTKOWSKI Staff Writer

ATLANTIC CITY — Efforts are under way to restore the largest and loudest musical instrument ever built.

A colossal restoration plan for the world's largest organ is no longer a pipe dream.

Key parts of the famous Midmer-Losh pipe organ are in "disastrous" shape, but it is not too late to save the instrument, preservationists said Wednesday as they kicked off a restoration effort that will cost millions of dollars.

The organ, recognized by the Guinness Book of Records as the largest and loudest musical instrument ever built, has been decaying inside Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall for decades and has not been played for more than five years.

A newly formed nonprofit group called the Historic Organ Restoration Committee Inc. estimates it will cost at least \$10 million to refurbish the Midmer-Losh and a smaller historic Kimball pipe organ also housed in Boardwalk Hall.

Committee members held their first meeting Wednesday to begin the planning for an arduous restoration campaign that will take an estimated five to 15 years to complete. This is considered the most serious effort to save the organ after years of debate.

"This is a labor of love, because this is one of the greatest organs in the world," said L. Curt Mangel III, an organ expert and vice president of the restoration committee.

The New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, the state agency that owns Boardwalk Hall and oversees the organ, has placed

\$1.1 million in an escrow fund to begin restoration. The authority has accepted responsibility for damage to the Midmer-Losh that occurred during the \$90 million renovation of Boardwalk Hall three years ago.

Mangel argued that the sports authority should not be blamed for the organ's deterioration. He said the instrument had been decaying for many years, long before the authority took charge of its care.

"There are sections of the organ that are disastrous, but that's the way it has been for a long time because of deferred maintenance.

Blame should not be placed on their head," Mangel said.

Mangel, curator of the famed Wanamaker organ in Philadelphia, explained that the Midmer-Losh includes special pipes, chest work and blowing mechanisms not found in any other instrument in the world.

"It has an awful lot of very unique and brilliant features that make it one of a kind," he said. "That's what makes it so extraordinary."

Midmer-Losh Organ Co. of Merrick, N.Y., spent nearly four years building the instrument at a cost of \$347,200, a huge sum during the Depression. The instrument was completed in 1932, three years after the grand opening of Boardwalk Hall, then known as Atlantic City Convention Hall.

Damage to the organ was caused by the building's old leaky roof, since repaired. The instrument's labyrinth-like network of chambers and 33,112 pipes also suffered damage during Boardwalk Hall's renovation project.

The Historic Organ Restoration Committee hopes to secure public grant money to supplement its private fund-raising efforts. It has already made application for a \$1 million grant from Save America's Treasures, a public-private partnership between the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Joanne Cocchiola, a New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority attorney, said the restoration committee will meet again in about two months to discuss recommendations for refurbishing the organ. Later, a formal restoration plan will be submitted to the National Park Service, which must give its approval because Boardwalk Hall is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"Everyone is very, very enthusiastic," said Cocchiola, who also serves as chairwoman of the restoration committee. "I'm sure everyone is going to work very hard to get this done."

Jeffrey S. Vasser, the executive director of the Atlantic City Convention & Visitors Authority, said the organizational structure is now in place to begin the fund-raising efforts needed to save the organ.

"Grants are very high on our list," said Vasser, also a member of the restoration committee. "I think there are a lot of opportunities for grants, but we also want to tap into the huge group of people who support the organ."

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So, you know all about the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ?

Test your knowledge with this 45-question, multiple-answer quiz.

Your Quizmaster: Stephen D. Smith

- How many Ophicleide ranks are there?
a 1 b 2 c 3 d 4
- How many ranks speak on 50-inch wind pressure?
a 20 b 15 c 10 d 5
- How many pipes are there in the Great organ?
a 4,456 b 4,465 c 5,644 d 6,544
- What is the instrument's opus number?
a 0500 b 0555 c 5500 d 5550
- In what month of 1929 did work officially start on building the instrument?
a April b May c June d July
- In what month was the inaugural recital given?
a April b May c June d July
- Whose name appears on the builder's plate, on the consoles, as the firm's president?
a George Losh b Seibert Losh
c Otto Strack d Harry Van Wart
- What was the middle name of the instrument's designer, Emerson Richards?
a Lawrence b Lee c Leigh d Lewis
- How many cubic feet of wind do the blowers reportedly produce each minute?
a 3,000 b 3,300 c 3,600 d 3,900
- How many string stops of two-ranks are there?
a 23 b 25 c 27 d 29
- How many ranks have pipes that speak at 32-foot pitch?
a 8 b 9 c 10 d 11
- What is the instrument's second-lowest lowest wind pressure?
a 3 inches b 4 inches
c 5 inches d 6 inches
- What is the instrument's most commonly employed wind pressure?
a 10 inches b 15 inches
c 20 inches d 25 inches
- Which of the String organs has the greatest number of pipes?
a String I b String II c String III
- In terms of number of pipes, what is the smallest department?
a Unencl. Choir b Gallery II
c Gallery IV d String III
- How many pipe chambers are there?
a 2 b 4 c 6 d 8
- How many stop-keys are there on the five-manual console?
a 637 b 673 c 678 d 687
- How many swell pedal selectives are there on the main console?
a 15 b 20 c 120 d 150
- The compass of the Choir and Great manuals is how many notes?
a 73 b 83 c 85 d 88



Re. question #8: This picture shows Emerson Richards' tomb in the Atlantic City Cemetery at Pleasantville, N.J. What was his middle name?

20. What wind pressure is employed for the majority of the Echo organ's stops?
 a 10 inches b 15 inches
 c 20 inches d 25 inches
21. What wind pressure is employed for just three of the Echo organ's stops?
 a 10 inches b 15 inches
 c 20 inches d 25 inches
22. What was the price of the original tender by Midmer-Losh?
 a \$200,274 b \$274,200
 c \$247,200 d \$200,247
23. How many Clarinet stops are there?
 a 5 b 7 c 9 d 11
24. In the original scheme, the Gallery II organ was to consist of?
 a Reeds b Diapasons
 c Flutes d Woodwind
25. What time did the working day at the Auditorium start for Midmer-Losh staff?
 a 6 a.m. b 7 a.m. c 8 a.m. d 9 a.m.
26. The Gamba Tuba stops are to be found on which department?
 a Grand Choir b Grand Great
 c Solo d Fanfare
27. The Swell organ's Silver Flute has pipes made of?
 a Stopped metal b Silver
 c Spotted metal d Tin
28. The Fanfare Organ's Stentor Flute is blown by what wind pressure?
 a 15 inches b 25 inches
 c 35 inches d 50 inches
29. The floor of the Upper chambers are how many feet above the hall's main floor?
 a 90 b 100 c 110 d 120
30. What was the instrument's first playing department?
 a String III b Brass Chorus
 c Gallery III d Unenclosed Choir
31. Who devised the 60-degree hoods for some of the reed pipes?
 a George Losh b Seibert Losh
 c Reuben Midmer d Emerson Richards

32. Which of these materials was not used for swell shades?
 a Aluminum b Iron c Wood d Concrete
33. The mixture with the greatest number of ranks is?
 a Grand Cornet b Grand Chorus
 c Stentor Mixture d Stentor Sesquialtera
34. The Choir organ has how many Tromba Ranks?
 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5
35. How many ranks are there in the Great organ?
 a 33 b 36 c 63 d 66
36. Is there a stop-key engraved "Salicional"?
 a Yes b No
37. How many flute celestes are there?
 a 3 b 5 c 7 d 9
38. The quietest of the Swell organ's horn ranks is called?
 a Flufel Horn b Flugel Horn
 c Glufel Horn d Glugel Horn
39. The Swell-Choir organ has how many reed ranks?
 a 3 b 4 c 5 d 6



Re. question #39: Here are some of the Swell-Choir's flue ranks being installed, but how many reed ranks does the department have?

Continues on page 9



WARNER
Theatre

Pipe Organs of Atlantic City

Atlantic City was truly a remarkable haven of entertainment pipe organs in its heyday. Its population in the late 20s was about 70,000. (It is 40,500 these days.) On a per capita basis, it would seem that Atlantic City had more pipe organs for a city of its size than any other place in America.

Here are the examples:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Bijou Theater | Kimball 2/ (1915) |
| 2. Capitol Theater | Wurlitzer H 3M (1923) |
| 3. Central Theater | Wurlitzer B (1924) |
| 4. City Square Theater | Wurlitzer 1 SP (1917) |
| 5. Colonial Theater | Kimball 2/10 (1915) |
| 6. Cort Theater (aka Savoy & Wood) | Wurlitzer 3 (1917) |
| 7. Criterion Theater | Wurlitzer F SP (1925) |
| 8. Earle Theater | Kimball 3/13 (1926) |
| 9. Liberty Theater | Moller 3/16 (1924) |
| 10. Palace Theater | Wurlitzer DX (1925) |
| 11. Park Theater | Moller 2/11 (1920) |
| 12. Royal No. 1 (Aldine) Theater | Moller 3/ (1920) |
| 13. Royal No. 2 | Moller 2/4 (1928) |
| 14. Savoy Theater | Wurlitzer SCH20 (1925) |
| 15. Stanley (Warner)(Roxy) Theater | Kimball 3/13 (1925) |
| 16. Warner Theater (aka Warren) | Wurlitzer SP 3M (1929) |
| 17. Virginia Theater | Austin 2/13 Kimball 3/13 (1924) |
| 18. Steel Pier Music Hall | Midmer-Losh 3/ (1930) |
| 19. Steel Pier Casino | Midmer-Losh 2/8 (1928) |
| 20. Elk's Lodge | Midmer-Losh 3/39 (1925) |
| 21. AC Convention Hall | Ballroom Kimball (1929) |
| 22. AC Convention Hall | Main Auditorium Midmer-Losh (1929-1932) |
| 23. Atlantic City High School | Midmer-Losh 4/73 (1923) |

For years on the Heinz Pier in the 30s, organist-singer Lois Miller performed nightly for thousands with her open-air concerts and sing-alongs on a Hammond Organ. She was also the resident organist at Boardwalk Hall, playing both the Midmer-Losh and Kimball organs there. The infamous Hurricane of 1944 severely damaged Heinz pier and it was torn down in 1945. There is speculation that Lois Miller's Hammond organ could be found buried in the mud beneath the old Heinz Pier. Of all the organ events in Atlantic City over the years, her outdoor concerts are the most fondly remembered by Atlantic City visitors in those days.

The ACHS organ was known as The Atlantic City Municipal Organ and there was an 'official' Municipal

Organist at the time – Arthur Scott Brook.

Jean Weiner was the Steel Pier organist. Lois Miller was Boardwalk Hall organist following the Hurricane of 1944. Barbara Fesmire succeeded Lois Miller when she retired.

(In addition to the 23 pipe organs listed above, there were over 30 Churches and Synagogues in town in the late 20s with perhaps up to a dozen churches having pipe organs, bringing the total number of pipe organs up into the thirties.)

On the next page is an anecdotal story about the fate of the Warner Theatre **WURLITZER** ...

Original façade of the Warner Theatre sans marquee. This is all that remains of the building. It was retained historically by Bally's Atlantic City .

Continues on page 8

The true story of “El Bombarde”

The thrilling sound of this mighty **WURLITZER** was heard for the first time by over 3,000 people in the Warner Theater at Atlantic City, New Jersey, sometime in 1929. For many years this mogul of the silent movies delighted the patrons of the Warner, first as the accompaniment for silent movies, and later, with the introduction of talkies, for sing-a-longs. (Remember the bouncing ball? However, with declining patronage during the depression, the theater owners were forced to cut expenses. Thus, this organ, as well as most others across the U.S., fell as silent as the movies they once accompanied..

During 1961 the management of the Hotel El Panama, several of whom were theater organ buffs, learned of the existence of the Warner organ, now resting under a quarter-century of dust. They had long dreamed of being able to install such an organ in their own hotel lounge. Here was an instrument that was surely worthy of all their aspirations, one of the two largest three-manual **WURLITZER**s ever built! The purchase was quickly consummated. To facilitate the refurbishment and removal to Panama of this silver voice of the silent film era, The Hotel El Panama enlisted the aid of several technical people, including Ted Campbell, Jack Weiss, and Leroy Lewis. Leroy at that time was the regular organist on the **WURLITZER** in the Surf City Hotel, and so was able to provide considerable technical expertise.

Transport to Panama was via a DC-4 owned by one of the crew. An idea of the mammoth size of this instrument can be had by considering that if the entire organ, not including the console, were put into one room, the room would have to be 70 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 20 feet high. When the plane

carrying the pipework arrived in Panama, the custom officials, who had never seen a pipe organ, decided that the pipes were rockets and rocket launchers, and they impounded the plane and its contents until the problem was straightened out. When the console arrived by ship, it was discovered that some enterprising seaman had removed the main cable, which contained approximately 1800 wires and many hundreds of pounds of copper.

The rebuilding of the organ wasn't much of a problem, but the installation was. The existing lounge floor had to be jack-hammered out to get the additional height that the pipes required. A new wall had to be erected, a new foundation poured, and a new ceiling hung, before the organ could be installed. On top of all this, the organ had to be disassembled after its first installation in the hotel, and re-installed. Finally, around July 1962, **WURLITZER** Shop No. 1009 spoke again before an awed and delighted crowd. During the past ten years, this brilliant instrument under its new name “El Bombarde” has entertained and inspired over 2,000 people a week from all around the world.

This is from the liner notes of Pipes Amid the Palms, Jon Fisher, organist. The author of the liner notes is uncredited on the album.

—Stan Lowkis

[The **WURLITZER** opus list shows this organ at the Panama Hilton in 1964, with Jose Riba in 1975, and at the Continental Hotel in 1979. —Ed.]



The console of the Moller from the Liberty Theatre after it had been removed and pressed into service for controlling the ACCH organ in its very early days. It is likely that only the Brass Chorus and the String II organ were controlled from it. Thereafter, version one of the five five-manual console took over.



Photo of the Stanley Theatre on the Boardwalk circa 1955.



Re. question #43: These pipes are all from stops on 100-inch wind, but how many of the instrument's ranks speak on this unique pressure?

40. Is the Solo organ's Tuba Imperial the only 100-inch stop that is not extended?
a Yes b No
41. How many string ranks are there in the String III organ?
a 10 b 12 c 14 d 16
42. How many extended ranks are there in the instrument?
a 66 b 69 c 96 d 99
43. How many ranks speak on 100-inch wind pressure?
a 1 b 2 c 3 d 4
44. How many ranks have pipes that are physically 32-feet long?
a 8 b 9 c 10 d 11
45. In what year was the instrument officially finished?
a 1931 b 1932 c 1933 d 1934

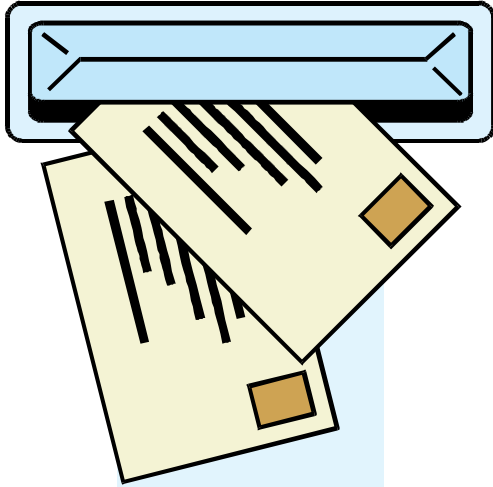
And finally. Did you guess which stop was missing from the picture on page 7 of the last issue of *the Grand Ophicleide*? It was the Master Tremulant (which was added later). This is a gray stop-key situated, on its own, on the left side of the sixth row down in the photograph. The answers to this quiz are below.

Answers: 1-b, 2-c, 3-a, 4-d, 5-d, 6-b, 7-c, 8-d, 9-c, 10-d, 11-c, 12-b, 13-b, 14-b, 15-c, 16-d, 17-b, 18-c, 19-c, 20-b, 21-d, 22-c, 23-a, 24-b, 25-c, 26-d, 27-c, 28-c, 29-a, 30-b, 31-a, 32-d, 33-a, 34-a, 35-c, 36-b, 37-b, 38-b, 39-a, 40-a, 41-d, 42-c, 43-d, 44-b, 45-b.



Atantic City High School — located at the junction of Albany and Atlantic Avenues — was designed by John T. Rowland, Jr., and built at a cost of over \$2,000,000. In its heyday, it boasted nationally competitive swimming and basketball teams. The organ here was also designed by Emerson Richards and built by Midmer-Losh. Although the scheme was more orchestral in concept than the Convention Hall organ, it was, in many ways, a precursor for the later and larger instrument.

we get mail



CONGRATULATIONS Gentlemen! I honestly never thought I would live to see the day with the Mighty Midmer-Losh would speak again, but it appears I may have been insufficiently optimistic!

Cheers!
Charlie Lester

What can I say except
HOORAY!!
Keep it up and look for my donation.

Bill Hubert

Dear Stephen,

Your Piporg-L post inspires me to write with congratulations and good wishes for these new developments despite having read about it already in the G.O. My sincere thanks for your continued efforts towards the organs, as well as thanks to Charles and Jack for their dedication.

I do so look forward to hearing the Kimball again, and to hearing the big organ (live) for the first time. My memories of that week in AC with y'all are still so very vivid, and cherished -- again I thank you all for them. Needless to say, please don't hesitate to call on me if I may ever again be of service to ACCHOS!

By the way, whatever has happened with the Ocean One exhibit?

Fondly,
Tim Bovard
Little Rock

Hi ACCHOS,

I'd like to tell you that I think the new look of the GO is just beautiful. The color is just great. I got a big kick out of the Senator Richards "Interview" also.

I specially liked the part about the 100" reed shallots. First Evens says that he offered to make new shallots (in the book, and most likely true) but, in true political fashion, the Senator says that HE asked Evans to do them, but Evens just never got around to it. Passing the buck, as usual....hahaha!

I do have some interesting information concerning the Pileata Magna. It seems that everyone believes that this refers to a gigantic woodpecker of some sort. This is not true. While it is true that there is a woodpecker named the "Pileated Woodpecker, the word "Pileated" has nothing to do with woodpeckers, specifically, or in general. The following definitions should clear this up.

pi-le-at-ed *adj.*

1. *Botany* Having a pileus.
2. Having a crest covering the pileum. Used of a bird.

pi-le-us *n. pl. pi-le-i*

1. *Botany* The umbrella-like fruiting structure forming the top of a stalked fleshy fungus, such as a mushroom; the cap.

2. A brimless round skullcap worn by ancient Romans

pi-le-um *n. pl. pi-le-a*

The top of a bird's head, extending from the base of the bill to the nape

As you can see, the pileum itself is a certain part of a bird's head. Therefore we could easily have a "Pileated Hummingbird" "Pileated Swan," or even the "Pileated Eagle" (instead of "Bald"). Perhaps the word "Pileata" in the case of the organ stop has something to do with the form of the pipes themselves. Another possible reason for the use of this particular word is that the Pileated Woodpecker itself might have an extremely loud and penetrating voice.

However, the word "pileata" simply means that part of any bird's head from the bill to the nape. I do hope that this helps to clear things up about this enigmatically-named stop.

Most Truly Yours,

*Paul Havenstein II aka Paul The Crazy Organist
Lisbon, Maine*

Dear Mr. Swisher,

I would be most honored to have you print my comments for the GO.

I did some further research on this issue. I actually listened to the call of the Pileated Woodpecker, and it is not all that loud. The other possibility: Since a "Pileus" is a type of felt hat that covers the entire head, it could be that the P. Magna is indeed the loudest Flue stop in the Fanfare Division, being intended to cover or top, all the other flue stops. It is completely possible that a stop on lower wind pressure is louder than one that is on a higher pressure. It's simply a matter of the toe opening and the size of the opening between the lower lip and the languid. In this case the name Pileata Magna could mean "Grand Cap"...to the flue stops.

*Most Truly Yours,
Paul Havenstein II*

Dear Mr. Swisher,

As "THE GREAT BOOK ITSELF" states, Henry Van Wart designed the Pileata Magna, along with the Gamba Tuba and Celeste. I would rather imagine that he was the one who might have named this stop. As this is a stopped flute, and "pileus" is a cap, or in this case a "stopper" Pileata Magna could also mean "Great Stopped" [Flute]. I guess that we will never know for sure, however it is sure fun to speculate.

Most Truly Yours,

Paul Havenstein II aka Paul The Crazy Organist

Feel free to use "Paul The Crazy Organist". Everyone (who is anyone) knows me by this up here in Maine, and I would get a big kick out of it.

What a noble undertaking. I have never played the organ but have always loved organ music. Although I played accordion for several years, I have fallen heir to my father's 25-year-old Wurlitzer home theater horseshoe. I love it even though it is terribly obsolete by "modern" standards"

I cannot believe the authorities showed such callousness in regard to the Midmer-Losh organ. Do they not realize what a treasure it is?

Thanks from just a guy on the outskirts of Birmingham, who appreciates nonetheless what you do. You are kindred spirit to my friend and neighbor Cecil Whitmire, who has done what you're doing, on behalf of Birmingham's Alabama Theater Wurlitzer. They've been quite successful in preserving the Wurlitzer, even to restoration and prospering in a manner I wish for ACCHOS.

God bless.

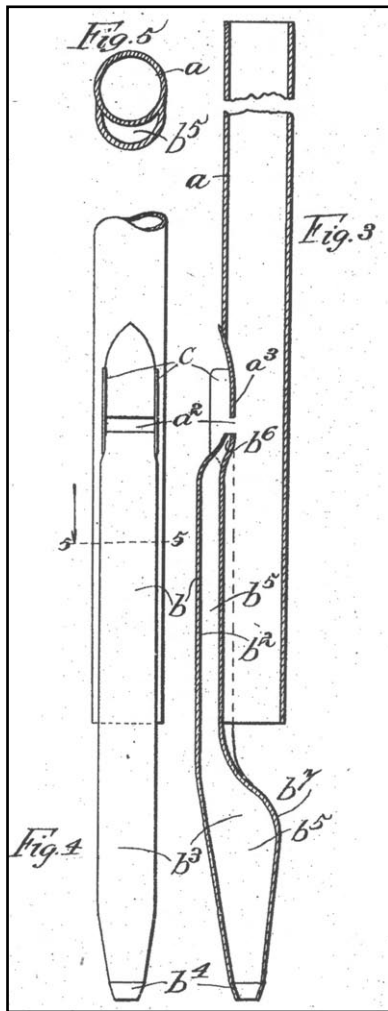
Bob Cleveland

This curious looking metal flue pipe ...

... was designed and patented by Arthur Scott Brook. He also devised wooden flue pipes and reed pipes of similar design. It is not clear if any such pipes were included in an organ, although it's

certain that there are none in the Main Auditorium instrument.

The design dates from 1909, some five years after Brook presided over the instrument designed by Audsley for the 1904 World's Fair. This instrument — with its 10,000 pipes — went on to form the core of the gigantic Wanamaker organ in Philadelphia. In later years, Brook seemed to suggest that an organ of 8,000 pipes was the ideal size for "any organist ever born with nature's equipment of two hands and two feet"!



Membership

Yearly ACCHOS membership dues are:

- Regular \$20 • Contributor \$40 • Donor \$75
- Supporter \$100 • Benefactor \$250 • Sponsor \$500
- Life Membership \$1,000

Overseas Regular membership is \$30 to defray postage costs. Please make checks payable in your currency to ACCHOS and mail to: Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc., 1009 Bay Ridge Avenue, PMB 108, Annapolis, Maryland 21403
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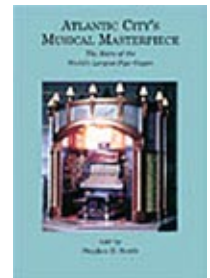
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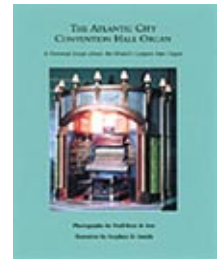
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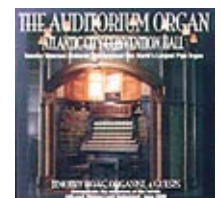
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