

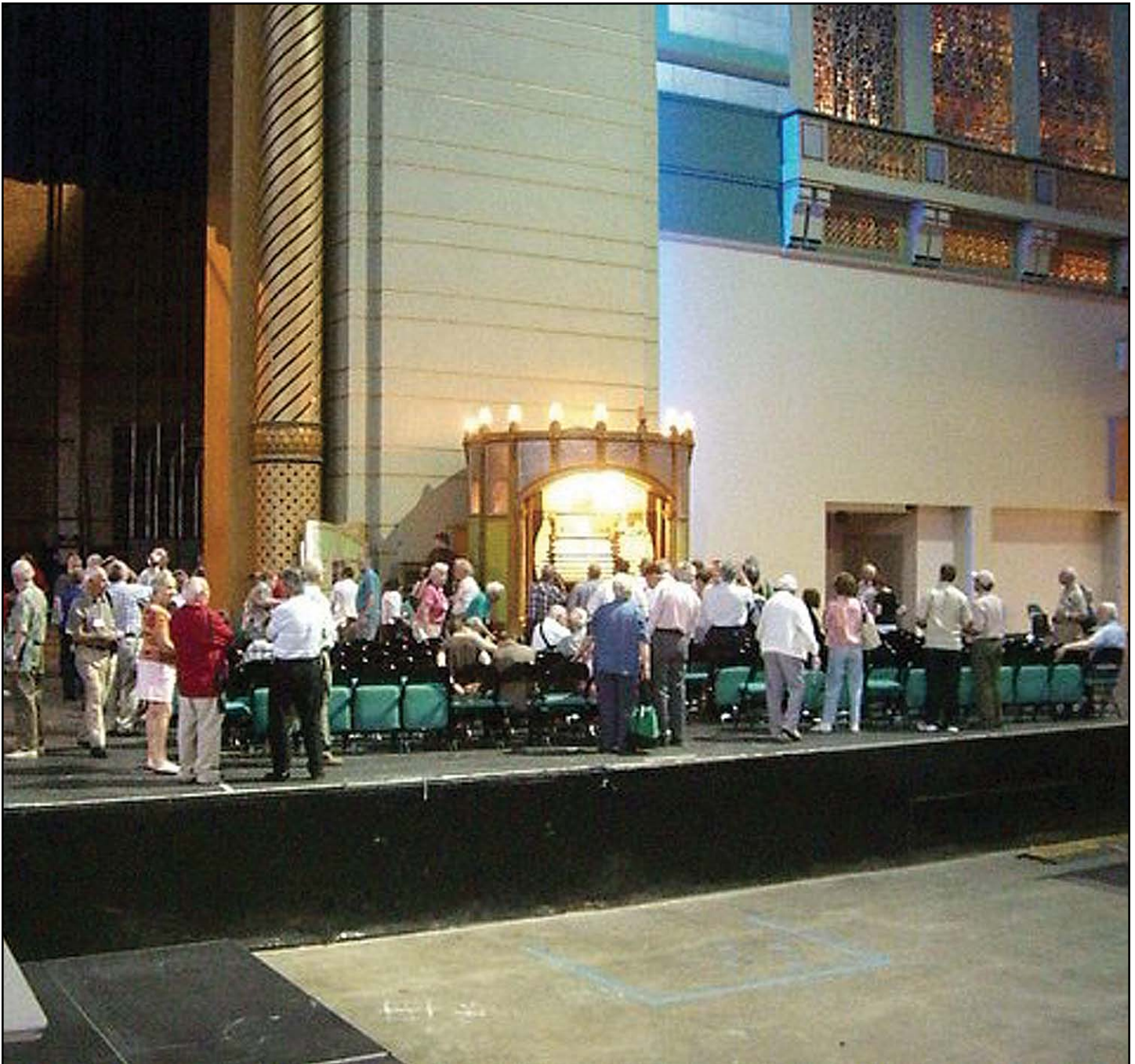
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1009 BAY RIDGE AVENUE, PHIB 108, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21403, U.S.A.
Website: www.acchos.org
e-mail: info@acchos.org

the GRAND OPHICLEIDE

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

Issue 37

Fall, 2007



the **GRAND OPHICLEIDE**

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

1009 Bay Ridge Avenue, PMB 108, Annapolis, Maryland 21403
www.acchos.org • info@acchos.org

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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.

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MEMBERSHIP – Yearly ACCHOS membership dues are:

Basic \$28 • Basic Overseas \$38 • Regular \$48 • Contributor \$75 • Sponsor \$100
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On The Cover — Members of the American Theatre Organ Society get a first hand look at the Midmer-Losh organ in Boardwalk Hall on July 1, 2007 as a "Pre-Glow" for the 2007 ATOS Grand Organ Tour which took place from Sunday to Friday, July 1-6, 2007, headquartered in New York City. The full story starts on page 4. *Photo courtesy of Jamie Snell.*

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Curator's Report

Good News!

Curator Carl Loeser reports that he has successfully re-started the Right Stage chamber of the Midmer-Losh organ in the main auditorium. This includes the Great and Solo divisions, as well as much of the Pedal division. Apart from the anticipated ciphers and dead notes here and there, all is well so far. Cleaning of the key contacts in the console as well as contacts in the relay room should eliminate many of the dead notes. Similarly, cleaning the magnets and replacing the armatures should correct most of the ciphers. In his own words on July 7: "Thought you might like to know that I fired up the Right Stage Chamber today. There were only a handful of ciphers right off the bat, and a few more occurred while the organ was running. Mostly it is suffering from dirty contacts and magnets I believe, and in DESPERATE need of a tuning!!!! Even with all the dead notes, this part of the organ makes quite a grand sound. The building managers can hear it in their offices with the doors closed, even

though they are at the opposite end of the building."

And on August 20, ACCHOS Board Member, Harry Bellangy reported: "And, here's the exciting part, we turned the organ on. I expected the huge ciphers that we encountered when we last turned it on. There was only one pipe ciphering this time.

Due to the construction activity in the organ chambers during the building renovation, the pipes have been knocked way out of tune. Once it is tuned, the organ should sing out with much greater power and clarity, complimented by the reduced reverberation in the room following the major building renovation from 1999-2002.

The 100" compressor could not be started due to a fault in the Westinghouse Controller. New controllers were installed circa 1990 when the new AC blower motors were installed. A local electrical contractor will be engaged to help rectify this problem.

Save America's Treasures Official Project

The National Trust For Historic Preservation's SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES Project has designated the Midmer-Losh organ as an *Official Project*, and the official logo can now be used. As an Official Save America's Treasures Project, certain benefits are afforded, including association with this highly successful national program.



Official Project designation also can increase public awareness of and attract national attention to the preservation, restoration and conservation efforts of nonprofit organization and federal, state and local agencies.



SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES
NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**Atlantic City Convention Hall
Midmer-Losh Pipe Organ**
Atlantic City, New Jersey

has been designated as an Official Project of Save America's Treasures

Robbie Greene McCarthy
Director

April 18, 2007
Date

Committee to Save America's Treasures
Mrs. Laura Bush, Honorary Chair
Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Founding Chair
Co-Chairs Richard Moe and Susan Eisenhower

Docent Tours

A plan is being developed to begin periodic docent tours of the organs now that a Curator has been appointed. The planned tours would take 2 hours and include the Kimball organ chambers and console, the Right and Left Stage chambers, the Right Stage blower room and the 7-manual console in its kiosk on stage left. Information will be available at info@acchos.org using the "TOURS" link.

Photo courtesy of Jamie Snell



A Milestone Event At Boardwalk Hall

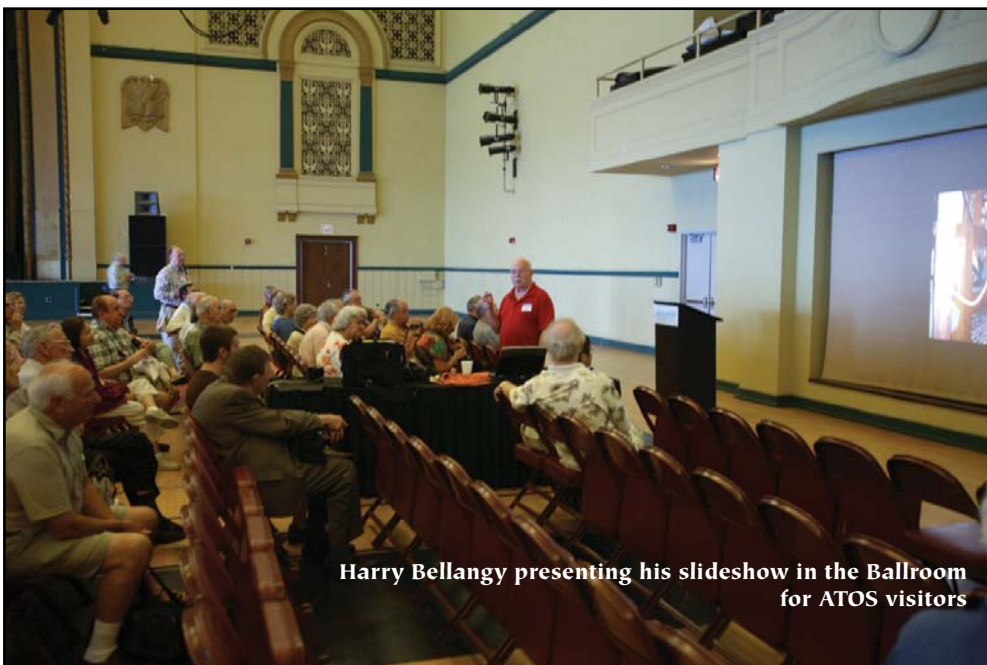
Through the kindness and cooperation of the Boardwalk Hall Management, over 100 members of the American Theatre Organ Society were treated to a rare visit to Boardwalk Hall to see both the Kimball organ in the Ballroom

and get a closer look at the Midmer-Losh organ in the main auditorium.

Two busloads of Organ Tour-Goers were driven down from Tour headquarters in New York City early Sunday morning on July 17, 2007, arriving just after 10 AM. The busses were able to pull into the West Hall up to the front of the building and visitors entered directly into Boardwalk Hall.

The first stop was in the lobby to see and photograph the 5-manual portable console for the Midmer-Losh organ that is on display there.

Next, they took the escalator up to the floor above and entered the Adrian Phillips Ballroom, home of the 55-rank Kimball pipe organ. The organ is scheduled and funded for a restoration and could not be heard; however, the visitors took in the grandeur and beauty of the Ballroom, could view the Atlantic ocean through the enormous windows, and got a glimpse of the console as it was in process of being uncovered from a



Harry Bellangy presenting his slideshow in the Ballroom for ATOS visitors



View of the Right Stage chamber



Massive stage area

protective plywood housing.

ACCHOS Board Member, Harry Belangy presented a large screen video projection slide show and lecture about the Kimball organ with sound samples from unpublished recordings.

From the Ballroom, two groups were formed. One was for those who did not wish to use stairs. They were directed down the right mezzanine hallway and into the organ workroom. The other group took the stairs up to the level of the gallery chambers and were able to have a close look into the Right Center and Right Forward Gallery chambers (#8 & #10). They then proceeded downstairs and entered the huge organ workroom

behind the Right Stage chamber. The seven large wall-mounted diaphragm-type reservoirs were seen along with views inside the chamber through its two entrance doors. The lowest pipes of the 64' rank were viewed, including the exotic beater for the low C pipe illuminated behind a Plexiglas cover.

From the organ workroom, guests were taken down to stage level in the freight elevator and were able to see the 7-manual console in its kiosk and take photos. Chairs were provided and everyone enjoyed the photo opportunity and the chance to see this remarkable console.

Several small groups were taken down to the sub-basement in the freight

to see the old combination action rooms that were damaged in the hurricane of 1944, and look at the three blowers for the Right Stage chamber which included the massive 40" blower, the 50" blower, and the 100" compressor for the four ranks on 100" of wind.

ACCHOS Board Member Antoni Scott commented:

"My friend, Terry, was thrilled to be a part of the event. He was incredibly impressed with the organ. It comforts me to know that others share the same excitement as us. Personally, I was impressed by the fact that all of the ATOS members could not believe what they saw!!! I took the opportunity, as one of the guides, to show the right gallery chamber containing the two of the four 100" reeds (one being the Tuba Maxima) to the ATOS members. Everybody was notably impressed.

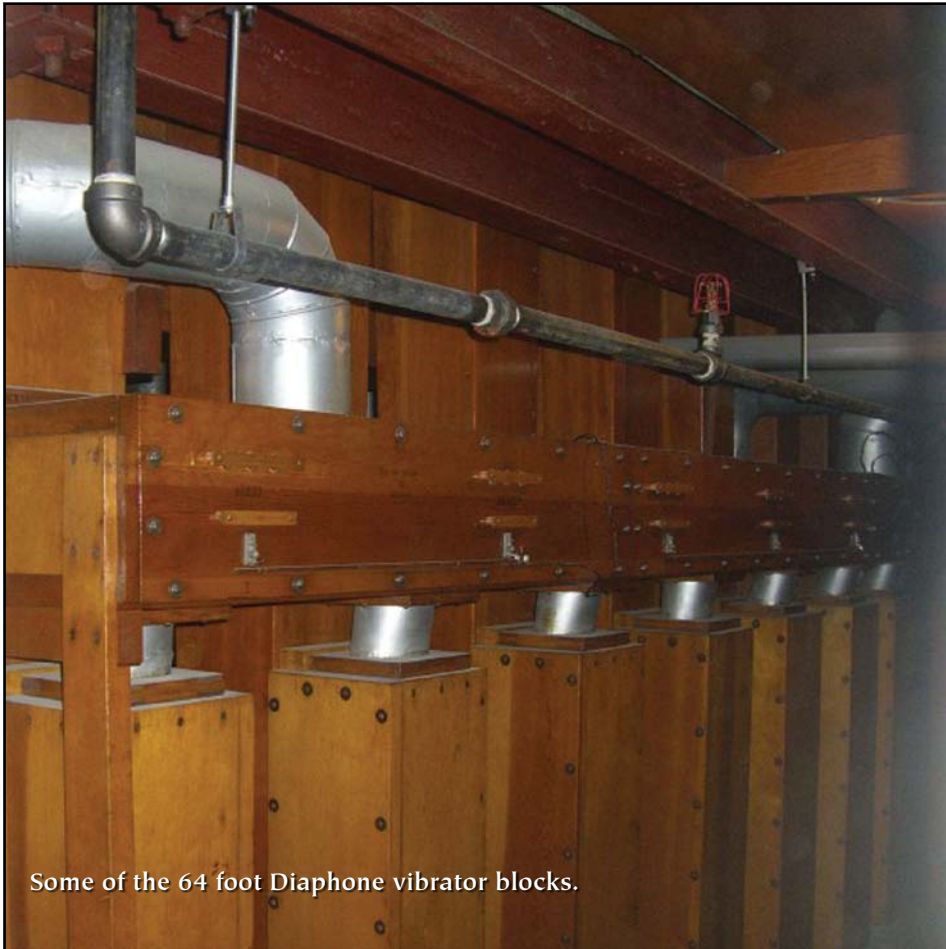
Also, I thought it was a good opportunity for ACCHOS to allow everybody to have their picture taken (with their own digital cameras) in front of the seven manual console. That way they can take back their memories to their country of origin and share the excitement with their colleagues. Initially, some people were reluctant to ask if they could have their picture taken. I took the opportunity to see that this would benefit the cause. Just think, everybody will brag that they had their picture taken at the console of the world's largest organ. One person (from Australia) told me personally that he thought that his picture was worth a



ACCHOS Board Member Antoni Scott

Continues on page 6

Photos this page courtesy of Jamie Snell.



Some of the 64 foot Diaphone vibrator blocks.



One of the 30" wind pressure regulator

Continued from page 5

\$1000 dollars to him. That just shows you the level of enthusiasm. Some woman told me she was so flustered that she couldn't think straight. I was excited by her emotion, as we all feel the same way. I heard many comment on how ergonomic the console was. Reaching for the Bombar manual was easier than anyone thought. What



The Midmer-Losh seven-manual console.



View inside the seven-manual console.



rs.



Battery of high-pressure regulators.



Tuba Maxima on 100" wind pressure.



sole.



Second, portable five-manual console, now disconnected.

wonderful tribute to Emerson Richards. Let's hope that their enthusiasm will excite more and more people. It was great."

Everything timed out nicely and the large group was able to leave the hall for lunch next door at the Trump Plaza Casino, then headed back to New York City.



Tongue-in-Cheek Department

As part of the restoration of the Midmer-Losh organ, the decision was made to replace all of the blowers with one master blower capable of supplying all wind pressures and volume.

[Comment received: Sounds good. Is there a VFD large enough to handle it? Also, how do we keep Seagulls from getting sucked in?]



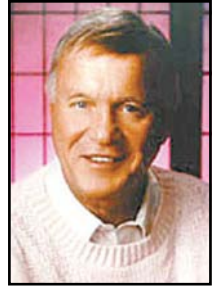
INSPIRATION

This unusual billboard was spotted on a roof across the street from the restaurant where ACCHOS Board Members were having breakfast in 2002 during a work program at Boardwalk Hall. Winston Churchill's message is clear and beautiful. We will never forget this thought as we move forward on the restoration of the Boardwalk Hall pipe organs!

PINKY'S CORNER

Atlantic City's Most Priceless Indoor Possession

By Pinky Kravitz



Many of you have never seen Atlantic City's most priceless indoor possession. You may have visited the former Atlantic City Convention Hall, now called Boardwalk Hall, and paid little attention to the enclosed area on the right side of the stage. If you asked a Boardwalk Hall employee what it is, most of them would tell you that it's an area for an organ. They may neglect, however, to tell you that it holds the seat and keyboards to the Midmer-Losh organ, the largest organ in the world.

As you walk on the second and third levels of Boardwalk Hall, and look at the walls, you may have noticed that there are open metal screens lining almost half of them. If you asked most employees what lies behind the screens, hopefully, they would tell you that the area houses many of the wind-pipes for the organ. Additional windpipes can be found high above the stage on both sides.

It is worth reiterating that it is the biggest organ in the world and that it is Atlantic City's most priceless indoor possession.

The organ was designed by former Atlantic County State Senator Emerson Richards and built by Midmer-Losh. Why bring this to your attention now? It is with great pleasure that I inform you that the Historic Organ Restoration Committee Inc. (HORC), under the auspices of the New Jersey State Sports and Exposition Authority (NJSEA), recently announced the hiring of Carl Loeser as the first Lillian Levy Curatorial Chair of the Boardwalk Hall pipe organs. Loeser brings a variety of expertise to the position and has worked in the pipe organ field for 30 years.

The late Lillian Levy, a Ventnor resident, was a past three-time chairperson of the New Jersey State Council of the Arts. Loeser is looking forward to being directly involved with the historic Kimball organ in the Adrian Phillips Ballroom and the giant Midmer-Losh organ in the auditorium. The hiring of Loeser fills a

void that has left the organs largely unattended since 1998, when the last curator, Dennis McGurk, retired. It sends a loud signal that the HORC is ready to begin restoration of these two organs. With \$1.2 million provided by the NJSEA in place, work has already begun in Boardwalk Hall's pipe chambers on new lighting and a sophisticated fire suppression system. However, additional funds will be needed to complete the Herculean task of cleaning over 33,000 pipes and restoring water-damaged mechanisms.

The appointment of the curator and the beginning of the restoration are important steps in validating the Midmer-Losh pipe organ being the recipient of the prestigious Save America Treasure Award of \$100,000. Why should we be so concerned about a pipe organ? Here are comments made by Pope Benedict XVI when he blessed the new pipe organ at the Alte Kapelle, in Regensburg, Germany in 2006.

"The organ has always been considered, and rightly so, the king of musical instruments, because it takes up all the sounds of creation ... and gives resonance to the fullness of human sentiments, from joy to sadness, from praise to lamentation. By transcending the merely human sphere, as all music of quality does, it evokes the divine. The organ's great range of timbre, from piano through to a thundering fortissimo, makes it an instrument superior to all others. It is capable of echoing and expressing all the experiences of human life. The manifold possibilities of the organ in some way remind us of the immensity of and the magnificence of God."

In 1921, George Losh signed a contract to build an organ, that was designed by Richards, in the new Atlantic City High School, on Albany Avenue, between Atlantic And Ventnor avenues, now a parking lot. In 1920, Losh purchased the organ building firm of Midmer & Son. He changed the name to Midmer-Losh in 1924.

In 1961, I took Earl Grant, the noted jazz organist, who was appearing at Luigi's Gondola Room, to Convention Hall and received permission to allow him to play the Midmer-Losh organ. He couldn't believe the sounds and the quality of its tone. As he continued to play, I saw tears running down his cheeks. When I asked him why he was crying, he replied, "This is the ultimate experience an organist can have, playing this unbelievable musical instrument."

There are millions of dollars needed to restore these highly valued instruments. A plan is being devised to raise the necessary funds to restore the most priceless indoor possession of Atlantic City and its businesses, residents and visitors. If Pope Benedict XVI spoke so highly about a church organ, imagine what he would say upon hearing the world's largest and most magnificent musical instrument in the world. When the Midmer-Losh organ is restored to all of its glory, the first person to be invited to its initial concert should be Pope Benedict XVI.

It's time to come together and contribute the necessary funds to restore our most priceless possession. Please note that most of the information in the column has come from the Grand Ophicleide, the journal of the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society Inc., founded in 1997 and dedicated to the use, preservation and restoration of the organs in Boardwalk Hall. Visit the organization's Web site at www.acchos.org.

Pinky's Corner airs Monday through Friday from 4 to 6pm on News Talk WOND-AM 1400. His TV show, *WMGM Presents Pinky*, airs Saturday at 7:30pm on TV40. Pinky's e-mail address is: pinky@acweekly.com.

[Pinky Kravitz, known as "Mr. Atlantic City", is known as the dean of talk radio, heard daily on WOND, watched regularly on WMGM -TV and his legendary column "Pinky's Corner" is read in the Atlantic City Weekly newspaper.]

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Boardwalk Hall balcony project br

■ Hall officials are looking to restore an open-air balcony that was sealed off by Donald Trump in the 1980s to accommodate two of his casinos.

By REGINA SCHAFFER
Staff Writer, (609) 272-7211

ATLANTIC CITY — Standing in a hot, enclosed hallway behind the ballroom inside Boardwalk Hall, it is difficult to imagine what it looked like nearly 80 years ago.

"This was all a balcony at one point," said Greg Tesone, assistant general manager of Boardwalk Hall.

Soon it will be again. Plans are in the works to restore the original open-air loggia area, which was enclosed when Donald Trump built his Trump Plaza casino to the right of Boardwalk Hall.

In the early 1980s, Trump was given permission to enclose the open area and install a heating and cooling system, making it possible for patrons to walk from the Trump Plaza to what was Trump World's Fair Casino on the left side of Boardwalk Hall. Trump World's Fair was demolished in 1999.

Tesone said construction in the loggia area will take a few months because of the large amount of glass that has to be removed, in

addition to the HVAC system and the flooring. Tesone said the glass will likely be removed in the fall, after vacationers have left for the summer. A historic architect is working on the project to ensure the area looks just as it did in the 1920s, he said.

Tesone said the new open area also will serve as a place for patrons to smoke if they want to. Some concertgoers have complained in the past that there was no convenient place to step outside and have a cigarette.

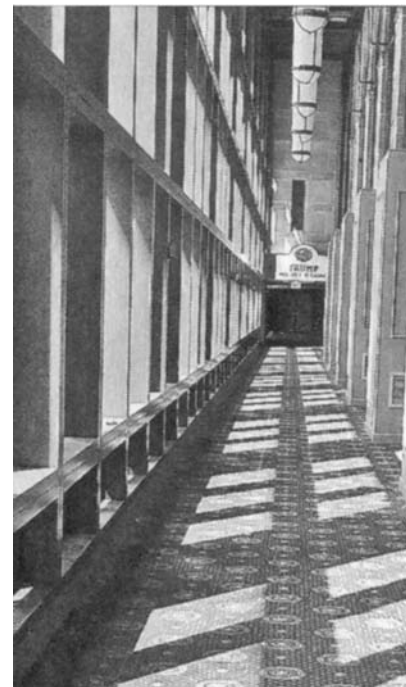
"This will give us that place," Tesone said.

Charles Swisher, vice president of the Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, called the loggia restoration another important step in the full restoration of the building, including its famous pipe organ.

"One of the little known mysteries in the (Boardwalk Hall) ballroom is the ability to sit in portions of the balcony while listening to the strains of the beautiful Kimball pipe organ as it's being played," Swisher said. "From that vantage point, one can look out the windows and see the ocean and sky with the waves coming in to shore. The combination of music and these views are breathtaking."

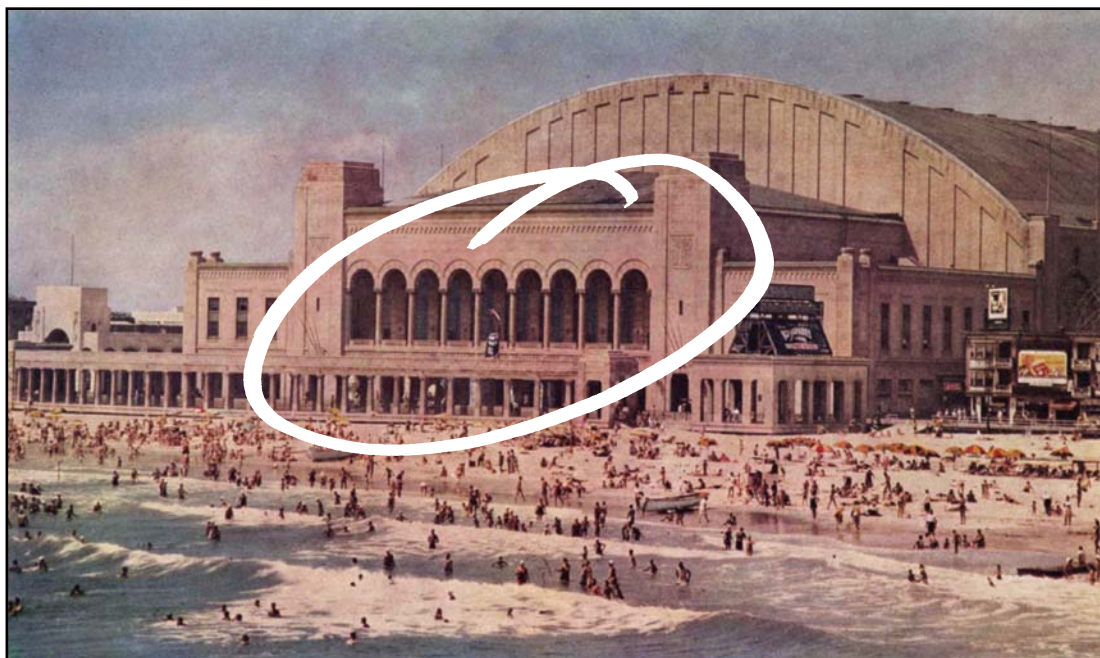
Swisher said the restoration of the loggia will make this view even more clear and dramatic to music lovers and the general public.

To e-mail Regina Schaffer at *The Press*:
RSchaffer@pressofac.com



Staff photo by Anthony Smedile

Officials say it will take a few months to restore the loggia at Boardwalk Hall because of the large amount of glass that must be removed.



This 1929 postcard (left) shows the original open-air loggia mentioned in the article above, across the front of Boardwalk Hall (then called Atlantic City Convention Hall); in the 1980s, the loggia was enclosed in glass and air-conditioned and heated so that patrons could walk from Trump's World Fair Casino (on the left of Boardwalk Hall in picture at right) to Trump Plaza on the right of Boardwalk Hall without having to go outside. Enlargement at far right shows façade with windows in place.

TUESDAY, MAY 29, 2007

breath of fresh air

we get mail 

From here and there...

Gregg Eshelman wrote on July 24, 2007:

If/when the organ is ever 100% functional, a great guest for the first concert would be the author Terry Pratchett.

Why? Because of the (in)famous inventor and pipe organ builder from his "Discworld" novels, B.S. Johnson. B.S. Johnson's pipe organs are usually enormous, with thousands of stops and they're never fully functional, yet are widely considered to be amazing musical instruments. (Perhaps the author was inspired by a certain pipe organ in Atlantic City?)

B.S. Johnson is often called "Bloody Stupid" Johnson due to his miscalculations on many projects, such as the trout pond on the grounds of the palace in Ankh Morpork. The pond only has one trout because it's one inch wide and one hundred feet long. ;) Another of his projects was the Colossus of Ankh Morpork, which is stored in a matchbox.

I'm waiting for the day when the organ is at 100%, and a tally is made of exactly how many pipes it has, because I want to hear Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor at the fullest full blast that's possible.

*Dear Mr. Eshelman,
Thanks for your interesting email.*

Try this link on for size:

<http://www.albany.edu/piporg-l/xmasinyc.html>

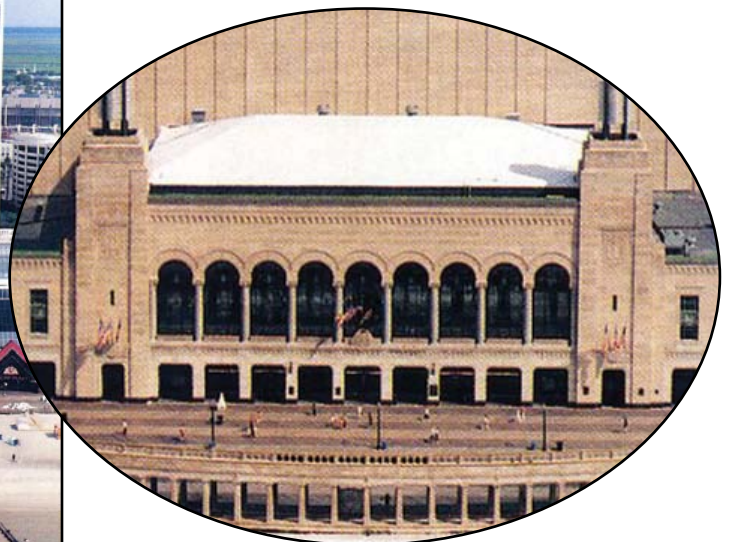
It is quite a story and the stop list link at the end is definitely worth a visit, especially the very last sentence! The author, Stephen Bicknell from England recently passed away, but his extraordinary writings and satire will live on forever.

*Charles Swisher
Vice President*

Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society, Inc.

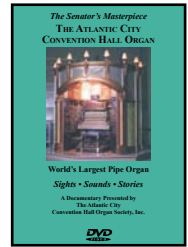


Press photo courtesy of Atlantic City Convention Hall Organ Society
Boardwalk Hall, as it appeared in 1929, originally included an open-air loggia that was enclosed when Trump Plaza was built in the 1980s.



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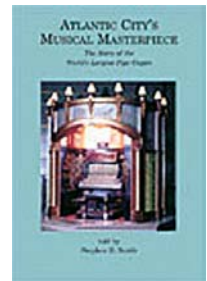
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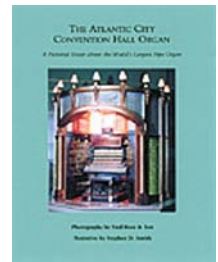
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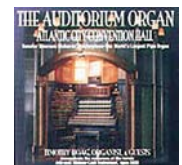
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