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# The WINDSHEET



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Newsletter of the NORCAL THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY  
PO Box 625, Berkeley, CA 94701-0625 510/644-2707

BERKELEY COMMUNITY THEATRE  
Allston Way betw'n Milvia St & MLK, Jr Way

www.norcaltos.org  
January 2012

## NORCAL CONCERT AND MEMBERS ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, January 22, 2012 at 2 PM  
COME IN VIA THE STAGE DOOR  
ON ALSTON WAY

Please note the 2 PM starting time and that this is a 'Members Only' meeting with no admission fee. The earlier start time allows for NorCal's very important Annual Meeting - which is **required** by law to maintain NorCalTOS' tax exempt 501(c)(3) status. Your attendance is needed to provide a quorum in order to elect Board Members and to conduct any other business that may be brought forward. Nominations for the Board are **Warren Lubich, Elbert Dawson, and Jud Owens**. (According to NorCal TOS' By-Laws if the number of nominees received is equal to the positions to be filled, the nominees are considered elected.)

Moreover, your participation in the business decisions is necessary to keep NorCal the vital and functioning Chapter we all love.

**Before** the business meeting NorCal will feature one of our own - **Bert Atwood** - as the artist. This is special because while most NorCal members know Bert from his many NorCal activities and his warm personality, probably only those who have attended a picnic at his house have heard him play. Bert prefers to play for his own enjoyment, and rarely performs for audiences, so you will be delighted to hear this talented member playing for us.

When Bert was 8 years old his father took him to the Redwood Gardens - a res-



taurant in Salinas which featured subdued lighting, candles on the tables, a Hammond organ complete with red and green lights under the keyboards, and an owner who played for patrons so they could dance. Bert's mother had started him on piano at age 4. After the restaurant closed for the night, the owner let Bert play the organ (he couldn't even reach the pedals). Bert was hooked!

His parents told him if he'd continue to take his piano lessons and would play piano in the Jr. High School orchestra, he'd get a Hammond for his graduation.

Bert's first organ teacher was **Dave Barrett**, a founding member of ATOE (now ATOS). For Bert's second organ lesson, Dave brought him a **George Wright** record. Bert was hooked on Theatre Organ!

He studied Electrical Engineering in college and then practiced engineering for 34 years. But, he continued to play the

Hammond as a hobbyist. Some forty years later he achieved his dream of a Theatre Pipe Organ in his home - albeit a "toaster" - an **Allen GW-4!**

The past 10 years have been spent refining the sound of the GW-4 to suit the acoustics of *Chez Atwood* and learning to play "**Gigi**" - his name for the GW-4. During the 50+ years he's played he always preferred to play for his own enjoyment and thus he claims he never mastered some of the finer necessities of professional musicianship, such as not playing comfortably in all keys and lacks true classical training. Nonetheless his music is quite enjoyable and his selections a delight to hear.

[Editor's Note: Bert is the author of 'My Father Was A Crop Duster', which chronicles the story of one of California's pioneer Crop Dusters. Published by aapublishing.com, it is a fascinating read.] ♪♪

NorCal Theatre Organ Society (NorCal TOS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. Federal Employer Identification Number 23-7415947 || State Charitable Trust No. CT 45966 || State Organization Number D-0726636

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When emailing, include ATOS or NorCal in the subject line. Otherwise, if you are unknown to the recipient's computer, its SPAM filter may divert your mail.

## 2011 George Wright Memorial Concert

The many NorCal members who made the trip to Sacramento's *Grant Union High School* for the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual *George Wright Memorial Concert* on Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup> were given a real treat.

**Dave Wickerham** brought the best out of the Grant Union High School's Wurlitzer, and gave everyone a grand time – **George Wright** would have been proud of him.

And congratulations to the *Alumni of Grant Union High School* and the *Sierra Chapter* who put this concert on each year to celebrate where **George Wright** began his glorious career.

CHAIRMAN'S  
WINDLINE



**H**appy 2012!

Well, 2011 was certainly an interesting year for NorCal... we finished our 2010 concert season only to eventually learn that 2011's would be in question due to two major projects in the BCT: 1) complete replacement of the stage lighting system, and 2) renovations in response to a lawsuit regarding ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) issues. The new lighting system is outstanding, with computer-controlled presets available on a stage-right panel. In addition, there are more lighting instruments and dimmers than ever! On top of that, the electrical contractors performed their work to high standards! The ADA work nears completion, but awaits a lengthy sign-off process from the state. In the meantime, Neal Wood and I plan to meet with school officials in the near future to discuss the possibility of a return to 'normalcy' in regard to offering public concerts once again.

The new year also brings new board membership, and I'd like to thank the nominating committee (**Warren Lubich, Bill Theobald, and Don Ravey**) for providing an excellent set of board candidates: **Warren Lubich, Elbert Dawson, and Jud Owens!** I'd also like to thank "termed-out" board

member/treasurer **Frank LaFetra** for his tireless work as a member of our board. In spite of personal injury and moving to a new residence, Frank was a real trooper and never missed a beat...THANKS!!!

I'm also pleased to announce that **Neal Wood** has agreed to serve as our new treasurer, following interim treasurer **Elbert Dawson** (thanks, Elbert, for stepping up to the plate in our time of need!).

As we look ahead to the new year, please plan to join us at 2PM on Sunday, January 22, 2012 for our Annual Meeting and program to be performed by our own **Bert Atwood**. See you there!

Looking into the future, we also have scheduled two open console dates for January 15 and February 22. We're also looking at presenting a member concert in March...stay tuned!

Farther down the road, the Sierra and NorCal ATOS chapters are discussing the possibility of co-hosting a national ATOS convention in 2016. Your thoughts and ideas are welcome as we make our considerations over the next several months.

**H**ere's to a great 2012!  
*BW J*

## Ironstone Pops Concert

This always popular event will be on April 14<sup>th</sup>, with artist **Brett Valliant**. Brett is an outstanding young organist who was a featured artist at the 2011 ATOS Convention and has toured both abroad and throughout the USA.

Brett's concert will feature a wide variety of popular music, including show tunes, ballads, jazz, and light classics.

Since the Ironstone Winery has a large list of concert attendees, tickets quickly sell out. Neal Wood has arranged for a block of 25 tickets for NorCal which may be ordered from him for \$39 per ticket by phoning 415-861-7082 or emailing Neal at: [nealwood@pacbell.net](mailto:nealwood@pacbell.net).

## DONATIONS

**Skip & Alicia La Fetra**

in honor of **Frank La Fetra's** Birthday

**Mr. Chris Nichols**

**Mr. Neal Wood**

**Mr. Art Woodworth**

EDITOR'S



**A**s we start a new year Frank and I are at last settling into our new home. Hopefully the turmoil of the last few months is past and we can again put more time into the Windsheet.

As Chairman **Bill Coale** points out in the Chairman's Windline, the stage lighting system is complete and very well done.

The renovations due to the ADA work are unfinished so the Theatre is not yet ready for public concerts. Unless you have been following the work closely you may be surprised at the changes. The front rows have been taken out and replaced with areas for wheelchairs and the people accompanying those in the wheelchairs.

To accommodate those with disabilities, the right side of the auditorium has been modified so that a ramp leads to a lift up to the stage level, then a hallway to bathrooms back of the stage level. It is a bit ungainly looking at the moment, so don't be surprised. (See Page Three)

Plans for a 2012 Concert Season depend upon when the BCT will be ready for public concerts. Bill Schlotter says that artists are anxious the play our wonderful Wurlitzer, so he does not see any problem in scheduling world class artists even now. But that means all concerts will be 'members' only. As before, guests will be able to buy a year's membership for \$20 which will include the \$15 admission for that day – much the same way our **FIRST TIMERS ARE 4 FREE** program worked.

JAN

## ♪ A FINAL NOTE ♪

**Alex Santos**

December 18, 2011, age 93

(Alex was a long time NorCal Member who attended almost every concert and event in spite of the difficulty at his age in taking public transportation from his home in San Francisco.)

**OPEN  
CONSOLE**  
Hosted by  
Chris Nichols



This is an opportunity for NorCal members to try their hand at playing the chapter's Wurlitzer at the Berkeley Community Theatre. When the theatre is available, these sessions run from **1:00 to 5:00 PM**.

The next scheduled dates are:

Sunday, January 15

Sunday, February 12

(The NorCal web site Events Page also lists the dates.)

Open Consoles are informal and our genial host, **Chris Nichols**, ensures that every NorCal member feels comfortable. Chris lends help and support to anyone who needs it. Depending on how many members are present, each has one or more 15-minute sessions in rotation at the console.

**Important:** Call the NorCal voice mail at **(510) 644-2707** on *that* Sunday morning to confirm that the theatre is available. If there will be Open Console, enter via the backstage door at 1930 Allston Way.



This is the name of **Chris Elliott's** new Christmas CD recorded at the *Nethercutt Collection* in Sylmar, CA.

Chris makes full use of the magnificent 4-manual 73-rank Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ in producing this delightfully fresh arrangement of popular and sacred Christmas music.

For information about the CD go to:

[http://www.christianelliott.com/Christian\\_Elliott/Christmas\\_CD%21.html](http://www.christianelliott.com/Christian_Elliott/Christmas_CD%21.html)

### Free Organ Music Web Site

**Chris Nichols** points out that there is a web site called *Organ Live*. It offers classical organ music recordings for free.

To tune in go to:

<http://www.organlive.com>

and click the big speaker.

According to their web post, "the full playlist is available for request. You can search our [their -- Publ.] entire library for a specific work title, composer, organist, or album title, as well as look up a specific organ by church, city, state, country, builder, date of construction, number of manuals, or number of ranks. Once you've found the work you're looking for, just click request, and we'll work it into our playlist."

<http://www.organlive.com/search>



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Open Console BCT

Sundays – Jan. 15 & Feb. 12  
[norcaltos.org](http://norcaltos.org)

### NorCal presents –

**January 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**2 PM**

Annual Business meeting

**Bert Atwood Concert**

(See Article on Page One)

### Orange County - [www.octos.org](http://www.octos.org)

January 22, 2:30 PM **Scott Foppiano** on the organ with Scott Sedman on the piano at Plummer Auditorium

### Santa Barbara

January 22, 2:30 PM **John Ledwon**

Arlington Theatre Santa Barbara

[www.sbtos.org](http://www.sbtos.org)

### Sierra Chapter

Friday, January 27, 2012

7:00 p.m.

**Dave Moreno**

at the Mighty Wurlitzer

Fair Oaks Silent Movie Night

7997 California Ave.

\$5/General

February 19, 2012

**Walt Strony**

2 PM

at the Fair Oaks club house

7997 California Ave.

\$10/General, \$8/Members, \$5/Students, \$20/Family

[sierrachapterATOS.org](http://sierrachapterATOS.org)

### Ironstone Pops

Sunday, April 22, 2012

12:30 Luncheon Buffet

2 PM Concert

**Brett Valliant**

\$39 per person

(see article page Two)

## 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Poorman's Organ Convention

May 5 & 6, 2012

### Granada Theater

616 Kentucky Street, Bakersfield, CA

Past Conventions have included silent film presentations, magicians, comedians and a host of live performances. This year will be no exception. Open console lasts till the wee hours.

For more information contact:

**James & Lucy Spohn**

[SpohnGranada@Theaterorgans.com](mailto:SpohnGranada@Theaterorgans.com)

## OTHER VENUES

**Castro Theatre, 4/22 Wurlitzer**, 429 Castro

St. SF, CA. Intermission music played daily

by **David Hegarty, Warren Lubich, Mark**

**Putterbaugh or Harry Garland. (425)**

**621-6120. [CastroTheatre.com](http://CastroTheatre.com)**

**Grand Lake Theatre, 3/18 Wurlitzer**, 3200

Grand Ave., Oakland, CA. The Mighty

Wurlitzer Organ is played briefly (10 to 30

min as time permits) before selected Friday

and Saturday evening performances at the

Grand Lake Theater. (510) 452-3556.

[www.grandlaketheatre.com](http://www.grandlaketheatre.com)

**Los Angeles** - [www.latos.org](http://www.latos.org)

**Orange County** - [www.octos.org](http://www.octos.org)

**Old Town Music Hall – El Segundo**

the Mighty Wurlitzer Theater Pipe Organ

is played every weekend, during the first

half of each show. As well as for ALL Silent

Movies!

[www.oldtownmusic hall.org](http://www.oldtownmusic hall.org)

**Palace of the Legion of Honor, 4/63 E.M.**

**Skinner**, Lincoln Park, San Francisco

Presidio. Saturdays and Sundays from 4:00

to 4:45 PM. Free after museum admission.

**David Hegarty** plays an **Organ Pops**

**Concert** on the first full weekend of each

month; other artists play classical concerts

other weekends. **(415) 750-3600.**

[LegionOfHonor.org](http://LegionOfHonor.org)

**Paramount Theatre, 4/26 Wurlitzer**, 2025

Broadway, Oakland, CA. Public tours on

first and third Saturdays of the month at

10 AM (510 465-6400).

**San Diego** - [www.tossd.org](http://www.tossd.org)

**Santa Barbara** - [www.sbtos.org](http://www.sbtos.org)

**Sierra** - [sierrachapterATOS.org](http://sierrachapterATOS.org)

**Stanford Theatre, 3/21 Wurlitzer**, 221

University Ave., Palo Alto, CA. The organ

is played before and between films. **(650)**

**324-3700. [StanfordTheatre.org](http://StanfordTheatre.org)**

**Visalia Fox Theatre, 4/22 Wurlitzer**, 300

W Main St., Visalia, CA. **(559) 625-1FOX**

**(1369)**

NORCAL THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY, Inc.

*A Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society*

ATOS is dedicated to promoting the tradition of the theatre pipe organ and public understanding and appreciation of the instrument and its music, and shall aid in any way possible the preservation of theatre organs through rehabilitation of instruments and fostering the arts of playing, building, voicing and maintenance. If you would like to join us, please call or write:

**Mr. Neal R. Wood at (415)861-7082 <[nealwood@pacbell.net](mailto:nealwood@pacbell.net)> , PO Box 625, Berkeley, CA 94701-0625.**

Dues are \$20 for NorCal TOS only and an additional \$40 for National ATOS (\$60 total) per year for full voting membership and subscription to *Theatre Organ* the six times a year glossy journal of ATOS. Spouse and children living at home may be included in your membership. We hope you will join us to help preserve and enjoy these great instruments.