



MECHANICAL MUSIC

Journal of the Musical Box Society International

Devoted to All Automatic Musical Instruments

Volume 60, No. 3
May/June, 2014





1949

2014



65th Annual Meeting

October 7 – 12, 2014 at the Bonaventure Resort & Spa in Weston, Florida



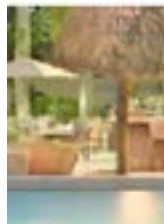
"Our Backyard Museum" – The Jancko Collection

Step back in time as you tour "Our Backyard Museum", the collection of Joel and Pam Jancko.

Joel and Pam Jancko started their collection in the early 1990's with only one building to house a couple of vehicles. This collection has grown through the years with additional buildings to encompass displays of an old town, a war room, a saloon, a soda fountain, a game room, a log cabin, a service station, a bicycle display, a fire station, a cinema, a street scene, a farm scene, a street clock, a steam engine, and even a fort. The Museum complex contains artifacts from the Civil War to WW1 and features many innovations from this time. Of most interest to our MBSI group will be the Music Room with a wide variety of instruments, including an Imhof & Mukle, a Seeburg H, a Wurlitzer CX, a Double Mills Violano, a Cremona K, a Weber Unika, an Encore Banjo, a Model B Harp, a Bruder band organ, a Limonaire band organ, a Bruder monkey organ, an American Photo Player and a classic Mortier, as well as a variety of cylinder and disc music boxes, organettes and phonographs. Making its debut at this meeting will be their newly acquired and installed 3 manual/11 rank Wurlitzer Opus 1616 theatre organ (model 235SP), expanded to 22 ranks. There will be a separate evening tour for those interested in hearing this wonderful machine.

The Jancko's have put their heart into "Our Backyard Museum". They frequently hold charitable fundraisers to benefit needy organizations. Joel can tell endless stories of their collection with vivid detail which is a delight for listeners. **An outdoor BBQ lunch will be served during our informational, eventful and awe inspiring visit.** For more information, go to www.ourbackyardmuseum.org

Fun for all
in sunny
Florida
with
Southern
Hospitality



Many fun
filled days
await you

Check our Website www.mbsi2014.org for new and interesting information about our upcoming meeting



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Learn what you should look for.



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Musical Box Society International is chartered as a nonprofit educational institution. Its purposes are: To establish and maintain a museum for the preservation and exhibition of automatic music; to foster a genuine interest in the collection, restoration and preservation of automatic music and to publish information thereon; to cooperate with individuals and with other organizations in exhibiting automatic music for the education of the public. It shall be the aim of the Society to collect and preserve for posterity, historical and current information about automatic music, including books, pamphlets, catalogs, manuscripts, films, tapes and other recordings, and to make such information available to educational institutions, students and collectors; to disseminate full information regarding the mechanisms of automatic music and the repair thereof; and generally, to stimulate interest in automatic music.

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the Musical Box Society International and the Editor.

MEMBERS, PLEASE SEND ADDRESS CORRECTIONS TO:

MBSI, PO Box 10196,
Springfield, MO 65808-0196

Or, make corrections on the website at www.mbsi.org.

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Postmaster: Send address changes to

MBSI, PO Box 10196,
Springfield, MO 65808-0196

The World of Mechanical Music

Copy this page, and give it to a potential new member. Spread the word about MBSI.

A fascinating hobby! It combines all the appeals of art, history, craftsmanship, and music all into one. Automatic music doesn't just sit there; it is ever willing to perform for those who care to hear it. Play an automatic music machine in a room full of people and all else will stop as the machine enraptures the audience with the sparkling melodies of yesteryear!

A "Music Box" is an instrument which plays music via the plucking of teeth on a tuned steel comb. Teeth may be plucked directly as by pins on a rotating cylinder, or indirectly as by projections beneath a rotating disc. When formed in October, 1949, MBSI's scope of interest was limited to the collection and preservation of these instruments. However, the scope of interest now extends to encompass all automatically played musical instruments — musical boxes, musical automata, player and reproducing pianos and organs, phonographs, and self-playing stringed, wind, and percussion instruments of any kind.



48 key Alan Pell crank organ.
Photo courtesy of the Bronson Collection

The Musical Box Society International, chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, is a nonprofit society dedicated to the enjoyment, study, and preservation of automatic musical instruments. Founded in 1949, it now has members around the world, and supports various educational projects.

Regional chapters and an Annual Meeting held each year in different cities within the United States enable members to visit collections, exchange ideas, and attend educational workshops. Members receive the scholarly journal, *Mechanical Music* which also contains advertising space for members who wish to buy, sell, and restore mechanical musical instruments and related items. Members also receive a Directory of Members, Museums, and Dealers.

The only requirements for membership are an interest in automatic music machines and the desire to share information about them. And you'll take pride in knowing you are contributing to the preservation of these marvelous examples of bygone craftsmanship.

More Information:

Phone/Fax: (417) 886-8839

Email: jbeeman.mbsi@att.net

Membership Application

MUSICAL BOX SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

Member Benefits

Six magazines annually — *Mechanical Music* plus the *Directory of Members, Museums, and Dealers* (published every two years). Membership also entitles you to participate in the Annual Meeting and to join regional chapters. New members receive a welcome letter, a Goods & Supplies Order Form, *Directory of Members, Museums, and Dealers*, and a list of the regional chapters.

Membership Dues

US members.....\$60

Canada.....\$70

Other International\$75

(Add \$20 for International air mail.)

U.S. Funds Only Please

Join online: www.mbsi.org/application.php

Last name First Name Initial

Last Name First Name Initial

Address

City

State / Zip

Postal Code / Country

Phone

Fax

E-mail

Sponsor

Check or Money Order Payable to: MBSI Treasurer (US Funds Only)

Mail to: New Member Registration - MBSI

PO Box 10196

Springfield, MO 65808-0196

Visa/MasterCard

Exp. Date

Signature

President's Message

By Julian Grace

MBSI President

At this writing we are just a few days past our spring Trustees meeting. We held it in Ft Worth, TX, so that the Trustees would have the opportunity the day after the meeting to view a wonderful collection located there.

I am happy to report that the meeting went well both in content and conduct. It was the longest meeting in recent memory, lasting to 7:30 p.m. This was mostly due to our review and updating of each item in the MBSI Policies and Procedures document. It is about 18 pages long and we went over it word for word. It is the document that guides the various functions and goals of MBSI. It had not had a thorough review in quite some time.

I won't report here all the rest of the items the Trustees worked on because the minutes of the meeting will be published for you in the July/August issue of *Mechanical Music*.

I do want to tell you that one of the issues at hand for your Trustees is our web site, www.MBSI.org. We are examining our site as to its function, appearance, content and its effectiveness to attract new members. We will be attempting to visit with some MBSI members that have experience with web sites to assist us in determining what attention, if any, our site is in need of. We will also be looking for volunteers to accomplish those improvements. If you have constructive suggestions on this subject or wish to volunteer your services I encourage you to email your suggestions or availability to me at grandpagrace@att.net.

The web site has turned out to be our most effective tool for gaining new members. What we don't know is if it is the sole way they find us or if our current members are directing potential new members to join via that route because of the new member discount. While we want a great web site, in making your suggestions for

improvements keep in mind that cost of improvements and maintenance must be a high consideration for us.

I want to take this opportunity to thank those who have submitted articles for publication. Please keep them coming as we have an ongoing need to replace those that are published. We now have a small reserve which is what we wished for because it helps us group articles for publication that blend well with the other journal content in that issue.

If you are doing, or have done, a build or restoration, we encourage you to take many photographs of your progress and write an article or articles on what and how you do it. You will always be glad you took the photos and if the article gets published the value of the piece featured should certainly be increased. Be sure to tell us how you handled any particularly challenging problem.

While we seek articles on all mechanical music subjects we currently are looking for more of the "How you did it" type articles. You will notice that when we go on home/collection tours one of the things we all want to see is the workshop. Should you desire, our editor and proofreaders will be glad to assist you in refining your article. We are looking for articles on all phases of restoration of all types of mechanical music equipment. Our members want to know things like what type of glue worked best, where did you source the materials you used, how did you accomplish that veneer repair, what were the steps in your refinish. How did you reproduce that part or how did you get that brass to look so good. You get the idea. They want to know how they can do it.

The opportunity to contribute to your fellow members' success with their projects is unlimited. And when your article is published you will be surprised how many people that you never met before will want to join in conversation with you to compare



experiences. Many new friendships get established that way.

Before I sign off I want to let you know that we have a new Publications Committee Chairman. Bob Caletti has been a member of the editor transition team and has been working on our journal closely with Steve Boehck, our interim Pub Chair. Bob has agreed to replace Steve to become our permanent Pub Chair. I want to welcome Bob and thank Steve for a job well done. Thanks also go to Robin Biggins, our previous Pub Chair, for his assistance. MBSI has a wonderful history of our members stepping up to contribute their time and talents for the benefit of the society.

Lastly, production work on the next issue of our directory is well underway. Grab a copy of your directory and review your listing information. You want your friends to have your correct contact information so that they can stay in touch. To make corrections to your listing, go to www.MBSI.org and click the member login link. Then select "My Account Settings." From there you will then be able to correct any of your information. After making changes click the "Save My Info" button. It is very easy to accomplish.

Remember to save the date and make your plans to attend our next Annual Meeting in Florida in October 2014.

Membership Chair Report

By Ardis Prescott

Membership Chair

I always look forward to traveling to other states and meeting our MBSI members. The March mid-year Trustees' meeting in Fort Worth, Texas gave me an opportunity to meet and visit with members of the Sunbelt Chapter. What wonderful hosts they were!

There was a good turnout of Sunbelt Chapter members attending from Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing familiar faces and making new acquaintances. Some of the Louisiana members shared with me their experiences dealing with Hurricane Katrina and how their lives and collections were affected. They in turn were concerned about the earthquakes happening in California. Fortunately, myself and the MBSI members I know in California were not affected by the quakes.

After leaving the Sunbelt Chapter functions I traveled to Duncanville to visit MBSI members Rick and Alla Wilkins at the Olden Year Musical Museum. Rick has traveled extensively throughout Europe, Russia and the United States acquiring an extensive collection of rare mechanical musical instruments. There are hundreds of instruments, including a wide

selection of upright disc machines with bells, disc playing organs, large cylinder boxes, rare phonographs and one-of-a-kind machines that are just remarkable. Rick has been collecting mechanical music for most of his life and when the museum is completed it will be a wonderful educational facility because of the diversity of the machines.

The plans for the new museum include an introductory theater where visitors will view a film giving them information on the collection they will see. Then docents will give guests a tour of the museum and demonstrate the instruments. It will be a great location to have a Chapter meeting after the museum is completed. The target date is the end of 2014.

Once again in closing I cannot impress the importance of growing our MBSI membership. We have lost a number of members due to deaths and not being able to get out and attend the Chapter meetings and National Conventions. If you know of members who no longer drive and would like to attend a meeting, give them a call and invite them to join you in attending a Chapter meeting. It will make their day and it will give you a "feel good feeling."

Remember to invite friends over



Ardis and Rick with rare Ehrlich's Musik Automat

to see your collection and ask them if they would like to join you in attending a Chapter meeting and meet other collectors. Music brings all of us together. Have your membership application and discount voucher handy to enroll new members. The member who enrolls the most new members receives a one-year free MBSI membership. I'd be delighted to

MEMBERSHIP | See Page 7



Partial overview of collection



Rare stringed instruments

Publication Committee Report

By Bob Caletti

Publications Committee Chair

Hello all!

Bob Caletti here, your new Publications Committee Chair. I have taken over from Steve Boehck who served as our interim Publications Committee Chair for the past two issues.

To help you get to know me, here is a bit about myself. I am a mechanical engineer and have been retired for four years now. My wife, MBSI Vice President Judy Caletti, and I have been members of this society for 33 years.

We got started when we went into a general store in Columbia, CA, and saw and heard a music box there. It was a 19⁵/₈-inch Polyphon upright with a base cabinet. We immediately fell in love with it and bought it. Shortly after we got this first music box, we joined MBSI and the rest is history.

Over the years, we have collected music boxes and orchestrions and we also have a Knabe Reproducing piano. I now enjoy restoring music boxes in my workshop that is connected to my home.

We live in the San Francisco Bay

area in California. Some of you may have visited us during the 2000 and 2012 Annual Meetings when our house was open for tours. I look forward to meeting more of you in person and through my interactions with you as the Publications Committee Chair.

I feel strongly that this is your publication. We need your stories and articles about mechanical music. We encourage new authors and Russell Kasselmann, our new publisher/editor, will help you write your article if you like. We encourage articles on any aspect of mechanical music from small instruments to large ones, music boxes, pianos, orchestrions, phonographs, band organs, fairground organs, or any other type of automated mechanical musical instrument. We also encourage technical articles on how these wonderful machines work or how to restore an instrument to its former glory. Perhaps you know of an instrument that has been in the family for years that you would like to write about. Don't hesitate to let us know!

There is also a column called The Hunt in every issue of *Mechanical Music* that details a collector's search



for a particular instrument or just a lucky find. Send us your story if you have had an experience like that.

We will reprint original catalogs, instruction sheets, or any historical information related to automatic musical instruments, as well. Please don't hesitate to send us what you have and we will see if we can use it.

I would like to give a special thank you to Steve Boehck for his help during the transition period and to the people that have sent in articles that make *Mechanical Music* what it is, a great publication that is very informative.

MEMBERSHIP | From Page 6

announce your name as the winner at our Florida Annual Meeting. Remember our motto: "EACH ONE/REACH ONE NEW MEMBER" and you do not have to limit yourself to ONE new member! Have a wonderful summer at your rallies, Chapter meetings and fun gatherings.



Welcome new members!

January 2014

Edwina Campbell
McConnelsville, OH
Ann Donoghue
Fort Collins, CO
David & Mia Donoghue
Plymouth, MI
Amy Donoghue
Plymouth, MI
Andrew & Julie Gould
Charleston, SC
Bob & Nancy Smith
Murrieta, CA
Robert A & Susan D Gottlieb
Fountain Hills, AZ
Cathy Parham Verba
St. Augustine, FL
Roger A & Sandy A DeWeese
Del Mar, CA

February 2014

Mary E & Frank R Fravel
Greenwich, NJ
Rhonda Armstrong
Ridgeland, MS
Roger & June Reitano
Leona Valley, CA
Gary & Phyllis Mcgaughy
Galveston, TX
James & Janet Arnold
Goodlettsville, TN
Carolyn O'Brien
Evanston IL
Keith Gramlich
East Meadow NY
William & Carrie Kocher
Storrs, CT
John & Jayne Nakashian
Westport, CT

By Russell Kasselmann

Publisher/Editor

It is wonderful to experience the generosity of MBSI members who are willing to open their homes and share what they have collected over the years. I was fortunate, recently, to visit the home of Robert Weiss who lives in Morro Bay, CA. The impromptu tour was set up by Publications Committee Chair Bob Caletti who met me at Robert's house to make introductions. Robert showed us his Regina Library Desk disc player, two cuff-style disc boxes and several beautiful cylinder boxes each with a unique story and set of features. In all, Robert has 35 music boxes, including a tortoise shell snuff box once owned by King George III. The box plays two short tunes and it is in pristine condition.

Bob and I talked with Robert about how his wife bought him the first music box and he was hooked from that moment forward. Robert showed us documentation from one cylinder box that traced it from manufacturer to its first owner, and every other owner up until Robert purchased it. Bob and I were both impressed.

After we bid goodbye to Robert, I made a mental note to make another appointment with him and see if I could convince him to share his stories with the rest of MBSI as part of an article for Mechanical Music. Robert isn't comfortable writing something himself, but he has great stories to tell and his music boxes are certainly interesting enough to hold their own in an article.

I would imagine that there are many other members out there like Robert, who have wonderful stories to tell and music boxes to share. All it takes is a person comfortable asking a few questions to coax those stories out and jot them down to be later organized into an article for Mechanical Music. If you have any interest in writing, whether you have experience or not, I encourage you to find someone in your area

with a collection you can tour and get their story. I promise it will be well worth your time and theirs.

Those of you who are already out there gathering stories and sending them in, I can't thank you enough. This issue of Mechanical Music is jam packed with great content. Jonathan Hoyt has an intriguing article on restoring a music box that was recovered from a house fire. Mark Williams, owner of the Orchestria Palm Court restaurant lets us in on the details of how he successfully put mechanical music instrument in a public eating space and exposes diners to the magic of their music on a daily basis. Ron Bopp takes us through his odyssey of mechanical music ownership, offering tips on how everyone can get the most out of this hobby. Museum Committee Chair Sally Craig shares good information on watching out for woodworms with resources to treat instruments affected by them. Hendrik H. Strengers offers a short history on the Mason & Hamlin Company that is responsible for some wonderful instruments still being played today. Victor Lia shares his story about restoring a E. Dienst & Co. barrel-operated orchestrion, one of only a few left.

Dr. Wayne Finger deserves a special note of thanks for contributing three articles to this issue of Mechanical Music. Wayne wrote the story of his search for a Seeburg KT special for The Hunt column. He also detailed the different types of music boxes that can be seen on the tours scheduled during the Annual Meeting in October in Florida and he documented a recent event where he promoted MBSI at a National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors regional meeting. Whew! He is one busy guy!

While you are enjoying all the great editorial content on these pages, don't forget to pause and admire the advertisements as well. Even if you are not in the market for a new music box or restoration service right now, remember that these advertisers are



supporting MBSI with their dollars and they deserve your thanks for that. So, pick up the phone and call them up just to tell them you saw their ad in Mechanical Music and you appreciate their support of MBSI. The more advertisers we have, the more we can do with the publications budget, so let the advertisers know how much you value their choice to advertise with MBSI. Of course if you are in the market for a music box or a service like restoration you should absolutely support our advertisers with your shopping dollars whenever possible.

Closing out my column for this issue, I would like to make all you prospective writers and chapter reporters out there aware of a resource you can use to upload your pictures and stories for publication.

We all know that email is limited and allows you to only send a small number of photos at a time and the photos can't be too large or the message won't go through. Well, to solve that problem, I have established an MBSI Author Resource website at <http://mbsi.irondogmedia.com>. Using this site, you can upload files that are as large as 30 megabytes (30 MB) each and you can upload many files all at once. All you have to do is go to the web page and hit the blue button that says "upload" to get started.

A publication schedule showing deadlines for each issue of Mechanical Music is also available on the site so you can send everything in on time.

Museum Committee Report

By Sally Craig

Museum Committee Chair

The MBSI Museum Committee, on behalf of MBSI, accepts mechanical music instruments, ephemera and other items of historical interest in order to preserve them for future generations.

In order to properly accept, document, restore where appropriate, and maintain an accurate Assets Database, the following procedures are to be followed.

Point of contact

The point of contact for the donations of instruments and ephemera is the current Chair of the MBSI Museum Committee who will share information about the proposed donation with members of the Museum Committee.

Determining acceptability

Input from the Museum Committee members regarding acceptability of the instrument will be coupled with a condition description by the donor, photographs, and, where possible, a visit by a Committee member or an MBSI member living near the donor. This information is to be forwarded to the Chair of the committee.

Accepting the donation

Upon the determination of the acceptability of the donation, the Chair of the Museum Committee will be responsible for sending three copies of the Deed of Gift and three copies of the Museum Acquisition Form to the Donor. Accompanying these forms will be a cover letter thanking the donor and asking that they be signed, witnessed and notarized as indicated on the forms. The Donor will return the forms with any other material (photos, written description, provenance if known, etc) to the Chair. The Chair will forward the forms received from the Donor to the current President of the MBSI

for signature and when returned, the Chair will countersign.

A copy of the Deed of Gift and Acquisition Form will be forwarded to the Database manager for entry into the Database and assignment of an Item Number.

The Chair will inform the members of the Committee of the status of the donation and seek input on the appropriate insurance value to assign to the donation as well as a location for the instrument. This may include a current exhibit, a new exhibit, a restoration facility (if necessary), or storage.

In all situations of MBSI Museum assets and ephemera for which the Museum Committee has responsibility, the location, transfer or moving of these assets must be approved by the Chair.

Additional notes

It is appropriate to ask a Donor to include in the donation the cost of packing and shipping of the donated item; the Museum Committee has a



modest budget for all of its responsibilities. In some cases a donated item will require repair or restoration in order to bring the item to "exhibit condition."

In such discussions the Donor should consult a Tax Advisor about including this cost as part of the donation.

The Chair may also delegate part of these procedures to another Museum Committee member or, in the case of the examination of an instrument or item, an appropriate MBSI member.

Musical Box Society International Acquisitions Procedures

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Deed Of Gift To The Musical Box Society International

We, _____ hereby give, transfer and assign to the Musical Box Society International (MBSI) by way of gift, absolute and unconditional ownership of the object described herein, including but not limited to all right, title, and interests, related and unrelated, in, to and associated with said object. We affirm that we own said object and that we have good and complete right and title to give said object, free and clear of all encumbrances and restrictions.

We wish the gift be identified to the public and in the records of the MBSI as a gift from.

Donor Signature: _____ Date: _____
Name in Block Letters: _____
Donor Signature: _____ Date: _____
Name in Block Letters: _____
Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Signed in the presence of and attested by:

WITNESS (Signature): _____ Date: _____

Name of Witness in block letters: _____

WITNESS (Signature): _____ Date: _____

Name of Witness in block letters: _____

NOTARY PUBLIC Date: _____ (notary seal)

Signature: _____

Musical Box Society International hereby acknowledges receipt of the above Deed of Gift.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Museum Committee Chairman, Musical Box Society International

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ President, Musical Box Society International

Description and serial number of object:

To make a donation to MBSI, ask for a Deed of Gift Form



An Imhof & Mukle
"Commandant 2" Orchestrion



Members of the The Greater Bay Area Costumer's Guild and a Model T Club often visit the Orchestra Palm Court in period costume to experience the mechanical musical instrument and the great food.

Winding back time

Step through the doors of the Orchestra Palm Court restaurant in San Jose, CA, and you might think you've fallen out of the current century and into the previous one. The restaurant is ringed with a collection of mechanical musical instruments playing jazz, blues and ragtime tunes as an old-fashioned soda fountain pours delicious drinks and a bartender mixes alcoholic beverages behind the bar ringing up each sale on an antique cash register. For lovers of mechanical musical instruments, it is a must-visit when anywhere near the

San Francisco Bay area.

Owner Mark Williams says he and partner Russ Kriegel started with a vision of creating a restaurant after the "Palm Court Salon" concept popular in the early 1900s, an example of which can be seen in the movie "Funny Girl" where Louis Armstrong sings to Barbara Streisand. In his mind, Kriegel saw lots of gleaming marble, polished wood and mechanical musical instruments playing the music of the era.

"We originally sought out a building that could be transformed into such a place. What we ended up with could have been nothing further from that!"

Williams said. "The building we found is from 1910, and we believe it was built as a new car showroom, since we know this was 'auto row' down in this part of town. It has tall brick walls, original skylights, and complex exposed wood rafters and trusses."

Later, someone brought in a photo that showed the building was once used as a car repair garage called Forgee's Garage. The building next door was the service station for a Nash car dealership that was around the corner on First St. in San Jose.

Undaunted, Williams and Kriegel, chose to use the architecture to their



At one time the building was a service garage.



The interior was rough, but the skylights were nice



The exterior of the building needed lots of help too.



The interior of the building after sand blasting.

advantage. Building on the theme of 1900s sheet music, Kriegel chose Mucha tapestries and palm trees to decorate, leaving exposed brick wall at strategic points to highlight the building's history. Carefully-chosen paint and tile were used other places to complement the instruments and give the feel of an inviting, comfortable space you might want to spend a good deal of time in.

To bring the building up to code, Williams had to retrofit it for earthquake safety. He restored the facade to the building from blueprints found during the earthquake retrofit so that the exterior would match the theme of the interior. Making the inside look good included sandblasting the brick walls and rafters, installing a new roof and a mezzanine where several of the instruments could be displayed. The part of the floor that is wood was

restored, a new underground power system installed and heating and air conditioning units were installed on the roof.

Then came the instruments.

By the year 2000, Williams had acquired four mechanical music machines and installed them in his living and dining rooms. There was a Mills Violano, a Coinola X, an Electramuse jukebox, and Howard Manualo pumper player piano. The machines were too loud for the confined space, and there was nowhere left for more than two guests to sit to appreciate them. The purchase of a Steck Duo-Art baby grand in early 2004 stretched the limits of the home past the breaking point so Williams started to look for ways to move some instruments to the restaurant. (Kriegel already had a Knabe Ampico grand, a Coinola CK, and an Angelus 65/88 note player in

his home, so there was no extra room at his house either.)

"Our first basket-case instrument was a Seeburg F that someone was basically giving away," Williams said. "It was missing the stack, spool frame, and pump, as well as the central stained glass and lamps. But it was still a nice looking machine! With a lot of cleanup, it became one of the four 'display' pianos sitting on the mezzanine awaiting a proper restoration."

Kriegel bought him a Coinola A for his birthday one year with a beautiful flower stained glass design. Later, Williams located another Coinola A identical to the one he already had, but with the front glass broken. MBSI member Lyle Merithew built a new stained glass front for it, and now the restaurant has a matching pair of Coinola A machines.

MBSI member Richard Reutlinger



A view of the interior today. The Imhof & Mukle "Commandant 2" Orchestrion stands against the angled wall. On the mezzanine above the bar are machines waiting for repairs so that they can join the machines below.



The antique cash register behind the bar.



Exterior signage that might have been seen on restaurants in the 1920s.



A Coinola X that is triggered by a remote control system.



A Coinola A machine is also on the remote system.



A Mills Violano, favorite of owner Mark Williams.

heard about the plans for the restaurant and offered to sell Williams a Wurlitzer Model I with floral stained glass. This piano is also currently only a display model, but bits and pieces continue to trickle in so that eventually Williams will be able to fill the gutted interior and hear it play. The most recent pieces to be found are a stack and spool frame.

Williams's Mills Violano originally came from Southwest (Texas or Arizona, he thinks). He was pretty sure the Violano had not been operated often when he purchased it from a woman in southern California. What he was sure of is that her husband had spent a lot of time and effort restoring it. The probable reason for its lack of play was return springs that had been factory mis-installed on many of the string lifter fingers making it sound awful. Virtually no song could be tolerated, Williams said, because the fingers would not reliably pick the right note. Once he corrected this

issue, it played quite well and became part of the collection.

An Imhof & Mukle "Commandant 2" Orchestrion is the star of the show. Provided to the restaurant by the David William Allen and William Nobel Lee trusts, the previous owners wanted the machine to find a home where it would be appreciated and on public display. Originally built as a violin piano similar to the Weber Unika, by time the Orchestria Palm Court received it, the Commandant 2 had been rebuilt as an O-roll orchestrion with added percussion. It is showcased against an angled wall that brings it into view as soon as you enter the restaurant.

"We wanted a certain minimum number of different machines for variety," Williams said. "One A-roll, one O-roll, one APP-roll, one Violano, plus two jukeboxes (one with correct equalization for acoustically recorded discs, the other for electrically recorded ones). But as we acquired

machines and had trouble finding parts to get them going, others would present themselves. For example, while trying to get the Wurlitzer I from Richard (Reutlinger) going, a Wurlitzer piano with violin pipes came along at a bargain price. Turns out it had been completely and wonderfully restored by Kent Goodman, and has been a reliable and enjoyable performer."

The restaurant now features eight pneumatic machines, three A-roll, two O-roll and three APP-roll. Of the eight machines, four are functional. The rest are in various stages of restoration.

The decision to put the machines where they were accessible to the public has proved to create no problems whatsoever. All the guests seem to appreciate and respect them, Williams said. Keeping up with the maintenance on all the machines is a challenge that sometimes goes unmet, he said, but no additional work is created because of the restaurant patrons.

One decision that has helped keep



Members of the The Greater Bay Area Costumer's Guild and a Model T Club enjoy lunch in period costume while listening to music from the same era.



A closeup of the art glass on the Electramuse.



A Wurlitzer Violin piano.



An Electramuse jukebox.



Eventually, the machines on the mezzanine will be moved to make room for more dining space.

the machines in good shape is the choice to have all of the machines remote-controlled rather than coin-operated. Some machines still have operable coin slots, but Williams said he doesn't encourage people to use them. He admits this takes some of the fun out of it for the customer, but in the end it was a good trade-off.

The control box for the machines is based on an old Strowger-type phone switch and a timer, along with neon indicator lights. It triggers one machine, waits for that machine to stop, then starts the next one after an adjustable delay. The circuit is designed with an interlock so that if one machine gets jammed, neither the self-timer nor the operator can advance the control panel.

"It's a feature that comes into use more often than I'd like!" Williams said.

The music isn't the only attraction at the Orchestria Palm Court restaurant. The food is certainly deserving of your attention, as well. The menu features steaks, salads, salmon, pasta dishes and delightful desserts.

"Our food choices nearly all have some health component to them," Williams said. "The cream puffs are made

with high-fiber flour, butter and cream from grass-fed cows, and organic Omega-3 eggs. Our rib-eye steak uses grass-fed beef. Our greens are organic. The basic idea is that you can enjoy all the rich foods you crave, but not clog your arteries while doing so."

Williams, unlike most Americans, has a distinctly different perspective on food acquired during a period of his life working in Italy at a company called Olivetti. He was exposed to the European dining experience where all meals, whether they were eaten in a high-end restaurant or at a friend's dining table, were served in several courses and prepared fresh with local ingredients. Eating in Europe, Williams said, is a major part of life not just a way to fuel your body. He enjoyed the no hurry attitude and found restaurant patrons would often stay for three hours or more at a table. Food, tips and taxes were all bundled right into the bill, so there was no worrying about how much to tip a waiter. It freed people to just enjoy the meal, he said.

The dining experience is very much the same at the Orchestria Palm Court. Tables don't have a single waiter. You order at the back bar and your food is

brought to you by the next available server. Tips and taxes are included in the bill and you pay at the back bar when you are ready to leave.

The service concept is very unique, in that we want people to hang around with no pressure to leave," Williams said. "There isn't a waiter hovering over them with a check. Most people seem to 'get it,' and some stay around for several hours enjoying music and conversation long after the food is done with. Possibly exactly the way it happened 100 years ago, which is just what we had in mind." ■

The Orchestria Palm Court restaurant is located at 27 E William St, between 1st and 2nd Sts, in the South First Area (SoFA) of downtown San Jose. It is within walking distance of several theaters and art museums.

Telephone
(408) 288-5606

Email
info@orchestriapalmcourt.com

Website
www.orchestriapalmcourt.com

Congratulations Volunteers!



(L to R): Michele Marinelli, Guinness Collection Curator, Bill Wineburgh, Carolee Wineburgh, Martin (Shep) Steenbock and Linda S. Moore, Morris Museum Director. Not pictured are MBSI members Myra Efinger and Bob Kussner.

Volunteer docents were recognized at the annual Morris Museum Volunteer Awards Luncheon on March 31, 2014. Several MBSI members are volunteer docents for The Murtoth

D. Guinness Collection of Mechanical Music and Automata and provide live demonstrations throughout the year at the museum in Morristown, NJ. MBSI members Bill & Carolee Wineburgh

were recognized as "Guinness Volunteers of the Year." MBSI member Martin (Shep) Steenbock, Myra Efinger and Bob Kussner were recognized for exceeding 100 hours of volunteer work.

WE WANT YOUR STORY!

Every mechanical musical instrument has a tale to tell. Share the history of people who owned your instrument before you, or the story of its restoration, or just what makes it an interesting piece. Send stories via email to russell@irondogmedia.com or mail your story to Iron Dog Media, 3420 Edgewood Drive, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401





The rise of The Phoenix

Or how to rebuild a burnt music box case

Story and photos by Jonathan Hoyt

When it arrived, I first thought “Is this restorable?” and then, “How much do they love this?”

I had just finished unwinding the shrink wrap from a music box that, to me, looked more like a charred piece of firewood pulled from a fireplace the morning after a dark, cold night. The music box in question was an upright 13 5/8” Symphonion. I nicknamed it The Phoenix, after the legendary birds that at the end of their life-cycle build a nest of twigs which then ignite to burn

both the bird and nest reducing them to ashes. From the ashes rises a new, young phoenix ready to live again. I thought this music box deserved that type of second chance at life as well.

The music had been recovered from inside a house that caught fire and the music box itself was on fire at one point. More than half of the music box case was charred. The fire burned through the veneer and into the base wood. The top door was burned completely through and the

veneer had delaminated and started to burn on the bottom door. In addition, water used to put out the fire and resulting steam loosened all the music box’s joints, damaged the base and warped the disc holders. The case got hot enough that the sap in the wood along with the finish turned to liquid and ran down the case sticking to all metal parts. In short, if you only gave it a passing glance it certainly looked like quite a mess.

I, however, was prepared to look



The charred case when it arrived after being pulled out of a house fire.



The burned area around the coin slot.



Removing the burned wood with a chisel.

as closely as possible to see what I could save and what would need to be rebuilt. The case was certainly in very poor condition, but the music box case as a whole was deemed salvageable since the main structure still had enough strength to rebuild from. This was good because it eliminated the need to create new forms to build the bentwood case, which would have created its own complications.

When I brought the case home, it was immediately banished to the outdoors until the campfire smell lessened. During this time, I took the opportunity to do further inspection. I found the fire had burned about 3/16-inch into the main case and had softened the underlying unburned pine wood. I knew this would make the reconstruction more challenging as I would not be able to use traditional methods of furniture construction or glue because the remaining surface would not be strong enough to bond to fresh wood.

I decided to rebuild the music box as a boat builder might repair a damaged boat. Using a chisel and scraper, I worked to remove the fire-damaged wood and then I used a steel wire brush to remove any remaining wood that lacked the needed structural integrity for the next steps.

At this point, I was able to move the case into my attached workshop garage as the remaining fire smell was much less noticeable. After using a bandsaw to create a thick pine veneer, I used marine-grade epoxy to bond it to the case. This served both to



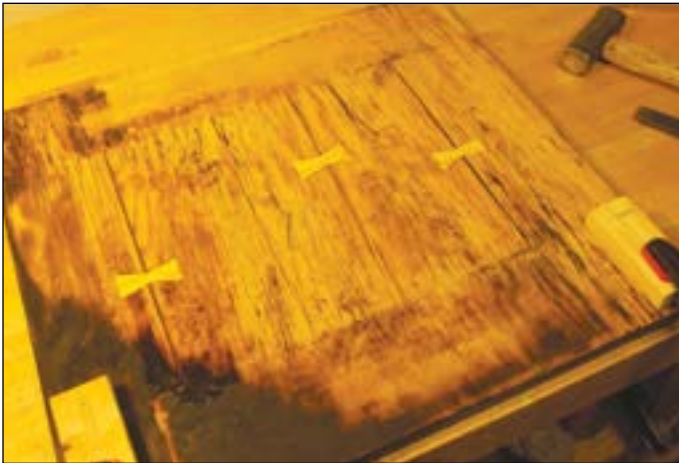
A detail shot showing the damage caused to the base by the fire.

stabilize the underlying wood as the water thin epoxy was able to soak into the damaged wood and to also bond to the fresh pine top. The case now roughly had its original shape and thickness restored and of equal importance it also had a fresh pine substrate that veneer would adhere to.

Since the upper door was a complete loss, I fabricated a new one using 1/4-inch plywood for the panel substrate (for stability). It was inserted using tongue and groove into a pine frame built with bridal joinery. This type of construction would be solid and stable for longevity. Proper build was

very important as the case might experience more humid or dry conditions in the future depending on where in the country it might be located. If not accounted for, normal wood contraction (dryness) and swelling (humidity) in addition to seasonal temperatures might literally tear the case apart over time.

Fortunately, the bottom door fared better due its construction and having received very little fire damage. The door was still flat and had mainly suffered cracking due to rapid wood expansion and contraction during the fire. To complete the repair on this



The bottom door still showing the charred edge, with newly installed butterfly joints.



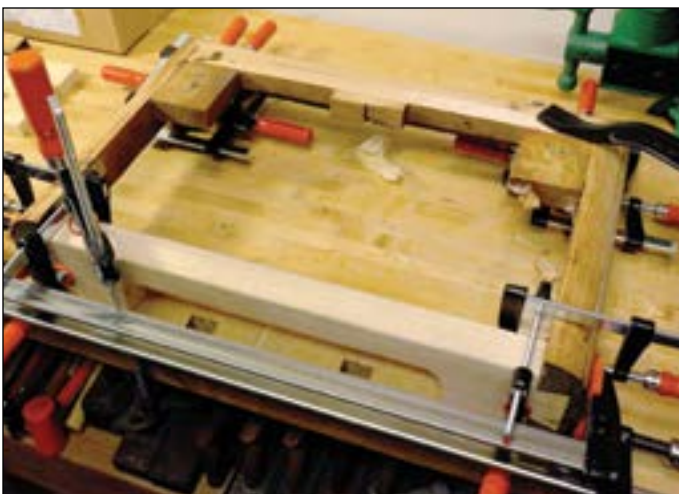
The completed bottom door, ready to be veneered.



The base as received. The hide glue and supporting blocks that held it together have separated.



The curved top of the case, showing a pine wood substrate epoxied to the underlying wood.



The rebuilt base before veneering showing a back support built and dovetailed into the assembly.



The front door, being glued to fit the case.



One view of the curved top of the case, prior to veneering.



A new pine wood substrate being applied using epoxy and wood cauls.



Another view of the case showing the new pine substrate prior to oak veneer being applied.



New matching oak fascia were bandsaw cut and planed. These go inside the case on either side of the bedplate.



In this picture you can see where the veneer was steam bent over curves.



A view of the veneered door prior to refinishing.



In this side view, you can see the flow of the wood grain over two pieces of veneer.



Grain direction is a frequently overlooked item in modern furniture that is usually present in antiques and handmade furniture and can have a strong visual impact. The original charred door that was unable to be salvaged is seen in the background.

door, I needed only to replace an edge, insert butterfly joints to stabilize the cracks and seal them with epoxy.

The water and heat generated during the fire caused the music box base to become separated from the upper case meaning it would require a complete rebuild. Using the original as a model, I built a new version and this time included structural blocks and an oversized dovetail to its back for extra strength.

Other items addressed during the rebuild were new fascia boards on either side of the bedplate, a coin box, new components for the disc storage rack, and several areas repaired in the main case that had nearly burned through.

All parts were then sanded to original dimensions. Sanding also served to eliminate any warping that had occurred during the fire.

Earlier in the project, I had selected several matched, sequential quarters-awn Red Oak veneer sheets that were the best match to the original look. The needed shapes were set out on the veneer with careful attention paid to grain direction and natural flow balanced with the best visually pleasing pattern of the wood grain. I believe grain direction is a frequently overlooked item in modern furniture but it is usually present in antiques and handmade furniture and it can have a strong visual impact.

When the case was returned from finishing, the transformation of The Phoenix was complete. It had risen from the ashes to become a beautifully restored version of its former self.

It is hard to imagine a case that started in worse condition, but it proved restorable with enough care. ■



The restored baseplate and coin slot.

WOODWORMS



Evidence of woodworm damage are exterior holes in the wood and sawdust on the floor.

Notes from a novice's notebook

By Sally Craig

What do music boxes, carousel animals, and butter churns have in common with one another? The answer: WOOD!

One day I lifted a music box from its normal resting place, only to feel a spot in the wood crumble under my

fingers. Under close examination, I realized that the wood was a honeycomb, the result of a previous meal enjoyed by my resident "woodworms." The woodworms were unexpected, uninvited, and unseen guests. As I investigated further, I found an entire

corner of my treasured music box had been reduced to a pile of sawdust.

First, I cried...then I let my fingers do the walking and called my local exterminator. He asked me to stop by and bring a pile of "sawdust" with me. Ironically enough, about two weeks

later I got a call about a carousel camel I'd had for sale, with an unusual twist to the normal sales routine: This camel was to replace a camel which "fell apart" in shipment to another buyer.

The camel that had fallen apart was the unwary victim of woodworm destruction. At that point, I felt both good and bad about my music box episode. True, the box was damaged, but I had fair warning that this could become a major problem with my carousel collection!

Researching further, I found that woodworms are larva forms of a variety of flying insects. The larva stage results from the female insect's depositing her eggs into old, rotten, soft or uncured wood. They lie dormant for months, hatch to larva stage, then start eating their way through inside the wood, forming honeycomb tunnels under the painted surface undetected by human eyes. When they reach the paint or lacquered top surface of the wood, they stop and change direction, re-entering the wood without breaking through the surface. As a result, there is a virtual shell of top paint or lacquer left intact, while below the surface destruction continues undetected.

The larva stage can go on with the insects eating away at the wood for 10 to 30 years! Finally, the insect emerges as an adult female who bores through the outer paint or lacquer surface leaving tell-tale signs of small piles of sawdust and flies away. Within a few days or weeks, she seeks another vulnerable piece of wood where she will lay her eggs and process starts all over again. All you can see from the outer surface is a small pin hole size "bore" mark. This type of mark is looked upon favorably as a sign of age or "distress" mark in antiques. Many furniture refinishers or manufacturers try to achieve this look of old, or "distressed" wood.

Be aware! This antique look may be a simple sign of woodworm activity. My music box, a butter churn and carousel horse got a good examination for signs of small, external round boreholes that signaled woodworm invasion. If I found one, I took an ice pick and a magnifying glass to



Woodworm larvae can eat for 10-30 years before becoming adults.



Damage from woodworms can be quite extensive.



An adult furniture beetle lays eggs before leaving the wood.

determine the damage. My exterminator suggested the ice pick to gently probe the area of the wood around the hole, under which you will find a honeycomb effect in the wood where the worms have been at work. The painted surface will remain intact. The ultimate damage is destruction of the wood in the area, from a small confined spot to the entire wooden object.

Once damage is discovered, the object must be fumigated to kill the larvae present. Fumigation does not destroy the object. It can be placed in a chamber at the exterminators, or in a plastic tent at home to contain a larger item. If done by the exterminator, they assure you of the larva destruction.

Repair must be done with replacement of wood in the region of destruction, or you eventually will end up with a pile of sawdust!

Remember the adult female emerges and lays eggs into other wood objects. From my experience and that of others, these infestations occur most often in wood furniture, music box cases or carousel animals in damp climates such as Florida or Mexico. Shipping crates made from junk wood, old antiques with junk wood on their unfinished sides (such as backs of picture frames, pianos, country furniture, etc.), or any other old wood objects are possible sites where the female can deposit eggs undetected.

The majority of antique wooden objects are "safe" and "sound". But I think everyone should investigate antiques "holes" the next time you buy a treasure to place in your home. ■



If damage is too extensive, replacement of wood may be necessary.

Resources for exterminating or fumigating

- Erlich, Nationwide offices, (800) 837-5520
- Western Pest Services, (East Coast) (800) 544-2847
- California Cotton Fumigating Co. (310) 834-3535

Insects can also be killed by freezing in a freezer. Remember to remove all metal pieces before using this method. Insects can also be killed by heat.

Products available in the U.S. and England at Home Depot and Lowes

- Xylophene
- Rentokil
- Cuprinol - wood hardener
- Pyrethrin - Aerosol in trash bag
- Vapona - no-pest strip used in a trash bag. Use two doses one month apart.

Experiencing the Spectrum of Mechanical Music

Confessions of a Mechanical Music Junkie

By Ron Bopp

It was a mere 40-plus years ago that I became entranced with a Western-Electric ‘nickelodeon’ advertised by a dealer in Joplin, MO. I had just finished a two-year stint with the United States Air Force at Whiteman Air Force Base (Knob Knoster, MO) and was headed to Joplin, MO, where I eventually established an OB/GYN practice and operated it for 23 years. The time of my first infatuation was late 1972 and the dealer was Bill Pohl who had a basement full of coin and reproducing pianos. My purchase of that Western-Electric “Mascot” coin piano was the beginning of not only a long-time friendship with Bill and his wife, Billy, but also an interesting relationship with the hobby of mechanical music.

Since that time, I have learned, there are many different ways to experience our interesting hobby. Most collectors start with a desire and then the acquisition of their first piece. It could be a player piano, a musical box, a coin-operated piano or perhaps, some sort of mechanical organ. In my case it was a pump organ (Figure 1) acquired with the help of the husband of a patient I had treated. In gratitude for my care of his wife he gave me a 200-year old medical book and told me he operated an antique store in Kirksville, MO. A short while later I visited his store and was fascinated by two coin-operated musical boxes on his back wall – he mentioned he had acquired these from a dealer in Los Angeles (the Hathaway and Bowers firm). One thing led to another and soon I acquired the pump organ. This was in 1969.

My personal experience of enjoying the spectrum of mechanical music can be broken into several parts:

- Seeing and Listening



(Figure 1) The author with pump organ in 1969.

- Obtaining
- Displaying
- Writing
- Presenting
- Leading
- Participation

It was not enough for me to just buy a musical box or coin-operated piano. I was fascinated by the history, the mechanism and the relationship with others made by the same manufacturer. The following are just some of the many examples of what I have done (and what new collectors can do as well) with the hobby.

Seeing and Listening

Forty years ago the chance to view collections, especially large ones, was very limited. Today MBSI members

can enjoy such large collections as those housed by the Sanfilippos, Gilsons or even the Merle Norman building in California. Until recently we could even enjoy a great collection in Boca Raton, FL, but that has been sold off.

I got my start by viewing a small private collection of Donald McDonald in suburban St. Louis. Later it was Paul Eakins’ Musical Museum, just a stone’s throw from Busch Stadium in St. Louis (Figure 2). Those were the days. I was mesmerized by Donald McDonald’s upright Link piano with the maze of the intertwining roll. How did that work? What kept the paper from tangling up? Many, many questions that would come answered as I became involved with the hobby.



(Figure 2) Gay Nineties Museum in St. Louis, MO.

Paul Eakins' museum—now that was something for the ears and eyes. A couple of years after its inception it was sold. I had received a sale list and the price was only \$8,000+ for "Sadie Mae" the large Gavioli trumpet organ (later to be correctly identified as a Style 28A deKleisti military band organ). I wanted that organ but on an OB/GYN resident's salary of \$7,000 per year it was not possible.

Over the years I observed and enjoyed many more collections of mechanical instruments. Many of the readers will remember Ben and Mary Lilien (Figure 3). Mary was from the little town of Seneca, MO, which is just a few miles south of Joplin. In the mid-1970s I bonded with the Liliens and stayed with them on my frequent trips to Los Angeles to attend medical meetings. They would introduce me to some of the great Southern California collectors and I had chance to view even more collections including the fabulous collection of Bill and Patsy Allen who live atop a small mountain in overlooking Los Angeles (Lemon



(Figure 3) Mary and Ben Lilien in 1983.

Heights in Santa Ana).

By this time I was really getting interested in the hobby.

Obtaining

As I mentioned before, my first coin-operated piano came from Bill Pohl. It was neat having a self-playing

Some items would require just cleaning and small amounts of maintenance but others would require a complete rebuild.



(Figure 4) Peerless Elite coin piano.



(Figure 5) Cremona G in a burl walnut case.

piano that all you had to do was insert a nickel. Others followed – more than 40 large automatic musical instruments. We never had the room for all of them so often one left when another one entered.

Early on I acquired four coin pianos that I described earlier in “The Hunt” section of MBSI’s journal (*Mechanical Music* January/February 2010). The acquisition of the Peerless 44, Peerless Elite (Figure 4), Fox PianoTainer and the Standard coin piano just sparked more interest.

Later Mary Jo and I were in California for a meeting and we visited American International Galleries. Our host was a delightful Bonnie Tekstra. Wandering around the showroom we came across three coin-pianos side by side: a Cremona G (Figure 5), Western Electric keyboard, and a Seeburg X Expression piano. We purchased all three – one year at a time.

Some items would require just cleaning and small amounts of maintenance but others would require a

complete rebuild. There are many good restorers in our hobby—I used Jerry Biasella (Chicago Heights, IL) and Terry Haughawout (Bloomdale, OH), and again made new hobby friends.

Our favorites and the two that we adored and held on to for the longest time were the Weber Unika (Figure 6) and the 52-key Gebr. Bruder fair organ. Both were made in Waldkirch, Germany and the music was just fantastic.

What instrument would I like to get back? A Seeburg X Expression piano mentioned above. Jerry Biasella restored this and it held a prominent place in my office for several years. What made it so desirable in my mind was that this was an expression piano that played from a drop of a nickel. My hearing has never been good enough to discriminate the multiple levels of loud/soft that emanated from the AMPICO or Duo-Art pianos but the five levels of expression from the Seeburg X were quite adequate - all for the

drop of a nickel.

A visit to Bill and Patsy Allen’s hill-top home in the mid-1970s brought me face to face with my first band organ, that being a Wurlitzer 125 Military Band Organ (Figure 7, Page 32). We held onto that organ for seven years until replacing it with another. It came from a stagecoach stop in Oregon to Allen’s to our collection to St. Louis and now is housed in a Chicago area warehouse. Used for many occasions, it traveled from organ rally to organ rally and even fund raising events (Figure 8, Page 32).

As we have downsized, we kept just three of our favorite instruments since our small Florida house doesn’t allow room for any more.

Displaying

Showing off your instruments is a great way to get involved with the hobby – not only can you proudly enjoy your collection but you also educate your like-minded members and visitors alike. Over our years of collecting



(Figure 6) Weber Unika Salon Piano.



(Figure 7) Wurlitzer 125 at Bill Allen's house.

we have had two 'music rooms' where our instruments sat, ready to play at a moment's notice. After acquiring an American Photoplayer, Style 20 the opportunity arose for me to play and entertain along with silent films (Figure 9, Page 33). Playing the Photoplayer gave us chance to learn and appreciate the life of Charlie Chaplin.

While our collection was always limited to less than a dozen instruments on display there have been many in this country that have been much bigger, and again, a chance to learn and enjoy the hobby.

Writing

This is where the real fun for me began and is an excellent method for members to expand on their knowledge of their favorite instrument(s). Once I would acquire a coin-piano or other mechanical device I looked up as much as I could find about the history, mechanism and provenance and then proceed to write an article that would



(Figure 8) Wurlitzer 125 and Charlie Chaplin



(Figure 9) The author at the Style 20 Fotorplayer.



(Figure 10) 15½-inch Regina and Charlie Chaplin

be interesting for others. Early on we were fortunate to purchase a couple of Peerless coin pianos (a Peerless 44 and the Peerless Elite mentioned earlier). This led to two articles in the early 1980s.

Belonging to several like-minded societies gave me chance to widen my distribution of articles. Over 33 years I have been lucky enough to have had over 35 entries in the field of mechanical musical instruments into the journals of MBSI, AMICA, FOPS (Key Frame) and even a couple of medical publications.

Writing these articles has led to larger projects, that of book authoring. In 1995, the organ rally committee of the Mid-America Chapter of the MBSI decided to expand its motto ("The Mid-Am Chapter has more Fun") by producing a photo album book of the organs of all its members. Editing and producing this publication was my first attempt into publishing a book. In 1998, after five years of research into the history of the American band organ, I wrote and published *The American Carousel Organ – An Illustrated Encyclopedia*.

Recently I completed a third organ book, *Fantastic European Organs*, a compilation of fair, dance and Dutch street organs I have been privileged to photograph in several European trips (more on that later). On-line publishing firms now make it easier to publish, and print in smaller numbers, without breaking the bank to do so.

Presenting

Presenting an audio-visual program is the ultimate way of expressing your knowledge and providing information and entertainment for others. I became enthralled with the concept after attending my first MBSI annual meeting in Los Angeles (1977) and watching Dr. Robert Miller give a presentation on the Gavioli & Cie. I said to myself: "I can do that!"

And I did – over the years I put together more than 30 presentations ranging from workshops to after dinner entertainments. Many were multi-media and some required the use of multiple projectors. My most memorable one was entitled "A Fife,

A Drum and A Flag”, an endeavor that required the use of five projectors on three screens plus two spotlights. In order to properly do it I was seated six feet off the ground on risers. I received a standing ovation after completing it. It was the banquet entertainment for the 1983 Annual Meeting of the MBSI in Philadelphia.

In 1986 I presented a one screen (on three projectors to give animation to the character) show “How Much is that Music Box in the Window.” It featured Mary Jo, acting and dressed as Charlie Chaplin, going through the various styles of musical boxes (Figure 10). We used an antique store owned by one of my patients for much of the filming. That was given at the MBSI annual meeting in Sarasota, FL.

It is interesting how the mechanism of giving a program has changed over the years. It is much easier these days. In the 1980s it involved using a slide projector with trays of slides. If I wanted sound I had to either manually advance the slides or use a fancy synchronization device. Today it is much easier to put together a program using Microsoft’s Power Point program and a video projector. The downside is

that there are no more multiple screen programs given.

Leading

Another way to enjoy the hobby and help others to do the same is taking them on trips to Europe to view mechanical organs and other devices within our hobby. In 1996 I started the Bumbling Bruder Tour and have continued to do so every three years. The tours coincide with the tri-annual celebration of the Waldkirch “Orgelfest,” normally held in June. In 2014 it will be our seventh tour. Initially 44-48 people went on the tour but it has been pared down to 26-30 people for ease of assessing collections. We have been fortunate to enter collections and museums in England, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Switzerland.

Participation

Intertwined with all the above aspects of experiencing mechanical music is the participation with the organization that embraces it. Whether it is working on a chapter committee, chairing a position with the national organization or becoming an officer, it all adds to the enjoyment

of the hobby. Other members just add to the enjoyment and knowledge of owning one or many pieces.

I have been fortunate as I have not only participated on a chapter level (Mid-Am Chapter...remember, they “have more fun”) but also as a trustee and president. Many positions go begging for members to step forward and participate. Do this and you will not be sorry.

Summary

My experience with the hobby of mechanical musical instruments has been more than just owning an instrument. It is easy to learn more and then let your fellow members learn what you have. Whether it is authoring an article or putting together a Power Point program for a chapter meeting (better yet, for a workshop at an annual meeting) you not only enhance other members knowledge of the subject but you get a sense of satisfaction of knowing you accomplished more, and learned more.

I hope this article will stimulate others to write, produce or participate . . . I, personally, will look forward to enjoying theirs. ■

WE WANT YOUR STORY!

Every mechanical musical instrument has a tale to tell. Share the history of people who owned your instrument before you, or the story of its restoration, or just what makes it an interesting piece. Send stories via email to russell@irondogmedia.com or mail your story to Iron Dog Media, 3420 Edgewood Drive, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401





Mason & Hamlin, a short history

By Hendrik H. Strengers

In 1854 two brilliant idealists Henry Mason and Emmons Hamlin founded the Mason & Hamlin Company in Boston, MA.

The father of Henry was Lowell Mason, born Jan. 24, 1792 Medfield, MA, and died August 11, 1872 Orange, NJ. Lowell Mason was self taught, spending 20 years of his life in doing nothing but playing all manner of musical instruments. When he was 20 years old, he went to Savannah, GA, as clerk in a bank. He formed, with the help of F.L. Abel, a collection of psalm tunes, published by the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston in 1822. Lowell later moved to Boston, taking a general charge of music in the churches there in 1827. He established the Boston Academy of music in 1832. He visited Europe first in 1837 examining the

methods of teaching in Germany. His degree of Doctor in Music was granted by New York University in 1835. He was the composer of "Nearer, my God, to Thee."

Lowell Mason's other son, William, was born Jan. 24, 1829 in Boston, and died July 14, 1908 in New York. William Mason received a formal education in music, had a successful debut at Boston in 1849, and studied at Leipzig, Germany in 1849 under Moscheles and Richter and at then studied at Weimar under Liszt. He founded chamber-music concerts with Theodore Thomas in 1854 and received the degree of Doctor in Music from Yale University in 1872. In 1890 he played the organ in a concert where Arthur Nikisch presented the piano.

When Henry Mason, who shared his father's lifelong dedication to music, met mechanic/inventor Emmons



William Mason, brother of Henry and son of famous hymn composer Lowell Mason.



Hamlin they decided to form a partnership for the purpose of manufacturing a new musical instrument with the name “organ harmonium.” Hamlin had discovered a way to “voice” organ reeds so they could sound like a clarinet, a violin or other musical instruments.

Henry Mason had graduated from a German University and only had a small bit of operating capital but he and Hamlin were determined to produce only the very best instruments. The partnership was successful and products soon were in high demand. Mason & Hamlin then developed the “American Cabinet Organ” in 1861. In 1867, the American Cabinet Organ won first prize at the Paris Exhibition, beating out larger well-known European companies and shocking the music world. Continued wins at the Paris Exhibition established the company’s reputation for excellence.

The manufacture of pianos was added in 1881 to the Mason & Hamlin catalog.

Henry Lowell Mason Jr. (1823-1885), son of Henry Mason, played the violin and studied the theory of music under John K. Paine at Harvard. He became president of the firm in 1869 and held that position until his death. The company introduced Harold Bauer (1873-1951) to the American public,



as well as the Dutch pianist Martinus Sieveking (1867-1950) who toured the U.S. in 1892 with great success.

There was a combination with the Cable Company (1911-1924). Ampico offered their action in Mason & Hamlin pianos in 1916 and Ampico acquired the Mason & Hamlin Company in 1922 for \$2 million.

The company was absorbed into the American Piano Company

(1924-1930), which was purchased by the Aeolian Company (1930-1932). ■

Sources:

- Craig H. Roell, *The piano in America, 1890-1940*, The University of North Carolina Press, 1989
- Alfred Dolge, *Men who have made piano history* (Vestal Press, reprint)
- <http://www.masonhamlin.com>
- Collection H. Strengers

A barrel-operated beauty

Restored Dienst & Co. orchestrion entertains again

By Victor Lia

The orchestrion I own was made by E. Dienst & Co, founded by August Eduard Dienst. He was a pioneer manufacturer in what was later to become the world's busiest city in the automatic musical instrument trade, Leipzig-Gohlis, Germany.

About 25 years ago, I acquired the orchestrion through a good friend who had no desire to put the time nor money into its restoration. The piece was a mess and needed so much work that I thought it might not be able to be restored. It sat in my workshop for more than three years before I began any type of restoration activity. It had so many different issues to be addressed, that I found myself on a daily basis examining its condition to determine how I would actually restore it.

I started by disassembling and removing the interior mechanism from the case. I then proceeded with an examination of the case itself. Most of the exterior of the case was so badly damaged that it needed to be veneered and refinished. I saved what I could and hand-carved whatever parts were missing or severely damaged. The gold artwork and the beautiful coloring on the lower panel was done by me.

I then addressed the interior mechanism. This included the harp, drum, cymbal, triangle and both drums. The interior mechanism was dismantled and restored piece by piece. The cast iron harp was gold-leafed, after which was sent out to be hammered and tuned. The drum received new skins, the cymbal and triangle were cleaned. The exterior coin slot was nicked.

The biggest challenge in all of this turned out to be the two drum barrels.





Both barrels sustained about 5 percent pin damage as well as actual barrel damage. With 5 percent of the pins missing on the barrels, the challenge became finding the correct tempered pin to replace those that were missing. I contacted several individuals who had metal businesses and asked for them to search out a pin for these barrels. Unfortunately, they were unable to find anything that would be appropriate. One day while visiting my mother, I noticed that she had a box of old tempered bobby pins. Upon examining them, they were the perfect size and shape! Problem solved.

The next step in the repairing the barrels were the barrels themselves. I now had to figure out, how I am going to restore these barrels and not affect the sound nor allow moisture to penetrate them. I had done much research and found several individuals who used varnish/lacquer but their success was short lived in keeping moisture out of the barrel. After much thought, the solution turned out to be a fiberglass resin. Coating the barrels was time consuming but successful. After 25 years, no moisture has penetrated the barrels and they have held their form. Each barrel has nine songs – polkas and waltzes. The second barrel is stored in the compartment located below the glass.

The exterior glass doors were sent to a friend in Buffalo, NY. All of the artwork on the glass is reverse painting, which is very difficult to duplicate.



Historical Note

The firm of E. Dienst & Co. was founded in 1871, producing and selling barrel-operated pianos and orchestrions through the late 1890s.

Later, the firm produced pneumatic instruments using a perforated roll. It was one of the few German makers to operate sales outlets in the United States, in New York and Chicago.

– Source: *Encyclopedia of Automatic Musical Instruments* by Q. David Bowers

Fortunately, when I acquired the orchestrion the original glass still had the original print on it, although faded and flaking away, he was able to beautifully restore them.

As each section was being completed, I would put the orchestrion back together. When it was completed, the first thing I did was put a nickel in the newly nickeled slot to listen to the songs.

What a joy! A number of years later, the son-in-law of the former owner of this piece brought over the top piece. No one knew that the top piece ever existed. This came as a huge surprise, and one that really finished off the orchestrion with flair. ■

Please feel free to contact me should you want further information:

Victor Lia (440) 526-7373





Do You Hear What I Hear?

By Dr. G. Wayne Finger

Throughout the 1800s, musical box makers continually developed new techniques to enhance and add expression to their music. Different makers developed innovative ways to provide more musical expression and play for a longer time without rewinding or song repetition.

At collection visits, collectors often demonstrate some of their special music boxes. Before playing, they often used words I was unfamiliar with to describe that type of music box. As a consequence, I didn't know what to listen for or what to look for. If you are in a similar predicament, here is a handy list of some favorite music box formats and what you can listen for when hearing them play at a demonstration:

For some types of music boxes, listen for the completeness of the music program and the variety of music:

Overture

An "Overture" music box has a program made up completely of operatic overtures. Many times they have very large diameter cylinders and fine combs with between 200 and 300 teeth. Since they have so many teeth, they can reproduce entire musical scores.

Grand Format

"Grand Format" music boxes are very large. The cylinders are sometimes 5 inches in diameter and over 18 inches long. They have a great musical range. Some play complete operatic works. Some of the largest are up to 6 feet long and some were made as exhibition pieces in beautifully detailed cases.

Longue Marche

"Longue Marche" music boxes have the ability to play music for a very long time on a single winding because of the stronger spring. Some can play two hours on a winding. Look for



multiple mainsprings, usually as many as four, working together. Listen to these music boxes over dinner or a glass of wine.

Interchangeable

"Interchangeable" music boxes have multiple cylinders which can be changed readily to provide a completely different musical program. There are different types of interchangeable machines. On an interchangeable box, the cylinder may be played on another like machine, i.e., Mermod

formats. A rechange cylinder box has cylinders that were made for that machine only, and cannot be played on any other machine.

For the following types of music boxes listen to the way the musical notes are expressed:

Sublime Harmonie

A "Sublime Harmonie" music box has two or three combs with the identical tuning. The cylinder is pinned to play the same note on each comb at the same time. As the teeth play



together, a slight dissonance is created by them because they are not exactly at the same pitch.

This dissonance adds depth to the music. Frequently one comb was made using shorter teeth than the other comb, further adding depth to each note.

Piccolo

A “Piccolo” music box has a separate treble comb tuned an octave above where the melody usually plays. This comb is used occasionally to emphasize special passages in the song or provide a counter melody. Listen for the higher pitched emphasis in the music.

Mandoline

A “Mandolin” music box has groups of between four and eight notes on the comb tuned exactly the same. This allows the performance to play

a single note repeatedly in rapid succession, as on a mandolin. Look at the cylinder closely and you will see the mandolin pinning arrangement. Listen for the beautiful mandolin effect in the music.

Piano-Forte

A “Piano-Forte” (or Forte-Piano) music box generally has two combs tuned the same but constructed so that one comb plays louder than the other. The piano comb’s teeth are thinner than the forte comb. This allows some beautiful expressive effects with quiet passages and loud passages. It also provides the ability to accent individual notes in a soft passage. Look for the two combs and listen for the effect of volume control in the music.

Alternating Tip

The “Alternating Tip” music box remains a source of lively discussion

today. In a true alternating tip music box, every other tooth is missing its tip, so it is never plucked by the comb. Some say this is to allow the “silent” teeth to resonate sympathetically with the music. Others say it was to modify a musical comb made for a 6-tune cylinder for use on a 12-tune cylinder. Listen and decide for yourself. What do you think?

Quatour

A “Quatour” music box typically has four combs providing a combination of the above characteristics. For example two of the combs could be for “sublime harmonie,” the third might be to add “piccolo” and the fourth might operate tuned bells. Different “Quatour” boxes have different combinations of features. The resultant music can be quite impressive. There are also music boxes named Quatour with only two combs and some suggest

that this name added more drama to the description of the box.

For another group of music boxes, listen to the range of instruments added to these machines. Some of these machines have levers which can turn the instruments on or off so the main melody can be better heard:

Bells

Music boxes with bells may have them hidden below the mechanism or “in view.” Listen to see if the bells are tuned or if they are of indeterminate pitch (which was more for show than for musical enhancement). See if you can find the separate comb which is used to activate the bells.

Drums and Castanets

Music boxes with drums and castanets usually have them in sight, but sometimes are hidden below the

bedplate. Listen to the music with them on and off.

Music boxes often use combinations of the above terms to describe them, because they have multiple special features built into them. A more complete description of these and many other formats are in the books, “The Musical Box – A Guide for Collectors,” by Arthur W. J. G. Ord-Hume, Schiffer Publishing Ltd. and “Cylinder Musical Box technology,” by H.A.V. Bulleid, Almar Press. Both of these books guided me in composing the summaries above.

Hear all of these types of music boxes at the 2014 MBSI Annual Meeting! One of the collections to be visited at this year’s annual meeting will demonstrate every one of the musical box formats described above.

Think of it – on the same day you

can hear and compare all of these different musical formats with your own ears.

This collection also includes disc musical boxes, a grandfather organ clock, an oil painting which contains a clock and music box, an upright Duo Art piano, an Arburo dance organ and several singing bird cages.

Three of the cylinder music boxes are from the collection of Dr. Byron P. Merrick who was the first president of MBSI.

The makers and retailers of these music boxes include Perrin Chopard, Henry Gautschi & Sons, Paillard, Mermod Freres, Nicole Freres, Ami Rivenc, Bremond and Samuel Troll & Fils. Another special feature of this collection is the Symphonion upright music box playing three discs simultaneously.

See you in October in Florida! ■



Making Time for NAWCC

By Dr. G. Wayne Finger

Opportunities to share mechanical music with other interested people are presented to each of us in many ways. Last fall, I learned from fellow MBSI members Steve Barnes and Sandy Cranfill that the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors (NAWCC) was holding a Regional Meeting close to my home in February of this year. It seemed like the perfect opportunity to demonstrate mechanical music and share the fun of attending the MBSI chapter meetings. We arranged for NAWCC to provide a complementary mart table for MBSI representatives to demonstrate some mechanical music and pass out literature. It worked really well. Alice and I staffed the table for two days. We played our Polyphon 19⁵/₈-inch disc music box hundreds of times and demonstrated how to change discs. Its slowly spinning disc was like a magnet to catch people's eye as they walked past. Sandy Cranfill brought an early keywind cylinder music box which we played many times. Of the hundreds of people that walked by, about 50 stopped to talk for several minutes and to hear the music boxes play. Many shared their fond memories of family music boxes or player pianos. Most have never heard of MBSI. We told them all about the fun attending the chapter meetings, that there was an active chapter in their region of the country, showed them the magazine and told them about this year's Annual Meeting in south Florida. About thirty wanted the handout about our MBSI Annual Meeting and about joining MBSI. I hope we soon have several new members from all over the USA and as far away as Poland!

The NAWCC is a much larger organization than MBSI, having fifteen thousand members. They love horology, clockwork mechanisms and the beauty of clocks and watches. Many of their members also own and enjoy



music boxes. Several of the NAWCC dealers brought music boxes to sell. Some also repaired music boxes. Many MBSI members are also members of NAWCC. There were about a dozen members of MBSI attending this event.

This NAWCC meeting was much different from our chapter meetings or our annual meetings. This NAWCC meeting was primarily a giant three day mart. There were about 400 mart tables full of beautiful clocks, watches, tools, etc. The sale items included six or eight disc music boxes, including Symphonion, Stella and Thorens. There were also a dozen good size cylinder music boxes and some loose movements - some working, some not. Each afternoon there were some workshops conducted while the mart continued. People were friendly and

good conversationalists. They all understood the tie-in among clocks and music boxes. One astute visitor commented, "Good music requires keeping a beat - so without timekeeping we would not have any music!"

A special thanks to Steve Barnes, Sandy Cranfill, Elaine Goldy and Norm Dolder for greeting people at the MBSI table while Alice and I went to lunch or wandered the mart to look at the wonderful clocks and watches for sale.

MBSI will be returning the favor to NAWCC this fall at our Annual Meeting in Weston, Florida, October 7 - 12. The NAWCC will be provided a complementary table at our mart. Please greet the members staffing NAWCC's table and take the opportunity to learn about clockwork mechanisms that keep time. ■

Golden Gate Chapter

*Chair: John Haskey
Reporter: John Haskey
Photos: John Haskey, Bob Caletti*

February 10, 2014 – Oakland, CA

The Golden Gate chapter meets quarterly, generally on the second Sunday of the second month of the quarter. February, 2014 found chapter members in Oakland, California at the home of Dave Corkrum.

Dave's collection and interests are varied. On the musical front he has many small Manivelle music boxes, a nice selection of cylinder boxes, and several disc music boxes. He also has a couple of street organs, a Duo-Art reproducing upright piano, and much, much, more. Additional hobbies include growing orchids, both in the house and in a greenhouse out back, and tending to salt water aquarium.

As members arrived, they dropped off their dishes for the potluck meal, then moved on to play many of the music boxes displayed throughout the house. Dave provided a main dish of meatballs. Many salads and tempting deserts rounded out the meal.

After the meal a brief meeting was held in the backyard. John Haskey led the meeting and discussed the rescheduling of the popular "Music in the Park" event at Ardenwood Historic Farm. This year the event will be held over Labor Day Weekend coinciding with the "Washington Township Rail Fair," an event that draws thousands of visitors to the park. This event will provide much more exposure for the chapter. Anyone with an instrument that would like to participate should contact Dave Corkrum who is coordinating the event.

A new member, Christine Hopwood, was introduced. Mr. and Mrs. Bob Cobb of Skokie, IL were visiting and were acknowledged.

As the owner and operator of Polyphon Musikwerke, Dave Corkrum produces 19 $\frac{5}{8}$ inch, 22 $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, and 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch discs for Polyphon music boxes



Mermod Freres Peerless Forte-Piccolo six-tune cylinder box with three interchangeable cylinders.



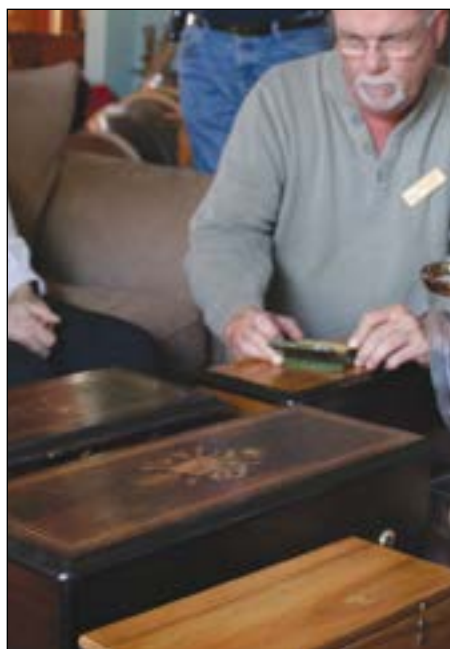
Symphonium Style 121GI 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ inch disc box with 10 saucer bells.



Dave giving a demonstration of punching a new Polyphon disc.



Dave Corkrum describing a circa 1835 keywind four tune box as Christine Hopwood looks on.



Just some of the many boxes in Dave's collection.



Potluck spread in the dining room.

in his garage and workshop. After the meeting Dave gave a short demonstration of how he punches new discs using an oversized master disc. Each of the hundreds of punches is made by hand! After completing a disc he then tests it by playing it on one of his many Polyphon music boxes.

As the day wound down, Dave demonstrated a number of music boxes in his living room including a couple of the afore mentioned Manivelles and an interesting circa 1835 keywound movement with four tunes in a plain box.

The next meeting of the Golden Gate Chapter will be held in San Jose in May.



Dave's home features musical treasures in every corner.



Chuck Schoppe and Judy Caletti examining a Duo Art Audiographic music roll.



Richard Hughes, Sandy Swirsky, Julie Hughes, Peggy Schoppe, Claudine Jones, and Lyle Merithew enjoying a beautiful winter Sunday on the front steps.



Bob Caletti and Darryl Coe chatting in Dave's living room.



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Southern California Chapter

Co-Chairs: John & Linda Birkitt

Reporter: Ardis Prescott

Photographer: Ed Cooley

February 15, 2014 – Perris, CA

Our chapter members are always looking for different locations to hold meetings so when Charlie and Hildegard Davis suggested an organ rally at the Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris, CA (just south of Riverside) we set a date in February hoping we wouldn't have rain. It turned out California is experiencing a drought this year and that made it even less likely we'd have rain...and we didn't!

There were approximately 45 MBSI members and guests in attendance for the museum's Open House event. The grounds of the museum lent itself to having monkey organs scattered around the area. Visitors were very interested in our instruments as most of them had not seen or heard them being played before.

Unfortunately, not many of our members brought instruments to be demonstrated. Robin Biggins and Ardis Prescott brought monkey organs and dressed in costume. New member Bob Smith, of Murrieta, CA, played his 33-note, MIDI-controlled organ, which currently plays 64 tunes. This was Bob's first attempt at building an organ. Long time MBSI member Mike Ames assisted Bob in the building of this organ and is assisting Bob on some new projects. Helpfulness is one of many great characteristics of MBSI members! We are so sorry we somehow missed getting a photo of Bob and his MIDI-controlled organ.

The Orange Empire Railway Museum acquires, preserves, studies, exhibits and interprets artifacts and documents of the rail transportation industry in order to educate the public on the technology, history and impact of rail transportation in Southern California and the West. The museum was founded in 1956 and has been located



Business meeting group photo.



New Member Roger De Weese demonstrates a Matchbox Manivelle.



Robin Biggins and Ardis Prescott with monkey organs.

at this site since 1958. It has become the largest railway museum in the western United States.

Pinacate, CA, now the location of the Museum, was once a supply town for the surrounding mining district it was named after. The town was

settled shortly before the California Southern Railroad was built through the area in 1882. Two buildings from the Pinacate townsite remain. The town was designated as a station in 1882 on what was to become the Santa Fe transcontinental line. The station

and section house were converted boxcars. The museum's mainline follows the original right of way.

Our members enjoyed visiting the various exhibits at the museum and had the wonderful opportunity to ride the streetcars that transport visitors between points on the Loop Line on weekends. Conductors described city transit history and technology in California. Conductors asked the children to come forward and step on the brake to blow the whistle and stop the train. Some children were leery at first but laughed with glee when the whistle blew and the train stopped! Black smoke spewed from the smoke stack as the train pulled out of the station.

Our business meeting was conducted in one of the historic buildings. We discussed locations for upcoming chapter meetings and were pleased that meeting locations are planned for the remainder of the year.

We're always pleased when our Treasurer Bob Lloyd advises that our chapter's funds are holding steady for our 2015 Annual Meeting in Torrance, CA. Bob reminded everyone to pay their chapter dues if they had not already done so. Robin Biggins gave an



Birkitt family birthday celebration.

update on our first convention planning meeting at the home of Bob and Diane Lloyd. Members volunteered to serve on various committees and we will soon schedule the first work session for making the table favors.

It was then time to celebrate a number of the Birkitt family's birthdays. Our youngest chapter member, Sarah Taylor, celebrated her 6th birthday



Awaiting the train ride.

along with several of our co-chairs' family birthdays. There were lots of sandwiches, chocolate birthday cakes and refreshments for our enjoyment.

It was an interesting and educational day! Always fun to have the opportunity to ride the trains of yesteryear! It's wonderful to see historical items so well preserved and having the opportunity to enjoy them.

Limited Time Inventory Reduction Sale

50% off most titles, including foreign shipments.

Prices shown in red reflect the reduced price



The Music Box Makers, The History of the Music Box in Ste. Croix

Jean-Claude Piguet's compilation of two separate works chronicles the development of the musical box industry in the Sainte-Croix region of Switzerland. Beginning in the early 1800s before mass communication and electricity were common and continuing through to the age of assembly lines, this fascinating story describes the erratic fortunes of the people who were involved, their companies, and the social and economic climate they endured. An outstanding and important work, originally in French, now in English.

Originally: \$77.50

Now: \$38.75 PPD U.S.A.



Cylinder Music Box Technology

Noted author and expert Anthony Bulleid presents a complete and detailed look at cylinder music boxes, their technology, history, and restoring tips. One of the most compelling books in the field. Available for the publisher's cost due to a generous gift to the MBSI.

Originally: \$13.00

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Order Online at www.mbsi.org/mart.php

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All prices here include U.S. Media Mail postage. Additional shipping charges for 1st class U.S. or airmail foreign shipments are shown on the checkout page. For other shipping options or quantity pricing, please email info2008@mbsi.org. Prices subject to change.

Southern California Chapter

Co-Chairs: John & Linda Birkitt

Reporter: Linda Birkitt

Photographers: Lowell Boehland, Ed Cooley, Dick Goetz

March 29, 2014 – Leona Valley, CA

On Saturday, March 29, 2014, members of MBSI were given a marvelous opportunity to enjoy the eclectic collection in the home of Richard and Mary Thomas. Not only was the collection eye-popping, but the lunch was very enjoyable! An uninvited guest (a Western Diamondback rattlesnake) attempted to join us for lunch, but Richard relocated it from the patio using a shovel. John Birkitt, having had extensive personal experience with rattlesnakes, was ready to greet

the snake with an untimely demise; however, some members were not comfortable with the thought of killing the snake!

After the noon luncheon the Chapter meeting was held in the Thomas' workroom/garage. Our hosts of the luncheon were ebulliently thanked for their hospitality by co-chair John Birkitt. Fifty-one members were in attendance for the meeting. Linda Birkitt, co-chair, took notes for Secretary, Ardis Prescott. Ardis, as National Membership Chair, and Robin Biggins, as Trustee, were attending the MBSI mid-year Trustees' meeting in Fort Worth, Texas.

Robin's term as MBSI Trustee will end in 2015. The Southern California Chapter of MBSI will seek a nominee from the Chapter to assure

representation from our group. Ralph Schack stated that one of the requirements for an MBSI Trustee is that the person has attended an MBSI annual meeting and has held a leadership position or office at the Chapter level. The Trustee position is a four-year term and the Trustee can be re-elected for a subsequent term. The advantages of being a Trustee are that you really learn how the organization works and you gain the opportunity to meet more of the National members. Ralph was reluctant to identify any disadvantages of being a Trustee.

Bob Lloyd, Treasurer, reported that our Chapter's finances are sound. He stated we have 150 Chapter members, of which 96 members are paid

SOUTHERN CAL | See Page 54





Richard and Reproduco (combination piano and pipe organ).



Richard and granddaughter, Mai Thomas.



Richard and Klingsor Phonograph.



Our hosts Richard & Mary Thomas



Richard and Mary Thomas family.



Collection Overview

SOUTHERN CAL | From Page 52

up in full.

Helen Chin, Transportation Chairperson for the 2015 Convention in Torrance, reported that she will need the confirmed venues which will be visited, the number of attendees using the bus service, and the scheduled dates so that she can obtain estimates on bus service costs. Robin Biggins and Don Henry will be working with Helen Chin to accomplish this task.

Charlie Davis, Workshop Chairperson, has contacted all Chapter Chairs asking for workshop presenters for the 2015 Convention. There are eleven potential presenters who will speak on a variety of topics, one of whom was identified by Charlie as being MBSI Trustee, Howard Sanford.

New business included the welcoming of four new members to our Chapter: Joel and Kathy Feldman from Brentwood are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on June 14, 2014; and, Greg and Chris Hopwood from

Morgan Hill, CA. (FYI Robin Biggins' birthday is also June 14.) Diane and Bob Lloyd recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

The next Chapter meeting will be April 26 at the home of Jerry Pell and Diane Minzey in Wrightwood, CA. The Chapter Christmas party will be December 20 and will be hosted by the "Redlands group."

Anita Lichtman reported there will be a memorial service for MBSI member, Leslie Manning, on June 14, 2014, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., at the Magic Castle where Leslie was a member. Contact Anita Lichtman for further details.

Ed Cooley sadly announced that Jack and Pat Hibbard's son was recently diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and that Jack and Pat are caring for his two girls. Any cards or notes to the Hibbards would be greatly appreciated.

Richard Thomas told the members that he and Mary moved to Leona Valley to downsize from La Canada.

However, neither of them could find anything they could do without so they built a 1,299 square foot "guest house" for their collections, keeping everything from before and adding to it as well. Rich then introduced his 16-year-old granddaughter, Miai Thomas, an accomplished pianist, who played her original award winning composition for our members, as well as a composition by Ravel. Miai later told us she was inspired to compose this piece (initially for "no reason") because she needed a reason in order to present her piece for national competition. The composer, DeBusey, created a piece to memorialize his daughter, Claudette, who preceded him in death. From this story, Miai developed a rationale for her composition.

The Chapter meeting was closed at 2:45 p.m. and the members returned to enjoy the musical presentation by Miai Thomas and to peruse the Thomas' collections. A grand time was had by all with the last guests leaving at about 6 p.m.

STANTON'S SPRING MUSIC AUCTION

Located at 1025 S. Cochran Avenue, Eaton County Fairgrounds, Charlotte, Michigan
(20 miles south of Lansing or 20 miles north of I-94 on I-69 to Exit 60 (Charlotte, Eaton Rapids/M-50), west 1/2 mile to Cochran Avenue then 1/4 mile south to the sale site on the Eaton County Fairgrounds)

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 24, 2014 – 12:00 Noon – 2:00 P.M. – Luncheon and Preview

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 24 – 2:00 P.M. – Selling Lots 1 – 299

FRIDAY MORNING, APRIL 25 – 9:00 A.M. – Selling Lots 300 – 600 (Plus a, b, c lots & unlisted items)

SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 26 – 9:00 A.M. – Selling Lots 601 – End



Another fantastic auction of automatic music machines including an impressive group of music boxes, phonographs, roller organs, Mill's Violano Virtuoso player violin, nickelodeon, jukeboxes, records, antique dolls & automatons, bird cages, rare bird clock, scientific items, toys, and so much more.

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Stanton's Auctioneers specialize in the sale of antique music machines. We are already scheduling our travel plans for the remainder of 2014, to look at and pickup collections across the United States and Canada as we plan and prepare for our November 20, 21, and 22, 2014 auction

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The Hunt

Story and Photos By Dr. G. Wayne Finger

Column Graphic by Mary Clegg



Since its introduction in 1923 the Seeburg KT special has continued as an appealing music machine. It plays a piano, bass drum, snare drum, xylophone and seven other instruments. All are housed in a compact cabinet with beautiful stained glass. It is small enough to fit in any home. It is coin operated, so visitors feel comfortable dropping in a nickel and hearing the music. It plays G rolls, which are still being recut. It has some of the best music available, both old and new.

At MBSI or AMICA meetings the KT Specials demonstrated never fail to be really fun machines. So in the early 2000s my hunt began to find one in need of restoration and then bring it back to life. Twenty years earlier the place to find project instruments had been "Antique Trader," antique auctions or an occasional visit to antique stores. In the 2000s, my time available to find new instruments and parts became limited to evenings in front of the computer.

This is the story of a several successful "hunts" which occurred between 2009 and 2012. A hunt to find an affordable KT special. A hunt to find original Seeburg parts for it and a hunt to find an expert who already had the drawings and could make any remaining parts. Amazingly, all these hunts were successful. All it took was persistence, connections and luck! Now my collection includes a restored original Seeburg KT Special.

The hunt for the instrument

In the early 2000s, most of my searching was on eBay. The search string used was "(Seeburg) (KT, nickelodeon, orchestrion, piano, pneumatic) -cd -dvd -ad -jukebox." This required the terms "Seeburg" and any one of the terms in the parentheses. It also excluded listings that were for music CDs and DVDs. It focused the results on Seeburg pneumatic instruments. After more than a year of checking weekly, a real opportunity arose. Up for auction was an original KT Special, serial number 163617. It was a basket case. It was missing the stained glass panel and frame. The entire lower section had been replaced with two electric vacuum pumps and an O roll frame. The xylophone was gone. The upper percussion shelf had about half the original instruments replaced with those made by the Player Piano



Company in the 1980s. This instrument had an interesting history. It had been played at a gubernatorial inauguration in Alabama and was still in that state. The important thing for me was its original KT Special cabinet, piano, action and the remaining internals.

Sight unseen, I bid a fraction of what a completely restored unit would cost and was the highest bidder. But was I the winner or just the biggest sucker?



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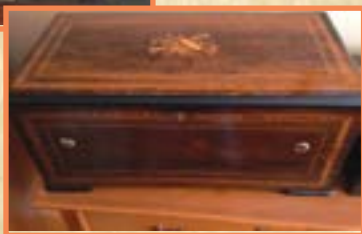
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The hunt for experts

One of the best things about our society is the people we meet at every chapter meeting and annual meeting. Mechanical music people are always ready to offer advice, share rebuild techniques and provide help. Resources like MBSI, MMD and AMICA enabled the successful hunt for people who could help.

I learned of John Wrasse by reading the MMD online and confirmed his references with MBSI members. John travels around the country moving these types of antiques and arcade machines. By waiting until he was already traveling through Mobile to Florida anyway, the moving cost was reduced substantially.

The next challenge was to replace the stained glass. We hunted for a good graphic of the original glass, so the stained glass panel could be reproduced. Luckily at our next two MBSI chapter meetings, we saw KT Specials and their owners allowed photographs. I took measurements and made straight on photos which were scaled up for our pattern. Over the next six weeks Alice and I made the stained glass panel. The frame was also missing. We needed a frame of quarter-sawn oak with “rays” that matched those in the oak case. Alan Arnold, a chapter member, is a wonder with this type of woodwork. We drove 50 miles to a special wood store. Looked over numerous pieces of raw uncut wood, and then selected a piece. We planed, trimmed and assembled an exact replacement oak frame for the stained glass. On the outside, the KT was starting to look presentable!

Next it was time for rebuilder and society member Richard Bair to work his restoration magic. He rebuilt the pneumatic stack and the percussion shelf to return them to their original configuration. Richard is a full time rebuilder living in Orlando who I met through MBSI. He has rebuilt many other Seeburg instruments including KT Specials. He already knew how a KT special would be tubed, its internal operations and had drawings or original parts of all of the internal pneumatic devices. For anything he didn't already have, he knew other



generous MBSI members who allowed him to photograph and measure their Seeburg machines. Within my limited musical machine budget, he rebuilt the pneumatic stack and the percussion shelf. Now the instrument looked like a KT special from the outside and it sounded great. However, it still had a non-original bottom section that played an O roll (instead of a G roll) and was missing the xylophone.

The hunt for original parts

In late 2010, I started using a nationwide Craigslist search app to look for Seeburg parts. This is where good fortune smiled on my KT Special. There was a listing in California for a Seeburg G roll frame, vacuum pump, motor, coin box, and control boxes - virtually the entire lower section from

a Seeburg coin piano! The parts were in rough condition, but original Seeburg. I contacted the owner and was able to buy them quite reasonably. When I opened the box, more parts arrived than had been in the photo, and they lived up to the “poor condition” described in the Craigslist ad. Rebuilder Richard Bair came to the rescue again. He painstakingly rebuilt each part. He also reconstructed a Seeburg xylophone.

Appreciating the results

In early 2012 the restoration of the KT Special was complete. Now it sounds and looks great. It plays original G rolls, has original instrumentation and has original Seeburg parts back in the lower section.

I am so appreciative for the help of

everyone who made this possible. The encouragement and help of the society membership was essential. The personal contacts, the ability to hear and to see machines in person, something that chapter meetings provide was vital for this restoration. The generous nature of the entire mechanical music community is very much appreciated.

Special thanks also goes to Richard Bair, whose expertise and attention to detail was like watching an artist at work (rwbair@gmail.com). His Seeburg project list continues to grow. He recently completed restoration of a Seeburg Greyhound piano. Richard is currently rebuilding a Seeburg G. He also has received two orders to reproduce two more Seeburg Greyhound pianos.

This was a very satisfying three year project. The hunt, the rebuild and the music each provide enjoyment along the way. I hope that you will one day take up the hunt for an original instrument and experience the satisfaction of seeing it restored and making beautiful music again. ■



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In Memoriam



Irene Hurley

I am sad to report the death of Irene Hurley of Washington, D.C. on March 19, 2014 at the age of 92. Irene worked for more than 30 years in the ticket booth at Glen Echo Park's 1921 Dentzel carousel. She was born in October 21, 1921 in Grand Island, NE the same year the carousel was installed.

Her history with the carousel, though, stretches to her youth. In an article from the Gazette newspaper four years ago Irene Hurley said, "I get a little melancholy sometimes and I think about the way it was and the way it is." She recalls singing in a packed street-car Sunday nights on her way from Georgetown to spend nights in the park dancing with World War II servicemen, stealing kisses behind buildings and

being too afraid to reach from her horse for a dangling brass ring on the carousel's old game. "I always call it 'the romantic years,'" she said of that period of her life. Her son Max

Hurley was the carousel operator at Glen Echo and arranged music for the carousel's Wurlitzer 165 organ.

She grew up on a farm south of Grand Island, being the oldest of four children. She graduated from high school in Grand Island in 1939. In 1942 she moved to the Washington, D.C., area and was employed by the War Department, Army map services, and



also worked 39 years for the Small Business Administration in Washington, D.C. She was married in Grand Island in August 1946 to George William Hurley. He preceded her in death in 1960.

She will be remembered as a kind lady with a can do spirit. The National Capital Chapter often holds summer picnics at Glen Echo and we will miss Irene. I'm sure she will be missed by all the parents and kids whom she has greeted over the years.

MBSI has also learned of the passing of Charles (Chuck) McGee, age 84, from Ontario Canada, on May 10, 2014.

Our condolences are with the families.

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Corrections

A punctuation modification inadvertently resulted in a sentence reading incorrectly in the previous issue. On Page 20, Tune Sheet #504 should have read:

"Ducommun et Cie. (E) 7663 on a six cylinder rechange box. Germain and Maurer wrote that after the death of founder Frederic William Ducommun-Girard on April 8, 1862, his two sons, Louis and Jean, ran the company until 1869 when Louis Mittendorff was taken on as a partner for the duration of five years."

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In the article regarding the Roehl Mechanical Musical Ambassador Award, it should have been noted that Jim and Sherrie Krughoff received the award in 2013.

.....

We strive to present the most accurate information possible in every issue of *Mechanical Music*.

Please send any notes regarding corrections or clarifications to the editor at russell@irondogmedia.com or call (253) 228-1634.

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Mechanical Music Mar/Apr 2014

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May 25	National Capital Chapter Annual C&O Canal Demo	Potomac, MD	Paul Senger
May 30-June 1	East Coast Chapter Meeting	Newhaven, CT	Brooks Low/Bill Wineburgh
June 14	East Coast Chapter Summer Picnic	Elysburg, PA	Bill Wineburgh
Aug. 30 - Sept. 1	Golden Gate Chapter 9th Annual Music in the Park Ardenwood Regional Park	Fremont, CA	David Corkrum
Oct. 7 - 12	MBSI 65th Annual Mtg.	Weston, FL	Carol Beck/Bill Griffin

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