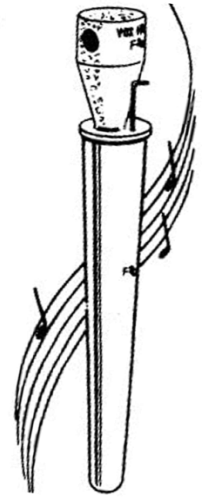




# VOX CATOE

## September 2011

P.O. Box 667 Lyons, Illinois 60534 / Online [www.catoe.org](http://www.catoe.org)



### The Newsletter Voice of the Chicago Area Theatre Organ Enthusiasts

## September 18th Social at Rialto

Join your fellow CATOE members and the Joliet Area Theatre Organ Enthusiasts (JATOE) on **Sunday, September 18th** with **George Smith** at the Rialto Square Theatre's Barton Grande Theatre Pipe Organ.

The Rialto 'Stage Door' opens at 1:30pm, the program begins at 2:00pm. The social will include a delicious refreshment reception after the event. CATOE members are asked to bring something to share with our CATOE members, JATOE hosts, and invited guests.

George last played for CATOE in June of 2007, and continues as the house organist for the Paramount Theatre in Anderson, Indiana. (See page 2 for more information about George Smith, his music, and family.)

## Tivoli Tour Draws a Big Crowd



Just a few of the estimated 500 fans who lined up outside of the Tivoli Theatre in Downers Grove, IL on August, 13th during the theatre's open house. Story and photos on page 2.

### Directions to the Rialto Square Theatre

**FROM THE WESTERN SUBURBS (I-355):** Proceed south on I-355 to the I-55 South (St. Louis) exit #269 or continue to I-80.

**FROM THE NORTH (I-55):** Take I-55 south to Joliet Road. Exit #269. Joliet Road becomes Illinois 53. Follow IL 53 south to Ruby St. and turn left. Crossing the Des Plaines River, Ruby St. will become Chicago St. The theatre is located at 102 N. Chicago. Enter through the stage door (east side) on Scott St.

**FROM THE SOUTH (I-80):** Take I-80 to Illinois Route 53. Exit #132. Proceed North on Illinois 53, into downtown Joliet. Once you drive under a viaduct you will come to a stop sign. Turn right and follow the curve. The street becomes Scott St. Go straight (past Van Buren St.) Enter through the stage door.

**METRA:** *Worried about gas?* Take the 'Rock Island Line' to the social. Train departs Chicago (LaSalle Street Station) at 12:30pm and arrives at Joliet's nearby (2 block walk) Union Station in time for the event! Return trains leave Joliet at 4:24pm & 6:24pm. **Check with Metra for schedule changes!**



# Tivoli Open House Packs Them In About the Artist: George Smith

Last month, Tivoli Theatre owners Willis and Shirley Johnson opened their Classic Cinemas - Tivoli Theatre to a crowd of 500+ people who wanted a chance to see the inner workings of the Downers Grove facility.

The free tours were offered in small groups between 10a.m. and noon, but to accommodate the crowd the event was extended until 2p.m. allowing the last remaining guests to participate. At it's peak, the line of anxious people waiting to go inside wrapped around the corner and down the block; a scene quite similar to the theatre's opening on Christmas Day, 1928.

CATOE was represented by it's entire Board of Directors who assisted in the presentation of our Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ. The presentation included a fascinating visual display of several styles of pipes, photos of many of our area organ consoles, and a membership brochure detailing CATOE's efforts to preserve, present and educate. Following the explanation of how the organ works and how it was originally used, CATOE President, David Rhodes performed a few bars of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Music of the Night" to show the instrument's power.



Each presentation included a short 'Question & Answer' session, an invitation to become a member, and ended with a round of applause from the audience.



George's musical career began in Indianapolis, Ind. in the eighth grade school orchestra playing piano. From there he entertained people everywhere! At Shortridge High School, he was in most every band and orchestra playing percussion.

His first professional opportunity came along during his senior year playing at the Roller Rondo Skating Rink. He was already playing Hammond organs at several large rinks, when a rare opportunity developed at the Skateland Roller Palace in Alexandria, Indiana. There, George was able to perform at the 4/20 Wurlitzer rank theatre pipe organ, originally installed in Chicago's Norshore (Howard) theatre.

After returning from service in the U.S. Army, he purchased his first Hammond organ and Leslie Speaker. Later George Smith's Music Center, Inc. was formed with the help of his wife Norma, who remains a faithful wife and helper after more than 55 years, along with two of their three sons. They were in the top sales leaders in the piano and organ industry in the Midwest and remain a leader with Hammond-Suzuki, Inc. USA in sales and service.

With their sons, Lonnie and Scott, the Smith's have had the pleasure of working with or supplying instruments to such notables in the entertainment business such as: Kathryn & Mary Frances Crosby, Ray Charles, Joey DeFrancesco, Tony Monaco, The Indiana State Fair, Tony Hulman, and many more.

George is the house organist for the Paramount Theatre Centre & Ballroom and continues teaching piano, organ, and keyboard. George and Norma are also members of the American Theatre Organ Society.



George Smith (Photo credit: Don Knight - The Herald Bulletin)