

# THE DETROIT THEATER ORGAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER SPECIAL COMBERMERE EDITION

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## Combermere Part I

Last month, the proposed new home for DTOS was opened to the membership to walk through and ask questions regarding the site and three proposed floor plans that were presented during the open house.

At the end of the open house, the playing membership was asked to cast their vote on whether to continue researching the site.

A total of 38 votes were cast and there were 28 members that approved the site and 8 members that did not approve the site. At least two of the members voting "no" gave the reason that the board failed to provide a business plan

on how we would financially sustain ourselves in the future (see associated Combermere story of page 3).

The board would like to thank those that came out to visit the site. The site was also visited by many of our associate members who were invited but could not cast a vote under the current by-laws.

The board would also like to thank Dave Voydanoff and Glenn Rank who provided coffee and donuts to the members.

While we still do not have a definitive decision on Combermere, there are still many things to consider before we make the big move from the Senate

Theater. As mentioned, we need to make sure that we can financially sustain ourselves for many years to come. Theater organ music can only be one third of our total income while the other two thirds has to come from other sources. We also still have not applied for tax exemption from the City of Troy as well. If we fail to get tax relief from them, we will have to budget another \$45,000 annually to cover these expenses. A decision regarding the deal will have to be made before November.

## COMING THIS MONTH

**Oct 12, 7pm** Special meeting of the board of directors.

**Oct 26, 7pm** Regular meeting of the board of directors

## Combermere Part II

The phase one environmental study that was ordered by the board of directors at Combermere is complete and the results are less than appealing.

The study conducted by PM environmental, was a walk of the grounds around the facility looking for signs of contamination. This phase was done at a cost of \$2,000 and it was recommended that a phase two study be done.

The phase two study recommendation is based

on a number of findings. A similar recommendation was made twice during the last ten years and never completed by the current owner of the property.

The focus of a phase two survey would be around the possibility of two underground storage tanks and the area around the existing operations by the tree service. While the tree service is well on the way of moving off site, it has been operating there for the last 25 years.

Special radar equip-

ment would first be used on the property to determine the exact location of the tanks that may be buried and then core samples around the tank would be taken for examination. Core samples would also be taken around stained soil by the existing tree service operations. The costs of a phase two assessment was not known at time of printing of this publication but could exceed \$5,000.00.

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## Combermere Part III

Two letters were received last month, one of which was distributed at the Combermere site visit, while that other was received about a week later. Both letters were in opposition of the purchase of the Combermere site citing a lack of a solid business plan, location and acoustical problems at the site as their basis.

With these recent letters to the board of directors, a special meeting has been scheduled for October 12 at the Senate to discuss in more detail the content of the letters and address the concerns that have been brought up.

As an organization, along with building our membership, we must find other means of income to secure our financial stability at Combermere.

While it is currently being used as a photography studio, it will require someone from the organization to continue to build this side of the business as well as look for other rental possibilities.

We are all aware that the number of volunteers within the organization is at an all time low. In order for our organization to thrive in the future, it needs volunteers to answer telephones, clean and

set up for property rentals and concerts in our situation.

Without these dedicated people, our organization will remain stagnant whether we remain at the Senate or move to the suburbs.

The other purpose of this meeting is to get updated on the status of the Senate. It has been on the market for two years now with only one offer that fell through due to the inability of the buyer to find financing.

We encourage the membership to attend the meeting and give us your feedback. The meeting starts at 7pm.

## COMING TO THE REDFORD

- ◆ Oct 15-16 **The Phantom of the Opera** with Tony Obien at the Barton organ.  
*Special note that there is no Saturday matinee for this show*
- ◆ Oct 22-23 **It came from Outer Space in 3D** 1953 starring Richard Carlson and Barbara Rush
- ◆ Oct 31 **Abbott & Costello meet Frankenstein** 1948 starring Bud Abbott and Lou Costello

## Orbits Resigns from Board of Directors

Last month, George Orbits resigned from the board of directors for DTOS to concentrate more on finding a new home for our instrument.

George has been very supportive of DTOS activities and was one of the founding members back in the early 1960's when he purchase the Wurlitzer from the Fisher family. He

began the process of removing the instrument by himself and soon discovered that he needed more help. It was then that he found other friends who helped him move it into storage and eventually into the Iris Theater in Detroit before moving it again into the Senate.

George notified the board that he will remain active and

that this decision will allow him to focus all of his attention on being the curator of the instrument under section X of the bylaws of the organization. The board wants to thank George for his continued support over a course of 45 years.

Friday and Saturday at 8pm with organ overture at 7:30pm all dates.

Additional Saturday Matinee at 2pm and organ overture at 1:30pm

All shows just \$4.00

## Wurlitzer Restoration Update

In preparation of the ultimate goal of moving the organ out of the Senate, Scott Smith was asked to update the board on what remains to be done on the instrument.

Scott has been in what seems to be an endless restoration project on the Wurlitzer and continues to care for the instrument on a monthly basis.

The best time to do the rest of the work appears to be while the instrument is being moved from one facility to another because the Society

could stand to save a little money on removal and reinstallation costs. Shop labor, material and transportation of specific chests would still need to be covered.

While the specific costs of the remaining work was asked to be kept confidential, a complete list of items that need restoration was forwarded and the funds for the work would have to be worked into the budget of any move that is made out of the Senate Theater.

To refresh everyone's memory, Scott was chosen from three bids that the board received to remove the instrument from the Senate earlier this year when a purchase agreement was in place for the sale of the Detroit properties. The purchase agreement eventually was terminated and the properties remain up for sale.



## *The Treasurers Ledger*

At last month's board meeting, the following information was distributed with regard to our income and expenses for the month of September.

Total income for the month was \$85 which came mostly from a internet sale of a shirt, CD and DVD off the website.

Expenses for the month were \$7,781.35 which was made up of building security, printing and property taxes. A vast majority of the expenses were legal fees (\$5,638.77). The telephone expense was \$148.80 and the water use for the quarter was \$448.46. The organization operated with a

loss of \$7,696.35.

Total assets in the organization are \$474,373.21 of which \$340,151.43 is in the checking, savings and two certificate of deposits. The remaining assets are fixed assets.

The board continues to look for easy ways to invest money and are always open to suggestions. Members are entitled to look at our books at any time by scheduling an appointment to meet with our treasurer, Bob Weil. Since our records are kept electronically, the meeting would have to be held at the Senate.



## *Board locked out of the Senate*

The regular meeting of the board of directors last month had to be held at an alternate location due to problems with the key fob system.

The board arrived at the Senate to find that their key fobs would not open the doors at the building and nobody in attendance had keys to manually open the doors to gain

access.

The following day, a board member gained access to the building and scheduled the alarm company to evaluate and fix the system that same week.

The reason why we wanted to print this story was to remind the playing members about the on-line reservation system at [www.dtos.org](http://www.dtos.org). We

encourage the playing membership to utilize the system to eliminate the possibility of someone traveling a long distance only to discover they cant get in. Problems like this would have been document on the system to alert someone before the trip was made.

## *Editorial: Can DTOS Survive at Combermere?*

With the many unanswered questions about our viability at Combermere, I would like to take this opportunity to clear the air about what I see as possible other sources of income to support ourselves after our move.

An event that would be more publicity than a money maker would be to collaborate with the American Red Cross to sponsor an annual blood drive. What a way to give back to the community and has anyone ever been entertained by

live organ music while giving blood before? The donation basket could be set up that might generate a little income.

Two sources of income that would need some telephone work by volunteers would be Spring and Fall flea markets. Calls would have to be made to rent out tables to companies or vendors in advance and some advertising would have to be done as well. Fees from table rentals are 100 percent profit for these events.

Yet another money maker

would be to utilize the land that we have by leasing spots out for RV and camper storage. This type of activity is already approved by Troy in this portion of the city and would just require some advertising.

What ever type of activity that we do at Combermere, it will require some work by our members on the telephone calling and scheduling vendors for some events.

*Christopher Dengate*

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

### **Executive Board**

Dick Leichtamer, President  
Christopher Dengate, VP  
David Calendine, Secretary  
Robert Weil, Treasurer

### **Board of Directors**

Steven Ball, Director  
Fred Brufloft, Director  
Jeff Cushing, Director  
Gil Francis, Director  
Gary Grzebienik, Director  
Tom Iwankovitsch, Director  
Lance Luce, Director



## **Combermere Part IV**

Now that the membership has approved the location, the board is waiting to take the next step with the city of Troy.

The next step with the city is to apply for a special land use for our activities and submit a site plan for their approval.

Our organization has been in discussions with the city officials since the beginning and have verbally been approved at the site. It is now time to take the next step and officially get ap-

proved. The cost of this approval is estimated to be about \$15,000.00 which is non-refundable should we decide not to go through with the purchase of the property.

The site plan approval is required by the city and specific details about where things will be located inside the facility will be submitted as well as our parking lot layout on the property.

As previously mentioned,

phased construction plan must be formed due to finances, but the city needs to see what the facility would look like at the end of construction.

The board will decide whether to move forward with the project or not at the special meeting scheduled for October 12th at the Senate starting at 7pm.

## **Combermere Part II Continued**

If the underground tanks are indeed located on the property, and the tanks are found to be full, there will be a great expense to haul the contents of the tanks away, remove the tanks and any contaminated soil if they leaked.

Along with the outside recommendations, there are also some concerns that were found with ceiling tiles inside the building that should be analyzed to see if asbestos is contained in the product.

With the results of the phase one survey, it may be the recommendation by the board of directors to walk away from the project on Combermere and continue the search for a new facility.

At this time, the purchase agreement allows our organization to walk away from the agreement without penalty and the current owners would then be required to return the \$25,000.00 deposit that was left when the agreement was signed

two months ago. While this certainly is not the first option that the board would like to take, it might have to be taken rather than risk huge costs in environmental clean-up fees in the future.

## **Membership**

Any changes to your mailing address, telephone number or e-mail address should be sent to our membership chairperson Gary Grzebienik. You may call him at (248) 435-3266 or e-mail him at [garyg@cdnet.net](mailto:garyg@cdnet.net).