

Meet Your Member: Matthew Caulfield

My fascination with band organ music began when we moved to Rochester, N.Y, when I was five years old. My parents and I would go to Seabreeze Park, ride the rides, and sit in the park's famous red rockers and listen to the merry-go-round band organ. When I was in college, I got a summer job working at the park. Then, the music really took hold on me, working there for the next nine summers.

Around 1958 I went over to North Tonawanda to see what band organs T.R.T. Manufacturing Co. might have for sale. That was my first and only peek inside Ralph Tussing's shop, a grungy, cluttered, and outmoded place, but fascinating nevertheless. I bought a Wurlitzer 146-A from Ralph for \$600. Running and maintaining that machine over the next four years taught me a lot about band organs, but when I moved to Washington, D.C., to work for the Library of Congress in 1962, I sold it for \$900. At that time not much good music was available for band organs anyway.

For the next few years my interest in mechanical music lay dormant, until around 1980 I began to become curious about the identity of all those unknown tunes that I had been hearing for decades on the Seabreeze Wurlitzer 165. I suppose now, looking back, that it was naive of me not to realize that all those tunes were at one time popular hits of their times, even though in the 1950s only a handful were still familiar. Seabreeze Park always had a rather large collection of rolls, dating back to 1926, all original green-paper Wurlitzer rolls, plus a few T.R.T. rolls on brown paper. (George Long stopped buying



Matthew Caulfield examining a new Wurlitzer Style 165 roll.

T.R.T. rolls after playing and returning a couple that he didn't like.) Most of the rolls had lost their labels by the 1960's, and the most-often-played ones had even lost all or part of their first tune. What were those tune titles? I could hear all those rolls in my head, but could identify so few of them.

In 1984 I began to seriously research the identity of the Seabreeze Wurlitzer 165 rolls. That naturally led me to write to the Griffith Park Merry-Go-Round in Hollywood, Calif., where Ross R. Davis had assembled the largest 165 roll collection in the country. Warren & Rosemary Deasy, the new owners of the M-G-R, put me in touch with Gary Watkins, Sun Valley, Calif., who, unbeknownst to me, had been pursuing the same interest as mine with the Griffith Park collection. Gary's researches were far more advanced than mine, and he generously turned over his

catalog to me to build on and expand. Access to the Copyright Office records, which are in the Library of Congress, had been essential to Gary and they would continue to be equally essential to me.

To make a long story short, the Watkins catalog of Griffith Park rolls was the seed from which has grown my online series of Wurlitzer roll catalogs, covering styles 165, 150, and 180. This URL will get you to the 165 catalog, where there are links to the others: <http://wurlitzer-rolls.com>. The 165 site has grown to much more than a mere catalog; it contains over 50 tunes, much history, and many illustrations. (There is no online 125 catalog, because Mike Grant, Columbia City, Ind., issues a paper catalog of those rolls.)

Today, I continue in retirement to research Wurlitzer rolls, issue recuts, run the Seabreeze M-G-R, and maintain its 165 band organ.

2007 Organ Rally Dates

<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Date</u>
Coney Island USA (Lady Liberty, AMICA)	Brooklyn, New York	Todd Robbins (212-664-0456)	April 1, 2007
COAA Rally #1	Lake Winnepesquakah, Georgia	Charles Walker (404-892-0065)	May 25-28, 2007
COAA Rally #2	Gallipolis, Ohio		June 16-17, 2007
COAA Rally #3	Quassy Amusement Park Middlebury, Connecticut		June 30 - July 1, 2007
Mid-Am Chapter (MBSI)	Wabash, Indiana	Hope Rider (260-563-5030)	July 19-21, 2007
COAA Rally #4	Muscataine, Iowa	Ron Bopp (918-786-4988)	July 27-29, 2007
COAA Rally #5	St. Joseph, Michigan	Ken Kasbaski (269-926-1053)	August 24-26, 2007