

Around the Office

Many of you may not realize that the office operates all year round. Not just during the Festival. So what do we do all year? The Ragtime Store and Office are open Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm (central time) for the fall and winter. There are times when we close for meetings and there are times we are open for special events or large groups. But typically, every week day. Plans for next year's Festival are well underway: tickets are ordered, venues secured, VIP orders filled, advertising and marketing considerations are all underway.

This year we will be hosting two Benefit Concerts spreading the excitement of the Festival over a couple more days. The first concert will feature Mimi Blais in October 2006. Then second concert will feature Anne and Jeff Barnhart with special guest Danny Coots. That will be in January 2007. See the related articles for more information on these wonderful events.

The Online Store is doing very well for the first year. We have had orders come in from around the world and are learning quite a bit about shipping package overseas in a post 9-11 world. With the ever changing inventory in the store, we attempt to update the online store with each inventory count – about 3 times a year. We are also looking at ways to make it more user friendly, so the look may still be evolving. Having a current release section and possibly online sales are both things being considered for the next few months. Remember, we are still in the baby-steps stage of this online merchandizing monster!

Musical themed gift items in the store sold well over the past year. But like any retail store, some sold better than others. We'll get the hang of that eventually – or we could be having many sales and give-ways! The main thing is people seem to like the new items.

Tickets and information for next year's Festival are available at the store, online at www.scottjoplin.org or by calling 866-218-6258 (toll free). We look forward to seeing many of you at the Benefit Concerts and the 2007 Ragtime Festival!

Changes on the Board

The Scott Joplin Foundation Board has gone through some more changes this summer as we lost two members. We had one member move out of state for professional reasons and he didn't seem to want to commute from Miami each month! And our beloved Bill Long has left us. Now before you cry or cheer, he has only officially resigned his board seat. He, along with Sue Keller, will remain our Artistic Directors taking care of anything performer related. This was a great way to keep him involved and bring in another member to help with this little Foundation of ours.

Darren Hartman was the first to fill an open spot. He was asked to volunteer for the Festival this year and had such a good time, we asked him to stay. Currently Darren is working on a music education degree. He serves as Choir Director at First Christian Church and teaches private lessons in both vocal and piano. Darren is also involved on stage with the Liberty Center community theater.

The final open position is yet to be filled, but by the time you receive this newsletter the Board will be voting on that last person.

We Hear You

The following is a summary of the survey results for the 2006 Festival. We always appreciate those who take the time to fill out surveys and do our best to incorporate all the suggestions that are feasibly possible. This is just a summary of what we received.

Things you liked:

- ♪ As always, everyone had a favorite performer – amateur, young, and professional
- ♪ Musically Yours was a big hit
- ♪ Rod for dance instructions
- ♪ Katy Depot
- ♪ Concerts
- ♪ Free Venues
- ♪ Extra day of events
- ♪ Open piano times
- ♪ After Hours

Things you think can be changed or improved to some degree:

- ♪ Parade and Fashion Contest
- ♪ Evening concert location
- ♪ Keep Gazebo and Musically Yours
- ♪ More pure Ragtime music
- ♪ Shuttles between venues
- ♪ Food – at dance, at Liberty Center, at VFW – you all are hungry!
- ♪ Better directions to venues

There are many items that are beyond our control and on each topic we hear both good and bad comments. We are definitely trying to find the best possible solutions for all concerned.

Thanks again for taking the time!!