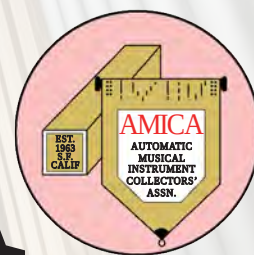


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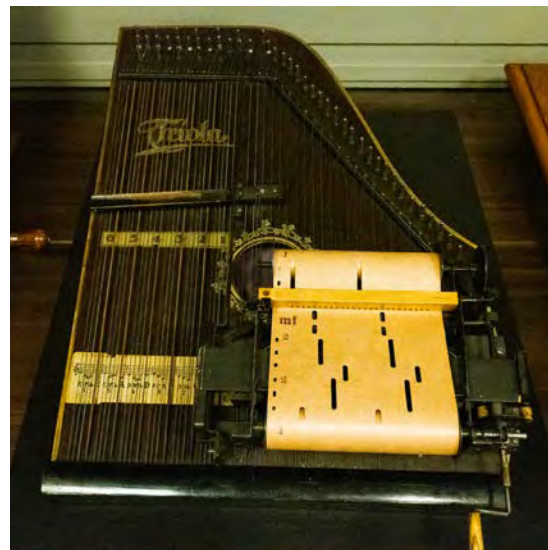


AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENT COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN



2025 AMICA/MBSI Convention in Chicago



THE AMICA BULLETIN

AUTOMATIC MUSICAL INSTRUMENT COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

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Visit the AMICA website at: <http://www.amica.org>

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Front Cover: Photos from the Sweet Home Chicago convention. Bottom right: Jeffrey San Filippo, Jared DiBartolomeo, Bruce Newman, Paul Hemple, and Rusty Hernandez.

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..... PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Chicago convention was non-stop amazement. Young Will Sapet pumping and singing the rolls with gusto! A Mart full of treasures, books, rolls, discs, and instruments. Marty Persky's offerings were stunning. For the pumper contest a nice Seybold piano made in Elgin, Illinois, home of the fantastic and fanciful Kresmary collection, it's Kurt's piano! I've visited fine homes and HOMES, but Kurt's abode and shop take your imagination to new places. His coffee table is a square piano illuminated with dramatic colors. The Bulletin will have a nice selection of convention photos, but all my photos can be viewed and downloaded for three months on my Google Drive:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1oGtP1nbwrzui_i460w8tvTnOIJoJfluZ?usp=sharing

Just enter that URL address in your browser and you will go to my photos. I know it's a lot to enter from a magazine, easier if you are viewing the PDF, copy and paste the URL address.

I've been told about the Sanfilippo collection for many years, and knew I would get there someday. Well, so much fun to share the adventure with friends! The staff is really friendly and we were hosted by Jeffrey Sanfilippo and Rusty Hernandez. The Wurlitzer pipe chambers are fantastic, hence a lot of photos for my organ friends. You will see Jeffrey pushing buttons for the Traps Bells and Whistles to our delight, and his too! Dave Wickerham played a memorable concert, he knows which buttons to push too! A retractable screen over the console shows the MIDI keys when played by the computer, and a great keyboard video when Dave played.

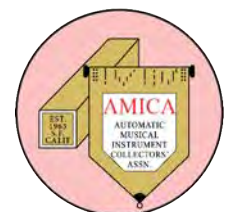
Comprehensive is not a long enough word to describe this treasure trove. When a weak dollar tempted foreigners to buy American phonographs, Jasper collected many machines to archive in this country. There are about 300 phonographs, and my pictures show unusual models.

A huge carousel, with horses and rides that are moved from the floor, is housed in a great hall surrounded by band organs. The front of the hall has the original Howard #3 clock mechanism from Chicago's Wrigley Building, and ample room to serve dinner to the more than 230 of us. No rubber chicken here, superb fried chicken and steak, very delicious. You can visit their website Sanfilippofoundation.org for more information.

The Volo collection has the most moderne Mortier dance organ I've ever seen, whimsical vehicles, a Grand Piano CAR, a Dr. Seuss car, big enclosed carousel, and lots to enjoy. The Halim museum features stained glass windows, glass art, and a comprehensive collection of clocks.

Marty knew just where to go! We drove through Chicago downtown, it's magnificent, and doesn't look deserted like some of our cities on the West Coast.

In May I went on an Art Deco crossing with three days in Paris, one night in London, and 7 days at sea on the Queen Mary 2. Matt Tolentino assembled an amazing orchestra. I posted about 100 videos of the orchestra songs on my channel. Go to YouTube, search there for alamedam8, open a video and subscribe to my Rob Thomas channel. Search down a little to find the songs. You can also search for ORCHQM225.



Happy Music, Happy Instruments!
Rob, AMICA President

Sweet Home Chicago:

A HARMONIOUS GATHERING OF MUSICAL MARVELS

BY COMPILED BY KIM KLEASON, JOEL CLUSKEY, CHATGPT AND FINAL EDITS BY JACKIE LUCAL

Highlights from the 2025 MBSI & AMICA Joint Convention

From August 20–24, 2025, the Hyatt Regency Schaumburg pulsed with mechanical melodies and collector camaraderie as members of the Musical Box Society International (MBSI) and the Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association (AMICA) convened under the fitting theme: *Sweet Home Chicago*.

This year's joint convention offered more than just a reunion—it was a celebration of artistry, engineering, and shared passion, set against the backdrop of Midwest charm.

A Venue Tuned for Comfort & Connection

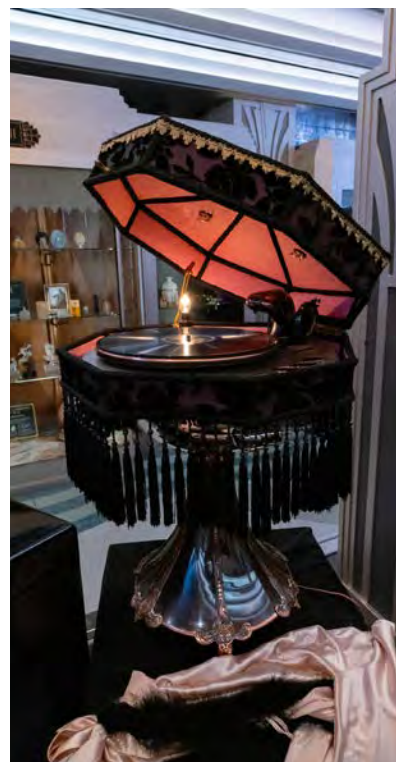
Returning to the spacious Hyatt Regency, the venue used for the last large gathering in Chicago, attendees enjoyed both convenience and comfort. Registration details and Mart forms were easily accessible via MBSI's website, streamlining pre-convention planning.

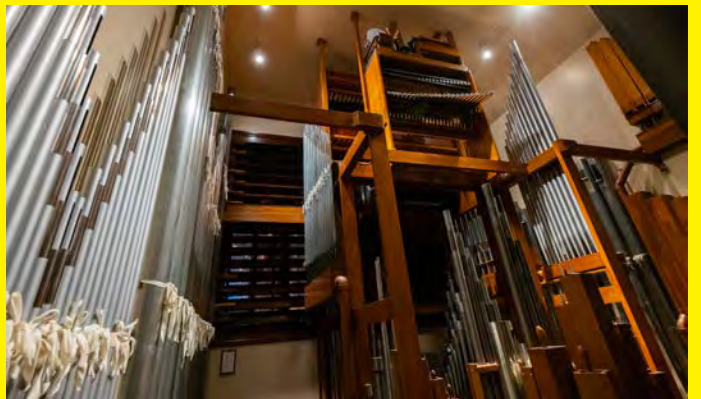
Touring the Treasures: Music, Mechanisms & Midwest Magic

A standout of the convention was its carefully curated morning-to-afternoon tours, each offering a blend of historical insight and mechanical marvels.

Kresmery Collection & Sanfilippo's Perfume Passage

This dual-site tour—offered Wednesday and Thursday—paired Kurt Kresmery's Elgin home collection (featuring a Welte Style 3 Cottage Orchestrion and basement full of music machines) with the Sanfilippo Estate's Perfume Passage, a 6,000-sq. ft. vintage drugstore and soda fountain brimming with perfumery artifacts. Small-group tours provided an intimate sensory experience, blending sound and scent in unexpected harmony.









Woelbing Collection & Organ Piper Pizza

Another Wednesday highlight: the Woelbing Collection, home to a 4-manual, 90-rank Wurlitzer theatre organ with 6,500 pipes installed in a large empty modern warehouse. An adjacent office space housed a fleet of vintage Harley-Davidsons along with two beautifully restored player pianos. An hours drive then led to lunch held at Organ Piper Pizza in Greenfield, WI. It featured live theater organ music by Zach Frame, turning a meal into a musical performance.

Halim Museum & Volo Auto Museum

Thursday's fully booked tour included Evanston's Halim Museum, known for its musical clocks, automata, and Tiffany stained glass. A museum only open to groups, attendees overwhelmed with the most beautiful pieces of artwork, stained glass and clock mechanisms. One could easily spend a full day this first class museum. Attendees then traveled to the Volo Auto Museum, a completely different venue where classic cars and automatic instruments—originally curated by AMICA's Tim Trager and now guided by Terry Younce—offered a nostalgic ride through time.



The Foot-Pumper Contest: Where Whimsy Meets Skill

Thursday evening brought the beloved Foot-Pumper Contest, featuring expressive performances on a reconditioned Seybold player piano lent by Kurt Kresmery. Contestants competed for the coveted “Golden Footsie Award,” showcasing tempo control, pedaling finesse, and playful showmanship. The event embodied AMICA's spirit: friendly, spontaneous, and joyfully mechanical.



Our Winners



*Diane DeTar, John Ulrich, and
Blanche Korfmacher*



Diane DeTar



Will singing

Learning, Sharing & Celebrating

Educational sessions were a vital part of the week, offering members a chance to deepen their knowledge and connect over shared discoveries. Workshops included presentations by legendary Bill Edgerton on building 75 replicas of the Seeburgh KT Special Nickelodeon, Warren Scott on design of a laser piano roll perforator, Margaret Binsberg on, “letting the sounds of music creep in our ears,” Jim Parker on mechanical zithers, Bob Caletti on his Symphonian Project and Rob Deland on notes and memories as a piano roll re-issuer. Much appreciation to them all for their work in preparing these presentations.

The Mart, Gala & Farewell

In addition to the workshops, Friday featured an awards luncheon, and the evening Mart—where collectors traded instruments, parts, and ephemera. Saturday's morning breakfast and business meetings led into an afternoon gala at the Sanfilippo Estate, blending elegance with mechanical wonder. Sunday wrapped with private collection visits to homes of Bisberg, VanMetre, Kresmery, Huffer, Persky, Septon/Stone, and Weyna—offering personal glimpses into members' passions.

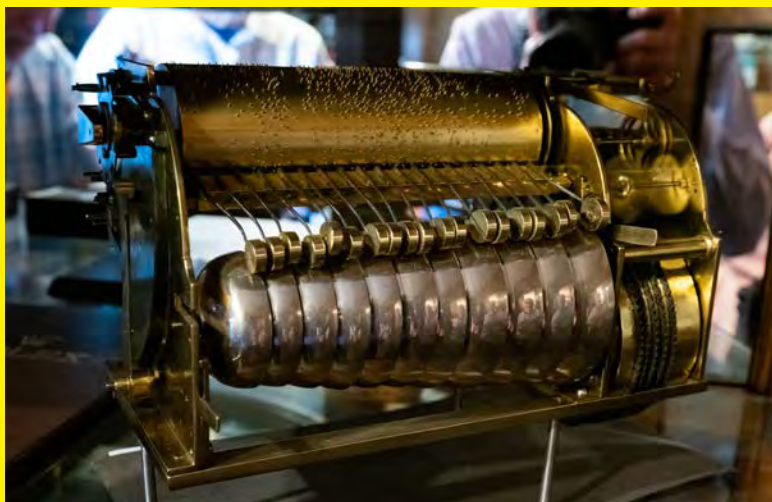
Sunday Home Visit: Mel Septon and Kathy Stone



Margaret and Richard Bisberg



Marty and Sandy Persky



Reflections on “Sweet Home Chicago”

This year’s convention was more than a showcase—it was a symphony of shared purpose. Attendees revealed in:

- Engaging tours for collectors, historians, and curious newcomers
- The whimsical Foot-Pumper Contest
- Opportunities to learn, trade, and connect
- Elegant social events that left lasting impressions

In Closing

Sweet Home Chicago wasn’t just a theme—it was a feeling. From orchestrions to automata, soda fountains to stained glass, the 2025 MBSI & AMICA Joint Convention reminded us that mechanical music isn’t just about gears and notes—it’s about the people who keep the melody alive.