



SHORT SHOTS FROM EVERYWHERE

The scene was Edwardsville, Illinois, early in 1917. A young man who had been making a name for himself playing those new-fangled theatre organs just happened to drop in at his hometown Family theatre to see the show. As he walked down the aisle a girl was onstage, singing "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now." He liked what he heard and what he saw, and decided that, somehow, he'd manage to get acquainted. Thus Eddie Dunstedter met "Vee." They were married late the same year. On August 30, 1967, Eddie and Vee celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. Both remember the fateful first meeting when Eddie knocked on her dressing room door. "My, he was handsome" recalls Vee. "I still am," echoes Eddie, as he sits contentedly in the Dunstedter's Reseda (Calif.) house trailer home, still busy writing "thank you" notes for the cards and messages received on his 70th birthday, August 2nd. "You know—I think I'll keep him," confides Vee, her eyes shining, as they must have on that long ago day when she first heard Eddie's knock on her dressing room door.



A MARRIED MAN—Eddie Dunstedter

Los Angeles ATOE Chapter Chairman Bob Carson has announced that the dates for the 1968 ATOE convention, to be held in Angeltown, will be July 8, 9, 10 and 11, the first we can recall which didn't include a weekend. He explained that it's the difficulty encountered in getting hotel accommodations for the expected several hundred ATOEers which dictated the dates. There are five suitable pipe organs in Los Angeles area auditoriums at the present time, the 2-10 Wurlitzer in the Rialto theatre, the 3-11 Wurlitzer in the Crown theatre (both in nearby Pasadena), the Chapter-maintained 4-37 Kimball in the Wiltern, the 4-61 concert Robert Morton in the Elks Club and the multi-rank Moller in the Shrine auditorium. Add to these a plethora of home installations ranging from six to thirty-six ranks, and the plot thickens.

From El Paso, veteran organist John R. Thomas reports the sale of the long-stored Oakland Paramount 4-20 Wurlitzer to Jax Cowden for installation in a building on Cowden's 80,000-acre ranch near Carlsbad, New Mexico, with Dick Villemin lined up to do the job. "John R." who plays intermissions weekends at the El Paso Plaza 3-15 Wurli, is Mrs. Cowden's organ teacher.

Too late for inclusion in *closing chord* came news of the death of Tommy Ott, 57, who played organ over radio stations WIND (Gary, Inc.), WLS (Chicago), and WJR and WWJ (Detroit) in the '30s and '40s. Known as a "Dixieland organist," Mr. Ott had resided in Southern California since 1956, where he recorded a marvellous LP of Hammond jazz for the Hi-Fi label entitled *There'll Be an OTT Time in the Old Town Tonight*.

The Seattle Orpheum's 3-13 Wurlitzer has been purchased at auction by Puget Sound Chapter member, Bob Coons. Wonder if he intends to combine it with the 4-34 Seattle Coliseum Wurlitzer, which he already owns?

Speaking of Dick Schrum, he's now the possessor of a 5'8" Knabe Ampico grand piano finished in Louis XIV ivory—exactly like the one which used to grace the Seattle Paramount lobby. Hmmmm!

The Detroit Free Press took note of a recent concert-movie session at the Redford theatre (Remember, Conventioneers?) with an article next day by staffer Louis Cook, who enjoyed the 3-10 Barton and the artistry of Prof. John Muri who cued three Buster Keaton silents on a Saturday afternoon. Cook wrote, "... John Muri, a veteran adventurer of the keyboards, warmed up the audience with a pre-movie concert (on the Barton), bringing a gaggle of delighted kids to the front of the theatre to gaze in awe upon something which was once a part of every child's life."

Sad but true, and thanks to Motor City Chapter's Holley Prim for the clipping.

The music he played on the 3-15 Wurli during the Colleen Moore-Gary Cooper starrer, *Lilac Time*, (1927) brought tears to many an eye at the San Francisco Avenue theatre's screening of the vintage silent, possibly including the orbs of two well-known organists who had come to hear Lyn Larsen's carefully prepared score—Searl Wright and Richard Purvis. Lyn's current schedule at

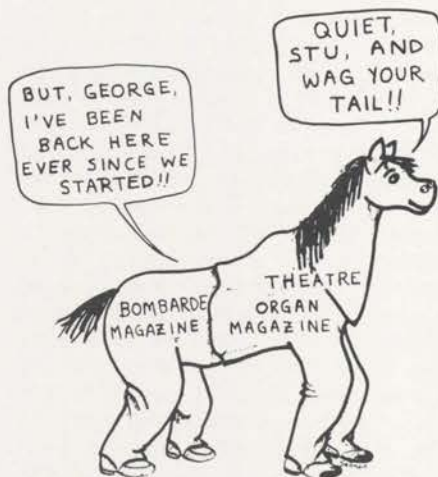


Lyn Larsen and his 1933 Packard "run-about."

the Avenue isn't as stringent as before; he will be playing on alternate weekends and he'll spend more time in the California Southland preparing arrangements for his Rodgers stint at the September Home Organ Festival and a January concert to be shared with Richard Purvis at the San Francisco Civic Auditorium. The instrument is a 110 rank Austin.

Groaning noises made by the **Bombarde** editor during the recent ATOE convention are interpreted neatly by the accompanying cartoon, which kept popping up at the Detroit confab. At one point it was projected on the wall of the

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This cartoon touched the hearts of the publication crew so deeply that they decided on some drastic action to correct the unbalanced equine condition.

VOX POP, continued

Senate theatre by a grinning Al Mason. The ATOE directors and officers took note and decided to "unhorse" the plaintiff by doing away with the separation between the two mags and "interweaving" material into a single magazine. But wait until the beeper realizes he's been demoted from Editor to Co-editor in the process.

In Chicago, organist Mark Noller got in some licks for theatre organ by playing intermission music on the 9 (so far) working ranks of the Parthenon theatre organ during the personal appearance of entertainers Sonny and Cher, on hand to plug their movie. In addition, Mark has been playing Saturday evening intermissions at the 3-12 Moller in the State theatre in Chicago, writes Dick Sklenar.

Organist Billy Nalle is ecstatic over the treatment he received at the hands of the Rochester Theatre Organ Society during his recent concert at the Auditorium theatre 4-21 Wurlitzer. He arrived to find press and electronic media lined up for interviews and all other facets of publicity and preparation humming. He later exclaimed, "The RTOS people were great. . . they overlooked absolutely nothing! Audience reaction was like that radio station's call letters — WHAM! They were absolutely wonderful!"

Gaylord Carter, after his fine July "Flickerfingers" show at the San Francisco Avenue theatre, told us that he had lined up a "gig" at the Imperial theatre in Toronto on August 20, the home of a rare 28-rank Warren theatre organ. However, the big beast, which has been undergoing rehabilitation for a long time, won't be ready. So Gaylord will do his flickerfingering on a Conn Theatre model plug-in.

The crew installing the former Keith's 3-11 Wurlitzer in its new permanent home at the New York State Fair Grounds, Syracuse, New York, is in need of replacements for some missing pipes. Their 8' Solo Scale Tibia Clausa (still one of the most beautiful sets this scribe has yet heard) is missing pipes 17, 41, 43, 45, 46, 56, 58, and 59. The Orchestral Oboe needs pipes 13, 21 and 58. The Empire State Theatre and Musical Instrument Museum is a non-profit project, often beset by too miniscule finances but rich in the industry of its hard-working members. They hope to expose the instrument to the hordes of people who attend the New York State Fair in late August but they need the missing pipes. Anyone having broken sets of the desired ranks who would be willing to donate them, please contact Charles E. Schubert, 111 Stillwell Circle, East Syracuse, New York, 13057.

Married: Organ builder Lee Haggart and organist Laurel Ruby, just 10 days after their initial June meeting, in Bur-



Laurel Ruby



Lee Haggart

bank, Calif. Laurel, who once installed a style B Wurlli (4 ranks) in her former Oregon home has the distinction of being the **Bombarde's** only "cover girl" (see photo), and Lee, one of a handful of top reed voicers left from the "golden era", hit it off immediately on being introduced by the **Bombarde's** editor—who is currently wearing a bow and arrow pin in his lapel.

A few years ago a wide screen was installed in Winnipeg's Garrick theatre. During the process, a Wurlitzer organ was covered over and never used again. Now that the Odeon-Martin chain has announced plans to make a "double cinema" of the house, and a number of interested readers are wondering what will become of the organ, if its still in the theatre. We'll leave this a "cliff hanger"—hoping someone in the know will come up with the answer.

The Minneapolis Civic Auditorium Kimball behemoth is still being rebuilt although much of the work has been completed. What works is being played by Bob Paige during intermissions at a summer series of symphony orchestra pop concerts which has the audience seated at tables where listeners can guzzle beer or soda pop and partake of other gastronomic goodies while they absorb culture. Paige plays the instrument from the 4-manual theatre console (there is also a huge concert console) which reportedly controls 19 unified ranks. Bob is often assisted by Jeannie Miles. She leads the singalongs.

Once every ten years the classical organists of the world meet for a conclave known as the "International Congress or Organists," with Toronto and Montreal chosen as the 1967 sites. The great concert organists of the world will convene (and presumably take in Expo '67 on the side) but the August confab will be officially opened by a concert played by The USA's Dick Ellsasser with members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

In Syracuse, New York, the venerable old Keith's theatre, in the process of being destroyed in the name of "urban renewal," seemed to turn a final blast of fury against those who had built it, given it years of glory, then degraded it with a death sentence—humans. Its once sturdy walls weakened by wreckers, the old building waited until traffic was thick at noon time, then hurled tons of its back wall out into the adjacent street to

crush four moving vehicles. One man was killed and four were injured. There were investigations started to determine whether demolition codes had been violated but no one suggested a likely explanation: the old theatre was just plain furious. Its 3-11 Wurlitzer organ had been removed and was being reinstalled in a permanent home on the nearby New York State Fair Grounds by the Empire State Theatre and Musical Instrument Museum.

Closing Chord

Jim Connor, mainstay of the El Paso Plaza theatre Wurlitzer restoration project, died at his home in El Paso on May 27. Born in Gainesville, Florida in 1933, Connor moved to El Paso at an early age where he later attended the University of El Paso. His first job was as a photographer for the local *Herald-Post*. He remained with photography throughout his life, finally reaching the rank of motion picture director. In the late '50s he became interested in a project to restore the neglected 3-15 organ in the Plaza theatre. The fact that the once silent organ is played for intermissions throughout each weekend is something of a monument to the Connor pursuit of



Jim Connor.

perfection as well as persistence. It is played by Jim's friend, veteran theatre organist John R. Thomas, who has this to say:

"Jim was a difficult person to know, but certainly the ideal man to ramrod the restoration of the Plaza's style 260. He was a demanding leader and a meticulous workman. His dedication to the organ was almost unbelievable; I know that he spent many hundreds of dollars from his own pickets for parts rather than wrestle with the "brass." Yet his relations with the "brass," from the City Manager to the Interstate circuit and Plaza management, was on the highest personal and ethical level. He was regarded as a friend by all of them.

"His death was due to a long illness which I first became aware of in 1961.

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