



## CHAPTER NOTES

### ALOHA

Aloha from Hawaii! The now-second-newest chapter (congratulations to West Penn Chapter!) has been keeping busy the last couple months.

On Sunday morning, March 19th we presented our second concert of the year at the Hawaii Theatre, featuring guest organist Elbert La Chelle at the 4/16 Robert Morton.

Elbert has played theatre organ accompaniment for vaudeville as well as elaborate stage productions and silent films. In addition, he's played at theatres along the Pacific coast and was staff organist for CBS and several radio stations in the West. The Aloha Chapter was fortunate indeed to have him as guest organist.

Following the concert, the chapter hosted members, guests and friends at a reception in our Chapter Room, backstage at the theatre. It's always a pleasant time to meet new friends and explain the chapter's activities. We often have one or two organ-buffs visiting from the mainland.



Aloha Chapter guest organist Elbert La Chelle at the console of the Hawaii Theatre's 4/16 Robert Morton.

On March 26th, over 50 chapter members and their guests met socially once again in the Penthouse party room of Aloha chapter members John and Grace Jenkins' apartment building. (They're chapter treasurer and secretary). The event was a farewell potluck dinner and party for organist Elbert La Chelle and Aloha chap George Krecji. Guests were treated to a beautiful view of the city of Honolulu at sunset and live organ serenades (*electronic*, unfortunately!).

On April 16th the chapter held a long business meeting, followed by chapter member Dan Engelhard, giving a very informative talk on the composition and construction of pipes, chests and offset chests. Those who were able to stay found it very interesting, and Dan has been asked to continue "class" in the future.

On Tuesday, May 30th the Aloha Chapter and Consolidated Amusement Co., owners of the Waikiki and Hawaii Theatres, will present "flicker fingers", Gaylord Carter, in concert at the Hawaii Theatre, accompanying "The Winning of Barbara Worth", with Gary Cooper.

This event also coincides with Consolidated Amusement's debut of an "Encore" Theatre exclusively featuring motion pictures from the silent days and the 'Golden Age' of Hollywood.

The chapter is certainly behind this effort and any publicity gained for the theatre organ in the midst of this "nostalgia" can only be beneficial to the chapter and the ATOS.

And remember, when you're in Honolulu be sure to say hello. If you can let us know in advance when you'll be here, we'll arrange to "organ"-ize your visit. Our chapter host, John DeMello, may be reached at 1264 Kalaniiki, St., Honolulu, Hawaii 96821, telephone (808) 373-3076, or through the Consolidated Amusement Co.

Aloha!

LOWELL ANGELL

### BEEHIVE

On Sunday, March 19, Beehive Chapter members were treated to a very special performance at the Arcade Theatre, in Salt Lake City. It was a Charlie Chaplin movie entitled *The Rink*, accompanied by Mike Ohman. After the movie members were invited to play the organ.

This was fun for the members, but one member, the host, was the most delighted of all, Calvin Christensen, owner and installer of the organ. That day was his birthday and also his public musical debut. He hastened to add that he had been taking lessons for only two weeks.

Cal bought the theatre in July of 1971 from his father, Mr. James Christensen, now retired who had owned and operated the theatre for forty years. Cal and Mrs. Christensen had recarpeted, painted and redecorated the theatre.

July was a big month for the Christensens. Through Bob Castle of Denver they bought a 2/7 Wurlitzer style E that had been in storage since it had been removed from one of the Famous Players Theaters in Pueblo, Colorado.

The percussions and Bass pipes are behind the screen on the left side, the pipes behind the screen on the right. The console is in front of the screen, making it easy to play for the organists because of good balance and contrast.

The organ had its grand debut in Salt Lake on Friday, February 25, 1971, when Gaylord Carter accompanied the silent movie great *The Mark of Zorro*. His sing-alongs and his great personality plus his musical talent delighted the audience.

Mrs. Christensen said that many old-timers while buying tickets for *The Mark of Zorro* said that it would be good to hear an organ in the Arcade again.

Thanks again to Cal and Mrs. Christensen for bringing back to life another pipe organ and sharing it with ATOS members and many grateful Salt Lakers.

MAXINE V. RUSSELL

### CENTRAL INDIANA

On March 12th over eighty members attended our monthly get-together at the home of Mrs. Ada Fisher in Indianapolis. At the business meeting plans



were discussed for the special concert to be presented on May 12th featuring Johnny Kemm on the Lowery electronic organ in a benefit performance to raise funds for the installation of a theatre pipe organ in the auditorium of Manual High School in Indianapolis. Prior to the concert, Mr. Kemm and local ATOS officials will be interviewed on a popular local TV talk show to explain the purposes of our organization and to discuss specifically the Manual High School project. Following the business meeting guests were entertained by Tim Needler and Jimmy Boyer playing Mrs. Fisher's 3-manual Conn electronic complete with external pipe speakers and a newly-installed theatre Glockenspiel. Open console time followed with many members trying the instrument into the wee hours of the evening.

The April meeting was hosted by Chairman Tom Hawkins in his home in Greenfield, Indiana. Our special guest for this meeting, Gay Crandall, entertained the membership on Tom's Conn 642 with her own delightful organ artistry so much enjoyed on a regular basis by patrons of the San Francisco supper club in Anderson, Indiana.

Future events scheduled include our annual May visit to the Kokomo, Indiana, home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank May in which is installed a 4-manual Wicks-Barton theatre pipe organ of 18 ranks and still growing! For the summer months we are hopeful of returning to the Embassy Theatre in Ft. Wayne to hear the artistry of Mr. Buddy Nolan on the 4/15 Page accompanied by the piano stylings of Mr. Dyan Pfeffenberger on the Embassy's concert grand. This duo positively sparkled during our October visit last year as they presented show tunes and Strauss waltzes in their special concert for our membership.

RUTH HAWKINS

## CHICAGO AREA

Long before anyone ever had any inkling of the possibility of the tremendous tribute that ultimately would be accorded to Charlie Chaplin, Chairman Bill Rieger brought up the idea of having CATOE present shows featuring Chaplin's *Modern Times* and *City Lights* with organ accompaniment. CATOE member Andy Antoncyck manages the Carnegie Theatre in downtown Chicago and they just happened to be in the midst of a "Chaplin

Festival" and besides that the theatre had an organ regularly used for intermission music and sing-alongs. And so it was decided that these films would be presented by CATOE as "silent" films in private showings with organ background. With the organist following the original scores with some hopefully effective deviations, the audiences literally "flipped."

I must humbly admit to having been the organist for these shows. I have always wanted to do film work. My real debut was Laurel & Hardy's *Liberty* in a Downers Grove Concert. Later came a Chaplin reel for the Niagara Frontier. Preparation for the CATOE presentations of *Modern Times* and *City Lights* was an in-depth education in film accompaniment. Since Charlie Chaplin had composed his own scores for both films it was in many cases a choice between his ideas and ours. The more you listened to his concepts, the less you thought of your own bright ideas.

TONY TAHLMAN

It was a bright Saturday morning March 11, when our genial Secretary Doug Christensen, stepped up to the microphone to present his introduction of our second Chaplin program at the Carnegie Theatre, starring Tony Tahlman. From the first moment, a mood of warmth and friendliness was set for the entire program.

This presentation was a rare opportunity for CATOE: first, to be able to present the show in a relatively new theatre with one of Chaplin's most famous silents — *City Lights* in excellent quality 35mm print and second to have the complete cooperation of the theatre and its new Conn Theatre Organ and most of all to hear one of CATOE's most dynamic and talented organists, Mr. Tony Tahlman. He spent weeks of concentrated effort perfecting the musical score for the film as well as selecting the tunes most appropriate to his concert and sing-along. And although the organ had a plurality of sound effects. Tony installed his own chimes, bells, whistles, auto horn, siren, etc., which he dispensed with the accuracy of a well-timed computer. While *City Lights* is basically sweet, tender, and emotional story, it has its comedy sequences, and Tony's musical score matched every situation.

The first half of the program was

replete with show tunes and old favorites, climaxed with a sing-along, with which he coaxed the audience into top singing form. His comments from the console put the organ buffs into a rollicking mood so they belted out the songs like professionals. It has been said that CATOE has the best sing-alongs and Tony sure proved it. With a few more comments from Doug, the "City Lights" were turned on for all of us, marking a new year of CATOE history.

Many organists today rely on technical values, speed, velocity and shocking harmonies. Paul Swiderski relies only on music that he enjoys playing. In turn his audiences enjoy listening and a true musical experience is consummated. Paul made his CATOE debut at the Lyons Township High School Social where he coaxed the resident 3/21 Moller into an effective performance on March 25. Paul is currently the assistant organist at the Elm Rink and plays every Thursday night.

A busload of members were augmented by several carloads venturing forth in a spring trip to the wilds of Indianapolis on April 22. Lee Erwin at the console of the Rivoli Uniphone, a midnight theatre party and a visit to Frank May's restoration of the Chicago "WLS" pipe organ at Breezy Lane in Kokomo, Ind. made the trip very interesting.

On Saturday April 29 members congregated to hear "Yngve" a tracker pipe organ that Jack Olander and the Keyboard Ensemble class of Maine Township High School had modified and rebuilt. As an added treat Samuel Nygren of Sweden gave a lecture demonstration of the tracker organ and had with him his personal exhibition of Swedish organ art.

Once upon a time, not so very long ago, the teen men of CATOE banded together into a group and called themselves the "Motley Crew." Members of the crew hail from all over Chicagoland and have since involved themselves with theatre organ tuning, construction, cleaning, and most of all, playing.

One of their specialties is out-of-town organ crawls. Numerous weekends have been spent working at the Coronado Theatre in Rockford, Ill. Two weekend tours to Milwaukee were arranged by Fred Hermes, Chairman of the Dairyland Chapter of ATOS. They also traveled to Stevens



Point, Wisconsin to hear Jim Benz-miller at St. Stanislaus Church. A visit to the Joliet area was very interesting and a late spring trip to Detroit, Michigan is being planned.

We hear constantly about the generation gap. This group of dedicated young teen-men working together, learning T/O techniques, instruments, and the thousand and one other details involved, have eliminated this gap as far as "Motley Crew" Chief Jack Smith is concerned, by keeping busy. Jack extends many thanks to the parents for their trust.

BILL RIEGER

## CONNECTICUT VALLEY

Our eleventh birthday was celebrated on February 12, 1972 with a meeting at the Waterbury Hammond Organ Studio. Program Chairman, Charles Putney surprised us with a pre-meeting concert demonstration of the Arp Synthesizer by a representative of the Tonus Company.

It appears that the electronic organ manufacturers have jumped to the synthesizer as a new toy, with the Wurlitzer in orbit, and others using self-contained add-on synthesizers. For those who wonder what a synthesizer, is, it is an electronic organ capable of playing only one note at a time, with controls for producing different tone qualities, attacks and other elements of sound waves, rather than stops as such. The Arp was interesting, producing many instrumental effects from a unit not much larger than its keyboard. One of the outstanding inventions in this instrument is "second touch." Now there is a really new idea! Press the key harder, and you get a different effect. What will they think of next?

We then departed to the State Theatre to hear Everett Bassett at the 2/10 style 205 Wurlitzer, opus 2016. This instrument was donated to the chapter a couple years ago in the RKO "giveaway", but the owners of the building contested ownership, RKO's lease ran out, and the organ remains in its home, where it should be.

Everett has kept the organ in repair since 1945, and knows it well. The console has been moved from stage right to the center of the orchestra pit, and a section of "pit fence" in the center was made removeable for use of the organ.



Everett Bassett in concert, State Theatre, Waterbury.

Ev has a musical and very listenable style, and delights in producing tunes that all of us but he has forgotten. How many readers recall "The Song is in My Heart," "The Lady's In Love With You," "Guilty," "Home," and "I'm Through With Love"?

It suddenly struck me, while listening to the Wurlitzer, that here is Grandfather Synthesizer, capable of playing many notes all at once, with myriad effects and tonal variety, orchestral effects and gadgets like "second touch?" It struck me how some of the sounds seemed so real, especially the Clarinet, Flute, Glockenspiel, Chimes, Drums and traps, and golly-gee, a Tuba.

The chapter presented its second official concert at the Thomaston Opera House with an excellent program by Bill Dalton. The name was familiar, but few of us had ever heard Bill play.

Now living in Connecticut and teaching in the Hartford area, Bill Dalton studied at Ohio State, and under such teachers as Bert E. Williams, Henry Foan of Westminster Abbey, London, and Pietro Yon of the Vatican, Rome. Starting as a pianist at age twelve, he was engaged to play organ solos at Loew's Ohio Theatre in Columbus, Loew's Richmond, the Byrd Theatre, Richmond; the Birmingham Paramount, and Radio City Music Hall. His radio and TV work includes

Paul Whiteman's NBC Show.

Bill is one of the original theatre organists who hasn't forgotten how the melody goes, and what chord goes with it. In spite of his long association with drawbars, he tackles registration orchestrally as well as any composer would orchestrate a score. In utter defiance of his age, he gets around the console nimbly and easily.

Bill selected a program which could have spelled disaster for some artists, as it contained no less than six classic orchestral compositions. This is where Bill had us spellbound. His registration constantly evoked illusions of an orchestra located in the chambers with some startling instrumental passages "Fantasy on the Opera 'Carmen'," "Overture to Orpheus in Hades," and Tchaikovsky's "Slavnic March" which brought the audience to its feet in unison at the last chord.

Perhaps the most interesting arrangement was "Broadway After Dark" which contained several familiar Broadway themes in a musically pictorial tour of the big city. Bill's most realistic musical effect of bustling traffic with startlingly convincing taxi horns was



Bill Dalton . . . Thomaston Opera House.



undoubtedly the surprise of the evening.

Here is a real musician who simply plays a delightful concert without flashy gimmicks. Bill Dalton.

It came as a complete surprise when a letter from our hard-working member, John Starr was read, offering his Crystal Palace theatre organ and silent movie museum to the Connecticut Valley Theatre Organ Society, Inc. The Crystal Palace in Goshen, Conn. has been John's "baby" for many months. The arched-ceilinged auditorium which houses the Allyn Theatre chandeliers, an ever growing Wurlitzer, and other memorabilia is slated for opening late this year.

Lawyers for both parties are setting up details under which John Starr will retain life use of the facility, while the Connecticut Chapter will acquire the museum as its home.

We believe this is another first for the chapter, and one which holds much promise for the future. We are grateful that John Starr has been so generous, and will announce further details as they develop.

AL MILLER

## LOS ANGELES

Southern California organ activities continued at a brisk pace after the busy month of February with its Great Western Regional Convention. On March 19th Helen Dell presented a very fine concert in the continuing Sunday morning series sponsored by the Los Angeles Chapter at the Wiltern Theatre. She played a varied program with something for everyone including "The Song of Herod", "I Love to Hear You Singing", "It's Impossible", "Dambusters March", and "Pastoral" (Richard Purvis). And the outstanding music of the entire concert was Helen's playing of the wonderful tunes from *Oklahoma* — all of them. The Kimball organ has never sounded better, with the rain damage repaired by Leonard Worne and his crew of miracle workers.

On April 11th the chapter held its Spring business meeting at the Elks Building in Los Angeles. Councilman Walter McCarthy of the City of San Gabriel presented Certificates of Merit on behalf of the City Council to eight members of the ATOS crew who worked for over 3 years to install the 3/16 Wurlitzer in the Civic Auditorium. Those receiving the awards were Neal

Kissel, project coordinator, his assistant, Bruce Skovmand, Frank Sherwood (who was largely responsible for installation of the organ lift), Harold Donze, John Hoffman, Chester Myers, Robert Brower, and Frank Sele. The principal item of ATOS business transacted at the meeting was the approval by the membership of an addition to the chapter by-laws concerning the disposition of chapter assets in the event of dissolution of the chapter. This provision in the by-laws was required by the Internal Revenue Service as a part of the recent granting of tax-free status to ATOS. During the Jam Session which followed, several members tried out the big Robert Morton Theatre Organ including Bob Meeker, Deke Warner, Fernand Martel, and Adele Thiele. Rose Diamond was eyeing the console when your reporter left so I suspect she may have played a bit too.

On Sunday morning April 16th the place to be was at the Wiltern Theatre where Scott Gillespie presented another fine concert. Scott is well known as one of the organists at Larry Bray's "Organ Loft" in Salt Lake City. The outstanding selections on his program were the Mormon hymn "Come, Come, Ye Saints" and the rarely heard but always enjoyed music from the "Mikado" by Sir Arthur Sullivan. To round out a day of Theatre Organ there was a jam session at the Elks Building in the afternoon.

Two events of interest to Theatre Organ buffs in the area were the Open House on April 6th and the *Flicker Fingers* show on April 15th, both featuring the ATOS installed Wurlitzer at the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium. The Open House was sponsored by the City of San Gabriel to show off the features of the auditorium to the citizens of San Gabriel and to the general public. Tours of the building were conducted and stage equipment and the extensive stage lighting facilities were demonstrated. Neal Kissel and his crew provided theatre pipe organ displays in the lobby which attracted much attention from the more than 1500 persons attending during the day, Jonas Nordwall played concerts on the Mighty Wurlitzer at 3, 6, and 9 PM. The *Flicker Fingers* presentation with Gaylord Carter at the console was a huge success with only a few empty seats in the 1500-seat auditorium. The program consisted

of two Harold Lloyd short comedies, a group of Cole Porter tunes, a community sing, and then the feature film, Buster Keaton in *The Navigator*. And to top off the evening, Gaylord presented the last film that Buster Keaton made, a film featuring a trip across Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific on the Canadian National Railroad. Buster rode a railroad "speeder" all the way, with very entertaining results, especially when he turned the speeder into a duck blind to help him get a better shot at some geese. Gaylord provided the organ accompaniment for the trip. It was a delightful evening of Theatre Pipe Organ entertainment.

SAM DICKERSON

## MOTOR CITY

The Redford Theatre was once again filled to capacity on Tuesday, March 21, when the Motor City Chapter presented Dennis James at the newly rejuvenated 3/10 Barton. The audience reaction on hearing this youthful performer for the first time, was overwhelming.

After a delightful mini-concert, a good old-fashioned sing-along, complete with vintage hand-painted song slides, the faces of Laurel and Hardy appeared on the screen.

Dennis explained before the start of the feature film, the 1927 mystery, *The Cat and the Canary*, that his accompaniment would be almost spontaneous, for due to the nature of the plot, regular reoccurring themes were not well suited to this film. The result was a fine film score, which seemed to draw us into the action, with brilliantly executed musical climaxes, coming one after another. Dennis was very much at home at the Redford Barton and we look forward to having him back again.

The following evening, Dennis conducted a Theatre Organ Master Class at DTOC, sponsored jointly by the Detroit Theater Organ Club and the Motor City Theatre Organ Society. In the style of an organists workshop, each participant performed two selections which Dennis critiqued. The Blower, the chapter newsletter, published a suggested list of theatre organ theory courses in publication, in addition to recommended collections of theatre organ arrangements and solos.

We highly recommend to any chapter considering booking Dennis James



for a public program that they also ask him about scheduling a Theatre organ Master Class for the benefit of chapter organists.

An American Legion Hall in Royal Oak was alive with activity as nearly 100 chapter members, not discouraged by the dreary rainy weather outside, turned out for our fourth annual banquet on April 16. Many tried their hand at the three-manual Conn theatre organ, loaned for the day by member Frances Morehead.

A highly successful Round-Robin organ crawl to hear and play theatre pipe organ installations in the homes of three chapter members was held on Sunday, in April. Gathering at the Royal Oak Theatre at 10:30 a.m., over 100 members listened to or played the 3/10 Barton and toured the chambers before splitting into three groups.

Floyd Bunt had just finished putting the finishing touches on the reinstallation of the 3/8 Page in his new home. After being in storage for several years, it was a treat to hear this nicely balanced instrument, with its glittering silver and gold keydesk, sounding once again.

The gold and white French style console of Mert Harris' 3/11 Wurlitzer is situated at one end of his spacious living room, enough distant from his two pipe chambers, housed in the former garage, to permit a pleasing sound that is not over-powering to the listener. Two separate sets of swell shades help to regulate the volume.

Roger Mumbrue's 3/19 "mostly"

Marr and Colton shares space in his large roomy basement with an assortment of coin operated amusement machines. The action of the upright piano, playable from the console, is visible through the glass paneled front.

Work on the 3/13 Barton in the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor is progressing so well that a sneak preview for chapter members is planned for June 11th.

DON LOCKWOOD

## NEW YORK

While readers of this magazine have been following the exploits of some of the better known "senior" organists who have been traveling the nation with silent film and organ shows, it is refreshing to see the emergence of a new talent, especially one of the "now" generation.

Young Dennis James has been touring the country for just a few years with these silent film and organ shows, and on Wednesday, April 5, he added another milestone to his rapidly ascending star as he held an audience spellbound at Rahway, N.J., accompanying *The General*, starring Buster Keaton. The amazing thing was, Dennis had only seen the film once before, and had never accompanied it. Those who were in attendance are still marveling at the fantastic job he did, rivaling, if not surpassing similar endeavors by others of longer standing fame in this department. A further credit to his artistry was his ability to keep the audience enthralled with his lightning

quick registration, which was done to perfection on probably the smallest instrument he has yet performed on publicly, the 2/7 Biggest Little Wurlitzer at the Rahway Theatre.

BOB BALFOUR

## NIAGARA FRONTIER

On March 14 youthful Dennis James displayed his ever-increasing talents and mastery at the console of the Riviera's 3/12 Wurlitzer.

He presented a well-chosen program that included some favorite standards and many popular tunes of the Twenties, Thirties, and Forties. At this concert, Dennis initiated our newly-added pit drums.

A special feature of this crowd-pleasing show was Dennis' rendition of "String of Pearls", during which time the stage drapes parted to reveal Alex Rene and his Big Band Sound — a 15-piece band that plays the sounds of the Forties. As the drapes opened, they picked up where the organ faded, and the group performed some of the more famous dance band selections.

The audience was well pleased with this exciting evening of organ and dance band music. (Musical entertainment such as this is almost a thing of the past.)

Don Thompson made his second Riviera appearance to a warm and receptive audience on April 19. There was a standing-room-only crowd that evening; in fact, some patrons had to be turned away.

Don's instant rapport with his attentive listeners drew him closer to their hearts. His excellent program held a host of wonderful compositions done in the rhythmic Thompson style.

The second half of Don's concert opened with "The Riviera," a selection from *The Boyfriend*. Also comprising the second half of the show were some of 1920's and 1930's most popular hits: Busby Berkeley production numbers, a rag, and a novelty tune or two. He lowered the console with the "immortal" Mickey Mouse march.

SHIRLEY COLE

## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

A real treat was hearing for the first time on pipe organ Father David Shaw. We had heard the Father on electronics on several occasions and knew he had a style which would come over big on the real thing. Shaw opened with a nice number and then told the chap-

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ter members that "to dispel any pre-conceived notions due to my clerical grab" he proceeded to put "The Stripper" through its usual bumps and grinds in a rousing interpretation. That did it! Most of the rest of his program were familiar pop tunes done in a swinging up-tempo style. The Avenue Theatre's 3/14 Wurlitzer was in good hands. Thank you Father Shaw!



Father Shaw at the Avenue Wurlitzer. (Lubich Photo)

Our next meeting took us back to two old friends — the 2/6 divided Robert Morton in the Cinema-21 — and our regular chapter artist, Larry Vannucci. Larry had not prepared a program as such, but just played them as he was inspired. After a few introductory remarks, Larry spoke not a word for the next two hours. But his music spoke for him — and it was one of Larry's best concerts yet! He knows this instrument inside and out "like the back of his hand." He has given it loving care for about 25 years, with hardly a week going by without at least one session on the little gem. When Vannucci is good, he is very, very good. And — this was one of those times.

Next it was a meeting at a new location — the Bella Roma Pizza in Martinez with David "Fats" Reese playing the 3/14 Wurlitzer/Robert



Larry Vannucci at the Cinema-21 Robert Morton. — (Lubich Photo)

Morton. Recently moving to the Bay Area from Salt Lake City, Reese has had a lot of pipe experience at the Bray Organ Loft. The Wurlitzer console came from the Sacramento (Calif.) Majestic Theatre, the balance of this Wurlitzer became the heart of the famed Granada, Tooting, London installation in England. David's program included both "oldies, but goodies" and contemporary selections, all of which were well arranged to show off the organ and its special effects. The organ boasts a wide variety of percussions, a real steam locomotive whistle (run on air), thunder and lightning effects, and a special feature of a three speed tibia tremulant ac-



David Reese at the Bella Roma Wurlimorton (Lubich Photo)

tivated from the console tabs. (Now, there fellows, is the way to settle those arguments!) Thanks, Dave, for a very enjoyable afternoon!

Our appreciation, as always, to the managements of the establishments where we hold our meetings and to the technicians who keep the instruments going. We in Northern California are very, very lucky to have so many fine theatre organs in excellent playing condition.

WARREN LUBICH and DEWEY CAGLE

## NORTH TEXAS

Our Christmas meeting in late 71 was a great one, held at the E.M. Johnson home in North Dallas. The whole family are organ buffs, with Dad doing the planning detail, Mom handling administrative detail and subsistence, Son serving as Chief Technician and Daughter as Chief Organist. Their installation of a 3/11 Wurlitzer, acquired from a church (yes, it's a *theatre* organ) in Corpus Christi, is really something. There were over 40 members and guests in attendance, yet plenty of conversation and listening space, without one interfering with the other. Even with Christmas decorations in the room, it was very neat and spacious.

Various members took turns at the console with everything from Christmas carols to "Alley Cat". One outstanding performer was Lew Williams, an 18 year old Organ Major from Texas Christian University. Lew is at home with any phrase of organ playing, a great talent, from whom we'll all be hearing more. He's good on theatre organ "oldies", pops, or Bach.

The March meeting of the chapter was at the Dallas home of Gordon L. Wright, where he has installed a 2/7 Wurlitzer acquired from the Orpheum Theatre in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Needless to say, this was another interesting



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session for the chapter, and Gordon's baby-grand player piano and the Rodgers plug-in in the music room also attracted their share of attention. Several of our more proficient chapter members serenaded us throughout the afternoon, and all were highly complimentary of the job Gordon has done with his installation. All speaking is done by the original pipes. No synthesized electronics. Only the switching is electronic. A beautiful job, technically and aesthetically, Gordon. Chapter Chairman John Beck's slide tour of the L.A. regional was also a meeting highlight.

There is one more chapter meeting this Spring, then a summer activity slump, as there is in almost everything during the 100 degree days, and then we'll be back with all stops out for a very promising 72-73 winter season. Meanwhile everybody will be working on their pet organ projects and rarities to go come the Fall.

JORMAN (JOE) KOSKI

#### PINETREE

This letter is to announce to all that the Pinetree Chapter is still alive and well. Although we haven't had much to report until now, here is an installment on the Wurlitzer obtained in New Rochelle, N.Y.

Three years ago, through the efforts

of Mr. Walter Froelich, we obtained a 3/13 Wurlitzer for the residents of Old Orchard Beach, Maine. Much of the instrument was installed under the supervision of Dr. Dwight Leighton of Yarmouth. Having been previously committed to the monumental one-man task of rebuilding the fifty-four rank organ at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Dr. Leighton had to temporarily drop the Old Orchard job for approximately two years. For most of the members, working on pipe organs of any kind was a new experience; therefore, we felt rather inadequate to handle the job on our own. Now, because I work a rotating shift, Dr. Leighton and I work as many Wednesdays as possible and quite frequently Saturdays as well. Dr. Herbert Hopkins of Old Orchard has spent many hours in refinishing the console and he's doing a beautiful job.

We will see to it that "Theatre Organ" readers get the full story and the plans for the organ in a future issue.

RON DRUMMOND



Earl Sharits and Ronnie Pedley share a mutual love of the theatre organ. Eleven-year-old Ronnie, our gifted youngest member, will make a brief appearance at the convention.

#### POTOMAC VALLEY

Sunday, March 28 found an unusually well-attended chapter meeting, a special occasion, to dedicate former Chapter Chairman George Johnson's 2/5 Wurlitzer installed in the basement of his home in Alexandria, Virginia. Guest artist was long-time member and former Colorado theatre organist, Earl Sharits (stage name Earle Sherdelle) who gave two informal and entertaining mini-concerts. Earl's offering of old and new tunes and the congeniality his personality bred, prompted the response of over a dozen volunteers during the open console period, the latter being representative of our membership ranging from our top professional to gifted young students and reticent but able amateurs. Members

something to CROW about!



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Barry and Dorothy Washington meantime served refreshments upstairs to those waiting their turn to see and hear Earl play.

George and Olean Johnson's instrument was removed from a church in Arlington, Virginia its original location being the Richmond Playhouse theatre in Alexandria. The Wurlitzer shares basement honors with George's narrow gauge (ON3) model railroad. The organ installation was a Father-Son-Grandson effort, his father P.K. Johnson also being a member and pipe organ owner, and son David being an able organ student.

The April meeting of the Potomac Valley Chapter featured former Chapter Chairman Ray Brubacher giving a program on the Lem Keller Special at the Keller residence near Frederick, Maryland. Lem began building his instrument in 1956. It is now a 4/17 with five sets of tuned percussions. The pipework is Moller, Wurlitzer, and Reuter; the harp is Link, and the console entirely electrically operated with Reisner components. The vibrato units, most of the chests, part of the relay, and the unique capture system which can be set at the keyboard were built by Lem Keller. About eighty members turned out to hear Ray Brubacher, who is well known for his many talents: church organist and



RAY BRUBACHER

organ teacher, Associate Editor of THEATRE ORGAN magazine, WXLN radio personality, movie and still photographer deluxe, organ and player piano restorer, recording artist, and, believe it or not, calliope player. The latter has something to do with Ray's love of steam powered machines. He has been tempted to go AWOL from an organ concert engagement when he has heard the siren call of a steam locomotive whistle.

The Johnson and Keller home installations and the Masonic Temple organ, as well as organist Ray Brubacher

will be among the important features at the July 10-14 Convention - "IN TUNE FOR YOU IN '72".

LUCIEN B. PHINNEY

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Sunday April 16, 1972 had been planned as "D" day for the last concert on the 3/15 Wurlitzer at the Denver Theatre as on the morrow "demolition" was to begin. The interior remodeling of the auditorium was to start. Several artists from the Denver area had been contacted and a program was set up for six organists to perform. As the time drew near the management of the theatre found it necessary because of construction difficulties, to cancel the use of the theatre. Bob Castle who plays and maintains the 4/20 Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer directly across the street from the Denver Theatre, very graciously invited the chapter to meet in that theatre.

The concert by the six artists was cancelled also but quite a number of chapter members tried their hand at the console. Among them were: Bob Castle, of course, Bill Johnston, chapter chairman, Bob Young, chapter publicity and several members from Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The group from Colorado Springs

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are at the present finishing the restoration of the organ in the Chief Theatre. Those from the Chief restoration crew who demonstrated their keyboard ability were: Rick Mathews (King Pin) and his assistants Rod Gates, David Church and Mrs. Wynn Wood. This group is about to form a branch of the Rocky Mountain Chapter as they are in the chapters chartered area although about 75 miles away.

Our chapter is awaiting the opening of Dick and Ruth Lewis' recently completed home organ installation of a 3/7 Marr & Colton. The organ is to be played by Bob Arndt of Des Moines, Iowa in the near future.

BETTY ROWE

### SIERRA

Sierra Chapter of the ATOS had planned to present another silent picture in Sacramento's Grant Union High School auditorium on Sunday, April 16 at 2:00 P.M. George A. Seaver was going to preside at the Kilgen console as he had many times before. The picture was to be John Barrymore in the Robert Louis Stevenson story of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. The event was not to be, nor was a program for the students of Grant Union High School set for April 14th, as you have noted, or will note, by The Closing Chord.



At the Carl Greer Inn: Jim Hodges, M.C. — Tiny James — Clyde Derby — Emil Martin, (Photo by Clint Savage)

George Seaver had no funeral, no memorial service. He wanted it that way. He had expressed the wish that his friends gather around a pipe organ and play theatre music. George Seaver's wish was granted; just the way he and his family wanted it. The location was the dining room of the Carl Greer Inn, thanks to Inn Manager Wayne Thorson; the organ was the former Seattle Music Hall 4/16 Robert Morton; the artist were friends Clyde Derby, Carl Greer Staff Organist; "Tiny" James, Norcal chapter member; and Emil Martin, Program Director of McClatchy Broadcasting Company and sometimes Greer Inn organist. The artists were introduced by Jim Hodges, Manager of FM Radio Station KHIQ and the man who had introduced George Seaver

to silent movie audiences many times. It was Jim who broke the news of Mr. Seaver's death to the listeners to KHIQ's Friday night theatre pipe organ music program by way of explanation for the sudden disappearance of the Seaver and Grant Union organ backgrounded silent movie announcements.

BOB LONGFIELD

### SOONER STATE

Great excitement was in the air as chapter members prepared to visit the Coleman Theatre in Miami, Oklahoma on the weekend of April 22 and 23. The Coleman celebrated the anniversary of it's opening over 40 years ago this month, with a gala film and organ intermission presentation, just as in the days when the theatre opened.

Featured at the console of the Coleman 3/7 Style 160 Special Wurlitzer was Mrs. Charles Puckette, it's mentor, curator and protector, and also an avid member of ATOS. Thanks to her determination and the help of loyal ATOS friends, Oklahoma's only remaining "In House" theatre pipe organ continues to play.

Coming up soon is an organ crawl to nearby Muskogee, Oklahoma by chapter members. The chapter will have a Jam Session on the 3/7 Robert Morton installed in the now completed, Muskogee Civic Center, at the

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invitation of Civic Center Manager, Vernon Laster.

Finishing out the chapter's planned activities is an upcoming silent movie, slide show, mini-concert program by Wichita Theatre Organist, Bob Foley. This program is tentatively scheduled to be presented on the 2/4 Robert Morton, located in the Tulsa Masonic Temple, as a joint ATOS Masonic Temple project.

## SOUTH FLORIDA

February 27th found us making the short trip up the Gold Coast to the residence of Ray Wulff in Boca Raton. Our own Reggie Foort had allowed time from his busy schedule



Reginald Foort at Ray Wulff's homemade console in Boca Raton.

to come and do a program during the afternoon on Ray's 3/9 Skinner residence installation, the console of which has been built from scratch by Ray himself. Needless to say, this was a superb match, the organ and Reggie Foort, with Reggie remarking this was one of the finest home installations he'd ever played. Those in attendance were indeed enthralled by the master musician. Reggie did quite a bit of story telling relating to the giant Moller traveling organ he'd had back in England during the "golden days". With photographs to bolster the many events in Reggie's life we were really able to share at length his fabulous career. Bouquets to Reggie for his magnificent presentation in the very intimate setting of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Wulff, to whom we are most indebted for their gracious hospitality.

March 19th our chapter was guest of chapter member David Thurman at the Trinity Episcopal Church in Miami where the 4/52 Aeolian/Skinner was brought forth in the grand manner. Mr. Thurman was featured during the afternoon in what he called "organ

capers" by Skinner. Oddly enough he kept his promise that this organ could be made to sound theatrical (?). After an open console session, a tour was made behind the swell shades for those in attendance to discover the source of this great sound. A great departure from our usual flair, this meeting proved to be unusually successful. Our sincerest thanks to Dave Thurman for his efforts on our behalf this day.

South Florida Chapter is pleased to announce that the chapter has been offered the complete cooperation in revamping of the former Olympia Theatre Wurlitzer in downtown Miami in conjunction with the Miami Philharmonic Society. Prior to being approached by our chapter the Philharmonic Society had not made any attempt to include the organ in its refurbishing project, currently underway. After recognizing that the ATOS was a nationally organized group of



Vice-chairman Ray Wulff, Reginald Foort, Jane Harvey and Chairman Steve Fitzgerald at the Wulff residence.

responsibility the green light was given South Florida Chapter for refurbishing the "sick" organ. The auditorium is now being completely refinished to its original Ebersson Atmospheric condition under a million dollar grant, with the Philharmonic anticipating a mid-October opening.

G. W. GERHART

## CLASSIFIED ADS

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