

How to Entertain 500 Friends!

An elaborate system of Bus scheduling enabled over 500 conventioners to enjoy the home tour wanderings through the beautiful Virginia and Maryland countryside.



An operating scale model railroad and a Wurlitzer Style B Special pipe organ share space in George Johnson's basement in Alexandria, Virginia. A program of good, solid theatre organ music was presented by Charlie Affelder of the Potomac Valley Chapter. Another group was treated to music played by Minneapolis organist Clyde Olson. The railroad gave an unplanned but very popular co-star performance along with the neat and compact organ installation.



Rockville, Maryland residents on Castaway Drive were surprised to see bus-loads of happy people entering Bob and Marge Lane's home. At the console of the white 2/5 Robert Morton was Potomac Valley Chapter member Earl Sharits, one-time Colorado theatre organist and "Mr. Congeniality" himself. How in the world Bob and his lovely wife found time to prepare their home and organ along with the huge task of handling Convention Registration is beyond comprehension. Marjorie is also the devoted Secretary of the Potomac Valley Chapter and this was the premiere for the installation.



George Merriken featured Dick Smith at the console of his 3/22 Wurlitzer at his picturesque Wurlitzer Music Hall. George operated his spectacular multi-color stage and house lights display. Due to limited space each bus-load split into two groups taking turns listening to Dick or viewing an oldtime movie and a film on the theatre organ with Joe Evalt as projectionist. George outdid himself to see that each visitor had a good time.



Those who visited Walter "Stump" Miller's beautiful 2/10 Wurlitzer had a surprise performance by Hector Olivera who had received an ovation for his thrilling concert at the Tivoli. Ray Brubacher did the honors for the two afternoon tours. This is one of Ray's favorite instruments as was evidenced by the manner in which he made it sound like a much larger organ. Stump's collection of antique clocks was something to behold. An ice water dispenser set up by the Millers and son Doug, really hit the spot on that hot day.



Two buses visited the Warren Thomas 3/8 Robert Morton in Washington Grove, Maryland. It was an open console for both buses and several of the conventioners made the Wonder Morton speak up. George Thompson, billed as the world's worst organist, made one of his rare performances much to the delight of all. This was the first public showing for Warren's installation and it was a real treat.



The Doug Bailey studio, in Rockville has been used as both a film sound stage and radio studio for several area stations, and houses Doug's 2/11 Moller (console from the Shoreham Hotel and pipe work from the Loew's Palace, Washington, D.C.). Due to limited space, a closed circuit video system was used, with montiors set up in various offices and visitors were able to alternate between the "live" performance and the TV viewing rooms. This installation has an entrance through the pipe chamber, giving visitors a unique opportunity to view the "inside" of a pipe organ from close range. Doug Bailey played several selections then turned the instrument over for open console.



At Lem Keller's residence the artist was Frank Lybolt, well-known former New York theatre organist, and now Dean of the Norfolk chapter of the AGO. Frank played an excellent program of old standards effectively blending the piano with the lush, well-balanced sounds of the 4/17 "Keller Special". The adaptation of the large organ's sound in this studio is a credit to master craftsman, Lem Keller.



Most popular of home installations was the 3/14 Wurlitzer in the Lautzenheiser studio in Springfield, Virginia. Featured at the console was Jean, the "Sweetheart of the Virginia Theatre", in an enthusiastically received program. Jean's "Goodnight, My Someone" was followed immediately by a rousing "76 Trombones" performed by GENII, the computer developed by Marvin Lautzenheiser for the sole purpose of performing on a theatre pipe organ. (See story on page 5). GENII was also the subject of a seminar presented by Marvin on Tuesday and which was repeated by popular request. Potomac Valley Chairman Jean, Convention Co-Chairman Marvin, and the Lautzenheiser studio, which served as convention planning headquarters, have concluded a busy year.

(Photo by Richard Neidich)

The tour found a four manual Wurlitzer in a temporary installation in the Alexandria, Virginia apartment of Ed Welsh. The instrument incorporates a new electronic device replacing the usual relays and switch stack and requires only two wires to connect the console to the chambers. Questions about the new relay system abounded as visions of simplified installations were instilled in the visitors. (No photo available)