

# VOX POPS



Conducted by Stu Green

*Readers are encouraged to submit interesting sidelights on the organ hobby (exclusive of chapter news items) material they believe will be of general interest about local organ activities and installations and the people who work at the hobby. We know "there's VOX POPS in them there chapters" and it only requires an 8 cent postcard to get it to VOX POPS Editor, Box 3564, Granada Hills, California 91344. If the contributor can afford a 10 cent stamp, why not include a black and white photo which need not be returned.*



Mrs. McMangle, organist, has been at the Gem for five years now. She and the manager are in a hurried conference over the score. The music for "Her Parisian Sin" is not on hand, so the score for "Her Eleventh Tooth" will have to serve, although, as Mrs. McMangle says, "you won't know the difference on this organ, anyway." Mrs. McMangle is a perfect lady, as you can see by the refined way she is eating plums, not spitting the pits all over the orchestra, as a common employee might do, but keeping them in her hand until she has a chance to toss them under the organ into a corner of the stage box.

*Courtesy: Chicago Tribune — New York News Syndicate, Inc. (Circa 1920).*

mission to inspect the organ. Much as they like to oblige, most managers find it difficult to get the house ready for opening while escorting visitors through the organ. A problem exists in theatres that have consoles that cannot be concealed or removed from public inspection. Some organ fans gather around the console before the show or during intermission to poke at keys and work stop-tablets. One theatre owner in Pennsylvania has to station an attendant at the console to keep people from handling the instrument. Of course, managers are happy to have fans come to their shows and enjoy themselves, but it is risky business to permit all comers to manipulate the console and enter the organ chambers. We ought not put managers to the

necessity of hiring extra help to keep their investments secure.

Some kind words should be said for ATOS audiences in general. Their behavior has been outstandingly good when compared with that of the average audience. Broadway audiences have been reported as usually cold and torpid. Classical concert audiences are as often obnoxious as not. At the Philadelphia Symphony, Stokowski often had to scold his audiences. He pleaded with them to stop their milling about and to cease their "disagreeable and disgusting noises." Contrasted with most symphony or rock audiences, ATOS audiences are sophisticated and well-behaved. It's a remarkable and highly commendable phenomenon. □

Your VOX POPPER wishes to thank the three readers who noticed that this column was missing from the December '74 issue. We have dreamed up all sorts of logical sounding alibis but decided finally to tell the truth; we missed the December deadline, not by just a couple of days, but by better than a couple of weeks. There's a very good excuse but who needs another hard luck story with the economy in the shape it's in? Armed with a better pair of eyeglasses, we'll try to miss deadlines with more margin to spare in the future. And to you three who noticed the column wasn't where it should be — Thanks, again!



The new *Earthquake* movie is proving quite a sensation with its low frequency rumble called "Sensurround," an in-theatre sensation designed to rattle upper plates and atrophy ear drums. To make the earthquake sequences realistic, the "Sensurround" equipment consists of batteries of well-baffled "woofers" speakers dispensed around the theatre. Into these are piped a 40-hertz electronic signal

from a special soundtrack during earth-shaking sequences. The effect is disturbing, especially in southern Calif. where residents have encountered the real thing. The slow air palpitation tends to shake one's clothing and do other strange things as indicated by comments gathered outside Grauman's Chinese theatre following a performance:

- A: "It rolled my socks up and down my ankles!"
- B: "Feels like a vibrator with a new set of batteries!"
- C: "It felt like someone was snapping my girdle!"
- D: "Felt like the whole firmament was riding my motorcycle, the one with the worn out shocks!"
- E: "More fun than sitting on a 'whoopie cushion'!"
- F: It undid my zipper — right down my back!"

It seems a little sad that Hollywood, in desperation to get theatre seats filled, must resort to what amounts to an enormous vibrator. Yet, its been done before — and with pipe organs. In the early days of the "talkies," when the high pitched sound equipment was incapable of registering deep-toned rumbles, suggestions would often accompany spectacle films suggesting that the house organ be used to bolster the soundtrack. Thus, at the showing of *Trail of '98* at Loew's State in Syracuse, N.Y., organist Maurice Cook turned on the organ blower and held down an octave of low-pitched stops to add realism to the snow slide scene. At the same theatre, later, Betty Lee Taylor added realism to the earthquake scenes in *San Francisco* in the same manner.

As spectator Lee Haggart put it, "This 'Sensurround' doesn't do anything a good 32' Diaphone couldn't do better. I haven't seen any lightbulbs popping!"

Harold Daringer, longtime exponent of the Venida Jones fan club travelled east from his San Diego home for a visit to Tom Ferree's Rivoli theatre in Indianapolis in late October and was afforded the red carpet treatment by Tom, who played the 3/17 Uniphone theatre organ for him. Harold obtained a circular on the Louisville-built organ which reveals how much solid labor Tom Ferree has put into restoring and enlarging the

stripped-down instrument he saved from a junkyard fate in 1965. The current instrument has only eight original ranks; the other nine being Barton, Marr and Colton, Estey but mostly Wurlitzer. Tom also had to replace the scrapped original toy counter and most of the tonal percussions. Harold reports the carefully matched additions blend well with the original ranks, and that the whole organ sounds great. While in Indianapolis Harold visited another favorite organist — Dessa Byrd Rappaport, a name that will bring a note of nostalgia to the many who remember her. Harold returned to San Diego just in time for the opening of the first (of a planned five) Organ Power Pizzeria, with Don Thompson at the 3/12 Wurlitzer (from the Wilson theatre, Fresno, Calif.). Harold writes that Don sounded fine and adds, "I'm sure Organ Power will be successful in this area."

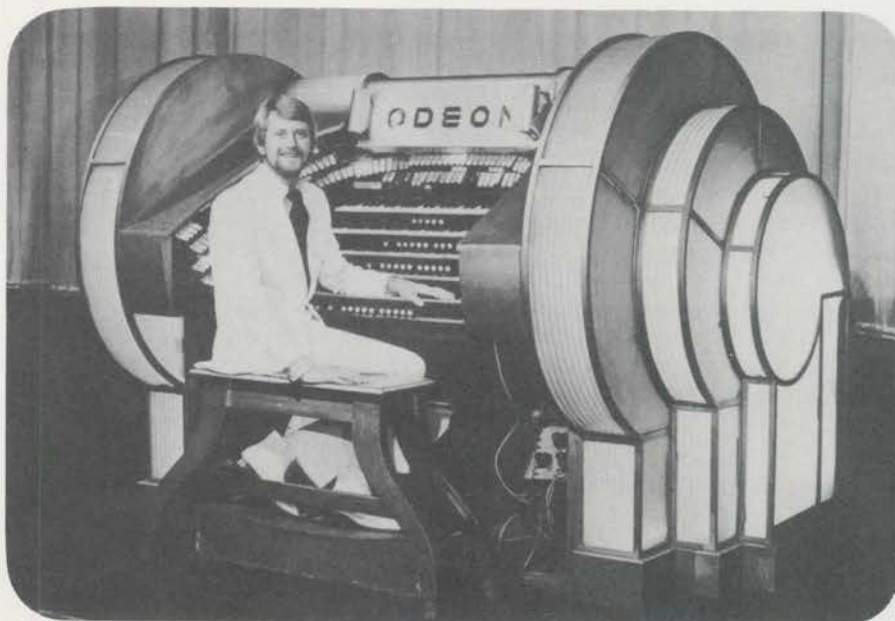
One thing Harold missed during his odyssey was the Lee Erwin presentation of Fairbanks Sr's *Black Pirate* at the Indianapolis Rivoli, shortly after he left.

Then came the bad news; the Rivoli organ was put up for sale.

Another guy who got back from a long trip in time to attend the Organ Power Pizza premier was Don Thompson — all the way from Britain. And it's well he made it on time because he was the star attraction.



Don reports that the San Diego pizzery opening was well-attended, with lots of press and TV coverage, but also that the newspaper which shot the photos was being tight with prints. Instead Don submitted a photo taken just before his recent tour concert at the Leicester Square Odeon. Don's English tour included three other concerts, all well attended, but this London concert was "the big one," featuring the 5-manual, 17-rank Compton played by the revered Gerald Shaw until his recent death. The photo illustrates a style of console decoration which never caught on in the USA — the "surround," a translucent and usually well-illuminated, extension of the console. Don is now doing a



Don Thompson at the Odeon. A big "surround."

Tuesday through Saturday stint at Organ Power Pizzeria No. 1



Helen Dell. Overshoes next time.  
(Dick Harold Photo)

It was all new to Helen Dell when she arrived in Rochester, N.Y. for her Dec. 3 concert for RTOS. Of course she had *seen* snow on the mountaintops in her native California but sloshing around in mushy slush was a new experience, and she resolved to bring overshoes next time. Fotog Dick Harold's Brownie caught Helen just after her concert, and just before the clod of snow in Helen's mitt made contact with Dick's bellows.

The premiere concert played by Virgil Fox on N.Y. Carnegie Hall's new Rodgers electronic concert organ proved to be quite a social as well as a musical event. The house was sold out weeks in advance and excitement ran high. The concert proved to all pres-

ent, even some usually dour newspaper critics, that the electronic concert organ has indeed come of age. These same critics were less kind to Mr. Fox, but they must have been belching into an anechoic chambers because all ear-witness reports reaching us have contained only praise for both instrument and organist. One enthusiastic report came from veteran organist Rose Diamond who attended the party sponsored by the Rodgers Co. in connection with the concert. Her report on those present reads like a "who's who" of musical *prominenti*.

The recent death of Ralph Trout brings about some bitter-sweet realizations. In *Lost Horizon*, the protagonist, Conway, observes that there comes a moment in the life of every man when he faces the eternal. That moment came for Ralph Trout when he realized that his heart would not last as long as the rest of his body, and he turned to the medics for at least an extension of life, a complete heart transplant. Medicine was able to extend Ralph's life for several years and we are the richer by all the music he brought forth from the organ in that time. Ralph was quite aware that he was living on borrowed time and could even joke musically about it by playing for a knowing audience such tunes as *So Beats My Heart for You*. Brave man, Ralph Trout.

Jesse Reed reports that John Muri came to Roswell New Mexico equipped with sunglasses, walking shorts and salt tablets. He'd have been better off with water skis, pontoons and oars, because the "Land of Enchantment" had been inundated with six days of almost constant rain. The streets reminded Muri of Venice!

Muri magic held, however. During the afternoon of his performance on the Pearson Auditorium Hillgreen-Lane organ, the rain stopped. Then the big black cloud in the east moved in slowly enough to permit over 600 stout-hearted organ devotees to get seated. Muri had not struck six notes of the overture when another deluge came!

So the evening was both a financial and artistic success. John opened with several numbers designed to show off the instrument. Snips from the works of pioneer fantasy cinematographer

George Melies followed. They're precious! After intermission, Muri conducted a singing school and showed a film of Fatty Arbuckle in *The Waiter's Ball* to an appreciative audience.

On the following day, rain held off long enough to permit Muri to visit the famed Carlsbad Caverns. Besides out-walking a couple years younger, he was observed buying a set of slides depicting the beautiful cave formations. We wouldn't be surprised to hear a Muri-authored *Cavern Suite* soon.

Doric Records has good news for Jesse Crawford record fans. There will be a new Crawford record release. After years of effort to clear perforated rolls made by Crawford at the height of his career, Doric has received "okays" from Crawford's widow, Lucy, and from William Thomson of the present Wurlitzer company, to go ahead with the release of a recording made by "miking" rolls played by Crawford and played back on Dick Villemin's carefully voiced



Jesse Crawford. The memory lingers on.

3/13 home installation. The rolls were made some years ago and Doric (and others) have been seeking a clearance to release pressings over a long time period.

What isn't generally known is that no "clearance" was actually necessary because there was then no way of copyrighting a recorded performance (there is now). So Doric could have gone ahead with the release independently years ago, yet preferred to get the okay of all concerned parties. This way, Lucy Crawford is assured a royalty on each record sold. The new Jesse Crawford record release is expected to be available late in the first quarter of '75. Tiny James, Judd Walton and Doric's prexy, Frank Killinger, have selected the tunes most representative of Crawford. What a delightful (and difficult) assignment!



Wonder how many Gotham organophiles tuned into WOR-TV on Dec. 6 to catch the interview involving Harvey Roehl and John W. Landon, respectively publisher and author of the recently released *Jesse Crawford; Poet of the Organ*? We've been getting mixed comment on the book, more plus than minus. Those who came too late to be a part of the Crawford era tend to accept it as gospel, and well it may be, as far as it goes. Those in the know dwell on the omissions. For example, Chicago theatre magnate Barney Balaban (remember the Balaban 1 and 2 model Wurlitzers?) is barely mentioned. Yet he is known to have had a strong influence on Jesse and was a friend of Crawfords during the Chicago days, until a falling out cooled it. Of course, such complaints may be small potatoes in comparison with the painstaking work done by the author in tracing the Poet's life so long after the principal's death. If one doesn't know what Crawford was really like after reading the book, it's probably, as Landon infers, because Crawford was an enigma, a loner and beyond the understanding of most observers.



Al Sacker was only seven when the trucks rolled up to the new Jefferson theatre in Beaumont, Texas, and unloaded the parts of the Robert Morton organ which would soon claim Al for its own forever after. That happened as soon as the Morton was in shape to



Al Sacker. A dream realized.

sing its siren song to Al. The lad saw a succession of organists play "his organ" between 1927 and 1956 — Alice Richmond, Fred Minton, Walter Wright, Milt Herth, Larry Jean Fisher, Billie Kitts, Marjorie Washburn and — finally — Al Sacker, the last to play it for shows. It wasn't that Al was slow to learn music. He'd been a pianist at 9, a church organist at 13 and his thirst for musical learning led him as far as the Julliard School of Music in New York. It was simply a love affair — man and pipe organ. Al was happy as long as he could listen to the organ. After the organ was discontinued, Al kept it in playing shape — until the 1700-seat theatre closed in 1973. The theatre was naturally damp and the organ had deteriorated badly when Gulf State theatres donated the house to the LBJ Foundation.

Then something wonderful transpired. The Foundation put in heaters to keep the humidity down. Then Al Sacker was contacted and given the coveted assignment of getting the organ back in shape and keeping it there. Asked if he wanted any help, Al Sacker replied, "No, this is my baby. I'll bring her back to health myself. I've watched out for her too long to let others touch her."

"Baby's" future is assured under LBJ Foundation ownership and Al is already thinking in terms of starting a South Texas ATOS chapter.



In Providence, Rhode Island, Dr. Alan Goodnow looked up from his work on the Wurlitzer in the Colum-

bus theatre to see a distinguished visitor watching him — none other than C.A.J. Parmentier. "Cass" had heard that Doc Goodnow, Prez of the Rhode Island T.O. Society, was heading a task force bent on refurbishing the 2/6 and, being in the neighborhood, decided to stop by for a look-see. He got more than that: Goodnow and his fellow buffs rolled out the red carpet and the one-time CBS console star was trundled off to visit R.I. organ installations.

Cass played a few numbers at the home of Harry Jacques in Pawtucket. Then he performed on the 2/6 Wurlitzer at the Seekonk, Mass., home of Walter Gelinas. Later, at the University of Rhode Island he met Dr. Walter Beaupre, professor of speech who doubles as special events organist at the University's 4-manual Austin. Cass



For "Cass" Parmentier, the "red carpet"

learned that Dr. Beaupre donates his fees to a fund which pays for organ concerts by visiting artists. Cass tried out the Austin, an instrument he found to his liking. He was also impressed by the progress made on the long neglected Columbus theatre instrument, a largely weekend project for the professional men who make up the work crew of the RITOS.



Alden Miller

Alden Miller reports from Minnesota that 225 Land O' Lakes chapterites and their AGO guests heard both classical and pop concerts on the 124-rank, twin console Kimball in the Minneapolis civic auditorium on Nov. 11, with Clyde Olson doing the "pop" honors at the 4/20 console and Dr. Edward Berryman doing his classical numbers on the 5/124 console. Then Berryman took over the 4/20 console for awhile and declared it much easier to play than the 5-decker. The session was rounded out by a 17-year-old classical whiz who attends the local Blake School whom Alden failed to identify by name. The historian of the *Lakes* chapter is profuse in his praise of the performers, and he should know; he's been an auditioner of this instrument since the dedicatory concerts by Lynwood Farnam and Eddie Dunstedter 46 years ago. Alden said he has never heard the Kimball in better shape.



On October 21st and 22nd *Organ Stop Pizza* became the only place in Phoenix to hear two mighty Wurlitzers. Billed as "Wurlitzer Forever," it featured something old and something new – the mighty theatre pipe organ (Wurlitzer 4/28) played beside the new plug-in with synthesizer. *Or-*



Dennis Chapin and Ron Rhode at Organ Stop Pizza, Phoenix.

*gan Stop* staff organists Ron Rhode and Charlie Balogh played solos and duets with 17-year old Dennis Chapin at the electronic. The event drew S.R.O. crowds both nights. Tom Rousseau of *Organ Stop* coordinated the event with the local Wurlitzer dealer, and its success may indicate more to follow, reports Karl Warner.



The Wurlitzer 3/15 Style 260 Special (Opus 0795) which was donated to Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan by Jim Thomas of Arizona is rapidly on its way towards sounding its glorious voice once again.

The University has contracted with the Wicks Organ Company of Highland, Ill. to rebuild and install the instrument. John R. Wagner of Grand Rapids, Michigan, who was instrumental in obtaining the instrument for the school, indicates that reinstallation is scheduled for spring and it is hoped that the instrument will be playing in time for June graduation activities. A marimba and toy counter which were part of a different organ installation in the Thomas residence were part of the donation and they will be included in the newly revamped Wurlitzer stoplist. The cost of the project has not been divulged.

The organ will occupy a position of prominence in the new Student Ice Arena and it is believed that this will be the only installation in the country to feature a full theatre pipe organ in a stadium devoted to college hockey.



We hope Chicagoans packed the Pickwick theatre Dec. 12 for Walt Strojny's CATOE-sponsored "Wurlitzer Holiday". Yes, it's now "Strojny." Walt tired of the mispronunciations and misspellings of the family name, Strojny – or was it Strogny? (some goofs in this column!) and finally gave in to simplification. Regardless of how he spells his name, the lad (19) is a "comer." Mildred Alexander reports he "wowed 'em" during his cameo at the Atlanta Fox benefit show recently. The former Al Melgard student took over Al's teaching studio not long ago.



Robbie Letherer

While we're on the subject of youth, reports have reached us that Robbie Letherer did a creditable job of scoring *Phantom of the Opera* at the Homestake theatre in Lead (yes,



Lead!), So. Dakota on Halloween eve, playing a restored 2/5 Wurlitzer pit organ. Having no score, Robbie improvised most of the music; No easy feat for a budding 19-year-old silent scorer. Cueing Laurel & Hardy's *Two Tars* was more fun, with musical references to Campbell's *Mmm, Good* as the tomatoes flew and the brassy *Dragnet* theme when the fuzz materialized. No reference was made regarding attendance, but with the pre-show ballyhoo we don't see how the combination of Robbie and Lon Chaney could have failed to get the population of Lead out on All Soul's Eve.



Bill Hage reports that work on installing the 4/28 Wurlitzer from Paterson's Fabian Theatre in Newark's Center of Italian Culture is continuing. "Ashley Miller and I are re-arranging the stop layout to eliminate about 39 couplers. We've had several Wednesday work sessions, and this will help Walter Froehlich to revise the Stopkeys in more conventional style. Walter conducted a seminar, complete with blackboard, for the organ restorers. It's going to take a lot of hands to get this monster working."



Rummaging backstage while repairing the 2/5 Wurlitzer in the Homestake theatre in Lead, So. Dakota, John Adams found a poster announcing the 1929 dedication concert of the then new organ. Adams, one of four South Dakota ATOSers, noted that the opening show was played by a young organist named Joe Brite. Joe Brite! The name rings bells because Joe was one of those organists who refused to give up playing in theatres just because "talkies" arrived. He managed to keep playing the little organ in the Alamosa (Colorado) theatre all these years. He was such a fixture in the TO hobby it's doubly sad to pass on John Adams' postscript to the effect that Joe Brite died of the injuries suffered when set upon by juveniles (Adams says "pistol whipped") in his beloved Alamosa theatre on Sept. 14. What are we coming to!



Joe Brite (Bob Hill Photo)



It's been a long time since Don Baker fondled the keys of the New York Paramount theatre 4/36 Wurlitzer, some years. In fact, Don was the last to play the organ in public during the requiem held just before the famed auditorium was destroyed. Don had earned that honor through his nearly 14-year residency at the Paramount, the longest of any organist. In the years between both Don and the 4/36 witnessed many changes. The latter suffered rough handling in its westward journey, a long period of storage and a console-destroying fire. Its rescue by Wichita Theatre Organ Inc. marked a turning point for the "Dowager Empress." Now safe in Wichita's Century II civic auditorium,



Don Baker. An old friend waits.

the venerable organ heard good news; her old friend and master, Don Baker, would come to Wichita for a March concert played on her.



Central Indiana Chapter's November Newsletter reveals that veteran theatre organist and chapter member Dessa Byrd has been ill, but is recovering. What memories her name arouses in mid-west organ circles! Was it the Circle theatre in Indianapolis where Dessa played a 3-manual Wurlitzer? Also the Indiana theatre's Wurlitzer. Get well fast Dessa!



Dessa Byrd (Darringer Collection)

Dick Penberthy reports receiving word from England to the effect that Alan A. Ashton's organ program on BBC Radio Manchester has been resumed by popular demand after being off the air over a year and a half. *Pedals, Percussion and Pipes* had been on the radio for 114 weeks prior to the 1973 cancellation.



Alan Ashton. Back on the air.

Doc Bebko's eighth season of accompanying silent movies at Buffalo's Museum of Science got off to a rousing start on October 19 before a packed house. He accompanied *Lost World* and the first chapter of a 13-part serial, *The Power God*. Doc says, "My early career of playing silents began in 1923 and ended due to lack of product. Previous to the silents' demise the theatre had done a fine business, employing two organists and an orchestra, I playing the night shift. This was at the Harlem Opera



Doc Bebko

House, a 1540-seat theatre with two balconies, situated at 211 W. 125th Street in New York."

John Muri thought Randy Sauls' biography of movie music composer J.S. Zamecnik was "pretty good" but points out that Randy left out an important item, especially in view of Zamecnik's publisher's failure to remember the man whose 1500 tunes they published. Muri points out the financial rewards reaped by the publisher for Zamecnik's hit tune, *Neapolitan Nights*, as well as for the standard piano novelty *Polly*, even the theme for *Wings*. These made money for the publisher who doesn't recollect. Perhaps what's left of the "music biz" needs a hall of fame to commemorate its less publicized greats.

Since his most successful appearance at the Detroit Convention, Vic Hyde has been busier than a one-armed paper hanger. At the Goldsboro, N. Carolina Fair, television's *Hee Haw* star, Archie Campbell, after seeing Vic's act, suggested that he visit Nashville and do some tape sequences which could be used on the TV program. Accompanying his act at the fair was Florine Oler, "who plays a real flashy, always fast, big Wurlitzer electronic, bobbing around with lots of action, big smile, good personality, bright red hair, sequined-green wardrobe," using revolting palm schmears. Yipe! Vic says Perry Cozatt Jr, son of the organbuilder, is now making his living exclusively by building air callopes, having four on order.

Out in California, Rose Diamond is already thinking in terms of a "SAVE THE MUSIC HALL" campaign to forestall the threatened extinction of the now singular New York presentation and movie house. She points out that it took only one man, violinist Isaac Stern, to sparkplug the campaign that eventually saved New York's famed Carnegie Hall from the wrecker's ball. And she adds that another man, actor Joel Grey (*Cabaret*) started the publicity which resulted in the Panov ballet company being sprung from confinement behind Soviet borders. Rose adds that the RCMH is, for all practical purposes,



Rose Diamond. Look out, Rocky! (Stufoto)

owned by our new Vice President — so how about a subsidy to your own family's theatre, Rocky? We would advise Mr. Rockefeller to pay attention to Rose Diamond's admonitions because she has a lot of Joan of Arc in her. She might be just the spark needed to insure continuation of the country's last remaining stage show and movie house on a grand scale. Old timers may recall Rose as the rehearsal pianist on duty while S.L. ("Roxy") Rothafel selected the girls for his very first line of Rockettes which opened the Music Hall in 1932.

Lon Chaney Sr. will probably swivel in his sarcophagus should details of the movie *Phantom of the Paradise* catch his posthumous attention. Writer/director Brian De Palma has the Phantom playing not the familiar horseshoe console with drawknob stops in the musty opera house sub-basement but an electronic synthesizer in a modern "Rock Palace." Combining elements of the Chaney classic with the Faust legend, *Phantom* satirizes the corrupt and pretentious world of pop culture. This goofy, savage film is a downer for rock cultists.

Bob Goldstine continues to spearhead the drive to save Fort Wayne's 2970-seat Embassy Theatre which houses a 4/15 Page. "Our deadline was October 28, and we had raised only \$10,000, a long way from the required purchase price of \$250,000 for the theatre and adjoining Indiana Hotel, plus the refurbishing estimate of another \$250,000. However, we had

the Ketchum Corp. do a feasibility study which indicates that we can be successful over a six-month period. With this assurance, we have been able to get a six-month extension from Sportservice. We shortly will launch a full-scale campaign to raise the required funds. Our big problem is getting the first large challenge gift from a family, foundation, corporation or wealthy individual. Public response has been tremendous, and we are finally getting many of the large civic groups behind us, such as the Downtown Association, Chamber of Commerce, etc. I am firmly convinced that we will make it this time."

Margaret Sabo, back from a junket to Rochester, N.Y. to savor the big RTOS celebration, reports that the Mt. Baker Theatre in Bellingham, Washington, has been leased by new operators for at least five years. This is good news; its 2/10 Wurlitzer is being used weekends during movie intermissions. The Puget Sound Chapter was formed in December 1959 in the lobby of this theatre.

For 35 years, Old Prospect or Klos' moral support of the New York Yankees had been legendary, even the subject of ridicule by some of his

associates. The picture of Arlo Hults in a "bathtub" surrounding an organ console in the October Vox Pops reminded Klos of an item he received at the height of his Yankee-loving fervor. It was known Klos listened to Yankee games while in the bathtub. A cartoonist in the graphic arts department of the "paragraph factory" where our man worked was the instigator. But "old Panamint" has since switched allegiance to the L.A. Dodgers. Why? Klos explains "Any team which hires ATOS member Helen Dell as official organist can't be overlooked. Her peppy tunes have to be a factor in the team's success. Let's Go, Dodgers!"

The status of theatres in Rochester, N.Y., would seem to reflect an average for the nation. Two theatres were razed in October and a third's life is hanging precipitously. First to go was the *Paramount-Studio 2 Complex*. Opened in 1916, the building closed early in 1974, due to declining patronage. Second to be razed was the 1,000-seat *Embassy*, once known as the glamorous *Cook's Opera House*. Ravaged by fire earlier in the year, an attempt to raise \$100,000 to restore the structure was unsuccessful. The 1300-seat *Capitol* may be the next to go. Its auditorium would be knocked down for parking space, but the front

of the building, which houses offices, would remain. This would leave two operating movie theatres downtown with a total seating of 550. The pipe organs in all three doomed houses were removed years ago. The *Paramount's 3/13 Wurlitzer*, Opus 1928, is now in Colorado.

There's more to being an ATOS member than just paying dues and reading THEATRE ORGAN. There's a camaraderie among ATOS members which doesn't allow them to remain strangers very long — even over wide geographical separations. This report submitted by Cedar Rapids Chapter member Byron Olsen is indicative.

ATOS members R.H. Sharp of Florham Park, N.J., executive vice president of Hughes Television Network in New York, his wife and Mr. and Mrs. A.M. Cox of Newark, N.J. (he is with the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce) were travelers on the Mississippi River steamer *Delta Queen* which docked at Davenport, Iowa. As members of ATOS, they knew that a pipe organ was located in the Capitol theatre so Sharp and his party made their way to the Capitol.

Dan Lindner, manager at the Capitol, remembers the morning very well. Several strangers appeared at the auditorium doorway. If possible, they would like to see the organ. Robert Beck of Davenport, who has done much of the organ's restoration, was working that morning. Bob and the group had a long talk about their mutual interest. They stayed to play for about two hours until they had to return to the *Delta Queen*.

Dan Lindner recently received a letter of thanks from Mr. Sharp. Quoting from Sharp's letter, he wrote, "I must confess it was my first encounter with a Wicks, and a most pleasant one it was. The organ is in fine shape and has great response. I am certain you will have many memorable concerts on it. The opportunity to play in the Capitol Theatre was the highlight of my trip up the Mississippi on the *Delta Queen*."

From Buffalo, N.Y., Randy Piazza informs us that Loew's Buffalo theatre, with its big Wurlitzer, has been foreclosed for back taxes, although it's still showing movies. However, the No. Tonawanda Riviera, with its now 3/17 Wurlitzer, is going strong seven days a



"Gold Digger" Klos. Bathtubs and baseball do mix.



week. Irv Toner and Norm Jarosik are playing the intermissions.



Good news for George Wright fans! He'll soon be back on the pipe recording scene. An anonymous Bay Area donor has given him a 2/10 Wurlitzer to which George intends to add several ranks of mostly Wurlitzer parts collected over the years by Dick Hull in Denver which George has purchased. Next it's a search for a proper acoustical setup possibly one of ABC-TV's Hollywood sound stages (George is the station's musical director). He may release a recording even before the new organ is perking. He has material he played on the Vollum estate 4-manual, 50-plus rank mostly Wurlitzer near Portland "in the can." He plans a circa 27-rank installation and it will be known as the *Jesse Crawford Memorial Organ*, according to an ABC-TV news handout released just before Christmas.



George. Back in the grooves again.



For those who were confused by Figures 3 and 4, illustrating "The ABC's of Regulators" (page 17, Dec. THEATRE ORGAN), the two captions were reversed. Our apologies.



What can one say in defense of a guy who plans a theatre organ installation in his home, methodically stalks a sleeping Moller, tears it out of a New York theatre by the roots, carts it home to Whiteville, North Carolina, installs it in his home, hones it to a fine playing condition — then unloads



J.M. Martin. Can he be saved?

it? Does such a man deserve any mercy, at all? When he's J. Marion Martin he does. "J.M." just couldn't refuse the generous sum offered for his Moller-blessed home — but the buyer wanted it without the organ, silly fellow! So J.M. and wife "Boo" planned to build a proper home for the whistles. But another twist of fate got in the way; there was a ready-made home for the monster in a nearby church. Shedding a few crocodile tears, our protagonist donated it in exchange for a tax write-off. Then (and this is the unkindest cut) he bought himself a plug-in. Despite these seeming trespasses, J.M. has some redeeming social values which counteract

this seeming outrage. He has performed, and continues to perform many services for pipes, one being the apparently permanent editorship of the Piedmont Chapter's newsletter, REEDS AND STRINGS. Besides, his erstwhile Moller is just down the street, in a nice, safe permanent home and available for fondling. And J.M. does much more to help keep the legend of the theatre organ alive. For example, on April 14, the Lecture Auditorium at Southeastern Community College (Whiteville) will once again become the imaginary *Palace theatre* of yesteryear for a silent movie presentation and organ concert. At the console — J. Marion Martin. □

## Binders . . .

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