

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER, A.T.O.E., ORGANIZED

An organization meeting to establish a Niagara Frontier Chapter of A.T.O.E. was held on Wednesday evening, October 28th, 1959 at 8 P.M. in the auditorium of the Grosvenor Library, Buffalo, New York. Present were fifteen individuals who were to become charter members of the Chapter. The following officers were elected: Harry J. Radloff, President; John Spalding, Vice-President; and Dr. Charles W. Stein, Secretary-Treasurer. Plans for the organization were drawn up and a Committee assigned to prepare a Constitution. Mr. Louis Rosa, Director of Research at the Wurlitzer Company, invited the group to hold its first official meeting at the studio in their plant in North Tonawanda (a suburb of Buffalo).

On the evening of Wednesday, December 9th, some twenty-five members and guests gathered at the Wurlitzer Plant for the first official meeting. The new Constitution was adopted unanimously and the group voted to confer its first and only Honorary Life Membership in the Niagara Frontier Chapter to Mr. Farny R. Wurlitzer, long-time Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Wurlitzer Company and chief architect of the "Mighty Wurlitzer." At the same time, the Chapter voted to place a wreath on the grave of Robert Hope-Jones, father of the electro-pneumatic pipe organ, who lies buried in Elmlawn Cemetery, Town of Tonawanda, on the one hundredth anniversary of the great inventor's birth. In accordance with the group's wishes, this was done on the afternoon of Saturday, December 12th, in the presence of the Chapter's officers.

Following the adoption of these resolutions, Mr. Louis Rosa of the Wurlitzer Company and Mr. Frank Manning, long-time supervisor of Wurlitzer theatre installations, presented some most interesting slides of the Wurlitzer theatre organ. This was a nostalgic treat for everyone. Included were pictures of a number of consoles, installations, the Wurlitzer Plant itself back in the days of the theatre organs and even of Robert Hope-Jones. In all, over one hundred

fascinating slides were shown. Following this, two local organists—Harvey Elsaesser and Bobby Jones—entertained at the console of a Wurlitzer electronic organ equipped with twin Leslie speakers. A friendly social gathering was then held at which it was learned that four of the members present had come from Toronto, Canada, across the border, and two others from Rochester, New York. It was a great thrill for all of us to have our first official meeting in the very home of the "Mighty Wurlitzer"! Plans were announced for a meeting to be held early in February, 1960, at the Roosevelt Theatre in Buffalo where there is housed a fine 4/M 18R Marr and Colton in excellent condition. Two former greats in the theatre organ world are expected to perform—Harold Jolles and Dr. Edward J. Bebko. Everyone is looking forward to this meeting and to others that will follow. Membership in the Chapter is increasing by leaps and bounds. By the Spring of 1960 we expect to have between fifty and seventy-five members. For the Western New York area is truly the home of the theatre organ with both the Wurlitzer and Marr and Colton plants having been located here. The debut of the Niagara Frontier Chapter, A.T.O.E. has been auspicious indeed!

(ED. NOTE—The officers and staff of THEATRE ORGAN are deeply indebted to the members of the Niagara Frontier Chapter, A.T.O.E., for their remembrance of the occasion of the birth of Robert Hope-Jones. Their action can well be described as representative of the feeling of every A.T.O.E. member and accomplished on the behalf of Theatre Organ enthusiasts the world over.)



Niagara Frontier Chapter ATOE Meeting at Wurlitzer Plant, North Tonawanda, New York, December 9, 1959.



The officers of Niagara Frontier Chapter ATOE place a wreath on the grave of Robert Hope-Jones in Elmlawn Cemetery, Town of Tonawanda, New York on December 12 1959. From left to right; John Spalding, Vice-President; Harry Radloff, President; and Charles W. Stein, Secretary-Treasurer.



Photograph of inscription at base of stone on the Hope-Jones' grave in Elmlawn Cemetery, Town of Tonawanda, New York.

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER, A. T. O. E. MINUTES OF THE MEETING Friday, December 4th, 1959

The second regular meeting of the Potomac Valley Chapter, A. T. O. E., was held Friday evening, December 4th, 1959, at the Alexandria Arena. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Erwin Young at 11:30 P.M. with twenty-one regular members and their guests present.

The minutes of the first meeting and the current financial statement of the Chapter were read by the Secretary and Treasurer, Bob Jones.

The Chapter Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and brought the membership up to date on the events leading up to the granting of the charter to the Potomac Valley Chapter, A. T. O. E. Discussion was then held concerning the newsletters received by the Chairman from the National A. T. O. E. President, Mr. Judd Walton, with particular emphasis directed to the location of the present Chapters and the general growth of the organization. The time and place of the annual meeting of the A. T. O. E. was recorded and Mr. Young indicated his intent to be present at this meeting. The members were then brought up to date on the status of the various organs installed or being installed in our Chapter area together with known plans for future meetings to include these installations. The Chapter was informed of the radio program over Radio Station WFAX, Falls Church, Virginia, 1220 KCK every Sunday at 12:45 Noontime, featuring our Chapter Vice Chairman Jimmy Boyce at the console of the Mighty Wurlitzer located in the Alexandria Arena.

The members were then advised they would be billed for National A. T. O. E. dues for

the year 1960 after the fourth 1959 issue of Theater Organ was received, probably some time after March 1960. Local Chapter dues are good through December 31st, 1960. This arrangement was accepted by the members present. The members were briefed on the proposal from Mr. Judd Walton to have local Chapter Chairman on the Board of Directors of the A. T. O. E.

Our Chapter Chairman, Erwin Young, discussed his visit to the Delaware Valley Chapter, A. T. O. E., meeting at Surf City, New Jersey. Also discussed was the trip by Mr. Young, Vice Chairman Jimmy Boyce and member Dick Collins to Radio City Music Hall as guests of Mr. Jack Ward, Staff Organist at the Music Hall.

Dick Collins made a motion, seconded by Bob Jones and approved by the members, to express the appreciation of the Chapter to Mr. Tom Brown, Manager Alexandria Arena, for the use of his facilities for our meeting.

The following committees were appointed: Program Committee, Jimmy Boyce Chairman, Ray Jenkins and Harold Warner as members. Membership Committee, Clyde Berkebile Chairman and Harold White assisting. Refreshment Committee, Mrs. Robey Chairman, assisted by Mrs. Haney, Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Williams.

The business meeting was ended with an expression of thanks to Mrs. Robey and Mrs. Cooper for the very tasty refreshments.

The members then adjourned individually to the console of the Mighty Wurlitzer, the strains of which were heard several blocks down St. Asaph Street until after 2:00 A.M.

ERWIN A. YOUNG, JR.,

Chairman.

(Continued from page 12)

tubes as proof, all because Tom spent a split second on the radio to say that they did; detailed descriptions of small towns, after Tom had added "whatever that may be" to casual reference to a dot on the map. A local minister called Tom "the most dangerous man in Rochester. Everyone knows this dangerous man. He's one of the few who can turn his back on an audience and get away with it." That wasn't all by any means.

In greeting his RKO audiences, there were a couple cheerios in his voice, but he spoke the King's English and made "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen" sound like the start of a grand occasion. The Scottish gags had to be taken with a laugh. He still works them in this fashion today. Radio announcing was one of the things which just happened to him.

Looking back, he says, "Really, I never had announced before I started at the Palace in 1929. I always ran away from public speaking. And then the regular announcer was late one day, and it was my turn. They gave my voice Grade A. That means I could bite the mike, and the words were clear. Some voices won't carry too close to the mike, you know." That was the first step—

(Continued on page 27)

SAN FRANCISCO THEATRE ORGAN SPECTACULAR!

It was raining, the tickets cost two bucks per person, the time was set at 12:00 midnight, publicity was local (approximately 30 mile radius), but despite these apparent obstacles 4600-plus theatre organ enthusiasts assembled at the San Francisco Fox Theatre on Saturday, March 5th to hear a George Wright concert! They came from as far as Los Angeles, Oregon, Arizona and other neighboring states. Originally sponsored by a local organ enthusiast, with the financial help of the many Bay Area organ clubs (including the Northern California Chapter of ATOE), the affair was later co-sponsored by radio station KPEN-FM, of San Francisco. It was at this point that interest really began to build up on a big scale, possibly due to the publicity given by the station on the air and in the Bay Area newspapers.

Work on the organ that had been under way for weeks in anticipation of an important recording date was intensified to have the instrument as nearly perfect as possible by the concert date. It was completed just in time for one rehearsal prior to concert time!

George Wright opened his show by bringing the organ up out of the pit into the full brilliance of a bevy of pure white spots, playing Show Business. His program included Misty; a Gershwin medley of Rhapsody In Blue, Love Is Here To Stay, Crazy Rhythm, and The Man I Love; Nochechita, Mae West medley that included Frankie And Johnny, The Bowery, My Old Flame; Clare De Lune; Whistler And His Dog; Night And Day; Victor Herbert Medley; and St. Louis Blues.

He opened the second half with Pine Top Boogie and then played accompaniment to the Fox Movietone Newsreel taken at the time of the original opening of the Fox Theatre in 1929, followed by an old-time slapstick comedy which delighted everyone.

He concluded by playing When Day Is Done and acknowledged the ovation from the console as it slowly descended into the pit. Staying until the last sounds of the organ had died away into the 3:00 AM darkness were several top executives of the Fox-West Coast Theatre Co. who were re-educated, by their own admission, to the drawing power of the Contemporary Theatre Organ. Manager Bob Apple is to be commended, not only for his theatre organ enthusiasm, but for doing everything possible with lighting, etc., to make the occasion a success.

Wright's artistry was matched only by the magnificence of the instrument, a 4-36 Crawford Special Wurlitzer. The enthusiasm of the crowd was unmistakable, and the almost deafening applause was tribute indeed, not only to Wright but to the Theatre Organ itself.