

Closing Chord

Richard C. Chase, a charter member of ATOS, resident of Corvallis, Oregon, died August 6, 1981. He installed in the basement of the family home a hybrid theatre organ, using a Morton console from a Tulsa, Oklahoma, theatre and 14 ranks of Wurlitzer pipes from a theatre in Maryland. Many well-known artists played the instrument during the '50s and '60s, including Leonard MacClain, Don Baker, and Dave Quinlan. Late in 1968 Richard's health failed and he was unable to maintain the organ, so he sold it and it was installed in a large home in Portland.

Over the years he helped to install 13 theatre pipe organs in churches and homes in Portland, Eugene, Newport and Salem, Oregon. The installation of which he was most proud was that of the 8-rank Wurlitzer from the Whiteside Theatre, which he installed, with the help of volunteers, in Gill Coliseum at Oregon State University in Corvallis. The organ was donated to OSU by the Whiteside family when it became

necessary to remodel the theatre for a wider screen, and the family asked him to handle the installation.

Randy Sauls died on August 7, 1981, after a long illness. His long career as an organist began at age 15 when he went to Starkville, Mississippi, to enroll as an electrical engi-



Randy Sauls — in 1934.

neering student at Mississippi A. & M. College. He was allowed to practice on the four-rank Moller of the First Presbyterian Church, providing he would substitute for the regular organist when she wanted a Sunday off. Three weeks after seeing his first pipe organ he played his first church service. Between Sundays he played at a local store-front movie house on a Seeburg Photoplayer, a combination of one rank of "Tibias," some traps and a piano.

After two years in Starkville Randy moved on to Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, where there were two theatres with pipe organs. In one he accompanied silent feature films on a six-rank Morton, and in the larger theatre he played a seven-rank Morton for the silent newsreels and short subjects.

From Baton Rouge Randy traveled to Miami, Birmingham, Nashville, Knoxville, Montgomery, and Jacksonville. His last regular theatre or-

gan job was in Albany, Georgia, where he closed in 1938. Early in his theatre work he became adept at solo and sing-along work, and was much in demand for these talents. Between theatre engagements, he worked in vaudeville and with hotel floor shows starring many of the big names of the day.

Randy had a piquant sense of humor, which was illustrated by an experience he told about. He was playing a Hammond in the Dogwood Room of the Henry Grady Hotel in



Randy Sauls — recent photo.

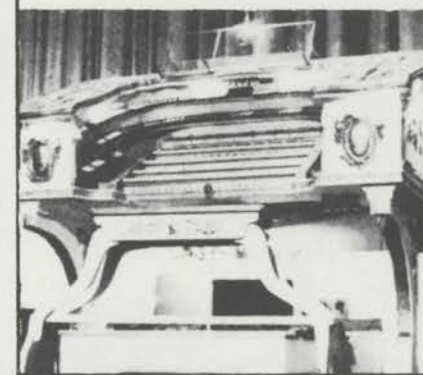
Atlanta. He didn't get on with the manager, and finally was fired while playing for a full house. He broke into his final selection on that job, "Marching Through Georgia," then quietly slipped away from the Ham-

A Note from the Membership Chairman:

It has been brought to our attention that several names, at least from the West Coast, were not included on the list provided to us from Falls Church in regard to current memberships. The print-out from Falls Church was the only record of existing members that we were given. Therefore, if any of the chapters have individuals who are not receiving their magazines, please advise this office so that we can update our files and get them as accurate as possible. ATOS Membership, 4455 LBJ Freeway, Suite 604, Dallas, Texas 75234, Phone: (214) 233-0863.

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

from
Members of J.A.T.O.E.
and
The Rialto Theatre, Joliet, Ill.



mond and escaped the wrath of the crowd exposed to a hated tune, leaving the confused manager to deal with the near rioters.

Settling in the Los Angeles area after duty in the U.S. Navy, he studied with Lyle Murphy and Dr. Wesley LaViolette, and established himself not only as a skilled performer but as a very able theorist, teacher and author. He contributed articles to the *Hammond Times* for several years, but his most important writing was "The Thinking Organist" series, which eventually included nine volumes. Randy also taught adult organ classes in a number of schools. Rather than an "ignorant clown from Mississippi," as he referred to himself, he was a sophisticated raconteur, author, performer, wit and teacher.

At the close of a concert Randy played at the Wiltern Theatre some eleven years ago, Byron Melcher said of him: "Never have I seen one person with so much fun, love and joy in doing what he was meant to do. The world would be a better place if more of us could be like this."

Bob McRaney, Sr., 69, of West Point, Mississippi, died August 27, 1981, at his home after a long illness. He was a theatre organist until 1932, when he began a career in radio broadcasting which lasted 52 years. He worked for several stations in Mississippi and Alabama, and served for eight years as general manager of the Mid-South Network. He helped organize the Mississippi Broadcasters Association, serving as president in 1943 and executive secretary from 1959 to 1977. Upon retiring in 1958 from his post with the Mid-South Network, he moved to West Point and acquired ownership of WROB there and WAMY in Amory.

Bob, Sr., was a theatre organ enthusiast all his life. When the Saenger Theatre was donated to the City of Hattiesburg for a performing arts center he persuaded city officials to purchase the Robert Morton organ which had been originally in the theatre and have it re-installed. Although quite ill at the time, he served as consultant on the organ project, and was responsible for several thousand dollars in contributions for the organ's restoration. He was the first to play the Morton when the theatre opened in 1929, and was to have



played the opening concert on the restored instrument. In July he was present when Mayor Bobby Chain of Hattiesburg presented a plaque for the organ dedicating it to Robert McRaney, Sr.

Edwin A. Link, 77, inventor of the Link Aviation Trainer of World War II fame, died of cancer September 7, 1981, at his home in Binghamton, New York.

Mr. Link's father, George T. Link, purchased the Automatic Musical Company of Binghamton, which had gone into receivership, and changed the name of the firm to the Link Piano Company. In 1914 this company built its first automatic theatre organ. Nearly eleven years later the Link company was to market its famous orchestral unit organ in association with its designer, the famous theatre organist C. Sharpe Minor.

While his older brother George operated the company, Edwin found himself "on the road" supervising and installing the Link organ, particularly in Chicago, Elkhart and Atlanta. He was responsible for many developments and in his lifetime he held more than 35 patents, some dealing specifically with the con-

struction and development of the theatre pipe organ.

When theatre organs declined in production the Link Piano and Organ Company turned to automatic phonographs. Ed Link built the first Link Trainer using the pneumatic principle of the Link organ to provide control.

As soon as it became known that Binghamton's Capitol Theatre was to be demolished it was suggested by Searle Wright, famed concert and theatre organist, that this fine C. Sharpe Minor/Link instrument be preserved. With the full cooperation of Edwin Link it was restored to its former glory and installed in the new wing of the Roberson Center for the Arts and Sciences in Binghamton, where it has been used as accompaniment for motion pictures and a yearly concert series since 1968.

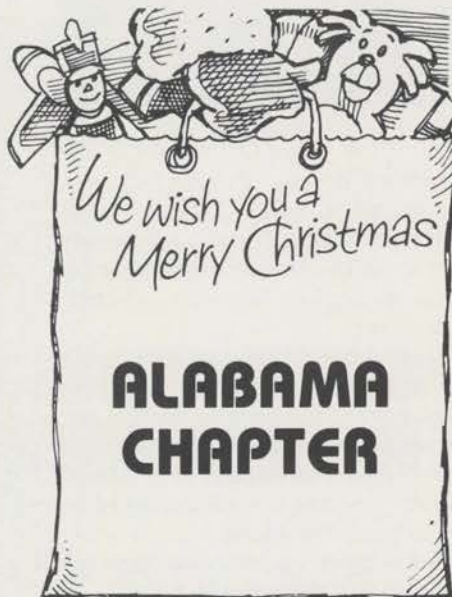
Lucius H. Downer, father of Nor-Cal member Ron Downer, died September 29, 1981, at the age of 86. He was born in Brattleboro, Vermont, and moved to Corning, California, in 1910. While still in his teens he began playing the organ in the First Baptist Church in Corning. After serving in the Army Quartermaster Corps in World War I, he located in San Francisco in 1923, where he worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for 39 years and for the San Francisco Fire Prevention Bureau for ten years.

Mr. Downer and son Ron installed a theatre organ in their home, as well as the first pipe organ in St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in San Francisco in 1971. They maintained the organs in the El Capitan and Irving Theatres in San Francisco.

Mr. Downer played for the annual Firemen's Ball in the Civic Auditorium, for graduation ceremonies of the U.C. Medical School, for St. Paul's, and for 45 years was organist for Parnassus Lodge, F. & A.M., and for 25 years for Balder Lodge.

Edwin Jay Quinby, 87, Commander, U.S. Navy (Ret.), died following a brief illness, at Overlook Hospital, Summit, New Jersey, on Sunday, afternoon, November 8, 1981.

An engineer, sailor, inventor and entrepreneur, he was a native of New York City and a graduate of the City



College of New York. He began his career as a merchant marine wireless operator — a “Marconiman” — a calling which took him virtually around the world and drew him into some of the international intrigue of the Russian revolution. He later served ashore in research and development activities with RCA Laboratories. He is credited with many inventions in wireless and electronic communications which were assigned to RCA.

In later life he was associated at different times with Monroe Calculating Machine Company, Philco Corporation and Shepard Laboratories, Summit, in electronic research and development work. He served as vice president of Shepard Laboratories.

He served in the U.S. Navy during both World Wars and saw service in the Far East, Russia, Germany and Poland.

Prior to World War I, between sea voyages, he served as a motorman on the North Jersey Rapid Transit Company. He was also involved in the field of pipe organ maintenance. These side interests remained with him for life. He was a founder of the Electric Railroaders Association, a non-profit organization devoted to preserving the history of electrified rail transit systems. He was a co-founder and past-president of Branford Electric Railway, a Connecticut-based, non-profit operating railway museum. He was a member of the American Theatre Organ Society and the Steamship Historical Society of America. He also belonged to several organizations for wireless and telegraph operators including the Morse Telegraph Club, the Veteran Wireless Operators Association and the Society of Wireless Pioneers. He was also a member of the Radio Club of America.

His intense interest in transportation history was reflected in many writings in specialty journals. He was the author of several books including a history of the Wilkes-Barre and Hazelton electric railway, a history of the North Jersey Rapid

Transit Company and a recounting of his early adventures at sea on a merchant marine tramp steamer.

He was responsible in part for the preservation of the stern-wheel steamboat “Delta Queen” following its relocation from the Sacramento River in California to the Mississippi River system. He subsequently served as Chairman of the Board of the Greene Line, the river steamship company which first operated the “Delta Queen” in cruise service on the Mississippi. He installed the steam caliope aboard the “Delta Queen” and frequently played the instrument while the steamboat cruised the Mississippi system.

He was a resident of Summit and is survived by his wife Margaret, by two children, Jack Robillard Quinby and Margaret (“Mimi”) Quinby Dwyer, and five grandchildren.



Johnny Kemm.

Johnny Kemm, well known as a concert artist for the Lowrey Organ Company, was found apparently murdered in a wooded area near his home in Joplin, Missouri, in early September.

He had been employed by Lowrey for many years, playing over 200 demonstration concerts each year. He made nine records for them. He and his wife Elizabeth also played concerts together. He maintained an organ studio in Joplin.

No further information was obtainable at publication time. □

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