

# Merry Christmas

from

Floyd and Doris Mumm  
Designers and Typesetters  
of THEATRE ORGAN

and especially the up-coming young artists, should we allow such strangely biased reviews to destroy their confidence. I admit, there were a couple of performers at the convention who did not measure up to the professionalism we have grown to expect, but Tom Wibbels was certainly not one of them.

We have had the great privilege of Tom's artistry in concert at the Capitol last year, and believe me he knows how to please an audience. We most certainly look forward to his return as often as possible. I think this young man deserves a lot better than what he got in that review.

Best regards,  
Gordon Madison  
Capitol Theatre  
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Gilbert:

As one of the conventioners to the Chicago Convention of ATOS I regretted to read the review of the entertainers in the last issue of THEATRE ORGAN.

In part, the total ignoring of a young man who did a fine job of entertaining, Tom Wibbels. All of my friends who came to the convention from Dallas feel exactly as I do. He displayed much talent and showed great promise.

We need to encourage the young artists, not tear them down.

Sincerely,  
Kathleen McDonald  
Dallas, Texas

Dear Bob:

I received the September/October issue of THEATRE ORGAN today. As an attendee of the Chicago ATOS Convention I immediately turned to the "review" section. While I am in reasonable agreement with the reviews, I must take you to task on one. That of Tom Wibbels.

Prior to his performance I had never heard any of his playing. I must say he was the most refreshing organist to come to the theatre organ circuit in years. He was one of the best artists at the convention. Please remember, he

received a standing ovation while people were calling out, "more, more"!

As an organization we are supposed to encourage new talent to get into T.O. A "review" like this one certainly doesn't accomplish this and is counter productive to our Society's existence.

Walter J. Beaupre's review of Mr. Wibbels is an insult to Tom and to his audience who all loved his performance and know that the review was "mis-guided." I believe you owe Mr. Wibbels an apology in the next issue of THEATRE ORGAN.

Sincerely,  
Kenneth R. Aultz  
Cincinnati, Ohio

*Ed. note: Letters expressing essentially the same views concerning Tom Wibbels as those above have also been received from Robert Eyer, Jr., Chambersburg, Pennsylvania; Linda Osborne, Dallas, Texas; Robert N. Cowley, Springfield, Ohio; Lorena M. McKee, Dallas, Texas; and Bob Legon, Malden, Massachusetts. Space does not permit publishing them all.*

*We would refer these correspondents and all readers to page 21 of the September/October THEATRE ORGAN, and call your attention to the fact that the ratings were by members of the audience chosen at random, and the comments are theirs, not those of Dr. Beaupre unless he has specifically stated that they are his.*

*The editors of THEATRE ORGAN would be interested to hear from professional theatre organists, and from the general membership of ATOS, as to the value and fairness of convention concert reviews in general, and whether convention concerts should be merely reported as events or evaluated in a review. We would also like to have expressions of opinion as to a preference for the audience rating method used this year vs. reviews written by one or two staff reviewers as was done during the past three years.* □

## Lance Johnson's Troubleshooting Guide Quiz Question

You are under the chests looking for dead notes with a test wire. Upon coming to a dead note, you find while energizing the magnet that there is air rushing out of the primary valve hole. Explain two possible causes.

(Answer on page 55)

### Questions and Answers

Lance Johnson will answer readers' technical questions by telephone. He can be reached at 701/237-0477 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time Monday through Friday, or in the evening from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at 218/287-2671. □

# PIPES & Personalities

## Play It Again, Jesse!

You say there is no such thing as a cat who prefers theatre pipe organ music? Wrong, oh doubting Thomas! But this one isn't a "Thomas." Her name is "Barbie" and she lives and works in the Robert Beverly Hale Library in Matunuck, Rhode Island. Her job description includes intimidating (not necessarily catching) mice and hypnotizing small children while their mothers select books. When the library installed a Hi-Fi system "Barbie" ignored it completely until one of the patrons donated some theatre pipe organ records and tapes. With the magical strains of "Charmaine" and "Jalousie" this most selective of music lovers jumps to her exclusive perch on the book check-out counter, preens herself sensually, and regulates the trem on her 16' Purr. "Barbie" has moral standards where music is concerned which are beyond reproach. She wouldn't dream of trying to sneak a tape recording of a live George Wright performance.

According to Head Librarian Ruth Clarke, "Barbie" has her favorite artists and has been known to climb down from her throne and demand to be let outside during certain performances. A target of considerable press coverage, "Barbie" has an uncanny public relations sense. During a recent celebrity interview a nosy reporter with the manners of a German Shepherd asked her to name both her favorites and those current theatre organists she placed in the Kitty Litter category. "Barbie" closed her eyes disdainfully, rolled onto her back to have her tummy scratched, and purred softly, "Sorry, darling! I don't do record reviews."



Barbie, the discriminating library cat.  
(Times photo by Daniel G. Dunn, used with permission.)



## Devtronix Names Wilcox to New Post

Devtronix Organs, Inc., has announced the selection of Dick Wilcox as Chief Engineer of its Organ Computer Division. Wilcox is the founder of Alpha Microsystems, Inc., of Santa Ana, California, which manufactures high tech computers for a specialized market.

Dick, also interested in organs, purchased the Devtronix "super" Publix model a few years ago and developed a computer control system for it. Devtronix worked with him in integrating the system into an operating organ, and this led to a highly refined software controlled system.

Wilcox recently purchased the Wurlitzer organ from the Cardinal Music Palace, and it is to be installed, together with the Devtronix Publix organ, in a 5000-square foot music room now under construction. Both organs will use the Wilcox/Devtronix Computer Control system.

Devtronix has also announced the formation of a new company, Lowell Organ Company, to manufacture and market a new medium-priced, ready-to-play church/classical instrument. The organ has three manuals and a full pedalboard, with 66 lighted drawknobs in side jambs. It contains ten sets of 109-note tone generators, plus an independent celeste generator, with four separate audio channels, and utilizes the Wilcox/Devtronix Computer Control system which through software provides all relay functions, couplers, mutations, mixtures, transpositions and capture combination action with ten or more memories.

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Doc Bebko paid his eighth annual visit to his daughter Barbara's family at Christmas in Salt Lake City and reports a super time in Mormon Country. A new \$500,000 organ has been installed in the Assembly Hall, adjoining the Tabernacle, and has superb sound and acoustics. There are three practice pipe organs on the premises for the five staff organists. One whom I heard, Melvin Dunn, has been there 34 years, and his job is to maintain all five organs in the complex. Hardly has

Lorraine Nelson at the Fargo Theatre 3/13 Wurlitzer.



Dick Wilcox



Devtronix organ.

time to practice, he says.

"We visited Larry Bray's Organ Loft the Saturday after Christmas and the big crowd each paid \$8.50 for a complete beef dinner (with salad bar, buffet style). Spent the evening listening and dancing to the music of the 5/38 Wurlitzer. House organist Scott Gillespie plays in the Big Band style of Dorsey, Miller, et al, accompanied by a very compe-

tent drummer. Larry Bray's nephew told me he inherited no debts or mortgages when Larry died, so he has clear sailing. With the console recently rebuilt, the instrument never sounded better. The charge is only \$3 to come in and just listen. The place closes at 1 a.m. Every theatre organ lover should make the pilgrimage to 'the Chosen Place' and enjoy the glorious sound."

\*\*\*\*\*

The Rahway (New Jersey) Theatre was officially designated the "Union County Arts Center" at the October 17 meeting of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders. The 57-year-old theatre is owned by the non-profit Rahway Landmarks Inc. The group has been working since January on restoration of the theatre, and is planning a fund drive to enable the work to continue.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dr. John Landon's latest book, *Behold the Mighty Wurlitzer: the History of the Theatre Pipe Organ*, has gone into its second printing.

## Red River Chapter Buys the Fargo Theatre

The Red River Chapter took over operation of the Fargo Theatre in July 1983. On August 2, 1985, an acquisition ceremony was held at the theatre to celebrate the chapter's purchase of the building. The program included brief remarks by civic officials, who all stressed the preservation of the landmark and its bright future. Ted Larson, instructor of Film Studies at Moorhead State University, talked about future artistic goals, and Gene Shannon, President of Friends of the Fargo, gave a summary of their involvement. Lance Johnson, Master of Ceremonies, then introduced Bill and Martha Powers, and handed each a check. Bill is a chapter member and represented one half ownership, and Martha Powers accepted on behalf of the Elliott family, the remaining half (the theatre was built by the T. F. Powers Construction Co.). Lance was named chairman of the committee to raise funds for restoration. Several large money gifts had already been received and were announced at this ceremony. Lorraine Nelson

Bill and Martha Powers receiving checks from Lance Johnson.





#### Brings out the best!

"One of the 1984 highlights in Boise, Idaho was the Bob Ralston Show. Our Robert Morton Theatre Pipe Organ is relatively small, but Mr. Ralston's performance made it sound ten times larger. It was a pleasure to have Bob in Boise. The 'fans' want him to return."

**Douglas Lemmon, Chairman,  
Egyptian Theatre Organ Society.**

#### A repeat performer!

"Our organ program got off to a great start with Bob as our first guest of the new season (Sept. 30, 1984). I was also impressed with the long, long line of people waiting to shake Bob Ralston's hand and thank him for a wonderful afternoon at Proctor's. Bob's a real showman and it will be our pleasure to have him back at Proctor's in the near future."

**Dennis Madden, Executive Director,  
Proctor's, Schenectady, New York.**

#### A real money-maker!

"The size of the audiences at the Thomaston Opera House for Bob Ralston's 4th year here (on Dec. 1 & 2, 1984) showed us that Bob maintains his following from his Lawrence Welk TV fame and continues to please his fans. This year — as always — The Bob Ralston Show was a real money-maker!"

**Allen Miller, President,  
Connecticut Valley Theatre Organ Society.**



#### Boosts attendance!

"Having Bob Ralston heading our 1984 Christmas program helped our attendance immeasurably. Our entire congregation was joyous with Bob's outstanding talent and professionalism. We've already booked him for our 1985 Easter program."

**Rev. John Hjellum, Pastor, Whittwood  
Baptist Church, Whittier, California.**

#### The very best!

"Bob Ralston's performance was most memorable and entertaining . . . excellent registration . . . by far the most exciting program of the (1984 ATOS) Convention and thus a fitting conclusion."

**Grant I. Whitcomb,  
Theatre Organ Magazine, Sep/Oct '84**

#### A winner!

"We are eagerly looking forward to the 10th Annual Bob Ralston Show on Feb. 9 & 10, 1985. I announced this to our audiences in December of 1984 and received a good number of 'Oohs and Ahs' as well as a round of applause each time."

**E.O. Matlock, President,  
Organ Club of Central Florida.**

# BOB RALSTON

**... better than ever**

**... and still packin' 'em in!**

Discover the magic of Bob Ralston at your next Theatre Pipe Organ Concert in 1985. His phenomenal performances are always guaranteed big crowd pleasers. Bob is ready to put on a money-making concert for your club as he has done for so many other delighted clients.

**Enjoy the taste of a successful Bob Ralston Concert**

Call Bob personally and he'll explain how you can have the largest crowd in the history of your club. His percent-of-the-house plan will show you how it will cost you nothing (not even his plane fare) if he cannot make money for your club. Bob profits only if you profit.

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Phone (818) 366-3637





Lyn Larsen and the Ken Mackintosh Band at Worthing Assembly Hall, West Sussex, U.K. (John Sharp photo)



Lyn Larsen and visitor Carlo Curley, Worthing Assembly Hall, West Sussex, U.K. (John Sharp photo)

and Hildegard Kraus provided organ music before and after the program.

The chapter is 20 years old and the members have accomplished many things along the way. Please come and visit; we'll be glad to show you around.

SONIA CARLSON

## More Publicity

In an article syndicated nationally by Newhouse News Service to about 250 newspapers, writer/reviewer Byron Belt described something of the history of the New York Paramount Wurlitzer, and then told of its present installation in Wichita's Century II Exhibi-

tion Hall. Belt was very complimentary about Billy Nalle's playing in the Wichita Pops Series, and about his recordings issued by Wichita Theatre Organ.

## Larsen a Hit at Worthing

Lyn Larsen played to a full house on September 29 in the Worthing Assembly Hall, West Sussex, England. For the first half Lyn soloed on the 3/10 Wurlitzer, then was joined by the Ken Mackintosh Band for the second half.

It was a most impressive program throughout; the precision ensemble of organ and band seeming a result of long collaboration,

whereas they had rehearsed together for only an hour and a half.

Several U.S. visitors were present for the occasion, including Carlo Curley, Henry Hunt, Marian Miner Cook and THEATRE ORGAN Editor Bob Gilbert and his wife Beth.

\* \* \* \* \*

Theatre organ activity, not only alive and well in New York State, is on the increase. Besides instruments in New York City, Long Island, Binghamton, Elmira, and on the Thruway Circuit from Buffalo to Schenectady, another group in Geneva is actively searching for an instrument for the Smith Opera House

## NOTICE: NEW ELECTION PROCEDURES

The new procedures proposed by Mike Ohman in the interest of economy and handling, proved very successful on both counts for the 1985 election and will again be followed for the 1986 election of the National Board of Directors. These procedures outlined below are in accordance with the target dates set forth by ATOS bylaws:

1. The request and instructions for candidates to submit their names to be placed on the ballot will be published in the November/December issue of THEATRE ORGAN. (No change)
2. All candidates are to have their résumés and photos mailed to the ATOS Secretary no later than March 1, in accordance with the instructions printed in the November/December issue of THEATRE ORGAN. (No change)
3. ATOS Secretary will send the names of the candidates and their résumés and photos to the Nominating Committee after the March 1 closing date. (No change)
4. The Nominating Committee will send the résumés and photos to the editor, who

will prepare them for printing and forward them to the publication office. The publication office will immediately process them and send a camera-ready copy to the Nominating Committee. The publication office will then process the election material along with the other articles for THEATRE ORGAN in the usual way and the résumé sheet will become the center pages of the March/April issue of THEATRE ORGAN. (This change allows the members to have a permanent record of the candidates who run for election each year. It also eliminates the cost of printing and mailing the résumés and ballots separately.)

5. The Nominating Committee will have ballots printed on large-flap billing-type envelopes with the return address on the envelopes and the candidates names printed on the inside of the flap. The ballots will be sent to the publication office to be inserted in the March/April issue of THEATRE ORGAN. The ballots will be inserted only in the copies mailed to members in the United States and Canada. (Overseas copies will not have a ballot included.) U.S. and Canadian members will remove the ballot, mark, seal, stamp and mail it as before.

The Nominating Committee, after receiving the camera-ready copy of the résumés, will have enough printed for the overseas members. The résumé sheet and a ballot will be airmailed to each overseas member, which will allow enough time to return the ballots by the deadline.

6. All ballots must be returned post-marked not later than May 15. (No change)

This new procedure has been coordinated with the Nominating Committee, ATOS Secretary, ATOS Membership Office, THEATRE ORGAN editor and the publication office in Livonia.

Be sure to look for your ballot in the center of the March/April issue of THEATRE ORGAN and review the candidates who will be running for the National Board of Directors. There will not be any ballots mailed this year to members in the United States and Canada.

If you have any questions, write or call Dale Mendenhall, 4428 Pennsylvania Avenue, Fair Oaks, California 95628. Phone 916/967-5060.



Performing Arts Center. This effort began in late 1984.

The SOHPAC is the 1862-seat ex-Geneva Theatre. It had a transplanted two-manual Wurlitzer when Jess Littlefield and Lloyd Klos visited the place in 1960. Once played by Frank Lybolt, it was removed some time ago. The new organization, spearheaded by Craig Young and Tom Nichols, are voraciously searching for a replacement, and they may have found one — a 3/14 Robert-Morton in the Newark, New York, area.

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Eddie Weaver returned to the Byrd Theatre in Richmond, Virginia, after an absence of over two years for a concert on October 13. Weaver started playing the Byrd Wurlitzer in 1961. His former pupil, Lin Lunde, now plays at the Byrd on weekends.

### A New Dimension

Although Sunday afternoons are typically slow for the pizza business, this is no longer the case at the Portland Organ Grinder since veteran staff organist Paul Quarino inaugurated an "experimental" program on August 8. From 12:30 until 3:00 on Sunday afternoons Paul plays Old Time Gospel Music to nearly full houses, and owner Dennis Hed-

Paul Quarino packs the house for Old Time Gospel Music at the Portland Organ Grinder.

(Claude Neuffer photo)



Mail to:  
ATOS Secretary  
423 North Stafford Avenue  
Richmond, Virginia 23220

**MUST BE POSTMARKED BY MARCH 1, 1986.**

It is time to nominate candidates for the National ATOS Board of Directors for a three-year term from July 1986 through June 1989.

All regular ATOS members are eligible for nomination, and may nominate themselves or be nominated by others. Written consent of the nominee is mandatory and must be received before the nominee's name can be placed on the ballot. In addition, each nominee shall furnish a small black-and-white photo of him/herself, together with a statement not exceeding 100 words in length which should include personal data, work and theatre organ experience, and a short platform statement.

berg is both surprised and pleased.

Because of Paul's experience as a church organist (he started when he was ten), his repertoire of gospel music is vast and varied. His selections range from a light and bouncy "Do, Lord" to a rock rhythm version of "Victory in Jesus" to a soft and pensive "In the Garden," and he always closes with a rousing "When the Saints Go Marching In." The response from the audience is uninhibited and enthusiastic. Even patrons who have not known about the gospel format seem to catch the spirit of the day and clap and tap along with the "regulars." Neither the monkey nor the movie is part of this program, but Paul does play "Showers of Blessings" while the bubbles fall.

No one could have predicted how successful this new idea would be, but after two months the crowds are still filling the dining room each Sunday afternoon, and there is such positive feedback from the customers that we'll probably be hearing Old Time Gospel Music for some time to come.

GRACE E. MCGINNIS □

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The Wurlitzer Company is donating all of its early corporate records to the regional historical center of Northern Illinois College. Included are some 1200 drawings, detailing installations of Wurlitzer organs in movie palaces and other locations in the United States and Europe.

This represents the largest acquisition to date in a growing collection of documents





# Holiday Greetings from the ATOS Staff

Lowell Ayars • David Barnett  
Tom B'hend • Vern P. Bickel  
Douglas C. Fisk • Robert M. Gilbert  
Russell Joseph • Rex Koury  
Dr. John Landon • Dale Mendenhall  
Allen Miller • Ashley Miller  
Fr. James Miller • Jack Moelmann  
Lois Seğur • Richard Sklenar • Walt Strony

and  
Best Wishes  
for  
1986

from a number of Illinois-based firms, to be housed in the center. The center will arrange, clean, and describe the collection, removing all material which might damage the papers, including staples and paper clips. Documents will be stored in special acid-free folders. The oldest document is a price list from the 1860s. Founded in 1856 in Cincinnati, the company acquired a plant in 1908 in North Tonawanda, New York, and in 1919 established the DeKalb, Illinois, division.

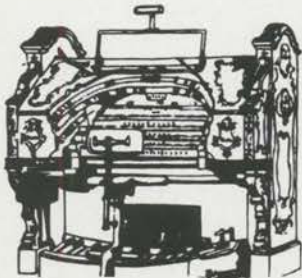
(From *The Diapason*)

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From *Preservation News*, October 1 1985, National Trust for Historical Preservation: "HISTORIC MOVIE THEATERS. Is there a historic movie theater in your town? If so, we want to include it in a book. Send the name, date, contact person, mailing address and phone number to Diane Maddex, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036."

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Since its May 1984 debut at Proctor's Theatre in Schenectady, New York, the 3/18 Golub Wurlitzer has attracted an enthusiastic and growing audience. With the appointment of Allen Mills in October of that year as Proctor's first organist/artist-in-residence, a monthly concert series was inaugurated. The first season was a hit, with an average of 1700



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Allen Mills

attending each concert, and drawing crowds of organ buffs and old-time music lovers from around Northeastern New York and from neighboring states as well. The December holiday concert was played to an SRO house.

The concert series has been extended for the 1985-86 season to ten concerts, including an extra performance of the popular holiday concert in December. Remaining concerts are:

- December 14 & 15 — *An Old-Fashioned Christmas*, a full-scale theatrical production with "The Off Broadway Babies," a children's chorus, ballet and more.
- January 26 — *A Pop Concert* with Dennis James.
- February 16 — A silent film classic, *The Circus*, with Charlie Chaplin, scored and accompanied by Allen Mills.
- March 9 — *A Pops Concert* with Lyn Larsen.
- April 20 — *Music from Broadway* with guest artists assisting Allen Mills.
- May 18 — *A Patriotic Salute* with the precision dancing of "The Off Broadway Babies."

Apart from the concert series, Allen Mills will be the featured artist with the Schenectady Symphony on February 22, when he will play the Symphony No. 3, the "Organ Symphony," of Camille Saint-Saëns.

Detailed information may be obtained by writing to Proctor's Theatre, P.O. Box 279, Schenectady, New York 12301, or by phone at 518/346-6204.

\* \* \* \* \*

Did you know that a former theatre organist was greatly responsible for launching the zany, madcap band of Spike Jones and His City Slickers on the way to fame and fortune? In 1942, Jones and the band were just another

outfit, doing gigs on the West Coast. British-born composer and once great theatre organist, G. Oliver Wallace, serving as Walt Disney's composer-arranger (score of *Dumbo*) was known for a sour disposition.

However, with World War II on and the populace in need of some laughter, Disney asked Wallace to compose a song for a cartoon, *Donald Duck in Axis Land*. Wallace showed his score to a neighbor, one of Jones' associates. As the cartoon was still in production, the song had to be published before being recorded. Jones persuaded Disney's attor-

neys and RCA Victor executives that the song was worthy. Only 500 pressings were released initially, but "Der Fuehrer's Face" zoomed like a rocket. Within weeks, thanks to Martin Block and other disc jockeys, Spike Jones had realized the first of several gold records, symbolizing a million discs sold. Spike and his band had made it at last.

The whole story of this unique band and its leader is contained in a definitive picture/text book, "Spike Jones and His City Slickers," by Jordan R. Young, published by Harmony Books.

# MEMBERSHIP CONTEST

WIN  
AUSTRALIA  
NEW ZEALAND  
TOUR

## ATOS MEMBERSHIP CONTEST WITH BIG WINNERS!

Did you say I have a chance to win a trip costing over \$6000? Hard to believe — BUT TRUE! By securing new members for ATOS two lucky couples will make the Australia-New Zealand tour next February-March with virtually all expenses fully paid.

### TWO WAYS YOU CAN WIN!

There are two ways to win. One is to sign up more new members than anyone else in ATOS. The second method is to secure just five (5) new members. Your name will then be part of a drawing made up of those who have gotten their five. From that group a winner will be selected. Think about it. When did you have a chance to win a prize of that value for such little effort and with such favorable odds?

### CONTEST ENDS DECEMBER 31, 1985

The contest is now underway and ends December 31. The rules and an advertisement describing the trip are below. One important point — **be sure your name as sponsor accompanies the new member application.** With some thought you can name five good prospects. Get them in! Get in the drawing!

#### ATOS MEMBERSHIP CONTEST RULES

##### TWO GRAND PRIZES

Each prize is for two people. It is the full cash payment required of couples making the Australia-New Zealand tour. Based on two per room. Must accompany the tour group.

#### See Patterson Travel Ad on page 28

**Prize 1:** The person securing the most new members during the contest period. A tie will be decided by a coin flip.

**Prize 2:** The other winner will be based on a drawing from the names of everyone who secured five (5) new members during the contest period. A person's name will be placed in the drawing for each multiple of five (5) new members secured. The winner of Prize 1 will not be in the drawing.

##### TIME OF CONTEST

This contest began June 10, 1985 and closes with new memberships postmarked not later than December 31, 1985. They must be received not later than January 6, 1986. Winners will be notified on January 8, 1986.

##### RULES

- 1) All persons holding membership in ATOS on May 1, 1985 eligible to participate. In memberships held as "Mr. & Mrs." either, but not both, may participate.
- 2) Every new member application must be accompanied by the name of the sponsor when received at the ATOS office. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- 3) Any person who has not been a member of ATOS during 1985 is eligible to be counted as a new member. The December 31, 1984 roster of ATOS is the guide.
- 4) If a person who has paid for the trip is a winner they shall receive a full refund.

##### RECORDS

The ATOS Executive Director shall keep all contest records. Members will be notified when the records show five new members have been secured. No other information regarding numbers shall be released. All records will be verified by the Treasurer. Neither the Treasurer nor the Executive Director is eligible to participate in the contest.

Contest is based on 50 paying persons on the trip. With a lower number the drawing prize will take precedence.

You may use the Membership Application Form on page 9 or a facsimile.