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President's Message



I am pleased to announce that I have been elected to serve as your President for another year. It has been, and will continue to be, an honor and a privilege to serve this great organization. Your other officers, also re-elected, are: Russ Joseph, vice-president; David Barnett, secretary; and Dale Mendenhall, treasurer. We also welcome to the Board of Directors four new members: Vern Bickel, Ashley Miller, Dorothy VanSteenkiste and Bob Markworth. We also want to thank those who have left the Board for their assistance in working for the ATOS cause: Walter Strony, Richard Sklenar and John Landon.

As I said in my most recent message, the ATOS Convention in Los Angeles is now history, but the memories will linger on for a long time. This issue is commonly referred to as the Convention issue, and I hope you will take time to read all about the convention. For those who attended, you can relive the experiences. For those who were unable to attend, you can learn what happened. Also in this issue are the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, and I hope you will take the time to read what your Board has been doing and what we will be doing during this coming year. The Board found it necessary, after several years, to increase the annual dues by \$5.00. Times have changed, and there are many projects going on which require an increase in income to the national organization. Of course, this is in addition to keeping up with the normal inflation which we all experience in our daily lives. The dues increase will become effective January 1, 1988: the current dues structure will remain until that time, so get your friends and neighbors to join before then, and also get your own renewal in before the rate increase.

Some changes in ATOS which were decided upon by your Board at the convention are the following: The Young Organist Competition will continue, but instead of bringing only the overall winner to the convention, we will bring all three of the winners (one from each age category) so they can be heard. Beginning in January 1988, the ATOS *International NEWS* will be expanded to eight pages, will be mailed separately to each member and will contain the classified ads currently in the Journal. Until that time, the newsletter will continue its current format and distribution method. We have formed a Chapter Relations Committee which will help newly formed chapters organize and interact with established chapters to assist in projects, fund-raising, non-profit status, bylaws, newsletters and the entire spectrum of things which confront a chapter. With all of the experience out there in our chapters, we should be able to share and exchange this knowledge so we don't have to "re-invent the wheel." We will also be revising the Bylaws to keep up with the times and make them more clearly understood. We will ensure that the membership is involved in that process.

Allen Miller, chairman of our Technical Committee, reported that the long-awaited technical manual is nearing completion and should be available soon through the Archives/Library. There will be announcements in both the newsletter and the Journal when the manual is available.

We are searching for a permanent location for the ATOS National Headquarters, Archives and Library. Sites which have been under consideration have included the Lanterman estate in Los Angeles, the Tow-Ford Museum complex in Sacramento, and the Indiana State Museum complex in Indianapolis. If you have any other suggestions, please let us know. This will be an expensive undertaking, and we are looking for grants from corporations or foundations to assist in furthering ATOS, its history as well as its future.

We have been working on a new membership brochure which should be done soon and will be made available to chapters and members for increasing ATOS membership. It must be remembered that, if we are to continue, we need a large membership to show strength in our efforts to save the instruments, the theatres that house them and the many other aspects of the theatre organ and its music.

Regional conventions are here to stay, and many of you have enjoyed them over the past few years. Our Convention Planning Committee, headed by Tim Needler (who is newly elected to the ATOS Executive Committee), has felt that these should come under the purview of his committee and the Board of Directors. This procedure will not increase the cost of the conventions, nor will it unduly complicate or restrict the convention, but rather will ensure that the needs of the members are taken into account, such as geographical location or scheduling that will not interfere with other events or conventions, and will enable the sponsoring chapter to ensure success. Regional convention guidelines will become effective in 1988.

During the annual Membership Meeting at the Convention, I asked for the donation of some equipment and services. It is reassuring to know that there are many of you out there who have equipment and services that will benefit ATOS. In particular, we received a donation of some 16mm motion picture equipment and the services of a member who can transfer motion pictures to video tape. Any of you who may also have either equipment or services which you think may be of value to ATOS, please let me know.

I am pleased to announce that the late Ray Bohr, longtime organist at New York's Radio City Music Hall, was inducted into the ATOS Hall of Fame. Jonas Nordwall was named Organist of the Year; Judd Walton was given this year's Technical Award, and Lowell Ayars was named Honorary Member for 1987. At the banquet we also welcomed three new chapters: the Jesse Crawford chapter centered around Billings, Montana; the Santa Barbara chapter in California, and the Cumberland Valley chapter in Pennsylvania. Welcome to the family of ATOS, and we look forward to hearing about your many planned activities.

Since this is the Convention issue, I thought I would spend just a couple of minutes answering or explaining one of the most frequently asked questions: Why do conventions cost so much? Many feel that if they were cheaper more could attend. When analyzing the question, one has to look at a couple of things. First, most of the expense of going to a convention centers around the following: transportation (usually air), hotel, meals and convention registration. It has been said that the average person could spend about \$1000 on these items. The host chapter and our Convention Planning Committee do the best they can to get group airfare rates and lower hotel rates. In Los Angeles, for example, the regular rate for a hotel room was around \$125; we got the same rooms for \$65 and \$75. The convention registration is the only thing we have direct control over, but when you look at it (\$145 this year), it isn't that bad, either. The registration pays for the convention organists and some of their expenses (at a much lower cost than if they were to play a concert in your home town), theatre or auditorium rental, publicity, convention materials such as the brochure, schedule, name tags, posters, etc. It also covers limited organ maintenance and, perhaps the biggest expense, bus transportation to and from the convention events. A couple of meals are usually included, and I will not comment on one of them we had this year, but these are provided to facilitate transportation and get people to the various places on time. These are just some of the things that control the cost of a convention. I will be quite frank with you — there is also a profit built-in to that registration fee (15%) which is shared equally between the National and the hosting chapter. This helps ATOS further its projects and keep dues down. Preglow or "Overture" and after-glow or "Encore" events and the banquet are optional; however, most want to attend. We will continue to look into ways to keep expenses down, but I think that we have done fairly well. One last comment on this subject: expenses, and therefore the cost to you, will vary from location to location throughout the country. If we are to go to the places where the theatres and organs are, we will have to pay for that privilege.

Sincerely yours,

Jack Moelmann