

Chapter Activities

New Midwest Chapter Formed In Chicago

It is with great pleasure that we announce the addition of a new A.T.O.E. chapter, being formed in the Chicago area, which will be known as Midwest Chapter, A.T.O.E.

As we go to press, the necessary details should be ironed out, and the new chapter, with the following membership, a permanent part of A.T.O.E. fellowship:

John W. Shanahan	Dwight Davis
Venida Jones	Bill Knaus
John H. Spears	Reginald Foorte
Peter A. Wenk	John Seng
Fred Krause	Wendall Kincaid
Jon Habermaas	Paul H. Davis, Jr.
Jack Gustafson	Kay McAbee
Tony Tahlman	William D. Hub
R. J. Erickson	Brother Andrew Corsini
Al Melgard	

We feel sure that this group will be a tremendous asset, and are most happy to welcome them into A.T.O.E. The report of the initial meeting follows.

Judd Walton,
Vice-Pres. A.T.O.E.

Midwest's First Meeting

The meeting was started on time at 10:30 a.m., on Sunday, February 23, at the PARAMOUNT THEATRE, AURORA, Illinois, with John Seng introducing himself and welcoming all organ enthusiasts along with their guests. We estimate the number assembled at between 45 and 50, which was indeed a wonderful turnout. John immediately introduced Kay McAbee as our first soloist and with that the Mighty Wurlitzer began rising from the pit. Kay played selections from "Oklahoma!" in an arrangement that left no doubts as to his ability to make a Wurlitzer really sing out.

Kay, on finishing his selection, then introduced John Seng and his portion of the program, which was a medley of selections from "Kiss Me Kate." John won the approval of all present with his distinctive style and expert musicianship. At the conclusion of this part of the program, the formation of a Midwest Chapter of the ATOE was discussed, and the various formalities involved as required by the National Organization were covered.

The aims and requirements, as stated in the first issue of THE TIBIA, were outlined by Brother Andrew Corsini, CSC, and discussion was then opened to all present. In general it was decided to limit ourselves to the minimum requirement of four meetings for the first year. Several possible meeting places were suggested and noted for future reference. We then proceeded to elect officers for a Midwest Chapter. The following officers were elected, all by unanimous vote:

Kay McAbee	President
John Shanahan	Vice President
John Seng	Secretary
Bill Hub	Treasurer

Next came discussion of dues for the local chapter, mainly to cover the cost of mailing meeting notices, and so on. The fee was set at \$1.50 per person for the first year. We were all then delighted to hear Kay McAbee



L. to r.: Upper row—Kay McAbee, John Seng; lower row—William Hub, John W. Shanahan. The console is the Aurora, Illinois, Paramount Wurlitzer.

announce that the manager of the RIALTO THEATRE in Joliet, Illinois, had already invited the group to hold a meeting there. This meeting will be held sometime in May, and everyone is quite anxious to hear the 21-rank Barton which Kay has been working on for some time.

With the close of the business part of the meeting, the group assembled around the console of the 3/15 Wurlitzer for a group picture. Many of the eager enthusiasts then took a hand at trying out this Wurlitzer which is in A-1 condition.

Present at this first meeting was Miss Venida Jones, formerly staff organist at KMOX, St. Louis, for many years. It was a pleasure to have her with us and we hope that at one of the future meetings she will favor us with a solo presentation.

Brother Andrew Corsini,
Acting Secretary,
Midwest Chapter, ATOE

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

New officers elected for the new year are:

CHAIRMAN: BOB JACOBUS

SECRETARY: WARREN WHITE

A program committee consisting of Bob Vaughn, Bud Mathews, Tiny James, and Judd Walton, together with the Chairman and Secretary have met and planned the meetings for the coming year.

A "get-acquainted" meeting of the Chapter was held Tuesday evening, April 29, at 8:00 p.m., at the Glenview Women's Club, Oakland, California. The program featured a "record session" . . . some old, some new, some borrowed, and some "blue"!

Those members, who were lucky enough to be able to attend the George Wright Concert held in Fresno on April 28, report that it was one of his finest.

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almost one in ten of the magnets was dead! Dead magnets were everywhere; there were 75 in the console alone. And getting 300 good Wurlitzer magnets in this day and age was no small chore.

Tonally, this instrument sounded something less than exciting. It reminded one of two small organs playing in the far distance. When this sort of thing was encountered in England, it was assumed that it was the result of design. But here in Boston . . . well, there had to be another explanation. Evidence now seemed to indicate that there was more to getting the real Wurlitzer tone than just setting the pressures and tuning the pipes. Several of the old-time Wurlitzer men said that one must not be afraid to handle Wurlitzer pipes in a much more radical way than in the usual straight organ. Accordingly, with the help of Howard Silva and Steve Misir, and armed with a sharp bung-hole reamer, the job was begun. The solo Tibia was first and the difference was unbelievable. It proved that given a thorough regulation, the organ would sound beautiful.

It turned out to be a simple matter of four or five nights a week for some six months to get everything in playing condition. After the mechanical troubles were licked, the tonal quality was studied and improved.

Changes In Ranks

The changes are detailed in the accompanying specifications. But a word or two on the results may

not be out of order. Today, to us, the organ resembles more the tonal qualities of the New York PARAMOUNT, and the acoustics of the two theatres are rather similar, also. Both have in common the desirable feature that it is not necessary to use big masses of stops to fill the building. Everything can be heard clearly. The general effect is one of lushness. Even with the tremulants off nothing seems harsh or forced. Great care was taken with the regulation of each single stop, to keep the organ as well balanced as possible.

The original brass trumpet was replaced with a Moller theatre organ French trumpet. The tuba horn is even more useful than before in the orchestral chamber where there are other excellent voices with which to combine it.

The great part of the work has been completed. There will be routine maintenance, to be sure but the joy of having this organ to play should more than offset any such task. Not too many organists have the continuing opportunity to sit down at an organ of this size and tonal excellence. Several organists plan to use this organ for recordings. Preliminary tests prove it is excellent for the purpose.

Thankful acknowledgement must be given to Max Naylor for his interest in this project, and to Steve Misir and Howard Silva, without whose patient help, the job could not have been completed.

(Specifications on page 16)

Delaware Valley Chapter Saves Organ

ALLENTOWN, Pennsylvania is like many another city in this great country. Among the community betterment projects is a Civic Little Theatre. This group, more fortunate or enterprising than some, found itself the owner of a theatre organ when it purchased the NINETEENTH STREET THEATER building. However, not everyone in the Little Theatre group realized just what a wonderful instrument had fallen to the organization.

In looking over the building, it seemed desirable to extend the stage over the orchestra pit and it was here that the old console got in the way. So it was decided to get rid of the obstacle . . . just like that. But A.T.O.E. has an especially sympathetic ear when it comes to old theatre organs. One of these dearly beloved creatures can call for help on the salicional with shutters closed and be heard across the traffic roar.

Thus it was that three members of the Delaware Valley Chapter of A.T.O.E. came to know of the danger of this organ's position and set out to rescue it. First, there was the item of changing the minds of the governing board of the Civic Little Theatre. Good talking, repeated often enough, convinced the skeptics that it was a mistake to forget the organ. But the console had to be moved! It was exactly where the stage had to be extended. After all, the building was purchased for the production of stage plays. Moving an organ console and reconnecting the cable was not the kind of a job an organization takes on eagerly. The Rev. George D. MacNeal, Mel Freund, and his son Frank undertook this job and completed it. Like most enthusiasts, these three people had the usual daytime chores to complete before they could devote any time to their hobby. This meant, in the case of this particular project, that the work had to be done between midnight and dawn, roughly, one night each week.

But of such is the labor of love. The console now rests on a pedestal along one wall instead of in the pit. And in the days to come, when members of the Dela-

ware Valley Chapter recount with pride that "we moved the NINETEENTH STREET THEATER organ," it is barely possible that George, Mel, and Frank will smile knowingly at each other and just listen to the tale of how it was done.



L. to R.: Mel Freund, Frank Freund, and the Rev. George D. MacNeal, all members of the Delaware Valley Chapter.