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President's Message



should be paramount in any discussion of the Society.

The American Theatre Organ Society has grown from a group of twenty or so enthusiasts in California to over 6000 members worldwide, from no chapters to 65 chapters, has changed its name from Enthusiasts to Society and has been instrumental in preserving one of the few truly "American" contributions to the musical instrument world. In 1955 theatre pipe organs were deteriorating in equally deteriorating motion picture palaces. Organs could be purchased for a song or, at the most, a pittance. Many organs were junked, many others were lovingly moved into private homes, few, if any, were being put into public locations. Chapters began to form, organs were being restored in public locations, organists began to offer concerts on theatre organs. We began to see a slow turn-around of a dismal situation. Our founding ATOS fathers began to see the light at the end of the tunnel: organs were no longer being junked; organs were slowly being put back "on line" in most major cities of the country. The ranks of both the society and organs began to swell. The picture began to look more favorable, the theatre organ would survive . . . and survive it will. ATOS has never been stronger both in membership, talent, resources and spirit.

Our tangible assets now include financial and other assets in excess of \$300,000. We are responsibly using some of our assets by encouraging young talent to take up the theatre organ banner through our Young Organist Competition and our scholarship program. We are in the process of developing a living museum to present the theatre organ, not as an instrument of the past, but rather as an instrument versatile enough to make a dynamic musical statement into the twenty-first century. As more chapters form and more organs are placed in accessible public locations the possibility of musicians making a viable living as theatre organists becomes a greater reality. More and more people are becoming involved in the management of the society . . . the past

two board elections saw approximately 42% of our membership voting, and we have the largest list of candidates who seek to help the organization by sharing their talents in the day-to-day operation of the society. And probably most important in my eyes, we are recognizing and correcting our deficiencies.

What are those deficiencies, simply put and without a lot of elaboration? The three A's . . . Age, Attitude and Apathy. Let us not forget that we are an aging society both as a country and within our organization. Younger people with new and innovative ideas must be found and introduced to the society. Let us not waste our time with the very young . . . those who are interested will seek us out *as they have in the past*, but rather put our major efforts into the 35 and older crowd. These people are free from the restraints of peer group pressure, financial problems and the family obligations commensurate with young children. They have more spendable income; they have spare time, and many are willing to try something different. In this group lies the gold mine to infuse ATOS well into the twenty-first century. And to those of us in the current group, we must be willing to change our attitude by compromising our views and interests to include the interests of this new age group. To not do so is to doom the society to ever decreasing numbers and eventual demise. And we must not sit back and say, "let someone else do it." Yes, 42% of our membership voted in the last two board elections, but what is the total percentage of actively participating members . . . members who do something more than drag themselves to an occasional concert or social event? If each and every one of us just brought *one* person into the society, our membership would double as would our talent and human resource pool.

I must address our technician problem separately. Technically, we are in the poorest shape, we need to address the problem of a good apprentice technical program. Sure, it will be expensive, but how can we expect young people to give of their time and talents without some sort of financial remuneration? When you were in your late teens and/or early twenties did *you* give away your most valuable resource, you, for nothing? In order to entice young people to enter the technical side of theatre organ we need to offer financial reward . . . and the opportunity of a life-long career.

Well, that's about it. I became a little

(continued on page 7)

President's Message cont.

wordy (so what else is new) and maybe a little more negative than I originally intended (so what else is new . . . again), but when it was discovered that, while a new president has been selected by the time you read this, there was no time for him or her to write this message, I was given one last opportunity to climb upon my now worn soapbox. Let me leave you with one final thought: The prognosis for the future of the society is good, but we need YOU to make it happen.

Until we meet again, I remain,
Sincerely,

John B. Ledwon

1991 National ATOS Election Results

Jack Moelmann	1385
Jim Riggs	1377
Paul Quarino	926
Ralph Beaudry	805
Alden Stockebrand	722
Edith Rawle	632
Laurel Haggart	510
Chuck Wiltsch	310
Hal Pritchard	294
Cyndae Koller	273
Jim Koller	195
Write ins	26
Total ballots received	2569
Disqualified	8
(more than 3 voted for)	
Total ballots counted	2561
Overseas ballots received	96
Submitted by Margret Ann Foy, May 21, 1991	

Letters cont.

on theatre organ by listening to Fred Feibel's "Organ Reveille" as we prepared for school and "Ann Leaf at the Organ" when we arrived home in the afternoon. Other organists I recall were Esther Leaf, Betty Gould, C.A.J. Parmentier and Fats Waller. The organ was so versatile that each organist made it sound different.

During WWII, Columbia Pictures made a series of sing-along movies featuring Lew White, Don Baker and Dick Leibert for armed forces theatres.

This organ should be preserved in its original condition for present day and future listeners.

Sincerely,
Al Hermanns,
Clearwater, Florida

New Scholarship Program of ATOS

Members of the Scholarship Committee are pleased to announce that the following students are the recipients of \$500 scholarships. These scholarships are to further their studies with professional theatre organ teachers.

All the scholarships were awarded in compliance with category "B" of the Scholarship Program. The committee was very impressed with the qualifications and resumes submitted.

SIMON PHILIP APPEYARD (16)
England

Teacher - Joyce Alldred

ZACHARY CUTFORTH (13)

Joliet, Illinois

Teacher - Lee Maloney

JELANI EDDINGTON (16)

Muncie, Indiana

Teacher - John Ferguson

SUSAN J. LEWANDOWSKI (13)

Madison Heights, Michigan

Teacher - Melissa Ambrose

ALICIA LUPA (16)

Citrus Heights, California

Teacher - Joyce Clifford

KEN MERLEY (15)

Troy, Michigan

Teacher - Steve Schlesing

ELENOR B. NARDY (16)

Alta Monte Springs, Florida

Teacher - Ken A. Stoope

Members of the Scholarship Committee are:

JOHN LEDWON
DAVID LOVE
CONNIE PURKEY
CHARLOTTE RIEGER
LOIS SEGUR
JINNY VANORE

Dorothy VanSteenkiste, Chairman
ATOS Scholarship Committee

Walt Strony Seminar

Registration for the
August 17 Seminar at the
Krughoff residence may be
sent to:

GIB PETZKE
419 West Oakdale Avenue
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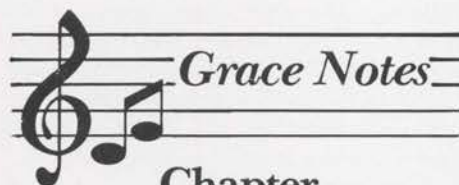
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Editor