

theatre organ

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF THEATRE ORGAN ENTHUSIASTS

A. T. O. E. Chapter Directory

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Northern California

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Secretary - Frank E. Bronson, 2545 Alameda St., Vallejo Calif.

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Niagara Frontier

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Secretary - John Seng, c/o Jack Gibbs, 7333 N. Bell Ave., Chicago 45, Ill.

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Chairman - Al Schmitz, 3404 - 27th Ave. N, Minn. 22, Minn.
Secretary - George Rice, 5005 Moore Ave. Minn. 24, Minn.

Ohio Valley

Chairman - Herbert C. Wottle, 80 Garrett Drive, Milford, Ohio
Secretary - Joan A. Wottle (same address)

Dallas

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Secretary - Grace Johnson, 5436 Glenwick Lane, Dallas, Texas

Connecticut

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Secretary - Joseph M. Tobin, 1565 Blvd. West Hartford, Conn.

Puget Sound

Chairman - Bruce R. Jacobson, 930 Indian St., Bellingham, Wash.
Secretary - M. H. Strickland Jr., P. O. Box 457, Bellingham, Wash.

Eastern Massachusetts

Chairman - Al Winslow, 1 Fairbanks Rd., Foxboro, Mass.
Secretary - Bob Thompson, 9 Gardner Rd., Norwood, Mass.

HOW TO JOIN A.T.O.E.

any person interested in . . . preserving the tradition of the Theatre Organ and furthering the understanding of the instrument and its music through the exchange of information . . . is invited to membership. Make your check payable to A.T.O.E., and mail to: P.O. Box 248, Alameda, California. Dues \$4.00.

MEL DONER HONORARY 1961 ATOE MEMBER

by Judd Walton

The nomination and election to Honorary Member which took place at the Annual Meeting of A.T.O.E. in Richmond, Va., on July 1, 1961, is belated recognition of one of the world's most avid organ lovers. Dr. Melvin P. Doner, PhD., is indeed one of the "old school" of music lovers, and organs have been his primary source of enjoyment for many, many years. Mel, as he has come to be known by hundreds of A.T.O.E. members, numbers as his close personal friends more organists probably than any other person alive today.

Mel's love for theatre organs dates way back to the very beginning when they first were becoming recognized as a new art form. When the old 78 rpm shellac phonograph records started featuring pipe organ music, Mel began a collection which now numbers into the thousands, and is without a doubt the most extensive collection in the world. The hours spent searching through stack after stack of records in Salvation Army Stores, Goodwill Industry Stores, used Book Shops, and the like must number into the thousands, too!

Mel's field is Entomology, and as

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MEL DONER

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A.T.O.E. Membership - \$4.00 per year includes subscription to THEATRE ORGAN.

A.T.O.E. HONORARY MEMBERS

1959 Jesse Crawford
1960 Fanny Wurlitzer
1961 Mel Doner

EDITOR George F. Thompson
Associate Editor Bud Abel
Production Manager Phil Lockwood

STAFF FOR A.T.O.E.

PRESIDENT W. Tiny James
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for the benefit of the members.

7. To determine the status of a Chapter as stated in Article 2 of Section IV.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. Make decisions regarding the policy and business of the Association when a referendum to the members is not convenient. Such decisions must have the approval of the President.

The EDITOR

1. In general, to be responsible for the material for publication in "THEATRE ORGAN".

a. Obtain, edit, and prepare material for inclusion in "THEATRE ORGAN".

b. Work with the publisher in preparing the material for publication in "THEATRE ORGAN".

2. Appoint a staff to aid him in securing material for publication in "THEATRE ORGAN".

3. It shall be his right to ask for and receive reports from the Secretary-Treasurer and the various chapters for use in "THEATRE ORGAN".

The ASSISTANT EDITOR

1. To assist the Editor in his duties.

2. To carry out assignments and duties as may be designated by the Editor.

3. To assume the duties of the Editor in his absence.

SECTION IV CHAPTERS

Article 1. Chapters may be organized by a group of at least ten (10) members, subject to, (1) the approval of the president, and (2) the provisions of the following Articles in Section IV.

Article 2. The request for a Charter for a Chapter must be submitted in writing and signed by at least ten (10) members in good standing, as determined by the Secretary-Treasurer, who will be members of the Chapter, together with a list of the names of the members who will serve as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary of the Chapter. All Chapter members must be ATOE members in good standing.

Article 3. The request for a Charter for a Chapter shall be accompanied by a payment of five dollars (\$5.00).

Article 4. The Charter shall be issued for a period of one (1) year with automatic renewal so long as (1) the membership in the Chapter is not less than ten (10), and (2) the chapter has held at least four (4) meetings during the present fiscal year.

Article 5. The Board of Directors shall have the right to withdraw a Charter if an investigation shall determine that continued existence of a Chapter's Charter is detrimental to the purposes of ATOE subject to review at the next Annual Meeting of Members. There shall be no liability on the part of the Board of Directors to return any part of the initial five dollar (\$5.00) fee as a result of withdrawing a Chapter's Charter.

Article 6. Additional dues may be levied by a Chapter for its own use after approval of the amount to be levied by the Board of Directors or the President, subject however to a two-thirds majority vote of the Chapter's members approving the additional dues levy.

SECTION V DUES AND FINANCES

Article 1. Each member shall pay to the Secretary-Treasurer four dollars (\$4.00) per year, which sum shall be due and pay-

able on January 1st of each year.

able on January 1st of each year.

Article 2. The said annual dues of four (\$4.00) shall be the total of the member's obligation to the Association.

Article 3. The membership and fiscal year of this Association shall be from the 1st day of January of each year through the 31st day of December of the same year.

SECTION VI DISSOLUTION

Article 1. In the event of the dissolution of the organization, after all liabilities have been met, the property shall be distributed equally among the current mem-

MEL DONER

(concluded from page 3)

head of this department for the J. R. Watkins Company Mel was fortunate in taking field trips to practically every part of the United States. After his official duties had been completed, anyone looking for him would have had the best success finding him by checking the aforementioned stores in the particular town he was in at the time. He has often ridden all night in a train coach rather than stay comfortably in a hotel, just to gain a few extra hours in the next town to search for records! Suffice it to say, name it and he has it!

Gradually, Mel's acquaintanceship with organ enthusiasts grew. He was one of the original seven on the old round-robin gang of Al Miller's letters. It was only natural that he would be present at the organization meeting of A.T.O.E. in Los Angeles in 1955. For several years he served as Editor of The TIBIA which was the original Official Journal of A.T.O.E. This task was indeed close to Mel's heart, as at last he could reach not just a few organ enthusiasts, but literally hundreds. He put almost unlimited time into the job, unselfishly giving up his record search to serve the members of A.T.O.E.

Some years back, Mel suffered a nearly fatal coronary, but came through with colors flying. More recently, a second attack laid him low for several months, but again his great spirit and love of the fine things in life contributed to his recovery.

This brief review of Mel Doner's theatre organ activities would not be complete without mention of his lovely wife, Eleanor. A really grand person, Eleanor has no doubt played the role of hostess to visiting firemen more than once when she was long ago ready for bed...for the record sessions and just plain organ talk often went far into the wee hours of the morning!

Mel and Eleanor, now grandparents, have four children, all nearly grown.

bers in good standing as determined by the Secretary-Treasurer.

SECTION VII AMENDMENTS

Article 1. These by-laws may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors by a majority vote, except that a by-law fixing or changing the number of Directors may not be adopted, amended or repealed without the vote or written assent of members entitled to exercise a majority of the voting power, or the vote of a majority of a quorum at a meeting of members duly called pursuant to the articles or by-laws.

To one who has done so much to share his enjoyment of a favorite hobby, and who has done it without thought of reward, no honor in the theatre organ field is too great. Election to Honorary Membership is little enough to do in the way of showing the members' appreciation for Mel's untiring work in their behalf, done modestly, quietly but unflinchingly. It is the heartfelt wish of the A.T.O.E. staff that Mel Doner continue for many, many years to enjoy his beloved hobby -- the theatre organ!

1960-61 ROSTER

THE ROSTER of the ATOE membership for 1960-61 is now available at 50¢ per copy. Just write National Secretary Ida James, P.O. Box 248, Alameda, California, include your half dollar, and your copy will be forthcoming.

"VOX"

"VOX", newsletter of the Theatre Organ Society of Australia, covers organ activities 'down under'. Annual Subscription from the U.S. Foreign Money Order from the post-office for \$1.50 (Australia pound.) Please, no checks or cash. Send to either Mr. V. J. Arnold, 67 New St., Brighton Beach, S5 Melbourne, Australia, or John W. Clancy, 10 Caloola Road, Wentworthville, N.S.W. Australia.

OF ALL THE FAMOUS THEATRE ORGAN BUILDERS, Robert Morton seems to be the one whose history is the least known. It is known that Morton was combined with American Photoplayer for the production of bigger and better theatre instruments and they gave Wurlitzer, Kimball, and some of the others considerable competition. The factory was located on the West Coast at Van Nuys, California. Judging by the number of Mortons still around - both in theatres and homes - they must have built a good share of the total output of all theatre organs.