

Hershey, Pa., Scene of EASTERN REGIONAL MEETING

By Richard F. Kline, Jr.
Chairman, Potomac Valley Chapter

On Sunday, August 19, the combined East Coast chapters met at Hershey, Pennsylvania, for the first regional meeting held by ATOE. Many members and guests arrived on Saturday to take advantage of the marvelous facilities found in the chocolate capital of the world, including several large hotels, amusement park, swimming pools and two large golf courses, so were on hand early Sunday morning for the first scheduled event. About 300 enthusiasts poured in from all sections - Canadians from the Niagara Frontier Chapter; the Ohio Chapter; Richmond and Norfolk members from the Potomac Valley Chapter, and even one member from the Puget Sound Chapter. Those who arranged the convention were extremely pleased with the turnout, and the general concensus was that this will not be the last meeting of its sort.

First on the busy schedule for the day was open house at the Academy Theatre in Lebanon, Penn., where all

had a chance to see and play a 2/10 Marr & Colton with a symphonic registrar. Many people took turns at the console and were pleased with the results and amused by the dramatic combinations found on the preset tabs above the main stop bolster.

The main meeting was called to order at 2:00 by Erwin Young, Eastern Regional Vice-President, who made the opening remarks. Potomac Valley member Frank Myers had taken a fine series of color slides of the California Convention which were then projected. Erwin Young and Dick Loderhose, National ATOE Vice-President, narrated. Afterwards, each of the six guest organists for the afternoon session took a 20 minute turn at the console of the 4/45 Aeolian-Skinner concert organ located to the left of the orchestra pit on its own elevator. The large draw knob console proved difficult to handle for the many quick registration changes required for

theatre music, but the organ was in excellent condition. Carl Hanke, house organist for the theatre, led off the program followed by Lowell Ayars of Bridgeton, N.J. John Varney, former organist at the Stanley Theatre in Baltimore, gave us a medley of operatic ballads and Irv Toner, chairman of the Niagara Chapter, followed with some oldies. Jim Boyce, organist at the Alexandria, Virginia Arena and owner of the N. Y. Center Theatre 4/34 WurliTzer was next, and Jack Ford, staff organist at Radio City Music Hall, wound up the session. (Jack, incidentally, played his portion "cold", having no chance to first try the instrument!) The whole program was very warmly received.

At 6:00 p.m. dinner was served in a private dining room adjoining the theatre. (Both theatre and dining facilities are located in the Hershey Community Cen-

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Eastern Regional banquet, with 217 people attending. The banquet room is in the same building as the Community Theatre in Hershey, Pa.



Leonard MacClain at the console of the 3/19 Moller in the Sedgwick Theatre. This organ is the work project of the Delaware Valley Chapter.



Lowell Ayars, Delaware Valley Chapter member, plays the Hershey Community Theatre organ. -- Photo by Ray Brubacher



Capt. Erwin A. Young, Eastern Regional vice president, on stage at the Hershey Community Theatre, calling the afternoon session of the first eastern regional meeting to order. 21

ter which is owned and maintained by the Hershey Estate.) 217 members attended. After dinner, a meeting was held with comments by Erwin Young and Dick Loderhose followed by brief remarks by chapter chairmen, who reported on increased memberships and newly restored organs in the various chapters. The banquet lasted until nearly 8:00, so we had just long enough to stretch our legs before returning to the spacious rococo Community Theatre for the evening meeting.

While the afternoon portion of the program was interesting and lots of fun, the evening session was the real ringer! Leonard MacClain soon had the walls of the theatre shaking with laughter, and his silent film cueing was flawless and perfectly registered. Here is one of the greats. After watching him cavort through a silent reel of Marie Dressler and a Laurel and Hardy, it was easy to see that his fifty years of playing have put him in a very special and enviable category. Seven all-too-short reels followed, and we were then entertained with song slides and more chuckles by "Melody Mac", as he was known to his radio fans for years in the Philadelphia area. It's easy to see why Leonard was selected as this year's recipient of the ATOE's member-of-the-year award.

Theatre historian Ben Hall commented on the Hershey Community Theatre and its opening and added his particular brand of mirth, now familiar to those who are fortunate enough to own a copy of his witty anthology on the golden movie palaces, "The Best Remaining Seats". Ben spoke about the function of the theatre's stage lift, the twinkling starry sky (which was then demonstrated) and its Moorish-Rococo-Byzantine-Gothic architectural style.

After the lights came up, 45 minutes still remained for members to take a crack at the organ. Finally, at 11:00, the



Jimmy Boyce at the 4/80 Aeolian-Skinner organ. Hershey Community Theatre.
--Photo by Ray Brubacher

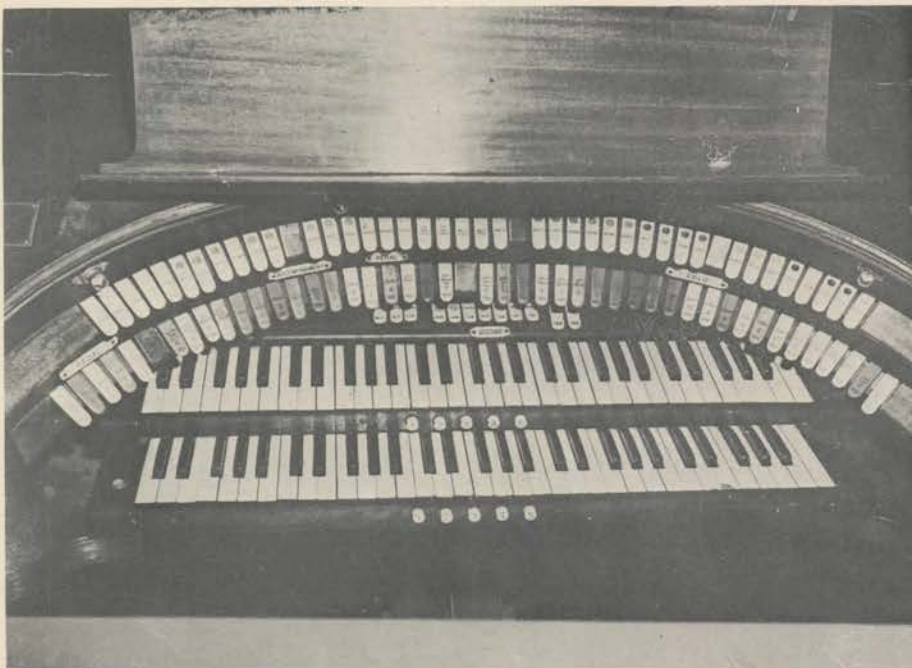
forest of microphones on the balcony was carefully packed away and after another round of handshakes the meeting ended.

On Monday all members and guests were invited to see and play the 3/19 Moller Deluxe in the Sedgewick Theatre in north Philadelphia, which is now in final stages of refurbishing by the Delaware Valley Chapter. The Sedgewick is now the chapter's "home".

After visiting the Sedgewick, the group adjourned to John Wanamaker's Store in Philadelphia to hear Leonard

MacClain play the noon concert on the famous Wanamaker organ. The organ has a six manual console and over 30,000 speaking pipes which makes it the second largest pipe organ in the world. It was designed by Rodman Wanamaker and most of it was built in the Wanamaker shops. Members who wished to visit the cavernous chambers were later given the grand tour. Quite a finale to our first regional meeting!

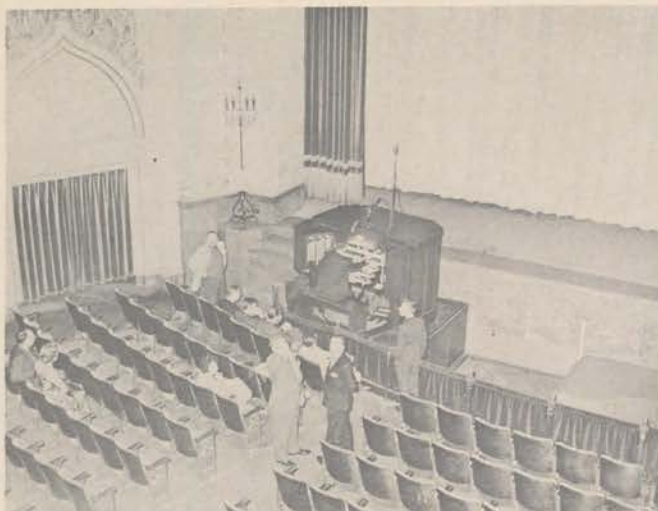
We are grateful to Dottie MacClain, chairman of the Delaware Valley Chapter, and her co-officers, John Armstrong,



Marr & Colton 2/10 with Symphonic Registrator in Academy Theatre, Lebanon, Pa., where open house was held.



Carl Hanke, house organist at the Community Theatre, Hershey, Pa.
--Photo by Ray Brubacher



View of Aeolian-Skinner console from balcony of Community Theatre, Hershey, Pa. --Photo by Ray Brubacher



Lowell Ayars opened the lineup of artists at the beautiful Aeolian-Skinner 4/45 while Radio City Music Hall organist Jack Ward looked on. Ward was the final artist of the afternoon.



National Vice-president Dick Loderhose at the 2/10 Marr & Colton in Academy Theatre.



Leonard MacClain views the console of the Community Theatre organ while Chairman Erwin Young remains "at parade rest". -- Photo by Ray Brubacher.



Ben Hall addresses the assembled ATOers at the eastern regional convention. --Photo by Ray Brubacher.

program director; John Daugherty, vice-chairman and Mrs. Dorothy Bloom, secretary, along with Erwin Young, for the groundwork they had carefully laid to make the meeting such a success. The

facilities of the Hershey Community Theatre and Community Hall were made available to ATOE through the courtesy of Lawrence C. Burris, director of the

Hershey Information Center. Tom Livezey, announcer for WEEZ, Chester, Pennsylvania, was the master of ceremonies for the afternoon program.

NEWS FROM THE ROCHESTER AREA

By Lloyd E. Klos

For the third time since its restoration, Rochester's RKO Palace organ was used to open a motion picture on August 14. The movie was "The Music Man", and for the occasion, the red carpet was installed at the front entrance. Following the first show of the evening, the red proscenium and organ grille lights were lit, then came the deep-throated Fall, 1962

wondrous sound of the opening chords of "Hello, Hello, the RKO", as Rochester's Mr. Theatre Organ, Tom Grierson, rode his steed upward into the golden spotlight. The audience which filled two-thirds of the theatre was most appreciative in its response, and Tom, as is his custom, spoke into the house PA system with the console mike.

Tom's 18-minute program started off

with the rousing "Strike Up the Band" by Gershwin. Then came the lilting "Lover", and "March of Hearts". Preferring to use full organ for most of the program rather than individual stops, Tom continued with "I Could Have Danced All Night" and "Alexander's Rag Time Band", and wound up, of course, with the inevitable "76 Trombones" which set the mood for the show to follow. Another lengthy burst of applause accompanied Tom Grierson's

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