

# American Association of Theatre Organ

## Enthusiasts' 1963 Annual Meeting

ATOE 1963 BISMARCK ANNUAL MEETING REALLY CLICKS!

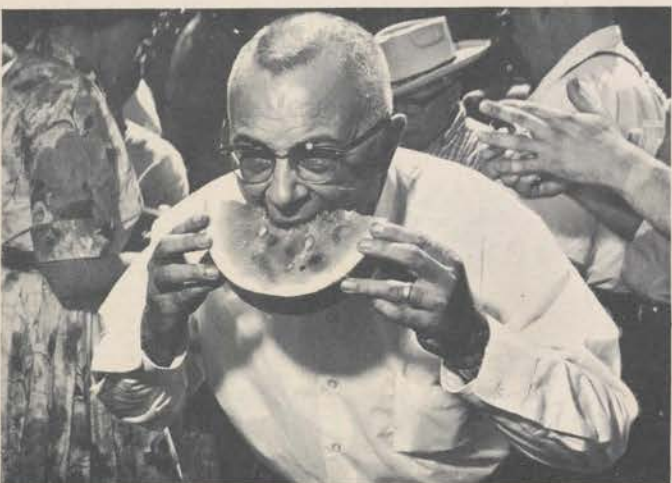
Friday afternoon and evening, July 5, saw over 200 ATOE members and their families converge on Bismarck, North Dakota for the 1963 Annual Meeting of ATOE. Altogether 23 States and 2 Canadian Provinces were represented by the time registration officially closed Saturday Night.

Following much hard work by the Land O'Lakes Chapter Chairman Harry Jorgenson and Al Schmitz together with co-hosts Reiny Delzer and Chuck Welch, the Friday evening program got under way with every seat in the Delzer studio filled plus a few standees. The balance of the audience was escorted across the street to the spacious Welch music room to hear the initial program via direct line from the Delzer home.



Bob Page changes registration on the Chuck Welch Marr & Colton.

The first surprise of the evening was M.C. Al Schmitz, a real likeable fellow, who knew just how to get the audience in the friendly mood that lasted for the entire three days of this meeting. We know that those in attendance will agree that Al really added the finishing touch to each program with his enthusiasm, audience participation, and friendly manner. Our hats are off to you, Al Schmitz.



M.C. Al Schmitz really likes his watermelon.



Al Schmitz is surprised when the bell rings during one of the 'jam sessions'.

The second surprise was in the form of Bob Page, a young fellow from Minneapolis, and the artist for this opening program. Most of those present had never heard of Bob Page before the Annual Meeting announcement and were therefore agreeably surprised by the talents he displayed. Their thunderous ovations following each set of selections were ample proof of the recognition of a true musician and fine pipe organist. Following the conclusion of the concert the two audiences exchanged places so that the people who had been listening by remote in the Welch home were then able to see Bob Page perform in person as he played a SECOND concert.

Bob Page played an additional concert on Saturday afternoon on the Chuck Welch Marr & Colton which was also received with genuine applause. Thanks Bob Page for your wonderful contribution to our ATOE Annual Meeting.



Bob Page and Reiny Delzer talking 'pipe organ' during watermelon break held on Delzer patio.





**DIRECTORS MEETING AND ANNUAL BANQUET  
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA**

Saturday morning at 10 the ATOE Board of Directors met in the Grand Pacific Hotel to hear a progress report, a financial report, and the results of the mail ballot for the election of the four new directors for the ensuing two year term, to elect new officers for the coming year, and to transact any other business that might be presented.



**Eddie Dunstedter receives his Honorary Member Award from President 'Tiny' James at the Annual Banquet.**

President W. 'Tiny' James read the financial report which was approved by the directors present. Membership was reported as 1713 as of June 30 which is a new record for ATOE. The results of the mail ballot elected Erwin A. Young, Donald D. Borden, Richard F. Kline Jr., and Harry E. Jorgenson as the new directors succeeding 'Tiny' James, Frank R. Killinger, E. H. Abel, and George Thompson. The new officers elected from among the executive directors for the coming year were Erwin A. Young, Vice President; and Richard F. Kline, Secretary-Treasurer. W. 'Tiny' James was re-elected to a third term as President and thus became a director again. (Our recent bylaw changes allow for the President to be chosen from the ATOE membership at which time he becomes a director.)

The future of our publication THEATRE ORGAN was discussed and a general policy was adopted pretty much along present lines. The changes discussed will be printed in future editions of THEATRE ORGAN as they are formalized. Two changes were made in our bylaws and these will also be noted in THEATRE ORGAN. The final action of the board was to name Eddie Dunstedter as Honorary Member for 1963/64.



**The ATOE Board of Directors in session at the Grand Hotel, Bismarck, North Dakota.**



**Bob Page at the Welch Marr & Colton.**

The Annual Banquet was held at the Grand Pacific Hotel Saturday Evening with 181 in attendance. Results of the directors meeting, introductions of guests, and recognition of our Honorary Member Eddie Dunstedter covered the business portion of the banquet which followed an excellent Prime Rib Dinner. The meeting was then adjourned to the Delzer home and WurliTzer for the evening concert.



**James Ellis of Manden, North Dakota is another fine organist who added to the 'jam session period.'**



**Host Reiny Delzer, 'Tiny' James, Erwin Young and Harry Jorgenson pow-wow in the Delzer organ chamber.**



**EDDIE DUNSTEDTER AND LEONARD MacCLAIN  
THRILL ANNUAL MEETING LISTENERS!**

The featured artist for the Saturday Evening Concert was none other than former Minneapolis theatre organist Eddie Dunstedter who was in top form playing the WurliTzer that he had played for so many years in the Minnesota Theatre. This is the 4/20 plus English Horn that now resides in the home of Reiny Delzer in Bismarck. Eddie was as sharp as a tack, and his playing and registration showed him to be the master of this Mighty WurliTzer. After opening with his theme song (which left a few damp eyes in the audience) Dunstedter then ran the gamut of old and new favorites, ballads, rhythm numbers, waltzes, they were all done in true Dunstedter manner. There are three numbers that are traditional with Eddie, and showman that he is, he kept building one climax on top of another with the high points being his renditions of "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers" (Now we know how you do it, Ed), "Tea For Two," and the stopper of all of them, "The Pilgrim's Chorus" from Faust. At this point the applause even overwhelmed the old showman himself, and wife Vee was seen to be drying her eyes. Those privileged to be in attendance will, we are sure, feel that they were treated to the ultimate in true theatre organ artistry. In order that no one would be disappointed, Eddie very graciously followed the lead set by Bob Page the previous evening and played a SECOND concert after the audiences had switched places between the Welch and Delzer residences. On Sunday afternoon Dunstedter played another concert for the members on the Chuck Welch Marr & Colton which was outstanding for showing off registration of the individual voices of the 2/9 organ.

"Melody Mac" or Leonard MacClain as you prefer, was the third artist to perform for those present at the Bismarck meeting. Leonard needs no introduction to ATOE members anywhere as he has given freely of his talents for our organization whenever asked and always does a terrific job.

Both of MacClain's concerts were on Reiny Delzer's WurliTzer, and he was heard to complain that he was not allowed to do a concert on the Welch Marr & Colton. Leonard played his first concert on Saturday afternoon to a full house (while Bob Page was doing likewise across the street at the Chuck Welch Marr & Colton) and held his audience in the palm of his hands for over an hour. But far and away the topper was the Sunday afternoon concert played by MacClain on the Delzer



**Lovable Leonard MacClain during one of his concerts at the Delzer WurliTzer.**

WurliTzer. This man is a real trouper and knows how to feel out his audience and then when he gets the combination he really goes all out. This he proceeded to do on Sunday and really outdid anything he has done before. Then to top off his concert Leonard was joined by ATOE member Lowell Ayars of New Jersey, a real top flight musician, and for the next two hours it was MacClain at the WurliTzer and Ayars first at the Hammond and then the grand piano playing together as if they had been working as a team for years and years. About the only thing that brought this session to a close was that both men had exhausted their mutual repertoires. This session will go down in ATOE annals as the outstanding unprepared program we have ever heard.

All ATOE can say to these fine artists is thanks for making our 1963 Annual Meeting the success that it was. We hope that you enjoyed the pleasure that you gave our members.



**Genial Eddie Dunstedter during his concert at the Delzer WurliTzer.**



**Eddie Dunstedter acknowledges the applause of the audience at the Sunday concert played on the Welch Marr & Colton.**



**OUR HOSTS**  
Reiny and Ruby Delzer  
Chuck and Fran Welch

Words cannot express our thanks to you and your ladies for extending ATOE the hospitality of your homes for our 1963 Annual Meeting, but we really do want you to know that it was appreciated. Only a few know of the efforts that you put forth to make this meeting possible, but all of those who attended were able to see the results, and it was something to behold.

**THE WORKERS**  
Harry Jorgenson  
Al Schmitz

Harry Jorgenson of Minneapolis rates the sincere thanks of all that attended the Bismarck meeting for his tireless work in making all of the arrangements and personally seeing that both instruments were in the tip-top condition that was so in evidence.

Al Schmitz put in many hours along with Harry in planning and working on the organs as well as doing the best MC job that we have ever witnessed. We received a letter from Al in which he says to all "conventioners" -

"You were the most enthusiastic and the kindest group I have ever had the privilege of working with. Thank you.

Your M.C., Al Schmitz"

The informality and the efforts put forth by our artists and our hosts, as well as the graciousness of the members attending made this one of the finest and friendliest ATOE meetings that it has ever been my privilege to attend. I feel that the many 'jam sessions' in the program were of exceptional value to those attending as it allowed ample opportunity for any that wished to sit down and play these wonderful instruments. This also exposed us to some fine artists that we would not have otherwise heard such as Jim Kennedy of Minneapolis, Lowell Ayars of New Jersey, and John Ferguson of St. Louis, to mention a few. There was also the young son of Raymond Taylor of San Mateo, California, who gave an excellent rendition of 'Alley Cat' and probably has the honor of being the youngest performer at our 1963 Annual Meeting.

It was a most enjoyable experience for Ida and me to renew old acquaintances and make many new ones.

I would like to personally thank everyone for their part in making this meeting go as smoothly as it did, and in particular express my thanks as well as those of ATOE to Reiny and Ruby Delzer, Fran and Chuck Welch, Edna Peters (registration) and last but not least my wife Ida James as National Secretary for her wonderful help.

W. 'Tiny' James  
President, ATOE



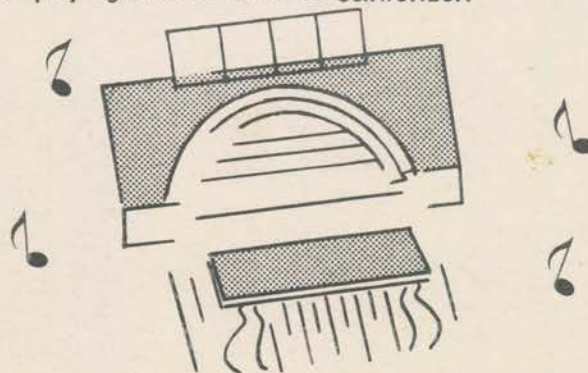
Land O'Lakes Chairman Harry Jorgenson inspects the reed on a Brass Trumpet pipe.



Seated at the Delzer Wurlitzer: Leonard MacClain. Standing L. to R: L.A. Waldsmith, Dayton, Ohio, and Lowell Ayars, Bridgeton, New Jersey. (Photo courtesy Bob Feickert, Bismarck Tribune)



John Ferguson of St. Louis plays for Eddie Dunstедter during a 'jam session'. He was heard to remark "This is like playing Bach in front of Schweitzer."



Unless otherwise specified, all photos by Jim Davidson of Harley Hettick Photographers, Bismarck, N.D.