

more popular slides one could hope for, and again the audience went into hysterics over the "tongue twisters" which were always included in every old time organ sing session.

Then, Eddie reached down into the depths below the organ console and came up with - you guessed it, a beetle wig, and of course, all of the musical effects associated with that group of artisans. Then came a spirited medley of string band music, done so well, that it has become one of Eddie's trademarks, one which he is always asked to do at every program. After some more audience participation for "Chatanooga Choo Choo," Eddie took the console down to picture level, for the final event of the evening, a showing of "Whispering Whiskers" starring Andy Clude and Snub Pollard. We were very privileged to be able to obtain a 35 millimeter print of the very funny film, one which is not too long, but gives the maximum amount of entertainment and is side splittingly funny all the way through.

After the film, Eddie closed the program with two more selections, and as he reached the final four bars of "I'll See You Again," he arose from the console and disappeared off stage in the fading glow of the spotlight while the organ finished his theme. No amount of continuing applause could coax him back to the console for an encore, but everyone I know, felt that they had heard not just another good organist, but one who besides being one of the finest theatre organists in the world, also makes you a part of his program, and not just another spectator. This is one reason and just one reason only why Eddie Weaver will always be at the top of our list in this area. Our thanks to him for another solid, musical performance.

The concert was presented by the Byrd Theatre, the Richmond Organ Enthusiasts Club, and the Potomac Valley Chapter, ATOE. Our thanks go to all who helped out to make this concert a success, especially to Don Malkames, of New York, who provided the film, and to Eddie Weaver's very talented daughter who assisted and helped the big Wurlitzer to play by itself.



Bombardier Editor Stu Green in disguise at the Hoberg Electric Organ Festival.
—Photo by Ida James

Fall 1964

ATOE Chapter News

Chapter Directory

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WOLVERINE CHAPTER OF ATOE FORMED IN MICHIGAN

Michigan, with the Detroit area alone having probably the highest concentration of home theatre organ installations in the nation, has formed a regional chapter of the ATOE after nearly nine years of effort. With over fifty ATOE members in the state of Michigan already on the 1964 Roster, the new chapter has increased this total by eight with its formation. The organizing group for the Wolverine Chapter provided twenty-six signatures to its letter of petition for a Chapter Charter. Some of the eighteen already established ATOE members, who participated in organizing the Wolverine Chapter, are among the earliest members carried on the ATOE lists from its formation in 1955.

Chicago in '65

The name Wolverine was chosen, since it is universally recognized as identifying the state of Michigan. The organizing members of the new chapter have been drawn from the Eastern, Western and North Central areas of Michigan as well as from the Detroit area. The Wolverine Chapter intends to extend its activities throughout the whole state, rather than remaining Detroit-based. Various state centers, with adequate theatre organ facilities, have offered to participate in the Wolverine Chapter's scope of activity. The organizing members decided to limit chapter membership to a total of fifty, at the present time, because of the physical restrictions of some of the theatre organ facilities which will be used in the immediate future for chapter activities. Most of the state ATOE members who were contacted regarding the formation of the Wolverine Chapter, responded with enthusiasm and signed the letter of petition for a

Continued on page 18

CHAPTER NEWS (Cont.)

chapter charter. An additional twenty-four ATOE members throughout the state are to be given the opportunity to join the Wolverine Chapter before interested membership candidates, who are not currently ATOE members, are invited to join. The organizing members agreed that all future members must be accepted

Continued on page 21

VALLEY OF THE SUN CHAPTER

by Donna M. Bechhoefer

The May meeting, held at the Paramount Theatre, was highlighted by a concert by Miss Loreen Lee at the 3 manual console. Although Miss Lee is better known in Phoenix as an artist who tours for one of the electronic organ companies, she showed equally good talent in the manner in which she



Getting the Wolverine Chapter under way are l to r; Bob Connor (Chairman), Frank and Betty Schoonover, Georgia Fenwick, Jo Williams, Fred Bayne, Lucille Mitchell (Secretary), Ann Stranahan, Ken Wuepper, Bob Howland, and Roger Mumbrue (Vice Chairman). Kneeling in front Bob Burk and Herb Head.



Coffee-break after the birth of a new chapter. Roger Mumbrue, Bob Howland, Georgia Fenwick, Betty Schoonover, and Ann Stranahan (Hostess to the group).



Ken Wuepper and Fred Bayne record the Wolverine Chapter birth for posterity.

handled the 'pipes.'

Hits from Broadway musicals, movie themes, a fox trot or two (*Darktown Strutter's Ball* on the pedals, no less) and sparkling Latin tunes made up the program which closed with *Slaughter On 10th Avenue*.

A full house was the order of the day for the June meeting which was held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Max Bray, and hosted by their talented son, Wade. The Bray family recently purchased the home and 3 manual Wurlitzer formerly owned by ATOE'r William Brown. Wade gave a short talk on the merits of his mighty Wurlitzer, then proceeded to delight all of the guests with several rollicking numbers which displayed his own talents as well as the versatility of the Wurlitzer.

After Wade's terrific presentation, the console was open to all who wished to try their hand at playing. This writer saw people from teen-agers on up to 'slightly past middle-agers' really

having a ball with the mighty monster.

A guest at the meeting was Mrs. Laurel Ruby, formerly of Oregon, who recently moved to Phoenix. Laurel owns a 2 manual Wurlitzer and is a true enthusiast. She will be an added spark to the chapter. Following the 'jam session' refreshments rounded out an excellent evening.

PINE TREE CHAPTER

The members of this chapter have worked faithfully throughout the summer on the restoration of the State Theatre Wurlitzer. The organ chambers were cleaned, dead magnets and damaged pipes were repaired or replaced, air leaks corrected, etc. The console keyboard and pedal board were extensively overhauled. Along with the above work, the console was redecorated in white and gold. (It was formerly orange, black and gold.) Our work progressed well, thanks to the cooperation of Mrs. George Francis, Manager, and the theatre staff.

When Mrs. Francis was planning for the special showing of the movie "Hamlet," she spoke of the appropriateness of the occasion for some organ music. We were most eager to respond and three of our playing members - Forest Perkins, Stuart Shuster, and David McNally - volunteered to provide prelude and intermission music at the matinee and evening performances.

So it was that on September 23 and 24 the State Theatre organ was presented to the public for the first time in many years! It was well received and this, we hope, bodes well for the future.

Now our work continues in preparation for what is probably a "first" in Portland theatre history - an evening of theatre organ music on October 27. This will be co-sponsored by us and the State Theatre. More on this later.

WESTERN RESERVE CHAPTER

The Annual Meeting of the Western Reserve Chapter was held at the Granada Theatre with over 60 members and friends in attendance. The Granada management as usual were very cooperative and we had a very nice birthday meeting and a couple of hours of very entertaining music supplied by our members at the 3/11 Wurlitzer. An old time Sing-A-Long very ably led by Wilson Bruggert at the console was one of the highlights of the afternoon.

It was feared that the unexpected flash flood and devastation due to the August rains in Akron might result in damage to the Loew's Theatre as part of the old Ohio Canal runs underneath the theatre, but we are happy to report that the theatre is back in full operation again and THE ORGAN WAS NOT DAMAGED. The Guenther Hilles of Canfield have started installing the chestwork of the new family Wurlitzer, the 260 from the Colfax Theatre in South Bend, Indiana.

Duey Arey, Chairman
theatre organ

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

Approximately 200 persons attended the October 5th and 6th meeting of the Northern California Chapter held at the new Carl Greer Inn and the Grant Union High School.

The new Carl Greer Inn has installed the 4/16 Robert Morton from the Seattle Music Hall Theatre, while the Grant Union High was a 4/18 Wurlitzer with a Kilgen console. Clyde Derby, popular Sacramento organist, was the featured artist at the Robert Morton for the afternoon program, and his performance showed off the organ in its new surrounding to perfection. Following a short jam session that saw Alice Blue, Tiny James, and Dave Schutt try their hands at the organ, the group headed for the Grant Union High School for the second portion of the program.

Chairman Fred Clapp started this portion of the program by introducing Tom Thompson, another Sacramento organist. Tom, like Clyde Derby, is an excellent showman, and started his program with some of the patter that we imagine he uses on his regular job. This placed everyone in a very receptive mood for the excellent program that followed. Tom Thompson is an excellent technician and entertainer, and his fast-paced program ending with the famous 'Honky-Tonk Train' brought a terrific ovation from the audience. A short jam session followed but had to be cut short as the schedule called for the group to gather for dinner at the Carl Greer Inn.

Dinner at the Inn was excellent in two ways; one the food, the other was the musical program played by Aletha Bowman on the fine Robert Morton. Aletha Bowman is one of the real 'old-time silent movie organists' having played during those fabled years at both the Senator and Capital Theatres in Sacramento, as well as others. She played for a little better than two hours (while the rest of us ate) and it was certainly a genuine pleasure to hear her perform. She is an excellent musician who knows how to register a pipe organ, and you can tell at once that she is right at home by the relaxed manner in which she plays.

Following the dinner concert it was time for Clyde Derby to start his evening stint at the Carl Greer Morton (he's the regular organist) which he did by calling on some of the chapter members to perform. Among those called was 12 year old Billy Taylor of San Mateo. This young lad is not the least bit afraid of these four manual monsters, and he steps right in and plays just like he had been doing it every day. (He did the same thing in Portland at the recent regional meeting.)

Following the guest artist part of the program, Clyde Derby took his place at the console and proceeded to entertain the regular customers as well as the ATOE members until closing time. Clyde is an excellent musician and a very popular entertainer with a very large following in the Sacramento area,

and one doesn't have to listen long to understand why. It is rumored that the Magnificent Morton continued to play well into the wee hours of the morning, but we didn't stick around to see or hear.

Sunday morning was devoted to a jam session by those wishing to try out

the Morton, while others were conducted on tours of the organ chambers. All in all an excellent week-end.

Editor's Note - The Carl Greer Robert Morton installation will be a featured article in the next issue of THEATRE ORGAN. Watch for it.



Clyde Derby at the Robert Morton, Carl Greer Inn.



Tom Thompson at the Grant Union High School Wurli/Kilgen.



Aletha Bowman at the Carl Greer Morton.

-Photos by Dave Schutt and Major H.A. Sommer

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER

by Ray Brubacher

AUGUST MEETING

The Potomac Valley Chapter held its August meeting Friday evening August 21st, at the Stanton Theatre, Baltimore, Md. Guest artist for the evening was the young and very talented Richard Smith, who is a professional musician and attends the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore. Mr. Smith put the 3/32 Kimball organ to fine use with many outstanding numbers which were enjoyed by the unusually large number of members present. The future of the Stanton is in great doubt as this luxury movie palace goes "legit" the 7th of September. The organ is unusually beautiful and mellow owing to the large number of string ranks in the instrument. The organ also is noted for its unusual division, that being twenty-five ranks on the left side, and only six ranks and the bulk of the percussion on the right. After Mr. Smith completed his program, another very talented organist in the area, Al Williams, official organist for the Navy Chapel in Washington, D.C. took his turn at the console, and surprised the audience by launching right into the complete William Tell Overture. Al was followed by John Steele who is making a name for himself in this area by his stylings and interpretation of orchestral works for the organ as well as a fine theatre organ style. John is currently involved in several organ restoration projects. The meeting ended around 4 a.m.

NEW ORGANS AND PROJECTS

The chapter is in hopes of soon being able to restore to top playing shape the 3/14 Aeolian with built in player that was installed in the New York home of the late Sigmund Romberg. Romberg gave the organ to the Scottish Rite Temple in Baltimore, Md., in 1946, but it has not been used for over five years. Through the efforts of member Howard Eich, and Mr. Oliver Swick, manager of the temple, we hope to begin work soon. Member Gil White recently purchased the 2/6 Link theatre organ from the People's Congregational Church, Washington, D.C., and is now in the process of installing it in his Gaithersburg, Md. residence. The organ is in good condition so it should not be too long until we hear this "first" in our chapter. The 3/13 Wurlitzer in the Loew's Richmond Theatre is now playing again thanks to the efforts of Dick Pitt and members of the Richmond Organ Club who are spending a great deal of time restoring the instrument which was played by Eddie Weaver for 23 years. The organ has a tremendous sound for 13 ranks and is divided. The console has been repainted white and gold, and its sound is second to none in the area. It is indeed heart warming to think that Richmond still reigns as the theatre

organ capital of the world with three Wurlitzers in top shape, two - the Byrd's 4/17 and the Mosque's 3/17 - being used on a daily basis.

Dick Kline's custom installation consisting of the former 3/15 Wurlt from the Capitol Theatre, Washington, plus an additional ten ranks is progressing nicely. The console, rebuilt into a four manual by the M. P. Moller Co., is now in its final resting place in the spacious studio Dick had built for it. All ranks have now been re-leathered and it won't be too much longer before installation will start. In Richmond, Dick Barlow's 3/13 Wurlitzer installation is now beginning to take shape and Dick is getting anxious for those first groans and bleats of a mighty W. coming back to life.

NEW YORK CHAPTER

PLACE: Pitkin Theatre, Pitkin and Saratoga Avenues, Brooklyn, N.Y.

DATE: October 11, 1964.

TIME: 8:30 - 11:45 A.M.

Loew'd Pitkin Theatre is one of the five "Wonder Loew's Theatres" with the "Wonder Mortons." The Pitkin has the "Little Wonder Morton" - only three manuals, but a console as elaborate as the four big ones.

The organ is presently used for intermissions on weekends. It is played by the house organist, Carl Weiss, who is responsible for putting the instrument back in shape.

The console has been restored to its ivory and gold glory and comes up on an elevator.

New owners have recently purchased the theatre from Loew's and have relamped the theatre and put it in mint condition. Even the clouds and twinkling stars are operating.

It is rumored that the theatre will be razed in about two years to make way for a new housing development.

Our thanks go to Mr. Carl Marshall and Mr. Oscar Roed of the Pitkin management; Carl Weiss, house organist; and Howard Day of the New York Chap-

ter AATOE for the invaluable help they have given to make this meeting possible.

LAST MINUTE NEWS

This is not a review of the New York Paramount Theatre meeting on September 27, 1964, but a chance publically to thank, on behalf of the New York Chapter, all those who made this meeting probably the biggest ATOE membership meeting in the history of its existence.

Our appreciation to John Armstrong who spent a week in New York settling union problems, getting city licenses, insuring our guests, and many other items that had to be solved;

To the organ crew who came in with a cigar box filled with magnets, and who tuned early and late;

To the greatest array of theatre organ talent ever assembled under one roof;

To Ben Hall for his program notes and historic comments;

And most of all to the audience of 754 people who supported us.

by Allen W. Rossiter

CHICAGO AREA CHAPTER

August 23rd was one of the most successful ventures in CATOE history with the John Seng Concert at "Our Lady of the Lake Seminary" in Mundelein. The loss of reverberation due to the crowded house surprised John, but, at all times the sound was unmistakably the sound of a magnificent theatre pipe organ in first class condition.

September 19 and 20 A Wonderful Wurlitzer Week-end starting at the home of Kenneth Hunt, Dayton, Ohio, wherein resides the former Chicago Terminal Theatre 4/17 Wurlitzer. On Sunday the 20th we go to the State Theatre in Springfield. Mr. Oliver Nicklas, former theatre manager and theatre and radio organist will be host.



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On October 12 the Connecticut Valley Chapter gathered at George Shaskan's Organ Studio in Stamford, which houses the largest operating theatre organ in Connecticut, a 22 rank Wurlitzer with a 3m Kimball console and a 2m Wurlitzer slave console.

The console was open to members and guests from 2 to 4 p.m. under the new play in order of arrival, 10 minute maximum rule which worked very well giving more members a chance to play. Following a business meeting at the studio and a dinner at a nearby restaurant, the group returned to hear a new member and former theatre organist Phil Stock, recording artist Rosa Rio (can that girl-ever play), and to top it all off Chairman Ev Bassett came up with two silent movies which he accompanied while wife Eleanor manned the projector. Our thanks once again to George Shaskan for a very memorable day.

Continued from page 18

by an absolute consensus of the existing membership and that voting on membership acceptance will be by secret ballot. It further was agreed, by chapter by-laws, that chapter regulation would be by majority agreement of the complete membership.

The organizing meeting for the Wolverine Chapter was held on September 13, 1964 at the home of Mrs. Lawrence (Ann) Stranahan, in Detroit, Michigan. Eleven of the organizing members assembled in person for this meeting and an additional fifteen, who were unable to attend the meeting, executed proxies, authorizing Fred Bayne to act on their behalf in the formation of the chapter. The organizational proceedings were tape recorded and the abstracted minutes of the meeting were circularized to all members for concurrence on the

resolutions passed.

R. W. (Bob) Connor was elected Chairman, Roger H. Mumbroe was elected Vice-Chairman, and Mrs. J. W. (Lucille) Mitchell was elected Secretary. It was agreed that no tenure of office was to extend beyond a one year term and that no chapter dues, except mailing were to be assessed.

Current plans are to hold the first regular Chapter Meeting and Concert early in December, with tentative plans being made for the meeting to be held in Saginaw, Michigan. The Wolverine Chapter has extended its appreciation to the Chicago Area Chapter ATOE (CATOE) for its generosity in relinquishing jurisdiction over the state of Michigan for the formation of the Wolverine Chapter and wishes to express gratitude for the fine cooperation of President Carl Norvell and past-President and current Publications Director, W. "Tiny" James, as well as all the National ATOE executives, who have extended encouragement and every possible assistance in the formation of the Wolverine Chapter ATOE.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Enclosed are copies of news items from the Rochester, New York press concerning the 1964 ATOE convention. There was also radio and TV coverage.

Copies of the publicity regarding the Loew's State Theatre Wurlitzer restoration and public concert last March are enclosed as examples of the type of enthusiastic publicity we could stand more of. The news items told the public the important details concerning the renewed interest in theatre pipe organ music, promised them a treat if they attended and left it up to them. And the public responded - 1000 strong on a Sunday morning!!

I believe that the Syracuse story could be used as a case history not only as an example of arousing interest in other cities for ATOE chapter activities but to persuade theatre managers that organ interludes and organ concerts would pay off if *they were properly promoted and advertised to the public.*

I don't know exactly why, but the press - when it does grant theatre organ enthusiasts publicity - insists on picturing us as people living in a world of nostalgia, wishing to turn back the clock. What we really want is to keep real theatre pipe organ music alive for the present generation as well as those of us who remember when theatre organs were in general use. We also want to promote the theatre pipe organ as a concert instrument - something that was never done to any extent even in the 1920's. I feel sure that in many localities throughout the nation theatre pipe organ concerts and organ interludes between pictures could be a paying proposition. *If there is even half the promotional effort put behind such events as there is in back of movies and other modern entertainment.* Sincerely yours,

Frederick H. Dise



3/10 Kimball gets worked over while 2m Wurlitzer slave is looked over at the George Shaskan Studio in Stamford.

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