

VOX POP, continued

Senate theatre by a grinning Al Mason. The ATOE directors and officers took note and decided to "unhorse" the plaintiff by doing away with the separation between the two mags and "interweaving" material into a single magazine. But wait until the beeper realizes he's been demoted from Editor to Co-editor in the process.

In Chicago, organist Mark Noller got in some licks for theatre organ by playing intermission music on the 9 (so far) working ranks of the Parthenon theatre organ during the personal appearance of entertainers Sonny and Cher, on hand to plug their movie. In addition, Mark has been playing Saturday evening intermissions at the 3-12 Moller in the State theatre in Chicago, writes Dick Sklenar.

Organist Billy Nalle is ecstatic over the treatment he received at the hands of the Rochester Theatre Organ Society during his recent concert at the Auditorium theatre 4-21 Wurlitzer. He arrived to find press and electronic media lined up for interviews and all other facets of publicity and preparation humming. He later exclaimed, "The RTOS people were great. . . they overlooked absolutely nothing! Audience reaction was like that radio station's call letters — WHAM! They were absolutely wonderful!"

Gaylord Carter, after his fine July "Flickerfingers" show at the San Francisco Avenue theatre, told us that he had lined up a "gig" at the Imperial theatre in Toronto on August 20, the home of a rare 28-rank Warren theatre organ. However, the big beast, which has been undergoing rehabilitation for a long time, won't be ready. So Gaylord will do his flickerfingering on a Conn Theatre model plug-in.

The crew installing the former Keith's 3-11 Wurlitzer in its new permanent home at the New York State Fair Grounds, Syracuse, New York, is in need of replacements for some missing pipes. Their 8' Solo Scale Tibia Clausa (still one of the most beautiful sets this scribe has yet heard) is missing pipes 17, 41, 43, 45, 46, 56, 58, and 59. The Orchestral Oboe needs pipes 13, 21 and 58. The Empire State Theatre and Musical Instrument Museum is a non-profit project, often beset by too miniscule finances but rich in the industry of its hard-working members. They hope to expose the instrument to the hordes of people who attend the New York State Fair in late August but they need the missing pipes. Anyone having broken sets of the desired ranks who would be willing to donate them, please contact Charles E. Schubert, 111 Stillwell Circle, East Syracuse, New York, 13057.

Married: Organ builder Lee Haggart and organist Laurel Ruby, just 10 days after their initial June meeting, in Bur-



Laurel Ruby



Lee Haggart

bank, Calif. Laurel, who once installed a style B Wurlli (4 ranks) in her former Oregon home has the distinction of being the **Bombarde's** only "cover girl" (see photo), and Lee, one of a handful of top reed voicers left from the "golden era", hit it off immediately on being introduced by the **Bombarde's** editor—who is currently wearing a bow and arrow pin in his lapel.

A few years ago a wide screen was installed in Winnipeg's Garrick theatre. During the process, a Wurlitzer organ was covered over and never used again. Now that the Odeon-Martin chain has announced plans to make a "double cinema" of the house, and a number of interested readers are wondering what will become of the organ, if its still in the theatre. We'll leave this a "cliff hanger"—hoping someone in the know will come up with the answer.

The Minneapolis Civic Auditorium Kimball behemoth is still being rebuilt although much of the work has been completed. What works is being played by Bob Paige during intermissions at a summer series of symphony orchestra pop concerts which has the audience seated at tables where listeners can guzzle beer or soda pop and partake of other gastronomic goodies while they absorb culture. Paige plays the instrument from the 4-manual theatre console (there is also a huge concert console) which reportedly controls 19 unified ranks. Bob is often assisted by Jeannie Miles. She leads the singalongs.

Once every ten years the classical organists of the world meet for a conclave known as the "International Congress or Organists," with Toronto and Montreal chosen as the 1967 sites. The great concert organists of the world will convene (and presumably take in Expo '67 on the side) but the August confab will be officially opened by a concert played by The USA's Dick Ellsasser with members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

In Syracuse, New York, the venerable old Keith's theatre, in the process of being destroyed in the name of "urban renewal," seemed to turn a final blast of fury against those who had built it, given it years of glory, then degraded it with a death sentence—humans. Its once sturdy walls weakened by wreckers, the old building waited until traffic was thick at noon time, then hurled tons of its back wall out into the adjacent street to

crush four moving vehicles. One man was killed and four were injured. There were investigations started to determine whether demolition codes had been violated but no one suggested a likely explanation: the old theatre was just plain furious. Its 3-11 Wurlitzer organ had been removed and was being reinstalled in a permanent home on the nearby New York State Fair Grounds by the Empire State Theatre and Musical Instrument Museum.

Closing Chord

Jim Connor, mainstay of the El Paso Plaza theatre Wurlitzer restoration project, died at his home in El Paso on May 27. Born in Gainesville, Florida in 1933, Connor moved to El Paso at an early age where he later attended the University of El Paso. His first job was as a photographer for the local *Herald-Post*. He remained with photography throughout his life, finally reaching the rank of motion picture director. In the late '50s he became interested in a project to restore the neglected 3-15 organ in the Plaza theatre. The fact that the once silent organ is played for intermissions throughout each weekend is something of a monument to the Connor pursuit of



Jim Connor.

perfection as well as persistence. It is played by Jim's friend, veteran theatre organist John R. Thomas, who has this to say:

"Jim was a difficult person to know, but certainly the ideal man to ramrod the restoration of the Plaza's style 260. He was a demanding leader and a meticulous workman. His dedication to the organ was almost unbelievable; I know that he spent many hundreds of dollars from his own pockets for parts rather than wrestle with the "brass." Yet his relations with the "brass," from the City Manager to the Interstate circuit and Plaza management, was on the highest personal and ethical level. He was regarded as a friend by all of them.

"His death was due to a long illness which I first became aware of in 1961.

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CLOSING CHORD, cont.

The illness blinded him several years ago and finally took him from his friends and family after a siege of Uremic poisoning brought on by Diabetes. He loved organ music and he's 'over there' now with the great ones who went before—Murtagh, Siegel, Crawford, Cole, Farney, Slosser, and the whole bunch. They were a great crew and Jim will fit in."

Jim is survived by his mother, his wife, Sheila, and their children, Mary Ann (9), Karen (7) and Michael (5). Jim Connor is also mourned by his seeing-eye dog, Toby, who will remain with the family by arrangement with Guide Dogs, Inc. Toby piloted his master about El Paso, even entered the Plaza chambers while Jim did his maintenance chores on the organ.

Services for Jim Connor, 34, were held at St. Josephs Catholic church in El Paso on May 30th. He leaves many, many friends—and a well-restored, playing organ.



Be sure you mail all Chapter News to:
A.T.O.E.-P.O. Box 7404, Bitter Lake Station,
Seattle, Wn. 98133

OREGON CHAPTER

An informal gathering of the Oregon Chapter of A.T.O.E. took place on July 9th at Oregon State University in Gill Coliseum. The organ there is a Wurlitzer 2 /8 style F special moved to Gill Coliseum from the Whiteside Theatre, Corvallis, Oregon, in 1961. A short jam session followed Andy Crow's recital. The group then moved to the home of Mr. & Mrs. Dick Chase for a picnic lunch and more jamming on the Chase 3 /14 mostly Wurlitzer organ. About 50 persons attended the meeting.

OHIO VALLEY CHAPTER

The last two meetings of the Ohio Valley Chapter of A.T.O.E. have been at two very fine theatre organ home installations. The December meeting was held at the beautiful home of Joan and Jack Strader in Cincinnati. The evening of De-

cember 6 was one filled with entertaining theatre organ music on Jack Straders 3m /19r Wurlitzer. The artist was Frank Stitt who is an Organ Division Representative for the Baldwin Organ & Piano Co. Frank presented a very interesting and entertaining program that consisted of a variety of selected show tunes, modern melodies, and Christmas tunes. Almost 100 persons attended this meeting.

Herb Wottle gave a brief report on the Eastern Regional Convention at Richmond, Va. Herb was the Ohio Valley Chapter representative as a featured artist at this convention. Herb said this was a very successful convention and especially thrilling Herb added for he and the Mrs. to have had the opportunity to chat with such artists as Bob Van Camp, Eddie Weaver, Leonard MacClain, Lowell Ayars, Dick Smith, Dick Schrum, Jimmy Boyce and many others.

The May meeting was held in Dayton, Ohio at the magnificent home of Ruth and Ken Hunt in their organ auditorium which houses a 4m /17r Wurlitzer. The artist for this meeting was Bill Smith who presented an outstanding performance to the group of about 75 persons. Bill made use of practically every stop on the organ, and held the close attention of everyone throughout the entire program.

The Ohio Valley Chapter is presently formulating plans for another public organ concert to be held sometime in the fall of '67. I might add that Gaylord Carter has certainly made an impression on the people of Greater Cincinnati. Gaylord's two performances at the Albee Theatre in Cincinnati last year were both outstanding successes. The name Gaylord Carter will remain in the hearts of Cincinnatians and Northern Kentuckians for many many years.

PIEDMONT CHAPTER



Don Hall announces the next number while Sid Seymour tries to drop a hint.

Sunday, April 16, 1967, the Piedmont Chapter met at the Pearson Music Company, Durham, North Carolina. Don Hall and Sid Seymour, at the Wurlitzer 4520 theater organ and Wurlitzer piano respectively, gave a very good duo performance of popular selections. As visitors we had members of the Wurlitzer Club of Durham. The program was well played and warmly received.

After the formal meeting and program, the Piedmonters went to a nearby restaurant. Chairman Marion Martin showed drawings and gave details of the thirty-plus rank Moller organ he had just purchased from Loew's 83rd Street Theater in Manhattan. This writer, with his fifteen or so years of pipe organ maintenance, removal, and reconditioning experience, secretly was glad it was Marion's organ and not his—though the writer could not help but wonder just about how that Moller would sound against his own little nine rank Kimball!

June 18, again a Sunday, Piedmonters took to the hills of southern Virginia to spend an afternoon with Frank Netherland's three manual, nine rank Kimball. Since Frank is writing this notice, we won't engage in any critical review of the selections he attempted to play. Suffice it to say that it sounded much like any other outworn talking machine platters from the palmy days. Most of the members did better during their stints at the console. An interesting and unexpected feature of this meeting was the playing of several ancient, deteriorated acetate disks of this very Kimball, made thirty-odd years ago when it was in its original theater installation in eastern North Carolina. Ben Hall might tell us when Deanna Durbin made "It's A Date", and John Carradine appeared in "Grapes of Wrath". These two pix were being plugged on the acetates, which were obviously made as radio radio spots. These platters had been salted away these many years by a former projectionist at that theater, and they were brought to us by member Sid Seymour. The organ is actually vintage 1922, and since these records were made it has been moved three times, first in 1938 to radio station WPTF in Raleigh, N.C., then twice since 1958 by its present owner. For the complete story, see *Theatre Organ*, vol. VIII, No. 1, Spring 1966. By the way, all nine sets of whistles are now on the steam.

At the recent meeting with the Kimball, the Piedmonters discussed the state of affairs of the only two theater installations remaining in our territory. One, the Carolina in Greensboro, N.C. has just undergone a complete theater renovation from booth to proscenium, complete with new projection equipment and rocking chair seats. To the delight of popcorn palace buffs, the original "Roman Palatial" decor, among the most beautiful in the South, was retained. The six rank Morton remains about the same—complete as installed, the biggest six rank sound around, but only in so—so shape. We laid plans to visit our other theater in the Fall. This house is a real "Eye-talian" Palazzo, the American in Roanoke, Va. Its two thousand seats are nestled comfortably among the splendors

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