

**Minutes of the ATOS Virtual Mid Year Meeting**  
**Saturday, February 6, 2016**  
**11 a.m. E.S.T.**

**1. Chairman of the Board Michael Fellenzer called the meeting to order at 11:06 a.m.**

**2. Secretary Bob Evans called the roll:**

**Officers Present:** Michael Fellenzer-Chairman of the Board, Richard Neidich-Vice Chairman of the Board, Bob Evans-Secretary, Lee Lanier-Treasurer. **Board Members Present:** Denise Andersen, David Barnett, Juan Cardona, Jr., Joshua Dill, Bob Dilworth, David Kelzenberg, John Ledwon, Don Phipps, Donnie Rankin, Carlton Smith. **Staff Present:** Ken Double-President/CE, Mike Bryant, Editor, *Theatre Organ* and Parliamentarian, Don Feely-Web Site Content Editor, Donna Parker-Membership Secretary, Greg Bellamy-IT Manager, Mark Renwick-Interim Operations Manager.

**3. The Minutes of the October 28, 2015 Virtual Board Meeting were accepted on a motion by Richard Neidich and Denise Andersen to approve.**

**Standing Business:**

**4. Officer Reports:**

*Note: All reports will be listed at the end of the minutes as "Attachments for File". They will be posted to the ATOS web site for examination.*

- Chairman of the Board (Michael Fellenzer): none beyond written report.
- Vice Chairman of the Board (Richard Neidich): none beyond the written report.
- Secretary (Bob Evans): none beyond the written report.
- Treasurer (Lee Lanier)
  - Lee noted that the report is through December, 2015.
  - Expenses are our main concern as revenue comes in inconsistently.
  - The publication is covered by our membership dues.
  - Mark Renwick is working on reclassification of budget items. The details are in the system but we must work out reclassifying them into proper categories.
  - Michael Fellenzer thanked Lee and Mark for their hard work.
  - Michael noted that the loss numbers are significant.

**5. Committee, Staff, and Task Force Reports:**

- President/CE (Ken Double)
  - Ken emphasized the importance of the upcoming fundraising drive. He is working with a well-chosen committee to create a meaningful and effective fundraising brochure for ATOS.
  - Ken has traveled extensively and met with many chapters since our annual meeting.
  - He reminded the board the the chapter leader's webinars will begin again shortly. They were well received.

- Membership Secretary (Donna Parker): none beyond written report.
- Interim Operations Manager (Mark Renwick):
  - ATOS has a new process for reimbursement. Mark encourages folks to utilize the proper process for reimbursement of expenses.
  - Mark is willing to work with anyone who has problems with the process.
  - Richard Neidich asked about the progress in hiring a new operations manager. Mark replied that forty (40) inquiries were received (Two applications were received from within ATOS). Some had experience in small non-profit organizations.
- IT Manager (Greg Bellamy) none beyond the written report.
- ATOS Communications Committee (Richard Neidich):
  - Communication is the responsibility of everyone
  - We all need feedback from the board and task force members.
- Endowment Fund (John Ledwon):
  - The committee had received four requests for grants thus far. This is less than is normal. The committee is asking for more information this year. The application process is in transition.
- Awards and Recognition (David Kelzenberg):
  - The committee has received four nominations. February 15<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for nominations.
- Technical DVD Project (Richard Neidich):
  - The production of the first DVD is taking longer than anticipated. We shot videos before we had a design. We are trying to retrofit the material to fit a script.
  - The first DVD will be on the proper restoration of regulators.
  - A sample will be available for the annual meeting.
  - Before undertaking a second project we must identify a producer, director, etc.

**New Business:**

**5. Action Items:**

**Motion: (David Kelzenberg, Don Phipps): (Full background information will be found at the end of the minutes).**

**I move that the American Theatre Organ Society adopt the following resolution:**

***Resolved, That the Society shall accept no further contributions to the George Wright Memorial Fellowship Fund;***

***Resolved, That the Young Theatre Organist Competition shall be renamed “The George Wright Memorial Young Theatre Organist Competition,” commencing with the 2016 competition;***

***Resolved, That the Society shall draw upon all assets in the George Wright Memorial Fellowship Fund to pay for Competition prizes and participant expenses according to the rules of the Competition. (Carried: 11-Yes, 2-No)***

- This motion was discussed at length. One board member felt that allocating funds just for those who entered the competition was unfair. A person without performance skills who wished to attend the convention should be able to benefit from this fund.
- Another board member expressed the desire for more events for young convention attendees.
- One board member suggested that sending someone to the convention might be part of the Awards and Recognition Program.

**The ATOS Board set the following meeting dates:**

- The next ATOS Virtual Board of Director's Meeting will be held on March 14, 2016.
- Annual Convention Meetings:
  - Friday, July 1, 2016-Travel Day
  - Saturday, July 2, 2016-ATOS Annual Board of Director's Meeting
  - Monday, July 4, 2016-Annual Membership Meeting 1:15 p.m.
  - Thursday, July 7, 2016-Member's Forum (morning)

**6. Good of the Order: (Any pertinent items not addressed in the agenda).**

- Mike Bryant suggested the expansion of the Nominating Committee's Report

7. The meeting adjourned at 12:56 on a motion by Denise Anderson and Lee Lanier.

/s/Bob Evans, Secretary

Note: This meeting was conducted using *Robert's Rules of Order-Newly Revised*. Mike Bryant, Parliamentarian.

**PROPOSAL FOR RESTRUCTURING OF THE AMERICAN THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY'S *GEORGE WRIGHT MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP* AND SUPPORTING FUND, WITH RAMIFICATIONS FOR OPERATION OF THE *YOUNG THEATRE ORGANIST COMPETITION* PROGRAM**

**BACKGROUND**

The American Theatre Organ Society has long had a primary objective of fostering appreciation of the theatre organ as a unique musical voice, a mechanically complex musical instrument, and a vital and exciting means of musical expression. To this end, the Society has recognized since its earliest days the critical importance of finding young people with an interest in the aesthetic of the theatre organ, either as a complex music-making machine, or as a medium of musical expression.

It is a sad reality that interest in the theatre organ has dwindled over time. There has been the occasional renaissance of sorts: the formation of ATOE and the advent of high-fidelity recordings in the 1950s and the short-lived craze of removing instruments from theatres and relocating them in "pizza parlors" and restaurants in the 1970s are two examples of brief revitalizations of interest in these instruments, but in truth the audience has continued to dwindle as enthusiasts have greyed and passed on, and modern taste in "popular music" has moved farther and farther away from the aesthetic of the theatre organ and its music.

The picture is not entirely a dismal one, however. Each year a new group of teen-aged (and younger) individuals somehow manage to encounter the magic sound of the theatre organ, either through recordings or (if really fortunate) through experiencing a live theatre organ "in the flesh." However this fortuitous confluence comes about, the result is a young person who is enthusiastic about the theatre organ, either being fascinated by its spectacular sound, or intrigued by its complex mechanical operation.

Either way, the American Theatre Organ Society is presented with a golden opportunity to bring on board a young and enthusiastic potential member and advocate for the cause.

As mentioned above, ATOS has long recognized the need to reach out to such young enthusiasts, to nourish and encourage their interest in the organ. Without a steady supply of this young blood, the organization is doomed to die off as its members do so. With foresight, ATOS has developed over the years a number of programs designed to encourage the participation of young people, including the annual Young Theatre Organist Competition, The Young Theatre Organist Scholarship, The Summer Youth Adventure Program, the Student of the Year Award, the Youth Representative to the Board of Directors, and the George Wright Memorial Fellowship.

### **THE GEORGE WRIGHT MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP**

Early in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, as one of several initiatives to encourage the participation of young people, a proposal was made to create a fund which could be used to help cover the expenses of attending a regional or national convention, for a student who had never attended a previous convention, and who might not otherwise be able to attend due to limited financial resources. Many ATOS members contributed seed money to this fund, and applications were solicited from chapters, teachers, parents, and friends for young people who might enjoy and benefit from attending an ATOS convention. This was of course not altogether an altruistic effort on the part of ATOS, which needed (and continues to need) an influx of younger members to carry the goals and ideals of the organization on into the future. With some fanfare, this program—which came to be known as the George Wright Memorial Fellowship program in honor of the legendary 20<sup>th</sup>-century organist whose influences are felt to the present day, was born. While instituted with the best of intentions, the success of the George Wright Memorial Fellowship program has been spotty at best. Since 2000, some 13 awards have been presented, with no awards presented in several years. In many years, no applications were submitted, so obviously no awards could be given. And, in reviewing the recipients of these scholarships over the years, one is struck by the few names that stand out as people who have remained active in ATOS and continue to attend conventions. On the positive side I do recognize a few names that represent success stories, such as Josh Dill, who currently serves as our Youth Representative to the Board of Directors. While I don't have easy access to current membership rosters or lists of who has registered for conventions in recent years, most of the names are unfamiliar to me and I wonder about their ongoing involvement and commitment. Perhaps this could be investigated further.

### **THE QUESTION**

Some of these issues and problems have apparently been discussed at previous board meetings over the last several years, without resolution. I (and others) have questioned the financial outlay presented to recipients of this award compared with the benefit received over the short and long term by ATOS. Each award represents a significant cost to the organization, particularly where fellowship recipients might come from the UK, Europe, or Australia. How many of these winners do we ever see again? How many continue to be members over many years? It would be worthwhile to evaluate the cost/benefit ratio over many years for this expenditure.

### **THE PROPOSAL**

It has been suggested that both ATOS and young enthusiasts would be better served if funds dedicated to the GW Fellowship fund could be used to help defray costs associated with operating the Young Theatre Organist Competition. Because this program also provides funding to bring young people to conventions, such use of funds would continue to support the ideals of the Fellowship fund as first established, i.e. bringing young people to our conventions who might otherwise be unable to attend due to cost, distance, etc. An added benefit is that we would be funding the participation of youngsters who are actually talented performers, and thus much more likely to remain invested in the hobby/career in the future. In a very real sense, this use of funds more closely aligns with the vision of the original planners and donors, i.e. to introduce youngsters to ATOS and foster a lifelong involvement.

With all of the concerns that have been raised about the effectiveness of the GWMF program over several recent years, the Board of Directors has apparently discussed these issues and problems several times in 2016 ATOS Virtual Mid Year Meeting Minutes; [Evans] File: 2015 Board Meetings

the past (prior to my involvement with the board), however no solutions were presented, much less implemented. Several have expressed the opinion that this award has outlived its usefulness, has been only marginally effective, and has not proven to be cost effective. However, some have expressed concerns that if this Fellowship is abolished, we are also abolishing an award honoring one of our greatest exponents of the TO world, George Wright. I believe I have a solution that will make all parties happy.

I suggest therefore that the currently existing George Wright Memorial Fellowship program be dissolved, that no further applications be accepted for this program, and that all monies set aside specifically for this program be used to support the Young Theatre Organist Competition. In this way, the original intent of these donations (to assist a young enthusiast to attend a first ATOS convention) will continue to be honored.

I also suggest that the official name of the Young Theatre Organist Competition be changed to 'THE GEORGE WRIGHT MEMORIAL YOUNG THEATRE ORGANIST COMPETITION' effective with the 2016 competition. This allows us to continue to recognize the great achievements of George Wright in essentially the same manner as before, while actually attaching his name to an even more important event encouraging the professional participation and growth of talented young musicians."

#### **THE MOTION**

I move that the American Theatre Organ Society adopt the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That the Society shall accept no further contributions to the George Wright Memorial Fellowship Fund;

*Resolved*, That the Society shall no longer accept applications for this Fellowship;

*Resolved*, That the Young Theatre Organist Competition shall be renamed "The George Wright Memorial Young Theatre Organist Competition," commencing with the 2016 competition;

*Resolved*, That the Society shall draw upon all assets in the George Wright Memorial Fellowship Fund to pay for Competition prizes and participant expenses according to the rules of the Competition.

Respectfully Submitted,  
David C. Kelzenberg  
January 20, 2016  
Iowa City, IA USA

#### **Attachments For File:**

1. Mid Year Meeting Agenda
2. Chairman's Report
3. Vice Chairman's Report
4. Secretary's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. ATOS Financial Statements August-December, 2015
7. President/CE Fundraising
8. President/CE Expenses
9. President/CE Report for January
10. President/CE Mid Year Report
11. President/CE Expenses for January
12. President/CE Visa Issues
13. President/CE Fundraising Campaign
14. President/CE Fundraising Campaign Addendum
15. Membership Secretary's Report
16. IT Manager's Report
17. Convention Planning Coordinator's Report

18. Interim Operations Manager's Report
19. Endowment Fund Report
20. Web Site Revitalization Report
21. ATOS Communication's Committee and Marketing Report
22. Proposal for Restructure of the George Wright Memorial Fund
23. ATOS Communications Committee Mid Year Status
24. Nominating Committee Report
25. ATOS Radio Report
26. Awards and Recognition Committee Report
27. Bylaws and Policies Committee Report
28. Chapter Relations Representative's Report
29. Retreat Forward Committee Report
30. Retreat Forward Committee Recommendations
31. Summer Youth Adventure Report
32. Technical Committee Report
33. Technical DVD Project Report
34. Young Organist Competition Report
35. Young Organist Scholarship Committee Report
36. Step Up Your Playing Event Report