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Sightlines

The monthly newsletter for USITT members

April 2013

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A New Look to Opening Night

A multi-media show made the 2013 Opening Night more about showing than about telling. [more »](#)



2013 Conference & Stage Expo

A collage of some of the hundreds of special sessions and moments from Milwaukee in March. [more »](#)



Apply For Rigging Safety Initiative

The deadline for the next round of support from the Rigging Safety Initiative for secondary schools is April 15. [more »](#)



Train in Las Vegas in May

Three days of intensive training in one of four selected areas will highlight the third Elite Training experience. Apply now. [more »](#)



Arbor Day USITT-Style

Supporting the USITT Rigging Safety Initiative means more instruction and inspections for schools across the country. [more »](#)



A Midwest Tradition Continues

Young technical theatre participants from throughout the Midwest were the stars in competitions modeled on the Olympics. [more »](#)



Planning a Hong Kong Adventure

Lauren Gaston, winner of the 2013 Student Travel Grant, has been studying in Kansas City, but will move her base of operation to Asia with help from USITT. [more »](#)



USITT's Executive Director: Why Can't we Change the World

Amazing spaces inspire thoughts about working and innovations within all of our connected worlds. [more »](#)



Tech Expo 2013

Adapting concepts to the practical world and then describing and demonstrating them make this biennial special exhibit and catalog special. [more »](#)

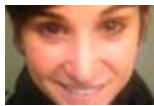


Wrapping Up Stage Expo and Looking Ahead

Stage Expo 2013, with its Innovation Stage and new and returning exhibitors gave visitors great ideas to contemplate. Now we're already thinking about Fort Worth in 2014. [more »](#)

The Last Word — Shadowing the USITT Board

Why one student thinks the new board mentorship program offers a



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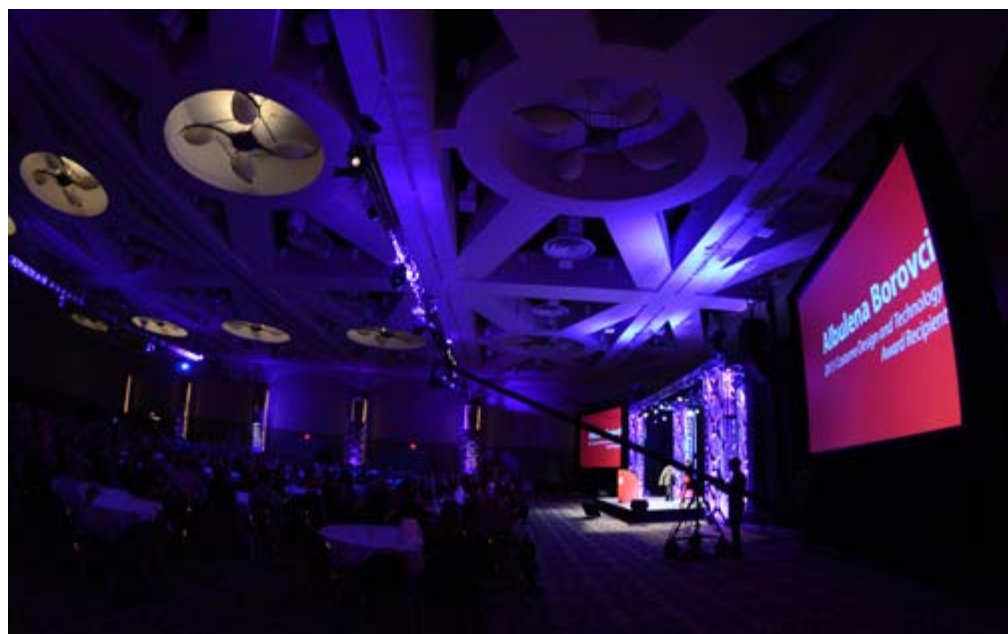
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News & Notices

Excitement, Achievement, Awards: CMU Remakes Opening Night

Janet Gramza *Communications Associate*



Opening Night looked and felt different in 2013 thanks to help from creative students and faculty at Carnegie Mellon University.

Photo/Tom Thatcher, Ross Zentner

Opening Night of the Milwaukee 2013 Annual Conference & Stage Expo was more theatrical than ever – thanks to **Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama** staff and students who created a multimedia show.

USITT Fellows wanted to spice up the Conference kickoff at Milwaukee's Delta Center by making the Opening Night awards more about showing than telling and adding excitement to the usual speech, awards, and reception. Cindy Limauro, Fellow and professor of lighting design at CMU, approached colleagues with the challenge, and they accepted.

"We said, 'Hey, we can make this work in between the 16 other shows we are doing this semester,'" joked CMU Assistant Professor of Stage Management Tina Shackleford, who oversaw the project.

Ms. Shackleford, who chaired the Stage Management Mentoring project at the

Conference, assigned 18 students to design an Opening Night multimedia production reflecting "The Bridge to Innovation," the subject of ETC VP [Steve Terry's address](#). The production had to launch the conference and spotlight the work of 11 award winners – the nine winners of USITT's 2013 [Young Designers & Technicians Awards](#), [Rising Star Award winner Aaron Porter](#), and the winner of the Joel E. Rubin Founder's Award, [rigging safety guru Tom Young](#).

The presentation showed "art intersecting with technology," displayed the YD&T winners' designs as they accepted their awards, and profiled CMU alum Mr. Young, who visited his old campus for an on-stage interview.

In the past, the Founder's Award winner was a secret until Opening Night, but USITT's Board of Directors changed that this year to allow all parties – especially the recipient – to prepare for the honor. Ms. Shackleford said Mr. Young had recently moved back to Pittsburgh, making it easy to include him in the production.

"It was so exciting for the students to have him come and sit on our stage," she said. "They really enjoyed hearing him speak about how the campus has changed and how technology has changed."

She said not all the students who worked on the project could be at the Conference; several were in rehearsals for on-campus productions that week.

"It's an interesting challenge to work on an event that you are not going to be able to see," she explained. "But it's definitely something they will encounter in the world – planning an event when you can't just walk into the space and say, 'Yes, that light here and this table there.'"

Another challenging task was to transform the Delta Center ballroom from a presentation to a party following the awards. The students used hanging fabric scenic pieces around the stage and dramatic lighting to "make the room look different" for the awards, then changed it up to create a more festive mood for the after-party.

Tina said the experience was good for all involved, and CMU is prepared to do it again if asked.

"Planning Opening Night as a separate event from the rest of the Conference does make it special," she said. "I think it was a great idea on all accounts, and I really applaud the [Fellows](#) for coming up with it and acting on it!"

Credits for the CMU/USITT Opening Night Production include:

- **Lighting** -- Justin Keenan Miller and Andrew Schmedake
- **Media** -- Dan Efros and Jordan Harrison
- **Management** -- Christina Benvegnu, Jody A. Cohen, AJ Cook, Shannon Henley, Tyler Jacobson, Sophia Mysel, Tim Sutter, and Zoe Westbrook
- **Scenery** -- Christine Lee, Holly O'Hara, and Joey Sarno
- **Sound** -- Chris Rummel and Becca Stoll

- **Production Stage Manager** -- Jess Bertollo
- **Faculty Advisors** -- Cindy Limauro and Tina Shackleford

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2013 Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Pictures



Desmond Heeley in *Watch them Draw*

Remembering Milwaukee

It has been 23 years since USITT staged its largest event in Milwaukee, but the great people, outstanding sessions, and warm welcome from the city made it truly USITT's "gathering place by the waters."

We thank Richard Finkelstein, Tom Thatcher, Ross Zentner, Mark Putman, Barbara Lucas, and Daryl Pauley for providing images for this issue of Sightlines, our website, and social media. [More photos can be found on the USITT Facebook page.](#)

Award Winners in Conversation



Desmond Heeley



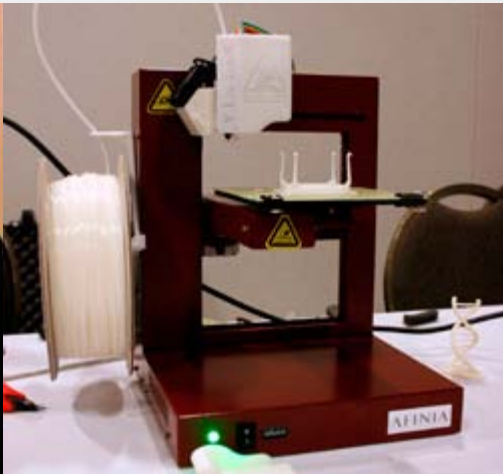
Tom Young



First Stage



3D Printing



International Student Travel



3D Printing



Otts Munderloh



Richard Pilbrow



Hands-On Sessions

Tech Olympics Winners



Grave Matters

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News & Notices

Rigging Program Sets the Stage for Student Safety

Janet Gramza *Communications Associate*



When Scott French got the job as auditorium technician for the Thompson School District in Loveland, Colorado, in 2011, one of his goals was safety inspections for its four high school stages.

He found that two hadn't had their rigging professionally inspected in 10 years. Fortunately, the district knew of USITT's new program offering free inspections for student stages. Mr. French applied for and got the inspections for the two schools – Loveland High School and Thompson Valley High School – plus training for staff and student technicians.

The deadline for the next round of support from the Rigging Safety Initiative for secondary schools is April 15, and [complete information and application forms can be found here](#).

"Luckily for us, the inspections went really well, and we only had a few minor issues," Mr. French said. "We had anticipated it would cost us \$2,500 to \$3,000 per school to have them inspected, so everyone was ecstatic."

Helping school stages stay safe is the mission of USITT's [Rigging Safety Initiative](#), a program launched by USITT and founding sponsor [JR Clancy](#) in 2011. Since then, USITT has approved rigging inspections and training at 40 high school stages across the nation and added two sponsors, [ETC](#) and

Shepard Exhibition Services. High schools concerned about their stage rigging – the ropes, pulleys, and other equipment used to hang and move curtains, lights, and backdrops – can apply to USITT for a professional inspection and a four-hour safety course for up to eight people.

Oasis Stage Werks in Salt Lake City, Utah, did the inspections for Mr. French's two schools. Oasis President Gary Justesen said his firm provides inspections and training for USITT's negotiated rate of \$1,000 per school. The Thompson School District came up with the money to fly an inspector there from Utah, rent him a car, and put him up in a hotel. Mr. Justesen said it took five hours to inspect Loveland's small stage (six fly lines), and over 10 to inspect Thompson Valley's 1,100-seat facility (21 fly lines), which Mr. French called "our jewel auditorium."

Mr. Justesen said he recommends the Rigging Safety program "all over the place," but some schools may be afraid to learn their rigging doesn't meet safety codes.

"People really shouldn't stick their heads in the sand over something like this – that's how accidents happen," he said. "With rigging, if everything's in good shape and it's working properly, it's out of sight, out of mind. But if you've got problems, it can kill people."

Mr. French said safety is a top priority for him personally and for his school district. He said he plans to apply for inspections for his other two high school stages.

"Since I was along for the entire inspection, I found all three days to be wonderful training for me as well," he said. "I hope this program continues and that other people take advantage of it because we certainly got a lot out of it."

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News & Notices

Apply for an Elite Experience!

Janet Gramza *Communications Associate*



Participants concentrated during USITT's first Elite Training Weekend in 2011. This unique, hands-on experience will be offered for 32 selected members in May.

Photo/David Grindle

Two years ago, Andrew "Drew" Carter was one of 32 students in the first USITT Elite Training program at the Cirque du Soleil Training Center in Las Vegas. He spent three intense days learning automation on Cirque's equipment, shadowing Cirque staff, and touring behind the scenes at Cirque shows, including *KÀ* and *Mystère*.

USITT is offering that chance to 32 more student and early career members for its third Elite Training class May 9 through 11. The Institute will accept four groups of eight people to train in sound, multi-media, rigging, and automation at Cirque. **Applications are due April 1.**

Participants must pay for their own travel, housing, and some meals, but the three days of training -- and a couple of free lunches -- are provided by top-notch sponsors: Cirque, Meyer Sound, Stage Technologies, coolux,

Columbus McKinnon, and Silver State Wire Rope.

"Elite Training connects student and early career members with the types of equipment they should be prepared to work with as they enter the field; equipment many schools can't afford," says USITT Executive Director David Grindle.

Drew was an undergraduate lighting major at Central Washington University when he took Elite Training in automation. In the [blog](#) he wrote about the weekend, he excitedly described learning eChameleon software and the Nomad automation control desk from Stage Technologies Training Manager Alex Hitchcock, shadowing the front of house control booth operator for KÀ, and touring amazing sets -- including "one of the biggest set pieces I have ever laid eyes on," an 80-foot-wide, 30-foot-tall amusement park that "in all its huge glory is actually flown for storage!"

He earned his BA last year and is now technical manager for the Performing Arts Center at Texas A&M University. He said he still values the connections he made and lessons he learned at Elite Training.

"It helped me broaden my training background from just lighting to much more," he said, "The experience was like no other."

In his blog two years ago he noted "For the past three days, Cirque du Soleil and USITT have taken myself and 31 others on a chance of a lifetime.

"Students, I urge all of you to apply for next year's Elite Weekend," he wrote. "Fill out the application and *apply, apply, apply!*"



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Arbor Day USITT-style

Help USITT celebrate our 2013 Arbor Day Campaign for the Rigging Safety Initiative.

More than 35 secondary schools have been awarded support to cover Inspections of their school rigging systems AND a four-hour training on safety and proper use of that system.

In a world of tightening school budgets, we all know that tough choices mean some things get financing and some don't. Rigging systems are out of sight to most and thus out of mind. But we all know that these systems involve wear and tear and failure can be catastrophic.

These inspections, done in states across the nation, aren't just to the benefit of arts students. In many schools, such as the Baldwinsville Central Schools in Upstate New York, the auditorium is used by every school in the district. By providing inspection and training for one theatre, the Rigging Safety Initiative improved the safety for over 5,000 students.

Through our participating partners providing services at or below cost in some cases, we are limited only by the amount of money in the fund. With your support, we will be able to say "YES!" to every school that applies.

Take a moment and make a difference in the safety of school children everywhere with your Arbor Day Gift.

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News & Notices

Midwest Tech Olympics Continues to Attract Young Participants

Ken Fraza, Steve Jacobs, and Ellen White



Photos/Courtesy Steve Jacobs

It was 14 years ago that the Midwest Regional Section began sponsoring the Tech Olympics at the Wisconsin High School Theatre Festival. Building on the success of Wisconsin's T.O., and with the input and guidance of ETC's Ellen White, the Tech Olympics was started at the Illinois High School Theatre Festival in January of 2003, making this past January the eleventh Illinois festival, the eighth year at the Indiana Thespians State Conference, and the fifth year at the Michigan Educational Theatre Association/Michigan Thespian Festival. Tech Olympics at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) continues each year as well.

One of the most encouraging aspects of each of the Tech Olympics/Tech Challenges is that the individuals from membership, educators, and other technical theatre practitioners volunteer their time and expertise. There are numerous theatrical



suppliers, dealers, and manufacturers in the region who donate material, swag, and necessary equipment for the T.O. to run. A special "thank you" goes out to ETC for donating Source 4's to winning teams and to the Midwest Regional Section for purchasing Tech Olympics T-Shirts.

The **Wisconsin T.O.** was held at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point November 17 to 19 in an Arts Center Drawing studio, which was right in the middle of all of the festival's happenings. Thirty-two high school students made up the seven teams who competed in five "regular" events including hanging a light, sound system set up, knot tying, sewing a button, and prop shifting.

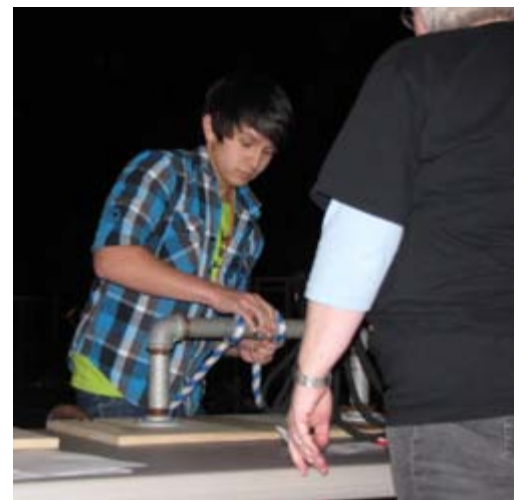
A new event this year, sponsored by The Acme Corp of Milwaukee, was *Watt's Up?* Two teams had perfect scores and judges had a hard time determining the winner. Acme provided an amp meter for first place and a multi-meter for second place.



Dominican High School's "Black Team" held onto its title for the third straight year, with Neenah High School taking a close second for the third straight year. With the help of volunteer students from UW-Stevens Point all of the events ran smoothly.

Tech Olympics took place during the Michigan Thespian Festival on the campus of Saginaw Valley State University November 30 through December 1. The events included hanging a light, sound system set up, knot tying, and prop shifting.

The **Region 3 KCACTF Tech Olympics** also took place at Saginaw Valley State University January 8 to 12. Thirty teams of two participated along with about 100 observers.



First place went to Corey Boughton and Zach Kentala of Flint University. Jess Hammersly and Michael Maurer of Michigan Tech, took second place. Adrian College's Jeffrey Clark and Emily

King came in third.

The best scores in each event went to

- **Knots** - Indiana State University: Natalie Capucci and Nolan Engels
- **Lighting** - Michigan Tech: Jess Hammersly and Michael Maurer
- **Set/Carpentry** - Northern Michigan: Charlie Jauguet and Jalina Olgren
- **Props** - Oakland University: Daniel Robinson and Adam Mitchell
- **Sound** - Concordia Chicago: Justin Glombicki and Rebecca Eifert

The **Illinois High School Theatre Festival** took place January 10 to 12 on the campus of the University of Illinois-Champaign. There were 90 competitors from 15 high schools. Events included light focus, wiring a pin connector, costume quick change, Nicopress, sound system set up, and knot tying. To keep events fresh and to surprise past participants, two different events were included this year -- legging a platform by bolting/unbolting legs and cable coil relay where four 25-foot DMX cables were laid out and had to be correctly coiled.



Top team honors went to Addison Trail High School. Second place went to Oak Park & River Forest High School.

In Indiana, the annual high school Tech Olympics was held January 26 at the Red Skelton Performing Arts Center on the campus of Vincennes University. This year, the event set another record with 76 students fielding 19 teams from 13 different high schools across the state.

The events this year were lighting a geometric shape, props quick change, knot tying, cord coiling, and fold a curtain as a team event. Many undergraduates from the staff at the Red Skelton PAC served as judges. Adults who were instrumental in making this come off flawlessly were Ellen White and David Del Colletti, both Midwest Regional Section members, plus Randy Riggs and J.R. Hermsdorfer from Indianapolis Stage Sales & Rentals. Ms. White, representing ETC, and Mr. Hermsdorfer, owner of Indy Stage, donated prizes for both team and individual awards.



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Electrons and Costumes DO Mix

USITT's 2013 Costume Symposium on the campus of Rochester Institute of Technology will give participants a chance to find out exactly how to incorporate lights, sensors, motors, and el-wire into costume and costume pieces.

Wearable Technology, hosted by Marla Schweppe and presented by Jeanne Christman, will provide illustrated, step-by-step instructions and assistance for the entire process.

[To learn more or to sign up, visit here.](#) Special student rates and scholarships are available.

Siriani Reaches Out to Help More USITT Members Save

In 2012, the USITT Freight Savings Plan saved USITT members \$12,767. The average savings for USITT members participating in the program was \$365. At the 2013 Annual Conference & Stage Expo, Siriani greeted old friends and reached out to show more members how to reduce their inbound and outbound shipping costs. USITT members can save up to 27 percent on select FedEx Express shipments (includes a 5 percent electronic shipping discount) and up to 15 percent on select FedEx Ground shipments. Join the free [USITT Freight Savings Plan](#) today and start saving! For more information, call Siriani at 1-800-554-0005.



SUNY-Purchase to Honor Abramson

The Broadway Technical Theatre History Project at SUNY-Purchase will honor

scenic artist Arnold Abramson with the second annual "Backstage Legends and Masters" award 7 p.m. Monday, April 22, in the college's Performing Arts Center, 735 Anderson Hill Road. It is free and open to the public.

Dan Hanessian, the professor who launched this program last year, is a member of USITT.

One of the past century's most influential scenic artists, Mr. Abramson painted more than 600 Broadway production sets, including the original *The King and I*; *My Fair Lady*; *42nd Street*; *Annie*; *Hello, Dolly*; *Sunday in the Park with George*; *Camelot*; *Sweeney Todd*; *The Sound of Music*; *Evita*; *Cats*; and *Bells are Ringing*. He began his career in 1950 and joined United Scenic Artists Union Local 829 in 1951. He worked for several years at Triangle Studios before joining Willie Nolan and Charlie Bender as Nolan Scenery Studios moved from lower Manhattan to Brooklyn in 1961. Mr. Abramson later became owner of the studio. After moving to Florida in 1991, he continued his career with Studio South and Coconut Studios before retiring in 2012.

Standard Public Review Synched with Plugfest

BSR E1.33 - 201x, *Entertainment Technology—(RDMnet)—Message Transport and Device Management of ANSI E1.20 (RDM) over IP Networks* is available for free download and review on PLASA's TSP public review webpage. The public review period is an unusually long one, ending May 15, so that it will be open during the RDM and sACN Developers Conference and Plugfest April 25 through 27. Product developers working through Plugfest may turn insights from that event into public review comments.

The Conference and Plugfest will be at Gatwick Manor, London Road at Lowfield Heath near Gatwick Airport in the United Kingdom. More information is available at www.plasa.org/rdm. Inquiries should be directed to PLASA's Technical Resources Manager, Ron Bonner, at ron.bonner@plasa.org.

BSR E1.33 - 201x describes a way to implement ANSI E1.20 Remote Device Management messaging over an IPv4 network. The primary use of the standard would be to complement ANSI E1.31 on an entertainment lighting control network. Downloading and commenting on this [standard](#) is free. More information about BSR E1.33 and the public review is available from PLASA's Technical Standards Manager, Karl Ruling, at karl.ruling@plasa.org.

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News & Notices

Travel Grant to Help Designer Study Opera in Hong Kong

Costume designer Lauren Gaston, a second-year MFA candidate at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, is the recipient of the 2013 USITT Student International Travel Grant. She will receive \$1,000 to help her travel to Hong Kong this fall to study Cantonese Opera design.

Lauren plans to spend a month at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts assisting with future productions, seeing performances, and "immersing myself in the culture," she wrote in her application.

The **USITT International Travel Grant** program helps students and professionals travel to other countries for research and study in theatre-related fields. It offers a \$1,000 student grant in odd-numbered years and a \$2,500 individual/professional grant in even-numbered years. Applications for the 2014 professional grant will be available this fall.

Several students applied for the 2013 grant. Lauren's is specific – a month-long immersion in "the world's premiere training program for traditional Cantonese Opera," she wrote. Unlike many student designers, she already has worked on three continents; Asia will be the fourth. She has designed costumes for theatre productions in London and operas at La Musica Lyrica in Italy, and assisted with costumes and production at New York's Metropolitan Opera.

"Lauren is one of the most professional students I have ever had the pleasure to work with," UMKC Costume Design Professor Lindsay Davis wrote in her letter of recommendation. "When her *Magic Flute* project was submitted to the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, her sketches were chosen as the construction project for their advanced costume construction class. Can you imagine? A whole set of costumes made simply because of their unique, imaginative beauty?"

She will stay with a former UMKC professor now at HKAPA, Sarah



Photo/Courtesy Lauren Gaston

Oliver, who has offered housing and a chance to help design costumes for the academy's spring opera productions. Experiencing and understanding traditional Chinese opera will help her and her university share a perspective that is international and "non-Eurocentric."

"I hope this momentum will continue to lead me to more international opportunities in my costume design career," she told USITT. "Nothing excites me more than learning about art and life through the eyes of another culture!"

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The Last Word:

Student Board Mentorship Program – An Opportunity

Brooke Feldman

I heard from the grapevine there was a new mentorship program forming in USITT in the area of arts administration. Hurray!

Why am I so happy? I grew up as a stage manager, living and breathing backstage, so the business side of the arts has always been an interest of mine.

There are a few of us "special" theater souls who get hit by the theatre management bug and want to become the future leaders of the entertainment industry. The only way to really understand if this is the side of the business to be a part of is through shadowing today's professionals and seeing their day-to-day responsibilities.

This new mentorship program is one of those ways.

For the first time, USITT is offering a program which focuses on the importance and structure of a board. What is a board you might ask? Basically, it is composed of the "deities" of a theatre or organization. They help shape and oversee the functions of the organization in conjunction with the executive director.

The board is an influential group which comes with a variety of skills from different backgrounds. Anyone who has ever sat in on a production meeting for a show knows it is the time when all the areas can get together and update each other on their progress. Boards are a bit similar to a production team except each member is constantly thinking of ways to continue the success of a theatre. In short, it is a tough job but always filled with dedicated people.

This board mentorship program focuses on the board structure of USITT, how it functions, and the responsibilities that come with being a board member. This is



an opportunity for students, who have attended annual conferences eager to be more a part of and learn about USITT, to gain knowledge and be exposed to a variety of leaders coming together to focus on the mission. It is also an opportunity for students who are interested in learning more about what a board does and its importance to any nonprofit organization.

So, for theatre geeks like myself who have found themselves with the theatre management itch, I urge you to take advantage of this mentorship program with USITT. You just might find yourself wanting to be a part of some organization's board some day and bring your expertise to the table.

Brooke Feldman is a master's degree candidate at Indiana University. While an undergraduate at Syracuse University, she was an intern at the USITT National Office in Syracuse.

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Milwaukee -- the Best

Milwaukee was filled with the buzz of the best in entertainment design and technology during the four days of USITT's 53rd Annual Conference & Stage Expo during March. We are still hearing stories about all the positive energy flowing through our thousands of attendees.

Glimpses of the conference can be seen through this issue of *Sightlines*. To see more, we are working to post videos of key events, photos on our Facebook site, and postings all over the electronic world.

Keep reading future issues of *Sightlines* for updates from the event.



At the Safe House in planning mode.



Costumers Take Note



Masonic Temple Tours



Masonic Temple Tours

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- **The ESTA Foundation:** By Design Day 2013 – For Giving, Not Forgetting
- **Electronic Theatre Controls:** Offer New Product, Activities in Milwaukee
- **Electronic Theatre Controls:** Elevates Lighting of *Lift*

Rosco Laboratories, Inc.: Autism Speaks To Light It Up Blue

Roscolux 68, Parry Sky Blue, and 80, Primary Blue, are the official color filters of Light It Up Blue, and **Rosco Laboratories, Inc.** will donate to Autism Speaks a portion of the profits generated during the month leading up to the April 2 event. April is Global Autism Awareness Month, and Light It Up Blue encourages sites around the world, ranging from national landmarks and famous buildings to homes and offices, to be lit blue in an effort to raise autism awareness around the world.

Rosco is partnering with participating Rosco dealers – each of which also made a \$250 donation to Autism Speaks – to provide several Light It Up Blue solutions. Rosco has also made a special gobo for the event, which is available for standard gobo pricing, for those buildings that can't light up blue but still want to participate in the Light It Up Blue campaign.

To learn more about how to Light It Up Blue with Rosco, visit www.rosco.com/liub.



Creative Stage Lighting: Jamey Brock Hired

Jamey Brock has been named Southeast Regional Sales Manager at Creative Stage Lighting.

Mr. Brock is a senior level sales professional with many years of experience in entertainment and architectural lighting. He has held sales and leadership positions with such lighting entertainment companies as Martin and Chauvet.



Jamey Brock

For more information about the company, visit creativestagelighting.com.

Stage Technologies: Supplying Automation on Third Pink Tour

Stage Technologies again has been contracted by pop star Pink's production manager, Richard Young, to supply the overhead automation for the singer's The Truth About Love United States and European tours. This will be the third Pink tour in a row that Stage Technologies has been brought on board to fly the star and other performers in her show.

Fans of Pink know that the show, directed by Baz Halpin, incorporates aerial performance during a number of tracks, including "Glitter in the Air," in which the star is dipped into a small pool of water onstage before being drawn up again for acrobatics involving an aerial hammock.

For more information visit www.stagetechnology.com.

The ESTA Foundation: By Design Day 2013 – For Giving, Not Forgetting

By Design Day, the annual fundraising day for The ESTA Foundation's Behind the Scenes in the United States and Canada, and Light Relief in the United Kingdom, will be Wednesday April 24.

One of the main fundraising events for these charities, By Design Day focuses attention on the various ways individuals can support these two organizations dedicated to assisting entertainment technology professionals in need. Fundraising can be a personal donation or through an organized collection. Many designers support the day by voluntarily giving a day's royalties to one or both of these charities.

By Design Day 2013 has the full backing of a host of award-winning designers across a broad range of disciplines, including Neil Austin, Gregg Barnes, Ken Billington, Paule Constable, Wendall Harrington, Howard Harrison, Don Holder, David Korins, Derek McLane, Rob Milburn and Michael Bodeen, Ken Posner, Jennifer Tipton and Hugh Vanstone, and Light Relief's co-founder, Rick Fisher.

By Design Day is supported internationally with donations from designers with productions all over the world. To date Light Relief has awarded more than £50,000 in grants to help lighting professionals and their families, while Behind

the Scenes has issued over \$325,000 in grants to professionals working in all disciplines.

Visit www.estafoundation.org/bts.htm or www.lightrelief.org.uk for more information.

Electronic Theatre Controls: Offer New Product, Activities in Milwaukee

Show goers were privy to sneak previews of a major, new **ETC** lighting control desk, new software, and some very special new ETC lighting fixtures at The 2013 Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

ETC had two booth spaces. One was a "Layers of Light" Theatre, where show attendees enjoyed ongoing educational presentations: Tom Littrell's "Designing for today's hybrid lighting rigs;" Steve Terry's "How to manage the transition to solid-state lighting;" and Michael Lichter's "Raising the bar: ETC Rigging's hoists and controls." The other presented the new ES750 dimmer.



ETC's standing-room-only Student Session took place March 22. Students met ETC staff, scored ETC swag, and got an insider-scoop on the latest ETC product news.

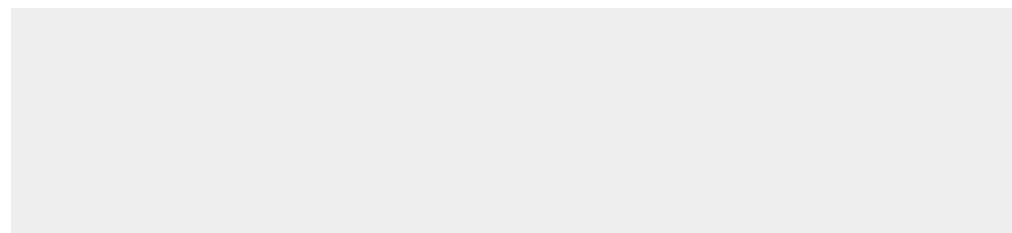
Application for ETC's all-expenses-paid LDI 2013 Student Sponsorship is open. Visit www.etconnect.com/LDI_sponsorship/studentapplication.html for more information, eligibility, and submission.

For information on ETC products and more, visit www.etconnect.com.

Electronic Theatre Controls: Elevates Lighting of *Lift*

Elevator lighting is usually fairly unforgiving, but a new musical in London proves it can be so much better — provided the 'lift,' as the British call an elevator — is as big as a stage. **Electronic Theatre Controls' (ETC)** Source Four LED Lustr+ luminaires light *Lift*, a play by Craig Adams and Ian Watson at the Soho Theatre, which explores the thoughts of eight strangers who happen to end up on the same elevator.

The virtually noiseless operation of the Source Four LED fixtures was a big bonus for the small studio theater. For more information on ETC and its products, visit www.etconnect.com.





Production of *Lift* at the Soho Theatre, London, lit with ETC Source Four LEDs.

Photo/Darren Bell

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- **L-ACOUSTICS:** Concert Hall Upgrades Audio System
- **Nemetschek Vectorworks:** Adds Tutorial to Training Guides
- **Alcons Audio:** Hamburg's Ohnsorg Theater Updates Audio System

Mega Systems: Welcomes New Member

USITT welcomes **Mega Systems** as a new Sustaining member of the organization. The company, based in San Antonio, Texas, provides professional lighting, audio, video, and truss products. Started in California, the company believes in creative cutting-edge quality gear coupled with outstanding service. Products are sold internationally through a network of dealers and a team of sales representatives.

To learn more, visit www.mega-lite.com.

TMB: Hippotizer Goes Wide at Super Bowl XLVII

This was the year of the media server at the Super Bowl in New Orleans. Hippotizer's widespread use at this year's high point in American sports and entertainment exemplifies media servers' importance as a creative tool in modern-day productions. **TMB** is the exclusive distributor for Hippotizer in the Americas.

Hippos were widely used in New Orleans; from the Pepsi Halftime Show featuring Beyoncé to a variety of events including the NFL main stage and press conferences, the Pepsi Smash Tailgate Party, the Direct TV Beach Bowl, and the Budweiser NFL Festival. For more information about Hippotizer, visit www.tmb.com/products/hippotizer. Discover many other innovative and exciting TMB products at www.tmb.com.



L-ACOUSTICS: Concert Hall Upgrades Audio System

Denver Performing Arts Complex's Boettcher Concert Hall, home to the Colorado Symphony Orchestra and built in 1978 as the first U.S. symphony hall in the round, recently had a full audio system retrofit that included an **L-ACOUSTICS** amplifier and loudspeaker package.

Over the past couple of years, the Colorado Symphony Orchestra has increasingly peppered its show roster with soloists and guest acts as diverse as Trey Anastasio, Bela Fleck, Guster, DeVotchKa, Kip Winger, Pink Martini, and Rodrigo Y Gabriela.

"The Orchestra's performances with pop and rock artists have all been very successful and certainly necessitated the presence of a serious, rider-friendly sound reinforcement system," said Aric Christensen, Boettcher Concert Hall's head of audio for the past decade."

For more information on Boettcher Concert Hall and Colorado Symphony Orchestra, visit www.coloradosymphony.org.



Nemetschek Vectorworks: Adds Tutorial to Training Guides

Nemetschek Vectorworks has added a new tutorial by award-winning scenic and lighting designer Kevin Lee Allen to its selection of training guides. *Entertainment Design: Scenery, Lighting, and Sound with Vectorworks Spotlight* explores the use of Vectorworks Spotlight with Renderworks software for use in the entertainment industries. More information can be found on the [training guides page](#).

Alcons Audio: Hamburg's Ohnsorg Theater Updates Audio System

The well-known Hamburg Ohnsorg Theater in Germany decided on an **Alcons Audio** pro-ribbon sound system when it left its old venue in the Großen Bleichen for the Bieberhaus at the Heidi-Kabel-Platz in 2011. With a new playhouse, the group needed a new sound system.

The Ohnsorg Theater was founded in 1902 by Dr. Richard Ohnsorg as "Dramatic Society Hamburg." With its plays in Low German ("Plattdeutsch") language, the theatre also established a high profile outside of Hamburg. It now performs Low German theatre especially for young people.

For more information on the new system, visit www.alconsaudio.com.



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News From **David Grindle**, *USITT Executive Director*

Why Can't You Change the World?



On a recent drive with my family, we stopped at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. Since we were traveling with two sons who wish to be engineers and scientists, it seemed like a fun yet nerdy stop for our family. The phrase "why can't you change the world" is on all of their admissions material. I looked at it and thought, "Yeah, why not?"

RPI is home to the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC). For a school with no theatre, music, or dance department, it's an *amazing* facility -- at an Engineering School that asks its students why they can't change the world.

While touring the facility with Johannes Goebbels, the director, our family saw the performance spaces where artists and technicians were working and talked about the concept behind the facility. People use the facility for developing ideas in which technology and art interact. Because the spaces are dedicated to one team at a time, they may work in ways that are productive towards completing their research. It might result in a performance; it might not.

Video clips of performances are shown. In one, a pianist is interacting with video. The tempo and dynamics of the music trigger the images. It was really cool. Someone had an idea and found a way to make it work. From there, new ideas can flourish and innovation can continue.

We've just come off of our cornerstone event, the Annual Conference & Stage Expo. Interacting with other designers and technicians is refreshing and fun, but also invigorating. For 53 years we've been about collaboration and innovation. The height of that tends to come off the Conference when we are tired but enthused with collaborative spirit. It is at that time that we can change the world.

Last year, we funded research into sustainability practices in our industry. The members who did that came back with incredible ideas that will lead to new discussions, projects, and potential Institute activities and partnerships with other organizations. It will change the world. It changed their definition of sustainability. They each came from different viewpoints, but found a common ground in new information. That is changing the world.

Spring is the time of renewal. It's the time the world changes again from death to life. But if the ideas within you aren't released, they can't grow and change the world.

Fifty-three years ago, some people thought we should have a place to exchange ideas and collaborate. They changed the world. It would be disrespectful of us to think we couldn't follow their lead and do the same.

Bring ideas to the table, collaborate, and follow through with those discussions you had in Milwaukee.

Change your world, because you can.



We'd like to hear your comments on this story.
Please e-mail David at david@usitt.org.

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- **Southeast:** Section Experiences Disney 'Magic'

Desert State: Plan Event, Investigate Life with *War Horse*

The Desert State Regional Section is planning an event, The Business of Theatre, April 20 at R.C. Lurie Company in Phoenix, Arizona. Details will be posted on the Desert State webpage and Facebook page.

Desert State held a special workshop February 9 with crew-members of the *Warhorse* national tour, at the Grady Gammage Auditorium in Tempe, Arizona. The focus of the workshop was life on a national tour and being a member of the union, as well as discussion of the technical challenges specific to *Warhorse*. In addition, attendees were given a backstage tour.

War Horse Touring Personnel who participated in the TechTalk were Steve Rogers, head audio; Corey Krolkowski, head carpenter; Billy Paton, head electrician; Kurt Oostra, head props; and Dave Vick, head rigger/automation carpenter.

Southeast: Section Experiences Disney 'Magic'

The Southeast Regional Section's annual Master Classes and Design Expo were hosted by Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida from September 27 to 29. They covered a wide variety of topics and allowed participants behind-the-scenes access to many areas of Walt Disney World venues.

Geoff Devenney and his team shared the mechanics and maintenance that creates the death-defying onstage magic of Cirque Du Soleil's *La Nouba*. Participants were allowed backstage and above-stage access to the scenery, lighting, audio and show control elements of the show. Participants got down and dirty with Dirk Ring, Ryan Abel, and the Epcot technicians exploring the pyrotechnics for *Illuminations – Reflections of Earth*.

Mary Lilly and Maureen Townsend shared the unique challenges of creating costumes and hair for animatronics. Issues such as access to machinery for maintenance, construction/closures for figures that are permanently mounted to

the floor, and oil leakage were just a few of the topics. Steve Probus shared the differences and similarities of props for the wide variety of venues and media handled by the Walt Disney Imagineering Prop Department.

Gene Columbus, executive director of Orlando Repertory, presented the keynote address, sharing his years of experience with the Walt Disney Company managing, producing, casting, and staffing many of the shows and events at Walt Disney World.

The Section also held its fall business meeting and welcomed Chip Hass (UNCG) as Chair and Stacey Galloway (UF) as Vice-Chair for Relations. The group offered its heartfelt thanks to David Wheeler for his many years of service as Section Chair.

The Southeast Section thanked Walt Disney World Resorts and its staff for being such gracious hosts. A special thank you to Jack Feivou, general manager of Epcot & Entertainment, and Wendy Abraham, project and communications integration manager for Walt Disney Parks & Resorts Creative Entertainment. The group acknowledged sponsors Barbizon, Charlotte; BMI Supply; Sculptural Arts Coatings; Stage Rigging Services; and Stage Decoration & Supply.

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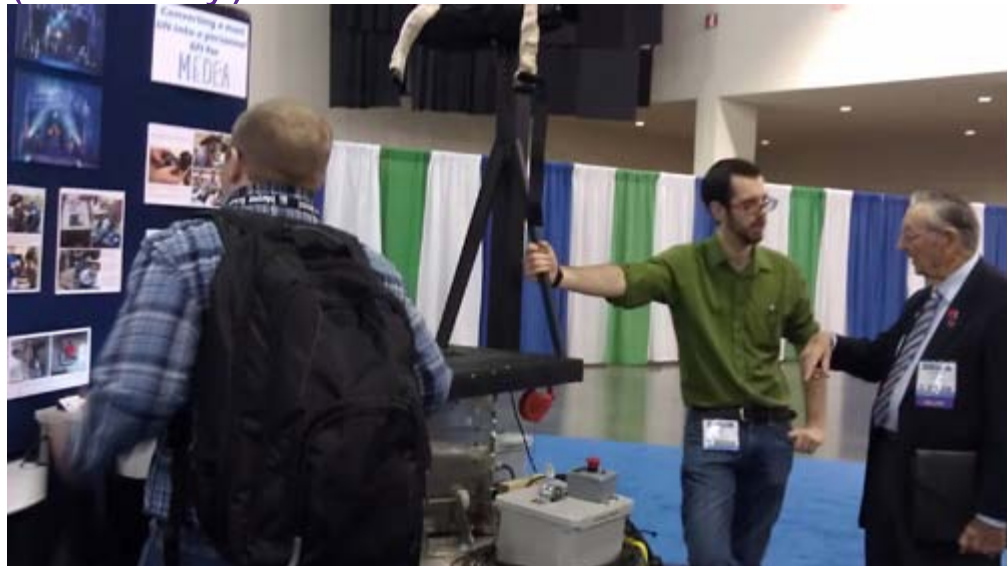
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Conference & Stage Expo

Tech Expo 2013 – Do Try This at Home (Carefully)



Tech Expo drew fans to the 17 entries which were on exhibit at Stage Expo during the 2013 Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Photo/Barbara E.R. Lucas

From a confetti cannon to a trick sword to a person-lift to breakable jewelry made of soap, this year's Tech Expo submissions again proved that necessity is indeed the mother of invention.

The 17 entries that made it into the 2013 Tech Expo were all great examples of "the creativity, ingenuity and ability to work under constraints that all of us in USITT are all too familiar with: time, money, and manpower," wrote Tech Expo Chair Rob Kerby of Northern Kentucky University's Department of Theatre and Dance.

Of the 17, three were chosen at the Conference to receive cash prizes sponsored by USITT, University of Delaware REP/PTTP, and RC4 Wireless. The winning projects are:

- A Video Puppet for the World Premiere Production of Erin Courtney's *The Service Road*, by Cory Einbinder of New York City College of Technology (CUNY). Cory designed an interactive video puppet to play the "big headed toddler," a possibly imaginary character operated by an onstage puppeteer.

- To Float Like a Firefly: LEDS that Don't Affect Fabric Drape, by Jen Dasher, Lisa Burgess and Jon Shimon of the University of Maryland. The trio found a new product, lightweight programmable LED sequins, and devised ways to attach them to chiffon costumes for the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- A Compensated Scenery Flying Rig, by Tom Strong, Kevin Hines, Matt Rohner and Ethan Weil of Carnegie Mellon University. The CMU team devised a rigging system to "fly" a 600-pound scenic element on and off stage for a production of *Sweeney Todd*.

Tech Expo is held every other year and culminates with an exhibit and final judging at that year's USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo. This year's was the 14th biennial Tech Expo; the next will be in 2015.

The process involves a committee of 15 to 20 people, who pore through dozens of entries and choose the most innovative and unique for inclusion in that year's Tech Expo catalog and Stage Expo display.

The largest entry in this year's display was the Will-Burt Ribbon Lift (usually used to lift scenery or lights) that a Purdue Theatre crew modified to lift a person -- Medea ascending during her final monologue.

Another popular entry was the confetti cannon that Otterbein University built using steel plumbing pipe, a solenoid valve, and a Dixie cup. "Big important disclaimer," the author, Gregory Bell, wrote in the Tech Expo catalog. "Do not build this confetti cannon's pressure chamber from PVC pipe!"

Rob noted the Tech Expo catalogs often come in handy when a technical director is faced with a problem to be solved on the fly.

As Tim Combs of the Theatre School at DePaul University wrote in his entry on Cartmaster Casters, "It never fails that directors and designers ask for scenery to do multiple things that conflict with the laws of physics."

The 2013 Tech Expo catalog-- as well as past catalogs -- are available for sale at USITT's [online store](#). For more information about Tech Expo, [click here](#).

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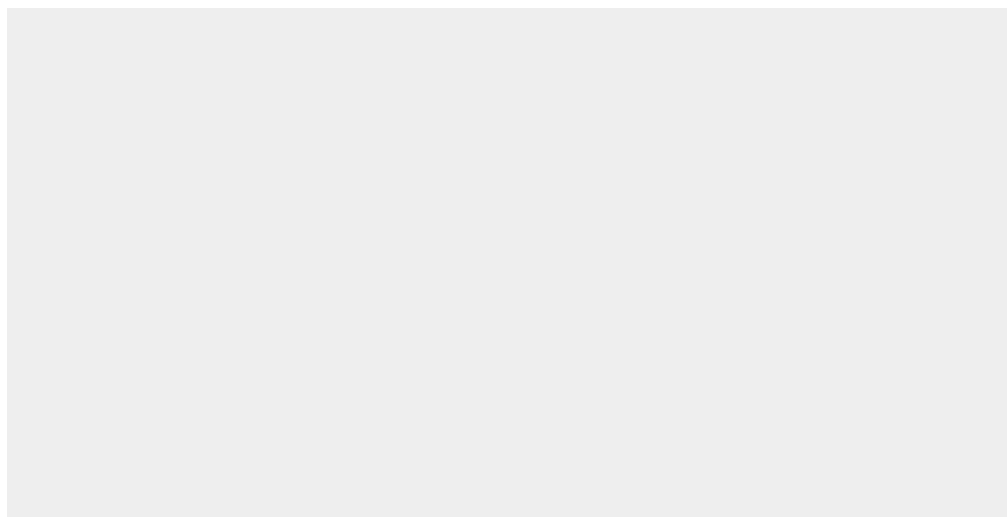
Stage Expo Sets Records



Floating in a cloud of innovation.

With more exhibitors generating excitement, the new Innovation Stage and Gallery, special exhibits, and returning favorites like Tech Expo and Cover the Walls, the sights and sounds of Stage Expo 2013 will be remembered well into the future.

Signups for 2014 have already started, so if you have not booked your space for Fort Worth, contact Ron Procopio at ron@usitt.org





A dramatic wall to provoke thought.



Conversations to enhance demonstrations.



At the Network Nexus where winners of the Find a Fellow challenge enjoy a moment of fun.

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The monthly newsletter for USITT members

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2010-2013

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- R. Michael Gros
- Rafael Jean
- Debra Garcia Lockwood
- Jill Maurer
- Stephanie Young

2011-2014

- Jack Feivou
- Jennifer L. Knott
- Andi Lyons
- Kevin Rigdon
- Loren Schreiber
- Joe Tilford

2012-2015

- Kasey Allee-Forman
- Bill Browning
- Alessia Carpoca
- Michael Mehler
- Linda Pisano
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- **Monica L. Merritt**, Director of Member Services
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As of October 15, 2012

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