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The Cincinnati Opera performs in Music Hall, center, located in Over-the-Rhine, a part of downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. Over-the-Rhine is one of the largest National Historic Districts in the United States, treasured for its massive collection of 19th century Italianate structures.

The architecture of the neighborhood is more reminiscent of Europe-influenced northeastern cities, such as Baltimore and Philadelphia, than of other Midwestern neighborhoods. Its name comes from its builders, German immigrants.

To learn more about the performing arts tradition of Cincinnati, [click here](#), or for more about USITT Conference Committee's planning trip to the city, [click here](#).

Photo/Aaron Davidson, Cincinnati USA CVB

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Abe Jacob, at left, receives the USITT Award 2008 from Rick Thomas as part of the Annual Awards Banquet of the 48th Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Houston. Nominations are now being accepted for several of USITT's most prestigious honors, including the USITT Award.

Photo/Casey Kearns

Nominations Needed for Special USITT Awards

Bruce Brockman

Chair, USITT Awards & Resolutions Committee

One of the most important things USITT does is to recognize the outstanding careers and professional achievements of our members and of individuals in the industry who have significantly contributed to our profession. Each year at this time the Awards committee asks that the membership of USITT consider those individuals they feel are worthy of distinction who should be considered for a USITT awards.

Over the years, the likes of Robert Brustein, Philip Glass, Zelma Weisfeld, Richard Durst, Richard Devin, Tharon Musser, ESTA, Strong Entertainment Lighting, and many other individuals and organizations have been recognized by the membership of USITT.

Please take a few minutes to reflect on individuals that you believe should be recognized by the Institute as recipients of the USITT Award, given in recognition of an outstanding lifetime contribution to the performing arts community; The Joel E Rubin Founder's Award which recognizes outstanding and continued service to the institute; or a Special Citation, given to recognize achievement in any are of the performing arts by an individual or organization. By recognizing outstanding members of the performing arts community, we also raise the prestige of the organization to which we all belong.

To nominate someone for one of these awards, please send the name, a paragraph or two describing why the individual should be considered, and the award for which the individual is nominated to bruce_brockman@usitt.org. Deadline for the submission of information is August 15 to allow the Award Committee to deliberate and pass along its recommendations to the Board of Directors for action at its October meeting.

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New Way to Support USITT@50

Making a donation to USITT@50 just became easier. USITT has created an online form which allows supporters to make a donation whenever they want. Contributors no longer have to wait until they are renewing a membership or registering for the Conference to make a donation online. All contributions are tax-deductible and will be acknowledged with a thank-you letter. Click [here](#) to make a contribution today. To learn more about USITT@50 and giving in general, click [here](#).

[To Top ↑](#)**ESTA Announces Rock Our World Awards**

ESTA introduces the Rock Our World Awards to recognize groundbreaking achievement by its members in new products, product applications, or projects. These awards were created to acknowledge the genius of both the creator of technology and the designer or integrator who applies the technology in a real world environment.

Have you seen a new product that you knew would change the industry or a product used in a way that was truly remarkable in its application? Now is the chance to acknowledge their impact.

Anyone in the industry may nominate a product, product application, or project for a Rock Our World Award, but an ESTA Member must be involved as the designer, manufacturer, supplier, or collaborator.

A panel of judges, including well-known industry veterans and rising young stars, will determine the finalists and winners. The finalists will be announced in early September and the winners will be announced at ESTA's annual dinner on October 23, the evening before the LDI show opens.

To enter a nomination online, go to www.esta.org/RockOurWorldAwards or call 212-244-1505 or email info@esta.org.

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This month:
 Support USITT @50
 New ESTA Awards
 Keep Info Updated
 Offer Holiday Cards
 ETCP Exams at LDI

All USITT members are encouraged to notify the office of any changes to their contact information. This allows USITT to keep members' records up to date. Verifying the information on file is especially important at this time of year because **August 1** is the last date to report changes and have them included in the **2009 Membership Directory & Resource Guide**. August 1 is also the last date to renew a lapsed membership or establish a new one to receive a listing in the 2009 edition. To communicate changes, go online at <http://www.usitt.org/membership/AddressUpdate.html> or call the USITT office at 800-938-7488, ext. 104. To renew or join over the phone, dial ext. 102 or 104.

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ESTA Offers Cards, Discussion Group

The ESTA Foundation's 2008 Behind the Scenes Holiday Cards are available now through September 2. ESTA has also launched a new, electronic discussion group.

Six holiday card designs are offered this year including custom cards from Bob Bonniol, Scott Pask, David Rockwell, Bruce Rodgers, and talented young photographer Andrew Hefter. With a minimum order of 250, cards can be personalized with a company logo and a custom message. New this year are the options for a two-color logo and return address printed envelopes. Packages of 10 cards are available with a standard greeting. The third option is an electronic version of any of the cards that can be sent via e-mail in the form of a jpg, gif, or pdf.

Orders will be shipped to arrive the week of October 27. All proceeds will benefit the ESTA Foundation's Behind the Scenes program. To view the card designs and order online, visit www.estafoundation.org/bts/holidaycards.htm. For more information, contact Laura Quartuccio at 212-244-1421 or holidaycard@estafoundation.org. For more information about Behind the Scenes, to donate, or to apply for a grant, visit www.estafoundation.org/bts.htm.

The May 20 launch of GenESTA's new electronic discussion group allows ESTA members to have year-round communication with each other.

The GenESTA Message Board can be accessed at www.esta.org/message and is open to both members and non-members. All users are required to register, and a moderator will activate their account. Based on their membership status and type of membership, each user will be placed into categories. Registration is open to anyone in the industry; however only ESTA Members and ETCP Certified Technicians will be allowed to post in their specific member discussion groups. All are welcomed to read posts in the open forums.

For more information, contact message@esta.org.

GenESTA is a committee within the Entertainment Services and

Technology Association designed as a feeder program for ESTA involvement leading to participation from the younger generation of ESTA members. For information about GenESTA or to get involved, contact lquartuccio@esta.org.

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Paper-Based ETCP Exams Scheduled at LDI

All three ETCP certification examinations will be given at the October 2008 LDI show in Las Vegas, Nevada: the entertainment electrician exam on Friday, October 24; and the arena rigging and theatre rigging exams on Saturday, October 25. Candidates who wish to take multiple exams will receive a discount for the second exam. Applicants must submit an application, along with supporting materials and fee, to the ETCP office no later than September 25. Space is limited.

Candidate information, including eligibility requirements and applications, is available on the [ETCP website](#), or contact Meredith Moseley-Bennett, ETCP certification coordinator, at 212-244-1505 or certification@esta.org.

Rigging examinations are given daily at over 190 computer based testing centers across the United States and Canada. After an application has been received and accepted, the candidate will be sent information on how to schedule the examination at a convenient site, date, and time.

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USITT Continues Support of ETCP, Issues \$50,000 Challenge

United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT) has put forward a generous challenge of \$50,000 over the next five years in its continuing support of the Entertainment Technician Certification Program (ETCP). USITT has played a key role in the development of the certification program, both through financial support and active participation on the ETCP Council.

"USITT is pleased to further the important work of ETCP in its ongoing effort to protect the health and safety of crews, performers, and audiences in performance spaces," announced Sylvia Hillyard Pannell, USITT President. "USITT is the bridge between its members and other performing arts and entertainment industry artists, artisans, educators, and students. As such, we are proud to champion this vitally important cause and look forward to many other organizations meeting and exceeding our challenge."

Several other ETCP Council members have already responded to the challenge placed by USITT. InfoComm International and the Canadian Institute for Theatre Technology have stepped forward as new donors while Production Resource Group has increased its already significant support. Randy Lemke, executive director of InfoComm International commented, "I will, without hesitation, state that the quality of the ETCP Program is world-class."

Tim Hansen, chair of the ETCP Council, said, "We are starting to see significant increases in applications to take the exams as more and more employers and facilities are requiring certification for technicians in lead positions, but contributions are still necessary to sustain the program in its start-up phase. We hope the industry will step forward to invest in this important program and help us meet USITT's generous challenge grant."

This important industry-wide program focuses on disciplines that directly affect the health and safety of crews, performers and audiences, thus reducing workplace risk. ETCP conducts examinations, awards certifications and recertifies technicians in three areas: rigger-arena, rigger-theatre, and entertainment electrician. More than 500 technicians have already earned certification.

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Entertainment Technician
Certification Program**usitt****etcp**
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Entertainment Technician
Certification Program

More information about ETCP is available [here](#). To contribute to the program or for more information on becoming ETCP certified, contact Meredith Moseley-Bennett, ETCP certification coordinator, at 212-244-1505 or certification@esta.org.

The ETCP Council members are key leaders drawn from entertainment business, labor, facilities, associations, and academia representing the diversity of the entertainment industry. Membership includes AMPTP, BASE Entertainment, Cirque du Soleil/MGM MIRAGE, CITT, ESTA, IAAM, IATSE, InfoComm, The League, Live Nation, PRG, TEA, SHAPE and USITT. ETCP is an ESTA initiative created to promote industry safety.

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Carl Lefko has been building bridges, between individuals, between organizations, and among segments within organizations for many years. In his new role as President, he will be leading USITT as it tackles the challenges and rewards of continuing to grow in the 21st Century.

Photo/Richard Finklestein

Officer Profile: Carl Lefko - President

Barbara E.R. Lucas
Sightlines Editor

Leading an organization with almost 50 years of history behind it, and a mandate to continue to change and grow may seem like a huge challenge, but for Carl Lefko, who takes over as USITT President on July 1, that is just the type of challenge he enjoys.

"The groundwork for change has already been accomplished" Mr. Lefko said. "We have been looking at what we do well, and what we can do better. We can serve as a bridge, providing focus and purpose, as we move further into the 21st Century. I look forward to the changes we're exploring."

As he talks about his role as President, Mr. Lefko acknowledges that the position requires a huge commitment of time and energy. That will be made much easier, he notes, since his Dean at Radford University is committed to his success, as are his fellow faculty members including Monica Weinzapfel and David Wheeler, who are both active with USITT as well. "They're all working to make this happen," he notes.

Mr. Lefko has been at Radford, in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, since his postgraduate years. "It's the only job I've ever had, but Radford has moved from having one designer to many."

His position has changed as well, and he is entering his fourth year as chair of its Department of Theatre and Cinema.

For Radford, Mr. Lefko has built bridges locally as well as internationally. In 2006, he and a team from the College of Visual & Performing Arts and the School of Nursing visited three schools in China exploring internship possibilities for both faculty and students. He has been a major advocate for international study for students, conducting study abroad programs himself and initiating Radford's first Semester Abroad program for the Honors students.

"I view myself as a facilitator," Mr. Lefko said, "to be a good listener and bring people of different opinions to an understanding or at least common ground."

Away from the theatre and USITT, Mr. Lefko serves as a bridge within his community. After reading Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral* he and his wife Ruth have increased their support of community-based agriculture, and expanded their garden to grow for others.

"We've always had a garden, but I'm more methodical about it this year." He and Ruth are expanding their canning operations, including pickles, sauces, tomatoes, green beans, beets and other veggies.

Carl and Ruth recently organized a community barbecue and potluck for his neighbors because "We look for an excuse to entertain."

He keeps in close touch with his two daughters. The younger is a recent graduate of the University of Virginia School of Nursing. The elder, who also works in the health services industry, is the mother of Carl's delightful granddaughter and almost grandson.

While he'll miss working closely as with the Conference Committee, Commission leadership, and regional representatives as he has as Vice-President for Programming for six years, Mr. Lefko looks forward to interacting with members and leaders of other organizations as well. He has been invited to give the Keynote at the Chesapeake Regional Section meeting in September, just a week before the Southeast Section Master Classes. As a past Southeast Chair, its activities are especially important for him.

As USITT moves forward, Mr. Lefko's leadership experience as a facilitator and coalition creator will help assure its steady progress toward its goals.

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Travis DeCastro, left, and Elynmarie Kazle, right, helped Carolyn Satter, center, present the USITT 2008 Distinguished Achievement Award in Theatre Management to Cynthia Poulson. The award was presented posthumously at the 2008 Annual Conference & Stage Expo.

Photo/Tom Thatcher

Cindy Poulson Honored With 2008 Management Award

Elynmarie Kazle
USITT Management Commission

It was a great honor that Travis DeCastro and I were asked to say a few fond words about our friend as the Distinguished Achievement Award 2008 in Theatre Management was presented posthumously to our colleague and good friend Cynthia Poulson at the 48th USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Houston, Texas.

"From the first time I met Cindy, when our USITT conference was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I was struck by her warmth and interest in everything around her. The Management Commission was just starting to develop more of a focus and programs for stage managers at that time, and Cindy helped us set up a very well-attended, local/national stage manager's roundtable forum.

"Looking back, I think there were 50 people crammed into a very small room, including quite a few local stage managers from the Milwaukee area. No one wanted to stop talking; it was such a lively session. By the time it was over, Cindy had disappeared. She was producing an international festival at the college, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, that weekend and had taken time out of her schedule to put the event together with me



Cindy Poulson

and help get the ball rolling. The session was very successful, and it gave me, in particular, the confidence to continue to work on developing the stage manager program and raise the profile of stage management within the Institute.

"I made a point to keep in touch with her from then on. She helped launch what has become the Stage Management Mentor Project and, as a first-time stage management mentor for the 1993 Conference in Wichita, she and Travis DeCastro worked together for the first time as part of our mentoring team. From then on, Travis and Cindy became two important "go to" professional resources as we developed the Stage Manager Mentoring project and the SM Roundtables, and increased interest in the stage management field throughout USITT.

"I remember how Cindy helped me find and recruit James Birder to take over the mentoring project (both because it was time and because I was now responsible for a newborn son). Cindy's calm presence at the crazy Las Vegas Conference in 1995 really kept us all together. She was so unassuming, yet students and professionals alike jockeyed for a bit of her attention.

"Cindy was on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee for 15 years. She was active in areas of the theatre department from play selection, to international travel, to student exchanges. At the time of her death, she was a respected member of USITT's Board of Directors, serving her first term as a Director at Large.

"I remember one year when Birder and I went out to dinner with her, I believe it was in Nashville, and Cindy announced it was her birthday, her 50th ... just like that. She was always that way. We will all very much miss having her here with us. She made an incredible mark on her students, on her fellow professionals, and on USITT."

The award from USITT reads:

Distinguished Achievement in Theatre Management 2008

presented to Cynthia Poulson

In recognition of her life-long service to theatre and the education of young people in our industry, USITT pays tribute to the legacy of Cynthia Poulson: her mentorship and her achievements as a professional and an educator. May her enthusiasm and love of life remain our one constant, central to the creative and technical success of the work we do.

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Short Fridays for National Office

Anyone trying to reach the National Office staff in Syracuse is reminded that the USITT Office will be closing at 2:30 p.m. on Fridays (Eastern Time) until August 29. Messages may be left for the staff at any time, even when the office is closed.

To reach the USITT staff, dial 800-938-7488 and extension:

- 102 for Michelle L. Smith, Membership & Ad Sales Manager
- 103 for Barbara E.R. Lucas, PR & Marketing Manager and Sightlines editor
- 104 for Monica L. Merritt, Membership & Conference Registration Coordinator
- 105 for Tracy Davis, Bookkeeper
- 106 for Carol B. Carrigan, Administrative & Finance Manager

We wish you all an enjoyable summer.

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Showboat Reunion to Honor Montgomery

This year, the Minnesota Centennial Showboat is celebrating "50 on the Mississippi" with a very special Showboat Players Reunion. All former Showboat designers, players, managers, and friends are invited to an afternoon of theatre and an evening of river fun on Saturday, July 12. Special hosts for the day are University of Minnesota Showboat faculty **Jean Montgomery**, **Lance Brockman**, **Charles Nolte**, and **Sherry Wagner-Henry**.

First, see the current cast of Showboat Players perform *The Count of Monte Cristo*, directed by Peter Moore and Vern Sutton. Following that, the party will board a Padelford Riverboat for a three-hour tour down the banks of the Mighty Mississippi for a once in a lifetime event with a special banquet dinner, an open mic to share special Showboat memories, a special tribute to Ms. Montgomery on the occasion of her retirement, and hours of old fashioned Showboat fun.

The Minnesota Centennial Showboat was inaugurated on June 26, 1958 in celebration of the Centennial anniversary of Minnesota statehood. A project that was funded jointly by the University of Minnesota and the Centennial Commission, the Showboat has presented a half a century of melodramatic performances and period music fare, and has served as a pre-

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Jean Montgomery

Long Reach Long Riders

Clyde Parker

Robert Doyle

Article Author

professional training ground for theatre and music students at the University of Minnesota.

The Showboat Reunion is open to the first 200 guests, and the registration deadline is July 8. To register, contact the Showboat administrative office at 612-625-4001.

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Long Riders Raise Over \$40,000

The Long Reach Long Riders successfully completed their fifth annual charity motorcycle ride benefiting Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and The ESTA Foundation's Behind the Scenes program.

This year's six-day ride started and finished in Las Vegas, Nevada. The 12 bikes encountered lots of sun, but also rain, sleet, snow, and hail. They rode an average of 239 miles a day and had temperatures ranging from 31 to 101 degrees. The highest point of the trip was at Lizard Head Pass in Colorado at 10,222 feet above sea level. For a complete listing of ride statistics, including the amount of Ibuprofen consumed by all riders (1,576 tablets), visit www.LRLR.org.

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Clyde Parker to Retire

Clyde Parker, longtime technical director for Arizona State University's Gammage Auditorium, has decided to retire. Mr. Parker is very active in the Desert State section and served as chair when it was first chartered. He has been a friend to many and a resource to all both regionally and nationally. He was always the consummate professional whether he was working on the latest Broadway bus and truck block-buster or a local school dance recital. For more information contact Erin at etduquett@aol.com, or Lisa Adamsen at lisa.adamsen@asu.edu.

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Doyle Honored with Order of Canada

Robert Doyle, noted Canadian stage designer, costume historian, author, and teacher, was awarded the Order of Canada, Canada's highest civil award, for his contribution to Canadian theatre arts education.

Educated at Britain's prestigious Wimbledon School of Fine Arts, Theatre Division, Mr. Doyle returned to Canada where he created eighteenth century domestic and military clothing for the restoration of the Fortress of Louisburg which led to a teaching career at the University of Regina in Saskatchewan and Dalhousie University. During his 35 years as the creator of the costume studies program, he helped launch the careers of some 300 young theatre professionals, many of them heading the costume departments of Canada's theatres. He also was a stage designer for many of Canada's professional regional theatres.

In 1979 he created the designs for the Nova Scotia Tattoo which

now, with Royal patronage, is an extraordinary indoor celebration of military and civilian history in Canada. Since his retirement from teaching in 1996, Mr. Doyle has written three books, *Waisted Efforts*, *An illustrated Guide to Corset Making*, in 1997, now in its second printing; *Laundry, The Whys and How's of Cleaning Clothes* in 1999; and *With a Needle, a Thimble and 10,000 Stitches, The Art of the Tailor* in 2005.

Mr. Doyle, who lives in Stratford, Ontario, is writing his fourth book, *Costuming the Dance*, and has written the outline for a full length ballet, *Algonquin Suite*, an ode to Tom Thomson.

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Author Error

The article about the meeting of the OISTAT Technology Commission carried erroneous authorship information when it was first published. We thank **Fritz Schwentker** for his work on inviting the Technology Commission to meet during the USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Houston, Texas, and for creating the report of the event.

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Changes, New Faces at VLS

Vincent Lighting Systems (VLS) recently made several personnel changes.

Kevin Lowry was appointed to end user sales for the northern Ohio and Indiana area, as well as western Pennsylvania. A native of California, Mr. Lowry attended Otterbein College, located in Columbus, Ohio where he earned a BFA in design and technology. He worked for Rosco Laboratories in customer service, technical support and product development.

Joseph Tupa has joined VLS as project manager. He has more than 20 years of experience working Cleveland and Milwaukee venues as stagehand, rigger, and lighting technician and worked various commercial shoots and music videos as gaffer, grip, and everything in between. Mr. Tupa took a hiatus in 1998, when he was hired by Conrail as a conductor. There, he moved up the corporate ladder to hazardous materials manager where he realized a passion for emergency response. He still works closely with his local volunteer fire department.

In the Cincinnati branch, VLS appointed Debra Cecil as field service technician. A recent graduate of Western Kentucky University, she steps in for Matt Klasmeier, who was promoted to specification sales and will focus on southern Ohio, Kentucky and central/southern Indiana. Adam Hayward continues to serve end user customers in that same area.

For more information, visit www.vincentlighting.com.

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Paradigm Unveiled at Lightfair

The new Unison architectural lighting system, which stars Paradigm, was one of the highlights of **ETC's** Lightfair 2008 booth. Paradigm is a feature-rich system that combines groundbreaking architectural lighting functions with the capabilities of entertainment lighting control. It offers advanced facility-lighting and building systems integration, handling the most complex installations with ease. The green-minded Paradigm puts together daylight harvesting, occupancy sensing, and time-based controls for critical energy savings. Paradigm's LightDesigner software takes lighting control to a new level with powerful features. SmartLink, ETC's budget-friendly architectural-lighting control line, is available as an option in the Unison DRd dimming enclosure.

This month:

Vincent Lighting Systems

ETC

Vari-Lite

Barbizon

PRG

J.R. Clancy, Inc.

ETC's Lightfair exhibit also featured the latest additions to the award-winning line of Pharos control products, including the new LPC X, Pharos AVC (Audio Visual Controller), and Pharos RIO (Remote Input Output).

ETC also unveiled a new addition to its line of Source Four fixtures at Lightfair. All Source Four HID units are available in an energy-efficient 70W version.

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Vari-Lite Supports SETC Events

Enthusiasm was in the air at the 59th Southeast Theatre Conference (SETC) in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The Conference featured a new Tech Mixer opening event and a Design Reception. Class act performers, Aerial Dance with Fabric, provided entertainment prior to the main awards banquet, the closing event.

Mike Collins, south region sales manager for **Entertainment Technology**, delivered the welcome message to the attendees of the first ever SETC Tech Mixer sponsored by **Vari-Lite** and Entertainment Technology. The Tech Mixer was open to all attendees who work or study in any aspect of design or technical theatre.

The Design Reception and Awards Ceremony, also co-sponsored by Vari-Lite and Entertainment Technology, awarded undergraduate and graduate students for lighting design, scenic and costume design and technical/crafts. Three top industry designers, Kevin Adams, Jennifer Caprio, and Todd Rosenthal, critiqued the entries. Vari-Lite VL3500 Wash luminaires and VL1000 Spot luminaires lit Aerial Dance with Fabric while the troop performed suspended from the roof of the rotunda.

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Barbizon Makes Headlines at the Newseum

The brand new, 250,000 square foot home of the Newseum on Pennsylvania Avenue was well received when it opened on April 11. Located in Washington, D.C. adjacent to the Smithsonian museums on the National Mall, the Newseum's seven levels of galleries, theaters, and event spaces blend news history with cutting-edge technology and hands-on exhibits. Besides offering museum-goers a behind the scenes look at how and why news is made, they also produce and broadcast in their own television studios.

The main funder of Newseum operations is The Freedom Forum, a nonpartisan foundation. *This Week with George Stephanopoulos* on ABC is broadcast each Sunday from its Pennsylvania Avenue studio, which faces the Capitol and is all glass.

The Newseum project began in Arlington, Virginia where **Barbizon** provided all of the studio lighting. Barbizon helped design and build the two studios at the new site as well as supply

the theatre. Barbizon was originally contracted as the systems integrator for lighting and rigging systems in the two Knight Studios, The Walter and Leonore Annenberg Theater, and the media screen in The New York Times – Ochs-Sulzberger Family Great Hall of News, but later was contracted to provide onsite project management and field coordination for the building-wide architectural lighting control system and the event lighting fixture package installed in the Great Hall.

For more information on the project or the company, visit www.barbizon.com.

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PRG Helps Span 1,000 Miles, Decade

When Sight & Sound Theatres inaugurated its 2,080-seat Branson, Missouri venue, it marked a major milestone in the company's two decade-long collaboration with **PRG**. For the new theatre, PRG partnered with Sight & Sound's design team to build a leading-edge lighting system fully compatible with the company's 10-year-old Millennium Theatre in Strasburg, Pennsylvania.

Known for biblical-themed productions featuring 40 to 50 performers, live and animatronic animals, massive sets, and awe-inspiring special effects, Sight & Sound came to PRG with a unique challenge to rotate productions between Strasburg and Branson with the same set, direction, and lighting. This required updating the original Millennium Theatre designs with today's technology while building in enough flexibility so the new system can serve for several more years.

Another challenge was the sheer size of the new facility. At 336,000 square feet, it is the largest building in Branson. The main stage is 110 feet wide by 100 feet deep with a 40-foot-high proscenium and is flanked by two side stages, each 80 feet long. Above the stage are six lighting trusses with wiring in place for a seventh.

PRG provided all the theatrical lighting for the facility. For more information on PRG, visit www.prg.com.

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Clancy Offers Safe Rigging Reminders

To reinforce the need for safety in the use of rigging systems in all kinds of performance spaces, **J.R. Clancy, Inc.** offers instructional signs, batten end caps, index cards, and arbor labels to remind operators to take every precaution and use counterweight rigging in a safe, professional manner.

The signs and labels are available free to any facility with counterweight rigging. Each sign has guidelines for operating the rigging system safely. While many operators are seasoned professionals with years of experience using a rigging system, it's important to have visible reminders to be sure operators complete every step.

The index cards have a surface that accepts grease pencil or dry erase markers and are used at the locking rail to label the set. Each has a warning that meets ANSI requirements, reminding users that sets may be operated only by trained and authorized personnel. The index cards may be purchased from J. R. Clancy dealers in packages numbered from one to 30, 31 to 50, and 51 to 70.

The precautionary signs, cards, and labels are particularly important in high schools and colleges where students may not be trained by rigging professionals to use the system.

In addition to the signs and labels, J.R. Clancy offers bright yellow plastic batten end caps to cover the ends of standard pipe battens increasing their visibility in dark backstage areas. The end caps include set capacity information, so users know exactly how much weight each batten can hold, and when the batten is over capacity.

Clancy also offers free replacement manuals for its counterweight systems. Generic operations manuals are available on the website, www.rigging-safety.com, for anyone to download. If a manual has been lost or if it just disappeared, Clancy will replace it free of charge. For more information or to order the rigging safety materials visit www.rigging-safety.com or www.jrclancy.com, or call 800-836-1885.

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RSAMD Gets Educational System

The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD) is the first education venue to purchase a **Stage Technologies** power-flying system for use with training modules integrated into its curriculum. With an Illusionist control desk on the fly-floor and an additional 28 computers in the PC lab running Chameleon software, the RSAMD can now offer students offline training on a virtual flying system and a real system to operate in their theatre.

As well as providing RSAMD with the latest technology to teach students, the point-hoist system is a flexible and portable tool for use in home and touring productions.

More information about Stage Technologies training services can be obtained by filling in an online contact form at www.stagetech.com/contact/index.asp.

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Wybron Names Technologies Director

Wybron, Inc., a veteran lighting company serving the entertainment, house of worship, and architecture industries, promoted John Sondericker III to director of technologies.

For the past 12 years, Mr. Sondericker has been Wybron's senior electronics/software engineer, helping design almost every product the company makes, and served as the chief architect of Infogate, the software at the heart of Wybron's Infotrace system.

Originally from Long Island, New York, Mr. Sondericker earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering in 1987 from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. He then returned to New York to work for the physics department of the U.S. Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory, where he designed and built particle detectors.

In his new role at Wybron, Mr. Sondericker will help the company stay abreast of new developments in the lighting industry including the continued emphasis on two-way communication protocols such as RDM and ACN (Architecture for Control Networks).

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Anchored in the Past, Sailing into the Future

Carl Lefko
USITT President

It is 1977, and I am a lowly first year graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro working in prop storage which, at the time, was located in the bowels of Aycock Auditorium in a wind tunnel. Suddenly, out of now where, a dark imposing shadow hovers over me. I looked up, and the imposing figure who would come to be known at Stage Expo as the "Man in the Gold Jacket," Bob Thurston, instructs me to give him \$20 to attend what I have come to learn was the first USITT Southeast Master Class held in the fall of 1977 on the Wake Forest University campus.

At the time, I had no clue what USITT stood for or even why I was going. As far as I was concerned, it could have been United Steel in Theatre Today. Something was mentioned about a new theatre with flexible staging and a session on MIG welding. I was simply being led by my graduate mentor and told this would be good experience for me. He never said that this trek would last over 30 years and include becoming Chair of the Southeast Regional Section and eventually becoming President of an organization I could not even tell my wife what the acronym,

USITT, stood for.

Thirty-one years later, I have numerous stories but, more importantly, countless reasons to tell my students and colleagues why it is important to become a member and be involved with the United States Institute for Theatre Technology. I can even elaborate at length the profound impact USITT has had on my career and life. Many of you probably have similar stories and can now articulate clearly the value of being a member of the Institute.

As I look out over this group, I see friends, colleagues, associates, and even former students who have become a major part of my professional life. These endearing relationships have become imbedded in the heart and foundation of this Institute. The question we currently are asking is how can we secure our future while not losing the fundamental qualities that have brought success in our first 50 years?

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work with you over the next two years as the President of USITT. I am fortunate to have worked with many of you already and look forward to forming new relationships as we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of USITT. And celebrate we will as USITT reflects on its distinguished heritage while working to solidify another 50 years.

Many have already been working hard to plan this momentous event, most notably the 50th Steering Committee led by Bobbi Owen, which has established a guiding theme for the celebration "Honoring Our Past While Securing Our Future."

We are currently in the final stages of a review of the organization by McCarthy Arts Consulting. This process has involved every aspect of the organization from exhibitors to conference attendees, Executive Committee, the Office Staff, the Board of Directors, Commissioners, and Sections all providing valuable input as we closely examine our past. We are exploring how to best meet the needs of our membership over the next 50 years.

Can we remain relevant to our membership if we continue on our current path? Do we need to explore changes that will strategically position the Institute on an even more solid foundation constructed specifically for the 21st century? To accomplish this successfully, how much change will be needed? *Change* – a word that often brings negative connotations and fear. I have never been one who supports change just for the sake of change. Change always brings many challenges, but it can be a healthy and reinvigorating experience if planned with intent and purpose.

The 21st Century task force, led by Bill Byrnes, is working closely with McCarthy Arts Consulting to coordinate the external review and will soon be making recommendations on how to reposition the Institute to meet the challenges of a fast-paced, mobile, electronic world. We are living in an age where children are more electronically savvy than their parents. Facebook is not a bedtime story, YouTube is not a new television set, and Bluetooth is not a

21st century reincarnation of the Smurfs.

How can the Institute compete and prosper in this new age where texting requires thumb exercises and a Wii is not the exclamation we repeat as we reach for the sky on the swing set. This new age of electronics and technology has a direct effect on every aspect of the entertainment industry. Our task force has a formidable challenge, but I am confident we will soon see a comprehensive plan that positions USITT as a major force in the entertainment industry for the 21st century.


Let us reach for the sky once again as we work together in guiding the changes that will assure our success in the years to come.

In order that we secure the future it is critical each member carefully examine his connection with the Institute. We regularly talk about USITT benefits. We even list them on our website and in the directory.

A strong organization needs good leadership. Almost everyone in this room is involved in some leadership capacity. As leaders in USITT, we are often asked by our constituents what the benefits of being a member are. It is now time to answer that question for a new generation. We must raise the bar by addressing a new set of expectations coming from our members who *do* know that Blu-ray and the Wii are cutting edge technology. In order for us to effectively address these needs, change is inevitable.

I now need you to look at what role USITT currently plays in your life. Many of you give generously of your time, some contribute financially, and others take on leadership roles. The future of this Institute depends on each of you! It is now time to construct a bridge to our future, and I pose one question to everyone tonight. What can you do to help build this bridge for USITT? By joining together and embracing positive change, we will be able to build a bridge that secures the future of USITT for the next 50 years. Thank you!

This speech was presented at the Awards Banquet of the 48th Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Houston, Texas where Carl Lefko received the gavel of office. His two-year term runs from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2010.

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Midwest Plans Backstage Kooza Tour

On Saturday, July 12, **Midwest Regional Section** members and their guests will be able to go backstage at *Kooza*, one of Cirque Du Soleil's touring shows, while it is playing in Chicago. Participants will have a chance to see up close the unique way Cirque sets up in the parking lot of Chicago's United Center and is able to completely control the performance and audience environment.

Heads of departments who can be available will be there to talk about their respective departments on the show with a chance to talk with participants as well. The program will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. with time for a late lunch before the 4 p. m. performance. Although the program date is close, there may still be space available for the tour; however, tickets for the performance may not be available. Contact Steve Jacobs at sjacobs192@comcast.net with questions.

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HOA Plans Master Class, Workshops

Heart of America Regional Section announces Fall 2008 Master Class and Workshops September 13 and 14 at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas.

Saturday will feature John Ezell, noted designer and subject of a special exhibit at the 2007 USITT Stage Expo, speaking about his career and work. Mr. Ezell has designed for Broadway, the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Tony Award-winning Crossroads Theatre and Cincinnati Playhouse, Roundabout, Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C., Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, Royal Danish Ballet in Copenhagen, Swedish Riksteatern, and the Cullberg Ballet in Stockholm, Sweden.

The day will conclude with a backstage tour and production of *Les Miserables* at Kansas City's Starlight Theatre. Sunday will offer workshops on projections and virtual scenery by Kansas University's Mark Reaney, the Ion Lighting console and moving fixtures, faux marble painting, using Sketch-Up as a modeling tool, and a brief business meeting. [Click here](#) for more information and reservations.

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Workshops, Changes for Desert State

This month:

Midwest

Heart of America

Desert State

Fun in the Sun! Okay the Mountains. The **Desert State Regional Section** will be presenting two workshops for the price of one: Simplified Screenprinting 101 with Gail Wolfenden-Steib and Creating Shapes with Foss Material by Cat Dragon. Both workshops will be presented on Sunday August 17 at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona. For registration or more information, contact jimmiebyrd@msn.

The ballots have been tallied for this year's board election and the results are: Chair, Fran Sutherland; Second Vice-Chair, Laurie Kinckman; Secretary, Eric Johnson; and Member-at-Large, Ric Alpers.

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The Tuning your Palette – Lighting, a session held during the 2008 Annual Conference in Houston, Texas is an example of the type of interesting and informative sessions which are already in the planning stages for the 2009 USITT event in Cincinnati.

Photo/Tom Thatcher

Lots of Lighting Events Planned for Conference

Vickie Scott

Lighting Vice-Commissioner for Programming

The beautiful city of Cincinnati, Ohio has a strong link to those things near and dear to all of our hearts. Cincinnati's annual 20 Days & 20 Nights Festival of Arts & Culture is a funky, non-stop arts extravaganza. The Cincy Fringe Festival is 11 days of performance, arts, film, music, and just about everything in between! The Festival of Lights at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens annually flips the switch on over 2.5 million dazzling lights and more than 100 lighted displays in the city's longest-standing holiday tradition. Celebrating its river heritage, Cincinnati is the home of the world's largest paddlewheel festival (think *Showboat*). Heck, Cincinnati is even the home to the world's oldest Bock festival, BockFest, which, in addition to a lot of terrific beer, pays homage to the time when Cincinnati was one of America's most prolific brewing cities.

With plans for 16 sessions plus a full-day Professional Development Workshop, the Lighting Commission intends to keep up with the Queen City and its boomtown history by offering conference-goers variety and spice with the lighting session programming for the 49th Annual Conference & Stage Expo. Kicking off the conference with the full-day PDW, *Photographing Your Lighting Design*, participants will have a hands-on opportunity to learn and hone tips and tricks for photographing their lighting design. With *Architectural Dimming and Control*, today's leading lighting professionals will examine the different philosophies and directions in architectural lighting design. For

the lighting designer, magic sheets are one of the most important pieces of paper at the tech table. In *Magic Sheets AREN'T Magic*, a panel of professional lighting designers will discuss how they lay out their magic sheets and why it works for them.

Lighting Networks 101.101.101.101 will offer an introduction to the set-up and troubleshooting of lighting networks. *LD/Programmer Communication*, unofficially titled "Pimp My Show!" will give insight into the essentials of communication in contemporary lighting design by exploring the communication process and vocabulary between the lighting designer and the lighting programmer. *Entering the Workforce/What's in Your Toolbox?* will bring together industry professionals from the many facets of lighting design to discuss differences and skills needed to enter theatrical, concert, opera, industrial, and theme park lighting design. *Alternative Light Sources/Tricks of the Trade* will take us beyond tungsten versus halogen.

Dealing with projections and media servers in productions is an issue that has become more and more important in design. With the session *Media Servers*, "It's not your Momma's slide projector anymore!" High definition television is here. Learn the tricks of the trade for lighting in HD by attending *Lighting in High Def*. Last, but certainly not least, have you been appointed to be your own supervisor? Are you an LD/TD/SD/SM/Etc.? In the session *Other Duties As Assigned*, people with experience of "multiple responsibility disorder" share their solutions.

The Lighting Commission has an action-packed, fun-filled conference planned. By the way, be sure to have some Cincinnati-style chili while you're in town for the conference.

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Nate Otto, left, Health & Safety Commissioner, consults with Tom Hackman, Program Coordinator, during the USITT's recent tour of the Duke Energy Center in Cincinnati. Mr. Otto is a member of the Commissioner's Steering Committee which met with the Conference Committee to discuss programming for the 2009 Annual Conference & Stage Expo.

Photo/Barbara E.R. Lucas

Commission Leaders Provide Vital Connections for USITT

Kim Williamson
VP for Commissions

July is here, and it brings long summer days, Independence Day barbecues, fireworks, and summer reading. Many of the Commissions of USITT also look to the start of each July with new leadership. Each Commissioner who has served over the last several years mark their departures with a range of accomplishments that evidence their belief in and commitment to the essential constituency of USITT – the Commissions and their members.

For each year of a three-year term, a Commissioner prepares an annual budget; oversees the planning of programming for the annual conference; identifies or plans the process for special recognitions and awards; identifies projects and/or project leaders; assists in the process for funding proposals; plans, develops, and advertises symposia; and identifies agenda items for the retreat. And don't forget the time commitment to the conference Commissioners meetings and the preparation to run Commission meetings. The range of people who want to take on this job description as a volunteer are few and so much appreciated!

The 10 Commissions of USITT develop and mentor their leadership in a variety of ways. Many develop their leadership

through Vice-Commissioner positions. For instance, the VC for Programming will step up to Commissioner following one or two years of programming.

Several Commissions distribute the workload between Co-Commissioners with one being the "senior" and the other being the "junior." Other Commissions identify their leaders by observing who has been a consistent contributor to the work of the group and is ready to assume a leadership role. Amid the diverse methods by which leadership is identified, several things remain consistent. Each Commissioner has the gift to think big, the desire to move their discipline within the craft further ahead, a selflessness and generosity of time they dedicate to their Commissions, and the enjoyment for their commission members.

No recognition of Commission leadership would be complete without the inclusion of the Commissioner's Steering Committee. The function of the Steering Committee is to oversee the larger issues that affect the Commissions and provide an advisory role to the VP for Commissions.

The greatest task the Steering Committee takes on is the wrangling of the 10 Commissions' programming for each annual conference. Additionally, it makes recommendations on Commissioner's Fund allocations and retreat topics. Although Nate Otto, Commissioner of Health & Safety, officially begins his three-year term on the Steering Committee on July 1, he hit the ground running and provided excellent leadership and representation at the May Conference planning meeting in Cincinnati. He joins Tony Hardin and Carolyn Satter as the other members of the Steering Committee.

Why are these details important to include in an article on *new* leadership? When you see the job description of what a Commissioner's task is and combine it with the process of developing these leaders, it becomes evident that they are doing this job for more than the "thank you" gift they receive at the conference each year. Thank each of these people for the hours, days, and years they have provided their dedication and leadership to bring great things forward for *your* Commission.

A hearty thank you to outgoing Commissioners:

- Roy Harline, Technical Production Commissioner
- Mary Heilman, Scene Design Commissioner and Steering Committee representative

and welcome to incoming Commissioners & Programming Vice-Commissioners:

- Stirling Shelton - Co-Commissioner Technical Production with Fritz Schwentker
- Frank Ludwig, Co-Commissioner Scene Design with Karen Maness
- Anthony Shou, Vice-Commissioner for Programming –

Architecture

- Beth Martell, Vice-Commissioner for Programming –
Technical Production

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Music and performance have been a major part of life in Cincinnati for decades. At right, the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra entertains crowds at Riverbend Music. Cincinnati also has the second oldest opera company in America.

Photo/D.A. Fleischer

Performing Arts in Cincinnati

Kathie Brookfield

Cincinnati Promotions Coordinator

Many residents of the Greater Cincinnati area have taken a strong interest in the performing arts, establishing music societies for vocal and instrumental groups, bringing in touring performance groups, and establishing educational institutions devoted to training musicians, dancers, singers, and actors of all ages. When USITT visits the Queen City in March of 2008 attendees will find that Cincinnati is proud to have its own professional ballet, opera and regional theatre companies as well as active community theatres and individuals whose dreams have led them to be community leaders by promoting the arts to young people.

Music has played an important role in the cultural life of Cincinnati. The May Festival was established in 1873 and is the reason the Music Hall was designed, built, and opened with the 1878 performances. The May Festival Chorus was founded in 1880 and is still truly a community group composed of people of all ages and from all walks of life who love to sing.

The Cincinnati Symphony is the fifth oldest in the country and oldest in Ohio founded in 1895. It has a continuing international reputation of premiering works by Debussy, Ravel, and Bartok as well as commissioning new works. Most notable is Aaron Copeland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*.

The second oldest opera company in America was founded in

1920. The Cincinnati Opera performed in the summer at the Cincinnati Zoo Pavilion until it moved to its current home in Music Hall in 1972. It continues to perform four operas each summer that bring internationally known performers, directors, and designers to Cincinnati. The organization also provides outreach programs to school children with performances by members of their young artists program.

Cincinnati is the home of the last survivor of one of America's floating theatre traditions. The Showboat *Majestic* took to the Ohio River in Pennsylvania in 1923, with Tom Reynolds and his family of 11 who lived, traveled, and performed up and down the Ohio River and its tributaries. The boat was drydocked in Indiana due to the "Safety at Sea Act" of 1965. The City of Cincinnati purchased the boat and docked it at the central riverfront as a focal point for developing the area in 1967. It has continuously provided professional summer stock entertainment using local performers.

The Educational Theatre Association, established in 1929 as the National Thespians, works to promote and strengthen school theatre by recognizing and rewarding excellence and viewing theatre as an instrument of lifelong learning. The organization originally focused on secondary schools and has recently expanded to include middle school and college students preparing for careers in theatre education.

The Association of Community Theater – Cincinnati (ACT) has been operating since 1955 as a non-profit, service organization dedicated to supporting and developing community theatre in the Greater Cincinnati area. In 2005, ACT was inducted into the Ohio Community Theater Association Hall of Fame. There are 18 member groups that are non-professional companies providing communities with entertainment and performance opportunities.

The League of Cincinnati Theatres was established in 1999 to bring together quite a spectrum of groups involved in the performing arts. Anyone with an interest in the performing arts can join this organization. Members of this organization are non-profit production companies as well as actors, directors, playwrights, producers, designers, and venue suppliers such as costume shops, lighting suppliers, and services for sign language interpretation and ticketing.

There are 27 producing organizations including the Tony Award-winning professional regional theatre Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. This theatre was founded in 1959 and opened with its first performance in the Thompson Shelter House in Eden Park. In 1968 a second performance space opened allowing two productions to perform. It has won international acclaim performing in Canada, Europe, Asia, and Australia. A very important part of the community, it provides classes and entertainment programming to young people both on-site and touring in-school productions performed by a company of acting interns.

Founded in 1986, Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati is a professional equity theatre dedicated to the production and development of new works, and home to regional, world, and off-Broadway premier productions.

Three university programs also are members of the League. They include Northern Kentucky University, Xavier University Players, and The University of Cincinnati - College Conservatory of Music. The Conservatory is the largest single source of performing arts events with close to 1,000 performances per year ranging from solo vocal and instrumental recitals, chamber music, jazz ensembles, and full orchestras to full scale opera, musical theatre, drama, and dance performances.

Check out the League of Cincinnati Theatres' website for a complete listing of all the member organizations, and if time permits, enjoy what they have to offer when the 49th Annual Conference & Stage Expo is in Cincinnati from March 18 to 21, 2009.

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Committees Meet to Plan 2009 Conference in Cincy

Helen Willard

Stage Expo Sales Manager

Each May, members of the Conference Committee meet with the Commissioners Steering Committee to go over the programming schedule. During the day-long meeting, every session proposed for the conference was reviewed and scheduled for a particular day and time in a specific room. This year's meeting was held at the Hilton Netherland Plaza Hotel, which will be USITT's headquarters hotel during the 2009 Annual Conference & Stage Expo.

Tours of the Duke Energy Center's exhibit halls, meeting rooms, and ballrooms took place on Friday afternoon followed by a look at the meeting space and ballrooms at the Hilton. Afterward, many members of the group trekked to Arnold's, the oldest bar in Cincinnati, which was established in 1861. Others crossed one of the many bridges to Kentucky for dinner at a much newer restaurant, the Chart House, situated on Riverboat Row with a lovely view of the Ohio River and the Cincinnati skyline.

While in the "Queen City," members of the committee had an opportunity for a *Taste of Cincinnati* which took place on the street right in front of the hotel. There were about a half a million other people strolling and sampling, listening to music, and generally having a fine time.

To celebrate the end of another successful programming meeting, several members of the committee drove up Mt. Hope to Primavista, a northern Italian restaurant with a panoramic view of the downtown skyline, the Ohio River, stadiums, bridges, and

Several members of the USITT Conference Committee, along with the Commissioners Steering Committee and officers, visited the oldest bar in Cincinnati for food and music during a visit to the Ohio city. From left are Tammy Honesty, Nate Otto, Dan Denhart, Kim Williamson, the waitress, and Tony Hardin.

Photo/E.R. Lucas

northern Kentucky. Future visits will provide opportunities to check out more of the area's many fine restaurants.

Plan now to attend the 49th Annual USITT Conference & Stage Expo March 18 to 21 in Cincinnati. For information about exhibiting at Stage Expo, contact hpwillard@aol.com.

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Executive Committee

- Carl Lefko, *President*
- Patricia Dennis, *Secretary*
- Travis DeCastro, *Treasurer*
- Kim Williamson, *Vice-President for Commissions*
- Bobbi Owen, *Vice-President for Communications*
- Joe Aldridge, *Vice-President for Conferences*
- Alexandra Bonds, *Vice-President for International Activities*
- Michael Mehler, *Vice-President for Programming*
- Vacant, *Vice-President for Promotions & Development*
- Holly Monsos, *Vice-President for Members, Sections & Chapters*
- Daniel Denhart, *Vice-President for Special Operations*
- Sylvia Hillyard Pannell, *Immediate Past President*

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Directors at Large

2006-2009

- Leon Brauner
- Richard Dunham
- Debra Krajec
- Andi Lyons
- Donna Ruzika
- Bill Teague

2007-2010

- Lea Asbell-Swanger
- Nadine Charlson
- Michael Monsos
- Mark Shanda
- Sherry Wagner-Henry
- Craig Wolf

2008-2010

- Dan Culhane
- Mary Heilman
- David Krajec
- Carolyn Satter
- John S. Uthoff

- Monica Weinzapfel

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Honorary Lifetime Members

- Richard L. Arnold
- Willard F. Bellman
- Joy Spanabel Emery
- Eric Fielding
- Ted W. Jones
- Christine L. Kaiser
- Joel E. Rubin
- Tom Watson

USITT gratefully recognizes the individuals and businesses in these special categories of membership:

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Contributing Members

Sustaining Members

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Contributing Members

- American Harlequin Corporation
- Apollo Design Technology, Inc.
- Automatic Devices Company
- Barbizon Lighting Company
- Cirque du Soleil
- City Theatrical, Inc.
- J.R. Clancy, Inc.
- Clear-Com Communication Systems
- Creative Handbook
- Creative Stage Lighting Co., Inc.
- d&b audiotechnik
- Disney Entertainment Productions
- Electronic Theatre Controls (ETC)
- Entertainment Services & Technology Association (ESTA)
- Entertainment Technology
- Future Light
- GAMPRODUCTS, INC.
- H & H Specialties Inc.
- heatshrink.com
- InterAmerica Stage, Inc.
- KM Fabrics, Inc.
- Kryolan Corporation
- *Live Design Magazine*/LDI Show
- Martin Professional, Inc.

- MDG Fog Generators
- Meyer Sound Laboratories, Inc.
- Morris Architects
- Norcostco, Inc
- PRG
- Production Advantage, Inc.
- Rosco Laboratories, Inc.
- Rose Brand Theatrical Fabrics, Fabrications & Supplies
- SeaChanger by Ocean Optics
- SECOA
- Stage Research, Inc.
- StageRight Corporation
- Steeldeck Inc.
- Strand Lighting
- Syracuse Scenery & Stage Lighting Co., Inc.
- Texas Scenic Company
- Vari*Lite
- Vincent Lighting Systems
- Vortek, a division of Daktronics
- Walt Disney Entertainment
- Wenger Corporation
- ZFX, Inc.

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Sustaining Members

- A.C. Lighting Inc.
- AC Power Distribution, Inc.
- A.C.T Lighting, Inc.
- AKT3 Company
- ALPS/Advanced Lighting & Production Services, Inc.
- Altman Lighting, Inc.
- Audio Visual Professional Group, Inc.
- Auerbach·Pollock·Friedlander
- A V Pro, Inc.
- Bandit Lites, Inc.
- Ben Nye Makeup
- Brawner & Associates LLC
- Bright Star Productions, Inc.
- University of California - Davis
- California Institute of the Arts
- Center Theatre Group
- Checkers Industrial Products Inc.
- Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
- Cobalt Studios
- Columbus McKinnon Corp.
- Cosler Theatre Design
- The Crosby Group, Inc.
- Dazian Fabrics, LLC
- Designlab Chicago
- Electronics Diversified, LLC
- Fisher Theatrical, LLC
- Foy Inventerprises, Inc.

- GALA Systems, Inc.
- Gerriets International Inc.
- Grand Stage Company, Inc.
- GRT Genesis
- Hall Stage North America, Inc.
- The Hilliard Corporation
- Hollywood Lighting Services, Inc.
- I. Weiss
- International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees
- Irwin Seating Company
- Johnson Systems Inc.
- Kenmark, Inc.
- Kirkegaard Associates
- KUPO Industrial Corp
- LCS Series (Meyer Sound Laboratories, Inc.)
- Le Maitre Special Effects Inc.
- LEE Filters
- Lehigh Electric Products Co.
- Leprecon
- Leviton/NSI/Colortran
- Lex Products Corp.
- Lighting & Electronics, Inc.
- Limelight Productions, Inc.
- Lite-Trol Service Company, Inc.
- Live Production Institute
- Look Solutions USA, Ltd.
- LVH Entertainment Systems
- Lycian Stage Lighting
- LynTec
- The MAGNUM Companies, Ltd.
- Mainstage Theatrical Supply, Inc.
- Make-Up Designory
- Mehron, Inc.
- Musson Theatrical, Inc.
- Mutual Hardware
- Niscon Inc.
- North Carolina School of the Arts
- On Location Lighting Systems
- Ontario Staging Limited
- OSRAM SYLVANIA
- Pathway Connectivity
- Penn State University
- Period Corsets
- Production Intercom, Inc.
- Prolyte Products Group
- Protech Theatrical Services, Inc
- RC4 Wireless/Soundsculpture Inc.
- Robert Juliat America
- Sapsis Rigging Entertainment Services, Inc.
- Schuler Shook
- Sculptural Arts Coating, Inc.
- Selador/Shine Lighting
- Selecon

- Serapid, Inc.
- Show Distribution Group Inc.
- Skjonberg Controls, Inc.
- Smooth-On, Inc.
- South Dakota State University
- Spotlight S.R.L.
- Stage Decoration & Supplies, Inc.
- Stage Equipment and Lighting, Inc.
- Stage Technologies
- Stagecraft Industries, Inc.
- Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas
- StageLight, Inc.
- StageSpot
- Staging Concepts, Inc.
- Strong Entertainment Lighting
- University of Texas Performing Arts Center Scene Shop
- Theatre Arts Video Library
- Theatre Consultants Collaborative, LLC
- Theatre Projects Consultants, Inc.
- Theatre Victoria
- Thematics
- Thern Inc.
- James Thomas Engineering
- Tiffin Scenic Studios, Inc.
- TMB
- Tobins Lake Sales
- TOMCAT USA, Inc.
- Topac Inc.
- Turning Star Inc.
- Union Connector Co, Inc.
- VectorWorks Spotlight by NNA
- Wayne State University Dept. of Theatre
- Wireless Solution
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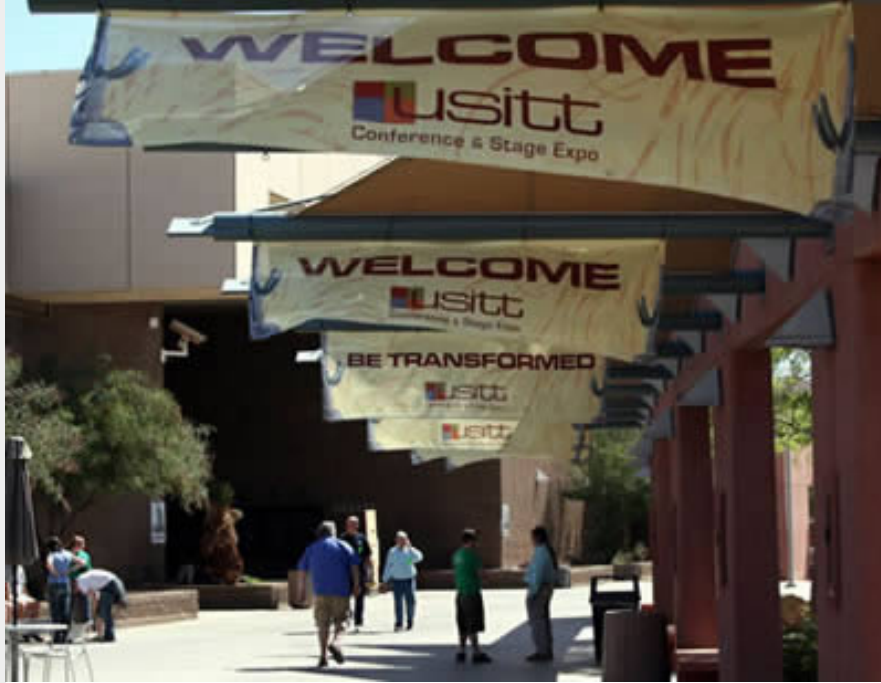
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The Phoenix Convention Center was named Phoenix Civic Plaza when USITT made the decision to hold its 2007 Annual Conference & Stage Expo in the facility. Between the time the contracts were signed and the event took place, portions of the building were demolished and were being reconstructed.

Photo/USITT Archives

Coming Soon! To a Convention Center Near You ☺ (Or Not ☹)

Joe Aldridge
Vice President for Conferences

I am frequently approached by members who want to know why we have been avoiding bringing the USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo to a city near them. All too often I am asked what I have against a particular area of the country or a city that they know would be "perfect" for the Conference. I take note of the suggestions and questions and try to be as open and honest as is possible in replying. After speaking with a regional section at the 2008 Conference in Houston, I decided that I should share the same information with the rest of the membership.

To be perfectly honest, we would really like to be able to hit every section, in rotation, as often as possible. The reality is that not every section has the resources – convention center, hotels, etc. – that can accommodate our event. Or, if a location has those resources, they are in such high demand that we are unable to negotiate a reasonable price for the use of those facilities, and it becomes unfeasible to bring the conference to that city or region.

The west coast is a prime example of that challenge. In the five

years I have been VP-Conferences, I have attempted to negotiate with San Diego, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Seattle, San Francisco/Oakland, Portland, and other west coast cities to no avail. We, the USITT Conference & Stage Expo, are an interesting anomaly. We require a tremendous amount of space, – 125,000+ square feet of exhibit space, 35 to 45 meeting rooms on a continuous basis for four days, and 4,000+ sleeping rooms.

In return, we don't generate what they consider "enough" income for these cities to lower the costs of the space needed to an amount that is affordable to both the Institute and to the members.

Generally, we can negotiate a decent price on the exhibit and meeting space but not on the sleeping rooms.

As many have noticed, the hotel room rates seem to be getting a bit higher each year. We work very hard to maintain a "reasonable" rate in the cities which are chosen. The six or so desirable cities on the West Coast have set room rates starting at \$225 and going higher. Not many members, attendees, or exhibitors can afford three to five nights at that rate. We may have to bite the bullet and pay those prices if we are to take the conference to any of these sites which members consider more desirable in the future.

Price isn't the only sticking point in negotiations. Dates play an important part in finding a suitable location. Traditionally, USITT's Conference is held the second or third weekend in March. On occasion, we go outside of those dates if we are able to negotiate a really good deal for the membership. These dates are prime dates for other conferences and conventions as well, which can create challenges for us in negotiating for a venue that we really want to visit with the conference. We attempt to negotiate as far in advance as is practical in order to lock in favorable rates.

Several times in the recent past, we were fortunate enough to look at cities that had open dates with circumstances that favored USITT. Phoenix was in the midst of a major renovation to the convention center, had open dates, and desperately needed to do business just to show others that they were still operating in spite of the chaos that seemed to be present due to the renovation.

Louisville also was facing a challenge that worked to our benefit. Cincinnati was willing to negotiate rates if we would sign a two-year deal, so 2009 and 2015 became the dates we will be holding the conference in Cincinnati. Unfortunately, we can not count on finding those "bargains" every time we sit down to negotiate.

While many cities seem to be ideal sites for the conference (at least in someone's mind), the harsh reality is that, until we can do a site visit to examine the resources closely, we don't know what we will discover that could prevent us from seriously considering that city as a viable site. In the past five years I have visited numerous cities. While examining the facilities available, we often find that the folks at the local Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) are more optimistic than realistic when talking about the

adequacy of their resources.

We produce an RFP (request for proposal) that is very detailed and precise in what we need (minimally) to produce our conference. Even so, I have encountered CVB representatives who insist that our show can be done in a venue that is 2/3 the size needed. Unfortunately, this has occurred in cities that otherwise could have been a perfect fit for our conference.

Finding ways to provide our Conference with the ideal location, nearby hotels with reasonably-priced rooms, and a whole variety of other factors takes time. I have been fortunate to have seen dozens of wonderful cities, have met lots of interesting people, and have personally viewed hundreds of hotel guest rooms, one at a time! All of this was accomplished while educating CVB and hotel representatives about USITT and the good work done by its members.

As I often explain, USITT is a unique organization with very specific needs. The success our of Annual Conference & Stage Expo means we must spend the time and resources to be assured of the correct "fit" that helps make our events so enjoyable to our vendors, members, and guests.

I urge you all to join us in Cincinnati this March and in Kansas City in 2010, see whether you agree with our choices, and then suggest a location for future Conferences.

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