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# Sightlines

November 2009

Lead Story

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usitt ohio valley

wishes USITT a Happy 50th Birthday!

The Ohio Valley Regional Section of USITT took time during its recent fall seminar to help start the celebration of USITT's 50th anniversary. Ohio Valley was just one of many regional sections which have been active this fall.

To learn more about regional activities, [click here](#). For a reflection, triggered by a visit to the Southeast section Master Classes, by President Carl Lefko, [click here](#).

Photo/Courtesy Tammy Honesty

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The Norwegian National Opera and Ballet in Oslo, Norway was one of two Honor Award winners in the 2009 USITT Architecture Awards program. Deadline is December 1 for entering the 2011 competition.

## December 1 Deadline to Submit Architecture Awards Entries

December 1 is the deadline to submit entries for the USITT Architecture Awards for 2010. Submission information, requirements, and entry forms are available [here](#), or by contacting the USITT office at 800-938-7488 ext. 101 or [info@office.usitt.org](mailto:info@office.usitt.org).

The Architecture Awards program is celebrating its 17th year in bringing public and professional recognition to architecture design of theatre projects. The program is open to any new construction or renovation completed since January 1, 2000. Architects practicing anywhere within the seven continents may enter one or more submissions. The USITT Architecture Awards jury will evaluate projects on creativity, contextual resonance, functional operation, exploration of new technologies, and community contribution. Awards will be presented at the 2010 Conference & Stage Expo in Kansas City, Missouri.

Winners are chosen by a jury of noted architecture professionals. For the 2010 awards, jurors will be Barton Myers, FAIA, president/design principal of Barton Myers & Associates of Los Angeles, California; Damian J. Doria, FASA, one of Artec's principal auditorium designers and principal acousticians; and D.J. Palladino, award-winning arts writer and editor based in Santa Barbara, California, who has been publishing articles on film,

theatre, art, food, and popular culture since 1978.

Award-winning projects will be displayed as part of USITT's Stage Expo which will run March 31 to April 2 at the Kansas City Convention & Entertainment Facilities. All submissions will be discussed during a session at the Annual Conference.

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## PLASA, ESTA Intend to Merge

PLASA (headquartered in the United Kingdom) and ESTA (headquartered in North America), two of the leading bodies worldwide for those working in the live events, entertainment, and communications industries, have signed a letter of intent to merge.

The announcement comes after long-term strategic reviews conducted by both organizations which believe uniting as one body will lead to a stronger voice for members, the enhancement of existing initiatives, and an expansion of the range of benefits and services.

The proposed merger has the full backing of both the ESTA board of directors and the PLASA executive committee, who voted on the proposal this summer and who will formally recommend the move to their respective memberships, subject to due diligence being completed successfully during the spring/summer of 2010. If both memberships vote to go ahead, the first stage of the merger will be completed by December 2010, effectively creating an industry-wide membership network of over 1,100 dealers, manufacturers, installers, service providers, and consultants operating under the PLASA name. This will also include members of PERA - the Production Equipment Rental Association - whose members work across the film, video, and broadcast industries and which recently merged with ESTA.

Any merger will be a continuation of an already established relationship between the two organizations which have worked together on a range of initiatives for many years and who share the same aims and objectives.

The planned merger will not lead to any immediate changes, and the direct priority for the ESTA and PLASA teams will be to continue to serve the joint membership in the strongest, most relevant ways possible.

Work on key initiatives will continue as before and in many cases will be considerably strengthened by the projected merger. ESTA's industry-leading Technical Standards Program has always received active participation from PLASA and its members, and the planned merger envisions a further development of this essential project.

The commitment to furthering industry skills will also remain a



Your Association with Expertise

key priority, and while the methods of implementation differ, the goals of increasing the level of knowledge and skills in the industry and creating a safer working environment are jointly shared and will be fully implemented.

Other initiatives, such as market research, will be strengthened with current research exercises expanded and opportunities for additional research explored.

ESTA president Bill Groener and PLASA chairman Rob Lingfield view the proposed merger as a significant and essential move for members of both organizations, who, they believe, will benefit from having a much strengthened representative body safeguarding their interests and developing their commercial advantages.

In a joint statement, PLASA CEO Matthew Griffiths and ESTA executive director Lori Rubinstein said, "This is essentially about doing what is best for our members. The proposed merger will radically enhance what we can achieve on behalf of the companies and individuals we represent, making us a more effective and informed advocate for the industry. The industry needs an organization that is responsive to its members' needs and one where they feel fully connected and involved. We share common goals and objectives and a united approach to the issues and challenges of our market will provide major long-term benefits and greatly broaden the role of the organization."

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## Announcements

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**Looking for 2011 Conference Programming**

Is it 2011 all ready? Not yet, but the Lighting Commission is gearing up for the 2011 conference and is looking for ideas and session submissions. Sessions may consist of a single speaker, round table discussion, interactive workshop, or panel discussion. The workshops are 75 minutes long and should focus on lighting technology, design, history, education, safety, or projections. 2011 will be a Light Lab year so ideas for displays in the lab are also being sought.

The Lighting Commission will review and submissions at the 2010 Conference & Stage Expo in Kansas City. Download the [submission form](#) and e-mail it to [todd.proffitt.ld@gmail.com](mailto:todd.proffitt.ld@gmail.com) or fill out the [online form](#). To volunteer to work on the 2011 conference, come to the Lighting Commission meeting in Kansas City.

[To Top](#) ↑**Company's Rebates to Benefit Behind the Scenes**

Lighting & Electronics, Inc. is using a new program offered by the LDI show as a way to give back to the industry and is issuing a challenge to all LDI exhibitors to follow in its steps.

LDI is offering a small rebate to exhibitors for every client that registers, uses the exhibitor's unique code, attends the show in Orlando, Florida November 20 to 22, and verifies on site. Lighting & Electronics has embarked on an active public relations campaign encouraging customers to attend and announced it will donate its entire rebate to Behind the Scenes.

Visit Lighting & Electronics at LDI in booth #1327 or [www.le-us.com](http://www.le-us.com). LDI 2009 will be held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando.

Behind the Scenes is an initiative of The ESTA Foundation to provide industry members with financial support when they are seriously ill or injured. For more information, to donate, or to apply for a grant, visit [www.estafoundation.org/bts.htm](http://www.estafoundation.org/bts.htm).

Behind the Scenes will hold its annual fundraising raffle at LDI with first prize a \$7,500 dream vacation, and will sell its custom designed holiday cards. Visit Booth #1343.

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This month:  
2011 Programming  
Behind the Scenes  
Fog Standards

## **Seek Review of Revised Fog Effects Standard**

BSR E1.23 - 200x, *Entertainment Technology - Design and Execution of Theatrical Fog Effects*, is available for public review through November 9. The BSR E1.23 project is a revision of the existing ANSI E1.23 - 2006 standard, which offers advice on planning and executing theatrical fog effects using glycol, glycerin, or white mineral oil fogs, or mists in theatres, arenas, and other places of entertainment or public assembly.

In addition to being asked to review the document to see if it offers adequate advice, reviewers are asked to notify ESTA of any protected intellectual property in the draft standard.

Comments must be received by the end of the day on November 9. For more information, please contact: Karl G. Ruling, Technical Standards Manager, ESTA; 875 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1005, New York, NY 10001; 1-212-244-1505; or standards@esta.org.

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# Seek Comments on Rigging Labeling Standard

**Jerry Gorrell**

*USITT Standards Committee Chair*

Comments are being sought for the standard RP-4 *Recommended System for Labeling Rigging Unknowns*.

Because teaching rigging math is a relatively new field and most instructors have been self taught, there is little consistency in labeling the variables. Imagine if the variables in the Pythagorean theorem were different in different math classes. C is always the hypotenuse of the triangle and the sides adjacent to the right angle are A and B. This consistency makes the formula recognizable everywhere.

The inconsistency in the use of the variables in rigging equations is causing confusion among young riggers and those new to rigging. To assist in correcting this inconsistency the USITT Standards Committee has been working with well known rigger Rocky Paulson, who has drafted a *Recommended System for Labeling Rigging Unknowns*.

The USITT Standards Committee is requesting that members review the recommended practice and submit any comments to: Jerry Gorrell, jgorrell@jgorrell.com; 15514 East Bumblebee Lane, Fountain Hills, AZ 85268.

Deadline for submitting comments is January 3, 2010.



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## Free or Discounted Magazines & Periodicals

**Michelle L. Smith**

*Membership & Ad Sales Manager*



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Special discounts for students and international members are available at the USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo.

## TECHNICAL BRIEF

Discounts on Individual and Institutional one- and three-year subscriptions. To subscribe, visit [www.technicalbrief.org](http://www.technicalbrief.org) and enter your member number on the printable order form. For more information or questions, call 203-432-8188 or e-mail [laraine.sammler@yale.edu](mailto:laraine.sammler@yale.edu).

Click [here](#) for a complete list of member discounts. For instructions on accessing a discount, select the item of interest and enter user name (USITT member number) and password (last name) at the prompt.

Questions or suggestions for a new benefit can be directed to Membership & Ad Sales Manager Michelle L. Smith at 800-938-7488 ext. 102 or [michelle@office.usitt.org](mailto:michelle@office.usitt.org).

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## In Memoriam

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## In Memoriam: Harry Donovan

**Bill Sapsis**

*USITT Fellow*

Harry Donovan passed away last Wednesday (September 23) night after a prolonged illness.

I first met Harry when we worked together helping to put together the rigging certification exams for the ETCP. I also had the opportunity to teach with him in Atlanta. It turned out to be one of his last teaching engagements.

I'm not going to kid you, working with Harry wasn't one of the easiest things I've ever done. When describing to a colleague the experience of working on the exams with Harry I said that I thought the word obstreperous had been invented solely to describe his attitude during that process. The difference between Harry and most of the rest of us, however, was that he had the skills to back up his opinions.

Harry was one of the best riggers the rock and roll world has ever known. His instincts were phenomenal. I do not know if he had an engineering degree, but he knew more about rigging engineering than just about anyone else in the business. He knew what he was doing and he was seldom wrong.

Harry's lasting legacy, of course, is his book, *Entertainment Rigging*. It's a monumental work and the amount of information contained in it is staggering. The effort required to put together such a book is evidence of his passion for training and his conviction that a clear and complete understanding of the rigging business is essential to anyone who ever wants to be called a rigger. My autographed copy (he had a quirky, almost disbelieving smile on his face when he signed it) has a place of honor in my office, right next to Jay Glerum's book and Randy Davidson's.

In a world full of distractions he remained singularly focused. I don't think he much cared what others thought of him or his methods. He was determined to show the world the right way to be a rigger and he wasn't going to let much get in his way.

He was gruff and he could be short tempered. But deep down he cared about us all. He cared enough to write a book. He cared enough to devote time to the ETCP exams and he cared enough to spend a good portion of his career training those who are to come



after him just how the job is supposed to be done.

It's sad when anyone passes on and even sadder when it's before their time. But pass on he has. Harry, for your work, your guidance and your friendship I thank you.

---

Harry Donovan of Seattle, Washington, died September 23 after a prolonged illness. He was born July 3, 1943 in Bath, Maine and graduated from Antioch College on Ohio with degrees in engineering and theatre. He started out as a lighting designer and electrician before becoming a rock and roll rigger.

He founded Donovan Rigging in 1988 and provided services for new projects, venues, and installations including permanent systems for the Chicago Bulls Arena, the Phoenix Suns Arena, and airplanes at the Museum of Flight in Seattle. He also did inspections and investigations of rigging accidents and was an expert witness. He was the author of *Entertainment Rigging*, first published in 1990.

He was a long time member of IATSE, USITT, and ESTA.

Mr. Donovan is survived by his wife, Patty; his mother, Constance Donovan; two brothers, Tom and Robert; two sisters, Gail Donovan Kesich and Kaja Donovan; several nieces and nephews; and members of the Berg family in Boise, Idaho.

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All those who were able to attend Scenofest 2007, which was held in conjunction with that year's Prague Quadrennial, found it to be both colorful and in challenging.

Photo/R. Finkelstein

## Scenofest Events to Blanket Prague

Scenofest 2011, to be held June 16 to 26, 2011 in Prague, Czech Republic, has some exciting events that will be spread throughout the historic city. Scenofest is a special project organized by OISTAT in cooperation with the Prague Quadrennial.

Scenofest 2011, led by Cindy Limauro (United States lighting designer and educator), will take over the whole of the Prague Academy of the Performing Arts near the Charles Bridge as well as specific sites in the center of Prague. It will include workshops for over 1,500 students in scenography, lighting, digital media, projections, sound design, costumes, puppetry, technical theatre, and many other disciplines. The events will include *Six Acts*, *Street Stories*, *The Gift*, and workshops.

*Six Acts* is a series of site specific spectacles in the heart of Prague created by students from all over the world led by prominent international artists. Each Act will respond to the rich history of these sites – the ordinary and the extraordinary daily life – to uncover the stories that have become lost even to the local inhabitants. Five international student teams will create a series of performances and installations over consecutive days during the Prague Quadrennial. The sixth Act will consist of a “way-finding” workshop to help audiences find the Acts and the Acts find their audiences.

Artists and groups invited to lead the Acts are: Theatre Titanick

(Germany), Mapa Teatro (Columbia), Roma Patel (United Kingdom), Tomáš Žižka and Petr Matásek (Czech Republic), and Fiona Watt (United Kingdom).

*Street Stories* will be a series of performances created for the streets of Prague. Students will submit performances especially made for an outdoor space in Prague; performances that uncover the invisible city; costumes inspired by the invisible city; lighting that makes the invisible, visible; and sounds that reveal the hidden thoughts of the city. A public square will be designated as the site. Submissions will be based only on portable technologies. No electricity or technical support will be provided. Maximum length of performance will be 30 minutes (not including 10 minutes set up and 10 minutes strike).

The final piece is *The Gift* – a juried design exhibit that will use the internet to share storytelling across cultural boundaries. The notion of *The Gift* is about human solidarity and cosmopolitanism. It invites students to develop a performance/gesture/act based on the idea of the gift between groups of young artists from the four corners of the world using the internet as a platform of exchange. During this project, exchange teams will be chosen (based on this call for proposals), ideas formulated over a period of time and “gifts” exchanged via a designated website.

Every gift exchange that is deemed sufficiently conceptualized will be digitally exhibited at Scenofest/PQ11 and will be available on the web. This project is designed to include those who would like to participate in Scenofest but are unable to travel to Prague. Approximately 20 projects will be critiqued by a professional jury and publicly discussed over the 10 days of Scenofest, broadcast in real time via the website.

Scenofest 2011 will offer workshops in lighting, digital media, projections, sound design, costumes, puppetry, scenography, installation arts, technical theatre, crafts, dramaturgy, directing, theatre architecture, and virtual theatre. Scenofest 2011 workshops will take place in the Prague Performing Arts Academy and other specific sites in the center of Prague.

More information about Scenofest will be posted on the [Scenofest/PQ website](#).

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## Showboat Featured in Chronicle

Photo/Leiah Stevermer,  
Minnesota Centennial Showboat

The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities' Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, through its summer production program, the Minnesota Centennial Showboat, was featured in a recent issue of *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

According to Sherry Wagner-Henry, Showboat's managing director, the *Chronicle* asked to do the feature on Showboat because of the uniqueness of the training program, the venue, and the role both public and private partnerships play in its management.

"We're really proud of the substantial role that Showboat programming and training has played in the lives of our students, our community and the University of Minnesota. In addition to the student performers, both design/tech students and management students get a chance to practice their craft and get paid real world wages for applying their skills and training in a professional theatre setting. It is applied learning at its very best!"

The article can be accessed at the [Chronicle's website](#).



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## Recognitions New to USITT



This unique recognition pin has been created as a way to say, “thank you” to the more than 70 USITT members who are completing their five-year contributions to the **USITT@50 Securing our Future** campaign. Donors to this campaign are recognized on the USITT Honor Roll of Giving that appears online and in the annual *Membership Directory & Resource Guide*.



USITT’s Board of Directors has established four levels of financial support by major donors as part of the 50th year celebration. Major donors are permanently listed on the USITT Honor Roll of Giving for their both current support and/or estate planning gifts.

These pins are a continuing reminder of how important these individuals are to help achieve many of the Institute’s goals. That would not be possible without the generosity of USITT’s members.

As of October 1, the five-year fundraising appeals have realized more than \$500,000 in direct gifts, estate planning, and matching incentives. Those gifts build the funds which support awards, grants, and recognitions.



We continue to thank each of these special donors for their effort  
in **Securing Our Future**.

**Lawrence A. Hill**  
*USITT@50*  
*Chair*

**Richard Durst**  
*USITT@50 Honorary*  
*Chair*

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**Henry Named to New Post**

Sherry Wagner-Henry, USITT Director at Large, has accepted a new position at the University of Minnesota as director of graduate programs for the College of Continuing Education beginning November 2. She is resigning from the managing director position in the theatre arts and dance department but will keep a part-time contract with the Showboat program for a few months while the department finds a replacement. Her new position will focus immediately on launching a new graduate program in arts and cultural leadership which she helped develop. Another major responsibility is to work with colleges, other units on campus, and community organizations in creating and launching new professional graduate degree programs.

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**Byrnes Named Interim Associate Provost**

William J. Byrnes, USITT Past President, has been named interim associate provost and dean of graduate studies at Southern Utah University. Mr. Byrnes has been Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts at the university, located in Cedar City, Utah.

He also co-chairs the Strategic Planning Steering Committee this year while continuing to teach a graduate seminar each semester in the arts administration program.

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**Launch of the First Night Riders**

The First Night Riders, is an annual fundraising, international, industry-based motorcycle tour of British theatres. It is a group of bikers connected to entertainment who take part on a long fun-ride raising money for good causes. The idea for The First Night Riders (motto Out of the Wings and into the Wind) came out of the tire tracks of America's Long Reach Long Riders.

The inaugural event for the First Night Riders in 2010 will raise money for the Theatrical Guild, one of the United Kingdom's longest serving theatrical charities which offers support to those working



This month:  
Sherry Wagner- Henry  
William J. Byrnes  
First Night Riders  
J.R. Clancy's Catalogs

backstage and front of house.



Launched at PLASA '09 by Brian Conley and Liz Robertson, both currently starring in *Hairspray*; Issy van Randwyck of *Fascinating Aida*, and actress Fiona Mollison, the event has already enlisted Richard Bullimore, Steve Colley, Neil Collins, David Edelstein, George Ellerington, Ric Green, Darrell Hewitt, Simon Le Bon, Simon Nichols, Michael Powell, and Bill Sapsis from the United States. The latest recruit, John Barnes, was signed up at the press launch.

Starting on Friday, June 5, the round Britain ride will take in new, interesting, and historically significant theatres around the UK, visiting one or two each day.

To keep up to date with riders and sponsors, and find out more about the event, visit the [site](#). Anyone wishing to take part or pledge support (or both) may contact the organizers at [info@firstnightride.com](mailto:info@firstnightride.com).

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### **Clancy Seeking Catalogs**

**J.R. Clancy, Inc.**, based in Syracuse, New York is entering its 125th year of manufacturing theatre rigging equipment. Remarkably, they have a good collection of old Clancy catalogs but not a complete one.

Are there USITT members who could help the company give itself a birthday present and complete its collection? The goal is to create electronic copies of the collection which could then be used as a research source for technical theatre.

We know that some members keep materials for a really long time, and others have inherited collections in their facilities. Have you seen one of the following Clancy catalogs?

- Catalog #3 dated 1887 or 1888
- Catalog #4 dated 1887 or 1888
- Catalog #13 dated 1896 to 1898
- Catalog #27 dated 1916 to 1918
- Catalog #29 dated 1918 to 1921

Rodney Kaiser of Clancy says “We do not have great expectations but do have hope and are happy to pay \$200 for each of the missing editions.” Contact him at [rodkaiser@jrclancy.com](mailto:rodkaiser@jrclancy.com)

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**TP Working in Dallas, Connecticut**

**Theatre Projects Consultants** is putting final touches on two unparalleled performing arts spaces: the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre and the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House, as last-minute preparations continue for the October 15 grand opening of the AT&T Performing Arts Center in Dallas.

Theatre Projects celebrates over two decades of involvement in the planning and building of one of the country's most ambitious new centers for the arts. The new AT&T Performing Arts Center is the final piece to complete the Dallas Arts District, a unique, 68-acre, 19-block neighborhood for the arts in Dallas which includes the Dallas Museum of Art, the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, the Nasher Sculpture Center, the Trammell and Margaret Crow Collection of Asian Art, and the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts.

In downtown Richmond, Virginia Theatre Projects teamed up with Wilson Butler Architects and acoustician Jaffe Holden on Richmond CenterStage performing arts complex. The work includes the restoration and renovation of the Carpenter Theatre for large-scale productions and the adaptive reuse of a local icon, Thalhimier's department store, into Dorothy Pauley Square, a home for local artists.

Theatre Projects is an international team of theatre designers and planners creating extraordinary performance spaces around the world. The team is based in Connecticut and London, with regional offices in Düsseldorf and Shanghai. For more information, visit [theatreprojects.com](http://theatreprojects.com).

[To Top](#) ↑**Open House December 7**

This month:  
Theatre Project Consultants

Creative Stage Lighting

Rosco

ETC

PRG

J.R. Clancy, Inc.

GAMPRODUCTS

Vortek, a division of  
Daktronics, Inc.

**Creative Stage Lighting** will hold its final Open House series December 7 at North Coast Theatrical in Akron, Ohio. Open houses are free for attendees.

Hosted with CSL Dealer Members, CSL Open Houses bring the latest lighting and entertainment technology direct to CSL's Dealer Network, providing an opportunity for Dealer Members to demonstrate new products to their clients.

New products and technology shown during the Open Houses includes Wireless Solutions W-DMX, Color Kinetics LED fixtures, Compulite consoles, and JB-lighting's JBLED A7. For more information, visit the open house [website](#).

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### **Supergel Keeps on Giving**

Since 2003, when **Rosco** introduced number 313 Light Relief Yellow to its Supergel range, the company has contributed thousands of dollars to the United Kingdom charity Light Relief, and at PLASA/09 one of the charity's trustees, John Simpson, accepted a donation for over \$4,100.



Making the presentation, Mark Engel, president of Rosco, said: "This is the largest check we have presented to Light Relief since the program began, with total contributions now in excess of \$19,000, funded totally by purchases of number 313 Supergel."

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### **ETC Aides Light Relief, Museum Lighting**

When **ETC** introduced its iRFR (Radio Focus Remote for iPhone and iPod Touch) four months ago, Luke Delwiche from ETC Tech Services in London suggested that the profits be shared between Light Relief and its United States equivalent, Behind the Scenes. At PLASA/09, Mr. Delwiche was delighted to present a check for £1,800 (almost \$3,000 U.S.) to Light Relief.

When users purchase the iRFR application from the iTunes store, they designate the charity of their choice. The Light Relief or Behind the Scenes logo then appears as the iRFR start screen.



New York's famed Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA) has new exhibit lighting as part of its renovated American Wing courtyard. The lighting system is sophisticated in its design and effect, yet simple to operate, maintain, and remotely control from 60 feet below. At the helm of the control is an ETC Ion lighting console.

For more information on ETC and its products, visit [www.etcconnect.com](http://www.etcconnect.com).

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### **PRG Supports U2's Tour**

Following a highly successful European leg, the U2 360-degree Tour has landed in America, breaking stadium attendance records. It features a production design unlike any seen before.

**PRG's** Concert Touring group supplied the entire lighting package for the tour, which also included the PRG Series 400 Power and Data Distribution System.



For more information on PRG, visit [www.prg.com](http://www.prg.com).

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### **Portugal Theatre Picks Clancy**

The decision to buy an automated rigging system was easy for the TEMPO theatre in Portimao, Portugal. Selecting the right manufacturer posed a greater challenge. TEMPO's technical staff came to the United States to visit installations, talk to users, and get hands-on experience with the equipment. Their experiences led them to choose PowerLifts automated hoists and a SceneControl 500 control system, both manufactured by **J. R. Clancy, Inc.**

More information about J. R. Clancy is available at [www.jrclancy.com](http://www.jrclancy.com), or by calling 800-836-1885.

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### **GAM Introduces Prism Rotator**

**GAMPRODUCTS, Inc.** has introduced the PRISMO variable speed prism rotator. PRISMO joins a family of GAMPRODUCTS accessories designed to work with ellipsoidal spotlights in order to create motion and special effects. PRISMO is available with either a three or five element prism.

The PRISMO is one of several accessories, like GAM's original TwinSpin, Film/FX and the SX4, designed to interface with a standard ellipsoidal spotlight. To learn more about the PRISMO and other GAM products, check out [www.gamonline.com](http://www.gamonline.com).

Contact GAMPRODUCTS, Inc. by phone 323-935-4975 or mail at 4975 West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90019.

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### **Paget Named Sales Manager**

**Vortek, a division of Daktronics, Inc.**, announced that Edward A. (Ted) Paget assumed the responsibilities of sales manager. He replaced Mike Cooper, who led the transition of Vortek since its acquisition by Daktronics in October 2006. Mr. Paget will continue his responsibilities as regional sales manager (North Central Region and Canada).

His leadership brings experience to the New York-based division of Daktronics. After 30 years of designing theatres and other public assembly facilities in Canada and the United States, Mr. Paget joined the Vortek sales team in 2007. A graduate of York University's Glendon College located in Toronto, Ontario, he spent 10 years as a Toronto-based theatrical designer and consultant. Prior to joining Vortek, he was vice president and senior associate with Jones & Phillips Associates, Inc., an international theatrical consulting and architectural lighting firm out of Lafayette, Indiana. Mr. Paget is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada, USITT, and CITT and a former member of the American Society of Theatre Consultants.

For additional information on Vortek and its rigging systems, visit the company's [website](#), e-mail [sales@vortekrigging.com](mailto:sales@vortekrigging.com), or call 1-866-4VORTEK.

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### LinkLift Installed in Dallas

**Serapid** LinkLift mechanical lift columns were installed at the Dee and Charles Wyly Theater as well as the Winspear Opera House in Dallas, part of the AT&T Performing Arts Center.

At the Wyly Theater, the lift columns are incorporated into this truly unique performance space to allow directors to change the configuration of the all-glass, vertically stacked building at the push of a button. At the horseshoe-shaped Winspear Opera House, the lift columns are incorporated to allow for a quick switch between opera and musical theatre to dance performances.

For more information, contact SERAPID at 800-663-4514, or visit [www.serapid.com](http://www.serapid.com).

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### Wybron Hits the Road

The **Wybron** Mobile Showroom, a custom-built, state-of-the-art enclosure which hit the road for its first leg of stops in October, will provide hands-on demonstration of Wybron offerings and an opportunity for tête-à-tête with lighting

professionals, including their local dealers. Most importantly, the Mobile Showroom offers education on the general theory behind and mechanics of professional lighting to an audience who may be unfamiliar with either or both. Stops are currently planned November 2 and 3 in Alexandria, Virginia at Barbizon; November 4 in Hanover, Maryland at Fisher Theatrical; November 5 in Frederick, Maryland and November 6 at Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

Wybron also updated its Moiré Gobo Library iPhone application adding Goboland, InLight Grayscale, and GAM Halftone gobos.

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### New Faces, Workshops at TOMCAT

This month:  
Serapid, Inc.

Wybron, Inc.

TOMCAT USA, Inc.

Thern Stage Equipment

TMB

Auerbach Glasow French

Schuler Shook





**TOMCAT USA, Inc** announced that Don Dimitroff, formerly sales manager for Columbus McKinnon, joined TOMCAT USA's team as sales and marketing director. In his new position, he will oversee field sales and marketing.



Brad Barnhill was appointed brand manager. In this capacity, he will coordinate all activities related to new product development and strategic marketing with emphasis in strengthening brand penetration.

The company also announced the return of its Hoist & Truss Workshop for the 2009 LDInstitute. Space is still available for the workshop November 18 and 19 at the LDI Show in Orlando, Florida. For more information on the workshop, visit the LDI site. For more information regarding any of TOMCAT USA's workshops, contact Lisa Jebsen at 432-681-6725 or via email at [lisa.jebsen@tomcatusa.com](mailto:lisa.jebsen@tomcatusa.com).

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### **Thern Offers Improved, New Products**

**Thern Stage Equipment** (TSE) announced its next-generation Clew Winch line sets and its Pilewind Hoist Systems are now available.

The improved line sets deliver the reliability theatre operators have come to expect from TSE with the addition of new features designed for superior performance and security. The latest addition to its innovative line of theatre rigging products, Pilewind line sets provide theatre operators a variety of convenient installation options in a compact system.



To learn more about these products, call TSE at 800-553-2204, e-mail [info@thernstage.com](mailto:info@thernstage.com), or visit [www.thernstage.com](http://www.thernstage.com).

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### **TMB Launched Products at PLASA**

**TMB** launched new products at PLASA 2009. The TMB “Village” featured hands-on demos.

New products include amBIENT XC from amBX, ProShell, Atex LED, ProPlex RMT, ProPlex GBS, Solaris CF-35 strobe, and ProFan.

TMB Architectural displayed a comprehensive range of architectural solutions and showed an array of popular products for the entertainment professional. Find out more about products and services offered by TMB at [www.tmb.com](http://www.tmb.com).

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### **Wins Lighting Design Awards**

**Auerbach Glasow French**, architectural lighting design and consulting firm, has won two international lighting design awards for the newly renovated and reinstalled Wrightsman Galleries for French Decorative Arts at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

The International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD) Award of Excellence, one of the highest honors given by that program, was presented May 6. Additionally, the Award of Merit of the International Illumination Design Awards was awarded to the designers by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA). The IESNA Award was announced on May 12 and will be presented on November 15 at the IES Annual Conference.

The Wrightsman Galleries hold the museum’s renowned collection of French furniture and decorative arts housed in elegant 18th century rooms.

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### **Schuler Shook Announces Appointments, Honors**

**Schuler Shook** recently announced a new senior lighting designer in Dallas, Texas as well as another employee being accepted as a full member of the American Society of Theatre Consultants (ASTC).

Jefferey F. Knox joined Schuler Shook’s Dallas office as a senior lighting designer. He has over 24 years of experience in lighting design, including running his own lighting firm, Luminous Design. His work experience in project management and design in New York City, Los Angeles, and Denver has exposed him to a diversity of project types. His project base is both national and international with well over 200 projects constructed in the United States, Europe, the Caribbean, and the South Pacific. He has taught at New York University School of Continuing Education and served as adjunct faculty at Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design. He continues his own research into



the spectral characteristics of light.

Jody Kovalick was accepted as a full member of ASTC at the organization's forum September 11 to 13 in Portland, Oregon. Mr. Kovalick was upgraded to a full member after exhibiting a broad range of capability and experience to his peers. He has been a theatre consultant for eight years. He was a member of the inaugural class of the ASTC Intern Program while a student in the MFA program at Yale, and was subsequently accepted as an associate member in 2006. He works in the Minneapolis office of Schuler Shook where his current theatre consulting work includes the Minnesota Shubert Performing Arts & Education Center in Minneapolis; The American International School, Muscat, Oman; and the University of Mary Washington – Klein Theatre and Dodd Auditorium, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Also at the ASTC conference, Schuler Shook Theatre Consultant Kimberly Corbett was accepted as an associate member. She is based in Schuler Shook's Dallas office, and her current projects include Dallas City Performance Hall, Dallas, Texas; Lone Star College, Kingwood, Tomball & Montgomery Campuses, Texas; and Lee College Performing Arts Center, Baytown, Texas.

ASTC is chartered to improve the programming, planning and construction of performance venues, to further the interests of owners, users and audiences of theatre, and to promote high standards of practice among its members. ASTC is an organization with close ties to the United States Institute for Theatre Technology.

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# News from: USITT's President

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USITT's Southeast Section Master Classes provided new experiences as well as moments of reflection for USITT President Carl Lefko.

Photo/David Wheeler

## Memories from the Past, Dreams for the Future

**Carl Lefko**  
*President*

Following a hands-on session on MIG welding, I finished washing off the grime and, of course, there were no paper towels to be found in the scene shop. I began shaking the water off when my wedding band slid off and rolled into the paint well. My heart dropped to my knees as I foresaw the inevitable – how do I tell my wife? As I peered down the paint well, I saw several feet of scrap wood and knew that my fear was getting closer to reality. I climbed down onto the stack of scrap lumber expecting the worst when a glint of shiny gold caught my eye. It was 1977 and I was beginning my journey with USITT.

USITT's recent Southeast Master Classes were both informative and nostalgic, as I returned to the University of North Carolina-Greensboro for an event that drew participants from throughout the region. I received my graduate degree from UNC-Greensboro, but that was not the only reason I paused during the sessions. It also was where Bob Thurston asked me for \$20 and signed me up for the very first Southeast Master Class in 1977. That event was held at Wake Forest and was the first demonstration of MIG welding I'd seen and was my first experience with the then-new flexible staging on campus.

This single event not only launched my active participation in the Section and ultimately culminated with my current role on the national level, but more importantly laid the foundation for my mentoring of young designers and technicians. Since then, I too have “arm-twisted” a few individuals and students explaining the value of getting outside our comfortable day-to-day routines and learning something new, seeing a new process, or being reminded of best practices.

It was great to see Delbert Hall, who was in grad school with me, teaching one of the rigging seminars, and listen to Deborah Bell (who received a USITT fellowship to further her research) discussing drawing techniques. I sat in on a session by Les Martin, *Care & Feeding Of Your Fly System*, and was quickly reminded what not to do.

Several Radford students were helping David Wheeler demonstrate his air cannon, shooting T-shirts into the waiting hands of their audience. It was all great fun, but it reminded us of all the information and resources which Regional Sections provide each year. And it makes us think about what a vast body of knowledge students will have as they work in the industry in the near future.

Those attending the Master Classes in Greensboro in 2010 face a very different future than what we have experienced in the past three decades. It is almost incomprehensible to realize that all those years have flown by, filled with new challenges and technological leaps forward. Talking to those who were having their first experience of a USITT event made me realize again what a vital function this organization performs. For those of us with a few years of experience, there are always connections to be renewed. For those just starting their exploration of the industry, the possibilities are almost limitless.

It was great to see Bob Thurston again, who after 32 years continues to mentor his now older student. I have learned the importance of not just introducing USITT to our youth but the act of giving back to the organization that has helped each of us grow and mature. As we build on the success of our first 50 years, it is my sincere hope that a new era of philanthropy will emerge.

As the T-shirts were sent aloft to eagerly awaiting students, I stopped to ponder; how many of these young designers and technicians will be leading this great organization in another 30 years?

Because of all that we have achieved, it is vital that we provide the best possible stewardship so that our future can be just as challenging and eventful as our past 50 years.

Plan to be part of the 50th Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Kansas City, Missouri March 31 to April 3 as we take the next major step in watching our future unfold and launch, with much fanfare, the next 50 years of USITT.

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## Fall Event Begins Section's Year

The Midwest Regional Section had a great event September 26 at University of Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center to start off the academic year. The production staff, led by Sarah Schreiber Prince, director of technical services, welcomed 35 Midwest Section members into the center's five performance spaces and countless backstage support areas.

The day began with a tour of the theatre spaces, including the Philbin Studio Theatre, a 100-seat flexible space; the Decio Theatre, a 360-seat proscenium space; the Leighton Concert Hall; a 950-seat music performance space with flexible acoustic panels and fabrics; The Browning Family Cinema, a THX certified movie theatre seating 200; and the Reyes organ and choral hall, complete with custom built organ on which one of the Notre Dame students played a mini concert.

After the tour, two workshops were presented. *Audio - The Kibble and Bits* explored the differences between analog and digital consoles and amplifiers. Joshua Ingle, the facilities' audio engineer. Rick Donnelly, from Notre Dame's film, television, and theatre department, led participants through the collection of more than 105 original renderings from the Stratford Theatre Festival housed at Notre Dame.

The renderings are by designers such as Desmond Heeley, Tanya Moiseyevich, Susan Benson, and John Pennoyer and adorn the wall of the public spaces of the Performing Arts Center.

During lunch, attendees visited the Historic Washington Hall, Notre Dame's original performance space located across campus. Afternoon sessions included quick, simple, and inexpensive mask making led by Rick Donnelly. In the scene shop, Verda Beth Martell and Steve Ferrier from

This month:  
Midwest  
Southeast  
Ohio Valley  
Southwest



Joshua Ingle, audio engineer at the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center discussed speaker clusters with participants.

University of Illinois presented their *Technical Training on the Road* workshop, which displays many variations of pneumatic applications and equipment and gives participants a chance to assemble the systems and try out the cylinders, actuators, and other toys.



Rick Donnelly, costume designer at Notre Dame and participant Tracey Lyons from UW Whitewater

On the Decio stage, representatives from ETC and

Creative Stage Lighting set up several LED fixtures next to the center's conventional fixtures. The presenters demonstrated how the LED fixtures are most commonly used in theatre production currently as cyc lights and wash fixtures as well as dance side light.

The Midwest Section will hold future events in Chicago in February; Grand Rapids, Michigan in March; and Wisconsin TBA.

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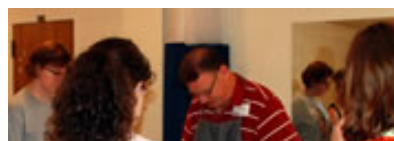
### **Master Classes Informative, Fun**

Over Labor Day weekend, the Southeast Regional Section held its annual Master Classes, hosted by the Department of Theatre at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Over 75 participants attended a wide variety of workshops and tours. Highlights from some of the popular sessions included Jeff Lieder (University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee) teaching sessions on fabric modification and tie-dying; Delbert Hall (East Tennessee State University and D2 Flying Effects) leading sessions that sent students flying across the stage as he taught about the rigging and choreography of flying performers; a visit to “I to I” sling manufacturers where roundslings are made and tested; a demonstration



of ETC LED lighting fixtures conducted by ETC and Barbizon-Charlotte; and a demonstration of the Jands Vista lighting system led by Russell Hill (Imagine Design and Production). There were sessions on pneumatics, Photoshop and Scene Design, Patternmaker Software, rendering, puppetry, and rigging safety.

The Friday evening keynote address was presented by



Richard Whittington, managing director for Triad Stage, who gave a thoughtful and insightful take on the current economic situation and its impact on regional theatre.



The Southeast Section thanks its sponsors: BMI Supply – South; Barbizon-Charlotte; Stage Rigging Services; Sculptural Arts Coating; and Stage Decoration & Supplies, Inc.

The Southeast Section's 2010 Master Classes will be hosted by Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Alabama.

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### Conference at Seton Hill University

On October 3, The Ohio Valley Regional Section held its annual Fall Conference at Seton Hill University in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. Nearly 80 members met at the university's brand new performing arts center. The focus of the conference was on getting a job with portfolio reviews, sessions on how to prepare a portfolio, information on taxes, how to interview, and fostering a sense of community presented by Curtis Craig, Annmarie Duggan, Jeff Gress, Chuck Hatcher, Joe Pino, Rebecca White, and Adam Zonder.



Other sessions included evoking mood in costume renderings and basic puppet making presented by Mary McClung. Members also toured the facilities of the Palace Theatre, which has remained functional while undergoing renovations over the past 15 years, and Seton Hill Performing Arts Center, which showcased large booths and shops, project rooms, the concert theatre, and a fully-trapped black box -- the Ryan Theatre. ETC and Integrated Theater Systems (Nick Gonsman, Jenn Christenson, Adam Leong, and Molly Jesso) conducted hands-on basic and advanced programming sessions on eight Ion lighting consoles. Jen Knott, from Rosco,





taught a hands-on sessions on the economic advantage of using Rosco paints and how to choose the right coating for a project. Eric Rouse shared how to use AC inverters to control low horsepower motors for small scenic elements and props.

For the first time in recent memory, the conference included a keynote address. Dick Block, of Carnegie Mellon, gave an illuminating speech on maintaining integrity in the theatre workplace. Following the keynote, the annual fall membership meeting was



held. Nominations were opened for the upcoming election in the spring. If you are interested in standing for election as a board member at large, Chair of the Section, or Vice Chair of Programming, please contact Eric Rouse at [ejr127@psu.edu](mailto:ejr127@psu.edu).

There were over 35 nominees presenting 105 display panels for the annual Peggy Ezekiel Design Exhibit, which was beautifully displayed in the lobby and hallways of the Ryan Theatre. The award recipients are listed on the Ohio Valley Section website.



John Seaman and Jim Hill are spearheading the project of recording the history of the section. A WIKI has been set up for all to contribute information about the section at <http://usitt--ohiovalleysection.wikispaces.com>

The day concluded with another first for OVS, Tech Olympics! David Nash and the team at Integrated Theater Systems generously donated the grand prize, an ETC SmartFade 12/48 console. Congratulations to the



winning team from Otterbein College (The team members are, Josh Branch, Rachel Heine, Caitlin Thompson, Wilm Pierson, and Berlyn Drabik.) A heartfelt thank you to Karen Glass, Ken Clothier, the rest of the Seton Hill University Department of Theatre Faculty, and the student volunteers for hosting such a successful conference!

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**Southwest Master Classes**

Labor Day weekend was full of events when the Southwest Regional Section held its TechXperience Weekend September 5 and 6 at Oklahoma City University and the Stage Center Theatre in downtown Oklahoma City.



The section kicked off the celebration of its 40th year during the weekend filled with workshops (including tailoring, moving lights, and scene painting), a keynote by Robert Beneditti, and the opportunity to see three local productions.

Section members were also able to participate in a Professional Design Exhibition.



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Presenters taking part in the 2009 version of the Costume Poster Session in Cincinnati, Ohio were able to show their solutions to costume challenges to more than 200 people.

Photo/Casey Kearns

## November 16 Poster Session Deadline

**Donna Meester**

*Costume Design & Technology Commission*

Now that work on fall productions is getting underway, many are discovering new and innovative solutions to various costume problems. Why not share those solutions with others who may encounter them? Submit a proposal by November 16 to the annual Costume Poster Session.

The Costume Poster Session is a time when costume designers and technicians are able to share information that is probably not well-known with colleagues. Many times this is something of their own invention, which includes, but is not limited to, a new solution to an old problem, a new problem and its solution, a classroom or management technique, the results of research, or other ideas, discoveries, or developments in the field of costuming. This session has become one of the most popular events for the Costume Design & Technology Commission, having an average of 200 to 250 people attending.

As an added benefit, poster presentations are widely accepted as meeting the requirements for scholarly publication. Those employed by an educational institution may be able to get the school to fund some or all expenses to the 50th USITT Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Kansas City, Missouri. Poster

presenters also may have the opportunity to publish their ideas in *TD&T*.

All submissions are juried by the Costume Poster Selection Committee. Ideas need to be presented electronically in the form of an abstract - a brief, concise summary of the information to be presented in the poster, no more than 200 words typewritten. E-mail abstracts by November 16 to Donna Meester (dmeester@as.ua.edu.) The deadline is earlier than in previous years in response to requests from those who need to know if a proposal has been accepted to receive funding. Applicants will be notified in December.

As excitement and interest in the poster session grows, ways to archive the presentations are being explored. As a result, there will be several guidelines that will need to be followed. Presenters will be sent a list of guidelines when they are notified of acceptance. All presenters must submit a copy of their presentation and handouts electronically by March 22. Questions or requests for more information can be directed to: Donna Meester, The University of Alabama, Dept. of Theatre & Dance, Box 870239, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0239; phone 205-348-9032; or e-mail dmeester@as.ua.edu.

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The Commercial Pattern Archive has evolved over the past 29 years and, in keeping up with new technology, can now operate on a variety of systems. Patterns and images continue to be added to the database which started as a project of the Costume Design & Technology Commission.

## Commercial Pattern Archive Expands with Innovations

**Joy Spanabel Emery**

*CoPA Co-founder*

The approaching *USITT @50* celebration prompts reminiscences about the history of the Costume Design & Technology Commission's Commercial Pattern Archive project. This project is not 50 years old, but it does reflect the amazing changes over the past 29 years. It began as the Flat Pattern Exchange with Kevin Seligman, Betty Williams, and Joy Spanabel Emery. The idea was to locate and share paper clothing patterns for production research and inspiration. Ms. Emery was the one fascinated with using the emerging computer technology to list the patterns for easy retrieval Ms. Williams with her vast collection of patterns and encyclopedic knowledge of pattern company histories. Mr. Seligman provided key information on the breadth of the industry and its' international influences.

The computer segment slowly evolved from a DOS-based "flat" database through at least three different Windows-based applications. Fortunately all the data could be exported into the new applications. In 1999 volunteers began scanning the pattern designs and small-scale pattern pieces and linked them to the pattern records. This capability exploded the value of the database as a research tool. These developments were possible with major support from the USITT Endowment Fund, The Commissioner's Fund, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and several other granting agencies as well as from the later proceeds from *CoPA Vintage Patterns* CD set.

Ms. Williams died in 1997 and shortly afterward her collection of fashion publications, tailoring journals, related research, and patterns were donated to the University of Rhode Island. These were combined with the URI Theatre Pattern Collection, and Ms. Emery's personal collection. Mr. Seligman's vast collection of patterns and other related resources were donated to the Los Angeles County Museum Doris Stein Research Center. Patterns from all four collections are included in the database, CoPA, as are collections from other sources. Work continues to compile a "union catalog" of pattern collections in the United States and elsewhere so researchers can find the original patterns closer to home.

However, CoPA was limited to Windows systems only, and CDs we are able to make available contain a fraction of the records and images. This year there were additional major developments. There is now a database with over 48,000 records and 74,000 images available on the web. That means it is accessible on MACs as well as Windows. It is the entire and ever-expanding database with new records and images added weekly. CoPa is now able to accept credit cards as well as purchase orders and personal checks.

The features are reflected on the enhanced web site [www.uri.edu/library/special\\_collections/COPA](http://www.uri.edu/library/special_collections/COPA). The online version is available at a graduated price scale for individuals and groups for set periods of time. The information can be used for design research, late 19th and 20th century costume history (especially for everyday wear), and dating patterns in personal collections. Patterns for costumes can be developed in the appropriate size by enlarging the small-scale pattern pieces, or the pattern schematic can be used as draping guides. The CD set with some of the database records can be used in the same way on Windows systems only. Information and order forms with pricing for both versions are on the website under Order Now.

All the proceeds go directly to the Betty Williams Pattern Fund to pay students for data entry and scanning as well as programmers for enhancing and maintaining the database.

The collection has come a long way from the early stage of the project. Much of what has been developed was barely a dream when it started. Who knows what opportunities the technology will present in the coming years. So, we make haste slowly.

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2010 Sessions to Feature  
Programs by Exhibitors

**Helen Willard**  
*Stage Expo Sales Manager*

In addition to exhibiting at Stage Expo, many companies and organizations sponsor and present programs at the conference. Some programs are co-sponsored by USITT Commissions and exhibitors; other sessions are developed by the Commissions with exhibitor personnel as presenters. Here are brief descriptions of some of the sessions which will be presented by exhibitors in Kansas City:

- **Almost Everything You Want to Know About USA 829**  
*Sponsored by USA Local 829 IATSE*  
A discussion of United Scenic Artists' representation of members working in the entertainment media of theatre, film, and television including designers, scenic artists, and associated positions.
- **Continuing Adventures in Sound**  
*Sponsored by d & b audiotechnik*  
The team from d&b audiotechnik, led by John Taylor, will continue their popular series of informative sessions on audio technology, ranging from system details to binaural recording.

*American Idol – Theatre in a Theme Park*, a case study of how Walt Disney Entertainment develop a live, theatrical experience from a popular television show, was one of the sessions presented by exhibitors at the 2009 Annual Conference. Exhibitors are already planning sessions for 2010.

Photo/Casey Kearns

- **Color Conversations with L\*A\*B\***

*Presenter, Joe Tawil, GAMProducts*

Panel discussion/lecture/demonstration on using the L\*A\*B\* color system for communication between lighting/scenic/costume designers.

- **Evolution or Immaculate Conception: Lighting Control Over 5 Decades**

*Presenters, Tracy Fitch and Anne Valentino, ETC*

Lighting control has evolved extensively through the past 50 years. A panel discussion with a few of the industry's masterminds who have charted the course from autotransformers to the latest networked consoles. Who knows? Questions might spark the next 50 years of innovation.

- **Lighting Fixtures**

*Presenter, Tom Littrel, ETC*

A discussion of lighting fixtures and how they have changed over the past 50 years, including demonstrations of conventional and intelligent fixtures.

- **White Space Sell-Off: One Year In**

*Sponsored by Shure, Inc.*

A representative from Shure Microphones will present an update of the status of wireless microphone use one year after the major changes of early 2009.

Exhibitors interested in submitting a proposal for an exhibitor-sponsored program should contact Helen Willard at [hpwillard@aol.com](mailto:hpwillard@aol.com) for more information.

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# Conference & Stage Expo

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The architecture of the Power & Light District in Kansas City, Missouri is a mixture of old and creative reuse. AMC is headquartered in KCMO, and put one of its flagship operations in the Power & Light District.

Photo/Barbara E.R. Lucas

## Kansas City: A Downtown Renaissance

**Tom Mardikes**  
*Kansas City Promotions Coordinator*

Kansas City probably thought it was getting a great deal when the new Federal Interstate Highway System ran not just one highway through its downtown, but two! Interstate 35 runs from the Canadian border to Mexico, and Interstate 70 runs east/west across most of the country.

These new highways were brought directly into downtown where they intersect. It changed everything. Before the highways, downtown Kansas City was the total focus of living in the then 20th largest city in the nation, and had plenty of mass transit in streetcars and some new buses moving people in and out of downtown every day.

Downtown theatres would run daily shows with thousands of people attending, and the best of everything was to be had downtown. The new highways however, cut a ring around a tight downtown area essentially squaring it off from everything else. First, all activity outside the



ring began to die, and very soon, the inner ring began to wither as well. The highways were used to ferry thousands of automobiles daily in and out of this inner core, and Kansas City rapidly became a car town. The suburbs exploded and urban flight left a devastating effect in its wake.

So, visitors to Kansas City in the 1970s, or '80s, or especially the '90s, quickly realized there was no reason to really be downtown, and no one ever was, unless they worked for a bank or a government.

How things have changed in the new century! Some \$4 billion in investment has led to an amazing revitalization so Kansas City's downtown has an interesting new and vibrant feeling.

The Kansas City Public Library at 10th & Central streets was the first of the new wave to open downtown in 2004. A marvelous 100-year old bank building is the centerpiece of this renovated and expanded \$50 million project. This main library features great visual beauty, wonderful facilities, internet-accessing computers, books, movies, coffee shop, play-readings, lectures, and meeting and conference facilities.

The H&R Block World Headquarters at 13th & Main streets was completed in 2006 and features 1 million square feet of office space in this unique oval design, an amazing art-enhanced lobby, and a 320-seat theatre shared with Kansas City Repertory Theatre.

The Sprint Center at 14th & Grand Streets now presents the major concerts and events for the metro area. It celebrated its opening in 2007 with an Elton John show, but the real show was Garth Brooks' "One Artist, One City, One Time" event where he came out of retirement and did nine back-to-back shows -- only in Kansas City. Also part of the Sprint Center complex is the award-winning College Basketball Experience that includes the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame.

Other projects completed in the Central Business District include: Bartle Hall Convention Center expansion and renovation; IRS Headquarters; new Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City complex; the Whitaker Federal Courthouse featuring 21 courtrooms; National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial; Union Station renovation; advertising firm Barkley, Inc.'s renovation of the former TWA World Headquarters; and nearly 3,000 residential units spread throughout the district.

The Power & Light District is where many USITT friends will spend their free time. Stan Durwood coined the name in the 1990s. He was trying to develop a downtown renaissance with a project that he named after Kansas City Power & Light's one-time headquarters, the Power & Light Building.

Mr. Durwood was a fascinating man who had an impact on the movie-going public worldwide. The 1960s started with quite a number of movie theatres downtown, but by the end of the decade (possibly because of the interstates) all that was left were two

huge movie palaces -- the Empire Theatre and the Midland Theatre -- and the smaller Roxy Theatre. Mr. Durwood owned them and was struggling to keep them full.

One day he realized that movie theatre labor in his theatres came in chunks, and that once the movie started, his staff didn't have much to do. He struck upon the idea that he could show more movies on more screens with the same labor force. He started by putting in small screens around the main screens in the Empire and Midland. Soon he was opening multi-screen cinemas in the Kansas City suburbs and the rest is history. His company, American Multi Cinema, or AMC, is the second largest movie theatre chain with over 4,000 screens, and headquartered at 9th & Main streets.

Mr. Durwood died before his vision of a Power & Light District could be realized, but today it nears completion and centers around 13th street between Main and Grand. It is actually an eight-square block entertainment district which opened slowly in 2007 and now features some 45 restaurants, retail shops, bars, and entertainment venues.

Some of the establishments up and running are the Lucky Strike Lanes upscale bowling alley, Gordon Biersch Brewing Company restaurant/bar, Genghis Grill stir fry, 801 Steak & Chop House, Maker's Mark Bourbon House, and Ted's Montana Grill. Some great Kansas City originals are The Bristol Seafood Grill and The Peachtree Restaurant with great soul food.

Taverns and bars are well represented by Flying Saucer Draught Emporium, Johnny's Tavern, Raglan's Irish Bar, Howl at the Moon Piano Bar, Angel's Rock Bar, PBR Big Sky, and Shark Bar.

The heart of Power & Light is the "KC Live!" which is a one-block area devoted to music and entertainment venues. Concerts are frequently held in this covered, outdoor plaza and visitors can wander the whole district with a drink purchased from one of the establishments. Fourteen eating and drinking venues on two levels surround this outdoor plaza.

Cosentino's Downtown Gourmet Market opened a fantastic grocery/deli/prepared foods extravaganza at 13th & Main streets. This 37,000 square-foot food emporium is nurturing a growing downtown resident population and is perfect for the traveler in search of a quick and healthy meal at a reasonable price. It is open daily from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The Main Street Theatre recently opened at 14th & Main streets. This is a magnificent state-of-the-art AMC movie house with digital projection and sound, 3D theatres, private viewing suites, and an in-house restaurant and bar. This is the former Empire Theatre completely renovated.

The Midland Theatre also finished a \$28 million renovation and has been turned into a beautiful, small concert venue seating up to 3,000. Seats were removed from the orchestra section to feature

cabaret table seating. A regular stream of musical groups and comedians grace the stage.

Finally, at the southwestern edge of the Power & Light district, is the home of the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. This \$413 million project will feature new performance homes for the Kansas City Symphony, Kansas City Ballet, and the Lyric Opera.

There will be two theatres designed by architect Moshe Safdie, acoustician Yasuhisa Toyota, and theater consultant Richard Pilbrow featuring an 1,800-seat proscenium theatre and a 1,600-seat concert hall. The complex is currently under construction and is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2011. USITT members will be able to participate in daily hard-hat tours through the conference, and a panel discussion with the design team is scheduled for April 1, 6:30 p.m. at the Copaken Stage.

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## Directors at Large

2007-2010

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

2008-2011

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

2009-2012

- William Browning
- Jonathan Darling
- Linda Essig

- Mitch Hefter
- Martha Marking
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- 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)
- Electronics Diversified, LLC
- Entertainment Services & Technology Association (ESTA)
- Future Light
- GAMPRODUCTS, INC.
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- InterAmerica Stage, Inc.
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- Protech Theatrical Services, Inc.
- Rosco Laboratories, Inc.
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- SeaChanger
- SECOA
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- StageRight Corporation
- Steeldeck Inc.
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- Syracuse Scenery & Stage Lighting Co., Inc.
- Texas Scenic Company
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- Cosler Theatre Design
- The Crosby Group, Inc.
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- Ontario Staging Limited
- Orange Events Sdn Bhd
- OSRAM SYLVANIA
- Pathway Connectivity
- Penn State University
- Period Corsets
- PNTA, Pacific Northwest Theatre Associates
- Prolyte Products Group
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- The Rigging Partnership
- Robert Juliat America
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- Sapsis Rigging Entertainment Services, Inc.
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- Serapid, Inc.
- Shanghai American School
- Show Distribution Group Inc.
- Siong Ann Engineering Pte Ltd
- Skjonberg Controls, Inc.
- Smooth-On, Inc.
- South Dakota State University
- Stage Decoration & Supplies, Inc.
- Stage Equipment and Lighting, Inc.
- Stage Technologies
- Stagecraft Industries, Inc.
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- StageLight, Inc.
- StageSpot
- Staging Concepts, Inc.
- Strong Entertainment Lighting
- Studio T+L LLC

- Theatre Consultants Collaborative, LLC
- Theatre Projects Consultants, Inc.
- Thern Stage Equipment
- Thinkwell Design & Production
- Tiffin Scenic Studios, Inc.
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