

usitt

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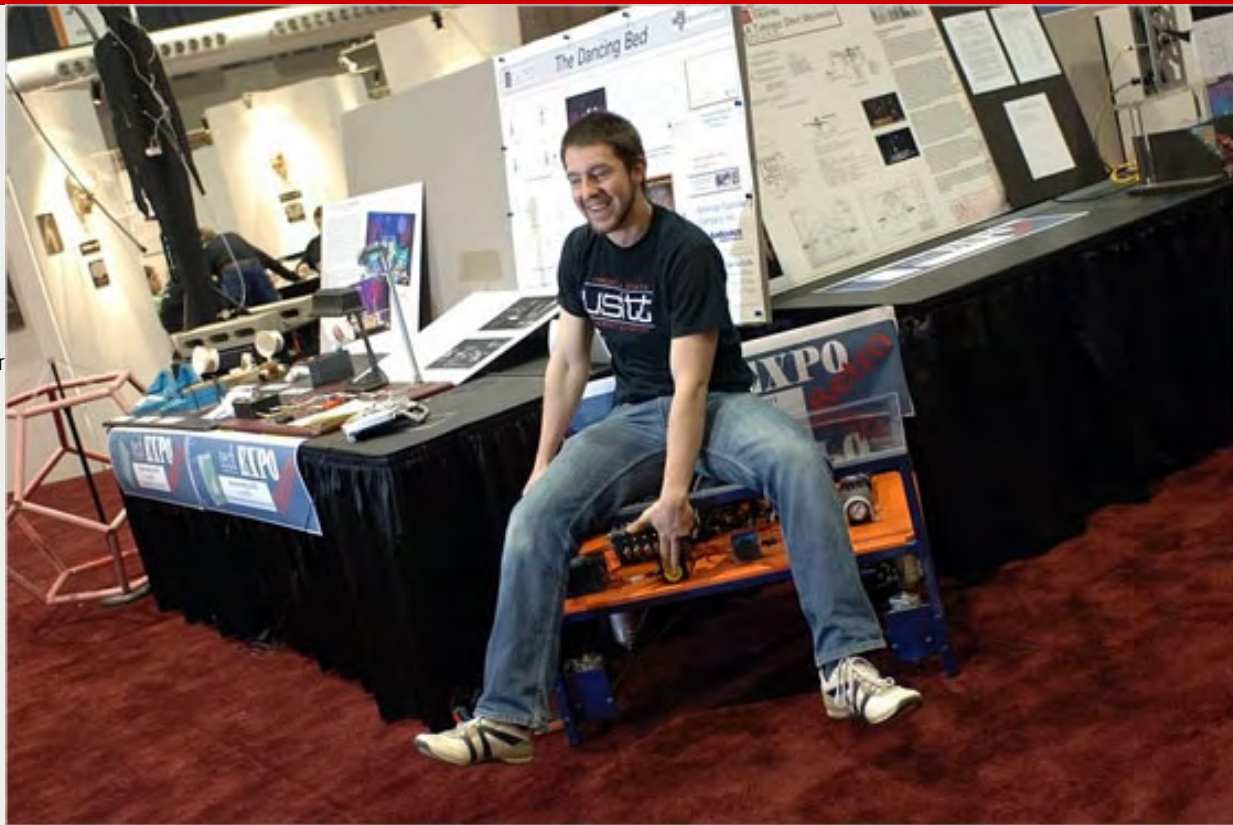
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Organizers are looking for innovative ideas to showcase as part of the 2011 version of the Theatre Technology Exhibit and catalog, the 13th time that projects have been collected and presented. For more information about participating in the 2011 Tech Expo, [click here](#).

A retrospective of past entries in the Tech Expo exhibits was part of the 2010 Stage Expo, including the "bed" shown above.

Photo/R. Finklestein

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New Insurance Benefits Available to Members

USITT and Fractured Atlas are working together to offer a variety of insurance products to members including liability coverage and health care products. Through an arrangement with Fractured Atlas, whose mission is to liberate the artist, any USITT member can become an associate member of FA and gain access to all its programs and services.

“Members have been asking us to investigate insurance coverage for several years,” said David Grindle, USITT Executive Director. “Working with Fractured Atlas puts us in a much larger risk pool and gets better rates for the membership than if we negotiated alone.”

Among the services which will now be available are liability insurance, offered in all states, for a wide range of situations – from annual general liability, to events, to errors and omissions, to theatre designers and technicians, to public art installations. Healthcare options are available in 27 states, and that number is growing.

Fractured Atlas does not provide insurance itself, instead working with different companies to seek the lowest cost, highest quality for all coverage. Microgrants, online courses, and special offers and discounts are also part of the Fractured Atlas package.

USITT members can find complete details and investigate pricing and options by visiting www.fracturedatlas.org/usitt. The link can be found on the USITT webpage featuring member benefits. Once on the site, members can enroll for free as associate members of Fractured Atlas and access information and pricing. There is no additional FA Membership fee, but those who enroll must continue their USITT membership.

“Providing our members with this service, through the Open Arts Network, helps address a need for working professionals and those just starting on their careers,” Mr. Grindle noted. “We look forward to the expanding opportunities which Fractured Atlas is planning.”



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Finalists in the 2010 "Ideal Theatre" Student Design Competition had the opportunity to present their work in Kansas City, Missouri to a special session sponsored by USITT's Architecture Commission. Awards were presented at the same session.

Photo/Tom Thatcher

Seek Student Designs for Ideal Theatre

Scott F Georgeson, AIA
Architecture Commissioner

The Ideal Theatre Student Design Competition, now in its fifth year, will begin accepting applications for 2011. Information will be available online at www.usitt.org in early August with submissions due in late December. The competition is sponsored by USITT's Architecture Commission.

Architecture and theatre students work together in teams to design their university's ideal theatre. The students collaborate to write the program and develop the design. The submissions are juried by professional theatre architects and consultants. Three teams will be selected to present designs to the Architecture Commission at the 51st Annual USITT Conference & Stage Expo in Charlotte, North Carolina, March 9 to 12, 2011. Information includes a [poster](#), [design brief](#), and [entry form](#).

In 2010, the final three teams were from the United States, Germany, and Poland. The German team was selected as Commissioners Winner. This competition provides an opportunity for an architecture student interested in theatre design to gain a greater understanding of the building type, plus have their work critiqued by top theatre professionals. Past submissions have been part of class work, independent efforts, and thesis research.

New for 2011, selected teams from the United States will be

included in the U.S. Theatre Architectural Exhibit at the Prague Quadrennial 2011. PQ2011 is the largest gathering and exhibit of theatre professionals and artists in the world. For more information on this event go to www.pq.cz.

For additional competition information and to see the 2010 winners, visit the USITT website, www.usitt.org/StudentArchitecture.aspx.

For questions, contact the USITT office at shannan@office.usitt.org or USITT Architecture Commissioner Scott F Georgeson, AIA, at sfg@workshoparchitects.com.

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Officer Profile: Martha Marking

Barbara E.R. Lucas
Sightlines Editor

USITT's Vice-President for Members, Sections & Chapters, Martha Marking, is new to that position, but as a former Chair of the Southeast Regional Section and a long-time member of the Publications and other committees, she is very familiar to many members. She took office July 1.

Ms. Marking has been a member of the Appalachian State University faculty since 1987. She is a professor of costume and makeup design and technology, and enjoys linking to others outside of her department and making campus-wide connections. Martha is currently the faculty chair of the university's Early Intervention Team, which is a new initiative on her campus. In 2007, Martha was recognized by the NC University system when she received the College of Fine and Applied Arts Teaching Award in 2007.

She recently served two terms as chair of the Faculty Senate, which she found extremely rewarding. Since she grew up in a family with six sisters and a brother, she says "everything is negotiation," and work on the Faculty Senate involved some of those negotiating skills. "I felt that I could effect change, and together we could make a difference," she says, "I really like to work with people and hear differing viewpoints."

She loves living in the mountains, and community around Boone, North Carolina. Even last winter's extensive snow days, 20+ for the public school system, where her husband, Michael is a special education teacher at the local high school, did not discourage her. She also loves the energy in larger cities.

In both 2006 and 2009 she managed Appalachian's loft in New York City, a space that can accommodate up to 24 visitors at a time. While there she enjoyed volunteering at the Museum of the City of New York and working with its extensive costume collection, which connects period costumes and textiles to New York City residents.

Her ability to sew, learning when she was eight or nine, is what led her to theatrical costume design as an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. She took an introduction to



Martha Marking

theatre course, found that she needed to put in some backstage hours, and ended up in the costume shop. Her skills were appreciated there and she was able to design 12 shows as an undergraduate, something made possible by wonderful mentors and the small size and liberal arts orientation of UW-W. She appreciates those same qualities at Appalachian State. She earned her MFA degree from Michigan State, learned new skills and made great connections there as well.

Martha enjoys using her skills for different types of productions, and was employed for several years as a cutter/drafter and then a designer at the Utah Shakespearean Festival; as returning designer for an outdoor drama, and as a guest designer for schools close to her home. "I really enjoy mentoring students," she said "and seeing the light that goes on when they make a connection between the classroom and a production."

This fall, at Appalachian, a production of *Stop Kiss* is creating excitement for her and the other designers. On a recent visit to New York City, where the play takes place, she took photos for the scene designer to use in a montage and brought back several *Village Voice* newspapers for the production team.

Ms. Marking sees her new USITT position as a continuation of the relationships she has made within and outside of the Institute. "Of all the officer positions in USITT, this is what I most desire to do," she says. "I love the people in the organization, and I can't wait until March to see all of them again. It's always an intense time of connecting, reconnecting, and learning."

As VP-Members, Sections & Chapters, she looks forward to working with individuals she already knows, and those she doesn't, to help them connect with one another to strengthen the organization.

Ms. Marking is adept at finding ways to connect her various interests. She loves to knit, and wrote an article about Chain Mail Techniques at the Utah Shakespearian Festival for *TD&T*. She has an extensive collection of period knitting magazines and books, but "we're not the same size we were in the 1940s" she notes, so things must be adapted, for actors bodies today, and often she creates her own patterns.

She teaches knitting classes at local yarn shops, and one year knit socks for all her nieces (when this article appears, she'll have 22 nieces and nephews). In addition to working at a Bernina sewing store in her "spare time" she says if she "ever retires", creating period knitwear for film or theatre sounds interesting, but with so many projects and interests that likely won't happen for several years.

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Officer Profile: Mark Shanda

For Mark Shanda, July 1 was an interesting day. He took office as USITT's Vice-President for Communications, and he became Interim Dean of Arts and Humanities at Ohio State University's College of Arts and Sciences.

Mark has been a USITT member for more than 25 years and has served two stints, separated by several years, on the Board of Directors. He is just starting his 25th year at OSU, and has been chair of the Department of Theatre for five years. The opportunity to serve as Interim Dean comes as the College of Arts and Sciences undergoes a restructuring – five colleges are being combined into one college with three divisions.

That means that this fall, for the first time in more than 35 years, he will not have a production on his schedule. Instead, he'll be juggling 1,492 grad students; 41 majors and 56 minors; 5,200 undergraduates; and 530 faculty members, along with his work with USITT's leadership in shaping the organization's future.

Mr. Shanda is looking forward to the joint challenges this year will bring, while still keeping in mind the need for balance between various segments of his life. He created workshops on examining and maintaining critical work/life balance and notes that Stan Abbott was looking at stress in live performing arts long before that was popular. Mark sees job-related stress and the need for balance as particularly acute for theatre people. "Institutions can set us up for failure, or our own expectations of what can be accomplished can do the same thing."

Trying to fit in work assignments, family, hobbies, and professional activities can be especially challenging for those in our industry. He's only missed two Annual Conferences in 24 years, he notes, and even though his wife said he could attend the USITT Annual Conference in 1989, while she was in labor for their daughter, he opted to put family first.

He stressed that the only two universal facts about children is that they start small and get bigger, and that they change your life. He and his wife, Ginny, have two daughters, one a college senior and the other a high school sophomore, who help reinforce that in a very positive way. An avid reader, Mr. Shanda particularly enjoys political thrillers – perhaps a hold-over from his undergraduate major of political science -- and his Matchbox vehicle collection



Mark Shanda

includes more than 1,000 pieces.

For Mark, one of the great values of USITT is that it provides connections to both colleagues and businesses. He credits Stage Expo as the place where his relationships with Paul Vincent of Vincent Lighting and Fred Foster of ETC, among others, were strengthened. Networking with students, teachers, manufacturers, and sales reps through USITT confirms that: “There is never only one way to solve a problem and we are never really alone in those production challenges that we face,” he notes.

He sees the path ahead as an adventure, something that will be constantly changing and evolving. There has been much change in his time at Ohio State. As an example, when he was hired at OSU after receiving his degrees from Iowa State and the University of Wisconsin, the Theatre Department had one computer, and it was rented!

At the core of USITT’s membership, Mark sees a shared response to challenges. “You can call or e-mail someone at the end of a rehearsal and by the next work call you are likely to have several potential answers to your problem. Sometimes we find that the simplest, and often overlooked, solution can be the best.”

He and his wife, Ginny, have two daughters, one a college senior and the other a high school sophomore, all three of whom have helped him maintain his positive life/work balance. Shanda has one obsession, his Matchbox vehicle collection that includes more than 1,500 pieces and is an avid reader of political thrillers – perhaps a hold-over from his undergraduate major of political science.

“I’m inspired by the work of others,” he said “and I am looking forward to that dialog.”

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OISTAT Adds PQ, Scenofest Prize

The Technology Commission of OISTAT announced the creation of the Technical Invention Prize (TIP) to be awarded at the 2011 Prague Quadrennial and Scenofest events. Modeled on USITT's Tech Expo, this competition will highlight the creative solutions developed for backstage and in production use by technical professionals worldwide. Plans for this new initiative include publication of a catalog highlighting the submissions and sponsorship of a prize for the winner. The competition will be juried by the membership of the OISTAT Technology Commission.

USITT members are eligible and encouraged to submit projects for this opportunity to be in the international spotlight. The deadline for submission has been extended to October 1. Additional information may be found on the [OISTAT website](#). Members who have questions may e-mail USITT's OISTAT Technology Commission delegate, Fritz Schwentker, at usitt@schwentker.com.

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PLASA 2010 will gain a host of new features this year as the list of exhibitors in audio, video, lighting, and staging technologies continues to grow. The Innovation Gallery, profiling the launch products nominated for an Innovation Award, will have a new format. Entrants will demonstrate their products to the awards judges. Visitors will be able to get early access to the gallery from 9:30 a.m. each morning. The ISCE and Springboard Pavilions will be radically expanded.



Also brand new is Industry Skills & Qualifications when the industry will meet its future talent as leading schools and colleges with arts production courses participate in the show, with a number of seminars focusing on the importance of training and education in the industry. The major four-day Education & Learning Programme will go live with a diverse mix of presentations and industry-leading contributors.

Online registration takes less than five minutes at www.plasashow.com.

This month:
PQ and Scenofest

PLASA 2010

Connect at LDI

Free Specs

CITT Rendez-Vous

Young Designers Awards

Rising Star Award

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A Call to Connect

Entertainment lighting, effects, and sound equipment manufacturers are invited to supply products for this year's Connectivity Pavilion at LDI 2010, October 22 to 24 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Controllers, monitoring equipment, signal distribution devices, luminaires, accessories, and other devices that use the American National Standards developed by ESTA's Control Protocols Working Group are being sought. Particular standards include ANSI E1.11, E1.17, E1.20, and E1.31, otherwise known by their acronyms DMX512-A, ACN, RDM, and sACN (streaming DMX-type data using ACN) respectively. The devices will be shown working together as part of a multi-protocol network to show the utility and compatibility of the protocols.

Manufacturers interested in participating are asked to fill out the [response form](#).

Selected participants will be expected to ship the product and have it available at the Pavilion by October 20 for booth set up. Participants will be responsible for picking up the products and return shipping after the close of the show on October 24.

Manufacturers should provide personnel to demonstrate during show hours, but no person will be expected to be there the entire time. For more information, contact Karl G. Ruling; ESTA Technical Standards Manager; 875 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1005; New York, NY 10001; 212-244-1505; standards@esta.org.

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Free Specifications Document Available

A cut-and-paste document to use as a reference when writing specifications is available for free and was developed by the ESTA Technical Standards Program.

The document is available for free download on the TSP Published documents web page. People also may access the [document directly](#).

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Halifax Site for Annual Rendez-vous

CITT's 20th Rendez-vous will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada in August. [Click here](#) for full schedule. To register, [click here](#).

Preconference workshops will be held August 10 and 11. They include *Rigging and Flying Performers and Entertainment Electricity and Power Distribution*.

The event will include the CITT Forum where professional entertainment riggers and general stage technicians will be recognized. There will be breakout session on education and industry issues. The popular Junk Challenge will be part of the opening night reception. The event challenges the technical and creative skills of the delegates. Tours and seminars will be offered as well as the annual trade show. Exhibitors will include Christie Lites, EPIC Production Technologies, Electronic Theatre Controls (ETC), GerrAudio Distribution, JD International, MDG Gog Generators, Ontario Staging, Roland systems Group, ROSCO, Sennehiser Canada, Show Distribution, Staging Concepts, Technically Yours Inc. (TYI), and ZFX Flying.

Swag Bingo will take place at Montes Bar & Grill in Dartmouth, about a 20-minute ride from downtown Halifax. Continuous, complimentary shuttle service will be provided all evening between downtown Halifax and Montes.

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Awards for Young Designers & Technicians

Nominations for the 2011 Awards for Young Designers & Technicians in the Performing Arts, (YD&T) are scheduled to open in September 2010. USITT has updated the web-based process to make electronic uploading of applications, portfolios, and materials easier than ever.

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Rising Star Nominations to Open

The nomination process for the USITT Rising Star Award sponsored by *Live Design/LDI 2010*, will open in early September 2010. The Rising Star Award includes a cash prize and recognition of new talent in many areas of design.

Start thinking of the young designers, technicians and rising stars who it would be appropriate to nominate, and plan to visit www.usitt.org, after September 1, 2010 for more information.

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In Memoriam

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Helmut Grosser on a trip down the West Coast of America, 1985.

Photo/Randy Earle

Remembering Helmut Grosser: 'American Idol'

Dr. Joel E. Rubin

USITT Fellow, Past President, and OISAT Past President

My first introduction to German technical directors came from those somber faces staring out of the introductory chapter in Volume I of Kranich. All men and serious fellows indeed. Even Walther Unruh, of a later generation and grandfatherly type that he was, bore the strongest resemblance to his predecessors. Meetings, for Walther, were treated in a serious way with firm agendas.

Meeting Helmut Grosser turned out to be a far different experience. It was, I think, in 1966 at a meeting of a propaganda-front conference "Interscena" in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The American and the German Federal Republic delegates had been invited to participate. With our countries out of favor with the regime, we found ourselves housed in a transient hotel far, far up the Vinoradska trolley line.

There were constant comings and goings with tourist buses day and night. The beer supply was always exhausted at the hotel bar before we could return from our afternoon meetings. We Americans made common cause with a smiling, bearded German fellow, then working in Köln, who joined us in a mutual search for

Helmut Grosser died May 23, 2010 at the age of 83. Mr. Grosser, a USITT Fellow, was active in OISTAT from the beginning of its existence. From 1974 to 1978, he led the programme commission of the new organization, and from 1978 to 1997 he served as OISTAT President. At left are remembrances from his colleagues and friends.

Pilsner, while he simultaneously probed the extent of his English vocabulary. This was the start of my relationship with Helmut Grosser that continued for more than four decades.

Two years later, again in Prague, we found ourselves participating in the formation meeting of the OISTAT. Helmut was then seconding for Prof. Unruh. A wonderful surprise was meeting Helmut's beloved Rosemarie at that meeting. Rosemarie's few words of English were supplemented by her ability to mime the thought she wished to convey. For example, my wife and Rosemarie had long insightful conversations with each other, these remarkably charming women forgetting their mutual inability to speak the other's language. My wife and I became close personal friends with Helmut and Rosemarie. Their love and close devotion to each other was immediately apparent. Their continued closeness as we knew them over the next decades set a new standard for enduring married life.



November 1973 at a Master Class at San Jose State University.

Helmut assisted Unruh during the Professor's term as the first President of OISTAT, and subsequently became the German Federal Republic's official delegate. We very much admired Helmut's ability to perform that task, as well as assume the editorship of the *BTR*, while performing his duties as the technical director at the operas in Köln and later in Munich. Our principal contacts were in the meetings of the OISTAT Commissions and Congresses. Helmut came to the meetings extremely well prepared on the agenda. He would quietly debate the issues until the point at which he thought the meeting had gone off track. Then a more aggressive Helmut appeared, a more animated Helmut, a more forceful Helmut. He used humor and mirth as means of adroitly re-focusing the meeting. This combination of serious purpose advocated with humor is a Helmut trait that is much to be envied. In the same way I am reminded of the annual Christmas messages that arrived yearly from the Bavarian State Opera, always focused on some aspect of the season's opera production coupled with some small physical object of humorous intent.

In 1973 I invited Helmut to deliver a series of month-long Master Classes in theatre design and technology sponsored by our United States Institute of Theatre Technology (USITT). The classes consisted of two or three days of lecturing in each of 10 locations throughout the United States. The students came from the graduate and undergraduate theatre departments of the teaching institutions in each location. Helmut prepared vigorously for these classes, including considerable enhancement of his English vocabulary. The messages that Helmut delivered included a love of theatre and opera, the obligations of the theatre professional,

the leadership role of the technical director, and the importance of safety in the theatre. Helmut brought a clear vision of professionalism in the theatre that instilled his own love for the profession of theatre. He and Rosemarie made enduring friends throughout the United States on this visit and on several subsequent visits.

Helmut had set such a high standard during the Master Class tour that, in 1985, he was still well remembered for his outstanding professionalism. In that year the USITT awarded him a "Special Citation" (less than a dozen individuals have been so honored by the Institute as it celebrates its 50th anniversary). The concluding words of the citation are--- "his continuing and prolific efforts to develop and improve the state of theatre production and organization."

In 1997, as Helmut was completing an 18-year term as President of OISTAT, I had the honor of awarding him OISTAT's Gold Pin. At the same ceremony, USITT made Helmut an Honorary Fellow of the Institute, the only non-member ever to be awarded this distinction.

Present at that ceremony as well was another of OISTAT's greats, Josef Svoboda. The three of us together taking some credit as among the Founders of OISTAT, and also for the success of our original mission, to facilitate a dialogue between East and West beyond the political borders created by the "Cold War."

Dr. Joel E. Rubin, author of this article, is a theatre-planning consultant in New York City. He is a Past-President and the Co-Founder of USITT and preceded Helmut Grosser as President of OISTAT.

Michael Ramsaur

Head, United States Centre of OISTAT

I write these words after hearing of the passing of Helmut Grosser. I relate these stories as examples of Helmut, the person who became my friend and who remains with me in my heart as a friend. I first met Helmut when I was 22 years old and came to Germany to work and to learn the physical and managerial operations of the large German Opera Houses. I was visiting various cities with no introductions. I knocked on the stage door of the Cologne Opera House and explained to the doorman that I would like to see the theatre and its equipment. After being told to sit and wait, some minutes later Helmut Grosser, the technical director, came to the door and proceeded to give me and my wife a 45 minute tour of his "house" explaining much to me about the equipment, operations, and repertory. OISTAT, BTR, and internationalism were never mentioned but Helmut took the time to patiently explain the nuts and bolts of the theatre's operations to me. Clearly a busy man in an important job, he made time to talk to a young boy he did not know but was interested in technical theatre. This was my introduction to the kind of man that was

Helmut Grosser.

As time went on, I discovered the pleasure of reading the *Bühnentechnische Rundschau* magazine, which Helmut edited, and its extensive coverage of theatres in Germany old and new. Through the *BTR* coverage of OISTAT, Helmut explained to me internationalism and the importance of international communication, particularly at the time between East and West. From Helmut's introduction of internationalism and Joel Rubin's invitation to actually attend an OISTAT meeting, I became committed to such communication. By attending OISTAT meetings and having regular contact with Helmut, I developed what I considered a precious friendship with him and his beloved wife Rosemarie, visiting them often at their home outside Munich.

Two memories of Helmut come to mind; both are personal because the memories included my children. Helmut made a USITT Master Class tour to the United States in 1973, and I, along with Randy Earle, was able to host him and Rosemarie when he spoke to San Francisco Bay area students. My fondest memory of that visit was driving the Pacific coast with Helmut and Rosemarie; the two of them hand in hand with my 2-year-old daughter walking the headlands and looking at the wild Pacific Ocean. Many years later my family was visiting with Helmut and Rosemarie at Christmas time. My two children were enchanted with the miniature Christmas Village, carefully decorated by Rosemarie, and constructed in a window by Helmut with the Munich snow of their yard as a backdrop. It became a Ramsaur family tradition to have such a village at Christmas, but alas without the Munich snow.



The professional accomplishments of Helmut Grosser as technical director at the Opera Houses in Cologne and Munich, as editor of the *Bühnentechnische Rundschau*, and as President of OISTAT were great, but to me his greatest accomplishments were personal. Helmut taught many colleagues an enormous amount about theatre and friendship, and I cherish the friendship we had, and I will miss him.

Randy Earle

Chair, USITT Fellows

My first memory of Helmut goes back to November 1973 when I was privileged to co-host, with Michael Ramsaur, his Northern California Master Class in Technical Direction that we held at San Jose State University. Helmut conducted a class that opened our minds to the true logistical problems of repertory opera

production, staging, construction, and storage on scale none of us had ever experienced. I always smile when remembering his apology for "bad English" that was unnecessary due to absolute clarity on his part. I took Helmut and Rosemarie on tours around the Bay area and enjoyed wonderful times with them. I remember their sense of awe upon seeing the coastal redwoods in John Muir Woods.

Subsequently, I was a guest of the Grossers in Munich upon several occasions where their hospitality was so generous and our friendship continued to grow. I will always remember the twinkle in Helmut's eyes when he spoke of Rosemarie and don't know when I've ever seen two people so much in love. When Helmut came to the San Francisco Opera to supervise installation of *King Lear* (Bavarian State Opera productions) in May 1985, without Rosemarie, we took a number of "road trips" including a magical journey down the Big Sur coast.

Once again, that smile haunts me and I remember so many good conversations with him about the theatre, our respective jobs and, most important, life in general. The story of the Grosser's journey to West Germany after World War II has never failed to stay with me and, in part, explains their mutual love. Helmut was deeply passionate about the second love of his life, the theatre, and never hesitated to share thoughts and experiences to assist those like me who were just entering the profession. His warm humanity and kind spirit will stay with me always as I constantly go back to that image of him at his 80th birthday celebration. Helmut, you are deeply missed by those of us so fortunate to know you.

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Goodbye to Bill Morse

It is with regret that we write of the death of Bill Morse, a long-time member of the Institute and one of the always-calm coordinators of the Conference Office. Mr. Morse, of Cal Poly-Pomona, died Sunday, July 18. We send our condolences to his family.



A more complete In Memoriam piece will appear in the September issue of *Sightlines*. A memorial will be held 4 p.m. September 19 at Cal Poly-Pomona.

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Congratulations to Justin Miller

Justin A. Miller, a recent MFA graduate of Michigan State University and a USITT member since 2004, tells us he has accepted and will soon begin his first teaching position as an instructional assistant professor of theatre as well as the technical director at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. He tells us "This new job offers everything I could want in a position: friendly colleagues, an ambitious season of productions, and a group of students that is not so large I can not learn their names.

"I attribute a great deal of my knowledge and professional confidence to my membership in the Institute, and one of my many goals for this year is to create an active and exciting student chapter."

Justin says, "See you in Charlotte," and we look forward to seeing him there.

Mr. Miller was our first response from Executive Director David Grindle's call for stories about USITT. We encourage others to share their experiences at info@office.usitt.org.

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Stroemel To Coach U.S. Women's Hockey

This month:
Bill Morse
Justin Miller
Mo Stroemel
Fun in Texas
The Manliest City
Bob Theis

Mo Stroemel, best known as a guiding force behind USITT's special events presentations for several years, is gaining fame for his work as a hockey coach. Mr. Storemel has been named head coach of the 2011 United States University Women's Select Team, which will compete at the Winter World University Games January 27 to February 6 in Erzurum, Turkey. This will be the inaugural appearance for the United States Women's Team, comprised of players from collegiate ice hockey teams affiliated with the American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA).

Mr. Stroemel is beginning his fourth year as head coach of the Penn State University Lady Icers. He has been with university's ice hockey program since 1994, serving in a variety of roles: women's head coach (2007-present); Men's Division 1 assistant coach (2004-2007); Men's Division 2 head coach (1997-2004); and Men's Division 2 assistant coach (1994-1997).

He is a member of the Penn State University faculty teaching classes in technical theatre. He lives in State College, Pennsylvania with his wife, Joan, and his children, Sarah and Tom.

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Things Are Different in Texas

USITT members are problem-solvers, and the scope of that talent is not limited to productions. A recent conversation between President Joe Aldridge, carrying out a summer project in Texas, and the USITT office was interrupted when Joe had to leave his truck and remove a turtle which was attempting to cross a roadway. Once the turtle was safely off the road, and out of harm's way, the conversation resumed.

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Charlotte Earns New Honor

Charlotte, North Carolina, where USITT will hold its 2011 Annual Conference & Stage Expo, has recently been named "America's Manliest City."

The title was awarded by the makers of COMBOS, the "official cheese-filled snack of NASCAR" since 2002. It was in second place in 2009, and toppled last year's champ city, Nashville, Tennessee, which fell to fourth place.

According to a report on WBTV, the ranking process changed a little this year, using manly criteria like the number of home improvement stores, steak houses, pickup trucks, and motorcycles per capita. Last year's rankings were based on criteria such as number of professional sports teams, popularity of power tools, and frequency of monster truck rallies.

For a full report on the manliness index, click on the [WBTV report](#).

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Member Featured for Running

Robert Theis of J.R. Clancy, Inc. was featured in coverage of the Chase Corporate Challenge, a 3.5 mile road race held in Syracuse, New York. An avid runner, he encouraged Clancy employees to be among the 6,791 participants representing 259 companies that entered the event.

In spite of delays caused by potential lightning strikes, a special effect that Mr. Theis had not scripted, all those who ran the event reported having a great time. Read the [whole story](#).

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Offers Software Upgrade, Provides Controls

A software upgrade for ETC's iFR has a number of new features, with several specifically designed for the Apple iPad. ETC also provided controls for Choctaw Casino's special effects in Oklahoma.

When running the iFR application on an iPhone, iPod Touch or iPad, these new features include a Cue Playback Display, which offers playback controls of the master cue list and shows the current cue and dynamic duration, as well as several previous and pending cues. A similar tool, the Cue List Display, provides the same information, but doesn't have playback controls.



An additional new feature is a Pan/Tilt display that provides ETC axis controls on the Eos product line. Also, a new Encoder Display – only on the iPad – allows users to create a page of encoders, which can be moved and resized as desired using standard Apple navigation techniques.

Finally, the new Console Connect List creates a list of different consoles to connect to.

All profits from iFR application purchases are put toward ESTA's Behind the Scenes program in North America and its British equivalent. Light Relief.

For vacationers on the road to the Choctaw Casino Resort, the guest experience begins on the approach to the hotel, with the series of LED-illuminated, color-changing pylons that flank the boulevard. Drawing up to the resort, motorists see a circle of nine obelisks around an entry fountain that incorporates not only dramatic water effects, but lighting and fire. Inside, guests are greeted with a second fountain -- a dazzling water-curtain programmed to change colors and water quantity as a kinetic backdrop to a buffalo sculpture. The synchronized magic of all these scenic effects – as well as the entire exterior LED wash

This month:
ETC
GAMPRODUCTS, Inc.
Rose Brand
PRG

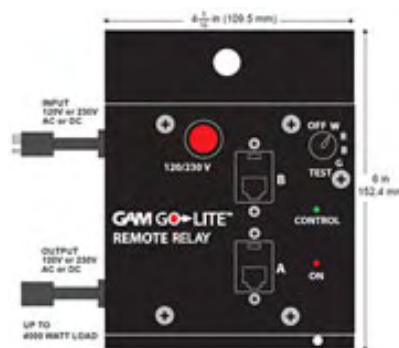
lighting of the building -- is performed by ETC Unison Mosaic show controllers.

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Introduces Remote Relay

GAMPRODUCTS, Inc. of Los Angeles, CA recently introduced the GAM Remote Relay, a new addition to the GAM GO-LITE system. The Remote Relay can handle loads up to 4,000 watts.

For more information about the GAM GO-LITE, contact **GAMPRODUCTS, INC.**, 4975 West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90019; 323-935-4975; fax 323-935-2002, or www.gamonline.com.



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Rose Brand's Lightbox Fabric Featured

Rose Brand's newest blog post highlights the grand vision of event designer Matthew David for a Lincoln Center gala. Using Rose Brand's Lightbox fabric digitally printed with the iconic skyline of New York, Mr. David of 360 Design Events LTD. used the virtues of this fabric and printing process to extraordinary effect. To see more visit blog.rosebrand.com.



Photo/360 Design Events

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PRG Provides Equipment, Forms Partnership

In Universal Pictures' *Get Him to The Greek*, Director of Photography Robert Yeoman, ASC and Gaffer John Vecchio knew that the concert finale, the payoff of the comic road trip adventure, had to deliver visually. They turned to **Production Resource Group (PRG)** and Lighting/Video Designer Bryan Faris to create the iconic rock performance.

PRG Distribution North America also announced their distribution partnership for North America, Mexico, Central America and South America with electric chain hoist manufacturer ChainMaster.



Photo/Universal Pictures

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Full Service Printer Joins Ranks

We welcome new Sustaining member, **Enhance A Colour**, a full service large format printing company with vast capabilities. The competitive difference is that the company manufactures everything in-house. Enhance a Colour is a true "one stop shop" for the person or customer looking for help at a single location. Its aim is to make life easier and deliver a quality product that exceeds expectations. For more information, visit www.eacgs.com.

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Welcome College Arts Center

We also welcome **Santa Clarita Performing Arts Center at College of the Canyons** as a new Sustaining member. The Santa Clarita Performing Arts Center is located on the campus of College of the Canyons, a California community college located at 26455 Rockwell Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91355. The facility boasts a spectacular 7,500-square-foot proscenium theatre with a state-of-the-art sound system and 886 seats, as well as the experimental Black Box theatre. Funded by the State of California and the City of Santa Clarita, the 47,000 square-foot center features instructional, community, and professional entertainment and informational programs. Designed with a green room, scene shops, costume and property storage, orchestra pit, make-up/dressing room areas, lockers, showers, ticket booth, and snack bar, the Performing Arts Center is a one-of-a-kind performance destination for community members in the Santa Clarita Valley. It provides a venue for local and regional performers who entertain, engage, and educate school groups 60 to 300 students. For more information, visit www.canyons.edu/offices/pio/canyonspac.

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Participates in International Exhibits

This month:
Enhance a Colour

Santa Clarita Performing Arts
Center at College of the
Canyons

Serapid, Inc.

TMB

Auerbach Pollock Friedlander

Stagecraft Institute of Las
Vegas

Ultratec Special Effects, Inc.

Stage Technologies

Serapid, Inc. participated in a number of exhibitions during the summer months.

First was the International Theatre Engineering and Architecture Conference (ITEAC) June 13 to 15 at Central Hall Westminster in London. Serapid is a silver sponsor of the conference, and representatives gave a presentation about flexible venues.

ITEAC was followed by the Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT) Show June 16 and 17 at the Royal Horticultural Halls in the Lindley, Lawrence and Assembly Halls in London. July 10 to 14 Serapid co-exhibited at the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP): Integrated Planning for Higher Education Exhibit with SECOA and Daktronics/Vortek at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The PALME Vietnam Show at the Saigon Exhibition and Convention Center in Ho Chi Minh, was held July 22 to 24.

For more information about Serapid or any of these shows, visit www.serapid.us/trade-shows.html or serapid.com/gb/world/trade_show.html.

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Equipment Aids in Tony Award Wins

One of Broadway's latest smash hits, *American Idiot*, received Best Scenic Design of a Musical and Best Lighting Design of a Musical at this year's Tony Awards Show. The award-winning scenic elements of the show center around numerous video displays and projections, driven by a system comprising a total of 17 Hippotizer HD media servers.



TMB is the exclusive distributor for Hippotizer in North America and Asia. For more information about Hippotizer, visit www.tmb.com/products/hippotizer. Learn more about many other innovative and exciting products from TMB at www.tmb.com.

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Principals Participate at ITEAC

Principals S. Leonard Auerbach and Steven Friedlander of **Auerbach Pollock Friedlander** were part of panel discussions for the International Theatre Engineering and Architecture Conference 2010. Held in London this year, the conference theme was “Are Performing Arts Buildings Fit for Purpose and What Does This Involve?”

Mr. Auerbach, the founding principal at Auerbach Pollock Friedlander, facilitated *The Development of Theatre Forms* and *New International* panels. *The Procurement Process* panel was chaired by Mr. Friedlander, principal in charge of Auerbach Pollock Friedlander’s New York office.

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Summer Classes in Full Swing

Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas recently kicked off classes for its 2010 Summer Training Program providing intensive training in live entertainment technology to 14 full time students and a grand total of 72 students



from all over the United States and three foreign countries. This year, the line up of classes consisted of Rigging, CAD, Lighting Technology, Scene Painting, WYSIWYG, Moving Lights, Sound, Makeup, Special Effects, Masks, and Tech Management.

Registration for SILV 2011 classes will open soon. Head over to www.stagecraftinstitute.com and sign up for the SILV Newsletter to get notified when next year's offerings are posted.

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Introduces New Fog Machine

Ultratec Special Effects Inc. has introduced a new fog machine using dry ice technology. The Dry Icer is a new and improved professional, cost effective solution for creating spectacular low-lying fog effects.



The sleek new design has a 20 pound dry ice capacity which is placed in a stainless steel basket. Other new features are low water shut off indicator, four-inch hose adaptor, and heavy duty latches on the lid.

For information, visit www.ultratecfx.com or call 519-659-7972 or 800-388-0617.

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PC Wing Takes Off

The PC Wing is the latest compact training and programming tool from **Stage Technologies** and is a popular new addition to its control desk family. PC Wings have recently been ordered by Guildhall College of Music and Drama in London and Zoomvliet College in the Netherlands to provide in-lab automation training tools for their technical theatre students.

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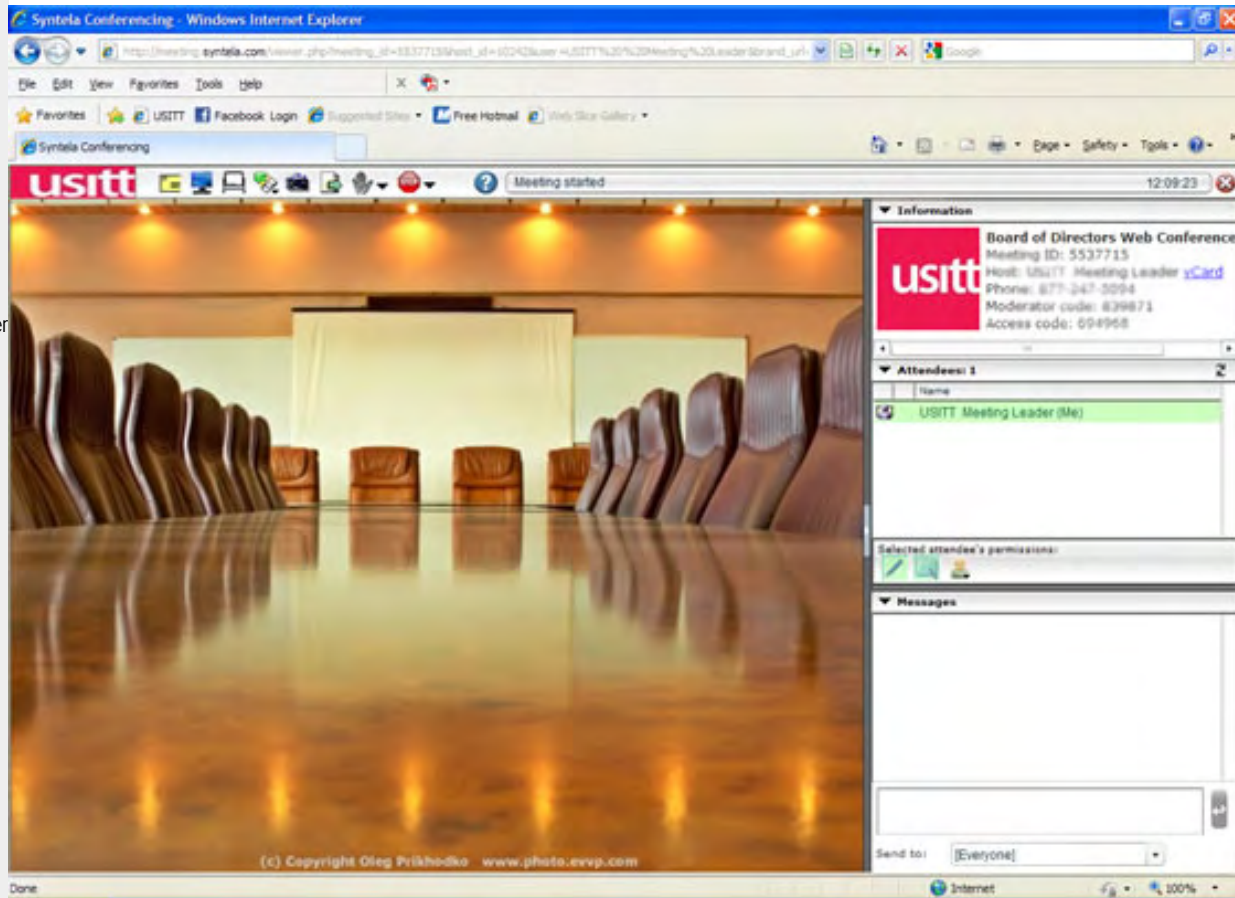
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Implementing 21st Century Meeting Techniques

Joe Aldridge
USITT President

Only one week on the job, and already I am being pressed to earn my keep! Change brings new challenges, and the first I am encountering is finding a method by which the membership can have access to the information it needs in order to be well-informed about the operations of USITT.

With the recent Bylaws changes, the number of Board meetings has increased from two per year to four. Traditionally, before the passage of the new Bylaws, the USITT Board meetings occurred twice a year with Board members meeting at the Annual Conference and again in conjunction with LDI.

In order to accommodate the additional meetings, we have embarked on twice yearly, web-based meetings. This is a new

venture for us, and we are in the process of refining the procedures/parameters so that, just as with the face-to-face meetings, the web-based meetings are open to the membership at large.

If you have a desire to attend the next web-based Board meeting, you will be able to do so with a little bit of instruction which will be provided by Shannan Hoerger in the USITT National office. The meeting will take place on Friday, August 13 with a start time being 1:30 p.m. EDT. All members should have received an e-mail confirmation of the time and invitation to the meeting from info@office.usitt.org. The meeting will last for approximately 90 minutes, depending upon the depth of discussion. The agenda will be announced before the start of the meeting.

Those interested should contact Ms. Hoerger at shannan@office.usitt.org for details. Be aware that Roberts Rules of Order will prevail and the conferencing system being utilized will allow for questions and comments via instant messaging from observers to the moderator -- me! We will need to know of your intent to join us by Wednesday, August 11, 2 p.m. EDT. This will allow us to make certain that appropriate arrangements are in place to accommodate everyone.

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Plan Annual BBQ

Joseph P. Donovan, chair of the New England Regional Section, will hold the section's annual BBQ on August 21 in Brooks, Maine at his home. Anyone interested in attending should contact him at joseph@donovan.net or find the group on Facebook. Search USITT New England.

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To Hold Master Classes, Expo

The Southeast Regional Section invites all members and interested individuals to attend its annual Master Classes, hosted this year by Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Alabama on September 17 to 18.

Tentative sessions include *Sound for the Theatre*, *Prop Food Construction*, *Tailoring*, *Stage Automation*, and *Scene Painting*.

In addition to the sessions, the Section will host its Design/Tech Expo open to students and faculty of the region. Enter designs and technical projects for adjudication and the chance to win conference registration to the USITT Conference & Stage Expo in Charlotte, North Carolina in March.

Visit the Southeast Section website for more information as it becomes available or contact David Keefer at Jacksonville State University, dkeefer@jsu.edu.

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Fall Conference September 25

The Ohio Valley Regional Section will hold its annual Fall Conference on Saturday, September 25 at Capital University in Columbus.

The conference will feature session topics that include *Master Class For Stage Managers*, *Robotic Scenic Units*, *Fabrics by Rosebrand*, *Introduction to Draping*, *Strand Palette Series Training*, *Scenic Painting on a variety of textiles*, *Virtual Collaboration*, *Going Green Behind the Scenes*, *History -- It Won't Kill You*, *Introduction to Wigs*, *Flame Retardant/Fire Codes*, and *Sound*.

New for this conference will be a discounted group rate at the Marriott Hotel. There will be information on booking rooms on the website. All discounted rooms need to be booked by September 1.

This month:
New England
Southeast
Ohio Valley

Also, new this year is a \$15 entry fee for each nomination/ submission to the Ezekiel Exhibit. This fee will help cover the escalating costs of shipping the exhibit from the venue to national and returning them to entrants. More information on Peggy Ezekiel Exhibit can be found on the [Ohio Valley Website](#). The deadline for nominations is September 7. All entries must be either delivered to the conference site by 9 a.m. September 25 or received in the mail by Matt Benjamin by September 15.

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USITT members are diverse, with varied interests and ideas, so an effort is now underway to better quantify membership.

Photo/Tom Thatcher

Better Defining Who We Are**David Grindle***Executive Director*

What do we do, and who do we work with? We've all had to answer that type of question. Friends and family members ask, and the answer is something like "I'm a designer" or "I'm a technician" and the response is a polite nod of the head, but there is still a lack of understanding of what we do and who we are among most of the general population.

As we develop additional benefits of membership, we are also working to develop a profile of not just what we do, but who we are. We are collecting this information so we can provide it in quantifiable terms using measures which are standard to those outside our industry. USITT members should have a voice large enough to be heard, yet I am constantly asked the question, "Who are you," when I'm speaking to "non-theatre" companies interested in offering benefits for our members.

We see ourselves as artists, technicians, managers – terms understood by others working in theatre and live performing arts. Benefits are all about marketing, and corporations are looking to market their products and services to organizations whose members can be "identified" in specific categories. As we ask to be considered for corporate discounts or other benefits which members are seeking, we are developing statistics to provide the information important to potential partners.

Additionally, we are beginning to seek funding for our activities from foundations and corporations. These are organizations that USITT has not previously approached, and many want to know details about the members of the organizations they are funding. For example, Lowe's Corporation asks us about our member's income, sexual orientation, and age. All of these details are private, of course, but collectively they show the diverse markets and buying power which can be reached by investing in USITT.

By seeking new funding streams for existing projects, we will be able to enhance others or start something new. It is all about finding new ways to bring benefit for your membership dollar.

In July, a survey was sent to all members seeking help in answering some basic demographic questions. Additionally, the survey asked opinions on current benefits and suggestions for new ones. Those questions will be used to be sure our efforts in creating new benefits will be meaningful. USITT has already formed an alliance with Fractured Atlas to provide insurance benefits to interested members and answers to survey questions will help as we move forward with these efforts.

I worked with Martha Marking, VP-Members, Sections & Chapters, to create the July survey. The information obtained is confidential and can not be linked to any individual. In addition, no question was "required" and each demographic question included a "prefer not to respond" option.

However, the information will greatly assist us by showing corporations and foundations the value in developing a relationship with USITT by providing benefits or funding.

By the time this appears, the survey will be over. Martha and I thank all of those who participated because the statistical information we collect will lead to a stronger Institute for you, the members.

Editor's Note: Almost 600 members completed the survey in the 96 hours it was available. That number gives us a great statistical snapshot of USITT.

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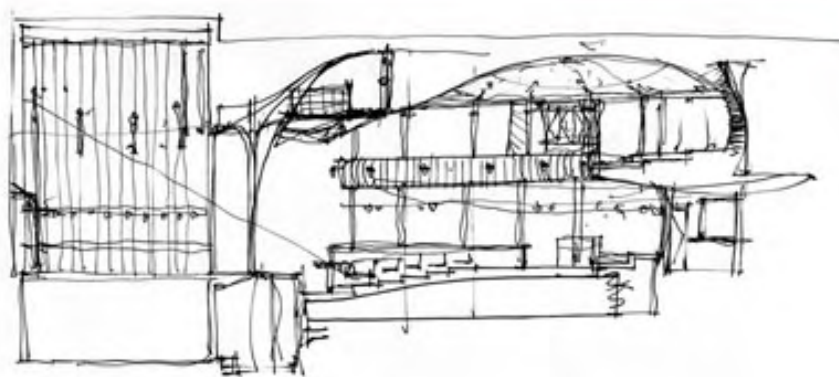
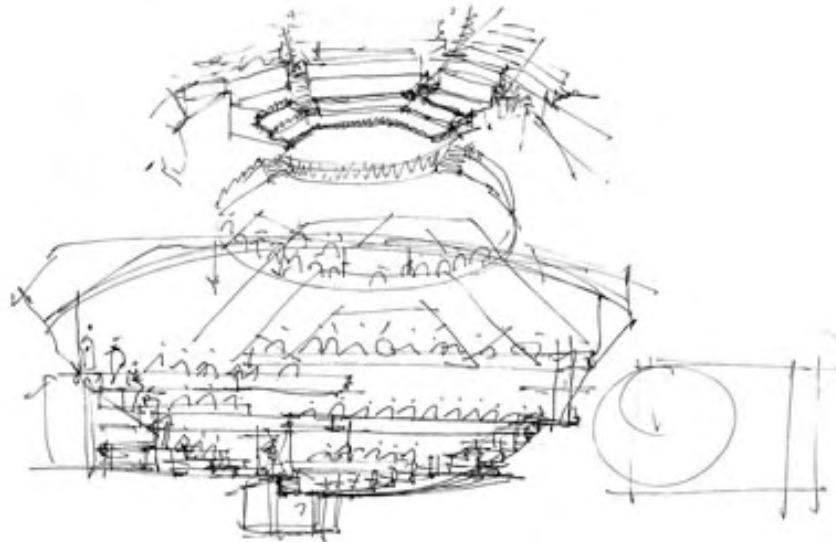
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Sketches, such as those of a concept sketch for UW Parkside Recital Hall (at left, top) and the concept sketch for new drama theatre at Carthage College (at left, bottom), could be part of the USA/USITT submittal for the Architectural Exhibit as part of the 2011 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Deadline for submitting entries is August 10, 2010.

Deadline August 10 for PQ 2011 US Architectural Exhibit

Scott Georgeson, AIA
Architecture Commissioner

It is not too late! Architects can submit entries for consideration as part of the USA/USITT Architectural Exhibit to the 2011 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. All submissions are due by August 10. The exhibit, *The Theatre Architect's Attic*, will show the broad range of theatre projects completed in the United States since 2006. E-mail Scott F. Georgeson, AIA, at sfg@workshoparchitects.com for more information on submissions.

The exhibit is designed as a sculptural collage of sketches, photos,

models, and videos. Texture, color, and scale will draw the viewer to the exhibit. The Architectural Exhibit will present the hundreds of spaces of all types, sizes, and locations.

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Programming from the Costume Design & Technology Commission is often colorful and always interesting to those who participate in sessions, such as Working with Hair: Laying Hair and Ventilating at the 2010 Annual Conference.

Photo/R. Finkelstein

Wanted: 2012 Costume Programming Ideas

Melissa L. Merz

Costume Design & Technology Commission

Months before the 2011 USITT Annual Conference opens, the Costume Design & Technology Commission begins to choose its programming for the 2012 event, which will be held in Long Beach, California. For years, the Costume Commission has welcomed suggestions for programming from its members. It's an exciting process.

At every USITT Annual Conference, there are a number of exciting sessions as well as the Professional Development Workshops. All are presented by professionals and educators who sent in proposals. At the beginning of each Conference, the Commission has a meeting for its members where proposed sessions are outlined. It's at that time ballots are passed out. Once they are counted, the sessions for the next year begin to be developed, allowing the members to have a direct say on what they want to see at the next conference.

How do the sessions get on the ballot? Any member can propose a session. The proposal form is found on the USITT website. Click on "Conference" in the top band. Click on "Proposing Sessions" on the left side. Instructions for submitting session proposals for the Charlotte conference are there, to provide an outline of the process. While costume sessions have already been decided for

Charlotte, the Commission is already looking for sessions for Long Beach, California in 2012.

Are there proposals for Long Beach? Not yet, but proposals can be submitted to Martha Cooper at mhcooper@fsu.edu.

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Ticket pricing is always an interesting topic of discussion for members of the Management Commission and all concerned with filling seats.

Photo/Barbara E.R. Lucas

Blogs Discuss Pricing Initiatives

Sherry Wagner-Henry

Vice-Commissioner, Arts Management

In the time since the Annual Conference and the Management Commission meetings in Kansas City, many of the relevant issues discussed seem to be constant in the news of the field. Many who attended, *Blue Hairs to Gen Y: How to Build and Maintain Audiences*, may remember one issue of discussion included Dynamic (or Demand Based) Pricing strategies. It was noted that the Minnesota Centennial Showboat at the University of Minnesota was studying the idea and had intended to launch a pricing initiative this season or next. Looks as if many folks in the field have started to entertain and employ the idea, some with extremely positive success.

A blog commentary from Thomas Cott's "You've Cott Mail" summarizes a larger commentary on demand pricing. This post leads you to the [larger article](#) from Rick Lester of TRG (Target Resource Group) Arts, on his blog of cultural consumer behavior. It profiles a case study at the Denver Center for Performing Arts, site of many activities during USITT's 1980 Annual Conference & Stage Expo.

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When Bill Sapsis of Sapsis Rigging Entertainment Services, Inc., hosts the annual Stump the Riggers session the questions can be interesting, and the responses are noted for being both informative and entertaining. Mr. Sapsis also presents prizes, including one in honor of the late Jack Seuss, shown at left with the 2010 winner.

Photo/Tom Thatcher

Exhibitors Offer Sessions

Helen Willard

Stage Expo Sales Manager

In addition to exhibiting at Stage Expo, several companies sponsor programs at the conference. Here are brief descriptions of some of the sessions which will be presented by exhibitors in Charlotte.

Seeing in Color! Finding Your Way through Wonderland

Sponsored by Apollo Design Technology

For a lighting designer, the tools available to color light range from long-standing methods to rapidly emerging technologies. This panel discussion, composed of designers from a variety of live entertainment styles (including dance, theatre, and concerts), cuts through the confusion by offering the student and young designer valuable insights on the products available today for creating color that best complements the theme, story, or music.

Automation at Cirque du Soleil

Sponsored by Cirque du Soleil

PowerPoint and video will be shown to give examples of how automation is used throughout the company and the different levels it is used at each show. The purpose of the class will be to give an overall view of the automation department and how it operates.

Wardrobe at Cirque du Soleil

Sponsored by Cirque du Soleil

PowerPoint and video will be shown to give examples of how the Cirque wardrobe department operates, and how it incorporates

hair and make-up, wigs, and crafts.

Military Post Theatres in Today's Society

Sponsored by InterAmerica Stage

Learn about theatres on military posts and their roles in today's society. Many are abandoned buildings, some are still used on military bases, and others are being renovated to serve local communities. In addition to the history of some military post theatres, discussion will include the stories of the theatres that are in use or are coming back to life.

A New Language for Color in Stage Lighting

Sponsored by Rosco

New manufacturing technologies require understanding and discussion about color for stage lighting in new ways. Until now, swatchbooks, RGB and CMY values, SED curves, and CIE charts have been used. The panel will clarify how to specify and get the desired colors from plastic filters, computer consoles, and color pickers.

How to Specify a Dance Floor so That Everyone Gets What They Expect

Sponsored by Rosco

Technical directors, dance directors, and department heads need to be on the same page when specifying a vinyl dance floor surface or a sub-floor. This panel of dance and technical theatre professionals will clarify the specification issues.

Stump the Riggers

Sponsored by Sapsis Rigging & Entertainment Services

This session is a perennial USITT favorite. A panel of industry experts invites you to take pot shots at them. Bring best (and worst) questions and try to stump these guys. Who knows? You could win a prize.

Disney Entertainment: on Land, Sea and Air

Sponsored by Walt Disney Entertainment

Explore how Disney Creative Entertainment celebrates its heritage while pushing the envelope in the design, production, and operation of shows in theme parks and cruise ships. This session will focus specifically on the life cycle of a project, from initial creative concept to the operational reality of the Disney show. Q & A session will follow the presentation.

Plan to go to Charlotte from March 9 to 12 for these and many other sessions.

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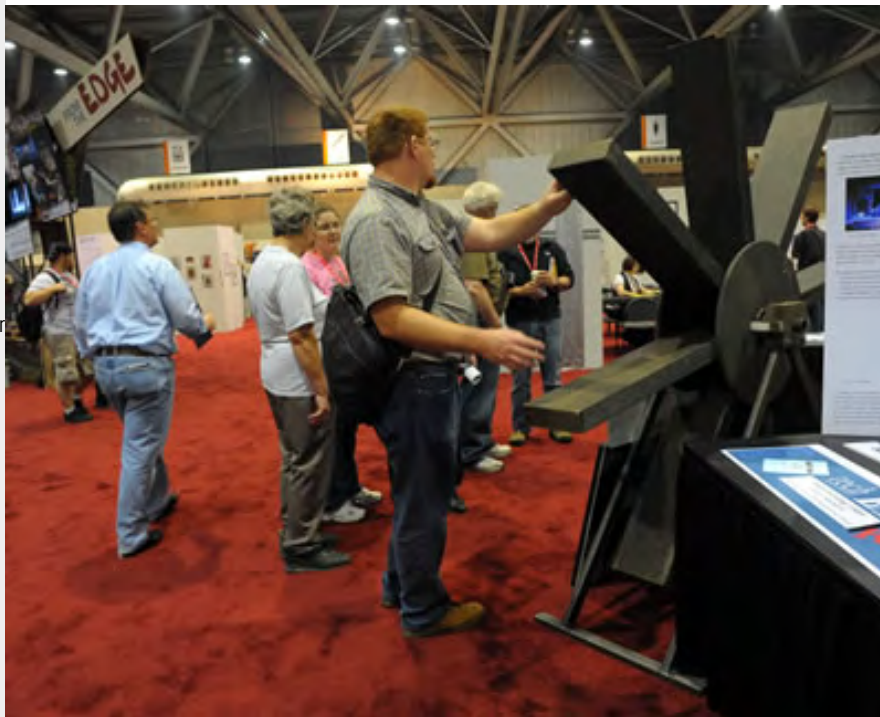
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A retrospective exhibit of Tech Expo projects was a big hit at Stage Expo in Kansas City.

Photo/William Browning

Tech Expo -- Next 50 Years Begins Now

Rob Kirby
Tech Expo Chair

Many people had a chance to experience the Tech Expo Retrospective Exhibit at the 2010 Annual Conference & Stage Expo in Kansas City, Missouri. It is amazing to see how far things have come in the years since USITT began collecting and sharing technical solutions to production challenges!

Consider Andi Lyons' exhibit printed on her dot matrix printer in 1987, as well as the spectrum Tech Expo has encompassed from Stephen Rees's simple and elegant "Wire Rope Keeper" to the pneumatic circuitry of Tom Korder's "Dancing Bed."

Now it is time to become part of the next 50 years by participating in the 2011 Tech Expo. Everyone is urged to take a moment to examine current summer productions as well as past productions for solutions worth bragging about and submit them for consideration.

All areas of production are encouraged to enter. The deadline for submissions is November 1. Download instructions and specifications [here](#), and find the application form [here](#).

Be part of the 2011 Tech Expo in Charlotte, North Carolina, a special exhibit at Stage Expo from March 10 to 12, 2011, and be included in the catalog featuring selected projects.

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- John S. Uthoff
- Monica Weinzapfel

2009-2012

- William Browning
- Jonathan Darling
- Linda Essig
- Mitch Hefter
- Brian Reed
- Kim Scott

2010-2013

- Emily Gill
- R. Michael Gros
- Panela Leung
- Debra Garcia Lockwood
- Jill Maurer

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- Stage Research, Inc.
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- ALPS/Advanced Lighting & Production Services, Inc.
- Altman Lighting, Inc.
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Why We Do It - Or Zen and the Art of Technical Production

Bryan Ackler

We are, for the most part, actually a very lucky group; most of us have chosen to work in technical entertainment because it was our choice. We were not forced to “follow our parents” into their field, or “take over the family firm.” Most of us didn’t choose this work to meet the famous celebrities, work in glamorous venues, or travel to see the world. Why did we choose to labor at odd hours in the dark for this very unusual profession? And what do we get out of it: material wealth, social status, pay and benefits, recognition, and reputation?

The actors, designers, directors, producers, and playwrights all talk about working for their art and receive public and personal gratification from executing their art. But what about us? Even the government doesn’t recognize our work as art; we aren’t classified or exempted as artistic. We must search for a vision of art within our chosen field of technical production. But we rarely find art in coiled cable, precisely aligned patterns projected on someone else’s scenery, or space left over in the tour truck where there wasn’t space before. We must find it in ourselves; we must view work in a more expansive concept; we must see it as contributing

more to our lives than the material, but as a spiritual contributor.

Making a meaningful difference and exercising a greater control over your own destiny are a result of being conscious of the choices we make about the work we do and the way we actually carry out the work. There is an old adage, “you can have it fast, cheap, or correct; choose two.” Yet there is the older Greek saying of “moderation in all things.” Choosing to perform at less than a personally fulfilling level builds and builds. Choosing not to follow your own road suppresses self-expression and creativity, which leads to unhappiness. Unhappiness or dissatisfaction with one’s work is the number one risk factor for heart disease -- a greater contributor than smoking, high cholesterol, or hypertension. Finding the path to a fulfilling effort can be both mentally and physically rewarding and benefit you in the long term. The passage to successful inclusion of creative self-expression in one’s workplace can be long and difficult, but we work in a profession that prides itself on tolerating, if not encouraging, expression.

It was either Harold Burris-Meyer or Robert Porterfield who once said that you should do your work for the three percent of the audience that knows the difference; breaking their willingness degrades the event for them. The remaining 97 percent of the participants are joyfully pleased. Of the entire audience, we, more than anyone, know the difference, and to that portion of that audience and ourselves we must dedicate our efforts.

Make your life’s work fulfilling; enthrall and thrill your coworkers and technical ensemble members. It will only benefit everybody in an infinite number of ways, and you’ll be happier and healthier.

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