

# usitt newsletter

AUGUST, 1988

Editor: Ron Olson

Vol. XXVIII No. 8

## ENGINEERING COMMISSION ANNOUNCES PROJECTS

### NEW LIGHTING CONTROL PROTOCOLS

Before these new projects are introduced, please be reminded of the intent for applicability of these and the existing USITT control standards as follows:

Although widespread adoption of these standards is sought by the USITT, compliance with the standards is strictly voluntary. Furthermore, the standards are not intended as replacements to protocols already manufactured, but rather as additions to existing protocols. This will broaden the installed bases of equipment which can communicate with each other. Also, compliance with these standards is the responsibility of the manufacturer, and labeling of equipment or statements of compliance does not constitute certification or approval by the USITT.

If you have the opportunity to utilize a new and/or more powerful signal protocol, explore it - don't limit your chance for more potent tools for the sake of an existing protocol. If you feel it necessary to have the standard for compatibility with other systems (e.g. road shows), investigate getting both protocols.

Several projects for the development of new standards have been proposed over the past few months, and we are now in the process of establishing working committees.

### DMX-512/AMX-192 Editorial Clarifications:

The first project is addressing the problem of ambiguities in the DMX-512 Digital Multiplexed Dimmer Control Signal Standard adopted by the USITT in 1986. These ambiguities have reportedly led to different interpretations by different manufacturers, and, as a result, some compatibility problems occur.

Also, some manufacturers with consoles that are switchable between DMX-512 and AMX-192 (Analog Multiplexed Dimmer Control Signal Standard) have been utilizing the 5-pin connector from the DMX-512 Standard for both protocols. Your comments are sought on this "Dual language Connector" practice and whether or not it should be included as an optional feature in the standards.

(more next page)

Please send your comments on Editorial Clarifications for the DMX-512 Standard (and AMX-192 if appropriate) and/or the DMX-512/AMX-192 "Dual Language Connector" to:

Michael Callahan  
611 Broadway-Room 841  
New York, NY 10012  
Phone (212) 982-3720  
FAX (212) 460-9947

### DA/DMX (Device Addressable/Digital Multiplexed) Dimmer Control Signal Standard:

This new project is to develop a more powerful Digital Multiplexed Dimmer Control Signal Protocol Standard. This standard would include error checking and have the capability of addressing more dimmers (devices) on one data link than DMX-512 does. It would not be compatible with DMX-512.

Please send your comments or indicate your interest in this project to:

Gordon Pearlman  
Entertainment Technology  
1332 NW Kearney  
Portland, OR 97209  
FAX (503) 227-1562

We would like to examine any proposals on development of a DMX protocol with error checking that could read DMX-512 (i.e. a DMX-512 protocol) or a bi-directional Digital Multiplexed Signal Protocol. Contact Mitch Hefter (see below)

### ASCII Light Cues:

The goal of this project is to develop a Standard ASCII Text File Format for lighting cues and patch information. This format would allow exchange of this data between different lighting consoles by different manufacturers. Since this would be a "lowest common denominator" format, some information such as some special effects may not be transferable. This Standard would also allow cue data to be extracted from a console to a Personal Computer for work and subsequent reloading to the console. This proposed standard is analogous to Word Processing Programs—most can address ASCII text files, but cannot read each other's documents due to format and different methods of enhancements.

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## Memberships

This newsletter is made possible through the generosity of the Contributing and Sustaining Members listed. The Officers, Board of Directors and entire membership of the USITT gratefully acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of these friends of the Institute.

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## **(Engineering Commission continued)**

This committee is now in the formation process. Please send your comments or express your interest (for forwarding to the committee) to:

Mitch Hefter  
1607 Elvas Way  
Austin, TX 78758-2203  
FAX (512)385-2203

### **Moving Lights Signal Protocol:**

The last new project is for the development of a USITT Standard Control Signal Protocol for Moving Lights. This protocol would establish a standard method of communicating positional, color, iris, and light level information to automated lighting fixtures. This standard is not intended to replace any existing protocols that are already manufactured. If you are interested in participating or have any comments, please contact:

Gene Gulich  
Bash Theatrical Lighting  
3401 Dell Ave.  
North Bergen, NJ 07047  
FAX (201) 863-6364

### **Ongoing Engineering Commission Projects:**

Control Communications Standard  
+10 Volt Dimmer Control Signal Standard\*  
Power Connector Data-Stage Pin Connectors\*  
Power Connector Data-Twist-Lock Connectors  
1990 NEC

Procedures for USITT Standards & Guidelines  
Dimmer Performance Criteria  
Electrical Safety Workshops  
(w/ Health & Safety Commission)  
Dimming System Power Feed Survey  
(w/Lighting Design Commission)

\*Project work almost completed

### **Proposed Engineering Commission Projects:**

DMX-512A  
Bi-Directional DMX  
UL Advisory Panel  
USITT Engineering Award  
NFPA 101 Life Safety code  
(w/ Architecture and Health & Safety Commissions)  
Truss Rigging  
Multi-Conductor Cable Abuse Study  
Power Cable Reference Guide  
Rigging Bearings & Supports,  
Loading;Renovations  
Control Connectors Reference Guide  
Fire Curtains

If you are interested in any of these ongoing or proposed projects, please contact:

Mitch Hefter-Engineering Commissioner  
1607 Elvas Way  
Austin, TX 78758-2203\*  
FAX (512)385-2203\*  
\*(Yes, they are both 2203)

## **NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL**

by David Diamond

If you have information about pyro-technics, you may be of help to our members in Alberta Section who are busy putting together regulations for use of pyro-technical equipment in theatres. If you would like to help, please contact: Mike Taugher, Chairman, Pyro-Safety Committee, Alberta, Canada T2N 1N4.

For those of you who will be attending the Costume Symposium or the Section/Commission Retreat or the Board meeting, remember to make your airline reservations on TWA using the USITT discount. Just call, (800) 325-4933 and be sure to give them our profile number: 99-14556.

This summer we are again updating our Press List. SECTION CHAIRS: please put together a list of the major publications in your area, with contact names and addresses so we can be sure they are on our list. Remember to include newsletters, weekly and monthly publications as well as the major dailies.

The stronger and more up-to-date our press release is, the better able we will be to increase the visibility of USITT. Thank you for your help!

It's official! Lincoln Center will host Design Expo '88 next summer. The rest of the tour of this fine exhibit which had its premiere at the Anaheim Conference is practically set. There is time available, however, between February 16 and March 28, 1989. If you know of an institution that would like to host the exhibit at that time, please contact Deborah Bell or Jeff Quinn.

Look for the new Backstage Handbook which was published recently by our Sustaining Member, Broadway Press. It contains information that will no doubt be useful to many of you. Look for their brochure coming to you by mail.

**USITT NATIONAL OFFICE  
FAX NUMBER IS:**

**212-562-5582**

## COSMAK'S CORNER

by Bernice Ann Graham

### PIÑATAS!

Consider your education and preparation as a technical theatre type personality (TTTP) incomplete, unless you know how to make a Pinata!

Most of us have seen these colorful papier-mache person, animal or thing-shaped with candy, fruit and/or toy-filled Mexican party items in movies or in person. They are usually seen hanging from a tree with a blindfolded child under them trying to break them with a stick to get at the "surprise" contents. Though traditionally a Christmas time event in Mexico and other Latin-American countries, Pinatas can be enjoyed at birthdays and other holidays (including Cinco de Mayo) by all nationalities.

In California, being a neighbor to Mexico, pinatas are often used as promotional gifts and/or for sale to individuals . . . even at Sears.

Or, you can make your own:

1. Chose a shape. Shape can be made with one balloon or two or three taped together before applying papier-mache. Use cardboard mailing, toilet paper or kitchen paper towel tubes for legs and necks; shape cardboard for beaks and ears; use ping pong or rubber balls for noses. Tape to balloon bodies. OR. . . (LESS TIME CONSUMING). . . Find a plastic inflatable toy or pool creature and use that as a base.
2. Papier-mache over base. Two methods are used: A. Paste-soak all strips (about 2" wide newspaper). Apply at least 2 layers of strips over balloon or inflatable object. If necessary, apply a dry strip every so often to soak up excess moisture. B. Alternate layers of paste and newspaper sheets can be trimmed to form necessary shapes. This process is referred to as "bread-and-butter" papier-mache.
3. Before completing the papier-mache process, secure a string harness around the pinata for hanging purposes. Tape and/or papier-mache string in place. (Paste Recipe: Water and wallpaper paste or just flour mixed in large pan to a thin milky consistency.)

4. After the papier-mache is dry, cut a convenient hole in the back of the pinata where balloons or inflatable form can be removed. This hole will also serve as the opening for inserting the candies and/or toys.

5. A typical Mexican pinata is covered with colored tissue paper fringe. Fold 3-inch strips in half as long as possible. Cut about 1 inch in from folded edge every 1/2 inch or so until strip is completely fringed. Turning them inside-out will make the fringe fluff out on its own. (Several layers can be cut at one time to save time.) Wrap these strips around the pinata. Each layer should overlap the previous one. Paste as necessary.

6. Add additional colorful trim as desired of crepe paper, foil, etc.

7. Fill your completed pinata with candy, fruit, small favors or toys that can survive the pinata being hit with a stick while swaying from a tree.

Before earning your PhD. in pinatas, you must be aware of the fact that traditionally pinatas were also made of clay pots. You now may receive you Pinata diploma. Congratulations!

### A COSTUMING MOUSE

A mouse came to the costume shop at CSUFresno that could re-design and re-color a period costume over a plate of an authentic period costume sketch. This could save a costumer hours of research and deliberation when designing production costumes. The mouse could also advise a costumer how best to layout pattern pieces on fabric for space utilization, therefore knowing the amount of fabric required for a particular project. . . in minutes rather than hours.

The mouse in question was attached to an Apple MacIntosh computer. A representative of ModaCAD of Los Angeles, California, demonstrated its system at CSUFresno in June of 1988. The system was also introduced in Spring of 1988 at the Apparel Industry Manufacturers Show in New York.

In its "New Product Introduction" release, ModaCAD states:

1. It is modestly priced (half the price of comparable systems).

2. It supports "all phases of design, from sketching and image processing to pattern [plotting], sizing, grading, marking and automated manufacturing."

3. It requires the minimum of training time. "With multiple windows, the designer can click between sketch, pattern and a spec sheet . . . at the same time."

For more specific information regarding this system contact Maurizio Vecchione, ModaCAD, 10366 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 4, L.A., CA 90024 Tel. (213) 271-7704 Fax. (213) 474-7891

Other computer systems represented at the AIM Show in New York were Lectra Systems, Inc., of Marietta, GA.(PATTERNS); Gerber Garment Technology, Inc. of Tolland, Conn.(SPREADERS AND CUTTERS); and Rockwell-Rimoldi of America, Pittsburgh (SPREADERS AND CUTTERS).

**ATTENTION COMPUTER COMPANIES!** Do not hesitate to contact MICROTheatre, "The Journal for computer users who work in entertainment" c/o University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003 (413) 545-0480 Delphi: MICROTHIRLEW

**ATTENTION COSTUMERS!** Computers are becoming "the way of the world." Even if you don't approve of computers, become aware of them and what they can do in and out of your field. BE PREPARED!!!

### Do You Have A Job Opening?

Reach the professionals you want on your team through **Theatre Design & Technology!**

For advertising rates and information contact:

Tina Margolis  
USITT Journal-TD&T  
330 West 42nd St.,  
Suite 1702  
NYC 10036-6978  
(212)563-5551  
FAX (212) 563-5582

# USITT PUBLICATIONS

## ● SCENOGRAPHY EXPOSITION CATALOGS:

The best and the brightest of the works exhibited at the Biennial Expositions held at the USITT annual conferences in 1980—82—84—86 & '88.

Member 1980 & 82—\$5.00 \* 1984 & 86—\$6.50 \* 1988—\$7.00  
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## ● TD&T INTERNSHIP CLEARING HOUSE:

This publication provides listings on internships in the areas of: Administration; Design; Management; Technical Production; Costume Technology and Manufacturing & Sales, bound in one book.

Member \$7.00 Nonmember \$8.00

## ● THEATRE DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY—BACK ISSUES:

Back issues of USITT's Quarterly Journal are available dating back to 1982. An invaluable resource!

Member \$6.00 per issue Nonmember \$7.00

## ● TD&T INDEX:

An index of the articles from THEATRE DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY 1965—1984.

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## ● DIRECTORY OF COSTUME RELATED SOURCES & SUPPLIES:

A national directory of vendors.

Member \$2.00 Nonmember \$4.00

## ● DIRECTORY OF SOFTWARE FOR TECHNICAL THEATRE

A critical survey of the wide range of available software with Theatrical application—from CADD to word processing

Member \$8.00 Nonmember \$10.00

## ● SUPPLIERS DATA BASE, A DIRECTORY OF CANADIAN RESOURCES FOR THE TECHNICAL THEATRE

Member \$8.00 US Nonmember \$10.00 US

## ● BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FLAT PATTERN SOURCES:

A comprehensive collection of Flat Pattern source material.

Member \$2.00 Nonmember \$3.00

## ● THEATRE ARTISTS AND CRAFTSPERSON BUREAU DIRECTORY:

A directory, listing individuals and organizations who are prepared to give workshops, lectures, or artist-in-residence services in the technical theatre areas.

Member \$6.00 Nonmember \$7.00

## ● RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR STAGE RIGGING & STAGE MACHINERY:

Specifications and Practices as developed by the USITT Engineering & Health & Safety Commissions.

Member \$7.00 Nonmember \$8.00

## ● USITT AMX 192 ANALOG & DMX 512 DIGITAL DATA TRANSMISSION STANDARDS FOR DIMMERS AND CONTROLLERS:

Describing the electrical characteristics, data timing, connector type, and cable type for both transmission systems.

Member \$7.00 Nonmember \$8.00

## ● USITT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STANDARD GRAPHIC LANGUAGE IN SCENIC DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY:

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## ● PROMOTION & TENURE EVALUATION OF THE THEATRICAL DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY FACULTY: ISSUES AND RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES:

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## LIGHTING DIMENSIONS INTERNATIONAL TO BE HELD.

Patricia MacKay publisher of Lighting Dimensions and Theatre Crafts magazines has just announced the first LIGHTING DIMENSIONS INTERNATIONAL show which will deal with lighting and sound technology for arenas, clubs, concerts, film, television and the theatre. It will debut in Dallas at the Infomart, November 18 - 20, 1988.

Promotional information describes the Event as "the one place in North America for any and all manufacturers in the business of show business to show their wares."

The Show will host new product introductions, product application, design demonstrations, workshops for designers and end-users, special meetings for International manufacturers, special events, on-site tours and the first annual Lighting Dimensions Awards.

Further information is available from Patricia MacKay or Jackie Tien at Lighting Dimensions, 135 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010 (212) 677-5997. Fax (212) 677-3857.

## IOD ANNUAL CONFERENCE ANNOUNCED

Mark R. Sumner, Director of the Institute of Outdoor Drama has announced that the 1988 Managers, Directors and Promoters Conference will be held at the Carolina Inn, Chapel Hill, N.C. on October 9 - October 11. The Conference will be the 26th gathering of this type, and will celebrate the culmination of the season in which seventy-four Outdoor Dramas will have been performed by companies associated with the Institute. Further information regarding the Conference is available from the IOD Office, CB#3240 Graham Memorial, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3240.

## FUTURE CONFERENCE DATE CHANGE

Future Conference dates were listed in the July issue of the Newsletter. The 1990 Milwaukee Wisconsin Conference was announced for March 28 -31.

PLEASE NOTE THE NEW DATES  
**April 11 -14, 1990**  
**Milwaukee Wisconsin**  
**Hyatt Regency Hotel**  
Mark your calendars NOW!

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### AUGUST

**ATHE Conference '88**  
Association for Theatre  
in Higher Education  
U.S. Grant Hotel  
San Diego, CA  
August 3 - 6.

**Illuminating Engineering Society**  
City Center, Minneapolis  
Contact: IES, 345 East 47th Street  
New York, NY 10017  
(212) 705-7596  
August 7 - 11.

### NOVEMBER

**Lighting Dimensions International**  
Infomart  
Dallas, TX  
November 18 - 20.

### DECEMBER

**USITT Winter Board Meeting**  
Calgary, Alberta Canada  
December 3 - 4.

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**THE DEADLINE FOR THE SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER IS JULY 31, 1988**

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**6/August 1988**