

usitt newsletter

OCTOBER, 1988

Editor: Ron Olson

Vol. XXVII No. 10

USITT PLANNING COMMITTEE FORMED

At the August 14th Board of Directors meeting, President Devin announced the formation of a new "Short and Long Term Planning Committee" to be chaired by Mr. Joseph Good of Strand Electro Controls. The purpose of the Committee will be to examine the needs and goals of the Institute and its Members for a period of up to ten years and to recommend action commensurate with those findings. The charge to the Committee is to include, but not be limited to:

1. Examine the recommendations which were produced by the 1987 and 1985 Board Retreats in Seattle and Toronto for evaluation and further action.
2. Study the data produced in the recent Member Survey.
3. Examine the USITT's perception and recognition within the performing arts industry, in government, and with the public at large.
4. Identify both short term and long term goals for the Institute's Membership and for the Organization, including administrative structure, programs and projects, services to the industry, services to the members, and other areas of concern.
5. Report to the Board of Directors by the August, 1989 Board Meeting, with recommended goals and specific recommendations for implementation.
6. Continue with planning as may be necessary and advisable.

The makeup of the Committee is based on the President's attempt to keep the group manageably small and still represent the diverse interests and regions of Institute Membership. The Members who have agreed to serve are: Jody Good, Chair; Richard Arnold, William Byrnes, John Conklin, Richard Devin, ex-officio, Joy Emery, Sarah Nash Gates, Kenneth Hewitt, Christine Kaiser, Robert Scales, David Diamond, ex-officio and non-voting, and advisory members Don Jones, John Lottas, and Don Shulman.

USITT Members who have thoughts and suggestions to convey to the Planning Committee should contact any Committee Member directly, preferably with a copy to the Chairman. This is viewed as an extremely important process in the life and future of the Institute, and all input from the Membership is encouraged.

FROM THE PRESIDENT National Office Relocation Planned

The age-old question of whether it is best to keep the USITT National Office and Staff in New York City or to seek another city where rentals and general expenses are lower and where employee cost of living might be eased has been addressed at regular intervals for at least the past twelve years. As our 42nd Street lease will be up for re-negotiation soon and our staff members are desperately in need of additional space, the Board of Directors voted in March to vigorously pursue a detailed examination of six cities in order to make an informed decision as to office relocation at its August meeting and to move forward quickly toward relocation at the earliest possible date (certainly by the end of the year). A committee, chaired by Leon Brauner of the University of Indiana was formed to study the information collected on those seven cities and make a recommendation to the Board at the August meeting in St. Louis. The cities studied were: Atlanta, GA; Denver, CO; Kansas City, MO; New York City, NY; St. Louis, MO; and Washington, D.C. Volunteers from each of these cities were asked to research answers to several pages of questions dealing with demographics, economics, and available resources in each locale.

Leon compiled a data base clearly showing comparisons indicated by the research and a lengthy, sometimes passionate and extremely thoughtful discussion ensued, with members of the relocation committee and interested members of the Board, Section Officers, and Commissioners present in St. Louis. The Committee finally voted eight to one in favor of seeking new, more economical and more spacious address in Manhattan and delivered its recommendation to the Board the next day. After further discussion, a majority of the Board Members voted to support that recommendation.

It is important that the general membership receive an explanation of the reasoning behind the decision, as I'm sure there are many who wonder, with a degree of disdain, why we continue to spend the Institute's hard-earned funds on a Manhattan location when it is clear, even without such a study, that there are less costly places to "set up shop" in many corners of North America. The discussion was not simple, nor was it one-sided. The study clearly showed that of the six cities considered, Kansas City offers the most cost-

(continued on page 3)

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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Office Relocation (continued)

effective real estate and related services of any location. There was considerable discussion of the Institute's increasing need and interest to aggressively pursue grantsmanship activities, both federal and private, and the advantages of locating in Washington, D.C. for reasons related to that activity, even though Washington presents us with the highest cost of living and doing business of the cities studied. Some discussion centered on the quality of life in various cities, given the cost of living to employees, relative dangers, and transportation comforts.

The key issues influencing the Board's action seem to be centered around four closely related points:

First is the image of USITT as a major contributor and leader on a national and international level to the performing arts. Members of the Board believe that, although the world of American and Canadian Theatre is no longer so tightly centered on the East Coast as it was twenty years ago, any of the organizations that serve the performing arts are located in either Washington or New York and, as a result, the prevailing image and visibility of those organizations is linked to those two cities. This was the majority opinion, even though the leadership of USITT has spread from coast to coast throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Second, and closely related to that thought, is the belief that credibility within the profession and within governmental and private funding sources is enhanced by our long-standing location in New York City.

Third, it has become increasingly clear that the Institute Staff and Officers interact in important ways with many arts service organizations in the New York area on a regular basis. The proximity of our office with the headquarters of such organization as TCG, the NYC Council of Cultural Affairs, Business Volunteers for the Arts, Volunteer Lawyers of the Arts, the American Council for the Arts, The Foundation Center, FEDAPT, the International Theatre Institute, the Library and Museum of the Performing Arts, the Theatre Development Fund, and many others had led to an easy and highly beneficial exchange of information and services.

Fourth, and finally, it has been pointed out many times that the "International Gateway City" status of New York City has been a key to the Institute's International visibility. Many people from other continents still view New York as the theatre capital of North America, even with a growing understanding of the enormous growth of theatrical activity elsewhere in North America. Though foreigners no longer look at New York as the only place to see theatre, most will include it on their travel agenda, and many of our European and Asian visitors contact the USITT Office to set up tours and make contacts.

Some estimates by Board Members indicate that the cost differences between New York and Kansas City would amount to as much as \$15,000 or more per year. The Board carefully weighed that possibility in its deliberations and voiced the strong belief that we stand to benefit to a greater degree monetarily by staying in New York. It should also be noted

that all of the members of our current full time staff are happy to remain in New York.

It is encouraging that there are currently at least two options for lower-cost office space (lower than our 42nd St. address) with greater space. These locations, both in lower Manhattan, are under negotiation, with subsidized rental rates from the City and other cultural groups, and could bring our offices into cooperative spaces and services with other not-for-profit organizations.

The USITT Board made it clear with this vote that the issue is not, nor will it ever be, dead. There will always be interest in the question of where the best, most efficient, and most cost-effective organizational home can be found.

I want publicly to thank Leon Brauner and the Relocation Committee Members for their diligence in finding and analyzing the information necessary to this study. I particularly am grateful to the six people who spent a great deal of time ferreting out the answers for the questionnaire: Don Stowell, Jr. in Atlanta; Tim Kelly in Denver; Henry Tharp in Kansas City; David Diamond in New York; Art Lueking in St. Louis; and Bob Marietta in Washington. It was not an easy nor a fascinating task, and they did a superb job and deserve our appreciation. I believe that their work gave the Board a Strong basis for an objective and informed discussion.

Richard Devin
President

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL by David Diamond

We are about to start our latest membership campaign and we need your help. The most effective means of encouraging new members to join is by personal referral. Tell a friend about the advantages of USITT membership. We will be happy to send them a brochure and membership form.

In addition, this year we are planning to distribute posters describing the Institute to theatres and drama departments around the country. They will have business-reply postcards attached which can be mailed to us to get more membership information. You can help this process by making sure the poster is prominently displayed on your bulletin board; and if the postcards run out, let us know so we can replenish the supply.

This campaign is part of an overall effort to increase the visibility of the Institute on an ongoing basis. We will be maintaining better contact with the media, so they will be aware of the diverse activities of the Institute. If there are publications you know of that do not receive press releases from USITT, let me know and I will add them to the National Press List.

As we continue to investigate the possibility of reprinting *Theatre Words*, we are interested in hearing form the membership as to your interest in the publication. We want to be certain that a strong market exists for this book, prior to taking on the responsibility of offering it to you.

C. RAY SMITH

C. Ray Smith, 4th President of the Institute, died on Thursday, August 18 in New York's Lenox Hill Hospital of a heart attack. He was 59.

A memorial service was held on Tuesday, September, 22, at 4:00 p.m. in St. Thomas Church, 53rd and Lenox Streets in Manhattan.

Most Institute members may remember him professionally as a Senior Editor of *Progressive Architecture* and then the first long-term editor of *Theatre Crafts*, but he had a broader career as a college teacher in New York area schools and as a writer on subjects usually related to architecture and design: at Pratt, at The Architectural League of New York and at Fashion Institute of Technology. His *NY Times* obituary lists important books on interior design, but he also edited theatre books like Jo Mielziner's *The Shapes of Our Theatre* (1970).

C. Ray came to the Institute through work on its Architecture Committee with Ben Schlanger, both deeply involved in gathering material for revision of the NYC Building Code then in progress. To combat the parochialism, C. Ray found on the committee then, he enlisted new and important practitioners, particularly in the New York area. When he became the Institute's President in 1968, he brought the same concern for broadening our influence by involving previously uncommitted important members of the architecture and arts community in our efforts. The result was a stronger organization, for which the Institute stands firmly in C. Ray Smith's debt.

As a *Theatre Design & Technology* Editor, I remember sharing his critical satisfaction at calling attention, in 1968, to a precedent for the colonnaded arcade decorative feature of Edward Stone's Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. C. Ray found that Stone "did not dare" in his execution of a monumental theatre. We printed a model photo side-by-side with a strikingly similar model for the Broyhill Furniture company in Lanier, North Carolina -- already completed 3 years earlier. In the latter case, "the concept and design of the building were created by Broyhill's management and design staff."

Ned A. Bowman

U. S. INSTITUTE
FOR THEATRE TECHNOLOGY
presents
A USITT Special Citation
to
C. RAY SMITH

His contribution to the advancement of USITT and to American Theatre Architecture was originally proclaimed in 1971 at the conclusion of his term as the fourth President of the Institute. This Institute's Board of Directors reaffirms his contribution both in his leadership of the Institute as its President and for ongoing editorial leadership in a series of distinguished publications directed to the unique requirements of a distinctive developing American theatre architecture.

USITT Board of Directors
March 1988
Anaheim, California

David A. Nibbelin
Theatre Consultant
Long-time USITT Member
Friend
September 4, 1988

WHAT ELECTS NEW DIRECTORS

During the 1988 League of Historic American Theatres Annual Conference held in Texas, the League's membership elected three members to serve on the Board of Directors. They are Killis P. Almond, Jr., AIA from San Antonio, Texas, Linda Messenger (Orpheum Theatre - Phoenix, AZ) and Russel B. Collins (Michigan Theatre - Ann Arbor, MI).

These people were chosen to fulfill the purposes and goals of the League, which is to help in the process of preservation, restoration and the active use of America's historic theatre buildings. The league is a national membership organization of these historic theatres.

A NOTE FROM THE NEW EDITORS OF USITT PUBLICATIONS

Since our recent appointment as the new editors for *Theatre Design & Technology*, the *USITT Newsletter*, the annual directory and other Institute publications, we have been going through a lengthy transition and preparation process before we can fully assume these new responsibilities.

Well, to quote an old saying, "Things always take longer than they do!"

We are currently in the midst of assembling a new desktop publishing system, training in the use of the various software programs, soliciting contributors for the publications, and sorting through a myriad of other details entailed in this major reorganization of the publishing process of the Institute.

But we are making headway. For example, we have just completed editing our first issue of *TD&T* which will be published about October 15. But there is still a lot which we need to accomplish before we would feel comfortable in assuming the editorship of the newsletter.

Therefore, we have asked Ron Olson to continue as the editor of the *USITT Newsletter* for another issue or two until our new desktop publishing system is fully operational and a new format for that publication has been prepared. Ron has graciously consented -- in spite of the fact he gave his "farewell" in the September issue -- and we are grateful for his willingness to continue serving the institute in this capacity for a little while longer.

We look forward to working with the various commissions, sections, and all the individual members of the Institute in moving the publications of USITT into a new era.

We urge you to contact us if you have ideas, suggestions, concerns, or articles for any of the various publications.

Eric & Cecelia Fielding
Editors of USITT Publications
966 East 1030 North
Orem, UT 84057-3463
(801) 226-3258

SOUND DESIGN COMMISSION REPORT

Several sound-related items result from the August 12/13/14 Board/Commission/Section retreat in St. Louis.

First, an announcement of change in Commission leadership: Charles Richmond, who has run the sound Design Commission since its beginning, has stepped down as Commissioner, having concluded that business and personal matters must claim the majority of his attention for the immediate future. Charlie will remain active as a Vice Commissioner, and is also involved working with Lucy Nowell in National Liaison. The Sound Design Commission wishes to recognize the time and effort that Charlie has put into building the Commission and its activities over the last several years.

The new Sound Design Commissioner is Dr. John L. Bracewell, who has been a member of the Commission since its beginning, and who has served as a Vice-Commissioner for the last two years. Dr. Bracewell was Education Commissioner during the period from 1975 to 1978, and has worked as a sound designer/teacher for approximately twenty years. He currently teaches at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY. Commencing immediately, the official address for the Sound Design Commission will be:

USITT Sound Design Commission
c/o Dr. John L. Bracewell
Dept. of Theatre Arts
Ithaca College
Ithaca, NY 14850

Telephone numbers:
(607) 274-3929 (Office)
(607) 274-3919 (Dept. office - for messages)
(607) 272-8128 (evenings and weekends)

The Commissioner plans to have an E-Mail address within the next few months.

Second announcement: an overview of approved Sound Design Commission programming scheduled during the working meetings in St. Louis.

1. An in-depth look at the Jack Singer Concert Hall in Calgary -- a long and careful look at a hall which features a unique system of variable acoustics.

2. The Sound Designers' Round Table will continue this year, featuring another group of designers who will discuss various current aspects of sound design activity among themselves and with those who attend the session.
3. Sound Design Presentation Session. An opportunity to hear and hear about particular designs by three sound designers.
4. Software for Theatre Sound Design. An examination of what's available in the computer that will help facilitate work in the sound room.
5. Sources for Sound Effects. A program on where to get sounds to use for production, concentrating on sources beyond the usual sound effects libraries.
6. A seminar on problems and techniques in live mixing, featuring notable experts from various areas of professional theatre.
7. A session on Sound Design and Operations in a European country.

We have attempted to schedule our sessions so that, hopefully, they will interfere minimally with other programming that sound-interest members might want to attend. Clearly, we cannot eliminate all conflicts, but we hope we have selected a schedule that will work well for the majority of Commission members.

The annual Sound Design Commission meeting will be held on Friday evening, April 14, from 8:00 to 9:30.

That's all for this month, except to say that the Commissioner is eager to hear from Commission members who have topics to suggest for the Commission to discuss, suggestions for projects or programming for the Commission to undertake, or matters that the Commission might wish to engage as action items, either for public advocacy or for consideration by the USITT Board of Directors.

LATEST SOUND CUE

Det Norske Teatret, Oslo, is installing a custom 320 channel Richmond Sound Design COMMAND/CUE theatre sound memory programming system. The sys-

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES SLATE FOR 1989 ELECTIONS

The Nominations Committee meeting was held in St. Louis on August 14, 1988, under the leadership of Past-President David Hale Hand, Chair. The final slate was approved by the Board of Directors and appears below:

President - Donald Shulman
(1990 - 1992)
Vice President for Commissions and Projects - Jared Saltzman
Vice president for Development - William J. Byrnes
Secretary - Jean Montgomery
Directors at large
(7 only will be elected)
Thomas Burke
Stuart Goldberg
Harold (Pete) Happe
Sylvia Hillyard
Molly Lind
Ron Naversen
Hiram Perez
Charles Richmond
Harvey Sweet
Stephanie Young

In accordance with the USITT By-laws, the membership may propose additional nominees for any office or directorship by petition. Such a petition must contain the name of the individual nominated, a 35 word biographical statement, and a statement by the individual that he/she is willing to have their name nominated. The petition must be signed by 50 members of the Institute (members in good standing at the time they sign said petition). All of the preceding must be sent to the USITT National Office and must arrive no later than November 25, 1988.

Respectfully submitted,
David Hale Hand, Chair
Nominations Committee

tem will control levels, fades, panning and routing of sound throughout the theatre. Det Norske Teatret chose the RSD COMMAND/CUE system because it is software based, includes a programmer's work station and remote operator's touch screen. The system also communicates with the operator in Norwegian to create any desired effect.

LHAT AWARD PRESENTED

The League of Historic American Theatres presented its annual League award to both John W. Frick and Carlton Ward, co-editors of the *Directory of Historic American Theatres*.

John Frick teaches in the Department of Drama at the University of Virginia. He is the author of *New York's First Theatrical Center: The Rialto at Union Square* and has contributed articles to *The Drama Review*, *Marquee* and *Broadside*. Carlton Ward is Chairman of the Drama Department at Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Alabama.

The book, the first comprehensive work of its kind, is a major contribution to the history of American theatre. It lists all available data about theatres built in this country from 1800 to 1915. In compiling the volume, Frick and Ward built upon the pioneering work of the late Gene Chesley whose collection of materials on historic theatres is now housed in the Princeton University Theatre Collection. This work completes and expands the updated list of historic theatres Chesley was working on at the time of his death in 1981. Numerous photographs amplify the text, making this a unique and invaluable reference source for students of American theatre as well as for historic preservationists and architectural historians.

The League Award is presented annually to a person or organization that has made a significant contribution to the League and the field of theatre preservation during the past year.

Past recipients include: Michael Price (Goodspeed Opera House), John Russell (Mabel Tainter Memorial Theatre), Conrad Schmidt Studios, Jean Rosenthal Associates, Nellie Walrath (Grand Opera House) and Judith E. Daykin (Brooklyn Academy of Music).

TECHNICAL PRODUCTION COMMISSION MicroCADD Shootout

The Technical Production Commission is planning a "MicroCADD Shootout" for the upcoming Calgary conference. We hope to be able to present a competitive evaluation of all the major Computer-Aided Design and Drafting programs currently available for personal computers.

To make the program successful, we need your help. If you use a CADD program, we would like you to evaluate the program you are using. This part of the project will involve the completion of a specified series of tasks leading to the creation of a simple ground plan or elevation. A questionnaire will be used to rate the ease and ability of the program to complete each objective. This part of the project should take about 2 to 4 hours to complete and can be done at your leisure. The questionnaire when returned and the results assembled, should provide a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the available programs and their usefulness in a theatrical setting.

We would like to include all of the programs currently available in the evaluation. The shootout is not centered on any one type of computer and we welcome participation from users of all type of hardware and software. For more information please contact:

Jeff Hickman
Department of Theatre Arts
CSU, Long Beach
Long Beach, CA 90840
Work Phone 213-985-5356
Home Phone 714-848-9571

or

Robin Schraft
Department of Theatre
Southwestern University
Georgetown, TX 78626
Work Phone 512-863-1359

Only with your help can the program be successful.

PHILIPS OPENS NEW LIGHTING CENTER

The Philips Lighting Company recently opened a new state-of-the-art lighting demonstration and educational center at its North American corporate Headquarters in Somerset, New Jersey. Philips hopes that all lighting professionals will soon begin to take advantage of the Lighting Center's facility and have extended an invitation for USITT to host a Lighting Symposium at the Center.

Designed to focus on the science and application of light primarily in architectural and interior settings; specialty areas such as theatrical and studio lighting are also highlighted.

Primarily geared to education, the Lighting Center also includes spacious seminar and workshop space where they plan to host programs designed to meet the needs of Lighting designers in all related fields. These programs will run the gamut from standard workshop, seminar or conference presentations to programs custom designed programs to meet a user's specific need. Under the direction of Mark Roush, the Center's staff is knowledgeable, accessible and eager to begin to share the art of illumination.

Anyone interested in becoming involved with the organization of a USITT Lighting Symposium or workshop to be held at the Philips Lighting Center should contact:

John Williams
Lighting Design Commissioner
2240 Central, APT. 1
Evanston, IL 60201

or

Mark Roush
Lighting Center
Philips Lighting Company
P.O. Box 6800
Somerset, NJ 08875

THEATRE TECHNOLOGY EXHIBIT '89

The Technical Production Commission is sponsoring the second biennial Theatre Technology Exhibit to be presented at the 1989 USITT Conference in Calgary. Following the success of the first Theatre Technology Exhibit in Minneapolis, exhibit coordinators Ben Sammler and Dennis Dorn are looking forward to an even bigger and better exhibit in Calgary.

(See September Newsletter for entry information and details)

CALL FOR 1989/90 BUDGET HEARINGS

Sarah Nash Gates has announced the following schedule for budget hearings from the various cost centers in the continuing attempt to prepare a realistic budget for the activities of the Institute:

- Sept. 1 Finance Chair mails budget call to Cost Centers.
- Nov. 1 Officers RECEIVE budget requests FROM Cost Centers.
- Nov. 15 Finance Chair RECEIVES budget requests FROM Officers.
- Nov. 25 Budget Draft to Finance Committee and F.Y.I. copies to Officers.
- Dec. 2,3 Budget Hearings

Friday, December 2 Budget Hearings:

Presidential Cost Centers:

- 7:00 pm National Office
- 7:45 P.Q., Liaison, Committees
- 8:00 Editor
- 8:30 Vice President for Development
- 8:45 Membership Committee
- 9:00 Secretary; nominations
- 9:15 Vice President for Liaison; Sections, Student Liaison
- 9:30 Treasurer

Saturday, December 3 (continued)

- 1:00 Vice President of Commissions and Projects; Design Expo, Tech Expo, Commissions, Costume Symposium
- 1:45 Vice President for Programs and Presentations; Conf. 89 (update), Conf. 90 (update)
- 2:00 Membership, Editor as needed.

Please respond to the timetable through your appropriate cost center.

ENGINEERING COMMISSION REPORT 1990 NEC Update

The Engineering Commission's National Electric Code Committee has, through the Technical Committee, helped to prepare a 700 page document which contains all of the proposed changes to the National Electric Code for the 1990 edition. This report has been circulated for public comment, along with the other twenty NEC code-making panels. The public has until October 21, 1988 to make written responses to these proposals.

A mailing has been made to all those on the Engineering Commission's NEC Committee. The mailing contained copies of pertinent portions of the Technical Committee Report with a request for comments, specifically, on the proposal of Panel 6 to change radically Section 400-5 on flexible cords and cables. The Engineering Commission's proposed responses to this change were also included.

If you are not on our mailing list, and you wish to receive this mailing piece, please be in touch with:

Ken Vannice
Vice-commissioner, Engineering
Liaison to the NFPA
c/o Lee Colortran, Inc.
1015 Chestnut Street
Burbank, CA 91506
(818) 843-1200

PACIFIC N.W. SECTION

The Pacific Northwest Section of the USITT (U.S. Institute for Theatre Technology) is holding its 1988 General Meeting Saturday, October 15, 1988, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at Cornish College of the Arts North Campus, 1501 10th Ave. E., Seattle.

Contact: Peter Allen, PNW Chair,
(206)782-4814

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260 pages: 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", softcover, ISBN: 0-911747-09-5, price: \$12.95

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Lighting Dimensions International
Infomart
Dallas, TX
Contact: Jackie Tien (212) 677-5997
November 18 - 20

DECEMBER

USITT Winter Board Meeting
Calgary, Alberta Canada
Contact: USITT National Office
December 3 - 4

JANUARY

Chesapeake Section
Design & Technology Exhibition
Juried Competition, Expo '89
Towson State University, Towson, MD
Contact: Tom Cascella (301) 321-2788

**USITT NATIONAL OFFICE
FAX NUMBER IS:**

212-562-5582

THE DEADLINE FOR THE NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER IS SEPTEMBER 30, 1988

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