



STAGE CALL

THE NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR AUSTIN'S STAGEHANDS
VOLUME VII, NUMBER 3 DECEMBER 2014

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 205

Rachel Magee, President
president@iatse205.org

Todd Drga, Vice President
vice-president@iatse205.org

Nikki Combs, Business Agent
businessagent@iatse205.org

Rita Kelso, Secretary-Treasurer
treasurer@iatse205.org

Michelle Ferrier,
Recording Secretary
secretary@iatse205.org

Mikela Cowan,
Sergeant-At-Arms
sergeantatarms@iatse205.org

"We are working
people- nobody gives
us anything. We have to
take it."

-Tom Chamberlain,
Oregon AFL-CIO President



Firebird crew photo compliments of brother Frank Cortez

Ballet Austin Stage Employee Caucus

Some stagehands gathered at the Long Center loading dock on September 27, 2014. We wore black, and we bitched about work and the union. Nothing remarkable in that, right?

But this time it was different. This time we came together before the show-call. Not after. This time we didn't break open the beer cooler. This time we took notes. This time we resolved to never let our contract be forgotten by our union again. And that's how we formed the **Ballet Austin Stage Employee Caucus**.

In case you've missed it, for two years straight now the local has failed to meet a simple deadline for opening negotiations with Ballet Austin. Luckily, Ballet Austin has been generous enough to go ahead and give us COLA-sized raises anyway. While all the members of the caucus are grateful to our boss for doing this, we still want to ensure negotiations actually open in the summer of 2015. That's mostly what prompted us to form our caucus. That and a general sense that maybe our union would serve us better if we got more actively involved in it.

So far only about ten of us are in the caucus, but we think it will grow. We decided to keep it headless, meaning I spoke first and took notes at the first meeting and it'll be up to someone else to take that role at the next one. And so on and so on. We are not officially or directly affiliated with Local 205 – though I am pleased to say two members of the local's e-board are with us. I'm also very pleased to say we only meet once per main stage show, roughly five times a year.

Our purpose is simple: we want to make sure the employees take a leading role in all future contract negotiations between our employer and our union. We're still figuring out what exactly that means.

Our effectiveness will be determined ... well, mostly by you.

So far, the caucus founders all have a copy of our current collective bargaining agreement (CBA). And we've all agreed to educate ourselves on it. Along those lines, we've also committed ourselves to finding ways to better support our job stewards. And one caucus member is looking into how the new online payroll system is affecting everyone. Maybe you know someone with an opinion about how you get paid? That person would be welcome to caucus with us.

If you've ever worked for Ballet Austin as a stagehand, you might as well come to the next meeting because you're already a member. It's up to you to choose how much you participate.

This goes for non-union folks too, by the way. And all departments are welcome.

Most importantly, since we're small and the clay hasn't really hardened yet, now is the best time to have the largest impact on the direction we take. Our next meeting will be **December 9th** in the early afternoon. The exact time hasn't been determined, but we'll gather sometime shortly after that day's AISD performances of the Nutcracker. We'll post the exact details on the callboard at the load-in. Or you can always email me (brad@bradleypwilsonliterary.com) with any questions you have about the caucus. See you there.

-Bradley P. Wilson



Dirty Dancing show crew, November 2014 at Bass Concert Hall, photo courtesy of sister Mikela Cowan

President's Message

I think it would be an understatement to say this has been the year of elections. Hopefully, by the time you read this the Business Agent's election will be concluded leaving us just the annual election of a new Death Fund Trustee and a new General Fund Trustee to conclude. Why have the recent election cycles been so long? One reason is that our Constitution requires that in the event no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, only the candidate with the fewest votes is dropped off the ballot prior to a runoff election. As all elections require written notice within a stipulated time frame, runoffs inevitably occur at the next monthly meeting. The process repeats until we are down to the final two candidates. At the next membership meeting, a constitutional amendment will receive a first reading to address this very issue. Several other constitutional amendments will also receive their first reading, many of which were recommended to Local 205 by International President Loeb. So, it would seem as we close out 2014, Local 205 stands poised for some much needed stability, some growth, and some change all at the same time! I hope in the coming weeks to sit down with the Executive Board to formulate some short, mid, and long range goals for our Local as we move into 2015. Some of the questions I think we should be asking are listed in the online publication of this edition of Stage Call.

In Solidarity, President Magee



Brother Lorenza Phillips running a camera at Dell World 2014. Photo from brother Lupe Perez.



205 stagehand Jon Maloy working on the History Channel Tailgate Carnival - Longhorn football game. Photo from brother Hal Siegel

For an updated committee list please see:

<http://newsletter.iatse205.org/about/trustees-delegates-and-committees>

STEWARD'S CORNER, Jim Ford
"PUSHING BACK"

"Today, we say that when you pick a fight with any of us, you pick a fight with all of us! And that when you push us, we will push back!"

-speech by Richard Trumka, secretary-treasurer, AFL-CIO, 10/26/1995

The American Labor Movement has progressed slowly and painfully through the last century. From this effort there have been many successful gains for the American worker. Perhaps the most significant would be the cornerstone of US labor law, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), sometimes called the Wagner Act. Here's a short chronicle of events leading up to it being enacted by Congress. Before the passage of the NLRA in 1936, employers were free to spy on, interrogate, discipline, fire, and blacklist union members. During the Great Depression workers engaged in general strikes. On numerous fronts and workplaces they battled police and private security forces. They had next to no rights or privileges insured by law. After much effort by organized labor, benefits slowly evolved; 40 hours, vacation pay, medical benefits, weekends, etc. These are undeniable facts that come directly from efforts by unions & the American Labor Movement. But now union-busting groups and the politicians they own tend to interpret historical events in a light shaded toward management. They promote the idea that unions impeded the growth of American industries, increased costs, and hampered free-trade and capitalist principles, in general. Basically, that trade unionism was un-American. SO NOT TRUE! I feel that the best of today's historians think Congress instigated the Wagner Act to steer unions away from potentially revolutionary confrontations. Because of the NLRA, by 1945 union contracts covered one third of the private sector workforce. A great wave of strikes hit the US in 1945-1946. Business interests petitioned Congress to amend the NLRA. This resulted in the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 that weakened many union protections. And then the Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959 imposed additional restrictions. Our agenda for the future is clear: we need to continue to fight for and advance these workplace protections and, at the same time, create new strategies and tactics for the battles of the new century.

-ARE UNIONS DEAD?

Quite often these days you see reports saying UNIONS ARE DEAD. It is true, there has been a decline in unionized numbers. There is strong anti-union sentiment in all parts of this country backed by corporations. They feed off these reports. We must fight back against these anti-union arguments. The average person these days knows more of these "un-truths" than the real story of what benefits come from unions. Here are some facts and ideas for rebutting these common complaints against unions:

-GREEDY UNIONS?

Corporations blame unions for rising prices of consumer goods, plant shutdowns and the decline of entire industries. But they never mention bad management decisions, or competition from state-subsidized nations, or corporations moving abroad to pay less wages, or corporate greed.

To read the full piece see <http://newsletter.iatse205.org/archives/806>



Evil Dead the musical show crew, photo courtesy of Frank Cortez

Young Workers Conference

Local 205 sent two representatives to the IATSE Young Workers Conference this year. Sister Cowan and Brother Levin would like to share some of their experiences with you, full reports and notes can be found online <http://newsletter.iatse205.org/archives/808>

From Darren E. Levin's report:

Messaging for Unions centered on the language that we should all be using to communicate the



205 representatives Sister Cowan and Brother Levin with fellow Longhorn, Emily Tao, Director of Communications at IATSE.

message of IATSE. The simple fact is management has perfected how they spin the labor movement in a negative light. Look at any newspaper in this country and you will see that evidence in just the headlines. Sadly, the labor movement has lagged behind in countering this attack.

Utilizing vocabulary like security, safety, professionalism, craftsmanship, quality, productivity, efficiency, stability, respect, and solidarity, just to name a few, we can reshape the face of the labor movement. These words work to give visual framing to the public. We each have a mental picture of what the aforementioned words trigger: these are images of effective, professional, essential workers. We all know that we are these people, but we must work to communicate that to our fellow members, our non-union counterparts in the industry who we are working to organize, and the general public who has grown unaware of the important protections that are a direct result of organized labor.

Did you know?

- *21% of IATSE membership is 35 and younger.
- *Knights of Labor (from which IATSE stems) was an illegal secret society.
- *Union membership was illegal until the 1930s.
- *In 1911 the Yellow Card system was established to protect road hands on tours from being stranded.
- *1970 saw the first body mics in use on Broadway.

Local News

Congratulations to our new Business Agent, sister Nikki Combs!
Congrats to brother Sam Chesney on the arrival of Noah Lee Santiago Chesney.

Welcome new members:

Ian Ferrier, Tyler Ray, Stephanie Trinh and Sarah Kihls!
Previous member Jennifer Roth passed last October, Rest in Peace.
Sister Amy Carr has toured to every one of the United States!

Social Media in the Workplace

As our local continues to be called upon to provide labor for more and more corporate events at the Convention Center as well as hotels I think it is time to start thinking about our profession and social media. I am sure most, if not all, of us have at one time or another been on a job that required us to sign a "Non Disclosure Agreement." Though not all jobs do. That being said, perhaps we should still keep that idea in mind when considering our professional conduct on the job site.

Most producers view their designs as intellectual property and, as such like to have control over when and how it is revealed to the attendees. While we may not have the attendees as our "friends," we have no way to know who may be on their list. And once the images are posted who knows where they could go.

While I am not advocating a total ban on photos and posting to social media on the job, I do think we should refrain from posting rehearsal photos before the event. I believe it is in our best interest not to have the employer placed in a position where written rules on such things need to be put in place. In short, conduct yourself as an industry professional and think before you post.

In Solidarity, Tinez

Your benefits, and how to make sure you get everything that you are owed

By Todd Drga

Working under a union contract entitles you to more than just an hourly paycheck. The IA and Local 205 bargain diligently to include benefits in all of our contracts. These benefits may include health insurance, vacation pay, and contributions towards retirement accounts and/or pension funds. If you are not sure what benefits are included in the contract that you are working under, ask the steward on the call or contact the Business Agent.

These benefits are paid by the employer directly to the respective funds, so you may not see the contribution amounts on your paycheck. If you don't seek out the information, you won't know how much you have received and more importantly, you may not know when you are missing contributions.

The first step is to keep track of all of the time that you work. A calendar or spreadsheet is useful, but make sure to enter your hours as soon as possible after each call while everything is fresh in your mind. Taking a picture of the sign-out sheet as you leave a call is also a good way to document your work hours.

Keep copies of all of your paystubs so you have records of what you have been paid. Most benefit contributions are percentages of the hourly wage, so if your paycheck is short, your benefit contributions will be as well. You should also reconcile your paychecks with the W-2 forms you receive from employers at the end of the year to make sure that your wages have been correctly reported to the IRS.

All of the benefit contributions are funneled through the IA's National Benefit Funds office in New York. Each employer sends employment records and the appropriate contributions for each pay period to the Benefit Funds office, which then distributes the contributions to each fund. Therefore, your next step should be to check on your fund balances and work history on the Benefits Fund website at <http://www.iatsenbf.org/>.

In the top right corner of the homepage, you can register for an account or log in if you have already registered. Information on the various benefit funds is located at the lower right hand section of the homepage. Look for the "Summary Plan Description" link under each fund category. The most common funds that our employers contribute to are the Health and Welfare Plan C and the Annuity. If you are working under a "pink" contract on a national tour, that contract will often include contributions to the vacation and pension funds.

Once you have logged in, you will see a "dashboard" with at-a-glance information on all of your funds. The first place to go is the lower right hand section of the page to the "My Work History" link. This will allow you to verify that all of your work has

been reported to the Benefits Funds office. Be aware that employers file reports on different timelines— some monthly and some weekly— so it may take a while for work reports to be processed and appear in your work history.

Your work history will show a list of each production, employer, cumulative work period, and total amount contributed to each fund. Clicking on the + icon next to each production name will show a detail of each work period that has been reported and its associated fund contributions. This is the information you need to verify that the correct amounts have been received for each payroll period.

If you have contributions to the IA annuity, that fund is managed by Mass Mutual Financial Group. Details of your annuity investments are on the Mass Mutual website. There is a link to the website from the IA benefits website (click on "View Annuity Contribution History" on the dashboard) or you can go to <https://www.massmutual.com/journey/public/PlanInfo.aspx>.

Once you log in to the Mass Mutual website, you can view your annuity portfolio and select from a range of investment choices. You are in control of the type and amount of investments in your portfolio. Because every person's retirement situation is different, it would be wise to seek the advice of an investment advisor or do research on the Internet about retirement investment strategies before making major changes to your portfolio.

If you have any questions about the benefit funds, or you think that contributions are missing, feel free to contact the IA National Benefit Funds office at 800-456-FUND.

Remember, these employer benefit contributions are a major perk of working under a union contract. Take control of your money and make it work as hard as you do.

Per capita for 2015 will be raised \$1 to \$72 a quarter, or \$288 for the year.

Stage Basics: Audio Stage Patch (Part 2)

-Andrew Ferrucci

Hello stage people. As you probably don't recall, we were in the middle of discussing the audio stage patch when the newsletter chief cut my hands off. Getting back up to speed, part one concluded with the XLR cables patched to the front panel of the sub-snakes.

The other end of each sub-snake will be equipped with a *fan-out* (a bunch of individual male XLR connectors). The fan-out is used to patch all of the sub-snakes into a *headbox*. Since it can receive inputs from several sub-snakes, it will have many more inputs than any of the individual sub-snakes. The XLR connectors can be patched to any input on the panel of the headbox. Microphones can also be patched directly to the headbox. Depending on their location on stage, this may be more convenient.

The headbox has 2 multipin connections on it. One goes to a fan-out to the monitor console, the other to the umbilical multipin cable that is run to the FOH (front of house) console. This FOH cable run (and the headbox) are collectively known as the *snake*. A snake with an attached headbox and fan-out is an *all-in-one* snake.

Microphones can be plugged directly into a stage box (or the headbox), however signals coming out of amplifiers may need to be run through a *direct input box* (or *DI*). The reason for this is that every signal sent to a mixing console needs to be at *mic level*. The direct out from an amp is at *line level*. A *DI* transforms an unbalanced, high impedance line level signal into a balanced, low impedance mic level signal. (Line level is a more powerful signal than mic level).

The norm for guitar amps is to mic them. This allows for more of the sound of the amp and speaker(s) to come through in the mix (as well as for the use of effects pedals). It makes it sound more like a guitar.

DIs are usually used with bass and keyboard amps. This produces a cleaner signal than putting a microphone on the amplifiers of these instruments. Micing a bass amp might give it more warmth, but it may also make it sound a bit muddy. An alternative would be to use a DI as well as a microphone. This hybrid signal may allow for more prominent articulation as well as a warm, ambient sound. Keep in mind that this requires 2 inputs on the stage box, one for the mic and one for the DI.

A stage box may also have a few male XLR outputs or 1/4 inch jacks to be used as *returns*. The returns can be used for in-ear monitors or headphones or even a device used to shake the drummer's throne when she hits the kick drum. They can send signal to a stage monitor, but only if it is an active (powered) speaker. They cannot be used to drive a passive stage monitor. A snake can't handle a speaker level signal and doesn't have the right type of connectors.

Typically, the headbox input numbers coincide with the inputs at the console. This method of patching is known as *one-to-one*. All of the inputs must correspond with the input list that the show provides. If the sound guy wants (expects) the bass to be in channel 7, the bass DI should be patched to input 7 on the headbox and, in turn, be patched to input 7 on the monitor and main mixing consoles.

This type of setup has been the standard for about 50 years now. A notable deviation, however, was the use of what was labeled the "wall of sound" by the Grateful Dead in the mid-70's. In this arrangement, a huge wall of speakers was erected behind the band. Each member had control of their own volume level, as well as the levels of all the other instruments coming out of his or her own "area" of the wall. This eliminated the need for mixing consoles and allowed the band to hear exactly what the audience heard and not a monitor mix. I'll expound more on this on the Word Press site.

Congratulations, you are now qualified to work as an audio deck hand. Remember to keep things neat and clearly labeled; you really don't want to go tracing cables all over the stage, particularly in front of an audience.

Stage Call

Editor-in-Chief—Mikela Cowan

Layout Editor—Jeff Ellinger

Copy Editor—Bradley P. Wilson

Contributing Editor—Andrew Ferrucci

Contributing Editor—Todd Drga

Archivist and Historian—John Stewart

Local 205 has a Facebook Page!

<http://facebook.com/iatse205>

or

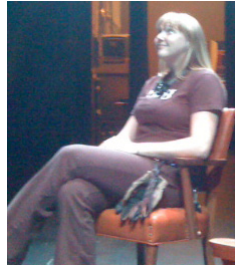
<http://facebook.iatse205.org>

Meet the Bargaining Committee!

Name * title * how long in industry * favorite tool *favorite color *favorite gig *stupidest thing backstage



Nikki Combs
Business Agent



Jessica Dunbar

*Stagehand
extraordinaire,
specialities are lighting
and smiling.

*The first time I ran a
spotlight I was in the
8th grade, I started
working in Austin in
2009.

*Open end adjustable
wrench on a leash of
course.

*Rainbow

*Tie between running
spot for *War Horse* and
production managing
for RAW Austin.

*I once did the
Macarena roughly 15ft
high in a genie lift.



Rachel Magee
President



Kevin Richie

*House Electrician
at The Long Center
- specifically with the
Long Center Presents
and Rental shows.

*I started theatre
when I was 3 and
began working with
community theatres
around age 8. I worked
my first "professional"
show when I was
15 as an intern for
the Galveston Island
Outdoor Musicals and
my first union gig was
with Local 51 at age

18, Bruce Springsteen
at the Summit in
Houston.

*Speed Wrench

*Blue

*I think I'd have to go
back to one of the kids
show tours I did. We
had a great touring
company.

*Pushing over the
foamies on the kid
shows, RC helicopters
flying onto (not into) set
pieces during a show,
compromising pictures
of actors placed in
props. Or a FOH
moment of not being
able to hear the SM
and missing about 10
cues, looking up and
seeing a scene change
happening in full stage
light.



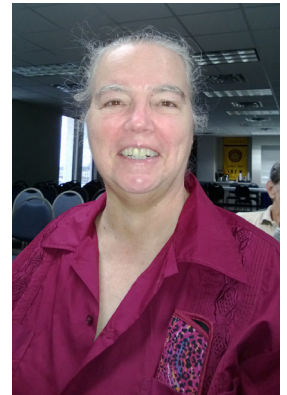
Brad Wilson

*Stagehand, writer,
editor, carpenter
*Since the early 90s
*Laptop keyboard

*Periwinkle, because
it's fun to say

*Sitting at my desk
making up stories,
though I haven't
managed to make
much money doing it
yet. So I don't know if it
counts as a gig.

*Dropping the goods
from a loaded pipe and
not bothering to tell the
fly man. Gravity always
wins.



Trinka Withers

*General stagehand,

lots of wardrobe

*A blip in the 70s, then
since the 90s

*Hand tools

*Red

*1st productions of
Jesus Christ Superstar
at Zach in '74, where I
met my husband.

Swearing Stagehands -Keith Harris

Stagehands are known for their multitude of talents, not the least of which is a talent for swearing. Some oaths have been uttered that would make a sailor blush. There is one oath in particular that is occasionally spoken by a select few that goes like this:

"...as a condition of my membership in Local No. 205 and in the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employes (sic), Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States, Its Territories and Canada, (I) do solemnly pledge myself to accept and abide by the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of this Local and of the Alliance."

Most of us have repeated these words and have heard them repeated at meetings when we gain a new brother or sister. The question is: what were we committing ourselves to?

We must turn our hymnals to ARTICLE TWO Section 1 of the Constitution and Bylaws of IATSE Local 205 to gain insight into the meaning of the words we were required to speak.

Here we find that we are swearing to dedicate ourselves "to the principles of trade unionism." This means that we are committed to organizing workers who practice our craft. In the case of Local 205, the...



Beauty and the Beast stage crew,
photo courtesy of Conrad Haden

Since 1911, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Local 205, has been serving the Austin area as the labor union representing technicians, artisans, and craftspeople in the entertainment industry, including live theatre, concert, and convention events.



Beauty and the Beast wardrobe crew,
courtesy of sister Joan Miller

We are the source for professional experienced personnel, including Stagehands, Scenic Carpenters, Properties Personnel, Projectionists, Riggers, Wardrobe Personnel, Lighting Technicians, Sound Technicians, Audio/Visual Technicians, Camera Operators, and Decorators.

We can cover your stagecraft needs from corporate meeting to musical theatre.

Contact the Business Representative for information on staffing your production:
BusinessAgent@IATSE205.org 512-371-1217 voice 512-458-1507 fax

IATSE Local 205
P.O Box 142
Austin, TX 78767

