



STAGE CALL

THE NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR AUSTIN'S STAGEHANDS
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International Alliance
of Theatrical Stage
Employees Local 205

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A successful call isn't one that gets done the quickest or where we beat the record load-out. It's the one where the work is done safely and everyone goes home able to work another day.

- Todd Drga

Workplace safety – everyone's job

-Todd Drga

We all know that working as a stagehand can be physically demanding and mentally exhausting. Working long hours under the pressure that "the show must go on" can make people willing to take shortcuts or ignore proper procedures. But before you take that shortcut, ask yourself: "Is the five minutes I'm saving really worth the chance that I'll never work again?"

See Two Takes on OSHA Class, page 3

Stewards' Corner

-Jim Ford

Last year, several Local 205 officers & members attended the IATSE Training Trust general entertainment safety class. The instructor was Kent Jorgensen, a name you see quite often in the IA Bulletin. Upon completion of the class, we received our IA Safety Officers' certification cards along with completion cards for attending the 10-hour OSHA general industry safety & health training course. What follows is the curriculum from that training session:

See Stewards' Corner, page 3

**Stage Basics
"DMX: Part 1"
see page 7**

Heads Up!

-Mikela Cowan

One of the most common phrases we are taught early on in our careers is "Heads up!" Sometimes it's a shouted phrase from above to give anyone below them a warning to move. Sometimes it's a loud notification from the fly-rail or deck that pipes are coming in. In either situation, communication is key to the safety of our brothers and sisters.

When on the fly-rail one may be running line sets and in constant communication with the loading-rail or folks on the deck by voice (yelling) or radio. The TD or head carpenter may be on deck calling pipes in and out, constantly talking to the head fly-man about which line sets to fly which directions, weights, or the progress of loading or unloading weight. Then the head carpenter can tell his crew or other departments when they can hang on a pipe, transfer goods, or drop units.

Full article :

<http://newsletter.iatse205.org/archives/843>

Safety Everywhere

-Joe Martin

While we tout safety as a virtue, I have found that in many areas of our industry we are either non-compliant or ignore simple things we can do to make our jobs easier and safer. I find in our local that the membership does work safely. We are great about making sure enough hands are on a heavy object and asking others for help when it is needed. While this covers a major part of the issues we deal with assembling road shows, there are many details we miss, specifically with PPE (personal protection equipment) and fall arrest.

continued on page 6



Secretary-Treasurer Kelso at Dell World 2014, photo by Pres. Magee

President's Message

Article Two of our Constitution and By-Laws states that our local is dedicated to uniting all workers within its jurisdiction and organizing the unorganized. Organizing falls into two categories, organizing individual workers and organizing the work. What's the difference or significance? Organizing the work is when a union helps employees gain recognition and union representation at their place of work. The employees ask for representation and, upon a successful election, negotiations for a collective bargaining agreement for current and future employees begin. Organizing the worker, on the other hand, means bringing individuals into the union.

Both types of organizing are extremely important to a local. Organizing the work within our jurisdiction improves wages and conditions for stagehands, creates union jobs, and generates income for the local. Organizing workers within our jurisdiction is equally important because it increases membership and, therefore, the union's strength.

Often, we think of organizing as a specific, temporary event such as an organizing drive. In reality, organizing should be an ongoing occurrence. For example, we think of our employers as organized because there are collective bargaining agreements in place. Yet we see increasing numbers of unorganized workers on calls. Some departments are dramatically less organized than others. How do we maintain union support if we have less and less union members working? Additionally, unorganized workers seem to use the local's hiring hall more than members. I would argue that these situations have come about because of a lack of organizing, and this needs to be addressed.

Without continually generating interest in joining the union, a local will become marginalized and eventually extinct. If we want to not only survive but actually grow strong, we have to organize our jurisdiction individually and collectively. How do we do this individually? Well, we certainly don't do it by treating unorganized workers with disrespect. Too often, I have seen and heard unorganized workers being treated as if they were inadequate compared to cardholders. I have even heard members joke about how over-hires are a poor reflection of the local. I disagree. It's the members looking down on unorganized workers who are a poor reflection on the local. After all, who would want to join an organization that makes them feel inferior?

It seems to me that the majority of Austin's unorganized workers are hungry for work, eager to please, and willing to learn. I see potential. In organizing and educating them, we further the life of this local. So next time you're at work, assist and support your unorganized coworker as you would your union brother or sister, and encourage them to become part of the movement that exists to improve the wages and conditions for all of Austin's stagehands.

-Rachel Magee

Austin Poverty Initiative

-Alex Moir, Education Austin

In March of 2014 AFT President Randi Weingarten attended the first meeting of what was to become the Austin Poverty Initiative (API). An Education Austin created coalition of more than 20 social work, advocacy, labor and faith groups, API's mission is to promote policies that alleviate poverty and foster economic stability. One of the first issues identified by the coalition is Payday and Title Lending. Have you seen them in your local mall? Texas laws allow these businesses to charge unlimited fees resulting in averages of 500% APR or more for a payday loan and 300% for auto title loans. API believes these immoral practices should no longer be tolerated. API will be expanding our coalition and petitioning the Texas legislature to support and uphold the City Ordinances of cities that rein in the most abusive practices, put the basic protections of these ordinances into state law and cap interest rates on payday and auto title loans at 36% APR. Join the battle against these usurious, scurrilous and democracy attacking practices! Call Alex Moir at Education Austin at 512-472-1124 today!

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration is the division of the Department of Labor that is responsible for enforcement of safety regulations for private employers. The OSHA webpage for Workers (<https://www.osha.gov/workers/index.html>) lists all of the worker rights and employer responsibilities. I will touch briefly on some of them in this article, but I encourage you to go to the website and read all of the information there.

The employer is responsible for ensuring that the workplace is safe and free of known hazards. This includes providing personal protective equipment (PPE) like hard hats, respirators, eye protection, and hearing protection. (Note that steel-toed footwear and prescription eye protection are not required to be provided by the employer, as those are considered “very personal in nature and ... often worn off the job-site”). OSHA also requires employers to try to eliminate or reduce hazards by making changes in working conditions rather than just relying on PPE. Employers must also inform the workers of any hazards that exist in the workplace, such as what chemicals they will be using. If any training is needed to properly use safety equipment, the employer must provide it.

Stewards' Corner *continued from page 1*

According to the Fair Labor Standards Act, it is required by law that employers display the official OSHA poster that describes everyone's rights and responsibilities under the law. Your steward can answer your questions or will know where to go to find someone more knowledgeable. Once again, I have asked the e-board to put in place a Health & Safety committee, which would mean there is a knowledgeable group of individuals to deal with these concerns. They would help to insure that no possible hazard is taken for granted. Most of our employers are just as concerned about preventing on-the-job injury. For those that aren't, this committee could help to “push” and persuade employers to take corrective action. It would benefit us all if some members took on the task of learning about this highly technical area. You don't have to become an expert overnight. Just commit to begin this journey of learning and help provide security & protection that safeguards our members. One great source for learning is COSH. It's a national network of twenty-five union-based Coalitions on Occupational Safety & Health. It's website is: <www.coshnetwork.org>. The New York website of COSH is packed with a lot of good information.

The National Institute for Occupational Health & Safety (NIOSH), an arm of the federal Center for Disease Control and Prevention, is also a good resource. They

Workers have the right to a safe workplace, free of known dangers. If they do not believe that the workplace is safe, they are allowed to report the problem without fear of retaliation. The first step should always be to report the situation to the employer and Union Steward. If the employer does not remedy the hazard, then any worker can report the situation to OSHA or request an OSHA inspection. If the condition clearly presents a risk of death or serious physical harm, there is not sufficient time for OSHA to inspect, and you have brought the condition to the attention of your employer, you may have a legal right to refuse to work in a situation in which you would be exposed to the hazard.

It is important to note that OSHA is a reactive agency. They only act when issues are reported to them. It is not feasible for OSHA inspectors to proactively inspect every workplace in the US, so they become involved *after* a problem is identified and reported.

Therefore, the front line of workplace safety is us, the workers, looking out for each other. When you are working, be aware of your surroundings and what is going on around you. If you see something that is not safe, speak up and bring it to the attention of the Steward. If you see someone who isn't wearing the correct PPE or using required safety equipment, ask them why they are putting their job and their health at risk.

A successful call isn't one that gets done the quickest or where we beat the record load-out. It's the one where the work is done safely and everyone goes home able to work another day.

are part of the Dept. of Health & Human Services. They are at: <cdc.gov/niosh>

It is almost always best to work through your union, but individuals have the right to contact OSHA if they feel the employer is negligent. You can get answers about your rights or how to file a formal complaint requesting an inspection about hazardous conditions. It is possible to do this and have your name withheld from the employer. You have some legal protections against reprisal if you exercise any of your legitimate rights. Again, my advice is to work through your union and get the full benefit of the power of the Bargaining Unit. Strength in numbers. And always remember that it's the employer's legal responsibility to keep your job safe and healthful.

Work Safe, Work UNION PROUD!



Brother Jeff Ellinger relamping a Lycian 3K at Bass Concert Hall: face shield, gloves, blast coat



Working safely in Long Center opera boxes

Local News

Welcome new members!

Holly Crowley, Patrick Crowley and Robin McShaffry

Congrats to new death fund trustee Bon Davis.

Thank you for signing up for another term as general fund trustee, Jon Vickers.

Rest in Peace retired brother Alvin Rowley, projectionist.

Member anniversaries

Mary Nelson 40 yrs!

Ken Huncovsky 20 yrs!



VP Drga harnessed
and counterweighted
by two hands at Long
Center



Steel Toes? Yes!



Safe and Stylish

Genie Lift Safety 101

- *When setting the outriggers tighten the back outriggers first. It is easy to take a one person bucket lift off its wheels.
- *Check the bubble level.
- *Always have a minimum of two people at the bottom of the lift.
- ***LISTEN** to the hand in the lift! She or he is in charge of when to move and when to stop!

Brunch at AFL-CIO Hall
Jan. 12, 2009



Edna & Jim
Maloy

Jon
Vickers

Alvin
Rowley

Bill
Simpson

Mary
Nelson

Safety Everywhere

continued from page 1



Fall arrest is far and away the worst safety equipment issue we face today in our venues in Austin. While there are some notable good things we stay on top of (fall arrestors in the Long Center box booms) these improvements are to a fairly modern building after years of increased OSHA regulation on high work. I know that it is practically impossible to ask for a fall arrest to be available every time we climb a ladder over 6 feet, but we need to question ourselves where fall arrest is practical and necessary. Would it help? Would it make the work safer and more comfortable to perform? For example, the hinged grid opening in the Long Center is a huge falling danger to anyone working around it. Never have I heard anyone from employee to management say anything about wearing harnesses near the opening, just to “be careful.” Note I’m just using this as an example, not to call out or shame the Long Center. Traditionally, riggers don’t ever have to wear harnesses on the grid and we aren’t used to bringing them up. But this is a special exception to that standard that has been overlooked. There are many other work locations in this town that need evaluation. Careful as careful may be, accidents happen, and the conversation needs to move forward to instill a culture of safety. Any task that presents a mortal danger needs to have a counter to take mortality out of the equation. I know that extra 5 minutes to put on a harness and clip off to the beam adds time to the day, but it could also save a life.

The worst offender of all the venues in town is the Erwin Center, where riggers climb the 110’ roof steel with no dedicated lines for fall arrest. The venue was built before there were any regulations regarding fall arrest. As a result, the riggers there, including myself, either climb without harness or use a harness mostly for equipment management. Only in extremely rare cases do we actually use harnesses for fall arrest and positioning. Everyone has to be vetted as a safe, experienced climber/rigger to be allowed on the steel. That doesn’t change the fact that every time riggers go up, they are at risk of losing their lives.

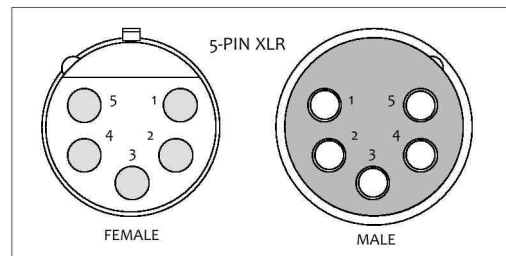
If I make any points in this article, my biggest one would be that even with years of experience and practice, the danger is still present. And wouldn’t it be great if that danger didn’t have to be so dangerous? As professionals doing a dangerous job, we deserve to have the necessary systems in place to prevent death. While not a union venue, many of us work at the Erwin Center and need to work harder to instill a culture of safety and encourage our brothers and sisters to use the tie-off method they find comfortable and safe. For me, it involves taking a 22kn climbing sling, basketing the beam or safe tie-off point nearby, and clipping it into my central front positioning ring. This allows for clean movement along the beam, and, in the event of slippage or an accident pulling me off the beam, I would slide off to the side or under it, within easy distance to pull myself back up without taking the damaging shock load of a fall on a shock absorbing lanyard. This also prevents the need for a rescue operation, which would need to happen within 15-20 minutes of a fall to prevent death due to suspension trauma. It is important to note that my method works, but it is by no means standard and should not be taken as such.

Every industry related to construction/physical work is highly regulated in terms of safety, except for entertainment. We often feel like those rules don’t apply to us, but they very much do. OSHA is ramping up its stance on entertainment safety, and it’s high time. I have noticed more and more touring companies coming through with hard hat requirements. A show coming up at the Erwin will require all riggers to wear hard hats. It is important to note that a hard hat is not for the sole purpose of protecting your head from falling objects. Ever been hit in the head with a board or pipe someone was carrying as they turned around? I’ve seen guys have their temples busted open from getting slammed with a piece. Wearing a hard hat is not about how much you mistrust the people around you or above, it’s about protecting your extremely valuable head. “Nerdy” looks be damned. It’s a job not a fashion show.

To read this piece in full please go to

<http://newsletter.iatse205.org/archives/839>

For up to date list of trustees please see <http://newsletter.iatse205.org/about/trustees-delegates-and-committees>



Stage Basics: DMX Part 1

DMX is like cable television. Although your house is being pummeled with 5000 channels of garbage, you are able to safely watch the Spurs or This Old House because your TV can disregard any information it doesn't need. Only part of the signal coming through the coaxial cable is for the station you've got it tuned to, and the TV only puts that part on the screen. DMX compliant equipment functions similarly in that all the fixtures, dimmers, or effects in line will only respond to the stuff they're supposed to. This is achieved by addressing each unit and patching its address to a channel or series of channels in your system, allowing your console to communicate with each unit individually.

Time was, all the equipment manufacturers that produced intelligent lighting and such had their own communication systems and connections. Nobody's controller could drive another company's fixtures. That was until 1986, when USITT developed the DMX512 protocol. Pretty much all intelligent lighting equipment is DMX compliant, although some companies produce equipment that operates on their own proprietary control standards, as well.

Maintenance of DMX512 was transferred to the Technical Standards Program of the Entertainment Services and Technology Association in 1998. In 2011, however, ESTA merged with the similar British organization PLASA. Now when you google ESTA, you can find out how international travelers register for the Visa Waiver Program. And did you know DMX is also a rapper?

PLASA is now responsible for keeping what became labeled the DMX512-A protocol whole. ANSI and EIA/TIA (look them up) also have contributed to the standardization of DMX. All of these organizations have helped sculpt the way we make the lights go on, spin around, flash, and change color.

DMX is an acronym for "Digital MultipleX". You don't have to know what that means to know that it sounds very cool. Because it is cool. It's probably the coolest thing that's ever happened to live entertainment.

The 512 refers to the number of pieces of information (DMX *addresses*) in a network segment known as a universe. It is also the maximum number of addresses that can be commanded on a single DMX cable. So when you run data along a pipe from unit to unit, all those instruments are in the same universe.

To learn everything about DMX, go to <http://www.usitt.org/dmx512> or www.elationlighting.com/pdf/files/dmx-101-handbook.pdf. You could also check out Wikipedia, but like they say, "this page has some issues."

To learn enough so you kind of get it, please find a continuation of this article in the education issue due out this summer, or on our Word Press site.

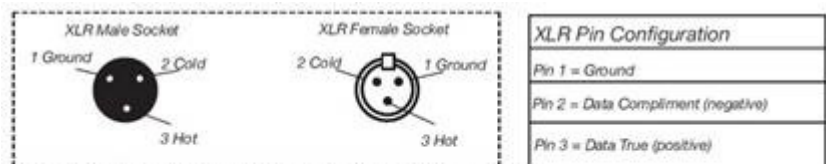
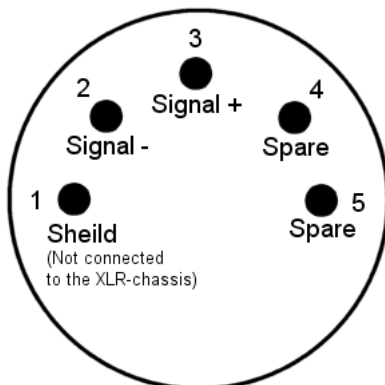


Figure 2

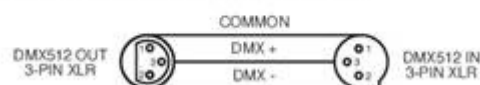


Figure 3

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.

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



Jersey Boys 2nd National Tour road and local crew at Bass Concert Hall, March, 2015. Compliments of Conrad Haden

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

