



## ***Intermountain Desert Regional Section Newsletter***

***March 2006***

***Volume 1, Issue 1***

***Amanda French, Editor***

# **Intermountain Desert Summer Mini-Conference July 21 & 22, 2006**

Wow! A new regional section and there's already a mini-conference!

That's Right! Friday July 21 and Saturday July 22, 2006! It's the perfect time to have our first annual meeting, share ideas, learn some new stuff, round up some new members, make new friends and enjoy all that The Utah Shakespearean Festival and southern Utah has to offer!

Our hosts for the conference will be Southern Utah University and The Utah Shakespearean Festival (USF) in Cedar City, Utah.

Many seminar sessions have been submitted so far including The Art of Managing People, Resume Doctors, Developing a Production at USF, Costume Design on a Small Budget and others. Workshop sessions submitted are hands-on demonstration of techniques and skills and include Molding and Casting, Wireless Mics, Ventilating Wigs.

Other meetings and events being planned include our yearly business meeting, meet and greet and portfolio displays, opportunities to watch the USF Randall Theatre crew do their daily change-over (quite a feat in repertory theatre) and many other literary and production seminars, play orientations, and costume display offered by the Utah Shakespearean Festival.

There will also be several options of plays to see in the evenings at the Shakespearean Festival.

If you have other ideas or suggestions for seminars and workshops, or are interested in presenting or sponsoring a seminar or workshop or volunteering to help, be sure to attend our Meet and Greet session at the USITT National Conference in Louisville or please contact Ray Inkle by April 30, at [inkel@bard.org](mailto:inkel@bard.org) with the subject heading IMD Mini-Conference 2006.

More information on housing, final programming and schedules coming soon!

# Meet and Greet in Louisville

## FREE FOOD!

On Tuesday, March 28th 2006 from 8 am— 9:30 am there will be an Intermountain Desert Regional Section meet and greet. Your Vice-Chair Amanda French and Secretary Scott Sizemore will be there and so will our popular key speaker—Free Food!

Stop by to chat about the future of our section and ideas to increase membership, discuss possible workshops and seminars for our summer mini-conference and just socialize with each other! We will also have applications for membership and will be happy to sign you up and take your dues! (See page 3 for application information and a schedule of dues.) See you there! (free food)

## Members' Forum

A Stage Manager's Hubby

contributed by Scott Sizemore

For those of you who don't know me, and let's face it, that's most of you, I'm certainly what you might call a successful guy in the grand scheme of things. I have a good job, I'm well respected for the work I do, which amazingly enough, is actually in the field in which I got my degree. I'm a theatre guy... kinda — but more about my real job in future articles. There is also a much more challenging duty I must perform that is wholly unrelated to monetary compensation. It's a tough job, but a rewarding one. It requires a wealth of patience, skill, and experience to perform this job well, and other members of this exclusive club will no doubt agree with me. Yes. I'm a stage manager's hubby.

Let me first let you in on what I consider to be an indisputable fact. Equity stage management is the toughest job in theatre. Period. Don't believe me? Let me paint you a picture.

It's eight-thirty in the morning. It's time for my wife to get up. Why? She's got a production meeting at 10:00 am. I hear her knocking around the house, taking her shower and trying to prepare her food for the day. At around 9:30 am or so, she leaves for her meeting. She has a rehearsal starting at noon, so I know I won't see her until her dinner break, which is at 5:00 pm — or will I? Unfortunately, being a stage manager, dinner break for the actors equates to more work for her while she prepares the following day's rehearsal schedule and distributes it according to the myriad of complicated and sometimes conflicting Equity rules. Meanwhile, since she's out of rehearsal everyone who isn't an actor decides this is an ideal time to talk to her about other aspects of the production. Sets, props, costume fitting schedules, you name it, they'll come out of the woodwork to bleed away what little time y honey gets to herself throughout the day. Even her trips to the bathroom are often not interruption free. In fact, her time in the bathroom, if she makes it there, is often the only moment of peace she gets the entire day.

But after all that, her day is far from over. Another three hours of rehearsal from 7 pm to 10 pm are on tap. And while at 10 pm the Equity actors can go home, my wife is back in her office working on notes to distribute to the various departments for the next day. And the next morning, it starts all over again.

Although production meetings certainly don't happen every day, there's almost always *something*. Multiply this schedule by 6 day per week, and you have my wife's life in a nutshell. If you think that's bad, when tech begins, it gets even worse. Were it not for the fact that I work at home, I would never see my wife during the seven show season — and even then I get only rear glimpses now and then. Luckily, I do most of the housework.

The difficulties a stage manager faces isn't only that of time commitment. Stage managers are required to play two diametrically opposing roles simultaneously. At once they are expected to be in charge, and at the same time completely selfless. They are the coordination point for all aspects of a particular production. They are information gatherers and distributors, and when tech begins, they become the boss. In this way, they are the ultimate middle-men — expected to solve all problems, and yet have no real authority over anyone or anything. It's the business world's middle management nightmare, multiplied by thirteen hour days, rigid deadlines and the added pressure of being the one solely responsible for the safe execution of all aspects of a successful show, night after night in front of a live audience.

One more wrinkle in this already impossible task is probably one of the most stressful and unpredictable of all — theatre personalities. Not only do stage managers have to be managers, paperwork fanatics, and razor-minded wizards who can track 200 props throughout the course of the show in their heads — not only do they have to be masters of communication within all disciplines from technical theatre to crew payroll and have the artistic sensibilities to understand how a light cue is supposed to interact with a piece of music — a stage manager is required to deal with some of the most notoriously difficult personality types in the world — that of the uncompromising artist.

All of these aspects taken together, along with many others that I don't mention here, combine to make stage management among the most challenging jobs in the world.

And there's little ol' me — her silent partner. I'm the one who gets the brunt of all that frustration and pain that her job requires be repressed during her work day. I'm a pair of ears when she needs to yell, her shoulder to cry on, a punching bag when she needs to hit something. And yet I'm the one who understands, perhaps more than anyone, how much this job not only rewards her, but defines her.

Theatre has always been, and continues to be unique. In some ways, it can be absolutely transcendent to experience, both as an audience member and as a participant. At the same time, it is also a curse. Theatre, by its culture — by its very nature — is much more than just a job. It's a life. It's a discipline that celebrates humanity, while, in exchange, it sucks away every shred of humanity you have to feed it.

There's not a day that goes by when both my wife and I don't seriously reconsider our path in life. The temptation of a regular job—eight to five with better pay and flexible vacation— is something that my wife will never be able to completely purge from her mind, but the knowledge that she will always be a stage manager in her heart is almost indisputable.

And so we soldier on. I'm a stage manager's hubby. Sometimes I hate it, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

# Membership

Joining the Intermountain Desert Regional Section of USITT is easy!

First, select the level at which you wish to join. (see fee schedule below) Then write a check for the correct amount made out to: IMD USITT, c/o Jessica Sizemore, 1048 E. 300 S. , Salt Lake City, UT, 84102 . (Please do not mail cash.) Or go to our web site at [www.usitt.org](http://www.usitt.org), under regional sections, print out and fill out an application and follow the mailing directions. That's it!

Students must include a copy of their current student ID to be granted membership at the student level.

Your membership dues help us to bring guest speakers to seminars, pay for advertising for seminars, symposium and special events, and some general running costs (among other things). So grab your friends and your checkbook and join us today! We look forward to seeing you!

Did you know that you do not have to be a USITT National member in order to be a member of this regional section? It's true! While we do encourage all of our regional members to become national members, it is not a condition for regional membership.

## Membership Dues

Membership Dues per year:

**Student— \$15** (must include a copy of current ID)

**Individual— \$25**

**Joint— \$40**

**Organizational— \$150**

A member in good standing is one who has paid his or her dues in full for the year. This will allow the member to waive most registration fees for regional seminars and symposia. Those who allow their membership to lapse may be required to pay registration fees in order to attend seminars or symposia.

Members may be asked to pay *materials* fees for some seminars and symposium events .

USITT is a membership-based organization. Membership will help you advance your knowledge and skills, and provide you with networking opportunities, information, and conferences.

The true value of membership, as in all associations, is in the opportunity to share information and ideas and to build community through participation. Members of USITT Intermountain Desert work together to grow in their craft and create educational opportunities designed to bolster the entire professional community in our region.

# Intermountain Desert Regional Section Officers

Chair - Jessica Sizemore

Vice– Chair - Amanda French

Secretary - Scott Sizemore

Treasurer - Brenda Van der Wiel

## Intermountain Desert Up and Coming Events

### March 27—April 2:

2006 USITT National Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

Thursday March 30<sup>th</sup> 8:00 am – 9:30 am – IMD Regional Section Meet and Greet – free food!

### July 21—22 :

2006 Intermountain Desert Regional Section Summer Symposium at The Utah Shakespearean Festival in Cedar City, UT.

## *Special Thanks*

*To Scott Sizemore for saying that it's time to start this regional section; to Jessica Sizemore for pushing us all and getting the ball rolling; to Joe Payne for our fabulous web site and to Brenda Van de Wiel, Amanda French, Joe Aldridge, Bill Byrnes, Eric Clark, Travis Coyne, Dan Efros, Doug Ellis, Ray Inkle, Tommy Macon, Kristina Stevenson, Zachary Stevenson and Janet Swenson for being charter members.*

Your input and comments are welcome. Columns and features can and will change with the information that we want to share with each other.

If you have any comments, suggestions, musings for our Members' Forum or items to add to the calendar, send me an email. Deadline for the next issue is April 30, 2006. Members' Forum submissions should be no more than 1000 words. Thank you.

Amanda French, Editor

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