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## Summer Section Meeting Marks Transitions,

By Kathleen Donnelly, Chair, USITT Midwest Section,  
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On behalf of the Officers and Board of Directors, I would like to welcome back both old and new members to an exciting new year with USITT Midwest Section. Along with the regional sections across the country, we are getting ready for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of USITT, which will be celebrated in Kansas City, MO in March 2010. I hope many of you can join us in Kansas City to celebrate the last 50 years and usher in the next 50.

This summer was a time of transition for the Midwest Section. Ann Archbold stepped down as Chair of the Midwest Section at the end of July, because of personal commitments. We thank Ann for her work as Chair and service to the section, and look forward to her continued contributions and participation to the Midwest Section. At the board meeting held on August 15<sup>th</sup>, I was appointed to fill in the remainder of Ann's term as Chair, and Shane Kelly has been appointed as the Vice- Chair of Programming for the upcoming year. We have also appointed to the board two persons to fill directors-at-large positions: Ken Fraza and Verda Beth Martell. We will be appointing one more person to fill a one- year Director at Large position to complete the board. If you are interested in serving on the board, please send me an e-mail to <Donnelly@uwosh.edu>.

By now you should have received your membership packet in the mail with our great line up of programming for the upcoming season. If you have not received a packet, or would like to join as a new member, please send an e-mail to Mick Alderson, Vice Chair of Programming <alderson@uwosh.edu>, and he will forward the information to you. The Midwest Section continues to offer free annual memberships to students (high school, undergraduate and graduate) in our region.



Please encourage your students to register for a free membership with Mick Alderson, so that they can receive mailing about our programs and events. At this time, I would like to remind all the educators in the region that you could nominate students for the Founders Award, which is given out each year at the annual meeting. Nomination forms and information about the Founders Award are in your membership packet, or can be found on line at [www.usittmidwest.org](http://www.usittmidwest.org).

The programming this year is taking us to all of the four states in the Region. Shane Kelly and the Programming Committee are still finalizing details of the programs and will be sending out updates as they occur. The first program of the year is a visit to the DeBartolo Center for the Performing Arts at Notre Dame on Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup>. I hope many of you can join us for that event, and for other events during the year. The Midwest Section is celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of USITT with a birthday cake in Chicago



during our program at DePaul University. Please join us for a slice of birthday cake and photo to be taken in honor of the golden anniversary. If you would like to be more involved in the Midwest Section, send me a note. I look forward to seeing many of you during year at programs and events.

Cheers!

Kathleen Donnelly, Chair  
USITT Midwest Section



Zach Tysinger (Best Aesthetic Design) and Chris Blad. U of Ill.

## Midwest Mechanical Design Competition (MMDC) marks three successful years, By Beth Martell, bmartell@illinois.edu

Some were silent; some gave an imposing whoosh and crack; one honked. These were the sounds of the entries into the Third Annual Midwest Mechanical Design Competition (MMDC) sponsored by USITT Midwest Section and the University of Illinois. On May 2nd, eight students from Indiana University and the University of Illinois met on the East Terrace of the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts for a shootout to determine the best dart shooter design.

The student designs followed two models – either a pneumatically driven dart, fitted into a barrel with special wadding, or a ballista. Both models were successful. The pneumatic devices tended to have more power while the ballistae were elegant and silent, a perfect stealth weapon.

Even though they were built on similar models, each prototype had a unique flair. One of the pneumatic devices, built by Indiana undergrad Gabriel Gula, was completely self-contained using a CO<sub>2</sub> rifle canister. Another Indiana student, 1<sup>st</sup> year grad Steven Workman built a compressed gas rifle, complete with breach loading barrel. Matt Stratton, Illinois 3<sup>rd</sup> year grad, who was defending his title for the second time, offered a pneumatic tank turret that would cloak well in any forest.

The ballista styles ranged from a finely crafted red oak siege engine by Illinois 1<sup>st</sup> year Zach Tysinger to a

modern UHMW and hardwood device by Illinois senior Scott Wolfson. The ballistae proved to be very reliable with enough power to stick in the array of targets.

The top prize, the USITT Midwest Section Best Design Award, was earned by Adam Weil with his rough and rugged ballista. His “Scorpion” was extraordinarily reliable, hitting the target in all but two shots and managed the only bulls eye in the contest. Adam will receive \$100 and the USITT Midwest Section Best Design trophy.

In order to compete for best design, students must enter a proposal that includes a narrative, costing and as-built drafting. This year’s winner for best proposal, Chris Blad (Illinois 2<sup>nd</sup> year grad), included complete drafting that would enable someone to recreate the device and background for why he chose his particular design. Chris will receive a trophy for this accomplishment.

This annual contest is open to all theatre majors, undergrad and graduate. It’s easy to get involved. Link to the MMDC site off of the Midwest Section home page (USITTMidwest.org) for more information. The rules for the 2009 contest can be found on that site. The guidelines for the 2010 competition will go up in August. If you would like to get involved in planning, please contact Beth Martell at bmartell@illinois.edu.

See page 6 for event awards.

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Steven Workman and Adam Weil, Indiana Univ.



Steven Ferrier and Matt Stratton shooting. Also a good look at our judges: Thomas E. Korder (black hat), Michael McNamara (left with clipboard), and Chris Hofmann (standing on right with clipboard).



## University of Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center hosts Fall Program

By Shane Kelly, skelly19@depaul.edu

USITT's Midwest Section had a great event to start off the year September 26 at University of Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center. The production staff, led by Sarah Schreiber Prince, Director of Technical Services, graciously welcomed 35 Midwest Section members into the center's 5 performance spaces and countless backstage support areas. The day began with a tour of the Theatre spaces, including the Philbin Studio Theatre, a 100 seat flexible space, the Decio Theatre a 360 seat proscenium space, the Leighton Concert Hall a 950 seat music performance space with flexible acoustic panels and fabrics, The Browning Family Cinema a THX certified movie theater seating 200, and the Reyes organ and choral Hall, complete with custom built organ on which one of the Notre Dame students played a mini concert for the attendees.



Attendees tour the Decio Theatre with Sarah Schreiber Prince, Director of Technical Services for the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center

After the tour two workshops were presented, one called Audio-The Kibble and Bits, exploring the differences between analog and digital consoles and amplifiers presented by Joshua Ingle, the facilities' audio engineer. Aside from playing some really loud music, Josh discussed signal flow, noise floor, and speaker design. Several folks spent time trying their hands at the center's analog and digital console set-ups.

Rick Donnelly, from Notre Dame's Film, Television, and Theatre department led participants through the collection of more than 105 original renderings from the Stratford Theatre Festival that are housed at Notre Dame. The renderings are by designers such as Desmond Heeley, Tanya Moiseyevich, Susan Benson, and John Pennoyer and adorn the wall of the public spaces of the Performing Arts Center.



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Over lunch, attendees visited the Historic Washington Hall, Notre Dame's original performance space located across campus. And after a lovely autumnal walk, we attended the afternoon sessions which included Quick, simple, and inexpensive mask making, led by Rick Donnelly, where participants made a great looking comfortable mask with pantyhose, fiberfill and a neutral mask.

In the Scene Shop, Verda Beth Martell and Steve Ferrier from University of Illinois presented their Technical Training on the Road workshop, which displays many variations of pneumatic applications and equipment and gives participants a chance to assemble the systems and try-out the cylinders, actuators and other toys.

On the Decio stage, representatives from ETC and Creative Stage Lighting set-up several LED fixtures next to the center's conventional fixtures. The presenters demonstrated how the LED fixtures are most commonly used in theatre production currently as cyc lights and wash fixtures as well as dance side light. After some show and tell, much of the afternoon was devoted to allowing participants to test out and experiment with the fixtures.

The Midwest Section is off to a great start for the year and we look forward to you joining us at future events in Chicago on February, Grand Rapids, Michigan in March and Wisconsin to be announced.



Rich Donnelly, Costume Designer at Notre Dame, and participant Tracey Lyons from UW Whitewater at the Masking Making Workshop



Tracey Lyons from UW Whitewater and her mask

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## Results of Third Annual Midwest Mechanical Design Competition

	Undergraduate	Rookie	Overall
Best Design	Gabriel Gula	Adam Weil	Adam Weil
Best Design Runner-up		Zach Tysinger	Chris Blad
Best Proposal	Gabriel Gula	Adam Weil	Chris Blad
Best Proposal Runner-up		Zach Tysinger	Adam Weil
Best Aesthetic Design	Gabriel Gula	Zach Tysinger	Zach Tysinger
Best Aesthetic Design Runner-up	Scott Wolfson	Steven Workman	Matt Stratton
Most Accurate First Place	Scott Wolfson (8 pts)	Adam Weil (25 pts)	Adam Weil (25 pts)
Most Accurate Second place	Gabriel Gula (1 pt)	Zach Tysinger (15 pts)	Zach Tysinger (15 pts)
Most Accurate Third Place		Steven Workman (9 pts)	Chris Blad (14 pts)
Target Array First Place	Scott Wolfson (16 pts)	Adam Weil (34 pts)	Adam Weil (34 pts)
Target Array Second Place	Gabriel Gula (7 pts)	Zach Tysinger (21 pts)	Chris Blad (25 pts)
Target Array Third Place		Steven Workman (16 pts)	Zach Tysinger (21 pts)



This year's competition will take place on the east terrace of the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois on Saturday, May 1, 2010. This year's project is mini-basketball shooters. To register, email [bmartell@illinois.edu](mailto:bmartell@illinois.edu)

Visit <http://www2.kcpa.uiuc.edu/kcpatd/Physics/MMDC.htm>, for more information.

Visit [www.usitt.org](http://www.usitt.org) for information, registration, sessions and activities  
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