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# The Light LS stuff

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MERRIMACK HALL AND GYMNASIUM

Merrimack Hall in 1923. Photo courtesy of Debra Jenkins

## The Tails of 10 Dead Rats

In 1899 there was a ground-breaking ceremony in Huntsville for the Merrimack Mills textile plant. Like most mills of its time, a village sprung up around it. The company store, the school, the local hang-out were all right there. For the Merrimack Mill Village, the local hang out became Merrimack Hall which, when constructed in 1920, housed a gymnasium and two community rooms on the top floor. The company store, barbershop, drug store, and a cafe were on the ground floor. It's been said that "anything fun that happened, happened at the Hall".

Starting in 2007, that statement will be fact again thanks to Debra and Alan Jenkins. Earlier this year, they purchased Merrimack Hall and are renovating it into a multi-performance and arts venue as a way to "give-back" to the community. Speaking with Debra Jenkins, you can hear the excitement in her voice about this project she and Alan have begun, "We envision that there will be a full schedule going on all the time".

The building itself has an interesting history. The upstairs gym was used by the school during the day and became an auditorium for events held in the eve-

nings and on weekends. One of the community rooms was a "Men's Only" area with pooltables, cards, and the like. The other community room eventually became the "Teen Canteen" for the local youngsters. The rooms were also used for local festivities such as Fall Festivals and Spring Flings. In speaking with Debra, one of the funniest things she told me was that movies were shown two nights a week with admission being a nickel. However, if you brought in the tails of 10 rats, you could get in the movie for free! (Apparently, there

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## Mobile's RSA Building: Mood Lighting

Funded by Retirement Systems of Alabama, the tallest building in the state - the Battlehouse Tower - ([www.battlehousetower.com](http://www.battlehousetower.com)), is nearing completion in Mobile, Ala.

According to the Mobile Register, the 745 foot tall building will be "a beacon visible for 25 miles across the flat coastal terrain", and will "affect the mood of the city."

How so? Because TLS, Inc. has been selected to provide 144 Martin Architectural color-mixing wash fixtures to light the building's exterior.

Using a mix of 200, 600, and 1200 watt fixtures, the goal is to create programming that, begin-

ning slowly each Monday night, will gradually build to an exciting weekend light show. Various themes will be represented: purple, green and gold for Mardi Gras, red, white and blue for 4<sup>th</sup> of July, etc. It will be the only installation of its type in Alabama, and certainly one of the largest color-changing exterior lighting projects in the Southeast.

About 20% of the fixtures will be located on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor, for the purpose of up-lighting the sides of the building. The remainder of the fixtures will be located throughout the open-truss crown of the building, from the 31<sup>st</sup> floor and up. Control will be via Martin's Maxxyz

PC and Maxxyz Manager software. The system will be connected to the Internet, allowing for programming revisions and fault diagnosis to be performed from TLS, Inc's

office in Huntsville. The lighting project is due to be completed in early 2007, with the building ready for occupancy shortly thereafter.



The RSA Tower in Mobile, Ala

*photo and article by Doug Bennett, Project Manager*

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## Opera House

TLS, Inc. recently completed work in the historic Grand Opera House in Meridian, Miss.

The Opera House will be part of the Riley Education and Performing Arts Center in downtown Meridian, and has been undergoing extensive restoration in the past year.

Owned by Mississippi State University, the Opera House dates back to 1890 when Meridian was an arts community hub. Although time has had its affect on the building, architects Martinez-Johnson from Washington, D.C. and Pryor-Mor-

row Associates in Columbus, Miss. were able to make use of most of the historic components and couple them with modern renovations.

Theatrical consultants Schuler and Shook, Inc. from Minneapolis and electrical contractor, Webster Electric in Meridian, Miss. teamed with TLS, Inc./Mississippi Project Manager Rusty Scafidel for the theatrical dimming and lighting control. The package includes lighting and dimming for the Grand Opera House proscenium theatre and the rehearsal

studio. Within both spaces are nearly 200 conventional lighting fixtures, two control consoles and 240 channels of dimming. The fixtures are comprised of 90 ETC Source Four ellipsoidals and 48 ETC Source Four PARs with Altman and Lycian filling out the remainder with fresnels and followspots. Dimming and control are accomplished with ETC's Expression with 2D Emphasis (theatre) and the Express 48/96 (studio). Installed in both spaces are the ETC Sensor SR48 dimming racks, with the

theatre also getting a Sensor SR24.

TLS, Inc's Install & Repair Department sent their whole crew over for the installation of lighting, control, and dimming.

The Grand Opera House had its premier performances and grand opening earlier this year in September.



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was a rat problem!)  
"There is just the coolest, hip, vibe to the building" says Debra as she describes the interior brick that were all hand made on site using river rock. The brick have their own beauty in their non-symmetrical layout.

You're probably wondering why you're reading about this here. Although the project is in the early stages, the purpose of the building has been developed and planned out. The building's two story structure will become home to a 310 seating capacity theatre, a 3000 sq ft dance studio, along with an area to be used for sound recording and rehearsals. With all that performance space, there is crucial need for a well thought out lighting and control design package. TLS,Inc. Project Manager, Bryan Comer is working closely with the Jenkins to come up with a design package that will incorporate functionality for the performance areas and enhance the beauty of the other interior areas such as the lobby and entrance.

*(Ed. note: A condensed history of Merrimack Hall can be found at [www.merrimackhall.com](http://www.merrimackhall.com). Look for "in process" updates on the Hall's progress in upcoming issues.)*

## Team Skippy



Team Skippy walkers: Jennifer Glover, Courtney Sherman, Crystal Burke, Jessica Laney, Kim Brock, Melissa Bennett - Photo by Greg Brock

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### Team Skippy Update

October 14 dawned earlier than most Saturdays for five TLS,Inc. employees. Gathering at 6 am to make the hour and a half trip to Birmingham, we arrived in Linn Park with over a thousand other participants in the 15th Annual Komen Birmingham Race for the Cure®. Our seven team members walked 3 miles in a sea of pink, then wandered around the park perusing sponsor booths and picking up all kinds of neat stuff.

For our efforts, we were able to be a part of the largest ever Birmingham Race and take back to Sandra video and photos of all those people joined

to make a difference.

Our monetary team goal was \$1000 but we surpassed that and came out with a grand total on race day of \$1369.44.

Walking team members were TLS,Inc. employees: Courtney Sherman, Jessica Laney, Kim Brock, Melissa Bennett and Greg Brock. Others were Jennifer Glover, daughter of Sandra, and Crystal Burke, former TLS,Inc. receptionist.

In addition to the seven walkers, team members included John Messina, Chris VanEnkenvort, Doug Bennett, and David Milly.

Many thanks to those who made contributions.

### And . . .

Along with the donations raised by the race participants, TLS,Inc. also committed to contributing \$2 per ETC Source Four fixture sold between Sept 1st and Nov 30th. At printing, that total monetary donation is \$748.00. Way to go folks! Thanks for purchasing all those fixtures!

