

The Light Stuff

The Light Stuff is a publication of TLS, Inc. Huntsville, AL

Change is Our New Way of Life

Welcome to the latest of many changes TLS, Inc. has undergone since the last newsletter! As a part of our newly adopted *Change=Learning/Learning=Change* philosophy, we decided to re-vamp the newsletter as well.

Since September, we at TLS, Inc. have learned first hand about stress as a living, breathing entity. We have weaned ourselves from the sale and rental software that we had been using for the past 10 years. And, yes, as you're probably guessing, it has not been the most joyful time we've known in our 2 decades plus in business. We *are* seeing the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel and it gets brighter day by day. The most positive aspect of the whole change over is that there are at least two of us who can honestly say that we've learned at least one new thing every day. Granted, the new thing isn't always a good thing, but it's new nonetheless!

This latest software is called *R2*. *R2*

As a part of our newly adopted

CHANGE

=

LEARNING

LEARNING

=

CHANGE

philosophy, we decided to re-vamp the newsletter as well.

is an Enterprise Wide Solution software for rental and asset management from Unique Business Systems. We chose *R2* because it will allow us to have multiple sites linked with a Wide Area Network (WAN) allowing real-time inventory control from those sites.

We have also started the process of bar-coding our stock. The Rental Department finds the bar-codes to be a great tracking tool. Working with *R2*, it is now easier to track items, and especially those with serial numbers. The Sales Department has just begun to stick their toes into the bar-coding pool, but within a month should be swimming without floaties.

We've also experienced some changes in our employee line-up over the last months. After 20+ years, Janet Milly decided to bite the retirement bullet and has been enjoying her days away from the office. Robbie Hayes has stepped up to fill the Accounting Department Manager position and we hired Robbie Vines to fill out the Accounts Payable area of accounting. We've also hired Joanna Broad, our new counter-sales person. By hiring Joanna, our walk-in customers will now have consistency in who they are greeted by. You can find out more about Joanna and Robbie Vines on page 3.

Theatrical Lighting Systems, Inc.



Shipping/Showroom:
1221 Jordan Lane
Huntsville, AL 35816

Mailing:
PO Box 2646
Huntsville, AL 35804

256-533-7025
800-229-7320(F)

www.tlsinc.com

Office hours: M-F 8:30-5:30 & Sat. 8:30-12:00 CST

TLS,Inc.Nashville
Contact: Kelsey Beard
kbeard@tlsinc.com
615.444.5924 (V)
615.443.0669 (F)
615.319.7330 (C)
2479 Murfreesboro Rd #320
Nashville, TN 37217

TLS,Inc./Mississippi
Contact: Rusty Scafidel
rscafidel@tlsinc.com
601.352.1755 (V&F)
601.613.8806 (C)
736 South President St.
Jackson, MS 39201

**High End Technical
Training Seminar
Jan 6-8, 2004
TLS, Inc. Classroom**

**Martin Professional
Training Seminar
Jan 26-29, 2004
TLS,Inc. Classroom**

**ProProduction
Convention
Feb. 19-21, 2004
Long Beach, CA**



Retirement is Good! Janet Milly (pictured above), our esteemed VP and Head of Finance, made the decision about mid-year to gradually step into retirement. She made it official in September. Janet says she's keeping busy these days by working on the remodeling of her house; looking over color swatches, painting doors, and the like. She claims they know her by name down at Home Depot. She drops in on us occasionally and always looks really relaxed.

We all wish Janet well in her new state of being and would like to thank her for her years of leadership. Janet can be reached at janet_milly@yahoo.com.

The Air is Getting Crisp - Must be Seminar Time

Ah, everywhere you look the colors are all around - reds, yellows, oranges. No, it's not the lovely colors of the fall foliage or reflections from Christmas decorations - it's the lights at all the upcoming seminars!

Some reading this may have just recently returned from LDI in Orlando, FL. Others of you may be gearing up to fly out to California in February for ProProduction.

Right smack in the middle of these big conventions, take a breather and head our direction for either of the two training seminars we are offering in January.

Starting off the month of January (6th-8th) we have Mike Andrews from High End Systems (HES) presiding over a Technical Training Seminar of HES products. Hands-on service training is on the daily agenda and a Technician Certificate will be given on the last day to those who pass the session tests. The class is limited to 20, so sign up now.

January 26th-29th rounds out the month with Carl Wake from Martin Professional. Carl is overseeing the *Intellimedia 2004* Technical Training Seminar. Discussion will include operating theories and circuit analysis, common troubleshooting and repair, maintenance and installation. Hands-on training will focus on field repair. Products covered include: Mac 2000 Wash, Mac 2000 Profile, Mac 2000 Performance, Mac 550 Series (New). Class limit: 20

Find more info and the registration form for both of these seminars by logging on to our website www.tlsinc.com and clicking on the News/Seminar icon in the left column. You may also call Crystal at 256.533.7025

Christmas productions seem to begin with the best of intentions and end with the worst of headaches. Over the years I've tried just about everything to make the programs less stressful and overloaded and have had mixed results. Here's what I've found works.

Plan early. Try to have your production outline no later than March or April, and your details in place by late summer. That seems early, but remember that waiting until the fall means you'll be competing for resources with every other production that is renting, buying, borrowing, and creating.

Build in a "fudge factor." Rental items, like lighting, are often rented on very tight timelines to keep cost down. The "in" and "out" days are set in advance with no room to spare. I suggest a "fudge factor" of an extra day or two. It's so important to give yourself the time to work out setup and programming kinks -as you go- without the additional pressure of the program opening deadline.

Give the gift of flexibility. Resolve early to give the gift of flexibility - decide before rehearsals get going that *you* will roll with the punches, give others latitude and be someone who tries to make things happen. Leave the politics at the door and remind yourself amid the squabbles that Christmas is a joyous season and a giving season.

Don't forget Christmas. Build time in to your rehearsal schedule to just enjoy Christmas. What good have you done if you put an incredible program on stage, but you have a big group of tired, disappointed, stressed-out actors, musicians and technicians back stage?

Finish strong. Following a Christmas production there is usually a litany of "we're gonna fix this or that next year." There are bound to be changes, ideas, mistakes and other issues that arise which can be improved on. Have your program evaluation as soon after the production as possible. Don't wait until after Christmas. Do it while everything is fresh on your mind - just a few days after the production. This will allow your team to release those thoughts and ideas instead of having to carry them through the entire holiday season.

article contributed by Gene Mason - Hunter Street Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL

Those of you who are close enough to visit us here at the shop in Huntsville have probably already met one of our newest employees, **Joanna Broad**. Joanna has come on board to fill our Counter Sales position. Joanna is the smiling face that greets you when you walk in our front door. She is here to either help you with finding the right lamp, gel, or fixture that you want, or send you on to a Sales Project Manager, if need be. Joanna comes from a BIG theatrical background, don't let that young face fool you! She has been a "techie" for over 25 local productions, lighting tech for 20 of those. She has appeared in 15 local production with Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater, Theatre Huntsville, and Renaissance Theater. Joanna is a 2000 homeschool graduate and has taught preschool drama and Spanish at Sunflower Station. In her time here, she has become a semi-pro with

our new software and has become the *R2* helpdesk for our out-of-state offices.

The other smiling face and friendly voice on the phone belongs to **Robbie Vines**. Robbie is the Accounts Payable Department. Originally from

the Big Easy (New Orleans, LA), Robbie came our way from Raleigh, NC. She is currently attending Calhoun Community College, and had attended Southern College in New Orleans. She has spent the past 13 years in the finance side of business; processing home mortgages,

working at SCI for 3 years, and as a mortgage officer for SouthBank. We at TLS, Inc. are happy to have them both working with us, and welcome them.

Joanna can be contacted by phone - ext 321, or email jbroad@tlsinc.com. Robbie's extension is 134 and her email is rvines@tlsinc.com.

Joanna Broad - Counter Sales



Robbie Vines - Acct's Payable

