



# SPOTLIGHT

Theatrical Protective  
Union Local No. One  
IATSE, AFL-CIO, CLC  
Organized 1886

WINTER 2008

## LOCAL ONE WELCOMES "SHREK, THE MUSICAL"



***Never spend  
your money  
before you have  
earned it.***

— Thomas Jefferson

We visited *Shrek* at the Broadway Theater on 53rd St. After a three-month try-out at Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre, *Shrek* is now ready for New York.

Everything about *Shrek* is BIG. It took thirty-two trailers to bring in all the equipment at an average of two trailers per day. The scenery is LARGE. The wedding-cake style turntable weighs in at

*Continued on pg. 5*

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## FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we move through the holidays our country struggles through the worst economy since the Great Depression. Our Local suffers as well with the likely fear that business is going to get much worse. We now sit across from terrified employers at all our negotiations with management directives to freeze or reduce costs, as well as eliminate overtime and jobs. Keeping this in mind, we must continue to focus on members maintaining their current healthcare with as much employment as possible.

Obviously the same dilemma exists in our Pension Fund where we are as vulnerable as every other fund in this country with Wall Street investments. With that said, it is disappointing that the Fund Trustees, in their fiduciary responsibility of protecting the Pension Fund, will not be allocating a Christmas distribution as done in past years. This decision should not cause hysteria. Our Pension Fund ratios fare much much better than most organizations, but the need to act responsibly is paramount. Treasurer McDonough reviews and reports on the soundness of all our funds at each monthly membership meeting.

We recently completed difficult negotiations with Lincoln Center (Avery Fisher and Alice Tully Hall), The Henry Miller Theatre, Best Instrument Shop and CBS Television, which will all be presented for ratification consideration at our December 21st membership meeting. Suggesting that the economy contributed to our difficulties at these negotiations would truly be an understatement.

Also at our December 21st membership meeting, I am very pleased that new International President Matt Loeb, in light of his obviously very busy schedule, has accepted my invitation to speak and I urge our members to attend as well.

The Local is currently in the bargaining process with Jazz at Lincoln Center, City University of New York (CUNY), J.P. Morgan Chase Corporate Auditoriums, Production Resources Group's Shop and the newly organized Lehman Performing Arts Center. All our Business Agents and committees need our support in making our deals during these difficult times.

Our Theatre Business Agents particularly deserve much credit and our continued support dealing with numerous grievances and a hostile relationship with the Broadway League who obviously can't put our strike of a year ago behind them. Local One remains vigilant in protecting and enforcing our Broadway contracts negotiated a year ago while never forgetting the noble effort of our entire membership.

Please be advised that I will be attending the I.A. General Executive Board meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the end of January. Shortly thereafter, I will be calling a meeting of all our twenty-nine elected delegates who will be attending the July 2009 I.A.T.S.E. convention in Orlando, Florida. Our delegates are charged with and need time to prepare necessary resolutions on behalf of our Local for submission to the convention at large. I will also be advising all delegates of their obligations to the Local while at the convention. International officers are elected as part of the convention and I look forward to our Local, the Mother Local, being appropriately represented.

In closing, I need to thank the Political Action Committee for all the hard work and success of November's election. All of our members who did their part in voting should be congratulated as well. Whether you voted for him or not, it is my greatest hope that all Americans pray for and support our new President Barack Obama; that he will succeed in restoring our economy, our confidence, our hope for the future of our children, and our status as the greatest Nation on earth.

God bless your families, our Union and The United States of America.

Have a happy and healthy holiday season and I remain at your service.

Jim Claffey  
President,  
Local One, I.A.T.S.E.



## FROM THE DESK OF THE RECORDING-CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

“What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need is not violence or lawlessness, but love and wisdom and compassion towards one another and a feeling of justice towards those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or they be black.” Those words, Brothers and Sisters, were spoken by New York Senator Robert F. Kennedy to a crowd of mostly African-Americans at a rally in Indianapolis, Indiana while he was running for the Democratic Party nomination for office of President of the United States. The date was April 4, 1968. The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. had been assassinated earlier that day in Memphis, Tennessee and Senator Kennedy had the difficult task of informing those gathered the awful news of the death of their hero. Many cities throughout the United States became scenes of rioting, looting and anger. Indianapolis was not one of those cities. The eloquence and courage displayed that night by Senator Kennedy had a very powerful and inspiring effect upon those in attendance.

President-elect Barack Obama has certainly displayed eloquence and courage throughout his successful campaign to attain the highest office of our country. He most certainly inspires young and old alike in a Kennedy-esque fashion. To many people, Robert Kennedy was the last great hope to lead the United States out of the darkness, out of an unwanted and unpopular war, out of poverty and despair, out of the turmoil and uncertainty of the 1960's. Bobby Kennedy's death was the proverbial final nail in the coffin. The hope and the idealism of a generation were shattered.

President-elect Barack Obama was clearly recognized by the people of the United States as the leader of this generation to lead us out of an unwanted and unpopular war, out of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of 1929 and out of the frightening times of an oppressive administration. The people in my neighborhood celebrated well into the night when it was determined that Senator Obama became President-elect Obama. The people of the world celebrated when it was determined that Senator Obama became President-elect Obama. A sense of joy, happiness and relief was felt throughout the Local One Union Hall the following days. The dedication and hard work done by the Brothers and Sisters of the Local One Political Action Committee resulted in a victory in every race we endorsed.

The future, once again, looks very bright. A Democratically held White House, United States Senate, United States House of Representatives and New York State Senate certainly brings back hope for all Union families. The work we need to focus on now is the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, universal health care for all, the proper regulation of the financial institutions that have been allowed to run wild, affordable housing, and educational opportunities for our children. The list is long and difficult but achievable. Your Union needs your support on the issues affecting all our lives.

Senator Robert Kennedy left the stunned and grief-stricken crowd in Indianapolis forty years ago with the words of the Greek playwright Aeschylus. He quoted by heart, “In our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.”

President-elect Barack Obama left the jubilant crowd in Chicago to the booming recording of Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band playing “The Rising.” The singer boldly declaring, “Come on up, lay your hands in mine.” Can anyone doubt we are not in for better times? Play it LOUD!

I send you my very best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous holiday season! May God bless you all!

Peace,

Robert C. Score  
Recording-Corresponding Secretary

# TREASURER'S UPDATE

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As the holiday season comes upon us, it reminds me of how quickly another year has gone by. Where does the time go.... the strike, the Department of Labor audit. In February, it will be two years since Donald has passed.

On a more positive note, income is up for the year. We have had eleven consecutive months of General Fund account balance in the black. Despite the current market conditions, Broadway remains strong and new productions such as *Shrek* and *Billy Elliott* will keep many members busy for years to come.

THE EIGHT MONTH LONG DOL AUDIT IS FINALLY OVER! We have received the letter of completion from the Department of Labor auditor and we passed with flying colors!

Many retirees have called concerned about our Pension Fund. The current bad market conditions have affected the entire nation. We have all read the newspapers and seen the news. Rest assured that we are monitoring the funds daily. Although down somewhat, the Fund has weathered the storm and, due to its diversification, done much better than most. Our investment strategy is based upon long term goals and our actuarial numbers are good. Down years like this one are built into the overall projections. I will continue to keep you informed.

As of January 1st, the Treasurer's office will be accepting Visa, MasterCard, Discover credit and Debit card payments. You will now be able to pay in person or by phone. If you wish, an E-mail receipt will be sent to you as well. In addition, you will be able to purchase Local One merchandise i.e. t-shirts, hats, golf shirts, pins, key chains and bumper stickers. If you have any questions, call the Treasurer's office.

Finally, as Co-chair of the Political Action Committee along with President Claffey, I would like to thank the entire committee for a job well done. From the bus trip to Pennsylvania, phone calls, e-mail blasts and robo-calls, Local One did its part. Each one of our endorsed candidates won their respective races except one race currently too close to call and being recounted. November 4th, 2008 was a great day for Labor and Local One. We look forward to the new administration and the next four years of CHANGE.

I hope to see you all at the Local One Christmas party. I wish you and your families a Happy and Healthy holiday season!!!

Fraternally,

Robert "Toby" McDonough  
Treasurer

*SHREK*, from page 1

22 and 1/2 tons. The Broadway Theater basement floor had to be leveled using Paralam joists and then topped with three layers of plywood. The unit has three turntables with an elevator in the center, with five additional elevators in the other turntables. House Carpenter Charles Rasmussen, the oldest active and 58-year Local One member, told us that there were no problems of any kind. House Electrician George Milne tells us that the turntable is “nothing like I’ve ever seen before.”

The Broadway Theater easily accommodated all the needs of this bigger-than-life-sized production. Three specialized sound-proof chambers for digital musical instrumentation were constructed. Two more dressing rooms are filled with video equipment for the magic mirror effect.

Not only will there be a 24-foot dragon operated by John Tartaglia, the Tony-nominated actor-puppeteer from *Avenue Q*, there will also be live interaction between the talking mirror and the audience member during the intermission. Mr. Tartaglia will be seated in the refitted fifth-floor dressing room as twelve VICON specialized digital cameras receive reflections off of the 30 pin-point markers placed on his face. Two ULTRANET computers synchronize the camera data and two towers use MOTION BUILDER software which “solves the data” and also renders the magic mirror character. Using a joy stick, which controls a camera mounted on the front-of-house truss, Mr. Tartaglia will be able to zoom in on a specific audience and be able to interact in real time. The magic mirror animation will be projected on the LED video wall.

Local One member Roy Franks, the Special Effects Operator, tells us that there are four LSG fog machines and seven Vipers using a total of ten gallons of fog fluid per week! There are eighteen Dewars LN2 tanks, forty 20-pound high-pressure CO2 tanks, eight 50-pound high-pressure CO2 tanks and two regular pressure CO2 tanks used per week.

Three different programmers (for video, moving lights, and FX) use five GrandMA light

boards which have fourteen different universes. There are also four Hippo Video Media Servers with 8 layer media per Hippo. The network based GrandMA is perfect for this complex installation. Every GrandMA set up can access all the other light boards in the house. If something is needed ASAP, one simply uses the closest GrandMA. Nice feature. On the balcony rail are three projectors, which, during tech, custom-make imagery to project onto the set creating a three-dimensional look.

In case we still haven’t impressed you with how BIG *Shrek* is, let us mention the 155 moving lights, mucho conventional units and approximately 50,000 LEDs. There are four (96) dimmer racks, one (48) dimmer rack, and four Series 400 distribution racks with enough cable to go to the moon.

Not to be out-done by the other departments, sound has over 90 speakers in the front of house. Twenty additional speakers are on the deck: 8 stationary and 12 in the turntables. The amps for the mobile speakers ride in the turntable and are wireless. There are about 30 wireless microphones. Local One members Phil Lojo and Bob Beimers have it all worked out.

Alan Grudzinski is the flyman/automation carpenter who went to Seattle with the production. His eight racks of automation control the majority of the flying scenery. One piece, the Cathedral Window, weighing in at over 8,000 pounds, was a real challenge. Tommy Cole, the House Flyman tells us that the insurance company required a beam to be installed across the entire grid – widthwise – to help distribute the weight.

A smooth move into New York was insured by having a number of Local One members go to Seattle as part of the production team including: Andrew Dean, Paul DaVila, Alan Grudzinski, Mike Martinez, Randy Zaibek, Jerry Marshall and Jimmy Fedigan. The show pulled together well over many weeks and long days for the crew generating much buzz around Seattle and New York. It is currently in previews and will open just before Christmas.

*Accompanying pictures are on page 11.*

THEATRICAL  
PROTECTIVE UNION  
LOCAL No. ONE,  
IATSE, AFL-CIO, CLC



**SPOTLITE**

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APPRECIATED**

Upcoming Monthly Membership  
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December 21

Jan. 18, Feb. 15, Mar. 22

**COME TO YOUR  
UNION MEETINGS!  
IT'S INFORMATIVE AND  
PART OF YOUR DUTY AS  
A MEMBER.**

Organized in 1886, Local Number One has served the entertainment community in theatre, television, and other entertainment venues proudly and professionally. With over three thousand members covering an expanding jurisdiction throughout the greater New York metropolitan area, our experience and knowledge covers the range of expertise required for any application. From fabrication to installation to safe operation, we can do it.

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT JAMES J. CLAFFEY, JR.; VICE PRESIDENT WILLIE WALTERS; TREASURER ROBERT (TOBY) McDONOUGH; RECORDING-CORRESPONDING SECRETARY ROBERT C. SCORE; CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES JOHN M. DIAZ, SR.; THEATRICAL BUSINESS MANAGERS MICHAEL WEKSELBLATT AND KEVIN MCGARTY; TELEVISION BUSINESS MANAGERS ROBERT NIMMO AND EDWARD McMAHON, III; TRUSTEES WILLIAM NGAI AND DANIEL DASHMAN; REPLACEMENT ROOM OFFICER DANIEL THORN; ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY EDMOND SUPPLE, SR.; AND FINANCIAL SECRETARY ANTHONY MANNO

*To our Local One  
members, families  
and friends,*

*We wish  
Happy Holidays  
to all and may  
your New Year  
be a safe and  
prosperous one*

## **LOCAL ONE HONORS FUND TRUSTEE EMERITUS IRVING CHESKIN AFTER MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE WITH A LOCAL ONE GOLD CARD**



Left to right: Fund Manager Scott Cool, Treasurer Toby McDonough, Irving Cheskin, President James J. Claffey, Jr., Mrs. Cheskin, Recording Corresponding Secretary Bob Score

## **FATHER RICHARD BAKER OF ST. MALACHY'S, THE ACTORS CHAPEL, RECEIVES HONORARY LOCAL ONE MEMBERSHIP**



## TUBE TALK

### Local One Nominated For Award

By Bob Nimmo

While on assignment at The Lighting Design Institute trade show in Las Vegas, where Local One has a booth to inform potential employers of the services we offer, I along with other Local One members attended the Entertainment Services and Technology Association's (ESTA) awards dinner. At the dinner the ESTA "Rock Our World" awards were presented.

The ESTA "Rock Our World Awards" recognize groundbreaking achievement by ESTA Members' new products, product applications or projects. The awards are to acknowledge the genius of both the technology creator and the designer or integrator who applies the technology in a real world environment.

From the more than forty applicants for the awards a panel of industry leaders reduced the field to nine finalists. The production of Bernd Alois Zimmermann's opera *Die Soldaten*, staged by Local One in the Park Avenue Armory this summer was one of the nominated finalists. The opera was described as an intimate and immersive total theatre experience in part by having the audience travel on moveable bleachers during the show paralleling the length of the narrow 220 foot stage. It took over a month to load in the show. The rigging equipment included over 150 chain hoists and approximately 3,000 feet of truss.

In addition to Local One, other project vendors who participated were also nominated including: Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Production Resource Group, Mountain Productions, Rose Brand Company, Barbizon Electric, Alcone Company, J&M Special Effects, Steeldeck and Sapis Rigging.

Although the nominated *Die Soldaten* project did not receive an award, special recognition was given to Local One from the podium that evening. It was indeed a proud, proud evening for Local One to be recognized and singled out at an event attended by approximately 600 industry leaders

Congratulations to all our Brothers and Sisters.

## TRAINING OURSELVES

By Brother Pip Biancamano

I recently had the privilege of attending the LDI convention in Las Vegas. I was there to represent the Union at the Local One booth as a working technician and explain to people who we are and what we offer. In addition I was there to walk the exhibits floor and identify systems and equipment that were important for Local One members to train on to increase our employability and maintain jurisdiction.

I have always found training on equipment a very difficult thing to administer. I will try to illustrate what I mean:

How do we make the best choice about who should be trained? Do we train those already with jobs? Do we train those totally unfamiliar with certain equipment in the hope this will increase their chances for employment? Personal experience has shown me if you train on a system and then don't immediately go about using what's been learned, the knowledge is quickly lost.

Which systems are the rising stars in our work and which are things of yesterday? Equipment manufacturers want us trained on their gear because they feel, I think wrongly, that if crews know how to implement their product, designers will be more apt to spec it. My feeling is gear manufacturers need to sell to designers and rental houses long before they sell to us.

How to stay up to date on what is being sold versus what is specified by designers? For this one you almost need a crystal ball. I believe the way to really anticipate trends is to open dialogues amongst designers, manufacturers and technicians—much like what happens at LDI.

I was an apprentice and was fortunate enough to have found myself during that part of my life under the tutelage of one Eugene T. Rowland, the Head of the NBC Electric Shop. I was by no means the beacon of what an apprentice should be. I studied basic electricity and electronics in high school; again I was not particularly a great student. I do a fair amount of reading on my



own and have some hobbies that are related to work. I know anything you want to know is in a book somewhere and I have over time developed some decent study skills. None of this is anything anybody is born with or something other than exposure to available information. So all I have, really, is a good foundation and a passion for the trade.

So how do I think this applies to bringing all of us to a place where we can be more intuitive in the work place and help with equipment specific training? I think it is more about a cultural change than anything else. I think we, as a Union, need to look at what happens with the new person coming in the door. What do we as a union need to do when it comes to starting that new person's professional foundation? I'm thinking about an education that enables us to excel at learning the implementation of new products and technologies targeted at our industry; education that will enable the Local One member to take a manual for a piece of equipment and instruct themselves on how to make it work now or at least really soon. None of this is rocket science—otherwise all of these companies would be out of business.

My experience has taught me that no matter how a new member comes into the union (whether it be earnings list, organization or apprentice program) we should have in place a more industry specific educational program. One that is specific to us and who and what we are as a Union. We need a starting place we can all begin from as we embark on our career as Local One stagehands; an educational program that covers the basic foundations of the types of equipment we are expected to know how to operate. Training on a specific piece of equipment can then follow, being built off the foundation that the individual has acquired. Equipment and technology becomes obsolete at a very fast pace in the entertainment industry. Of course this education must deal with not only being productive but also being safe in the work place.

This situation doesn't only apply to new members. What about a carpenter who gets on an electric or sound call or the electrician who has the opportunity to work a carpentry or props call? Anyone of these departments might have to deal with rigging, electric or

other equipment issues. All of us should have a foundation in the basics of all other departments.

I feel this across the board education should begin at the start of a person's entry into Local One, not along the way. I believe this kind of foundation will make all of us more intuitive, productive, and safer; and lead to better employment and jurisdictional opportunities. Yes, some of us will be better at some things than others. But isn't that what being on a team is all about, assisting and supporting each other? This direction in the long run makes us better at our jobs and gives us the ability to earn more.

Other unions actually have certificate and associate programs their members must complete in order to be considered for membership. I don't know if we need anything so extensive but in this case I think more is better.

Education and training can only raise the already exceptional quality we offer our employers and make us that much better. I also believe that having better trained and educated Local One members will have the added benefit of making us stronger at the bargaining table.

*Brother Pip, a member for over 15 years, is presently employed and serves as a Shop Steward at NBC-Universal.*

#### OUR CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD



December 2008: looking South at the southeast corner of 46th St. and Eighth Ave.

## EDUCATING OURSELVES (and each other)

By Brother Chris Higgins

I think of myself as an unusual member of Local One. I had the privilege to become a member at age 43 after six years in regional theaters, nine years teaching at college level, and five years working as a journeyman carpenter. After I got my card, I returned to teaching at NYC College of Technology in Brooklyn, which led me to join the Local One Education Committee.

My experience teaching as well as my time spent in the shops gave me a unique perspective on the issue of training our membership. I feel strongly that students can actually teach themselves and each other if I give them the opportunity to try out new equipment and techniques in practical situations. This is also true of union members. We have all been shown or told how to do a job better by a co-worker with greater experience. These people may not consider themselves teachers—no advanced degrees were required, no tests or grades were given—but they taught us just the same. Sometimes it was just a simple trick or technique to make a job more accurate, or quicker, or less effort. Sometimes it was a way of thinking about work that made a tough job seem a little easier or got us through a difficult day.

Now our membership faces the challenge of learning to use computer technology that has rapidly entered our workplaces. It can be very intimidating to those of us who learned our craft in the years before desktop computers became such a big part of our environment. Even during my time in graduate school in the late eighties, computer automated drafting was still pretty rare in our industry. Most working drawings and all design drafting was done by hand. I have to admit that my CAD skills are often below those of my much younger students. Yet I see these students make mistakes in their drafting that show they lack knowledge of construction methods and spatial relationships that we take for granted on the shop floor. In other words, they have mastered the software, but aren't using drafting to solve problems or to provide the right information to the shop floor.

This split between mastering the programs used to design and control live performances and the experience needed to use those programs to make a show better is at the heart of the challenge we face as a union. Most of our brothers and sisters have worked on many types of shows and that experience enables them to adapt to new challenges. But now there is an increasing demand for people who have the training to program moving lights or scenery automation consoles or set up video systems. Loading in a show often means setting up a computer network along with installing scenery and equipment. Computer based equipment represent a substantial percentage of the overall budget of a show, so naturally the producers want to know that qualified people are installing, programming and troubleshooting these systems. Unfortunately, there is no line in the budget for training operators and especially no time in the schedule to learn on the job.

So where does this leave us? So far we have been able to protect our jurisdiction, but if we can't supply qualified operators from within our ranks, employers have the right to hire whoever they can find to fill those positions. We have take steps to ensure that we can keep pace with the challenges in the industry or watch our members get left behind. This is the task the Education Committee has been charged with. Our approach so far has been to gather information about where we stand as a group. What training do our members have already? Which members have what training in which technologies? What kinds of training or certification are employers looking for? Once we have a clearer picture of our strengths and weaknesses, we can better address the problem. To this end we have written a survey form that allows members to list the training they have, so a realistic list of qualified members can be generated. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

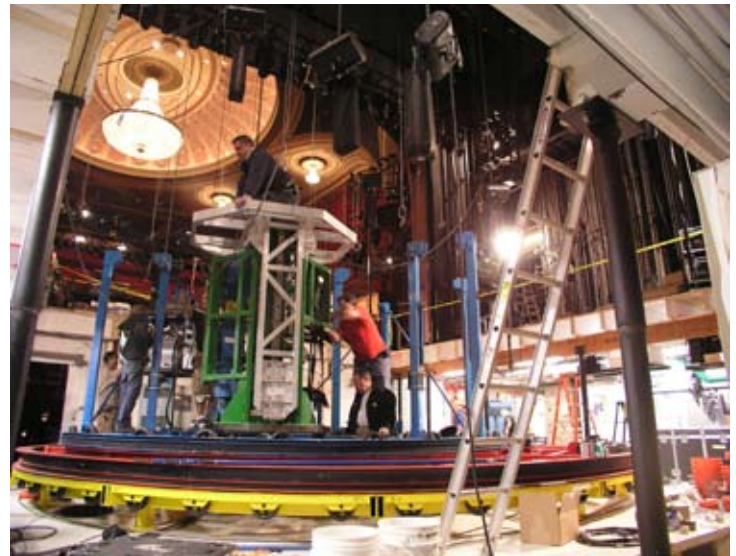
The next step is to ensure that our members have access to training. This has been a standing policy with the Local for several years. If a member is interested in a relevant class that will enhance their skills they should contact the Board of Trustees Chairman to seek Executive Board approval. Upon approval, the member then pays for the class and upon completion, he or she submits the bill and attendance certificate to the local for reimbursement of tuition costs. Many mem-

bers have taken moving light classes, Auto CAD or other courses at colleges and training seminars and taken those skills back to their jobs. The Education Committee has proposed a way of streamlining this process by creating a list of courses and training that is “pre-approved” by the Executive Board rather than having to vote on a case-by-case basis. In other words, a member will know that the board has approved reimbursement for a “menu” of courses before spending time and money on them.

Finally, we come to the costs of training. Our local has a limited budget for these programs, which are expensive due to the cost of the equipment, the space required to set up workstations for a full class and the fees for qualified instructors. Our members give up a day’s pay, the cost of gas and parking, etc. in order to attend classes. It is often difficult or impossible for members to plan their work schedule to accommodate a class schedule. But we see members who have made sacrifices and benefited from their efforts to keep on top of new technology. As a group we should support the efforts of these individuals and as trained individuals we should give back to the Local by sharing our knowledge with our brothers and sisters. We need to take responsibility for educating ourselves, and each other, if we are going to stay competitive in our increasingly high-tech stage craft.

**SHREK PRODUCTION PHOTOS**

taken by Mike Terpstra © (with thanks to George Milne)



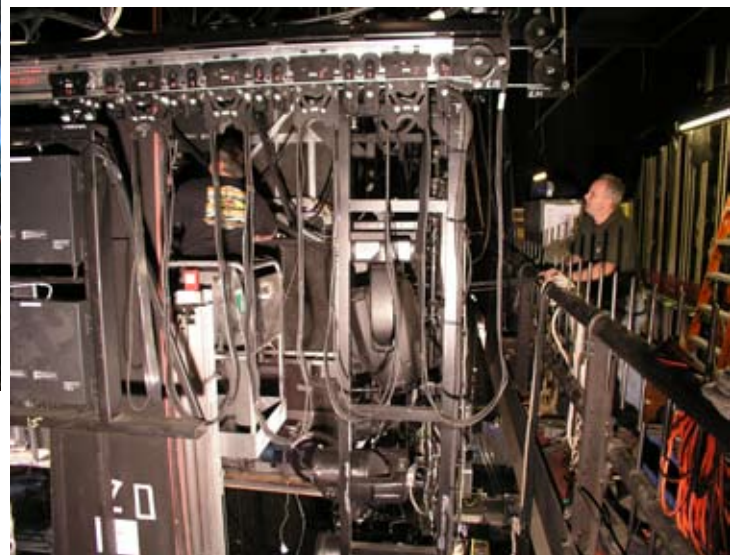
Assembling the elevators within the turntable



Master Carpenter Charles Rasmussen



Above: Action downstage right at the Broadway  
Right: Flyman Tom Cole critically observing the installation hanging over the stage



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