

IATSE 8

Stagehand

Inside this Edition:

The Benefit of Benefits

"Local 8 Benefits, Protecting Every Stagehand at Every Stage of Life"

Stagehands
for
Benefits

Stagehands
for
Annuities

Stagehands
for
Pensions

Stagehand
for
Health Care

Fall 2019

Volume 1 | Issue 2

iatse8.com

CONTACT INFORMATION

Officers:

President – Michael Barnes

Secretary Treasurer – Christopher O’Shea

Vice President – Matthew McIntyre

Recording Secretary:

Joseph Baliski

Business Agents:

Tricia Barnes-Vargo

Dan Little

Reed Brooks

Phil Effinger

Office Administrator:

Kiera Barnes

Executive Board:

Dennis Moore Jr.

Drew Nolan

Fred Maples

John Damiani

Sean Ryder

Kevin Beebe

Committee Chairs:

Communication Department:

Dan Amadie

Dennis Moore Jr.

Kiera Barnes

Justin Wyatt

Steve Solipaca

Contact:

webmaster@iatse8.com

Benefits Committee:

Matthew McIntyre

David Michael Kenney

Community Outreach Committee:

Paul Myers

Contact:

plasticelvisbus@gmail.com

Diversity Committee:

Karim Boyd

Contact: 4kboyd@gmail.com

Education Committee:

Joseph Baliski

Dan Amadie

John Duncan Jr.

Dan Imburgia

Dennis Moore Jr.

Colin Peters

Reed Brooks

Paul Hewitt

Dan Little

Contact: jbaliski@iatse8.com

Member Outreach Committee:

John Petrick Sr.

Contact: stghnd8@aol.com

Organizing Committee:

Mark Grasso

Political Action Committee:

Matt McIntyre

Tricia Barnes-Vargo

Contact: unionmatty@aol.com

Regional Theatre:

Dan Little

Contact:

daniellittle@gmail.com

Safety Committee:

Jonathan Manuella

Steward Committee:

Michael Barnes

Women’s Committee:

Laura Wentz

Young Workers:

Dan Little

Justin Wyatt

Kyle Hanahan

OFFICE INFORMATION

Office Phone – (215)-952-2106

Office Email

iatse8office@gmail.com

Magazine Editor

iatse8quarterly@gmail.com

Applications & Resumes

applications4local8@gmail.com

WE’RE ONLINE

Local 8 Website: iatse8.com

Call Steward:

iatse8.callsteward.com

**IATSE National Benefits Fund
(Health Insurance, Pension, and
Wells Fargo Retirement Annuity):**

www.iatsenbf.org

**Hospital and Medical
coverage for C-2, C-3 and C-4:**

www.empireblue.com

**Dental coverage for C-2 and C-3
only:** deltadentalins.com/iatse

Vision coverage for C-2 only:

www.davisvision.com

**Local 8 Benefits Fund
Administered by O’Neill
Consulting:** 215-657-7400

Prudential Retirement Annuity:
www.prudential.com/login

**UNUM Long Term Disability
Insurance:** www.unum.com

Vacation Fund: Carmela Varon
215-657-7400 x1118

Twitter:

twitter.com/iatselocal8

Instagram:

www.instagram.com/iatselocal8/

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/IATSELocal8/

YouTube:

[www.youtube.com/channel/
UCyTIRkMntULcl9p3o3Ggtg](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyTIRkMntULcl9p3o3Ggtg)



IATSE 8 Stagehand

Fall 2019 | Volume 1 | Issue 2

4

Letter from the President

"Work, Contracts, Benefits, Training, Committees, and Policies are all pieces of our success in Local 8."

5

Message from the Secretary-Treasurer

"Your hard work and dedication has made Local 8 stronger than any time in our history, and we are just getting started!"

6

The Benefit of Benefits

"By the end of this year Local 8 will have one of the top worker benefit plans in the country, but it wasn't always this way."

9

Benefits Breakdown with VP Matt McIntyre

"I am pleased to announce that the benefit trustees are working on rolling out even more benefits which are scheduled to go into effect on, or before January 1, 2020."

12

Interview with DMK

"Credit must be given to our leadership, back in the day, who made hard fought decisions to create our own Local 8 benefits program."

14

Member Spotlight

"A look into the career of a self-described 'Theatre Geek' and lifelong Stagehand."

18

Editor on the Go

"Hamilton may have been an unlikely success story, but the success from the Local 8 Stagebands manning The Forrest Theatre comes as no surprise."

22

Dem. Presidential Summit

"This election we want our voices heard. Union strength is what they need, and the time for the Union labor movement is now."

26

Local 8 Updates

"Check out the happenings in Local 8."



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
With the Ten-Year Agreement in place at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, we are focusing on other growth areas both internal and external for Local 8. Starting with contracts. Our Convention Center contract is in place for ten years. We recently ratified our Wells Fargo, Forrest, and Mann Music Center contracts for five-year deals. We are in negotiations for The Academy of Music, Merriam, Kimmel, Walnut, Orchestra, Opera, and Tri State Staging. These contracts represent over 75% of gross earnings of the members.

Contracts are only good if those agreements provide work opportunities for the members. Local 8's shift count continues to improve year after year. 2019 is 12% over 2018, and is on track to be the Local's busiest year. This trend continues to be in a positive direction driven by the Convention Center, Hotel AV jobs, and increased theater shows, and concerts.

The Office continues to work with the software developer to roll out the Call Steward 3 version to best suit our member's needs. The input from the members continues to be helpful as we attempt to develop a program that provides transparency, and information, while protecting member's privacy concerns. The extra time we are taking to roll out CS3 will hopefully pay off in answering our member's needs, and providing the information being requested.

The Local's training and activism schedule is filled with opportunities for our members. The Education Committee continues to best schedule classes around our work to maximize membership participation. This is becoming more important as safety and certifications are now a major focus of our union and our Employers. The Phillies Game, Labor Day Parade, Golf Outing, Fishing Trip, and Presidential Summit all occurred this quarter. These events were in addition to the Holiday Party, Coat/Food Drives, Breakfast with Benefits, Spring Clean Up, Corn Hole Tournament, and GOTV events scheduled throughout the year. Local 8 secured a double decker bus to present BIG at this year's Labor Day Parade. We were the big winners this year at the Met, The Convention Center, and at PSAV. This parade provided our members an opportunity to be LOUD and PROUD.

The Local's Political Action, Training, Communication, and Young Worker's Committees have been very active. We are reorganizing the Women's Committee, Communication Committee, LGBTQPlus Committee, Organizing Committee, and Diversity Committee. Members are encouraged to participate on all committees.

Work, contracts, benefits, training, committees, and policies are all important parts to keep our Local relevant to our members. This is a lot of work and needs a lot of attention. Together, we will take on these challenges and continue the work to finish the job.

Sincerely,
Michael Barnes
President/Business Manager, IATSE Local 8



*"Work, Contracts,
Benefits, Training,
Committees,
and Policies are
all pieces of our
success in Local 8."*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Barnes". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Continue the Success...

Over the past three years Local 8 has made great strides, by working side by side with President Barnes and the Current Officers, *"Our Membership has a Voice"*.

Referrals: Local 8 has reached record levels consecutively since 2017, while restoring the trust in our seniority.

Financially: Local 8 has reduced expenses to our Members, while increasing our General Savings fund by 200%.

Transparency: Local 8 Members are presented detailed information at each General Meeting, as well as helpful information on our website. iatse8.com.

Representation: Local 8 has increased Officers and staff to assist and train our growing Memberships.

Our Membership has an *extensive benefits package* including affordable healthcare options, annuity, pension, vacation and disability, and we are adding more as explained further in our Benefits article.

Your hard work and dedication has made **Local 8** stronger than any time in our history, and we are just getting started! 2020 bookings look promising for another healthy year of employment. With every member's continued involvement and commitment to their craft our Locals future is Bright!

I would like to personally thank you for your continued support and wish you and your family a Safe and Happy upcoming Holiday Season.

In Solidarity,
Christopher O'Shea
Financial Secretary-Treasurer, IATSE Local 8



"Your hard work and dedication has made Local 8 stronger than any time in our history, and we are just getting started!"

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. O'Shea". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a large, faint watermark of the IATSE Local 8 logo.

The Benefit of Benefits

Written by: President Michael Barnes

Local 8's Health Care coverage is comprehensive and flexible. Our Retirement Plans are well funded and provide real retirement options. With the addition of the supplemental benefits being rolled out at the end of this year, Local 8 will have one of the top worker benefit plans in the country.

It wasn't always this way. The Local's annuity and vacation plan started the ball rolling in the 1980's. Twenty-two of our members were provided Blue Cross/Blue Shield Coverage by their Employers. The remainder of the membership was required to buy their own coverage with after tax dollars. With much fewer work opportunities, stagehands felt pressured to direct their money towards wages rather than benefits. With the choice of paying their bills or maintaining health coverage, many stagehands chose to pay their bills and had no medical coverage.

In 1993 the Trustees led by Miles Fischel and Paul Taylor along with President Bill Harrer, Secretary Treasurer Drew Nolan and myself, we initiated a plan to provide **Health Coverage to ALL Stagehands**. The plan included two very new, very controversial concepts. The first credited each stagehand with an individual amount out of a Health Care pool of money contributed on their behalf by the Employer. The second concept included a graduated menu allowing every stagehand to obtain some level of Health Benefits regardless of contribution. These concepts may sound familiar as they are the basis of the IATSENBFF Plans.

The fight to get these Health Care benefits in place was on two fronts. The Employers and the membership. Both fronts were dug in. Members with coverage from their House Jobs, their significant others, along with stagehands who did not want any of their wages or raises

used for Health Benefits, were numerous and loud. Many meetings included a lot of shouting and often came close to fist to cuffs. The Employers were no less friendly as they argued over increased cost and paperwork.

Local 8 caught a break with the newly elected First Lady Hillary Clinton whose priority was to get universal health care for the country. Employers, fearful they would be mandated by the government to provide coverage, agreed to Local 8's contract proposals which included an immediate 10% Health Contribution on all gross wages. The 10% Health Contribution was funded by rolling back hourly wages, redirecting vacation contributions to Health Care, and directing a percentage of the raises to Health. The ball got rolling very quickly and Local 8 rank and file members had a Health Care Plan in place by 1995. No one anticipated Health Care would increase so much over the last 25 years. We have been fortunate as we set the plan up to have benefits paid on all gross wages including overtime. The overtime contributions and the contributions paid on compounded wage increases has provided the best opportunity to keep up with the insane Health Care cost over the past quarter century.

Another major factor in our ability to maintain our plan was the decision to merge our Health Care into the IATSENBFF. This decision allowed our members working in other IATSE jurisdictions (Local 52 Movie and TV) to pool their money rather than have separate accounts. The national plan at the time also provided a significant subsidy and allowed excess funds to be banked indefinitely. The National Funds, like every Health Fund in the country, has been hit by significant increases. Good management of the plan has resulted in premiums remaining the same for the last five quarters. Going forward, Local 8 will address the increased Health Care cost by bargaining higher Employer contributions to the fund.

With our Health Care in place, the focus was shifted to establishing a meaningful retirement plan for the members. The decision was to build on the existing annuity plan. Local 8's Annuity Plan is managed by our third-party Administrator O'Neill Consultants. O'Neill's collects the money from the Employers and forwards it to Prudential Investments. Members are permitted to direct their investments through a variety of options. Locals 8's Annuity Fund has grown from just over *two million* (\$2,000,000.00) in *1993* to *fifty-five million* (\$55,000,000.00) *this past quarter*. The Fund is growing while paying out over millions a year in retirement benefits to our members.

Another major step in establishing the Benefit Package was the start of the Local 8 Pension Plan in 2001. Local 8 participates in the IATSE-NBF Plan C Pension. Details of how this plan works are laid out on the IATSE-NBF.org website. As with the Health Care Plan, the fight with the Employers and Members to put this plan in place was harsh. In addition to the Employer's cost and paperwork concerns, Employers are exposed to an unfunded liability risk when contributing to Pension Plans. In 2001, major corporations and industries were reporting underfunded and bankrupt Pension Plans. Employers throughout the country were converting Pension Plans to Annuity Plans. The IATSE was one of the few organizations that was able to start up a Pension Plan with Employers during this difficult time. The battle with the Employers was won through strength and leverage at

the bargaining table.

The battle with the members was not nearly as easy. With increase Health and Welfare contributions needed, well-funded Annuities in place, and a five-year contribution minimum to qualify for a Pension, many of our members fought against a Pension Plan. Some members felt a Pension would not be meaningful for many of the senior members. Many of our younger members were not focused that far in the future. It was a small group with the foresight to put this plan in place that has changed the lives of every current and future member of IATSE Local 8. Our targeted 8% pension contribution is in place with all our major Employers. This level of contribution provides an estimated \$120 per month credit for every \$50,000 in wages, \$180 a month for \$75,000 and \$240 for \$100,000. There is a 25-year cap on the years of credits a person can collect with NO cap on the amount of the monthly credit.

We have estimated, a stagehand who averaged \$75,000 wages a year for 25 years would be eligible for an approximate \$54,000 pension, a \$28,000 Social Security and have over \$400,000 in their annuity. These are conservative estimates as many stagehands will have larger annuities at retirement.

With our health care and pension in place and funded, and our annuities growing at a rapid pace, Local 8 is introducing a cache of new benefits to answer our members concerns.

December 2019 is our targeted date to rollout the following new benefits:

1. Long Term Disability. This is the same LTD plan currently in place through UNUM. The LTD kicks in after 90 days. The difference this year is the benefit will be paid through the vacation fund by the Employers, and the \$380 dollar cost WILL NOT be deducted from your vacation check. This benefit provides 60 percent of your previous year Local 8 income up to \$5,000 a month.
2. Short Term Disability. This plan, also provided by UNUM will pro-

(continued on next page)



(continued from previous page)

vide coverage after 14 days up to 90 days. Having UNUM provide both plans will result in easy transition from Short Term to Long Term Disability if needed by the participant. This benefit provides 60 percent of your previous year Local 8 income up to \$4,000 a month.

3. Maternity is covered under the same terms as the Short-Term Disability.
4. Mental Health, Substance Abuse Assistance, and Benefit Assistance will be handled by our new Ritework Program. The Ritework Program will provide participants an individual health care advocate. Participants will be able to communicate with their advocate through the Ritework App. Similar to our Call Steward App. During introduction, the Local will be scheduling significant training to participants leading up to the roll out in December.
5. Details of each of the above plans are being written by the Fund Administrators and will be outlined in an updated Summary Plan Description. The SPD will be provided to everyone upon completion.

Local 8's benefits are only good if they are used by the participants. To increase usage, Local 8 along with the IATSEBFBF provide many ways to get the information to you.

1. IATSEBFBF.org Log In, Log On and track your Health and Welfare Cap Account and Pension Contributions. The IATSEBFBF website provides all the Plan Descriptions, costs, and other Fund Information you will need. Your IATSEBFBF Dashboard provides your personnel information for Health and Pension.
2. IATSEBFBF Newsletter and Quarterly Cap Statements. These are automatically sent to you. Read them, they have important information and follow up actions required to maintain your benefits.
3. IATSE Plan C Pension Statements. These statements are sent to individuals only by request. A request form is on the IATSEBFBF website.
4. Vacation and Annuity Statements are sent out yearly by O'Neill Consultants. Check your contributions against your pay stubs. Mistakes are often made by Employers. Our best auditors are our members.
5. Prudential Retirement App. Log in and Log On to track and make changes to your account. Pruden-

tial Annuity Statements are regularly sent to participants.

6. Breakfast with Benefits is hosted each year by Pond Le hockey in late Fall to allow participants, and their significant others to meet our benefit providers and ask questions in person.
7. Education and Training Seminars from Prudential for Annuity are in place. The KNOW YOUR NUMBER Seminar is put on by your Local to educate you on coordinating your Pension, Annuity, and Social Security benefits. Social Security Disability Seminars are given by Pond Le hockey to assist our injured and disabled members. New seminars from Ritework will be added starting October to provide training to assist with Health Care issues and billing.
8. Local 8 also provides member to member assistance through Vice President Matt McIntyre, and David Michael Kenney. This assistance includes helping members with any and all health and retirement questions.
9. New member and orientation classes are regularly scheduled through the Local 8 Education Committee to provide benefit information.
10. Officer Assistance provided through the Full and Part Time Local 8 Office Staff is always available to provide information and assistance to members and participants.

Union's benefit their members in many ways. Contract negotiations, safety, unjust terminations, and meaningful benefits. Each of these areas are important, and require a lot of work from a lot of people to provide our members with the best possible representation. I am proud to say as a result of the members and officers of Local 8, and the IATSE International both past and present, we can say loud and proud that we take care of our own. From cradle to grave, the benefits we have in place along with the education and training to use those benefits, make our benefit plans meaningful to our members.

It is the responsibility of the Officers and members to maintain and improve the benefits to the next generation of stagehands. As always, thank you for supporting the union's plans, be healthy, and hopefully in the future enjoy your well-funded retirement from the IATSE.

Fellow Sisters & Brothers,
As one of two of your “*Benefits Assistance Coordinators*” along with DMK, we are here to assist you the member/participant with any of your benefits needs, concerns, or questions. Remember, the only dumb question is the one not asked. These benefits have been negotiated on your behalf per each and every collective bargaining agreement (contracts).

Here is a breakdown of your benefits:

O’Neill Consultants is our third party administrator who manages the annuity fund, vacation fund, education fund, and disability insurance.

The “**Annuity Fund**” is administered by *O’Neill Consultants* in which Prudential Services makes the investments of such funds. This is a retirement fund which can be accessed at the age of 59.5 years old but there is also a “*Hardship Withdrawal*” provision in which the member/participant can access in the event of extreme circumstances, and at an added cost in the form of a 10% early withdrawal excise tax.

The “**Vacation Fund**” is administered by *O’Neill Consultants*. A vacation benefit is collected in addition to your paycheck each and every week and given back to the member/participant on or about December 1st of each year in the form of a check.

The “**Education Fund**” is administered by *O’Neill Consultants*. An education benefit is collected in addition to your paycheck each and every week. With these funds, we are able to educate and train our members to provide them with the skills needed to succeed in our industry.

The “**Long Term Disability**” insurance is administered by *O’Neill Consultants* through the UNUM Group. This insurance is currently paid for by funds taken from your vacation check, this insurance takes effect after a 90 day absence from work, and this policy also includes a \$10,000 dollar life insurance policy.

The IATSE National Benefits Funds Office (NBF) manages our Pension Fund and Health and Welfare Fund.

The “**Pension Fund**” is administered by the *NBF*. This is your retirement account. A pension benefit is collected

from your paycheck each and every week and at the age of 65 years old, a monthly pension check will be disbursed to the participant for as long as he/she shall live. This pension also comes with a beneficiary provision in the event of an untimely passing of such participant.

The “**Health & Welfare Fund**” is administered by the *NBF*. This fund is referred to as your “*CAPP*” account. These funds are utilized to select the health plan that best suits your individual needs. They range from **C1**, **C2**, **C3** and **C4** coverage and there is also a medical reimbursement option/account for participants who have an excess of funds in their *CAPP* account to be used for out of pocket medical expense reimbursement. Please note that the health coverage plans also provide a life insurance policy.

Also, important dates to remember: **September 15th** (open enrollment), **December 15th** (open enrollment), March 15th and June 15th of each year, these dates are the deadlines to select and/or pay for health coverage for the following quarter. I suggest each member/participant go to www.iatsenbf.org to register an account so you can track your Pension, and Health and Welfare contributions in a timely fashion.

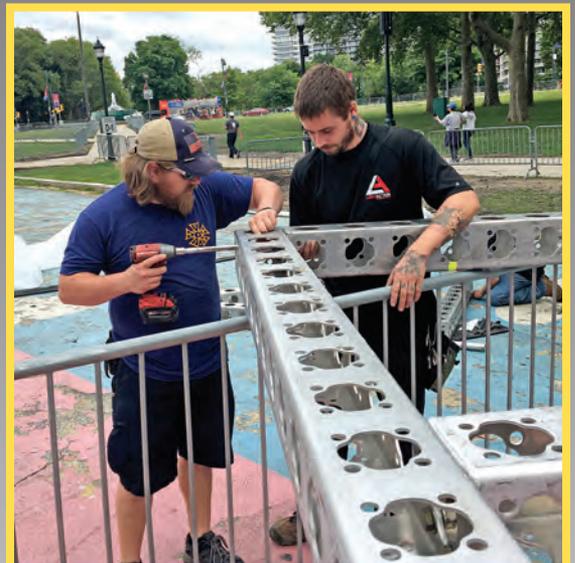
As far as your benefits are concerned, I am pleased to announce that the benefit trustees are working on rolling out even more benefits which are tentatively scheduled to go into effect on, or before January 1, 2020. These benefits include a short term disability provision, a maternity and paternity provision, and a Medicare supplement provision, stay tuned.

In closing, please know that DMK and I are here for you the member/participant for any and all of your benefits needs, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

Fraternally,
Matthew J. McIntyre
Vice President
Benefits Assistance Coordinator



LOCAL 8 MEMBERS





Interview with David Kenney;

Q

When did you first become involved with Local 8 benefits?

A

When I joined Local 8 back in the 90's, my company, DMK Productions, ran payroll services for IATSE, Teamsters and Actors Equity. I learned the ropes of making benefit contributions for Union Workers. I closed my company in 2008, and I moved to California for a few years. When I came back to Philadelphia, I jumped back in with Local 8 and was elected to our Board of Trustees in 2011.

Q

What made you want to get involved?

A

While I was living in California, I took the State Exam for my insurance license and started to learn the business. When I moved back to Philadelphia, I sat for the Pennsylvania State Exams for Life, Annuities, Health, and Accident Insurance. I got involved because I believe in our Local. I wanted to bring what I had learned to assist my Brothers and Sisters with understanding the Benefits of Being Union.

Q

How have you seen the benefits evolve over the years?

A

Credit must be given to our leadership, back in the day, who made hard fought decisions to create our own Local 8 benefits program. The "short gain plan" was to have an increase in the hourly rates with each new contract. It made for more money in members' wallets "now." A lot of members wanted that. But the leadership at the time pushed for the "long gain plan" of *not* having all of the money *now*, but instead

having a percentage of the increase contributed to benefits. Benefits that members would use later on.

If you enjoy getting your Vacation Check, OR, have had to file a claim for Long Term Disability due to illness or a non-work injury, OR, you have had to take a Hardship Withdrawal from your Annuity, OR you have retired and are drawing money from your Annuity, OR, if you had to file a death certificate for member's family to get the money from their Term Life Insurance policy... You have benefitted from the leadership who prevailed upon the members back then to choose the "long gain plan."

Separate from your Local 8 benefits are your Health Insurance and Pension with the International. www.iatsenbf.org

In both programs it is important to remember: Contributions by employers to your benefits are NOT deducted from your hourly rate. It is paid into your benefit accounts directly by the employer. That is the benefit of being UNION!

Q

Where did the idea of breakfast with benefits come from?

A

The law firm of Pond Lehocky sponsored a Health Fair event at our Union Hall. They paid to have healthcare professionals do screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, etc. They also had a catered breakfast. It was nice, but I saw that the idea was to raise awareness of their legal representation for Workers' Compensation and Social Security Disability insurance claims. Well, both of those are Benefits. So, my thought was to combine them with representatives of each of our other benefits in a table top trade show

Benefits Coordinator



setting, with a buffet breakfast. And that's how we got... BREAKFAST WITH BENEFITS.

Q How do you feel breakfast with benefits helps the members?

A Knowledge is power. Ignorance will cost you money. The forms, details, and regulations involved with benefits can be intimidating and difficult to understand. The voice on the 800 number you call doesn't always give you what you need when you have a problem. Members who come to BWB get real time with a real person from each of our benefit programs. **Get** a seat at a table with your paperwork and your questions. **Get** a problem solved. **Get** knowledge of what options there are for you and your family. **Get** a name and a number that you can reach out to later on for help. **Get** actual information from the source, not from what you heard on the job. **Get** your benefits and get breakfast too.

Q What kind of work goes into being a benefits coordinator?

A Matt McIntyre shares this job with me, and I am truly thankful for his teamwork. Together we have made key connections with people at our National Benefits Fund office, O'Neill Consulting, UNUM and Prudential, who work with us to assist our members and their families. Our members are busy. Matt and I understand that and so we assist with filling out forms, uploading documents, and explaining details by phone, text and emails. When a member's claim is denied or delayed, we act as their advocate to find out why. This investigative work can take hours

and days of emails and phone calls. We try to educate members so that

they can handle their benefits themselves. We also stay informed on changes to our benefits plans. But mostly, we listen with compassion and support because we are all in this together.

Q What would you like to see happen with benefits in the upcoming years?

A One of the first things I did when I was a Trustee was to push for our Long Term Disability Insurance to reduce the waiting period from 180 days to 90 days. Most of our members do not have enough money in the bank to pay for three months of living expenses should they not be able to work due to illness or a non-work injury. And so, I have always wanted our Local to find a way to secure **Short** Term Disability coverage for our members.

Q What are a few things members should do that can help themselves with benefits?

A First know that IATSE Local 8 is NOT your employer. We have multiple employers, so get organized by keeping all of your W-2's and pay stubs in one place. You will need them for Workers' Comp Claims and Disability Claims. Always update change of address and contact info with each of the following: The IATSE National Benefits Fund, O'Neill Consulting Corp., and our Local 8 office via Call Steward. You must notify each one separately. And finally, open and read your mail from IATSE when you get it!

Kimitha Cashin

Written by Dennis Moore Jr.

This edition's member Spotlight is featuring Kimitha Ann Cashin, the Prop Master at The Wilma Theater. Kimitha just celebrated her one-year anniversary of IATSE Local No. 8 membership this past July. Sister Cashin became a member as a result of the successful organizing effort conducted on behalf of our brothers and sisters at the Wilma Theater on The Avenue of the Arts (South Broad Street).

Sister Cashin, a self-described "Theater Geek", started her career backstage at the young age of four. She had an uncle who toured on the national tour of *Cats* as a stage manager. The ability to visit and experience the magic and workings of the backstage world we take for granted, sparked an interest which led to community theater acting, and provided a glimpse into the technical side of productions. This acting experience, and her inquisitive nature, led to her roaming around backstage asking why are things done this way? Why is that item here? Why is the stage laid out in this manner? Can I help with this or that?



Kimitha studied theater at West Chester University where she graduated with a BFA. During her time at WCU, Kimitha studied both technical theater and continued to act. In her senior year she starred as the role of *Helena* in the production of *A Mid Summers Night Dream*. Immediately prior to the production, The University had a new lighting grid installed. Kimitha's arms were the only crew members able to fit between the grid slats. This unique talent led to her arms being bruised for opening night. The bruises, while a badge of honor for a crew member, were not ideal for an actress. Consequently, tons of makeup was applied to hide the bruises for her role on stage.

After graduating from West Chester University, intern opportunities were had in both Florida and California. While the internships were researched to accommodate her desire to be in close proximity to a beach, she only had time to get to the beach twice between the two states. At the commencement of these internships, she returned to the Philadelphia area and began working at the Walnut Street Theater scene shop as an intern. This was prior to the shop being organized by the local. After being let go from the WST scene shop Kimitha moved on to the Philadelphia Theme Factory. This too was an internship. A call from the Wilma Theater to Philadelphia Theme Factory led to her being hired by the Wilma based on a recommendation



from her superiors at Philadelphia Theme Factory. Sister Cashin has been at the Wilma Theater for the last fifteen years. In addition, she has been the Props Master at both the Curtis Institute, and Philadelphia Theater Company.

She loves the variety of the productions staged at the Wilma Theater. The unique space which the Wilma is, provides the continual need to come up with new and adventurous ways to stage a show. Not to mention keeping the lift clear of the production for its actual intended use. She feels her personality lends itself to being an excellent props master. Her ability to see the big picture, while dealing with the small details required in the props world, fits her personality well. To hold this position for over fifteen years speaks to her dedication, artistry, and skill set.

Sister Cashin's tenure at the Wilma brought her in contact with IATSE Local No. 8 during the recent organizing drive. Sister Cashin admittedly was hesitant, and leaned towards not being in favor of the organizing effort. Her reasons were due to some unknowns, and perhaps some fear that the organizing effort would hurt the operation of the theater in the future. These fears were based on misinformation, and some residual effects that took place at Philadelphia Theater Company during that unit's organizing campaign.

Sister Cashin reached out to the local asking that the props department be included in the unit even though she had some hesitations. This decision proved to be a huge benefit to her career and work opportunities. Once the campaign was completed, for the first time in her career she received benefit contributions, and no longer had to work as a 1099 designated contractor.

In her words, joining the union opened a billion doors and work opportunities. Kimitha has taken full advantage of the opportunities provided including working as a buyer on numerous IATSE Local No. 52 projects in our region, Local 501 in Lititz, PA, and of course the various venues in our local's jurisdiction.

When asked about her accomplishments, the 2011 production, "In the Next Room, or the Vibrator Play" by Sarah Ruhl was the one she mentioned. A period piece which she had to recreate late 1800 Victorian style lamps and fixtures, along with other unmentionable personal items. To be able to recreate these items tested her skill set and the finished product was tremendous. Sister Cashin beamed

with enthusiasm during the description of the lamp fixtures, and recreating the thousand dollar plus fixtures for under two hundred and fifty dollars, and well within her budget. On top of the financial savings, they looked phenomenal.

Kimitha takes great pride in her skillset, work ethic, and the ability to use the tools of the craft learned through her career. An additional joy is hearing her co-workers telling others, more specifically road crew members, to relax and be at ease because, "she's got this". The in the field or in the trenches compliment from a coworker reaffirms her belief that her decision to be a part of our local was the correct one.

Sister Cashin would like to urge our brothers and sisters to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the union, to be involved. Take classes, seminars, attend



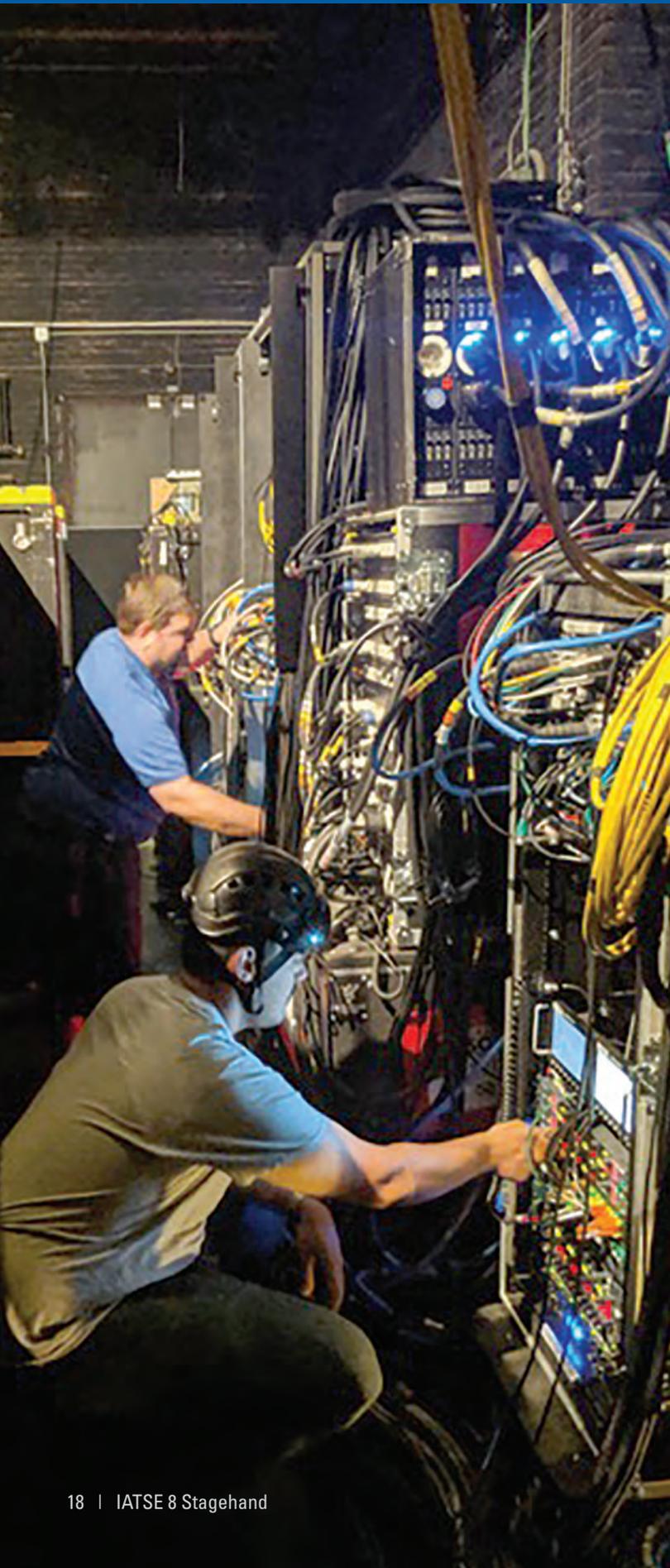
"Joining the union opened a billion doors and work opportunities."

meetings and events whenever possible. Take pride in your craft. She stated she truly believes you get out of things what you put into them. The local is no different. Putting in time and effort to partake in the above mentioned training makes everyone better, and provides a stronger base for our local, along with giving the local a better position to bargain from.

The local has gained skilled members and added to our foundation with the addition of Sister Cashin and the rest of the Wilma Theater crew. Our local is in a better place due to members like Sister Cashin, and her decision to ask to be included in our family.

Please congratulate Sister Cashin on her recent one-year anniversary the next time you see her, and more importantly for being part of what I feel is the best local in the IATSE.





Hamilton

Written by: Kiera Barnes

When people think of the theatre usually the first thing that comes to mind is New York City and Broadway. But Philadelphia has deep historical theatrical ties.

Philadelphia is home to America's oldest theatre, The Walnut Street Theatre. The Walnut was founded in 1809 and a National Historic Landmark. It is also the most subscribed theatre company in the world with 50,000 season ticket holders according to Philly Voice. From the 1700's into the 1830's, Philadelphia was the center of theatre in America due to being the Nation's capital and President George Washington's love for shows. A few that opened in the 1800's were Chestnut Street Theatre, The Walnut Street Theatre, and The Arch Street Theatre. Walnut Street being the only one left operating.

Another historical theatre in Philadelphia is The Forrest. It was built in 1927 to compete with a rival playhouse located at Market and 21st Streets. The Shubert's were behind this "road house", used primarily by touring theatre and dance companies. The Shubert Organization is a theatrical producing organization and major owner of theatres. The organization was founded by three brothers, Sam S. Shubert, Lee Shubert, and Jacob J. Shubert of Syracuse, New York. Although all three brothers are now deceased, under new ownership the Shubert Organization still owns and operates the Forrest. They named the Forrest theatre after Edwin Forrest, the great Philadelphia born tragic actor of the nineteenth century. This theatre's architect is described as the most elaborate design, and was created by architect Herbert J. Krapp. Some big name shows that have come to the Philadelphia Forrest were Mamma Mia!, The Phantom of the Opera, Les Miserables, Cats, and *Hamilton*.

Hamilton was an unlikely success story. No one had predicted the success this show would bring to the the-



in order of setting up the show. With all that planning we were still able to get the show in on time without any hiccups.”

atre. It is a unique show which combines multiple styles of music including R&B, hip hop, pop, soul, and traditional music. It is a classic tale of the founding fathers which is based off the 2004 biography *Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow. The show is running at The Forrest from August 27 - November 17, 2019. With such a high success rate and the length of time it will be calling The Forrest home, I talked with Local 8 Stagehand Damien Harrer to ask what goes into preparing for a show like this.

Damien said, “The theatre has been preparing for Hamilton for over eighteen months. It started with re-painting the entire theatre, fixing the air conditioning system, and repairing the fly floor and grid. They had to replace the fire curtain, repair the stage floor for the weight of the show, and purchased three new spotlights. We also added steel I-beams in the ceiling to create structural points to be able to hang their sound towers. There have been hundreds of email exchanges, and over twelve site visits from the Hamilton production crew to prepare for the load in of the show. Being that our theatre is a small Broadway style theatre, and we do our load in from the street, there’s a lot of planning that goes into the timing of trucks

Stagehands have been manning the theatres for years. Local 8 has been since the early 1900’s. Many stagehands spend their whole lives in a theatre. There is something magical about it. It brings you back to the root of our craft. We started there on the fly floors, moving props, shining spotlights. The past seems to come back to life when you step into the theatre. It’s amazing what stagehands and IATSE have become. Movies, televisions, festivals, trade-shows, we have adapted and continue to adapt in the ever-changing technology of the entertainment business. But there will always be a little part of the theatre in a true stagehand.



LABOR DAY PARADE



Breakfast with Benefits

AVAILABLE TO ALL IATSE MEMBERS, SPOUSES AND RETIREES.

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

8:00AM - 10:45AM

(Leading into the general meeting)

2401 S. Swanson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19148

LEARN ABOUT

- Workers' compensation
- Social Security disability
- Union Services Access
- Pensions
- Annuities
- Health insurance
- Vacation pay
- Income verification
- Managing investments
- Benefits of political action committee
- Legal advice
- Funeral/cemetery benefits
- Long-term disability insurance
- Wills and estates

BENEFIT REPRESENTATIVES INCLUDE:

Pond Lehocky Stern Giordano LLP | Union Services Access
IATSE National Benefits Fund | O'Neill's Consulting Corp.
Prudential Financial | Dignity Memorial | PACA | UNUM



EAGLES TICKETS RAFFLE!

SPONSORED BY:



**POND LEHOCKY
STERN GIORDANO**



2019 Philadelphia Democratic

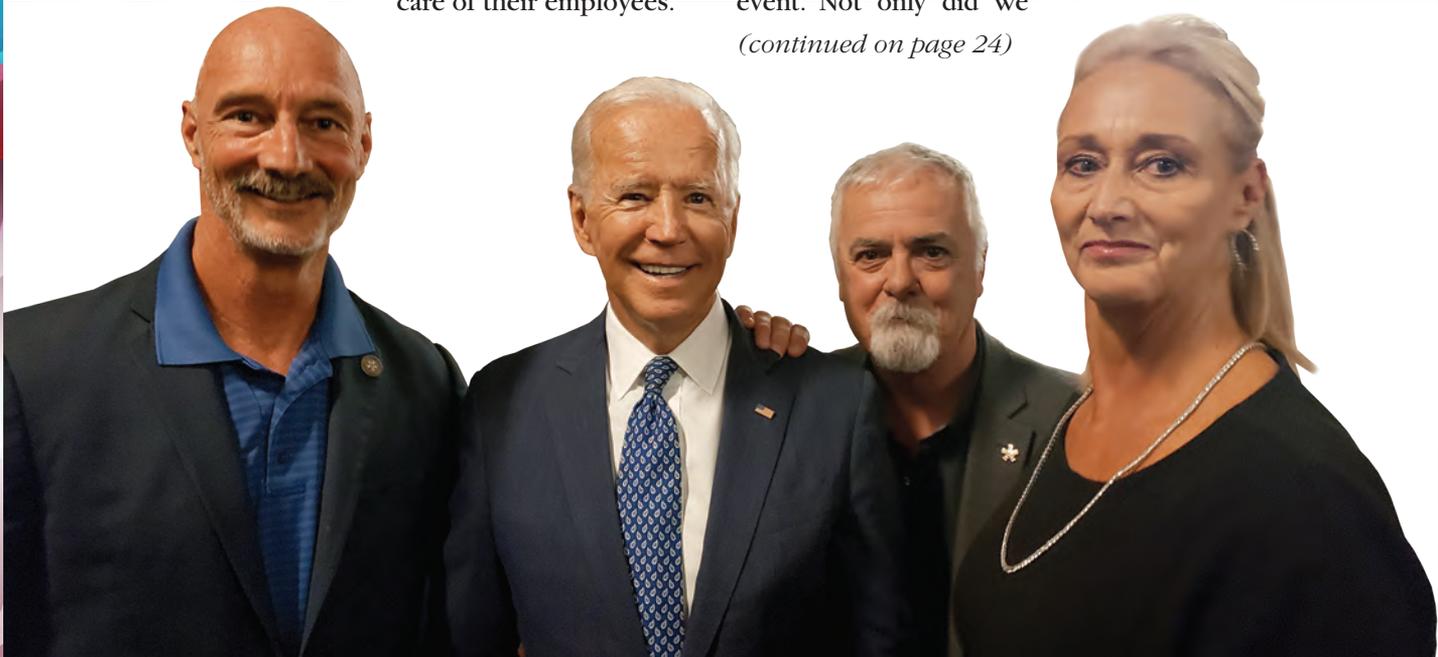
Written by: Kiera Barnes

As you all know, we have a big election coming up in 2020. What you may not all know is the importance of these elections for Unions. Vice President Biden stated, in the 1990's there was a shift where Unions began to be looked at as the bad guys. Labor leaders were known as bullies and tough guys, and using their strength to bulldoze over others. But we know the truth. Unions were built to protect us. Our labor leaders demand fair wages, safe work places, and benefits for their members.

Getting involved in these elections are not only important to protect us from those political candidates who are against Unions, but it also shows that we are a force to be reckoned with. The middle class blue collar workers are what America is built on. Organizing to help protect other workers will create jobs in this country, and hold larger corporations responsible to take care of their employees.

This election we want our voices to be heard. We want the Democratic candidates running to know, they can't win this without us. We show up in numbers. Union strength is what they need, and the time for the Union labor movement is now. So when the opportunity to get involved with a huge event like a Presidential Summit was presented to President Michael Barnes, he took it. Teaming up with John Dougherty of the IBEW 98 and President of the Building Trades, we had a kick-off party down at the Local 8 Hall for the big event the following evening. The room was packed with Labor Leaders, Elected Officials, and a ton of Union members. The following evening, hosted at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, was the 2019 Philadelphia Democratic Presidential Summit. VIP rooms were set up in the ballrooms stocked with refreshments, Philly favorites like cheesesteaks, dessert tables, and a live stream of the event taking place. IATSE Local 8 made our mark at this event. Not only did we

(continued on page 24)



Presidential Summit





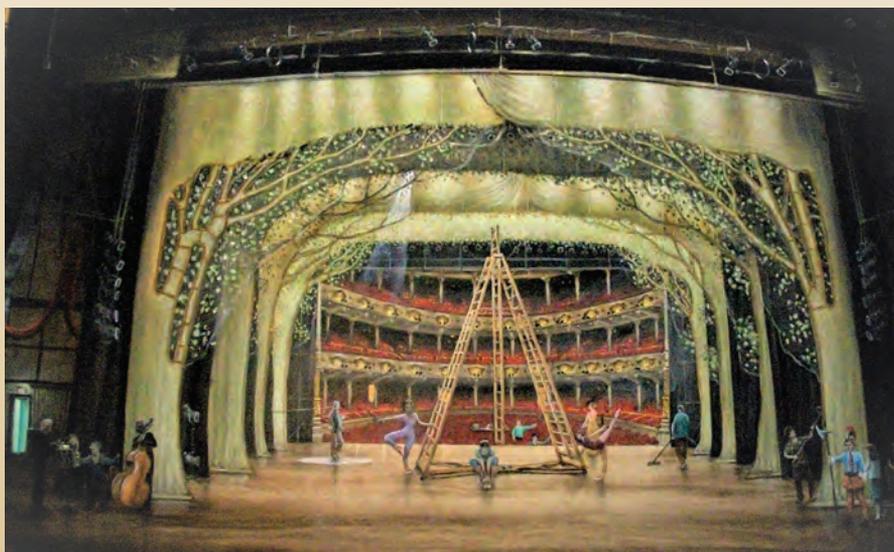
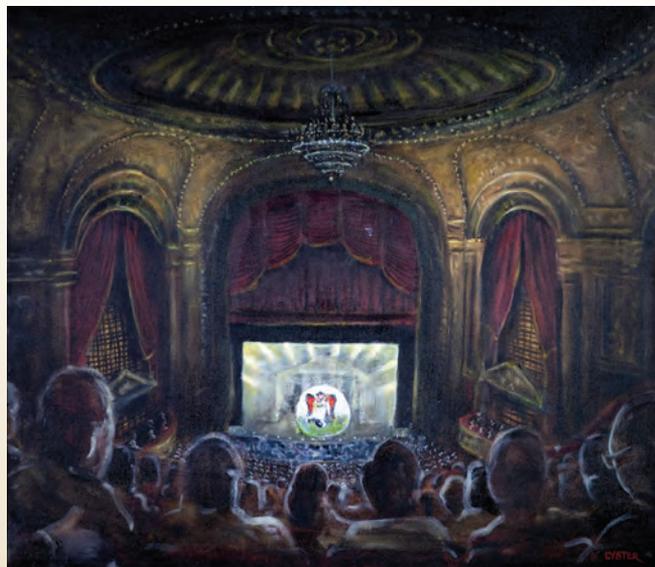
(continued from page 22)

provide a VIP suite, but members were also busy working the event. Democratic candidates for the Presidential 2020 Election came out to answer Union brothers and sister's questions on why they deserve our support. The room was packed with various Unions from around the city. This event proved, when asked to come out for your Union family, we answer. We will continue our participation in the upcoming election thru our Political Action Committee ran by Vice President Matt McIntyre and Business Agent Tricia Barnes-Vargo. Get involved. It is important for us to protect our Union rights that our Union Officials fight for every day, and elect a United States President who will work just as hard for us. Working class is the back bone of America, so let's keep working to protect our rights.



George Lyster

"I am a member of Philadelphia local 8, retired, living in Brea, California. I always enjoyed painting and often found subject matter on the stages where I worked. I think you will recognize local venues, The Academy of Music, The Forrest and Miriam theaters, etc. that I have featured in the work."



Young Workers Committee

"The Young Workers initiative aims to give our young union members a greater understanding of the responsibilities of leadership, and encourage their participation in the IATSE. Members should be committed to advancing the labor movement through participation in their local union's activities, activism within the community, or activism in the wider labor movement.

Young Worker members are reminded to keep these three goals in mind:

1. Be part of something bigger.
2. Teach practical membership skills.
3. Identify, encourage, and support young active members."

– IATSE International

Local 8 Young Workers committee runs food and blood drives, volunteer their skills and voice to do outreach programs at local colleges, organize fellow entertainment workers, show solidarity with other unions, and bring education opportunities to your local union. It is a wonderful opportunity to network with other members, and to build professional relationships that

can help you grow in your career. But it's also a great opportunity to have fun, building personal relationships, and hosting social events for your Local members and their families. All these Young Worker projects and more are designed to encourage young motivated members to seek a greater understanding of the union process, and ensure that those members are prepared for the unique challenges the future has in store, because the Young Workers of today are the Labor Leaders of tomorrow.

– Kyle Hanahan
Local 8 Member



Breaking New Ground

This summer, several members of IATSE local 8 spent time at Delaware Valley University working a production of *THE PRODUCERS*. The Burlington County Center for the Performing Arts undertook the Mel Brook's musical as part of their summer series. While Doylestown is within the jurisdiction of Local 8, there had never been a crew of IATSE professionals working their shows. Travis Johnson was initially involved with the project, and it was his insistence to bring in his union to ensure a smooth run. While there may have been some initial trepidation on the part of BCCPA, after working with Bill Thompson, James Murphy, Anthony Gormley, and Kevin Beebe, Sr. the actors, stagehands, and technicians could not have been more pleased. The BCCPA is looking forward to continuing working with IATSE Local 8 on future projects, and could provide excellent opportunities each year for stagehands interested in summer work.

Scenic Design: Dustin Pettegrew, **Lighting Design:** James P. Lewis,
Sound Design: Travis Johnson, **Costume Design:** Janell Berte

– Kevin Beebe Sr.

Organizing in Local 8

IATSE Local 8's bargaining power comes from our union's density. We represent all entertainment workers. Because we work in union, employers must negotiate strong contracts with the stagehands. This is our Local's purpose. To achieve our goal, we organize the unorganized. Local 8's first-time contract with PSAV unites 65 new members and expands IATSE's jurisdiction into twenty-one, previously unrepresented hotels. Since 2012, Local 8's share of the regional theater market-place has grown 25%. Term agreements at PTC, Bristol, Media, and the Wilma came from ground-up organizing. The TLA campaign of 2015 was the precursor to our Local's city-wide agreements with Live Nation. With each victory, our union grows. With that growth comes our strength.

– Daniel Little *International Representative*



IATSE Local 8
2401 S Swanson St.
Philadelphia, PA 19148
© 2013



There will be deadlines posted for articles, and photos to be submitted for the upcoming issue. If you are interested in becoming a writer, have an article you wrote and would like to submit, or have any photos please email all information to iatse8quarterly@gmail.com. When sending photos please do not crop or modify photos-the original version usually has the highest quality.

Editor: Kiera Barnes / iatse8quarterly@gmail.com

