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### Communications Committee 2009-2010

**Nicole Alvarez, VP**  
 Meetings & Events Houston

**Scott Briggs**  
 AV Technical Support

**Alex Ramussen**  
 Sullivan Group

**Heidi Novosad**  
 Sullivan Group

**Craig Howard**  
 Cirque imagination

## A Message from the President

Greeting ISES Houston!



Mia Monroe, MTA, CSEP

What an honor it is to be serving such an illustrious and talented group of professionals! The 2009-2010 year is really looking to be both challenging and rewarding. I've had the unique experience of serving this chapter at every level, from starting as a student member on to general membership, being appointed to the board, and now serving as your president. In that time, I must say it has been an amazing ride- lots of work, lots of learning, and lots of fun!

From day one of my membership, I have been active, serving on several committees, volunteering countless hours, developing invaluable relationships and receiving and referring thousands of dollars worth of business. I can tell you from personal experience- *if you work for ISES, ISES will work for you!* Your membership is an investment in both yourself and your industry. That is why we as your chapter leaders have challenged ourselves to ensure your return on investment by offering more educational programs that will strengthen your business, provide more professional development opportunities that will lead you towards earning your CSEP, and expose you to the best resources in the special events industry- locally and abroad. This is the year of the member. Its all about you, but we cannot succeed without your participation.

If you have a speaker or industry topic you'd like to see at a monthly meeting- call us- or better yet, join the Programs and Education committee to bring your idea to fruition! If you've seen what ISES can do for you and you want to spread the word, join the Membership committee and help us grow! If you feel like your career is in need of a jump-start, but you're not sure where to begin- ISES is your answer. We will give you the tools you need to succeed, but its up to you to take advantage.

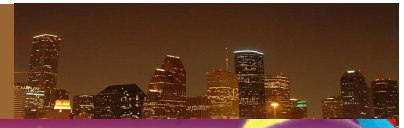
This will be a challenging year for us all. I issue one more challenge to you: develop yourself professionally, strengthen your business and serve your industry by being an **active** member of ISES. Your career will never be the same.

Warmest Regards,

Mia M. Monroe, CSEP  
 2009-2010 President  
 ISES Houston Chapter



# Industry News



## AND THE WINNERS ARE...

### Best Entertainment Production

Debbie Myers, CSEP, BRAVO! Productions & Entertainment, Inc. and Sally Webb, CSEP, The Special Event Company (Cultural Carolina)

### Best Event Design/Décor

Jade Gold, Prop Rock, LLC

### Best Event Photography

Steve Lee, Steve Lee Weddings

### Best Event Videographer

Stefani Twyford, Legacy Multimedia, LLC

### Best Team Effort

Deborah Elias, CSEP, CMP, Elias Events, LLC; Scott

Justis, LD Systems; Jade Gold, Prop Rock, LLC; Gene Ruple, Fashionable Events

### Corporate Event Planning

Alex Rasmussen, CSEP, Sullivan Group (Field of Dreams)

### Best Event Produced for a Non-Profit

Lynn Ellis, eEvents Group

### Best Wedding

Heather Hamilton-Sims, Simply Jubilee Events, Inc.

### Crème de la Crème

Matthew Finnan, Hilton Americas-Houston



The **Greater Triangle North Carolina ISES Chapter** is hosting the **2009 Southeast Regional Education Conference (REC)** from November 13 - 15, 2009 in Raleigh, North Carolina.

At this conference you will participate in valuable seminars, panel discussions, and roundtables; take tours of incredible new special event venues; and network with industry professionals from around the country at the most exciting social gatherings!

Please visit [www.isesnrec.com](http://www.isesnrec.com) for additional information and to register.

## Save the Dates

### ISES Houston Upcoming Events

#### October Chapter Meeting

Joint Meeting with NACE  
Villa Rinata  
2840 Chimney Rock  
**October 14th, 2009**  
**5:30 to 8:30 P.M.**

#### November Chapter Meeting

**November 4, 2009**  
**5:30 to 8:30 P.M.**

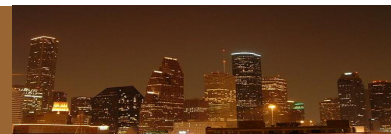
More details to follow.

#### December Membership Drive

**December 2, 2009**  
**5:30 to 8:30 P.M.**

More details to follow.

Share your company's accomplishments, the latest trends in the industry or your cutting edge ideas. Get published in Soiree, ISES Houston's publication. Submit your articles to [communications@iseshouston.org](mailto:communications@iseshouston.org) for consideration.



## Member Spotlight: Richard Hoggatt, Stage Directions

### Q. What are some of the trends you've noticed in the corporate event industry and what is Stage Directions doing to accommodate those trends?

We've been in the industry for 22 years so we've seen many trends come and go. The better word is "business cycle". It's a circle that in good economic times companies throw parties, anniversaries, and celebrations. Money is spent on lavish decor, food, entertainment and AV production. There are times when companies are doing quite well, but they can't look like they're spending a lot of money on their events so the design can't look too showy. Things must appear understated and conservative which in itself means they spend money to look like they're not. Then there are times like the current cycle where events, travel and entertainment are cancelled or cut back to the basics, the bare basics. We go through at least three budget revisions and each time there are more cuts and more cuts. Knowing your client and doing what's best for them in all of these cycles is what builds the relationships that gets you through tough times. We can build value into each project by saving the client money on their production needs and their AV equipment staging budget.

### Q. If a budget-conscious planner or event organizer is having to scale back their meetings because of an economic crunch, what is the value of audiovisual technology that should motivate professionals in the industry to keep it on the agenda?

Audio-Visual technology is there to enhance the communication of the message. It may not be a flashy opening video to open the meeting. In tight times we find that the companies spend more on their AV because it is more critical that they connect with their stakeholders. They may cut the sets and banners and just use drape, but they will need more wireless mics to handle the Q&A sessions from the audience.

### Q. What are some of the services Stage Directions provides in regards to interactive media and how does this impact corporate events?

We recently worked on a Corporate video project for a Houston Oil & Gas Company. Instead of spending \$40,000 on the employee meeting

at a downtown hotel, the company president was taping his presentation for delivery through their Web portal. A Q&A session was taped and he answered three questions from employees and it was all streamed to every employee the next morning. Though I hate to see a meeting get cancelled, Stage Directions can deliver the message in a live environment, a taped one, or through the web. In many cases we provide all three.

### Q. What are some of the ROI benefits to incorporating media production services into an event as opposed to using a bare stage and basic audiovisual equipment?

It's like a birthday cake without the candles. Every event should have a purpose and in that purpose is a message. There should be a theme. The media production is what makes the memory of the event last and connects the audience to the message. We have clients from Exxon that still remember an event we did in 1986.

### Q. Your company provides High Definition video services. How is High Definition shaping the way planners view meeting components that involve visual technology?

Most meeting planners need to be educated about High Definition Video and what it can do to the look of an event. In the current economic situation customers aren't considering new technology as HD because they feel that it will send their budgets soaring and they are looking to cut costs, not spend more on better video technology. We've actually produced events in High Definition without increasing the budgets, knowing that the clients can't justify the added expense. HD projection gives the client and extra 18% of width in the image to add more graphics, and text to their PowerPoint's and the increased resolution shows more detail in the picture.

### Q. What should a meeting planner consider when it comes to deciding whether or not media production is necessary to their event?

They should think of what it does to enhance the core message the client wants to get across to their audience. Now more than ever if the client is spending the bucks on a live meeting or event, they are doing it

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## Welcome New ISES Houston Chapter Members...

**Scott Briggs**, AV Technical Support  
sb@avtsgroup.com  
www.avtechnicalsupport.com  
(281) 924-0335

**Sharon Anderson**, Cityview Catering @ Villa Rinata  
sharon@cityviewcatering.com  
(713) 334-7765

**Frank Perez**, Elegante Entertainment  
fhperez@fhpentertainment.com  
(832) 465-1161

**Jody Torrence**, iCatching Events, LLC  
jtorrence@icatchingevents.com  
www.icatchingevents.com  
(832) 864-2503



# ISES Members Working Together



**Date of Event:** August 22, 2009  
**Occasion:** Birthday Party  
**Location:** Client's home – Memorial area

Event coordinated by **Cirque Imagination**. We staged an elaborate birthday party and collaborated with several ISES members. Striking invitations created by **Kelli Christopherson - Designology Ink**. – incorporating Cirque characters and a whimsical theme. The evening began with passed hors d' oeuvres and *Cirquetini's*.

An *extraordinary* menu was created by **A Fare Extraordinaire – Karen Lerner and Amanda Hughes**. Guests were amazed at the ever so creative menu enjoyed by all. A few of the highlights included *Chinese Acrobats* (steamed dumplings), *Miniature Beef Churrascaria* served on a sugar cane, *seasoned steak fries* served in a *circus* decorated cone and *mini candied apples* (fresh apples dipped in milk chocolate and caramel with sugared pecans and crushed toffee).

Strolling Cirque performers in colorful costumes greeted guests and custom pictures were taken with the artists upon arrival. The pictures were placed inside acrylic frames with a custom Cirque border and given to guests as a memento. Pictures of the guests with artists taken by **Yvette Llorance – Catch the Moment and Dick Didow** – allowing guests an up close and personal opportunity with the artists.

Floral and décor exquisitely done by **Let it Fly – Ellen Ramsey** and staff. Exotic flowers throughout their home in the buffet area and living room. Outside were floating, lighted arrangements in the pool. The backyard was transformed into a dining area and performance arena. Acrylic tables and chairs using bright colored fabrics and neon lights covered the patio and changed colors throughout the evening. Magnificent floral arrangements adorned each table. The hot tub was transformed into a 12 x 12 hexagon shaped stage where ground acts and break dancing were performed.

At the opposite end of the pool, an aerial apparatus was erected with aerial acts performed 21 feet high. Incredible sound and lighting provided by **Stage Directions – Richard Hoggatt** and staff. Spectacular lighting surrounded the backyard with a special lighting touch of "Happy Birthday" shining down on the pool.



Entertainment provided by **Cirque Imagination**. Breathtaking acts performed included hand balancing, contortion, juggling, break dancing and aerial acts with chiffon and lyra. After the show, the party continued inside with the **Cirque Imagination** artists mingling and entertaining the guests. Encore performances and candid photos with the artists continued throughout the evening.

This event was amazing due to the creativity and teamwork of all the ISES members involved. From start to finish, we collaborated on every detail with the end result being a smashing success! For additional information, please contact Judy Blake – [jblake@cirqueimagination.com](mailto:jblake@cirqueimagination.com) or at 832-754-6700.

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for a measurable reason. Professionally produced videos, graphics and PowerPoint's help executives deliver a powerful message which is long remembered after the invoices are paid.

## Q. Can you relate an experience of stage craft and media technology rescuing an event from total disaster?

Actually there have been many times when what we did directly affected the direction and outcome of some large corporations. We've done trade shows where it was ♦make it or break it♦ for the clients and the media production was the tool to do the communication. Boise Cascade used us to create a ♦media blitz♦ to avoid a strike that would have shut down a paper plant. American General hired us to do their shareholder meetings and one year they faced a potential hostile takeover. It was an hour that had to go perfect, especially the Q & A session at the end.

## Q. What should a meeting planner do if he/she is not technology savvy, but wants to incorporate the latest audiovisual trends into their itinerary?

We work with many planners as partners in the design and implementation of AV technology. It's not an afterthought but a part of the strategy to create a memorable event. The technology moves fast and we are constantly evaluating new displays, projectors, and LED lights to meet the dif-