

## Pine Lakes Sound Team

Hurricane Charley struck Florida's southwest coast on August 13, 2004. It was Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>.



The Pine Lakes Clubhouse was damaged to the extent that the north end was closed for repairs for about two and half years. The north end contains the ballroom, various activity rooms, kitchen, stage, and communal storage room. One result was that most of the sound equipment was either damaged beyond repair or simply disappeared. Consequently, nearly all of the sound equipment, as it exists today, dates from that incident.

From 2007 through 2010, the sound system was managed by Ralph Stallsworth. However, in the fall of 2010 Ralph moved from Pine Lakes permanently. In October 2010, David Helms replaced Ralph as Pine Lakes Soundman. The first thing David did was to ask for help in managing the system. Two very capable and experienced engineers, Stu Paterson and Cass Klapac volunteered, thus creating what is now called the Pine Lakes Sound Team. This arrangement has worked quite well.



(L-R) Cass Klapac, David Helms, Stu Paterson



Dressed for the show and ready to go

The sound team made many improvements.

First, the obvious: there are three trained people. In the event that one or even two of them are not available, the system should still have at least one technician on hand.

Next, the wireless equipment was formerly arrayed on the floor behind the stage when in use. This arrangement resulted in a lot of work on the part of the techs because the equipment had to be set up and tested, then packed away after each rehearsal and performance. Additionally, this very expensive equipment was highly vulnerable to damage, wear and tear, and other mishaps while so arrayed (see photo 1 below).



Photo 1 - Wireless Receivers as formerly arrayed

David and Stu determined what equipment and procedures would be needed to permanently install the equipment in a lockable metal cabinet and hard-wire it into the existing sound system. After obtaining financial support from the major users - chorus & theater - the necessary materials and equipment were ordered and David and Stu did the installation (see photo 2 below.)



Photo 2 – Lower Equipment Cabinet

Next, the sound team purchased additional wireless receivers so that we now have a total of twelve available. This cost also was borne by the chorus and theater. Eight receivers are shown in photo 2 above and four more in photo 3 below.



Photo 3 – Upper Equipment Cabinet

Next, the sound team installed two hanging choir microphones over the stage. This equipment also was paid for by the chorus and theater. The purpose of these mikes is to pick up the chorus as a group, rather than wire each individual singer with their own wireless mike – an arrangement that would be prohibitively expensive and cumbersome. This installation is not pictured here because the mikes are designed to be unobtrusive and not easily seen. However, photo 4 (below) is a stock photo of one such microphone.



Photo 4 – Hanging Choir Mike

Other improvements include:

- Reconfigured the speaker control system resulting in higher sound levels when output from all speakers (ballroom and activity rooms) is desired.
- Replaced the existing computer system used for sound effects and music clips with a later model computer equipped with a wireless keyboard, mouse, and space saving flat screen display monitor. (equipment donated by David Helms.)
- Devised a method of combining the two existing Sound Control Boards to operate as a single board, thus increasing the available channels from 16 to 32.
- Inventoried the entire sound system. Provided a copy of this line item inventory to ELS management, thus placing the sound system under ELS' blanket insurance policy. Also, provided ELS management with an itemized cost estimate for replacing the system in the event of a catastrophic loss, such as another hurricane.
- Permanently labeled all storage cabinets, equipment cabinets, and jack panels for easy identification.
- Installed additional shelving in storage cabinets for better use of space and more efficient access to equipment, parts, and cables.
- Overhauled ballroom lectern to make it more attractive and easier to use. This lectern also doubles as a mobile, self-contained sound system suitable for use anywhere in or near the clubhouse.

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