

R.A.T.S.  
rec.arts.theatre.stagecraft  
E. Lee Dickinson

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rec.arts.theatre.stagecraft is a tech theatre newsgroup frequented by people from all over the world with all different levels of experience. It's fun reading, and tremendously informative. Here's a list of some of the most recent topics:

Advice sought: rose pedal drop  
Need to create an avalanche!  
Moving raft  
How to diffuse the fog from a fog machine?  
3-5 Pin DMX?  
Cad Software for Mac?  
Fake Corn Stalks  
Nails or Staples?  
Recipe for stage blood???

There are two ways to get involved in this newsgroup. First, Google has a newsreader at <http://groups.google.com> – if you go and type in “rec.arts.theatre.stagecraft” you'll be able to read new posts and archived posts. (Note that Google groups is the BEST way to read old posts. Obviously it's google – it'll let you search them.)

The faster and more robust way to do it is to use the newsreader that comes with your computer. Outlook and Outlook Express both have newsreaders (*View* → *Go To* → *News* in Outlook, something similar in Express. Macs also have newsreaders, I suppose.) You'll need to configure it with the following settings:

Server: news.vt.edu  
Account: (your VT PID)  
Password: (your VT Password)

In case your software requires you to enter it, the news server is on port 119.

PS: Don't post with your real e-mail address. You'll get LOADS of spam. I personally post to newsgroups using [lee@REMOVE\\_STUpidSPAMleedickinson.com](mailto:lee@REMOVE_STUpidSPAMleedickinson.com) – that confuses the spambots, but real people trying to get in touch with you will be able to figure it out.

As I said – the posts are informative, and some of the characters and egos that frequent the group make for good reading.

See some of you there, I hope.