ESTA members pay tribute to excellence

BY BEVERLY INGLESBY

Awards honor volunteerism, creativity, and innovation at LDI2008

ON OCTOBER 22, 2008 AT HARRAH’S IN LAS VEGAS a record number of ESTA members and guests gathered to celebrate at the annual ESTA Dinner. Friends and friendly competitors honored the accomplishments and commitment of ESTA members with awards and recognition for service, innovation, and industry advancement. ESTA President Bill Groener began by promising a lively evening—and he delivered—keeping the pace moving and energy high.

The ESTA Rock Our World Awards

Mike Wood, Immediate Past President and Treasurer of ESTA, introduced the Rock Our World Awards. Mike provided the background to the new award: “We wanted to create an award series that had no rules except for excitement; no boundaries except for imagination; and no restrictions other than the winners must have more magic than Harry Potter! The Rock Our World awards are intended to reflect the reasons we stay in this industry—that feeling you get in the pit of your stomach when the lights dim down, the curtain goes up, and you just know your disbelief is going to be suspended in a way its never been suspended before. The rules for these awards are very simple because, as I said, there are none. The single criterion is that the winners showcase what we do and why we do it to an exemplary level. We do this because it still excites us, we do this because we love to see an audience enthralled, and we do it to show we can do it better than anybody else. The winner could be a product that could change the industry—either breathtaking in its simplicity or stunning in its breadth. It could be so blindingly simple that you slap your head and say, ‘why didn’t I think of that?’ (And take the patent out on it . . .). It could be a remarkable way somebody has used a product—perhaps an unexpected or unconventional application. Or it could be an entire project which brings together the expertise of many in a single enterprise. It could be a widget, it could be a lighting fixture, a piece of machinery, a design, it could be a building, a theatrical production, a major event; it could be anything anyone in this room devises, creates, designs, constructs, installs, or uses. No rules, other than we are proud to be part of the industry that produced it.”

When the new award was announced and the entries opened, over 30 nominations were submitted for the 2008 award. Those were narrowed down to a short list of nine finalists for a distinguished panel of judges to ponder. When there are no rules in a competition the group of peer judges must have unmatched qualifications and integrity to determine whose Rock rocked us the most. ESTA was extremely fortunate to attract a panel whose credibility is unimpeachable. The names of the six judges were kept secret until the awards presentation. They are: Rick Baxter, Ken Billington, Cory FitzGerald, Elaine J. McCarthy, Rocky Paulson, and Bruce Rodgers. (A small sample of the judges’ achievements is in the accompanying sidebar.)

The nine finalists for the ESTA Rock Our World Awards included:

• Pyrotek Special Effects Inc. for the Aqua Visual FX Water Screen
• Total Structures for the AIR Roof System
• SECOA for STC Alloy Chain
• A.C. Lighting for the Jands’ Vista PC as used in the Foxwoods MGM Resort Casino
2008 ROW Judges

- **RICK BAXTER**
  Production Electrician Rick Baxter’s career spans over 30 years of Broadway, dance, industrials, and special events. Show credits include Singin’ in the Rain, Sunset Boulevard, Smokey Joe’s Café, The Producers, Mamma Mia, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, and The Little Mermaid. He has put together the lighting packages for Mamma Mia, We Will Rock You, Hairspray, The Producers, and Phantom of the Opera and worked with numerous dance companies, including Eliot Feld Ballet, the New York City Ballet, and the Bolshoi Ballet. In 2006 he was presented an LDI award for “Bridging the Gap Between Broadway and Las Vegas” and served as a Subject Matter Expert on the ETCP exam committee for Entertainment Electricians.

- **KEN BILLINGTON**
  Lighting Designer Ken Billington has designed over 80 Broadway and 70 Off-Broadway shows including The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe, Footloose, Candide, Annie, Annie Warbucks, Inherit the Wind, Moon Over Buffalo, Fiddler on the Roof (3 times), Meet Me in St. Louis, On the 20th Century, Side by Side by Sondheim, and Fame. Ken was honored with the 1997 Tony Award for Chicago and received Tony nominations for Sunday in the Park with George (2008), The Drowsy Chaperone (2006), End of the World (1984), Foxfire (1982), Sweeney Todd (1979), Working (1978), and The Visit (1973). Touring productions include The Drowsy Chaperone, Chicago, Annie, High School Musical, and Riverdance, for which he was the lighting supervisor. He has also lit 26 seasons of the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, and the Las Vegas spectacular Jubilee.

- **CORY FITZGERALD**
  Lighting and Video Programmer Cory FitzGerald’s most recent touring credits include Madonna (Sticky and Sweet and Confessions), Nine Inch Nails (Lights in the Sky), Mary J. Blige and Jay Z (Heart of the City), Bon Jovi (Lost Highway), The Spice Girls World Tour, Ricky Martin (Black and White), Rain (I’m Coming), and he is currently the lighting designer for the band M83. Theatrical productions such as Thurgood, The Producers (National Tour), Spamalot (Vegas), and Wicked are in his resume as well as the past four seasons of the Radio City Christmas Spectacular. Television highlights include the NFL kickoff and NFL draft, NBA Hall of Fame inductions, Bobby Jones Gospel, and The Clinton Global Initiative. This Rising Star’s recent special events are Zootopia, Orange Rockcorps (UK), the opening of Tyler Perry Studios in Atlanta, and the opening celebration of the Atlantis Resort in Dubai.

- **ELAINE J. MCCARTHY**
  Set and Projection Designer Elaine J. McCarthy’s work history encompasses theatre, opera, and dance. Theatre includes Broadway productions: Thurgood, Spmalot, Wicked, Good Vibrations, After the Fall, Assassins, Man of La Mancha, Into the Woods, Judgment at Nuremberg, and The Green Bird; and Off-Broadway shows such as: Frequency Hopping, Distracted, Embedded, The Stendhal Syndrome, Suitcase, The Thing About Men, and Speaking In Tongues. Opera credits include: Mazeppa (Metropolitan Opera), Dead Man Walking (New York City Opera), War and Peace (Kirov and Met Opera), Tan Dun’s The Gate, and Peter Sellars’s The Peony Pavilion. She has designed for dance productions: Remote (White Oak), Philip Glass and Susan Marshall’s Les Enfants Terribles, and in 2003 received an Eddy Award for projection design.

- **ROCKY PAULSON**
  Retired Production Rigger Rocky Paulson remains a prominent industry figure as an educator and a member of ESTA’s Rigging Working Group. His leadership in the development of the ETCP rigging certifications brought him an ESTA Volunteer of the Year Award in 2005. He is an ETCP Certified Arena and Theatrical Rigger. In 1977 Rocky founded Stage Rigging which he sold to The Freeman Companies in 2000. Between his first tour for NBC Entertainment’s production of Peter Pan in 1973 and his last official gig for the 2006 Super Bowl, a few others credits include: tours for Earth, Wind and Fire; Pink Floyd; Billy Joel; and The Grateful Dead; Super Bowls in 2002 and 2004; the 1992 Republican National Convention; and the Olympics in 1996 and 2000.

- **BRUCE RODGERS**
  Production Designer Bruce Rodgers, as President of Tribe inc., also wears the titles of Art Director, Concept Designer, and Creative Consultant. He and Tribe have designed for artists: Rascal Flatts, Madonna, Bruce Springsteen, Leonard Cohen, Dave Matthews Band, Reba McEntire, Dolly Parton, Sting, Mary J. Blige, Jennifer Lopez, Marc Anthony, Ricky Martin, and Mariah Carey. Other credits include; the 2008 and 2007 Super Bowl Halftime performances, the 2008 Democratic National Convention, The Concert for America at the Kennedy Center, Lollapalooza 2003, The 2001 VH1 Vogue Fashion Awards, the 2000 Billboard Awards, and TNT’s An All-Star Tribute to Johnny Cash. In 2000, his production design of ABC’s Brave New World was nominated for an Emmy, and he holds the 1999 Silver Award for Set Design and the 1998 Gold Award for Set Design from the Broadcast Design Association of America.
• Element Labs, Inc.’s Versa RAY Screen as used at the 15th Asian Games in Doha
• Carallon Limited for the Pharos LPC X as used in the “Cloud” sculpture at Heathrow Terminal Five
• Alcone Company, Barbizon Electric, IATSE Local One, J&M Special Effects, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Mountain Productions Inc., Production Resource Group, Rose Brand, Sapsis Rigging Inc., and Steeldeck Inc. for Lincoln Center’s Die Soldaten at the Park Avenue Armory
• Athletic & Performance Rigging (a division of Tiffin Scenic Studios), Atlanta Rigging Systems, Entertainment Structures Group (a division of Steven Schaefer Associates), and Xtreme Structures and Fabrication for the Tacoma Dome Lighting Grid System
• Philips Solid-State Lighting Solutions, Production Resource Group, and Tim Hunter Design for Harrah’s Atlantic City Waterfront Tower

Although categories were suggested for the nominations to help in completing the submissions—the awards were not restricted in that way—no rules, remember? The nine finalists were reviewed as one group in the final judging; the judges were free to select any number of winners without regard to their original category.

In the end, it was the determination of the judges that three entrants really represented the spirit of these new awards and “Rocked Our World.” And the winners are:

**Pyrotek Special Effects Inc.**
For the Aqua Visual FX Water Screen
“Absolutely brilliant—used theatrically at its best”
“It’s a pretty incredible product that is used in an artistic way”
“I love this screen for the art and the technology”

**Element Labs, Inc.**
For the Versa RAY Screen as used at the 15th Asian Games in Doha
“The scale is impressive, the shape is interesting, and the resolution is incredible”
“Totally unique layout on a massive scale that worked”
“Amazing structure and design”

**Carallon Limited**
For the Pharos LPC X as used in the “Cloud” sculpture in Heathrow Terminal Five
“This was thinking outside the box”
“A whisper is louder than a scream and this is a whisper”
“This is a great use of a theatrical device without a lighting application”

Thanks to all who made these awards possible. From the suggestion through the development process, a new award requires a lot of work. Thanks also to all those who submitted a nomination. Who will Rock Our World in 2009?

**Eva Swan Award**

The Eva Swan Award was named after an extraordinary woman who was ESTA’s second employee. Eva came to ESTA late in her ten-year battle with cancer, yet made an enormous contribution to the association both with her dedicated work and her unflagging spirit. This award was established in her honor to recognize those individuals who also have had a significant and life-affirming impact on ESTA.

Tim Hansen was honored with the award in front of a cheering room of his peers. The 2005 Swan recipient, Wally Blount came out of retirement to present the award to Tim. The two men had worked closely on several projects, including the development of the Entertainment Technician Certification Program (ETCP). Wally spoke movingly about how retirement has given him the perspective to understand that what really matters is whether we have left the world a better place by our actions. He shared, “There is absolutely no doubt that Tim has changed not only our association, but the entertainment technology industry, in significant ways through his tireless volunteerism.”

Continuously supported in his volunteer work by his employer Oasis Stage Werks in Salt Lake City, Tim has been deeply involved in ESTA over the years. He served two terms on the ESTA Board of Directors and currently sits on the Executive Committee. Under the Technical Standards Program, he has been a member of the Rigging Working Group since 1999, was an original member of the Photometrics Working Group, and has been Chair of the Floors Working Group since its inception in 2000.

Tim’s most lasting legacy however will undoubtedly be his work with ETCP. Tim served on and eventually co-chaired the committee that was the precursor to the ETCP Council. He served as a member of the small steering committee that created the structure for ETCP, and he has chaired the ETCP Council since its first meeting in September 2003. His strong leadership has been instrumental in bringing together the unprecedented group of industry organizations, businesses, and individuals to create the program and in keeping them actively focused on its development. Tim has been deeply involved in Oasis Stage Werks in Salt Lake City over the years, especially everyone at Oasis Stage Werks, also deserves a piece of the award. Thank you to ESTA for this very special award. It will always be the high point of my career, but certainly not the end point.”

**Frank Stewart Volunteer of the Year Award**

The Frank Stewart Volunteer of the Year Award recognizes extraordinary effort by a volunteer or group of volunteers during the previous year. In presenting the award to the ESTA Membership Committee Bill Groener, shared, “recruiting new, qualified members for ESTA is an essential activity if we are to prosper and develop as the trade association representing all areas of the entertainment technology industry. In fact, the only activity I can think of that could be more important is ‘retaining’ members once they have come on board and showing them the value of their membership. In the last year, this committee expanded both its numbers and its efforts.”

Bill continued, “Your Membership Committee has recruited 88 new members since we last met at LDI in 2007. This number is substantial, but it is even more amazing in light of current economic uncertainties. In addition to their recruiting efforts, this group has also worked feverishly to retain existing members.
through improved communications that help to highlight the value associated with membership in our association. Our on-going efforts are renewed and energized by the addition of new members with new ideas, new opinions, new energy, and enthusiasm.”

Members of the committee are: Bob Luther, Lex Products; Fred Mikeska, A.C. Lighting; Dinna Myers, Musson Theatrical; Eddie Raymond, IATSE Local 16; David Taylor, Arup; Steven Way, Advanced Lighting & Production Services; and Richard Wöpert, Union Connector. Wearing their “cowboy” style hard hat awards, this group will be able to accomplish anything!

Eddie Raymond stayed at the podium to make a second presentation of this award to a group of volunteers whose identities must remain confidential due to the nature of their work, the Behind the Scenes Application for Assistance Review Committee. This group is charged with determining who is eligible for financial assistance.

Bearing witness to the difficulties of others and having to choose who can and who cannot be helped by the Foundation is at once gut wrenching and gratifying. One of the more exceptional and remarkable achievements of the Review Committee is their ability to respond within a day or two of receiving an application. Eddie shared, “While not all applications can be approved, the committee’s timely response and encouragement is greatly appreciated by all applicants. The work done by the Review Committee is vital and difficult. Even in anonymity, the three members of the Behind the Scenes Application for Assistance Review Committee are recognized for their tireless effort and commitment to helping others in our industry.”

Members’ Choice Product Awards

The winners of the 2008 ESTA Members’ Choice Product Awards were presented by Bill Groener during the LDI Awards ceremony, Saturday evening, October 25. These awards honor product innovation and recognize outstanding entertainment technology products in three categories: Expendable, Widget, and Equipment. The Members’ Choice Product Awards were established in recognition of the fact that ESTA members have an enormous impact on the success of a new product, as well as a unique
perspective on its merits. The voting for the 2008 awards was opened for the first time to employees of all member companies at LDI regardless of their membership category.

Equipment Category
Firefly, a division of Industry Advanced Technologies, Inc. was recognized for their FIREFLY® ENERGY Series™ 5 Channel LED Illuminated Cable Protector. Designed to reduce accidents, and increase pedestrian awareness, the Cable Protector includes LED lighting in an all-weather design to meet the rigorous demands of live event and broadcasting, while offering maximum protection for electric, data, and other cables.

Expendable Category
The BTH lamp by OSRAM Sylvania was honored for filling a void in the low-wattage, high performance offerings for 6” and 8” fresnels (and PC spots). The BTH lamp is brighter and whiter than BTL lamps with increased color temperature of 3250K compared to BTL’s 3000K. At 575W, 115V this lamp provides a much higher light output of 15,000 lumens compared to the BTL’s 11,000 lumens.

Widget Category
Voting resulted in a tie for this category.

The Lex 3-Phase 3Fer from Lex Products provides single-phase power for lights, equipment, laptops, etc. from a 3-phase 20 amp receptacle (L21-20) common in convention centers, outdoor events, and concert touring, eliminating the need for extension cords or a small distro box. It is available in both Edison and stage pin connectors and is UL Listed.

The Gel Swatch Library for iPhone from Wybron, Inc. allows users to browse, compare, and search nearly 1,000 GAM, Lee, and Rosco gel colors, showing similar and complementary colors for each. The application displays each color’s SED curve and CMY/RGB percentages, and the application’s search feature makes it easy to find a specific gel by name.

ESTA Members honored by LDI
In addition, several ESTA members were recognized during the LDI Awards ceremony. The Best Debuting Product in Special Effects was awarded to City Theatrical for the DMX Snow Machine developed in conjunction with White Light. DMX512 control and precision motor technology combined in a flexible, light-weight package to provide an accurate, specific, and reliable way to create this time-honored theatrical effect by today’s standards.

The Best Debuting Product in Rigging/Staging was presented to Steeldeck for the APACK retractable audience tiering system that can also be curved. It was reported one judge emphasized the substantial support system with a minimum of moving parts.

Element Labs was recognized with the Best Debuting Products in Production for the Helix P1 which offers amazing display shape possibilities. The Helix P1 is flexible, durable, and has user-specific pixel pitch.

The Best Debuting Product in Lighting resulted in a tie. Electronic Theatre Controls’ Unison Paradigm System addresses the challenge faced by most lighting designers of balancing energy management, entertainment technology, and architectural control with a scalable, innovative platform. The other award went to Nila
Lights as seen in the PRG booth. This revolutionary new lighting solution is recognized for its low-energy consumption, while delivering unmatched lighting performance and product versatility. An Honorable Mention in Lighting was given to the Protester 19 Mobal by Global Design Solutions and available through TMB.

Pixel Range won the Best Small Booth award for a vibrant use of LEDs in a very small area; eye-catching from afar while maintaining a comfortable environment in the booth. And Vari-Lite won the Booth award for Creative Use of Light for subtle and cohesive use of their entire product line to create an immersive lighting environment.

Special thanks
ESTA could not stage the many meetings, booth and suite hospitality, and other special events during LDI without the generous support of many key member companies. We extend a special thank you to: Blue Pony Digital for the Rock Our World Awards video presentation; Stage Equipment and Lighting for their on-going, generous assistance with storing and handling the ESTA booth; Neil Huff and PRISM, Inc. and OSRAM Sylvania for sponsoring the hospitality in the ESTA suite; PRG for providing the audio/visual equipment, lighting, and audio in the ESTA booths; and Advanced Lighting & Production Services, Musique Xpress Lights, OSRAM Sylvania, See Factor, Stage Equipment and Lighting, and Wireless Solutions for sponsoring the ESTA and World-ETF lounge on the show floor during LDI. We also want to recognize Peter Willis of Howard Eaton Lighting Ltd. for his work on the Control Protocols Interoperability Pavilion and the many volunteers who manned the booth; as well as Tobin Neis, Barbizon; Kim Craigie, Vincent Lighting Systems; and Frank Stewart (who keeps trying to retire), for all their efforts on the Behind the Scenes booth.

Scott Hoyt, Heartland Scenic and Steve Surratt, Texas Scenic Company.

Marshall Bissett, TMB, Bill Groener, Tim Hunter Design, and Lori Rubinstein, ESTA.

Linda and Warren DiBernardo of Lighting & Electronics.

DigitalSpot 3000 DT

- Digital Moving Light with compact weight, size and price
- Packed with all parameters for precise image, gobo and video projections
- Creates stunning Mid Air Effects
- Provides intense and extremely even colour washes
- Positioning of projections are flexible and changeable within seconds
- Accurate PAN/ TILT Movement
- Embedded high-end Media Server
- Integrated LED Wash Module including 48 x RGBW Luxeon Rebel LEDs
- 2,700 ANSI Lumen light output with 2000: 1 contrast ratio
- DigiMerge - Creation of a single image by up to 64x DigiSpot 3000’s
- DigLayer - 3 Gobo Layer for image and video control and playback
- DiSphere - Projection onto curved screens, into corners and onto spheres, from inside and outside
- Network Fixture Synchronization
- Network Media Management and Synchronization
- Control by DMX and ArtNet
- Full Key Stone Correction
- Full Shutter-Blade System with 4 Shutters
- Mechanical Shutter
- S-Video and Composite Video Capture Video IN
- Network Video Streaming
- Patents pending

ROBE Lighting Inc. • 13807 N.W. 4th Street • Sunrise • Florida 33325 • Tel: +1 954 615 910 • Fax: +1 954 615 9105 • Email: info@robelighting.com

robedigital.com
Jerry Onik and Mandy Jahn of Heartland Scenic with Becky and Rich Wolpert of Union Connector.

Steve Ehrenberg, BASE Entertainment and Paul King, Lincoln Center.

Retired Wally Blount with Herb Hart and Randy Gephardt of Columbus McKinnon.


Mark West, Brandon Denny, and Scott Trowbridge all of Downhome Productions with Marshall Bissett of TMB.

Nic Phillips, nicphilips group; Larry Turner, Roundhouse Advisors; Marian Sandberg, and Ellen Lampert-Greaux of Live Design.

Gary Justesen, Oasis Stage Werks and Carmel Alston, The Opera Shop.