

**VES Board Meeting Minutes  
September 14, 2022– 1:00pm  
Via Zoom Conference**

**Board members present:**

Jan Adamczyk, Neishaw Ali, Laurie Blavin, Rita Cahill, Colin Campbell (*alternate*), Nicholas Casanova, Mike Chambers, Bob Coleman, Lisa Cooke, Gavin Graham, Dennis Hoffman, Adam Howard (*alternate*), Kim Lavery, Brooke Lyndon-Stanford, Arnon Manor, Andres Martinez, Karen Murphy, Janet Muswell-Hamilton, Susan O'Neal, Robin Prybil (*alternate*), Jim Rygiel, Dane Smith (*alternate*), David Valentin (*alternate*), Joe Weidenbach, Richard Winn Taylor II, Philipp Wolf (*alternate*), Susan Zwerman

**Board members absent:**

Dayne Cowan, Mike Fink, Himanshu Gandhi (*alternate*), Johnny Han (*alternate*), Thomas Knop, Josselin Mahot, Tim McGovern, Maggie Oh, Bill Villarreal

**Guests:**

Jeff Okun, *LA Section*; Sebastian Sylwan, *Technology Committee*

**Section Members present:** Robert Andrews, *Chair, London*; Zach Bell, *Co-Chair, Georgia*; Alan Boucek, *Co-Chair, Bay Area*; Christina Caspers-Römer, *Chair, Germany*; Tavia Charlton, *Co-Chair, Toronto*; Rachel Copp, *Co-Chair, New Zealand*; Urs Franzen, *Co-Chair, Germany*; Chris Gallagher, *Co-Chair, Georgia*; Tara Marie Jacobson, *Co-Chair, New York*; Mat Krentz, *Co-Chair, Vancouver*; Jose Marin, *Co-Chair, New York*

**VES Staff present:** Jeff Casper, Naomi Goldman, Eric Roth, Ben Schneider, Jim Sullivan, Nancy Ward

**Minutes:** Lori Bowman

**Call to Order – Lisa Cooke**

- Lisa called the meeting to order and confirmed that there was a quorum. She noted that the Board minutes from the May meeting were approved online.

**Executive Director's Report – Eric Roth**

- The yearly billing effort concluded recently and the current count of VES members worldwide is 4,259. This year's member retention rate is over 95%.
- The VES Awards ceremony is scheduled on Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. The nomination event is scheduled on Saturday, January 14, 2023. Working with a new show producer. Jeff Okun is the main contact for info and questions about the 2023 Awards Show.
- An all-Sections meeting is scheduled on Tuesday, September 20 at 1:00pm PDT. Announcements have gone out.
- Susan Zwerman and Jeff Okun are spearheading a new virtual production handbook. This is different than the next edition of the VES VFX handbook and will focus specifically on virtual production.
- The VES staff is busy working to upgrade the VES website and hope to complete this before the end of the year.
- The VES Honors event is scheduled on Friday, October 14 at the Skirball Cultural Center. Nancy Ward will provide more details later on in the meeting.
- Additional luminary videos are being recorded for the VES Archives.
- The annual Board of Director elections occur in October. The nominations will take place the first two weeks of October and the elections will take place during the last two weeks of October. Eric noted the names of the Board members who are terming out and those who need to run again for the coming year:
  - Board members who have served a consecutive six years and will be terming out for a year include: Emma Clifton-Perry, Bob Coleman, Kim Lavery and Tim McGovern.
  - Board members whose two-year term is up and need to run again to return to the Board include: Jan Adamczyk, Nicholas Casanova, Dayne Cowan, Gavin Graham, Dennis Hoffman, Thomas Knop, Brooke Lyndon-Stanford, Josselin Mahot, Janet Muswell-Hamilton, Maggie Oh and Jim Rygiel. Alternates in this category include Colin Campbell, Himanshu Ghandi and Philipp Wolfe. These members must proactively run again if they want to return to the Board in the coming year.
- Eric Roth announced that he is retiring from the VES on September 30, 2022. He has served as Executive Director of the VES for **19 years**. This will be his last Board meeting. He noted he has attended over one-hundred Board meetings, hundreds of committee meetings, seventeen VES award

shows, numerous VES festivals, and eight production summits. Eric represented VES at the annual FMX Germany conference for sixteen years and attended hundreds of screenings and webinars. During his tenure, VES launched the award-winning VES magazine, VFX Voice. Eric noted he had the extraordinary privilege of meeting with Board members, VES membership and stakeholders in the industry over the years. He thanked the VES staff for all of their hard work and support. He is proud that the VES currently has over 4,000 members worldwide and fourteen Sections and Section boards and managers. Eric acknowledged the invaluable contributions of the volunteers in the VES who believe in the industry, the craft and the VES. He noted that it's been his honor and privilege to work with the Board members, the Committees and VES membership in full collaboration as a team effort. He has worked closely with the six Board chairs over the past 19 years and thanked them for their extraordinary contributions to the VES and the industry. As of October 1, Eric's new email will be [rothpeople@gmail.com](mailto:rothpeople@gmail.com).

#### **Treasurer's Report – Laurie Blavin**

- Financials are looking good. The report is in the packet of meeting materials for reference.

#### **Statement from the Chair - Lisa Cooke**

- Lisa congratulated Eric on his well-deserved retirement but noted that she is very sad to see him go. She thanked him for 19 years of tireless dedication to VES. She acknowledged that he has grown the Society into a vibrant, global community during his 19-year tenure. She praised Eric's support and guidance in working with all the six Board Chairs. She thanked him for an extraordinary job well done and wished him the best in the next phase of his life.
- The VES Search committee will be working to find Eric's replacement. They are enlisting the services of the executive search firm, Martin Shirley Associates. The committee is currently in the process of interviewing candidates. The committee will present candidate recommendations to the Board for approval. Lisa noted that they may call a special Board meeting for this purpose when the vetting process is complete.
- Announced that Nancy Ward has been appointed the interim Executive Director to maintain continuity during the search process.
- Lisa thanked the Board members who are terming out for their service and dedication and hope to see them back in a year. Encouraged the Board members who are ending their two-year terms to run again to join the Board next year.
- Thanked the staff for keeping everything running smoothly during this transition.

#### **Update on VES Honors Event – Nancy Ward**

- Nancy announced that the VES Honors event is scheduled on Friday, October 14 at the Skirball Cultural Center. It's an invitation-only VIP event. A portion of the complimentary tickets are reserved for VES members. The event celebrates the leaders and trailblazers of the VES industry. There will be a networking event with cocktails and appetizers before and after the Honors program which will celebrate the recipients of the Founders Award, Honorary and Lifetime memberships, and the newest Hall of Fame and VES Fellows inductees.
- Expect 150-200 industry VIPs and VES members to attend. All tickets are complimentary and the event is completely funded by sponsors. Nancy has already raised 90% of the Honors program expenses. She encouraged Board members to have their company sponsor the event. The benefits of being a sponsor are to showcase the organization as a key industry supporter and help the VES put on a spectacular event. Need to finalize the sponsorships within the next two weeks. She thanked Neishaw Ali and Spin for joining as a platinum sponsor. Board members can check out the event details on the VES website. An e-blast will be sent out soon with details about how to get the VIP tickets. Encouraged everyone to RSVP for the event.

#### **Archives Committee Report – Lisa Cooke**

- The Committee is in the process of designing the nuts and bolts of the virtual Archive Museum. Should be ready for review stage in the next several weeks. First internal demo is scheduled before Eric steps down. Will continue with demos and reviews with the Archive Committee and follow up with publishing the actionable time line.
- Achieved the goal of completing 25 luminary videos for the 25th VES Anniversary. Encouraged everyone to watch the videos.

#### **Health and Wellbeing Committee Update – Emma Clifton Perry**

- The Committee is looking for new members so Emma encouraged Board members to join the committee.

#### **Education Committee – Arnon Manor**

- Arnon thanked Eric Roth for all his support and guidance.

- The committee work is progressing well. Neishaw Ali is leading the mentorship program and needs to recruit seven mentors in these areas: Creative Director, Matte Painting, Supervisor, Virtual Production Supervisor or Director. Brooke Lyndon-Stanford volunteered to mentor. Arnon encouraged additional interested parties to contact Neishaw Ali about mentoring.

#### **Approval of new VES Fellows – Mike Chambers**

- Mike thanked Eric for all his contributions and tireless and dedicated support working with the VES Board Chairs during his time with the VES.
- The VES Fellows met in August. Five candidates are being recommended for approval for title of VES Fellows.
- ***Motion: The VES Fellows Committee recommends the following new VES Fellows:***
  - Tony Clark, VES
  - Jeff Kleiser, VES
  - Gene Kozicki, VES
  - Rick Sayre, VES
  - David Tanaka, VES
- ***Seconded. Vote taken. Motion passed.***
- The new VES Fellows will be announced at the VES Honors event on October 14.
- Mike noted that two additional nominees were not recommended for the VES Fellows title.
- The Committee is concerned that the endorsement letters that have previously been submitted for Fellows nominations are not comprehensive and detailed enough. Will address this issue moving forward by improving the endorsement letter guidelines for those who nominate and endorse potential Fellows.

#### **Update on the Emergent Technology Award – Sebastian Sylwan**

- Thanked Eric Roth for supporting the Tech Committee's work all these years. Also thanked Eric for his support for the creation of the Emergent Technology Award.
- The Board **previously** voted on this award and it has been approved. This new award will be announced at the 2023 Awards ceremony. The Committee has finalized the rules and procedures and are currently finalizing the submission documents and the logistical details. The pre-selection process for nominations will be handled by a sub-committee which is formed when the submissions are received. The nominations will be vetted for eligibility and the final selections will be submitted to the VES membership at large to vote on.
- Description of award: "The Emergent Technology Award honors the inventors of a novel and overall unique innovative tool/device (software or methodology) of outstanding value to the art and science of visual effects, gaming or animation. The achievement is original and advances the state of the art". Sebastian added that this award recognizes an emerging technology that is being used now rather than something that has already been established and used in the industry in previous years.
- Eric noted that many hours were spent in previous years trying to establish this award. He thanked Jeff Okun and Bob Coleman for their past efforts. He praised Sebastian and the current Tech Committee members for finding a way to make this award a reality.
- Sebastian commented on another Tech Committee issue. The Cinematic Color V2 project has been in progress for the past several years. There has been disagreement among the authors of the project that cannot be resolved. There has been no communication from the authors for many months so the committee has decided to shelve the work and to tell the authors that the VES will not be proceeding any further with this project.

#### **New Business**

- Richard Taylor acknowledged Eric Roth for his dedicated service with the VES through the years. He commended him for being a great leader and "the heart and soul" of the VES. He also thanked Eric for being a friend and a mentor.
- Susan Zwerman noted that she's been setting up field trips at PRG and the VPG group for the LA Section. The next field trip is scheduled at XR Studios on October 3. It already is booked with 82 confirmed attendees. She encouraged other Sections to consider organizing field trips like this in their respective regions since this has been a valuable perk for members.
- Susan is pleased to be working with Jeff Okun to get the VES Virtual Production Handbook off the ground. They have spent the last five months working on it. To date, they have 89 industry professional writers who work in virtual production who have committed to contribute to the handbook. The publication will include 125 sections and over 26 chapters and will be coming out next summer. Thanked all who have helped with this effort.
- Laurie Blavin noted that she recently attended two great networking events: The SIGGRAPH mixer and the VES LA Chapter's summer picnic.

- Richard Taylor noted that this year is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of milestone visual effects films such as Bladerunner, Poltergeist, ET, Das Boot, Dark Crystal, Firefox, The Thing and Tron. He suggested having an event that celebrates and acknowledges the practitioners who worked on these historical productions and show selected film clips during the event. Eric noted that he will reach out to the office staff with this recommendation.
- Brooke Lyndon-Stanford thanked Eric Roth for being such a guiding force for him and the VES. He is hopeful that Eric can continue to be a mentor for the members.
- Andres Martinez thanked Eric for his years of service. He recommended that members reach out to VES members when traveling in other countries to connect and check in with them.
- Colin Campbell gave a brief report for the Work from Home Committee. He reported that the committee is sending out a survey to get feedback from artists, facilities and studios to see where the industry stands with the ever changing “work from home” scenario. The committee will use the survey results to come up with work from home programs that better serve the membership. The committee will submit the survey to the Board for approval in the near future.
- Lisa asked the Board to give a final round of applause for Eric Roth and excused Eric from the meeting. She asked the rest of the participants to stay for one more business item.
- **Confidential item:** Jeff Okun asked the Board to vote on two honors for Eric Roth:
  - ***Motion made to award Eric Roth the VES Lifetime Membership. Seconded. Vote taken and motion passed.***
  - ***Motion made to award Eric Roth the Board of Directors award which will be presented to him at the 2023 VES Awards. Seconded. Vote taken and motion passed.***
- Lisa thanked the Board members who are terming out and encouraged them to join the Board again after taking one year off. She also encouraged members who are up for Board reelection in the coming year to submit their nominations to return to the Board.

**Lisa adjourned the meeting at 1:55pm**

**Next BOD meeting: November 9, 2022**

*Submitted by Lori Bowman*

*Submitted by Rita Cahill  
Secretary, VES Board of Directors*