

**VES Board Meeting Minutes**  
**September 8, 2021– 6:00pm**  
**Via Zoom Conference**

**Board officers present:**

Lisa Cooke, *Chair*; Emma Clifton Perry, *1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair*; David Tanaka, *2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair*; Jeff Okun, *Treasurer*; Gavin Graham, *Secretary*

**Board members present:**

Laurie Blavin, Kathryn Brillhart, Colin Campbell (*alternate*), Nicholas Casanova, Dayne Cowan, Kim Davidson, Camille Eden, Michael Fink, Bryan Grill (*alternate*), Dennis Hoffman, Thomas Knop, Kim Lavery, Brooke Lyndon-Stanford, Arnon Manor (*alternate*), Tim McGovern, Janet Muswell Hamilton, Maggie Oh, Susan O'Neal, Lisa Sepp-Wilson, David Valentin (*alternate*), Joe Weidenbach, Philipp Wolf (*alternate*), Susan Zwerman

**Board members absent:**

Jan Adamczyk, Neishaw Ali, Bob Coleman, Himanshu Gandhi (*alternate*); Josselin Mahot, Karen Murphy, Jim Rygiel, Bill Villarreal

**Guests present:** Zach Bell, *Co-Chair, Georgia*; Mike Chambers, *Board Chair Emeritus*; Steve Garrad, *Co-Chair, Vancouver*; Abhishek Krishnan, *Chair, India*; Marine Lelievre, *Co-Chair, Montreal*; Steve May, *Technology Committee*; James Ogle, *Co-Chair, New Zealand*; Reid Paul, *Co-Chair, Los Angeles*; Justin Porter, *Co-Chair, Australia*; Cheryl Vanderbilt, *Co-Chair, Bay Area*

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

**Minutes:** Lori Bowman

**Call to Order – Lisa Cooke**

- Lisa called the meeting to order. Gavin Graham confirmed that there was a quorum.
- Announced that the May Board meeting minutes were approved online.

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

- The Society is approaching its 25th anniversary in 2022. Encourage members to promote the anniversary with video sizzle reels, campaigns, social media, and historical timelines to provide exposure for the Society.
- Eric thanked everyone for all the impressive work that was accomplished by all the VES committees this year.
- VES will be launching a new website early next year in conjunction with the VES 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Also launching Digital Museum next year.
- Will be keeping the current web address [visualeffectssociety.com](http://visualeffectssociety.com) but changing the master URL to [vesglobal.org](http://vesglobal.org). This is part of the new rebranding process for VES.
- October is election time for the Board.
  - Board members who need to run again: Neishaw Ali, Laurie Blavin, Lisa Cooke, Camille Eden, Mike Fink, Karen Murphy, Susan O'Neal, Lisa Sepp-Wilson, Bill Villarreal, Joe Weidenbach, Susan Zwerman; Alternates: Bryan Grill, Arnon Manor and David Valentin
  - Board members who are terming out this year: Kathryn Brillhart, Kim Davidson, Jeff Okun, David Tanaka.
  - Board members who were not called out by Eric do not need to take any action and will remain on the Board for the coming year.
  - The Board members mentioned above will also be notified of their status in writing.
  - The nomination event begins on October 1 and the nomination period will be open for two weeks. The last two weeks of October will be the election period.

- Will be voting on VES Fellows this evening and Fellows Steering Committee Chair Mike Chambers will lead the discussion and voting. Ben Schneider will be sending an email with instructions about the voting process during this discussion.
- Eric sadly noted the recent passing of VES member Bill Taylor. Eric acknowledged his special talents and skills, generous spirit and exceptional contributions to the VES and the visual effects industry.

#### **Treasurer's Report – Jeff Okun**

- Jeff noted that the VES is in an excellent financial position. Eric added that the report could be viewed online in the Board of Director portion of the website.
- Eric announced that the yearly membership billing cycle was just completed and all went smoothly. Fewer members termed out this year than last year. VES staff member Colleen Kelly has taken over the membership billing process and she did a stellar job.
- Eric noted that the budget might be in the red next year because part of this year's budget is allocated towards next year's awards show. An in-person awards show will bring the VES back in the black but a virtual awards show could put VES in the red.
- Eric thanked Jeff for his leadership and assistance with budgetary matters.

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

- Lisa noted that next year is going to be a multi-faceted celebration of a number of VES anniversaries.
- She acknowledged the hard work of the staff and the dedication of the VES volunteers that has contributed to the Society's growth and many accomplishments this year.
- Accomplished a lot this year in spite of covid. Some of these include:
  - The Education Committee created outreach and mentorship programs.
  - The Health & Wellness Initiative created new member wellness benefits.
  - The Awards Committee hosted its first virtual Awards show that was a huge success and viewed around the world.
  - The Archive Committee made great strides in reporting the legacy of visual effects.
- Lisa thanked all the Board members for their time and commitment this year. She encouraged Board members who haven't joined a committee to find one to join. She congratulated everyone on a successful year and she's looking forward to more to come before the year ends.

#### **Archives Committee Update – Lisa Cooke**

- Posted a number of luminary videos on the VES website in the temporary Archive Section that will become the future Digital Museum. The behind-the-scenes stories in the videos are educational and informative. One of the Luminary videos features the late Bill Taylor.
- Twenty-six luminary videos have been edited or are in the process of being edited. Hope to complete in the next few months. Thanked David Tanaka and Jeff Casper for their incredible work on this project.
- The France and Georgia Sections have submitted their luminary videos. All Sections have been invited to submit videos and each Section is encouraged to designate a point person to be the liaison to the Archive Committee. Several more Sections have submitted their luminaries for approval and are waiting for the latest covid surge to ebb to begin filming. The Bay Area Section is planning to schedule their first round in October.
- The Digital Museum architecture is being developed with VES staff and digital archivist consultant, Sandra Joy Aguilar, who is identifying compatible archive platforms and organizing the video content so it will be searchable and user-friendly Thanked Kim Lavery and Debbie McBeth for their constant and effective outreach efforts.
- Lisa thanked Board members, VES staff and committee members for all their contributions and hard work this year.

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

- Arnon acknowledged Lisa Cooke's amazing work as Board Chair this year.
- The Education committee meets once a month. The committee has new ideas for expanding its education programs and is encouraging more people to join the committee to assist with these efforts.
- Finished the first round of initial mentorship and outreach pilot programs with Women in Animation, Access VFX, and Rise Up Animation. It's been a learning curve and valuable experience for the committee.

- Rose Duignan has indicated that she doesn't feel that it's necessary to continue paying the \$100/month fee for Access VFX. Those who want to mentor with Access VFX can pay the \$2/month fee or have their respective companies pay that fee for them.
- The committee wants to continue to work with and explore their relationships with outside organizations.
- The Peer-to-Peer Mentorship program finished its first pilot program with VES mentors and mentees and it was very successful with Neishaw Ali and Kaitlyn Yang at the helm. The next steps are to consider best practices and get input from mentors/mentees. Neishaw is starting round two of the program and will do another poll to membership in November with Debbie McBeth's help to see who is interested in becoming mentors or mentees.
- Susan Zwerman, Camille Eden and Debbie McBeth have put up a page of educational resources in the VES website. Encouraged everyone to use this resource and share with others.
- Arnon has been working on the CTE (career technical education) initiative which is a VFX certification program in California for high schoolers. The program is progressing with a lot of interest from vendors and educators in the industry. In the process of building a curriculum to present to the Department of Education.
- Continuing to look for new engagement and programs for existing members and to keep up outreach efforts to bring in new members into the society and the industry.

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

- Emma thanked Debbie McBeth and the VES staff for their incredible work to help get the committee's initiatives off the ground.
- The Members Access Program (MAP) is launching in the next week. A company called Lifeworks is providing Beta Testing for the program. The committee and Debbie are double-checking to make sure that the resources provided to every country with VES members has their own phone number and help line. Encouraged everyone to check out the program when it launches. Some regions have the added bonus of regional discounts and perks but this will vary from region to region.
- In negotiations with AETNA to provide health insurance percentage discounts for expatriate workers residing outside of their usual country of residence (non-US citizens). Waiting on an update from AETNA.
- A list of potential discounts have been formulated by the committee team. They've been provided with a vetted template for approaching organizations for discounts and a dedicated email account. The committee will begin the approaches of organizations shortly, starting with one company each to see how well the template and methodology works.
- The health and wellbeing resources collated by the committee earlier in the year have been vetted by the team and curated into a webpage by Debbie McBeth with help from Emma Clifton Perry and Phillipp Wolf. It can be found under the resources tab on the main VES website. The resources have been vetted to make sure that the help line numbers are correct and that the organizations are LGBTQ friendly and not affiliated with any political or religious organizations.
- The Guidelines Sub-committee was formed to create a Best Practices and Industry Guidelines initiative. The members are looking into creating best practices to present to the industry to improve conditions worldwide for members.
- Phillipp Wolf gave an update on the webinar series. The first season of the series is online on the website so he encouraged all to share the series with others who can benefit from its content. The Quebec Film Commission is starting a paid advertisement for the series soon. The second season is in the works and the Quebec Film Commission is on board again and will finance the second season. Dr. Drea Letamendi is a clinical psychologist who heads up the student resilience center at UCLA called RISE (Resilience In Your Student Experience) and will co-create the second season with VES. Will be 10 episodes released monthly over the course of the next year. Stay tuned for more info.
- Eric acknowledged the incredible work of the committee including the creation of the global Members Access Program.

### **Technology Award – Jeff Okun**

- VES has been trying to get a Technology Award established in the past and there's been a number of roadblocks. The Technology committee has worked through those obstacles and has asked that a motion be made to create a Technology Award. The Committee has determined that this honor will celebrate individuals, not companies, and those individuals will be people who have accomplished

exceptional technological achievements in present time rather than individuals from the past. It hasn't yet been determined whether the award will be given out at the Awards Show or at another VES event. It has been decided that the award recipients will not be chosen by the Awards committee but will be vetted and selected by the Technology Committee. The Tech committee will come up with its own rules and procedures for the selection process and submit its recommendations to the Board for approval.

- **Motion: Jeff made motion to create a Technology Award. Lisa seconded.** Emma Clifton Perry gave her verbal endorsement for this honor. **Vote taken. Motion passed.**
- Jeff thanked the Technology Committee for doing the necessary work to bring this motion to the table.

#### **Technology Committee Update – Steve May**

- Committee member Steve May gave the committee report in Committee Chair Sebastian Sylwan's absence. Steve introduced himself and added that he is currently the Chief Technology Officer at Pixar.
- Thanked everyone for their support for the creation of the Technology Award.
- Just completed the 2022 version of the VFX reference platform to standardize certain types of software in the industry. This allows software vendors and studios to build and maintain their pipelines.
- The committee is exploring the impact that the work-from-home scenario will have on artists in the industry in the long term. Seeking engagement from other committees and sections to get more diversity and opinions from the membership and other industry bodies.
- Virtual production is a very active and evolving area in the industry so the committee is compiling and publishing a virtual production glossary of terms.
- Tech Committee member Jean-Francois Panisset is a new member of the Technology Advisory Committee of the Academy Software Foundation. He can represent the interests of the Technology Committee and the VES membership at large through his participation in this advisory committee.
- Finalizing the VFX Transfer Specification so this will help to standardize, formalize and provide tools for the transfer of images between vendors in different parts of the production process.
- Reviewing a proposal from Joseph Goldstone for an initiative to standardize VFX on-set camera metadata. This would be a fostering activity, led by the Tech Committee and involving other industry groups rather than a standalone effort.

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

- Mike Chambers has been appointed as the Chair of the VES Ad Hoc Fellows Steering Committee since he is the past VES Board Chair. He is tasked with overseeing the effort to evaluate and recommend nominees for the VES Fellows award.
- Mike read the qualifications for the VES Fellows honor: ***A VES Fellow is a member who has maintained an outstanding reputation and who has made exceptional achievements and sustained contributions to the art, science or business of visual effects, as well as enabling members' careers and promoting community worldwide for a period of not less than ten (10) years within the last twenty (20) years. In addition, a VES Fellow has provided sustained service to the Visual Effects Society which has positively contributed to supporting or to significantly advancing the Society, its membership, and its mission statement.***
- Nominations are submitted in writing and the Steering Committee evaluates and reviews these nominations and makes recommendations to the VES Board.
- This year's nominees and recommended by the Committee are: Brooke Breton, Mike Chambers, Van Ling and Nancy St. John. Mike noted that since he's one of the nominees he recluses himself from any input concerning his nomination.
- **Motion: Mike made motion to approve the four nominees for the VES Fellows honor. Jeff Okun seconded.**
- **Motion: Lisa Cooke made motion to approve all four nominations by acclamation in lieu of a vote. Jeff Okun seconded. Lisa announced that all four nominations are approved by acclamation.**
- Eric noted that Board members could disregard the email from Ben Schneider regarding voting for the motion since it was passed via acclamation.
- Mike discussed the limited choices that were offered for Fellows consideration and how the Board, Section leadership and the general membership might be motivated to submit more nominees. One

suggestion was to create an easily accessed “nominations” page on the website, which could be used for this purpose, as well as any other “honorary” award categories. There are clearly numerous artists and practitioners amongst the members who are well qualified for the honor and it would be a positive thing to have great diversity and geographical representation within the group of Fellows.

- Lisa Cooke congratulated Mike Chambers on becoming a VES Fellow.

**Lisa adjourned the meeting at 7:00pm**

*Submitted by Lori Bowman*