

## Recap of Academy Annual Meeting in Santa Barbara

June 17, 2014

The 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Academy of Electrical Contracting concluded just over a week ago in beautiful and temperate Santa Barbara, California. **Rex Ferry** ('02) chaired the meeting that included 90 Fellows and 79 guests. The 169 attendees is the largest number in many years!

Unlike last year's hot, steamy & stormy weather in the "colonial capital," the weather in Santa Barbara was just about perfect. This added to the spirit of the attendees, who appeared to appreciate an excellent program of education, entertainment and fellowship.

If you haven't returned the **evaluation form** that was in your registration packet, please remember to complete and return it. Contact me if you need another copy.

There were many **highlights and memories**. I'll elaborate on them below:

- The opening reception/dinner on the lawn at the historical Four Seasons Biltmore featured a Mexican theme with the opportunity to renew acquaintances and meet new Fellows.
- The Working Group had a lively discussion on an interesting topic led by Fred Sargent ('81): *Market-Driven Contracting*.
- Our speaker, Monty Roberts, offered a very unusual experience when, after hearing his remarks, we were able to visit his "lab" at his ranch (Flag Is Up Farms). We had the unusual opportunity to hear a speaker in a traditional setting (ballroom) and then visit his ranch to witness what he had described. And most unusual was the fact that every attendee had the opportunity to talk with Monty that afternoon at the ranch.
- Attendance at the spouse program was higher than usual, perhaps because of the interesting stories about the auction of Oprah's homes to benefit her charity. The auction was dubbed the "Mother of All Yard Sales".
- The Saturday evening formal evening offered an award-winning view overlooking the Pacific Ocean. {Could this have been the best venue ever for a formal dinner setting?}
- The sumptuous crab and beef duo was followed by a show featuring Frank Sinatra, Marilyn Monroe and Clark Gable (impersonators, I believe). This was but a warm-up, however, for the **band** that followed. With a male and female singer fronting the local band, the dance floor was jammed with people dancing to one fantastic upbeat familiar song after another. The songs ranged from rock to Motown to total funk. And one song led directly to another ~ without so much as a pause between songs!

**Working Group Leader Fred Sargent** ('81) and his company (SGT LLC) has recently been involved with the Education Department of the IBEW to create and provide training and follow-up coaching on the fundamentals of starting an electrical contracting business. The program Fred developed is called *"Market-Driven Contracting"*.

IBEW President Ed Hill approached Fred last year with the idea about creating a course to prepare contractors to focus on "under-served and abandoned segments of the electrical contracting marketplace". After researching existing resources, including information and programs available through NECA, Fred created the course. The program consists of two week-long training sessions separated by an interim period of 2-3 months.

The first week covers business administration and contractors' law. The second week covers preconstruction activities and field operations. During the interim period the attendees take steps to prepare for the start-up of their companies by forming a corporate entity, hiring or identifying a lawyer and an accountant, starting a banking relationship and an insurance relationship and, finally, preparing a business plan.

Attendees' participation is sponsored by: employers; local union or LMCC; with some attending at their own cost. The presentation was followed by a lively question and answer period.

**Recognition** is an important component at the annual meeting. The Jury of Fellows selected the following 15 individuals for induction into the Academy at the NECA convention in Chicago, IL on September 28:

**Craig Clark**

Dynalectric-Colorado  
Lakewood, Colorado

**Johnny Dyke**

D C Electric Company  
Benton, Kentucky

**Paul Guarrancino**

J M Electrical Company Inc  
Lynnfield, Massachusetts

**Tim Homer**

Wasatch Electric  
Salt Lake City, Utah

**Mark Huston**

Lone Star Electric  
Fort Worth, Texas

**Michael Joyce**

Zenith Systems LLC  
Bedford Heights, Ohio

**Blair Mahan**

Benson Electric Company  
Superior, Wisconsin

**Thomas McClure**

McClure Electric Inc  
San Francisco, California

**Todd Mikec**

Lighthouse Electric Company  
Canonsburg, Pennsylvania

**Mark Nemshick**

Chicago & Cook County Chapter, NECA  
Westchester, Illinois

**Jeff Ohman**

Minneapolis Chapter, NECA  
St Louis Park, Minnesota

**Rocky Sharp**

Madsen Electric  
Tacoma, Washington

**Edward Shikany**

Sweney Electric Company Inc  
Merrillville, Indiana

**Thomas F Thierheimer**

Britain Electric Company  
Houston, Texas

**Jim Willson**

Los Angeles County Chapter, NECA  
Pasadena, California

During the General Meeting, the Fellows elected **Stan Lazarian** ('05), **Tony Maloney** ('12), **Greg Rick** ('12) and **Dan Schaeffer** ('09) to the **Academy Board of Directors** for the term ending in 2017.

Two **Academy papers** were presented. The first paper by **Greg Stewart** ('08) addressed the question: *"What Do We Really Sell in Today's Business World"*. It reminds us of the importance of building and nurturing relationships in every aspect of life.

**Gloria Ashford** ('07) presented a paper entitled *"Welcome Gentlemen . . . and Lady: A Look at Our Industry Through a Woman's Eyes"*. The differences between men and women as electrical contractors were explored.

The papers for 2014 can be seen at the Academy website: <http://www.necanet.org/neca-community/peer-groups/academy/academy-papers/2010-2019>

**Monty Roberts** was our speaker. The “man who listens to horses” regaled us with his life story that mostly revolved around horses: from championships at a tender age, to movie stunts (with James Dean), to thoroughbred horse-racing (including Alleged), to the Queen of England, to several best-selling books.

We saw video of some examples of standard practices used in “breaking” horses. We learned that “trust and communication work when fear and force don’t”. Monty uses the term “Join Up” to describe his approach to getting a horse to trust him (including saddling and riding).

During the Q & A, **Joy Borden** asked Monty Roberts if his training techniques for horses worked as well with dogs. Monty explained that, while appearing to be similar, the two animals are in very different classes. The training of predators (dogs) is completely different from the training of prey (horses).

**Flag Is Up Farms** At the conclusion of the Saturday meeting, most of the Fellows and guests boarded buses for a Saturday afternoon BBQ and demonstration of Monty's “Join Up” techniques at his ranch in Solvang, CA. Monty’s home on the 100+ acre ranch offered a spectacular view of the Santa Ynez Valley as we sampled the highly acclaimed lunch. Following the meal, the group moved to the “round pen” where we watched Monty communicate with a previously un-saddled or un-ridden horse. As we watched, Monty carefully described (first) and demonstrated (second) his methods using body language to gain trust by demonstrating to the horse that he was not a predator. After about 23 minutes the horse was saddled with a young student aboard.

We were also introduced to *Shy Boy*, the subject of one of Monty's books and a PBS special. *Shy Boy* is now 23 years old. He was born and raised in the wild and encountered Monty in 1997 where they were the focal point of a bold experiment: *Could Monty achieve “Join-Up” in the wild?* Obviously that worked and years later, when presented with the question about whether Shy Boy would rather be free, Monty returned *Shy Boy* to the wild. Here his former herd welcomed him, but after one night, *Shy Boy* was ready to return to the Flag Is Up Farms with Monty.



Chairman Rex Ferry at the Formal Dinner!

The opportunity to really experience what Monty Roberts had talked about was amazing and educational. Before we returned to Santa Barbara, some of us got to watch the running of the Belmont Stakes with Monty. Unfortunately, California Chrome was unable to capture the Triple Crown, but it was interesting to hear his comments during the race.

At the **formal dinner**, Chairman Ferry recognized 14 of the Fellows and guests that were attending their first annual Academy meeting, including the following: Orvil & Connie Anthony ('13), Eric & Arlene Aschinger ('13), Brad & Margaret Butler ('13), Darrell & Thecla Gossett ('13), Leonard & Linda Lynch ('13), Mike & Barbara McPhee ('13), Marvin & Barb Nelson

('13), Traci Pickus ('13), David & Lanie Roberts ('13), Clayton & Shannon Scharff ('13), Frank & Jacqui Schetter ('13), Jody & Down Shea ('13), Donald & Judy Turner ('13) and Brad & Jo Ann Weir ('13).

Almost 40 Fellows and guests opted for an extra day's visit to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

**Now back to some of the memories and photos:**

The show began with Frank Sinatra, Marilyn Monroe and Clark Gable entertaining the group. There were a few photo ops! And, as noted earlier, the band played a continuing stream of up-beat and familiar dance songs. The dance floor was packed!



And speaking of **photos**: We'll be printing customary photos of the formal dinner tables and distributing them later this summer, but if you would like to see the photos taken (by the professional photographer), the website link is: <http://pictage.com/1587288>

Once on the website, you'll be given the option to either create an account or to continue. To view the photos, click on continue and if you'd like to purchase any of the pictures, you'll need to create an account. You will be taken directly to the page for the pictures of the Academy meeting in Santa Barbara. In the upper left of the page, click on Photos and you'll have the choice to review them by category (All, Candids, Formal Dinner, Flag is Up Farm, Morning Meeting or Portraits).

Thinking about Stowe already,

**Mike Thompson ('92)**  
**301-806-1109**



Escort Committee with Monty  
(Greg Stewart, Dan Walter, Stan Lazarian and  
Dennis Quebe)

"My life's goal is to leave the world a better place than I found it, for horses and for people too. - Monty Roberts"

We can learn a lot from horses about how to treat each other. I was born into the horse business and have spent my life creating an understanding between horse and people by learning their silent language of gestures. At 79, I want all my students to be better than I am.







Opening Reception



Monty Roberts Visits with Attendees



Gaining Trust "Join Up" at the "Round Pen"

BBQ at Flag Is Up Farms



Reacting to first saddle, "He seemed like such a nice man"!



Dennis & Linda Quebe, Bob & Karen Bruce and Brad Weir focused on the presentation.