

June 19, 2018

### Recap of the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Academy in Laguna Beach

The 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Academy of Electrical Contracting concluded just over a week ago where we overlooked the Pacific in Southern California. **David Hardt** ('07) chaired the meeting at the spectacular Montage. One-hundred-nine (109) Fellows and 95 guests enjoyed the beautiful surroundings, the view from their rooms and simply fantastic weather. The Academy programs and networking opportunities were similarly excellent ~ and, while I'm a little hesitant to say this, **the Montage might be the best venue we have ever held a Summer meeting** ~ and we've been to some pretty spectacular places!

Early results from the online **evaluation form** enables me to share some early trends about the success of this meeting. To date, we have received 59 responses; that's just about half of the attendees. If you haven't already responded online yet, please do that ASAP. You can tell us what you think by accessing Diane's June 12 email and clicking on the link.

There were many **highlights and memories**:

- Beginning with check-in at the Montage, once Fellows had been escorted to their room by the front desk clerk (I'm sure they had a fancier title than that), they were presented with their **room keys**. As you can see, they promote the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Philadelphia. That's Ben Franklin overseeing the site where we will have our formal dinner on September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The opening event was held on the lawn overlooking the Pacific. The weather was as perfect as the view. If you were with us that night, you're probably not surprised to hear that the event was the highest rated activity during our meeting. If you didn't want to eat outdoors, you could eat in the Studio Restaurant. It was a great setting for fellowship and greeting new Fellows. Check out the beautiful sunset that evening at the end of this document.
- *The Future of Foreign Policy* was a very timely topic. Our General Meeting speaker, **Ambassador R Nicholas Burns**, discussed President Trump's meeting in Quebec City (coincidentally the site of our next meeting) that happened to be taking place during our meeting, as well as Trump's pending trip to Singapore to meet with the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-Un. Burns was Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, as well as US Ambassador to NATO and Greece, and he is a frequent TV commentator. He discussed the current pessimism about the world's status ~ but he also added that he also thought it was a time of hope (see more below).
- The **Working Group** was held in two sessions this year. The first session, moderated by Fellow Lanny Thomas, addressed **Business Succession**, the transfer or sale of a business from one owner or generation to another. Fellows **Rod Borden** ('88), **Rex Ferry** ('02) and **John Negro** ('99) were panelists for this first session. Each related their story including: their career path in the industry, how they acquired their company, the economic conditions that impacted their transition plans, the



Chairman David Hardt at the formal dinner



Yes, that's the room key for Fellows (front & back) at the Montage!

structure of the sale or transfer of the business and the time required to plan and execute the plan. During his presentation, Borden reminded the Fellows that he had written a paper on Family Business that is available on the Academy website (see below for specific link).

Following the panel presentation, several Fellows in the audience told their stories about the succession or transfer of their companies. While there were similarities, each company's experience was unique.

Fellow **Vince Real** ('17), current chairman of the NECA Business Development Taskforce, introduced the second session, ***Build Value with Service Business***. The presenter was Fellow **Fred Sargent** ('81). Sargent is the author of a recently released book, *Great Service Made Simple*. After a brief overview of his book, Fred talked about the impact a successful service operation can have on the profitability and value of an electrical contractor's business. He described the elements of a well-run service organization and answered questions from the audience about starting and running an electrical contracting service operation. Sargent's PowerPoint presentation can be viewed at <https://www.necanet.org/about-us/member-groups/academy/academy-annual-meeting/2018-annual-meeting/2018-presentations/>.

- The **spouse breakfast and program** on Friday morning was a huge hit. It should be noted that their enjoyment and uproarious laughter interfered with the serious conduct taking place next door at the Board of Directors meeting. Ron Owens was the guest speaker. Owens' resume includes firefighter, arson investigator, drone pilot and hypnotist. Sorry, I forgot to mention that he is also an ordained minister. Besides talking about the fires in Southern California, he discussed and demonstrated the use of drones AND he hypnotized Renee Huston and Debra Walsh. They cracked everyone up as they played the role of "Walmart greeter" and answering phone calls using their shoe.
- The Board of Directors wasn't nearly as interesting, although they did agree to change in the *Rules of the Academy*, pending approval by NECA's Board of Governors in September.

The original Rules (article II, Sec. 1, (e) stated that ". . . a recipient of the McGraw Award, the Coggshall Award or the Comstock Award, shall be deemed to meet the requirement . . . and be entitled to Fellowship in the Academy . . ." The amendment would add two awards to the list of three awards: the Robert L Higgins Association Executive Distinguished Service Award (new name for an existing award) and the Abraham Lincoln Leadership Award (for government affairs leadership).

- Responses to our evaluation indicate that Saturday's formal dinner was spectacular, from the setting, to the service, to the food! Chairman Hardt introduced the chef and first-time attendees. One of the features of the evening was the "chocolate duo" with Academy logos. To some, eating these treats was sacrilegious; and many people were reluctant to eat them ~ including me.
- *Flashback Heart Attack* (an 80s band) provided the dance music. They got off to a questionable start, but when they switched to "songs that we know" the dance floor was packed.
- As noted earlier, **Ambassador Nick Burns** acknowledged that, while there is a great deal of pessimism in the world ~ and in the US, this is really a **time of hope**. Burns believes this "hope" is warranted because:



This is the chocolate dessert  
~ too pretty to eat?



**Ambassador Nick Burns addresses  
the General Meeting**

- Our economy is headed in the right direction
- People are beginning to be lifted out of poverty
- Global public health
- Greater technological changes on the horizon
- Opportunities for women to succeed
- We are living in a period of “long peace”

Burns closed with a quote from Winston Churchill: *“The price of greatness is responsibility!”*

The **Jury of Fellows**, chaired by Dennis Quebe, selected the following 15 individuals for induction into the Academy in Philadelphia on September 30:

Kenneth C. Borden  
Kansas City Chapter, NECA  
Kansas City, MO

Gregory Bowman  
NABCO Electric  
Chattanooga, TN

Kevin P. Connelly  
Connelly Electric Company, Inc.  
Addison, IL

Luke R. Cunningham  
West Side Hammer Electric  
Bethlehem, PA

Brian D. Damant  
Central Ohio Chapter, NECA  
Columbus, OH

Mike Doyle  
Danard Electric  
Tacoma, WA

Karl Jensen  
West Side Electric  
Portland, OR

Michael Kelliher  
Pieper Electric, Inc.  
New Berlin, WI

Tom Kyle  
Kyle Electric  
North Bend, OR

Greg Long  
Long Electric Company  
Napa, CA

Thomas M Morton  
LLD Electric Company, Inc. Gurnee, IL

Andrew Porter  
Washington DC Chapter, NECA  
Annandale, VA

James A Reed  
Century Electric  
San Francisco, CA

Clyde Wetsch  
Skeels Electric Company  
Bismarck, ND

Robert M Zahn  
Chewning & Wilmer, Inc  
Richmond, VA

**Recognition** is a key component at the annual meeting. During the General Meeting, the Fellows elected **Larry Cogburn ('08), Craig Martin ('09), Doug Martin ('15) and Sonja Rheaume ('16)** to the **Academy Board of Directors** for the **term ending in 2021**. Thanks were offered to Fellows going off the Board, as follows: Orvil Anthony ('13), Russ Borden ('10), Brad Giles ('11) and Todd Mikec ('14).

**Mike Thompson ('92)** presented his **Academy Paper** titled *"Fifty Years of the Academy of Electrical Contracting"*. The paper results from Thompson's research about the 50 years of the Academy and his personal involvement for the last 32 years. He identifies some of the changes that have taken place in the first 50 years of the Academy. Thompson's PowerPoint presentation can be viewed at <https://www.necanet.org/about-us/member-groups/academy/academy-annual-meeting/2018-annual-meeting/2018-presentations/>.

Forty-eight years of Academy papers (113 total) can be seen (by decade) at the Academy website: <https://www.necanet.org/about-us/member-groups/academy/historical/academy-papers>.

Fourteen Fellows and guests were **attending their first annual Academy meeting**. They will receive their (replacement) blue ribbon to be worn at future Academy gatherings:

Larry and Julie Beltramo ('17)  
Larry and Pam Clennon ('17)  
Ron and Kathy Cogburn ('17)  
Dave and Chris Gill ('17)  
Kellie and Todd Holland ('17)  
Sue and David King ('17)  
Bob LaLumiere and Karen Fritts ('17)

Ciro Lupo and Helen Murphy ('17)  
Shawn and Angela Murphy ('17)  
Tom and Brenda Parkes ('17)  
Vince and Donna Real ('17)  
Rilo and Wanda Stephens ('17)  
Don and Paula Stockton ('17)  
Dave and Donna White ('17)

Chairman Hardt recognized these new Fellows at the **general meeting** and with their guests at the formal dinner.



**Greg Stewart & Susan Ernst**

As mentioned earlier, the entertainment got off to a slow start, but you can see that Greg Stewart and Susan Ernst didn't let that spoil their fun!

And speaking of **photos**: We will be printing and distributing the customary photos of the formal dinner tables this summer. If you would like to see (and purchase) other professional photos from our meeting, click on the website below. It will take you to the webpage for the Academy meeting photos:

Here are **instructions from the photographer**: "Photo galleries are now available online for viewing and downloading. Images are high resolution, so please

allow time for the gallery to load for viewing. Likewise, download will also take a few minutes, depending on the images selected and the speed of your server. All Downloads are included free. I have also included the option to order different size prints. You or your guests can order via website; but you are free to make your own prints if you prefer."

Link to photos - <http://ttaylorphoto.zenfolio.com/neca-2018-montage>

Password - NECA2018 (Case sensitive/all caps/no space)

EASY TO DOWNLOAD individual or all images in a gallery. Select any image in gallery. Select "Download" icon option above image. Select "Original" or "All Available".

Selecting 'Original' refers to an individual image. Download begins immediately.

We are hard at work on celebrating the founding of the Academy fifty years ago in Philadelphia. We will be mailing invitations this summer for the September 30 formal dinner and program at the Franklin Institute. And we're working on plans for next June in Quebec City.



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

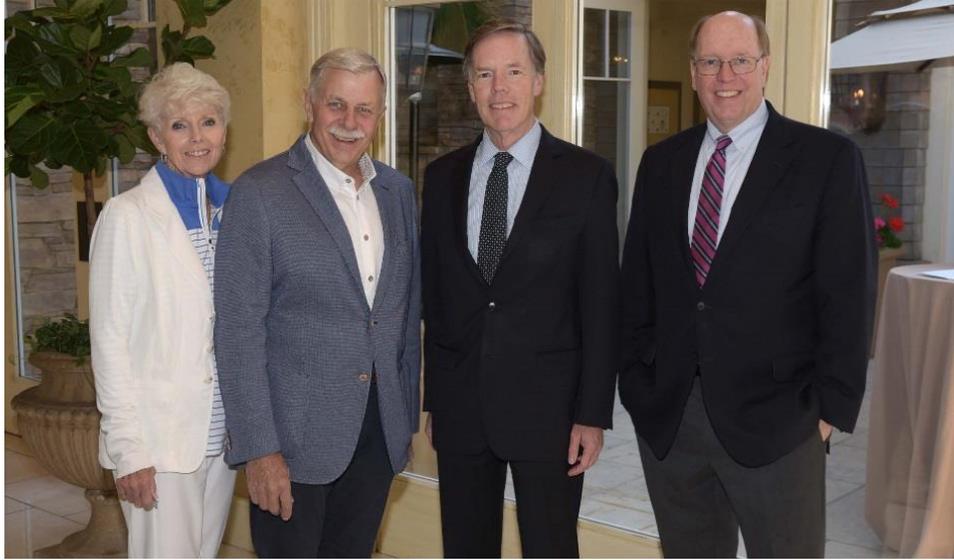


**Mike & Barbara McPhee and Isa & Russ Borden**



**Larry, Barbara, Kathy & Ron Cogburn**





Chris & David Hardt with Ambassador Nick Burns and John Grau





**David Roberts, John Grau & Geary Higgins**



**Dave White & David Hardt**



**Chris Hardt with Tina & Tim Gauthier**