Elevatoring in the Time of Coronavirus

by Ricia Sturgeon-Hendrick

In early January, we decided to have the Elevator World, Inc. Annual General Meeting virtually. It wasn’t because we had to, but because our CEO wanted to try out some new technology. The camera was fun to set up, and we instantly found it was great for having conferences with editors of our international magazines — all at once, instead of one at a time. At the time of this writing, two months later, we feel like it was a stroke of brilliance (or clairvoyance). Who knew all meetings would be like this for the foreseeable future?

As we go to press, it is a troubled time for all of us around the world. Day by day, we are being asked to physically cut ourselves off from others to avoid contamination from the coronavirus. Humans are social animals, so this is hard for us, but it is not nearly as hard as it might have been 50 or even 25 years ago. We have computers, smartphones, FaceTime, Slack and Zoom video conferencing. We are having to learn new ways to work and stay in touch. But, many of the things we learned in kindergarten will help us now: wash your hands, don’t touch each other, be respectful of others, be kind and be patient. We need to follow the motto of our English friends, who, during the World War II bombings, advised each other to “Keep calm and carry on.”

This issue is full of technical and practical articles. The focus topic is **Fixtures** with four entries:

- **From Dairy Queen to Fixture King** by Kaija Wilkinson: Innovation Industries had an inauspicious beginning in Roswell, New Mexico. Now in Russellville, Arkansas, the family-owned company has grown by investment and acquisition into a powerhouse.
- **Big Brothers** by Lee Freeland: Austria-based View Elevator uses artificial intelligence in its in-cabin fixture to "sense" imminent danger from emergency calls.
- **Cabin Design** by Muharrem Çakirer: the author outlines how designers must be careful not to create obstacles while enhancing accessibility. He urges the use of contrast, mirrors and soothing colors.
- **Newest on the Market** by Lee Freeland: this Product Spotlight focuses on Genemek’s latest fixtures. To keep them coming, one-quarter of the company’s employees are in R&D.

Robert Kaspersma of Liftinstituut has written a fascinating paper on how some new technology may create a barrier to those who must maintain or inspect the equipment in **Innovative Designs: Challenges for Inspections and Maintenance.**

While the second quarter of 2020 has been wiped clean of events, we report on four great meetings from the first quarter that just snuck in before the worldwide lockdown:

- **New Energy, New Attitude** by Kaija Wilkinson: the Elevator Escalator Safety Foundation (EESF) held its Annual General Meeting in Tampa with new leadership building on the past. EESF is moving forward in the U.S. and, in Canada, is looking to new challenges.
- **ECA Annual Membership Meeting** by Lee Freeland: the Elevator Contractors of America met in Orlando at the Four Seasons. The three-day meeting was packed with education and information shared by contractors and union officials.
- **Focused on Growth** by Vijay Pandya: held in Mumbai in late February, the eighth International Elevator and Escalator Expo saw more than 7,500 visitors, despite the beginnings of coronavirus concerns. Some 135 companies displayed.
- **Facing Challenges** by Matthew Jackson: NY Build put on a very active show on March 3-4 with plenty of participation by the elevator industry, despite a subdued atmosphere, in NYC.

The features this month are from London and Dubai.

**Loewe Circular Lift** by Lee Dean shows off the new flagship store on Bond Street in London. It features a luxurious glass panoramic elevator surrounded by a stone stairway. A **New Face for Dubai** is the story of elevatoring the Dubai Frame, the largest picture frame in the world. From one side, it outlines the old city and, from the other side, the modern high-rises. thyssenkrupp faced many challenges installing the vertical transportation.

Our hearts go out to our readers around the world. We will continue to try to give you the news quickly through our websites and digital newsletters and more in-depth in our magazines. I look forward to when social distancing is a thing of the past, and we can once again reach out and touch someone. Be safe!