On Being Essential

by Ricia Sturgeon-Hendrick

We are halfway through a year that has been dominated by a strange virus that has forced the whole world to shelter in place for months. When January dawned at ELEVATOR WORLD, we were looking for glimpses of the future with our 2020 Vision replay. Little did we know the near future would be nothing like we imagined. Suddenly, our industry was essential, along with nurses and doctors, grocery store workers, the media and even meat packers.

While others were quarantined or working from home, elevator mechanics struggled to keep elevators operational while wearing personal protective equipment and facemasks. However, there is no such thing as “working from home” when you are in elevator maintenance and other essential businesses. Hospitals, medical facilities and multistory residential buildings were the highest priority, even when parts became more difficult to obtain.

It is appropriate that this is the People Issue, because our industry’s people deserve a lot of credit for keeping the world going up and down safely. Twenty-two industry players were nominated by the industry, including CEOs, salespeople, trainers and troubleshooters. Many are based in NYC, with some from places including Florida, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, California, Canada, the U.A.E. and India.

We also are reporting on two seminars from last month. **NAEC 2020 Spring Educational Conference** by Kaija Wilkinson was not in Charleston, South Carolina, as planned, but on Zoom from your home. Some 70 participants came to the event led by Don Gelestino and Alesa MacArthur. New officers were announced, and visitors enjoyed several speakers. **Webinar for the Elevator & Escalator Industry, India** by Vijay Pandya was put on by EW India and Virgo Communications. It was the first in a series of webinars to visit the impact of COVID-19 on the industry. Major OEMs in India were on the panel, and more than 1,000 attended. A second webinar with a worldwide industry. Major OEMs in India were on the panel, and more than 1,000 attended. A second webinar with a worldwide

Our Focus Topic this month is evacuation solutions and Emergency Operations, and we have five excellent contributions to that subject:

♦ **Rethinking “Rescue”** by Michael J. Ryan: The author has often mentioned this personal peeve to your publisher. He abhors the term “rescue” from a stalled elevator, as it is a safe, though inconvenient, place to be.

♦ **MRLs in Emergencies** by TAK Mathews: This was originally a paper given at last year’s International Elevator & Escalator (IEE) Symposium in Las Vegas. At issue is equipment that is no longer designed to be in a fire-rated machine room that may be subject to fire damage and, therefore, not work for firefighters or in occupant evacuations.


♦ **Clearly Protected** by Gene Kennedy: Flood Glass is used to protect elevators from the devastation of floodwater and debris, such as that suffered in New York and New Jersey during Hurricane Sandy.

♦ **Rationale for Developing a Brake Tester** by Dr. Albert So, Dr. K.H. Lam and Chung To “Andy” Kong: This was also originally a paper given at the Las Vegas IEE Symposium. Based on an accident in which an elevator continued to travel with the doors open, a research team at The University of Hong Kong developed a generic brake monitor to address the issue.

A feature this month is **Twice as Nice** by Hongliang Liang, which describes the modernization project adding double-deck elevators with destination control at Westminster City Hall in London. Also, we have 3D **Hoistway Door Protection** by John W. Koshak for a continuing-education credit. Colin Craney has written an interesting article, *A Strange and Different New World*, that speaks to the impacts of COVID-19. He notes the old saying, “In times of crisis, the state really is the bank of last resort.” While the author is from the U.K., we can all sympathize with various world leaders who are being judged by their responses to the virus. There’s nowhere to hide on this one!

It’s a packed issue. Enjoy the read.