



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Judith Rubin
+1 314 853-5210
rubin.judith@gmail.com

Gene Jeffers
+1 818-843-8497
gene@TEAConnect.org

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Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) Announces 17th Annual Thea Award Recipients

Annual awards for the themed entertainment industry seek, gauge and celebrate excellence in storytelling that supports the creation of compelling places and guest experiences

Orlando, Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2010 -- "The annual Thea Awards, presented by the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA), recognize and honor excellence in the creation of extraordinary visitor experiences, attractions, exhibits and places," says incoming TEA president Rick Rothschild of FAR Out! Creative Direction. "Storytelling and teamwork are the heart of the Experience Design Industry and its projects. TEA's Thea Awards celebrate storytelling across the globe - educational and entertaining stories of heritage, history, fiction, fantasy, magic and even hard science – delivered with artistry and the appropriate use of technology at museums, theme parks, world expos, special events and other settings. The Thea Awards also honor teamwork at its very best – the creative handshake between the visionary project owner and the multidisciplinary collective of designers, artisans and technicians who realize the vision. Also, this year we commemorate the late Harrison "Buzz" Price, who at the very first Thea Awards in 1994 was recognized with the Lifetime Achievement Award. In his honor, we've renamed it the 'Buzz Price Award, recognizing a Lifetime of Distinguished Achievements.'

The Thea Awards Nominating Committee (listed below) recommended the current slate of 15 Thea recipients, with final approval by the TEA International Board of Directors. The Awards will be formally presented March 12, 2011 at the 17th Annual Thea Awards Gala, to be held at the Globe Theatre, Universal Studios Hollywood. The Awards Gala, sponsored by Economics at AECOM, is an elegant, black-tie dinner event and is open to the public. Tickets/more information: www.teaconnect.org.

17th Annual Thea Award Recipients

The Buzz Price Award – Recognizing a Lifetime of Distinguished Achievements
(formerly the Thea Lifetime Achievement Award)

Kim Irvine, Art Director, Disneyland

Thea Classic Award

The Exploratorium, San Francisco, CA

Thea Awards for Outstanding Achievement

Along the River During the Qingming Festival, China Pavilion, Shanghai Expo 2010 (Expo Pavilion Exhibit)

The National Infantry Museum, Columbus, Georgia USA (Museum)

The Walt Disney Family Museum, San Francisco, USA (Museum)

Science Storms, Museum of Science & Industry, Chicago USA
(Museum/Science Center Exhibit)

Beyond All Boundaries, Solomon Victory Theater, National World War II Museum, New Orleans USA (Museum Attraction)

Glasnevin Museum, Dublin, Ireland (Museum)

World of Color, Disney California Adventure, Anaheim USA (Nighttime Spectacular)

ICT Mobile Device, Information and Communications Pavilion, Shanghai Expo 2010 (Integration of Technology and Storytelling)

“Flynn Lives,” ComiCon 2010 San Diego, Calif. USA (Promotional Event)

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Universal Resort Orlando, USA (New Theme Park Land)

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Universal Resort Orlando, USA (Thematic Integration of Retail, Food & Beverage Experiences)

“Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey,” Universal Resort Orlando, USA
(Feature Attraction)

“Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey,” Universal Resort Orlando, USA
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The Buzz Price Award – Recognizing a Lifetime of Distinguished Achievements
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Kim Irvine, Art Director, Disneyland

Kim Irvine began her career at Walt Disney Imagineering in 1970. Working alongside her mother Leota Toombs (recent Disney Legend for her Imagineering contributions) Kim was able to learn her skills under such greats as Mary Blair, John Hench, Mark

Davis, and Claude Coats. John Hench would become Kim's mentor, as he relied on her more and more for her color expertise, a skill for which John was the undisputed master. This skill would serve Kim well over the ensuing decades that she would lead the art direction at Disneyland, always finding new pallets of color and emotion to keep the Park appealing to the ever evolving demographic. Kim contributed to many of the early attractions at Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom and Epcot including: Small World, interiors for the Contemporary Resort, The Land, Universe of Energy, Germany and Mexico pavilions. In 1980, Kim joined the Disneyland Design Studio and pioneered the development and evolution of that team as a model for the branches that exist in Disney's resort locations around the world.

In her long held role as Art Director for Disneyland, Kim has been responsible for such projects as the Disneyland 50th celebration, most notably Sleeping Beauty Castle itself, and color schemes and symbolic designs representing each of Disneyland's five decades. Kim was entrusted with the redesign of John Hench's classic Plaza Inn Restaurant, the creation of Rancho Del Zocalo Restaurant in Frontierland and most recently, the complete concept for the magical Disneyland Dream Suite in New Orleans Square. While Disneyland has kept Kim busy, she can always squeeze in time for projects elsewhere when her expertise is keenly needed. As an example, the Disneyland Paris Castle interior and its Carrousel benefited from the loan of Kim's talent. During the last year, Kim led the effort to reimagine "*it's a small world*," bringing new life to the 45-year-old classic, design of the new Disney Gallery and interiors for the new Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln exhibit on Main Street U.S.A., along with a variety of highly themed merchandise experiences.

Thea Classic Award

The Exploratorium, San Francisco, Calif. USA

The Exploratorium is a museum of science, art, and human perception. It includes a large collection of interactive exhibits, online interactives, web features, activities, programs and events. The Exploratorium pioneered the "interactive exhibit movement" by engaging its audience in active science discovery and learning. The museum sells its exhibits around the world. The Exploratorium, founded in 1969 by physicist Frank Oppenheimer (brother to J. Robert Oppenheimer father of the atomic bomb), set a new direction for science education, employing hands-on learning tools to engage museum visitors in the learning process.

Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement (Expo Pavilion Exhibit)

Along the River During the Qingming Festival, China Pavilion, Shanghai Expo 2010

The "Along the River During the Qingming Festival" exhibit is a giant scale representation of the Song Dynasty Chinese art treasure *Along the River During the Qingming Festival* scroll. The complete re-creation of this panoramic scene is projected on a 100 meter wide screen (approx 6 meters tall). All scenic elements are authentically re-created and remain static, while all the people of the original painting (more than 1500) are animated and moving throughout the riverfront village setting, showing the activities of a full day - including a transition into the evening and night lighting, sunrise, and another day. The result is a magical effect that can be watched for

hours. There are additional projections below the mural in a “digital river” with projections of scrim and beneath utilizing electronic tiling. The original 17 foot long scroll painting was also on display in an adjacent gallery during the first month of the Expo. A National Treasure, it is normally kept at the Beijing Art Museum and only exhibited for brief periods every few years.

Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement (Museum)

The National Infantry Museum, Columbus, Georgia USA

The National Infantry Museum takes visitors on an immersive, interactive journey—as experienced by the Infantryman—through every war fought by the U.S. over the past two centuries—from the American Revolution to Operation Iraqi Freedom. “The Last 100 Yards” is the museum’s signature exhibit. Life-like scenes from eight wars in Infantry history dot a 100-yard-long gently inclining ramp, signifying the Infantry’s role in taking the last 100 yards of any battle. The scenes feature cast figures of real Infantry soldiers, as well as a World War II glider, Huey helicopter and Bradley Fighting Vehicle. Different galleries trace Infantry history through a collection of more than 30,000 artifacts, from before the Revolutionary War to action today in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is a special gallery recognizing Medal of Honor recipients and one that pays tribute to those who love an Infantryman, and the sacrifices they make supporting him.

Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement (Museum)

The Walt Disney Family Museum, San Francisco, Calif. USA

Celebrating its first anniversary on October 1, this museum was built, owned and operated by Walt Disney’s own family, with no direct connection to The Walt Disney Company. It is located in a series of historical buildings at The Presidio of San Francisco, part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area of the National Park Service. The Museum is easily a half-day experience even for casual visitors, because it houses so much original material -- drawings, artifacts, models, photos, three dimensional objects, etc. – created by Disney staff under Walt’s direction for films, television and the Disney theme parks for over 40 years. There are one-of-a-kind presentations (i.e., a model of Disneyland, supervised by Tony Baxter, that includes ideas Walt imagined but never built in the Anaheim park), audio and video recordings on over 200 video monitors exploring the Disney creative process during the Walt years, inclusion of many Disney creators that make clear Walt did not do it alone, and a balanced explanation of Walt’s darkest time: the Studio strike in 1941. There are artifacts unique to the Museum; for example, a brand new Multi-plane Camera rig, two stories tall, built for the Museum by Thea Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Don Iwerks. Also on display are the 32 Academy Awards presented to Walt Disney. The Walt Disney Family Foundation regularly presents special programs including screenings of films made during Walt’s time and has embarked on an ambitious program to engage school children in weekend creative activities.

Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement (Museum/Science Center Exhibit)

Science Storms, Museum of Science & Industry, Chicago USA

Science Storms is a 26,000 square foot interactive exhibit with dynamic, large-scale

laboratory experiments that demonstrate nature's most powerful phenomena such as tornados, lightning fire, tsunamis, sunlight, avalanches and atoms in motion. The exhibit includes hands-on experiments and interactive media to allow guests to investigate the basic scientific principles behind nature's forces. Visitors are engaged in the adventure of science and in the imaginative and creative processes of scientists. Not only can a visitor step into the vortex of a 40' tornado, they can feel and measure the dynamics of the forces at work. The 24' Tesla coil and the giant Newton's cradle are other examples of the scale of many of the exhibits.

Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement (Museum Attraction)

Beyond All Boundaries, Solomon Victory Theater,

National World War II Museum, New Orleans USA

Beyond All Boundaries uses a 125' projection scrim, life size props, atmospheric affects and multi-plane (behind-the-screen) imagery to place visitors at the National World War II museum in the heart of a highly emotional, profound, 4D cinema experience. The 4D technologies (giant screen, rumbling seats, snow falling, etc.) have been perfectly orchestrated so as to enhance and intensify rather than distract from a rigorous focus on an unexpected, profound story line. It shows that World War II pushed all of its participants BEYOND ALL BOUNDARIES of human decency, in the defense of human freedom.

Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement (Museum)

Glasnevin Museum, Dublin, Ireland

Opened in April of 2010, the Glasnevin Museum is located in Glasnevin Cemetery, the largest in Ireland, which first opened in 1832. The Glasnevin Cemetery, resting place of some 1.2 million, has been a popular tourist destination for many years as visitors flock to the site to see the Round Tower monument at the vault of "Famous Liberator" Daniel O'Connell. The Museum is an impressive structure in itself and is comprised of three major exhibits, including *The City of the Dead*, *The Milestone Gallery* and *The Prospect Gallery*. "The City of the Dead" is an immersive exhibition in the basement of the Museum in which visitors descend through evocative layers of earth into the Well of Memory, a network of stone drains built in the 19th century to minimize the spread of cholera. This exhibit includes the multimedia "Reflections Wall" featuring the names, stories and mementos of the dead; "Grave Matters," a literal cross-section of the earth below Glasnevin Cemetery in which burial practices and other issues such as grave digging and cholera control are explored; "The Archive Vault," home to the Cemetery archives of the Cemetery; and "Beliefs," an animated walk through the establishment of Glasnevin as the first non-sectarian cemetery of the time and an overview of various views on afterlife. The "Milestone Gallery" is home to an impressive history exhibit and 10-metre long interactive timetable in which the lives of famous individuals buried at Glasnevin can be explored. The "Prospect Gallery" affords spectacular views and a useful guide of the cemetery.

Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement (Nighttime Spectacular)

World of Color, Disney California Adventure, Anaheim USA

This nighttime fountain spectacular is a visual and technical marvel, and an important

focal point in the reimagining of Disney California Adventure theme park. World of Color comes in the form of nearly 1,200 fountains, some shooting higher than 200 feet. Mist screens that can become 380 feet wide; as wide as the 15 million gallon Paradise Bay Lagoon itself, are the background palette of the show. A wide range of other elements includes Disney and Pixar animated film scene projections, lighting, lasers, fog, fire and music - adding up to some 18,000 points of show control. Five years in the making, the 26-minute show takes its name from the 1960s television series "Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color." A sense of the size and scope of this attraction can be further conveyed through a short list of the eight types of fountain attachments used: Four butterfly fountains, six dancer nozzles with intertwining dual nozzles, ten 200-foot geysers and 12 flower spouts, 76 water whips with heads that can turn in any direction, 400 chasers and 600 grid fountains at eight foot intervals complete the list.

Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement (Integration of Technology & Storytelling)
ICT Mobile Device, Information & Communications Pavilion, Shanghai Expo 2010

The ICT Mobile Device is an exemplary achievement in the integration of technology with storytelling that enables an outstanding visitor experience. As one of the attractions at the Expo Shanghai 2010, the Information and Communication Pavilion was unique in the use, not only of well-known industry technical systems, but an entirely new and novel hand held device which interactively connected every guest with the presentations within the Pavilion. This device can be described more thoroughly as an "Information Communication Technology Mobile Device" (or ICT Mobile Device). The device provides an array of functions quite beyond those of all such previous mass guest interface systems. Every Pavilion guest is loaned an ICT device that invites them to, in an individual manner, personally communicate with multiple displays and presentations choosing responses to a large array of ideas and subjects which suit their own individual interest. More than 2,600 individual ICT devices can interact with the Pavilion systems at one time. The ICT device acts as a video game player, storage device, an interactive media player, in addition to being a four language audio player. Equipped with a Hi-Def visual touch screen, the device also has LED lights and can vibrate to emphasize important presentational moments. The ICT device stores their photos and more detailed personal information communicated to it as they touch the gadget to various subject displays. The overall important function of the gadget is to allow each guest to build an extensive database of not only new information transmitted to the ICT device, but provide the Pavilion with all the detailed individual choices made during the guest visit. Thus the ICT device combined with the other multi-media technology systems provides the Pavilion operations with invaluable feedback data about the choices and opinions expressed by every individual guest. But wait, there's more. When each guest returns home, they will find their very own Internet web page created automatically by the ICT device during their visit to the Pavilion. They are invited to continue their exploration of the future communication possibilities via Internet long after their actual visit.

Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement (Promotional Event)

"Flynn Lives," ComiCon 2010, San Diego, Calif. USA

"Flynn Lives" was the title of Disney's TRON ARG (Alternate Reality Game) that

combined elements of promotion, puzzles, game play, scavenger hunting and location-based entertainment into a completely new kind of guest experience. To promote the upcoming TRON LEGACY (a sequel/reboot of the groundbreaking original TRON film), this ARG created an experiential groundswell of interest in the film over nearly two years, leveraging social media and online connectivity to tell a compelling, immersive story that feels inherently part of the digital world of the film, filled with labyrinthine computer networks and competitive video games. Starting with influential online bloggers and fans, the game created a “resistance movement” themed to the film’s mysterious digital-world storyline, told through numerous interconnected websites and real-world puzzles. This created a parallel story to the film, both online and within the real world - the characters from the movies would affect the player’s real lives with media, events, and rewards. All of the game’s events encouraged global collaboration - many puzzles could not be solved by a single player, and were played by people all over the world. Each step of the game would result in a real-world event; players were often rewarded with game “swag” mailed to them from the resistance movement, keeping them engaged. Certain puzzles led to secret real-world “drops” or phone calls with clandestine clues. Each step of the ARG progressed in scope and scale to include more and more of the real world. In particular, major real-world events like ComicCon included giant location-based attractions as part of the ARG, such as a full-size arcade recreated from the film at ComicCon 2009, and the futuristic “End Of Line” nightclub at ComicCon 2010 - a themed environment with wrap-around HD projection to create the feeling of flying inside the computer world.

Thea Awards for Outstanding Achievement

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter (New Theme Park Land)

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter (Thematic Integration of Retail, Food & Beverage Experiences)

“Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey” (Feature Attraction)

“Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey” (Technical Achievement)

Universal Resort Orlando, USA

The challenge was to deliver a real world version of a magical place imagined in the vivid pages of J K Rowling’s Harry Potter stories. The phenomenally successful book series evoked images that would be difficult to create in the world of film, let alone theme parks. With film, the magical world was extended to infinity through digital effects and by restricting the views of the camera. Designers from the Harry Potter film world would later say that it wasn’t until Orlando that they first saw Hogwarts Castle and its magical world all together in one place. In creating the **New Theme Park Land** for The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, everyone from J K Rowling on down was intent to deliver a world that could hold up to intense scrutiny of rabid Potter fans. From the minute detail of windows displaying chocolate frogs - pulled from Rowling’s writings, to larger spaces detailing the likes of the Hog’s Head Pub, Ollivanders Wand Shop, or the Owl Post. At the other extreme is the jaw dropping grand overview of Hogsmeade Village and the imposing edifice of Hogwarts Castle draped in a mantle of winter white. Somehow, it has all been magically transported to steamy Central Florida. These environments on their own have achieved a level of believability that moves fans emotionally. It is not so much replicative architecture as it is the storytelling of magical

places, times and feelings, made real by “inhabitants” sharing their magical trappings, habits and foods. Suspension of disbelief in the film version requires massive doses of celluloid trickery to complete the illusion. Come to Orlando and inhabit for a time, a real magical world, just an exit removed from Interstate 4.

The **Feature Attraction** of the Wizarding World is called “Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey.” The scope of this adventure is massive. This state of the art attraction resides beneath the most imposing structure in the Wizarding World, Hogwarts Castle. The “Journey” begins with a queue that winds guests through the most memorable story settings in the Castle. Exhibiting extraordinary detail, this preshow includes a look into Dumbledore’s Office, and the Defense Against The Dark Arts classroom, where convincing images of key film characters set up the ride premise. In the Portrait Gallery, paintings come to life with an unmatched level of reality; while an animatronic Sorting Hat gives guests their final instructions for the journey. The level of showmanship to this point has surpassed what would typically be found in a major attraction, but it merely creates anticipation for what lies ahead---a ride like no other ride ever experienced.

The “enchanted bench” ride vehicle behaves in a way that defies every show/ride system in operation to this point in time. Its movement through Harry’s daring world of adventure can only be described as magical. No track, no hint of where you are going, just complete immersion in the story scenes, and so the “Journey” unfolds. With the aid of Hermione’s magic, the bench lifts up and behaves as though it had come to life, hurling guests from one adventure scene to the next, first out front, then on your back and over to your side and then down below. After joining Harry for a short round of Quidditch with Draco Malfoy, we quickly get sidetracked into a darker world of Hungarian Horntail Dragons, Acromantula Giant Spiders, the Whomping Willow Tree and of course the dreaded Dementors. Harry is able to rescue the guests by summoning his “Patronus” to drive the Dementors away allowing us to fly back to the safety of Hogwarts to celebrate winning the Quidditch Match. It will take several rides to drink in all that the brain has to process in what is a totally new way of experiencing a story. The **Technical Achievement** of this ride system introduces a robotic arm (with a seating bench where the hand should be) into a dimensional environment where sets, film and animated effects are traveled in around and through, in a seamless series of events. A major technical achievement is the computer controlled interface that allows these free ranging/massive machines to perform in harmony with loading belts, walking guests, and an ADA spur track that can cycle additional vehicles into the orderly running system. Once all these operational issues are engaged, the show systems sync with the 40 + moving vehicles, co-coordinating animation and filmed sequences to each “bench” full of guests—each dispatched at an astounding seven seconds. The unique aspects of the robotic arm allow it to place guests in the center of a scene; for example, a giant astrolabe where you are surrounded by massive metal rings... with no apparent break for ride track visible above or below. Three times during the “flying” journey the vehicle syncs with revolving dome screens that allow for extended time in thrill/story sequences with the lead characters. The transfer from practical sets to filmed simulator environment is virtually seamless. This system and its software allow “Forbidden

Journey” to safely deliver a new kind of experience in a magical way, raising the bar on the art and science of themed entertainment.

Usually, a major creative accomplishment ends here. The operating group steps in to take care of the needs and desires for food, merchandise, etc., and the seamless themed environment so carefully crafted is jarred by real world drink and merchandise brands, churro and beer carts, etc. But the Wizarding World is not usual. An amazing **Thematic Integration of Retail, Food & Beverage Experiences** has been created at a level where guests willingly wait an hour to go into a Wand Shop, when the same product is readily available from carts. The interaction between “guests and wizard” in that shop is not to be missed, and under different circumstances could stand alone as a show. What transpires show wise in this encounter turns into a merchandise feeding frenzy as the guests move on deeper into the retail area. Brilliant idea! Magic is plentiful everywhere in the stores. There are carnivorous books, jousting statues of knights, skeletons with birds attacking their marble-like eyeballs, US Postage Stamps with iconic scenes that can be “posted” via owl, and authentic school robes and gowns that add 10 degrees to the already roasting Orlando summer.

There are Chocolate Frogs and nasty tasting “Every Flavored” jellybeans, but the signature concoctions are the scratch blended beverages, Pumpkin Juice and Butter Beer. (It is rumored that Rowling had buy-off on the taste!) If the beer is purchased from the Hog’s Head Pub, there is a show to accompany the dispensing of the drink featuring, what else, the Hog’s head. This all could be an eye opener for operators that are buried by the usual trinkets and fast food on exhibit at IAAPA. It is amazing to enter a park environment and not find cola, churros or branded water.

Thea Awards Committee

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Patricia MacKay (Ones and Zeros)

About TEA

The [TEA](#) (Themed Entertainment Association) is an international nonprofit alliance founded in 1991 and based in Burbank, Calif. TEA represents some 7,000 creative specialists, from architects to designers, technical specialists to master planners, scenic fabricators to artists, and builders to feasibility analysts working in more than 650 firms in 30 US states and 40 different countries. TEA presents the annual Thea Awards and the TEA Summit and hosts the annual SATE conference (Storytelling, Architecture, Technology, Experience). TEA also produces a variety of print and electronic publications, including the TEA/AECOM Theme Index, TEA Project Development Guidelines, and TEA Annual & Directory.

Visit TEA on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About the Thea Awards

Like the TEA, the Thea Awards, sponsored by Economics at AECOM, were created to bring recognition to achievement, talent and personal excellence within the themed entertainment industry. From a modest beginning in 1994, the Thea Awards have become internationally recognized as a symbol of excellence. The public is welcome to attend the black tie 17th Annual Thea Awards Gala, which will be held March 12, 2011 at the Globe Theater, Universal Studios Hollywood. Tickets may be ordered online at teaconnect.org. The name of the award is a play on three words: the first is "Thea," the Greek goddess from whom all light emanates. Thea was the mother of Helios (the sun), Eos (the dawn), and Selene (the moon). The second key word is "Theater," a word derived from the goddess Thea. The third word, of course, is TEA, the name of our association.

[A comprehensive listing](#) of Thea Awards and project credits from 1994-2010 and [detailed history of the awards](#) are on the TEA website.

About [Economics at AECOM](#)

Economics at AECOM (formerly ERA/Economics Research Associates) is an international consulting firm focused on economic analysis for the entertainment and leisure industry, real estate development, public-policy analysis, tourism, and economic development. Since its founding in 1958, Economics at AECOM has completed over 15,000 assignments yielding unmatched experience in land use economics. In the process, the firm has made important contributions to some of the world's most innovative and successful development projects. Their projects span the globe and range from repositioning single land uses to New Towns planned over 30 years. In broad terms, Economics at AECOM assists private developers and public agencies in assessing the future economics and outcomes of real estate projects and economic development plans. Economics at AECOM offers a diverse array of economic analysis and tools to answer complex problems. Website: aecom.com