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Acad salutes tech achievements
Feeney honored with Gordon E. Sawyer award

By [DAVID S. COHEN](#)

The film biz's tech community saluted an important environmental initiative and heard the promise of major changes to come Saturday night at the Academy's Scientific and Technical Awards at the Beverly Wilshire.

Maggie Gyllenhaal hosted, and the thesp struggled with the technical jargon and her too-weak contact lenses but won over the crowd anyway, finishing up by saying "I suspect this is a joke you sci-tech guys play on an unsuspecting actress."

Ray Feeney, a much-honored visual effects and technology specialist who took home the sole Oscar statuette of the evening, the Gordon E. Sawyer award, told the gathering that now that most post-production has gone digital, the next step is digital production.



Maggie Gyllenhaal presented Ray Feeney with the Gordon E. Sawyer Award Saturday.

That transition, he said, will be "as important a change as the introduction of sound or the shift from black-and-white to color cinematography."

A special award saluted the industrywide effort to shift from silver-based to cyan-dye analog sound tracks on release prints, a change that had an important environmental impact.

Speaking for the 12 honorees, Ioan Allen of Dolby told the group that the new process saved 40 million gallons of water a year and prevented the use of 750 tons of chemicals annually.

"Our industry has achieved something significant for the good of the earth," he said. "Be proud."

Longtime vfx branch chief Richard Edlund was saluted with the John A. Bonner medal for service to the Academy. Edlund said that except for those times when he's won Oscars (He's won two for visual effects), he's enjoyed the Sci-Tech Awards better.

"I think we have more fun with our friends," he said. But on reflecting on the press, the photographers, and the beautiful actresses on the red carpet, he said "Come to think of it, the Oscars aren't so bad after all."

There were three notable themes for the awards. Kudos were presented to several teams working on archival solutions for digital post-production and to several wireless lens control systems. In CGI visual effects, there were awards for 3-D modeling

Acad prexy Sid Ganis complimented the kudofest's new digs at the Beverly Wilshire and put in a plug for the Acad's museum, which is still on the drawing board.

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