Honoring the best

As I watched the evening news on Thanksgiving weekend, I was struck by how much politics and the upcoming Presidential race is interwoven with the way Americans are celebrating the holiday this year. Even as lawn signs continue to dot every landscape in the wake of Election Day 2007 (everyone will take down all those signs they put up, right?), it seems that political campaigns are as ubiquitous to this holiday as counting blessings, enjoying family, turkey, football and shopping. Sure, we're used to seeing political campaigns during summertime holidays when the election is just around the corner. But Thanksgiving?

This year's Presidential election cycle is much different than others in recent memory. Many states moved their primaries up in the calendar so voters can have a greater say in which candidate gets the nomination of his (or her) political party. Here in New Jersey, where primaries were long held in June, it was easy to wonder why only a few states get to decide the Presidential candidates for the rest of the nation. The only time you would see a Presidential candidate in New Jersey before June was to raise funds, and not to listen to issues that mattered to New Jersey voters. This time, New Jersey will hold its primary in February. And there was speculation that Iowa would move its caucuses to December 2007 to remain the first state to begin narrowing down the field of candidates.

Of course, such maneuvers are understandable given the weight of the decisions we expect our President to make. For all the political jokes on late-night TV shows, there are very real issues that matter to and affect real people, and Americans are demanding leadership, and they are clamoring to have their say at the polls. Thus, the political season runs right alongside our holiday season.

It is against this backdrop that the readers of ECN got to have their say through our annual Readers Choice Tech Awards. This past November, visitors to www.ECNMag.com voted for the best new products that appeared in ECN in the previous 12 months. Each product category that ECN covers was represented in the online poll, and the winning products for each category are presented here [1] in this Awards Issue.

As a design engineer, you know that you face very real and challenging issues such as time to market, getting the most functionality into a design, space constraints and cost. In addition, efficiency and the environment continue to be increasingly important to designers. That's why we added an Energy Efficiency category to this year's Awards. The winning products are those chosen by your peers that best meet these issues and challenges, and they are recognized for their excellence and leadership by their manufacturers.

Speaking of excellence and leadership, I would be remiss if I did not thank our longtime editor-in-chief, Aimee Kalnoskas, for her dedication and hard work toward making ECN such a trusted source for product and design information. For seven

years, her professionalism, enthusiasm, integrity and class have been second to none. She was truly democratic in her management style, listening to and putting the interests of our readers first while never being afraid to take an unpopular stance when necessary. Her warm personality and infectious laugh always drew a crowd, as did the coffee and heavenly baked goods from her café -- they get my vote every time!

For now,
Chris Warner, Managing Editor

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