

To: VES members
From: The VES Membership Committee
Subject: Endorsement letters for prospective members

The VES relies heavily on the endorsement letters submitted by members who are proposing new candidates to join the Society. Although we strive to have the Membership Committee represent a broad range of the effects community, every year there are nominees who no one on the committee knows. In those cases, the letter may be the single most important deciding factor. In ALL cases the endorsement letters weigh heavily in the committee's decision to recommend or NOT recommend.

IMPORTANT guidelines:

1. Please take the responsibility of writing an endorsement letter seriously!

To write a meaningful letter, you should know the individual personally, long enough and well enough to have formed a judgment of his or her character. Just as important, you should know their work, and it must exemplify the highest PROFESSIONAL standards of the art and craft. Questions to ask yourself might be, "Would I recommend this person for a job? Would I want to work with him/her?"

2. If you cannot give a ringing endorsement of the individual in question from your own knowledge, please decline the request. Yes, it's hard to refuse when the candidate is a colleague or a friend of a friend, and even harder when it's your boss! (It's important to make your relationships clear in the letters you do write.) Of course, if you have already recommended someone else for the membership period in question, it's a simple matter to decline gracefully. Otherwise, you might just say, "Bob, I wish I knew you better, let me suggest you find a member who personally knows your entire work history." or "Jane, I'm sorry I don't know your work well enough to make the kind of strong recommendation you need."

3. Question the candidate about his/her reason for wanting to join the VES?

"I just wanna get free screeners!" is not enough reason. The candidate may not necessarily have the time or the desire to serve on committees, but each should indicate that they have given at least some thought about why they want to part with an annual membership fee to be a member in our Society.

4. Write a meaningful letter and include specifics.

Include the following information:

- How long have you known the candidate?
- What is your professional relationship with the candidate? Supervisor, subordinate, co-worker, peer or?
- What does the candidate do that is related to visual effects?
- What personal and professional qualities of the candidate will benefit the Society?

5. Insist that the candidate read the application instructions thoroughly.

An inability to follow the instructions is an indication that the candidate clearly does not take their possible future membership in the VES seriously. Incorrectly submitted applications will be rejected and the applicant will have to wait until the next round to resubmit.

6. Under no circumstances should a VES member allow the candidate to write the endorsement (even as a rough draft or outline) to have the endorser complete and sign. It can be especially embarrassing and even fraudulent when the committee (as it has in the past) receives duplicate endorsement letters.