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LIGHTING



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AND LIGHTING PRODUCT GUIDE

THE EVOLUTION OF THE SMART FIXTURE

BY GARY K. MARKOWITZ, MIES

I have often wondered about the origins of the art of controlling light:

Was it in the beginning of time when light was created by the Supreme Being, only to be doused by the nightfall?

Perhaps our cave-dwelling ancestors (Og, the caveman, for example) developed the concept by finding shelter from the daylight and building fires to overcome the darkness. This new-fangled way to light the family cave had some serious negative characteristics:

Add more wood to the fire, get more light and heat (not exactly the best method on those hot summer nights)...

Pile the wood higher onto the fire for those tasks requiring high visual acuity (for example, darning Og's best fur suit) and either invent the first sauna, or burn the family out of cave, and home.

Put out the fire, and there is the darkness again.

Well, at that point, controlling lighting sources was only a concept that was in its infancy. The eventual development of electricity, and the electric light bulb brought light into modern man's home without the high risks of fire source lighting. The light switch was a further development invented to control this



source of light. Further refinements in this technology brought about a device to control the intensity of incandescent sources. The rheostat is still the most commonly utilized device found in both residential and commercial installations.

Despite man's initial achievements to control the luminous environment, there was a desire to produce sources providing greater efficacy and develop better methods to control these sources. Electronics technology continues to defy stagnancy as demonstrated by the daily announcements of refinements being made to the devices of work and leisure.

Improvements are also common in the field of illumination where technology moves from the laboratory to the electrical distributors' shelves at an almost break-neck pace. This week I was informed of two new ballast manufacturers, and their one-upmanship over the rest of the pack.

In the January/February issue, I reviewed some of the more interesting aspects of fluorescent electronic ballasting. In just two short months, the technology has been further refined to include improved harmonic control, reduced-cost dimming for architectural or daylight-based controls, and improved regulation of the current crest factor. *(continued on page 30)*



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*Shown above: Patented series of mini bollards from Lumiere.

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