

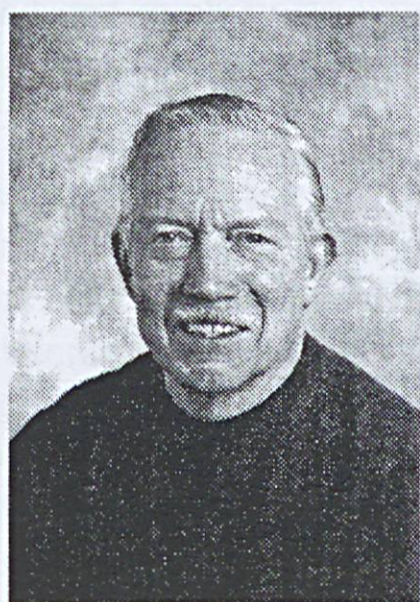


Bulletin

Published by the American Society of Furniture Designers

May 2001

A Few Words From the President Roger Schneeman



Roger Schneeman

ASFD's 20th anniversary was the theme of its April Market dinner in High Point last month attended by one hundred members and guests. Nine Corporate members were featured during the reception which was followed by dinner and a special program including presentation of this years Scholarship winner and a keynote speech by Farooq Kathwari, president and chairman of Ethan Allen. Door prizes were raffled off with proceeds going to the Scholarship Fund. A special thanks is due to Carl Vuncannon of the Bernice Bienenstock Furniture Library for donating several books included as prizes.

Thanks also to Michael Chazin for MC-ing the evening where he also recognized several ASFD charter members (1981-2) who were present. Those distinguished members included Dave Daniel, Buddy Grohs, Steve Hodges, Marty Pratt, Bob Stannard and Arto Szabo. Members present who joined between 1983-87 were also recognized as well as eight previous presidents of ASFD. It was particularly nice to see Jackie Brezney who is one of only two female presidents in ASFD's 20 year history. As president, I'd like to encourage more female members to join the Board and serve on committees.....let me hear from you!

We began another two years with new officers and board members, a list of which is included in this Bulletin. Arto Szabo, our treasurer, reported that ASFD finances are healthy. New committee activities were discussed; and we're delighted that Colleen Visage has agreed to chair the Bulletin edi-

torial committee. She will indeed welcome articles and opinions from all members. The possibility of a unique conference was suggested. It is too early to reveal anything, but it could be a delightful opportunity (see next Bulletin).

We are in a time that is stressful for the furnishings industry and for designers. Reports are that manufacturers are retreating to a defensive economic position. Retailers, according to Jerry Epperson, are hurting and some large ones like Heilig-Meyers and Montgomery Ward are going out of business. Sales are down and inventories are up. Imports from Mexico and especially China are changing the manufacturing and retailing economics. Manufacturers want nothing other than a face lift of presently successful lines. What does this mean for the home furnishings designers...at least until the economy improves? Will it be harder than usual to sell design services and fresh new ideas? We all face a challenge.

All the best to you *Roger*

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Jett Stowell, Jim Thompson, Mike Hodges
and Willard Clayton
The October Company

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Farooq Kathwari address to the ASFD, April 20, 2001

Farooq Kathwari, President, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Ethan Allen spoke at the April meeting of the American Society of Furniture Designers. His talk was packed with insight vital to running a successful business. It certainly has brought Ethan Allen to a unique success in the home furnishings business. A good speech always makes one look into his or her own mind and think further on what the speaker said. Mr. Kathwari's talk certainly did this for me.

He said that an executive's job is to create chaos and then manage it. He surrounds himself with good advisors who are not afraid to advance differing and controversial ideas. Thus, he has the advantage of more insight when making decisions. He said that Ethan Allen does not do traditional market research. Instead, he said, one must constantly be aware of life style changes. The clothing people wear, the vehicles they drive and their leisure time activities gives insight into the home environment they will want to create. Many established companies and brands such as Sears, Montgomery Ward did not watch emerging life style trends and lost business to companies like Old Navy, The Gap and Abercrombie & Fitch. The American car companies refused to recognize that American's attitudes and values were changing and lost sales share to Japan, other Asian countries and Europe, the Oldsmobile brand is a good example. As Americans became more casual in clothing and recreational activities and more adventurous in their choice of vehicles, Ethan Allen changed their image and product design. In the 1990's they made a significant shift in the way they viewed their business, their customers and workforce. They shifted 40% of their current product offering to include relaxed contemporary, but not shocking designs and their classics became more casual. They re-evaluated 50% of their store location and relocated them. Furniture retailers must not ignore companies like Pottery Barn, IKEA and Crate & Barrel who base their business on being in touch with the consumer's life styles and respond to those trends.

He said business, and the designer, must keep their eyes on the consumer, the rest is just details.

Consumers want less, not more, but they want

it right. They don't want more choices, they want right choices; style, function and value. We have to understand what people are buying. Women don't buy cosmetics; they buy good looks and self-confidence. People don't buy clothing they buy self-expression. They don't buy furniture; they buy an expression of their values. Design must have a personality to stand out, which is the difference between mediocrity and excellence. Always look to ways of how you can make it better.

He also spoke of pricing. When you don't have the furniture people want to buy to express their life styles, you have to compete on price. Brand name is not enough. The challenge is to make a known brand a desired brand. He said that people have told him that Ethan Allen could raise their prices. People want Ethan Allen and many probably would pay more. Mr. Kathwari prefers to set a fair price, not the highest possible price.

With an increasing amount of furniture and furniture components coming from other countries like Mexico and China, Mr. Kathwari was complemented for not shifting furniture production out of this country. He explained that there are advantages to manufacture furniture in this country.

You don't tie up your capital and you have control over deliveries and quality.

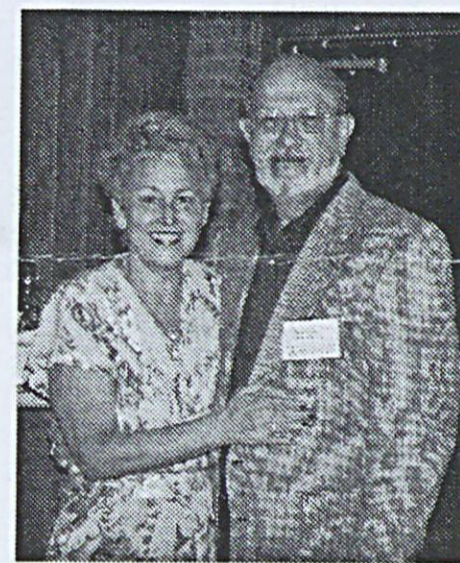
However, he pointed out that they have been importers of many, especially hand crafted, decorative items long before the import craze began.

Ethan Allen has kept pace with consumer motivations and life styles, places emphasis on design and changed their corporate and store image to attract the emerging customers. They succeed with award winning designs, personnel who help customers and with strong national favorable brand recognition.

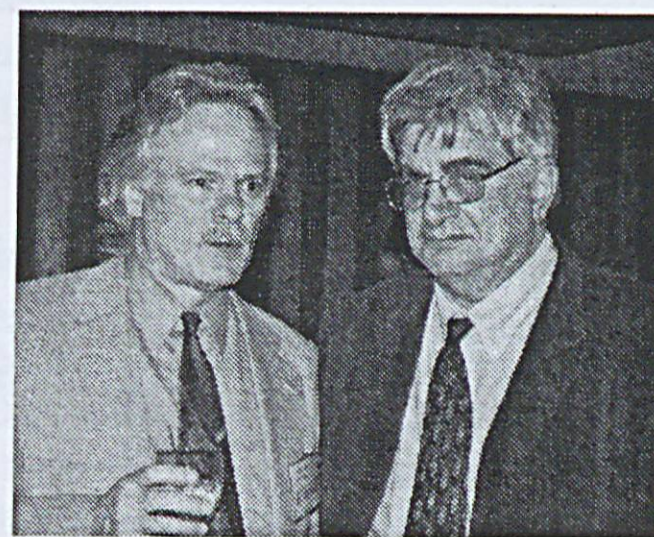
by Roger Schneeman



Farooq Kathwari
*President, CEO and
Chairman of the Board
of Ethan Allen*



Christine Evans,
ASFD Executive Director
Darrell Lowman, ASFD



Jim DiPersia, Karl Felperin
ASFD Professional Members

Thoughts from the April High Point Furniture Market

by Roger Schneeman, Brixton Lane Design



Vikki Hodges, Ted Rittersdorf, Steve Hodges, Howard Skillington, Scott Eppinga at ASFD Dinner.

Here we are at the dawn of the 21st Century and our homes, inside and out, look like century old manor houses of the 18th and 19th Century bourgeoisie. Eighteenth and 19th Century British, with a touch of Asian, was the prominent feature in trade publications at the market. Country French and anything else safe, which has been selling in this down market was shown. Manufacturers are grabbing at any embellished established look that may, at least for a short while, win the interest of potential purchasers....but nothing too different, nothing not tried and true.

In his talk at the ASFD dinner, Farooq Kathwari said that consumers don't want more, they want it right. One could say they don't want more choices, they want right choices. The industry (or is it the retailers in particular regions) with its thousands of manufacturers, offers a tremendous number of choices, but within a narrow scope of style expressions, mostly from the past. We found a source, China, for low-cost hand carving; and by golly, if one manufacturer (or is it us designers) is using it, we are all going to use it more.

Note that I avoid the term "consumer". People don't consume furniture; they keep it for a long time and then pass it on to their children who really would rather have something new and

exciting, but they don't want to offend their parents. Many would rather have something really "cool". I toured the Market halls with Ben Shaffer, the ASFD David Kline Scholarship winner and his friend. Of course, being young Industrial Design students, they were interested in seeing the cool new contemporary. We toured the Design Center and the C & D building seeking out the furniture they admired. I was surprised to see so much. I guess anything you want is there, you just have to seek it out.

I noticed a few showrooms showing simple contemporary home entertainment centers especially designed for the emerging flat screen 4" thick plasma TV's or the somewhat thinner than normal, flat-screen liquid crystal on silicon (LCOF) TV's. The LCOF offering from Thomson Multimedia has a 50" diagonal screen and weighs under 100 pounds. The emerging television technology is getting wider in proportion, larger, thinner and lighter. Few, if any, of the present traditional armoire style home entertainment cabinets being offered will accommodate the emerging technology. The very thin plasma models can be hung on the wall.

Home office, small office has become a major category; but as computer use combines with interactive television, even this furniture staple is likely to require new forms in the future.

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Kichler Lighting, a leading manufacturer in the home lighting and decorative accessory industry is actively searching for an experienced designer. You will be the creative force responsible for multiple product families covering a wide range of styles and price points for our Minoff Lamp, Westwood, Kichler Classics (Tiffany), Ambience and Kichler Outdoor (low voltage) Divisions. In this position, the right individual should possess an innate sense of color and style plus have received formal training in art or design. CAD experience preferred. Previous experience in the design of decorative products for home or business is required. We offer an attractive salary and benefits package in a professional environment that will encourage and strengthen your ability to create. All information forwarded will be held in strictest confidence. For consideration, send your resume to:

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2001 ASFD Pinnacle™ Design Achievement Awards Program

Building on the growth and momentum of the last five years, the 2001 Pinnacle Awards program features three new categories, additional corporate sponsorship, and a larger location for the October awards ceremony.

The three new categories to be added this year are Leather Upholstery, RTA Furniture, and the splitting of the Occasional category into Occasional Tables and Occasional Storage.

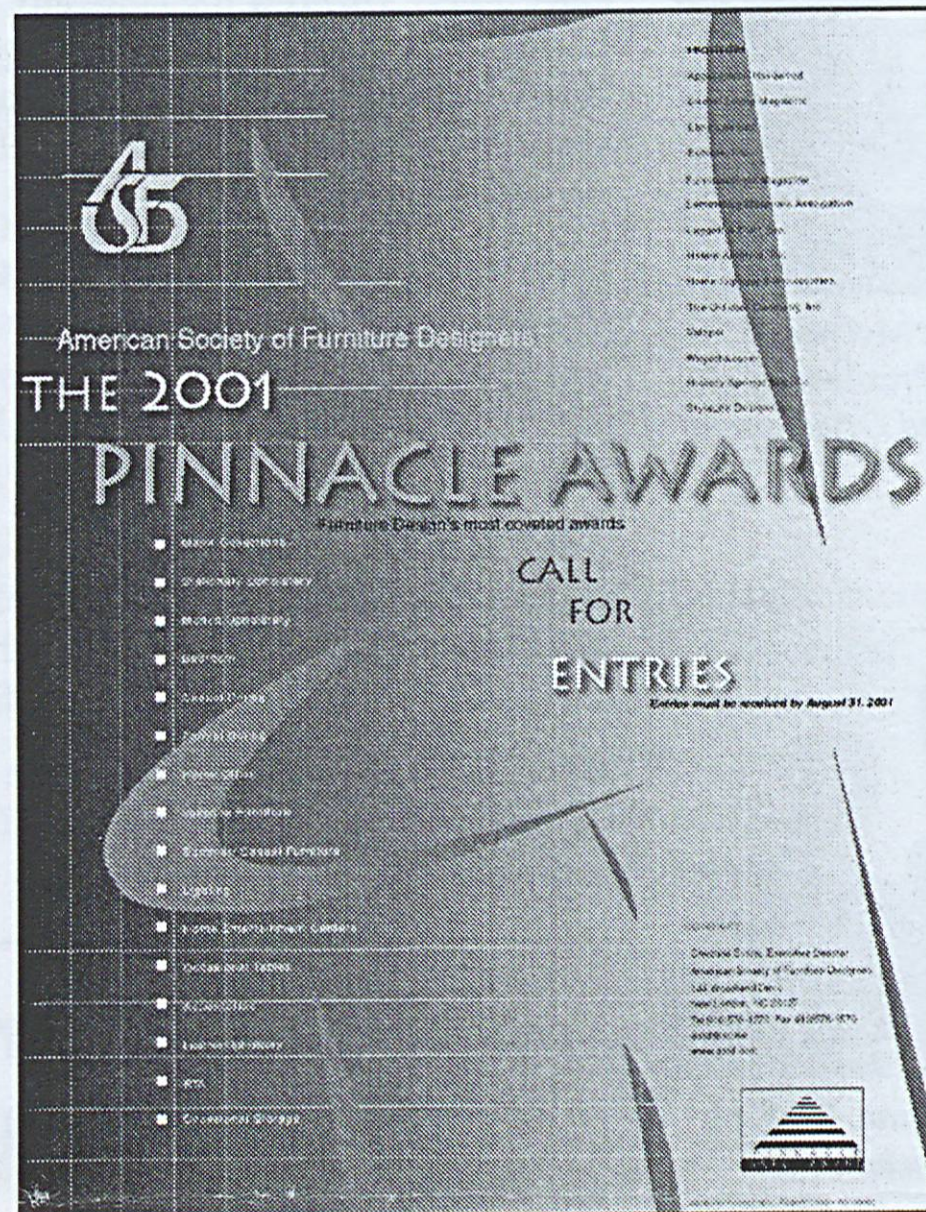
"The additional categories are in direct response to requests from entrants as well as our distinguished panel of judges," claims Karl D. Felperin, 2001 Pinnacle Awards Chairman. "Our new leather category reflects both the growth of the leather upholstery industry and recognizes the unique design problems and opportunities created by leather. To make our occasional category reflect the real occasional market, a split was necessary. RTA gives those manufacturers in this industry a level playing field, particularly in the rapidly growing Home Office Category."

Sponsorship has been obtained from fourteen industry suppliers who include Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc., Casual Living Magazine, Elmo Leather, Eubank, Inc., FurnitureStyle Magazine, Hafele America, Inc., Hickory Springs Mfg. Co., Home Lighting & Accessories Magazine, Laminating Materials Association, Leggett & Platt Inc., StyleLife Designs, Inc., The October Co. Inc., Valspar Industries and Weyerhaeuser.

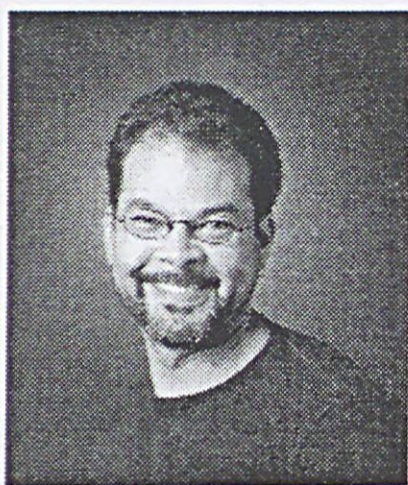
The Pinnacle Awards panel of judges include Ray Allegrezza, Editor-in-Chief, Furniture/Today; Richard Bennington, Professor of Bus. & Director Home Furnishings Program at High Point University; Larry Chilton, Corporate Buyer for Wood-Armfield Co.; Robert Ficks, Jr., Home Furnishings Council; Ellen Gefen, President of Gefen Productions; Carolyn Gomez, V.P. Merchandising, Mastercraft Interiors; Jackie Hirschhaut, V.P. Public Relations, AFMA; Max Shangle, Professor/Furniture Design, Kendall College of Art & Design; Julie Smith, Editor-in-Chief, FurnitureStyle Magazine; Cheminne Taylor-Smith, Editor-in-Chief, Casual Living Magazine; and Tony Wilkerson, Sr. V.P., Havertys Furniture.

The awards ceremony and dinner on Friday evening, October 19 will be held for the first time at the International Home Furnishings Ballroom. "While the High Point Country Club has treated us quite well, the growth in entrants and guests requires a larger facility," says Christine Evans, ASFD Executive Director.

The 2001 Pinnacle Poster/Entry Form was distributed to showrooms at the April High Point Market. A mailing will also be done in July to include ASFD members. The entry kit will also be available for direct download from the ASFD website at www.asfd.com. Deadline for entries will be August 31, 2001. Finalists will be notified immediately and the winners announced at the Pinnacle Awards banquet on October 19.



Designer Spotlight



Mark McDowell
*Vice President of
Design and Development*

Mark McDowell, Vice President of Design and Development, has led Fine Art Lamps' design team since 1991. Heading the company's design team, McDowell has played an integral part in Fine Art Lamps' continuing success and in the development of highly-accepted decorative collections. He believes the variety and diversity of combinations possible not only in form, but also in materials, keeps his design work fresh and vibrant. "Constant renewal-this is the life blood to creative work" says McDowell.

Born from a union of two cultures, the son of a Japanese-born mother and Scottish-American father, Mr. McDowell grew up in a home that was a crossroads of differing cultures and traditions. His unique point of view and style infuse his designs with exotic cross-cultural influences, while capturing today's need for function. Mr. McDowell's artistic vision knows no east or west and is without boundaries, much to the delight of Fine Art Lamps.

When asked about the nature of his design work, McDowell comments "I have spent my life observing the beauty of form, light and color in nature and in man-made objects. It is an inherent need I was born with to find beauty in all things. I capture this beauty in drawings, paintings, sculpture and finally, in product design. It is a life long pursuit of learning and discovery."

Mr. McDowell was educated at the Kansas City Art Institute and the Columbus School of Art and Design. Before coming to Fine Art Lamps, he was associated with Sarreid and Guildmasters.



Sam Applegate, Ed Fink
Wood Technology

ASFD Presents Scholarship Award

The American Society of Furniture Designers recently awarded the second annual David Kline Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$2500 to Benjamin Shaffer, a senior at the University of Cincinnati, College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning. The award was named in honor of the late David Kline, freelance designer and a past president of ASFD. Nominees from 15 targeted universities were asked to submit a "mini portfolio" of sketches, renderings and details of one furniture design project including a written essay.

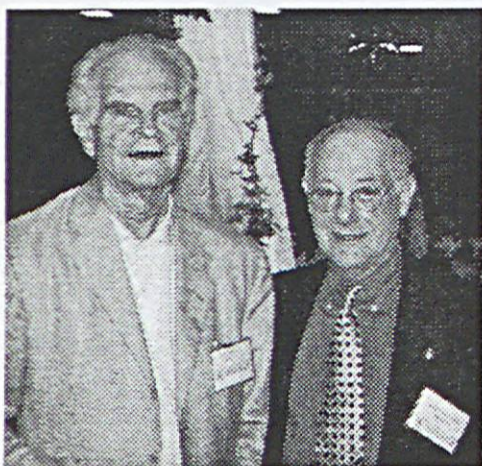


Benjamin Shaffer

The scholarship was co-sponsored by Toppan Interamerica, Inc., a Corporate member of ASFD which is headquartered in McDonough, Georgia. Toppan's president, Jack Jo joined Douglas Krieger, ASFD vice president and furniture designer at Sauder Woodworking in making the presentation before an audience of 100 ASFD members and guests at the recent ASFD Spring Market dinner in High Point. In his talk, Mr. Jo expressed pride in supporting the efforts to advance and promote the furniture design profession.

Ben's winning project was entitled "Lexan Seating Exploration". In his presentation, Mr. Krieger said "this student's effort uses design skills beyond those commonly used. He extensively uses 3-D sketching, new material research, new fabrication concepts and experimental full size prototyping. Ben really displayed some 'out-of-the-box' thinking and we believe achieved something that could have lasting significance."

Founded in 1981, ASFD celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. The organization is proud to present the annual scholarship program which will continue to be co-sponsored by Toppan and other industry suppliers with the award likely increasing next year.



O.B. Solie, Ed Fink



Jack Jo
President of Toppan



American Society of Furniture Designers

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Christine Evans, Executive Director

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2001-2002

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Friedman, Alan - VP/Pres Elec	2003	(773) 244-1042	(773) 244-1046	FriedmanAH@aol.com
DiPersia, Jim - Vice Pres.	2004	(212) 889-7474	(212) 689-6463	jinn3000@aol.com
Krieger, Doug - Vice Pres.	2004	(419) 446-3484	(419) 446-3690	dkrieger@sauder.com
Szabo, Arto - Treasurer		(203) 661-2505	(203) 629-2978	aszabo2@home.com

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Academic:	Doug Krieger (Jeff Smoler, Jim Dipersia, Scott Rhyder, Bruce Mulder)
Bulletin:	Colleen Visage (Christine Evans)
Membership:	Alan Friedman (John Cooper)
Nominating:	Carl Schauble
Pinnacle Awards:	Karl Felperin (Jim DiPersia, Arto Szabo)
Planning:	Arto Szabo
Public Relations:	Jim DiPersia, Roger Schneeman
Website:	Carl Schauble (Joe Gilbert)

Note: BOD are required to attend two meetings per year—April and October, High Point, NC



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Editor's Note Colleen Visage



Hello, I would like to introduce myself as the new editor of the ASFD Bulletin. I am the Corporate Creative Director (not a bad title) for Kichler Lighting, a leading manufacture of decorative home lighting and accessories. Kichler is located in Cleveland, OH, where I was born and am currently raising a young family of my own, and so no Cleveland jokes already. I have a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Industrial Design and have been working in the home furnishings industry for the past 15 years.....now enough about me.

I would like to discuss the importance of the bulletin. The ASFD Bulletin is a newsletter for you, our members, to be used as an informer about our organization. Our organization is built on the very core of creative talents within the home furnishings market. Therefore, I would like to see the bulletin expand its role to you to involve you in ASFD, to get to know you and your many talents. In each edition, we are planning to feature designer members and corporate members in a Spotlight section. I will ask and encourage you to share your stories and your knowledge with our members. We can all learn from one another. Please send to us information about you, your views on design, specialties, awards, industry related shows, information about materials, product images, mug shots (a must), all about what is happening in your world of furniture design.

Please keep this thought "it takes all it's members to participate to make an organization strong".

I look forward to hearing from each of you....If I do not, I am afraid I will be filling the pages of the Bulletin with artwork from my two children, Christopher and Jenna.

Respectfully yours,
Colleen Visage
Cvisage@kichler.com

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