



# Bulletin

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February 1998

## Letter from the President

Dear Friends and Members of ASFD,

That time of year is here and we review our years accomplishments and shortcomings. Although the year for me has had major health problems, as most of you know, I managed to get out a lot of work and overall I am very pleased. There are a lot of new products in the pipeline, and there seems to be a lot of work out there if I have the strength or inclination to pursue it.

I work more slowly now but I work longer and perhaps smarter. It is very hard to find design assistants or any qualified help in my office, so if anyone knows designers interested in moving west, there could be an interesting opportunity.

Our association is preparing for an exciting year, starting with our appearance at the NeoCon West show at the Los Angeles Convention Center on March 19. Keep in mind that WestWeek is at the Pacific Design Center the same week, about 10 miles from the L.A. Convention Center and both are important design shows. Even those whose work is mostly residential will find inspiration in

the products and materials shown.

There also are many opportunities to hear national and international design professionals and enjoy good food in a great area to visit. Los Angeles and southern California have become much more cultural, and the climate is usually terrific. Besides being the home of Universal Studios, Disneyland, Magic Mountain, there also are several fantastic museums including the Huntington, which has a great Greene and Greene Collection, the Greene and Greene Gamble House in Pasadena and the New Getty Center.

Remember that this is our society, and we need your help in bringing back old or lapsed members and in attracting new members. If you have any suggestions for new corporate suppliers or members, please contact our executive director, Christine Evans.

*Sincerely,  
David T. Kline  
ASFD President*

# From The Executive Director .....Christine Evans

Happy New Year! It was a pleasure to receive holiday cards from some members and even a musical e-mail greeting to me at asfd@ac.net.



By the way, we're compiling a list of member e-mail addresses and it would be helpful if users would send an e-mail message confirming your correct address. Thanks very much.

Among the members who called recently were Bruce Anderson and John Stafford who both thanked ASFD for recent Referral notices and reaffirmed how valuable this

service is to the organization. Even if the inquiry is not a match for one designer, he can pass the information along to someone he knows or thinks might be interested. Thanks guys for your comments and support.

Dexter Patterson informed me that he has accepted a new position involving relocation within Wilsonart. Frank

Waters has assumed Dexter's Sr. Sales position and will also be the new liaison with ASFD.

Our thanks and best wishes are extended to Dexter for his past contributions and support to ASFD on behalf of Wilsonart International, ASFD Corporate member. I also enjoyed talking with Harold Halliburton, Bob Wilson, Robert Foresta and James Dipersia who all submitted address changes during December.

The 1997 Pinnacle Awards CD Press Kit featuring Award Finalists and banquet pictures was mailed out in early December. Karl Felperin did a wonderful job creating the CD and appeared to have fun doing it! If anyone wants additional copies, please let me know.

1997 was an exceptionally good and exciting year for me. Now with over six months of experience with the organization, I look forward to the now familiar forthcoming projects, events and to the prosperity of ASFD in 1998. Again, best wishes to you for a healthy, happy and successful new year.

## *Welcome New Members!*

**Affiliate:** Mickey Ackerman, Rhode Island School of Design; Tel. 401-454-6163, Fax 401-454-6157

**Associate:** Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers, Inc., Mark A. Barford, Exec.V.P., P.O. Box 427, High Point, NC 27261; Tel. 336-885-8315

**Corporate Representative:** Frank Waters, Wilsonart Int'l., 2323 Park Central Blvd., Decatur, AL 30035; Tel. 1-800-252-7993, Fax 1-770-593-0545

**Student:** Patricia A.J. Allen, Catawba Valley Community College, Newton, NC

## *APRIL 1998 ASFD MARKET EVENT*

*Saturday, April 25*

Elks Club, 700 Old Mill Road, High Point, NC

3:00 p.m. — Board Of Directors Meeting (Open)

6:00 p.m. — Cocktails & Corporate Display Tables

7:30 p.m. — Dinner & Program

***PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!***

*Further Details To Come...*

***LET'S PLAN A GREAT TURNOUT!!***

# Are there more or less opportunities for furniture designers today than there were 10 years ago and why?

By Karl D. Felperin, ASFD

Early in December, Dave Kline and I were discussing this question when we both came to realize that this would be a good article for our Bulletin.

It seemed to us that there were two factors. The consolidation of the furniture manufacturing and retailing industries might indicate less opportunities, since there are fewer manufacturers to work for and even fewer retailers for them to sell designs to. But you could argue that the globalization of our industry has created a need for more designers familiar with the US retail market.

I called some of our members, asked them to contribute 200 words or so, and this is what I got. Putting this together was very easy since they e-mailed me their responses. The tone is decidedly optimistic. Maybe we could make this a yearly thing.

*Carol Christa, ASFD Wrote:*

There are as many opportunities today as there were ten years ago. Opportunities are abundant when a designer with fresh ideas has an interested manufacturer willing to produce them. Great ideas by themselves are meaningless to a designer without a manufacturer to realize them. As I see it, the opportunities exist in the partnership between the designer and the manufacturer.

*Dave Clark, ASFD wrote:*

Are there opportunities for furniture designers today? Yes, particularly if you are a team operation.

First I must say that I think opportunity exists for all facets and sizes of design offices today. The fact that Berry & Clark began primarily as a two person office fifteen years ago to an office of seven today, has given me first hand experiences of the positive and negative aspects of growth and team oriented design.

You must first make the assumption that as designers we want to do what we do best and that is design. This is where the fine line of too small or too large is critical. The less people involved can create more opportunity for direct control and involvement. Larger operations if not handled carefully can create the design manager or marketing agent within your own firm. You end up reviewing ideas of others and not creating your own. On the other hand, manufacturers doing large collections with definitive sketch and detail timetables creates an advantage for the properly staffed team operation. The field narrows significantly when manufacturers realize that while there are many talented designers they must ask if can you adequately handle all the work and meet the deadlines. Controlled growth is the key

for quite often it is possible to have the same net financial results as a smaller operation once you factor in the costs involved. The ability to form a talented team of equals that you do not manage, but share and refine everyone's ideas should be the goal and has been the real key to the success of Berry & Clark Design Associates.

*Alan Friedman, ASFD wrote:*

I believe there is about the same amount of work out there for designers as there has been. My basis for this opinion is that there are continuing opposing forces affecting us in our industry. It is true that there is consolidation, reduced numbers of manufacturers and retailers, somewhat weaker consumer demand, and more designers to contend with. However, when we as designers are "on a roll" and are able to apply our insights and creativity in a way that produces items that are really somewhat different and unique, these items are gobbled up by a very hungry and appreciative industry.

*Steve Hodges, ASFD wrote:*

In answer to your question yesterday, Karl, I believe that there are greater opportunities for freelance designers today. As you noted, the public and the furniture industry has become much more aware of the importance of good design.

Despite consolidation within the industry, there is a great need for design expertise. Many smaller manufacturers who have previously never used a designer are seeking design and marketing expertise to help them compete against their larger counterparts.

Foreign manufacturers are increasingly employing U.S. designers, not only to help crack the lucrative American market, but to help them increase their domestic market share.

Sadly, our office has been able to capitalize on the mistakes of designers who are less than professional and have hurt clients rather than helping. We try to sell ourselves as a one-stop design and marketing source for smaller companies who typically don't have the resources or history for a more professional approach.

*Dave Kline, ASFD wrote:*

Is there more work for furniture designers today than ten years ago, and why is that?

Yes. I find that there is more public recognition of styles and of the contribution a designer can make to creating a style. In the home furnishings industry there are finally some furniture collections with

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designers names which have made it through more than one season . We know that the designers whose names have been applied to these collections and who collect most of the financial rewards only had limited input, but as independent designers we benefit indirectly from their success.

For many factories the internal development of products is a long painful process which can be shortened and influenced in a more saleable direction with professional input. Many medium sized and smaller companies. do not want to spend the money or time for real market research and designers frequently give their hard won marketing knowledge away, along with the preliminary sketches. Our profession has benefited from the worldwide acceptance of designers, particularly fashion designers on many of the things that we all use every day, from cars to ties, luggage and handbags. Current shelter magazines show rooms

that have a Timberlake or Pierre Deux or Barbara Barry look. one day perhaps we will see magazines extolling the *Steve Hodges look*. As a sidebar note, a careful study of any of the inameî designers would show the amount of money they spend on personal and corporate public relations. We might learn something from that

*Jeff Smoler, ASFD* wrote:

What are our opportunities in the future? I feel that there are tow types of furniture designer: artisans and technicians. The artisans creating one highly specialized piece of furniture will always survive.

These designers had their beginnings in the Renaissance being hired by wealthy patrons and continue to this day and beyond. The technicians however, rely on the economic climate of the society to pay for their services. If the economy continues to escalate, these designers should have a rosy future.

If any of you have further thoughts on this topic, let's here from you.

# Kendall students attend design colloquium

In the pre-dawn frost of Nov. 13 more than 20 Kendall College of Art and Design students and their instructors set out for Dearborn, Mich. to visit the Henry Ford Museum.

Joined there by students from the Center for Creative Studies, and museum professionals and curriculum developers from several institutions, they met at Lovett Hall Ballroom for a Colloquium of Furniture Design and its relation to market.

The colloquium, sponsored by the Henry Ford Design History Center, was led by a panel consisting entirely of Kendall alumni, including Doug Krieger '92, ASFD, a designer at Sauder in Archbold, Ohio; Jack R. Lewis '83, ASFD, Director of Design-Residential at La-Z-Boy in Monroe, Mich.; and Steve Wilcox '90, design coordinator at Hekman Furniture in Grand Rapids, Mich. Moderator for the panel was Associate Professor Max S. Shangle.

Discussion among the panelists with lively audience interaction concerned many aspects of the integration of market forces with product design and development.

Some of these aspects included a manufacturer's size and philosophy, market price point of product and the activity of designers in innovation and

creativity.

In summing up the day's activities, Nancy Bryk, curator of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, said, "the Furniture Design Colloquium...offered a variety of people the chance to talk to people who actually make the things that we collect and research.

"The museum staff was most interested to learn what factors designers take into account as they design for people's various needs. We hope to continue this conversation with designers, and with Kendall College students — there's much more to learn!

"Our most sincere 'thanks' to Max Shangle for his unflagging enthusiasm for the topic and his expert handling of the panel."

During a two-hour interlude following lunch, colloquium attendees were given guided tours of the Henry Ford Museum's furniture exhibit, its furniture storage area and the Research Center.

Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers Inc., ASFD, helped fund the cost of the trip for the Kendall students through its contributions to the Furniture Design program.

# GRFDA awards \$1,500 scholarship

The Grand Rapids Furniture Designers Association awarded its annual scholarship at its December holiday banquet. Steven Turner, a junior at Kendall College of Art and Design, was presented the \$1,500 tuition scholarship by GRFDA President Michael Alpers, ASFD.

The GRFDA scholarship selection committee included Monty Jo Simpson and Joe McCambridge of Baker Furniture Co., Shannon Lookabill of Warren and Associates, Steve Wilcox of Hekman

Furniture and Kevin Dewald of Keeler Brass.

The committee selected Turner for his demonstrated abilities and commitment to achievement in his study of furniture design.

The GRFDA holiday banquet was attended by more than 50 members and 20 Kendall College furniture design students.

The students were guests of Keeler Brass who covered the costs of their dinners. Keeler Brass is a corporate member of ASFD.

## Table wins Kendall's student contest

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — A checkerboard-design table made of maple and walnut was the winning entry in the 1997 Furniture Design Contest at Kendall College of Art and Design here.

Sponsored biannually by Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers Inc., the contest pits students against each other for a cash prize. A panel of judges selected the maple-and-walnut table designed by Meng-Fang Wu, an ASFD student member, at the 1997 competition in September.

Wu, a senior in furniture design from Taipei, Taiwan, turned a class assignment into an award-winning design in just over a year.

"I tried to build something that can be used and also be a sculpture in a living room," Wu said. "That's why I used the Chinese style of construction with square blocks."

Built from Appalachian maple squares, the tabletop allows light to pass through to the floor, which gives the appearance of movement when

walking around the table. The walnut legs contrast with the light surface to give the table a unique perspective from every angle.

AHMI, a trade association based in High Point representing more than 190 companies that produce and distribute Appalachian wood products around the world, sponsors the contest by providing lumber and donating the cash prizes.

Students must design an occasional or case goods product for use in the home that is manufacturable, made from solid hardwoods and built to full scale.

"The contest gives the students a terrific opportunity to see the process from design to product development and into actual production of a prototype," said Max Shangle, Kendall College's furniture design coordinator and assistant professor.

"This is a great life experience for our students."

# Member of the Month

## Meet Carol Christa

"When I was a young girl, I always wanted to be a nurse, but I knew that I could not be a nurse because I was already an artist and I did not think that I could be both." This is what freelance upholstery designer Carol Christa conveyed to me in a recent conversation as I interviewed her for the ASFD newsletter.

As it turns out, what she does now is to bring "comfort and beauty into the homes of people all over the planet" and this in a large sense offers comfort and healing to those who encounter her designs.

She spent 10 years in graphic design and illustration in New York before moving back to her home state of Georgia in 1981 to begin her career in the Home Furnishings industry.

"When I was working in graphic design I was always trying to do paintings and illustrations that were beautiful, soothing and healing. Illustrations have a short shelf life in the world of advertising and I could never quite figure out how they could have a more long-term effect."

Designing furniture gives longevity to her intent and to her belief that it is particularly healing to be surrounded by comfortable and beautiful things in your home.

Her forte is designing smaller scaled furniture with a woman's point of view in mind. "A woman's body is soft and curved, much like my upholstery designs. It is about rounded corners and nice radiuses. Even when box cushions are used, they are over stuffed to look rounded." Her designs consider how a woman relates to the furniture, unconsciously with her body, and how women value presentation and comfort.

As a woman, Carol knows that presentation is very important. This is why, as an added benefit to her manufacturers, she provides fabric marriages for each one of her designs. This is one of the things that sets her apart as a furniture designer. Attending fabric shows regularly, she has over 1,200 fabric samples in her fabric room and maintains a working relationship with fabric reps. Her furniture designs are full color renderings, not black and white sketches, with a sample of her fabric selection and frame marriages.

She is very busy but finds time to serve as a board member of ASFD and sums up her experience as a designer in the home furnishings industry as "I can't think of anything else I would rather be doing."

Susan Von Cannon

## Hodges wins four Ontario FMA Trillium Awards

Steve Hodges, ASFD, a freelance furniture designer in Lexington, and Durham Furniture of Durham, Ontario, were the recipients of four Trillium Awards at the annual Grand Trillium banquet.

The banquet is sponsored by the Ontario Furniture Manufacturers Association and held in Toronto at the winter furniture market there.

The four Trilliums were in the categories

of traditional bedroom furniture, juvenile furniture and Canadian content.

The Trillium Awards program recognizes excellence in design, marketing and production of Canadian residential furniture.

The awards are bestowed by a jury of retailers from across Canada.

The president of Steve Hodges and Associates, Hodges is a past president of the American Society of Furniture Designers.



## Welcome new Pinnacle Awards Chairman Steve Hodges; Thanks to Karl Felperin

After two years of serving as chairman of the Pinnacle Design Achievement Awards Committee, Karl Felperin is stepping down.

An active member of the American Society of Furniture Designers, Karl is acknowledged for creating and spearheading the Pinnacle Awards. The purpose of the annual Pinnacle Awards program is to acknowledge excellence in design and to celebrate the individual designers and manufacturers of the winning retail home furnishings products.

Important for publicity, Karl masterminded the creation of the Pinnacle Press Book/CD, making photographs of the winners and their designs avail-

able in CD form, and distributed them to the trade press and major newspapers across the country.

Steve Hodges will be taking the helm of the Pinnacle Awards program. Also an active member of the American Society of Furniture Designers, Steve has served on the Pinnacle committee for two years, making him well-suited for the chairmanship.

We look forward to his leadership as we prepare for the third Annual Pinnacle Awards in October.

Thank you, Karl, for a job well done.

Congratulations, Steve. We look to you for continued excellence in service.

# Attention All Designers!

It's not too early to consider your entries for the 1998 Pinnacle Awards.

Think about that winning group you had at the

October 1997 Market. Get your photos now and be ready to send in your entries when the entry forms are published.

### Deadline for April's Bulletin March 3

Send entries to:

Attn.: Rochelle Johnson

P.O. Box 2043

Jamestown, N.C. 27282

Office: (910) 888-2939 Fax: (910) 888-2928

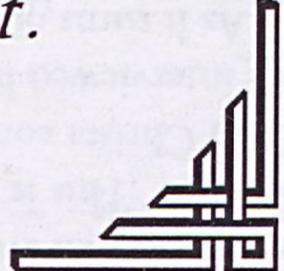
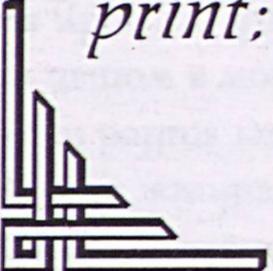


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*"Do you know the difference between education and experience? Education is when you read the fine print; experience is what you get when you don't."*

*Pete Seeger*



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