

Volume II 2016

the professional florist

**New Benefits
for MFA and
WUMFA Members**

**MFA Announces
2016 Officers
and Directors**

**Golden Touch,
Garden Designs
Highlight
Motown
Weddings**

**Giving Events
That Extra Touch**

**The Millennial
"Everyday"
Trend**



DIAMOND AWARD
WINNING PUBLICATION
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2016 • Course Schedule

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Jackie Lacey



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Volume II 2016

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LEADERSHIPREPORT

New Benefits for MFA and WUMFA Members

BY ROD CRITTENDEN, MFA EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



The Michigan Floral Association and the Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Florists Association have formed two new partnerships which will provide members added benefits.

Aflac (supplemental insurance) and **Retailers Processing Network** (credit card processing) have outstanding track records and proven value, along with teams of service professionals ready to help.

Aflac supplemental insurance will provide an additional level of financial protection for you and your family as well as your employees and their families in the event of a serious accident or illness.

It's easy to add voluntary coverage to the benefits package at no direct cost. Through affordable premiums, their plans help manage health care-related costs that can be overwhelming. They provide employees cash benefits to help pay for out-of-pocket costs, at no direct cost to your business.

Having a strong benefits package is key to attracting employees. Aflac policies help boost benefits by rounding out what major medical doesn't provide. Employees will have more confidence knowing Aflac's supplemental coverage will help them in case of an illness or accident. Products offered include Accident, Cancer, Critical Illness, Hospital, Dental, Vision, Life, and Short-Term Disability Insurance.

Dedicated service professionals, Cindy Jackson and Alice Hansens, are committed to helping MFA and WUMFA members manage the impact of health care reform and offer the full line of Aflac products.

Retailers Processing Network's management team has more than 100 years of combined experience in the credit card processing industry and uses its expertise to help clients reduce their merchant processing costs. They understand the needs of

the retail industry and have a solid track record of reducing retailers' costs while also saving time and trouble with their card transaction systems.

A sales team of five has the ability to reach all corners of the state for face-to-face appointments as well as follow up service long after the sale. They're knowledgeable, well-informed business experts, who will keep your transaction process running smoothly, handling sales and customer service on a personal level and working hard to ensure when you need something, have a question, or just need advice, you'll always be dealing with a real, live person.

In addition to your savings from lower rates and fees, Retailers Processing Network provides additional savings by not charging for supplies and services that are standard for many processors. Saving on these "hidden fees" can equal as much as \$80 per 1,000 transactions.

When you sign up to use our new processing service you'll pay nothing for supplies, PCI Compliance Fees and Penalties, Chargebacks, Voice Authorization Fees, Data Breach Protection, Monthly Minimum Penalties, Application Fees, or Contract Termination Fees. You'll also have the choice to process transactions with a traditional terminal, point of sales systems, online via computer or smart phone, or a plug in for cell phone swipes.

Finally you'll have Data Breach Protection included with your processing plan. Coverage from Retailers Processing Network and Royal Group Services Ltd, LLC provides up to \$100,000 of protection per merchant location, \$500,000 maximum per business, (with no deductible) should the unthinkable happen and your business suffers a credit card related data breach.

You're covered for the following data breach expenses; Forensic audits to determine the extent of the breach, fines from the card associations due to the breach, the cost of notifying customers of the breach, and the cost of banks reissuing cards to customers.

Please call the MFA office, (517)575-0110, to schedule an appointment to meet with a representative from one or both of these companies today. ✿

Welcome New MFA Members!

Aflac

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Alice Hansens

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Email: Cynthia_weisenberg@us.aflac.com

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What the Michigan Floral Association Does For You!

For more than ninety-five years the Michigan Floral Association has offered its members the industry's absolute best in floral education, networking, money-making/money-saving programs and opportunities.

The Association provides a unified voice in governmental affairs and a platform on social media.

- ✿ **GREAT LAKES FLORAL EXPO** – Our annual conference, one of the best meetings in the country.
- ✿ **CERTIFIED FLORIST (CF)** – A nationally recognized floral certification program.
- ✿ **"FIND-A-FLORIST" FEATURE ON THE MFA WEBSITE**. Powered by Google Maps, it increases your ranking in all Google searches, driving orders to your business 24/7/365.
- ✿ **PROFESSIONALLY STAFFED OFFICE** – Providing timely and educated answers to your industry questions.
- ✿ **PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION CENTER** – Offering great year-round educational opportunities.
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- ✿ **MEMBERS ONLY PERKS** – Special, discounted pricing on MFA events.
- ✿ **THE PROFESSIONAL FLORIST MAGAZINE** – Diamond Award winning trade publication.

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If you are not yet a member join today and take advantage of all Association benefits!

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- Fines from the card brands
- The cost of notifying your customers
- The cost of the banks reissuing cards



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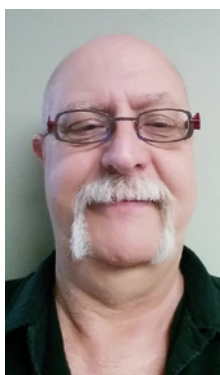
Our Customer Service Representatives are full-time employees, not contract workers in an outsourced call center halfway around the world. Their knowledge and experience (an average of 12 years in their positions) helping business owners and managers is the reason they know the answers to members' questions and score at the top on follow-up customer satisfaction surveys.



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FLORISTAWARDS

show proof of enrollment in a course of study directly related to the retail floriculture industry. Applicants must have clearly defined career goals that relate to the industry.

How to apply:

Download a complete scholarship application at www.michiganfloral.org, by clicking on MFA Scholarship in the menu bar or call the MFA office at (517) 575-0110. The completed application is due by June 30, 2016.

The awards will be announced on September 1, 2016. Letters will be mailed to the winners and their names will be published in *The Professional Florist* magazine. The scholarship grant goes directly to the MFA office in the applicant's name.

The main source of funding is the silent auction held every year at the Great Lakes Floral Expo. The scholarship program has awarded more than \$42,000 since 2002.

MFA Awards Four Scholarships

Four deserving florists have been chosen by the Michigan Floral Association to receive this year's scholarship awards. The awards can be used at the Great Lakes Floral Expo or to get Certified Florists materials. The winners have 18 months to use the scholarships.

This year's winners are Shelley Adair, CF, Weddings and Creations Celebrations,

Canton, Michigan; Barbara Joseph, Barb's Designs, DeWitt, Michigan, and Georgianna King and Paul Sawyer, CF, both from Blumz...By JRDesigns, Detroit/Ferndale, Michigan.

Eligibility Requirements:

Applicants must be employed and working in the floriculture industry or

FloraCraft Sponsors Certified Florist Scholarships

This year's Certified Florist scholarship winners are Tamara McCarthy, Vogt's Flowers, Grand Blanc, Michigan; Jason Rudicil, Eastern Floral & Gifts, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Kim Slocum, French's Flowers, Livonia, Michigan.

The scholarships are sponsored by FloraCraft Corporation, Ludington, Michigan, and awarded by the MFA scholarship committee.

The CF program was developed to create a nationwide standard of quality. Those passing the exams must know basic design,

care and handling, product identification, customer relations and sales, delivery, marketing, lighting and display. The written and hands-on exams require a passing grade of 80 percent to receive recognition as a Certified Florist.

Rodney P. Crittenden, MFA executive vice president, expressed the association's gratitude for FloraCraft's continuing support



Jason Rudicil



Tamara McCarthy



Kim Slocum

of the scholarship program and its efforts to provide means to educate members of the floral industry.

Teleflora Michigan Unit Wins National Award



For the second straight year the Michigan Unit of Teleflora has won the National Achievement Award at the meeting of unit presidents held in Los Angeles. Attending was the Michigan team of Debbie Custer, unit president, and Teleflora Education Specialists Helen Miller, AIFD, CAFA, CF, CFD; Darla Pawlak, AIFD, CFD, PFCI, and Jerome Raska, AAF, AIFD, CAFA, CF, CFD, PFCI. Debbie Custer also won a regional award for outstanding leadership.

The awards were presented by Teleflora's Michael Martin, executive vice president and general manager, sales and membership services; Lottie McKinnon, manager industry relations, and Rich Salvaggio, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, vice president industry relations and floral publications.

Michigan Floral Association members on hand to accept Teleflora's National Achievement Award were, from left, Helen Miller, Darla Pawlak, Debbie Custer, and Jerome Raska.

WEDDINGFEATURE

Golden Touch, Garden Designs Highlight Motown Weddings

BY J. ROBBIN YELVERTON, AAF, AIFD, CAFA, CF, PFCI, BLUMZ...BY JRDESIGNS, FERNDALE AND DETROIT, MI

With the beginning of the New Year, 2016, weddings are golden in Detroit. No, really, GOLDEN! Brides here in the Midwest can't seem to get enough of gold. Gone are the silver, platinum and pewter of the last few years. The warm luster of gold is haute in wedding decor. Whether low gold mercury glass bowls of florals or dramatic raised centerpieces on gold pedestals, the golden touch is everywhere.

Along with the gold rush has come a renewed interest in natural garden inspired designs. More prominently used foliage and texture are breathing life into floral designs. The use of a variety of novelty foliage, herbs, berries and grasses add a lushness to designs that has been missing in the all-floral arrangements we have been seeing.



Non-matching centerpieces using an assortment of vintage containers ties into the retro/vintage trend that we have been experiencing. It will remain strong simply because it is elegant and romantic. Lush, organic and free-form designs are on the upswing breaking the monotony of the compact mounds of previous years and this trend is showing up nationwide.

The trend in other parts of the country of less floral does not appear to apply to our area. Fortunately, the emphasis is swinging back to florals over props. The use of props such as lanterns, wooden slabs, picture frames, bottles and jars is still popular, but the inclusion of florals brings life back to the table center. Golden finishes and highlights brighten and add a sense of opulence even to the simplest of glassware and accessories.

While the use of neutrals, blushes, champagnes, creams and whites is still strong, pops of color are being added to the mix for interest. The Pantone colors of rose quartz and serenity are sure to be part of the mix this year, though in a more subdued fashion.

With the strong interest in the use of gold and the renewed appreciation for the beauty of foliage, weddings in Motown in 2016 are sure to be both lovely and on trend. ✿



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NEVILLE ON THE LEVEL

Get Ready for a Party!

BY NEVILLE MACKAY, CAFA, PFCI, WFC



I LOVE getting ready for a party, don't you? From getting your hair done (if that's an option) to choosing what to wear, planning a night out can be a lot of fun... that is for the people going to and participating in the event.

As a person who so often finds himself on the other side of that door, I can tell you it's quite

different from that side. But, I seem to be preaching to the choir, right? You all know what a time we can have when doing the work for a party, wedding or other event.

So, gather round and I'll tell you a few stories from the front lines, tips on what to do that may make things go more smoothly, and I may even offer suggestions on how to get through it all without self-medicating.

I have done flowers for all sorts of events from backstage flowers for Sir Elton John (the drama, darling...the drama!), large fussy weddings for spoiled Daddy's Little Princesses, and intimate dinner parties for a stodgy bunch of Great-I-Am's, to one of my favorites, flowers for HRM Queen Elizabeth and HRH Prince Phillip. Each event can be unique and hopefully positive, and for us, a money-maker by all means.

When I was asked to work on floral pieces for the Royal Family, I did what most any florist would do, and once I changed my clothes, I set up a meeting with the people in charge to go over things in detail.

Now, there were protocols, security issues, specific rather priceless containers, as well as concerns like scents and color preferences that all had to be dealt with, so things took a bit of time before we could start arranging flowers.

I will say, though, that on the day I went and set up the flowers at their Canadian residence, I was pretty excited. (Yup, I did get to go in Her Majesty's bedroom, and ask me sometime to tell you about how I almost got a selfie on the Royal Throne in the washroom.)

I try to get to know the people I work on events, and I strongly suggest you develop a relationship with all you work with as well. There's nothing so cutting as when we are referred to as "just the florist" from some just out of trade school with barely a passing

grade in party planning. That was tried on me once, just once... I think she is selling cookies somewhere now.

Watch for the "Send me a sample" people, who want your ideas, suggestions and then turn and do their own thing. Many of us have been stung; I know I sure have, and so I take the time to see who I am dealing with before I offer too much advice. Like my Mum told me, "Don't give it away, dear."

This is why it's important to develop those relationships, so if a new contact comes along, you'll be able to ask others what the scoop is in advance. In our industry, we are judged on our last event, and if the event is a disaster because of some thing else and not the flowers, you may well still find your reputation twisted in with all the other crap.

I found myself in that very situation years ago when a coordinator didn't coordinate well at all, sending flowers to the wrong place, as well as the dessert and cake....people remembered the flowers were late and they came from me. Lovely.

I love to give advice, offer opinions and explain ways to make an event a better success, and that is what makes us unique and special in the party world. Take the time to be a guidance counselor (I like to call myself, "Man Landers") for your clients and the folks you work with, and you will gain a lot of respect and credibility.

Another thing to do is to invite yourself to as many venues as possible. It is so important to have a visual of what a space is like, so when you meet with a client you can better make suggestions about placement, color, etc. It's like going to a travel agent and speaking to one who has been to the place you want to go, or at a restaurant where the server has actually eaten what you're thinking of ordering.

Now, go squeeze into that little black dress, slap on a little lippie, polish your nails, pour a big glass of your favorite bevie and watch the last season of Downton Abbey...it's ALWAYS a party there! ✿

Neville MacKay, CAFA, PFCI, WFC, lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. He is on the Smithers Oasis (North America) design and education team, speaks and designs internationally, appears regularly on TV and radio, and hosts tours to the UK. Neville has designed for many heads of state and celebrities. He opened his floral shop, My Mother's Bloomers, in 1992, info@mymothersbloomers.com.

★ Important Reminder ★ MFA Scholarships!



Certified Florist/Great Lakes Floral Expo Scholarships Application Deadline: June 30!

These scholarship awards will be up to \$500.00. They may be used for Great Lakes Floral Expo registrations with the exception of the Saturday evening recognition banquet and/or one Certified Florist manual with one round of testing that must be completed within the time frame of the scholarship. You may also apply for one of three Certified Florist scholarships sponsored by the FloraCraft Corporation.

New Hands On Workshop Scholarships – Applications accepted all year

These scholarships will be up to \$1000.00. This scholarship may be used to attend a MFA Hands On Workshop.

Download an application today at www.michiganfloral.org.

MFA Announces 2016 Officers and Directors



At the Michigan Floral Association's board of directors meeting, **Jerome Raska, AAF, AIFD, CAFA, CF, CFD, PFCI**, from Blumz...by JRDesigns, Ferndale/Detroit, Michigan, was elected to serve as the association's president for 2016. **Tim Timinski** from FloraCraft Corporation in Ludington was elected vice president. Prior to the meeting **Tim Galea**, Norton's

Flowers & Gifts, Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, Michigan, was appointed to fulfill the remaining one-year term as a director at large. This vacancy occurred when Chris McGahey resigned to take a new position with Kennicott Brothers Co., Chicago, IL.

Association members elected the following to serve three-year terms on the board. Director at Large: **Bob Patterson**, Patterson's Flowers, Big Rapids/Reed City/

Cadillac, Michigan. Director Region 2: **Andrew Maglio**, Events To Rent, East Lansing, Michigan. Director Region 4: **Alice Waterous**, AIFD, CF, CFD PFCI, Waterous Floral Consulting, Grand Haven, Michigan.



"I would personally like to thank Robert Patterson of Patterson's Flowers & Gifts, Big Rapids, for serving as the association's president for the past three years. He is to be commended for his hours of volunteer service and endless dedication to the MFA," said Rodney P. Crittenden, MFA executive vice president. "I would also like to congratulate and welcome the

newly elected and appointed board members and officers. The membership is in good hands with a dedicated and active group of individuals willing to serve in these leadership roles!"

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EVENTSFEATURE

Making those Events 'Special'

BY PENNY DIEPHOUSE, EASTERN FLORAL,
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN



Distinctive, unique, exceptional...all words that can describe that "Special" event. For florists, it's all that and more. Making an event special is in the creativity of the designs and the details.

One of the biggest trends currently in the floral industry is described as, "Free-form," or "Wild and Natural". This trend first made its way into our business via the wedding market and is now taking over what we do with flowers on a daily basis in all other genres.

Planning an event is really quite a production with countless details; staging an event is an art in itself. Designing, planning and coordinating for small or large numbers can be a challenge. It can even be stressful at times. It is no secret that any event requires careful planning; planning is the key to success. Now let's get this party started!

I worked with our special events department in production and set ups on some of Eastern Floral's most memorable parties during the last year. We create and design for numerous parties and events using a variety of flowers and colors. However, all three of the special events described below just happened to use white hydrangeas as the dominant flower.

At our fund raiser the hydrangeas conveyed a rich, elegant, sophisticated feeling, ideal for the large space they occupied in the room. At the Whitecaps Ball Park Winter Event hydrangeas were used as a casual, fun flower representing a mound of freshly popped popcorn. The third party was a gala. Here, the hydrangeas convey a snowy winter evening on the ice rink at the Van Andel Arena. A beautiful flower, three uses, the very versatile hydrangea.

Planning for the annual fund raiser at the Amway Hotel is always a challenge, especially when you can't repeat what you did the year before. One of our larger events, it boasted 90 table centerpieces. Three different designs were chosen for the tables and were staged appropriately throughout the ballroom. This event included a very impressive stage décor, VIP designs, and high top tables.



This very classy affair, with elegant stylish centerpieces, gave a defined, rich and elegant feeling to the ballroom. Exactly the look, style and feel our client wanted.

Take me out to the ball game was the theme for our next event. Our creative team developed and constructed the perfect design for the ball park venue. Even though the party was held in January, the designs brought to mind a day filled with clear blue skies, sunny warm temperatures, popcorn and peanuts.

The Whitecaps Winter Party held at the Fifth Third Ball Park in Grand Rapids was fun to work on. The Whitecaps are our local favorite minor league baseball team. Three coordinating designs hit a home run for this client. All three of the designs could be grouped together or could be used as a stand alone. However, they all complement each other.

The first was a bundled mound of white hydrangeas topping a red and white striped plastic popcorn container. The flower choice and its texture resembled freshly popped popcorn. The second was designed in a glass cylinder vase. The inside rim was wrapped with wide red metal bands used to hide the water tubes on the hydrangea, filled

Thirty of the centerpieces were constructed in 30 inch tall glass cylinder vases. The inside of the vase included silver nuggets in the bottom and silver branches wrapped with mini LED lights. A silver manzanita branch was placed in the top of the vase at an angle, wrapped with the mini LED lights.

Surrounding the branch and at the top of the vase were five jumbo white hydrangeas, a perfect number of blooms. A long full stem of stunning purple phalaenopsis orchids hung down to one side of the design. This was a striking artful piece, especially when the LED lights were turned on and the design illuminated the room. These 30 designs were assembled on site. A team of seven workers put these centerpieces together and helped set the entire ballroom.

The second 30 designs, constructed in a silver mercury glass vase, consisted of white jumbo hydrangeas, green Rio Lemonade roses and a stem of purple phalaenopsis. The orchid was placed over the top of the hydrangea complementing the taller design. The rest of the 30 tables boasted three varying heights of glass pedestal vases with silver nuggets, and floating candles.



EVENTS FEATURE



with ball park peanuts in their shells and topped with a white hydrangea. The third design in this trio was made in a square wooden box. It consisted of red carnations placed along one edge of the box and green trick carnations, which resembled the grass on field. Resting on the top of the grass sat a vintage baseball for added impact. So simple, but such a hit. No way were we striking out at this event.

The Van Andle Arena in downtown Grand Rapids was the setting for a 600 guest gala, The Wish Ball sponsored by Make-A-Wish Michigan which grants wishes to children battling life threatening medical conditions. A sports theme was the wish of the recipient. The gala was a first held on the home ice of the Griffins, our local hockey team. The arena was transformed into a winter wonderland. Plywood boards were placed on top of the ice rink making way for the tables.

Our aim was to meet the needs of the committee and design a stunning, dazzling table centerpiece utilizing a winter theme in a sports arena. Once again a tall 30 inch glass cylinder vase was chosen for dramatic show in the large venue. This black tie affair required assembly on site.

Silver nuggets were mixed with artificial snow and placed in the bottom half of the vase. Also added were LED mini lights reaching

to the top of the vase. A Lomey dish was placed on top of the cylinder. It contained five jumbo white hydrangeas clustered together with mini LED lights tucked inside for a beautiful wintry glow. Tall white sticks were added for extra height and a dramatic look. Long decorative clear crystals which attracted the light, acting almost like a prism, were an added touch. It was spectacular.

Party and event work is fun. After all the planning, assembly and set up our ultimate goal is to capture the client's vision and see it to fruition. We want our party to be the talk of the town for days and weeks to come. We also want to generate an excitement that is talked about and shared.

Let's face it, everyone loves a beautifully set table but it is not complete without a floral centerpiece. The florist creates the wow factor in the center of the table. Flowers can and do make a statement. Flowers are a conversation piece too. Any time you have people seated around a table it is a special event. Be known as the floral shop whose clients have come to expect the unexpected. Bring something new to the table, dare to be different and keep those creative juices flowing.

Parties and special events are one of Eastern Floral's specialties. The Special Events Department exclusively handles parties, fund raisers and events of all sizes, even creating weekly designs for the J W Marriott Hotel in downtown Grand Rapids.

Under the direction on Antoinette Kiewiet, vice president of design and creativity and Brenda Hankis, designer of floral concepts, the creative team bounces ideas off each other, meets with clients, does research, and makes plans. It is a long process, each event is unique, mostly due to the theme, and that is what makes it fun. A smile on the client's face says it all" according to Kiewiet. "When the guests see the final floral table centerpieces placed, the room set, and the candles lit; that says it all beautifully." ❀

How Wholesalers Help Retailers Make the Most of Prom Sales

BY TOM FIGUEROA, AIFD, CF, NORDLIE, INC.

One of the most important tasks to help your florist build on prom sales is to strategize with them early. Prom season used to be end of May and early June but now prom can take place as early as April in some areas. The problem: It falls right around Mother's Day, our busiest time of the year.

Here are some tips to assist your florist with the bustling prom season. Make contact early...send out some tips and sales sheets. Show off your latest ribbon choices and corsage enhancements, whether colored leaves, wire, jewels or wrist bands; help your florist differentiate their corsage selection. Send out a preorder sheet for stem wrap, pins, glue and the other basic items utilized during prom season. The week after a successful holiday is a great time to get your customers buying.

Marketing Tips: Offer your customers some tips on marketing to their local

schools. Florists should contact schools in their general area and write down the dates for prom. They should use their personal contacts to connect directly with groups at the school such as band, sports and chorus. Perhaps they can turn corsage and boutonniere orders into a fundraising event. Three weeks before prom have a "band night" where \$1 from each flower order goes to the school group leading the event.

Provide Pre-Order and Up Sell List: Send a preorder sheet to your florist and list the basic fresh corsage items they will need. Add a section of unique flowers to up sell that corsage, such as, orchid spray, garden roses, and other flowers to encourage different designs.

Hold a Class: Do you have design staff or a customer who would like to do a class? Body flower classes are great ways to help your florists start thinking ahead or to "keep

their eye on the ball". You could have two classes: An advanced classes for those looking to improve their fine techniques, and a basic class to show beginners how to make boutonnieres.

Share, Share, Share: Social media is perfect to attract this new generation of flower buyer. Help your retailer populate their social media accounts with new ideas. Reach out to our vendors for photos to pass along to the retail customer. If you are bogged down with holiday preparation, outsource this task to someone at your wholesale house. Let your junior managers or rising stars show you what they can do. Energize your employees and florists to make this a successful prom season.

This article is reprinted from "Thoughts in Bloom – The Blog for WFF&FSA Members".

CFREPORT



BY CINDY CHING, AIFD, CF

Design Style

Contemporary Abstract Line Design

What a conversation piece! This arrangement can be used for almost any holiday or special event. The two birds of paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*) catch your eye and the color moves to the center where the same color is repeated with mini calla lilies (*Zantedeschia species*) at the base. More interest is provided by splicing one side of the red ti leaf (*Cordyline terminalis*) with a finger nail three times to the center then placing it with that side down to show the leaf holes. The horsetail (*Equisetum hyemale*) is bent to the left by inserting an 18 gauge wire into the middle of the stem. This design would be a great conversational piece at any event, a great design for a beach wedding or even in a rustic outdoor event. *



Design by Robbin Yelverton, AAF, AIFD, CAFA, CF, PFCI,
Blumz...by JRDesign, Detroit/Ferndale Michigan

CF Flower of the Month

Bird of Paradise

Strelitzia reginae

Availability: All year
Lasting Quality: 7 to 14 days



CF Tip

The heavy stems require dense foam or wire to support them. Soak the flower head in warm water for about 20 minutes to help tight sheaths open so flowers can emerge. Gently force thumbs into the narrow end of the sheath, working toward the stem and lifting out the flowers carefully.

CF NEWS: A CF Steps Class will be held on Wednesday, June 1, 2016, at the MFA office. Next CF testing is Sunday, June 12, 2016, at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. So get out your CF manual and make it your goal to become a Certified Florist!

DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT

A Special Design for That Special Event

BY ENRIKA KARALIUS, AIFD, CFD,
ROYAL PETAL, CRESTWOOD, IL
2015 MFA DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

Trendy copper goes well with yellow, lime green, blackberry, chocolate, green and brownish tones. When doing corporate, party, or event flower designs, it is important to set the right atmosphere. Here is a tablescape perfect for a corporate gathering. I have used several heights of copper colored pillar candles and candlesticks to create a gorgeous unforgettable table setting. The collection features chocolate anthuriums, blackberry colored calla lilies, craspedia balls, lime green mini cymbidium orchids and white proteas. Oversized permanent botanical succulents, cylinders, decorative sand and copper colored Oasis® flat wire add interest and focal emphasis.

To carry through these striking elements I have attached "Schwartz" calla lilies to the candlesticks with Uglu dashes in a flowing line for extra detail. Details are really what tie a beautiful tablescape together and often it is the most important part of the look. ✱

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TIPS&TRENDS

Showcase Your Flower Designs with Slideshows

BY GAIL PABST, AAF



Pictured bouquet by Laura Bremke, The Platinum Petal, Wellington, Ohio, 2014 GLFE design contest.

Looking for a way to showcase all the photos of your bridal bouquets, wedding designs and event tables on your website and social media? Look no further than making a quick video or collage of your photos using an easy slideshow program.

Brides-to-be start their search online; your goal is to show off as many examples as possible of what your flower shop can do. This can easily be done with any number of free slideshow software products available. Two that come to mind are PhotoSnack and Slidely. Both of these programs are free and can create beautiful slideshows, videos or collages with your uploaded photos.

How to Create a Florist Website Slideshow

1. Upload the flower photos – These can be uploaded from your computer, Facebook, Instagram or other accounts. Make sure the photos highlight the design or bouquet that will be of interest to your audience. Don't add photos that are not

clear, are too busy or just plain messy. If the photo isn't amazing...don't use it! Just okay photos are not okay to use. For many brides, this is the first time they are seeing your work, make it amazing.

2. Choose your settings – For PhotoSnack and Slidely, you can customize your slideshow with different backgrounds and music. Have fun with this and make it your own work of art.

3. Use short, enticing descriptions on the videos. Don't make them too wordy but give a few words to entice the viewer to call for more information. Be sure your shop information including name, phone, address and website are found on the video. Use keywords and phrases as parts of the slides to enhance search engine optimization (SEO).

4. Share it. After creating a slideshow you can share the video on your Facebook page, Instagram, and website. Both of these programs make videos that are responsive and can be seen well on mobile devices.

5. A few other points to remember when making the slide share is the ability

of the visitor to stop the slide rotation any time so they can freeze the current image for better viewing. Also, when deciding on rotation speed make sure it doesn't rush the reader but is not too slow that readers get bored and click off early. Music should be non-offensive and more like background music (think elevator music), nothing too loud or obnoxious.

6. Keep doing them. Take time to continue to make more videos. These might include different themes or weddings. Even just putting new ones out on social media will be a great help in presenting what your shop can do.

Don't delay, now is the time to have fun and create some beautiful slideshow videos that will emphasize what you create in your shop...awesome designs! ✨

Gail Pabst is the new Michigan Floral Association blogger. As a marketing and social media consultant, she specializes in marketing strategy, email marketing, social media, and content writing. She can be reached at gailpabst@gmail.com.

INDUSTRY INFO

International Floriculture Expo Set For June 20-22 in Chicago

The International Floriculture Expo will be held again in Chicago at McCormick Place from June 20-22, 2016. The event will be in the same exhibit hall as United Fresh, in close proximity to the Global Cold Chain Expo and FMI Connect.

Events will kick off on Monday with a full day of floral-specific education targeting consumer data, sustainability, pricing analysis, and the hottest trends, ending with bubbles and a toast to the industry. The next two days will be a showcase of over 60,000 square feet of exhibits from containers to cut flowers.

More than 5,500 floral and produce professionals

attended the shows last year. The Expo is North America's largest business-to-business trade show for the floral industry uniting mass market retail buyers, florists, suppliers, media, and other industry professionals. The annual event is produced by Diversified Communications. For more information go to www.floriexpo.com.

Michigan Firm Honored for Wedding Event Work

Amy Kate Designs, Elk Rapids, Michigan, has been named a winner of the WeddingWire Couples Choice Awards® 2016 for event floral artistry in Northern Michigan. WeddingWire is a global online wedding network of more than 400,000 wedding professionals.

The award honors those who have provided excellence in areas such as quality, service and professionalism. It recognizes the top five percent of network members. The winners are chosen by past newlywed clients based on their reviews from the past year.

Pantone Picks 2016 Colors

The Pantone Color Institute, global authority on color, has chosen two colors for 2016: Rose Quartz (Pantone 13-1520), a warm pink, and Serenity (Pantone 15-3919), a cool blue. Other colors that Pantone says will complement these two include greens or purples, rich brown, creamy white, other light shades of pink or blue, all shades of yellow, radiant oranges or red metallics, silver, various gray tones, and reddish purples such as maroon or fig.

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80 Designer Urn
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MEMBERPROFILE

Entrepreneurial Spirit Fuels Success of Patterson's Flowers

BY BARBARA GILBERT, EDITOR

From Farm to Florist... that was the beginning of one of Western Michigan's most successful floral enterprises, Patterson's Flowers, which is celebrating its 64th year in business.

Founder Don Patterson came from a family of dairy farmers but as the third son he found there was no room on the farm. Instead he went to Michigan State University and studied horticulture. At the age of 20 he bought a closed flower shop and greenhouse and began his career in the floral industry.

"Our family always had an entrepreneurial spirit. They bottled their own milk on the farm and grew flowers and plants. So it was in his nature to start out on his own, said second generation florist, son Bob Patterson.

The original shop was opened February 4, 1952, in Reed City. In the 70s and 80s locations were opened in Big Rapids and Cadillac to broaden service in West Central Michigan.

The stores are owned by Don's wife, Gloria, 80, and two sons Robert and Brad.

Bob noted, "We grew up at the shop, it was a typical family business. There was never any pressure to become a florist. It was our decision to join the company."



The stores feature a variety of products.

Bob, who has been in the business for 36 years, is in charge of personnel, marketing, gift buying and public relations. He manages the Big Rapids store. Brother Brad takes care of all the perishable buying, facilities management, and the garden center in addition to running the Reed City store while both keep an eye on the Cadillac location. Bob's wife, Debbie, works in sales and customer service at the Big Rapids store.

Patterson's carries the usual complement of fresh flowers, plants, balloons, stuffed animals, and gift items. They also make and sell their own fudge and rent out their kitchen to a cupcake maker and have those for sale, too. A seasonal garden center and the plant department continues to grow. Fresh flowers are the largest product line.

As to sympathy business, the stores do a lot of grave maintenance delivering flower and plants to the gravesite and maintaining them. But this too is changing in Patterson's opinion because the younger generation does not think this is as important as it once was.

Three years ago they began renting tuxes. "Renting tuxes has brought in lots of new people, and increased our boutonniere and corsage business for proms and weddings. In Big Rapids there is no other place to rent tuxes so we fill a much needed niche for weddings, proms and black tie events. Retail

has changed so much that we must do what we can to build traffic."

Marketing plays a big part in the success of the business. A lot of local radio promotions include contests and giving away arrangements for several holidays including Valentine's Day, Easter, Sweetest Day, Administrative Professionals Day, and Mother's Day. In the summer there is a fun giveaway of "Red Hot Roses" any day when



The large walk in cooler in Big Rapids allows customers select their own bouquet.



Green plant assortment.

MEMBERPROFILE

the temperature is over 80 degrees. "We did a great deal on talk radio for Mother's Day and Valentine's Day. We also advertise on a country station and a top 40 station. Don't be afraid to try new venues, declared Patterson.

"In addition there is a good amount of direct mail, social media, Google ad words, and cable. Four color brochures are sent out for all the major holidays. Our website continues to grow in traffic and order volume. We use Facebook and email marketing to keep our name in front of our clients and prospective clients."

The firm is a member of the Midwest Floral Group, an organization which began in the Great Lakes area and now includes 16 shops located around the United States. They meet twice a year to bounce ideas off each other. The meetings are held in different areas so members can see other shops and different ways flowers are being promoted. Discussions cover financials, personnel, logistics, and marketing among other things. They also collaborate on the four color holiday brochures.

Window displays and store displays are as always very important at holidays. In the Big Rapids store 20 decorated trees go up for Christmas. Due to the fact that Big Rapids is home to Ferris State University, Valentine's Day is the store's biggest holiday with flowers to celebrate an engagement high on the list.

Bob remembered one of the more unusual Valentine's Day deliveries. "One young man devised a scavenger hunt with a dozen roses and a proposal at the end. He proposed at the mini Eiffel Tower in Paris, Michigan."

They don't do a lot of event work but are always seeking commercial accounts such as Yoplait which is located in Reed City and uses the shop there to order flowers for personnel related occasions.

Totally the three shops employ 25 people with at least two full time designers at each store. The holiday staff includes another 25-30 temporary and freelance employees. All the stores get together at least once a year to discuss programs and ideas. The focus is on providing customer service by taking advantage of workshops and webinars for ongoing staff education and training.

One unusual aspect of their company is the Big Rapids store is open seven days a week. Bob said, "Sometimes Sundays are very good. We really want people to see us as a place to go shopping for a variety of things. We want to get them in the front door and we want to compete with the big box stores.

"The economy is a challenge for everyone. We continue to change how we operate, add new products and service to increase our revenue. Our cash and carry features on fresh flowers have been a great way to build walk in traffic and educate our customers that we provide good quality flowers and great prices. We are always

looking for ways to change and grow new products and services.

"It is hard to pick my favorite part of the job, since every day brings different situations. But I love dealing with our customers. We are helping them express their emotions. That is what a florist really does...sell emotion." ✿

Floral Holiday Calendar

| FLORAL HOLIDAYS | 2016 | 2017 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| New Year's Day | Friday, January 1 | Sunday, January 1 |
| Valentine's Day | Sunday, February 14 | Tuesday, February 14 |
| St. Patrick's Day | Thursday, March 17 | Friday, March 17 |
| Easter Sunday | Sunday, March 27 | Sunday, April 16 |
| Passover | Thursday, April 22-30 | Monday, April 10-18 |
| Admin. Professional (Secretaries) Day | Wednesday, April 27 | Wednesday, April 26 |
| National Teachers Day | Tuesday, May 3 | Tuesday, May 2 |
| Cinco de Mayo | Thursday, May 5 | Friday, May 5 |
| Mother's Day (US/Can.) | Sunday, May 8 | Sunday, May 14 |
| Dia de Las Madres (Mex.) | Tuesday, May 10 | Wednesday, May 10 |
| Memorial Day | Monday, May 30 | Monday, May 29 |
| Father's Day | Sunday, June 19 | Sunday, June 18 |
| Independence Day | Monday, July 4 | Tuesday, July 4 |
| Grandparents' Day | Sunday, September 11 | Sunday, September 10 |
| Rosh Hashanah | Sunday, October 2 | Wednesday, September 20 |
| Yom Kippur | Tuesday, October 11 | Friday, September 29 |
| Thanksgiving Day (Can.) | Monday, October 10 | Monday, October 9 |
| Sweetest Day | Saturday, October 15 | Saturday, October 21 |
| Bosses' Day (US) | Monday, October 17 | Monday, October 16 |
| Halloween | Monday, October 31 | Tuesday, October 31 |
| Thanksgiving Day | Thursday, November 24 | Thursday, November 23 |
| Hanukkah | Saturday, Dec. 24-Jan. 1, 2017 | Tuesday Dec. 12-20 |
| Christmas Day | Sunday, December 25 | Monday, December 25 |
| Kwanzaa | Monday, Dec. 26-Jan. 1, 2017 | Tuesday, Dec. 26-Jan. 1, 2018 |

WUMFA

Promoting Your Special Talent

BY PATTY MALLOY, AIFD, CFD, WUMFA PRESIDENT



It's a new year and the future looks bright.

What a great time to look for ways to promote your special talents in the

wonderful world of flowers.

It's that time of year that keeps everyone busy planning and preparing for the busy spring holiday season ahead. If you are not doing it already, it's also a great time to promote your design work for other special events.

The floral world revolves around so many special occasions and party events. When planning for the year ahead, it's fairly easy to list all the national holidays and regional events that need to be on your calendar.

But what other special events are you missing? With our worldwide integrated nationalities there may be other cultural events that you could be marketing and reaching out for to provide your services. For many cultures flowers play a big part of specific occasions such as Hmong funerals, an India bride's wedding, or the Hispanic Quinceanera just to name a few.

Find your floral niche according to what unmet needs there are in your area or region and learn all you can about that culture. Then plan to get your name out there as the expert in floral design and event party work for that specific clientele. You might be amazed at how much extra business you can generate by doing a little extra investigating.

There will always be benefit dinners, awards banquets, corporate events, galas, garden parties, and various children's parties that will need your design expertise. Be sure to assemble an event floral design portfolio if you haven't done so yet. This way you can show off your creativity whenever a client wants to see what you

can do, especially if you want to create a niche market for your business. Party work and special events are great ways to increase your business all year long.

This is also a good time to get inspired by attending classes or design shows to spark your creative juices. There are lots of opportunities to expand your knowledge this spring.

WUMFA has a series of workshops coming to an area near you. Check out the WUMFA workshop listings on the website at www.wumfa.org. The annual WUMFA convention in Green Bay this spring will offer a variety of hands-on workshops, business sessions, and design shows to help spark your imagination and give you some wonderful insights on building your business for greater success.

Friday, April 1, features an all day hands-on "events" workshop you won't want to miss. Another two hour hands-on wedding workshop is offered Sunday morning, April 3. The business sessions will help refine your marketing skills including building better corporate sales, marketing to the affluent, and Fortune 500 marketing tactics.

The main stage design shows will feature corporate sales with plants for profits, wedding trends, party work, and today's memorial tribute trends. The convention offers some of the best training in the industry. You will find all the information right in issue one of *The Professional Florist* and also on the WUMFA website. Be sure to make plans to attend. The cost is very reasonable and the education and inspiration gained will be exceptional.

As always the board at WUMFA is continuously looking for ideas to help our florists be successful. Please be sure to contact us and let us know if there's something special you would like offered in education topics or articles. In the meantime, we look forward to seeing you at our upcoming "special event", the annual WUMFA convention, April 1-3, 2016, in Green Bay! ✿



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Giving Events That Extra Touch

BY BOB LARSON, AIFD, CFD, CO-OWNER BO-JO CREATIONS, FLORAL, CAKES, AND GIFTS, ELLSWORTH, WISCONSIN

When I was asked to write this article, I had to stop and think a minute about what an “event” really is, or what I consider an “event”. The dictionary definition of the word is: “Something that happens or is regarded as a happening, an occurrence, especially one of some importance” and “the arrival of a significant point in time at a determinable time and place following a chain of occurrences”. Well now, that helped a lot, didn’t it? Actually, it did!

In the floral industry, we are helping out clients and customers every single day providing beautiful arrangements for birthdays, anniversaries, births, promotions, retirements... the list goes on. That’s what we do.

Obvious events are weddings, corporate parties, holiday parties, and yes, even funerals (“celebrations of life”), all of which require much more planning and content. All of these reasons for celebration carry

extreme importance to your customer, and their expectation is you will provide the products and services they have come expect from you and your business.

Here’s how it works in my neck of the woods. We are located in beautiful west central Wisconsin, where the wooded hillsides, rivers, streams and rolling farmland abound no matter what highway you travel on. We can’t brag about metropolitan stereotypes here, but we can brag about the beauty and quiet of our landscape. Our area is dotted with small towns and villages, but we are only an hour away from the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis. To our east, Menomonie and Eau Claire, Wisconsin, are the largest cities we are close to. These demographics definitely play a role in what we do for event work.

Our biggest events are weddings. True, in our immediate area there are beautiful weddings, but not so many event weddings. Because we offer multiple wedding services in our shop, we are able to attract clients from these larger cities that do have “event type” weddings, and budgets that can support them.

Target marketing is one of the best forms of advertising, so being involved in local bridal shows is a great way for future and



A custom designed casket spray for an eight year old girl who died of a very rare form of cancer was decorated with her favorite thing, peace signs. Not long before she died, the shop presented her with a purple and white runway bouquet for being the Grand Marshall of the 2015 Ellsworth homecoming parade.

repeat wedding clients to see, taste, smell and touch what we have to offer them for their special day.

In this day and age of social media, we find it very beneficial to put out a little teaser one or two days before a show with pictures of finished bouquets, cakes, tablescapes or centerpieces and invite everyone to come to the show and see the rest of what we have

Wedding decorations featuring floral orbs on the pilsner vases and gold candelabra frames highlighted the event. There were 22 orbs on vases or frames, and eight sitting directly on the tables. A more dimensional look was achieved by the eight inch permanent orbs in white hanging at different levels from the high ceiling.



WUMFA

to offer. Everybody still likes to get something free, so we have pens, cake samples, brochures and other promotional literature available for the taking. We feel that it is very important to greet everyone who stops at our booth and invite them to sample our cakes, view our photo albums, and be invited to like us on Facebook.

I am a baker by trade, with being a professional floral designer my second passion. The two businesses married together very easily for my wife, JoAnn and me, and go hand in hand for events other than weddings.

We have some local and semi local corporate clients that we provide funeral work and everyday work for throughout the year, and dessert buffets, home-made candies and packaged desserts for the

holidays. In our 19 years in Ellsworth, we have done weddings or large anniversary events for all of these corporate clients' families. Word of mouth still being the best form of advertising, we get other corporate clients and weddings from these initial clients. Gotta love that! This is one of the main ways we get and keep clientele for events here.

Networking is the second best form of advertising. Social media is networking, as is being on a preferred vendor list at local hotels, reception venues, churches, local schools and funeral homes. I'll come back to that funeral home thing in just a minute, but first, let's say more about networking.

Having your own preferred vendor list is a great idea. We recommend caterers, DJ's, venues, photographers, videographers, hair stylists, light and sound, dress shops and tux rental shops. In turn, they recommend us to their clients. That's a win-win situation if you ask me. And it doesn't cost anything. Your event customers appreciate a personal recommendation from you, someone they trust, much more than a list of businesses they would have to research themselves.

OK, I've mentioned funerals twice now, so here is a little more about that. Yes, a funeral is also an event; there are just normally only a couple of days to plan. We have been successfully involved in funerals both through the cake shop and the flower shop. We provide family floral arrangements, occasionally personal flowers for family members, baked items for the family room at the funeral home or church, and dessert buffets for the meal after the funeral service is over.

Family floral arrangements, incoming wire service and phone orders are, of course, your mainstay for "celebration of life" work. However, you can also upgrade your order if you do it in the right way. Meeting directly with the bereaved family is always the best way to provide the service they want and need at that time. Knowing the status of the family and the type of service they are having can easily lead to a floral event.

Ask the family about the service they are planning. If they are having a catered meal, you can suggest small table centerpieces for the gathering after the service. If it is a smaller church service with mostly family and close friends, suggest a single rose or carnation for each person to take with them, or for the family to lay on the casket or the base of the urn before burial.



This wedding cake is a stack of "stumps" all made of cake and butter crème icing. The coloration is done with an airbrush and colored butter crème. The deer on the top are bark wire to add some whimsy to the cake, but still keep the rustic more masculine theme going. We have won three awards by entering this design in decorating competitions.



Rather than just serving cake, a company decided to give guests at an employee appreciation party a variety of desserts.

Encourage family members to have personalized tribute pieces. A husband or wife's piece can reflect travels or hobbies the couple did together. For children and grandchildren, suggest adding keepsake pieces such as decks of cards, cooking utensils or birdhouses to their memorial arrangement – things that remind them of their loved one.

Offering some suggestions for other related services is a nice gesture welcomed by the family. Recommend a good baker or bakery in your area that could provide desserts for them, musicians to provide service music, or a nice hotel for out of town guest accommodations.

As with any type of event work that you do, organization and proper planning are key to the event's success. I will be the first to admit that my organizational skills are not stellar (and my wife will attest to this very readily), but when it comes to planning larger events, I'm pretty on top of things.

Thanks to helping some very good friends with their large events, I learned how to organize, order, and process everything; such as contract paperwork, checking venue policies, church rules and restrictions, hiring extra help, renting items

needed to complete projects, time frames for ordering fresh product and hard goods, and most importantly having clear payment policies in place and understood by all parties involved.

Another aspect of organizing is storage of items. Keep original boxes for vases and containers, store acrylic crystal ornaments in egg cartons, hanging or draping beaded ropes and garlands in individual zip lock bags, and mirrors with paper towels between them. Yes, it takes a little more time to do, but saves so much time the next time you need to use them.

Having suppliers that you are confident in is also crucial when it comes to event work of any kind. Being familiar with your wholesalers and suppliers will give you a better feeling of security at a time when you don't need any added stress.

The other ingredient that must always be added to this mix is qualified help. You can't do this alone, you know that. You need staff and assistants that know your style, are willing to put in the needed effort and take pride in what they do. No doubt about it, doing large event weddings and corporate parties is a lot of work, and a lot of hours. Have people that can handle the physical demands, be positive, and enjoy the process with you.

One of the goals of successful event work is getting repeat business. Asking your satisfied clients to write a review and post it on several social media sites is an excellent marketing tool. Have these reviews printed and available for clients to see during initial planning meetings.

A thank you gift will be well received by a client who gave you a good recommendation leading to another client who booked an event. Or sending a beautifully vased arrangement the week after the wedding to the mother of the bride will keep you in the forefront of her memory as she shares stories of her daughter's fairy tale wedding with her friends. These low cost gratuities will not go unnoticed, and can easily pay for themselves in future business.

We don't get to do a lot of events here, but the ones that we do are always memorable and gratifying. Not to mention, they really make the checkbook look good – for a little while anyway. As an owner and designer, I encourage you to enjoy the processes of your events. Keep stress to a minimum by staying on top of the business aspects of the event. Do as much as you can, as early as you can. Don't be afraid to ask for help – pride goeth before a fall, after all.

Get everything in writing, and then signed. Get non-refundable down payments at the time of booking (not "deposits" as deposits are considered refundable). Be up front and clear about the deadline for final payment (a minimum of two weeks prior to the event). Set deadlines for changes and abide by them. Keep communication open between yourself and the venue concerning delivery and pick up times, lighting, and available carts and dollies for hauling, very clear and concise. Keep your notes all in one place and then remember where you put them. And most of all, don't be afraid of doing event work. After all, this is what you do every day, just on a bigger scale. ✨



Brent Stelzer Named Unit Director

Brent Stelzer, owner of Brent Douglas Flowers in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, has been chosen as the new Teleflora regional unit director for the Central Region. He is a past president of the Wisconsin and Upper Michigan unit and a strong advocate of design education.



Ostermann Wins Boutonniere Contest

Sarah Ostermann, Schroeder's Flowers, Green Bay, Wisconsin, was chosen as the grand-prize winner of \$500 in the "Boutonniere and Corsage Contest" sponsored by Designs by Buddy. Nearly 30 other contestants participated in the contest. Her design for a rustic-themed autumn wedding had a copper bird perched in a mossy nest, line flowers, curly wire, leaves, orange berries, hemp cord and a heart lock and key symbolizing the groom holding the key to the bride's heart.

DESIGN TIP

Making That Design Special

BY DOUG BATES, AIFD, CF, CFD
FLOWERS BY VOGT'S, STURGIS, MI
2015 MFA ACADEMY WINNER

One of our least favorite calls is: "I want something unique, but I don't have much to spend...what can you do?"

Incorporating a fun and easy armature as the base of a design is a great way to get added drama, without a lot of cost. At our store, we love the Oasis® flat cane. It makes for a quick and cost-effective way to satisfy our customers, and comes in a variety of colors.

Simply start by pulling a length of the cane from the spool and work it into a fun shape, stapling it in place as you go. Make it as large or as small as you like. When you're finished, place it on top of your foam filled container and insert your stems through the armature to hold



it in place. You'll end up with a design that has added interest and movement, and your customers are sure to be thrilled.

The great thing about lightweight armatures like this is they can be used



in a variety of ways such as a base for a hand-tied design, en masse for a great showroom display, suspended in your windows at prom time for a fun and funky theme – the possibilities are limited only by your imagination. ✿

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The Millennial “Everyday” Trends

BY DEREK C. WOODRUFF, AIFD, CF, CFD, PFCI,
THE FLORAL UNDERGROUND, TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN



What if I asked you to think of “everyday floral design” as being on a devolutionary path instead of on an evolutionary path?

What I mean is, try to think of floral design from a much simpler perspective, an earlier, less contrived and controlled perspective.

One of the biggest trends currently in the floral industry is described as, “Free-form,” or “Wild and Natural”. This trend first made its way into our business via the wedding market and is now taking over what we do with flowers on a daily basis in all other genres.

Orders for arrangements for sympathy services, ladies luncheons, even gifts to friends have all taken on a wild and non-

Photos courtesy of Syndicate Sales, Inc., Kokomo, Indiana.



uniform style. The challenge with this type of design is that it seems to ignore all the principles and elements that we are taught as young, budding designers: structure, symmetry, line, form, etc.

So, what does it mean for the “classically trained” floral designers? Following are three tricks to help tackle the very scary, sometimes unprofessional seeming, wild style of new-age floral design.

First, as the old saying goes, you have to know the rules to break the rules. Although initially it may seem like this design style is lacking the fundamentals of floral design, without those basics, many issues can arise.

For example, the vase life of the flowers may be shortened, or the physical balance of the arrangement may be off. While we may want the final piece to look wild and crazy, we certainly don't want it to be so crazy that it tips over or falls apart.

Once a designer has mastered their knowledge of basic floral design principles, then they can start to bend and break the rules to achieve a gorgeous, free-form arrangement that holds up and lasts just like any other arrangement would.

Second, working backwards gives a fresh perspective. Of course, I don't mean turning around and not looking at what you are doing. Instead, think about the way you put an arrangement together. In what order do you arrange your flowers? Do you start with greening-in your container? Do you put your filler flowers in as your first flowers or your last? For this new trend, try reversing the process, while keeping the free-form



style in mind. It will probably come together easier than you think.

Finally, get fresh with your container. To achieve the wild look we are talking about, you may need to experiment with different styles of containers. Consider a footed bowl or a low glass piece instead of the standard, dozen rose vase. Or, try a glass vase with a wide choke so that your flowers and greenery fall more freely and are airier. The





Photos courtesy of Syndicate Sales, Inc., Kokomo, Indiana.

free-form design is happy in its natural state and the ingredients should complement one another, as well as the container.

This latest floral design trend is about instinct and comfort. When Millennials shop at the market, they choose materials that appeal to their senses rather than by counting stems or even with a design in mind. They are making decisions based on colors, textures, and fragrances. When they get home and put their flowers in a vase, they are doing what feels comfortable and instinctual, and what we are calling the new "free-form" or "wild and natural" style.

Who ever thought that the future of floral design would not really be design at all? Although it seems to lack rules and control, the fundamentals are as important as ever. Armed with confidence of the basics, a fresh perspective, and new materials, this is a new opportunity to create an original style in floral design. We may struggle with new ideas that seem to buck the system, but we don't want our years of experience to cripple us from evolving... or de-evolving in this case! ✿

Certified Florist Manual & Testing

Did you know? MFA's Certified Florist (CF) program is a comprehensive program that covers all aspects of professional floristry and is the most affordable program available to florists today. And the most convenient: You can self-study at your own pace with this great manual/reference resource. The Certified Florist accreditation is nationally recognized and an approved pathway to AIFD accreditation. MFA offers an optional, educational "Steps to Certification" class to help prepare for certification.

Other Certification or Certified Floral Designer programs available today would cost you over \$1,000 and could take you years to accomplish! But not this program:

***Cost for manual and one round of CF testing is \$599.99 (includes tax & S/H)**

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Consumers today are offered more and more options for purchasing flowers and are looking for your credentials or certification to help them justify spending their money with you. Let them discover you are a Certified Florist when they look into your business!

Get your CF manual today and prepare for the CF exam, which consists of 2-1/2 hours of hands-on design (you make five designs: one duplicate for incoming wire service orders, one vase, one pin-on corsage, one wrist corsage and one wedding bouquet,) and two hours of written work (30 product ID and 120 multiple choice questions). If you pass each section with a score of 80 percent or better, you become a Certified Florist!

The CF Manual consists of the following chapters and books:

- 1. Care & Handling • 2. Product Identification • 3. Customer Relations/Sales • 4. Delivery • 5. Marketing • 6. Accounting • 7. Gluing • 8.

Lighting • 9. Basic Floral Design (this topic is covered using two books that are included with your manual purchase.) *Florists' Review Design School and Flower Arranging... Step by Step Instructions for Everyday Designs* • 10. Study Guide & Evaluation Forms



Visit www.michiganfloral.org or call 517-575-0110 and register today!

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QUESTION:

Name three important things happening every spring?

ANSWER:

Proms, Mother's Day and Weddings

Sharpen your knives, scissors, snippers and skills by taking a hands-on MFA "flowers to wear" class in your area. Lapels, wrists and "Sunday Best" all deserve beautiful floral embellishments for these important spring events. Hand-on classes are the best way to get up to speed as the spring rush begins.

Practice with cold glue, decorative wire, glitz and glam, be ready for a busy season ahead. Up to date styles and skills will save you time, help put cash in the bank and keep customers coming back.

Host facilities are scattered throughout Michigan enabling you to find one nearby. Whether you are starting out, or simply need a boost, this hands-on class is a must.

Included in the class are: all fresh product, cold glue, decorative wire and accessories.

Bring your own scissors, knives, wire snips and needle-nosed jewelry pliers.

Monday, March 21, 2016

Time: 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Alanson Public Schools

7400 North Street, Alanson, MI 49706

Instructor: Jackie Burrell, AIFD, CF,CFD

Tuesday, March 22, 2016

Time: 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Nordlie-Kennicott, Warren

25300 Guenther Road, Warren, MI 48091

Instructor: Shelley Adair, CF

Wednesday, March 23, 2016

Time: 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Nordlie-Kennicott, Grandville

4611 Ivanrest Ave. SW, Grandville, MI 49418

Instructor: Alice Waterous, AIFD, CF, CFD, PFCF

Wednesday, March 30, 2016

Time: 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

DWF

5100 Exchange Drive, Flint, MI 48532

Instructor: Laura Parker, AIFD, CF

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

Time: 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Patterson Flowers

216 Maple Street, Big Rapids, MI 49307

Instructor: Jackie Burrell, AIFD, CFD

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

Time: 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Rokay Floral

1125 Hill Brady Road, Battle Creek, MI 49037

Instructor: Doug Bates, AIFD, CF, CFD

*Thank you to the hosts and suppliers for helping make these classes possible:
Alanson Public Schools, Nordlie-Kennicott Warren,
Nordlie-Kennicott Grandville, DWF Flint,
Patterson's Flowers Big Rapids,
Rokay Floral Battle Creek, Fitz Designs*

Introduction to Design

Member \$1000 • Non-Member \$1250

Wednesday Evenings, April 27, 2016 - July 20, 2016

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Instructor: Cindy S. Ching, AIFD, CF

Includes all you need for the course

This comprehensive course will introduce beginning students to the exciting field of floral design. Principles and elements of design, proper mechanics of construction, care and handling of fresh materials and use of color are the focal points. For those desiring to become a Certified Florist, this class is a great first step. Time will be divided between lecture and hands-on design. All materials are included in the course fee and students will have a completed design to take home each week. Topics include: vase arrangements, symmetrical triangles, asymmetrical triangles, and horizontal centerpieces, round designs, hand-tied bouquets, corsages, and boutonnieres. The class will meet from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm every Wednesday for 12 weeks beginning April 27. except the week of May 4 for Mother's Day. There are 36 hours of classroom instruction. Since this is a personal enrichment course there will be no exams. Limited course enrollment of 12 will ensure that each student receives personal attention.

Intermediate Floral Design

Member \$1000 • Non-Member \$1250

Thursday Evenings, April 28, 2016 - July 21, 2016

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Instructor: Cindy S. Ching, AIFD, CF

Includes all you need for the course

This course builds upon the foundation of the basic design course. The focus will be on the information presented in the Certified Florist (CF) Manual with the goal of preparing students to take the CF examination. (Students who do not wish to take the CF exam will still be welcome.) The CF manual is the text for this course. You may purchase this manual at www.michiganfloral.org or call (517) 575-0110. This manual is recommended but not required. All other materials will be included in the registration fee. Time will be divided between lecture and hands on design. A sample test will be given on each topic. Lecture topics include: care and handling of flowers and plants, product identification, customer relations, sales, delivery, marketing, accounting, display, and intermediate floral design. Design topics include: vase arrangements, bridal bouquets, corsages, boutonnieres and sympathy. Designs will incorporate the contemporary techniques of grouping, layering, basing, framing, and many more. Each week you will take home your designs. The class will meet every Thursday for 12 weeks beginning April 28 except week of May 5 for Mother's Day. There are 36 hours of classroom instruction. Since this is a personal enrichment course there will be no exams. Limited course enrollment of 12 will ensure that each student receives personal attention.

Steps to Certification

Member \$149 • Non-Member \$199

Wednesday, June 8, 2016

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Instructor: Cindy S. Ching, AIFD, CF

Includes all flowers/supplies

Cindy will guide those who plan on becoming a Certified Florist. Tips on how to prepare for both the written and design portions of the test. Students will spend part of the day reviewing the written test and then work in the design room practicing skills needed to pass the exam. Attendees will leave with a clear understanding of what it takes to pass the prestigious CF exam. Class enrollment limited to 12. To download an application go to www.michiganfloral.org.

Call (517) 575-0110 for more information.

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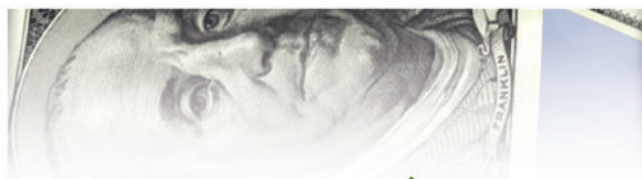
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