



Volume VI 2015

**Dealing
with the
Difficult Bride**

**Seven Steps
to Great
Wedding
Photos**

**'Grand'
Weddings on
Mackinac Island**

**Wedding
Mishaps:
Hiccups or
Disasters?**

**Nature's
Creative Edge –
The Finale**

the professional florist



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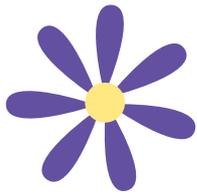


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Volume VI 2015

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LEADERSHIPREPORT

A Preview of 'Together We Bloom'

BY KEVIN ADAMO, 2016 GLFE CHAIRPERSON



On behalf of the Michigan Floral Association, I would like to invite you to an experience you will not forget, an experience that will help increase our business knowledge. I say "our" because we are all in this together. With an ever

changing industry, it is important for all of us to pull together and share what works with each other. Thus, this year's theme for the MFA 2016 Great Lakes Floral Expo, "Together We Bloom", March 4-6, at Devos Place in Grand Rapids.

At your fingertips will be national and local designers, vendors and shop owners coming together to share their talent and professionalism. I have implemented many ideas from marketing to wedding designs from people I networked with at the Expo. This can be the most valuable time you spend all year.

Make sure to be there on Friday for our own, exciting version of "Chopped". In "Floral Chopped" novice designers will be coached by an experienced designer telling them how to make an arrangement. At the end there will be one winning design pair. A performance by a stand-up comedian will finish the night.

Don't miss out on our extended cocktail hour on Saturday which this year will be held on the Expo floor. Music, models displaying bridal bouquets from the design contest and a live auction with some awesome items will highlight this part of the Expo. Then just pop next door to Ballroom B for the awards banquet and the Designer of the Year final round on stage.

You wanted more about weddings, sympathy and everyday designs and we heard you. Join us for the weekend and choose from seven business sessions, seven hands-on classes and five main stage shows.

Friday's all day hands-on design session features internationally known, prize winning designer Jacob McCall, AAF, AIFD, FSMD. By popular demand, the all day business session will be presented by Greg Gale, CMBP, expanding on his popular Myers-Briggs session from last year's GLFE.

Main stage sessions will include outstanding industry presenters John Hosek, AIFD, CAFA, CF, PFCI; Neville McKay, CAFA, PFCI, WFC, and Jacob McCall, AAF, PFCI, FSMD. Angela Christie, CF, will conduct one of the hands-on workshops. More workshops will be announced soon.

Business sessions will feature Kirsten Schulte discussing corporate accounts, Clay Atchison III covering sympathy business and Joy Lai on how to handle negative reviews on social media.

The trade show has a new configuration this year, making it easier to visit with all our wonderful vendors. These vendors support our association throughout the year and especially the weekend of the Expo. Don't forget to stop in their booths, see what they have to offer, and let them know you appreciate their support. Without their sponsorship this weekend of education and networking would not be possible.

I ask all of you to be a part of this "Bloom". One way to become even stronger is to share your ideas and learn from each other. I promise this will happen on March 4-6. Don't miss out on the Michigan Floral Association's 2016 Great Lakes Floral Expo, DeVos Place, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Complete information on the 2016 Great Lakes Expo will be in the next issue of *The Professional Florist*. ✿



2016 Great Lakes Floral Expo

SAVE THE DATE: March 4-6, 2016

**Amway Grand Plaza Hotel/Devos Place
Grand Rapids, Michigan**

**For More Information
Go to www.michiganfloral.org**

Make your plans now to attend the 2016 Great Lakes Floral Expo for three exciting days of design spectaculars, award winning business tips, and networking with your fellow MFA members and industry professionals.

Register early and not only will you save money but you could win a Plaza Dream one night stay at the beautiful Amway Plaza Hotel. Early registration forms must be in the MFA office by 5:00 p.m., January 29, 2016. You will automatically be entered in the Plaza Dream contest.

Registration forms will be available at www.greatlakesfloralexpo.com. in the near future.

Attention! Potential Exhibitors

Reserve Prime Space Now for the 2016 Great Lakes Floral Expo



2015 Great Lakes Floral Expo Facts

Total 2015 registration: 403
 285 buyers/designers/employees representing 124 businesses
 72 representatives from 26 exhibiting companies
 46 students from 9 different schools

New For 2016

New Floor Plan

Saturday, March 5, 2016
 Show Hours: 10:00 am - 6:45 pm
 (3.15 hours of uninterrupted shopping time)

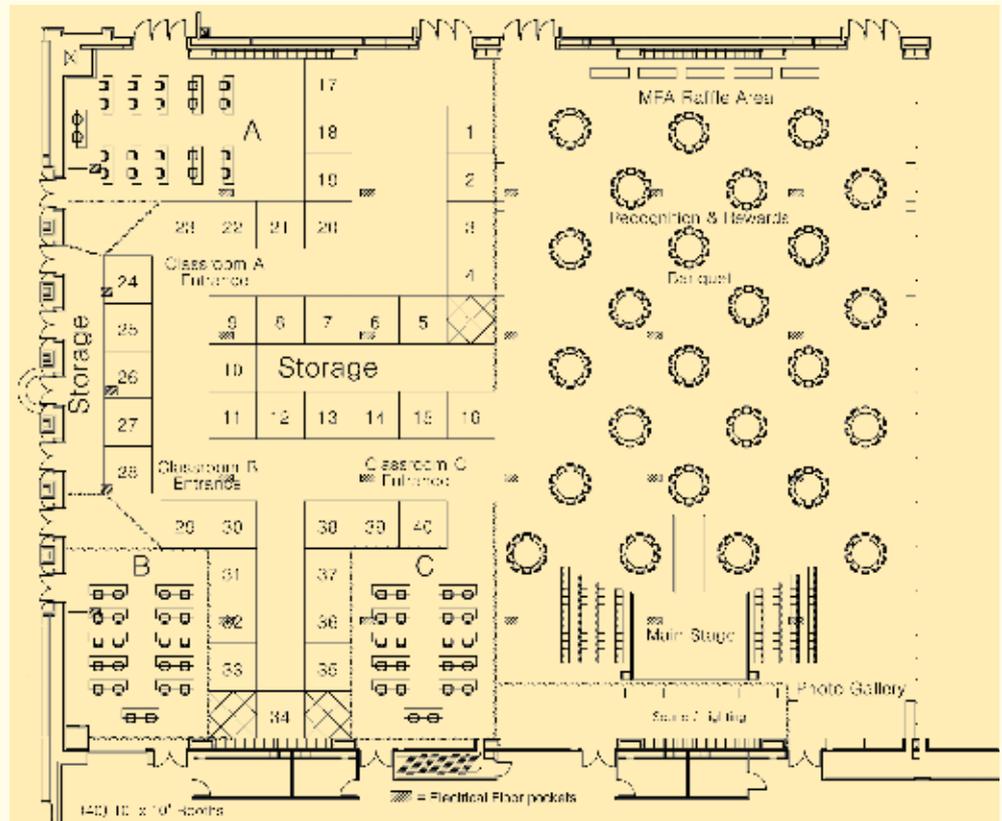
Banquet Cocktail Party on the Trade Show Floor 5:00 pm - 6:45 pm Saturday

Sunday, March 6, 2016
 Show Hours: 11:00 am - 2:30 pm
 (1 hour of uninterrupted shopping time)

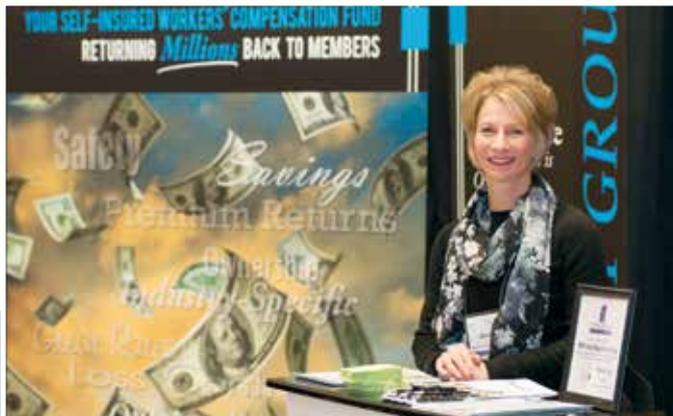
Product Reviews/Demos in Kiosks During Show Hours

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"The Great Lakes Floral Expo is the place you want to be seen! Over the years, it has allowed me to personally meet with many existing and potential clients. Plus, the upbeat and professional convention hall provides an excellent setting for my company to showcase our products. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to exhibit at the GLFE!"
 —Dawn Feldpausch, Regency Group

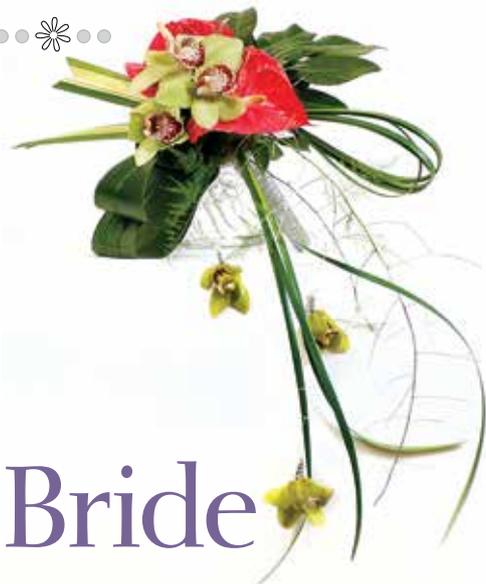


I have been attending MFA conventions for 32 years and have always picked up at least one new idea every year, even after all these years. I enjoy chatting with the exhibitors and keeping up with them on current and future trends in the industry. I always make sure to take advantage of the exhibitors' specials.
 —Stephen Welch, President, CEO, Bentley Florist, Inc

WEDDINGFEATURE

Dealing with the Difficult Bride

BY TONJA VANDER VEEN, AIFD, DESIGNING DREAMS, GRAND RAPIDS, MI



Yes...she was one of those brides...you know, the bride that no matter what you do, it is next to impossible to make her happy. On top of it, she came in only two months before the wedding and wanted a platinum (premium) wedding on a shoestring budget.

We have all had to deal with either a difficult bride or a mother (family) of the bride. Here are some tips and tricks to help you out with a short deadline and not so nice brides.

Every bride can come with challenges in some way or another. The reason for this is that they have been dreaming about this day either for a lifetime or at least since they got engaged. They put a lot of extra stress on themselves because it has to be "perfect" in their eyes and the image of what they think everyone else needs to see as "perfect" too. Often, the things they want have been seen on Pinterest and/or on a cable television show and are out of line with their budget or what they are willing to spend.

How do you figure out what they are looking for... the "image" in their head and heart. The biggest thing right now is Pinterest. Do you have internet access in your store so a bride can bring in her Ipad or laptop to pull up the pictures she is looking at? I highly recommend having wireless internet available for your brides and customers.

A shoestring (small) budget doesn't mean it has to look that way. There are ways that you can help your bride figure out what is important and what is not. Our opinion is that we never take money away from a bride's bouquet to "cut cost". This is their day and we tell them we want their bouquet to be everything they have been dreaming about.

You can make a difference in the budget on the larger pieces in front of the church or facility. In place of orchids and garden roses use hydrangeas and football mums, which have the "fluffy" romantic look brides want. Football mums give a nice large showing and are very cost effective.

Carnations are rebounding as well; they are not getting the "I like every flower but carnations" line. They look amazing in arrangements when they are clumped together for a big impact,



have a great fragrance and are priced to continue to make a comeback in wedding work.

Another way that you can help keeping the bride's cost down is through rentals. Rentals are something beneficial for you as well as the bride. Rent large ostrich feathers to add to the ceremony or reception flowers. This allows them to use instead of buy and will put money back into your pocket. Every time you rent them out it is no extra cost for you, but continues to add to your bottom line. Also, buy the new battery operated pillar candles. They last a long time and again will save the bride money because she will not have to purchase them but can rent from you.

Brides are waiting longer and longer before ordering their flowers. We have more and more brides walking in and ordering flowers the same month in which they are getting married. Years ago, most of our brides were reserving dates a year in advance. In our market, that has changed significantly.

Even though we may have to deal with difficult brides and their mothers, we still love to do wedding work. Promoting your shop or studio as a wedding expert is important; doing this allows brides to see you as a specialist in the wedding field.

Social media continues to be the best way to advertise yourself, your skills, and your business. Media posts are informative and help build your SEO (Search Engine Optimization). Sites include: Pinterest, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter. Instagram and Pinterest are two of the hottest spots right now. These are great forms of free advertising. The younger generation is on these media forums so make sure you post every week.

Additionally, text progress pictures to your bride and her mom (or family member). Seeing what you are doing will calm their nerves and will get them excited about the flowers. They often will tell their friends you did that for them. Remember, finding ways to satisfy even the toughest brides will be rewarded with additional referrals.

Another idea to attract potential customers is Shutterfly. Make books of your wedding work and bring them to your local hair and nail salons, tuxedo shops and bridal shops. You will have the undivided attention of customers waiting for their appointments.

These tips can help you prepare for the bride with short deadlines. This will make your job easier and make their day "perfect". ✿

TECHTIP

Seven Steps to Great Wedding Photos

BY GAIL PABST

When creating beautiful wedding designs, do you take photos for your website and social media or do you say, “next time, for sure”. Taking photos of your designs should be an important step before sending them out and with these hints it can be an easy step, too.

1. Camera – You no longer need to purchase an expensive camera to do the job, often a smart phone or tablet will work great. If you would like a designated camera for photos, get a digital that takes photos at 5MB for less than \$100.

2. Designate an area – Make sure there is a separate, always clean, spot to take photos. This is very important because if you have to move things around to take photos, you won't. This spot can have fabric draped behind and under the arrangements or even white cardboard or table runners. Just be sure it is in neutral colors like dove grey or white so the flowers are the main focus.

3. No shaking allowed – Yes, you are as steady as they go but trust me you really aren't and for clear, non-blurry photos get a tripod. If you are using a phone, purchase a tripod that grips the camera phone instead of connecting with a screw.

4. Bring in lights – Without the right kind of lighting the flowers will look dark, flat and unappealing. These photos are going to help get more sales so make the flowers pop. Use early or late sunlight (direct daylight can be too harsh) or purchase a few lights to use above and next to the designs. Remember to use daylight bulbs in the lights and to turn off the phone flash and fluorescent bulbs overhead if possible.

5. Try different angles – Take photos from the top, front, side and back. These will all give different depths to the design and a better perspective. Then take the photos and put them together in a collage using a photo app.

6. There's an app for that – Enhancing, cropping and adding text to photos can



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now all be done in many different photo apps. Try and find ones that work best for you. Instagram is great for working and sharing photos for free.

7. Now use them...everywhere. Use those photos on your website, changing them often so new brides will want to come back to see what's new and put them up on ALL social media. What a great way to show what you designed the weekend before and what you can do for upcoming brides. Print the photos and add to a photo album in the store. Send the photos to the happy couple making sure your name, etc., are on them

when the photos are shown to friends and family.

Don't let designs get out of the store without being photographed; it's the perfect marketing tool for your shop. ✿

Gail Pabst is a marketing and social media quality advisor. Gail has been part of the flower industry for over twenty years and is passionate on coaching clients on how to manage their social media channels and marketing programs themselves. She specializes in marketing strategy, social media, email marketing and content writing, saving customers time and money. Gail can be contacted at gailpabst@gmail.com.

WEDDINGFEATURE



'Grand' Weddings on Mackinac Island

BY LAURIE WILLIAMS, MARGARET'S GARDEN, GRAND HOTEL, MACKINAC ISLAND, MI

Conversations at the front counter are almost as unique as our shop itself. Located at the East entrance of the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, Margaret's Garden is a European styled open-air flower shop. This format invites our guests to come behind the counter and chat, look at our wide variety of flowers, or simply enjoy watching as we work.

Our staff of three designers and three assistants enjoys visiting with guests who are sometimes surprised to see a flower shop inside a hotel. They ask all sorts of questions and we are more than happy to provide answers. We are most often asked: What are all these flowers for? How do they get here? How do we deliver with no cars on the island? How many weddings do we do each season?

The bulk of our work happens here at the hotel. We handle all the weddings and special events, make up floral gifts for VIP's and frequent visitors, provide fresh flowers on the tables in the dining room and work with guests celebrating special occasions who would like fresh flowers in their room upon arrival.

Getting flowers to the island is a process in itself. Everything is boxed up at the wholesaler and put on a bus to the boat docks. Then they come across to the island on a freight ferry, are loaded onto a horse-drawn freight flatbed and brought through the back of the hotel by our bell staff.

We receive anywhere from six to ten 35 lb. boxes of flowers three

times per week for our standing orders, and the numbers increase depending on how many weddings or special events we are planning. Our largest shipment was this season where we received, checked in and processed 60 boxes of flowers for one wedding including 1,000 hydrangea and over 600 stems of phalaenopsis orchids.

Delivery is usually made in our red wagons, which we keep parked in front of our cold room. When guests walk through our area and see the wagons we hear all sorts of comments. Some

people would like to ride them down the hill, some want to borrow them for their luggage, and the children, of course, just want to play with them.

We take our wagons all over the hotel when we deliver to the rooms and set up parties. There are no cars on the island so when we have deliveries downtown we either take a wagon or call for a horse-drawn taxi, flatbed dray or use a bike with a cart behind it, depending on how much we have to take.

On average we do over 150 weddings per season and our season runs from early May through October. We book most of our hotel weddings from our winter offices by the time we open in May, and then work with brides on offsite weddings and parties after opening. Our weddings can be as simple as a bouquet and a boutonniere for an elopement or as elaborate as themed parties with 800 guests in attendance and several event planners working together to achieve the perfect result.

In general our weddings are pretty typical, using the most popular color trends of each season which tend to be the blush pink and peach tones. Occasionally, we have a bride who has



NEVILLE ON THE LEVEL

Tales from the Front... the Joy of Weddings!

BY NEVILLE MACKAY, CAFA, PFCI, WFC



Weddings aren't as cookie-cutter as they used to be, and with people wanting themed weddings, blended ethnicities and goodness knows what else, we never know what we'll be asked to do.

Really, there is no limit to the lengths some will go to, to create their gawd-awful tacky, I mean unique, decor. I truly believe the wedding industry is what built the empire that is the Dollar Store!

When I was asked to think of and share stories of my experiences as a wedding florist, and offer tips and guidance, I had to stop and think of all the things that have happened in my career, and which ones were clean enough to talk about publicly.

I thought of the time I had a bride come in for a consultation with a newborn, and promptly decided to breastfeed this offspring whilst deciding whether to have all roses or to "keep it understated" and have just lilies, but I can't talk about that because I would have to tell you what I said about her top bits and how many flowers we would need.

I also thought of the couple who came in with both of their mothers in tow. Don't you just love a committee? They told me that since his mother was on her third marriage, his dad on his second, her mother on her second and her dad on his fourth, they thought they'd keep this wedding "simple" because it was their first. Charming.

Then there was the time I had a couple who said that the four of them would be happy together, and when I asked if they had children...wait for it...it was explained to me that she was bisexual, and he was a transvestite, so sometimes they would both be men, or both women, or she'd be the man and he'd be "Vanessa" what I think he called his alter-whatever-you-call-it. I had to watch re-runs of "Soap" for a week, just to feel normal again.

I hope I won't bore you with these tales from the front lines of a wedding consultant's life, because I'm sure we could all gather as if at a big ol' AA meeting and purge all sorts of wild and wonderful tales, right?

When chatting with, and consulting with a wedding couple, don't assume anything. Gosh, these days you really can't. Several years ago I made the horrible mistake of assuming the man with the bride was her close friend who was very (too much so) knowledgeable about fabric, colors, jewelry, and flowers...and I figured by his demeanor, men. Oh, no, he was in fact, the groom. Whoops! Seriously, someone was delusional in that relationship or rich. Oh well, who hasn't made that mistake before?

I had a lady call and tell me she was a little short, so not to be surprised or shocked when I saw her, and another who told me ahead of time how busy she was so I wouldn't feel awkward. You all know, I LIVE for that stuff, and these two were some of my best weddings!

It was like the gal with the walker who was self-conscious about it, 'til I told her that if she had to have it, then own the thing. We painted it purple (her colors) tarted it up with all sorts of flowers, and away she sashayed down the aisle. In fact I saw her recently and she now has several in different colors!

Couples come to us for our expertise and advice, so be up front with them and be honest about what you can offer them. I had a lady who wanted rugosa roses in full bloom (You know what I mean, right? They aren't commercially grown.) all over the reception and church in November. I calmly told her that I wanted a full head of hair and a trip to Tahiti, but we could both dream, I guess.

Oh, and the wing nut who told me she needed to have centerpieces of hydrangea, roses, freesia and a "few" orchids, and her budget was \$8-10 each. I, in my sweet manner, suggested I make one of these lovely designs and take a photo of it, so she could have it copied and put in cheap frames on all the tables, because that's all she'd get for that price. Funny thing, I didn't get the order.

We do weddings for all sorts from same sex couples (I should tell you sometime about David and my wedding. It was a blast! It was live on the radio, there were TV cameras, internet streaming...very understated as are we.) to older couples, better luck next-time brides, and people from all different places, and we need to be aware and comfortable with their wants, needs and expectations before saying "I will" do your flowers.

Remember, it's ok to just say no if you're not comfortable with what is asked for; goodness knows I have many times. It's best not to do a project that you know will be torturous rather than to suffer.

One last thing I will share with you that I tell all my brides: "Darling, do enjoy the weeks and days leading up to your wedding day, and be sure to have as much fun and excitement as possible, as well as on your wedding day. Because, the next day you're just a married woman, and honey, there's ain't nothing special about that!"

Be well, and all the best with your upcoming weddings. ✿

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.



KENNICOTT BROTHERS

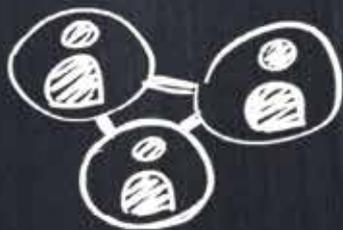
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CFREPORT



BY CINDY CHING, AIFD, CFD

Design Style

Beautiful Bridal Work

Every bride wants her flowers to reflect her personality, aspirations, and dreams. Bridal flowers should be exciting, magical and romantic. The floral designer needs to use colors, textures, unique products, mechanics, and style to fulfill the bride's wishes and make sure her day is special and unique. This white bridal bouquet uses white cymbidium orchids and white roses, with baby's breath tucked in deep. Aluminum wire accents and silver aluminum beaded wire provide the collar for this beautiful bouquet which is elegantly finished with satin ribbon and pearls. ✿



*Design by Shelley Adair, CF,
Wedding and Celebration Creations Inc.,
Canton, MI*

CF Flower of the Month

Roses

Available year-round, will last three to ten days depending on variety and handling. Look for tight heads, starting to crack, showing full color and strong, straight stems.



CF Tip

Hand-tied Bouquets

Hand-tied bouquets can be enhanced with a series of knotted ties. To create the ties, use several short pieces of ribbon, about 5 to 7 inches each. These pieces can all be the same ribbon or pieces of several different ribbons. Starting at the binding point of the bouquet, tie each ribbon around the stem into a knot, with ribbon ends neatly trimmed. Space each ribbon tie an inch or so apart, ending the ties at a point that allows the bouquet to be placed in water without getting the ribbons.



CF NEWS: Time to get out your CF manual and start studying. Become a CF in 2016. We would love to have you join the Certified Florist group. On January 6, 2016, take the Steps Class to help you prepare for the CF test. Then on January 17, 2016, the Certified Florist test will be offered at Michigan State University, in East Lansing, Michigan.

DESIGNERSPOTLIGHT

Here Comes the Bridal Bouquet

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

The basis for this bride's bouquet is one half roll of Oasis® flat cane secured with silver bullion wire and glue. Using the cold glue technique, silver brunnia, phalenopsis orchids, and white begonia flowers were attached with floral adhesive. This is more time efficient than wiring and taping individual blooms. In this case, the two featured Patience garden roses were enhanced with additional petals glued onto the outer edges to give them a fuller look. The handle and streamers are made from icicle rock crystals and secured with bullion wire. Maximize the natural freshness of fresh cut flowers by spraying with Floralife® Finishing Touch Spray to refresh, hydrate, and protect each blossom. ✿

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WUMFA

The Road to Becoming a Professional Florist

BY PATTY MALLOY, AIFD, CFD, WUMFA PRESIDENT



Weddings are featured in this issue of *The Professional Florist* magazine. I wonder how many of us loved

playing with flowers so much that we started designing wedding flowers for friends and relatives because we thought it would be fun. That's how I got started in floral design many years ago.

Once I designed a few silk flower bouquets for a few close friends and relatives, I was well on my way to a path that would lead me into a lifelong career in the floral industry. I am sure there are at least a few of you out there that may have had a similar experience getting started in the floral world.

The road to becoming a professional florist can entail many things from taking design classes, learning tips from other florists, and studying trade magazines to actually being an apprentice in a shop and/or learning design from a mentor. If you have an opportunity to learn from a mentor it can be a very fun and fulfilling experience.

As I looked for avenues to learn all I could about floral design, I eventually found some design classes available through WUMFA back in the early 1990s. As I attended those classes I admired the knowledge and dedication of the instructors. They were so helpful and patient with students no matter what level of experience each student was at. I always looked up to these instructors and considered them to be "my real mentors" in the floral world, even though they didn't know it.

Living in the northwestern part of Wisconsin doesn't necessarily offer many opportunities to study with a mentor compared to what the more metropolitan cities may have available. So I jumped at every opportunity to learn all I could and the WUMFA classes offered those opportunities.

Just to name a few, floral design instructors such as Kevin Ylvisaker, AIFD, CAFA CFD, PFCI; Sally Rossmiller, AIFD, CFD; Brad and Kelly Harnisch, AIFD, CFD, and John Hosek AIFD, CAFA, CFD, MCF, made our classes not only educational but fun learning experiences thanks to sharing their outstanding design tips and tricks.

Building strong relationships with florists from other cities is a good place to start your networking and mentoring journey in the world of floral design. There are so many fantastic florists who love to share their knowledge with students eager to learn the trade. You can read about some of them right here in this issue.

Look to your local wholesalers for design shows they may offer with nationally recognized floral designers and learn all you can. If you find a designer you connect with through a particular design style that person can be your virtual mentor from afar.

In this digital age just about anything is possible to learn on line. You can catch some nationally known designers on YouTube which is a great way to experience instructions from celebrity designers when you can't see them in person.

We are very fortunate to have many national and international professional designers right here in our own states of Wisconsin and Michigan. You can keep up with trends and read about upcoming events in this magazine to see when designers will be featured at various design shows especially if you want to catch an event nearby when possible.



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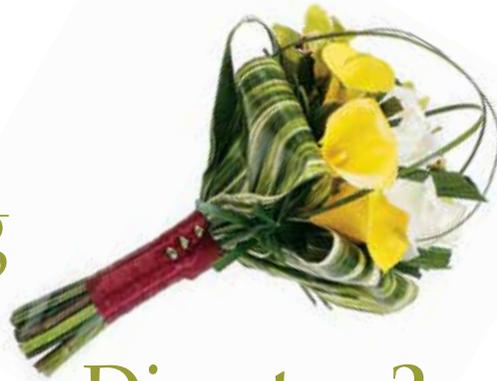
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Learn as much as you can as often as you get the chance. I attended the National Alliance of Floral Associations in San Antonio, Texas this year. It was fabulous networking with other designers sharing thoughts and picking up new ideas. Whenever I attend an event, I can always learn something new along with adding some new floral friends to my little black book of contacts. We all have similar concerns across the country not to mention a love for all things beautiful in the world of floral design.

Continue your journey in floral design with the support of educational design workshops and events sponsored by WUMFA. We are also here to help you become the best you can be. Let us know what we can do for you. ✿

Wedding Mishaps: Hiccups or Disasters?



BY KATHLEEN JOHNSON, AIFD, CF, CFD, FREELANCE DESIGNER, NEKOOSA, WI



As we all know, there are many things that can go wrong at a wedding. Statisticians say that six percent involve wedding attire such as lost, stolen or damaged garments. Approximately eight percent involve illness or injury to the bride, groom or other key members of the wedding, requiring the wedding to be canceled.

Forty-four percent involve vendors who fail to show up or didn't perform services as promised. Things like the caterer or officiate cancelling; no show of the limo driver; the photographer's camera bag stolen in the middle of the wedding shoot; the dress shop or florist has a fire or files bankruptcy right before the wedding. While we florists fall within that 44 percent, I'm not sure what percentage is strictly related to us as florists.

Nevertheless, a wedding like any other large event has lots of moving pieces that can become our problem, no matter how prepared we are. It may be a mishap that leads to a near disaster or just a hiccup with a quick recovery. It happens to all of us at some point or another.

Fortunately the hiccup is usually only known by you and your staff while the disaster is known by many and could ultimately have a negative effect on your business. Even if a so-called disaster happens,

how you handle the situation can say a lot about your level of professionalism.

It has been interesting to read, hear and even experience some of these floral wedding mishaps, hiccups or disasters. I'm sure you all have stories to tell. It could be anything from showing up to the wrong church; to a flat tire; to an accident throwing our precious cargo all over the back of the van. It might be that you just set up the chuppah in the wrong place at the venue. Even those last minute additions or changes, like the planner added three more tables and forgetting to tell you, can cause a hiccup or disaster.

How about this one. You are setting up for a wedding at a museum. You know, the place with more rules than any of the local venues in town. No rose petals, no spilling water, bring a vacuum, stay so many feet away from exhibits, and don't break anything.

With the inside decorated for the ceremony, and the outside decorating just about completed, that's when it happens. The wind picks up and the large glass vases on the grassy lawn begin to have a problem. Yup, you guessed it. Glass vases begin to topple like trees in a forest. The difference is the sound of glass crashing and not trees.

Your inner "floral paramedic" jumps into rescue and recovery. You spring into crisis management mode and call in the emergency team to bring in the extra case of vases. Due to quick floral thinking and the preparedness of the team you save the day not to mention your reputation. The good news is at least the guests had not yet arrived. Lesson learned, watch out for Mother Nature.

Here is one more. It was a large Italian

wedding and the bride planned a very special bouquet toss. The couple hired a pilot with a micro light plane to fly past the single bridesmaids and guests. The bride would then throw her lucky bouquet down to them.

Unfortunately, when she threw her bouquet the flowers were sucked into the plane's engine causing it to start on fire and explode. They plunged to the ground hitting a house but thankfully all survived. While this didn't directly involve the florist, it was one of the most unique disaster stories I have heard. There are so many more stories to share. All you have to do is talk with your fellow florists.

I don't believe that there is a wedding out there that has gone absolutely perfectly, but I do believe that we, as florists, can avoid some of the disasters, with knowledge and good professional practices. A timeline can be a great tool but think of it as your guideline because we all know things come up. It should never be so tight that it leaves no wiggle room.

You are sometimes at the mercy of other vendors so you will want to confirm all the details to ensure you have time to execute your work. Having extra time can be a lifesaver. I would also suggest that you bring a copy of important instructions, names and numbers with you should the unexpected happen.

It is always good to have a wedding emergency kit. This will vary with each shop but may include extra flowers, vases, floral tools, first aid kit, and a camera/cell phone to document anything important that comes up.

Hopefully your staff is prepared to handle any wedding mishap hiccup or disaster in a professional manner. Some of you maybe rather new to all the of this, but believe me there is a lot to learn from your own experiences as well as others. Knowledge is the key so continue to grow and share what you know. This is how all florists gain a professional image necessary for a successful business. ✨



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FLORAL CELEBRATION

Nature's Creative Edge – The Finale

BY ALICE WATEROUS, AIFD, CF, CFD, PFCI,
FLORAL CONSULTANT, GRAND HAVEN, MI

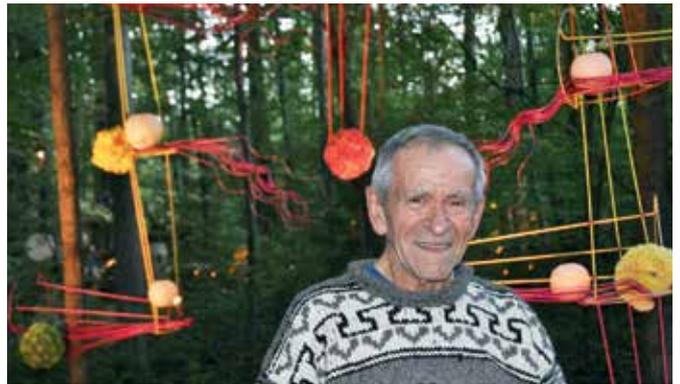
Going out with a bang, "NCE" enjoyed a record 53 contributing professional designers producing 40 floral exhibits. The designers included seven students from Kishwaukee College, plus instructors Janet Gallagher, AIFD and Joyce Grattoni, AIFD. The event also hosted a record number 1,150 visitors.

Originated and hosted by Robert Friese, AIFD, Nature's Creative Edge began with two consecutive master classes featuring Hitomi Gilliam, AIFD, as the guest instructor. Creations by the class in the forest adjacent to Bob's home/garden were so beautiful he invited friends and neighbors to come and enjoy. All declared it needed to go public.

The next year, he invited designers to journey to his West Michigan property to create a massive floral exhibit for public viewing. Designers from Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, and Wisconsin answered the call through the years, as Nature's Creative Edge became an annual event. Ticket sales originally benefited local charities and later the AIFD North Central Regional Chapter education funds.

Open for three evenings each year, thousands enjoyed magical exhibits that became more amazing as the sun set and special lighting and candles twinkled throughout. Annually, themes ranged from art, music, storybooks and more. An average of 30-35 design professionals gathered each September to make magic happen.

Friese's vision and generosity made possible a floral experience that showcased excellent design, and provided all with a unique opportunity to express their love of floral design. Some dubbed it "Florists' Camp".



Bob Friese, AIFD, in front of an exhibit by Skeeter Parkhouse, CF, Wasserman's Floral, Muskegon, MI, at the farewell Nature's Creative Edge.

AIFD North Central Chapter members formed the backbone of the team, but many other talented floral professionals and volunteers participated as well. Key to the event have been artists James Lutke and Hilary Hilliard, both of whom work on a regular basis with Bob and are considered his "flower children". They put in untold hours each year during the months leading up to NCE, clearing out former exhibits, preparing the site for the next, setting lights and assisting designers. Each also created exhibits of their own. Then they return to help clean it all up afterwards.

To the casual visitor, the event is spectacular and awesome, but there is no way to grasp the amount of work and resources it takes to produce such a large scale exhibit. The site covers a little more than five acres.

First, the forest is trimmed out to allow



Exhibit by Marisa Rakowski, CF, Alison Ludema and Lisa Vandermeer, Ludemas Floral, Grand Rapids, MI.



Exhibit by Rupali Shete Sandalage, AIFD, Schaumburg, IL.

FLORAL CELEBRATION

paths and exhibit sites. Walking paths are established with tons of wood chips, electrical installed, and regular grooming done. In the weeks preceding the pole barn/garage is cleaned out making space for design tables; hard goods and flowers are procured, buckets washed and props hauled out. Signage is painted, advertising, tickets printed and distributed, parking arranged, shuttle bus and photographer found. Volunteers man the parking lot, ticket tables, etc., stock the refreshment shed, pick up and process product, ready the compost site, create and print site maps. Just some of the bases covered to make the event seem effortless. Whew!

Each year, Bob prepared his home to house many of the designers coming from afar. He baked and cooked for weeks ahead stashing provisions in the freezer to feed the team during the last few days during prep and set up. Then, he hosted a Thursday night dinner for the design team and visiting floral industry donors (Oh, Bob's legendary cheese cakes, yum!)

The 2015 finale theme "Invention" meant each designer had to "invent" an exhibit using "surprise package" items. Throughout the forest were piles of "things", leftovers from all the former exhibits. On arrival, designers drew a number corresponding to a site and pile of goodies. They could also select from a pool of items in the resource center, more leftovers. They were provided flowers, hard goods and accessories donated from several vendors to complete their masterpieces. The results were as diverse as the assigned pieces and parts and all visually delightful.

A number of designers were available during open hours to chat with visitors about the theme, designers, the items and mechanics used.

As the curtain draws to a close and we kill the lights, on this unique, amazing project, Nature's Creative Edge becomes a sweet memory full of inspiration to the creative team and viewing public alike. Thanks again to the "father" of Nature's Creative Edge, Robert "Bob" Friese, AIFD, for a decade of floral celebration!

Bob would like to thank the following for their 2015 support and beyond:

Everflora, Roy Houff, Kennicotts/Nordlie, Kennicotts/Vans and Smithers Oasis/Floralife.

James Lutke, Hilary Hilliard, North Central Regional Chapter of AIFD members, Jerry Waterous, Natalie Carmolli, Bob Larsen, AIFD (500 cookies for 2015!) plus a host of volunteers. Ticket sellers: Grand Haven Garden House, Calico Cat, Eastern Floral (all locations), Picket Fence Floral and Wasserman's Floral. ✿

Photography by Ken Welsh, kenwelshphotography.com, welshken@att.net.



Exhibit by Hilary Hilliard, free-lance floral artist.



Exhibit by Sue Wall and Antoinette Kiewiet, Eastern Floral, Grand Rapids, MI.



Exhibit by Carolyn Clark Kurek, AIFD, C2K Floral School, Indianapolis, IN.



Exhibit by Craig Montanye, AIFD, Picket Fence Floral, Holland, MI.

MARKETINGRESEARCH

The following is the first in a series of excerpts from "Funeral Directors & Flowers, Insights into Floral Tributes in the Funeral Industry", a study from the Floral Marketing Research Fund in collaboration with the American Floral Endowment. The survey is a guide to floral tributes in funeral services, consumers' reactions, and feedback to improve relationships with floral retailers.

Funeral Facts

Part One

The responses gathered in the 2014 Floral Marketing Research Fund survey came from 192 members of the National Funeral Directors Association.

Forty-one states were represented plus participants from the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Ohio led the list with 16 responses followed by Pennsylvania with 15, Michigan with 11, and Illinois with 9.

Seventy-three percent of respondents were male, and sixty-six percent of those had more than 20 years experience. Sixty-four percent of the businesses had less than six people and were single location, independent facilities. The service areas ranged from 30 percent serving a community of less than 10,000 people to 41 percent with 10,000 to 50,000 people to 15 percent serving a city of more than 100,000.

According to the report summary: "The information gathered from this survey can assist in enhancing the educational and marketing materials provided to funeral directors. These materials, aimed at consumers, would illuminate the emotional, psychological and physical benefits flowers bring to grieving families."

Findings included:

- Funeral directors considered flower and plants as providing the most comfort to the bereaved, followed by sympathy cards, for non-human sources of comfort.
- Seventy-three percent of funeral directors believe their clients recall flowers and plants as a comfort.
- From the viewpoint of the family, the majority of funeral directors (51 percent) believe floral memorials are an expression of sympathy, followed by tribute/respect for the deceased.
- Seventy-four percent of funeral directors encourage flowers at the services and nearly 18 percent view floral tributes as a significant tradition that should be preserved.

- Funeral directors recall approximately 64 percent of clients talking about flowers/plants.
- Sixty-eight percent of funeral directors are unaware of any studies showing the benefits of flowers at services.
- Twenty-percent of those who completed the survey indicated that families of the deceased always request donations instead of flowers, seventy percent stated their clients sometimes request donations and 10 percent specified donations are rarely/never requested.
- Sixty-four percent of funeral directors do NOT use the term "in lieu of flowers" in funeral announcements.
- The majority of funeral directors (63 percent) were visited by a local florist in the past three to four months while only nineteen percent were visited one plus years ago or never.
- Eighty percent of funeral directors stated they have a working relationship with at least one local florist. Seven percent have a local florist but not a real working relationship, and two percent have an in-house floral designer/shop.
- Seventy-four percent of funeral directors encourage families to have flowers at their service, six percent only sometimes encourage flowers/plants and sixteen percent have no preference.
- The majority of directors (44 percent) believe funeral flowers are sometimes a hassle while 18 percent of them think funeral flowers are a hassle indicating there is room for improvement.
- The cards attached to memorial flowers are another area for improvement for 89 percent of funeral directors.
- The majority of funeral directors (75 percent) also expressed as helpful the use of containers that avoid spills, followed by adjusting the arrangement (45 percent), transporting the flowers to the cemetery (25 percent), and setting up the flowers in the service area (15 percent)

More information from the survey will be published in future issues. ✿

Welcome New MFA Members!

Royal Petal

Enrika Karalius, AIFD, CF, CFD
1138 State Street, Lemont, IL 60439
Phone: (630) 257-0339
Website: www.royalpetal.com

Ionia Floral

Brenda Cowling-Cronk
470 S. Steele Street, Ionia, MI 48846
Phone: (616) 527-1111
Website: www.ioniafloralandgifts.com

Ken Freytag Receives First Annual Tom Butler Award

Teleflora presented the first annual Tom Butler Floral Retailer of the Year Award to Ken Freytag, Freytag's Florist, Austin, Texas. The presentation was made at the American Floral Endowment dinner which took place at the Society of American Florists annual convention

The award recognizes a retail florist and Teleflora member who best embodies the legacy of Teleflora's former Chairman Tom Butler. In addition to running a first class retail operation, the winner "shows the highest level of commitment and service to their local community, is a dedicated ambassador to the floral industry, and provides leadership and guidance to fellow florists."

"I can't think of a more deserving individual to honor the values and legacy of Tom Butler than Ken Freytag of Freytag's Florist," said Jack Howard, Teleflora executive vice president of national accounts. "Ken Freytag's 40-plus year career as an ambassador dedicated to the improvement, growth and sustainability of the floral industry and that of his fellow florists are just a few of many milestones that make him worthy of this year's Teleflora Floral Retailer of the Year Award." ❀



Tom Butler's grandchildren Cole and McKenna and his daughter Amy Brumby congratulate Ken Freytag.

The late Tom Butler's passion for the floral industry inspired an almost 50-year career. He served as chairman of Teleflora, and chairman of the American Floral Endowment. His commitment to giving and innovation continues within the floral industry through the Tom Butler Family Fund that helps provide funds to support the Endowment's research and grant efforts. His many honors included SAF's Hall of Fame Award and Paul Ecke, Jr. Award, the MFA Award of National Industry Service, induction into the MFA Hall of Fame, and several other state association awards. For the many who knew him, he was considered to be the "Chief Champion of Florists", always there when they needed him, always understanding their issues and concerns, and always representing their cause.

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For a list of distributors please e-mail marketing@alexandrafarms.com

INDUSTRY INFO

Raska, Foley Chosen 2016 Mayesh Design Stars

Jerome Raska, AAF, AIFD, CAFA, CF, CFD, PFCI, co-owner of Blumz by JRDesigns, Ferndale/Detroit, Michigan, and Shawn Michael Foley, Hothouse Design Studio, Birmingham, Alabama have been chosen the 2016 Mayesh Design Stars. Seventeen expert florists entered the contest.

Raska has over 30 years of experience in the floral industry and has won many awards for his work including the prestigious Tommy Bright Award. He is also well known throughout the industry as a teacher and an educator. He will be working closely with the company to shoot exclusive content that will be featured on *Blumz.com*, *Mayesh.com*, and across social media outlets.

Foley, a designer at Hothouse Design Studio, has been following the competition since its inception in 2011 and decided he was ready to give it a shot. "I've always loved sharing and educating in the floral industry, so this was a great platform to pursue," he said.

For his submission, he made a mockup tablescape for a rehearsal dinner using sunflower centers, equisetum, hellebores, scabiosa pods and bell eucalyptus in simple glass cube vases.

Mayesh has 18 stores in eight states and distributes florals to retailers around the world.

SAF, AmericanHort Advise Taking Ralstonia Off 'Select Agent' List

The Society of American Florists and AmericanHort together submitted formal comments on horticulture's science-backed position that *Ralstonia solanacearum*, Race 3, Biovar 2 (R3Bv2) should be removed from a list of animal and plant diseases that the federal government has determined could be misused as terrorist weapons.

Every two years, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) requests a public review of the "Select Agent" list, asking for comments on whether plant or animal diseases should be taken off the current list or added to it.

In the floral industry, R3Bv2 can have a devastating impact on geranium (pelargonium) crops, according to SAF's Lin Schmale, senior director of government

relations, and both the potato and tomato industries also could be adversely affected by introduction of the disease. Years ago, however, SAF, working with growers, regulators and researchers, developed protocols for helping growers ensure disease-free geranium crops.

SAF and AmericanHort's comments stated in part that "the extensive research... has shown that the original reasons for including R3Bv2 on the list are not valid. Those reasons included its supposed survivability at cold temperatures, its supposed unique ability to infect potatoes at low temperatures, and its supposed ability to cause an economically damaging disease outbreak under North American climate conditions. All of those reasons have been disproved by subsequent research. Therefore, there is no longer any justification for keeping R3Bv2 on the list." For more information, contact Schmale at lschmale@safnow.org.

Memorial Established for Peggy and Mike Leider

Past American Floral Endowment Trustee Ken Tagawa has established a memorial tribute in memory of lifelong floral industry members Margaret Lynch "Peggy" Leider, 76, and her son Michael J. Leider, Jr., 54. Both died of cancer earlier this year.

"Both Peggy and Michael gave a tremendous amount of support to the industry, side by side with Jim Leider. This is our way of honoring their legacy, by also allowing others to give back to the industry they loved, in their names," said Ken and Randy Tagawa.

Peggy Leider was a major supporter of the family greenhouse business, Leider's Greenhouses, a 117-year-old greenhouse operation based in Buffalo Grove, Illinois. She was a member of several organizations, including the Chicago Botanic Garden Women's Board, Ravinia Festival Women's Board and the Northwestern University Women's Board.

Michael Leider graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in ornamental horticulture in 1982, and studied and worked in the Netherlands after graduation. He eventually returned home in order to gain more experience and advance his skills.

He contributed to various projects at the Chicago Botanical Gardens as a wholesale plant supplier, and sourced most all of the plants for their Orchid Show.

Ken Tagawa established the tribute with a \$1,000 contribution, and has donated an additional \$2,000 to the fund.

AFE Establishes the Young Professionals Council

AFE has established the Young Professionals Council comprised of 21- to 35-year-old students and professionals in the floral industry.

YPC members will use their skills and strengths to help reach other young professionals interested in becoming leaders in the floral industry, provide guidance and feedback on AFE's programs, and get involved in leadership and learning opportunities through the programs.

"There are crucial industry challenges that need to be addressed, and the YPC is a significant program that I believe will help benefit the industry. I look forward to working with the driven young members of this group to help spread awareness of AFE and build a stronger future," said AFE trustee and YPC liaison Dwight Larimer.

AFE Appoints New Trustees

Cynthia "Cindy" Hanauer and William "Billy" Hardin Jr. have been appointed to the American Floral Endowment board of trustees. Both will serve a three-year term with the option for a second term.

Hanauer is founder and CEO of Grand Central Floral, LLC in Jacksonville, Florida. She has worked in the floral industry for 45 years and held senior positions at the Kroger Company, Winn-Dixie Stores and 1-800-Flowers.

Hardin is president of Hardin Global, LLC located in Siler City, North Carolina. Prior to that, he was president of Hardin's Wholesale Florist in Liberty, North Carolina from 1992-2010. He has been involved in the floral industry for 35 years and previously served as president of the Wholesale Florist & Floral Supplier Association and on the SAF board of directors from 2000-2007. He specializes in the operation of greenhouses and wholesale florists.

SAF Offers Members Chrysler Savings

SAF membership now provides savings totaling \$1,500 on many Chrysler, Fiat, Dodge and Jeep vehicles, with no minimum number of automobiles purchased.

FloraCraft Honored

FloraCraft Corporation of Ludington, MI, was honored with a Computerworld Data+ Editors' Choice Award for achieving business benefits through big data and demonstrating real world results and best practices.

FloraCraft, which was named Walmart's supplier of the year in 2014, implemented the Plex Cloud ERP at production facilities in Michigan, California and Arkansas and plans to roll out Plex at its Mexico facility.

Cloud ERP is an approach to enterprise resource planning (ERP) that makes use of cloud computing platforms and services to provide a business with more flexible business process transformation.

"Our legacy ERP system couldn't keep up with our growth in products or volume, not to mention the level of speed and precision required to work with very large retailers," said Jim Scatena, Floracraft president and CEO. "With Plex, we now have a full view of our business from the supply chain to the production line to the customer so we can do accurate, real-time production planning. We can be confident that we have the right bill of materials and routing steps to fulfill customer orders, and at the same time we can do longer runs on the plant floor, which is more efficient. We're even able to track costs down to a tenth of a cent, key to staying competitive and managing profitability."

"Delivery and transportation are fundamental to the floral industry, and buying, operating, equipping and maintaining vehicles are major expenses for SAF members," said SAF Membership Manager Brian Walrath. "By offering our members savings on fuel-efficient, reliable vehicles, SAF and FCA US LLC (formerly Chrysler Group LLC) are helping lower the cost of doing business."

Through the partnership, SAF member business owners and employees, and their immediate family members at the same residence may receive a \$500 cash allowance toward the purchase or lease of select new Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Ram Truck, and Fiat brand vehicles. The \$500 discount is off the final negotiated price of the vehicle and in most cases can be combined with other offers to increase savings.

In addition, SAF member business owners and their employees also may qualify for On The Job program allowances, including up to \$1,000 to add new equipment, a company logo or graphic to their work vehicle.

Access complete information on eligibility and instructions on how to take advantage of this discount at safnow.org/chrysleroffer.

STARS Act Legislation Introduced in Congress

After months of lobbying by the Society of American Florists, S.1809, the "Simplifying Technical Aspects Regarding Seasonality (STARS) Act" was introduced in the Senate. The legislation is a companion to H.R. 863, introduced in the House last February.

Leading a coalition representing various industries, SAF worked with a bipartisan group of members of Congress to introduce the legislation. The bill would provide relief to seasonal employers in the floral industry who have been struggling to understand and comply with the Affordable Care Act.

Under current law, different definitions of seasonal, with different lengths of service, are used to determine whether a business is defined as large or small under the ACA and whether the employees in question must be offered health insurance. "The result has been confusing and often incorrect compliance information that puts seasonal employers at risk for potential tax liabilities," said SAF Senior Director of Government Relations Shawn McBurney.

Left unchanged, the law would create greater confusion and more costs for seasonal employers attempting to properly comply with the ACA. The STARS Act seeks to align definitions of what constitutes a seasonal worker with Treasury Department regulations and provide clarity so employers can understand and comply with the law.

Members of the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) took the issue to Capitol Hill after McBurney briefed the group. NALP has been involved in SAF's efforts to pass the STARS Act almost since its inception.

Industry Members Attend 2016 Dutch Trade Fair

Exporters, growers, wholesalers, and retailers attended the FloraHolland Trade Fair in Aalsmeer, the Netherlands, earlier this month. This year's fair was devoted to the opportunities and possibilities available to respond to market developments.

The FloraHolland House was the centerpiece of the fair, a central meeting point for attendees. Striking novelties and important market and consumer trends were on display with one goal: More consumers spending more money on more flowers and plants.

Approximately 650 growers and 50 breeders were on hand to display new products and concepts..

Endowment Names New Board Members

The American Floral Endowment has announced two new trustees and three new officers. Dwight Larimer, DESIGN MASTER color tool, inc., has been elected chairman-elect; Kristi Huffman of The John Henry Company, Lansing, Michigan, was appointed treasurer/secretary, and Laura Shinall, Syndicate Sales,

Inc., Kokomo, Indiana, was named public relations and development committee chair.

David Garcia of the Pete Garcia Company in Atlanta, Georgia and Greg Royer of Royer's Flowers & Gifts in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, have been appointed to three-year terms on the board, with the option of a second term.

The remaining executive committee members include past chairman, Paul Bachman, Bachman's Inc. and Jim Daly of Smithers-Oasis/Floralife. Nine-year trustee Ken Altman was appointed as trustee emeritus and will continue on the board as a non-voting member.

Greenleaf Wholesale Names New President

Greenleaf Wholesale Florist has announced the appointment of Robert Kitayama as president. He succeeds Scott Kitayama who has led Greenleaf for the past 13 years, and is stepping down to pursue other interests inside and outside of Greenleaf.

Robert Kitayama is also the president of Kitayama Brothers in Watsonville, CA, and previously spent 14 years at Greenleaf in various management positions.

FTD Gives Scholarships to Attend Industry Events

FTD University awarded ten \$1,000 scholarships to attend one of three 2015 industry events: the American Institute of Floral Designers symposium, the Society of American Florist convention and the FTD boot camp.

FTD University scholarships are exclusively available for any employee at an active FTD member florist who would be a first time attendee at the event.

The 2015 FTD University scholarship recipients were:

AIFD National Symposium

Elva Graham – Green Thumb Florist & Gifts, Faison, NC
 Carolyn Krueger – Carolyn's Floral Designs, Brandon, MB, Canada
 Rosalie Richards – Hestands Floral & Gifts, Portales, NM

SAF Convention

Rachel Billingsley – Sparta Flowers & Gifts, Sparta, TN
 Kevin Blair – The Exeter Flower Shop, Exeter, NH
 Kristen Brown – Rutland Beard Florist, Baltimore, MD
 Lisa Goluboff – Designs North Florist, Greensboro, NC
 Tammy Rose Sirois – Wallingford Flower & Gift Shoppe, Wallingford, CT

FTD Boot Camp

Courtney Turner – Isis Floral Designs, Marengo, IL
 Requita Williams – D & K Gift & Flower Shop, Hephzibah, GA

The FTD University scholarships were created to provide member florists with financial support to encourage participation in educational opportunities and networking events designed to further individual professional growth.

"I would like to thank FTD for choosing me for a scholarship to attend SAF convention in September," said Tammy Rose Sirois. "I networked a lot, as well as gained inspiration from many of the speakers... I definitely took home some valuable information."

FTD University Scholarships were first awarded in 2014 and will be available again in 2016. Applications will be accepted beginning in January 2016. To learn more about the scholarships and the variety of other education programs that FTD offers, visit FTDi.com/FTDUniversity.

DESIGNCOMPETITION

The Art of Competition

BY DEREK C. WOODRUFF, AIFD, CF, CFD, PFCI, SYLVIA CUP FIRST RUNNER-UP, 2014, 2015

Floral design competitions used to be something I feared.

The thought of putting myself, my designs, and my reputation on the line in front of judges and peers gave me a huge amount of anxiety. But one taste of success in competition, and I turned around. Now design competitions are not only something I seek out, I can't wait!

I learned that I love the feeling of urgency and being forced to be as creative as possible within a strict time limit. I realized as floral designers that is actually what a majority of our careers are all about. Imagine a customer coming in the door who wants a floral arrangement made on the spot. They stand there watching and waiting, judging how quickly the piece comes together, and how the final arrangement looks. That's just like being on stage.

There are actually a couple different kinds of floral design competitions. The live version, like my description above, only not in front of customers, or the type that doesn't involve a stage, but pre-designed pieces brought to one place for judging.

The Sylvia Cup is a great example of a live competition. Competitors come prepared only with tools and an open mind to whatever is thrown at them. They are presented with a theme, product, and a specific time frame to accomplish their pieces. The audience gets to watch the designers create right in front of them and the pieces are judged at the end. It's exciting, engaging, and thrilling to compete in this kind of competition.

The Great Lakes Floral Expo offers a combination of pre-design and live competition. Designers create two pieces ahead of time based on a theme, budget, and size, and bring it with them to the venue for judging. This gives designers time to plan and strategize their pieces. They have the opportunity to experiment and create any type of crazy thing that comes to mind without being judged until they are ready. This kind of competition gets really intense during the set up period, where designers are unveiling their creations all at once.

After this there is a surprise package where designers create on the spot using the identical materials. The top five with the highest scores for all three pieces go on to the Designer of the Year run-off.



Once I was given the opportunity for live competition, I found my niche. In 2011, having worked diligently at the Expo design competition, finally, after seven years, I scored high enough marks to be in the run-off. This is where finalists have half an hour to create one arrangement using a secret ingredient. And I won! It was at that moment that I realized I was able to think clearly under pressure, manage time efficiently, and be my most creative self, all in front of a live audience.



This success propelled me forward in the competition arena and fueled me to compete and win numerous live competitions like The Bobbi Cup in 2012 and 2014, MFA Designer of the Year in 2014, and even a reality TV show, The Arrangement (a "Top Chef" style reality competition show produced by MTV), where I was second runner-up.

Designers need to figure out which kind of competition plays to their strengths. I learned early on that creating designs ahead of time is my downfall. It turns out that I am way more creative in a pinch. If I have months and months to work out my design, I will over think it, over plan it, and end up overdoing it, yielding terrible scores in competition.

Floral design competitions are a wonderful way to stretch oneself in the profession. As day-to-day designers, we have a tendency to fall into a rut and rely on the old standards to get us by. When faced with strict limitations, a live audience, judges, and other competitors, however, creativity soars and ideas are born.

Competing may not be for everyone, but give yourself a chance to attend one, maybe even sign up, and see how you do. Sometimes stepping out of the comfort zone reveals a side of yourself that you didn't know was there. That definitely happened to me. ✿



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SAFCONVENTION

SAF 2015 Convention Report

Awards and Accolades

Demaree and Walton Inducted into Floriculture Hall of Fame

Del Demaree Jr., AAF, Syndicate Sales Inc., Kokomo, Indiana, and Charles F. Walton of Smithers-Oasis, Kent, Ohio, were inducted into the Society of American Florists Floriculture Hall of Fame at the convention's closing dinner.

"The Floriculture Hall of Fame is truly the floral industry's highest achievement," said SAF awards committee member David Gaul, AAF, DWF Wholesale Florist, Denver, Colorado. "Being chosen for this prestigious honor means that the recipients have made a permanent and significant contribution to the advancement of floriculture."

Del Demaree, Jr.

Most second-generation business owners build on the achievements of their predecessors. But when Del Demaree, Jr., AAF, took over the family business, it had fallen on hard times and was just getting by. Through hard work, persistence and dogged determination, Demaree took the company to new heights.

When his father retired in 1967, Demaree became president of Syndicate Sales.

From there, the company's growth took off due to his vision and entrepreneurial drive. By this time, products such as the Aquapic, the Design Bowl and Everlastin' Baskets were three widely used staples, but Demaree introduced a series of products that broke new ground.

Demaree also understood the advantage of new technologies. In 1988, Syndicate was the first company to use barcode shipping to add a new level of transparency and accountability into the supply chain.

Throughout his career, Demaree dedicated a tremendous amount of time and energy to give back to the industry through participation in SAF, the Wholesale Florist & Florist Supplier Association, the American Floral Endowment and many other associations and organizations.

He was SAF's president from 1981 to 1983 where he worked on the national Floraboard program and making Grandparents' Day a national holiday. Demaree was AFE chairman from 1992 to 1993 and served on the WF&FSA board of directors and as its treasurer. He received WF&FSA's Leland T. Kintzele Award, the American Institute of Floral Designers Industry Award of Merit and was named the Michigan Floral Association's Wholesaler Tradesman of the Year.



Del Demaree, Jr.

Charles F. Walton

During his tenure at Smithers-Oasis, Charles Walton transformed the company into one of the country's premier developers and manufacturers of post-harvest care and floral design products with locations in 19 countries.

He involved Smithers-Oasis in every stage of the life cycle of flowers and plants, ultimately with the end

result of giving the consumer a more positive experience with flowers and plants in their homes and places of work.

Between 1986 and 2010, Walton established the company's presence worldwide. In addition, the acquisition of Floralife in 2007, made Smithers-Oasis one of the leading suppliers of post-harvest products. He also developed a family of foam products used to support the propagation and transportation of young poinsettia plants.

He personally authored the first Smithers-Oasis Code of Worldwide Business Ethics. The code was anchored by: "Do what's right, treat others with respect, and conduct all aspects of the company's business in a manner that excludes considerations of personal advantage."

In 2010, after serving as the company's chairman for 24 years, Walton sold the business to a team of senior-level executives. One of Walton's guiding tenets was: "If the industry won, the company won." To that end, Walton encouraged his management team to support the industry through involvement in trade associations, research projects, infrastructure development, design and event shows, all forms of education and any other activity that would further the cause of floriculture in the United States and around the globe.

In addition, he contributed his own time and energy to industry groups and causes serving on a variety of SAF committees as well as on the American Floral Endowment's board of trustees. In 2007, he served as coordinator for the highly regarded Seeley Conference, carefully building a series of talks around the topic of lean manufacturing, something he successfully implemented at Smithers Oasis.

LoAnn Burke Wins 2015 Sylvia Cup

Loann Burke, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, Furst Florist, Dayton, Ohio, won the 48th annual Sylvia Cup design competition. As grand prize winner, she received a silver trophy cup, \$3,000 and complimentary



Charles F. Walton



LoAnn Burke

SAFCONVENTION



Sylvia Cup winner, LoAnn Burke, first runner-up Derek Woodruff, and Jenna Naylor, second runner-up.

registration to SAF Maui 2016. The Sylvia Cup is the country's longest running live floral design competition. It began in 1967 and is named for Sylvia Valencia, a prominent designer and long-time SAF supporter.

Derek Woodruff, AIFD, CF, CFD, PFCI, Floral Underground, Traverse City, Michigan, was first runner-up and received \$500. Jenna Naylor, AIFD, GMF, Bloom with Jenna in Snellville, Georgia, was second runner-up and took home \$250.

Among the 17 floral designers competing were 13 members of the American Institute of Floral Designers, three contestants sponsored by state floral associations for winning recent contests, and six past Sylvia Cup contestants. Each contestant received the same materials from the competition's sponsors: flowers and foliage from the California Cut Flower Commission and design supplies from Smithers-Oasis.

Inspired by "Cirque du Soleil," the contestants had to create three "Cirque du Fleur" design concepts:

"Delirious" – A functional, mystical floral headpiece to be worn in a Cirque du Fleur performance.

"Mysterious" – A table centerpiece with a strong sense of rhythm to be used at the opening gala of a Cirque du Fleur event.

"Karma" – A harmonious bridal bouquet that included something suspended within the design.

A panel of three judges appointed by the PFCI board of trustees evaluated the designs. The judges scored each design based on nine factors covering design elements, design principles, mechanics, execution and creative application. The highest combined score determined the winner.

Judges were: Joyce Mason-Monheim, AAF, AIFD, AzMF, CFD, PFCI, from Tucson, Arizona; Sylvia Cup 2014 winner Jacob McCall, AAF, AIFD, FSMD, of The Elite Flower in Miami, Florida; and Jerome Raska, AAF, AIFD, CAFA, CF, CFD, PFCI, Blumz by... JRDesigns Detroit/Ferndale, Michigan.

2015 Tommy Bright Award Goes to Richard Seiboldt

Richard Seiboldt, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, was honored by the Professional Floral Communicators-International with the Tommy Bright Award for lifetime achievement in floral presentation.

The Tommy Bright Award is the highest honor presented by PFCI. It is named after Ethel "Tommy" Bright, whose motto "Learn More, Teach Others" reflects PFCI values as the floral industry's speakers bureau and the only network of professional floral business educators certified by SAF.

Seiboldt has long been celebrated for his ability to push the bounds of what is possible in design particularly when marrying concepts from the floral and culinary worlds and he is also dedicated to sharing his deep well of knowledge and committed to helping those in need.

Seiboldt has traveled the world and engaged thousands of people with his one-of-a-kind speaking style and penchant for both high drama and lighthearted whimsy on stage. He once created a "sandcastle" made entirely of brown sugar while the audience watched. Seiboldt also ensures that each of his presentations reinforces the best practices and principles of design, underscoring the talents and abilities of professional florists and floral designers.

A supporter of the American Institute of Floral Designers for more than 35 years, Seiboldt was a national board member for four years and has designed more than 10 programs for the organization's symposia. In 2014, AIFD presented Seiboldt with its Award of Distinguished Service to the Floral Industry.



Richard Seiboldt

Awards Presented to Four Industry Leaders

Terril Nell, PH.D., AAF

One of the country's top experts in postharvest research and one of the floral industry's most passionate and respected ambassadors received the 2015 Paul Ecke, Jr. Award. The honor was presented to Terril A. Nell, Ph.D., AAF, professor emeritus at the University of Florida and former SAF president.

Established in 1984, the award recognizes exemplary devotion to profession, industry and community. Previously the SAF Golden Bouquet Award, this award was renamed in 2002 in memory of Paul Ecke, Jr., AAF.

"Terril is a big picture thinker who easily communicates with business owners in any part of the industry," said SAF awards committee member Robert Williams II, AAF, PFCI, Smithers-Oasis-North American Operations. "He is focused on meeting industry needs, dedicated to higher education and has relentless drive to improve the industry's products. He was also a friend and colleague of Paul's and someone whom Paul would be immensely happy for and proud of."

SAFCONVENTION

Lin Schmale

Lin Schmale, senior director of government relations at the Society of American Florists, received the 2015 John H. Walker award. The award was established in 1979 to honor the contributions of SAF's former long-time executive vice president and recognize the important contributions of floral industry association executives.

"Lin is known for tenacity and fearlessness as well as collaboration and kindness in fighting for the floral industry every day on Capitol Hill. A walking encyclopedia of the federal bureaucracy, she has a long and well-documented history for promoting teamwork and partnerships to accomplish the sometimes seemingly impossible."

Terry L. Ferriss, Ph.D.

A beloved teacher who helped reintroduce freesia to the commercial cut flower market was the recipient of the Alex Laurie Award. The honor was presented to Terry L. Ferriss, Ph.D., professor of horticulture at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Established in 1948, SAF's Alex Laurie Award is named for the eminent professor at The Ohio State University. Over the course of his 60-year career, Laurie laid the groundwork for research that revolutionized the floriculture industry and left a lineage of students, teachers and researchers continuing to provide information necessary to ensure the industry's future.

Terry L. Ferriss, Ph.D., was the first tenured female faculty member in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and the first woman to serve as a department chair and as associate dean in the college. She retired, after 36 years in academia, in May 2015.

Butera the Florist Named 2015 Marketer of the Year

A comprehensive brand overhaul that included relocation, a new website, reduced inventory, two non-traditional locations and chasing after brides outside the city limits earned Carolyn and Vince Butera, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, Butera the Florist, York, Pennsylvania, the title of 2015 Marketer of the Year from *Floral Management* magazine.

The plan involved relocating their main store to a historic space in downtown York, much smaller than their 4,000 square foot suburban location, in a market that attracts 2,500 visitors weekly. Two months into it, they opened a second stand, dedicated exclusively to the BTF Weddings brand. The Buteras went "solo" online, retiring their wire service website and developing a new one, dedicated exclusively to the BTF brand.

In the past year, the Buteras increased their wedding sales by 94 percent and see more than 2,000 customers, on average, per week, up from fewer than 50 in 2013.

To those in the audience whose spirit needed a little "spark," Carolyn Butera urged them to imagine that their company never existed and they were starting from scratch. "That's what we did," she said, adding that growth requires the bravery to "burst through the status quo."

Five Businesses Mark 100 Years of Success

The Society of American Florists honored the longevity of five floral industry firms with the Century Award which recognizes companies that have been in business for 100 years or more.

The 2015 Century Award honorees were: Allan's Flowers, Prescott, Arizona; Brown Floral, Salt Lake City, Utah; Evans Flowers and Greenhouses, Peabody, Massachusetts; Furst Florist & Greenhouses, Dayton, Ohio, and Ye Olde Yardley Florist, Yardley, Pennsylvania. 

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Instructor: Cindy S. Ching, AIFD, CFD

Includes all Flowers/Supplies • Lunch Included

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 learning what is needed to pass the exam. Attendees will leave with a clear understanding of what it takes to pass the prestigious CF exam. Lunch is included in the registration fee. Class enrollment limited to 12. To download an application go to www.michiganfloral.org. Call (517) 575-0110 for more information. **Bring your own tools.**

Introduction to Design

Member \$900 • Non-Member \$1,000

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

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Instructor: Cindy S. Ching, AIFD, CFD

Includes all Flowers/Supplies

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 \$900 • Non-Member \$1,000

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

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Instructor: Cindy S. Ching, AIFD, CFD

Includes all Flowers/Supplies

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.



DESIGN TIP: Bridal Emergency

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

This month's column deals with having sound business practices. It's good to review from time to time to make sure you're being the best you can be. And, I've included pictures of some of my favorite bouquets.

Our shop was called over the weekend with a floral emergency: The mother of the groom was calling from the church, where flowers (not from our shop!) had been delivered. They were extremely disappointed with what they had received from their florist, and were hoping to order something from us that the bride would be proud to carry down the aisle.

Well, we specialize in special orders, and strive to deliver satisfaction, so we got to work. Within the hour, we delivered a bridal bouquet of Black Magic roses with accents of spiral and seeded eucalyptus, hand-tied with a custom ribbon treatment of black double-faced satin. It was exactly what everyone was hoping for, and it moved the bride and both moms to tears. Everyone was happy.

But, as it turns out, this entire scenario could have been avoided. Why? Because earlier this year, the bride sent us an email to inquire about our shop providing flowers for her wedding. She never received a response from us. And she didn't want to pester, so they never followed up with a phone call. UGH!!

It doesn't matter that I was on vacation when she emailed, it doesn't matter that this has been one of our busiest summers ever. What matters is that her wedding flowers were important, but we didn't see that. It boils down to the fact the I dropped the ball when I failed to respond to an email. So while I initially felt good about "saving the day" for this poor girl, I'm really the one to blame for not providing her stellar customer service in the first place.

Our customers have a choice, and when we don't provide them with the goods they want paired with stellar customer service, they'll take their business elsewhere. This point was brought home to me this week, so I'm revisiting procedures to make sure this doesn't happen again! Mistakes keep us humble, but so long as we're learning from them, they help us to grow. Hopefully this will be a help to you as well. ✨

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2016 Great Lakes Floral Expo
SAVE THE DATE: March 4-6, 2016
Amway Grand Plaza Hotel/Devo Place
Grand Rapids, Michigan
For More Information
Go to www.michiganfloral.org

Make your plans now to attend the 2016 Great Lakes Floral Expo for three exciting days of design spectaculars, award winning business tips, and networking with your fellow MFA members and industry professionals.

Register early and not only will you save money but you could win a Plaza Dream one night stay at the beautiful Amway Plaza Hotel. Early registration forms must be in the MFA office by 5:00 p.m., January 29, 2016. You will automatically be entered in the Plaza Dream contest.

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FOR SALE

For Sale: 5 Door Display cooler, 13' x 3', with condensing unit and Evaporator, 4 years old, \$3000. Call Mark at 989-828-5100 or email *fourseasonsfloral.shepherd@email.com.*

SEEKING DONATIONS

MFA Scholarship Committee Seeks Donations for the 2016 Raffle: Help fund the MFA Scholarship program with a donation to the Silent Auction. All kinds of items are needed. Electronics, tools, sporting equipment, as well as any floral related products. For more information on how to donate call the MFA office at (517) 575-0110 or go to www.michiganfloral.org/mfa_scholarship.html and download a Silent Auction donation form (PDF file).

★Important Reminder★

MFA Scholarships!

Certified Florist/Great Lakes Floral Expo Scholarships

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.



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ASSOCIATION

the professional florist

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