



Volume V 2012

**Just Let  
Mom Do It...  
Bridal Feature**

**Building Your  
Wedding  
Business**

**Like a  
Kid in a  
Candy Store**

**Peonies  
for the  
Holidays**

**Review,  
Renew,  
Reinvent!**

# the professional florist



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WINNING PUBLICATION**  
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# the professional florist

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## LEADERSHIPREPORT

# Looking Ahead...

BY ROD CRITTENDEN, MFA EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



**O**n October 11 the Michigan Floral Foundation (MFF) will honor Bobbi Ecker-Blatchford, AAF, AIFD, PFCI with induction into its Hall of Fame. This special event will be held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, 187 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI.

The evening will begin with an open reception from 6:00-7:00 pm for all event attendees. Dinner will be served from 7:00-8:00 pm. The Hall of Fame induction will take place from 8:00-9:00 pm. The evening will conclude after the ceremony.

Bobbi has dedicated her life to making our industry better and better each and every day. She inspires everyone from that little twinkle in her eye, to her endless words of encouragement and her tireless optimism.

We sincerely hope that you will be able to help us celebrate with Bobbi Ecker-Blatchford, her family, and other industry leaders. Tickets for the event are \$85.00 ea. and can be purchased by calling (517) 575-0110.



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### **"Make it a Real Michigan Christmas" Campaign Enters Second Season!**

I am pleased to report the campaign to promote Michigan-grown poinsettias and Christmas trees has been funded again for a second season. We have a strong foundation and are preparing some exciting opportunities for our membership. Funded by a \$75,000 Specialty Crop Block Grant, the "Make it a Real Michigan Christmas" campaign was featured in 21 television segments, 10 radio interviews and 16 newspaper articles during the 2011 holiday season; the first year of the campaign. In addition, the campaign aired more than 1,000 public service announcements and participated in holiday activities across the state. A website ([www.realmichiganchristmas.com](http://www.realmichiganchristmas.com)) was developed to provide information for the media and consumers.

The campaign is a partnership coordinated with the Michigan Floral Association, Michigan Floriculture Growers Council and the Michigan Christmas Tree Association and was developed to help build consumer awareness of poinsettia and Christmas tree production in Michigan. The key messages of the campaign include:

## LEADERSHIPREPORT

MAKE IT A  
*Real Michigan*  
CHRISTMAS

campaign through special events. Our public relations team is currently having very productive discussions with two organizations that have high visibility during Thanksgiving and the holiday season. All Michigan Floral Association members will be getting more information on these events as they are secured.

Further, MFA member florists who sell Michigan-grown poinsettias can participate in the campaign in a number of ways:

- Display the campaign poster that was distributed in 2011. If you would like to print more for use this year you can download all campaign artwork at [www.realmichiganchristmas.com](http://www.realmichiganchristmas.com).
- Include the campaign logo in local ads or on your website.
- Link your website to the campaign website.
- And new for 2012, the campaign will be producing printed inserts for you that can be used as statement stuffers or stapled onto packages that you are delivering to customers in October and early November. Watch for these to be shipped directly to your store this fall.

Stay tuned for further details and be prepared to “Make it a Real Michigan Christmas” at your shop! ✻



- The environmentally friendly nature of real, farm-grown plants that are completely renewable and biodegradable, rather than artificial, petroleum-based products that are often produced overseas and are not biodegradable.
- The emotional benefits of having real plants and flowers in your home. A Harvard study concluded that the presence of real plants and flowers in the home can reduce feelings of negativity and provide a boost of energy, happiness and enthusiasm.
- The boost provided to Michigan’s economy by purchasing locally grown products and supporting local retailers.

The plan for the 2012 holiday season promotion campaign is to revise and continue the public service announcements, continue efforts with the media (television, radio, print and electronic) in the state and strengthen the visibility of the



### The 2013 Floral Olympics

Floral aficionados, save the date! Mark your calendar now for the **2013 Great Lakes Floral Expo, March 1-3, 2013.**

The conference, “Reaching for Excellence, Aiming Higher, Achieving More, The Floral Olympics,” promises to be a fun-filled weekend full of inspiring and empowering learning opportunities. The conference will be held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel/DeVos Place in Grand Rapids, MI. For more information on attending or exhibiting, please visit [www.michiganfloral.org](http://www.michiganfloral.org)

or call the MFA office at **(517) 575-0110.**

— Dick Gleason, CF, 2013 Expo Chairman

## BRIDALFEATURE



Herbers/Sease Wedding Photos by A. Tappen Photography

Sometimes a bride has trouble finding just the right florist to do her wedding flowers and decorations. But other times all you have to do is tell your mom that you are getting married. Kim Herbers was a floriculture major at Michigan State University, is a MFA Director-at-Large and is the supply manager at Saginaw Valley Flower Exchange, Saginaw, MI. The following is her up close and personal account of her daughter's wedding.

# Just Let Mom Do It...

BY KIM HERBERS

**O**n May 26, 2012, my daughter Jamie was married to Brooks Sease. It was a given that I would take on this labor of love and do the flowers.

The couple met in Memphis, TN, where they dated for about a year. Brooks proposed on the beach in West Palm Beach, FL, and they decided to have a destination wedding, themed "Barefoot on the Beach," in Ft. Pierce, FL.

To set the stage, guests were met by a steel drummer. There were four beautiful bridesmaids, led by the maid of honor, the bride's sister Taryn. Wearing shamrock green dresses, they carried a mixture of yellow mini callas, orange gerbera daisies, yellow oncidium orchids, plum carnations, green cymbidium orchids and purple phalenopsis orchids accented with opalescent jewels.

The two groomsmen and best man Liam Sease, the groom's nephew, wore boutonnieres of yellow oncidium orchids tied with raffia and accented with silver bouillon wire. The groom's boutonniere was a white mini calla, yellow oncidiums and accent petals of orange gerberas.

Niece Keely Sease served as flower girl. She carried a basket, made by her grandma Mary, the groom's mother. In the front of the basket, she had flowers to match the girls' dresses; in the back she had rose petals to throw in front of the bride.

Then, the breathtaking bride came down the aisle. Her dress was handmade by her uncle. She was stunning. Her bouquet was made of white mini callas, white dendrobiums, yellow oncidiums, purple phalenopsis, green cymbidiums, and a mixture of tropical foliage. She also had a mixture of mini callas and yellow oncidium orchids in her hair.



*The bride wore mixture of white mini callas and yellow oncidium orchids in her hair.*

## BRIDALFEATURE



*Table arrangements included a mixture of orange alstroemeria, birds of paradise, plum carnations, yellow oncidiums, purple silk oncidiums, orange gerberas, tropical foliage, and lights.*

*The decorated wedding cake.*



The couple did a sand candle instead of the unity candle. Both moms poured in some sand, from the beach where the couple was engaged and the beach that they were married on. The sand ceremony was completed by the bride and groom.

After the ceremony, we went up to a beautiful restaurant overlooking the ocean. The bride and groom entered through a wall of hanging dendrobium orchids, made simply with U-glue Tabs and fishing line. They entered into a room filled with arrangements of tropical foliage provided by Jan Benedict of Quality Florida Greens, Pierson, FL. Beautiful split leaf philodendron, aspidistra, bear and lily grass, variegated flax and lots, lots more!!

The arrangements were a mixture of orange gerberas and alstroemeria, purple silk oncidiums, birds of paradise, plum carnations and yellow oncidiums finished with a mixture of

tropical foliage. In the center of each table arrangement were Acolyte submersible lights. To finish off the table the silverware at each place setting was wrapped with aspidistra leaves and adorned with oncidiums and alstroemeria.

Since it was a destination wedding, all the bases for the bouquets and corsages were pre-done and sent to Florida. We worked though a wonderful wholesale house in Melbourne, FL, called Coastal Wholesale, where we got great service, good quality and a smile before I left!

We ended the night with dancing, dancing and more dancing!!

I expect I will have another wedding in my future since the bouquet was caught by my daughter, Taryn who is now getting married in August 2013 with the reception on a golf course, in a tent! ✿



*Left to Right:*

*The bride and groom, Jamie and Brooks Sease.*

*The bride's sister Taryn served as maid of honor and carried a bouquet of yellow mini callas, orange gerbera daisies, yellow oncidium, plum carnations, green cymbidium orchids and purple phalenopsis accented with opalescent jewels.*

*The sand candle ceremony utilized sand, from the beach where the couple was engaged and the beach where they were married.*

## BRIDALUPDATE

# Building Your Wed

BY LOANN BURKE, AIFD, CFD, PFCI; EVENT SPECIALIST, FURST FLORIST, DAYTON, OH



**F**lorists who are thriving in today's market tend to be those who attract wedding and event business. Brides are out there dreaming about flowers and looking for floral professionals to create designs for their special day. In order to attract bridal

business, you may just need to think like a bride. Go where the brides go or get the brides to come to you. Both strategies can work to increase sales and build your wedding business.

### Look at What the Brides are Looking at

Bridal websites such as The Knot, The Wedding Channel, and Brides.com are all "must visit" sites to get an inside look at the latest trends in dresses, colors, and more. Take a minute to browse each site. The knowledge you gain there can impress a would-be client.

### Cross Promote with Other Local Wedding Vendors

Often, the best wedding clients come from referrals. By the time a bride visits a florist, she often has her gown, her venue, and her photographer. Forming relationships with major dress companies, photographers, rental companies and venues is an inexpensive way to get referrals.

If you're not familiar with a venue, take an afternoon to visit the major wedding sites in your area. Each venue will have a different set of restrictions, guidelines and procedures for vendors providing services for the event. Learn what is expected at each location. This knowledge goes a long way to building a lasting relationship and preferred vendor status.

Partner with event rental companies to host a bridal event in their store or yours. Brides can shop one location to see your gorgeous flowers paired with linens, decorative accessories and other rental items.



*Presentation is important when hosting a bridal event. Great looking table setups in the wedding area of a shop lets customers imagine the possibilities for their own event. This picture is from an event bridal open house Furst Florist did at Primetime Party Rental.*

### Participate in Wedding Trade Fairs

Wedding trade fairs are fantastic venues to network with other event professionals and talk to many brides in one location. Offer to provide flowers in other participating vendors' trade fair booths to cross promote both businesses.

At one trade fair, our shop found itself short on time to plan the floral display for our booth. We decided to bring buckets of beautiful flowers and small bouquet holders to create mini bouquets on site instead of creating a large floral display. Brides stood in line for up to two hours to get a petite custom designed bouquet, and we got a five minute mini consultation with each bride! The brides then advertised for us as they walked through the trade fair with their bouquets, complete with our business card attached. The buzz generated was priceless!

*The Hiawatha Corporation's Wedding Garland is perfect for decorating that winter wedding and other special occasions. Made with fresh salal, huckleberry and bear grass it can be customized by adding flowers and/or ribbons to match the occasion. The garland also doubles as a table runner. For more information go to [www.hiawathacorp.com](http://www.hiawathacorp.com).*





# ding Business

## Host a Wedding Planning Social Event

Make your shop or studio a destination for wedding planning by hosting a social event. Invite several local wedding professionals to participate. Imagine the buzz generated with a wine tasting event paired with a gown preview and floral selection party. Partner with a local wholesaler to bring in a variety of beautiful and trendy blooms for the occasion.

## Be Intentional About Your Online Presence

Is your website up to date with current photos of your recent events? Are you on Pinterest? Facebook? Twitter? Do you blog? In order to attract brides, you need to live where brides live. Today's brides live on the Internet. The Internet is the go to place for ideas, inspiration, and sourcing for everything from favors to flowers.

If your web presence is twentieth century in a twenty-first century world, invest in an update. Today's brides are highly

visual. Many brides are planning their entire weddings on Pinterest. But Pinterest is not limited to brides. Develop a Pinterest account for your business featuring boards that display your own designs, style and creativity. Your individual Pinterest boards can reflect seasonal designs, bouquets, centerpieces, event decor, etc. Categorize your boards to best reflect you and your business. The possibilities are virtually endless.

After you've built up your social media presence, be sure to link your marketplace website with icons that direct brides to your social media sites. Your online presence and social media savvy can woo or ward off a potential bride.

These simple strategies can amp up wedding sales and get the brides buzzing about you and your business. Follow these simple tips, and...Here come the brides! ✿

---

*Loann Burke, AIFD, CFD, PFCI is an event specialist with Furst Florist, president of North Central AIFD and design director at Smithers Oasis.*



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## MARKETINGFEATURE

# Like a Kid in a Candy

BY BARBARA GILBERT, EDITOR

**I**t's a tough job but somebody had to do it. In order to find out about new products that could be merchandised in floral shops, I attended the Sweets & Snacks Expo held several months ago in Chicago. The fact that they gave attendees a big bag to collect candy in had nothing to do with my volunteering for the job.

The expo, run by the National Confectioners Association, is the largest confectionery, snack and cookie show in America. Thousands of products were displayed for buyers from around the world. Visitors could visit more than 560 companies debuting new and innovative products and ideas.

More than 5,000 new products are introduced in the United States each year and many were featured in the New Product Showcase and in individual booths. Salty and sweet combinations are a favorite with items from chocolate covered potato chips to cinnamon sugar popcorn.

The confectionery industry is not unlike the floral industry in that two-thirds of NCA members are small businesses, and many of the manufacturers are fourth and fifth generation family-owned.

Flowers and chocolate are a natural combination as a thank you gift, to celebrate a special occasion, to say I'm sorry, and as a romantic gift. And they can also be used with other add-ons such as toys, balloons, candles and containers.

Bob Patterson, Patterson Flowers, in Big Rapids, MI, has carried candy in his store for over 10 years. In fact, they actually make their own fudge and cookies in a small commercial kitchen. "We went to the Atlanta Gift Show one year and found a company called Calico Cottage which supplies us with all the ingredients and materials to make the fudge."

In addition customers can buy individual truffles, and boxed Godiva chocolates from a display case set up at the front of the store. However, most of the candy



*The Teleflora Junk Food Bucket, full of chocolate, lollipops, and jelly beans, is a junk food junkie's dream.*



*Michigan in a "chocolate state of mind" from Eastern Floral.*

sales are made on the shop's website.

"Candy is very popular as an add-on to flowers. More and more shops are looking for product lines to increase their overall selections and candy is perfect for this. We also incorporate candy in our gift and snack baskets which are very popular with students at Ferris State University here in Big Rapids," he noted.

At Eastern Floral's seven locations in Michigan they have been creating gourmet gift baskets for many years. Marketing director Kiersten Shulte noted "Many customers like something unique that gives the perception of luxury. We offer a variety of standard candy and chocolate items plus many gourmet lines including Lindt, Toblerone, and Ghirardelli.

"Chocolate has really taken a huge turn in the last few years with interesting flavor combinations. For example: bacon and chocolate, sea salt and chocolate, curry coconut chocolate bars, etc. We have picked up on this trend and will be introducing similar style bars in the coming months. We're really looking forward to the chili and chocolate bar."

"There isn't a better gift than flowers and chocolate, and we love to include beautiful blooms into the gourmet design. We have frequent requests to have a bouquet, or a blooming plant, incorporated into the design. That way the recipient gets the best of both worlds," noted Shulte.

One of Eastern Floral's most popular items is Teleflora's Junk Food Bucket filled with snack foods, candy bars, crackers, and



*Florists can promote the World Series with the Take Me Out to the Ballgame Basket from Teleflora.*



*With football season in full swing, the Teleflora Goalpost Goodies arrangement is a great suggestion for Sunday football parties.*

## MARKETINGFEATURE

# Store



*Fit For A King, one of Eastern Floral's gourmet gift buckets.*

gummies, a combination of sweet and salty.

Rich Salvaggio, Teleflora vice president of industry relations and floral publications, offered several benefits of carrying assorted gift baskets.

"They offer your customers yet another value added purchase which can showcase your shop's talent and they can be themed to various holidays as well as to various sports and other interests – e.g. golf, knitting, junk food, the movies, etc."

He added, "Gift baskets can be exclusive to your shop by finding products that share the same style and class as your shop so they blend with your signature branding. They should always have a touch of your own shop's special flair so the moment a

customer sees them, they will say, "Oh, that's from ABC Flower Shop.... I'd recognize that ribbon anywhere."

One of the most interesting products at the Sweets & Snacks Expo was the Choc-Card™ a combination greeting card, gift card holder and chocolate bar. The cards cover many occasions such as Christmas, Chanukah, birthdays, congratulations, and special days. In fact one of the special day cards features beautiful red roses on the front and a dark chocolate bar inside.

Also introduced for 2012 were seven new Fun Candies from Hauser Chocolatier. These small bags can be used as party favors, balloon weights, in baskets or as stocking stuffers. The one ounce bags are filled with

a variety of different candies including gourmet jelly beans, licorice, sour candy, and chocolate.

In this day and age, organic products are in demand. The Organic Candy Factory was showing gluten free, preservative free, nut free, and vegan wares. Among their most popular items, were the Organic Gummy Cubs™ which contain organic apple juice, and no preservatives.

Even though I probably gained five pounds from my "research", it was interesting to see what items florists can look forward to as add-ons to flower and plant sales. If your shop does not carry chocolate and other candy, it would be worthwhile to investigate this avenue for more sales and profit. ✿



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MARKETING TIP

# A Special Pairing – Flowers & Chocolates



BY DOUGLAS CALE, BIRMINGHAM CHOCOLATE, BIRMINGHAM, MI

**F**lorists and chocolatiers may live in two different worlds, but flowers and chocolates were made for each other. Visual bouquets. Aromatic bouquets. Tasting bouquets. Together, flowers and chocolate are truly a medley for the senses. When given together, each is a complement to the other. And each can whisper something personal to the recipient.

Florists and chocolatiers were meant to work together to make someone’s day special. What is more cheering than spring flowers? What is more pleasing than the taste of great chocolate? There are so many opportunities for collaboration: occasions, holidays, compliments, relationships, eCommerce, business gifting and more.

### Themes and Schemes

Occasions such as weddings and parties may celebrate a certain theme. Chocolate favors can be created for just about any activity: sports, hobbies, causes, vocations, interests. With access



*Chocolate wedding rings are a good add-on for the sweet table or as table favors.*



to thousands of molds, novelty favors can be appropriate for any occasion from woodland weddings to birthday bashes. Personalizing favors from high-heel shoes to monogrammed truffles help to make an event unique.

We coordinate with florists so that our packaging matches the color scheme of the event. In fact, we even make chocolate roses whether for a place setting or a bouquet.

It’s the little details that can come together to make a big difference when florists and chocolatiers get their creative juices flowing. Sometimes it is as simple and elegant as a rose and a monogrammed truffle at each place setting. And what could say “thank you” better to the bridal party or out-of-town guests than chocolates and flowers waiting in their hotel rooms?

### Holidays Appreciations

Many of the biggest holidays coincide for chocolatiers and florists. Valentine’s Day, Sweetest Day, Easter, Mother’s Day, Thanksgiving and of course Christmas. Stuffed chocolate turkeys make a tempting centerpiece with a side of flowers for the Thanksgiving table. If you want to think big for a larger event, how about a three foot chocolate Easter bunny surrounded with spring flowers. Classic lovers know how to do it best – flowers and chocolates for their valentines.

It is easy to get creative with holiday promotions. A little teamwork can go a long way, especially if both retailers are local.

*This chocolate birthday greeting can be used with a bouquet of flowers or in a gift basket.*

*Easter flowers and chocolate bunnies are a popular combination.*



Offer a “build your own” special that encourages the customer to visit both shops. Or offer a package that can be picked up at either shop – especially if orders are placed in advance.

### eCommerce

You have a web site – so do we. At the very least, share links and make it easy for customers to shop online. Perhaps a couple suggestions or a special offer can be highlighted. At checkout, make it easy to add a box of chocolates to that floral bouquet. Remember that chocolates can be personalized to make the gift truly thoughtful. Every buyer may not want to go the extra mile, but it can make it easier for those who do... one-stop shopping for that unique touch.



*Celebrate Christmas  
by combining chocolate  
and live wreaths.*

### Business Gifting

We are both in the gifting business and business gifting can be big business. Our products always make the recipient feel happy and appreciated. What better way to thank employees for a great effort – perhaps one year with chocolates and another year with flowers just to mix it up? And the same goes for holiday customer appreciations, referrals or just a “thank you” for your business. Whether in combination or alternately, chocolates and flowers are personal expressions of appreciation.

Just as your flowers are always fresh, so are our artisan chocolates. We do not use preservatives or unnecessary additives. Our chocolates are hand-made at our chocolateria in Birmingham, Michigan where we offer truffles, personalized favors, customized business gifts, molded favors and novelties, , as well as Oreos, grahams... well you get the idea.

Our chocolates are kosher, gluten free (except for chocolate dipped pretzels) and vegan selections are available. Our gift baskets can be customized to include pastries, brewed chocolate, coffee, tea, cake pops and lots of chocolates.

### Plant the (Cocoa) Seed

All it takes is for two retailers who care enough to collaborate in order to offer something exceptional to their customers. When the seed of collaboration is watered with a little creativity, good things can happen. ✨

---

*Douglas Cale is the owner of Birmingham Chocolate (a franchise of Schokolad®). The company website is [www.birminghamchocolate.com](http://www.birminghamchocolate.com).*

## MFA President Alice Waterous, AIFD, CF, CFD, PFCI Honored

At the 2012 AIFD National Symposium, MFA President Alice Waterous, AIFD, CF, CFD, PFCI, was presented with the North Central Chapter’s Hall of Fame Award in recognition of her many years of service and leadership.

In addition, she was inducted as one of the first AIFD Laureate members along with Gary Wells AIFD, CFD from Kentwood, MI. The AIFD Laureate recognition program salutes those who have been members for at least 21 years and have attended at least 10 National Symposiums. ✨



## Happy Birthday Kathy Petz, AAF, CF, PFCI

On the evening of July 27 Kathy Petz, AAF, CF, PFCI celebrated her 70th birthday at the Turkel House in Birmingham, MI. The house was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and is owned by MFA members Dale Morgan and Norm Silk of Blossoms in Birmingham. Here, Kathy was presented with her birthday cake surrounded by her husband Steve and family members. ✨



## WEBSAVVY

# Pinterest Getting Pinned Without Getting Stuck

BY CAROLYNN VAN NAMEN, MBA, INTEGRA GLOBAL CONSULTING



**W**hat's so interesting about Pinterest? And do you really need another social networking site to add to your overflowing list of priorities? In a word, yes!

Pinterest is a newer social network site that holds particular appeal for retail florists because it is essentially a visual buffet. Think of it as a digital version of a cork-board or scrapbook, where you can put up photos of your favorite floral arrangements, stunning wedding designs, a clever accent piece or unusual flower variety. It's a place where you can post your best work and let visitors view and share your photos on their own sites.

The site has seen explosive growth in just six months from fewer than one million users to 150 million. The majority of site users are women, especially those engaged in creative pursuits or professions. For floral business owners, that means greater opportunities to drive traffic to your website and convert visitors to buyers. And who doesn't want that?

### Learning the Lingo

Unlike other networking sites, you need to be invited to have an account on Pinterest. Which isn't tricky at all – just ask a friend who already has an account to invite you, or request an invitation directly from the Pinterest site at [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com). Done!

Pinterest has its own unique terminology. A "pin" is an image or photograph added to Pinterest, which you can upload from your own computer or from another website using the Pinterest bookmarklet, "Pin It button" or just a URL. A pinboard is a set of theme-based pins, and you share visual content by posting, or "pinning."

When you share someone else's content, it's a "repin," and you can add the Pin It button to your website to make it easier for others to share your content. When pins are added using the Pin It button, they link back to the site they came from. That's important because your images that visitors repin on their pinboards will then link to your website and build traffic to your site.

As with most other social networks, you can browse items from other users and "like," "repin" or "comment" on them. Members can interact with the content by reposting it, sharing others' pins

on Facebook and Twitter or by email, and even adding individual pins on their website or blog.

The site now connects with Facebook, allowing users to automatically post new pins to their Facebook feed for others to view. This means more eyes from other sites can access your pictures. You will want to make sure you register your Pinterest account using the same email address that you have for your business Twitter account. You can tie your Pinterest account into your Twitter account, but unfortunately, you can't connect Pinterest to your Facebook business page.

### Setting Up Your Account

Get the maximum mileage from your profile on Pinterest by following these six points:

1. Include your business name for the greatest exposure. In your profile field, use your business name instead of your personal name so your business name is displayed on your Pinterest home page.
2. Make the most of your "About" section by adding a descriptive paragraph. This will appear next to your profile photo (one of your signature arrangements?) as a way for users to learn more about you. Make sure you add your website URL here as well. People will not be able to click on it to reach your website but it provides another way for people to find you.
3. Include your website address in the "website" field in your profile. This seems obvious but is sometimes overlooked. And don't forget to add the Pinterest "Pin" button to any page on your site with great photo or video content (which means all of them, right?)
4. Connect your Pinterest profile with your Facebook account. When you turn on the "Publish Activity to Facebook Timeline" setting, your pins will also be shared with people on Facebook.
5. Make sure you turn OFF the "Visibility" setting in the account settings, which will allow your pinned content to appear in search. This won't improve your site's SEO, but it will drive traffic back to your site.
6. Keep it fresh – and that's not just for flowers! You have to cultivate your Pinterest site with the same love and attention that you give your perishable products. You have to change it often, adding new photos and content on a regular basis.

## WEBSAVVY

Keep it organized so people can find the category of information they're looking for. And invite your customers to add their favorite photos showcasing your work!

### Rules of Engagement

Pinterest is all about sharing content you love and frowns upon blatant self-promotion of your business or products. What you want to do here is to highlight the lifestyle your brand promotes, show how it enhances the lives of your customers, and convey the stories around people who use your products and services.

Envision a pinboard with some of your favorite holiday decorations, photographed gracing the mantel or doorway of someone's home. Think of Pinterest as more of a magazine spread than a collection of product photos. Then invite others to comment and "like" your work. It's just a matter of a few clicks before their friends tell other friends who tell their friends, and so on.

Weddings and other events are ideal opportunities for you to display your artistry with photographs of the bridal party, the ceremony and the reception site. Once you post your photos, visitors will share them with others on their own pinboards. And remember, your photos will link back to your website.

You can encourage your customers to send you photos (or take photos of them at their event) to make a board that demonstrates their delight with the floral pieces you have created for them.

You can also create a user-generated pinboard by inviting

visitors to contribute their own pins to your pinboards. Or, select a few of your top customers and re-pin their boards to your own Pinterest page, then ask followers to vote on the boards to select the best one.

You should have a well-designed website before you start pinning on Pinterest so you can provide information about your shop and services and then capture contact information about your visitors. Be sure to add the "Pin It" button to your site to make it easy for visitors to re-pin your content.

Distinguish yourself as an industry trend-setter by creating themed pinboards that show unique ways to decorate for specific holidays using floral products along with related lifestyle photos, such as imaginative Halloween arrangements and exterior decorations with fun kids' costumes, or special treats for Halloween.

The key to using Pinterest effectively is to go beyond floral designs to integrate your work with related aspects of celebrating a holiday or event. The more photos you use that display your creativity in an actual situation, the more attention you will receive and the better you can communicate your brand. ✿

*Carolynn Van Namen, MBA, is an independent marketing and communications consultant with Integra Global Consulting, based in the Chicago area. For help with your online marketing and messaging, contact her at [Carolynn@integra-gc.com](mailto:Carolynn@integra-gc.com). You can also check out her profile at [Linkedin.com/in/carolynnvannamen](https://www.linkedin.com/in/carolynnvannamen) and follow her on Twitter @cvannamen.*



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## MEMBERPROFILE

# From Finance to Flowers

BY BARBARA GILBERT, EDITOR

**C**hanging careers is commonplace in this day and age. But going from finance to flowers may be a bit more dramatic than the usual job change.

Leaving the corporate culture, Gordon Cashen decided to return home to Escanaba, MI, and start a whole new chapter of his life. Cashen had been the director of computer systems for Shopko and the director of financial systems and human resources payroll at Schneider National, Inc., a multi-national trucking company.

Six years ago, in February, 2007, Cashen bought Wickert Floral Company in Escanaba, a shop that was founded in 1923. Originally there were three shops, all within six miles of each other. Cashen closed the others to concentrate on the business located at 1006 Ludington St.

"Changing your career after 50 can be daunting and challenging," said Cashen. "I wanted to come back to Escanaba and was looking for something outside the corporate culture. I just kind of stumbled onto this opportunity."

He admits that his skills are in the management end of the business not in the design room. "They let me do gag items like 50 year birthday arrangements but that's about it."

The shop has seven part time employees, one driver, and



*Diane Miller, left, Wickert Floral general manager, poses in the workroom with sales rep, Janice Robitaille.*

*One of Wickert's most popular arrangements is this design using "crazy daisies."*

*This special consultation area is used for planning funeral designs.*





## MEMBERPROFILE



*Brides can relax in a special consultation section and discuss their needs with knowledgeable shop personnel.*

one full timer, Diane Miller, the head designer and manager. Cashen does the accounting plus maintenance and delivery when necessary.

Diane Miller noted that they specialize in weddings, funerals, and the big holidays: Christmas, Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. Miller has 21 years of experience in the floral industry having started while in high school.

"We have done several unique weddings," she noted. "For example, there was one where every bridesmaid wore a different color dress and the dress color was left out of the bouquets. Of course, we have done all white weddings, natural "green" weddings, and one flower variety weddings."

Wickert does 70-75 percent of all the funeral work in the area. The shop is 9,000 square feet and has a wedding and funeral section to service customers.

Some of the best sellers are gerberas, orchids, stargazers, and neon colored "crazy daisy" arrangements. Cashen commented that the trend seems to be away from roses and toward what he calls "Zen" artistry, a more modern design look, and a rustic look in weddings. They have pretty much eliminated the décor side and handle very few hard goods, having reduced that inventory by 90 percent.

Customer service is a big part of the shop's success. They deliver further than any florist in the area, as much as 45 miles out from Escanaba. In fact they will service weddings all over the Upper Peninsula. Wickert has been named the best florist in Delta County, winning the Readers' Choice Award from the Delta Press of Escanaba, for the past four years.

"If I had to pick a motto for my business it would be putting 'feelings into flowers'" Cashen said. "For example, when we are doing a funeral and the family comes into the shop, our objective

is to make them feel comfortable and let them know that we care and want to make this stressful time as easy as possible for them."

Part of this service directed business occurs at Christmas. From mid-November to the middle of December they hang holiday decorations at houses in the area. These include wreaths, swags and garlands using hooks that match the siding, meaning that they are not visible when the decorations are removed. These hooks can be left up all year, ready for the next season. They also bend wreaths to make handmade JOY signs. These are very popular for hanging over the garage. Last year the retail sales in this area totaled \$15,000.

All customers are on the shop's computer system. Using the Teleflora Dove System, Cashen can track his customers' history. When something new is ordered the system prints out the order, card message, and delivery ticket. This has simplified order taking and delivery. Ninety two percent of sales are by phone or the internet with only eight percent walk-in.

In addition to the flower shop, Cashen has developed a collateral business called Cashen Bridal Account. It is a method by which family and friends can contribute to a floral account and help the bride and groom with their flower and décor needs.

Cashen explained, "The goal of CBA is to help couples have the wedding celebration they are dreaming of, respecting their budget, but making it easier for others to gift them money allocated specifically for flowers and decoration. It is designed to allow those invited to the wedding, whether they can attend or not, to contribute in a meaningful way."

### How does it work?

The bridal couple can go to the Cashen Bridal Account website and set up an account. Then they invite friends and family to contribute using social media such as Facebook or by email or even regular mail.

The CBA website also allows the couple to view florists and décor vendors who give discounts for being a CBA member. As a member, they also will receive personalized, printed thank you cards to send to contributors. In addition a sign is provided to display on the gift table thanking those who have put money in the account. Money that is left over is given to the bride and groom. In three years, Wickert's wedding sales have more than tripled.

In November 2011, the site went live on the internet. Cashen is marketing the idea in California as a benchmark. Based on the California model, he is in the process of expanding into states nationwide. At this time there are 800 brides and 300 vendors registered on the site.

The CBA is advertised on The Knot, at state floral association shows, wedding shows and obviously in the social media. Cashen partners with the state associations and gives discounts to members. Michigan Floral Association members will be able to visit his booth at the Great Lakes Floral Expo next March 1-3 in Grand Rapids. For more information, visit [www.cashenbridalaccount.com](http://www.cashenbridalaccount.com).

Looking forward to the expansion of his businesses, Cashen will move both Wickert and the CBA into a new building in 2014.

What does Cashen like about the floral industry? "I like making people smile," he said, and what better way to do it than with flowers!" ✿

## IMPORTUPDATE

# Peonies for the Holidays

BY GAIL PABST, MARKETING DIRECTOR,  
KENNICOTT BROTHERS COMPANY

**R**ed and white; fragrant and bright. That's what peonies can add to Christmas arrangements. Peonies are enjoying enormous success as a hot, trendy flower and are now available in quantity from Chile for the upcoming holiday season.

Chile has the perfect temperature in the winter for peony production and they are available from Thanksgiving through the New Year. Delight your Christmas brides with peonies in their bouquets. This flower opens up a new area of opportunity for customers who are looking for something special.

The varieties that are most popular include Henry Bockstoce, the ultimate premium Christmas red with its large waxy petals of vivid crimson on strong stems that provide a focal point in designs.



*Duchesse de Nemours, a pure white peony.*



*The Christmas red peony, Henry Bockstoce.*

Duchesse de Nemours is a perfect traditional pure white. Premium white Avalanche, grown in the cool climate of both Chili and Alaska, also performs extremely well. There are pink varieties in all different hues including Kansas, Alexander Fleming and the perennial favorite, Sarah Bernhardt.

Consumer interest in peonies is increasing each year. The availability of peonies during the winter season is a delightful surprise to sophisticated flower consumers who enjoy peonies during their traditional growing season. Make your customers' design just a bit special this year with peonies.

For more information on peony varieties and weekly availability, go to [www.kennicottpeonyhotline.com](http://www.kennicottpeonyhotline.com). Peonies from all farms are marketed under the brand of Midwest Blooms. Peonies are available from your local wholesaler. ✿



*Peonies waiting to be processed in the packing house.*



*The Chilean peony fields of Kennicott partner Brian Blackburn.*



3999CLR  
Van's #292088  
7.5" GARDEN VASE  
PLAIN  
Opening: 4.25"  
12/Case



3952CLR  
Van's #292301  
7.28" SPRING GARDEN VASE  
PLAIN  
Opening: 3.375"  
12/Case



3950AST  
Van's #292298  
7.28" PETITE VASE TRIO  
PLAIN  
Opening: 3.75", 2.375", 2.5"  
12/Case



3907CLR  
Van's #292087  
8.5" GARDEN URN  
PLAIN  
Opening: 4"  
12/Case



3104CLR  
Van's #292294  
8.5" GATHERING VASE  
PLAIN  
Opening: 4"  
12/Case



3007CLR  
Van's #295787  
8.5" MARILYN VASE  
PLAIN  
Opening: 3"  
12/Case



3005SCLR  
Van's #292216  
9" RIO BUNCH VASE  
OPTIC  
Opening: 2.75"  
12/Case



3002SCLR  
Van's #292192  
9" RIO VASE  
OPTIC  
Opening: 5.375"  
6/Case



3003SCLR  
Van's #292194  
9.25" RIO CACHE VASE  
OPTIC  
Opening: 7.25"  
6/Case



3020AST  
Van's #292230  
10" BOKAY VASE TRIO  
PLAIN  
Opening: 3.75", 4.625", 3.875"  
12/Case



3905CLR  
Van's #292086  
10.25" GARDEN URN  
PLAIN  
Opening: 4.75"  
6/Case



3008CLR  
Van's #292217  
10.5" RIO VASE  
PLAIN  
Opening: 5.5"  
6/Case



3929SCLR  
Van's #292297  
12" CONICO VASE  
OPTIC  
Opening: 6.5"  
6/Case



3004CLR  
Van's #292202  
13.25" MING VASE  
PLAIN  
Opening: 5.5"  
4/Case



3605CLR  
Van's #292089  
14" GRECIAN URN  
PLAIN  
Opening: 6.5"  
6/Case



Alsip, IL  
708-371-8000  
Edina, MN  
952-831-8008  
South Bend, IN  
574-282-2884  
Indianapolis, IN  
317-291-8267

Walker, MI  
616-785-9500  
Chicago, IL  
773-254-0700  
Doraville, GA  
770-449-0100



3914CLR  
Van's #295760  
5" BUBBLE BOWL  
PLAIN  
Opening: 3.25"  
12/Case



3967CLR  
Van's #291722  
6" BUBBLE BOWL  
PLAIN  
Opening: 4.25"  
12/Case



3553CLR  
Van's #293002  
8" BUBBLE BOWL  
PLAIN  
Opening: 5.25"  
4/Case



## WHOLESALE CONNECTION

# Your Local Wholesaler = Your Link to Profits

BY PATRICIA LILLY



**S**uccessful product sourcing has turned into an art these days. It can be a time-consuming process to find the best product at the best pricing supported by the best service. Your local wholesaler is ready to help you maintain timely, adequate inventory, help you with

last minute requests and needs, and keep you abreast of the latest trends in cut flowers and floral supply offerings.

When considering sourcing product, remember that your local wholesaler provides more than just product.

You will receive:

- A wide array of products and services. Fresh product requires stringent care and handling, and your wholesalers are trained and have the experience needed to appropriately care and handle product. They also stand behind their product and are quick to replace damaged product or product not up to your standards.
- Excellent value by providing quality products, good service and fair pricing for this service.
- Dependable service, including door-to-door delivery, ensuring that you receive your product when you need it.
- One-stop shopping for your fresh and non-perishable product needs.
- Flexibility, allowing you to buy in large or small quantities.
- Reasonable credit terms.
- Assistance with marketing programs.
- Timely information about new products and services.

Cultivating a strong, personal relationship with your local wholesaler helps to build trust and confidence. They understand your needs and you understand their services. Let's take a closer look at some of your most critical needs.

### Sensible Buying

One stop shopping: this says it all. Wholesale florists know the market – they do the product screening, sifting of order quantities, negotiating, advance purchasing on product, and the backup

stocking on fast movers. The typical wholesaler buys from a variety of sources, but you get one set of terms and one invoice from a partner in your business, not just another supplier. It's easy, it's efficient, it's sensible, and it's profitable.

### Timely Delivery

You need your product "just in time." Wholesale florists' fundamental role is "just in time" inventory and delivery. They act as the key link, taking large shipments from many suppliers, breaking them down, and delivering the appropriate quantity to you, their retail customer. With regular schedules, so you can plan ahead, and get last minute deliveries so you can fulfill an order. There's no getting around the cost of delivery– it's expensive. Someone has to provide this service and the cost has to be built into the price you pay, no matter where you buy. All you can do is keep that cost to a minimum. Put delivery into the hands of a specialist – the wholesale florist – the key link in transportation and delivery.

### Product Flow

The key for good retail return on investment is to stock fast-moving product in appropriate quantities. The solution is to let someone else carry as much of your inventory as possible, and to get it to you when you need it. The wholesale florist specializes in just this service. And, because the wholesale florists' modern distribution centers are so efficient, you get a bonus – the lowest possible cost of distribution.

### Marketing for Results

Wholesale florists are also experts in marketing – they can provide you with education and training on products, floral trends, the latest and greatest in non-perishable product, merchandising advice and more. Your wholesaler remains the source of the best marketing and selling assistance because their resources and experience are gathered from hundreds of suppliers and customers. Product fulfillment, promoting, marketing, selling – you can't skimp on these in today's marketplace. You have to get the best help, and that's the wholesale florist – your key link to profits. ✻

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*Patricia A. Lilly is the executive vice president for the Wholesale Florist & Florist Supplier Association, a business organization dedicated to providing members with the information, services and support they need to remain competitive in today's constantly changing market. The association offers a wide variety of programs and activities to supporting the mission of enhancing networking and business opportunities for all floral wholesale distributors and suppliers. Visit WF&FSA at [www.wffsa.org](http://www.wffsa.org).*

# Out with the Mason Jar, in with...

BY DOUG BATES, CF, FROM DESIGN'S BY VOGT'S, STURGIS, MI — 2012 MFA DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

**H**ow many of us will dance a jig when the Mason jar centerpiece fad is over? A friend on Facebook recently posted to our group that the quickest way to make gorgeous blooms look cheap is to drop them into a Mason jar.

Are cheap-looking flowers what we're after? I think not. The Mason jar fad may be here to stay, but I suggest that there are alternatives!

This little number, for example, is just as rustic, organic, and oh-so-eco-chic! As a composite centerpiece, it contains a variety of succulent plants, and what is more "green" than plant life? Nestled onto a bed of repurposed glass chips, the succulents look right at home with bits of reindeer moss and a couple of sheltering Manzanita branches, all in recycled glass vessels, of course! Similar looking, economical Mitsumata branches,

available at all Nordlie locations, could easily be used instead.

And did you know that Mitsumata is a recycled product? Its bark is the main component used in manufacturing parchment paper. The fun branches we get to play with are just the leftovers!

I know that in our shop, succulents are HUGE!! By themselves, in arrangements, and especially in bridal flowers and event work, they are sought after by customers who enjoy their easy care modern style.

The colors work together in this design to make a soothing organic palette. This type of centerpiece would be perfect for the bride and groom who are looking to minimize their carbon footprint. An added bonus? The individual vessels can double as party favors for the guests! Another way to add value to what you're offering, even if it IS in a Mason jar! ✿



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*get your tickets now for The Michigan Floral Foundation Hall of Fame Dinner honoring*

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**Bobbi Ecker-Blatchford** is an award winning designer, and trusted mentor to many in the floral industry. Her over 50 year career began in her family's third generation retail, wholesale, and growing operation in Iowa. Her trademark enthusiasm and generosity are legendary in the floral industry.

You are cordially invited to attend  
The 4<sup>TH</sup> Annual  
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honoring our inductee

**BOBBI ECKER-BLATCHFORD**  
AAF, AIFD, PFCI

Thursday, October 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2012  
Six o'clock in the evening

Amway Grand Plaza Hotel  
Pantlind Ballroom  
187 Monroe NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Tickets: \$85 per person.

For more information or to make reservations  
please call Cindy at the Michigan Floral Association (517) 575-0110.

Kindly respond by October 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2012.

Mail Payments:

Michigan Floral Foundation P.O. Box 67, Haslett, MI 48840.  
Rooms are available at Amway Grand Plaza Hotel For \$119.

Call (800) 253-3590 for Reservations.

Mention Michigan Floral Foundation for group rate.

# Review, Renew, Reinvent!

BY JASON MCCOLLUM, AAF, AIFD, PFCI



**O**ur economy will eventually come back, and all of us, at every level of the floral industry, need to be preparing, as we coax it along. Most of the time we are caught up in day to day activities and creating time to just

“sit and think,” to ponder creative solutions and answers for our business questions, is not an option.

Hopefully, this article will “reset” you, your perspective and resolve, and will move you to fresh positions that will rejuvenate you and revitalize your business and its profitability.

## Review

In one word PROFITS!! This is why we are in business. No news here, however taking the time to break sales down into categories, i.e. Green Plants, Fresh Flowers, Fresh Floral Arrangements, Weddings, Corporate, etc., gives us an accurate profile on what is currently profitable versus what is currently failing on a (ROI) return on investment basis.

Wire service sales and expenses need to be reviewed as a separate business, based on a very simple, focused P & L statement. Each wire service your shop belongs to needs its own separate statement.

Reviewing (COG) Cost of Goods: What does it cost me to produce the goods I sell, and how does that cost contribute to my profitability? Which categories of salable goods produce the highest percentage of profit dollars? Your cost of labor as a factor needs to be included as a cost of goods.

Don't forget containers, wire, tape, ribbon, foam, cards, cardettes, etc. The list goes on, but these are all very real costs. It is a good idea to separate your invoices so you can easily see just what you spend in supplies or hard goods each month. You will be surprised.

## Renew

“Out with the old, in with the new.” Nothing like a good White Elephant Sale or another promotion or incentive to move the goods that are contributing to the museum like quality of your business. Some probably qualify for their own bronze plaque, listing the year you bought the item. Your money is sitting on your shelves with a permanent ring of dust.

Time to renew your image and renew your spirit resulting in a renewed “YOU” and your business!

Now, that you have focused on some inventory clearing and cleansing to turn these products into profitable dollars, renewing your “IMAGE” is the next step.

One of the phrases I hear is “I always have wanted our shop to do more contemporary work...” and of course, my reply is “You can't sell it, if you don't show it!”

A fresh coat of unexpected colors can create a focused background for new vignettes in your shop. Time to show what you can do with the “renewed you”!

Do several themed vignettes, involve your staff and their input as to what they feel is best suited for your existing customers. Use bolder visual statements to attract the new clients with your “contemporary work.”

Creating storyboards on foam board becomes your own “Pinterest.” Set them up as coming attractions, and place around the shop, to let your customers know something new and exciting is coming.

These completed vignettes serve as perfect photo opportunities for future mail campaigns inviting your established clients as well as your new target audience to an open house.

## Reinvent

This “renewed you” is now ready to debut as the “reinvented you!”

Staging and presenting an open house (Thanksgiving weekend seems to work well for some shops) is a good way to showcase your reinvented perspective. Do an email campaign, followed by a direct mail campaign using photo postcards. (Remember those brand new and exciting vignettes with the bright colors and the new merchandise?)

Your open house photo postcard invitations should go out the week before your open house event. In addition to the invitation you may choose to offer a percentage discount on all purchases made during those days as an added incentive to drive traffic.

Another all important component in today's business community is social media. Create a Facebook page for your shop, use Twitter, and LinkedIn. All these avenues of communication can help add opportunities for more business.

Reviewed! Renewed! And Reinvented! You are ready to step in and keep pace with our economy as it returns. Profitability is your focus; it just takes some time to think creatively about how and when you will arrive there. ✿

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*Jason McCollum has worked in the floral industry for over 30 years as a designer and product development expert. He currently is developing and marketing home décor, seasonal, gift and outdoor products.*

## CFREPORT

# Chairman's Report



# Time for a Change?

BY TIM LATIMER, CF, CF CHAIRMAN



**H**ave you ever noticed that you feel good when you are wearing new clothes or a new pair of shoes? When you know that you look good you feel good and present a positive image. The same thing can apply to your shop. When your shop is dressed the same every day, day in and day out, it can't be presenting a positive image. Get some "new clothes" for

your shop...change the displays.

When we are in the shop every day it is so easy to become immune to the displays. Try looking at the store through the eyes of a customer. If you were a customer would you be able to find what you need? Would you be inspired to buy?

In today's economy it is even more important to present your merchandise in a way so that customers can envision how they would use it in their homes. The CF manual has a wonderful section on designing displays. Displays do not have to be expensive!

To some degree, designing attractive displays is much like designing attractive floral arrangements. Great color and an eye-catching focal point are highly desirable but may not be enough to make a display click. Multiple components must be considered and controlled in order to achieve success.

## Signs

Signs in the windows and in the display areas of the shop act as silent salespeople, constantly providing messages to customers and, either directly or indirectly, encouraging sales. Long gone are the days when signs are handwritten. We all have a computer and can easily produce professional looking computer generated signs. Signage should be consistent throughout the shop, easy to read and to the point. (Another advantage in making computer signs: spell check!)

## Avoid Clutter

Too much merchandise, no matter how well arranged, tends to look messy and confused.

Don't try to show everything at once. Edit the choices of merchandise to be featured in decorative displays, and relegate the remaining product to display shelves. Also avoid overwhelming merchandise by surrounding it with too many props.

## Price It

Everything on the sales floor should have a price. That includes the props; if a customer wants to buy it I want to sell it! If you have a prop that you can't part with, take it home and find something else for the shop.

## Move It

Sometimes simply moving the display around can give the shop a fresh new look and cost nothing. Moving displays also encourages a good cleaning.

## Light It

Good lighting is an inexpensive way to highlight merchandise and increase sales. A trip to the hardware store will provide you with all you need. (Your CF manual has great lighting tips.)

Dress up your shop and watch your sales grow. ✿

## CF FLOWER of the Month GERBERA DAISY (*Gerbera jamesonii*)

Common name Gerbera Daisy or Transvaal Daisy (not Gerber!...Gerber is baby food).

Gerberas are important commercially. They are the fifth most used cut flower in the world after roses, carnations, chrysanthemums, and tulips. It was named in honor of the German botanist and naturalist Traugott Gerber.

Gerbera daisies are thirsty flowers. It is important to check to see that the vase is full and add preservative solution often. Be sure any floral foam materials used are completely saturated and the container is full of water daily.

Gerbera stems are highly susceptible to bacteria blockage. This may cause the head to droop over. Use clean water and replenish preservatives every 1 to 2 days.



## FLORAL TIP: Lighting! *From the CF manual, page 148*

Lighting is an integral part of any good display. It's the element that directs the viewer's eye, providing emphasis and pop. To learn more about lighting, keep your eyes open. Look in the display windows of other retailers to see how lighting brings drama and impact to displays, while lack of lighting leaves others drab and uninteresting. Your CF manual has valuable lighting information to help you out.



**INDUSTRYNEWS**

**Suzie Kostick  
Joins Fitz Design**

**F**itz Design, worldwide distributor of floral jewelry and accessories, has announced the appointment of Suzie Kostick, AIFD,

CFD, PFCI, to the position of director of marketing. She will be responsible for brand awareness, promotion, industry relations, and project development. She will also assist with education programs.

Kostick comes to Fitz Design with over 35 years of floral industry experience. Most recently she was the publisher and executive editor of *Flora Magazine*. She has also spent time as a retail flower shop owner, mass-market manager, business consultant, special event coordinator, educator and program presenter.

"I am very excited to have this opportunity to work along side some of the industry's most creative minds. Fitz goes beyond supplying beautiful products, they are committed to making sure that their products have practical and multiple uses," Kostick said. "They also provide floral wholesalers and retail florists with practical and useful marketing and sales education so they have real success in their businesses."

For more information visit [www.creationsbyfitzdesign.com](http://www.creationsbyfitzdesign.com). ✿

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## Professional Education Center

### Floral Design School: Introduction to Design

**Instructor: Tim Latimer, CF**

**Member \$900**

**Non-Member \$1000**

**12 Weeks of Class**

**Every Wednesday**

**Jan. 16-Apr. 10, 2013**

**6:00-9:00 pm**

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: vased arrangements, symmetrical triangles, asymmetrical triangles, horizontal centerpieces, round designs, hand-tied bouquets, corsages, and boutonnières.

The class will meet from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm every Wednesday for 12 weeks beginning January 16. There are 36 hours of classroom instruction.

Since this is a personal enrichment course there will be no exams.

The limited course enrollment of 12 will ensure that each student receives personal attention.

### Intermediate Floral Design Certified Florist Prep

**Instructor: Tim Latimer, CF**

**Member \$900**

**Non-Member \$1000**

**12 Weeks of Class**

**Every Thursday**

**Jan. 17-Apr. 11, 2013**

**6:00-9:00 pm**

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](http://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: vased arrangements, bridal bouquets, corsages, boutonnières 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 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm every Thursday for 12 weeks beginning January 17. There are 36 hours of classroom instruction.

Since this is a personal enrichment course there will be no graded exams.

The limited course enrollment of 12 will ensure that each student receives personal attention.

### Steps to Certification

**Instructor: Cindy S. Ching, AIFD, CF**

**Member \$149.00**

**Non-Member \$199.00**

**Tuesday**

**January 8, 2013**

**10:00 am-4:30 pm**

Cindy will guide those who plan on becoming Certified Florists. The session will cover do's and don'ts, methods and mechanics, insight and answers. This is a hands-on experience. There will be 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, using all the new CF written and hands-on sections! Attendees will leave with a clear understanding of what it takes to pass the prestigious national CF exam. Class will run from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm with a half hour break for lunch, which is included in the registration fee.

**Bring your own tools.**

Visit [www.michiganfloral.org](http://www.michiganfloral.org)  
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# 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)**

**\*Cost for manual only is \$399.99 (includes tax & S/H)**

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](http://www.michiganfloral.org)  
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#### Upscale Floral Design Shop Seeks Creative Designer:

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**QUALIFICATIONS:** Prior floral design experience, Must be able to pass Michigan Gaming Control Board Requirements, Creative Eye/Artistic Flair, Prior Sales Customer Service, Excellent floral knowledge. Resumes welcomed 313-342-2333 FAX. Phone 313-342-3758 (Shop number).

**Full Time Floral Designer Wanted:** Teleflora shop in Hastings, MI needs someone with training and/or experience. Send resume to Barlow Florist 109 W. State St. Hastings, MI 49058, Fax to: (269) 945-0469 or email: [barlowflorist@barlowflorist.com](mailto:barlowflorist@barlowflorist.com).

**Wholesale Job Opportunities:** Nordlie, Inc., Michigan's largest wholesaler, has excellent opportunities for high energy staff in numerous capacities. Inside sales, route sales, designing, or merchandising – stop by our Warren, Flint, or Grandville stores. Full benefit program. Contact any one of our store managers: Tom Figueroa AIFD, MCF; Warren; 586-755-4200. Cathy Davison; Flint; 810-767-8883. Leslie Walton / Deb Durrant; Grandville; 616-534-6883.

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#### MFA Scholarship Committee seeks donations for the 2013 silent auction:

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](http://www.michiganfloral.org/mfa_scholarship.html) and download a Silent Auction donation form (PDF file).

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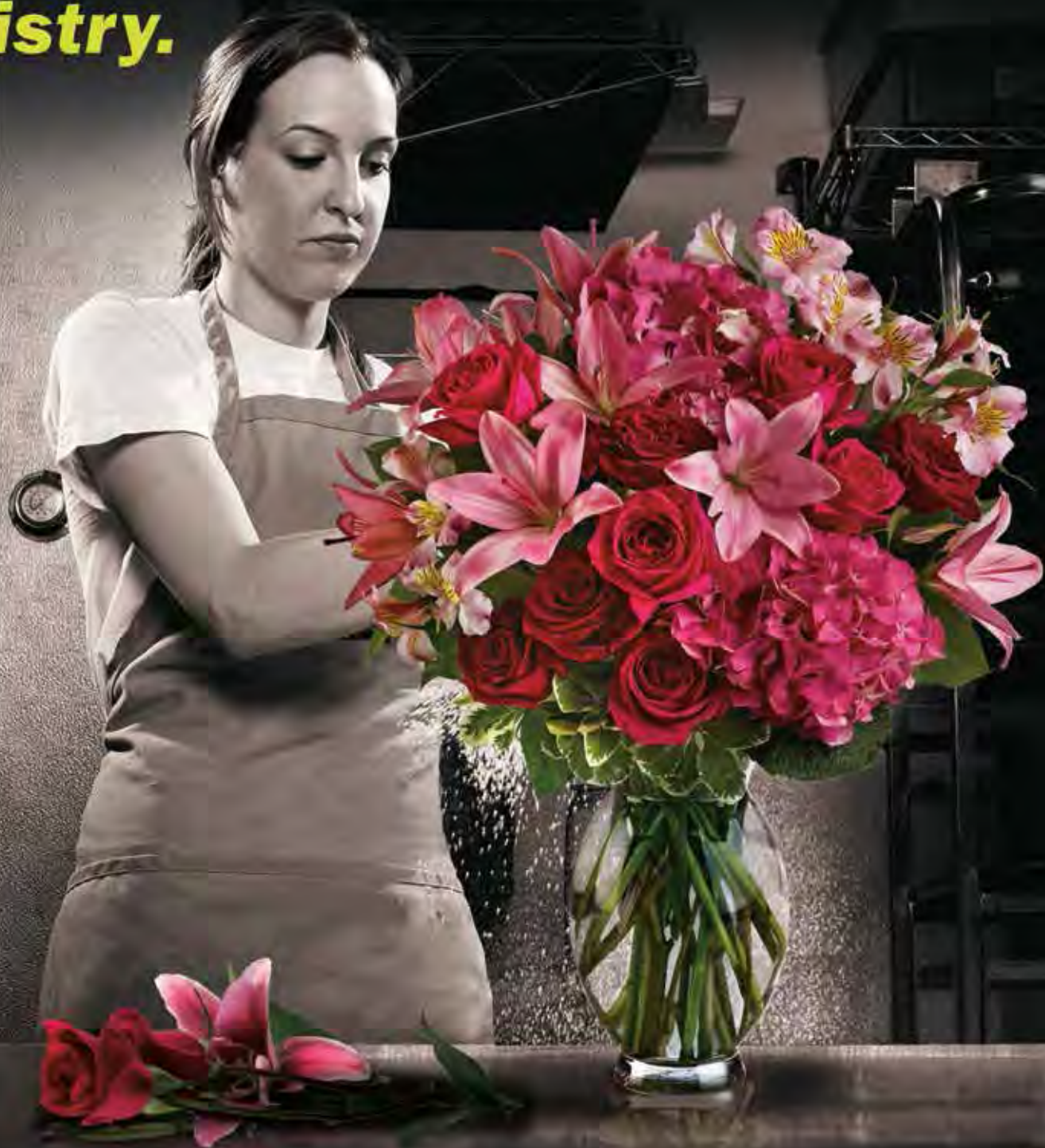


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