



April 2016

Something for everyone at NatCon 2016

Thank you to all who attended and contributed to the success of HMA's recent National Conference and Expo in Fort Worth. If you were among the participants, you know that over 200 industry stakeholders were on the scene, and that the event consisted of 2+ days of over-the-top business sessions, colleague-to-colleague networking, a whole lot of industry strategizing, and more.

- HMA's '**Next-Gen**' Millennials were ultra-impressive and proof positive that the future of our industry is resting in very capable, imaginative and strong hands.
- The 'extra' support provided by our **Conference Sponsors** helped to elevate the event to "the next level." (Visit www.HMAmembers.org to see all who went the extra mile for the HMA.)
- And the sold-out **Industry Expo** was a healthy mix of veteran and 'new-to-the-HMA' industry suppliers! Thank you all for coming out and sharing your solutions, strategies and technical expertise!

If you were unable to be in Fort Worth and would like to hear and see what you missed, then spend some time at www.HMAmembers.org. Simply log into the **Members Only** section to hear and view the 2016 Meeting Presentations. It's all at your fingertips and just a click away.

Once again, a hearty **Thank You** to all who contributed to another very successful HMA National Conference and Expo! And as we look to **2017**, HMA's National Conference & Expo is set for **March 22-24**, at Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston, South Carolina. Visit francismarion.com for a look at this historic property. Then mark your calendars, please!

Central Regional slated for May

It's already April, so don't delay. HMA's 2016 **Central Regional Meeting** is heading to Louisville, Kentucky, **May 25-26**, and it's going to be interesting. Registration, hotel information and meeting specifics are up and running at www.HMAmembers.org. Here's the plan.

The following companies will be opening the doors of their facilities to the HMA:

- **Brewco, Inc.**, Central City, Kentucky, www.brewcoinc.com
- **Canton Wood Cooperage**, Lebanon, Kentucky, cantoncooperage.com
- **Dunaway Timber Company, Inc.**, Fordsville, Kentucky, www.dunawaytimber.com
- **Koetter Woodworking, Inc.**, Borden IN, www.koetterwoodworking.com
- **Salem Hardwood Lumber**, Salem, Indiana, shlcinc.com

And the **Embassy Suites by Hilton**, 501 S. Fourth Street Louisville, Kentucky, will serve as our base of operation. [Reservations](#) can be made by calling **502.813.3800**. Be sure to ask for the Hardwood Manufacturers Association room block to secure the discounted room rate of **\$165**. And yes, the hotel offers a complimentary shuttle to/from the Louisville International Airport.

HMA members and industry friends will find all of the meeting details at www.HMAmembers.org. Be sure to check it out and register soon. Like we said, it's already April!

Officers, Directors elected at Conference

At HMA's March Board of Directors meeting in Fort Worth, the following **Officers** were elected for 2016. Congratulations to President [Richard Wilkerson](#), Anderson-Tully Company, First Vice President, [Bob Miller](#), Frank Miller Lumber Company, and HMA Executive Vice President, [Linda Jovanovich](#).

Executive Committee members were also elected at that meeting. In addition to the Officers, congratulations go out to: Troy Brown, Kretz Lumber Company, Inc., Antigo, Wisc.; T. J. Rosengarth, Northwest Hardwoods, Inc., Tacoma, Wa.; Trisha Thompson, T & S Hardwoods, Inc., Milledgeville, Ga.; Nordeck Thompson, Thompson Appalachian Hardwoods, Inc., Huntland, Tenn.; and past president Skipper Beal, Beal Lumber Co., Inc., Little Mountain, S.C.

During the Conference's Thursday Business Meeting, HMA members elected **Directors** Julio Alvarez, Bill Hanks Lumber Company, Inc., Danbury, N.C.; Joey Josey, Josey Lumber Company, Inc., Scotland Neck, N.C.; Hugh Overmyer, Linden Lumber, LLC, Linden, Ala.; Phil Menzner, Menzner Lumber & Supply Co., Inc., Marathon, Wisc.; and T. J. Rosengarth, Northwest Hardwoods, Inc., Tacoma, Wa.

Congratulations to you all and thank you for your service!

More than just Talk

*By Linda Jovanovich
HMA Executive Vice President*

I'd like to thank everyone who helped make HMA's recent National Conference and Expo such a success. It pleased me to hear so many of you refer to it as an "**industry**" event. It was designed to be just that – a learning, sharing, and networking event for **all** industry stakeholders. My 'gut' tells me that as more and more of us grab hold of this growing "industry" mindset, the future of our hardwood industry will brighten. Here's what I mean.

Many of you came to me with concerns about the recent hype surrounding foreign hardwood look-alikes, and how the media inaccurately equated these imitators with **solid** American hardwood products. Your concerns were well-founded. And I'll repeat here, what I told all of you.

Our response to this mis-information must be an "**industry**" response that tells the world that:

- In the U.S., quality standards and **safe** manufacturing practices are regulated and monitored by U.S. agencies and associations.
- Consumers at all levels can confidently choose products made from American hardwoods knowing that the hardwood has been responsibly harvested and quality control standards have been met.

This issue of the *Link* includes an article entitled, “**HMA’s response to the media Hype.**” I encourage you to read it; download the entire response; and make it available to your employees, customers and vendors, family, friends and everyone else who needs to know the facts about America Hardwood products. As an industry, we can set the record straight!

I’ll close by reminding you that HMA’s Central Regional Meeting in Louisville, May 25-26, is fast approaching. I’m excited about all of the different and interesting places we’ll be touring. Meeting details can be found at www.HMAMembers.org. Make your plans soon, and take advantage of this signature, HMA member benefit.

HMA’s response to the media Hype

If you are still getting a lot of push-back as a result of the media’s questionable coverage of foreign hardwood look-alikes and the health issues being caused by these hardwood “imitators,” then perhaps **HMA’s response**, available for download, might help. Here’s the crux of our message.

Be Informed – Today’s marketplace offers many products that claim to be or may look like American hardwood on the surface. But don’t be fooled by low-cost imitators! And do not confuse products made from **solid**, all-natural American Hardwood with these inferior and potentially dangerous look-alikes.

Recent media coverage of health-harmful, ‘**imitation**’ hardwood products and their questionable and non-regulated manufacturing processes - ***some foreign countries have no governing agencies to assure quality standards or environmentally safe manufacturing practices*** - has been causing great consumer concern. And rightly so! But it is inappropriate and unfair to assume those issues apply to solid, all-natural American Hardwood products.

Made in the USA - In the U.S., quality standards and **safe** manufacturing practices are regulated and monitored by U.S. agencies and associations. And consumers at all levels can confidently choose products made from American hardwoods knowing that the hardwood has been responsibly harvested and quality control standards have been met.

Bottom Line – Disregard the Hype. Know the facts about flooring, furniture, cabinetry or millwork made from **solid** American Hardwood by contacting the agencies, associations and companies that monitor and produce them. And before you buy, research both the manufacturer and the product. An informed buyer is a happy one.

Susan M. Regan Scholarship recipients announced

Congratulations to **Kegan Blink**, Barton, New York, and **Jared Steckbauer**, Marathon, Wisconsin, the inaugural recipients of the Susan M. Regan Memorial Scholarship. In their thank you letters to the HMA:



Kegan Blink, a Wood Products Technology major at Morrisville State College said, “While working our family farm, I became fond of building and fixing. That led me to take all of the shop classes my High School offered. And in those classes I began to hone my wood working skills. What began as a hobby is turning into a career. Bob Pope of USNR and James Costello, my professor at Morrisville State College, encouraged me to apply for this scholarship. I thank them and I thank HMA.”



Jared Steckbauer, a Wood Processes and Technology major at North Central Technical College (NTC) said, “I have always been fascinated by the wood industry, so when I found out about this program at NTC, I knew I had to be in it. My teacher, Travis Allen, stressed the importance of working in the industry during summer break. And the experience I gained at Menzner Lumber Company proved to be very beneficial. Working hard, studying and pushing myself is the plan to make the most of my education.”

Background Information - Recognizing the need for skilled industry professionals, HMA established **two** annual scholarships in memory of former Executive Vice President, Susan M. Regan. Each scholarship, in the amount of \$1000, is intended to provide financial assistance to qualified students enrolled in an accredited forestry/wood products program. Visit www.HMAMembers for scholarship details.

Millennials steal the spotlight in Fort Worth

One of the best received learning sessions at HMA's recent National Conference and Expo in Fort Worth was the handiwork of our '**Next-Gen' Millennials**. Without question, they were at the top of their game! If you were unable to be in Texas, here's a look at what you missed.

A member panel, moderated by Claire Thompson Getty and comprised of HMA Baby Boomers Ray Wheeland and Eric Porter, Generation X'ers Matt Fisk and Bob Miller, and Millennials Tim Brownlee and Thomas Battle, discussed how, "**Leveraging the Generational Differences in the Workplace**," would increase productivity, employee retention, customer satisfaction, and profitability. It was an eye-opener!

Understanding the Generations

- **Baby Boomers (1946-1964)** grew up in a healthy economic era and believe that long hours and hard work result in success.
- **Generation X (1965-1979)** was raised in a period of great socio-economic upheaval. Mothers were forced to enter the workforce, and that meant that children had to care for themselves after school - "latch key kids."
- **Generation Y "Millennials" (1980-1999)** are 'the' technology savvy gadget users. They enjoy networking and appreciate speed.

Recognizing & Leveraging their Strengths

To get the best from **Baby Boomers**, honor their experience and recognize their value. Involve them as mentors/coaches/trainers, and find ways to accommodate their schedules.

Generation X'ers love technology. They are multi-taskers. They manage time well and are goal and objective oriented. Tap into their technology expertise. Value their competence and creativity, but be sure to provide "role" models, and clearly explain company goals and objectives.

Techno-savvy **Millennials** use technology to work smarter, not longer. Utilize their expertise in technology. Create a plan for their future and develop ways to cross-train and rotate roles. Mentor and coach one-on-one, and work to eliminate bureaucracy.

Best Practices in Leading a Multigenerational Workforce

- **Operate from a Sophisticated Management Style** – Over-communicate! Communicate company vision, goals and measures to employees. Communicate, manage and train based on best management practices. Engage all generations for planning and decision-making. Use multiple communication vehicles.
- **Create Workplace Choices** – Allow the workplace to shape itself around the work being done, the customers being served, and those doing the work. The result – less bureaucracy, short chain-of-command, and a relaxed workplace.
- **Respect Competence & Initiative** – Assume the best in people and provide autonomy. Listen to ideas. The 'next big thing' for your company may originate from a young, twenty-something staffer.

- **Accommodate Employee Differences** – Treat employees like customers. Recognize and try to accommodate workforce diversity via flextime, job sharing, telecommunicating and scheduling options.
- **Nourish Retention** – Encourage life-long learning. Offer training, coaching, mentoring, leadership opportunities, and a wide variety/choices of benefits. This builds employee experience, confidence and loyalty.

Visit the **Members Only** section of www.HMAmembers.org for the entire presentation.

Hardwood Federation in 2016

Among the presenters at HMA's National Conference and Expo was Hardwood Federation (HF) Executive Director, Dana Lee Cole. Her "**Washington Update**" included a brief recap of HF 2015 activities and then detail on what to expect from Washington for the remainder of 2016. During her presentation, Dana said ...

"I'm sure you are all very aware that this is a Presidential election year and that will impact policy and legislative development in Washington!

- Control of the Senate will be as important as control of the White House.
- **Republicans** have more seats to defend and according to pundits, there are challenges. (New Hampshire (Kelly Ayotte), Illinois (Mark Kirk), Pennsylvania (Pat Toomey), Rubio's seat in Florida, Ron Johnson's seat in Wisconsin)
- **Democrats** need a net gain of **five** to win back control of the Senate.
- Much will depend on who the Presidential candidates are, because a strong candidate can pull a Senate Candidate over the finish line."

As HF charges ahead into 2016, "we recognize that legislation is going to be very difficult to pass, because in such a divided country, every vote is considered a campaign point. Also, the Congressional calendar will be front loaded for the first six months of the year. After the Republican and Democratic Conventions in the last two weeks of July, Congress will only be in session for a few short weeks. However, this does not mean that progress on our issues cannot be made."

The "hardwood specific" issues that HF will be focusing on include:

- **Forest Management** issues - specifically appropriate allocation of funds to meet Forest Service harvest goals; reasonable reform of NEPA and ESA, and flexible administration for forests across the country.
- **Northern Long Eared Bat** – monitoring the final rule and implementation. If the final rule is significantly different from what is expected, HF will look at legislative and legal options. And also protect a positive final rule from legal challenges.
- **Biomass** - **specifically** offering comments on how the President's Clean Power Plan considers biomass and be looking for other vehicles, including legislation, to force EPA to recognize the benefits of biomass.
- **Regulatory Reform Efforts** - monitoring an effort in the House to form a Commission that would identify and recommend for elimination burdensome business regulations

In closing, Dana thanked HMA for its ongoing support of the Federation, and she encouraged all in attendance to reach out to their **local, state** and **federal** officials for an up-close and personal discussion regarding the issues critical to the hardwood industry.

For the entire presentation, visit the **Members Only** section of www.HMAmembers.org.

Dealing with Stress

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, close to 28 percent of Americans, age 20 and older, “either have high total cholesterol or are taking cholesterol-lowering medications.” Many cardiologists see chronic stress as a key contributor. What’s to be done?

The experts at the Mayo Clinic suggest these stress-reducing tips:

- **Cut Stressors at Work** by dealing with your most unpleasant tasks early in the day.
- **Take some Time for Yourself** and rather than cramming more into a busy schedule, find ways to leave things out.
- **Practice Positive Thinking** and don’t say anything to yourself that you wouldn’t say to someone else.
- **Eat healthy** because a well-functioning body is better at managing stressors.
- **Exercise** can reduce the production of stress hormones.
- **Practice Relaxation Techniques** by scanning your body parts for tension, and imagine it melting away.
- **Cut Stressors at Home.** Everything doesn’t have to sparkle.

For more on stress management, visit www.mayoclinic.org.

Staying Healthy all Year Long

The flu season may be winding down, but let’s not get too relaxed in the “fighting-off-germs” department. Health experts tell us that the key to staying healthy is to practice good health habits all year long. To ward off germs:

“**Clean and disinfect** frequently touched surfaces at work and home, especially when someone is ill. Get enough sleep and exercise; manage your stress; drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious foods.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. And when you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, as well. If possible, **stay at home**. This will help prevent spreading the illness.

Clean/wash your hands often to protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. And **avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**”

Information source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov

Need-to-Know Carbon Monoxide information

“Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless and potentially dangerous gas produced when fuel is burned without enough air for complete combustion.” Extreme amounts can cause headaches, drowsiness/fatigue, nausea, irregular breathing, overall paleness, very red lips and ears, unconsciousness, brain damage and even death.

When any of these symptoms are present, immediately open windows and doors, and get outside. Then call 911 or the local fire department for assistance.

Prevention steps include:

- Using plug-in carbon monoxide monitors
- Having furnaces and heating appliances checked annually by a certified heating contractor
- Using properly installed space heaters that meet local fire codes
- Keeping air vents of gas appliances clear
- Checking fireplaces for closed or blocked flues

- Ensuring chimneys are clean and free of obstructions
- Periodically checking pilots for carbon build up
- Not running gasoline engines in an enclosed space

To learn more, visit Peoples-Gas.com.



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