



January 2020

More than just talk

By Linda Jovanovich

HMA Executive Vice President

Best wishes to you all for a healthy and prosperous 2020! I'm ready to get to work and I trust you are as well. So let's begin by taking care of the following two action items. Both have January deadlines, and your input is vital.

Action Item #1

January 14 is the application deadline for the **Susan M. Regan Memorial Scholarship**. As a memory refresher, HMA offers up to three annual Scholarships, to provide financial assistance to qualified students enrolled in an accredited forestry and/or wood products program.

- A scholarship may be awarded to a junior or senior enrolled in a four-year institution. Applicants must be enrolled in an accredited Forestry/Wood Products program for the full school year, and not graduating mid-term.
- A scholarship may be awarded to a second-year student enrolled in a two-year institution. Applicants must be enrolled in an accredited Forestry/Wood Products program for the full school year, and not graduating mid-term.
- A scholarship may be awarded to a graduate student pursuing a master's degree enrolled in a graduate school. Applicants must be enrolled in an accredited Forestry/Wood Products program for the full school year, and not graduating mid-term.

Here's where you come in

If you know of an eligible student that could benefit from this opportunity, please make them aware that all of the eligibility requirements, and a scholarship application, are available at www.HMAMembers.org. And don't delay. Completed applications, along with all transcripts and references, must be received by **January, 14**.

Action Item #2

It's **HMA NextGen Leaders Council** nomination time, and if there is an up-and-coming leader in your organization, now is the time to make HMA aware of your shining star. Anyone currently employed in an HMA member company, who is under the age of 40 and has been recommended by an HMA member, is eligible to serve on the Council. During their three-year term, Council members:

- are encouraged to attend HMA Board of Directors meetings, as well as Hardwood Federation Fly-Ins, in order to become familiar with all aspects of HMA and gain insight into industry issues.
- must be willing and available to work on various HMA sponsored projects to help further develop each Council member, and to offer insight and recommendations on improvements for the HMA.

If you've forgotten, the purpose of the **Council** is to engage and mentor the next generation of industry leaders, as well as seek their input as to how the HMA can better serve their professional development, and the Association as a whole. So, if you have a 'potential leader' that is ready, willing and able to commit to the furtherance of the **NextGen Leaders Council**, I hope you'll submit their name to ljovanovich@hardwood.org.

Nominations are being accepted through January 18th. And additional information on HMA's NextGen Leaders Council is available at www.HMAMembers.org.

Early Bird Registration ending, soon!

Don't delay. Time is running out on the 2020 National Conference and Expo "**Early Bird**" Registration savings opportunity. After **January 5**, HMA Member registration (and SCMA Registration) increases to **\$495**. Act now and Save!

[Online](#) registration is quick and easy. Or simply call the HMA office at 412.244.0440. We'll happily finalize that detail for you. And we'd appreciate the opportunity to personally extend Happy New Year greetings to you.

And One more thing - Music City is calling!

And the place to be is Nashville, Tennessee! Listed in *Travel + Leisure's 2019 15 Best Cities in the United States*, don't miss this opportunity to walk "the District," pop into the Country Music Hall of Fame for a glimpse of Elvis' cadillac, and even catch a 'cold one' at Tootsie's Orchid Lounge. Won't you join us in Nashville? Visit www.HMAMembers.org to learn more.

Info on the other Conference sessions

National Conference and Expo 2020 in Nashville is just around the corner. And if you've been slow to finalize your plans for the March 25-27 event, get a move on. Early Bird Registration ends soon; hotel rooms at the JW Marriott are filling fast; and the Conference learning sessions are on course for "**Piloting Change.**"

On the Agenda ...

Plan on an interactive "**Operations and Technology SoundBytes**" session presented by industry suppliers + HMA members. DMSi Software will be talking TallyExpress. WoodEye will be talking Thermally Modified Hardwood and the market opportunities associated with that remarkable material. And TS Manufacturing will be referencing their latest advancements. You'll not want to miss this.

And just like last year, HMA is planning a session that will focus on "**Today's Top Priorities.**" At this point, we can only speculate what March's 'hot topics' might be. So, stand by as this 'mystery' session takes shape. Who knows? We may be calling on you to contribute to the discussion.

What else is in store?

The Conference's other business sessions include "**Lost in Translation,**" "**An Economic Outlook,**" "**Market Trend SoundBytes,**" "**Best Business Practices SoundBytes,**" and a session dealing with "**Advocacy and Representation.**" In addition, HMA's NextGen Leaders Council will be hosting the Thursday evening Reception and Expo. And that's where 41 of the industry's best suppliers will be front and center.

Visit www.HMAmembers.org for all of the Conference details, including a listing of participating exhibitors, available event sponsorships, and the complete Conference agenda. Don't miss this.

More Sponsors going the 'extra mile'

For the past several months, HMA has been recognizing the many companies that have 'stepped to the plate' and signed on as National Conference and Expo Sponsors. We'd like to add the following **new** supporters to that impressive list ...



At the **Platinum Sponsor** level is HMA member Baillie Lumber Company, Hamburg, New York! The generous folks at Baillie Lumber have opted to sponsor the Thursday evening Reception that's being hosted by HMA's NextGen Leaders Council. Thank you for once again 'stepping to the plate,' and for all you do in support of HMA's education/promotion efforts. (www.baillie.com)



At the **Bronze Sponsor level** is HMA member Haessly Hardwood Lumber Company, Marietta, Ohio! These good people will be sponsoring one of the Conference learning sessions. To Jack Haessly, and everyone at Haessly Hardwood Lumber, thank you and looking forward to seeing you in Nashville. (740.373.6681)

It will soon be Conference Sponsor 'Last-Call.' So if your company would like to go the 'extra mile' for the HMA, please call us - 412.244.0440 - to discuss available opportunities. Time is of the essence.

Spotlighting the 2020 NatCon Expo events

Hats off to the 41 industry suppliers that have made plans to participate in HMA's 2020 National Conference and Expo in Nashville! Three Conference agenda events have been slated to spotlight **YOU!** So be at the top of your game. You're going to be busy!

On Wednesday, March 25

Beginning at 6pm in the Symphony Ballroom, the Conference's Opening Reception and Expo is your opportunity to shine. **Mix and mingle** with the HMA membership, and be prepared to present your company's solutions, strategies and technical expertise.

On Thursday, March 26

- The mid-day Vendor Expo Café – 11:45 to 1:30 – has been designed for even more face time with HMA members. So step away from your Expo booths and join them to **'talk shop.'**
- Thursday's evening Reception and Expo – from 6 to 7:30pm and hosted by HMA's NextGen Leaders Council - is where you'll **'clinich the deal.'** And also enjoy an evening of liquid libations and an array of sumptuous appetizers.

Visit www.HMAmembers.org for a preview of the Exhibit space and a list of all participating suppliers. And for those still interested in being part of the Expo, don't be discouraged that all of the booth space has been reserved.

The "**Strolling Supplier Package**," which gives you the opportunity to attend all meeting events + interact with key decision makers, is yours for the taking. Call the HMA office at 412.244.0440, and Amanda will get the ball rolling for you. Act today!

Hardwood Federation Update

By Dana Lee Cole

Hardwood Federation Executive Director

For nearly two years, trade has been the priority issue for the Hardwood Federation. And as you know, the ongoing trade war with China has been particularly impactful - in devastating ways - on the hardwood industry. Thankfully, the final days of December 2019 provided some hopeful signs that relief may be on the horizon.

USMCA

The first sign was the announcement that the Trump Administration had come to an agreement with House Democrats to move forward with the United States-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA), NAFTA's next generation.

- On December 19, 2019, the House passed the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement Implementation Act (H.R. 5430) by an overwhelming vote of 385-41.
- The Senate will take up the issue in the New Year, probably in January or early February, after the impeachment process concludes.

And while USMCA is certainly important, of greater significance for many in the industry was the news that a "Phase 1 Deal" has been reached with the Chinese, and that hardwoods will apparently be included!

"Phase 1 Deal"

After months of back and forth, on again - off again negotiations, the U.S. and China announced they had reached a "Phase 1 Deal" which includes significant increased purchases of U.S. agricultural products. High level confirmation that hardwoods are intended to be included came from U.S. Trade Ambassador Lighthizer during an appearance on Fox News, Tuesday Dec. 17th when he mentioned that hardwoods and forest products are included in the Agricultural chapter of the agreement.

This is a tremendous step forward, and a victory for all in our industry who have been working so hard to make Washington D.C. understand the terrible impacts the trade war has had on the industry! **But the work is not yet done.** Translators and lawyers are going through the 86-page deal, line by line, to make sure there is no discrepancy between the sides. And the formal signing is expected to take place the first week of January.

Details regarding exactly how and when purchases will be made are also murky. The long-term success of the deal, of course, still largely depends on the Chinese honoring these commitments, and following through on their end of the agreement.

Without a doubt, U.S.-China relations will continue to be a rollercoaster. The December 23rd announcement that China was cutting tariffs on over 800 products is an example of the confusion that can ensue from partially translated documents, incomplete press accounts and the relentless pressure the industry faces daily.

After consulting with their contacts in China, the American Hardwood Export Council reported that:

- While it is true that hardwood was not specifically part of this reduction, "...this list represents changes to China's overall tariff rates to **ALL** of its WTO member trading partners (Most Favored Nations or "MFNs"), **and does not specifically address the retaliatory tariffs placed on U.S. goods as part of the trade war.**

- If and when the “Phase 1” portion of the rumored bilateral trade deal is confirmed and signed, we can expect to see adjustments to China’s retaliatory tariffs aimed at the U.S. and, hopefully, specific reductions for U.S. hardwoods products.”

As we know all too well, anything can happen. And there are sure to be many more swings between good news and bad news days. Nonetheless, we must continue to be engaged, tell our story and work to keep those negotiating the deals to stay on task!

Please note

Ensuring that hardwoods-and the impact this trade war with China has had on the industry-were considered by the Trump Administration during trade negotiations was a combined effort of many in the industry:

- During Hardwood Federation events like the Fly-In, many individual hardwood company leaders came to Washington and spoke directly with members of the Administration and Congress.
- Many hardwood company employees wrote, called and e-mailed their Congressional representatives.
- Hardwood Federation Member Association Executives shared information, encouraged engagement and supported Federation outreach and activity.

Hopefully the New Year will bring the targeted relief we seek. Rest assured that the Hardwood Federation will provide further information as it becomes available.

Promotion Coalition to Energize & Unite

As every member of the U.S. Hardwood sector knows, our industry is facing significant challenges. Markets are shrinking. Competition is stiff. And while our industry has a “powerful” story to tell, it has yet to be “successful in developing a coordinated and collaborative domestic initiative to effectively tell this story, and communicate the science-based benefits of real American hardwood products.” But that’s changing!

A recent press release provided the following update on the work being done by the **Real American Hardwood Promotion Coalition**, a group of hardwood association executives that “came together in early 2019 to brainstorm approaches for a voluntary, industry-wide promotion initiative.

The top priorities are transparency and moving forward in a way that engages **all** members of the hardwood community. The mission is to develop a clear, concise and overarching brand statement and promotion program that can be echoed throughout the supply chain.

This brainstorming session led to the following objectives:

- Establish a real American hardwood promotion program directed at domestic consumers, specifiers, educators, influencers and end-users with a launch date of spring 2020.
- Identify steps and deliverables vital in developing a coordinated initiative to promote the true story and science-based benefits of real American hardwood.
- Bring other association executives to the program and expand the reach of the message.

A successful program will:

- Educate consumers and raise public awareness of real American hardwood;
- Generate new products;
- Increase markets and sales;
- Improve industry stability.

More than 30 executives of hardwood industry organizations and associations—local, state, regional and national, have been a part of the conversation to establish consensus and develop an action plan. The focus is to capitalize on the expertise and skillfulness of the hardwood association executives who manage diverse priorities and expectations, sharing the same common denominator: Real American Hardwood.

Broad participation from every industry segment is vital to develop the overarching brand statement. To date, 24 organizations representing lumber, flooring, moulding, cabinetry, veneer and industrial market segments have come forward to participate, agreeing to pool funds and finance at least the first two phases of work.

Promotion means different things to different people. Webster defines it as an activity that supports or provides active encouragement for the furtherance of a cause, venture or aim; the publicization of a product, organization or venture to increase sales or public awareness. For the American Hardwood Promotion Coalition, key components to a successful, sustaining, promotion program include Advocacy, Research & Development, Marketing and Education.

The group plans to:

- Collect Data: Review existing data; identify missing data regarding consumer attitudes towards hardwood products; identify the unknown. The coalition will work with a vetted research firm to collect significant data from consumers, architects, builders, designers, educators and industry associates on buying habits, key influencers, little known (un)truths about hardwood products and the environmental favor they hold versus other materials.
- Develop a Brand: Engage a firm specializing in brand acceleration to utilize the research results to develop the over-arching brand statement, and identify the most effective go-to-market road map. This will hopefully include strategic efforts that can be implemented at little or low cost. A priority of both phases will be to keep industry association leaders aligned and engaged.
- Implementation: Identify feasible tactics and move forward, continually evaluating and adjusting.
- Education: Develop a database of post-secondary programs related to forestry, sustainability and wood as a primary building material. Association and industry leaders will be able to search for opportunities to present and educate the build/design influencers of the future about the benefits of sourcing hardwoods for finished goods, construction and industrial applications.

The next Coalition meeting will be held on Monday, February 3, 2020, at the Indiana Hardwood Lumbermen's Association (IHLA) Convention in Indianapolis. All interested association executives are encouraged to attend. A Coalition update will be presented at the general session on Tuesday, February 4.

To offer support to the initiative, contribute financially, or receive additional information, please email hardwoodpromotion@gmail.com."

Grow/Groom/Inspire-Congrats 2019 Class

For the past two years, the hardwood industry, in conjunction with the Northcentral Technical College, Antigo, Wisc., has offered The Hardwood Manufacturers Certificate Program, a unique, 12 week/14.45 credit course of study designed to prepare learners for fast growing, in-demand positions within the hardwood manufacturing industry.

The 2019 program, which ran from September 3 to November 22, included **Brayton Schrock**, Dry Forest Wood Products, Shipshewana, Ind. and **Sage Maiers**, Kendrick Forest

Products, Edgewood, Iowa, both who are now better able “to further their careers in the Hardwood Lumber Industry.”

Thank you to **Travis Allen**, Northcentral Technical College Wood Science Instructor, who provided this insight, “With the terrible hardwood markets that we are experiencing, it was more difficult for employers to send their employees out for training. But we still ended up with two students that participated in the entire program, and gained a tremendous amount of knowledge that has improved their skills-set and will benefit their employers.”



Pictured from left to right: **Brayton Schrock** and **Sage Maiers**

Regarding the 2020 program, curriculum and application information will be available, soon. So employers, this is your opportunity to grow, groom and inspire the supervisors, lumber inspectors, Kiln operators, quality control technicians and plant managers so desperately needed in your hardwood facilities. Plan ahead.

The Colors of 2020

Paint manufacturers and color giant Pantone have announced their favorite hues for 2020. As you will see, the recommendations are all over the board - bold and pastel. “Creating a space in which people feel good about living and working,” appears to be the bottom line for 2020.

- **Behr: Back To Nature S340-4** - “a restorative and meadow-inspired green meant to reengage with the natural world; reflect societal trends towards embracing the outdoors; and purify and promote balance at home, Back To Nature has universal appeal and can work well with simple or maximal styling.”
- **Benjamin Moore: First Light 2102-70** – “a soft, rosy hue, blooming with potential, to represent a new dawn of idealism, design and living, and reflect a new definition of the home – First Light reflects a shift in mindset from the material, to satisfying the core needs in life: community, comfort, security, self-expression, authenticity and ultimately, optimism.”
- For Pennsylvania-based PPG Paints, their choice is “**Chinese Porcelain**,” a blend of cobalt and moody ink blue that imparts calmness and restful sleep, while offering the spirit of hopefulness – a precious commodity in a restless world - that will bring us closer to natural elements such as the sea and sky – creating serenity in any space.”
- **Sherwin-Williams: Naval SW 6244** - “a rich navy hue reminiscent of the night sky and deep sea, Naval strikes a balance between calm and confident. Its deep, sapphire-like quality, taking cues from the Roaring 1920’s, is where the glamour of Art Deco meets the serenity of a yoga studio, pairing the contemporary desire to treat ourselves with the practice of self-care.”
- **Valspar** has announced **twelve** 2020 Colors of the Year, ranging from “soft grays, greens and blues (Mint Whisper, Grey Brook, Secret Moss, Tempered Sage and Utterly Blue), to warm neutrals (Bombay Pink, Desert Fortress, Pale Powder, Crushed

Out, Canyon Earth and Winter Calm), each one inspired by colors in nature and intended to bring tranquility into home environments.”

And **Pantone’s Classic Blue 19-4052** “has been described as “a timeless and enduring hue elegant in its simplicity,” with the ability to “highlight our desire for a dependable and stable foundation from which to build, as we cross the threshold into a new era.”

Adding Color to your Diet

If changing your eating habits sits at the top of your 2020 resolutions list, take this good advice from the American Heart Association. “Eating healthy doesn’t mean depriving yourself of delicious food. It’s about adding; adding color, to your snacks, your meals, your life, with fruits and vegetables.

- The best way to get all of the vitamins, minerals and nutrients you need is to eat a variety of colorful fruits and veggies. (There are five main color groups – Red & Pink, Blue & Purple, Green, Yellow & Orange, White and Brown.)
- All forms of fruits and veggies – fresh, frozen, canned, dried – can be good choices.
- They add vitamins and nutrients. They add health benefits. They add flavor and fun. They can spice up a meal and maybe even the conversation around it.

Bottom line: Eat more Color! By adding just one more cup of fruits and vegetables a day, you can take a simple but powerful step to a healthier, longer life.”

Visit the American Heart Association to learn more.



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