

**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:**

Spotlight on a WCAA Central NJ Chapter Member	1-2
Message from the President	2
The China Syndrome	2
WCAA National News	3
Fabulous Factory Tour	4
Northern Views	5-6
Highpoint Market Review	6
OMG - I Should Have Gone to that Meeting	7
Do You Need More Hours in the Day?	7
The Customer Experience	8
Get to Know Your Industry Partners	9
Member Projects	10
Dior Exhibit - Shanghai	11
Member Projects	12

Spotlight on Kelli Chitty

Debi Pinelli • A & J Interiors

When I asked Kelli to be interviewed for this issue, the first thing she said was, "people might be sick of seeing me". Kelli is so dedicated to our chapter and to the window coverings industry, she is everywhere. We know she's an expert at her craft, not only in design but also in fabrication. But what do we really know about Kelli?

Kelli started her career in banking during high school and worked her way up the corporate ladder to become Vice President of Cash Management Sales. She met her future husband Dave while at the bank, got married and after having her daughter Caroline, decided to "retire" from the banking industry. Not being one to sit around, Kelli began designing and fabricating window treatments for family and friends. She started her workroom in 1993 and was one of the first members of the WCAA NJ chapter. Through her contacts at the WCAA she expanded her business to a retail/wholesale workroom and began fabricating fabulous window treatments for

many of her colleagues.

A few years ago Kelli decided to evaluate her business. She hired another chapter member Vita Vygovska as a coach and did a thorough business analysis. They determined through their detailed analysis that it made more sense for Kelli to close her workroom and focus her efforts on design. Kelli now has an office located within a granite and marble showroom which caters to high end clientele. When clients come to visit her office, they can see her exquisite taste and attention to detail. From the crystal buttons on the drapery panels to the



glamorous lighting, Kelli's office is the perfect combination of feminine and professional with just a hint of "bling". Interiors by



Kelli offers furniture, wallpaper, accessories, lighting and of course custom window treatments -- everything to complete fantastic rooms.

Kelli has won window treatment design awards and is also a published author contributing articles to Design

NJ, as well as Drapery and Design Professional magazine. She currently holds the position of Immediate Past

(Continued on page 3)

Message From the President

Ellen Salkin • NJ Chapter President

By now we are all fully engaged in the holiday season with shopping, sending cards and planning holiday gatherings. Personally, I am approaching this holiday season with a tremendous sense of gratitude; being thankful for all that has come my way this year and for what is to come in 2014. I hope to enjoy and spend time with family and good friends, as well as my WCAA Central NJ Chapter family. I see our Chapter as 1 family dedicated to serving each other, the organization and our industry.



What I also love about our chapter, especially this past year, is our commitment to giving back. This year, many of our chapter members gave their time, money and expertise to Lin's Linens, an organization headed by our chapter member, Liz Balogh, which helps women fighting cancer to have a safe and comfortable haven in their home. All this complements the values of our very special chapter.

I consider it a huge honor to have served as your Chapter president for the last 16 months and look forward to another 2 great years. Also, I cannot tell you how much I appreciate the spirit of service and support I have received from the entire board and membership. I thank you for all your hard work and commitment.

I wish all our members a very happy, healthy and safe holiday season.

The China Syndrome

Rosemarie Garner • NJ Chapter Vice President

As some of you know, I visited my daughter in China in October. She is in Beijing for a semester abroad at the Beijing Dance Academy and is learning a lot not only about dance but about another culture and about being a minority in another country. At times it is very challenging, especially the language barrier and the food (she is a vegetarian, of course). But, I am in awe of her courage and resiliency and downright pluck! She is doing something that scares her and challenges her at the same time. And, she will be richer and wiser for having had the experience. She will come home a different person.

I don't know about you, but I feel like as workrooms and designers and installers, we step into challenging situations all the time. We are presented with a blank slate and have clients look to us for the ultimate solution to beautify their homes and to solve privacy or sun issues in an aesthetically pleasing way. That is a lot of responsibility! Sometimes I am given a sketch or work order and it is something that I have never done before and I get that familiar pit in my stomach. What? They think I can do THAT? Are they CRAZY? Then I take a breath, dig down deep, and remember that challenging situations keep us fresh, they keep us learning. They keep us on top of our game.

So this holiday season, I am going to channel my daughter and jump in and embrace all the challenging situations that I am presented with in work and in life. I am going to breathe when it gets difficult and I am going to enjoy the end product and a job well done. I encourage you to do the same. And, as always, remember you have the best resource you could ever want in the members of our chapter. Reach out if you have a challenging situation and you need someone to help trouble shoot. We will all be richer for it.



WCAA National News

Linda Principe • National Board President

WCAA National has been hard at work to add new member benefits and enhance your national membership! Here are just a few of the exciting new benefits that can help you build your business and save you money.

Home Advisor.com - this is a lead-generating service that is offering our members the ability to set up a profile and reduced rates on leads.

Total household.com - WCAA has teamed up with Total Household by offering an "ugly window" contest which creates a lot of publicity and brand recognition for our association. In addition, members are entitled to a free profile on the site.

2014 Calendar contest - members were given an opportunity to submit photos of their work and be featured in a WCAA calendar. This provides excellent publicity for you as a professional and something that will impress your clients should your photo be chosen.

Trans First credit card processing - new lower rates for members will help you gain that client who may insist on using their credit card when they purchase from you.

Of course, we continue to offer the same shipping, insurance and vendor discounts as well as education for our members, which I hope you are taking advantage of!

WCAA is proud to be partnering with the NKBA and NAHB for the first annual Design and Construction Week and the co-location of the International Builder's Show (IBS) and the Kitchen and Bath Show (KBIS) in Las Vegas February 4-6, 2014. The Vision '14 show will also be held at the same time. I will be there and look forward to getting a pulse on the industry.

Warm wishes from the National Board for a safe and peaceful holiday season,

Spotlight on Kelli Chitty (continued)

President having served as president of our chapter from 2010-2011. Prior to that Kelli was the membership chair. She is also a Director at Large for the WCAA national board. Kelli feels that she benefits from membership in the WCAA from the many resources it provides, but she particularly enjoys the networking and numerous friends she has made.

Kelli said her most exciting project was a NYC apartment where the client gave her "carte blanche" to decorate his living room, office, bedroom and two bathrooms. (See December, 2012 edition of this newsletter for pictures of the project).

Kelli loves to travel particularly in the Caribbean where her husband Dave travels frequently. Now that their daughter Caroline has graduated college and is settled, Kelli can accompany him on his many trips. Her favorite island is Anguilla where she'd like to buy a house someday.

Kelli lives close to the Jersey shore so she frequently hosts gatherings of family and friends during the summer. She also loves to cook and has a cookbook collection that includes a beloved handwritten cookbook from her mother-in-law. She hosts her entire family which includes 2 brothers and 1 sister and all their children for Christmas dinner.



Fabulous Factory Tour of Michele's Fabrics

Darcy Litt • Darcy Litt Designs, LLC

On October 10 a large contingency of the NJ Chapter of WCAA met at Michele's Fabrics in Lakewood, NJ. This field trip was way more than a visit to a fabric factory outlet!

We first got to browse the fabric factory outlet store. There were hundreds of bolts of beautiful fabrics, neatly displayed on racks, by color. Most fabrics were priced at \$27.95 per yard. A great price for these beautiful high end jacquard fabrics. There was an even better bargain at the back of the store. Remnant fabrics were \$7.00 per piece. If you are a fabric junky, it was extremely hard not to buy something.

The best was yet to come. The owner of Michele's Fabrics, Len, gave us the background of his business. The textile factory was started in the 1930's. Len purchased the business in the 1980's and named the business after his daughter. His factory manufactures high end, jacquard fabrics. His customers are fabric companies like Kravet, Brunschwig & Fil, Robert Allen, Stout & many others. Michele's Fabrics is one of only 3 jacquard fabric manufacturers in the US. The most fascinating part of this trip was the factory tour. I've seen textile factories that manufacture printed fabrics, but have never seen jacquard fabrics being manufactured. Multiple large spools of thread are attached at the right and left side of the loom. The beauty of a jacquard fabric is the 3 dimensional affect, which comes from the

many layers of the weave. I was amazed at how long it actually takes to make one bolt of fabric. Each loom runs on a computer generated program. Some of the designs come from Len's design team and some designs come from the



fabric companies, like Kravet. After a full bolt is manufactured it goes to an inspection station, where a person, painstakingly goes over the entire blot. Any stray threads found on the front are poked to the back with a special tool. I now have a greater appreciation for the beauty in jacquard fabrics and understand why they are a higher price point. This was truly

a remarkable experience.

Michele's Fabrics is located at
1965 Swarthmore Avenue
Lakewood, NJ 08701
732-994-5764
Michelesfabrics.com

Call the outlet if you would like to get on their mailing list. Outlet is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm.

Northern Views - When Clients Raise Your Prices

Christine Stone • Stone Designs

Does it ever happen? A Client actually insists on paying MORE for your product? Yes, it does!

Let me share my recent fun, so you know this is not some hokey motivational imagining, but a true collegial experience. Most of you who know me at all, know that I try to live by attitudes such as "Go BIG or go home", and "Everything happens for a GOOD reason". Some quite amazing things have happened in my life that keep me striving to live these attitudes even in tougher times. But this particular event was such a pleasant surprise, encouraging me to continue on my path in a fairly new business venture begun in the latter phase of my working life.

While I was in a shop, the business owner commented that she was thinking of converting a small back room into a change room, and wondered if I could give her a quote for a simple drapery panel. "Sure thing, I'd be happy to", was my response. She knew I also provide embroidery services, and we suddenly had that ah ha moment - Wouldn't it be fabulous to have the logo embroidered on it! I asked her what her budget was and she replied, "Oh, whatever!"

After doing a quick project overview in my studio, I realized that it wasn't going to be just a simple situation of hanging an inside mounted rod in the opening and a quick panel, for several reasons. First of all, the embroidery would be lost in the folds of a drapery panel. And we can't do just a flat panel when we're a custom shop, now can we? So, a valance that had some sort of flat overhang would be needed. And the panel needed to be wider than the opening, meaning a different mount option was necessary. So thinking from the position of "best" final product, I complete a fast estimation and am shocked that the price will be about a thousand dollars. My bad habit of always putting myself in the Client's shoes when it comes to pricing (Would I pay that much for a panel for a change room?!), I think it's an outrageous price and she's never going to pay it. But, it is what it is. I've got to tell her.

So I meet with her, fill her in on why the scope needs to change if we want to maintain the embroidery idea, and give her the ball-park figure. Her resulting facial expression tells me her thinking is right around where mine was - it's way more than she planned. So, I give the option that we can go back to just a panel in the door

frame and eliminate the valance and embroidery to reduce the price. Oh no, that's the part she really loves! I suggest, again, that if I had a budget, at least I could check out alternative fabric choices, etc. She agrees she could probably squeeze \$700. Ok - that helps. I tell her I will go back and see what ideas I can come up with that will fit within her budget.

Elki Horn has taught me that I need to be able to price my work quickly. So I figure out a couple of ways of utilizing the fabric more efficiently, and immediately look at some options. And I come up with an idea that I'm excited about. Now it's time for a fast rendering. I haven't done one in awhile, so out comes the Minutes Matter manual to refresh myself, and I'm finished a rendering in no time flat. Using shortcuts for calculations, I confirm that I can do it within her \$700 budget. Yahoo.

After several meeting cancellations by the client, we finally meet in my studio. Right away, she's impressed by the updated chair at the door that's embroidered with, "Yes, this is a Slipcover". Into the small showroom we go, and I give her time to settle in. She walks around touching the samples, trying out the shades, looking at the little sample bed with the beautiful duvet and monogrammed sham, and she sighs.

We get down to business. I show her ONE rendering - the one I think is most suitable and best suited to her needs. Plus it's my favourite. I show her the fabric samples I've chosen, and she sees how well they coordinate with each other and her shop surroundings. I have her feel a piece of interlining and explain why it's best to include it in the panel. I have a sample stitch-out of her logo digitized and embroidered in her company colours. Using the bed skirt from the mini display bed, I explain what micro welt cording is and show how the little godets in the valance will hang. We look at a full length Ripplefold sample to demonstrate functionality and installation. All this takes about five minutes. "Do you have any questions?" No, she assures me I've been very thorough. "Is there anything you'd like to change?" "No - I LOVE it", she says. "So you approve the whole concept as I've presented it?", I ask. "Absolutely - I wouldn't change a thing".

"OK, so now we need to discuss the price", I say. "I know you had a budget of \$700...". At this point, she interrupts me and exclaims, "No, we can't do it for \$700". I look at her,

(Continued on page 6)

Highpoint Market - Fall 2013 Review

Linda Principe • Linda Principe Interiors, LLC

The High Point market is always a very inspiring trip as we look for new trends, designs and colors in the new introductions.

Quatrefoil was spotted numerous times on side tables, mirrors and fabrics. Circles and clovers were also seen on many items. There was a lot of brass, but not the bright brass of the past. This brass was more brushed and subdued and we saw that on many pieces, including lighting, tables and mirrors. Bronze tones seem to have turned to a reddish copper, but bronze is overall still very popular. There was also a lot of brushed silver.

There was a lot of

reclaimed wood, distressing, and hammered looks on many different pieces. As far as colors are concerned, there was a lot of blue, both deep dark tones and bright blues. Navy was paired frequently with emerald, the 2013 color of the year. Teal and orange were also seen frequently in the vignettes. Beige and gray combinations were again very popular.

Ikat prints were seen in various showrooms so they are still as popular as ever. Bold decorative banding was also noticed on pillows, bedding, draperies and furniture.

Customization is really the buzzword now as many companies have jumped on board



with the ability to customize almost anything on any surface.

The High Point showrooms are truly eye candy for every designer!

(Continued from page 5)

but for some reason wasn't totally surprised by what came next. "We have to do it for MORE", she says! I laughed, and told her most people want to bargain the price down, not up, and would she please tell me why she wants to pay me more? And she proceeds to sell me on my own worth and workmanship. She shares with me that she can't wait to have me do work in her home as well, tells me my work is absolutely fabulous, expresses that she knows the fabrics are expensive because they're so beautiful but also playful, and that her shop is doing better now than when we first spoke, so she wants to pay more because she knows I'm worth it.

Well, you don't have to bang me on the head twice, when it comes to giving me more money! I begin wondering if we're in the \$800 range now. But no, she insists we do it for the original \$1000 ball park figure, and she will give me a cheque on the spot. I told her the downpayment would be 50% of the total, but she also insists on paying the full amount up front.

So there you have it. Sometimes Clients do value our worth and are more than willing to pay for it. This story is your proof. Elki so wisely encouraged me to write down this occurrence and post it in my workroom, so I don't forget that it really happened. Because we do tend to forget the good stuff, don't we?

I figure, all I have to do is examine what steps in this situation I think I did right, and keep repeating them more often. I'm sure you've spotted a few things you are already in the habit of doing, but also have more ideas to add. I was blessed with a wonderful example of exciting possibilities, which I choose to pass along with the hopes that it will also encourage others. Please share your success stories with us, so we can all be reminded of the abundance that is ours.

OMG!!

I Should Have Gone to That Meeting

Robin Matthews • Seams Sew Right

On August 1st Robin Matthews moderated a panel discussion titled Organization in the Workroom. Chapter members Bob Gallic, Fran Fox, Ceil DeGuglielmo, Elki Horn and Barbara Mackowiak shared their knowledge about time management, bookkeeping, tool organization, and running an organized workroom space. Our members shared their workroom organization tips as well. Everyone went home that day with many great ideas.

National Board member and Custom Home Furnishing Academy instructor Michelle Williams treated our members to a full day program in September. The morning topic was “Cool, Calm, Confident Communication”. Members learned through filling out a questionnaire just how well they listen and communicate. It was a real eye opener for many! The afternoon program was all about “Discovering Your Value”. I’m sure we are all making larger profits after attending that meeting!!

Our members learned all about “Luxurious Bedding” in October during a two part program with Laurie Medford of Rowley Company. In the first session Laurie shared pictures of fantastic bedding projects as she passed around samples of her fabulous work. We learned all about duvet inserts, pillow inserts, and scaldinos....don’t know what a scaldino is? You should have been there! The second half of Laurie’s program gave our members the opportunity to play with their own one of a kind pillow designs. The meeting room was buzzing as we admired each others work. Luckily, clients all over NJ and PA will benefit from the knowledge and inspiration gained that day!



Do You Need More Hours in the Day?

Meyer Laniado • Window Treats

For as long as I could remember, I have had a passion for self improvement. Throughout High School and College, I would take every opportunity I could to follow up with an impressive speaker and ask him/her how they organize their day, how they keep work/life balance, how they maintain high levels of energy and/or focus, what and how do they prioritize etc. Amazingly, very few of them found this “interrogation” annoying and most gave me their emails or numbers to keep in contact! While I may be more focused on this area than most, I do think everyone wants to improve, at least to be more effective and/or efficient. I don’t think there is a person on earth who has not asked for more hours in the day.

To free up some hours, to allow for some personal time, we need to focus on doing things right and staying organized. I know, although need major improvement still, in keeping all of my files and “stuff” organized. How much time do we spend searching for a folder, a book, our car keys or back tracking and trying to remember who a fabric was for etc.? If we spend the time to do things carefully with our full attention, without multi-tasking, we will not only be more effective, having done the job right, but will be more efficient, having saved time from searching and problem solving later.



The Customer Experience

Joe Jankoski • National Board Member

Last week, on a friend's recommendation, I went to a new restaurant in my town. I ordered and devoured the best steak that I have had in years. That was the good news; unfortunately, I sat in front of my finished plate for what seemed an eternity. It took even longer to receive my coffee and finally the check. The waiter did not seem to recognize the poor performance and acted as if everything was just fine. So, as a consumer, what was my take-away? Clearly, the product served was truly outstanding...but their service and attitude did not match the product. Would I ever come back? No. My decision was not based on their excellent product, but on the disappointing experience that I had during the buying process. So let's bring this issue closer to our businesses and focus on the actual experience that you are providing your client.

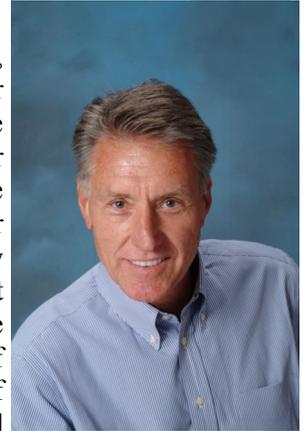
Some companies are just better at making sure customers feel good. Nordstrom always delivers legendary customer service, Disney really makes dreams come true, the quality of the Apple in-store experience equals the quality of their products, Amazon uniquely personalizes my shopping experience despite the gazillion products they offer and the local auto repair center just installed a pool table! My six dollar Starbucks investment in a venti, sugar-free, non-fat, vanilla soy, double shot, decaf, white chocolate mocha with light whip and extra syrup is rewarded with a plush couch, free Wi-Fi, cool music and tasty eating choices. In each of these cases, because the overall experience and engagement was so positive, I find myself returning to them again and again even though there are less expensive choices for clothing, vacations, electronics, books, auto repair and coffee.

The consumer experience however, goes well beyond the moment of purchase. The consumer's opinion of you is built before, during and after the actual sale. Their experience is actually formulated each and every time they touch your company. Those critically important impressions are shaped by the quality and content of your company's

advertisements, web site, Facebook or Pinterest page. Their impression is shaped by the number of rings it takes to answer the phone, and if they get a live voice or a taped message? Your hours of operation, the company logo, the display in the front window, the condition of the store, the quality of merchandising, the cleanliness of the bathroom, the appearance and attitude of the salespeople, the ability to qualify a customer and offer meaningful solutions, the promptness and quality of the follow up, and simply saying thank you, all come into play. All of these individual touch point moments trigger an emotional reaction from the consumer. Obviously some are good and sadly some create disappointment. Consumers typically have specific expectations, perhaps even a fantasy, of what they hoped for, well before they contact you. The big question is – did your company meet and importantly exceed those expectations? Have you set up a system to measure that important fact? If you are able to find out which individual touch point fell short, you could fix it, and by doing so, establish a better system to create a delighted loyal customer who will tell others and return to you for another positive experience.

It really does not matter what business you are in, elevating the customer experience is even more important than ever, for two reasons. Not only does it give you a better opportunity to close a bigger sale, but in today's digital world, it will lessen the possibility of having an aggressive, disappointed consumer, post a less than flattering comment about you on an internet blog!

In an industry where many retailers sell very similar products, the only difference that will lead to more sales and create loyal clients is how you treat a customer, each and every time they touch your company. It would be worth the effort to evaluate and improve each of those engaging touch points.



Get To Know Your Industry Partners

Horizon Window Fashions

Moira Youmans, Decorating by Moira

I was so excited to hear that Horizons Window Fashions (formerly B&W) has become an Industry Partner with WCAA that I immediately reached out to my sales rep Buddy Bressler and asked if I could interview him for this article. Buddy put me in contact with Mike Sloan, National Sales Manager who was happy to sit for this interview.

If you are a customer of Horizons Window Fashions, you have seen all the emails touting the 12 Reasons to Buy Soft Shades from Horizons:

- Premium rain-repellent lining standard on all shades & draperies
- Hidden support rods standard on all shades
- Cordless ONE Controls, upright or cord-lock available at no charge
- Duo-fold controls available at no charge
- Back valances on waterfall shades at no charge
- Knife & ribbed pleat upgrade at no extra charge
- Seven day (or better!) production ...all the time, anytime, on every product
- Fabric wrapped brackets at no extra charge
- A genuine cordless control without size limits
- Pin hole free construction on black out shades at no extra charge
- Free fabric swatches shipped within 24 hours
- The best sample book ever



Because there are no up charges, Mike emphasized how easy it is to present pricing to a client, regardless of their needs. It helps, too, that premium lining is used on all shades and draperies. He's right - it is so much easier when you don't have to get out the calculator and start adding up all the extras.

If you are a designer that's on the go (which most of us are) you can order online - but they also have an App for that! It's so simple to review and order FREE fabric swatches, do pricing, review decorative hardware. It's all at your finger tips!

I started buying woven woods, from Horizons but after attending a local seminar and seeing some of their soft treatment samples first-hand, I was impressed enough to start using them for soft treatments as well. I can tell you from personal experience the treatments arrive virtually wrinkle free and ready to install. You can also order your decorative hardware - poles cut to exact length, brackets, finials - one stop shopping.

The BEST news of all ...Horizons will be introducing additional fabrics in 2014 which will be "dramatically different" according to Mike. Approximately 70% of the line will be new! As an alternative to their fabric, they do accept COM, and fabricate in 3 business days!

Mike indicated that a number of drapery workrooms use Horizons to fabricate their cordless shades - especially now with the new cord safety compliance.

So if you are a designer OR workroom, go to the website www.horizonshades.com and check out all of their products woven woods, soft treatments, shades and decorative hardware.

Member Projects

Roberta Dara • RD Design & Decor



Dining Room Before



Dining Room After



To submit photos of your work for an upcoming issue, contact Ellen Salkin at wcaanj@optonline.net

From Dior Exhibit - Shanghai

Rosemarie Garner • R. Garner Custom Designs,

I was fortunate enough to visit my daughter in China this October. I went with a friend and we began our trip in Shanghai, which is a very cosmopolitan city; very much like NYC. Aside from visiting the landmarks, we went to a few museums. Imagine our luck when the Museum of Contemporary Art had a Dior exhibit! It was beautifully curated and very comprehensive. I always seem, though, to look at almost everything with an eye toward window treatments. How can that technique be incorporated into a panel, or pillow, or valance? Oooh, look at that overlay! How can I use that?

There were elegant and intricate designs, and there were simple designs, but in all of them the eye toward detail was inspiring. His use of color and texture was luscious, and his lines are perfect. You can see why he became a style icon. Here are a few examples to inspire you in the New Year. Enjoy!



Member Projects