



President's Message

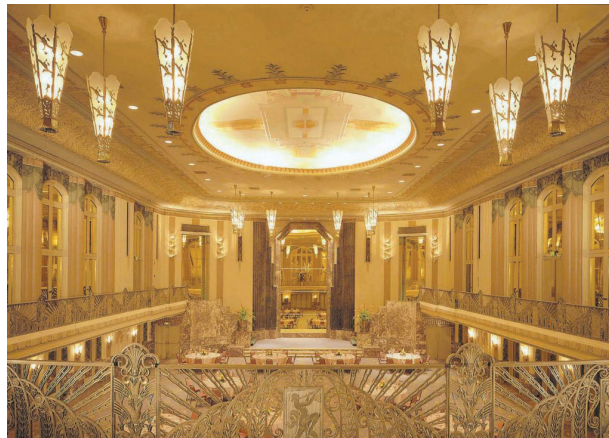
It's That Time of Year Again

By WIA President Mike DiGilio, C.P.

It's that time of year again – convention planning time. Our convention committee has been working very hard since last September to bring you a memorable event. The WIA's convention seems to get better every year.

The convention format last year in Denver featured many changes. We saw the introduction of the Slido app. Attendees who downloaded the app could ask questions through it at each seminar. This streamlined the Q&A, cut down on side talk, and allowed everyone's questions to be answered. Tabletop displays saw a big change also. Each tabletop was pre-recorded and then presented throughout the convention time frame. This allowed each demo to be seen by all attendees. We also saw the advent of free time on Friday afternoon, which gave us plenty of time to explore Denver, the mountains, and even get to Red Rocks for the Gov't Mule concert.

This year the convention will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio at the beautiful Hilton Netherland Plaza, 35 West Fifth Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202. The event will take place September 12, 13, and 14. I have never seen a better example of Art Deco architecture: the hotel is simply fantastic. The exact details are yet to be announced, but registration fees will be very close to last year's. Room rates are \$149.00 per night.



The pre-convention class will be held on Wednesday, September 10. The class will cover how best to install metallic papers. WIA will again have "guru" classes and lots of interaction using the Slido app. Check the WIA website for full details coming soon.

Cincinnati is a beautiful city on the Ohio River and borders Kentucky. There's plenty to do in your off time, even though that time is usually taken up with shop talk. There will be vendors on hand to meet with and ask questions of. I urge all our members to come this year. It is the best way to learn and hone your skills, meet others in your field, and see a part of our country you may not have seen yet. ■

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Wallcovering
Installers
Association

ARTS & CRAFTSMANSHIP CINCINNATI, OHIO

SEPTEMBER 12 - 14, 2019



Wallcovering
Installers
Association

New Members

New Members February – May 2019

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Brilliant, Low Cost Advertising Ideas

With Kelly Alexander Millar, Kelley & Co.

Most wallcovering businesses fall within the category of cottage industry. These small businesses usually employ fewer than 10 people, with many being one-man operations. Wallcovering installers often work as freelance professionals, which means that the responsibility and expense of drumming up more business falls upon the one person who's already doing all the project work.

People don't get into wallcovering installation to sit in a plush corner office. They have a genuine affection and affinity for the craft. This can mean bidding that CEO-style income goodbye, but it doesn't have to mean that you can't launch a kick-ass advertising campaign to build your business. Following is a list of low-budget tactics for acquiring new business.

- **Produce and share great content.** Creating informative content and sharing it helps to establish your reputation as an authority in your field. Recycle old, still relevant content. Content may include blogs, newsletter and magazine articles, and videos that explain and demonstrate. Explanations and

demonstrations doesn't necessarily teach potential customers they don't need you; it can convince them that what they want to do really does require a professional.

- **Use coupons.** Writing for WordStream, Megan Marrs notes that "some web hosting services offer advertising discount codes as part of their membership offerings." The trick to using coupons is to offer something customers value. For instance, a veterinarian may offer a discounted, below-cost neuter or spay service to secure that pet owner's patronage for the life of the animal.
- **Paid advertising.** You know the benefits of social networking and you can't escape the advertisements that pop up in your news feed. Consider signing up for pay-per-click advertising service allows you to target the right audience.
- **Start a customer referral program.** Let existing or past customers enjoy the benefit of a referral bonus for their word-of-mouth advertising. This may entail offering a

(Continued on page 4)



Advertising Ideas *(Continued from page 3)*

discounted service, a free product, or direct payment.

- **Hold a raffle contest.** Again, you'll have to offer something of value, whether a product or service, but entries will add to your mailing list of prospective customers. Rafflecopter makes online raffles easy. Or host a prize drawing at an event by having attendees drop in their business cards.
- **Use reviews and industry awards.** Proclaim your excellence by posting those glowing customer reviews. They're almost as good a word-of-mouth referrals. Also applying and – one hopes – winning contests showcases your excellence. Display winner's badges and use them in your advertising materials, such as ...
- **Business cards.** You've heard the Vistaprint commercials declaring that the best advertisement is a great business card. They're not wrong. Make sure your business card looks professional, indicates your creativity, and contains the necessary information.
- **Deliver a presentation.** Is your local Rotary Club or Realtors association interested in wallcovering installations? Call and find out. By teaching and showing people the value in what you do, you can inspire interest and acquire new customers.
- **Display signs.** Whether you affix magnetic signs to your vehicle, buy a vehicle wrap, or post yard signs near the client's curb, advertise your presence with a simple, attractive sign to build brand awareness.
- **List your business in the Yellow Pages.** The old-fashioned telephone book isn't quite dead and it's transitioning online. A listing is free, but you can also pay for a larger ad space. Don't forget to list your business in other directories, too, like Yelp, and make sure the information is accurate.
- **Use direct mail.** Everything's online these days, so receiving paper makes an impression on potential customers. The USPS® Every Door Direct Mail® program can help save both time and money for local, direct mail advertising.
- **Exhibit at local fairs and festivals.** Purchase booth space at your local county fair or other festival to meet potential customers, offer product samples, and display posters showcasing your best projects.
- **Form partnerships with other businesses.** When you see Tommy Silva on This Old House, you expect to see Rich Trethewey. You want to be the wallcovering installer that big-name architect or remodeling company brings in. Be the shoo-in subcontractor and make sure you return the favor.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

When you have a choice of vendors, remember to use WIA Associate Members first.

Advance Equipment
Manufacturing Company
AMBTRA, Inc.
Atlantic Wallcovering and Décor
Bradbury & Bradbury Art
Wallpapers, Inc.
Cavalier Wall Liner
Designtex Group (The)
Experience49
Eykon Design Resources
Fabricmate Systems
Fidelity Wallcovering, Inc.
Gardner-Gibson, Inc.
Heritage Wallcoverings Ltd.
(Lincrusta)
Hytex Industries, Inc.
Jacaranda, Inc.
Jack Loconsolo & Company, Inc.
Koessel Studios
Len-Tex Wallcoverings
LSI Wallcovering
Maya Romanoff Corporation
MDC Wallcoverings
Pacific Laser Systems (PLS)
Painters & Allied Trades LMCI
Phillip Jeffries Ltd.
Presto Tape
R37 Inc.
Roman Decorating Products LLC
Roos International, Ltd.
Wallcovering
Rust-Oleum Corporation, Zinsser
Brands
Steve's Blinds & Wallpaper, LLC
Textile Wallcoverings
International, LTD (TWIL)
The Paint Store Online
Thibaut Wallcovering
Vahallan Papers
Wallauer's
Wallpaper Boulevard
Wallpaper Direct
Wallpaper Warehouse
Williamson College of the Trades
Wolf-Gordon, Inc.
York Wallcoverings, Inc.

Why Use Fabric Wallcoverings?

With Kelly Alexander Millar, Kelley & Co.

Wallpaper has been around for thousands of years with the earliest records showing that the Chinese glued rice paper to their walls as early as 200 B.C. In 105 A.D., Chinese court official Ts'ai Lun discovered how to make paper from textile waste. In the 8th century A.D., the Arabs learned paper-making skills from the Chinese and spread the knowledge throughout the Middle East. (They did much the same with porcelain.)

Through the centuries, people have covered their walls to beautify and insulate. The first wallcoverings in Europe were textiles, banners and tapestries. Until mass production of paper took off in the late 17th century, paper remained expensive and something only the wealthy could afford. Of course, cloth was expensive, too, especially finely woven cloth with decorative prints and patterns.

Sophisticated and intricate, brocade, damask, and matelassé were labor intensive, like lace. Wealthy aristocrats and merchants displayed their prosperity by draping their bodies, furniture, and walls in swathes of such expensive textiles. But did that make fabric better than paper for covering walls, or merely just more expensive?

Before printing presses could handle long lengths of paper, clients hired artists to paint the paper applied to their walls. A pattern woven into a bolt of cloth needed no painting; the decorative cloth could be applied directly to the wall without needing that final touch by an artist and his paintbrush. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England, credits the influence of textiles for advancements in printed wallpaper: "Textile patterns of all kinds provided inspiration to the paperstainers." The French in particular learned to emulate the sheen and depth of real silk and satin on paper.

However, that doesn't answer the question.

Like wallpaper, many fabric prints and patterns can be matched. Anyone taught by an old-school seamstress will demonstrate. In circumstances that prohibit the application of wallpaper, fabric may be the viable option.

Writing for the magazine *Threads*, Sarah McFarland sought a simple way to add color and interest to her apartment walls that would not violate the terms of her lease. She liked the simplicity of it as well as the ease with which

the fabric could be stripped and the wall underneath cleaned without damaging the wall.

Wallpapers & Fabrics To Go speaks to the appeal of silk and satin wallcovering, noting that "[s]atin wallcoverings may not be cloth at all." Many so-called satin wallcoverings, says the site, are actually manufactured from vinyl treated to look and feel like satin with the benefits of being water and dirt resistant. Nothing, however, quite matches the beauty and versatility of real silk: "Genuine raw silk wallcoverings

offer subtle textures and rich, vibrant colors."

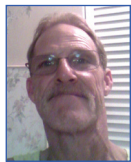
The advantage of fabric wallcoverings lies in its ability to "breathe." Porous fabric wallcovering allows air to pass through, preventing the growth of mold and mildew. It's stronger and more durable than paper products, although not as durable as synthetics like vinyl. In addition, fabric can be cleaned.

Fabric wallcoverings manufactured for use as wallcovering often incorporate paper. Writing for the Home and Garden section of Global Weblist, Phineas Gray states that "fabric wallcovering is often composed of anywhere between 15 and 40% paper." Wallpaper Boulevard reminds customers and installers alike that "coated fabric wallpaper has the designs on the coating, not the fabric." Coated fabric is better suited for low-moisture areas. ■



Increasing the Ranks of Membership

The WIA welcomes those new members who joined in February and March this year.



John Kraft

Kraft graduated from high school in 1983, and joined the family business as a fourth generation paperhanger.

The art of installation and figuring out patterns to create “awesome works of art” attracted his interest initially and keep him in the profession.

He has worked primarily in the residential market in the Baltimore-Washington, DC metropolitan area, which includes many historical properties, such as the Peabody Court Hotel, Union Train Station, and the governor’s mansion. He won first place in the Great Paper Chase, a guild-sponsored contest to which over 150 installers from the Baltimore-Washington metro region were invited.

Kraft’s father was a prominent member of the association, and he is proud to continue his family legacy of both Kraft Wallcoverings and membership in the WIA in Florida.



David Dubose

David Dubose credits divine intervention for his introduction to wallcovering installation. As a 19-year old, he counted among his friends

some men who worked for Cole’s Wallcovering in Atlanta, Georgia. Through them, he secured an apprenticeship with the company and, 28 years later, still installs wallpaper. He noted that, like many WIA members, paperhanging seems to run in families: his great grandfather was a paperhanger in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

“Maybe paste runs in my veins as well,” Dubose mused.

Dubose recalled his musical background, stating that upon graduating high school he was prepared to go to music school. Instead, he said, “I spent the next chapter of my life playing keyboards at church and learning to install paper.” Two years later, he married, moved to Raleigh, North Carolina, and started his own business. At the height of his business there,

he employed 10 installers. When the economy took a downturn in 2003, he moved back to Minneapolis where the wallcovering business thrives.

Continued learning and opportunities to network with other installers inspired Dubose’s decision to join the WIA. He explained, “I look forward to the friendships and continuing education of this industry I have been a part of for so long.”



Jeremiah Nealy

Another new WIA member also grew up in the wallcovering industry: Jeremiah Nealy. He apprenticed under his father who has 35 years

of experience installing wallcoverings. A decade ago, he went into partnership with his father to form their company Steve Nealy & Son Wallcovering, LLC, located in southern Indiana. The business specializes in installation, repair, and removal of wallpaper. The company has been part of the HomeAdvisor network for around 10 years, holds 10 awards, and maintains a 5-star review.

Nealy considered joining the association for years, but balked at the “paperhangers” part.

“When I heard that they finally switched the name to wallcovering, I figured it was time to get on board!” Nealy said. “I never really considered it ‘wallpaper,’ as technically it isn’t; it’s primarily vinyl. Wallcovering covers a bigger spectrum, including grasscloths, strings, fabrics, etc.”

He also mentioned looking forward to networking within the trade. “It seems there are few of us left,” he said. Nealy added that he takes “pride in knowing I’m one of the youngest and best installers in the area.”

John Gannon

John Gannon started as a painting contractor as a college student studying business. He received an offer from a company to wallpaper

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The Latest on Liners

Wallcovering installers use liners for two basic reasons: 1) to smooth over poor wall conditions, and 2) to stabilize delicate and sensitive wallpaper. Covering the gamut of conditions that relate to those reasons, liners come in two basic types: bridging liners and blankstock.

Phil and Jennifer Curtis offer their insights on wallpaper liners.

Liner Types

Made of a nonwoven substrate, heavy duty bridging liners protect wallpaper from uneven surfaces and poor wall conditions. Their nonwoven structure means they are dimensionally stable, ergo, unlikely to stretch or warp. Blankstock is, essentially, wallpaper substrate without ink; it's unfinished, unprinted wallpaper. With good wall conditions, installers typically use blankstock with delicate and sensitive wallpapers. Blankstock, Jennifer Curtis said, wicks moisture from delicate wallpapers and helps mitigate shrinkage of the wallpaper by acting like a thin sponge.

Installation Hints

Liners are often installed horizontally to avoid the liner seams and the wallcovering seams from falling in the same place. Cross-lining or "railroading" the liner assists with counteracting the torque from the expansion and contraction of the vertically installed wallcovering and gripping the seams to help reduce shrinkage.

The same adhesives used to affix the finished wallpaper should also be used to stick the liner to the wall. That general rule of thumb ensures equal drying time and bonding strength. Sometimes, Curtis said, the outside facing surface of blankstock is pasted with a thin coat of adhesive and allowed to dry to provide extra bonding strength when the wallpaper is installed over it.

Wall composition may affect the choice of liner or whether a liner is used. For instance, the smooth surface of sheetrock may remove any need for liner; however, a textured plaster wall or paneling will require a liner to provide a smoother, more stable surface for the wallpaper. Oftentimes, the wallpaper itself determines

whether the installer uses a liner. With delicate and sensitive wallpapers and scenic murals, liners offer a smooth, even surface to prevent permanent creases.

When using a liner, separate installation. Allow the liner to dry completely before installing the finished wallpaper over it.

Ordering Hints

Phil Curtis noted that liner doesn't come packaged the same as wallpaper. Most residential wallpaper, he said, comes in 21-inch to 27-inch widths; liner can come in rolls as wide as 54 inches by 300 feet – considerably larger than the typical single or double roll of wallpaper. When ordering liner, refer to the square footage of the surface to be covered. Do not assume that, if your project requires a certain number of rolls of wallpaper, then the measurement will translate into an equal number of rolls of liner.

Wallpaper liners present an extra step in the installation process that can make the difference between a beautiful finish and a disaster. Wallpaper does best when given a dry, smooth surface that can yield a tiny bit and wick away moisture. ■

Increasing the Ranks *(Continued from page 6)*

their office and had no idea how to go about it. Speaking to an European craftsman who hung wallpaper who offered to show John how to install wallpaper, he split the contract with the man and hasn't looked back since.

"I've always liked working with my hands," Gannon said. He added, "I'm trying to get out of the painting business. It's too mundane. Installing wallpaper uses more gray matter."

Gannon joined the WIA primarily to acquire greater exposure for his business. He spoke with an industry representative in Toronto who mentioned his company was always on the lookout for installers. Gannon decided that membership in the premier trade association for wallcovering installers offered the extra credentials and educational opportunities needed to improve his craftsmanship and his business. ■

Liner Primer

By Robert Kelly, Paper-Hangings.com

First up: there have been changes in the lining paper market such that chemical pulp with polymer additives, nonwovens, recycled paper, and other new materials are now appearing on the market, all claiming to be "liner."

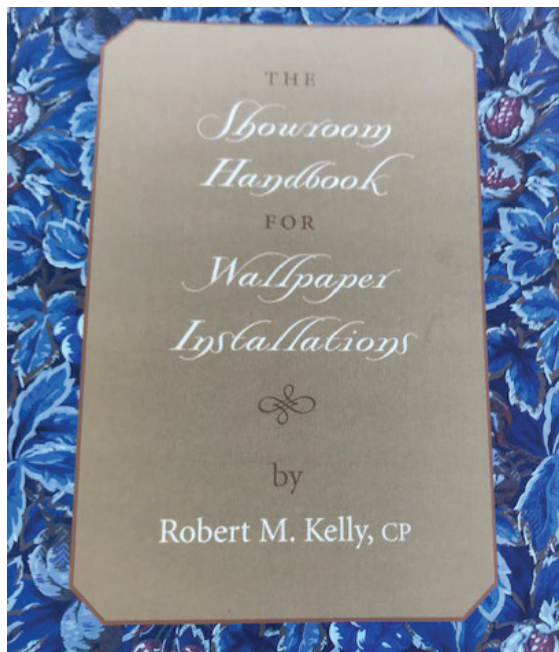
For starters, a lining paper is simply anything under a wallpaper. Even a nonwoven can be called a liner. And some of these can be useful; for example, prepping a textured or sand-finished wall. But when hanging most traditional and high quality wallpapers, a liner should be absorbent above all.

The purpose of absorbency is to let the finish paper dry out quickly and safely, grab the seams, and prevent the nasty white line that can result from a splitting seam, not unlike the annoyance from a splitting headache.

The problem with nonwovens has always been at that point: absorbency. Nonwoven fibers such as rayon or polyester are generally not absorbent, even when they're blended with pulp.

Chemical pulp is different. Chemical pulp is usually white and can be made from a variety of different pulps. Polymer additives help chemical pulps by adding wet strength. This helps trim better around moldings. But, if the polymer content is over a certain amount, it can make the paper slick and shiny.

Chemical pulp is therefore in a kind of in-between category. Chemical pulp liners with additives seem to work okay, but how well they work depends on the amount



and type of polymers and pulp.

Finally, we come to recycled paper. This is a type that has little to no polymers. It's highly absorbent, but it's also more difficult to cut. This is the one that we call whitestock (WS-30), and it's the one that I feel comfortable in offering for sale. Testing by dozens of paperhangers, plus my own testing, proves that this one works.

For more information from a longtime WIA

member and acknowledged wallcovering expert, consider purchasing a copy of *The Showroom Handbook for Wallpaper Installations* by Robert M. Kelly. Originally published in 1996, the 88-page book can be purchased from www.paper-hangings.com for \$19.95.

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