



President's Message

Fall Is Upon Us

By WIA President Mike DiGilio, C.P.

Hello everyone,

Our second online convention, our TeleSummit, was held in September and it was a huge success. I do want to thank all involved. Our staff, Nancy and Kelley, along with Susan Macuna and her committee, our participating vendors, and all the presenters did an unbelievable job. While it wasn't exactly an in-person convention, I was still exhausted when it was over. It was a great two-day information packed event! We have put the event on our university website (www.WallcoveringUniversity.com) and it is available for replay so if you missed the event, check it out on the University site.

Fall has arrived and the rush to the holidays and the rush to finish this year's workload is upon us. There seems to be an uptick in the volume of calls for new work, including a lot of shoppers. Everybody wants their job done right now. It seems that new designers are calling, along with many new customers. How do we handle the workload of our existing, long-term customers as well as the tide of new ones? Some customers will simply have to wait longer than they expect. Existing designers and customers take precedence over new ones. New customers, if they are serious, will wait. It's a good idea to qualify a prospective customer over the phone or via email.

The first question to ask a prospective new customer concerns the time frame they are looking at for their job. If it's immediate and you're booked for five weeks, chances are they will move on to another paperhanger. Try not to waste your time or the customer's time by calculating an estimate when you know you can't meet their schedule in the hope that maybe they will change their mind and wait. They won't. If they are a recurring customer, chances are they understand the market and will wait. They will call with an extended schedule already in mind. Sometimes it's a good idea to leave holes in your schedule. This way you can fill that time later with an occasional 1-day or half-day job.

Is the prospect a new designer? Ask yourself why they are calling you. Is their regular paperhanger too busy? This could be a good opportunity to expand your designer business. Be open and honest. Do your usual good job but try to do extra. They will remember. We are problem solvers. Always communicate wisely. Always be professional.

With the coming winter and everyone being inside again, we need to remind ourselves to be COVID-safe. Depending on your location, COVID numbers are the same or worse than in the spring. We need to reassure our customers that we work safely. Remember your masks, booties, gloves, and sanitizer. Many of our customers work from home and their kids are schooling from home. Keep in mind you may be walking into a stressful environment. Try to be as non-invasive as possible. Keep the radio down or wear headphones. Minimize your contact, keep to yourself, fill your water buckets away from everyone. Remember to ask about their comfort level. The next few months could be stressful so keep a cool head. Stay safe. Stay healthy. ■



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Gig Economy.....	2
New Members.....	3
Coping With Grief on the Job.....	4
The Multitasking Myth	6
Preserving Historical Wallpaper`	8
Accelerate Your Career in Wallcovering Installation	9
WIA TeleSummit: Take Two.....	11

The Gig Economy: It's Not Just a Trend

Before the COVID-19 pandemic sent the world into a tailspin, the gig economy dominated business conversation. When governmental and societal reaction to the pandemic mandated lockdowns and sheltering-in-place, working from home forced many business leaders to rethink workforce management and to revise how they did business. However, as wallcovering installers know, some jobs cannot be performed from the comfort of their own homes (or local coffee shops). Those include factory work, agriculture, retail, and construction trades. With accommodations made for personal or client protection with masks and social distancing, many gig workers who work on project sites enjoyed business as usual.

With wallpaper's rebound in popularity over the last decade and the recent surge in new construction, wallcovering installers are busier than ever. This is great for the industry, but will it last? Statistics predict that the gig economy will strengthen if only because Millennials (i.e., Generation Y) are realizing that "their college majors and degrees aren't going to help them earn enough money with wages stagnant in the US workforce. While Millennials have always been interested in entrepreneurship, now more than ever there is an opportunity for them with these gig economy jobs."¹ GenY comprises 72.1 million people in a population of 333.3 million in the USA.

Gig workers comprise 36 percent (57.3 million workers) of the American workforce and 44 percent of them rely on gig work as their primary source of income. Gig work refers to "a free market system in which organizations and independent workers engage in short-term work arrangements."² This type of work commands an estimated worth of \$347 billion in just this year alone. Compound annual growth statistics predict that gig work will increase to \$455 billion in 2023 and for the number of freelance workers to increase to 86 million in 2027. Capital Counselor predicts that 60 percent of the US workforce will be independent by 2027.

In short, this "trend" is getting stronger and it's here to stay.

The growing strength of the gig economy as a major facet of the nation's workforce and economy



Photo courtesy of Kulmatukko on Wikimedia.org.

The gig economy encompasses diverse businesses, including transportation-related services such as food delivery.

arises from more than job loss due to pandemic-related business closures and layoffs or the entrepreneurial spirit of younger generations who don't regard gig work with the same stigma as older generations. In fact, 67 percent of 24- to 44-year-old workers work independently.

The gig economy can be divided into four basic categories:

- Asset-sharing services (includes Airbnb, HomeAway, TURO)
- Transportation-based services (includes Lyft, Uber, DoorDash)
- Professional services (includes freelancers, consultants, building trades)
- Handmade goods and miscellaneous (includes childcare, crafts, pet sitting)

The benefits of being a gig worker go beyond the traditional perception of work-life balance. In fact,

¹ Melggs, Brian. "10 Impressive Gig Economy Statistics to Know in 2021" published Aug. 31, 2021, by Gigs Done Right. Retrieved from: <https://gigsdoneright.com/gig-economy-statistics/>.

² Broda, Kris. "Gig Economy--The Economic Backbone of the Future?" published Jul. 31, 2021, by Brodmin. Retrieved from: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/us-population/>.

many gig workers work longer hours than those traditionally employed, but--and here's the kicker--those hours are flexible. Not only do gig workers adjust their workdays to fit the jobs, but they also assume responsibility for their own fringe benefits, such as vacation and sick days. In one way, gig work can be considered more stable than traditional employment in that the loss of one client or job generally doesn't spell financial disaster: the gig worker has other clients and other jobs to rely upon while marketing his or her services to acquire more gigs to fill the pipeline for future work.

Many businesses that function within the gig economy are sole proprietorships or small limited liability corporations with maybe a handful of employees. Recruiting employees into a gig-based business is difficult, not only because the boss may not be able to guarantee a steady income with good wages and benefits, but also because the job candidate may not see long-term potential for the job. One option offers some additional enticement: succession planning.

Don't call it an apprenticeship.

When business owners think of succession planning, they tend to consider it as the process by which a business is handed down through generations of the same family. Succession planning, however, doesn't necessarily require that the next generation of management or ownership be a family member. With the propensity of Generations Y and Z to favor independent work, this may be the perfect time for a retiring gig worker to recruit an employee with the promise of turning over the business to that employee within a predetermined number of years. Succession planning, properly exercised, takes years to implement, so those nearing retirement age should begin recruiting now.

During the employee's tenure, the business owner teaches that employee all facets of the business, from client/supplier acquisition and relationships to the ins and outs of the trade to administrative tasks. Even as the business continues and hopefully grows, the employer mentors the employee and gradually steps back to let the employee assume the responsibility for the business until the appointed day when the business and all its tangible and intangible assets are legally transferred. This includes equipment and inventory as well as client lists and supplier contacts.

Succession planning is attractive primarily for the opportunity to learn a business, the certainty that ownership and independence will be awarded, and that it's easier to take over a successful business than to build a new business from scratch and make it successful.

The next generation of gig workers awaits. ■



Wallcovering
Installers
Association

New Members

Installer Members:

At Your Service, LLC, LA

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FineLine Interiors, LLC, NC

Jocelyn Dubose

Gelni, Inc., NY

Salvatore Militello

Marc Poulos Painting, IL

Marc Poulos

Michael O'Sheehan Installer, PA

Michael O'Sheehan

Olde English, Australia

David Dillinger

Palacios Painting, CA

Diego & Alexandria Palacios

Randy Wages Installer, TX

Randy Wages

David Wasson Wallcovering, TX

David Wasson

Wallpaper Cayman Ltd., Cayman Islands

Mark Chaloner

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

Visit all of our Associate members at (<https://www.wallcoveringinstallers.org/become-a-member/associate-membership-directory/>)

Coping With Grief on the Job

The past two years have delivered a double-whammy with regard to workers' health and welfare. One depressing outcome is the likelihood that many of us are now intimately acquainted with the death of beloved friends, family members, and colleagues. Working while grieving takes a terrible toll on our psyches, but we must work to earn a living. This article discusses some ways to ease the burden.

Don't Assume People Know

It's difficult to imagine that those who know you might not be aware of a loved one's death. However, we are each preoccupied with our own lives and all the drama, hardship, opportunities, and more that fill our lives.

In past centuries, we indicated our grief through our clothing. Widows wore black. Widowers transitioned to black armbands while women transitioned to "half-mourning" gray. Today, no one thinks someone dressed all in black is grieving; instead, it's an edgy fashion choice.

With that nonverbal option to build societal awareness of our grief, we're left with awkward declarations: awkward for the one mourning and awkward for the one who receives the announcement. Many who mourn opt to remain mum about their loss to avoid that awkwardness.

According to Forbes, when a loved one dies, it's best to notify clients and colleagues with a short, simple email and/or voicemail message, such as "My mother has died. The funeral is Wednesday, and I'll be back in the office on [date]." No other details need be provided.

Establish a Private Place

Many people unfamiliar with the grieving process assume that it follows a linear path. We're familiar with the stages of grieving (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance), but what many don't realize is that progression through those stages doesn't plod along in orderly fashion according to some preconceived, "normal" timeline. Someone who's grieving may feel like he's being bounced through an emotional pinball machine. In addition, grief has triggers. At any time, one might see or hear or even smell something that triggers a burst of sorrow.

Because you'll be susceptible to spontaneous bursts of strong melancholy which may erupt in sudden tears, it's best to establish a private place where you can retreat to weather the emotional squall. For those traveling to job sites, that might be your vehicle.

Even if you can't suppress the tears until a scheduled break, acknowledge that "allowing



Faith-based ceremonies and social rituals may assist in coping with the loss of a loved one.

Photograph by Yuri_B on Pixabay.

yourself to feel sad and even cry is perfectly normal and natural when you're grieving, so instead of fighting it, you should plan for it."

Keep a supply of tissues on hand. You'll need them.

Practice Forgiveness

The absence of a loved one creates an immense void in our lives and hearts. Grief not only affects us emotionally, but physically, too. Even after returning to work, you may find yourself unable to do what you did mere weeks ago. Your stamina has dwindled. Your tolerance for error has frayed. You experience an increase in apathy. Your sleep patterns are disrupted. You may experience nausea, loss of appetite, or find yourself trying to fill the void with food. Crankiness, drowsiness, forgetfulness, and more affect your mood and personality.

This is natural.

Part of healing is learning how to forgive yourself for not being your old self. You may never again be your old self, but you can use death to become more self-aware. When a loved one dies, you cannot avoid grief. Grief changes you.

Another part of healing is learning to forgive others. Societal discomfiture regarding death leads to impertinent, prying questions, blundered expressions of sympathy, and trite reassurances about your loved one's spirit or soul. Shrug them off if you can. If you can't, excuse yourself from that person's presence and find that private space where you can deal with the emotional overload without an audience. Then take a deep breath and forgive them for their blunder, because no words can truly ease your loss.

Get Support

For many who grieve, work serves as a mental and emotional distraction that keeps them from wallowing in sorrow. That distraction does not reduce grief, it merely allows breaks within the grieving process. The pain will not go away if you ignore it.

You cannot forget your loved one and you must proceed through the grieving process. Freelancers and sole proprietors don't usually have the benefit of bereavement leave and many company bereavement policies are stingy, barely allowing enough time to organize a funeral, much less allowing one to deal with overwhelming sadness and loss.

When grief overwhelms and prevents you from being productive—especially after an extended period of time—then it's a good idea to seek help. That help may come in the form of a support group, counseling, or therapy. Don't feel weak or silly. Especially when a loved one has died unexpectedly, we may need that extra support to help us navigate through the emotional minefield and get our lives back on track ... eventually.

You Will Move on

Although your life may seem to take a pause at the time of loss, the rest of the world and time will continue to move along. As you work through the grieving process, you may find your memories of your loved one fading. Thoughts and memories that bombarded your mind will dwindle in frequency and strength. Take comfort where you can find it: family members, friends, pets, faith, etc. Time will heal this emotional, spiritual, and mental wound—or at least buffer it with scar tissue. Time puts distance between you and your loss. ■

NATIONAL ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

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

**Advance Equipment
Manufacturing Company**

Anstey Wallpaper Company

**Bradbury & Bradbury Art
Wallpapers, Inc.**

Cavalier Wall Liner

Designtex Group (The)

Experience49

Fidelity Wallcovering, Inc.

Gardner-Gibson, Inc.

Len-Tex Wallcoverings

Maya Romanoff Corporation

MDC Wallcoverings

MISH, Inc

Mutoh

Painters & Allied Trades LMCI

Phillip Jeffries Ltd.

R37 Inc.

Real Wood Veneer Wallcovering

Roman Decorating Products LLC

**Roos International, Ltd.
Wallcovering**

Steve's Blinds & Wallpaper, LLC

Studio Zen Wallcoverings

The Paint Store Online

Thibaut Wallcovering

Vahallan Papers

Versa Design Surfaces

Wallpaper Direct

Wallpaper Warehouse

Williamson College of the Trades

Wolf-Gordon, Inc.

York Wallcoverings, Inc.

The Multitasking Myth

We already know it's inefficient, stressful, and ineffective, but we still find ourselves multitasking anyway. Why do we do this and how can we stop?

A Lack of Options

Consider a busy café. The waitress jumps from task to task, serving different customers and several tables while kitchen staff ping-pong between frying eggs, flipping pancakes, plating hamburgers, etc. A lot of activities are going on simultaneously. One might say that food service is the granddaddy of multitasking because kitchen staff and wait staff simply have no other option.

Using this example, it's obvious that nothing really gets done any faster. The food doesn't cook faster and diners don't eat more quickly. Tasks humans perform are not being done at the same time, but within the same block of time.¹ That's a crucial distinction.

Hopping between tasks is actually less mentally draining if they differ, because doing unrelated tasks involves different thinking processes or different parts of the brain. A 2015 study by the University of Florida discovered that disparate tasks – pedaling a stationary bicycle while solving cognitive tests – incurred no deterioration of mental results because the tasks were so dissimilar.² Findings showed that 2 percent of people are “supertaskers, able to divide their concentration effortlessly without their performance suffering.”³

If you think you're one of those rare supertaskers, you're probably not. According to The Productivity Pro, research shows that those

few people who truly are supertaskers think different from the general run of humanity: they actually perform better when doing multiple tasks at once than when trying to focus on a single task. In a word, their brains are wired more efficiently than everyone else's brains. To determine whether you're one of these superior performers, take The Lotus's test at www.supertasker.org. The 40-minute test “is designed to evaluate your multi-tasking ability” and requires a physical keyboard and a working sound card.

We're Fooling Ourselves

Attempts to multitask – which for most of us means switching constantly between multiple tasks within the same block of time rather than actually doing more than one task at the same time – come from the erroneous idea that we're getting more done. Frankly and unless you're part of that rare 2 percent of supertaskers, we're not. Constantly switching between tasks comes at a cost in efficiency and quality.

Despite what employers might think –how many job ads have you seen specifying candidates be able to multitask? – and just because computers can do it doesn't mean humans can.⁴ Technology and impatience convince us we can do more in less time. Focusing on accomplishing one task at a time means mitigating distractions. “Even a little distraction like an email notification can cause efficiency to drop by 40%”⁵ reports Kathryn Ryn in her article “Why You Can't Actually Multitask (And When to Try Anyway).” Multitasking, or rather the attempt to multitask, not only results in tasks

¹ Hammond, Claudia. “We're Told That Multi-tasking Can Leave Us with an Attention Deficit and Make Us Less Effective. BBC Future Investigates” published Feb. 19, 2016 by BBC Future. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20160218-why-multi-tasking-might-not-be-such-a-bad-idea>.

² Altmann, Lori P. et. al. “Unexpected Dual Task Benefits on Cycling in Parkinson Disease and Healthy Adults: A Neuro-Behavioral Model” published May 13, 2015 by PloS One. Retrieved from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25970607/>.

³ Hammond, Claudia. “We're Told That Multi-tasking Can Leave Us with an Attention Deficit and Make Us Less Effective. BBC Future Investigates” published Feb. 19, 2016 by BBC Future. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20160218-why-multi-tasking-might-not-be-such-a-bad-idea>.

⁴ Cantor, Ph.D., Joanne. “Five Reasons We Multitask Anyway” published May 31, 2010, by Psychology Today. Retrieved from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/conquering-cyber-overload/201005/five-reasons-we-multitask-anyway>.

⁵ Ryn, Kathryn. “Why You Can't Actually Multitask (And When to Try Anyway)” published by Blog by Kathryn Ryn. Retrieved from: <https://www.bykathrynryn.com/why-you-cant-actually-multitask-and-when-to-try-anyway/>.

taking longer to accomplish and lowers the quality of our work, but the constant distraction also impairs working memory and long-term memory.

Consider texting and driving, a lethal combination. By multitasking, we make ourselves stupid, inefficient, and forgetful –not a good look for anyone and not a reasonable request to make of anyone.

What's Really Happening

When told that multitasking changes the way our brains operate, we need to know how or at least what changes occur. Focused attention commands both the right and left sides of the prefrontal cortex of the brain. Trying to do more than one task at the same time forces the two sides to work independently of each other, which makes you switch from side to side to do what you're doing. Although the switch happens in microseconds, those microseconds add up, which means a task could take you up to 40 percent longer⁶ to complete than if you concentrated on each task separately.

More cognitively difficult tasks consume greater cognitive resources and overload the brain with more than it can handle. This is why texting and driving all too often results in tragedy: the brain can't adequately perform both tasks at once. However, if the cognitive load is low – such as jogging and listening to music – then the brain can cope.

In physical terms, “[s]witching between tasks makes your brain eat up more glucose, making you feel exhausted and disoriented even after a small amount of multitasking.”⁷ What's more, “[h]eavy media-multitaskers have smaller gray matter density in the anterior cingulate cortex, which helps regulate both automatic bodily functions like blood pressure and heart rate, as well as rational cognitive functions like decision making, empathy, impulse control, and emotional regulation.” Another physical consequence: multitasking increases cortisol and adrenaline in the body, leading to hypertension, diabetes, and immunodeficiency.

So, Why Do We Do It?

In simple terms, distraction feels good. Because our prefrontal cortex is wired to seek and appreciate novelty, distractions from single-minded focus on the same boring task deliver a hit of pleasure to the brain. We enjoy completing lots of small, inconsequential tasks rather than focusing on the one big task that's important. It's the same powerful mechanism that causes the downfall of drug addicts chasing that pleasurable high.

The Power of the Subconscious

We can't entirely eliminate distraction, because not a single one of us controls the world. From the neighbor's dog barking to demands for attention from other people (like clients) while we're working, we must learn to cope with them and reduce them as much as possible to enhance our efficiency. This ability to ignore all distractions is one reason why robots perform so well: specific mechanisms are focused on performing one task to the exclusion of everything else. Single-minded focus might feel like your brain is working harder, but the opposite is actually true.

Multitasking isn't always bad. Pairing two cognitively low tasks, as noted above, need not impede either. There's nothing wrong with listening to music while you exercise or wash the dishes. A cognitively low task such as taking a shower allows the brain to dedicate the bulk of its energy on cognitively high load, which is why those fabulous ideas always bubble up from your subconscious at the most inconvenient times. There's a lot of truth to saying you'll let your subconscious work on something while you do something else.

Regardless of the instances when the brain can work through problems in the background while you focus your energy and attention on other tasks, multitasking as a measure of productivity and skill doesn't exist for the majority of people. To do your best work in the least amount of time, put down the electronic devices, mitigate distractions, and focus on each task in turn. ■

⁶ “Multitasking: Switching Costs” published Mar. 20, 2006, by the American Psychological Association. Retrieved from: <https://www.apa.org/research/action/multitask>.

⁷ Bonnie, Emily. “Addicted to Multitasking: The Scientific Reasons You Can't Stop Juggling Work” published Jul. 28, 2017, by Wrike. Retrieved from: <https://www.wrike.com/blog/addicted-multitasking-scientific-reasons-you-cant-stop-juggling-work/>.

Preserving Historical Wallpaper

Wallpaper was used as insulation as well as room décor in ages past, so anyone involved in hanging wallpaper in historic homes will eventually find himself or herself dealing with historical wallpaper. If the property owner does not want to keep the old wallpaper, then your job is to strip away the old stuff (perhaps multiple layers), prepare the wall for fresh application of modern wallpaper, and update the room's décor. Or perhaps the property owner likes the quaint look of the old wallpaper and is amenable to replacing the old wallpaper with a modern reproduction.

Lucky you.

On the other hand, some owners of historic properties want the existing wallcoverings preserved, not replaced.

In a scholarly article titled "Preservation of Wallpapers in Historic Interiors: Basic Considerations and Maintenance Options," author Kadri Kallaste advocates for the preservation of historical wallpaper. The author speaks to a recent trend in Estonia of stripping historical wallpaper to get at paintings beneath, the author makes an argument for preserving the antique wallcoverings. Of the values assigned to human-made items

(historical, aesthetic, monetary, etc.), "any historical wallpaper could be considered educational. Any historic wallpaper or decorative scheme can inform its observer of the historical means of wall decoration, the quality of materials and printing methods and the history of pattern design." He opines removal of the wallpaper obliterates both its decorative and educational value.

The limited resources and space allowing for the preservation of historical wallpapers in museums, however, puts the onus of preservation upon the property owners in which such materials are found, especially when removal of the wallpaper will most certainly cause irreparable damage to it. This most often results in preservation *in situ*. Onsite preservation requires that the existing substrate as well as the wallcovering itself be in good, stable condition.

According to Phillipa Mapes, writing for Building Conservation, "[t]he conservation of historic wallpapers relies on the skills of the trained paper conservator." The trained conservator draws upon a special skill set that includes "the skills of easel painting, wall painting and textile conservators also, and as an element of the fabric of the building



Photo by Vincent Ciro on Pixabay.

Vintage living room with period wallpaper.



Built around 1840 by Charles Hales, Bellevue House in Kingston, Ontario presents a fine example of mid-19th century architecture and décor.

it may also involve close liaison with architects, historic building advisers and other specialists.” Not only must conservators try to restore historical wallpaper’s original color and detail, but they must also combat and correct the deterioration of time and external damage. Even if the material is not damaged by rough handling, the settling of buildings causes walls to crack, pollutants in the air can break down paint layers and paper structure, and adhesives may eventually fail.

The Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service acknowledges the historical importance of antique wallcoverings. Their 1977 guide, *Wallpapers in Historic Preservation*, might be considered historic itself. If you’re interested and already have a firm grasp on historic wallpaper technology, style, and use, skip to page 40 for practical how-to information on preserving wallpaper in a building restoration project.

As with all restoration projects, preserving historic wallpaper begins with research and onsite examination. The research component involves studying the historical and physical aspects of the building, including old portraits and photographs and other records (e.g., the original architect’s archives) for pertinent information that may include the manufacturer, colors, and wallpaper dimensions. It may be necessary to remove a small sample for analysis.

When restoration is not a feasible option, the property owner may elect to have a reproduction custom-made and installed to replace the original wallcovering. ■

Accelerate Your Career in Wallcovering Installation

COVID-19 propelled online learning to the forefront of education, but the WIA was already leading the way with Wallcovering University. WIA saw the absence of an accredited curriculum by trade schools and vocational colleges and understood the need to provide a rigorous, comprehensive course of vocational training for those interested in embarking upon a career in wallcovering. Wallcovering University courses are intended to speed students’ entry into the wallcovering installation industry.

Ready, Set, Go for Residential Installer Specialist

WIA now has available a full complement of online coursework to earn certification as a Residential Installer Specialist. As a whole, the 10 courses account for approximately 85 percent of the education a student needs to be successful in the trade, with the remaining being time at the wall. Each course includes two to three hours of instruction on installation topics as follows:

- Introduction to Wallcoverings and Installation Career
- Tools of the Trade
- Primers, Liners, and Adhesives
- Wall Preparation
- Setting Up your Professional Workspace
- Professional Wallcovering Removal
- Pattern Matching
- Seams and Seaming Techniques
- Layout and Engineering
- Installation Basics

Students earn a certificate upon completing each course. When all 10 courses have been completed, the student may submit them to the WIA and receive certification as a WIA Residential Installation Specialist.

Wallcovering University graduates may further their training with the following:

1. Wallcovering University students may work with industry professionals at the wall for hands-on instruction. This in-person class is offered in conjunction with the WIA's annual convention. (The 2022 convention will be held September 16-19 in New Orleans, LA.)
2. WIA will announce the student's completion of coursework to the membership to assist in securing a mentorship/apprenticeship.

Tuition for each course in the Residential Installer Specialist curriculum is priced at \$125. To encourage commitment and course completion, WIA offers the entire 10-course bundle at a discounted price of \$999—a savings of \$251—so, you basically get two courses for free!

But Wait, There's More!

WIA's online education doesn't stop with the classes related to Residential Installer Specialist certification. Because of their demanding nature, metal leaf wallcoverings receive their own 6-lesson course (\$280). Wallcovering University also offers informational and educational lessons from the 2020 and 2021 TeleSummits. The 2020 TeleSummit contains six lessons for \$198 and the 2021 WIA TeleSummit contains 24 lessons for \$348. TeleSummit materials contain:

- 2020 TeleSummit Replay
 - Using Lining Materials with Scenic Wallpapers
 - Being Service Oriented & Safe in Today's New Environment; Owning Your Worth as a Paperhanger; Hanging Liner & Paper Over Muslin; Online Estimating Tool for Commercial Jobs
 - MUTOH's Lunch Session
 - Roman Products' Lunch Session
 - How to Measure Wallpaper
 - Profiling: The Ins and Outs of Trimming to Complex Moldings; Time Is Money; Tools Every Paperhanger Needs; How to Remove Muslin
- 2021 WIA Unmasked TeleSummit
 - Wallpaper Symbiosis
 - Taking Better Photos with Your Smartphone
 - The Not So Subtle Art of Delegation and Other VA Mysteries

- Preventing Injury for Specialized Manual Professionals
- ROMAN: Moving into the Future with Expanded Formulas
- When a Simple Stripe Becomes a Design Element
- Versace Greek Key
- Tool Talk
- Saving the Day
- Let's Check Out Wallcovering University
- Unusual Installation
- Why You Should Join the WIA Facebook Group
- Vendor Partner Presentations: Cavalier Wall Liner, York Wallcovering, Roman Products, OLFA Hand Tools, Thibaut Wallpaper, Ahlstrom-Munksjo
- Roundtable Discussions: Scheduling; Self-care and Mental Health; Finding Good Help; Marketing; Industry-Specific Tools; Managing Equipment as You Age.

Wallcovering University isn't just for industry newcomers. Even if you've got that Certified Paperhanger credential, there's always more to learn and more new products and tools to try out. Finesse your skill set and add to your knowledge through continuing education.

To learn more about Wallcovering University, go to <https://www.wallcoveringuniversity.com/> or contact the WIA business office at info@wallcoveringinstallers.org. ■

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WIA TeleSummit: Take Two

By Jennifer Curtis

Last year the WIA hosted its first virtual convention to keep members and associates healthy and safe during the pandemic. Because COVID did not lessen its grip on the world in 2021, the WIA developed and implemented another amazing online event on September 24 and 25. President Michael DiGilio welcomed participants and conducted our annual WIA business meeting. Mike shared that our membership is close to 500 and announced members' anniversaries including several who that have been a part of our organization for 40 years! He added that our WIA Facebook page is very active with members and associates sharing tips and advice with each other. DiGilio boasted that Wallcovering University now has 10 courses available online to complete the Residential Installer certification and that 200 installers have already taken some classes.

Jon Sherman from Flavor Paper spoke about "Wallpaper Symbiosis." He quipped that we are better together and has taken that to heart when creating new wallcoverings at his Brooklyn, New York site. The company appreciates feedback and have made changes after listening to installers' concerns. Sherman added that it's a cooperative relationship between manufacturers and installers: those involved should share as much information and details as possible to make the end product and installation an incredible experience for all.

Next, Ed Hovnanian from Cavalier Wall Liner discussed the various types of liner paper the

company offers to installers. Whatever your needs, Ed, with 50 years in the business, can assist you and provide the proper liner paper for all your installations.

With the tremendous work we are currently experiencing, it is difficult to keep up with the mundane tasks and important paperwork needed to keep our businesses running smoothly and/or expanding. Cathy Baillargeon explained the many benefits of hiring virtual assistants, from having someone manage your social media to scheduling your installations as well as invoicing, handling general correspondence, etc. You determine what your needs are and what you are willing to delegate to a virtual assistant. Several of the TeleSummit participants stated that they are very pleased at having hired VAs to help them run their businesses.

Ryan Mills from Ahlstrom Munksjo shared how their company is the global leader in sustainable and innovative, fiber-based solutions. Nonwoven

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WIA UNMASKED
2021 WIA VIRTUAL TELESUMMIT
SEPTEMBER 24 & 25, 2021



Wallcovering
Installers
Association

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substrates are currently used in a high number of wallcoverings. Mills touted the many benefits of nonwoven products from being 100 percent PVC-free to superior printability, to name a few.

A member favorite, the round table discussions brought participants together to discuss marketing, scheduling, managing your equipment as you age, finding industry-specific tools, and self-care. All these segments were informative and well-received.

Joanne Berwager of York Wallcoverings shared that York is also a strong partner with the WIA. They have been including postcards in every order recommending the use of WIA installers. They also include a link to the WIA website in most of their emails to designers. Berwager added that they were excited to share that York had acquired

Hytex, known for its acoustical and woven textile wallcoverings. They are promoting a residential product called Quiet Walls as well as York Defender, a 20-ounce, antimicrobial protective product offering a long-term solution to fighting germs.

York wasn't the only associate with wonderful news. Robin Patrick from Roman Products, LLC announced that in June 2021 they acquired the Gardner-Gibson formulae for primers and adhesives. Patrick reaffirmed that they will not alter the formula for the 234 adhesive. She also reviewed all Roman's popular primers and adhesives, too. Our organization is fortunate to have such a premiere manufacturer producing high quality products for our industry.

On Saturday, our participants enjoyed tips from Linda Holt regarding photographing our installations. Holt shared key steps to consider when photographing our work using our smartphones. Focusing on composition, lighting and editing will help you create beautiful images of your installations.

However, before we can photograph our work, we must actually work! Our organization is filled with very talented installers. Diana Halverson, for example, discussed a difficult installation of Versace's Greek key wallcoverings. She encouraged us to be creative and add our input when determining the layout of this pattern. Heidi Mead, another stellar installer, shared her thoughts

about manipulating a simple striped wallcovering, engineering the pattern to make it flow and match to fit the room.

Shelly Wilkins' presentation covered "saving the day." Wilkins explained how she and her crew tackled an installation in which someone else made a mistake that would have normally hampered or even stopped the installation. Wilkins' assessed the problem and was able to correct the situation with a little extra time and effort on her part to complete the installation in a timely manner.

Jennifer Miller, Thibaut's quality inspector at their Charlotte, North Carolina facility, spoke about its relationship with the WIA. Miller shared that the company's New Jersey office has a testing room where they can test hang products if a quality issue is questioned by an installer.

Dr. Simon McFarlane offered a virtual session on body dynamics and preventing injury. With the many repetitive, daily tasks we do while working, Dr. McFarlane encouraged proper lifting techniques, appropriate footwear/orthotics, the use of easy grip tools and platform ladders, and reaching out for medical support when necessary.

Fellow WIA installer, Bill Armstrong, shared his thoughts on the benefits of participating on the WIA's Facebook page. He mentioned that nearly 300 installers currently post on our site. Members share questions about upcoming installations, seeking advice from others who have already installed a particular pattern or tackled a given situation. Armstrong added tips on how to navigate the Facebook page and search for previous posts that may be helpful to you.

Grant Shepherd of Olfa Blades enthusiastically announced that their blades can be purchased at WallpaperToolStore.com, your local paint store, Lowe's, and now Sherwin-Williams. Shepherd expressed enthusiasm for continued support of the WIA.

Frank and Eunice Bokstrom delivered an informative presentation on tools, covering women's work pants to straight edges, scissors, and various trim guides, and much more. Event participants also enjoyed a discussion on products to use for touching up seams.

The TeleSummit ended with an open "chat and chill" session for all participants. Members enjoyed stories of recent installations and family activities. Our members are more than just colleagues; we care and support each other. Although we could not be together in person, we still felt close to each other. We look forward to the next opportunity to share our knowledge with our WIA family.

Until next time... ■