



A Brief History of **CHINESE WALLPAPERS** by Chris Murphy



During the Age of Discovery over 400 years ago, the first explorers and traders made contact with China. Although the rulers of The Middle Kingdom (between heaven and earth) didn't want much in the way of goods or contact from foreign barbarians, they did allow some trading to occur at the ports of Canton and Macao. Gifts were presented to the interested parties on both sides as introductions, or as signs of goodwill upon completion of the exchange. The Chinese items carried home by the Westerners became objects of extreme fascination back home, and decorative objects soon became goods of trade.

Historians don't know exactly when Chinese decorative papers were first

introduced to Europe. It has been noted that in the regions around the above port cities, glassless windows were often covered with paper, sometimes decoratively painted. Chinese royal houses had some paper-covered walls, but only monochromatic schemes were used: white, crimson, or gold.

At some point in the late 1500s, panels of hand-painted paper were being sent to the finest houses in Europe for use as wallcovering. The best guess is that some trader brought back a painted window cover, and wouldn't you know, his wife wanted the walls done, too.

These panels were never intended for the Chinese market, and have always been produced for Western tastes. A precursor to the Chinese design was chintz, a patterned, hand-painted cotton fabric originally from India (Chintz would seem to refer to a Chinese origin, but Europeans constantly mixed countries



of origin, also referring to Chinese papers as Japanese or Indian papers.). These were also made for the European market, but also showed Persian and Chinese influences, as seen in the Tree of Life designs: an asymmetrical flowering tree growing from stylized rocks, and including birds, butterflies and other flying

insects. The pictures also followed some artistic conventions seen in English embroidery, with flowers coming



from a connecting branch or vine.

Chintz and Chinese papers depicted what the Europeans wanted to see, but were produced in the home country's artistic style.

Do not think that the Chinese painted these papers for lack of a better method of production: they had been printing for centuries. The detail in the papers seems to follow from traditional, academic studies of nature dating from the Song Dynasty in the 12th-13th centuries. Some Westerners thought that the creatures depicted were fantastic, whimsical creations. These were not inventions, but species unfamiliar to them. Indeed, they were judged by knowledgeable naturalists as the best illustrations of plants and

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animals known. So good were these drawings that in 1968 it was discovered that a Chinese scenic in Temple Newsam near Leeds, England had 25 birds appliquéd on it in addition to the originals. It seems that Lady Hertford, the owner at the time (late 1820s), had cut the figures from J.J. Audubon's *Birds of America*, and had them pasted on to further elaborate and balance the design.



As with the porcelain trade, a number of small workshops sprung up to satisfy the market's taste. A white mulberry-fiber paper called mien lien was used. This was frequently backed by canvas, linen or a stout bamboo paper. Silk was often overlaid on the face. The artists, always anonymous but obviously highly trained, had skills akin to modern watercolor techniques. They used gouache or tempera; their traditional techniques allowed for no mixing of colors with more opaque whites. They used pure, transparent inks that were manipulated by varying the angle and pressure of the brush, and the viscosity and quantity of the pigment. These colors, once applied, could not be reworked; this was a fine art. Western artists were never able to adequately copy the complexity of the

designs. Nor could they compete with another feature of the Chinese papers: the inks were colorfast, and still look vibrant after hundreds of years.

The patterns consist of three main types. The first seen in Europe were life and occupations - human figures engaged in their domestic industries: porcelain making, silk making and dyeing, growing and curing tea, harvesting rice. The second is the aforementioned Tree of Life - birds and flowering trees. The third motif showed up after 1755 in response to European demand: figures and trees. On these, the more crowded the scene, the later the date of production. In addition, these often had a painted-in balustrade or wall, as a type of wainscot. On all Chinese papers the perspective is unique. Distant objects in the scene are shown only slightly smaller, near the top of the design. This makes the detail of the figures and objects readily seen. The perspective is as if the artist is viewing his subjects from a raised point off the ground. The papers were usually done as panoramas, a continuous scene with no endpoint. Generally, they consisted of 25-40 panels, 12 feet high, and 3-4 feet in width. The top 2-6 feet only had the ground color. Extra sheets were included, so that headers could be filled in, and branches and birds cut out and placed over damaged or discolored

areas (did they know paperhangers, or what?), or like Lady Hertford, used as embellishments.

Many of these ancient hangings

survive in Europe. There, they were not pasted directly to the wall.

Rather, a frame of wood battens was covered with canvas, and the panels were hung on that. They were thus portable, and protected to a degree from damage and decay. Not many have survived as long in the U.S., but there are some early examples, such as at Winterthur, built for the du Ponts.

Fashion has included and discarded chinoiserie (shin WAH sa ree: a style reflecting Chinese qualities or motifs) many times in the past. Presently, it is enjoying a resurgence, and deservedly so, as Chinese papers can still be acquired that are produced in the meticulous, traditional

way. They are, and have always been, the highest artistic achievement seen in wallpaper.

Sources:

Wallpaper in America, Catherine Lynn, (W.W. Norton & Co., NY, 1980)

Wallpaper in New England, Richard C. Nylander, et al (Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Boston, 1986)

The Papered Wall: History, Pattern, Technique, edited by Lesley Hoskins (Thames and Hudson, London, 1994).



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GRACIE *by Chris Murphy*

The Gracie Company opened in New York in 1898, mainly selling custom lamps. After founder Charles R. Gracie expanded into Asian antiques in the 20s and 30s, a friend showed him a roll of hand-painted paper from Beijing.

Mr. Gracie felt he had a market for such papers, and he established a relationship with the studio that had produced them. The same family has

managed the studio for over 50 years, but their identity is a company secret. The artists, I'm told, are long-term, highly trained employees, and as in the old tradition, anonymous.

Gracie's NY studio, which is adjacent to its showroom, restores and preserves papers and furniture. In addition, they design new patterns and murals, and coordinate custom orders.

Custom wallpaper orders are drawn for architecturally specified projects: they fit the room.

Mike Gracie, V.P. (and great-grandson of Charles R.) says that custom orders now make up 92% of all their wallpaper orders. Mike's father, Brian, is president of the company, and his mother and sister both worked there for many years-truly a family company.

A Lighthearted Look at the HISTORY OF THE PAPERHANGER: PART 1

by Walter Green, Atlanta Chapter President

In the beginning... no, that's too far back. It was the best of times, it was the worst... no, still too far back. How about, grandpa used to say, "a real paperhanger is ..." nope, that's still not it."

The problem is the word paperhanger. If one goes far enough back, our trade was "wallcovering installer". It was not paper that was the vogue, but fur! Weren't animal skins the first "wall decorations" for early man? Face it; some of them still look pretty good today. Unfortunately, the secrets of hanging hides on cave walls were lost before the invention of the brochure.

It was probably after the Iron Age that man figured out one could create decorative marks on leather and that soon became the symbol of financial success. The problem was leather smiths did both the creation of the patterns and the installation. That market didn't catch on fast enough to create a demand for specialists and, to be frank, one didn't need much skill and expertise to operate a hammer and nail.

Those who lived too far from the woods put fabric on their walls. Fabric became popular as one did not have to wait for years to get more yardage. This could have been the beginning of wallcovering installation as a specialization had it not been for the invention of sports, which required all of the men's spare time.

The Chinese had already invented paper but they did not want the Europeans to steal all their good decorating ideas. That is why the Emperor detained Marco Polo for so long. It took Marco three years to convince the Emperor that Europe was not interested in the high-end market. In reality, Marco just wanted to get back so he would never have to eat soy sauce again.

Paper did not catch on at first because there just was not much of it. When a big enough piece was made, nobody knew what to do with it. It tore easily. If it were left outside, rain ruined it. It burned too fast to be a good fuel and even with seasoning, it did not taste that good.

Then, an unemployed artist named Fred Fils made the suggestion that a rich client pay him to paint a pretty scene on paper for the den wall. Fred was able to give a better price for this than a portrait because the scenery did not wiggle around or need "potty" breaks as would an incontinent relative. Fred became so popular he had to get a partner and start a decorative wallpaper business.

It was around 1600, that the paperhangers got the idea to become organized and form a 'guild'. The trouble was Fred and his partner had all the good jobs because they were the best artists around. Out of frustration, an English woodcarver cut a design into a block of wood and inked it onto paper in a repeating pattern. Overnight, the guild of paperhangers surged from two members to three.

The demand for paper for decorating put a lot of pressure on the Germans to come up with a suitable printing press. The Germans were the only ones allowed to make machinery back then because everyone else was "right-brain dominant". You don't even want to think about where we might be today if the early French had been allowed to design machinery.

Unfortunately, "Gutie" and the left-brain boys would not allow anything to be printed but Bibles, which is still a point of controversy today. Some think it was a smart political move and others argue that the 'wood-block-boys' paid him off. In reality, it did not matter because it was going to be years before there were going to be continuous rolls of paper to put through a printing device.

Thanks to Louis XIV (pronounced loo-eee-ka-torz), the world's first fashion conscious King, interior decorating really took off. Beauty was all that counted and he never brought up 'vinyl coating' or durability issues. Unfortunately he did not like all the patterns, and the penalties for paperhangers were quite severe, causing a drop in guild enrollment.

Meanwhile England, whose motto was "we got more plaster walls than anybody", saw an opportunity. What

could they make fast and cheap that everybody would rather have on his or her plastered walls? That's right! The English started importing Oriental rugs by the thousands. One couldn't go anywhere without seeing an Oriental rug on the wall. The Orientals were building a booming economy and since there were four walls to every floor, they saw no advantage to telling the English how to do anything.

Across the pond, in the Americas, the Colonists voted to secede because Oriental rugs clash with log cabin décor. This led to a big battle which we fortunately won and were finally able to escape English taste in decorating. After losing the big battle and seeing the large numbers of dead things we liked to mount on our walls, the English never bothered us about decorating again.

Since most early American homes had wood walls, decorating was a challenge. Sure, there was plaster, but English themes were out of vogue. So early American paperhangers figured out how to "line" wood walls. Felt was cheap and easy to install as was muslin fabric that could be tacked up and sized.

Either of the materials gave a smooth enough surface for lapped seam pulp papers that only required wheat paste. One did not have to worry about neighbors having the same pattern because no one had neighbors. Durability was not a problem because no one was likely to live as long as their wallpaper.

This brings us up to some where in the 1800's. In Part II (deaux) we will examine "The Age of the Paperhanger". This is real important because..... oh, sorry, I have to go to dinner.

ARSENIC AND OLD PASTE by Bill Archibald

The Preservation Society of Newport County owns many properties besides the fabled mansions that go by the names of "The Breakers", "Marble House", and "Rosecliff". About a thirty-minute drive north of Newport in Portsmouth, RI is the Brayton Farm. The farm, whose seven acres of land overlook Narragansett Bay, is known for its topiary garden containing approximately 80 "Green Animals". However, people whose lives revolve around home decoration may consider the Victorian farmhouse on this property equally interesting. It contains turn of the century furniture, paintings, toys, and yes, wallpaper. In a recent conversation, staff member John Hogan indicated that the wallpaper in one of the rooms had been hung at least seventy-five years ago and that arsenic had been used in the paste. His assertion about the arsenic was politely noted and mentally archived for future reference.

Back home in front of my 21st century workstation, I posed a quick question on both Internet wallpaper list-serves about the use of arsenic in pastes. Bill Reimers of San Antonio noted: "The arsenic in the paste was put in the paste to kill silverfish; they loved to eat 'pulp' wallpaper as well as the 'wheat' paste. In those yesteryears, back in the 30's & 40's, we added poison to the 'wheat' paste to kill those crawly critters."

Wallpaper historian Robert M. Kelly, C.P., of Lee, MA, said, "Highly unlikely, (that arsenic was added to paste). Although they did use arsenic for some of the greens, until folks realized that that lovely deep green was 'to die for'. The arsenic scare was well over by 1900 or so but it was real for a while and the folklore lives on."

With interest and curiosity tweaked, I launched a search into cyber space for connections between arsenic and wallpaper.

Carl Wilhelm Scheele (1742-1786) was an accomplished Swedish chemist and apothecary who is said to hold a record for discovering seven natural elements (N, O, Cl, Mn, Mo, Ba, and W). He created

a very popular green pigment named appropriately Scheele's Green. This pigment was formed from the compound copper arsenate. It was used extensively in paints, textiles, wallcoverings, and even confections. Its use in foodstuffs was discontinued when it was quickly discovered to be poisonous. Today, this blue-green compound is used as an insecticide. Scheele's death at age forty-four is

suspected to have been caused by the simple manner in which he identified the contents of his experiments. When crystallizing the salts of heavy metals, he would taste them. (oops!)

In the mid-1800's, there was wide-spread suspicion that certain wallpapers, when damp, were causing illnesses in the homes in which they were installed. With these suspicions prevalent, it was ironic that William Morris, who was a well known environmentalist and advocate of a return to traditional craft styles and materials, would discount the danger of Scheele's Green. He insisted that his printer use this man-made arsenical pigment, even though Morris had set up his company to produce decorative goods and books using traditional methods, materials and themes. He eschewed modern synthetic dyes, as they were not natural and simple. Yet, modern chemical analysis indicates Morris did not hold to these principles when producing the wallpaper patterns for which he is famous. There is speculation that this decision was influenced by his major holdings in his father's mining company, Devon Great Consols (DGC), the largest arsenic producer of the age. However, in 1875, Morris' printer, Jeffreys and Co, switched to an arsenic-free green. Morris remained indifferent to the dangers and in 1885, wrote: "a greater folly is hardly possible to imagine: the doctors were bitten by witch fever." He asserted that if there really was a problem, "we should be sure to hear of it."

When in the 1890's, over a thousand children in Italy died due to unexplained reasons, chemist E. Gosio was consulted. He discovered that in the homes where the deaths occurred there were two common factors: wallpaper printed with Scheele's green, and mildew. Upon further research he concluded that the mold carried out a chemical process that converted the copper arsenate into very poisonous arsenic vapor, which sank to the floor on which the children played. The malady became known as "Gosio's Disease".

Gosio's Disease is suspected by many to have contributed to Napoleon's death. After his defeat at Waterloo, he was exiled in 1815, to St. Helena Island in the South Atlantic. To escape the watchful eyes of his British captors, Napoleon and his entourage spent much time inside Longwood House, where even today the wallpaper is changed every two years due to the ever-present high humidity. Samples of wallpaper that decorated that house during Napoleon's final six years have been tested and found to contain Scheele's Green. Napoleon's hair has also been tested and found to contain high levels of arsenic. Although an autopsy found that the "Little Colonel" died primarily from a cancerous ulcer of the stomach, it is now widely accepted that Gosio's Disease contributed to his demise.

The paper at the Brayton Farmhouse did have a vertical green pattern. Perhaps it was not arsenic that was added to the paste. The paper could have been printed with Scheele's Green. And, the house being a shoreline structure, humidity is prevalent. Perhaps Mr. Hogan wasn't too far off the mark when he mentioned arsenic and the wallpaper in the same breath.



TIPS, TRICKS, & TOOLS

Michael Keith, C.P., has collected the following tips. *The INSTALLER* makes no claims as to their use and the reader should take responsibility to test appropriately.

After installation, the following methods are suggestions for doctoring slightly separated seams.

Chalk: Lightly work correct color chalk into the seam with finger, rag, or such. Excess surface chalk should wipe away with no problem.

Poster Paints: Mix correct color, fill seams with it, and allow to dry. Then, using a damp sponge, wipe dried paint from the face of the paper. The seam stays colored. The great thing about poster paints is that they can be wiped off even after dry.

Acrylic Craft Paint: Mix correct color. The trick is in the application. Wet seam with a damp towel. Smear paint down the seam smoothly, then wipe off paint, leaving residue in the seam. Make sure all of the paint is off face of paper.

Acrylic Craft Paint: Mix correct color. Thin with water to consistency of ink. Moisten seam and wipe surface with a dry towel. Using a very fine artist brush loaded with the "ink", touch the seam. Capillary action will carry the color for an inch or two above and below the brush. Check the surface of the paper and wipe clean.

Inks: Select a fine point calligraphy pen and load it with the right color ink. Touch pen to dry seam. The ink will be drawn out as with the thinned acrylic craft paint and brush.

Eyeliner: Cheap eyeliners and lip liners (pencils) can almost match any paper. Lightly color the seam and wipe away excess.

Watercolor Pencils: Wet the seam with a sponge, stroke pencil down seam about 12 inches at a time, work color into seam with your finger, and wipe clean.

Painting Crayons: "Caran D'Ache Neocolor II Painting Crayons" are water-soluble crayons. They can be mixed with water to create an ink/paint or sharpened and used like pencils.

Coloring the ends of unrolled bolts is a preemptive method of camouflaging unsightly seam splits. Carefully apply correct color to the ends of a tightly rolled bolt, being careful to keep colorant off the pattern. All of the above materials plus markers, both permanent and water based, could be used this way.

Another successful method is coloring the edges of individual strips prior to pasting. From the backside of the paper at an angle away from the pattern, run a colored pencil, crayon, chalk, or marker along the edge of the paper.

THE CHAPTER CORNER

The INSTALLER has received requests from Chapter Presidents for ideas for chapter meetings. We are actively collecting ideas for programs and field trips. Please submit ideas to: Bill Archibald, 127 Seekonk St, Norfolk, MA 02056; Phone: 508-520-4041; E-mail: installer@ngpp.org; FAX: 208-247-1161

Inviting guests with specific knowledge about factions of our trade is always educational. When inviting a guest, prior to his or her appearance, send a list of questions and topics generated by the chapter members so that the guest will be fully prepared. Product representatives should be encouraged to bring samples.

Types of guests found worthwhile to varied chapters include:

- State Workers Compensation Board representative to discuss safety on the jobsite
- Construction or trade attorney for a question and answer session about legalities of doing business
- Health insurance representative to offer ideas about insurance for small businesses and the self employed
- Certified Public Accountant to talk about bookkeeping, accounting, tax issues, and related financial matters.
- Financial planning expert to give suggestions on investments, living trusts, estate planning, annuities, etc.

- Architect or general contractor to instruct how to estimate from architectural drawings
- Computer or software expert to explain how computers and software can be best utilized for our business.
- Ladder and staging expert for instructions on safe use
- Technical and/or sales representative from any and all related industries – This would include but not be limited to: wallpaper, liners, adhesives, removal solutions, prep coatings, pasting machines, tables, and tools.
- Invite your NGPP Regional Director to get to know him or her.

PROMOTE YOURSELF *by Jennifer Curtis, C.P.*

Are you proud of a recent accomplishment, an award you received, or a job well done? Then PROMOTE YOURSELF! ! Stand up and toot your own horn — no one else will do it for you! How, you ask ? Just take a few minutes and write a press release, announcing your talents and accomplishments. The response will be impressive!

A press release is normally an announcement of some kind that gives facts concerning a given topic — a new product introduction, someone's promotion, a recent award, a special milestone in one's life, etc. The interesting fact with a press release is that it gets you noticed — for free. Unlike a paid, solicited advertisement, a press release doesn't even cost you a nickel. It's free. It only costs you the time to write and submit the article. However, because the press release is free the editor makes the decision when the article will run. It may run a week after

you've submitted it or perhaps three weeks later.. Paid ads and important stories always have priority over press releases.

A press release should cover the five "w's" **who, what, when, where,** and **why.** Most press releases are also issued with a photograph whenever possible. They are more eye-catching and interesting that way. The key to writing a successful press release is the order in which the article is written. The most important information should be stated right away, not buried in the middle of the article or near the end. Imagine an inverted triangle with the tip facing down. That's how your information should flow--from most important to dwindling down to a general statement.

Whenever possible try to use your company letterhead and date your article. Write in large letters at the top "**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**". Also be sure to include your name or a contact name with a phone number in case the

editor needs to contact you to clarify something in the article. Try to write your press release in an interesting but concise manner. State the facts but don't get too bogged down with every detail. Remember, the editor has the right to edit your article, and believe me, they will- I've had several press releases "edited" and irrelevant information scratched from the article. What remained was the "meat" of the story though and the press release was still nice.

So remember, **PROMOTE YOURSELF!**

Pacific Laser Ad

THE GUILD'S FOUNDING - PART III by Tish Iorio

Developing Character and Adding New Culture

Part three of the founding of the NGPP as told to Tish Iorio by Joe Murphy, founding father and Life Member of NGPP.

"As said earlier Sam Kovnat had been a union organizer at one time and he always seemed to be reaching out to get the guild more members. Somehow he made contact with the Delaware County chapter of the PDCA whose members also installed wallcovering. He asked John Kronberger and myself to go with him to a meeting about ten miles from Philly on West Chester Pike. On the way he let me know I was to do the 'speaking'. A prepared speech really was not needed. We told them why we had organized, the progress we had made, and what we hoped could happen with our input as an integral part of this industry. Our time spent was most productive. We answered their questions, gave them our address, date and time of meetings and invited them to visit us. From that meeting we got such quality members as Lou Schiavo, Bill Eckert, Sam Predente, Dom Demeo, and Izzy Dubin.

On April 11, 1981, through the efforts of member Steve Magargee we did a charity project at the first Ronald McDonald House in this country. Through his efforts, various manufacturers donated the material and twenty-two members donated their time and talent. By days end, twenty large rooms, baths, and hallways had been completely papered as we fought off the electricians and carpenters along the way. The following Saturday a smaller crew of ten completed the rest of the rooms.

By 1981 we had a solid membership sharing our bi-yearly meetings with New York, and a new group struggling for existence in Florida. (I think it was begun by two displaced New Yorkers, Sol Canter and Herman Eilberg, and possibly others.) There was beginning talk of becoming a National organization. We did have a lot of quality members who supported all meetings regularly but we did not have

the number of players we could hope for.

From the pool of members, three stepped forward to investigate the possibility of having a convention. Lou Schiavo, Bill Eckert and Izzy Dubin had the impossible dream of a convention for paperhangers. At their own expense they began testing the waters and Pocono Manor in the mountains became the site of choice. It would require that we get reservations for 50 rooms in order to secure the use of meeting rooms free plus some complimentary entities. It seemed like an impossibility, but we made it, and the first convention was held June 26-28, 1981. John Orsak, president of Sanitas and member of the Wallcovering Manufacturers Association was the keynote speaker through the efforts of Mario Chiaccio, since we had very little access to manufacturers or executives in the related trades. Mario made a statement at this convention as we ate dinner that I have never forgotten. Since he represented the WMA it showed how much progress we were making. His statement was, "The Guild has made more impact in the trade than your numbers justify." Remember, at that time we had only three guilds or chapters.

This was our first contact with one of the manufacturers top executives and we made his visit pay dividends for both of us. In the course of his address he mentioned Sanitas was setting the trim wheels at a forty five-degree angle for a better seam. Much to his surprise we told him the ninety-degree cut on the edge was far better. Lesson one, we both benefited from the exchange.

As our membership increased we saw a great potential in trying to form a chapter in the suburbs of Philadelphia in the area where we had spoken to the PDCA chapter.... and gleaned a few members from. We hated to lose the members from our chapter but we had high hopes that drawing from a pool of mechanics in that area along with those existing members we would have a successful start. It was slower than expected but eventually the Delaware County chapter was born.

The Philadelphia chapter has been tireless in its support of the Guild, its workshops, conventions, as officers both locally and nationally, and as, with any birth, can be justifiably proud of all that has been accomplished in 25 plus year because of their vision. To all of those founding members still with us, the rest of us say....Thanks for everything."

And a special thanks to Joe Murphy and Tish Iorio for sharing this information with our membership.

CHAPTERS

Atlanta (Georgia)
Baltimore (Maryland)
Bay Area (Florida)
Berkshire (Massachusetts)
Boston (Massachusetts)
Canton/Akron (Ohio)
Capital Region (New York)
The Carolina's
Central Pennsylvania
Chicago (Illinois)
Coachella Valley (California)
Columbus (Ohio)
Connecticut
Delaware County (Pennsylvania)
Greater Cincinnati (Ohio)
Los Angeles (California)
Miami Valley (Ohio)
Milwaukee (Wisconsin)
New York (Long Island)
Northern California
Northern New Jersey
Northern Virginia
Northwest (Oregon)
Philadelphia (Pennsylvania)
Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania)
Rockford (Illinois)
San Antonio (Texas)
San Diego (California)
South Jersey
Twin Cities Metro (Minnesota)
Upstate New York
Washington DC
Westchester County (New York)
Western Carolina (South Carolina)
Western Lake Erie (Ohio)

If you are interested in chapter membership or in forming a chapter in your area, contact the NGPP National Office.

NATIONAL PAPERHANGER'S FORUM & TRADESHOW

A Terrific Way to Invest in Yourself

A few weeks to go and it's not too late to register. Columbus, Ohio is this year's site for the 2003 NGPP National Paperhanger's Forum & Tradeshow. For those who have not been to Columbus you will be in for a real treat. We will be meeting at the Easton Hilton, a new four star hotel, recommended by the Columbus Chapter. The hotel is within walking distance to great restaurants, plenty of shopping and clubs for those who enjoy the night life. Parking is free for those who will be driving. For those who flying, the hotel provides shuttle service to the airport.

This year Ohio is celebrating its bicentennial and the 100th anniversary of flight, referred to in Ohio (and North Carolina from what we hear) as the Centennial of Flight. The Wright brothers, from Dayton, Ohio are being remembered for their vision, imagination and the invention for man's first successful flying machine. In keeping with the spirit of Ohio's celebrations, our theme is "Ohio Seems wRight". Our programs will certainly meet the billing. I hope many of you are planning to be there. We have programs that will appeal to the seasoned veteran as well as the aspiring master paperhanger.

Our program materials were mailed in May and we hope you have taken a few moments review. Our staff has done an excellent job producing this year's program. Our new educational programs were offered in conjunction with the Forum allowing member to attend either or both events.

Attending the Forum is a great opportunity to discover what's new in our profession and the wallcovering industry. You will have an opportunity to attend seminars on business, Hands-On demonstrations, panel and

round table discussions, motivational and industry speakers, our industry awards and much more. All events are tailored for professional paperhangers.

We encourage everyone one to attend. If you find it impossible to attend our full 2 ½ day program, consider attending for the day. If you live near Columbus and have a few hours, attend the tradeshow on Saturday. You will not be disappointed with this three hour event.

You may have heard this before, but, we truly believe in it.

You get out of your business what you put into it. Having a successful business costs time, money and energy. It means investing in your business even when times are slow. During down times, our business approach, marketing plan and client base need to be evaluated. Associating and learning from one another puts things into perspective and helps us make the necessary adjustments. Many of our members have found ways to prosper no matter what the economy is doing. They will be at the Forum and Tradeshow and willing to share their business knowledge and skills. This is a grand opportunity to discover some of their "trade secrets".

When the Forum and Tradeshow is over, those who attended will look back and add to the theme, Ohio DID (w)Right! See you in September!

Call or email the NGPP National Office for registration and hotel information at 800.254.NGPP or ngpp@ngpp.org.



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August/September 2003 Issue

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Brush Saver, Inc.

Cavalier Wallliner

Crosspoint Fabrics

CST/Berger

Custom Laminations, Inc.

daVinci Architectural Wallcoverings

Design Tex Group (The)

Duron Paints & Wallcoverings

Eisenhart Wallcoverings Co.

Environmental Graphics

Fabric Wallmount System

Fashion Wallcoverings, Inc.

Flexi-Wall Systems

FSC Wallcoverings, Inc.

Gardner-Gibson, Inc.

Graham & Brown

HEYN-Glasfaser GmbH

Hyde Tools

Imperial Home Decor Group

Intelicoat Technologies

Jobsite Magazine

Johnson Diversey

Koroseal Wallcovering/RJF Int'l

Len-Tex Wallcovering

Logue & Associates

Loparex, Inc.

LSI Wallcovering

Marshalltown Trowel

Monadnock Paper Mills, Inc.

Multicolor Specialties

Muralo Company, Inc. (The)

National Wallcoverings

Off the Wall Wallpaper Removal Svc.

OLFA Products Group (The)

OMNOVA Solutions, Inc.

Osborne & Little

Pacific Laser Systems (PLS)

Patton Wallcovering

Perfect Color, LLC

Ramco Industries, Inc.

Roman Decorating Products

Roos International, Ltd./TASSO

Roysons

Sherwin Williams Company

Stark Wallcovering

Tapo-Fix/National Division

Tara Graphics

Thibaut Wallcovering

Vahallan Papers

Wooster Brush Co. (The)

Worktools International, Inc.

York Wallcoverings, Inc.

Zinsser Company (The)

All Pro Ad

RE-CERTIFICATION REMINDER

Clyde Morron, C.P., Certification Committee Chair, would like to remind all Certified Paperhangers who were certified prior to the year 2000 that it is time to be re-certified. All certified paperhangers will be getting a letter as a reminder to get the paperwork in by December 31, 2003. This deadline was extended a year. Re-certification packets were mailed in January 2002. Some of the C.P.'s have gotten their points in and may disregard this notice. If you have misplaced or lost your re-certification packet, please call the National Office at 800-254-6477 and another packet will be sent.. If you are retired or no longer interested in being re-certified, please let the National Office know.

THE SELVEDGE

Cut from "Tips. Tricks. & Tools"

1. Use a flat surface, about 30-36" above the floor, for working with the wallpaper before hanging... it'll save your back and knees.
2. A level works great for getting that first sheet plumb on the wall.
3. Water makes an excellent solvent for sponging up excess paste.
4. Do not drink from your water box.

INDUSTRY CALENDAR

August 25-26

WFCP Tour in San Antonio, TX

September 8-9

WFCP Tour in Philadelphia, PA

September 18-20

National Paperhanger's Forum & Tradeshow in Columbus, OH

September 18-20

Restoration & Renovation at the Navy Pier, Chicago, IL

September 29-30

WFCP Tour in Chicago, IL

October 13-14

WFCP Tour in Naples, FL

The INSTALLER

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER by Joe Parker, CP, NGPP National President



You may remember my discussion in last month's *INSTALLER* about the "job from hell". I thought I might take a few minutes and tell you how it's progressing.

We sat down with the owner's representative and, in a *calm and business-like manner*, discussed the huge list of problems we were having and the financial ramifications to us. While we did not get everything we were asking for, we came away with a very substantial financial change order, which should assure us a reasonable profit on the job.

We must always maintain a professional demeanor about ourselves, as that's what separates the professional from the "tailgater". I firmly believe that our professional attitude was a big plus in securing a successful outcome.

Once again I urge all to review the Guild-endorsed PDCA standards. In our discussions, we frequently used phrases and terms found in the standards. The standards make good sense and are a huge ally for you. They may be found at www.pdca.org

A few more rooms have change orders ranging from painting to wallcovering. The oohs and ahs from folks seeing completed rooms of wallpaper blow away those drab painted walls. It's amazing to see how much better walls look when papered.

We still (now almost a year since starting) don't have the job finished but I

believe that by the time we meet at the Forum in September, we should be finished. It's been a learning experience.

This year we've started our pre-Forum educational programs. Chairwoman, Elsie Kapteina has done an outstanding job of bringing this new experience to our members. I urge you to visit the Guild website at www.ngpp.org and review the classes available.

And lastly, congratulations to the new *INSTALLER* staff. Last month's edition on laser levels was certainly a keeper. Great job, Bill Archibald and crew.

P.S. Over the past few years we have encountered grass cloth from time to time, but recently were seeing it almost every other week. Are you?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Installer,

Recently I had a long telephone conversation with an industry type whose name most would recognize by reading the industry mags. He wanted my impressions on what has gone wrong with the wallpaper industry. How could it plummet from a 2 billion per year industry in the early 90's to a one billion per year now? How can it be turned around. (One can see why the conversation was so long.)

He agreed with me that a big mistake was made in the 1980's when the industry, as a whole, made a big push for DIY installations. As a result of that policy, thousands upon thousands of rooms across America were hung incorrectly and the chickens came home to roost in the 1990's to the present. I refer to the Zinsser study of a few years ago where 68% of respondents feared wallpaper and the problem of removal.

But leaving removal problems aside for a moment, I believe the core problem with promoting DIY installation is that it denies that there is, or ever was, a **Trade** associated with the installation of wallpaper.

The industry apparently believes that handling crooked ceilings and door jambs to make paper look straight, cutting around pedestal sinks, engineering seam placement for grouted-in towel racks and toilet paper fixtures, wrapping and miter-cutting complex structures like kitchen soffits, dealing with warped outside corners, round archways, etc. is not really a big problem. Rather, it is the pasting of the material that requires the most acumen. What I'm talking about here is the current industry mania, which surrounds non-woven materials. If I read another article about how DIYers will find the installation of non-wovens "EZ" because they can "paste the wall" I'm going to plotz.

It seems that the industry has learned nothing from their mistakes of the past twenty or so years. By pushing DIY and ignoring wallpapering as a trade they are once again looking short term instead of long. When will the industry learn that a professionally wallpapered room is an advertisement for more wallpapered rooms? And why is it ME—someone without an MBA—who understands this, while high priced

consultants push DIY and fashion, fashion, fashion?

Jim Parodi, Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY

Dear Installer,

Last issue, there was an article about the shop, Second Hand Rose, and it stated that they had many old rolls of wallpaper- including the dreaded, the ugly, the hated paper-backed foil. It is also my understanding that the Guild has built back up its treasury. My proposal: The NGPP offer a bounty for each roll of that nasty stuff, and we don't care how you got it. We'll burn 'em in a bonfire at a future convention, er, ah, 'Forum.'

Chris Murphy, Atlanta, GA

Letters to the Editor will be accepted from any current Guild member, and must be signed by such. Content of any letter published does not reflect views of the The INSTALLER or the NGPP. Letters may be submitted in the following ways:

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TABLE TRIMMING by Michael Keith, C.P.

This first appeared in Vol. 2. No.2 of Master Paperhanger Magazine (April, 2002). MPM is published quarterly by Robert M. Kelly, C.P. For information or subscription, please go to www.masterpaperhanger.com or phone (413) 243-3489 . This article has been edited, with permission, from its original form.

A wide variety of wallcoverings are shipped with unfinished edges and are meant to be trimmed by the installer. This may be done at the table or at the wall. Today's focus will be on trimming handprints at the table.

The handprint manufacturing process is inexact. Worn jigs, screen-wobble, registration stops and stubborn substrates can affect the alignment of a pattern as it is printed. Uneven expansion and contraction may result from the varying amounts of ink applied to the paper. Factory machine trimming of a handprint may result in an unacceptable gain or loss of pattern at the seam, so the trimming of handprints has traditionally been left to the paperhanger. However, this is changing as several design companies (such as Brunschwig & Fils) and contract screen printers (such as Scancelli) have increased the amount of product they pre-trim.

The removal of selvage is the subject at hand. Trimming at the table can be performed wet or dry. When trimming dry, the goods are rolled out and the selvage removed by using a straightedge to guide the cutting tool. This is done prior to the application of paste. The trim line will usually be a safe reference, cutting 1/16 inch inside the marks, unless you find them to be inaccurate, in which case, the pattern is your next best reference. If the selvage is of uniform width, the paper's edge can also act as a reference. The object

possible. If the selvage is not uniform in width, then the pattern should be the major reference, again, keeping as true to the trim marks as possible. The opposite side should be trimmed in the same way. Verify that the trimmed strip is parallel. In cases where there is no pattern, for example, textiles, textures or random patterns, the second edge should be made exactly parallel to the first, by measuring across the material and using the previously trimmed edge as a reference.

An irregular selvage width may require minor directional changes in the trimming. In that case, or indeed, in any case that produces variance, it may be wise to precut all the lengths before trimming the selvage. This will ensure that these directional shifts don't show in the middle of your seam, i.e., at eye level, but rather at the beginning or end of the strip.

It may also be advisable to back-roll the material, depending on the type of material, how it is rolled, and the tension of its curl. The material must lie flat on the table. If this is not addressed, the curl can torque the paper out of alignment and make a straight trim difficult at best.

Like dry trimming, wet trimming also takes place at the table. Each strip is pasted and booked so that the material's edges are perfectly aligned. The straightedge is placed at the trim marks or at a prescribed distance from the edge of the material, and then

adjusted if required. If he edge of the ground color is determined to be dead on it will be a good benchmark when wet trimming, taking care that the edges align where the two ends overlap. If the selvage is irregularly printed, or if the ground color does not align, you may consider dry trimming instead.

With some materials, wet trimming may cause creasing at the fold. To prevent this, place a couple of single edge razor blades on the table next to each fold

and set the straightedge right on top of them. Then press down on the center of the straight edge and trim. One blade should be placed under each side of the straightedge, and at each end. The thickness of the spines of the razor blades will prevent creasing at the fold. Another way to try to avoid creasing is to accordion fold the material. It seems



is to measure consistently from the edge, and at the same time, stay as true to the pattern and trim marks as



when the weight of the straightedge is distributed over 4, 6, or 8 folds, creasing ceases to be such an issue.

With wet or dry table-trimming, the use of a single edge razor blade held flush to the side of the straight edge at 90 degrees will ensure a perpendicular cut. A "shallow" cut with the back of the blade closer to the table is sharper and more accurate as opposed to a cut with a blade which is more "on point". Direction of the cut, whether using a forehand or backhand stroke, is a personal preference. I often switch to a cross-armed backhand stroke when

(TRIMMING - continued on page 12)

(TRIMMING - continued from page 11)

stability and an exact trim is required. It feels less awkward than the forehand trim I was first taught.

Single edge razor blades are available in different degrees of sharpness and thickness. The thinner blades and double-honed edges are by far the best in their performance. The familiar designations of these blades # 9 and # 12, refer to the thickness of the blades (.009 inch and



.012 inch), with the # 9 the thinner of the two.

The rotary trimmer, though an excellent tool, has fallen out of favor in the last few decades. It fits precisely in the channel of the straightedge and, when adjusted, will give you a smooth, exact, and effortless cut every time. There is a learning curve involved, and it is critical the channels be kept very clean, but after some practice with some leftover wallcovering, you may not want to go back to the blade. I know three master paperhangers in Ohio who wouldn't be caught without their wheel cutters.

Some wallcoverings are susceptible to oxide marking from your straightedge. This problem can be minimized by applying

masking tape to the surfaces of the straightedge that will be in contact with the wallcovering. Be careful that the tape is not placed in such a way that the smooth passage of the cutting tool is affected. A good cleaning with aluminum jelly will also reduce this risk. If these marks do occur, gentle use of a clean pencil eraser may remove them. You should, of course, test this method on a scrap beforehand.

If wallcovering is trimmed on your table, its wooden surface will probably begin to show signs of wear after a while, especially from cuts across the grain. To avoid this, many hangers will place something between the blade and the wood. Zinc strips and plates have been the traditional choice. The soft metal will not dull the blade. Plate mirror or glass is another choice, offering almost no resistance to the cut, and is perhaps the superior cutting surface.

I have used both materials and found them lacking. The zinc, available in 3 inch wide strips (thin and flexible), or plates (thicker and rigid), are sometimes difficult to keep positioned under the cut, and are cumbersome; and for precision work, don't last that long. Glass breaks. I speak from experience. Some use a laminate like Formica, and replace it when it's worn out. Another choice is plastic, either acrylic or polycarbonate. Acrylic is marginally more resistant to scoring but is breakable.

Polycarbonate (Lexan) is virtually unbreakable and is my choice. I use three boards and trestles, with a 1/16 inch sheet of Lexan covering the first board. With tens of thousands of cuts, it is still in great shape and has many more years of life left to it.

THE KILL POINT

Many years ago, a friend of mine was forced, because of hard-partying habits, to move back home. Dr. Walt, his father, an Obstetrician-Gynecologist, was non-plussed: he had 7 kids and thought he finally had one out of the house.

Jim the mason and I moved Walt Jr., our buddy, back into his parents' house. All the while the Doc was bustin' Walt's chops. Mrs. Doc, trying to put a different face on the situation, invited us in for milk and birthday cake when we were done. At this point, the Doc figured it was time to vent some spleen on Jr.'s helpers to assuage his lot in life.

Doc, "Jim, I know you're working with your father, but Murphy, what are you doing since you graduated SUNY-Binghamton?"

Murphy, "I went to a trade school, for paperhanging, and that's what I've gotten into."

Doc, "School for paperhanging? Murphy, I hang my own paper, come on upstairs I'll show you the bathrooms."

Murphy, "Well, Doc, I do my own gynecology, but I don't think I'd ask your opinion of it."

Doc, "Murphy, you drink scotch?"

(GRACIE - continued from page 2)

Mike also tells us that these papers are still made for the export trade and are rarely found in China, even in westernized cities like Hong Kong.



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<http://www.graciestudio.com/>

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Ernest Gaspard & Assoc.:
(404) 233- 8645

*Other sources of Chinese papers:
de Gournay, London: (44) 20 7823 7316; <http://www.degournay.com/>

Joyway, Staunton, VA.: (888) 280-8110; <http://www.joywayusa.com/>

Altfield, Hong Kong: (852) 2524 3318; <http://www.wayofdesign.com/>

*thanks to <http://www.wallpaperinstaller.com> for these sources.