

THE DOWNLOAD

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calendar BIFMA EVENTS

The Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association (BIFMA) International had scheduled the following list of meetings and events as of press time. Additional events will be posted to the BIFMA website on the Internet at www.bifma.org.

June 15, 2005, 7:15 am to 9 am
BIFMA Annual Meeting
Holiday Inn Mart Plaza
Sauganash Ball Room, Chicago, IL

June 23, 2005, 9 am to noon
State Franchise Tax Meeting
BIFMA Hdqtrs., Grand Rapids, MI

July 11, 2005, 1 pm to 5 pm
Color Working Group Meeting
BIFMA Hdqtrs., Grand Rapids, MI

July 25, 2005, 2 pm to 4 pm
Textiles Subcommittee Meeting
BIFMA Hdqtrs., Grand Rapids, MI

Aug. 24-25, 2005
9 am to 5 pm (both days)
FES Subcommittee Meeting
Holiday Inn Select
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Sept. 13, 2005, 8 am to 3 pm
Formaldehyde Workshop
Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare
Chicago, Illinois

Sept. 13, 2005, 11 am to 4 pm
Statistical Committee Meeting
BIFMA Hdqtrs., Grand Rapids, MI

Sept. 20, 2005
Board of Directors Meeting
Chicago, Illinois

October 5-6, 2005
9 am to 5 pm (both days)
Engineering Committee Meeting
Bodycote Materials Testing Canada
Mississauga, ON Canada

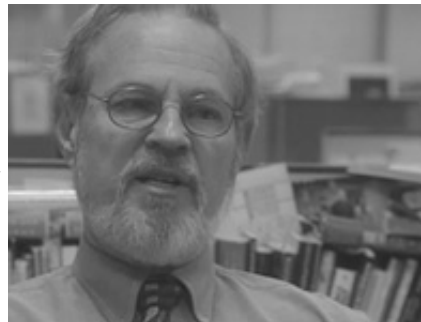
February 9-11, 2006
BIFMA Management Conference
Theme: Globalization
The Bahamas

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper with vegetable based inks.

“The Global Era” Examined & Targeted For Further Analysis

BIFMA International's Annual Membership Meeting speaker on June 15, 2005 during NeoCon was Richard Longworth, Executive Director of the Global Chicago Center of The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations.

As a Senior Writer for the Chicago Tribune and a foreign correspondent with United Press International for 16 years in London, Moscow, Vienna and Brussels, Mr. Longworth has much experience on “the front lines”. He offered BIFMA a look at how “The Global Era” is re-shaping the world and our lives in the 21st Century every bit as much as the Industrial Era did in the 19th and 20th centuries.



Richard Longworth

We already see this happening, in the office furniture industry as much as in other industries, and it's just begun. At the moment, outsourcing -- of both industrial jobs and services -- is the big issue, and this will continue for the near future. We can expect that any job that doesn't require face-to-face contact can and probably will be exported. At some point, this wave, like all waves, will flow back. Already, Chinese companies are beginning to buy plants here, much as Japanese companies did 20 years ago, to manufacture components that had been made in China. But in the

near term, we can expect turmoil -- in sales, in jobs, in company ownership, in trade -- that will dominate the lives of businesses and governments.

“Globalization” will be the topic of BIFMA's next Management Conference, February 9-11, 2006 in the Bahamas. These issues will be explored in additional detail with a host of speakers specializing in the area and others specifically knowledgeable of the impact on our industry.

Last year's successful Management Conference had “Sustainability” as a theme and BIFMA will include it again this year as a “sub-theme” with a prominent speaker in that field. It is believed by many that the

future of successful worldwide commerce hinges on how sustainable the products and the companies making them are in the long run. GE's recent announcement that the company is hitching its future to the growth of clean energy, clean water, and other clean technologies is one example. For GE, the fifth-largest U.S. company, it represents a strategic shift that could catalyze competition among some of the world's largest companies to accelerate the emerging clean-tech economy. Mark your calendars and “come to the Bahamas” for more on all these topics.

Furniture Emissions Subcommittee Update

A group of industry volunteers has been working diligently over the last 12 months to develop a scientifically based, open test protocol that will provide a common and accessible method to measure emission levels of various compounds from furniture products. There are a number of market factors that have motivated this activity.

Market Factors

- o An increasing market trend toward LEED certification of buildings, interiors, homes, etc.
- o Nine States have already enacted laws or executive orders requiring LEED certification of all State funded building projects.
- o GSA has indicated they will soon require compliance to a low-emitting product standard.
- o The states of California and Washington are examining a variation of emissions testing based on component testing in small chambers.
- o The "bottom line" is that if you're not already receiving requests from your customers for "low-emitting" products, you will soon.
- o There are several emerging test methods, that the industry has no control over, and are causing confusion in the marketplace.
- o Presently there is only one practical way to achieve the LEED-CI 4.5 credit for low-emitting product, and that is to have your product line "Greenguard certified". Greenguard certification is awarded by the Greenguard Environmental Institute and is quite an involved process. Additionally, there is currently only one lab that is approved to test to the Greenguard protocol.

What are BIFMA's Objectives?

BIFMA began its work in Furniture Emissions in order to:

- o Develop an open, scientifically based and harmonized test method.
- o Identify alternate test labs capable of commercial testing.
- o Pursue 3rd party certification as appropriate.
- o Reduce testing costs by improving the ability to use small chamber testing to predict large-scale chamber results.

What is the Project Status?

- o A test method has been developed by Dr. Jensen Zhang using an expert peer review process.

- o The method needs to be verified for accuracy and repeatability from lab to lab.

- o The validation plan will simultaneously address several objectives; in addition to verifying the method, it will provide incentives for other labs to offer commercial testing services, and provide testing results for small chamber research.

Why is this Work Important to BIFMA Members?

- o BIFMA seeks to provide an alternative, or an option, to the existing criteria to achieve LEED-CI 4.5 credit for low-emitting product.
- o Additional options will provide the industry with choice.
- o Achieving the stated objectives will lower the overall costs of testing and compliance, which ultimately benefits our customers.

What's Next?

- o The BIFMA test method and standard will be circulated for Member review and comment.
- o The validation plan will be implemented.
- o BIFMA will work with the US Green Building Council and GSA to ensure these groups consider our document as an equivalent option for low emitting product testing.
- o Significant industry resources have already been invested in this initiative, and more is required.
- o Validation plan testing will be expensive and conducted over a short period of time.

What does BIFMA Need from Members?

- o Understanding and realization that this issue is market driven and something that you will be facing soon if not currently.
- o Serious review and consideration of the test method and standard when they are circulated for industry comment.
- o Support funding efforts required to validate the method, bring additional test labs "on-line", and improve the science to allow less costly methods of testing.

New BIFMA Directors Elected

The Board of Directors of the Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association (BIFMA) International is pleased to announce the election of two new directors for the 2005-2006 fiscal year. Christine Woodard, Vice President of Harden Contract, McConnellsville, NY and Daniel J. Tuohy, President and CEO of Tuohy Furniture, Chatfield, MN were elected to the BIFMA Board of Directors. Additionally, Steve Gane, President of HBF, Hickory,

NC was elected as BIFMA's Vice President/President-elect for a one-year term.

Danny Davis, President of Davis Furniture, High Point, NC and Julio Hirschfeld, General Manager of PM Steele SA de CV in Mexico City were both elected to second terms as Directors. And Dan Miller, President, Furniture Brands Group of Kimball International, Jasper, IN was re-elected to a second term as BIFMA's President.

Sustainable Business Forum Bestows “Leading Edge” Awards On Peter Wege and BIFMA International

by Lisa Locke - West Michigan Environmental Action Council

Grand Rapids, MI – May 16, 2005 – The West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum (SBF), an organization committed to environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable commerce, has presented its "Leading Edge" Awards for 2005 to Peter M. Wege and the Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association (BIFMA). The awards were presented during "The Future of Commerce: Sustainable Solutions for Business," the SBF's 10th Annual Sustainable Business Conference & Expo, held May 11-12 in Grand Rapids.

Mr. Wege was cited for his efforts to promote sustainability in West Michigan, including leading Steelcase, Inc., and Aquinas College's sustainability initiatives; BIFMA International was acknowledged for being the first manufacturers trade association in the United States to develop formal industry-wide sustainability guidelines for its membership.

Described by his peers as an "ecological visionary" and an "advocate for human betterment," Mr. Wege has devoted several decades of his life to improving the environment and protecting the Great Lakes region. He created the Wege Foundation in 1967 to provide for the future needs of the community. He remains active through numerous philanthropic activities and board memberships, including his present position as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of Steelcase, Inc. Mr. Wege recently authored the book, *Economicology: The Eleventh Commandment*, which advocates the use of resources in a more holistic, efficient, and systematic fashion.

BIFMA International was recognized for recently releasing a set of guidelines to serve as a roadmap for office furniture manufacturers and

suppliers of all sizes seeking to establish or expand their environmental management systems (EMS), such as ISO 14001, to include sustainable business practices.

"Peter Wege and BIFMA are true leaders in the movement toward more sustainable business practices," said SBF board member Bill Stough. "Their commitment to the Triple Bottom Line of environmental stewardship,

economic vitality, and social responsibility provides further validation, if any is necessary, that sustainability is the right path to a healthier, more prosperous future."

The SBF Conference, hosted by the organization's West Michigan Chapter, featured presentations, workshops, and exhibits focused on sustainably focused products and processes. Approximately 400 business, government, and community leaders, educators, students, and environmental advocates attended the event.

Keynote speakers included economist Theodore Roosevelt IV; Interface, Inc. founder and chairman Ray Anderson; Fred Keller, founder of Cascade Engineering; and Joel Makower, founder of "The Green Business Letter" and GreenBiz.com.

The West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum is a non-profit organization of area companies united in their commitment to the principle of environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable commerce, a concept known today as the "Triple Bottom Line." Membership is open to businesses and individuals that share that commitment.

Additional information is available on the Sustainable Business Forum at:

<http://www.wmsbf.org>



Peter Wege and Tom Reardon Receive Sustainable Awards

New Association Members Welcomed



BIFMA welcomes our newest members. We hope they will find the benefits of BIFMA membership rewarding.

Newest Regular Members:

- Pleion Corporation - Santa Ana, CA

Newest Supplier Members:

- Gill Industries, Inc. - Grand Rapids, MI

Newest International Members:

- Pegasus International

Chicago Students Working To Lighten Landfill Loads

BIFMA was recently invited to speak to Archeworks, an alternative design school for architects, about the Resource Reclamation Project being planned in Michigan involving prison workers in product disassembly for scrap recovery and landfill avoidance. They were excited about our work and we about theirs! Here are two articles by students presenting their thinking along with drawings of a prototype of "The Unit for Living" they are building for a sustainable furniture show this summer. Their goal was to "repurpose discarded pieces and parts" that normally would be thrown out by making them into something functional. Thanks to Lisa Kulisek and Archeworks for allowing this meeting of the minds. Our future is in good hands.

New Products Need the Eye of the Disassembler

By Lars Söderkvist

In the effort to make resource use more sustainable, a key consideration is design for disassembly, or DfD. Recycling materials is vastly more reasonable than extracting materials from the earth and using them once in a consumer product, to be sent back as buried garbage or released in the air as burned waste or fuel. Yet recycling as it's currently practiced does little to enable materials to be cycled through more than once, while allowing for things to enter and re-enter service a number of times is the only meaningful way to bring the concept into being. We currently accept a frighteningly anemic version as the thing itself, and it takes some serious thought to imagine an implementation of recycling in a deep form. This is partly because the products that now surround us were rarely imagined as items to be someday disassembled for further use or for recycling. Design for disassembly takes into account the benefits that come from easy reclamation of materials for reprocessing (or in some cases safer disposal), as well as from facilitating the repair or replacement of parts before the entire product has reached the end of its useful life.

Previous to this moment in human history, design for disassembly had been an unglamorous and un-trendy idea, given that the circumstances of people's existence rarely revealed the scale of waste that we are now familiar with. Building materials were typically stone, timber, and other available (often local) resources used in a way they could easily be incorporated into new buildings, and economic necessity usually assured that they would be. Traditional Japanese building techniques, for example, include a method of constructing with pieces that fit together like a puzzle, the lack of nails making disassembly simple, resource-efficient, and well matched to the means of those building and using the structures.

Design for disassembly is key to cradle to cradle design, a concept articulated in the work of chemist Michael Braungart and described in the book *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking The Way We Make Things*, by Braungart and his colleague William McDonough. Cradle to cradle describes product design



**Archeworks Prototype of a Desk Made From "Repurposed Parts"
For a Sustainable Furniture Show This Summer**

that enables as much material as possible to be recycled into the same product, or to become material of the same quality. This emphasis on staying within the same level of quality is important, since conventional recycling can be thought of as downcycling, typically involving a material being manufactured into a consumer product that's then melted down or taken apart in order to reclaim the material for use in a less valuable form. Plastic containers for consumer goods are recycled into plastic lumber for park benches or decking, but in the process of reclaiming the resin and giving it another useful form its tensile strength is greatly diminished. The material is caught in a downward pattern of usefulness, and has a severely limited life-cycle. Cradle to cradle design involves using materials in a form that allows for easy separation into constituent parts so that the materials can be reprocessed, or simply reconfigured, into new items of a comparable grade. McDonough and Braungart talk of a world of biological nutrients and technical nutrients, their radical idea being that products should be designed as much as possible to use strictly one or the other (or both, as long as they can be safely separated) and make the nutrients readily available for further use at the end of the item's useful life.

(continued on page 5)

It is increasingly necessary to design products in this mode of thinking, and a business environment is quickly being created with great opportunity to profit from incorporating cradle to cradle thinking and DfD in product design. The competitive pressure - the advantage to being in the lead or at least not lagging behind - is an ever more real consideration for manufacturing businesses as they face consumer demand, public relations concerns, waste management issues, and transportation and energy costs. DfD is a component of any truly sustainable approach to resource use, so the effect is towards sustainability as new adopters incorporate the process.

Space Is Not The Place

By Sarah Vogel

When we first started taking apart office furniture, we were particularly struck by its sheer designed-ness. It is particular stuff, precise, built to do exactly what it does best - serve its time as office furniture. The labor put into the design and construction, along with its durability, far outweigh the value of the raw materials. Despite that, the fact that some brands are built to be easily disassembled immediately suggested the possibility of recycling the individual components - or at least the steel and aluminum. Since then, we have come across efforts to develop cost effective



The Reverse Side of "The Unit for Living", This Bed Was Conceptualized by Archeworks Students

methods of recycling both fiberglass and particle board.

We needed to conceptualize what purposes these highly designed objects could fulfill somewhere in the realm between destruction and reuse. Since we did not allow ourselves to be constrained by practicality in any fiscal or structural sense, it quickly became clear that these purportedly ubiquitous and useless items could be repurposed both practically and fantastically. While in a few hours, we considered hundreds of options, you will find illustrated here those which we were most inspired by.

1. Plugging Mt. St. Helens. One of the most pressing issues to consider when looking to reuse office furniture is the unbelievable quantity (not to mention weight) of the pieces. The EPA has estimated that approximately 3 million tons of office furniture and furnishings are discarded each year. Especially as the industry transitions from primarily producing cubes to developing more modular and modern pieces, there will be a huge glut of used furniture in the resale and landfill markets. Questions of where to find a large enough market for the old furniture tends to become a series of more and more ridiculous solutions. Mt. St. Helens would require quite a bit of furniture to fill it and the pile would have to be replenished as the pieces decayed or melted. Other proposed solutions for the particular problem of quantity include filling the Mariana Trench and sending the furniture into space.

2. As we continued to look for a large enough market to absorb such a quantity of product, we realized that if the furniture could be made attractive to homeowners, the glut of furniture could fuel the public's current passion for designing and redesigning their homes. Building cabinetry, shelving and tables for the home or garage. Office furniture, while designed for the office, is also very determinedly designed to be durable storage and organization units. With the aesthetic possibilities afforded by recovering, repainting, and die cutting the furniture, it can be transformed into anything from hipster loft dividers to garage and laundry storage to backlit bookcases. One limiting factor could prove to be sufficient production of relevant hardware and connecting pieces, but apart from that, old office furniture could be the next California Closets.

3. Office panels themselves are specially designed to provide superior acoustic insulation in an office setting. Imagine new housing and building projects utilizing old office panels in-between walls to provide sound absorption as well as an extra layer of insulation. This is just one instance of realizing a particular aspect of office furniture design. Perhaps the panels could also be reused in auditoriums as acoustic paneling.

A Green Supplier's Story

by Sidney Shaw of Metalworks, Inc.

If you're not a Green Supplier, you may soon receive a call from one of your customers inviting you to be green! That's just what happened to Metalworks Inc. one fine day when Steelcase called and invited us to join the Green Suppliers Network (GSN). Scott Lakari, the VP of operations got the call and the green ball started rolling.

Metalworks is a privately run manufacturer of office furniture in Ludington Michigan and has been in business since 1975, supplying the office furniture industry with quality pedestal and lateral filing cabinets. Metalworks has 240 employees and a 125K square foot plant.

The GSN program originated out of the USEPA and is supported by the State of Michigan. Our first contact with GSN was a phone conference organized by Mary Ellen Mica of Steelcase. It was during that conference call Metalworks decided to participate and the first step consisted of having Metalworks audited. The program is not one of compliance with or enforcement of regulations. It

is entirely voluntary and at the discretion of the facility management.

Metalworks was thoroughly audited by the assessment team resulting in a Pollution Prevention, Waste Reduction, and Energy Conservation Report. The scope of the report included:

1. Identification of opportunities for waste reduction, energy conservation and pollution prevention.
2. Technical recommendations for pollution prevention and energy conservation.
3. Administrative and management changes required to achieve goals

The first recommendation of the report was to create an Environmental Management System directed by an Environmental Management Committee (EMC) that would oversee the energy and waste reduction changes. Previously Metalworks had no such system. We generally had a lot of dedicated employees that helped bring about changes but no organized system in place. Metalworks took this to heart and immediately



Assessment Specialist Rick Flemming with Metalworks Team and Kathleen Vokes of EPA's Design for the Environment Program

appointed an EMC. The EMC now consists of the EHS manager, Sales manager, Maintenance Supervisor, Quality Control and Steel purchasing Manager. The EMC is now in the process of applying to the State of Michigan for Clean Corporate Citizen Status (C3).

Another benefit to come from our involvement in the GSN program included access to a summer intern to work on waste reduction and energy conservation. Overall, our experience with the Green Suppliers Network has been very positive. We commend the program for helping us further the goals of waste reduction and environmental improvement that Metalworks management team is determined to achieve.

Bahamas Bound! (Passports Required Starting in 2006)

As this newsletter is going to print, BIFMA is in the process of locking in a facility for the February 9-11, 2006 Management Conference. It will be held in the Bahamas next year and all interested participants should make sure that their passports are current. If not, start the process to renew or secure first-time passports now to avoid the rush.

New rules proposed by the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security will eventually require travelers from the United States to carry passports or other secure travel documents to all foreign destinations, including Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean -- destinations that previously did not

require such documentation.

The rules will be phased in over the next few years, beginning Dec. 31, when travelers returning from the Caribbean and Panama will need to have a passport to re-enter the United States. On Dec. 31, 2006, the requirement will be extended to Americans traveling by air and sea from Mexico and Canada.

The State Department estimates that as many as 12 million people will get passports next year, up from an estimated 10.5 million this year. The process can take many weeks under normal circumstances so the best way to prepare for February is to "think Bahamas" now rather than later.



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September 22-23, 2005 The National Trade Centre, Toronto

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Brian Walker, Herman Miller Inc.

Christine Woodard, Harden Contract

CALENDAR of industry events

Updated regularly on BIFMA's Internet Site: www.bifma.org

June 13-15, 2005, NeoCon World's Trade Fair - Chicago, IL; Contact: Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc.; Telephone: 800-677-6278 or 312.527.7599; Internet: www.merchandisemart.com (click on NeoCon)

June 15, 2005, BIFMA International's Annual Meeting - Chicago, IL; Telephone: 616-285-3963; Fax: 616-285-3765; Email: email@bifma.org; Internet: www.bifma.org

June 15-17, 2005 - 8th Annual Green Ventures 2005, Potsdam, Germany, (near Berlin); <http://www.green-ventures.com> Phone: 49-331-2786283

June 21-23, 2005, The Eastern Ergonomics Conference and Exposition (EECE) - 4th Annual, Crowne Plaza Times Square, New York City, NY

July 7-9, 2005 - ISOT 2005 - Tokyo, Japan; <http://web.reedexpo.co.jp/isot>

August 3-6, 2005 - San Francisco Furniture Market, Summer Market 2005 - San Francisco, California; Internet: <http://www.sfmart.com>

August 24-27, 2005 - IWF 2006 - The International Woodworking Machinery and Furniture Supply Fair USA - Atlanta, GA; Internet: <http://www.iwf2004.com> 404-693-8333

August 28-31, 2005 - National Recycling Coalition 24th Annual Congress & Expo - Minneapolis, MN; <http://www.nrc-recycle.org/congress/index.htm>

September 14-15, 2005 - NeoCon East - Baltimore, MD; Contact: Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc.; Telephone: 312-527-7598; Internet: <http://www.merchandisemart.com/neoconeast/overview.html>

September 14-17, 2005 - Furniture China 2005, Shanghai New International Expo Center, campsino-expo.com/furniture, 301-424-7060

September 19-22, 2005 - INTC 2005 (International Non-Wovens Technical Conference, St. Louis, MO; 919-233-1210 Fax 919-233-1282 <http://www.inda.org>

September 22 & 23, 2005 - IIDEX/NeoCon Canada, National Trade Centre, Toronto; Contact: 416-944-3350, www.iidexneocon.com

September 26-30, 2005 - Human Factors and Ergonomics Society 49th Annual Meeting - Orlando, FL; Internet: <http://www.hfes.org/meetings>

September 28 & 29, 2005 - Green By Design 2; Steelcase University Learning Center, 901 44th Street, Grand Rapids, MI; Contact Betsy Hernandez 616-247-3041 or Email: ehernand@steelcase.com; <http://www.greenbydesign.biz>

September 28-30, 2005 - OFDA Dealer Strategies Conference & Expo - Orlando, FL; Internet: <http://www.ofdanet.org>

October 18-20, 2005 - WorkPlace '05 - London (biannual); Internet: www.workplace-event.co.uk

October 20-26, 2005 - Fall International Home Furnishings Market - High Point, NC; Internet: <http://www.ihfc.com>; 336-888-3700

October 23-25, 2005 - World Workplace - 2005 Conference & Expo, Philadelphia, PA USA; Contact: IFMA.org; Internet: www.worldworkplace.org

**October 19-22, 2005 - ZOW 2005 - Milano - Italy
39 02 8699 5712 Fax: 39 02 8691 3226, <http://www.zow.it>, info@zow.it**

November 9-11, 2005 - Greenbuild International Conference & Expo - Atlanta, GA; Internet: <http://www.greenbuildexpo.org>

November 22-25, 2005 - IFFT 2005 - Tokyo, Japan, <http://idafij.or.jp>