

SDA's 20 Years: Looking Back

II. A Journal Is Born

By Stephen Blumrich

My involvement with Surface Design Journal began at the first conference's organizational meeting when I volunteered to be part of the Newsletter Committee. Don Blake of San Francisco, Pam Scheinman of Montclair, NJ and Pat Mansfield of Madison, WI and I decided we could handle that involvement next to our studio work. The first newsletter, a conference follow-up, was published out of Montclair. Then Don took over as copy editor and I arranged for articles and production.

When I received the big stack of conference feedback forms it was obvious that a newsletter was not what we should produce. There were calls for information on techniques, events, safety, fabrics, dyes, etc. SDA needed a magazine, but that was wishful thinking. To build up to that point, we decided to establish a magazine format with the few allotted pages to give it a start.

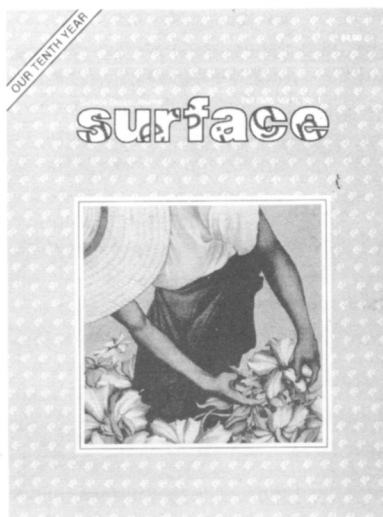
Because of professional commitments, Pat and Pam left, and Don left a year later. I was overwhelmed, but Elsa Sreenivasam, SDA president, convinced me that we could handle it all, somehow, by telephone; and we did. It was all low budget and volunteerism. One year, the National Endowment for the Arts provided me with a grant for my time.

So we could afford some extra space in the Journal, I suggested the sale of advertising space. I had met Rebecca Arkenberg at the first conference; we were both batikers with common interests, and she agreed to handle advertising sales. It was an uphill struggle. She told me how often people did not take her seriously because she called from Wyoming for a publication in Oregon. What's a textile magazine doing in Oregon anyway? We overcame that obstacle.

With the enthusiastic support of SDA presidents Elsa Sreenivasam, Glen Kaufman, and Don Bujnowshi, we added pages, improved the format, added spot color, and finally made the big step to full color.

Before my departure I still intended to get the Journal published bimonthly. There is unlimited, unpublished material, so I left, at least for me, an unfinished job. The change to a new team came at the time of the desktop publishing revolution. My issues were cut and paste on the kitchen table, endless proofreading, and endless paper shuffling. But it was twelve years of fun.

Stephen Blumrich is a partner with his wife, Teresa, in Pea Ridge Purties, Tullahoma, TN, a studio producing traditional Southern folk art quilts, dolls, and pieced yardage.



Surface Design Journal Fall 1979 and the 10th anniversary issue.

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