



Surface Design  
Association

## General Guidelines for SDA Area Representatives and Project Coordinators

*SDA needs You!*

### IN THIS DOCUMENT:

- **Creating Communities**
- **Resources and Assistance**
- **Area Representative and Project Coordinator descriptions**
- **Suggestions from experienced Representatives**

### CREATING COMMUNITIES

SDA supports communities of members. These communities can occur at the state or local level, or be organized around an interest group rather than geography. They can be short or long-term groups.

Some examples include:

- One-time members' exhibition, event, workshop
- Focus group based on shared medium, technique, art business practice
- Local group of SDA members. This could be for a state, provincial, or metropolitan area
- Online SDA community, for example, of embroiderers or educators

### ASSISTANCE AND RESOURCES

- Resource documents such as Communication and Social Media Guidelines, the Exhibition Guidebook and Checklist, tips for organizing lectures, workshops and critique groups, among others.
- Area Representatives and Project Coordinators may apply for Small Event Grants and use SDA's email newsletter service.
- Establish financial arrangements through SDA's Executive Director.

### PROJECT COORDINATOR

This volunteer job is for someone who envisions a short-term project. The timeframe for this position would be the duration of the project. The Project Coordinator should be someone who is organized and enjoys connecting with other artists.

- To propose a project, please contact the [president@surfacedesign.org](mailto:president@surfacedesign.org)
- To connect with SDA members, you can search the member directory based on name,

location, or medium. If you need a list of email addresses, please contact the [Membership Manager](#).

## AREA REPRESENTATIVE

This volunteer job is for someone who wants to foster a local community on a longer-term basis. Usually, Area Reps choose to take this job for a year or two, but the time frame is not set in stone. Examples could be the SDA Nevada State Rep, the SDA Kansas City Metro Area Rep, and the SDA Embroiderers' Rep. The best candidates are outgoing, organized and enjoy connecting with other artists.

- To volunteer as an Area Representative, please contact the [SDA Membership Manager](#) who will refer you to appropriate staff and resources.
- Area Representatives need to be responsive to inquiries and questions from member in their area, either through a direct answer or by referring them to the SDA staff.
- No one-size-fits-all: Area Reps can think large or small. You can establish a meeting, exhibit, or simply be a local contact willing to answer questions and represent SDA.
- To connect with your area SDA members, you can search the member directory based on name, location, or medium. If you need a list of email addresses, please contact the Membership Manager. Please review the Communication and Social Media Guidelines before contacting other SDA members.
- Communication with your members can be accomplished through emailed newsletters, blogs, google docs, texts, and phone calls.
  - To coordinate newsletters, contact SDA [Administrative Assistant](#)
  - To submit an idea for a blog posting, contact Lauren Sinner at [laurensinner@gmail.com](mailto:laurensinner@gmail.com).
  - To contact Sean Misday, Social Media Manager, [smisday@gmail.com](mailto:smisday@gmail.com).

## PREPARING FOR A MEETING (suggestions from former Regional Rep Linda Gass)

### Identify a venue, a date and time

- Find a space large enough to hold your group comfortably. Saturday or Sunday Brunch has worked well. Evening events in some regions have not been as well attended. This may vary by region. Avoid holiday times and summer vacation; early Spring and Fall seem to be good times.
- Frequency: Members look forward to an annual event.

### Send an invitation

- Use email and send postcards only to those members without email.
- Give people 3 weeks' notice. Think about inviting members from neighboring states if

geographically feasible.

- Invitation should contain:

**When:** date and time range

**Where:** Address of venue

**Bring:** Your recent work, a potluck dish that is easy to share. State whether or not beverages will be provided

**Cost:** SDA Members free. Guests \$5.00

**Directions** to the venue & entrance location and parking. List a phone number to call if people have questions about the event. Also list a phone number to call on the date of the event in case someone gets lost.

**RSVP:** helps you know how many people to expect.

Send a **reminder** out the week before.

### **What to provide**

- Be prepared to provide the basics: paper plates, plastic cutlery, napkins, cups. You might also provide some beverages such as coffee, tea and water. Name-tags for people are useful.
- Always have SDA brochures & membership information available as well as past issues of the *Surface Design Journal*.

### **What the members bring**

- a potluck dish to share
- their latest work to share
- encourage them to bring a friend

### **Get some help:**

Recruit volunteers ahead of time to help you with setup and cleanup, with checking that people are members and collecting guest fees, helping people with nametags.

## COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM EXPERIENCED AREA REPRESENTATIVES AND GROUP COORDINATORS ABOUT MEETINGS, COMMUNICATING, AND ORGANIZING

“**Demonstrations** work well at meetings as well. Generally, there are members who have expertise they are willing to share. They are a good draw and people leave feeling that the meeting gave them something.”

“We have a lot of fiber groups, so we **meet quarterly** for 2-3 hours. Ask for volunteers to host, and move the meetings to different geographic areas. Once, a member invited us to her large studio and we all made a small felted work to be embellished at home. There was a \$25 fee to cover supplies and studio use. All of our meetings are open to non-members and we encourage members to bring guests. Of course, we love it when guests become members. Workshops are open first to members and if not filled after a certain date, non-members may come.”

“**Door prizes** are also fun. One year a member was moving across the country and called me about how to dispose of a number of "arty" pieces of clothing. There was so much buzz about who wanted which piece and who hoped to win. Since then, I have asked members to consider donating a small textile item for a door prize. Sometimes we have one item, sometimes several. They range from a small piece of special fabric to studio basics like interfacing to hand dyed scarves.”

“At each meeting we try to **set the date and location for the next** one. We use our blog for announcements of meetings as well as any events, calls for entry and exhibitions.”

“We have had 3 “gatherings” in the past 3 years, and overwhelmingly, people wanted a **group exhibition**. We have now had several of them.”

“Our meetings are fairly informal, usually held in someone’s home, with a presentation by one of our members, another artist or a fiber art business person. We have also viewed SDA conference CDs and admired SDA swatches. Once a year we have a potluck supper.”

“We organized an exhibition for which we got an **SDA Small Events Grant** and the opportunity to award an **SDA Award of Excellence**. We also created the ‘Exquisite Corpse’ exhibition, securing a venue for an exhibition of that work.”

“[We had] a three-day, spring **Art Retreat** for SDA members, at a small resort. We will rent a large studio space nearby, so people can work on their own projects, but the main focus will be getting to know each other (and our work) better, as well as planning for future events. The group also **supported the SOFA show** in Santa Fe.”

“Regarding local meetings, with close to 300 members, we have a theme or a presenter. We charge guests at our meetings \$5 and members are free. It is a potluck, but I provide cutlery, paper goods and drinks. The presenters are members who talk about their work and what they

do. Themes have been Positive & Negative, Textures, Inspirations. I also tell them that if they don't have anything that fits the theme, then just bring something they choose. We always have show and tell, which is very well received. The wonderful thing about SDA meetings is the diverse work that is shown. There has also never been a conversation lull at a SDA meeting!”

“Members were asked about the frequency of local meetings, which have historically been 1 in conference years and 2 in non-conference years. The overwhelming response is that it is enough. The meetings held in **January and February are the best attended.** From feedback, it appears that in the fall members are often busy with open studios and various markets. Summer meetings have had mixed results.”

“Attendance at meetings is 10-20% of the membership. Requests for newsletter content from members gets a 2-5% response. Once people attend a meeting, they realize how inspirational and informative they can be.”