“I have gained more out of the Best Practice Group (BPG) Program than almost anything else AWI offers,” according to Dustin Giffin of Giffin Interior & Fixture (BPG #10). Ted Robinson of Technique Manufacturing agreed saying, “The Best Practice Groups are the best thing that has happened in AWI.” Why?, NewsBriefs wonders.

Their comments took place during a Friday Family Gathering (FFG) conducted on Feb. 19 about AWI BPGs, when seven panelists shared views about their participation in these small forums established in 2005 for top level executives associated with AWI Manufacturing Members. Ably led by moderator Dustin Giffin, who is also Vice President of AWI, the spirited FFG discussion led the panelists to share highlights of their groups.

The following synopsis reveals many of the answers to why the BPGs are so successful with many maintaining a robust meeting schedule since the group’s founding.

Pre-COVID General Format
BPG members typically tour the shop of the host, who rotates among the nine remaining AWI Standards on the plate of the AWI Technical Committee for development in 2021, three are currently at various stages of the ANSI process and expected to be completed and approved this year. Another six are in line for development efforts by the AWI Technical Committee later this year.

Stair Standard
As announced in the April edition of NewsBriefs, ANSI / AWI SMA 0643-2021 – Wood Stair, Handrail, and Guard Systems Standard has completed the entire development, vetting and ANSI process with approval by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) on March 1, 2021. What remains is printing of the Standard, posting on the websites of AWI and the Stairbuilders and Manufacturers Association (SMA), and an effective date that relates to its accessibility. At our press time, a proposed effective date is nearly final.

Countertops Standard
“There is just a little more work to be done in the ANSI process before AWI Standard 1236 – Countertops is expected to be approved,” said AWI Technical Director Hunter Morrison. “Feedback from the canvass and public comment periods have already been received by the AWI Technical Committee, which is addressing the issues raised with each commentor. Presuming there is agreement with the committee’s resolution of proposed changes, the Countertops Standard will enter the final process of securing ANSI approval and final action.”

The proposed Standard’s scope includes: engineered and natural...
AWI BEST PRACTICE GROUPS (cont. from page 1)

members for each two-day gathering. John Leininger of Leininger Cabinet & Woodworking (BPG #3) noted that “we seriously look at each person’s problem and offer suggestions. For example, one member had a particularly challenging problem with a partner about which we offered suggestions for resolution.”

We pushed each other to take action.

Both John and Joe Wadsworth of Custom Source Woodworking (Virtual BPG) affirmed the value of accountability within their groups. “We pushed each other to take action,” which Dustin confirms contributes to the maximum return on time spent at the meeting.

“We typically meet at a hotel,” Ted said, “and have evolved since our founding in 2008 to meet at destination sites.” While the tours of BPG member host facilities remain a part of our group (BPG #10 – Next Gen II), it has been interesting to see the changes within our group’s companies,” said AWI President, Sebastien DesMarais of Hollywood Woodwork. “During our shop tours, we dig deeper than in a more typical AW Plant Tour.”

Comradery / Socialization

“For our Women’s BPG (#13), we carve out some time for something personal,” said AWI Past President Kristine Cox of Rowland Woodworking. “This helps to form a bond among group members, which continues apart from the BPG meetings, such as correspondence via email.” She added that BPG #13 often convenes at AWI Spring Leadership Conferences. Chris Buell of Wright Architectural Millwork (BPG #10) said their group has added sports activities. John confirmed that the chemistry among members of his BPG enhanced the friendships that grew over time.

Collaborative Business

A by-product of the BPGs can be partnering with members on a business project, according to Joe. More than one-half of the panelists have performed work for members of their BPG. John singled out a huge, time-sensitive project his group did in collaboration with another BPG member, Conley Caseworks. Sebastien said, “Each region and market has its highs and lows. Currently three of our BBG members are helping Hollywood Woodwork with a project. We balance each other’s business, and I am confident about sharing the job, because we know the work of our BPG partners. Collaboration is a huge benefit.”

Chapters vs. BPGs

“Best Practice Groups and AWI Chapters work in a similar fashion, but I think they have more differences than similarities. While there is an opportunity for sharing in a chapter setting, it is less structured and detailed as you find in a BPG. In your BPG you have a dedicated group where you have the ability and opportunity to get much more in-depth with current issues; more focused feedback … your support group is one phone call or email away.”

Non-Competitive Members

Aman Bajwa of Kambium, Inc. (BPG #5) noted that although his group is “somewhat segregated by region the focus and skills of each member company are complimentary rather than competitive.” BPG #13 includes some members geographically nearby but they are not directly competitive.

2021 AWI PARTNERS

AWI thanks the 26 members listed at right and welcomes them to the new AWI Partner Program. Their additional support throughout the year helps to fund the association’s programs, publications and other services for members. AWI Manufacturing Members are encouraged to connect with these partners anytime at www.awinet.org whenever a need arises for their services. To learn more about the program for AWI members contact AWI Director of Marketing & Membership Katie Allen at kallen@awinet.org.

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stone, solid surface, phenolic, decorative laminate, solid and veneered wood, and epoxy resin. Standard 1236 was developed based on information from industry experience, the Architectural Woodwork Standards, Edition 2 (2014), and from input by industry manufacturers and other specialists, according to Hunter. No Duty Levels are required in this Standard; however, there are requirements relating to structural and aesthetic performance. For this Standard, the canvass and public comment periods occurred simultaneously in accordance with ANSI procedures for standards development. "If all proceeds as anticipated, a Countertops Standard should be approved by ANSI, and published with an effective date by the end of 2021," Hunter said.

**Finishing Standard**
Next up is a Finishing Standard which is currently in development by the AWI Technical Committee. As soon as the remaining members of the canvass group are identified to balance its composition (which is imminent), this draft standard will make its way through the ANSI process. As with all standards development, the process requires openness, balance, consensus, and due process.

This proposed Standard’s scope is to provide standardized objective criteria for the evaluation of the performance and aesthetic attributes of coatings applied to architectural woodwork and related interior products.

This standard will assist in the clear communication of expectations of a coating technology between the manufacturer, woodworker, specifier, architect, and end user for factory applied coatings.

**Other Standards**
A proposed Wall, Ceiling Surfacing & Partitions Standard (to be titled Wood Paneling), is in line for development by the AWI Technical Committee, followed by a Millwork Standard.

The remaining proposed Standards in no particular order for development are: Wood Trim, Wood Frames, Integrated Door Opening Assemblies, and Specialty Casework.

The goal is to gain ANSI approval, publish, and identify an effective date for the remaining standards by 2022. Stay tuned to NewsBriefs for progress reports as developments occur.

You won’t get Jimmy Buffet’s song out of your mind when you start planning to attend the 2021 AWI Convention! Put on your flip flops, plan your escape, and set your coordinates to fun and relaxation for Margaritaville Lake Resort, Lake Conroe, Montgomery, Texas. It’s the perfect blend of Lake Latitude and Island Attitude.

**SAVE THE DATE!**
69TH AWI ANNUAL CONVENTION
OCTOBER 6-8, 2021
MARGARITAVILLE LAKE RESORT
LAKE CONROE
MONTGOMERY, TEXAS

Photo: Benchmarkresortsandhotel.com
WANT EXPOSURE TO POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS?

There’s a way to get exposure for a recent architectural woodwork project, while promoting the benefits of wood to architects, design professionals and specifiers.

AWI members, along with design professionals, contractors and owners, are invited to participate in the AWI Award of Excellence Program (AOE). All winners of the prestigious quarterly recognition have their project published in Design Solutions Magazine and those published in AWI’s quarterly journal are eligible for consideration for AWI’s coveted Standard of Excellence Award bestowed annually.

Design Solutions Magazine is the official journal of the Architectural Woodwork Institute. Each quarterly issue showcases beautiful examples of fine architectural woodwork manufactured by AWI Manufacturing Member companies.

The next project submittal deadline for the AOE Program is August 1, 2021 for the fall issue. Visit www.awinet.org > Publications > Design Solutions for submission forms. Direct your questions to Margaret Fisher at mfisher@awinet.org.

AWI BEST PRACTICE GROUPS (cont. from page 2)

one phone call or email away. Having been involved in a local chapter and a BPG, I definitely find both to be a valuable resource,” said Kristine.

Virtual Format

Several groups had to meet virtually during the COVID pandemic, while BPG #15 formed in July 2020 is the only group to date that has not met face-to-face. Sebastien proposed that AWI harness the virtual movement and consider formation of focus groups for their Education Outreach teams. “The AWI seminars offer information overload which might evolve into small groups who could meet virtually afterwards as an outgrowth of specific seminar topics.”

The FFG on Best Practice Groups ended as it began…“It’s the best thing that has happened for our company.”

More Information

Several Best Practice Groups are seeking additional members. Numbers 7, 5, 6, 13 and 15 are interested in accepting new members to round out their strength. If you are interested in exploring participation in such a group, contact BPG staff liaison Taylor Shaughnessy at tshaughnessy@awinet.org. The Members Only area of www.awinet.org also has general information about BPG operations as well as a recording of the FFG session on Feb. 19.