



2nd Annual Meeting & Convention

2021

**LEATHER AND HIDE**

**COUNCIL OF AMERICA**

**OCTOBER 14 - 15, 2021**

Intercontinental Hotel in Chicago, Illinois + Via Teleconference

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

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COUNCIL OF AMERICA

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## LHCA CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Dear LHCA Members,

Welcome to our second board meeting as a merged organization. What a year with all the challenges posed by Covid. Your organization continues to be healthy from both a financial and membership standpoint.

Steve Sothmann and Michael Schumpp continue to lead our organization with the utmost professionalism. They have been able to renegotiate our contract with NAMI, saving our association \$75,000 for 2021. They have worked to keep open our export markets for hides, while solving our everyday disputes regarding overseas shipments. They have been instrumental in bringing new companies into the LHCA. As importantly, they have secured every available dollar of USDA promotional funding, amounting to almost \$7 in USDA funding for every \$1 in dues paid.

Steve Lange continues to run the lab quite well as a self-sustaining part of our association, staying in the black despite the dislocations caused by the pandemic. Most importantly, Steve has been able to renegotiate our 15 year contract with the University of Cincinnati on favorable terms. This would not have been possible given the relationship that existed under the lab's previous leadership. Steve has integrated our lab more deeply into the University by offering both work and design projects to students.

The LHCA remains much involved in the California Prop 65 lawsuit against the glove and shoe brands. While resolution of the lawsuit rests outside of our hands, we are working to make sure that any settlement does not place undue burden on our industry. Chrome VI is the silent elephant in the room about which our industry must be constantly vigilant.

A special thanks to all our members who have accepted the dues increase this past year. This was necessary to keep our association healthy and functioning in your best interests.



Jay Jensen  
Chairman, LHCA



Shep Hermann  
Chairman, LHCA

Pending the election of officers, Shep will be handing the role of co-chairman over to Kerry Brozyna of Wolverine. Our intent is to keep a co-chairman from each of our original groups, as well as similar representation on the Executive Committee, to make sure everyone is represented. Kerry will bring a new perspective given his competencies in the leather industry and involvement with footwear. He is going to be an excellent leader. Shep is most grateful to everyone in the industry for their support these past dozen years culminating in the merger of our two great associations.

Our adversaries nowadays are a combination of alternative petro-based products and the animal-"rights" lobbyists. These are pushed by numerous NGOs with a lot of money who don't always appreciate the value of our industry and its products. Our industry association speaks with one voice to counteract these forces.

We are continuing to work on the marketing campaign using funding from the USDA. We utilize this money to fund the Real Leather campaign and global competitions that keep leather in the hands of young designers and push leather to the forefront for our customers and consumers.

It is our hope and expectation that all of us will work together for the common good. We invite anyone who has an issue to bring it forward so we can address it in open and productive fashion. We are one family now. A hearty welcome to all.

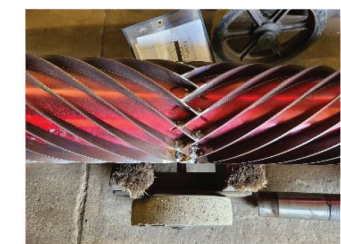
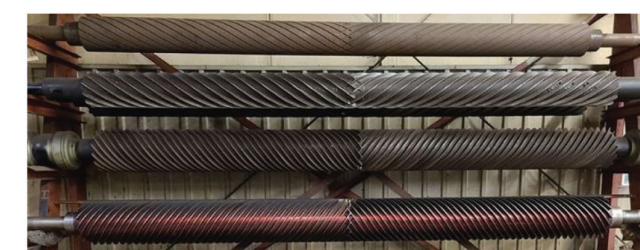
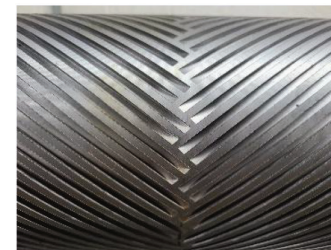
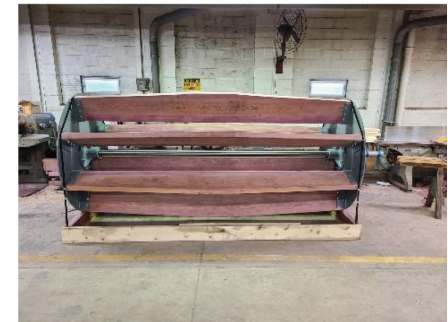
- Jay Jensen

- Shep Hermann



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## PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Welcome to the 2nd Annual Meeting and Convention of the Leather and Hide Council of America!

Welcome to the 2nd Annual Meeting and Convention of the Leather and Hide Council of America, finally with an in-person component! After 18 months of no travel and all Zoom meetings, I'm incredibly excited to see many of you again in the flesh. And we also appreciate those who are participating in the meeting from afar - thank you for your continued commitment to the organization.

It is hard to believe that our new Association is nearly two years old, but what a momentous two years those have been. In some ways, it feels like we've been doing this for many years together, and in other ways it feels like we just started. It has no doubt been a challenging time period for everyone, but I believe we are moving solidly in the right direction as an industry.



Steve Sothmann,  
President of LHCA

From the Association's perspective, 2021 was a year of further program and advocacy - we expanded our Real Leather. Stay Different. Student Design Competitions to include China, Taiwan, Italy, the UK, and an online international component. We continued our consumer and brand marketing efforts under the same campaign, honing in our messaging on the things leather does best - sustainability, durability, and beauty. We were even more active in the general media space, defending and promoting the interests of leather as the best material in the world, such as by challenging fashion and auto brands who make false claims about leather publicly.

We also signed an exciting new agreement with the World Wildlife Fund to give our membership access to a variety of WWF's tools to address ongoing social and environmental issues in their supply. I believe this work will help to position the US industry as one of the most sustainable and forward-thinking industries in the world.

From the broader industry's perspective, we finally saw some market relief and returning demand for leather in a number of end-use sectors, only to run smack dab into significant transportation-related headaches. While we are certainly not the only industry experiencing this pain, transportation breakdowns present a perennial and frustrating problem that I hope we will see relief in the near term, and efforts to address the underlying problems in the long term. It is the only way we will avoid going through this mess yet again in another 4 or 5 years.

Finally, I would like to take time to thank our Association officers, Executive Committee and Board Members for the guidance they provided this year as we continued to grow as an organization. Without the leadership of our Co-Chairman Shep Hermann and Jay Jensen, especially, I am sure we would not be as strong as we are at this point. I'd also like to thank our staff and consultants, whom have worked diligently to get us where we are today. The entire team banded together and worked extremely hard this year, and all deserve a hearty round of applause.

I hope you all enjoy the program and comradery of the Annual Meeting and Convention, and enjoy your colleagues' company once again! - Steve Sothmann, President of LHCA



# AGENDA 2021

OCTOBER 14 - 15, 2021

Intercontinental Hotel, Chicago, Illinois

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021 All times are listed in Central Time (CT)

10:00 am - 11:00 am	Foundation Board Meeting Foundation Board Members Only
11:15 am - 12:45 pm	Executive Committee Meeting Executive Committee Members Only Lunch to be served
1:00 pm - 1:50 pm	Hides and Skins Committee Session All LHCA Members are Welcome to Attend
2:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Board of Directors Meeting - Including Combined Sustainability, Marketing, and Tanner/ Environmental Sessions All LHCA Members are Welcome to Attend Only LHCA Board Members may Vote
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm	Reception Open to All Attendees

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2021 All times are listed in Central Time (CT)

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SESSION. OPEN TO ALL MEETING PARTICIPANTS

8:30 am	Breakfast
9:00 am	Business Session I  Welcome and Opening Remarks - Co-Chairs Shep Hermann and Jay Jensen Sponsor Address - Hidexe Association Business - Steve Sothmann "Introduction to the Sustainable Leather Foundation" - Deborah Taylor, Managing Partner, SLF "Real Leather. Stay Different. Campaign and Design Competition Current and Future Direction" - Tim Lewis and Glenn Tarr - gt&i
10:30 am	Coffee Break
10:45 am	Business Session II  "Biodegradability of Leather - A Discussion" - Karl Flowers, Technical Director, Authenticae LTD "The Leather Hour and Social Media Influencers" - Eva Barbara Bongard, Thomas Ross, and Mike Rubinovotz
12:00 pm	Adjourn

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## SPEAKERS

### DEBORAH TAYLOR, PCQI

Managing Director, Sustainable Leather Foundation  
UN/CEFACT Consultant, United Nations Economic  
Commission for Europe



Deborah is the Managing Director of the Sustainable Leather Foundation, a not-for-profit Foundation, set up specifically to support the leather industry in becoming more sustainable. The purpose of the Foundation is to provide a global platform for the benefit of all stakeholders in the leather value chain, from farm to post consumption. SLF provides a certification programme, education, best practice, cohesive collaboration and support for transformative environmental and social change. In addition, the Sustainable Leather Foundation believes that consumer focused information is fundamental to raise the level of understanding and education around the positive and sustainable practices that already exist, and are in development, within the leather industry.

Previously from 2015-2020, Deborah managed the Leather Working Group (LWG), an environmental stewardship programme that supports the reduction of environmental impacts caused by tannery operations around the world. While managing LWG, Deborah saw membership and audited tannery numbers double, managed the increased number of audit tools now available and created greater collaborative effort and formal links with other initiatives in the sector.

A practitioner member of the Chartered Quality Institute and a certified SA8000 lead auditor, Deborah also currently works as a Consultant for the UNECE on the project to "enhance traceability and transparency for more sustainable value chains in the garment and footwear sector". In addition, she is a Council Member for the Society of Leather Technologists.

At home, Deborah has previously served her village as a local Parish Councillor and is a current Trustee of a local charity, the Welton Townlands Trust, since 2005. She is also a member of Mensa since 1992 with a registered IQ of 150.

## SPEAKERS

### EVA BARBARA BONGARD

Founding Member, The Leather Hour



Eva is a leather industry connector, bio-friendly passionate and founding member of The Leather Hour.

Integrity, honesty, persistence, and customer focus have been the core values during her career, since it started at young age helping her father in a western boot factory in Leon, Guanajuato in Mexico.

Being introduced directly to the international trade of the leather industry 24 years ago for the supply of bovine leather and raw materials. Eva has been traveling around the world, searching for new supplies, and creating strategic alliances between international markets and entry trade opportunities being involved in the commercial side, along with supporting the administration and logistic required within the different countries.

When Eva moved to USA, she was involved in the supply chain of the leather industry creating business development processes, customer service, and international logistics operations with clients in Europa, Asia, and Mexico for wet blue, wet white hides as well as splits.

Passionate about the uniqueness of the leather and our industry as well as inspired by the changes within the industry toward more sustainable processes, at the end 2019 Eva created TWIL The World In leather where she looks to offer unique and creative leather applications for home décor through her brand TWIL and strives for sustainability in the products she offers as well as she looks for strategies to open markets where leather is not being used for products.

Eva is a leather influencer. She strives for reinventing the way we use and think about leather in our everyday lives through her daily work and networking. Through The Leather Hour she has found an opportunity to share the positive message about leather, joining experience and efforts with Mike and Thomas.

Besides leather, her passions involve humanitarian work as well as environmental awareness.

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## SPEAKERS

### MIKE RUBINOVITZ

The Leather Hour



Mike was born into multi-generational (5) leather industry family.

His personal involvement has been working on all 6 continents improving leather and hide quality from the Farms up until leather everything that consumers use with this amazing natural material.

In each of his roles in corporate and private business Mike has been able to apply what he has learned to create great teams of humans to manage without his presence yet always being remembered for his input.

Has learned, worked, and applied forward thinking strategies for the Leather Industry and now make and promote the use of natural veg tanned leathers as a more environmentally friendly process moving forward and thus also helping create durable and sustainable leather products.

An advocate and active promoter for starting the DE commoditization of leather increasing better returns for the tanning sector and reducing unnecessary logistics in the global trading and commodity format of leather.

An advocate for empowering small leatherworkers throughout the world who are in a sourcing crisis for good stable leather raw materials and information to combat the VEGAN alternative materials movement which is growing.

Mike's passion for the leather industry positioned himself as an expert in understanding the good and the bad about leather and being able to talk openly about that to a wide background of people.

He understands the correct application of raw materials to the correct types of leather articles and their finishes combined with years of knowledge in the Leathermaking and shoe industries as well from Farm to Sales Outlet.

Mike during the last 10 years has been able to expand and modernize his knowledge base by starting up various E platforms for the commercialization of leather, tools plus anything needed for craftsmen to produce their fine leather goods.

Mike now speaks together with Thomas Ross and Eva Barbara Bongard on clubhouse every week on many topics related to Leather and its fascinating world in THE LEATHER HOUR.

That's where he advocates for some more awareness towards and from global consumers designers influencers and Leather Association related people to try to appreciate and understand in a newer open and transparent way what leather is really about with a big focus on our youth through Education and Social media platforms like Instagram Tik Tok and Clubhouse.

**SPEAKERS**

**THOMAS ROSS**

Founding Partner Social Selling HQ LLC  
 Founding Member of The Leather Hour



Thomas Ross directly and more recently through Social Selling HQ LLC has been helping companies grow from start up to enterprise for over 20 years. He has achieved many sales and marketing accreditations from numerous groups and associations over 3 decades. As a founding partner of Social Sales HQ and a founding member of "The Leather Hour", Thomas brings a wealth of direct experience in Sales, Digital Marketing & Digital Transformation. Thomas has had the opportunity to work in Europe and all areas across North America. From Start-Up to Enterprise, Thomas has developed programs for many industries and organizations all focused on the goal of growing brand recognition while driving new revenues. Thomas and the teams at Social Selling HQ actively develop and implement Digital Transformation programs across many industries such as:

- Leather Industry
- Manufacturing
- SaaS/Cloud technologies
- Distribution & Logistics
- Technology
- New Venture Start ups

Thomas believes that actions and results speak louder than recommendations or reports ever could. Working directly with organizations he has provided value through the following key services:

Integrated Social Sales and Digital Marketing

- Digital content development/engagement
- CX & CRM implementation and integration
- Employee advocacy & Social HR
- Social Brand Value and market penetration
- Brand Advocacy
- Managed and supported social selling/SSHQ Pro

Digital Transformation

- Digital Workshops
- Digital Roadmaps
- Digital tooling and process transformation
- Financial & Performance Management/Sales & Marketing Metrics/KPI's

Combining current digital technologies with the execution of customized social sales solutions is what Thomas delivers through Social Selling HQ.

With hundreds of client testimonials across North America, Thomas looks forward too many more opportunities to come.

# Southwest Hide Company

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## SPEAKERS

### KARL FLOWERS

Technical Director, Authenticae Ltd



Karl Flowers is the Technical Director at Authenticae Ltd, who specialise in leather biodegradability. He started his tanning career with the Leather Industries Research Institute, LIRI (in South Africa) and has actively consulted and researched in fields including sustainability, CO2 deliming, new waterproofing and retanning chemical applications, cationic finishing, computer-aided colour matching and drying technologies.

Karl has taught every topic of leather technology and leather science, to varying depths, from certificate level to PhD, and is currently the external examiner for the International School of Tanning Technology. Karl is consulting Technical Editor for International Leather Maker, and Technical Director for Sustainable Leather Foundation. Karl's research focusses on understanding the biodegradability of leather and leather-like materials, with an active interest in life cycle analysis systems. Karl is passionate about the global dynamics of the leather industry; clean technologies; and operations management in the tanning industry.



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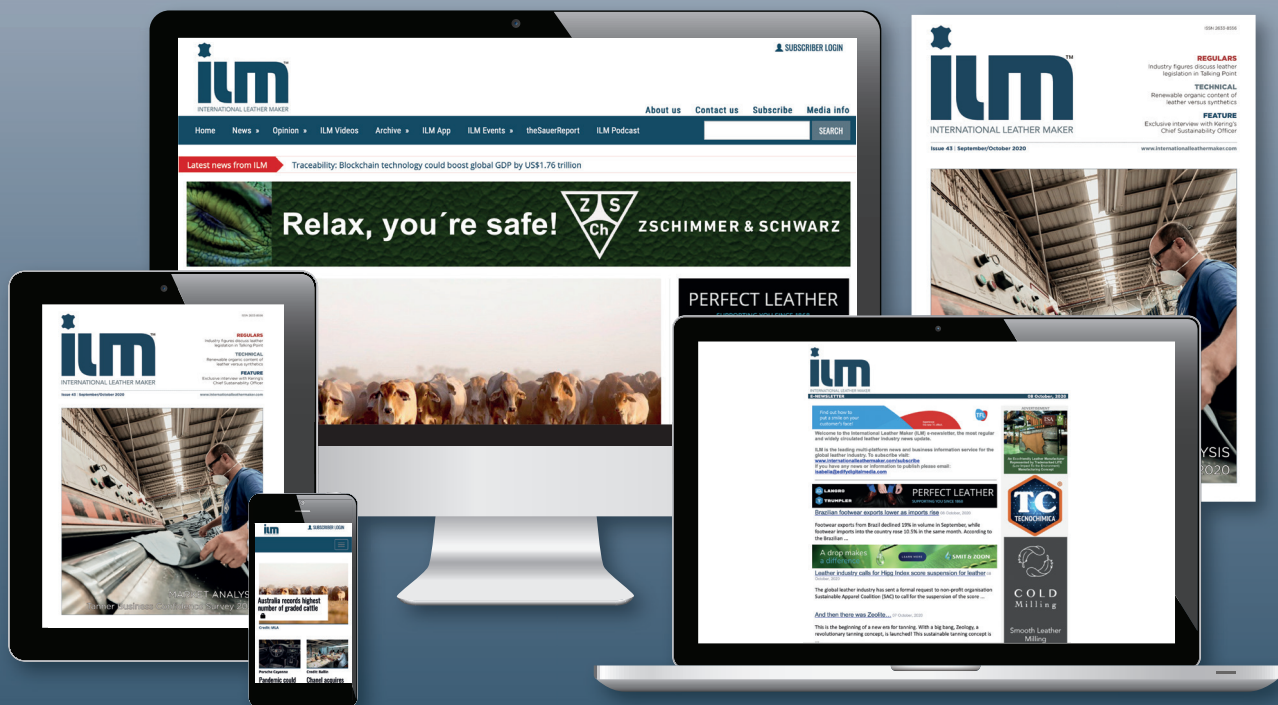
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