

CANADIAN



LEATHERCRAFT

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

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C. S. C. L.

C.S.C.L. is a non-profit, voluntarily staffed, educational service for leathercraftsmen -- organized in 1950 by amateur and professional craftsmen -- membership includes craftsmen from coast to coast in Canada and American friends are joining each year.

WHAT ARE THE CHIEF OBJECTIVES OF THE SOCIETY?

- to improve the status of leathercraft by raising the standards of design and craftsmanship.
- to help anyone interested in any phase of the craft.
- to raise standards of teaching and judging.
- to conduct sales and exhibitions.
- to co-operate with the other services in furthering the crafts
- to supply teachers, demonstrators and adjudicators upon request.

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Robert Muma, FCSCCL - History of the society's first ten years
Editorial Committee - History of the society's next fifteen years
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V. Pres. Mrs. Beula Reynolds, ACSCL, 500 Parkinson, Woodstock

Co-ordinating Editor Mrs. Joy Hutcheson, R.R. # 4, Ingersoll

THE SOCIETY'S FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

This is the tenth anniversary of the Canadian Society of Creative Leathercraft. This organization as we see it today is a mature tree with a number of Branches in Toronto, Hamilton, London, Peterborough, Tillsonburg, Barrie and Petrolia.

In outlining the growth of this tree we ought to know something of its roots and something of the seed from which it germinated -- something too of the environment which gave it shape.

As far as we know, prior to 1947 there was no leathercraft organizations at all in Canada. In that year, Mrs. Edith Roscoe organized the Weston Leathercraft Guild.

Some time during the following year, 1948, sensing a need for a wider organization, Mrs. Roscoe called a meeting of craftsmen and craft house representatives at 53 Avenue Road, which is now the Piccadilly Club. This old church was being used by the Handicrafts Guild for a series of craft courses that year. Eleven people were present at this informal meeting: Edith Roscoe, Margaret McFarlane, Clarice Packham and Mrs. Cannon from Weston; Jack and Margaret McDougall; Ray Potter and Evelyn Hamill from Lewiscraft; Bob Wallace, Ruth Home, and myself. We discussed leathercraft standards and original design, the need for an organization, etc. Nothing concrete was done and we adjourned to meet again if any need arose.

About the same time the Ottawa Valley Leathercraft Guild was formed by Deane Russell.

In February, 1950, the Toronto Art Gallery held an exhibition of contemporary crafts and a great many pieces of leather were entered but only two or three were accepted. Something must be wrong, what was it? Everybody was discussing the question. In a letter to Deane Russell March 12, 1950, I questioned the possibility that a solution might be in an "organization of Leathercraftsmen on a high standard of creative craftsmanship."

In his reply of March 23, 1950, Deane was enthusiastic in his agreement: "We would be most interested in seriously exploring such a plan with you during our spring visit to Toronto" he wrote. "If you care to explore the idea with others in the meantime, we would be glad to come to Toronto prepared to present some rather important information to any group who might make up a first meeting of this nature."

The idea was just a larger development of a trend or growth already started and the meeting finally set for June 8, 1950, at the central YMCA was the actual sprouting of the organization we have

today. The minutes of this first meeting are very interesting now, and the following is a resume of them:

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the formation of a guild or society to further the aims and interests of leathercraft in general, which would have representation from many groups of leathercraftsmen.

There were seventeen people present at this first meeting: Robert Numa, Chairman; Deane H. Russell, Ottawa; Ray Potter, Miss E. Hamill, Miss Judy Drope and Stan McQuarrie representing Lewiscraft; Mrs. Margaret McFarlane and Mrs. Edith Roscoe, Weston Leathercraft Guild; Miss Clarice Packham, Clarke and Clarke Leathers; R.K. Wallace, Bob Wallace Hobbycraft; Harold Booth, Hamilton, Booth's Hobbies; Dr. and Mrs. R. K. Larmour; Mr. and Mrs. Don MacKinnon; Mrs. J. Carter Miss Edith Howison.

Deane Russell opened the meeting with a discussion of contemporary design and felt that in this field an organized leathercraft society could do much to further Canadian Leathercraft.

The name chosen at this time for the Society was The Canadian Society of Creative Leathercraftsmen. Officers elected were: Deane Russell, President; Mrs. Margaret McFarlane, Vice-President; Robert Numa, Secretary-Treasurer. Also elected were an Advisory Council of: Harold Booth, Hamilton; Mrs. Reta Larmour, Toronto; Mr. Louis Zimmerman, Montreal; and one member from Ottawa to be elected later.

It was suggested that each new member should submit his work to a Board of Selection which would vote on whether such work was of sufficiently high quality for the craftsman to be admitted.

A Constitution was discussed and such topics as membership qualification and fees were considered. It was decided that a tentative Constitution should be drafted by the chief executive officers.

An initial Treasury was set up by an assessment of \$1.00 from everyone present. There was a collection of leathercraft on display contributed by the various active members present including luggage, purses, wallets and wall plaques. The meeting was voted a distinct success.

Deane Russell continued as President of the Society for four years giving a great deal of his time and energies developing the Society through this formative period. Our quarterly 12-page bulletin, "Canadian Leathercraft", came into existence in September, 1951 with Deane as Editor until he resigned from both positions in 1954.

Dr. Larmour followed for two years as President, succeeded by Mrs. Jean Newton for one year, and Mr. Fred Brown, who begins his fourth term this year. Dorothy Numa became Editor of the Bulletin

in 1954 and is relinquishing it this year to Mrs. Margaret McFarlane.

When we were barely two years old in 1952, our President attended the Annual meeting of the Canadian Arts Council in Montreal with a brief from our Society and we were accepted into full membership in that coordinating body of the arts and crafts in Canada now known as the Canadian Conference of the Arts.

In February, 1952, our first travelling exhibition called "Canadian Handmades in Leather", was organized by Mrs. Reta Larmour, the Exhibitions Chairman. During the sixteen months it was on the road, it travelled an estimated 14,000 miles, was shown 39 separate times, and was seen by approximately 150,000 people. The second Travelling Exhibition, called "Canadian Originals in Leather," went out on March 1st, 1954, and toured 29 centres across Canada. The name of this second exhibition indicates the extent to which we had already achieved our goal in encouraging leathercraftsmen to attempt original design.

Since 1955, Mrs. Nora Huyck has been in charge of Exhibitions. It would be a surprisingly long list of collections of leathercraft that these two have handled during our history not only for exhibitions but for Membership and CNE competitions as well. A few of the more noteworthy events at which our exhibition of leathercraft was a prominent feature were: Nine of our Annual Meetings, five International Assemblies, the First and Second International Hobby and Homecraft Shows in the Colliseum, The Canadian Shoe and Leather Fair in November, 1952, in the Automotive Building, two years at the Handyman Show, and M'Lady Fair in Montreal in December, 1952; Pacific National Exhibition in 1955 where we received the Bedford Cup for the best leathercraft and the PNE Medal for the Best Club. This winter we also had a special exhibition in the Lord Simcoe Hotel.

Special Mention should be made of the exhibition which was assembled and sent on invitation to the First British International Handicrafts, Homecrafters and Hobbies Show at Olympia, London, England, 1953. This was visited by 100,000 people during nine days and the officials reported to us that our display of leathercraft was the best single exhibit in the show.

1954 was a big year in our history. It was then we became affiliated with the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, and this has proven to be a valuable association in various ways, especially in regard to the annual CNE competitions and the preChristmas sale of work through the Guild shop.

In February, from 5-12, 1954, we arranged an extensive exhibition of leathercraft in conjunction with a sale and demonstration of work for the International Hobby and Homecraft Show at the Colliseum. One evening during this show a delegation of sixteen members

from the Eastern Leathercraft Guild of Rochester, N.Y., visited our display and met with us later at the home of Dr. & Mrs. Larmour, where plans were briefly discussed for organization on a larger scale. In April, sixteen of our members returned the visit to the Rochester Guild and plans were made for the First International Assembly of Leathercraftsmen at the Hotel Statler in Buffalo in the fall of that year. With one exception this has continued as an annual event in which our Society has played a very important role.

For the Fourth International Assembly of Leathercraftsmen held in Rochester, our Society had proposed the inauguration of a Salon of Leathercraft to be based on art standards. A jury of Rochester arts and crafts authorities of national distinction selected the pieces and made four Honor Awards, which were won by four of our Charter Members.

Early in our history we set up the graded membership system: General members, Associates and Fellows. This has had much to do with making us keenly aware of leathercraft standards and other organizations have called on us to provide qualified judges for leathercraft competitions. We also developed a system of grading teachers of leathercraft according to their experience and training.

Every organization, in order to function properly, needs a set of rules. The Constitution not only provides a set of rules but architecturally provides the framework of the building. This Framework of our Society was begun at the organizational meeting and rapidly took shape through many Executive meetings during the first few years. However, many weaknesses became apparent and had to be repaired. Indeed, whole sections of the structure had to be torn out and rebuilt and new sections added. The architect in charge of this very important job of reconstruction has been Mrs. Larmour, who, with the expert help of Mrs. Gel Brigden, the wife of one of our members, has worked untiringly anticipating our Society's needs and checking the legal angles. A nucleus of devoted members has always been on hand when needed giving many hours to threshing and rethreshing the many complex details involved. Now on our tenth anniversary we are happy to have adopted this Constitution in its finished form. Now we have a sound foundation. Now we can continue our building in the knowledge that we have a structural framework that is secure.

Today on our tenth anniversary we have only to glance at many of the fine pieces of work on display to verify this imposing outline of the development of our Society in the realization of its ideals. Here is a challenge to each individual member to look for even greater opportunities for development in the years that go on from here.

From 1961-1966, Nora Huyck was a very capable Chairman for the Council of Fellows.

During Fred Brown's third year as President in 1959, a scholarship to study book binding was awarded by the Women's Committee of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild to Bob Muma. Since this time, Bob has devoted his full time to book binding and operates his own studio in Toronto. In the beginning Bob passed his knowledge along through leathercraft classes and was the author of several books on tooling and colouring, but as his fame spread, his time was taken up more completely with the binding of books. Through the years Bob has been most willing to assist anyone who asked for help in any phase of leathercraft and has given much time and devotion to the affairs of C.S.C.L.. He has been our archivist and the keeper of standards of teaching. The Fellow, Associate and Weston Trophy articles have always been judged at the Muma residence.

Endel Ruberg of Montreal won the Best Canadian Design award at the C.N.E., this was the first time that this award was given to a leathercraftsman.

Fred Brown has always been one of our most capable workers, putting in many hours on demonstrations of various leather techniques such as 3 dimensional work, turned edges, moulding and colouring, and has taught leathercraft classes. Many of his pupils have joined C.S.C.L.. He has served the Society as President, Chairman of the Council of Fellows and Chairman of the Library Committee. Fred Brown is one person who has a profound belief in C.S.C.L. and has pointed out just recently that when you have people who will travel 30 to 130 miles to executive council meetings there must be something there. He has maintained a constant level of support to the executive and the society as a whole. When someone is needed to do some hard work, Fred is always willing to help. It was during the fourth year of his presidency, that the Constitution and By-laws were printed by the courtesy of Mr. Harold Frost of Wallaceburg, Ontario and circulated to the members.

Harold Wilson of Hamilton was the President during our 12th year, and we held our seventh annual Christmas sale at Canadian Handicrafts Guild. Harold was a fine leathercraftsman; his specialty was masks. He and Mrs. Wilson also provided excellent demonstrations on different types of braided belts. Unfortunately his term as President was cut short by ill health.

Viola Harris became the next President and during this very active year, we participated in the Stratford Shakespearian Festival, and the eighth Christmas sale was held at the C.G.C. sales shop. Viola Harris was another good craftsman, but after retiring from work has become deeply involved with the Canadian Guild of Crafts and through her position there has kept C.S.C.L. informed of current happenings in the craft field in Canada and

throughout the world. She was made an Honorary Fellow in 1970.

Cecil Roebuck was presented with an Honorary Associate membership in 1963 for his faithful and willing service.

We received an invitation to exhibit at the Canadian Handicraft Guild Annual meeting and workshop in New Brunswick. Twenty-five articles were sent to this. Also eleven articles from six members were selected and displayed at the Stratford Shakespearian Festival. We again held a Christmas sale.

Next, we participated in the Pacific National Exhibition and forty-eight articles were sent. The Bedford Cup Trophy was won by one of our members. Thirty-seven pieces of Leathercraft were sent to Albertacraft 1964 Exhibition, these were sent for display only, but three were selected to go in the Alberta travelling Craft Exhibition. We also had a display at the Bell Telephone Bldg., University Ave., Toronto, Hobby show at the C.N.E., Christmas sale at the Guild shop and at the Algonquin Pioneer Exhibit, as well as the 10th International Assembly of Leathercraftsmen. This meant that our Exhibition chairman, Mrs. Clara Cavanagh had a very busy year for which we express our heartfelt thanks.

At the 15th Annual meeting, Belleville joined as a branch with Dorothy Harwood as charter President. Reta Larmour was awarded an Honorary Life Fellow membership. Margaret McFarlane retired as editor of the Canadian Leathercraft and Gerry Mills took over the job. Dorothy Muma was President at this time. This was the first year that the articles for C.N.E. exhibit were screened by the Fellows. Gel Brigden was chairman of the Arts, Crafts and Hobbies show at the C.N.E.. The eleventh annual Xmas sale at the Canadian Handicrafts Guild was held.

In 1966 the Arts, Crafts and Hobbies show at the C.N.E. became an exhibition and sale and the booth was manned by the members from different branches each day. Work was accepted from three craftsmen for part of a Canadian Craft Exhibition held at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, U.S.A.. We also contributed articles for the Community Programs travelling craft exhibition. The annual Xmas sale was held for the twelfth year at the Guild shop.

In Dorothy Muma's third year as President, Dorothy Read was given an Honorary Associate membership for her service in connection with the C.N.E.. A grant of \$1500 was received from the Dept. of Education Community Programs to purchase and set up a travelling exhibition. Forty-one pieces were purchased and exhibited in four showcases. The exhibition, named "Leather Today" was toured by the Art Institute of Ontario.

Janis Zalitis donated a sterling silver pin to the associate

with the highest mark commencing in 1967. Robert Muma was commissioned to produce a handmade volume to be a permanent record of each year's winners of the Salon Awards of the International Assembly of Leathercraftsmen.

1968-69, the annual Xmas sale was discontinued, so the only opportunity for sales was the Arts, Crafts and Hobbies show at the C.N.E.. A change in the Constitution, Article VIII, was made to change our name from Canadian Society of Creative Leathercraft to Canadian Society for Creative Leathercraft. Woodstock branch was formed in 1968. Clara Cavanagh was elected Chairman and Anne Hook became Secretary of the Council of Fellows.

Dorothy Muma served six years as editor of Canadian Leathercraft, four years as a very capable President, and has continued to have an active interest in the society along with holding down a full time job. Dorothy has also worked with her husband, Bob, in giving classes of instruction in leathercraft. She also has produced Canadian designs for handbags.

Irva Ford of Hamilton became our President in 1969. The first Prestige Show was held at City Hall, Toronto. Sixty-three articles, made by 26 craftsmen were chosen to be put on display to the general public. The Arts, Crafts and Hobbies sale at the C.N.E. was held and 74 members assisted. Upon request, we gave a \$35 prize to be awarded by the Canadian Guild of Crafts in their competition at the C.N.E.. Also there was a "Craft Dimension" Canada Exhibition held at the Royal Ontario Museum in the fall of 1969, with only one piece of leatherwork being accepted; Nan Astley's reversible handbag. At the C.N.E. Women's Division, 13 Leathercraftsmen received prizes and Gladys Riddell won the Chatelaine Award. Dr. Ralph Larmour was awarded an Honorary Fellow Life membership at the annual meeting in 1970. Dr. Ralph Larmour served as our second President for two years. He was the originator of the Garnett line of dyes, being by profession, a chemist. He loved to work with the dyes on leather and gave many interesting demonstrations of the use of Garnett dyes. He contributed several very informative articles in past Canadian Leathercraft issues. He was greatly missed by all those that knew him when he passed away in October 1970. Dr. Larmour gave a great deal of time and energy to the development of C.S.C.L..

In 1970 the 20th Annual meeting of C.S.C.L., combined with the 16th International Assembly of Leathercraftsmen, was held. This was the final meeting of the International Assembly of Leathercraftsmen, as there was no invitation forthcoming from the U.S.A.. Nine Salon ribbons were awarded by three judges, five judges awarded 34 craftsmen with ribbon awards for their craftsmanship.

In the Canadian Guild of Crafts competition, three members received awards. In the C.N.E. Women's Division 16 prizes were awarded, 11 were won by C.S.C.L. members with the Chatelaine award being won by Clara Cavanagh. We again participated in the C.N.E. Arts, Crafts and Hobbies exhibition and sale of work. Forty pieces were shown at a window exhibition of leathercraft in Toronto, together with a brief history of the Society by Nora Huyck. Reta Larmour was named Honorary President of the Society in 1971. Reta Larmour was the first secretary of C.S.C.L., and the first Chairman of Council of Fellows, there is no way to describe the amount of work that she did in the formative years of C.S.C.L.. She was instrumental, with the help of Mrs. Lorna Brigden, in hammering out the Constitution of the Society -- again a monumental job. She was a charter member and one of the original Fellows. She taught Leathercraft and was herself an exquisite leather carver. It was for her use that the Doctor formulated the Garnett Dyes and anyone who has seen her work can testify that she put these to good use. In later years she became crippled with arthritis and couldn't continue with her leathercraft as in the past. One of her many generous acts was to donate the tools, leather and craft books which she and Dr. Larmour had used to C.S.C.L.. Again we have lost a staunch supporter of Leathercraft in her death in June 1974.

At the 1971 Annual we had a special table to show the Fellows' works from former years. The Chatelaine award was won by Anne Hook in the C.N.E. Women's Division competition. The Leathercraft Standards were set out and published in Canadian Leathercraft Summer 1971. The slides of the Salon Awards were made available to the branches at this time. This was the first year, \$25 grants were made available for branch workshops and later were cancelled due to C.S.C.L. operating at a slight deficit.

The 22nd Annual meeting brought to a close the presidency of Irva Ford after three years of intense activity and very enthusiastic leadership. Irva has been involved in Leathercraft for many years and has taught for several. Her competitive drive embarked us on our first three biennial exhibitions with a fourth one coming up in 1976. She has won many well deserved awards herself and as exhibition chairman has encouraged others to compete. Quite a few of our members received their basic training through her classes. Irva was a chartered member and first President of the Hamilton Leather Guild which was founded in 1956.

Helen Wheaton of London became our President in 1972. She was a charter member of the London Leathercarvers Guild which was formed just before C.S.C.L. started in 1950. She has put in many hours for C.S.C.L., giving demonstrations on many facets of leather work such as carving, saddle stitching, dying, glove

making, etc.. Helen has given unstintingly of her time representing C.S.C.L. as a liason with Ontario Craft Foundation and the Canadian Guild of Crafts. Helen has served executive council for many years and everyone agrees it is a joy to work with someone with such unfailing good humour. Her husband, Harold, has been indispensable as her morale builder, chauffeur and a general hard worker for C.S.C.L..

Creative Leathercraft has been recognized as a worthwhile society in the last few years and we can thank Helen Wheaton for a large part of this.

The Michigan Leather Artisans award was established at the last meeting of I.A.L.C. to be awarded to a C.S.C.L. member whose work has displayed the highest level of achievement in creative design. We became affiliated with the Ontario Craft Foundation and Canadian Guild of Crafts and Canadian Craftsmen's Association. The second juried show was held at Woodstock Art Gallery, 29 craftsmen contributed 64 articles. Mrs. Irva Ford received the "Best Leather Entry in Show" award in the Canadian Guild of Crafts competition. At this time a draw was held for the 1st time at the Weston Annual meeting. Back numbers of Canadian Leathercraft were made ready for sale at this time. These had been sorted by Cecil and Sadie Roebuck and Gel Brigden stored them at his home. The sale was handled by Beula Reynolds and Harold Wheaton with receipts of \$116.27. An editorial committee was set up to edit material to be supplied by the branches, the branches acting as reporters.

Cecil Roebuck, because of his wife, Sadie, being interested in Leathercraft became deeply involved with C.S.C.L. and served as treasurer for a number of years. He was always there when anyone needed a helping hand. His unfailing good humour added much to the pleasure of attending executive council meetings. He and Sadie opened their home on many occasions to hold the executive meetings. We all felt a great loss at his passing in 1973.

During 1974, we held the third biennial Exhibition at the Learning Centre, Toronto and for the first time cash awards were given. Itsuko Yasui won the Canadian Guild of Crafts (Ontario) award for the best leather article. Later, sections of the exhibit were shown at Pointe Claire, Quebec and Thorncliffe Library upon their request. During the month of June, the Woodstock branch had an exhibit at the Woodstock Art Gallery.

In 1973, the Ministry of Industry and Tourism conducted regional competitions to acquaint craftsmen with design, technology and sound business practice. EEDEE Awards were presented to the winners, Irva Ford was one of the top four winners. She received a beautiful trophy for the belt which she submitted.

At the 24th Annual meeting in Belleville, it was voted on and carried to revise the fees upwards to \$5.00 per year. The membership had by this time reached over 200 members. The Larmour Memorial Library Committee made two giant steps by holding three auction sales of the Larmour tools and leather supplies which realized over \$1000. We owe a big vote of thanks to Fred and Phyllis Brown, Sadie Roebuck, Jessie Little, Anne Hook, Mary Zatyko, Jean Hunter and Olivia Smith for the many hours of work which they have put in on this.

Gel Brigden was awarded an Honorary Associate membership for his many years of cheerful support of C.S.C.L..

World Crafts Council was held in Toronto during June 1974. Ten of our C.S.C.L. members attended the Conference, Daphne Lingwood gave a demonstration in leather.

The Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the National Design Council jointly sponsored a "Design Canada" Craft Award 1974 program. Four pieces only of Leathercraft were selected as follows:

Irva Ford - Cuir Bouille Jug - Honourable Mention
 Louise Pomminville - Decorative Leather Bird
 David Trotter - Leather Bracelet
 Rex Lingwood - Leather Belt - Honourable Mention

A gentle and lovable Barrie couple, Eleanor Coutts (who passed away in the fall of 1973) and her husband Sandy (who passed away in 1974) are deeply missed by all members. Eleanor was an excellent craftswoman; won several awards and gave freely of her time on executive council. Sandy served us in many ways, one which most of us remember was his demonstrations on design adjusting, enlarging and reducing patterns. He also served on the executive council.

Anne Hook was elected Chairman of the Council of Fellows in 1974, with Jessie Little appointed as Secretary.

The 1975 Annual will be our twenty-fifth anniversary, and we are having a weekend meeting at Geneva Park Conference Centre, on Lake Couchiching, April 18, 19, 20th.. A special feature will be a display of leather articles made during the past 25 years. Antique leather items will also be on display.

C.S.C.L. - COUNCIL OF FELLOWS

In the spring of 1953, and according to the terms of the Constitution, eight C.S.C.L. members had the honour of being chosen as the first group of FELLOWS of the Society.

By the same system, eight members were chosen as the first Associates.

FELLOWS

Larmour, Reta	Toronto
Larmour, Ralph (Hon)	Toronto
MacKinnon, Don	Toronto
Muma, Robert	Toronto
Richardson, Margaret	Ottawa
Roscoe, Edith	Weston
Russell, V. Lara	Ottawa
Russell, Deane	Ottawa

ASSOCIATES

Burgess, Arthur	London
Jennings, Margaret	London
Lloyd, Nora	Toronto
McFarlane, Margaret	Weston
Packham, Clarice	Weston
Surgenor, Irene	Cornwall
Tyrell, Jessie	Ottawa
Villman, Irva	Toronto

The Fellows formed the First Board of Selection at the Fourth Annual Meeting - 1953.

Theirs was the responsibility of establishing and maintaining the standards of the craft.

In 1956, a meeting was held, to establish the powers and duties of the Council of Fellows.

- a. To be responsible for establishing and maintaining the standards of the craft.
- b. To appoint, annually, a Chairman to chair its meetings and represent it on the Executive Council, report its actions to the Executive Council, and award professional Diplomas at the Annual Meeting.
To appoint a Secretary to carry on correspondence and keep records.
To appoint a Board of Selection (as provided by the By-laws)
- c. The Council of Fellows shall be independent of the Executive Council and serve as final authority in all matters pertaining to the standards of the craft.