



# STAIRWAYS

News and Events for Stair Industry Professionals



2022 STAIRCRAFT AWARD  
BEST IN SHOW  
Hardwood Design, Inc.



STAIRBUILDERS AND  
MANUFACTURERS  
ASSOCIATION  
NEWSLETTER

## BOARD STRAT OP

BY TERRA ERB

SMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Your SMA Board of Directors spent two intense days with our business coach reviewing the successes and struggles of the past year so we could set our goals for the 2023 calendar year. Your team is laser focused on ensuring the SMA remains a great association serving our members and the stair industry as a whole.

The SMA is a collective focused on the stair industry of the future and we are sure that you will continue to be a proud member of the SMA and if you are not a member, you will surely be asking yourself, "what am I waiting for?"

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# STANDING BY

## 2015...2018...2021...WHAT IS NEXT?

BY DAVE COOPER

SMA CODE DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATIVE

If you guessed 2024 you might understand that code development is a 3-year cycle. The 2024 IBC development cycle ended early this year with confirmation of the Online Governmental Consensus Vote, OGCV. The final hearing of the 2024 IRC ended on September 21 and the results of the IRC online ballot is expected early next year. Other than the highly contested issues decided by narrow margins the OGVC usually affirms the vote taken at the final hearing. The ICC's final steps in the process are related to publication of the codes in late 2023 to be available for review and adoption by jurisdictions having authority.



SMA Code Development Representative

Aside from the confusion over which version is adopted and enforced where you work there is actually an advantage to the years of cyclical development and subsequent adoption of the I-codes. You can see into the future, you can be prepared for the enforcement of regulations affecting your products, processes, and services well in advance as well as foresee opportunities to lead the market with creative solutions that only a tuned in professional could provide. The issues in this cycle possibly more than others from the recent past will provide the stair professional with clear opportunities to prove the value of their expert knowledge.

Clear evidence of this is the level of industry participation and the number of SMA members that engaged in constructive discussions with others from the shelter industry in the Post Connection Task Group and Committee meetings. Members attended the hearing, Stood UP and Testified and are now Standing By to educate others to understand and implement the results of their efforts. Issues of universal consequence stretching beyond our membership and the stair industry proved worthy of the consensus of many sectors beyond any one's sphere of influence. Designers and Engineers, Manufacturers, Builders, Fabricators, Installers, and Regulators reached consensus upon a prescriptive solution for floor edge structure capable of supporting the guards we provide. It will be in the 2024 International Residential Code.

A guard connection solution is in your future... if you wait and your still around in 6 years when the 2024 code will most likely finally be enforced in your area. But as an SMA member that has preemptive knowledge of what is to come you can join with other SMA members to launch a grass roots nationwide campaign for local adoption NOW. It has been our intent from the beginning to promote this needed change in building safety regulations regardless of the outcome in this code cycle. Its approval will all but guarantee success of such an effort. You can be a part of developing the literature and presentations, or their dissemination, education and adoption in your area. Imagine the local stair professional with such a message gathering support, appreciation, and acknowledgement of their expertise with support of their association of stair professionals. Those taking the bully pulpit will be recognized.

Guard Connection to floor systems was the main issue but other issues also took the stage at the hearing. Among them the more critical results were:

# STANDING BY (CONTINUED)

- We successfully defeated a proposal that failed to address the issue of guard infill spread. It addressed only cable and inaptly related the 50 lb/ft<sup>2</sup> failure load to the dimensional requirement for guard opening limitations.
- Our proposal for the definition of landing as well as one proposed by The National Ornamental and Miscellaneous Metals Association (NOMMA) was disapproved. The notion of the need for specific definitions is often viewed as limiting the range of interpretation in enforcement. More work will be needed to gain favor of the regulators.
- Our proposal to specifically eliminate guards and handrails from the “All other structural members” default category was approved. This misplaced default requirement was specifically pointed out by MSU as a significant problem when testing guard connections for the SMA. MSU determined that the default limit had been based on joist and rafter deflection completely unrelated to guards or handrails and if enforced our common installations would fail to comply.
- We were effective in defeating a deck builder’s proposal to eliminate the required light source at the top landing of an exterior stair. Illumination is critical to one of the simplest ways to ensure safety at the start of a stair, top or bottom, where sight and movement coordination is initiated and the most common area of accidents.

Code and Standard development have been a critical part of the SMA’s identity and value proposition. Is this still the case? Are the major battles fought and won? Are there issues on the horizon that you can foresee will need the SMA? New products, new materials, consumer demands, and changing technology will continue to change our industry. What do you see as the future code and standard needs of our industry to be addressed? The problem of connecting guards to engineered floor systems with nothing more than air and a prayer was affecting the entire industry but was brought to the surface by just one member of the SMA. Your issues are likely SMA issues and could be issues resolved with help from your colleagues in the association.

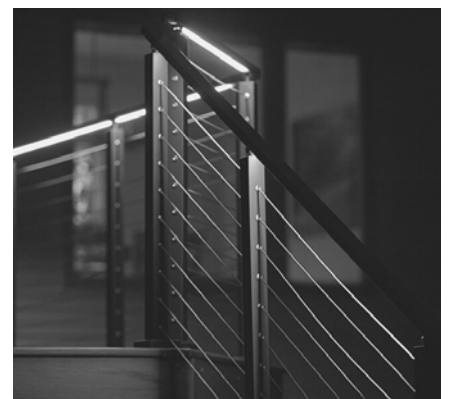
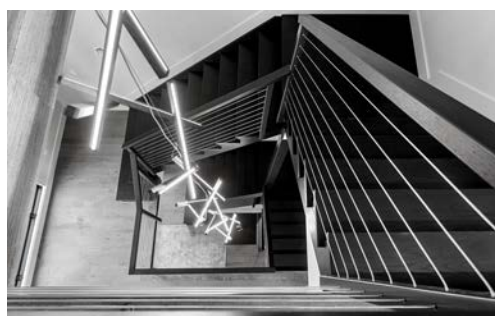
The SMA has pledged to work with others from the industry to form a task group to address the issue of infill spread in the next cycle. This task group will be organized prior to the end of the year. If cable and/or other flexible guard infill materials are common to your product line, we encourage you to take part. Watch for SMA announcements and – STAND BY!

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## JOIN THE TASK GROUP

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Canada Patent No. 2,699,214. Other Patents Pending.





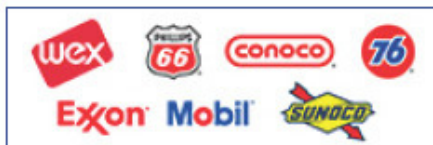
MEMBER SAVINGS PROGRAM  
SAVING MEMBERS MONEY

# MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

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Did you know that as a SMA MSP member you have access to over 25 Supplier Discount Programs? Our Group Purchasing Programs are saving members an average of 10 - 40% with our key suppliers. These significant savings are enough to pay for your companies' annual SMA dues many times over.

## OPERATIONS/SUPPLIES



## INSURANCE



## FINANCE



SMA members! See all the MSP supplier programs and start saving today when you click the link below.

[MORE INFO](#)

# SMA STORIES

## WHY MEMBERSHIP MATTERS TO YOU!

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The stories of the SMA's impact on our members and their businesses continue to humble us as we hear personal stories from new and old members alike. As you know, the SMA is filled with incredible craftsmen who are willing to help others in the industry. Our members actively contribute in various aspects of the association and we are thankful for their excitement to share their passion and skill with others in the industry.



**Keith  
Fleming**

---

Helix Handrails

"Since my first encounter in 2004, the SMA has provided encouragement for me on many levels. Originally, it was support for entering the stair/rail industry as a small business owner. Over the years, it has provided educational support for methods of woodwork, design, and codes. The networking opportunities helped me share my knowledge and gain valuable relationships. Relationships that are more than just professional. Knowing from experience, I will have the support of my fellow members to perform the responsibilities set before me. Today, I am excited about what lies ahead."

"The SMA has been a great support to our business just in the educational materials and specifically the visual interpretations. Those are always a hot commodity around our office as we seek to better our work and educate our customers. Once I started reaching out to the SMA with particular code questions it became apparent the importance of the SMA and how I could step in and bolster their efforts. The work of the SMA only betters our industry and it's encouraging to know there are many other companies across the country like ours all experiencing similar challenges, but we are able to meet together and help one another."



**Renda  
Barr**

---

SRG Stairs





## Boyd Winkler

House of Forgings

"In the early 2000's I was asked by Lewis Fitts to attend an ICC public hearing in Nashville, Tennessee. Dave Cooper, the SMA's code expert, was unable to participate, and they asked that I go and take notes as it was rumored that there was a gentleman who was going to comment on stair "falls" and challenge several codes. I had an assignment! As the time neared, this gentleman did speak, presenting very well constructed arguments for changes that he felt would "better" stair safety. As I listened, it became evident that these suggestions could severely impact the industry I was a part of and generally not make a stairway any safer.

At that point, it was clear what role the SMA played in the stair & stair parts industry. I was lucky to be a part of the early concepts of what would become the SMA visual interpretation. I watched as codes were changed, wiping out large stock inventory segments. Money that was just – thrown away. I later attended meetings on our company's behalf and was introduced to allies and foes in our industry, which today have become friends. I have watched many small stair builders grow into leaders in their perspective markets. I have watched the industry become more focused. Undoubtedly, the Stairbuilders and Manufacturers Association has played an integral part in the growth and strength of the industry. It has helped many people not only prosper but help them give back to the next generation of industry leaders. I cannot thank this industry enough and for the relationships gained through the SMA."

## WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

Share your SMA Story with us! We hear time and time again that the SMA has had an incredible impact on the lives of our members. What is your SMA Story?



[SHARE STORY](#)

# YOUR Stair Shop Package!

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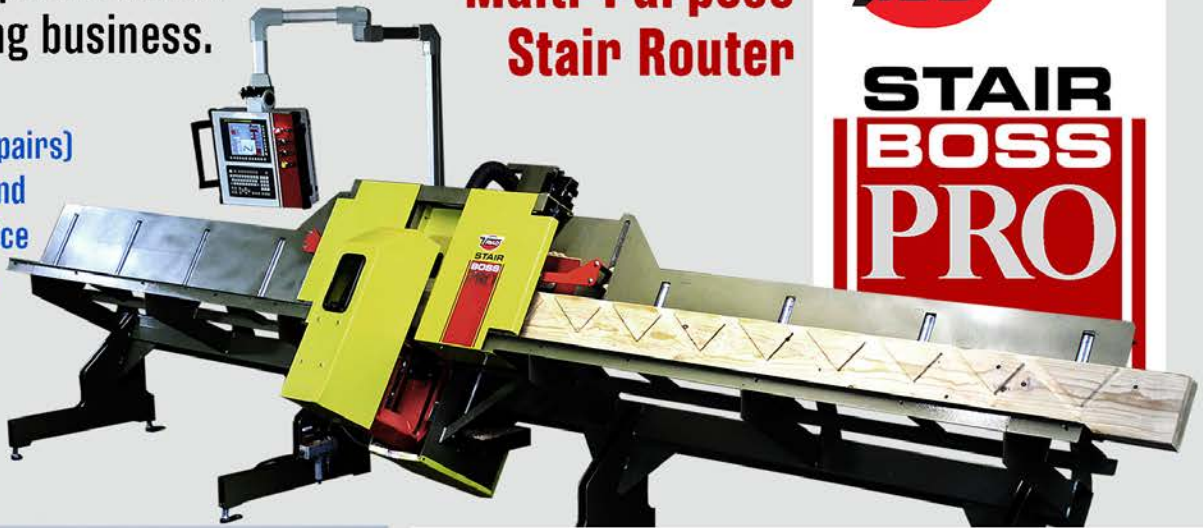
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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON

You've asked for it, and it is finally here!  
Wednesday, October 26th at 12:30 PM ET, join the SMA Lunch and Learn focused on YOUR FINANCIAL SUCCESS!

Two financial professionals, Paul and Colleen Chrisman, a father-daughter duo with the Chrisman Group, will be taking over the microphone and sharing ways you can PERSONALLY set yourself up for financial success.

[LEARN MORE](#)



We are currently accepting reservations for advertisements in the SMA Membership Directory. If you have not reserved your space, either register online or email us by October 26th!

[REGISTER NOW](#)

[EMAIL US](#)



The SMA's Stair Balustrade will be hitting the road again in February 2023!

Register NOW for the SMA Stair Academy's Stair Balustrade class! This class is hosted by House of Forgings and will be in Houston, Texas, February 6, 7, and 8. Don't miss this opportunity to expand your stair knowledge with this 3-day, hands-on course focused on core design and installation for over-the-post and post-to-post stair balustrades.

[REGISTER NOW](#)



# STAIRCRAFT AWARDS

## JOIN THE COMPETITION!

BY JOHN WONDERLY

SMA MEMBER, JOHN WONDERLY ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORKING



John Wonderly Architectural Woodworking consists of one employee and myself. I have been in the stair building industry for over 34 years. I have been with the SMA close to 20 years with a short break in the middle. Today, my shop is currently located in a rural area of Ohio and is nestled in the middle of eight acres of woods. Given the setting and the fact we custom make every part in house, we do not get much interaction with other people in the stair industry on a regular basis. This trade is such a small niche of the overall construction and manufacturing industry that I found it very difficult to “talk shop” and discuss technical and business issues with other people who design and build the same or similar stair projects. Being involved with the SMA and especially the StairCraft Awards has definitely changed that.

Attending the annual conferences and seeing all the photos of the other entries has been a great experience for me. Over the years, it also affirmed that I am a fellow member of a group of very talented and passionate crafts people. During these conferences the interaction I was lacking on a day to day basis became a special few days every year where special bonds were built and conversations happened that showed me a unique group of similar-minded stair builders. These interactions have helped me develop friendships and strong business relationships with fellow members of the SMA.

It was at my first SMA conference that Dave Cooper, the SMA Code Development Representative, asked me why I did not submit an entry into the StairCraft Awards. After explaining why I had not, he assured me that I was building unique stairs and he strongly encouraged me to enter the next year. Even though I had received a national design award from a woodworking organization several years earlier, my thought at the time was that I did not build anything worthy to submit along side such a talented group of stair builders. Finally, several years later I submitted my first entry to the SMA StairCraft Awards. I did not win an award that year, but the experience was very worthwhile. In the years since, I have received the honor of winning in several of the categories.

A few of the many benefits to winning a StairCraft Award is recognition from your peers, validation of your dedication to the craft and being promoted on the SMA website. From a business point of view, a huge benefit is also the advertising possibilities. Additional perks of winning one of these awards includes other organizations in the building industry adding the winners to their publications, websites, and information streams. Adding “National Award Winning Stair Builder” to all of your literature and promotional items and advertising is helpful for marketing one’s business. Every winner could create a drop down on your website for the winning stair and award. Every winner and for that matter, every entry inspires others within the industry to expand their creativity in their designs and offerings to their customers. Ideas that are generated by the entries and winners further enhances every aspect of our industry.

There are many different categories to enter within the Stair Craft Awards. Everything from Straight Traditional Stairs to Modern Curved Stairs and many others. There are even categories for just stair parts, just balustrades and even Anything but Stairs. So whether you build interior or exterior stairs, wood or steel stairs, or build stairs from any combination of materials, there is a category for you. If you are a parts manufacturer or distributor, there are categories for you to enter as well.



2022 STAIRCRAFT AWARD  
BEST STAIRWAY RENOVATION  
John Wonderly Architectural Woodwork





# STAIRCRAFT AWARDS

Now, it's your turn to join the competition! SMA members are eligible to compete in this inspiring awards competition that strives to recognize the individual achievements of our members and elevate industry standards.

Register to compete in the 2023 StairCraft Awards competition with projects you have completed in the past 5 years. There are several categories in this year's competition. They include:

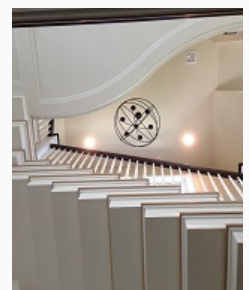
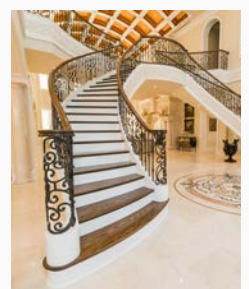
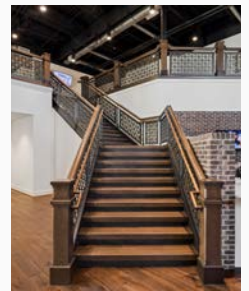
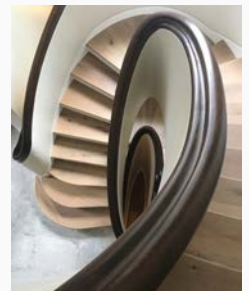
- **Best Stair Part**
- **Best Balustrade**
- **Best Straight Stairway - Traditional**
- **Best Straight Stairway - Modern**
- **Best Curved Stairway - Traditional**
- **Best Curved Stairway - Modern**
- **Best Spiral Stairway**
- **Best Stairway Renovation**
- **Best Commercial Stairway**
- **Best Production Stairway**
- **Challenger Award**
- **"Anything But Stairs"**

The StairCraft Awards entrants are evaluated with aesthetic value, stair safety, quality of workmanship and technical achievement in mind. Find more information about these awards and see past winning entries at [stairways.org/staircraft-awards](https://stairways.org/staircraft-awards).

Registration ends Monday, February 20th, 2023 so start gathering photos from your favorite stair projects and join the competition!

» **REGISTER NOW!**

Don't forget to also participate in the Challenger Award and the "Anything But Stairs" competitions! The Challenger Award showcases new products, improved processes and/or perfected techniques that will have a positive influence on the stair industry. The "Anything But Stairs" competition showcases the vast array of talents SMA members have outside of the stair industry.





[CLICK HERE](#)  
to view 2022 award recipients

[CLICK HERE](#)  
to view all 2022 entries



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## 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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APRIL 27<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>

MEET US IN  
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Association at the 2023 Annual  
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# A NEW PERSPECTIVE

## ICC CODE HEARINGS

BY DELON SHETLER

SMA MEMBER, HEARTLAND STAIRWAYS

Several weeks ago the International Code Council (ICC) held public comment hearings in Louisville, Kentucky. As most of you know, code is arguably the single most important action item of the SMA. Stair code concerns are the single and initial reason why the SMA was born in the first place. The stories of how the SMA was started, how very few contributed huge sums to get things started, how a small group of individuals started advocating for the stair industry, and how the SMA has evolved into the many faceted, very active, and influential entity it is today is fascinating and inspiring.

Our company didn't join the SMA for many years because we thought the cost was too high. After seeing all the code advocacy the SMA had been doing for us all those years that we weren't members, we realized we had a duty to become involved and give back. Funny thing is, the more we become involved the more we seem to continue to get back. One area we haven't delved into helping out very much as a company is code, and therefore, when we heard the hearings were in Louisville it made sense to make a little 4 hour road trip and see what David Cooper experienced at these events.

I have always been impressed by how much heart and effort Dave has put forth toward the SMA and a person doesn't have to spend much time with Dave to see how passionate he is about stair code. He lives and breathes stair code...the truest of stair nerds. The SMA had a substantial contingency attend this event and the collective that was present and ready to back Dave was pretty impressive. There were 9 issues that Dave had planned to testify and I think most of us other attendees had varying degrees of passion on the various topics.

Dave put forth a lot of preparation on the various topics and on several topics he had assistance from others. Issues ranged from application of a load to determine the guard opening limitations in cable systems, to the relationship of balustrades to floor structure, several relating to the definition of a landing, and more. Dave had received a great deal of input and assistance with the balustrade/floor structure issue and the SMA and fellow industry advocates were very well prepared for this topic. This article isn't intended to be about the issues but more about the process so I encourage everyone to look at the various issues the SMA argued, the side we chose to argue, and why. You may have ideas and input that could change our argument or give ideas on how to bolster our arguments.

I'm not exactly sure what I expected but I do know there was much more real world experience and common sense present than I expected. I had a somewhat jaded view and expectation of a "big government lobbying" type of atmosphere where money and the loudest mouth has the most influence but this was not the case. You could tell most of the people there were industry experts and the process has enough steps and parliamentary procedure to ensure that all are heard but no single voice gets favoritism by getting more time or attention. Also, any individual that wants to attend can have their two minutes at the podium without any association to any organization. Everyone also gets to have one minute of rebuttal after all are done with first round of testimony. The Chairperson has a timer and no one gets a second more.

# A NEW PERSPECTIVE (CONTINUED)

This was the Public Comment Hearing (PCH) the second of two in the process. At the first hearing an ICC committee rules in favor or against each of the issues. After their ruling and prior to the PCH, there is opportunity to submit public comment in favor or against their ruling. It can become quite confusing to a newcomer knowing if you are arguing for or against because you are arguing either for the committee ruling or against the committee ruling which could be for or against the issue at hand, or for or against public comments relating to the issue at hand. Such as, you could step up to the podium and argue in favor of the committee ruling which was actually opposed to the issue you also oppose. Each time you had to get straight which side you were on. Plus, sometimes arguments are for or against public comments that were submitted after committee rulings. On the first day it was funny, as John Wonderly, Terrie Stokes, and I approached the podium behind Dave we were still whispering about whether we were for or against. We knew full well what we wanted to argue but we had to get straight which way the committee had ruled prior. We were going to argue in support of Dave about some of the public comments but the issue was voted upon in favor the committee ruling so the public comments became non-issues and further testimony wasn't necessary. Are you confused? It took me over half of a day in attendance before I became comfortable with knowing the order of processes and knowing how the rulings, arguments, and voting really worked.

My big take away was, the code process is quite lengthy and complex. I have a new and greater appreciation for Dave and his familiarity with the code process and the product he advocates. It was interesting and good to see how much collaboration goes on amongst various trade associations and to a much lesser degree, private businesses. The code process is about as fair as I imagine it could be. There is obviously no perfect system and there are obviously going to be selfish interests and biases to be encountered for such programs but the process has a way of sorting through the BS and letting truth and common sense prevail.



My old take away still is, we need to be very thankful for the SMA, Dave, and all the volunteers that are on the front lines fighting against frivolous regulations that hinder the stair industry's ability to function while also bringing forth new codes needed to ensure safety to our clients and continued public trust in our organization and industry.



## CODE CERTIFICATION

Congratulations to these newly code certified SMA members.

### CODE LEVEL I CERTIFICATIONS

Claudio Garcia-Paiz, JD Stairs  
 Dave Pape, Cooks Woodworks LLC  
 Adam Gorski, Florida Stairworks & Carpentry  
 Neil Van De Motter, Florida Stairworks & Carpentry  
 Alex Patton, JD Stairs  
 Lorenzo Luna, JD Stairs  
 Marshall Nelson, JD Stairs  
 Luis Callejo, JD Stairs  
 Jeffrey Maksymowski, Jr., JD Stairs  
 Erick Caldera, JD Stairs  
 Joshua Sizelove, Cincinnati Stair & Handrail

### CODE LEVEL II CERTIFICATIONS

Peter Mormillo, JD Stairs  
 Jeff Bennett, Jeff Bennett Carpentry LLC  
 Caden Watts, JD Stairs  
 Lorenzo Luna, JD Stairs  
 Amanda Schrader, Viewrail  
 Heidi Burns, Viewrail  
 Dustin La Fleur, JD Stairs



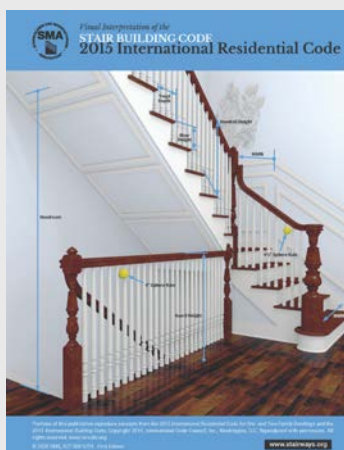
## VISUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE STAIR BUILDING CODE

[STAIRWAYS.ORG/STORE](http://STAIRWAYS.ORG/STORE)

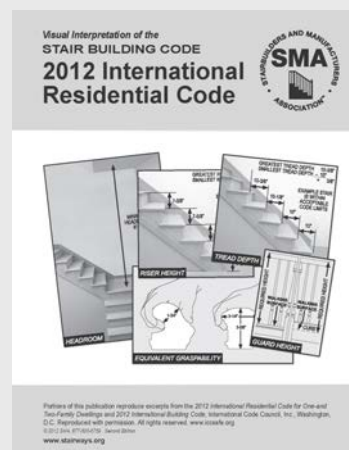
2018



2015



2012





# WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

**GEORGEWORKS** - George Reiche

**JEG SALES** - James Grow and Craig Grow



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# CONNECT WITH US

SO WE CAN STAY CONNECTED WITH YOU.





# ANSI/AWI SMA 0643 - WOOD STAIR, HANDRAIL, AND GUARD SYSTEMS STANDARD

Effective as of August 15, 2021

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