



THE ASSOCIATION & VOICE OF THE US SEWN PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

Closing 2024 with reflection and vision for the future

December 2024 X-Files

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It's hard to believe another year is coming to a close. I find myself reflecting not only on this past year, but also on the last five years. It was in 2019 that I joined SEAMS, participated in my first conference that spring as an attendee and then as a panelist in the fall on "Shaping the Future of Our Industry: Millennials." Following that panel, SEAMS introduced the article "Millennial Corner" which highlighted the stories of my peers, and I was among those who contributed [that year](#), and was the precursor to the advent of the X-Files series you read today.

In 2019 I started to really put myself out there into the larger industry; at the same time I was starting and then later closing a new, failed, business partnership, and personally dealing with the cancer discovery, battle, and then loss of my biggest cheerleader, my Dad. I entered 2020 at a major low point, but forged forward and found light in different places, and was happy to maintain relationships with family, friends, colleagues and clients in a mostly virtual year. It was that year I was invited to teach at Columbia College Chicago, and I found a new sense of purpose through mentoring and connecting with young people entering the fashion industry. Collaboration was the word of the year, and it took on a whole new meaning for everyone.

In 2024, I traveled more than ever and was involved with several speaking engagements, panels and planning committees for conferences and trade events. I joined the SEAMS Board at the beginning of this year, and was humbled to be presented with the Sarah Friedman Award at the Fall Conference in Mobile, Ala. My business has continued to grow, and I have a great team. To say all of this was unimaginable five years ago is a major understatement. I am incredibly grateful for all who have supported me throughout my life, my career and my journey to get here.

I recall even further back to my early days growing up, when my grandmother taught me how to sew doll clothes by hand, or the year I made potholders for everyone in my family using a basic plastic weaving loom. This year, I introduced my daughter (9) to knitting as part of a Girl Scouts project. She fashioned a simple circular knitting loom from a paper towel roll and popsicle sticks, ultimately knitting a 5-foot-long scarf. I shared with her and her troop how what they just learned applied to real equipment and manufacturing. Their rudimentary knitting project could be considered the baby step towards operating a full-size circular knitting machine. These types of experiences may spark some interest in creating, and it's never too early to sow the seeds for the future. This year I participated in an [Eighth Grade Career Fair](#),



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which was awesome to interact with younger students, and help to foster their interests in various fields including manufacturing and design.

Entering 2025 for many of us may be filled with mixed emotions, no matter what each is dealing with in their businesses professionally, or in their personal lives. There may be feelings of both uncertainty and excitement, but above all, we need to remember our collaborative spirit and community as we forge ahead. Rather than be swept up in a sea of “what if’s,” let’s enter this second quarter of the 21st century with consideration and reflection of the past, so that we may better appreciate our present, and take leadership in the future ahead.

Many of the [topics](#) which were top of mind as we closed 2019 are the same as now: workforce development, recruiting and retention; sustainability and the circular economy; Industry 4.0 and digital transformation of manufacturing; nearshoring and reshoring initiatives; the call for further supply chain transparency, and creation of an “even playing field” for U.S. textile and sewn products companies.

2020 kicked everything on its head, but we are still contending with these same challenges and changes. This time, we are more resilient and more connected than ever. We made it through the toughest of times together, and we will continue to fight these fights.

January brings two great opportunities for SEAMS members: the [SHOT Show in Las Vegas](#) and [Texworld in NYC](#). We look to bring in new customers and new members who share our vision and mission to support and grow the U.S. supply chain. [Texprocess Americas](#) and [Techtextil North America](#) will be co-located in Atlanta this May, with a SEAMS pavilion and our famous [TopGolf Networking Bash](#). And, we have a *very* exciting Annual Conference coming up this fall. I hope you’ll make time to get involved this year – together, we can achieve our goals and have the best results.

I wish everyone a very happy holiday season, with a renewed spirit to tackle the new year ahead!

Cheers my friends! 🍷
- Xochil