

by Patrick Coyne



DESIGN ARMY

Naming their business Design Army might have appeared a bit over-confident back in 2003 when it was just Pum and Jake Lefebure working out of their home, but today, the ten-person firm, in their custom-designed offices, appears prophetically titled.

“We knew we didn’t want our names on it—Lefebure and Mek-aroonreung—come on,” Jake says.

But Design Army? “We see Design Army as a brand rather than a design shop,” Pum says. “Yes, we’re a design firm in Washington, DC, but we don’t want to limit ourselves to anything.”

Jake, from the mountains of Pennsylvania and trained at Pennsylvania State University, and Pum, from the sprawling city of Bangkok and educated at Radford University, met at DC-based Supon Design Group, where Jake eventually became the creative director and Pum the sole senior art director. “After many late nights and weekends at the office it just seemed natural that we start dating,” Pum says. “Soon we were doing laundry, grocery shopping and everything else together, and it wasn’t long before we were together 24/7.”

A change in ownership at the firm convinced the married couple it was time to strike out on their own. “The first couple of months were a bit of a shock,” Jake explains. “We basically worked at our kitchen table, staying up until 3:00 in the morning to do an annual report. We had to build a portfolio to show clients, so we treated each project like it was the last project we were going to do.”

Their big break came quickly and from an unlikely source. “One of our first clients came from a yard-sale flyer we did,” Jake says. “He said, ‘This is the best yard-sale flyer I’ve ever seen in my life. Are you guys designers? I’ve started a company with my partner...’ He was part of the Clinton administration and he knew everybody. So we took his project on for not a lot of money thinking if this guy knows as many people as he says he does, this is the kind of client we want.”

“He led us to the Washington Ballet and the Human Rights Campaign,” Pum says.

“Within six months, we had to start hiring,” Jake adds.

Another great source of new clients has come from designing invitations for gala events. “There’s a lot of fundraising in this town—\$1,000-a-seat tickets,” Pum says.

Jake Lefebure provided the caption information.

Right: “**The Human Rights Campaign** was in full force for the election year with many high-profile projects and endorsements. The theme, ‘Politics of Possibility,’ was an underlying message for a majority of them. One of the biggest challenges was to make the 2008 annual report memorable, but not flashy and expensive looking. The oversized, self-mailer format and lightweight environmentally-friendly papers helped drive the design. By keeping a more typographic look, we were able to create a visual voice without looking overly produced.” Pum Lefebure, art director; Sucha Becky, designer; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors.

“Celebrating its **25th anniversary** in 2005, the Human Rights Campaign wanted the annual report to look back at past accomplishments as well as give a glimpse of future goals. Since it was impossible to distill a quarter of a century visually, for the cover we used simple typography emphasizing the 2 and 5 in 2005. Inside we were inspired by a timeline, showing slices of HRC history and inserting small facts along the way. Finally, to underscore the weight of 25 years, we reduced the format to 5" × 8" and doubled our page count so the report is hefty and substantial.” Pum Lefebure, art director; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION REPORT

POLITICS OF THE POSSIBLE

WE STAND FOR THE POLITICS OF POSSIBILITY

Believing in the politics of the possible — without ever losing sight of the fundamental goals of the entire lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender movement — is the cornerstone of our work at the Human Rights Campaign. In 2008, we put that strategy into practice across a broad spectrum of objectives, from the highest levels of national politics and legislation, to the daily lives of millions of LGBT Americans in their homes, workplaces, faith communities, schools and neighborhoods.

In these pages, you will learn what a force of 725,000 members and supporters can accomplish when it pools its resolve and resources to accomplish its goals and push forward the boundaries of what will be achieved in the future. It can't all happen in a single election, Congress, news cycle or year. But the work of the Human Rights Campaign and the Human Rights Campaign Foundation proves every day that it is happening, steadily and irrevocably, in the benefit of every American who believes in the one thing that has always been possible in our country: equality for all.

2	4	5	8	10	14	17
LETTERS	ELECTION	LEGISLATION	COMMUNITIES	FOUNDATIONS	FINANCES	SUPPORT

2008 WHO WAS A FORCEFUL PRESENCE IN MORE THAN A DOZENS PRIMARY AND CAUCUS STATES AS THE FIRST TRANS MEMBER OF THE U.S. CONGRESS, ELECTION.

IN HONOR OF MATTHEW SHEPARD

TELLING, PERSUADING AND DEMANDING THE END OF A BANKRUPT POLICY

THE ELECTION OF A LIFETIME

THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WAS A HISTORIC MOMENT FOR THE LGBT COMMUNITY AS BARACK OBAMA AND MICHELLE OBAMA BECAME THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES TO OPENLY IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL OR TRANSGENDER.




HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION

Through research, education, public awareness, and advocacy, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation works to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to live their lives with dignity and respect, and to help the nation live up to its promise of equality for all.

COMING OUT

FAMILY

WORKPLACE

AT THE INTERSECTION: RACE, SEXUALITY AND GENDER

WORKPLACE AT THE BANGOR

“

When we have enough courage to come out — I don't mean just out of the closet, I mean out of your spirit — when you have enough courage to stand and say, 'I came here to stay.' It's amazing. You have no idea who you will inform. **Maya Angelou**



“

Thanks to organizations like the Human Rights Campaign, public opinion has shifted in a major way, allowing more people to be honest about who they are. **Judy Shepard**



Design Army

“All the invitation work we do goes out to business owners and marketing executives,” Jake says. “It doesn’t pay well, but it reaches the right people.”



A year later, Design Army had moved into a small row house office, taking over two floors; eventually occupying all three. A growing staff and workload convinced the pair to look for a more permanent space. “We purchased a burnt-out commercial

building in the northeast part of DC that had been sitting empty since 1972,” Jake says. “From 2005 to 2007 we renovated the old two-story building into a three-and-a-half-story space. The only original detail we kept was the façade.”

Considering their rapid growth, is the current configuration of nine workstations and two private offices enough? “We have no desire to go larger,” Jake says. “It’s great to keep control of the creative. We’ve got our finger on every project that comes in and goes out the door.”

“We already experienced too big at Supon Design when we got up to 40 designers,” Pum adds. “We know what size is best for us if we want to do good work.”

Bucking the trend of design firms pushing for larger-scale, longer-term programs, Design Army is a project-based studio, producing approximately 400 projects per year—60 percent for fashion/arts/entertainment-based clients, 20 percent for corporate and 20 percent for nonprofit and other clients. “I try to limit the amount of brand projects because they can take like six-to-eight months to finish, and I want to get paid,” Jake says.

“The best project for us is one that has a deadline,” Pum adds.

Bucking another trend, 75 percent of their work is print-based. “There’s always going to be print design around in some form or fashion,” Jake says. “And there are certain industries where it’s never going to go away.”

This page: Jake Lefebure and Pum Lefebure.

Right: “**Arent Fox** asked us to design something out of the ordinary for its summer associates program and pro-bono newsletter—we gladly accepted the challenge. AF101 features a series of quirky illustrations using Rorschach Tests and other visual illusions to illustrate the experiences and insight the program will offer young attorneys. The pro-bono newsletter was a bit more difficult; there was either no decent photography to work with or the content was too complex to illustrate. We had to design in such a way to allow for any scenario, and typography was once again our best friend.” Pum Lefebure, art director; Lee Monroe, designer; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors; Tim Madle, illustrator.

“Since 1956, the **American Institute of Architecture Students** has been the official voice of students to the educational system and the profession of architecture and design. The bi-annual publication, *CRIT*, is the platform for that voice. Each issue presents new design challenges—the art submitted with articles all looks similar and the image quality is often poor. As the budget does not allow for custom illustrations or photography, we often turn to typography. The clever and smart design solutions are appropriate for the younger, educated and creative audience (the ‘architects’ of a majority of the content in each issue).” Pum Lefebure, art director; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors; AIAS, client.

When describing the firm’s approach to creative problem solving, Jake is succinct. “Our style is very direct: verbal/visual. You put the two together, you make a connection, that’s what we do,” he says. “It’s very old school. It doesn’t matter if it’s film, pixels or print. A good idea is a good idea.”

“We’re really good at subtracting things that are not necessary,” Pum adds.

Old school could also describe their ideation methodology—everyone on staff is required to sketch their ideas in notebooks. “If you can’t get a concept down on a piece of paper, don’t bother with the execution,” Pum says. “Our designers focus on the concept, not on what font or style of execution to use, but on what we’re trying to say.

“We hire a lot of people right out of school because it doesn’t matter if they have five years or no experience,” she says. “They have to work the Design Army way. Sketch. If they don’t know how to sketch, they have to learn. That’s how we get the idea across. It works. We cut 50 percent of unnecessary execution and the client totally focuses on the idea.”

“We can’t do this with every client,” Jake says. “Arts and entertainment clients are more creative and can envision, but for corporate clients we have to do full comps.”

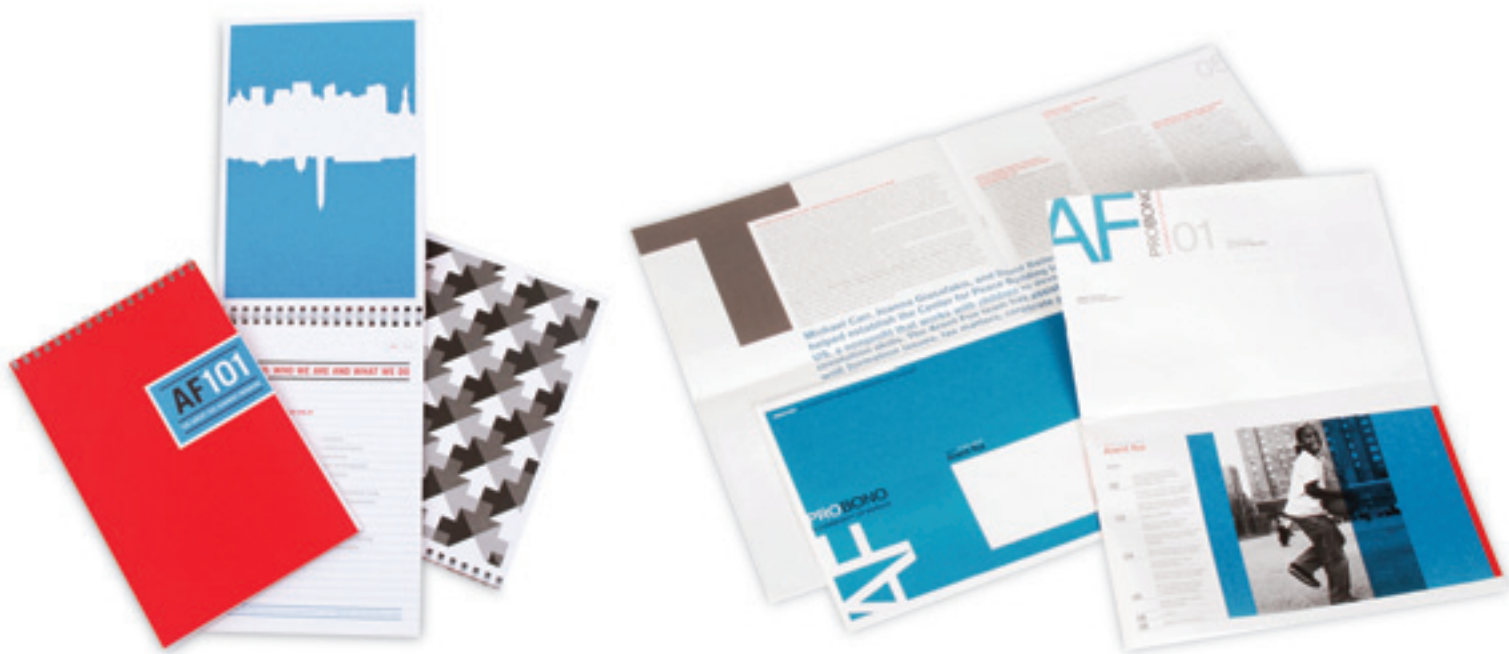
That’s not to say that Design Army plays it safe with their corporate clients.

“We are risk-takers and will show a conservative client a limit-pushing design,” Jake says. “We always have a very good reason for what we do and we’ve gotten some pretty conservative people to go for it; it paid off for them because they stood out.”

“If the client feels we are a part of their team and share in their success or failure, they’re willing to listen to us more,” Pum says. “It’s better to go crazy and then tone it down, than to have the client say, ‘We were expecting to be blown-away.’”

“We also tend to deal with owners of companies,” Jake says. “They’re the best clients because they can quickly say ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ We don’t have a lot of clients where it’s an up-chain situation, except for our corporate clients, but even then the up-chain is only two steps.”

The partners operate from clearly defined roles: Jake handles all new business inquiries, RFPs and most of the print buying;



> The Truth of New Brutalism
 Reyner Banham, dissatisfied with modern architecture's formulaic philosophy, initially developed the ideology of "un architecture autre."¹ Highly influenced by French painter Jean Dubuffet, "un architecture autre" had much polemical roots in avant-gardism as Modernism. As Nigel Whitey notes, "an [architecture] autre" then, at its most dynamic and radical... [was] non-hierarchical and non-relational anti-formalism... and [employed] a direct, anti-elegant, even use of forms... [It was] a new and tough attitude to creating."² Such ideology eventually culminated in the architectural discourse and practice of New Brutalism. However counter-culturally consistent Banham intended New Brutalism to be, its practice has been (and still is) widely regarded as a disastrous experiment. As a consequence of overwhelming rejection, practitioners and theorists learn Banham that the limits of employed expression in design and reason in philosophy are not as far as they would like to believe.



Design Army

Pum is the creative director, designs and works with any photographers needed on a project. Both will work with writers depending on the project. Still, the partners do have an occasional disagreement over the creative direction on some projects.

“We disagree all the time,” Jake says. “We yell at each other and our designers just put in their ear buds. Five minutes later I’m like, ‘I’m going to get something to eat. You want something?’ We’ve been able to turn it on and off. When it’s business, it’s business and when it’s us, it’s us.”

The short-term nature of most of Design Army’s work means each designer is juggling multiple projects at any given time. Paperwork is kept to a minimum. “We don’t do time sheets,” Jake says. “I’d rather have our staff spend

This page: “Each season **Karla Colletto** reinvents her swimsuit collections; our challenge is to make each new line marketable and memorable. Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes, in flipbook format promotes the new line, K by Karla, which is a mix-and-match bikini line. For the product launch we printed digitally to minimize costs, and then splurged with a translucent plastic cover and an opaque white silk-screen. For their signature line, we kept it simple: the A to Z line book features not only the suits, but also informational text about the line and designer. The individual cards use blocks of colors from some of her signature swimsuit designs, and a simple, tailored pinker-edge reflects her attention to detail. The format is a chain-bound swatch-book with slipcase. Keeping the brand elements minimal allows for consistency yet coordinates with the ever-changing seasons of fashion.” Pum Lefebure, art director; Lucas Badger/Pum Lefebure, designers; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors; Cade Martin/Heidi Niemala, photographers.

Right: “To celebrate the new year, new clients and new green initiatives, we designed a custom **enviro-packed promotion** targeting event planners—and those with eco style. Themed around ‘Re’ wording, the kit includes a fully illustrated 10-year calendar with helpful hints to go green (ReMIND), a bamboo USB drive (ReSTORE) and a 100 percent organic tote bag (ReACT), all FSC-certified of course.” Pum Lefebure, art director; Lucas Badger, designer/illustrator; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors; Ronald Reagan Building ITC, client.

“How do you gift package a racecar ride, deep-sea dive or ballroom dance lessons? **Excitations** is not your ordinary gift-giving company, and its packaging needed to express that. Since many of their gifts are centered on once-in-a-lifetime experiences, we created not only a container, but a keepsake: a red leather-clad box that can hold a 5" × 7" print or message in the die-cut cover, packed with customized gift tags, ribbons and product cards. Every gift box is hand-assembled and truly one of a kind.” Pum Lefebure, art director; Lee Monroe, designer; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors.

“**The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars** aims to unite the world of ideas with the world of policy by supporting pre-eminent scholarships linked to issues of concern. The cover sets the tone for the report, titled ‘Voices of Vision,’ which is all about dialogue and quotes pertaining to the center, as well as a special feature on Woodrow Wilson’s 150th anniversary. This special section uses quotes and comments from past scholars as visual markers, while the remaining pages highlight various programs, publications and people who make the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars a success.” Pum Lefebure, art director; Mike Maluso, designer; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors.



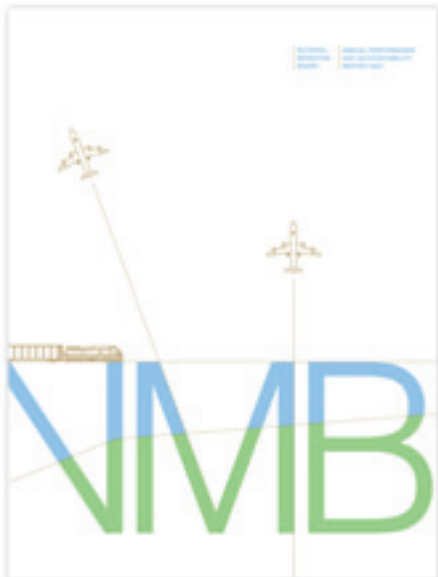
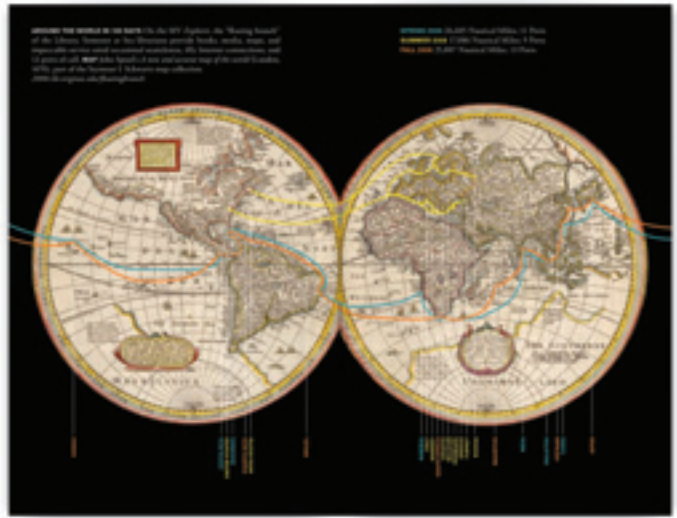




One of our favorite sayings is, "I learn something new every day." As you move through the Library's collections, programs, resources, exhibits, and spaces, there are infinite possibilities to learn things you didn't know before. It's exciting and humbling at the same time. There is always more to take in and find out.

This year the Library added hundreds of thousands of items including books, DVDs, images, artifacts, and new scholarship in digital form. Students, faculty, staff, and interested people from all over the world shared knowledge through programs, exhibits, and lively dialogue.

Illustration: One of John Tenniel's illustrations from Lewis Carroll's *March Hare* in *Through the Looking Glass*, 1871.



OVERVIEW OF FISCAL YEAR 2007

When the NMB determines that a dispute cannot be resolved in Mediation, the NMB proffers Interest Arbitration to the parties. Either labor or management may refuse the proffer and, after a 30-day cooling-off period, engage in a strike, implement new contract terms, or engage in other types of economic Self Help, unless a Presidential Emergency Board is established.



Design Army

that half hour being creative than filling out time sheets each day. We're small enough to know what's going on.

"We like being creative and 95 percent of the time our staff knows that coming into work is going to be fun," Jake says. "They're always trying to wrap up projects because they know there's something new going on."

In the future, that "something new" may not be limited graphic design.

"We don't know where Design Army is going to be ten years from now, but things have to evolve," Pum says. "We might even do a Design Army product line. We've been looking at manufacturing in Asia. In this economy, you can't look at the design market as American only—we can sell product to the entire world." **CA**

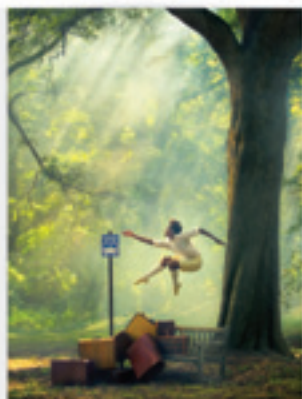


Left: "*Infinite Possibilities* takes an artistic look at the challenges of saving and restoring the collections, what obstacles the library will face in the coming years and a fresh perspective on how to be kind to a book that you borrow from the library. Additionally, the 2008 annual report not only serves as a way to inform audiences about these treasures, but it also reaches the donors and alumni who often give back to the university. Finally, to further reinforce the annual report's theme, we have a series of three covers." Pum Lefebure, art director; Scott Vadas, designer; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors; University of Virginia Library, client.



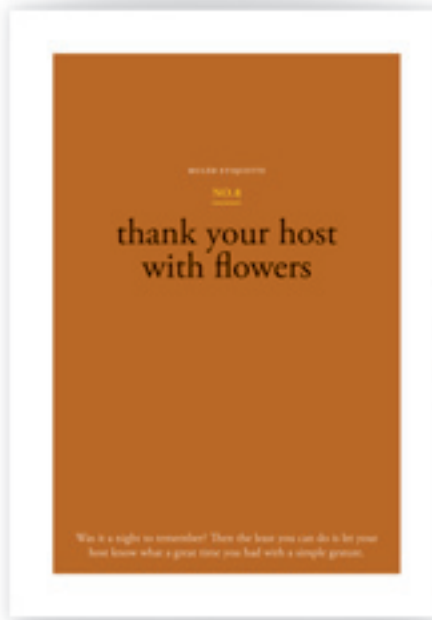
National Mediation Board annual report. "The NMB mediates labor-management relations within the railroad and airline industries. For the past five years we have pushed the creative limits of this very specialized subject matter. Although economic factors and industry issues are always hurdles, the ongoing challenge is how to make the same planes and trains look different and meaningful every year. Lately we have turned toward illustration, special finishes such as embossing and textured uncoated papers to make the report distinct within the industry. Who says the government can't be sexy?" Pum Lefebure, art director; Taylor Buckholz, designer/illustrator; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors.

That depends a good deal on where you want to get to. You're sure to find it if you only walk long enough.



This page: "**The Washington Ballet's Jete Society** has an annual dance party and fundraiser for its younger patrons. We were assigned the theme of '007' and a very low budget to create an invite that would capture the audience. Three vellum sheets, when properly aligned, cleverly reveal event information, and a slick black cover sheet lists the sponsors and details. The A2 size fits into a pocket, and a single PMS (black) creates a low-budget but high-impact design. The invite was shaken, not stirred." Pum Lefebure, art director; Taylor Buckholz, designer; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors.

"The Washington Ballet was one of our first clients. To celebrate the artistic director's tenth anniversary, we asked for access to dancers and costumes in order to design a commemorative book showcasing their **top-ten favorite ballets**. It took 5 days of photo shoots, more than 65 dancers and a whole lot of support team to capture all the images. It was truly challenging to take iconic performances and reinvent them to tell a single cohesive story; we were all very pleased with the results." Pum Lefebure, art director; Lucas Badger/Taylor Buckholz/Scott Vadas, designers; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors; Jake Lefebure, project director; Cade Martin, photographer.





Design Army

Left: “A jewelry designer who uses birds and nature as inspiration needs a promotional package to match. We titled her promo **‘The Birds and the Beads’** as most of her recent work was bird themed. All products were photographed in a natural setting to reinforce the theme and a consistent color palette was chosen to unify the package.” Pum Lefebure, designer; Alissa Walker, writer; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors; Taran Z, photographer; Julie Wolfe, client.

“This by far is our favorite piece (and one of our first) but designing for designers is always the most difficult. The client directions were to use the theme **‘freedom’** and keep it tasteful—we tried our best. Taking designer twists on political and patriotic quotes, i.e., ‘Ask not what you can do for the paper, but what the paper can do for your design,’ and pairing them with custom photography and sparkling paper resulted in loads of recognition, some controversy and plenty of designers at the party.” Pum Lefebure, designer; S.W. Smith, writer; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors; John Consoli, photographer; Fox River Papers, client.

“In a conservative city, standing out from the crowd is hardly an impossible feat. But to do it with class and style, well that’s a little more difficult. To showcase the organic fashion and furniture of **Muléh**, we paired the store’s newest products with a few rules of etiquette—and how to break them with style. The result is a quirky little book that can be tucked into a pocket or purse.” Pum Lefebure, art director; Mike Maluso, designer; Kevin Tenglin, writer; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors; Max Hirschfeld, photographer.

This page: “Handed out to weary-eyed metro riders, the **Shop Golden** gift guides delivered a blast of color and style this past holiday season. To celebrate the gift of giving (and spending), we designed a shopping guide focused on the diverse downtown workforce of Washington, DC. Featuring ten personalities, the guide directs people to local merchants and the perfect gift for the rug rat, the fashionista and even the frienemy.” Tim Madle, art director/designer/illustrator; Sloan Carroll, writer; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors; Golden Triangle BID, client.

“**The Virginia Film Festival** celebrated its twenty-year anniversary with a huge ‘family’ gathering, featuring an array of filmmakers exploring the dynamics of family life from every possible angle. A simple iconic film family was developed as a poster and logo graphic used to brand the week-long event.” Pum Lefebure, art director/creative director; Tim Madle, designer; Jake Lefebure, project director.

“When we were kids and broke something, we asked our dads to fix our accidents. So when a friend started his own handyman service targeting the **anti-DIY** contingent, we wanted a logo that was friendly, direct, trustworthy and to highlight the person doing the work whose name is **AI**.” Pum Lefebure, art director; Tim Madle, designer; Pum Lefebure/Jake Lefebure, creative directors; Ask Dad, client.

