

# GD USA

GRAPHIC DESIGN USA

## PEOPLE TO WATCH IN 2007

THINKING GREEN

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY  
PAPER AND PRINT



JANUARY 2007  
THE MONTHLY NEWS MAGAZINE  
FOR CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS





## PEOPLE TO WATCH IN 2007

Each year we choose a group of People To Watch who embody the spirit of the creative community. They are individuals who we have come to know and respect for a combination of talent, leadership, success, insight, business savvy, community service and newsworthiness. Choosing is a subjective process — this field is deep with special people doing special things — and we admit our limitations up front. Nevertheless, we believe that after you read this special report you will agree that, once again, we've done pretty darn well. Meanwhile, we look forward to our 44th year and to hearing from and getting to know and celebrate many, many more of you.

— THE EDITORS



robert p. sedlack, jr.  
SEDLACK DESIGN ASSOCIATES

Robert Sedlack's academic research is focused on the life-changing impact that design can have when applied appropriately in collaboration with organizations dedicated to social betterment. Sedlack, a professor at the University Notre Dame, focuses on projects that heighten the awareness of, and reliance on, graphic design to help achieve broad-based social and cultural advancement throughout the world community. As principal of Sedlack Design Associates, he is responsible for the consultation service, design and the execution of a wide variety of print and multimedia projects for the business and cultural community. Says Sedlack, "With both a B.F.A. and an M.F.A. in graphic design, I can say that graphic design was my first career path. Perhaps the defining moment of my early life was when a picture of me holding my winning Easter bunny drawing was printed in my hometown newspaper. I was in third grade and, at that moment, I was sure I was on my way to fame and fortune."

**Should graphic design be an instrument for positive social change?** Yes, absolutely! One of the major reasons I decided to teach at the collegiate level was because I am interested in projects that could effect change but might not have the resources to get accomplished outside of academia.

Bon Sel (Good Salt) is a design-driven project that focuses on delivering salt fortified with diethylcarbamazine (DEC) to Haitian consumers in hopes of eliminating lymphatic filariasis (which leads to elephantitis). Although this project is occurring in fits and starts (due, in part, to an unstable Haitian government), and the creative work I've done to date is minimal, the consulting, collaboration and design management is incredibly fulfilling. In addition to being a worthy project, the people with whom I'm working — both in the States and in Haiti — are extraordinary, particularly the project's leader, biology professor Fr. Tom Streit. Others in this great multi-disciplinary group include Notre Dame's Haiti Program staff members, faculty colleagues, M.B.A. faculty and students, graduate and undergraduate design students and creatives from DDB/Chicago.

In the classroom, our design students do work that addresses issues that emphasize social awareness and service through the power of design. Here are three examples: drawing on their values-based education to assess a corporation's actions, students design analytical communications pieces that examine operating practices that they believe are unethical. Students also create social awareness campaigns mounted on campus that address important issues of the day, including projects dealing with the impending war (Fall 2002), affirmative action (Spring 2003), voter participation (Fall 2004), gay marriage (Spring 2004), poverty (following Hurricane Katrina, Fall 2005) and global warming (Fall 2006). At other times students identify and work with non-profit organizations that they believe will benefit from a better visual identity. Perhaps the best example of a student project that exemplifies my teaching philosophy is the previously mentioned Bon Sel project.

Exposure to this "social model of design" allows students the opportunity to explore a critical direction that embodies social awareness and recognizes the great responsibility inherent in the discipline. When applied appropriately and collaboratively with organizations dedicated to social betterment, this model creates important examples that heighten the awareness of, and reliance on, graphic design to help achieve broad-based social and cultural advancement throughout the world community. It can lead to some pretty kickin' portfolio pieces, too.