

# Brother Dealers Gather For Successful 2003 Back To School Conference

Brother dealers gathered in Memphis in August for their annual Back to School Conference – five full days of product launches, training classes, and celebratory events. Organized by June Mellinger, director of education for Brother's Home Appliance Division, Back to School helps to keep dealers current on Brother's latest innovations while it presents the dealers with many opportunities to learn how to attract customers and increase sales.

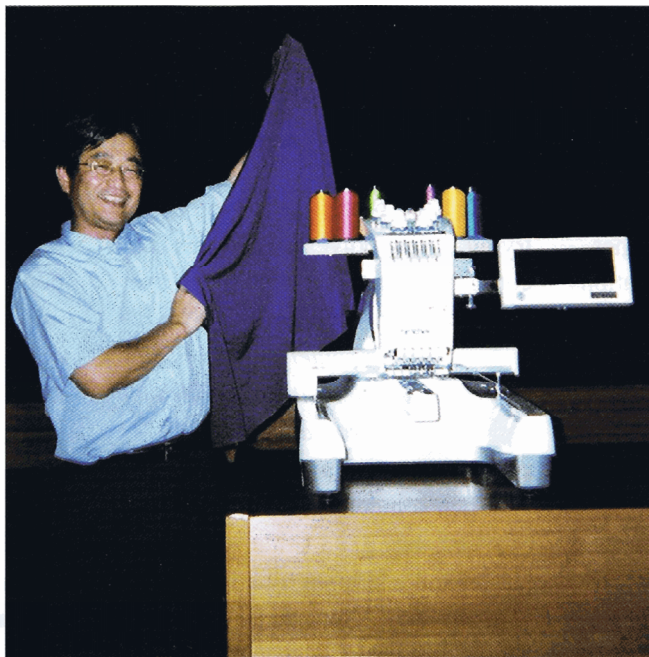
Classes ran the gamut, from demos on the new bridge embroidery machine, the PR-600, to how to carry out effective online marketing.

"This year's Back to School was particularly important," said Mellinger. "Not only did we launch three new machines, but we commemorated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Brother dealers. One 10-year veteran, John Scarsella (Harlem Avenue Sewing Center, Chicago,) commended Brother for seeking to meet the needs of his customers.

"In the past in this business, you had to wait three or four years for a product to change," reported Scarsella. "Now, with Brother, it's three or four products in less than a year."

Although Brother's dealer network began only 10 years ago, its dealers have helped catapult Brother to a position of leadership in the home sewing and embroidery market.

In addition to the extensive selection of classes, Back to School's



*Brother Vice-President Sean Katayama*

annual Fabric Challenge and Pacesetter Project once again provided dealers and their staff with the opportunity to display their skills and creativity, and the chance to win thousands of dollars worth of prizes. Using Dan River fabric and set criteria, participants in the Fabric Challenge came up with a wide variety of projects, ranging from gift baskets to quilted vests. For the Pacesetter Project, Cassie Vogt, a talented 12 year old from a kid's sewing club at Heyde's Sewing Machine Company (St. Louis, MO,) took first prize in one of the six categories with the use of the Feltscaper to create a complex landscape wall-hanging.

This year Brother added another special event to the five-day agenda. As a salute to the Memphis Zoo and the recent arrival of its two giant

pandas, Brother dealers were asked to create a tote bag using a panda theme. Winners of the contest were announced at the Bear Bash breakfast held on the last day of the convention. Mayor Keith McDonald of Bartlett, home to Brother's manufacturing and distribution operations, was on hand to congratulate the winners.

Next year, Back to School leaves Memphis for Anaheim, CA, headquarters of Brother's licensor, Disney. Mickey, Minnie, Donald and their friends are sure to be there to add even more fun to the

celebration of Brother's 50<sup>th</sup> year in the United States.

Brother's Home Appliance Division offers a full line of home sewing machines, from the basic to the top-of-the-line sewing and embroidery machine. The company is recognized for its high-quality machines and accessories – offering ease of use and flexibility at affordable prices.

Bridgewater, NJ, is the corporate headquarters for Brother in the Americas, (from Canada to South America) and has fully integrated sales, marketing services, manufacturing, and research and development capabilities located in the United States. In addition to its headquarters in New Jersey, Brother has facilities in California, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Tennessee as well as subsidiaries in California, Ohio, Canada, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Argentina. ❖