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ALAN LARABEE REMEMBERS A LIFETIME IN STONE

by Liz McGeachy

PHOTOS SUPPLIED COURTESY BARABARA COHEN AND WHITE HOUSE ARCHIVES

ALAN LARABEE WASN'T BORN INTO THE STONE INDUSTRY, HE MARRIED INTO IT. BUT IT GOT INTO HIS BLOOD JUST THE SAME. HIS FATHER-IN-LAW WILLIAM KORAN, A CZECHOSLOVAKIAN STONE SETTER FROM A LONG LINE OF STONEWORKERS, HELPED HIM GET STARTED IN THE BUSINESS WHEN LARABEE WAS ONLY 22 YEARS OLD. LARABEE STAYED WITH THE TRADE FOR 50 YEARS. TWO OF HIS THREE CHILDREN ALSO WENT INTO THE STONE INDUSTRY.

"My kids always tell me, 'You're only a first generation stoneworker because you married into it, but we're fifth generation," Larabee said with a laugh.

The stone industry has changed dramatically in the years since Larabee was an apprentice with Miller Druck Company in New York. And he's happy to illustrate those changes with his stories about work he did at places such as the United Nations Building, where he nearly installed a plaque upside down, to the White House, where he helped build a famous fireplace mantel.

Alan Larabee was born in 1937 and grew up in the Bronx. He left school after 10th grade, and worked in various jobs before going into the Marine Corp. He met his future wife, Lorraine, in 1959 and married her only three weeks later.

"She didn't think she would make a good military wife," Larabee said, "so I tried being a Fuller Brush salesman for a week and that didn't work, then I tried being a vacuum cleaner salesman, and that really didn't work. So when my father-in-law said 'Do you think you'd like to try setting marble?' I decided to give that a try. The money was good back then. Those were the days when you needed someone with pull to get you into the business."

Miller Druck Specialty Contracting, Inc. is an international company now, but Larabee said it only had a few employees in the early 1960s when he was learning the trade. "I started out as a 'go-fer,' but with only 7-8 people in the entire company, including the front office, it was a tremendous hands-on opportunity to learn everything about the job from master craftsmen."

Larabee was shown the ropes by a number of stone setters who had emigrated from Czechoslovakia.

"They were always telling me 'That's not the way we do it in Praha (Prague)," Larabee complained. But in 1961 when nine stoneworkers in Prague were killed repairing a church damaged during WWII and the New York Daily News ran a big photograph of the tragedy, Larabee cut it out and posted it on the bulletin board at work.

"We didn't have magic markers back then so I wrote underneath it in crayon, 'This is the way they do it in Praha,' and they never said that to me again," Larabee said. "But I tell you, those guys were all very good to me."

Larabee explained that there were two stone trade unions in New York at the time, one for the setters, cutters, and carvers and one for the helpers. He started out as a helper and worked his way up to setter with the help of John Danko, who was known as Three-Fingered John.

In 1962, a restored Imperial Danby Marble fireplace was installed in the State Dining Room: at far left, the two marble setters responsible meet with President John F. Kennedy, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, the First Lady Jackie, Johnny Powers, rep. of the Marble Setters and Carvers Union, and reps of the Marble Industry of New York. At far right, Mr Malcolm Cohen, now 98, also served as MIA President 1984-5.

"He had a flap of skin over two fingers, so he was considered handicapped and not allowed into the military," Larabee said. "But he was the least handicapped man I knew in the stone industry."

Larabee tells the story of working on a project at the United Nations Building with Danko. It was in 1963 when Taiwan was given Observer Status by the UN. Taiwan donated a jade green marble plaque with writing covering it to be placed in the building, and Danko and Larabee were to install it.

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ALAN LARABEE'S MEMORIES OF WORKING IN THE STONE BUSINESS

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Unfortunately they couldn't tell which way was up, so they had to get an interpreter to help them.

One of the most famous projects Larabee worked on was a reproduction of a fireplace mantelpiece for the State Dining Room in the White House in 1962.

When President Truman left office in 1953, he took the State Dining Room marble mantelpiece with him for the Truman Presidential Library in Missouri. In the early 1960s, when the Dining Room was refurbished, the White House decided to create an exact replica of the Truman fireplace and mantel, which included bison and a prayer: "I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this House, and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof."

The project was overseen by Malcolm Cohen of Miller Druck Co., who was with the American Marble Industry. Creating the replica meant making a plaster-of-paris model of the original mantel in Missouri, then back in New York, carving the new mantel from a piece of Vermont marble. Larabee remembers that a man named Red Raddy was the carver, and he was his helper.

"I was the assistant – the 'go-fer,' the guy who cleaned the floor. I was his Boy Friday," said Larabee. "Red was all business. I don't think we exchanged 200 words in the year I helped him, but he knew what he was doing."

After his early years in the stone industry, Larabee went on to work with the Alberene Soapstone Company in Virginia, which provided stone counters to laboratories around the country. One job, Larabee recalled, involved removing soapstone countertops and replacing them with cast resin tops. The soapstone was placed in storage for future "recycling."

Alan Larabee is now retired and living in the state of Washington, but he passed his interest in stone onto his two sons. His oldest son, Tom Larabee, works with Alaska Tile in Kenai, Alaska. His younger son, Robert Larabee, died in an automobile accident in 2005, but he was also in the industry.

"The stone industry was a fascinating place to work," Larabee said. "You were producing something, and you could see the results so clearly."

White House Archives

During the Kennedy renovations to the White House, the original 1902 design mantel in the State Dining Room was restored. A gift of Vermont marble from Domestic Marble and Stone was used to replace a green stone mantel that President Truman removed when he left office. Produced by carvers from Miller Druck Company, Larabee recalls helping with the project while an apprentice, and the care taken to preserve and reproduce the original details and original inscription. The inscription, as placed there by Franklin D. Roosevelt, is from a letter by John Adams to his wife Abigail, written immediately after he first moved into the house in 1800:

"I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this House, and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof."

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Pro-Seal Preserves from the Black Hills to China

by Joel Davis
Photos Supplied
Courtesy Pro-Seal

If Pro-Seal Systems Inc. can be entrusted to help save Mt. Rushmore, it's safe to assume that it is up to the task of developing quality products for the concrete countertop industry.

The Washington State-based company's concrete repair and waterproofing materials have been used in the preservation of the Panama Canal, the Great Wall of China, the Empire State Building, and even faces of the U.S. presidents on Mt. Rushmore, CEO Tal Brammer said.

"There are some of the biggest flagship projects in the world under our belt," he said. "We saved the features on the president's faces on Mt. Rushmore. Solving the problem was a privilege. We were happy to do that."

It's not just the glamorous projects that attract Pro-Seal's attention, however. The company offers more than 150 products to deal with water and fluid contaminant problems. Of these, several are of interest to anyone who installs concrete countertops or works with decorative concrete.

Will Kraft, a Pro-Seal sales specialist, minced no words about the company's strengths. "We are the ultimate problems solvers," he said. "... Everybody is searching for the holy grail of concrete countertop sealers. It's got to be acid resistant and easy to apply."

Use the company's Pro-Seal Ultra Shield II-A sealant, and you may just have completed that quest, Brammer said. "You are probably using the holy grail."

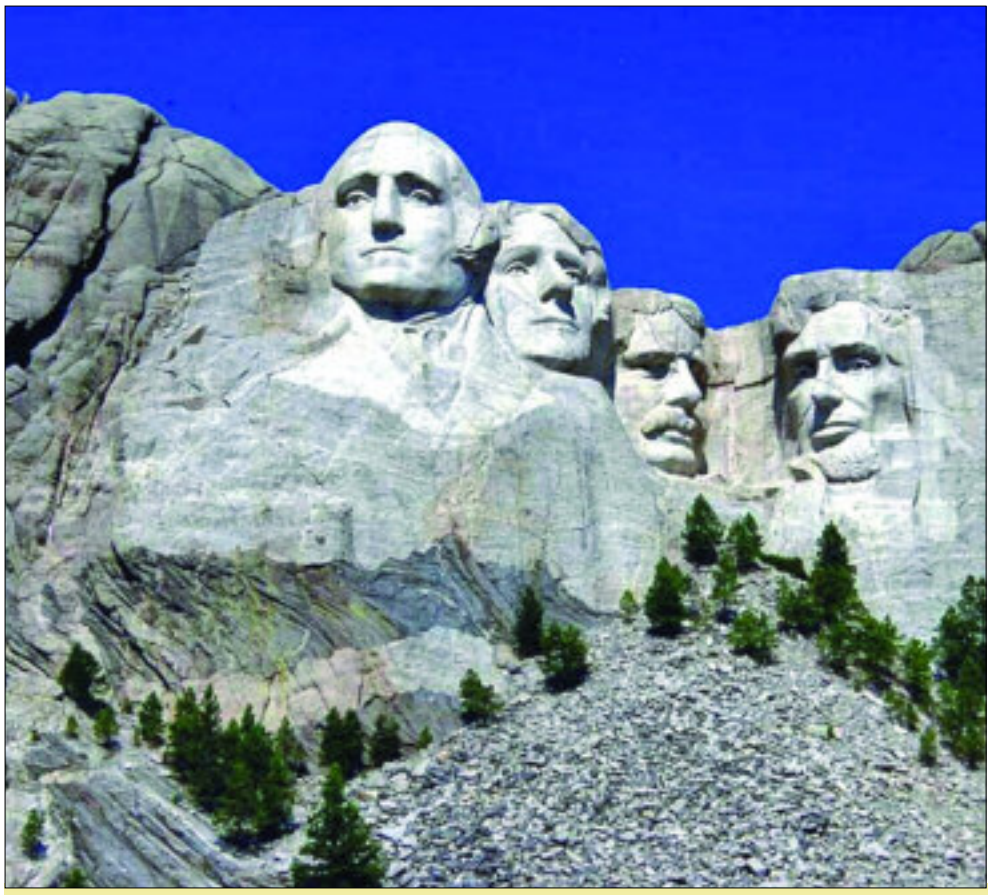
Ultra Shield II-A, a hydrocarbon resistant film sealer, can improve the durability of concrete countertops. "It is the most popular (sealant) in that industry," Brammer said. "It's won a lot of awards."

Industry feedback about the project has been very positive, Kraft said. "We work really closely with the guys who are doing this every day. The feedback we get from the leaders of this industry is this just works. It's easy to lay down. It stands up to the wine and vinegar and all the things you see in a common kitchen."

Although some contractors use burnishing pads or wheels when applying Ultra-Shield, others just use micro-fiber rags and a little elbow grease.

"You don't have to mortgage your house to buy a special light to put this stuff down," Will said. "It simply wipes on and off. It couldn't be easier to apply."

Some installers are turning to a combination of Pro-Seal products – either the DP-36 or the Pro-Seal R.O.C. Hard with the Ultra Shield II-A – to optimize the protection of concrete, Kraft said. "The nice thing is you are actually applying less Ultra Shield. There are big savings in cost, and it increases the durability of the countertop, too."



Pro-Seal has helped preserve some very high-profile projects, including the presidential features of Mt. Rushmore

DP-36 increases the density of concrete by 10 to 23 percent by reacting with latent components within it. Those newly activated particles then fill up naturally occurring pores and air spaces, which reinforces its structural mass. DP-36 also extracts fluid contaminants from concrete, including unwanted water, by forming a hydrostatic barrier that greatly reduces and, in many cases, stops water drive from the negative side. As part of a Pro-Seal system, it helps prevent freeze and thaw damage.

Kraft is happy to advise customers on best practices in treating concrete countertops or decorative concrete. "I keep my finger on the pulse of this industry so any time there is new information, I'm kind of a go-between," he said. "People will call me for tips and tricks and for trouble shooting."

The company is willing to invest its time and resources into creating individual solutions to specific problems, Kraft said. "It's more about tailor-making systems for specific problems rather than trying to throw one product at every problem."

In the 1990s, Pro-Seal beat out dozens of other, larger specialty chemical companies in a competition to provide repair materials for the Panama Canal. The Pro-Seal products are still performing.

For example, Pro-Seal is currently working with the National Park Service to develop a system to stop erosion at some ancient Indian archaeological dig sites. The company is six years into a seven year test of the technology.

"People come to us with problems that can't be solved with one material or another," Kraft said. "We will typically design a system for their specific problem."

Developing a formula from scratch takes Pro-Seal about five years. Designing a derivative of an existing product takes anywhere from six months to two years.

Brammer helped found the company 38 years ago. Its original focus was the construction industry. At the time, concrete sealants were not up to the task of dealing with the environmental conditions of day-to-day construction work. "We kept thinking that nothing is ever clean and nothing is ever dry, so we wanted to develop products that could be applied in adverse environments," he said. "There was a lot of trial and error at the start. It took us a good six or seven years to really get ramped up and get something we considered... viable for the marketplace."

The company developed a product to extract moisture out of materials like masonry, stucco, and concrete so sealer could be applied without waiting for summer or breaks in the weather, Brammer said. It also produced sealants, patching materials, and coatings that could be applied underwater or on surfaces that were wet or covered with acids, oil, or other contaminant fluids.

"From there, our philosophy has grown and changed. Our products are 'green' in nature. In those days, it was 'environmentally friendly.' Today they talk about them as green."

One of the highlights of the company's achievements was securing the Panama Canal contract. Winning that contract was a coup for Pro-Seal, which took on far larger competitors and won, Brammer said. "We were a small company then, and we beat out some of the biggest players in the game in terms of performance."

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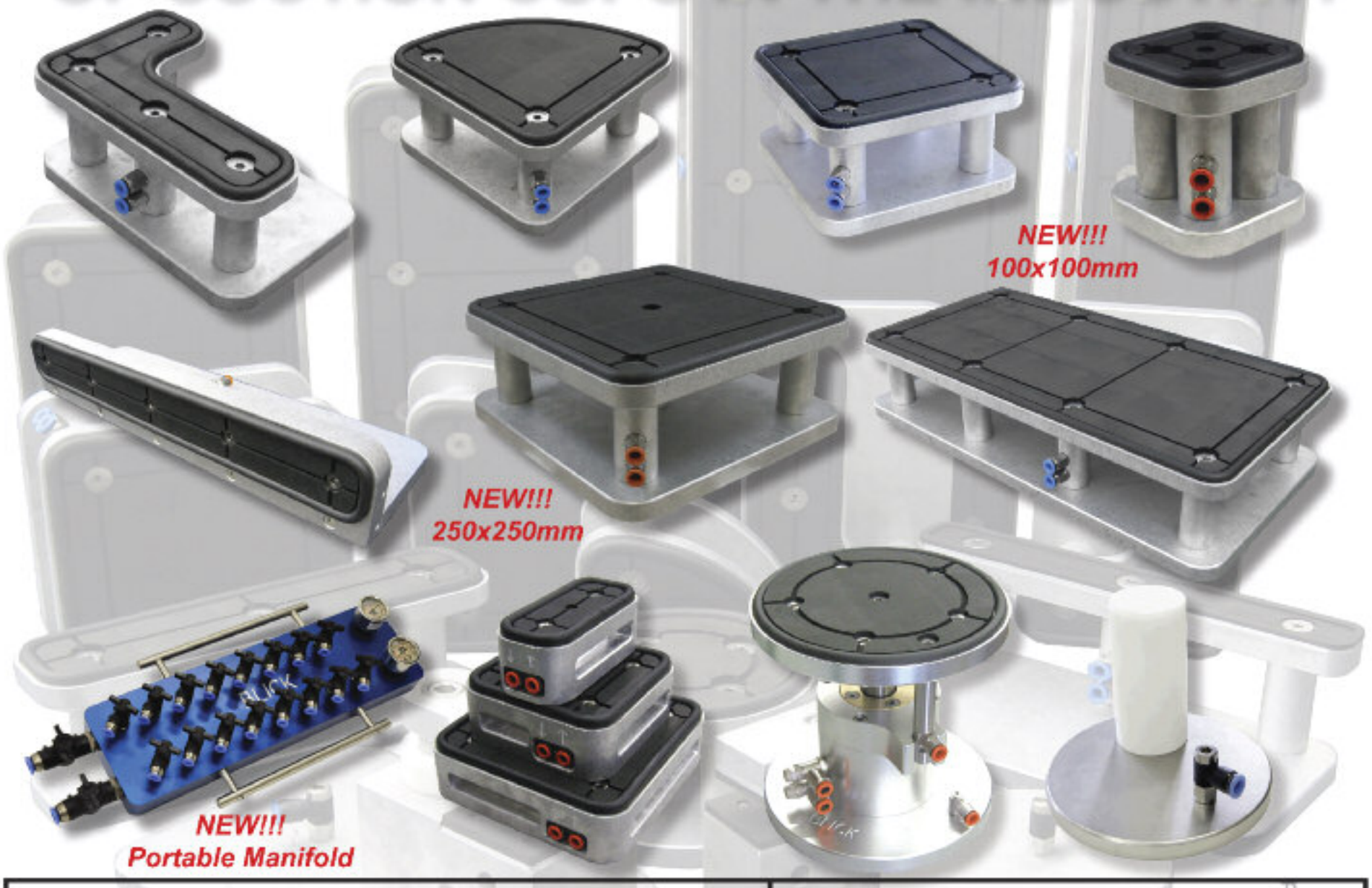

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WE START 2012 OFF BY LOOKING BACK WITH OUR ALAN LARABEE INTERVIEW, AND LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREAT YEAR WITH OUR PRO-SEAL PROFILE, STONE INDUSTRY PRODUCT REVIEWS, AND HELPFUL ADVICE FROM OUR INDUSTRY CONSULTANTS. ALL OF US HERE AT THE *SLIPPERY ROCK GAZETTE* WISH OUR READERS A SAFE AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR. PLEASE BROWSE AND EXPLORE OUR REVAMPED WEBSITE, TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YEARS OF STONE INDUSTRY RESOURCES INCLUDING PRODUCT REVIEWS AND SHOP SAFETY, AND HOW-TO ARTICLES. HAVE A GOOD READ, AND AS ALWAYS, WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS!

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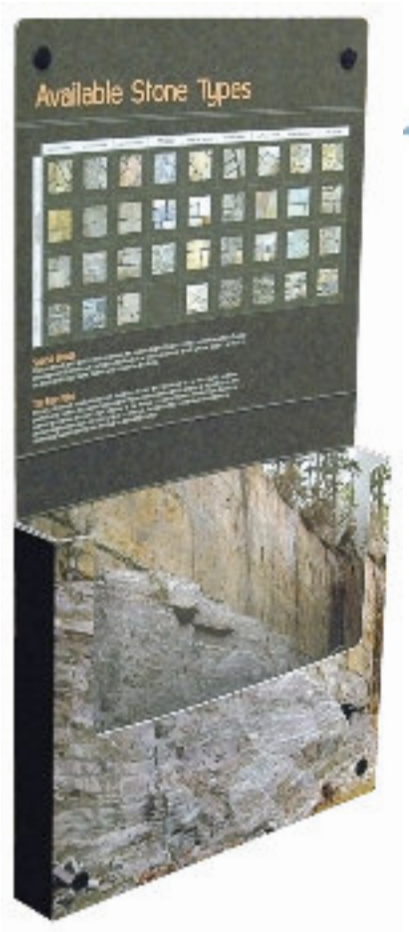
CHAMPLAIN STONE OFFERS NEW "SALES BOX" TO CUSTOMERS AND PROSPECTS

CHAMPLAIN STONE HAS PRODUCED A HANDY PROMOTIONAL "SALES BOX" WHICH IS OFFERED TO EXISTING CUSTOMERS, POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS, SPECIFIERS, AND OTHERS INVOLVED IN THE SELECTION OF NATURAL STONE MATERIAL FOR ALL CONSTRUCTION PURPOSES.

This upscale, stunning package was designed by Kayla Herlihy of Champlain Stone's in-house design department, and has been crafted to hold a number of brochures, including the firm's Stone Product Guide. It functions as an identity package for architects and designers; a custom–collated, one-of-a-kind presentation kit for sales meetings; a press kit for the media…and much, much more.

Complete information about the Sales Box design will be published in Corporate Image's sales catalog, an entity that showcases various sales promotion items. "We offer a great deal of educational product information, customer endorsements and case histories showcasing signature projects to share with professionals, helping them optimize stone purchasing decisions," stated Ryan McLaughlin, Champlain Stone's Director of New Business Development. "Our new Sales Box is an attractive, handy, and helpful tool to assist those in the marketplace relative to selecting the best stone material for most any project."



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The Champlain Stone Sales Box is available to qualified members of the trade.

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PLAYING A GUNMAN ON TV

SEVERAL SAN FRANCISCO POLICE OFFICERS RESPONDING TO A 911 CALL ABOUT AN ARMED ROBBERY RAN INTO THE ALPHA MARKET ON COLE STREET WITH GUNS DRAWN.

"Drop the gun!" an officer ordered, aiming his weapon at a man in a ski mask brandishing a pistol.

Instead of dropping the gun, the man in the mask turned to the officers and said, "It's a movie!"

That's what they all say.

It was shortly before 11 a.m. one Wednesday. What happened next, according to Ade Saba, owner of the Alpha Market at 960 Cole St., is that the police "got really upset."

"They wanted him to drop the gun, but the guy didn't take it seriously because he knows it's a plastic gun," Saba said.

The police report said "the gunman refused to put down his pistol, and the officers overpowered and disarmed him." He was not arrested.

Perhaps most stunned of all was the Japanese film crew across the street. With the simulated robbery at the Alpha Market, they thought they had a pretty good new episode of "World's Most Interesting Footage."

Then it got a little more interesting.

"We were shooting about a stupid crime - a little segment people can laugh about," said Yasmine Yoshida, filming coordinator with Duo Creative Communications, the film company. "It's supposed to be funny, but all of a sudden it wasn't funny at all."

Unfortunately, Yoshida said the cameras were no longer rolling when the real guns arrived.

"They were just so scared," she said.

Police told her that the actor, David Lubin, was lucky he hadn't been killed.

"They said when they see someone running around with a gun, they usually just shoot," she said. "They don't ask any questions."

Yoshida said Duo Creative has a great relationship with Saba and his Alpha Market, where they've been filming each month for the past year.

The show is filmed in San Francisco in English, but shown with Japanese voice-over in Japan.

"It's a very popular show," Yoshida said.

But that Wednesday, the city's Film Commission came around asking a lot of questions, "and I was in hot water," she said.

Ultimately, she said that Duo Creative had all the proper permits and did not need to inform the police about the bogus burglary because it was on private property.

"We did everything right," she said.

Source: The San Fransico Chronicle, www.sfgate.com/chronicle/

CoverQUIK Tile to Introduce "Innovation in Renovation" Programs at Surfaces 2012

CoverQUIK Tile, the innovative new manufacturer and importer of revolutionary cost-saving and time-saving glass & stone tile and setting systems, will be introducing its "Innovation in Renovation" programs at Surfaces 2012, Jan. 24-26, in Las Vegas, NV.

"It has been an exciting launch since Coverings (last) year," stated Bill Reid, Co-Founder and Vice President/Sales. "Already we stock and service CoverQUIK products out of our three U.S facilities. And, in this short window of time, we've established a strong cadre of top North American distributors with more than 120 coast-to-coast locations. These organizations are showing customers firsthand that virtually anyone can install and enjoy popular glass and stone tile in their homes or businesses in just hours (not days!)… with half the usual prep, mess, labor, time and expense. At Surfaces, we'll unveil a number of new merchandising items and products which will make selling CoverQUIK items even easier!" exclaimed Reid.

The firm has beefed up its distributor support by adding Justin Malloy as Media Manager. He stated, "We've developed CoverQUIK pages on Facebook and YouTube to create more leads for our distributors. At the National Remodelers Expo in Chicago, October of last year, CoverQUIK was successful in procuring nearly 200 qualified leads from contractors. The momentum keeps growing!"

"We are also offering a three-year warranty on our products," added Reid. "Specifics about this can be seen on our website, www.coverquik.com. There are still a few very good territories open for new distributors, and we are planning on filling those after meetings which will take place during Surfaces. Those interested should stop by our exhibit # B3873 at the show."

For more information or inquiries on CoverQUIK Tile, please log on to the company's informative web site at www.coverquik.com or contact Bill Reid, Vice President/Sales, at bill.reid@coverquik.com or call 407-973-8763.

From the Publisher's Pen

New Slippery Rock Website

It is a cold December morning with a light layer of frost on the holly berries by our parking lot. The sun is trying to peek over the mountain ridge that I can see from my office window. The beauty of East Tennessee is hard to beat regardless of the time of year. If your travels take you near Knoxville, please give us a call, we would like to get to know you and we may be able to rustle up a cup of coffee.

While many folks are out trying to find Christmas presents or perhaps working hard to finish a kitchen before the holidays, we are busy working on the new Slippery Rock Gazette website (www.slipperyrockgazette.net).

Phase 1 is finished. This includes *free classified ads* as well as the current issue and 27 prior issues that have been archived and are now available for searches.

It looks like the word is getting out about our new site. We have had quite a few people take advantage of our free classified ads. We are also able to use several tools including Google Analytics to measure traffic. Based on our previous experience with websites, it looks like we will need to be expanding server capacity very soon.

Phase 2 is scheduled for testing and completion in January. It will include an industry directory of manufacturers. Many manufacturers in our industry are small and do not have big advertising budgets or money for extensive website search engine optimization. We hope to be able to provide a service to help fabricators find the websites of suppliers in an easy to use, organized format.

I would really appreciate your comments and suggestions for the new website. We want this site to be useful to you, our readers. Please send your ideas to me, c/o publisher@slipperyrockgazette.net

Thanks for reading. Here's to the best year, ever, for all of us.

Rich Hassert

Email responses to:
publisher@slipperyrockgazette.net

Wrong Man Wins Local Election

Talk about your typically misleading ballot; a typo has led to the election of the wrong man to a finance board in Derby, Connecticut.

James J. Butler was the highest vote-getter, winning 1,526 votes for the 10-member Board of Apportionment and Taxation, which oversees the town's finances.

However, his father, 72-year-old James R. Butler, was the person who was supposed to be on the ballot. He's the one who had been nominated by the Democratic Town Committee for a second, two-year term.

The News Times of Danbury and *New Haven Register* report that James R. Butler says his 46-year-old son is not interested in public office.

Av Harris, spokesman for the secretary of the state's office, says James J. Butler should be sworn in because he was elected.

Local officials were supposed to take their appointed office December 3.

Hey, Give Me Some Credit, Here!

A Central Florida woman says she's having numerous financial troubles because of a bank error that caused Chase Bank USA to declare her dead last December.

Wrenella Pierre has filed a lawsuit and Chase officials said they're investigating how the mistake happened.

When Pierre and her husband built their home in 2007, they got two mortgages through Chase Bank.

According to the lawsuit, the bank notified credit-reporting agencies last year that Pierre had died. They sent a letter of condolence to the family, saying someone from the bank would be in touch about the mortgage.

Pierre says she notified bank officials that she was alive and also went to a local branch to correct the mistake.

A month later, the lawsuit alleges, credit agencies still reported her dead.

Source: Orlando Sentinel, http://www.orlandosentinel.com

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No Rest for the...uh, Weary?

Rufus Leakin
Guru of Folklore

PUSHED for space, a Spanish cemetery has begun placing stickers on thousands of burial sites whose leases are up as a warning to relatives or caretakers to pay up or face possible eviction.

Jose Abadia, deputy urban planning manager for northern Zaragoza city, said the city's Torrero municipal graveyard had removed remains from some 420 crypts in recent months and moved them to a common burial ground.

Torrero, like many Spanish cemeteries, no longer allows people to buy grave sites. It instead leases them out for periods of five or 49 years.

Abadia said the cases involved graves whose leases had not been renewed for 15 years or more. He said Torrero currently had some 7,000 burial sites with lapsed leases out of a total of some 114,000.

He said leases generally lapsed because the relatives or caretakers had died or had moved house and failed to renew the contract. He said in other cases, with the passing of years, family descendants sometimes no longer wanted to pay for further leases.

He said the policy was a matter of graveyard management and that graveyards were not limitless in space.

"If we keep on building and building spaces for human remains, where are we going to end up?" said Abadia. "It's a problem that is affecting big city cemeteries more and more."

The graveyard began looking for payment defaulters over the past two years. Abadia said the process of trying to notify relatives or caretakers and giving them a chance to decide what to do normally takes up to six months.

"We're not doing it to make money or empty graves but rather to improve management," said Abadia.

The sticker campaign was decided upon to coincide with the November 1st Roman Catholic holiday (All Saints Day) on which people visit graveyards. Abadia said that since then, hundreds of people had called to make inquiries about graves of their relatives.

Nowadays, Spanish cemeteries normally place coffins or cremated ash urns in niches above ground.

OK... how disturbing is this? A person lives their life as righteously they can, then when they finally are given a "resting place" in hallowed ground, they only get a temporary lease? Wouldn't it be comforting to know that your memorial and final resting place is actually final?

I completely understand that space is limited in many European countries, especially in the cities. Americans take the ample space we have for granted (think about it–we have states that are larger than some countries!) and if urban societies continue to expand (and they will), and a country can only extend to a particular point, something is going to have to give, because you can't always expand and build "up." Valuable country real estate is needed and reserved for farming in many cultures– an eminently practical solution, and better than converting pasture into yet another condo development. WE all know how well THAT is working out, these days...

America is also a comparatively young country, so we don't have many over-full urban graveyards that have been around as long as those in Spain. I guess when it comes to having more "living" space, where ever you are, the actually living must come first. What was once claimed by the dead will loose ground to meet practical needs, as vacant, arable land becomes more scarce, everywhere.

Only Santa Can Do That!

FIRE officials say a Texas man who had to be rescued from the chimney of his house wasn't trying to be Santa Claus. He was just locked out of his house.

Fire officials say they had to hoist the 22-year-old man by rope from the chimney of his house in southwest Lubbock.

Deputy Fire Marshal Robert Loveless tells the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal* that the man and his family were locked out of their house. Loveless says the man, wanting to save the price of a locksmith, decided to enter the house through the chimney as his wife and child waited outside around 1 a.m.

Loveless says the man's wife called 911 after he became stuck. Firefighters hauled him out about an hour later. He was not injured.

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The Magic of a White Christmas

Auntie Mae's Various Ramblings on Life in a Small Town

Ida Mae Nowes
Nubbins Special Correspondent

NUBBINS HAD A WHITE CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR–THE FIRST ONE IN I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG. THE MOVIES LIKE US TO THINK THAT CHRISTMAS LOOKS LIKE A MAGICAL VERMONT POST CARD EVERY YEAR, BUT WHERE I LIVE IT MIGHT AS EASILY BE RAINING OR 70 DEGREES. YOU JUST NEVER KNOW.

What I do know is that snow threw the whole town into a tizzy. This was no little dusting after all – there was a good 12 inches of fat white frosting covering the whole town by Christmas morning. Christmas Eve morning people were still hoping it wouldn't amount to much, but as the flakes kept falling they got worried. In Vermont nobody bats an eye at 12 inches of snow, but in Nubbins snow can cause a certain level of insanity–especially on Christmas Eve. There were groceries to buy! Last minute gifts to find! Church services to attend! Family and friends to visit!

I confess to feeling a bit of that insanity myself. Merl was in town visiting his mother, and the three of us had plans to go to the 7:00 candlelight church service. We were then going to Roberta's house for eggnog and caroling with her beau Brian and a few other folks. I had other things planned for the day too, like giving a little Christmas present to my neighbor Johnny Mac–the young man I've been tutoring. And I was completely out of coffee for my Christmas morning breakfast.

At first I was in a big huff about it all. How very inconsiderate of the weather to mess up my plans. But then I thought, really, who cares? So I don't get to go to the candlelight service for the first time in 40 years. So I don't get to see Johnny Mac, or be with my friends and Merl on Christmas Eve, or buy coffee. I've got a roof over my head and so far the heat's still working, so I can live without those other things, can't I? I wasn't sure about the coffee, but the rest… probably.

If I've learned anything from living six decades, it's that things usually have a way of working out, though rarely in the way you thought they would. So I made myself a cup of cocoa and sat at my kitchen table watching the silvery flakes float down in my back yard as the dusk settled in. I soon found myself lost in the soft, magical scene outside my window. I was so mesmerized I jumped when I heard a knock on the door.

When I opened it, there was a scarlet-cheeked Johnny Mac, with Mae the dog on a leash. In his hand was a gift in green and red paper.

"Merry Christmas, Aunt Ida Mae," he yelped. "Isn't this snow *awesome*!"

"It's wonderful," I couldn't help but reply, and Mae agreed by barking. "You two better come on in and get warm."

He and Mae came in stood on the mat, while I closed the door behind them.

"My mom wanted me to bring you this," he said, handing me the present, "and she wanted to make sure you knew the church service was cancelled for tonight."

"Well I guess I'm not missing anything then," I said, smiling to myself. "I've got something for you too." I went back in the living room and came out with a shiny gold gift bag, which Johnny Mac tore into without hesitation. He pulled out a long red scarf I'd knitted for him and a shorter one.

"Wow!" he said, wrapping the long one around his neck. "What's the short one for?"

"Your mom told me that you're going to be able to keep Mae for your very own, so I made one for Mae too," I said.

Johnny Mac's eyes grew wide. "You did? You are the coolest!" Mae didn't seem quite as excited as Johnny Mac when he tied the scarf around her neck, but Johnny Mac was clearly impressed and surprised me by reaching over and giving me a hug.

"Thanks Aunt Ida Mae. I gotta go back home now cause it's gettin' dark. Merry Christmas!" As he and Mae stepped out into the carport, we saw that someone had driven into the driveway. It was Brian's truck, and as Johnny Mac and Mae ran home, Roberta and Merl and Brian and three other friends tumbled out.

"What's going on?" I asked.

"Well we knew you weren't going to get out in this mess, so we're bringing the party to you," Roberta said, showing me a sack filled with eggnog and other goodies. Merl gave me a big hug and said "Merry Christmas, honey."

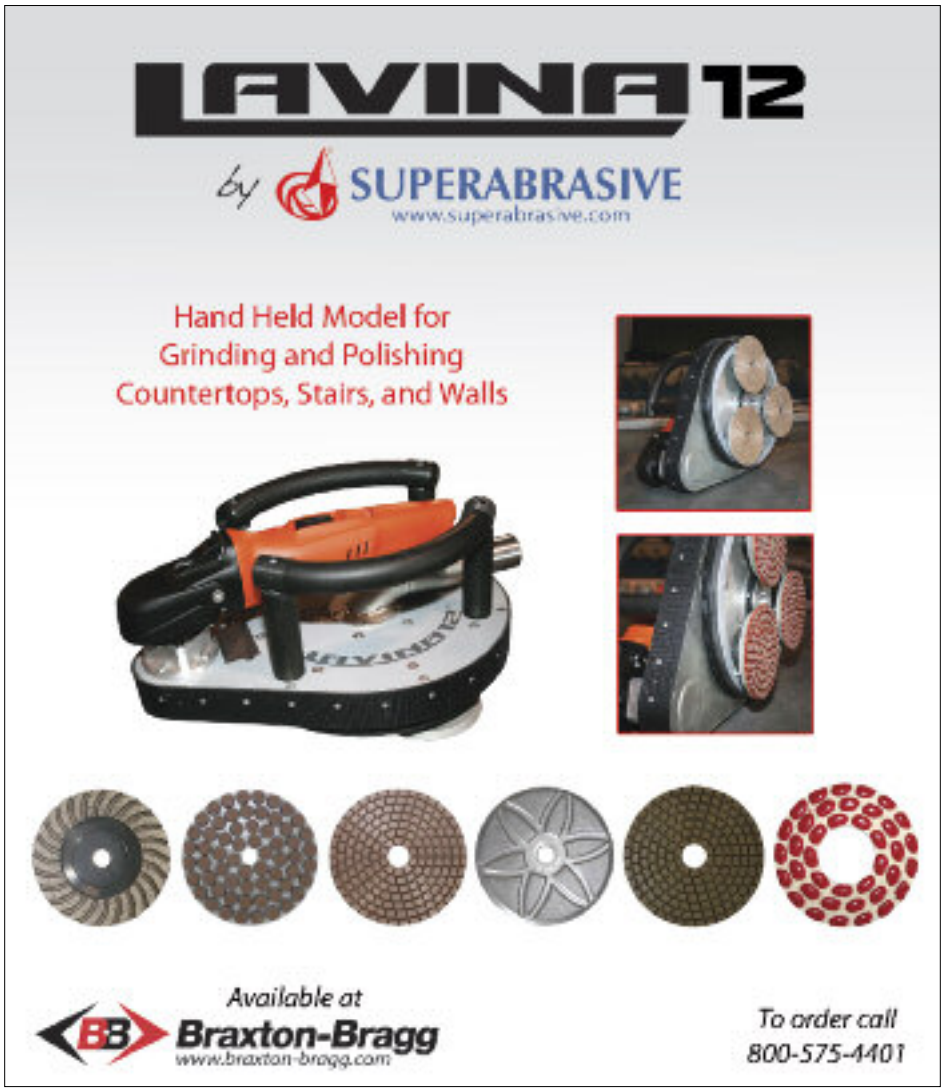
Suddenly the scene changed from a soft, solitary evening to one of people and laughter and music. But I still felt a hint of Christmas Eve magic in the air.

Roberta picked up the gift Johnny Mac had left.

"What's this?" she asked.

"Oh Johnny Mac brought that over from his mother," I said, tearing open the paper. As I pulled out the gift I could only shake my head and smile.

It was a pound of gourmet coffee.



Tile Redi® Offers Handy Display for Dealers and Distributors

TILE REDI®, WORLD-LEADING MANUFACTURER AND MARKETER OF PRE-FORMED, ONE-PIECE SHOWER PANS AND RELATED ACCESSORIES, OFFERS THE MARKETPLACE A CONVENIENT, STAND-UP DISPLAY WHICH SHOWCASES ITS LINE OF SHOWER PANS AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS.

It is outfitted with photography and support verbiage that carefully explain to customers the benefits of the product line… and, its ease of installation.

Constructed of sturdy corrugated material, this easy-to-assemble piece takes up less than four square feet of showroom floor space.

"Our display is ideal for virtually any kind of showroom," stated Farrell Gerber, Tile Redi's Executive Vice President of Sales. "An actual shower pan is positioned on top for customers to see and touch. There are also pockets to include leaflets, which describe the line. Showroom managers in particular, like this display because it's so easy to put together and move around."

The dealer/distributor showroom display is just another example of how Tile Redi has all the tools necessary to support the sales efforts of its customers.

Tile Redi patented and UL-listed shower pans are manufactured as pre-formed, one-piece shower modules. Complete with fully integrated drains, curbs and splash walls, each leak-proof unit is pre-pitched for easy drainage.

By solving water intrusion problems, Tile Redi shower pans inhibit the growth of mold and mildew. For more information, please contact: Tile Redi, 4450 NW 126th Avenue, Suite 101, Coral Springs, FL 33065. Call 800-232-6156. www.tileredi.com.

Mercado Machinery Distributing Jet Edge Waterjets in Mexico

Jet Edge, Inc., a leading manufacturer of ultra-high pressure waterjets, is pleased to announce that Mercado Machinery is now distributing Jet Edge precision water jet cutting systems in Mexico. The machine tool distributor has sales offices in Mexico City, Monterrey and Guadalajara.

Mercado Machinery carries Jet Edge's full line of precision waterjet cutting equipment, including waterjet cutting machines and waterjet pumps. Jet Edge manufactures a wide range of waterjet cutting systems, from 30″x30″ to 30´x100´, and offers the widest range of intensifier pumps in the waterjet industry, including 36KSI, 60KSI and 90KSI pumps, 30-280hp, electric and diesel.

"We are very pleased to introduce Mercado Machinery as our new distributor for Mexico," said Jude Lague, Jet Edge president. "Mercado shares our commitment to outstanding customer service. Their experienced sales and technical staff know the metalworking industry and can help our customers select the best machine for their application."

For more information about Mercado Machinery, call (55) 5567 2321 (Mexico City), 33 3121 8829 (Guadalajara) or 01 800 837 3001 (Monterrey) or please visit them online at mercadomachinery.com/hydra.html.

For more information about Jet Edge waterjets, visit www.jetedge.com or call 763-497-8700 or 1-800-JET-EDGE (538-3343).

About Jet Edge

Established in 1984, Jet Edge is a global designer and manufacturer of waterjet systems for precision cutting, surface preparation and coating removal. Jet Edge systems are used around the world in a broad range of industries, from the world's leading airlines to automotive, aerospace, industrial manufacturers, machine and job shops.

Laticrete Helps New Jersey Boxing Club Pursue More Knockouts

LATICRETE, a global manufacturer and leader of premium installation and finishing systems for the building industry, donated funds to The Dover Boxing Club, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of young people from Dover, New Jersey and surrounding communities.

Ed Leahy, Founder/Trainer, is a former professional boxer and judge, well-known in the boxing world, who won the lightweight championship while on active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps. Through his leadership, The Dover Boxing Club provides young men with exercise programs, character development, self-discipline, self-confidence, and the opportunity to achieve competitive excellence. It promotes and grows the sport of boxing in the US by competing in local, state, regional, national and international competitions. Being non-profit, The Club depends on donations to maintain its operations.

Ed Leahy's brother, Tom, currently is a Technical Sales Representative for LATICRETE Specialty Products Division (SPD). He stated, "Dover Boxing has been very active in bringing kids from overseas to compete here in the states… and, vice versa. For example, recently, amateur boxers from Ireland came into America to fight some of the club's members. It's all for a great cause, and donations are always needed. David Rothberg, Chairman/CEO of LATICRETE didn't hesitate when approached for a contribution."

Dover Boxing will be the first amateur club from anywhere in the world to bring fighters to compete in Beijing Stadium. In the very near future, a contingency of Dover's young boxers will demonstrate their pugilistic prowess at China's "National Stadium" (also known, due to its unique architectural appearance, as "The Bird's Nest") that was designed for use throughout the 2008 Summer Olympics and Paralympics.

"Without donations from generous companies such as LATICRETE, we wouldn't be able to engineer opportunities for the youngsters such as the China trip," said Ed Leahy. "And, just like LATICRETE, Dover boxing is now going international!"

With the help of funding from Laticrete, the Dover Boxing Club will be the first amateur club from anywhere in the world to bring fighters to compete in Beijing Stadium.

About Laticrete

LATICRETE International, Inc. is a US-based, family-owned global manufacturer and leader of premium installation and finishing systems for the building industry. LATICRETE® products are produced and distributed worldwide in the commercial and consumer channels. The company's philosophy of innovation and technical expertise has led to an unparalleled reputation and commitment to superior quality, performance and customer service. Manufactured in state-of-the-art ISO 9001:2008 certified facilities, LATICRETE offers a broad product portfolio including an extensive line of low VOC sustainable products independently certified by GREENGUARD.

LATICRETE®, LATAPOXY®, SpectraLOCK®, Hydro Ban® and DRYTEK® are registered brands of LATICRETE International, Inc. To visit their corporate Corporate Website, go to www.laticrete.com.

ARTISAN STONE GROUP MEMBER FLOFORM COUNTERTOPS WARMS UP WITH "CUT THE COLD" COAT DRIVE

Helping local communities stay warm one coat at a time

FLOFORM COUNTERTOPS AND PARTICIPATING DEALERS ARE SHARING THE WARMTH THIS WINTER BY LAUNCHING THEIR FIRST ANNUAL CUT THE COLD COAT DRIVE. EACH FLOFORM BRANCH IS COLLECTING LIGHTLY USED COATS AND JACKETS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL CHARITY ORGANIZATIONS SUCH UNION GOSPEL MISSION (SEATTLE, SPOKANE, PORTLAND), SILOAM MISSION, METRO COMMUNITY, AND THE MUSTARD SEED TO HELP KEEP THOSE IN NEED WARM THIS WINTER.

The Cut the Cold Coat Drive was developed as an effort to provide support to thousands of homeless and low income individuals throughout our cities—including many children—who would otherwise be without a winter coat.

Dec. to Jan. 31, FLOFORM Countertops invites the public to bring gently used coats and jackets to a local FLOFORM or participating dealer showroom.

"At FLOFORM, we believe in commitment not only to our customers and employees, but to our communities as a whole," says FLOFORM President & C.E.O. Ted Sherritt. "We are grateful for the opportunity to support the needs of our community and help those who are less fortunate."

The public may donate coats at the following locations from now through January 31, 2012 during business hours:

Winnipeg, MB - FLOFORM Showroom
38-5 Scurfield Boulevard
Winnipeg, MB, R3Y 1G3

Edmonton, AB – FLOFORM Showroom
7630 Yellowhead Trail
Edmonton, AB, T5B 1G3

Calgary, AB – FLOFORM Showroom
1825-32 Avenue NE #9
Calgary, AB, T2E 7C8

Kelowna, BC – FLOFORM Showroom
#107-1641, Commerce Avenue
Kelowna, BC V1X 8A9

Seattle, WA – FLOFORM Showroom
22445 76th Ave S
Kent, WA 98032

Edmonds, WA – Chermak Construction
655 Edmonds Way
Edmonds, WA 98020

Edmonds, WA – Builders Showroom
7711 Ballinger Way
Edmonds, WA 98026

Bellevue, WA – LUWA distributing
13500 Bel-Red Road Suite 1
Bellevue, WA 98005

Anacortes, WA – Creative Cabinets
1014 11th Street
Anacortes, WA 98221

Oak Harbor, WA – Floors Plus
3175 N Goldie Rd
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

Clinton, WA – Bayview Design
5809 S Bayview Rd
Clinton, WA 98236

Mount Vernon, WA – Mount Vernon Carpet Center
400 West Fir St.
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Bellingham, WA – Lynden Floors
4071 Hannegan Rd
Bellingham, WA 98226

Spokane, WA – FLOFORM Showroom
5320 E Sprague Ave, STE 400
Spokane Valley, WA 99212

Portland, OR – FLOFORM Showroom
9220 SW Nimbus Ave, Building C
Beaverton, OR 97008

For information about the Cut the Cold Coat Drive and drop-sites visit www.facebook.com/floform or call 877-FLOFORM.

About FLOFORM Countertops

Established in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1961, FLOFORM is Western Canada's and the Northwestern United States leading manufacturer of quality countertops. For more information regarding FLOFORM Countertops, visit http://www.floform.com

LATICRETE MVP 3.0 SUCCESSFUL CONTRACTOR LOYALTY PROGRAM UPGRADED

LATICRETE, A GLOBAL MANUFACTURER AND LEADER OF PREMIUM INSTALLATION AND FINISHING SYSTEMS FOR THE BUILDING INDUSTRY, HAS ANNOUNCED MAJOR UPGRADES TO ITS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL MOST VALUED PARTNER (MVP) CUSTOMER LOYALTY PROGRAM.

"MVP has been one of the best programs we've ever offered to users of Laticrete products," stated Ron Nash, Laticrete Director of Sales. "We started the program a few years ago with 20-30 MVPs. Today, there are several hundred contractors participating. It became clear to us that we were forming strong partnerships with these contractors. So, we sat down and discussed what we could do to enhance the MVP program and recognize their loyalty."

Since its inception, the MVP program has been a three-way partnership between Laticrete, qualified Laticrete distributors, and tile and stone installation contractors. Once joining the program, there are many benefits offered to the contractor. These include rebate incentives, MVP Adventure Travel, rewards points, and "Sneak Peaks" of new Laticrete products.

"There are even more benefits offered with MVP 3.0," continued Nash. "When MVP contractors have a need for technical support, there is now a separate dial-in phone number for special access to our Technical Services Department. There is also improved flexibility in the use of rewards points including the ability to use their points to pay for registrations and lodging at industry events like Surfaces, Coverings and the TCAA National Convention."

Ed Metcalf, President, Laticrete North America Division, was the person who spearheaded the movement of upgrading the MVP program. He stated, "The Laticrete Most Valued Partner program has been a huge success because it is more than just a loyalty program. We engage with our MVPs in every possible way to help them grow their business and give them an advantage over their competition. MVP 3.0 is the latest step in the program's evolution, intended to help make the benefits of MVP even more apparent and readily accessible to our most dedicated end-users."

Laticrete International, Inc. is a US-based family-owned global manufacturer and leader of premium installation and finishing systems for the building industry. Laticrete® products are produced and distributed worldwide in the commercial and consumer channels. The company's philosophy of innovation and technical expertise has led to an unparalleled reputation and commitment to superior quality, performance and customer service.

Manufactured in state-of-the-art ISO 9001:2008 certified facilities, Laticrete offers a broad product portfolio including an extensive line of low VOC sustainable products independently certified by GreenGuard.

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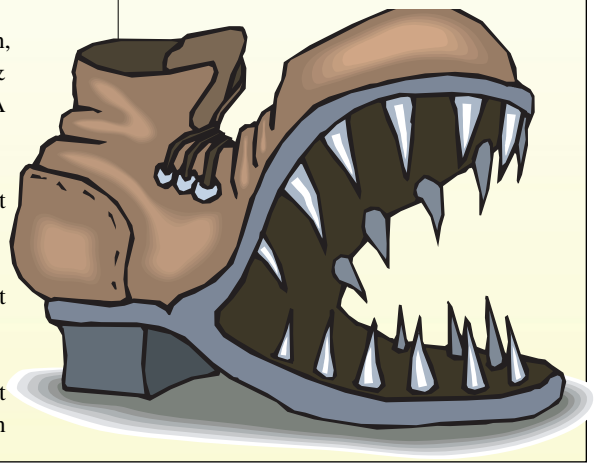
2. Place them on your front porch, along with a copy of Guns & Ammo Magazine and the NRA Directory.

3. Put a few giant dog dishes next to the boots and magazines.

4. Leave a note on your door that reads:
Hey Bubba,
Me, Big Jim, Duke and Slim went for more ammunition. Back in an hour. Don't mess with the pit bulls–they attacked the mailman this morning and messed him up real bad. I don't think Killer took part in it but it was hard to tell from all the blood. Anyway, I locked all four of 'em in the house. They has calmed down some, but you better be real quiet and just wait outside.
"Cooter"



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GENERATING RETURN DOLLARS ON PREVIOUSLY INSTALLED JOBS

Kevin M. Padden
AZ School of Rock &
KM Padden Consulting

HOW OFTEN DO YOU WISH THERE WAS A WAY FOR RETURN BUSINESS ON WORK YOU'VE ALREADY INSTALLED? IN OUR INDUSTRY, PEOPLE DON'T USUALLY REPLACE THEIR STONE WORK SO WE HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO GENERATE SALES AFTER THE INSTALL.

One way that many Fabricators are generating return sales is to offer a cleaning and sealing program to their customer base. Now, I've long been an advocate for re-sealing after five to seven years after the initial coat of sealer gets installed, but in many cases, depending on the kind of sealer that was used, this may be way too long to wait until another coat of sealer is required.

I have said this before, and you should think about this–IF you have a company that installs hundreds or even thousands of square feet of natural stone floor tile (or slabs that are cut up and used in a flooring application) every month you are (in effect) planting "little money seeds" under ***every*** square foot of flooring you're installing. In anywhere from one to two years from the day that you finish installing that big honed limestone floor that you may be working on right now, that floor will need to be restored in some way. Maybe re-honed, re-polished, whatever; the point here is, that if you are the one installing 1500 square feet of flooring this

Leave yourself a reminder note in your customer database to ask clients about any stains that might need special attention, including stains they've been unable to remove.

week, wouldn't it be nice to know that somewhere in the next 24 months–that same floor could generate another $2,250.00* in income? (* that's based on 1500 Sq.Ft. x $1.50/Sq.Ft. for the example–what you charge is up to you)

The best guys, in my opinion, (the ones who have figured this one out) are the ones that actively do tile work, slab fabrication and stone restoration and concrete polishing. (OK, the concrete polishing is a bonus, and counts the same as restoration.) A typical company that fits into this profile is one that will contract with a customer to do (as an example) all of the home's countertops in various slab types, and all of the floor tile work (maybe soft goods like carpet too, if they are so inclined). This is where (in my opinion) the brilliance of this strategy comes into play.

The company who uses their ability to "track" their jobs from the past, and schedule follow up calls on one year and two year anniversary dates of the job completion–will be best positioned to keep potential restoration sales "in house". Example: You have a job from two years ago–like the one above. You got all of the slab work and all of the stone tile flooring. The job went great – no problems, no complaints, customer paid (happily) and you're pretty sure they'd give you a good referral (as would all of your other customers). Once this job is in your database, reminders at established intervals will let your client know that additional work is needed and available to keep this install looking its best.

The centerpiece of this whole philosophy is "tracking." You HAVE to establish a company or an organizational protocol to consciously "track" the jobs that you do, and categorize them into re-seal/restore candidates based on products that you originally installed.

With the various sealing products that Braxton-Bragg offers, you really have no excuse to not take advantage of this "goose that will keep laying golden eggs" for you as a business entity. All YOU have to do is keep track of the goose.

Additionally, the restoration market is one that has been overlooked by the very guys (in my opinion) that can capitalize on garnering ADDITIONAL income that would have otherwise gone into someone else's pocket from restoring natural stone & concrete flooring that you originally installed. In my opinion – this is a no brainer.

The floor restoration equipment and supplies that Braxton-Bragg offers us in our Industry along with the related training and customer support – can put you on a fast track to reaping the benefits of "pushing the envelope" of your own company's business model and putting you in a better position of expanding your revenue stream.

Until next month – Best Regards & Happy Fabricating!

Generating Return Dollars on Work Already Installed is a topic that is taught each month by Kevin M. Padden at the AZ School of Rock in Gilbert, Arizona. For more information on classes, contact Kevin at 480.309.9422 or online at www.azschoolofrock.com.

Visit www.braxton-bragg.com for Stone & Tile industry products

JACKASSES ON A PLANE

MOST PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ON A PLANE WITH A FEW JACKASSES BEFORE. BUT 10 DOZEN DONKEYS ON ONE FLIGHT?

One hundred and twenty donkeys have arrived at a sanctuary in California on a plane from Hawaii chartered by the Humane Society of the United States.

Tracy Miller, manager of Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue in Tehachapi, said the donkeys are "none the worse for wear" after the long flight and a two-hour drive the day that followed it.

They are descendants of donkeys brought to Hawaii's Big Island to work coffee plantations then cast aside when they became obsolete.

Recent drought conditions have brought hundreds of donkeys down from the mountains into developed Hawaii, where they have disrupted traffic and made other trouble for humans, inspiring a search for new homes.

HOW NOT TO WALK THE DOG

A DOG-SITTER'S SHORTCUT LED TO CRIMINAL CHARGES FOR A COLORADO WOMAN WHO RAN A CHIHUAHUA ALONGSIDE HER CAR AT 10 TO 15 MPH.

The Daily Camera reports that 29-year-old Joan Renee Zalk of Boulder faces animal cruelty and felony menacing charges after witnesses confronted her one morning for running the pup alongside her Toyota Camry.

The newspaper reports that Zalk told officers the dog, named Cooper, "goes ballistic" if it doesn't walk at least 3 miles a day.

Witnesses called police after seeing the leashed dog struggling to keep up with the car. Zalk reportedly said the dog was fine.

Zalk is free on bond. Cooper was uninjured and was taken to a local shelter. The dog was expected to be released to its owner, who was out of town at the time of the incident.

Visit www.braxton-bragg.com for New Cyclone Cluster Wheel

Visit www.slipperyrockgazette.net for this advertiser and more

If you want your edge to match the top, use what the quarries use!

Used to obtain a "wet" effect both for indoor and outdoor application. Perfect for bringing out a deep rich color in stone. Works excellent for matching the edge of the stone with the surface polish.

May be applied on polished, flamed, rough or sanded surfaces. Works well to disguise small scratches or lower polished surfaces. Ager is also suitable to protect surfaces against oil and water.

The product does not change color when exposed to the sun. Ager works as both a stone color enhancer AND a super high quality sealer.

- Use to deepen and enhance the luster of natural stone
- Give it a wet-look effect
- Use on sanded, smoothed, or on polished surfaces to bring out the color
- Suitable for indoor or outdoor use on all types of marble
- Drying time is 1 hour
- Surface is water-repellent 24 hours from application
- 1 liter of Ager covers approximately 15 square meters of stone surface

TENAX

All Braxton-Bragg products carry a 30-day, risk-free, money back guarantee. If you are not satisfied with your purchase, simply return it for a prompt and courteous refund.

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Sale Price
5936	Tenax Ager Color Enhancing Sealer, 1 Liter	$56.95	$49.78

Call Now–Sale Ends January 31, 2012

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BETTER! FASTER! CHEAPER!

The Skies are Not So Friendly, Anymore

Carmen Ghia
Resident Travel Advocate

AIRLINES have already begun charging for food, drinks, seat assignments and baggage. Now one is demanding that passengers cough up extra cash on board for fuel.

Hundreds of passengers traveling from India to Britain were stranded for six hours in Vienna when their Comtel Air flight stopped for fuel. The charter service asked them to kick in more than 20,000 pounds ($31,000) to fund the rest of the flight to Birmingham, England.

The situation may represent a new low in customer care in an era when flyers are seeing long lines, long waits and few perks.

Britain's Channel 4 news broadcast video showing a Comtel cabin crew member telling passengers: "We need some money to pay the fuel, to pay the airport, to pay everything we need. If you want to go to Birmingham, you have to pay."

Some passengers said they were sent off the plane to cash machines in Vienna to raise the money.

"We all got together, took our money out of purses — 130 pounds ($205)," said Reena Rindi, who was aboard with her daughter. "Children under two went free, my little one went free because she's under two. If we didn't have the money, they were making us go one by one outside, in Vienna, to get the cash out."

Amarjit Duggal told the BBC she was flying from the Indian city of Amritsar on Comtel after scattering her mother's ashes. Her father, sister and uncle were still in Amritsar and did not know when they would be able to return home.

The situation was highly unusual in Europe, where airlines are tightly regulated, said Sue Ockwell, a crisis management expert at Travel PR.

"It's a bit like, well, boarding a train and saying that you can't go on because they've cut the electricity off because they haven't paid the bill," Ockwell said. "You just really don't expect it. This is patently not going to do that airline any good at all."

The passengers did eventually reach Birmingham, but many expressed anger.

"It is absolutely disgusting," said Dalvinder Batra, who is from the West Midlands. "There are still people stuck out there."

Bhupinder Kandra, the airline's majority shareholder, told the *Associated Press* from Vienna that travel agents had taken the passengers' money before the planes left but had not passed it on to the airline.

"This is not my problem," he said. "The problem is with the agents."

But Kandra insisted the company was still solvent.

"We have not run out of money," he said. "We have enough."

The Civil Aviation Authority stepped in to protect passengers after a company that sold flights on Comtel Air went out of business. Astonbury Ltd, trading as Skyjet, ceased trading. The authority will ensure that passengers get home in the coming days.

A similar Comtel situation was taking place back in Amritsar. Some 180 passengers on another Comtel flight were told they would not be taking off until they come up with 10,000 rupees (about $200) each, Kandra told the BBC.

It was not clear when that plane was supposed to have taken off. The passengers in Amritsar were not stuck on the plane or at the airport, according to British diplomats in India. Most were booking flights on other airlines to get to Britain.

Ockwell dismissed Kandra's explanations, saying it sounded like a bad credit issue.

"One really does wonder," she said.

Airport officials in Birmingham said that Comtel's flights the following weekend had been canceled, but Kandra insisted all would be operating as normal.

Flying used to be my favorite way to travel, but as of late, it's become my least favorite. Stories like these don't really help the situation much, either.

Nowadays, if you choose to fly, it really helps if you shop around for the best possible price you can find. If you start searching early, you may save even more on airfare. But since the tragedy of 9-11, restrictions have been getting tighter, and to stay competitive, airlines have started charging more for things like carry-on luggage, which used to be free!

Seems like it won't be too long until airlines start charging for soft drinks and those tiny packets of complimentary snacks. However, to keep someone grounded so you can get even more money from them smacks of piracy or highway robbery on an old stagecoach line!

What would have happened if someone refused to pay? Would they have been summarily stranded in a foreign country? Flying the "friendly skies" has long been a thing of the past. Unfortunately, the travel experience common on jets now can make them feel more like a public-trans bus in the air. Too bad one can't take a Megabus abroad!

Jet Edge Adds Waterjet Training Workshops at Shanghai, China Office in 2012

Waterjet systems manufacturer Jet Edge, Inc., is now offering waterjet training and demonstration workshops at its local Shanghai office and showroom. Workshops are scheduled from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Feb. 22-24 and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. June 18-20.

During the workshops, Jet Edge technical experts will demonstrate Jet Edge's 6200 bar X-Stream waterjet cutting technology and will provide basic operation and applications training on a Jet Edge precision waterjet cutting system. Topics will include: X-Stream 6200 bar water jet cutting, precision cutting tips and techniques, mobile waterjet cutting, mobile surface preparation and blasting, hydro-demolition, and basic maintenance and repair of waterjet intensifier pumps.

To register, visit www.jetedge.com, call +86-21-5868-3678/2809 or send an e-mail request to sales@jetedge.com.

Jet Edge offers a wide range of precision water jet cutting systems, mobile waterjet cutters and surface preparation tools, including precision waterjet cutting machines, portable waterjet cutting systems, ultra-high pressure intensifier pumps, waterjetting tools and waterjet parts and accessories. Jet Edge has the widest range of waterjet pumps on the market, from 30-280hp, including 36KSI (2500 bar), 60KSI (4100 bar) and 90KSI (6200 bar) models. Electric and diesel pumps are available. Jet Edge also offers custom engineering and OEM integration support.

Based in St. Michael, Minnesota, U.S.A., Jet Edge has a sales, service and showroom office in Shanghai. For more information, visit www.jetedge.com or www.jetedge.cn, or call +86-21-5868-2809/3678 or +1-763-497-8700.

About Jet Edge

Established in 1984, Jet Edge is a global designer and manufacturer of waterjet systems for precision cutting, surface preparation and coating removal. Jet Edge systems are used around the world in a broad range of industries, from the world's leading airlines to automotive, aerospace, industrial manufacturers, machine and job shops.

The 100hp X-Stream xP90-100 is capable of producing pressures in excess of 90,000psi. It supports a 75,000psi continuous operating pressure and has a flow rate of 1.45gpm (5.49lpm).

NEW
Sink Cutouts in 4 minutes
Made in USA
Sinkmate System
The Sinkmate System uses three separate tools for sink cutouts. These three tools follow the same template creating a very fast and accurate system for cutting your sink holes. Fast, portable, inexpensive and durable, let the Sinkmate System work for you.
- FAST - Cut a 3cm lav sink in less than 4 minutes with nearly no clean-up
- Drop a 60/40 kitchen sink in less than 10 minutes
- No chips or blow outs to fix from the downward force of an incremental finger bit
- The Sinkmate System is the least expensive method for sink cutouts
- Save money on abrasive costs. No expensive finger bits!
- Use the same 1/2" thick template and change the size of the cutout for mis-shaped sinks
- These tools are not limited to sink cutouts. Clean up inside corners on L-shaped tops, follow a template with the turbo blade saw and step cut your curved tops
6" Concave Blade
2" Zero Tolerance 60 Grit
8" Turbo Blade
Witness the Revolution
Sinkmate System
Int'l / US Patent Pending
EdgemateStoneTools.com
Edgemate Stone Tools LLC
For more information call
612-741-6510
Introductory Price $4,999.00
Edgemate Stone Tools LLC 372 Industrial Blvd, Waconia, Minnesota 55387

10 GREAT FABRICATION PRODUCTS YOU SHOULDN'T BE WITHOUT IN 2012

Peter J. Marcucci
Special Contributor

AS WE RING IN THE NEW YEAR, I CAN'T HELP THINKING OF THE CHALLENGES WE AS FABRICATORS HAVE DILIGENTLY FACED KEEPING OUR CUSTOMERS HAPPY IN 2011.

Competitive pricing while offering a high quality product and keeping a good bottom line is a tough balancing act. Questions like...should we invest in that new machine–or should we squeeze another year out of the old one? Should we finally give in to offering a full line of quartz surfacing–or stay in a natural stone only mindset? I'm quite sure many an owner has lost sleep making these and other decisions trying to stay in the game. So, I was elated when the folks at the *Slippery Rock Gazette* handed me a list of 10 outstanding products ranging from saws to cup wheels that give us, the fabricators, the edge we need to produce a quality product, on time, day after day. Innovative and priced right, these hot products offer over-the-top performance in a cool economy.

ABACO SLAB LIFTER

Built with integrity, the Abaco Slab Lifter's intelligent engineering will give any fab-shop years of safe, reliable service. Thin where it counts with plenty of contact area for preventing slipping or breakage, this lifter will pay for itself if it prevents just one dropped and ruined slab–and you can't really put a price on injuries prevented, or loss of life and limb. The Abaco Professional Slab Lifter is a must-have shop product, reasonably priced at $499.00.

HERCULES® VARIABLE SPEED AIR POLISHER

Without a doubt, the perfect complimentary tool to the MEM Stone Router is the Hercules® Variable Speed Air Polisher. Well-balanced and weighing in at 3 lbs., this handful of precision power features a non-slip, rubber-coated handle, giving the user an easy-to-hold grip surface for hours of comfortable polishing. With a maximum spindle speed of 4,500 RPM and engineered using 5 heavy-duty bearings, this tool stays on the job and out of the repair shop, giving you, the fabricator, the edge! Cost is $164.95.

MARMOELETTROMECCANICA

2800 & 3500 Electric Routers

No CNC? No Problem. The MEM Marmo Master Stone Router gets it done. Safe, efficient and easy to use, the 2800 and 3500 are the right solutions for profiling complex edges quickly. Using a clever "Water System" design, the MEM Master easily glides over a film of water, preventing scratches and giving the user a quality edge, dust free. Built to give years of reliable service, the 2800 and 3500 are respectively priced at $2,697.95 and $3,895.00.

POWER WEDGE

Another product worth its weight in gold is the Power Wedge and Power Wedge Jr. Constructed with break-resistant plastic, the brightly-colored wedge is easy to spot while the smaller "Jr." can be kept in your back pocket; both save time and effort. It's a simple, well-made solution to safely create space between slabs. Both are only $19.95. Don't got it? Get it!

DIAMANT-D LAMPO 2000 TITANIUM BRIDGE SAW BLADE

Let's face it, the true sign of a great blade is not how fast it cuts, right out of the box; most blades do this easily at first. The true sign of a great blade is when it can sink its teeth into hard granite or quartzite and have it come back cutting fast and straight. Quiet and stiff, the Diamant-D Lampo 2000 is hands-down the most consistent performer I have ever used. I've thrown everything at this blade, and year after year it flat-out puts-out! It's easy to love and hard to do without. Priced at $338.00 for the 16˝ (great for mitering), it has always been my first choice in blades.

CYCLONE FLAT RESIN CUP WHEEL

If you're dry shaping an edge by hand, the Cyclone Resin Cup Wheel is the right choice. Balanced and controllable, this cup wheel gives a precise feel all the way into a corner with *no drop off* and *no chipped corners*. Great for radius corners and laminating, it is a recommended product value priced at $79.75 each. Or better yet, dump those dangerous silicon carbide wheels and buy the fine, medium and coarse for $239.25.

HERCULES® MODULAR WORK STATION

Easy to assemble and built to last, the Hercules® Modular Work Station offers a quality mix and match array of stable work tops. Fabricators now have the versatility needed to easily gauge thicknesses, match seams and edge profiles from one countertop to the other. Most cutouts are also a breeze due to the well thought-out 36-inch center opening. With 13 linear feet of work surface and a 1,500 pound safety rating, the Hercules® Modular Work Station's (level) best effort has created a safe and durable work surface that easily conforms to any shape kitchen. It's a top choice for any shop and I highly recommend it. Cost is $995.00.

Continued on page 19

10 GREAT FABRICATION PRODUCTS YOU SHOULDN'T BE WITHOUT IN 2012

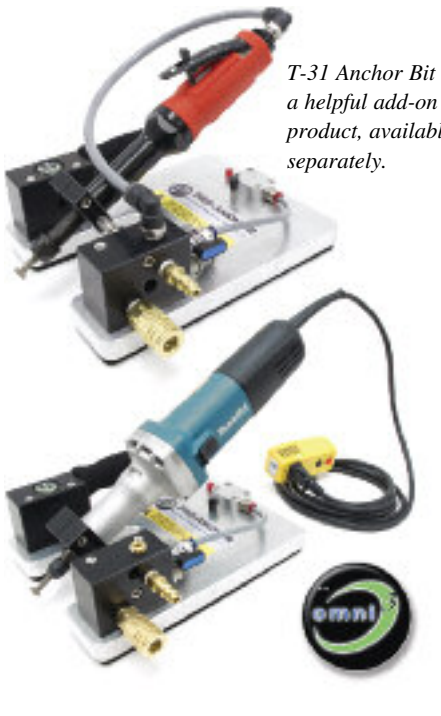
Continued from page 18

RENEGADE BRIDGE SAW

The Renegade Bridge Saw is a versatile, middleweight, workhorse brilliantly engineered with all the right stuff making it the perfect solution for any small or medium shop. Made in America with quality components, the Renegade Bridge Saw can be up and running in a jiffy and giving reliable production year after year. Coming standard with laser and tilting turntable, this cutting-edge saw is backed with a 6 month warranty on electrical parts and a 12 month warranty on mechanical parts. If you're on a budget and want a bridge saw worth its weight in gold, consider the Renegade. This multi-purpose saw is priced at $34,900.00, but leasing options are available–an attractive option in a still-sluggish economy.

HERCULES® KITCHEN TRANSPORT A-FRAME CARTS

If you're like me, you like to keep your finished work safe and ready to go out the door so when it's installation time, you're loaded and ready to go. Introducing the Hercules® Kitchen A-Frame Carts, a well-engineered unit that lets you do just that. Key features include: powder coated carbon steel construction, nylon rubber-layered uprights to prevent scratching, and tie-down straps to keep your finished pieces safe. Offered in two sizes, these carts offer safe, long-term storage that can be easily moved or loaded using a forklift. The large model will set you back $1,839.95 and the small model $1,495.95.



T-31 Anchor Bit is a helpful add-on product, available separately.

OMNI CUBED T-31 PRO-ANCHOR SYSTEM

Slick, trick and super quick, best describe this offering by Omni Cubed. At a stone show a few years ago, I had the pleasure of trying the Omni Cubed T-31 Anchor System. In the past, I had always labored by drilling sink holes with a hand drill. Twenty minutes later when the demonstration was over, I wondered why had it taken me so long to find such a well-made, easy-to-use, time-saving product. Get one and you'll be thinking the same thing. Cost is $795.00 to $995.00.

For more information on these great fabrication products, go to www.braxton-bragg.com

EARNING THE PRIVILEGE TO BE IN THE DOGFIGHT

Richard Pierce Thomas
Leadership and Small Business Consultant

THIS PAST OCTOBER 17, WE CROSSED THE THRESHOLD ON OUR SIXTH YEAR IN BUSINESS. TO CELEBRATE THE EVENT, MY WIFE AND I WENT OUT TO DINNER. SIPPING ON A GLASS OF WINE AFTER OUR MEAL, WE SHARED PERSPECTIVES ON THE LAST SIX YEARS, REFLECTING ON THE JOURNEY.

"What a wild ride it's been," I said, communicating much more than words could say. She smiled a knowing smile. It was a déjà vu of sorts. Almost six years prior to the day, we were celebrating the launch of our business, Activate Leadership, over dinner. It was a big change for us. After spending twenty years in the plastics industry, I had made a jump that was about as far from the manufacturing world as I could get – leadership coaching. How I landed on that? Well, its something I still scratch my head about and is the subject of a book I am writing.

All this to say, at the time of our business launch in 2005, we were full of hope and promise. As it turned out however, we were not prepared for what lay ahead – three years of too few successes, repeated dashed hopes, and a brush with near bankruptcy. If that weren't enough, the financial toll was too much to bear and we found our twenty-year marriage teetering on divorce.

"Too much information!" my fifteen-year-old son would say. Perhaps, however there is a purpose in sharing the personal details of our journey. What I learned in my six few years is that trying to separate being a business owner from my personal life is like trying to unscramble the omelet. It just can't be done. I learned what happens in the business is mirrored in our personal lives. Conversely, what happens in our personal lives is mirrored in the business. Ultimately, what I had to reconcile was what am I striving for? And, was the outcome worth the sacrifice? For me, my faith in God, my marriage, and my three children are more important to me than anything. And that meant that if I had to lose the business to save what was truly important, then so be it. It didn't mean that I gave up. On the contrary, it gave me clarity and invigorated the fight to save the business. It's just that I wasn't consumed by it like I had been before, and things became easier to do. Like realizing I'd been gripping the golf club too tightly, and taking a relaxed, easy swing and knocking the dimples off the darn ball! I had a renewed sense of priority that helped me get clear about what I said "yes" to, and probably more importantly, what I said "no" to.

I learned what I'd always been told but finally knew by experience – there aren't any guarantees. We can do all the right things and still lose. A.L. Williams says, "You beat fifty percent of the people in America by working hard. You beat another forty percent by being a person of honesty and integrity, and standing for something. The last ten percent is a dogfight in the free enterprise system." All we really have control over is the first two – work hard (and smart, I'd add…), and be a person of integrity, standing for something. The rest, as William's says bluntly, is a dogfight. And you can't really appreciate how much a privilege it is to be in the fight without paying the price to get there.

In these recent economic times, we have learned many of the hard lessons my father's generation learned. The lessons that sacrifice, failure, and getting knocked silly more times than we'd like to remember is all part of the journey. Fortunately, there is grace in the midst of hardship. Emerson says, "Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising up every time we fail."

As we begin a new year, my wish and prayer for you is not that you avoid defeat. But that when you get knocked down, you pick yourself back up. Do this, and I have no doubt you will eventually find success, and only then you will know what a privilege it is to be in the dogfight.

A QUOTE FOR THE NEW YEAR

"AN OPTIMIST STAYS UP UNTIL MIDNIGHT TO SEE THE NEW YEAR IN. A PESSIMIST STAYS UP TO MAKE SURE THE OLD YEAR LEAVES."

– WILLIAM E. VAUGHAN (1915-1977)

AMERICAN INDUSTRY AUTHOR, MENTOR AND SUBJECT-MATTER EXPERT

The Following Message is a

FABRICATOR SAFETY ALERT:

Is Cheap Adhesive on a Slow Boat From China to Your Shop?

Containers can reach a sweltering 150 degrees on their 4-6 week trip across the ocean.

Is your adhesive already losing its bonding strength before it even gets to your shop?

It could be if it's coming from China…

Chinese Drywall, Lead Paint Covered Chinese Toys, Tainted Chinese Baby Formula and… ???

According to ABC News, "China by far leads the list of countries making products that are recalled in the United States, accounting for 65 percent of all the recalled products in this country..."

Now, in an effort to boost their own profits, some U.S. suppliers to the stone industry are getting their polyester adhesives made in China.

We asked one of our manufacturers about this and here's what he said:

"The Chinese products may not be properly labeled and documented for OSHA compliance. The MSDS may not match the labeling and requirements for OSHA compliance. Ingredients used may not be TSCA certified to be imported, transported, or used in any application in the USA." In other words, you'd better think twice about using this in your customer's home.

Warning:
Always keep container closed tightly when not in use. Use this product in well ventilated areas. Store at temperature between 50° and 70° F.

But, let's be fair. Not all products from China are bad products. However, there is real concern when you combine a history of taking shortcuts and producing poor quality products with improper storage conditions. Bottom line: you might just be asking for trouble.

Consider the label of a product we pulled off the shelf in our climate-controlled warehouse in the box to the left. Notice, "adhesives should be stored between 50° and 70°."

So even if the Chinese adhesive is made properly, the fact that it sits in a container for 4-6 weeks at 150 degrees almost guarantees you'll be risking your safety - and your customers safety - by using their adhesives.

If you want to make sure your adhesive is as strong as it's supposed to be, make sure it's made right here in the U.S. How do you make sure? **Go to www.Braxton-Bragg.com/adhesives.**

Every product we carry has the "Country of Origin" listed on the order page so you know where it comes from. Or, simply pick up the phone and **call 1-800-575-4401** and ask one of our product sales specialist about our adhesives **made proudly in the USA.**

Item #	Description	Everyday LOW Price
46401	Stone Shield ™ Transparent Flowing, Quart	$10.75
46402	Stone Shield ™ Transparent Flowing, Gallon	$39.90
46403	Stone Shield ™ Transparent Flowing, 5 Gallons	$139.90
46404	Stone Shield ™ Transparent Knife Grade, Quart	$10.75
46405	Stone Shield ™ Transparent Knife Grade, Gallon	$39.90
46406	Stone Shield ™ Transparent Knife Grade, 5 Gallons	$139.90

Call 800-575-4401

Braxton-Bragg
www.braxton-bragg.com

Fax 800-915-5501

BETTER! FASTER! CHEAPER!

Visit www.braxton-bragg.com for Stone Shield products

Visit www.slipperyrockgazette.net for this advertiser and more

"Less Than Ten Bucks!"

"If You Know Where To Find Them, Your Wet Polishing Pads Really Can Be *Both* Better *And* Cheaper..."

KNOXVILLE, TN – Industry supplier Braxton-Bragg seems to have called in all their favors to bring a better wet polishing pad to contractors.

What's more, they've held the cost of these highly rated pads to less than ten bucks. They could be just what contractors need as they continue to pull out of this recession.

Product Manager Steve Bussell says, "Our Scorpion™ Wet Pads are one of our most popular polishing pads, economical and with professional quality." Steve goes on to say that even though "it's not our top-of-the-line pad, but it is a good pad at a great price. It was designed from the get-go to be a simple yet effective way for contractors to add to their bottom line by keeping costs low."

Right now, Braxton-Bragg is offering contractors an additional 10% off when contractors stock up for the upcoming summer season.

Simply call **1-800-575-4401** right now and you'll immediately be connected to a real live human being. No recordings. Ask them for the "Scorpion™ Special."

Or, if you prefer you can order directly online at www.braxton-bragg.com. You'll find Scorpion™ as well as full line of other wet and dry polishing pads. If you have any questions about the website, simply pick up the phone and they'll walk your through the easy-to-use site.

And they always publish their prices in every ad. Here's an example of their upfront pricing:

YOU SAVE $1.00 PER PAD

Scorpion™

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Sale Price
8450	4" Scorpion™ Polishing Pad, 50 Grit, Neon Green	$9.95	$8.95
8451	4" Scorpion™ Polishing Pad, 100 Grit, Neon Orange	$9.95	$8.95
8452	4" Scorpion™ Polishing Pad, 200 Grit, Light Blue	$9.95	$8.95
8453	4" Scorpion™ Polishing Pad, 400 Grit, Aqua	$9.95	$8.95
8454	4" Scorpion™ Polishing Pad, 800 Grit, Purple	$9.95	$8.95
8455	4" Scorpion™ Polishing Pad, 1,500 Grit, Sage	$9.95	$8.95
8456	4" Scorpion™ Polishing Pad, 3,000 Grit, Pink	$9.95	$8.95
8457	4" Scorpion™ Polishing Pad, Final Buff, Black	$11.75	$10.75
8458	4" Scorpion™ Polishing Pad, Final Buff, White	$11.75	$10.75
8459	4" Scorpion™ Polishing Pads, Set of 7, 50-3,000 Grit	$69.95	$62.65

"We ALWAYS publish our prices Up Front!"

All Braxton-Bragg products carry a 30-day, risk-free, money back guarantee. If you are not satisfied with your purchase, simply return it for a prompt and courteous refund.

Call Now–Sale Ends January 31, 2012

CALL 800-575-4401

Braxton-Bragg
www.braxton-bragg.com

Fax 800-915-5501

BETTER! FASTER! CHEAPER!

ARTISAN GROUP™ COUNTERTOP FABRICATORS RAISED $32,000 TO HELP "HOMES FOR OUR TROOPS" BUILD HOMES FOR INJURED VETERANS

Countertop Group Hosted First Annual Yard Sale, Counters For A Cause

ARTISAN GROUP COUNTERTOP FABRICATORS ACROSS AMERICA RAISED $32,000 AT THE GROUP'S FIRST NATIONAL GRANITE YARD SALE, "COUNTERS FOR A CAUSE," TO HELP "HOMES FOR OUR TROOPS" BUILD SPECIALLY-ADAPTED HOMES FOR VETERANS. HOMEOWNERS PURCHASED BEAUTIFUL PIECES OF STONE REMNANTS AND SLABS AT DISCOUNTED PRICES AND HELPED A VETERAN AT THE SAME TIME.

Artisan Group Executive Director Chad Seiders recently presented the check to Marine Corporal Neil Frustaglio, a Homes For Our Troops representative and marine who recently received a home from the organization.

"These marines have given their blood, sweat, tears and in some cases part of themselves to defend our rights and freedoms in this country," says Chad Seiders, Artisan Group Executive Director. "It is a privilege to give something back to them."

"Homes for Our Troops appreciates the fundraising efforts of the Artisan Group," says John Gonsalves, President and Founder of Homes For Our Troops. "Because of the support from patriotic companies across the nation, we are able to restore freedom and independence back to our severely injured veterans through the gift of a specially adapted home."

Artisan Group members who participated in this Counters For A Cause sale and/or contributed include: Surface Products, Duracite , Block Tops, Front Range Stone, Atlanta Kitchen, Top Master, Solid Tops, Consolidated Kitchens & Fireplaces, Rocky Mountain Stone, Creative Countertops, RockStone Store, US Granite, Trindco, Artistic Counters, Innovative Surfaces and Floform Countertops.

About The Artisan Group™

Artisan Group™ is the premier network of stone fabricators in North America. Its extensive network allows the organization to offer the best granite from sources around the globe. Utilizing the most technically advanced, automated shops in the industry, highly skilled craftsmen ensure that each installation meets exacting standards. From classic to exotic, Artisan Group offers the most extensive array of stone choices in the industry, and is dedicated to customer service. For more information or to request a quote, visit www.artisan-counters.com.

Artisan Group Executive Director Chad Seiders (L) presents a donation from the Artisan Group's Counters For a Cause granite sale and fundraiser to Marine Corporal Neil Frustaglio, a Homes For Our Troops representative and marine who recently received a home from the organization.

About Homes for Our Troops

Homes for Our Troops is a national non-profit 501(c)3 organization based in Taunton, Mass. founded by John Gonsalves in 2004. Homes for Our Troops mission is to build specially adapted homes for service members who have been severely injured in combat operations since September 11, 2001. All homes are built at no cost to the veteran through the generous support of individuals, foundations, and corporate contributors. Homes for Our Troops has received a Four Star Rating from Charity Navigator.

BOOTY CALL BUSTED

COLORADO SPRINGS POLICE SAY A MAN'S GIRLFRIEND UNEXPECTEDLY CAME HOME JUST BEFORE ANOTHER WOMAN WAS DUE TO VISIT, SO HE CALLED POLICE TO REPORT HIS NEW ACQUAINTANCE AS A BURGLAR.

The Gazette reports that 24-year-old Kevin Gaylor was cited with a misdemeanor of false reporting to authorities.

Police say Gaylor had invited a woman he met online to come to his home after 3 a.m. so they could get better acquainted, but his girlfriend came home first.

Police say that when the other woman arrived, Gaylor called police and falsely reported an intrusion.

Gaylor has an unlisted phone number and couldn't be reached for comment.

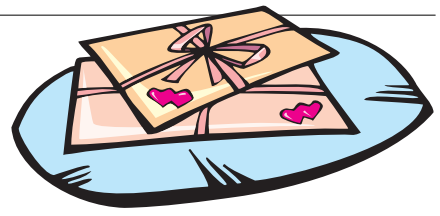
LOVE LETTERS ARE TOO SWEET

TWO INMATES WHO TRIED TO SWEETEN THEIR LOVE LETTERS, QUITE LITERALLY, BY ADDING A SPRINKLING OF SUGAR TO THE ENVELOPES ACCIDENTALLY TOUCHED OFF A HAZARDOUS-MATERIALS SCARE AT A PRISON IN UPSTATE NEW YORK.

The *Watertown Daily Times* reports that authorities noticed something leaking out of the envelopes at the Watertown Correctional Facility, and state police and firefighters were brought in.

In one case it turned out to be sugar. The other was lemonade mix.

The Department of Corrections says one inmate, Jafar Torkpour of Broome County,



had added sugar to a note telling a woman he was still "sweet" for her. Another inmate, Desmond McNeil of Queens, did the same thing, telling a woman his love for her was "sweet enough."

Authorities say both men could be disciplined.

Source: Watertown Daily Times, http://www.watertowndailytimes.com

MIA ACCREDITS FIRST CANADIAN COMPANY

FLOFORM OF SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN IS THE FIRST CANADIAN COMPANY TO EARN THE ACCREDITED NATURAL STONE FABRICATOR DESIGNATION OF THE MARBLE INSTITUTE OF AMERICA.

MIA Accreditation for natural stone fabricators and commercial contractors recognizes those companies that meet the industry's highest standards for business activities, product knowledge, fabrication and installation.

"The Accreditation Commission made the decision to open the program to Canadian companies 2 years ago and we are very pleased to announce our first fully accredited company in Canada, FloForm. This is a milestone event for both our association and the industry as a whole," said Gary Distelhorst, CAE, executive vice president of the Marble Institute of America. "Since launching the Accreditation Program in 2007, we have accredited over 50 companies in the stone industry and over 100 are currently going through the process of becoming accredited. We congratulate FloForm on this achievement."

John Eustace, the qualifying agent for FloForm said, "This sets us apart from all our competitors. It shows that we are a long-term reputable business. Our industry is essentially unregulated. Anyone with some tools and a truck can claim to be a 'Granite Shop' no matter what their experience or skill level. The MIA accreditation process is a way that we have voluntarily allowed ourselves to be regulated and give ourselves credibility. Of course being the first Canadian company gives us a 'one up' on all our competitors." He went on to describe the process of becoming accredited, "the longest part of the process was the application, getting all the information together. The exam was long, but relatively easy as most of it is stuff we work with every day. The site inspection was a necessary formality. One thing the site inspection did for us was to give us a deadline to complete some maintenance projects that we had been working on. It's always good to have a deadline when trying to get things done."

Ted Sherritt, president and CEO of FloForm added, "FloForm is very proud to become the first MIA Accredited Natural Stone Fabricator in Canada. Our great employees strive every day to be the best in the industry with respect to customer service, product offering, safety, innovation and this process is a strong indication that their hard work and dedication has not gone unnoticed. We are also very proud to have completed this process as it is one of the cornerstones of being a member of the Artisan Group."

The route to becoming accredited consists of three equally-weighted phases. Phase one requires the completion of a lengthy application which ensures that the company is in compliance with the ten standards of accreditation as laid out by the MIA Accreditation Task Force. The second phase consists of a two hundred question examination, testing the applicant's knowledge and use of materials, installation, fabrication, restoration, care and maintenance, administration, legal/contracts, jobsite and shop safety. The final phase is a comprehensive site visit, which includes a review of the facility, documents, and one or more installation inspections.

About the Marble Institute of America

For over 65 years the Marble Institute of America (MIA) has been the world's leading information resource and advocate for the natural dimension stone industry. MIA members include marble, granite, limestone, sandstone, and other natural stone producers and quarriers, fabricators, installers, distributors, and contractors around the world.

ELEVEN TO THE FIFTH POWER

JACOB Anthony Saydeh (say-DAH') won't have any trouble remembering precisely when he was born.

Virtua Memorial hospital in Mount Holly, New Jersey, says Jacob entered the world at 11:11 a.m. on Friday, November 11, 2011 (11-11-11).

And to make the Veterans Day birth even more remarkable, the boy's mother is an Air Force veteran and his father currently services in the Air Force.

It's the second child for Staff Sgt. Christopher Saydeh and his wife, Danielle. They live at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, where he is a member of Air Force security forces. They are a third-generation military family.

Jacob weighed 8 pounds, 13 ounces.

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with 100% recycling/reuse of process wastewater

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Actual water samples before and after processing with a Beckart system at Midwestern stone cutting facility.

Dry, compacted filter cake meets typical landfill requirements

A Beckart Hy-Pack® Filter Press installation at an East Coast stone fabricating facility.

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After 8 years of trial and error, this new product...

Turns a Countertop Scratch Into Cold Hard Cash

– even if it's engineered stone

"...it saved our butts the first time we used it."
~ Barry D. Brookings, OR

Works with Tools You ALREADY HAVE!

CRESWELL, OR–Steve Anneker spent eight years of trial and error to develop what has been called "revolutionary" to the stone industry. This first of its kind system allows any contractor to polish even engineered stone countertops with tools he already owns.

Ever Damaged a Countertop During Installation?

Steve did. A west coast fabricator with more than 20 years experience, finally had enough after a carelessly placed blade ruined the profitability of an expensive granite install. At that moment, he vowed to find a solution to these mishaps.

Saves Profits and Your Reputation

With Steve's new system (available at www.Braxton-Bragg.com), you can keep a job mishap from becoming a job redo. Simply follow Steve's step-by-step system and you can save jobs you thought were ruined. Just ask fellow installer Barry D. of Brookings, OR who said, "…it saved our butts the first time we used it."

Seeing is Believing

The Polishing Pro System was demonstrated at the 2011 Coverings in Las Vegas. Visit www.braxton-bragg.com/polishing-pro-system for a complete video demonstration of how the Polishing Pro System works.

Why Just Save Money When You Can Make Money!

It's no secret the recession and housing bust has been hard on business. That's the bad news. But here's the upside… During the boom years, millions of homeowners installed stone countertops in their homes. It became, and still is, the desired product for kitchens and baths.

Opportunity Is Knocking – Will You Answer?

But here's the thing, many of these tops are now worn, scratched and dull. And there's the opportunity. Because now—for the first time ever—with the Polishing Pro System, you can create a whole new line of business, repairing and restoring both natural stone **AND** engineered stone countertops.

Could You Use An Extra $500 Per Day?

Steve not only invented the Polishing Pro System, he uses it daily in his business. Steve says, "I get calls weekly – it's easy to make $500 per day." Steve went on to tell us that he can get $100 – $125 for a scratch repair and $1,500 – $2,000 or more for a complete surface restoration.

Get Started With a FREE Ad ($500 Value)

When you give Polishing Pro Systems a no-risk try today, we'll give you a free Ad you can use in your local paper, Val-Pack, or even just as mailbox stuffers. It's an easy way to help you tap into this new business opportunity.

Call Today For Your No-Risk Trial and FREE Ad

To get started, simply call **1-800-575-4401** and ask about Polishing Pro Systems for either natural or engineered stone.

Item #	Description	Everyday LOW Price
57009	Polishing Pro Systems for Engineered Stone, Restoration, Add on Kit, Includes Two 4″ Polishing Pads, One 5-1/2″ Velvet Touch Polishing Pad, One 68 Gram Jar of Soft Polish Compound	**$149.95**

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BETTER! FASTER! CHEAPER!

The Polished Perspective

Counter Intelligence

Tom McNall
Floor Restoration Contributor

BEING IN THE WORLD OF STONE FOR SO LONG HAS TAUGHT ME EXACTLY WHAT TYPE OF STONE TO HAVE IN EACH LOCATION AROUND MY HOME. HOWEVER, I DO BENEFIT MONETARILY FROM THE ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS WHO DO NOT CHOOSE THE CORRECT STONE FOR THE APPROPRIATE SITUATION IN THEIR CUSTOMER'S HOMES AND BUSINESSES. AND WHILE I DO CHAMPION NAPOLEON'S WORDS, "NEVER INTERRUPT YOUR ENEMY WHILE HE IS MAKING A MISTAKE," I CANNOT HELP BUT WANT TO ENCOURAGE THESE BLUEPRINT WIZARDS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PRODUCTS THEY RECOMMEND AS COVERINGS AND WHERE TO PLACE THEM PROPERLY.

Particularly to the point, in the last 2 weeks, we have "en-countered" 2 separate marble kitchen tops and islands – one polished and one honed – both requiring extensive restoration. Previous to this parable, the home of the polished top was built by a contractor who has chosen polished marble tops in several of his home's kitchens. We have serviced *three* of these home's countertops in the last 6 months. Herein lies my perplexing problem: do I purge my profit by proposing that this particular purchaser peruse another product of stone for his kitchens (Say that fast 5 times)? Or do I encourage him to continue in the same manner? And why is marble not a good choice for a kitchen?

First of all, marble is a calcium-based stone. As such, it is truly a beautiful product with many options of color. However, it is very susceptible to corrosion and etching at the hands of acids. What is the likelihood of acids being in a kitchen? Well… anything that includes vinegar for one. So anything pickled, mustard and several salad dressings cannot be used on the counter or island unless you want it to be dulled. Coffee is also acidic, so that is out as well. Anything with tomatoes or citric acid will also eat away at the surface of the stone, as will wine. Oh yes, and soft drinks can be highly acidic as well. So what is left? Well, I can safely say that water is about your safest product on your marble island/counter top.

Now, if your customer is ok with a spotty, etched-looking counter top, then we can pull a Charlie Sheen and say, "Winning!"

When it comes to marble vanity tops in an ensuite or bathroom, there are less acidic items laying around, but caution still needs to be taken to prevent unwanted corrosion. Some toothpastes can be acidic as are some perfumes, colognes, deodorants and even hairspray. Reading the label on these products and recommending that the customer be careful in their use will score you big points for repeat business.

However, looking at the situation from a win-win frame of mind, I prefer to help educate the designers and architects BEFORE the situation gets ugly. And unlike the Napoleonic quote above, I view designers and architects as my *allies* as opposed to enemies. I try to be helpful and friendly with them, offering information on stone as well as pointing them to AIA Certified courses (where they can get needed learning credits) at MIA sponsored events. In this way they can see for themselves the benefits of recommending the proper stone for the proper location.

Now when helping their clients design their "space," architects can speak with conviction as to why "this particular marble, while beautiful, it is not best suited for this particular situation. However, THIS granite here is and, if we pay a little more (notice the up-sell), we can get a slab with that gold veining that you wanted." See how easy that is?

In most cases where I have seen customers with etched marble island tops, the consumer always wanted the veining and color options of marble. Only afterwards did the buyer's remorse set in and they realize that although pretty, and color-matching of the home's décor, this particular stone was going to be more high maintenance than a trophy wife with a purse dog. Unfortunately, most end users come to this realization when they see how much it costs to re-surface the island in their home. And the lighter-walleted customer is eventually left saying, "if only the sales person told us about our options with granite beforehand…"

It is this initiative that my company takes in harmony with the MIA to help educate consumers and their advisors beforehand of the many sensible options that are available when it comes to stone. And eventually we can turn the "if-onlys" into "We-love-its." Because my philosophy has always been, if an end user is happy with their stone purchase, they WILL buy more. And the more I showed that I was concerned for their long term happiness, the more stone my children and their children will have to restore down the road.

Until next month, keep your stick on the ice.

Tom McNall is founder and owner of Great Northern Stone, an Ontario-based stone cleaning and restoration company servicing Ontario and Chicago, IL. Tom also offers corporate and private consultations as well as speaking at conventions. He can be reached at stone_rx@earthlink.net.

This "sea of marble" may be gorgeous now, but is not very practical for the average homeowner due to etching and staining caused by the many acidic substances found in the average kitchen. The moral of the story: as far as kitchen counters are concerned, marble makes great columns and statues.

Art for Art's Sake

AUCTIONEER SOTHEBY'S HAS SOLD WORK BY ARTISTS GREAT AND MEDIOCRE, FAMOUS AND OBSCURE – AND NOW, BY AN ARTIST WHO NEVER EXISTED.

The London auction house said it is offering a drawing by the talented but fictional American abstract expressionist Nat Tate.

Tate is the creation of British novelist William Boyd, who wrote a fictional biography that included reproductions of the artist's drawings. It was published in 1998 complete with endorsements from David Bowie and Gore Vidal, who were in on the joke.

Tate later appeared as a character in Boyd's novel "Any Human Heart."

The work, "Bridge No. 114," has an estimate of 3,000 pounds to 5,000 pounds ($4,700 to $7,900). Proceeds from the November 16 sale will go to a charity, the Artist's Benevolent Institution.

The Origin of the Original Stone Sleeves™

Aaron J. Crowley
Stone Industry Consultant

I was born in sunny San Diego, California.

But shortly thereafter my parents got out of the Navy and moved to Portland, Oregon, a damp and occasionally cold place. My body never recovered from the climate shock and every winter I grow more convinced that I was not meant to live where palm trees can't grow.

As such, it's amazing that I ever fell in love with the stone business, a trade where we come in from the wet and cold, to work in the wet and cold…

Well, they say that necessity is the mother of all invention, so perhaps that's how the idea for the Original Stone Sleeve (a waterproof wet polishing sleeve for fabricators) was birthed one cold rainy day about 12 years ago, during a conversation with a friend who loved to water ski.

Being perpetually cold, I exclaimed that anyone who goes outside in Oregon and gets in the water on purpose is crazy. He went on to tell me that they water-skied year round, to which I laughed out loud in disbelief.

I literally didn't believe him, but he persisted by telling me that they wore "dry" suits and actually stayed quite comfortable despite the frigid temperatures. He went on to describe the

waterproof rubber seals at the neck, ankles, and wrists to which my ears and perpetually cold arms perked up.

"Did you say waterproof rubber wrist seals?" "And where does one find one of these dry suits?" I breathlessly questioned.

Within hours I was frantically flipping through the yellow pages and interrogating water-ski supply salesmen about their dry suit inventories as visions of a waterproof wet polishing sleeve materialized in my head.

Miraculously, the top two dry suit manufactures in the country were both located in Oregon, and it wasn't very long before I had a pair of sleeves "lopped off" of a discontinued suit. And not long after that, I was taking them around and bragging to my fab buddies that the sleeves of my sweatshirt stayed dry and I stayed San Diego warm as a result.

The response was overwhelming and before long samples in neon yellow, purple, and deep blue were showing up on the desks to stone tool suppliers all over the country for product managers to review. The universal response was, "Nice idea but no one is EVER going to pay that much for a pair of sleeves."

Not surprising, Braxton-Bragg was the first supplier to buy a pair. In fact they bought a box of 50 pairs and ran an ad in The Express and the rest is history.

Well, there's a little more history than that. About 5 years ago, Braxton-Bragg's current product manager informed me that they had been approached by a company with a Chinese-version of our Stone Sleeves. He was graciously informing me that a carbon copy knock off our flagship product was going to give us some serious competition (Thank you, S.B.).

It wasn't long before the stone tool suppliers

who carried our Stone Sleeves were carrying a copy-cat product for half the price. Needless to say our sales suffered for a few seasons as indistinguishable pictures showed up next to the real thing in the catalogs.

But then something happened…those overseas imitations didn't wear well, the seals separated, and suppliers tired of the returns.

Then slowly, sales of the Original Stone Sleeve began to return and it is a pleasure to report that thanks to the unequaled quality of American Manufacturing and the loyalty and support of suppliers like Braxton-Bragg, American fabricators are again buying them as fast as we can make them.

Thanks for letting me thank you!

Aaron J. Crowley is the founder and president of FabricatorsFriend.com, the exclusive promoter of Stone Sleeve fabricator sleeves and Bullet Proof aprons. He is also the author of Less Chaos More Cash. You can reach him by email at Aaron@CrowleysGranite.com

National Retailer Redesigns with Mediterranea's "Mountain Timber" on Stores' Façades

When national retailer Earth Bound Trading planned a redesign of its stores stretching from Arizona to Key West, they knew a distinctive tile would be needed.

The product selected was Mediterranea's Mountain Timber — the perfect marriage of a tile to a retailer that features down-to-earth products. Beginning with its location at the Storebriar Mall in Frisco, TX, Earth Bound Trading is installing Mediterranea's Mountain Timber on the façade of its stores as part of ongoing renovations.

"Earth Bound Trading had specific requirements for the tile to be featured on the front of its stores," said George Larrazabal, director of sales for Mediterranea. "The Mountain Timber series evokes the true free spirit of Earth Bound Trading – vibrant, individualistic and unique. The result is a porcelain tile look you won't see anywhere else."

Mountain Timber offers one of the most distinctive visions for a tile series – featuring a spectacular array of fossilized wood colors. Mountain Timber mirrors the look of lumber – transformed while buried underground through the ages – only to be rediscovered in our time as

Beginning with its location at the Storebriar Mall in Frisco, TX (pictured), Earth Bound Trading is installing Mediterranea's Mountain Timber on the façade of its stores as part of ongoing renovations. Mountain Timber offers one of the most distinctive visions for a tile series – featuring a spectacular array of fossilized wood colors.

a fossilized stone. While such a natural product would be impossible to quarry for manufacture and distribution, Mediterranea has used its exclusive Dynamic HD Imaging™ technology to recreate this remarkable achievement of nature in a stunning glazed porcelain tile series.

Mountain Timber comes in two fully-rectified sizes of 6″ x 24″ and 12″ x 24″, along with 2″ x 2″ mesh-backed mosaics. Available in three unique colors, Mountain Timber is the most distinctive wood-look option for architects, designers and homeowners.

For over a decade, Mediterranea, Italian-based developers and craftsmen have been designing and producing tile in collaboration with the world's top factories in Italy, Spain, Brazil, Turkey, Argentina and the United States. Mediterranea has the unrivaled ability to match its unique products with the right manufacturer, surpassing competition with cutting-edge technological capabilities, competitive pricing and outstanding U.S.-based service.

Just 1 failure using a cheap glue will cost you thousands of dollars and your reputation.
Is it really worth risking it for 95 cents a job?

TENAX

Manufactured in Italy using premium raw materials

Sold in 96 countries around the world

Tixo Knife Grade

*Tested 3 times stronger than a leading competitors glue**

Transparent
Smooth consistency
Great cure time
Super strong

Tenax Crystal

Water Clear
2 hour cure time
Available in Knife grade and flowing

Travertine Filler

Perfect consistency.
Easy to apply.
Cures in just the right time
Takes a polish

StrongEdge Epoxy

Water clear
2 hour cure time
Flowing
Excellent for laminating
The strongest rodding glue

Domo Epoxy

#1 Epoxy in Elberton, Ga, "The granite capital of the world"

Can be used on moist material

TENAX

www.tenaxusa.com

Available at:
Braxton-Bragg

*Adhesion test made by Tenax Internal Laboratory showed Tixo to have an adhesion strength post curing of 1.2 MPa compared to 0.4 MPa compared by a leading competitor of glue.

Visit www.braxton-bragg.com for Tenax products

FLOFORM COUNTERTOPS OPENS NEW SHOWROOMS IN BEAVERTON, OR & SPOKANE, WA

The Showrooms are Cozy, Complete with Coffee, a Fireplace and Internet Work Stations

FLOFORM COUNTERTOPS, ARTISAN GROUP MEMBER AND WESTERN CANADA AND THE NORTHWESTERN UNITED STATES' LARGEST COUNTERTOP MANUFACTURER, HAS OPENED 6,000- SQUARE-FOOT SHOWROOMS IN BEAVERTON, OR AND SPOKANE, WA.

To truly differentiate the showrooms, Floform has created an atmosphere that is similar to a home or coffee shop rather than a warehouse. Whether it is sink installation styles, edges, laminate or exotic granites, a customer can come into the showroom and get the necessary education to enhance their project. The showrooms are open to consumers, designers, builders and architects.

The new showrooms feature a range of all countertop products, installations, and inspiration. No product or type of material was left untouched. Whether it is sink installation styles, edges, laminate or exotic granites, a customer can come into the showroom and get the necessary education to enhance their project. To truly differentiate them, Floform has created an atmosphere that is similar to a home or coffee shop rather than a warehouse. With internet capable work stations, cookies and coffee on demand, and a seating area with a cozy fireplace for guests, the buying experience at Floform will be the most comfortable aspect of the remodel process; an experience which is personalized and emotionally satisfying.

"The initiative behind Floform's new showrooms was to create an atmosphere that reduces the inevitable stresses that are associated with remodelling, by offering solutions to ensure comfort, convenience, and control," says Floform President & C.E.O. Ted Sherritt.

The showrooms are open to consumers, designers, builders and architects. For more information on the new showrooms, visit 9220 SW Nimbus Ave, Bldg C, Beaverton, OR 97008, 5320 E Sprague Ave Suite 400, Spokane Valley, WA 99212 or www.floform.com.

Floform has locations in Winnipeg, Regina, Victoria, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, Kelowna, and Vancouver, as well as U.S. showrooms in Seattle, WA, Spokane and Portland.

About Floform Countertops

Established in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1961, Floform is Western Canada's and the Northwestern United States leading manufacturer of quality countertops. The company started out with post-form laminate countertops over 50 years ago giving it the experience to expand into products such as DuPont Corian, Cambria, Artisan Stone Collection and Heritage Wood countertops. From the Floform showroom to your home, Floform's craftspeople and installation professionals are committed to ensuring that your countertop is a feature you'll be proud of for years to come. For more information regarding Floform Countertops, visit http://www.floform.com.

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Artisan Group

Artisan Group™ is the premier network of stone fabricators in North America. Its extensive network allows the organization to offer the world's best granite from the best sources around the globe. Utilizing the most technically advanced, automated shops in the industry, highly skilled craftsmen ensure that each and every installation meets exacting standards. In fact, all Artisan Group members have either achieved Marble Institute of America Accreditation, or have begun the process, making it the first group of granite fabricators in the world to be working towards this distinction.

From classic to exotic, Artisan Group offers the most extensive array of stone and wood choices in the industry, and is dedicated to the highest level of customer service. For more information or to request a quote, visit www.artisan-counters.com.

GOOD ADVICE OF THE MONTH

"NO WORK IS INSIGNIFICANT. ALL LABOR THAT UPLIFTS HUMANITY HAS DIGNITY AND IMPORTANCE AND SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN WITH PAINSTAKING EXCELLENCE."

— MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. (1929-1968)
AMERICAN CLERGYMAN, ACTIVIST, AND PROMINENT LEADER IN THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

How Tom's Great Idea Can Grow Your Business

Sean McCool
Direct Marketing Strategist

IF YOU WANT TO BE THE NUMBER ONE COMPANY IN YOUR AREA… IF YOU WANT MORE PEOPLE COMING THROUGH YOUR DOORS…AND IF YOU WANT MORE SALES WITH LESS EFFORT AND MARKETING DOLLARS…

Then you need a USP.

The USP (Unique Selling Proposition) is one of the most powerful concepts in marketing.

Before I explain how to get your own, let me show you its power to transform a business from struggling to powerhouse.

Tom and his brother were looking for a way to pay for college. They opened a business together—a pizza joint near their school.

The business didn't start off well. After 8 months, business was so bad that Tom's brother bailed. Tom struggled with the restaurant alone for a few years. He made good pizza, but so did the other pizza places. His pizza was affordable, but it wasn't the cheapest in town. He couldn't figure out how to stand out from the crowd. Sound familiar?

One day, he had a life-changing idea. He was near a college. He knew students didn't care about great pizza, they just wanted it quick. So he started advertising:

"Fresh, Hot Pizza Delivered in 30 Minutes or Less, Guaranteed."

And he knew he could pull it off. He was in a great location, and his target market lived close by. I'll tell you about how all this ties into the USP soon, but for now, look at what happened to Tom. You see, once Tom Managhan made this change, Domino's started growing.

Fast.

It wasn't just guesswork, either. He knew why his guarantee worked—he was very close to his target market. As he grew, he studied the best locations. He advertised only within a certain distance from his stores.

That focus allowed him to open 3 restaurants in 1969. Less than 10 years later, he had opened 200. He had 1,000 restaurants by 1983. By his retirement in the late 1990s, Tom had more than 8,000 Domino's worldwide.

And just for the record, when Tom started wasn't a "great" time to be in business. America was struggling with an unpopular war, an energy crisis, a hostage crisis, income tax brackets as high as 77%, and interest rates in the teens.

Yet, Domino's still grew.

The best part is his success gave Tom incredible freedom. He bought his favorite baseball team, the Detroit Tigers. He started an enormous collection of Frank Lloyd Wright furniture. He collected custom cars. He donated substantial amounts to his church. He became one of the primary funders of the Ave Maria Foundation.

What Changed?

What sparked the change? What spurred Dominos' growth? It was his focus on

Domino's Unique Selling Proposition or USP.

He guaranteed 30 minute delivery. And he knew his guarantee made him different than anyone else. That, in essence, is what a USP is all about. What makes you different?

Three Steps to Your Own USP

Creating a USP is probably the best way to develop a business. Yet, so few do it. To stand out from the crowd, follow these three steps.

First, find a unique angle to develop your USP. Look at your industry. Find an angle no one is exploiting. For Tom, the angle was delivery time. No one had set a time limit for themselves, so he did.

And people noticed.

The good news is you can develop a USP in any industry. Avis car rental couldn't get past being number two, so they advertised, "We're Number Two. We try harder." People knew Avis had a reason to excel. They figured Avis would treat them better than the number one company.

Fred Smith built FedEx (which also started in the 70s—during a fuel shortage) on, "When your package absolutely, positively has to get there overnight." Fred had developed a unique system to speed up delivery time. He realized he could promise overnight deliveries when no one else could.

Other insurance providers slashed prices and created discounts. Allstate advertised, "Dollar for dollar, no one protects you like Allstate." Allstate didn't want to be seen as cheap. They wanted to be seen as the best protection available.

Do you see how this works? Is there something you do or can do that no one else is doing? It doesn't matter if the opposition can catch up. If no one else is doing it now, you have an opportunity.

Second, once you come up with your USP, advertise it. Once he had his USP, Managhan advertised it everywhere. He communicated it in every commercial. He printed it on every item a customer would see. Fliers, coupons, and even the pizza boxes all displayed it.

Everywhere someone saw the name Domino's, they saw the USP. In short order, if anyone wanted quick pizza, they thought of Domino's.

Third, do more than advertise. Push the USP in everything you do. Managhan didn't stop at just advertising. Where he placed his stores... what his research team designed... his business contracts... were all determined by his USP.

Let me be more specific. He searched for locations near colleges and populated areas. He developed an insulated box to keep the pizza hot longer. The contracts for his franchisees clearly laid out his expectations and goals. All to ensure 30 minute deliveries to anyone who ordered from them.

To Tom, the USP was more than a marketing gimmick. It marked a fundamental change in how he did business. He did everything he could to deliver pizza in 30 minutes or less.

What are you focused on providing to the customer? And what are you doing to ensure you provide it as promised?

Here's my point. Nothing will grow your company quicker than a good USP. Once you and your customers are clear on what makes you different, your company will grow beyond what you thought possible.

If Tom Managhan could grow his company during an economic crisis…

If Avis could win the uphill battle against number one…

If FedEx could deliver packages during a fuel shortage, and…

If Allstate could sell insurance while every competitor slashed prices…

Then you, too, can succeed… no matter the obstacles.

Sean McCool is a an award-winning marketer and success coach. He can help you create marketing materials or just talk with you about what's possible for your business. You can contact or leave a message for him through his website www.SeanMcCool.com.

It's Miller Time!

BRAZILIAN POLICE SAY THEY ARE TRYING TO FIND OUT WHY 2,600 CANS OF BEER WERE DELIVERED TO A JAIL HOLDING POLICE OFFICERS CHARGED WITH CRIMES.

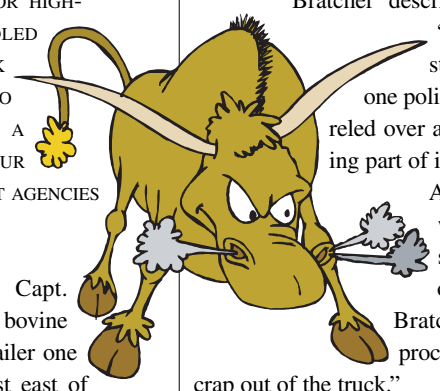
The Rio de Janeiro radio station BandNews FM reports the beer was delivered to the prison in a northern suburb of the city.

Police inspector Waldyr Soares Filho tells the *O Globo* newspaper that officials are investigating the person who allowed the alcohol into the facility. He says he does not believe it was meant to be used for a party, but doesn't offer an alternative explanation.

Local newspapers last month published photos of a party at the same jail thrown by an officer charged with 16 murders. The man later escaped.

Steer Clear of the Roamin' Steer

A RUNAWAY STEER STOPPED TRAFFIC ON A MAJOR HIGHWAY, HURDLED OVER A BRICK WALL AND DAMAGED TWO POLICE VEHICLES DURING A CHASE THAT HAD FOUR ARIZONA LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES SCRAMBLING.



Yuma County sheriff's Capt. Eben Bratcher says the male bovine escaped from a livestock trailer one morning on Interstate 8 just east of Yuma in southeastern Arizona.

Police responded immediately because the steer was darting in and out of traffic.

Bratcher described the scene as "chaotic" as the steer bounded over one police car and later barreled over a brick wall, knocking part of it down.

A deputy eventually was able to rope the steer from the bed of a patrol truck. Bratcher says it then proceeded to "kick the crap out of the truck."

The nimble, elusive critter was captured uninjured and returned to its owner.

THE SLIPPERY ROCK CLASSIFIEDS

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ADS NOT MEETING GUIDELINES WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED.

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•Maximum of 70 words or less per ad
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•Please review all your ad info before submitting– NO refunds will be given for ads that are submitted with the wrong contact info or content and then published.
•Ads may be submitted by fax to 800-915-5501, (Attn: Stacie Wingo), email swingo@slipperyrockgazette.net or use the online form located at
www.slipperyrockgazette.net

2012 CLASSIFIED AD DEADLINES

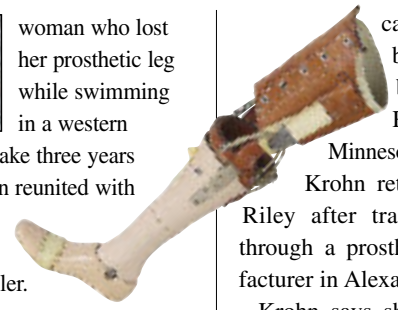
ISSUE	AD SUBMISSION DEADLINE
FEBRUARY 2012	WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2012
MARCH 2012	TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2012
APRIL 2012	TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2012

READERS PLEASE NOTE:

The information contained in our Classifieds section is provided by third parties and not an endorsement of particular products, companies or employers. The SRG® encourages all interviewing employers to carefully conduct prescreening of all prospective employees, and purchasers of used equipment are encouraged to use caution and common sense.

GET A LEG UP ON YOUR FISHING

A woman who lost her prosthetic leg while swimming in a western Minnesota lake three years ago has been reunited with the limb thanks to a helpful angler.



Beth Krohn was fishing last month on Lake Ida in Alexandria. She says her line kept snagging on something, and that she hoped it wasn't a dead body.

A KSAX-TV report says her catch turned out to be a prosthetic leg belonging to Pam Riley of Morris, Minnesota.

Krohn returned the leg to Riley after tracking her down through a prosthetic limb manufacturer in Alexandria.

Krohn says she's proud of the catch, comparing it to going deer hunting and shooting the biggest buck.

Riley says she always wondered what someone would think if they saw a leg surfacing in a lake.

For Sale

FOR SALE: Why buy used? New bridge saw, full size, hydraulic lift table & CNC controls. $99 per week w/ lease. New & used granite equipment. Hydraulic tilt tables, 12 ft. x 12 ft. bridge saws, sink machines & profilers. Will ship & install if necessary. Call with your needs 813-476-5386, 813-634-3984 or email zpilotz@yahoo.com

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FOR SALE: CMG Taurus Inline Edger Profiler: Brand new, only 18 months old. Robust for heavy, fast edging. Showroom condition & currently in operation. Low hours- less than 25. 208 3-phase w/ transformer. New $160,000, selling for $95,000 OBO. You pick up. Call 410-829-2352 or email mike@segergranite.com

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FOR SALE: 2003 Wilson Saw 11´–6˝ Gantry Saw, blade included, 2000 +/- running hrs, 3 beam constr. on main beam- 211 lbs. / foot beam, Mitsubishi programmable controller on electrical system w/ Maples keypad for programming several cuts per piece of rock, 60 hp. 3 phase main motor, Nylon wear strips on raise & lower, 315 belt drive trans., 2˝ case hardened ball bearing lift screws on raise & lower, heavy duty precision bearing housing w/ wear adj., rise & fall on saddle, 40˝ of runway per side, 11´-6˝ blade guard, auto gantry indexing, block detection, rack & pinion drive on cross travel & gantry, automatic forward, reverse, & down feed, pendant control push button station for manual operations. Safety cutoffs on water, amps, overtravel, & blade rotation. Serious inquiries only 724-290-1969.

FOR SALE: Granite Shop closed and everything must go! Great heavy-duty bridge saw, older 6,000 lb. Clark forklift, boom, clamp, fab. stand, A-frames, routers, hand tools, transport rack, 14 ft. open trailer, all display cabinets from showroom with granite tops, plus stone display racks, and much more! Will sacrifice for $45,000. Call 314-683-5436 for pictures and more details. Want to sell as package but would consider selling saw separately.

FOR SALE: 2003 Marmoelettromeccanica Bridge Saw and Table, excellent cond. guaranteed, bought new from Regent Stone Products, 15hp motor, 220 volts, 1,400/2,800 RPM, 3 phase, new laser, auto and manual controls, digital measurements readout, many more extras: tilt mortar bed table locks in any angle, digital readout, operates on air and hydraulics. Available (for fee) to have saw set up in your shop. Will load saw and table on your truck. $27,000 OBO. Call Terry Hamby, 1-301-739-1695, Hagerstown, MD.

FOR SALE: Breton Bridge Saw–Breakdowns? Convert Your Breton Saw and never have to call Breton again. For the price of **ONE** Breton visit, convert your Breton Saw to a manual, computerless, problem-free saw that will keep you running for many years. Email: ConvertMyBreton@aol.com to schedule an appointment. Prompt, courteous, worldwide service.

FOR SALE: Fabrication Equipment: Achilli TFM3000ce bridge saw $7,500. Oma hydraulic pump (2), Oma Auctor CP99 profiling machine (2), Oma Antarex bowl cutter (1), profiling bits $7,500. Achilli hydraulic tilting slab cart, $2,500, Hyster 5,000 lb. forklift w boom and Abaco clamp $2,500. Woodstock rolling I beam with A-frames at each end–comes w/ 2 ton Yale electric lift & 1.5 ton manual lift $2,500. A-frame pairs $50, slab racks with poles $250. Call Bill 919-468-3733.

FOR SALE: 2002 Park Industries Pro-Edge III Polisher. Low hours, excellent condition. You ship, ready for immediate sale. Call Keith Guier at 406-270-3936, Kalispell, Montana. Email whitefish5@hotmail.com for details & pictures.

FOR SALE: CNC Concept 2.10 w/ low hours, includes 26 tools - all in good condition. Serious inquiries only. Call Uri, cell: 732-522-8933, office: 732-905-6600.

Equipment Wanted

Wanted used CMPI 2000 Radial Arm Polisher (or similar model) to purchase for parts or complete unit in good/excellent working condition. We are willing to pay fair market value. Call 772-223-7287 or email denise@uspaverscape.com

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•14˝ Diamant-D Demo Titanium Blade $199 • 7˝ Pearl Super Dry Gold Turbo Blades (8) $69.95 • 8˝ Pearl Super Dry Gold Turbo Blades (4) $69.95
• 4˝ and 4-1/2˝ Viper Turbo Blades, no Quad Holes, $10.48 and $10.98

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The Slippery Rock Classifieds

Help Wanted

Experienced Fabrication Floor Manager–Norcross, GA: Experienced Fabrication Floor Manager needed to supervise & support fabrication team. Full-time position with competitive salary, excellent benefits & relocation assistance available. Fax resume & salary requirements to 770-685-6190 or e-mail to info@marmistone.com. Qualified candidate must be eligible for work in US. Marmi Natural Stone is participant in the drug-free workplace program.

Masco Cabinetry's Countertop Division is seeking: Granite Countertop Templators, Granite Countertop Installers, Granite Countertop Installer Trainees. Positions in multiple locations: Wilmington, DE; Baltimore, MD; Richmond, VA; Hartford, CT; North Attleboro, MA; Providence, RI. Prior experience. Construction experience is plus. Trainees are welcome to apply. Fax resume to 732-363-1963 EEO/AA employer. We e-Verify.

Business Opportunities

Granite Shop For Sale: Everything needed for granite fabrication. New state of the art building, not a retro-fit. 1-1/2 acres on heavy volume, 4 lane commuting to & from Pittsburgh, PA location. Turn Key operation. Call for details 412-527-5705.

Quarry For Sale: Dimensional Sandstone Quarry for Sale due to owner health issues. Quarry located in North Western PA. Wide range of colors from browns to golds to whites; many brilliant colors. Excellent material for slabs (4 ft. x 8 ft. slabs), fabricating & carving. Quarry is set up for production w/ saws, splitter & all equipment needed. Many loyal customers w/ excellent record of high-end projects. Awesome business opportunity. Serious inquires only. Call 724-282-6455.

Do You Want 10, 20, 30 + More Installs Per Month? We can take you from wholesale to retail and fill the void left by channel partner's drying up. We have generated over 2.5 million in sales for our customers in 2010. Your phone can be ringing in as little as 24 hrs. Call today 877-877-1916 or visit www.FireUps.com. We are the Granite Marketing Experts! Markets are exclusive. Call today!

Established Marble, Granite and Tile Store–Importer and Distributor of Ceramic Tile, also Fabrication Shop for sale. Large piece of property with rental income. Located in a great area of Long Island, New York. Price $1.2 million for Business, $3.3 million for property, rent negotiable, quick sale; for more information call the owner at 516-790-2810. Rental property paid for everything.

MultiCam® Inc. Introduces V-Series WaterJet

The V-Series features fully-enclosed bellows to protect both the Y and Z axes from abrasive garnet buildup. The X axis features dual drives and completely covered custom aluminum extrusions to keep all precision bearing surfaces clean during the cutting process.

GLOBAL CNC CUTTING SYSTEM MANUFACTURER MULTICAM® INC. HAS ADDED THE VALUE-SERIES WATERJET TO ITS PRODUCT LINE. NOW THE FLEXIBILITY OF WATERJET CUTTING IS MORE ECONOMICAL. THIS PURE WATER OR ABRASIVE CUTTING SYSTEM FEATURES WORK SURFACES UP TO 60˝ X 120˝.

"We designed the V-Series WaterJet to offer high performance, versatility and productivity at an affordable price," said MultiCam Director of Sales and Marketing John Harris. "It's easy on the budget and a smart CNC investment."

Fully enclosed bellows protect both the Y and Z axes from abrasive garnet buildup. The X axis features dual drives and completely covered custom aluminum extrusions to keep all precision bearing surfaces clean during the cutting process.

KMT's new NEOLine™ 10d direct-drive intensifier rated at 10 hp and 40,000 PSI powers the V-Series WaterJet. The pump also is available in a single-phase electrical configuration, which makes it ideal for small shops without three-phase power.

About MultiCam

Since 1989, MultiCam Inc. has manufactured thousands of CNC (computer numerical control) cutting solutions for various industries around the world. The innovative company integrates advanced technology and value in highly productive systems that are easy to use and built to last. MultiCam manufactures CNC router, laser, plasma, waterjet and knife cutting machines at its 135,000-square-foot facility in North Texas. The global network of experts includes 70 MultiCam Technology Centers worldwide with 20 across North America. To learn more about MultiCam's CNC cutting solutions, visit www.multicam.com, email sales@multicam.com or call 972-929-4070.

WARNING!

Sources Reveal Well-Known Stone Industry Supplier is Using At Least SEVEN "UNFAIR PRACTICES" To Get New Customers!

If You Own or Run a Stone Services Business, You Must See The Video On This Site…

www.UnfairSupplier.com

THE STONE DETECTIVE

Another Sticky Situation

Frederick M. Hueston, PhD
Stone Care Consultant

I WAS MAKING MY WEEKLY TRIP TO THE "BIG BOX" STORE WHEN MY CELL PHONE RANG. "STONE DETECTIVE HERE, CAN I HELP YOU?"

Just as I said that (a little more loudly than usually, speaking over the noise), one of those orange vested sales guys came up to me and as they are trained to do, asked me if I needed any help. It seems when you want these guys they're never around, but when you're busy, as I obviously was, talking loudly into my phone, they're right there to help. I gave him the universal sign that I was on the phone and he walked away mumbling something under his breathe. Geez…

The guy on the phone said he had a problem with a new marble floor. Apparently this was installed in a new house and the marble floor had been covered for quite some time. He went on to tell me that when they removed the plywood and plastic covering the floor that all along the edges the marble had pit marks and the builder refuses to take responsibility. He asked if I could come over and take a look and see what caused these marks. I told him I could easily swing by on my way back to the office.

I finished shopping and bought yet another set of screwdrivers and headed out to my ole

Woody to head over to Mr. "Pit Mark's" house.

Holy-Moly… I pulled up to this huge mansion. The house was as big as small hotel. It was *ginormous*. I got out of my Woody, feeling like a rube in the Big City for the first time, and walked up to the front door. I have never seen a door this big. It had to be ten feet tall, with this huge brass circular door knocker on it. Kind of reminded me of that scene in the movie, *Young Frankenstein,* where Gene Wilder picks up Terry Garr and heads for the front door. Well, those of you who have seen the movie know what I'm talking about… And those of you that don't, run to YouTube to look it up. I had to see for myself if the knocker worked, and sure enough, it did. Within seconds a tall, dark and not so handsome gentleman answered the door. He had this deep voice and didn't really sound like the guy I talked with on the phone. Sure enough he was only… The Butler. Yes people still have Butlers. He said he was expecting me and told me to follow him. He led me into the kitchen where this older couple was slurping down a bowl of cereal of some sort. They both looked up at me with ludicrous milk mustaches… which almost made me start laughing at them. But, I composed myself and walked over and introduced myself. He just gave me a blank look, blinked a couple of times and said, "Oh… OK," and led me into the living room. The living room was the large room and was wall to wall white marble. It appeared to be a Thasos white but it had a very distinct large crystal appearance. He pointed to a section along the wall and said, "That is what I was telling you about."

I bent down and sure enough there were these tiny pit marks. I started looking across the floor and I noticed a pattern. These mark were along the wall and in several straight lines running across the floor. I thought I knew where these were coming from, because I'd seen this before. I asked him how the floor was covered. He told me that they put down plastic and taped the plastic with masking tape and then covered it with plywood. I asked him if there was any other marble in the house that was still covered. He replied, "Oh, yes, the guest bath still is covered." I asked him if I could take a look. He led me to the guest bath where it was covered just as he described to me. I bent down and pulled up some of the tape– and low and behold, there were the same pit marks as I saw in the living room. I looked at the sticky side of the tape and there were tiny marble chips adhered to the back. I called him over and said that this that the tape has been down a long time and the glue on the tape adhered to the marble and when the tape was removed it pulled part of the marble with it. I told him that the marble might be able to be repaired but chances are they would have to replace it. Well, that was an expensive lesson to learn, but another case solved. As an afterthought I told him before he removes the tape from the rest of the floor to wet the tape with some alcohol and slowly pull the tape off.

The Stone Detective is a fictional character created by Fred Hueston, written to be entertaining and educational. He has written over 33 books on stone and tile installations, fabrication and restoration and also serves as an expert for many legal cases across the world. You can send any email comments to him at fhueston@stoneforensics.com

Scollay Square Relocates to "The Granite Farm"

OLDE New England Granite, niche suppliers of aged, antique and weathered granite, have welcomed a new addition to "The Granite Farm," recently discovered from a bygone era.

The Granite Farm is ONEG's inventory base located in Lynnfield, Massachusetts, which inventories stunning collections of reclaimed granite materials from various projects and locales throughout New England, many of which being quite well-known. This time, the granite has been reclaimed from the now defunct Scollay Square police station and its nearby park. According to town records, this reclaimed granite could have been originally quarried and installed at "The Square" as early as 1838.

ONEG's Scollay Square collection consists of original steps, landings, posts and foundation pieces from the square. The material was salvaged during the demolitions – which took place during the 1950s – when plans were to then reconstruct and revitalize this once-bustling and thriving center of commerce and entertainment.

As is customary with antique granite, the weathered and antiqued colorations give the material a rugged charm appropriate for most all applications. According to Biz Reed of ONEG, "We are repurposing this material to be used as fireplace mantels, header pieces and informal landscape stoops and steps… and, so much more. When people select reclaimed granite from ONEG, they will be adding a little bit of history to their hardscape."

For more information about reclaimed granite, The Granite Farm, and how you can benefit from the products and services offered, please visit www.oldenewenglandgranite.com. For more information about Olde New England Granite, contact Evelyn Brothers at 781-334-4805 or send an email to oldenewenglandgranite @comcast.net

Olde New England Granite's Scollay Square collection consists of original steps, landings, posts and foundation pieces from the square. The material was salvaged during the demolitions – which took place during the 1950s – when plans were to then reconstruct and revitalize this once-bustling and thriving center of commerce and entertainment.

Leaves You No Place to Hide

POLICE investigating an alarm at a Michigan restaurant used a thermal imaging device to find a fleeing suspect hiding in a pile of leaves.

The Grand Rapids Press reports that when the man was discovered concealed under leaves in a bush in Hastings, near Grand Rapids, he ran off again — and jumped into a river.

Police arrested the suspect after he went to a nearby motel to change his clothes. Officers found a backpack belonging to the man that contained waste from methamphetamine production and say he likely was making meth in the motel room.

The man is being held on a probation violation, and it is expected he will also be facing drug charges.

Huligar.com Granite and Marble Countertop and Floor Repair Service Offers "Boot Camp"

IT'S THE "GROUPS OF FOUR OR MORE STAY FREE" PROGRAM HOSTED BY JOSVEEK HULIGAR OF HULIGAR.COM GRANITE AND MARBLE COUNTERTOP AND FLOOR REPAIR SERVICE, AND FOUNDER OF THE NATURAL STONE RESTORATION ALLIANCE, (HTTP://WWW.NSRAWEB.COM/) A GROUP OF INDEPENDENT STONE RESTORATION PROFESSIONALS.

If you pay for four or more of your employees, the villa rental is free!

In today's economy it is becoming difficult to maintain a business with the increasing competition in the stone restoration service industry. It makes sense to be at the top of your game, offering additional service and detailed work that your competitors don't have.

The two-day boot camp is packed with skilled training that can only be learned through "hands-on" experience." Subjects taught will include making seams blend, and making countertops look like new. You are invited to come and learn state-of-the-art techniques from the professionals.

This is more than just a class; it is a continual education program, that only requires you to pay in full once and be active on the stone repair forum in order to return to the class. No seats. No stories. No sales pitch.

Students from Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and Hawaii, as well as from the mainland of the U.S., have gathered to learn from stone restoration experts. From beginners to seasoned professionals, the class will have an impact on your business. No other workshop has this truly unique offer. This class is a must-have if you plan to separate yourself from everyone else.

Ultimately, the "boot camp" is for those who have a real interest in learning the stone restoration trade or to advance their existing skills. From the art of restoring countertops to floors, this class has it covered.

Two-day class covers:

- Prep Work
- Grinding
- Honing
- Polishing
- Sealing
- Clean Up
- Edge Work
- Custom Stone Coloring

Classes are scheduled for:

January 20-21, 2012 (Floor class Jan. 22)
March 23-24, 2012 (Floor class Mar. 25)
May 25-26, 2012 (Floor class May 27)
June 22-23, 2012 (Floor class Jun. 24)
September 28-29, 2012 (Floor class Sept. 30)
November 23-24, 2012 (Floor class Nov. 25)

For additional information, you can contact Josveek Huligar at services@huligar.com or call 1-917-775-9202.

15 New Year Resolutions for Pets

WITH YET ANOTHER YEAR RAPIDLY UPON US, MAYBE IT'S TIME FOR THE AGE-OLD TRADITION OF MAKING NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS TO EXTEND TO THE PETS. PERHAPS THEY WOULD SOUND SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

15. I will not eat other animals' poop.

14. I will not lick my human's face after eating animal poop.

13. I do not need to suddenly stand straight up when I'm lying under the coffee table.

12. My head does not belong in the refrigerator.

11. I will no longer be beholden to the sound of the can opener or a doorbell ringing on TV.

10. Cats: Circulate a petition that sleeping becomes a judged competition in major animal shows.

9. Come to understand that cats are from Venus, dogs are from Mars.

8. Take time from busy schedule to stop and smell the behinds.

7. Hamster: Don't let them figure out I'm just a rat on steroids, or they'll flush me!

6. Get a bite in on that freak who gives me that shot every year.

5. Grow opposable thumbs; break into pantry; decide for *myself* how much food is "too much."

4. Cats: Use new living room sofa as scratching post.

3. January 1st: Kill the sock! Must kill the sock! January 2nd - December 31: Re-live victory over the sock.

2. The garbage collector is *not* stealing our stuff.

1. Dogs: I will *not* chase the stick until I see it *leave my master's hand!*

THE VARMINT COUNTY CHRONICLES

"Boomer" Winfrey
Varmint County Correspondent

Varmint County's "Occupy Barstool" Movement Offers the Best Solution

I WAS JUST GETTING READY TO TAKE OFF FOR DOC FILSTRUP'S WEEKLY POKER GAME AND POLITICAL THINK TANK LAST WEEK WHEN MY BOSS, VARMINT COUNTY WAR WHOOP & EXTERMINATOR PUBLISHER GINNIE HAMM, CALLED ME INTO HER OFFICE.

Ms Hamm, who goes by Ginnie rather than her full name Virginia for obvious reasons, resurrected the newspaper from the ashes of bankruptcy after her papa, former publisher H. Harley Hamm, experienced a little difficulty with the IRS. Harley, it turned out, was claiming as dependants his Siamese cat, his two horses and an entire kennel of Blue Tick Coon Hounds.

Harley ran into problems when he grew a bit older and more forgetful. An IRS auditor noticed three H. Harley Hamm Juniors in the family, one of them having been in college for sixteen years.

"I need you to skip the poker game tonight and go down to the Dead Rat Tavern," Virginia said. "Daddy called me last night and told me the paper needs to cover the local protest movement."

"Varmint County has a local protest movement?"

"Apparently. Daddy says a bunch of locals have started the "Occupy Barstool Movement" and they don't intend to budge until America wakes up."

So I dropped by the Dead Rat, the bar run by Curley "Little Poison" Haig up by the interstate exit to interview the leaders of the local "Occupy" movement.

"How does the Occupy Barstool Movement differ from what those Occupy Wall Street people are doing out on the streets?" I asked.

"Well, first of all, we're the real 99 percent," Harley pointed out. "Those Wall Street protesters are just a bunch of kids, old hippies and college students, along with homeless vagabonds who join the protests to pinch a free meal."

"Yeah, we represent the real majority, red-blooded Americans who work hard all day then come here to occupy barstools until closing time," Ike Pinetar added.

"So your protest doesn't start until people get off from work?" I asked.

"Well actually, most everyone has been here since the bar opened," the occupant of the adjoining barstool cut in. "Most of us have been laid off and drawing unemployment since 2008."

"So what are your demands, more jobs?"

"Nah, not much sense in getting jobs. That bunch up in Washington would jest take it and give it to one of them fereign countries, like Iraq, Aft-ganny-stan or France," retired Road Superintendent Oscar "Pothole" Perkins growled.

"That Obama fellow ish shending all our money back to Kenya, where he came from," another fellow, deep in his cups, slurred.

"That's Ike's cousin, Otis Pinetar. He's retired and has been occupying his barstool 24 hours a day since we started our movement," Harley whispered. "You'll have to forgive him if he's a bit incoherent."

"So what are your demands, exactly? Ending foreign aid?"

"Yesssh. And vote 'em all out of office," Otis Pinetar exclaimed as he slid out of his stool to the floor.

"Uh well, just one more question. The Occupy Wall Street people are getting some criticism because they're complaining about things but not offering any solutions. Is your solution to organize voters and support a candidate?"

"Well maybe, but we' have to leave the bar to do that. Most of the guys in here ain't registered to vote," Archie Aslinger replied.

"Heck, most of 'em can't vote, they're still on probation!" barmaid Boots Clotfelter giggled.

"So, do you guys have a solution or not?"

"I've got one," elderly Caleb Hockmeyer cut in. "Grow marijuana."

"You mean legalize marijuana?" I asked, realizing that such an act would put the notorious Hockmeyer clan out of work.

"Heck no, don't legalize it!" Caleb laughed. "I mean let the tobacco companies grow it and sell it to the Chinese. Pretty soon China will owe us money and there won't be no more trade deficit or whatever."

"Well gentlemen, this has been interesting but I don't think you guys have a serious political movement here. What are you trying to prove with this 'Occupy Barstool' thing?"

"Son, I'll tell you what our Occupy Barstool Movement is all about," Harley replied. "Archie, Ike, Caleb, the entire Haig clan – we've all vowed to stay here in the Dead Rat Tavern 24 hours a day, on our barstools, until folks come in and fill the dance floor with food, toys and Christmas gifts for Varmint County's needy families and fill that big jug on the bar with cash to pay their electric and water bills."

"Yeah, times are hard and a lot of folks are out of work this Christmas, so we want everyone who can afford to come in here after work and spend money on booze, to pass on getting' drunk and spend the money on toys and Christmas turkeys for them that can't afford it instead," Pothole added.

"You put Virginia up to sending me down here to cover your so-called 'movement,' didn't you?" I asked Harley. "So you guys aren't really protesting anything."

"Well, yeah, we're protesting. We're protesting the fact that everybody seems mad at everybody else and the news media just stirs the pot that much more. It don't matter whether you're a Democrat, a Republican or a Pachyderm, who you like for President, whether you hate Wall Street or work on Wall Street," Harley concluded. "Those of us here in Varmint County wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

Humbled, I thanked the boys on the barstools, dug into my pocket and left my week's payday in the jug before heading back to the newspaper office.

MARBLE INSTITUTE AWARDED TWO "POWER OF A" SILVER AWARDS

THE MARBLE INSTITUTE OF AMERICA'S (MIA) ACCREDITATION PROGRAM, AS WELL AS ITS STONE SLAB HANDLING SAFETY PROGRAM, HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE POWER OF A SILVER AWARD.

The Power of A Awards are the premier program honoring associations that exemplify how the association community and its dedicated professionals are essential to a stronger America and world. The awards, presented each year by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), recognize and celebrate the extraordinary contributions associations make to society year round by enriching lives, creating a competitive workforce, preparing society for the future, driving innovation and making a better world.

The MIA Accreditation Program and Stone Slab Handling Safety Program were both entered in the "Power to Create a Competitive Workforce" category of the awards competition. The competitive workforce category recognize programs that help individuals gain and apply new technical skills, as well as learn best practices for their profession.

MIA Communication Director, Garen Distelhorst (who manages the Accreditation Program) said, "We felt that the Accreditation Program was a perfect entry for the Power of A Awards. From the outset, the Accreditation Program has been driven by our members' desire to develop industry standards for competency and an accompanying accredited designation. Our Accreditation Task Force spent over two years assembling the criteria, program structure, comprehensive exam, etc. The Accreditation Program is a testament to the significant impact an association can have on an industry when it unites its members around a common goal."

MIA Industry Research and Information Manager, Mike Loflin (who facilitated the Stone Slab Handling Safety Program) added, "The Safety Program is one of the most significant, important and timely examples of industry collaboration that we are aware of. Many competing companies came together for the betterment of the industry and have created a program applicable to any company handling stone slabs. There had never been a full training program created through the cooperation and idea sharing of stone industry companies."

ASAE received nearly 100 entries in the first year of the Power of A Awards. The awards were presented at ASAE's Summit Awards Dinner on Wednesday, December 5, 2011. The dinner brought together association executives, government officials and business and community leaders for an evening to celebrate the value of associations and their impact on society.

About the Marble Institute of America

For over 65 years the Marble Institute of America (MIA) has been the world's leading information resource and advocate for the natural dimension stone industry. MIA members include marble, granite, limestone, sandstone, and other natural stone producers and quarriers, fabricators, installers, distributors, and contractors in over 50 countries around the world.

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BETTER! FASTER! CHEAPER!

Pro-Seal Preserves from the Black Hills to

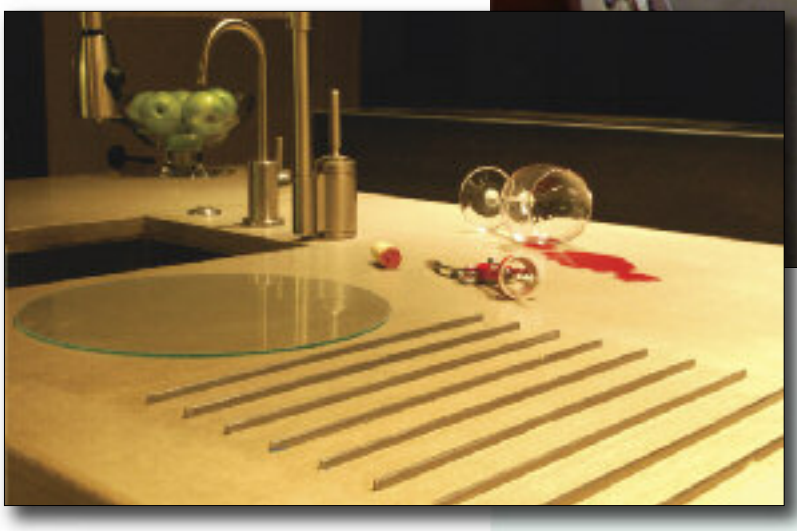
by Joel Davis

Continued from page 3

Brammer grew up in the glassmaking industry. He brought technology and techniques from that discipline into the Pro-Seal approach. "Why we are able to do what we do is a process called vitriforming. Basically, glass is a vitriform. Instead of following traditional chemical processes, we use a variant of that."

The company has one facility in the U.S. as well as facilities in China, Germany, and Greece. Domestically, it employs about 15 people at its Washington headquarters. Its production facility is highly automated, Brammer said. "We can do about 2.2 million square feet of product every eight hours."

Currently, Pro-Seal is involved in some exciting projects overseas, Brammer said. China is laying about 1 million kilometers of elevated tracks for its bullet train system. The problem is the concrete components of the tracks are being destroyed by a variety of factors: acid rain, vibrations from passing trains, salt air, and the freeze/thaw cycle.



Top: Pro-Seal has developed what CEO Tal Brammer describes as the "holy grail" of concrete countertop sealants.
Above: Pro-Seal's Ultra Shield II-A, a hydrocarbon resistant film sealer, protects the concrete countertop from acidic discoloring agents commonly found in the kitchen such as wine or vinegar.

"We are working on a couple of very large projects in China. We're working on railway tunnels in Shanghai. They have some significant groundwater infiltration issues. We're stopping the flow of the groundwater from the inside of the tunnel."

Brammer said the company continues to gather information about the performance of the products in order to keep improving them. This has been especially useful in fine-tuning its offerings for concrete countertops. "We've made some huge leaps in the countertop market because there is more data readily available."

Pro-Seal is constantly seeking to tweaking its products or application techniques "to get better results or better scales of economy," he said.

The company is also very serious about the ensuring proper use of its products. "We have an authorized applicator program," Brammer said. "The contractors work with us. We have a university here at our facility. It's a pretty intensive learning process. ...The benefit of it is you have contractors who know exactly what they are doing."

The company focuses on customer service, Kraft said. "One of the biggest advantages is our technical support. Whether its a DIYer or a contractor has was been doing this for a while and has a question, we're always available to help them out."

"A consumer can call in and talk to a product manger and get everything they need to know to do their home project," Brammer said.

A Pro-Seal representative will return messages within 24 hours. If it is during regular business hours, they might even be able to talk immediately. "If (customers) have a problem they know they can always call somebody at Pro-Seal, and we'll talk them through it," Brammer said.

Anyone interested in distributing Pro-Seal Products or becoming an authorized applicator should call 425-488-6570. For technical support, call 800-349-7325 or email info@proseal-products.com.

Been There, Got the T-Shirt

A New York man wearing a T-shirt declaring "I'm a drunk" is facing DWI charges after a collision with a police car.

Suffolk County police arrested 23-year-old Kevin Daly of Coram. They say he crashed into an officer's vehicle at about 1:45 a.m. The officer was treated for minor injuries.

Daly, who is unemployed, was wearing the T-shirt in a mug shot provided by police. It reads: "I'm not an alcoholic / I'm a drunk / Alcoholics go to meetings."

He was ordered held on $10,000 bail at his arraignment and was issued several traffic summonses. He was represented by an attorney from Legal Aid, which has a policy of not commenting on pending cases.

Daly was due back in court.

Snacks are 20% of Your Grade

A California university professor can no longer demand snacks from students taking his psychology classes.

Sacramento State professor George Parrott has demanded snacks from his students for 39 years. Students were told of the snack demand on the first day of class. But two weeks ago he walked out of his Psychology 101 lab class because there were no snacks.

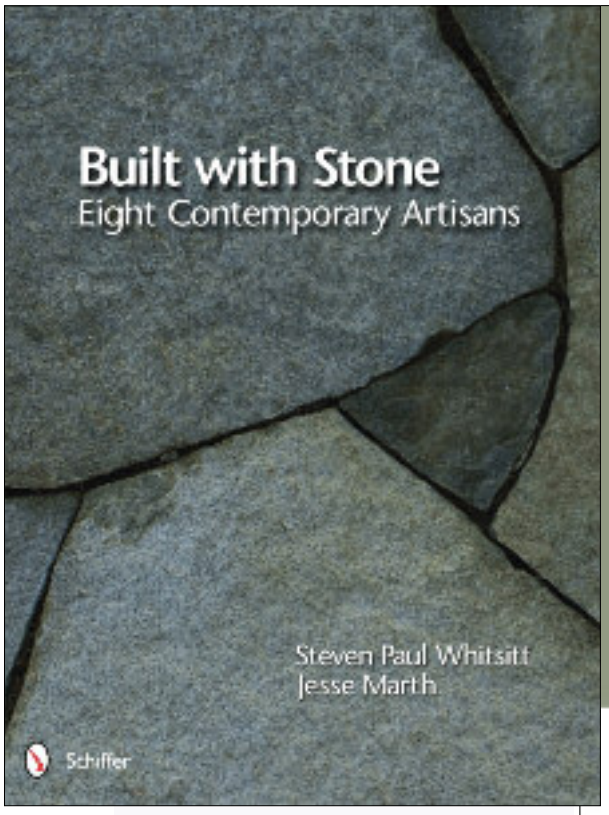
University spokeswoman Kimberly Nava says members of the psychology department at California State University, Sacramento decided Parrott's decision to walk out of class was unacceptable and the dean told him to stop.

The Sacramento Bee reports Parrott's requirement was his way of encouraging students to work collectively, among other things.

SCHIFFER PUBLISHING PROMOTES NEW BOOK OF STONE STRUCTURES

"Built with Stone: Eight Contemporary Artisans" Showcases the Work of Master Stoneworkers from Around the US

THIS DESIGN BOOK RELEASED BY SCHIFFER PUBLISHING, LTD. SHOWCASES THE WORK OF EIGHT MASTER STONEWORKERS FROM AROUND THE UNITED STATES IN A WIDE VARIETY OF INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR PROJECTS.



Book Details: Size: 9˝ x 12˝; 144 pages, with 200 color photos and illustrations. Hard Cover Price: $39.99, ISBN: 978-0-7643-3941-7

Enjoy this photographic compilation of works by 8 contemporary stonemasons. View interior and exterior structures in public and private venues using dry stack, mortar, pavers, and more in a variety of styles.

Large, full-color photography captures stone constructions including retaining walls, steps, fireplaces, patios, water features, and free standing structures. Each artist's work is featured in a dedicated chapter and shows a selection of techniques, including dry stacking, mortaring, paving, and carving.

Though these craftsmen adhere to different aesthetics, the fundamentals of their craft and their patience for building something with permanence is common throughout. From small garden walls to two-story fireplaces, here is the grand, simple, and sustainable work of contemporary stone artisans for designers, students, and homeowners.

Photographer Steven P. Whitsitt travels the United States documenting the work of top-end designers. Jesse Marth is an editor at Schiffer Publishing, Ltd. is based in Atglen, PA on the Schiffer Book Farm. The company is known for publishing high quality Antique, Arts, Architecture, Lifestyle, and Military History books, as well as a successful line of children and ghost books.

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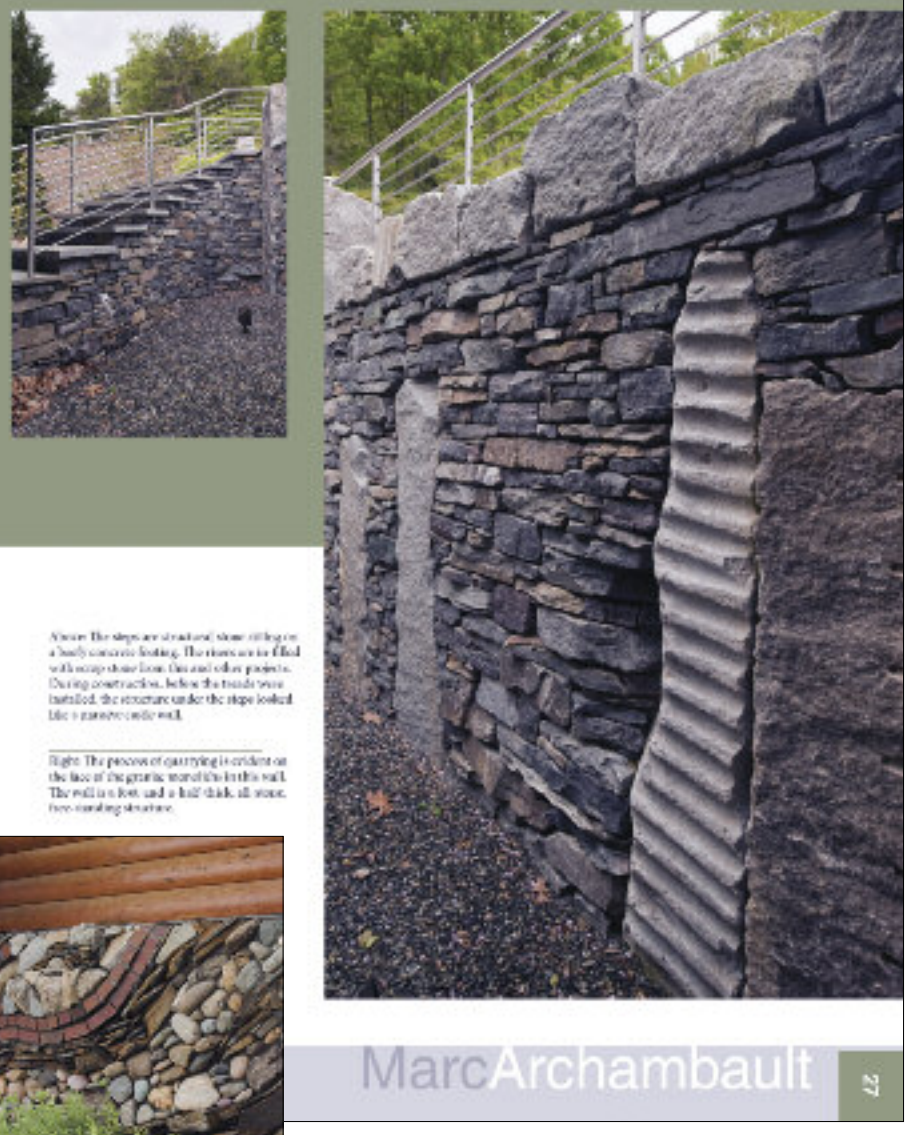
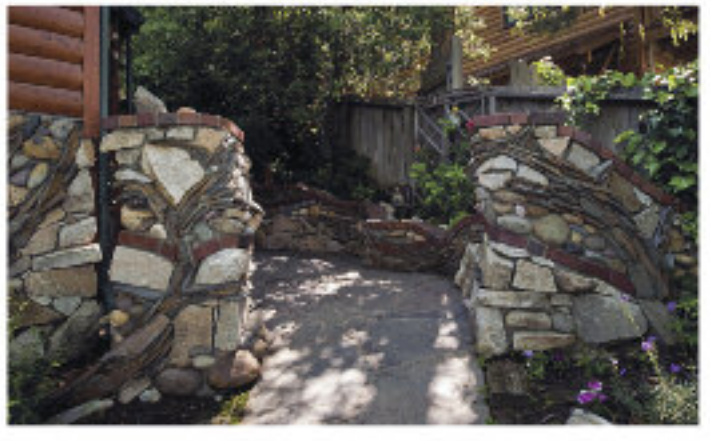
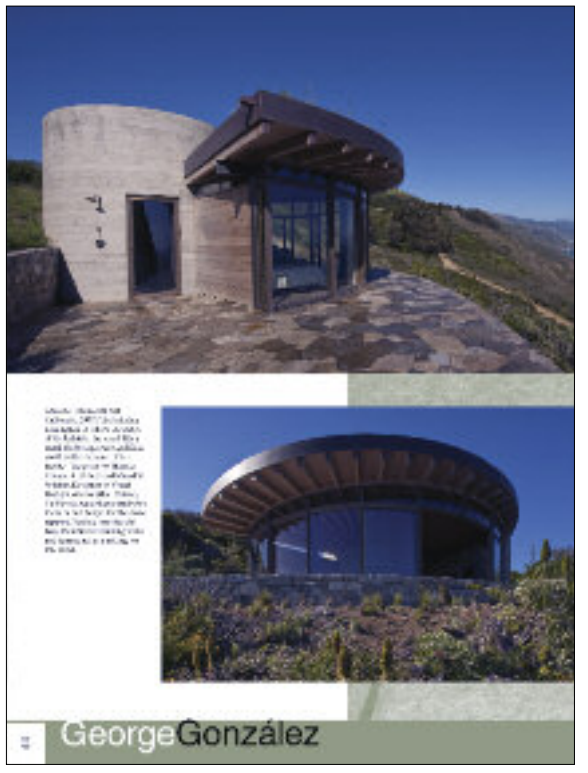


Top Right: Marc Archambault of Hammerhead Stoneworks is a stone mason and artist based in the mountains of western North Carolina. He creates walls, steps, paths and patios using traditional, old school building techniques.



Bottom Left: Robert Pierson comes from a heritage steeped in masonry skill. He apprenticed with his father and older brother at a very young age in central California. From these traditional roots, he began to incorporate his own artistic style.



Bottom Right: George González, a former graphics designer who is largely self-taught as a mason, has been practicing his craft for 30 years, working from a home he built himself on the Bolinas Mesa in northern California (not shown). His crew of six includes two of his sons. Three members of his crew have worked with him 21 years.

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