HEN an American legacy rises from the rubble to become a major player in the stone industry, it is good news. The successful rebirth of Alberene Soapstone Company is inspirational... and this is just the beginning.

The Alberene Soapstone Company was founded in the small town of Schuyler, Virginia in 1888. Throughout the last century this soapstone vein, one of the largest in the world, has encountered thousands of different working hands and experienced the industrial innovations of quarry machinery. It has been used for laundry tubs, laboratories and later the scraps were carved into sculpture.

Now fast forward to the 21st century. Just two years ago, some local investors (Virginia Soapstone Ventures) decided to attempt a revitalization of Alberene Soapstone Company, and they appointed Richard Coyte as Director.

“I have been given the greatest opportunity of any career: to save and elevate an American company with an historic past, helping bring it back to prominence in a market dominated by foreign competitors,” Coyte says.

Coyte has worked with multiple companies over the years as a consultant. With a background in finance and a law degree from Georgetown University, he may seem an unlikely candidate to manage a quarry. However, since stepping in as the Director for Alberene Soapstone Company, the company has turned heads and profits.

Thanks to the alignment of several factors and the hard work of some key individuals during the past year, both peripheral and internal, Alberene Soapstone Company has risen from the rubble, literally and figuratively.

Two main goals of this revival were to increase production and target the appropriate market. The owners of the company proposed a plan to quarry full-time, reevaluate the company’s target market and hire a management team. Peter Farley accepted the Production Manager position, even without management or production experience. He effectively brought a new 16-member crew together, and has been an exceptional Production Manager ever since.

“He was running the plant when production made the quantum leap from under 2,000 square feet a month to over 12,000 square feet a month,” says Coyte, “It was incredible.”

Alberene offers four distinct soapstone types, including Old Dominion, Climax, Alberene and Church Hill. By adhering to quarrying one product, the company can focus on maintaining the highest quality, which is also in line with its historical integrity.

When it came to hiring a quarry manager to excavate this soapstone, industry experience was essential and Dan Rhoades fit the bill. Rhoades was previously Vice President for Vegas Rock, and after working there for 18 years, he made the move to Virginia to work with Alberene as the Quarry Manager, and his role and input are integral to the company. He is involved in the hiring process, machine repair and equipment purchasing.

“The first day Dan arrived, I mean the very first day, he had moved the machinery into place and started cutting blocks,” says Coyte.
Alberene Soapstone Company

Continued from page 1

The shift to quarrying industry-size slabs required new and larger equipment. Per Rhoades’ recommendations these include an industry standard slab rack, a new polishing line and a new stone saw.

“Probably the most important piece of equipment we have is the Fantini 70 Super-H with a 20 foot blade,” Coyte says.

Expanding their product size allowed them to expand their market, and this development is considered a natural extension of the company’s history. “It allows us to focus on the clients that we can best serve—contractors, fabricators, installers, specifiers, and architects,” Coyte says.

Coyte also explains two external elements that have also contributed to Alberene’s rise. The first is a market uptrend in the stone industry. Stone is popular and people are spending money on home renovations. In the last five years, interior design (for kitchens, in particular) has become incredibly trendy in American media and society.

Coyte and representatives of Alberene attend home shows, trade shows and conferences on home design and architecture throughout the year. These opportunities to connect with clients and meet homeowners who are interested in soapstone have been beneficial to the company’s budding reputation. Additionally, American quarries and American stone have been increasingly popular with clients.

“I think I first noticed the trend when Stone World Magazine announced that it was dedicating a feature every month to American quarries,” says Coyte. Since then, it seems that everyone is talking about American stone and buying from American companies.

“It’s like that phenomenon of buying a certain model car and then all of a sudden you see one everywhere you look,” he jokes.

Whether you call it synchronicity, projection or the Baader Meinhof Phenomenon, Alberene has been proactive in promoting its national legacy and playing a part in the local movement. After all, Alberene is the oldest and only soapstone supplier in the country, which allows the company to claim the lowest carbon footprint. Natural soapstone does not require chemical sealants or stains, and this is important to the company’s fabricator client base. Eco and environmentally friendly labels on home materials continue to be a significant factor for fabricators and homeowners.

Alberene’s largest client base is on the east coast, stretching from Virginia to Maine. In line with its legacy, the company seeks to maintain loyalty with its many partners. Coyte notes Alberene’s appreciation for Tennessee Marble, who has been supportive and provided loads of useful industry advice. Another distributor, in particular, has been an invaluable aid for Alberene to break into the New England market, a historical haven for soapstone and stonework.

“We could not have reached such a large market in New England without EleMar,” says Coyte, “They have been a huge supporter of Alberene and we are incredibly grateful.”
Above, Left and Right: A stone worker grinds a custom piece with an early version of a single-arm polisher, and above, another adds counterweights to balance the polishing arm on a rubbing bed—one of the interesting machines still preserved at the Schuyler operation, now thoroughly modernized with surface polishers and other essential processing equipment to bring industry-sized slabs to a growing market.

Below: American Original soapstone slab from the Old Dominion quarry, shown in two different surface treatments in the kitchens pictured: on page 1 (polished), and below, right (honied).

The second external factor contributing to the company’s success is a recent decrease in the supply of soapstone from other sources. In the past, Brazilian soapstone has controlled the market by exporting much of its stock to the United States. However, the supply has slowed over the last few years, and Alberene’s leadership team saw this gap in the market as a perfect opportunity for them to step in.

So everything was falling into place for Alberene. But this company’s recipe for revival has an in-house secret ingredient, and it is leadership.

The smart management, industry expertise and marketing savvy of Alberene’s leadership team have been a keystone for Alberene’s rapid success. It takes a lot of faith to jump into a company with a long history. But Coyte, Farley and Rhoades had good reason to believe in the legacy the company had sustained over the last hundred years.

Although profits and numbers are a positive indication of growth, Coyte’s most rewarding honor has been boosting employment in the community.

“Adding 25 jobs to this area was really important to me and meaningful for the company,” says Coyte. He expresses gratitude for being in a “community that cares.”

The Albemarle County area that has supported this soapstone quarry and production plant for over a century has a lot of pride in the industry, and history as well. The town of Schuyler is a popular tourist destination for Appalachian history buffs, and anyone who watched the famous Walton family on TV. The Walton’s House, now a museum, is a unique blend of antiquity, nostalgia and entertainment. During the summer months, tourist buses flock to the region to visit Alberene for the “Lunch & Learn” tours and to catch a glimpse of John-Boy’s bedroom and Ike Godsey’s store.

In March, Alberene hosted their first Stone Fabricators Alliance (SFA) Workshop. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and more than half of the attendees placed orders for stone before the workshop had ended. Honed and polished soapstone seem to be the most popular finishes with fabricators.

The next big debut for Alberene will be honed soapstone in the kitchen of a new Southern Living home in Charlottesville, Virginia later in the summer.

And wait, there’s more! Alberene will be expanding this year in quarrying a new section of the soapstone vein, which will yield mostly Church Hill black soapstone.

Be prepared to see a lot more of Alberene in industry news, trade shows and homes around the country. Part of the company’s mission at Alberene is that the public know about American soapstone and where to get it.

For more information, visit Alberene Soapstone Company website www.alberenesoapstone.com or call 434-831-1051.

Above, Left and Right: A stone worker grinds a custom piece with an early version of a single-arm polisher, and above, another adds counterweights to balance the polishing arm on a rubbing bed—one of the interesting machines still preserved at the Schuyler operation, now thoroughly modernized with surface polishers and other essential processing equipment to bring industry-sized slabs to a growing market.

Below: American Original soapstone slab from the Old Dominion quarry, shown in two different surface treatments in the kitchens pictured: on page 1 (polished), and below, right (honied).
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In Memory of Elio E. Salvo

We present this news with a heavy heart: We are sorry to inform all the friends of both Miracle Sealants and the Salvo family that the founder of Miracle Sealants Company, the man who coined the term “impregnator” with the introduction of 511 Impregnator, passed away, April 9, 2013, at the age of 84 after a brief battle with cancer.

The son of two Italian immigrants, Elio was born in Boston, MA on September 7, 1928. He married his beautiful wife, Pauline, in 1950. Sadly, she passed away in 1999 a few months before their 50th wedding anniversary.

Elio’s father, Joseph, built, from the ground up, a successful stone and tile contracting and installation company in the New England area. The family moved to California after WWII.

Elio’s grandchildren represent the 4th generation of Salvo tile and stone professionals.

An entrepreneur with a vast vision, Elio founded Miracle Sealants in the early 1980s and, with the help of his two sons Joseph and Albert, lead the company into a new generation of tile, stone, and grout care and maintenance. The tile and stone care industry owes a great deal to this pioneer: many terms, products, and procedures for the protection, maintenance and restoration of tile and stone employed to this day are related to the innovations of Elio and Miracle Sealants.

Elio is survived by his four children: Debra, Connie, Joseph, and Albert, and his many grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

The industry has lost a visionary and he will be missed sorely by all.

From the Publisher’s Pen

Wo really neat and useful products were introduced at Coverings 2013. The first is the Raptor, which is billed as the next generation rail saw, but that description is incomplete. The Raptor does make all conventional rail saws obsolete, but if you start using it, you may find that your bridge saw will become a coat rack—just like your Wizard. Here is why:

✓ Cuts through even the hardest 3cm stone in one pass—no step cutting.
✓ It cuts about as fast as the typical bridge saw, but setup is faster and easier.
✓ Because it glides on a film of water, it is far less likely to scratch the stone and it is less fatiguing to the operator than any rail saw.
✓ It is easier to use than any other rail saw, does not require bulky truck-ship only rails, and weighs significantly less than typical rail saws. It can be shipped anywhere and even taken to a job site.
✓ It runs on standard 120 volt power, no need to run 220 volt lines.
✓ The Raptor uses a 6 inch blade, resulting in less stone waste where cut lines intersect.
✓ At the show, the Raptor using a Cyclone Turbo blade cut 1,040 linear feet of dark granite and the blade had about 25% of its useful life left. This works out to about .03¢/foot for diamond consumption.

The second product introduced is the SR2 by Stone Pro. This support rail uses a medical grade vacuum pump to provide enough suction for even the most textured surfaces. Battery power provides suction for 4 to 6 hours. Stone Pro has always made functional products but they went all out in the industrial design department when they created this product. During setup, Brad demonstrated the rail on the back of a slab that had scrim glued to it. During the show, Brad used the rail on textured stone to demonstrate curls. (Brad is a big guy). The unit worked perfectly. On either textured or polished stone, this unit makes other rails obsolete.

Have a good read,

Rich Hassert

Email responses to:
publisher@slipperyrockgazette.net

Introducing River Valley Series

Inspired by the enchanting isle of Sardinia, Mediterranea is pleased to introduce the River Valley series—an innovative combination of elements from the old world and the new.

Found along Sardinia’s jagged seashore cliffs and lush Mediterranean valleys are extremely unique natural stones found only in this special corner of the world. Mediterranea has utilized its Dynamic HD Imaging™ inkjet technology to combine these distinct stones with modern cement graphics to create a never-before-seen combination of cement and stone.

River Valley is offered in four rich color selections: Amber, Bronze, Copper and Sand. And with sizes in 12x24, 18x18 and 13x13, River Valley is manufactured in the most popular formats to suit any residential or commercial installation. The 2x2 mosaic and bullnose trim pieces are the perfect complement to any project.

For more information, contact Mediterranea/Architectural Imports, 3501 NW 115th Avenue, Doral, FL 33178. Call 305-718-5091, fax 305-718-5099. Email: info@mediterranea-usa.com or visit them on the web for more details at http://mediterranea-usa.com.

Click here to view more Stone & Tile content.
He had never heard of social media or the likes of what today’s smartphones can do. I pulled out my iPhone (yes, the stone detective might be old-fashioned but I try to keep up with all the latest gadgets), and showed him some of the features.

He was totally blown away and I was afraid I might have to perform CPR on him. Wonder if there is an app for CPR? He looked at me and said that computers and all those newfangled things are going to put people out of work. I didn’t want to argue with him and just agreed.

I finished my cup of joe and my English muffin and headed out the door when my phone rang. The man on the other end said he got my name from the Marble Institute and he had a problem with his granite countertop, with the sink.

I asked, "What seems to be the problem?"

He said, "The sink is falling and I’m afraid it will fall completely out."

I asked him if he had called the fabricator and he told me he did but was getting nowhere. He was about ready to file a lawsuit but needed an expert to take a look at the problem to make sure it was the fabricator’s fault.

I said, "I could look at it, but I’m 3,000 miles away and I don’t know anyone in your state. To fly me out to look at it would be more costly than replacing or reinstalling the sink."

He sounded really disappointed. I was about ready to hang up when I thought back to my conversation with the old man earlier that morning. All of sudden a light bulb went off in my head. I asked him if he happened to have an iPhone. It just so happened that he did. I told him that I could do a FaceTime inspection and the cost would be a fraction of what it would cost to fly me out there to take a look. He loved the idea!

All of sudden a light bulb went off in my head. I asked him if he happened to have an iPhone. It just so happened that he did. I told him that I could do a FaceTime inspection and the cost would be a fraction of what it would cost to fly me out there to take a look. He loved the idea!

The exaggerated corners simplify the installation of square tile, and a "flangeless" design makes installation easy. Tall Niches fit standard 2" x 4" walls and mount flush with ½" backer board. Contact Braxton-Bragg for pricing and availability.
SEEING IS BELIEVING

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Advice To Myself

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

Here it is … my last column. But what to say? Who cares what an old(ish) lady in a small town like Nubbins has to say about anything?

Like I do with all such problems, I took this one to my friend, Roberta. She just shrugged and said in her matter-of-fact way, “Look. I know you hate giving advice, but for some reason people seek you out for it. Why don’t you give them what they want?”

Roberta’s right. I don’t much like giving advice, but I have learned a lot in my many years on this earth. I’ve also learned quite a bit by writing this column for the last nine years. Why not share it? So, I looked back through my old columns and came up with a list of 32 words of wisdom life has taught me. But it’s not advice for anyone other than the person who needs it most. And that would be me.

1. If you’re going to bother looking in a mirror, always start out by saying, “Hello, gorgeous!”
2. Go outside at least once a day.
3. If you want to remember someone’s name, say it out loud three times. (If you don’t remember it after that, see #24.)
4. Life is a wave. Ride it or go under.

5. Comparing your insides to somebody else’s outsides is always a waste of time.
6. If you are walking to the beauty parlor for an appointment, always add an extra 30 minutes because you will end up talking to all the neighbors you run into along the way and Cathy at the Cutt-and-Run will give your appointment away.
7. You don’t have to go to every battle you’re invited to.
8. If a child wants to hold your hand – take it.
9. Listening to people is good for you and good for them. And by listening I don’t mean thinking up what you’re going to say next while the other person is talking.
10. Avoid secrets if at all possible. They will make you absolutely crazy.

11. There is a teensy-weensy line between enjoying the holiday season and going overboard. Find that line and don’t step over it. Be firm!
12. You’re never too old to ride a roller coaster, to get married, or to do a maypole.
13. When the wildflowers are out, all is right with the world.
14. It is perfectly acceptable (even encouraged) to leave extra zucchini from your garden in other people’s cars – even if those people are strangers.
15. A walk around the block with good friends is as good as therapy. Plus, it’s a lot cheaper.
16. If it stays cold for a week and the local lake freezes over for the first time in 20 years, somehow there will be enough ice skates to go around. I don’t know how this works, but it does.
17. If you look for the good in people, you will find it.
18. If you have been on Facebook for more than 20 minutes, go back and read #2.
19. It is never too late to start your day over. These things help: honest friends, deep breaths, a gratitude list, Pearl’s peppermint bark.
20. Don’t look for trouble, but when it comes (and it will come), find the gifts it brings with it.
21. What other people think of you is none of your business.
22. Don’t live in the wreckage of your future. Today’s wreckage is good enough.
23. Never try to resist a warm, homemade cookie.
24. Life is too short to fold fitted sheets, to stifle tears, to dust rather than take a nap, or to worry when you forget someone’s name.
25. Be kind – to others, but also to yourself.
26. If you ever get a tattoo (and I am not advocating this), above all else, take an experienced proofreader with you to avoid staring at a typo for the rest of your life.
27. It turns out laughter really is the best medicine.
28. People will often come through if you get out of the way and give them the dignity to try.
29. Keep the key to your happiness in your own pocket.
30. If you decide you want to buy something on the spur of the moment, wait a week and see if you still want it. (Unless it is a tattoo – then wait at least twelve years.)
31. When you don’t know what to do, do the next right thing.
32. Life is hard and it isn’t fair, but it’s still wonderful.

So this is my list. And if you want my advice – go out and make your own.
I learned my first lessons in the differences between operations and heroics working in sales while in college.

I was selling shoes at a small Nordstrom store and worked the shoe department on weekends when we would be invaded by the weekly surge of Canadian shoppers seeking deals. Ladies’ shoes in particular were a prized commodity as the Canadian VAT (value added tax) created a large price advantage for shoes sold in the US.

One particular busy weekend, I made a sale to a Canadian woman who was getting married the following week and wanted a pair of silver pumps that had to be ordered. Electing to pick them up at the store rather than receiving them in Canada and incurring the VAT, I told her I would call her when they arrived.

The silver pumps arrived the following week and as I was preparing to call her with the good news, she pleaded for me to do something to help. Her of the bad news, she pleaded for me to do them up at the store rather than receiving them in time, VAT notwithstanding. Informing her of the correct size in Seattle. I personally drove to Seattle to pick up the shoes, and then drove straight to Richmond, BC, delivering them personally. Needless to say, she was very happy and the heroic garnered me a customer service award. I was lauded for my efforts and eventually recognized during a company-wide meeting.

The whole scenario never sat right with me, however. I kept thinking that it shouldn’t have happened in the first place. Don’t get me wrong, here – outstanding customer service is something I value and is incredibly important to a business (see the August 2011 SRG, “You Dance with the Girl You Brought”).

The distinction, however, is between being willing to do almost anything to satisfy the customer, which is important, and continually band-aiding a business model with constant heroics because it is not built to scale for growth.

I observe these operational gaps in businesses every day. Admittedly, when starting a business you learn quickly to do just about anything to keep it going and heroics are a large part of that. The challenge becomes that reliance on heroics sows the seeds of what limits a business from scaling in the future.

Simply, if you want it to perform predictably and profitably, and equally get something out of it in the long run, then you must develop operational excellence in the business. One of the better books I’ve read on operational excellence is Michael Gerber’s E-Myth Revisited. He provides an excellent framework for developing operations.

Before you get there, however, you have to recognize there is a problem, and it probably lies with you. Are you continuously solving the same problems in the business? Are you repeatedly relying on the same key people to go above and beyond to save the order? Are you finding yourself drawn into new projects while systemic problems go unsolved?

If your answer is yes to any on these, then it’s likely you have a business dependent on heroics rather than operational excellence. You may be winning the battles, but you are losing the war.

Start winning the war today by taking a long, hard look in the mirror. Are you the problem? It may also require acknowledging that your company has likely been built around rewarding the heroics that keep you from getting where the business needs to go. Changing this requires focus and determination, however, the payoff is substantial.

Most valuation experts will acknowledge that in the long run (recent recession excluded), next to the viability of your market, it is the operational excellence in your business that will have the most impact on your valuation multiple and being rewarded for your years of hard work. By my estimation, that is what winning the war is all about!

Rick P. Thomas is President of Activate Leadership, a leadership development consultancy in Washington state. He consults and speaks to organizations across the country, focusing on individual and organizational achievement.
HE MARBLE INSTITUTE OF AMERICA (MIA) has issued its 2013 Awards Program Call for Entries. The Call for Entries signifies that the MIA is now accepting entries for their various awards.

The Call for Entries signifies that the MIA is now accepting entries for their various awards. These highly coveted awards honor and recognize natural stone companies, natural stone professionals, and architects from around the globe.

In the current economic climate, it is crucial that your business receives as much publicity and recognition as possible. Specifiers, architects, general contractors and the public view recognition from your trade association (the MIA) as proof positive that your company is competent, professional and worthy of their business.

The 2013 MIA Awards consists of:
- **The Pinnacle Awards** are presented to companies whose projects’ beauty, creativity, ingenuity, and craftsmanship exemplify professional mastery in the use of natural stone in commercial and residential environments. As a Pinnacle Award winner, you will receive widespread recognition for your professional accomplishments. Again this year, with the generous support of Hanley Wood Exhibitions, all Pinnacle Award of Excellence and Merit winners have the opportunity to invite an architect from the firm involved in their winning project to StonExpo 2014. The Pinnacle Awards consist of 4 separate categories and also seeks to identify and award a project in one of the categories that demonstrates environmental responsiveness and successful resolution of sustainability goals. The 4 separate categories are:
  - **Commercial Interior** – sponsored by Custom Building Products and Aqua Mix.
  - **Commercial Exterior** – sponsored by Custom Building Products and Aqua Mix.
  - **Residential Interior/Exterior** - sponsored by BLANCO.

- **The Grande Pinnacle Award**, sponsored by Marmomacc, is presented to the best project across all categories. This award includes a beautiful trophy and a trip to Marmomacc 2014 in Verona, Italy. Again this year, the award’s sponsor Marmomacc, will present a Grande Pinnacle Award to an architect from the firm involved in the winning project. In addition, the architect will win a trip to Marmomacc to attend Veronafiere’s week-long continuing education program on designing with natural stone.

- **The MIA Natural Stone Craftsman of the Year Award**, sponsored by Polycor, Inc. & TexaStone Quarries, singles out one craftsman who has physically performed outstanding stone fabrication and/or installation over a period of many years. The individual candidate must have served as an apprentice stone mason and risen through the ranks as journeyman stone mason, foreman and superintendent. In addition, the person honored must have a solid track record of leadership and mentorship, a real educator for those he works with.

- **The Migliore Award for Lifetime Achievement** was established to recognize an individual who has made extraordinary contributions to the natural stone industry and the Marble Institute of America. The award is named for MIA’s long-time Technical Director, the late Vincent R. Migliore, who was its first recipient.

- **The MIA Natural Stone Scholarship Award**, sponsored by Cold Spring Granite Company, provides educational opportunities for aspiring fabricators, installers, or administrative apprentices interested in furthering their careers within the natural stone industry. The scholarship covers travel and registration costs for one or more recipients to StonExpo/Marmomacc Americas, the natural stone industry’s premier exhibition and education event, and MIA’s Annual Meeting.

To acquire an Awards Program Call for Entries, contact Helen Distelhorst at hdistelhorst@marble-institute.com or log on to www.marble-institute.com/awards. Deadlines begin in August...apply today!

Visit www.slipperyrockgazette.net for more Stone & Tile industry news

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NKBA Celebrates 50 Years of Leadership Through Learning

NKBA Has Nurtured the Growth of the Entire Kitchen and Bath Industry Since Its Founding in 1963

The National Kitchen & Bath Association, the premier association for kitchen and bath professionals with nearly 60,000 members, is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year, marking a half century of leadership through learning.

The American Institute of Kitchen Dealers (now the National Kitchen & Bath Association) was founded in 1963 at a time when kitchen planning was just beginning to emerge as a specialty. Lumbermen, carpenters and builders were laying out and installing kitchens, learning as they went, having no easy way to share knowledge with each other.

Then a small visionary group of kitchen dealers, inspired by a manufacturer’s rep, met near Philadelphia, contributed $463, and formed the Association. With that, the infant industry found its voice.

The founders set goals that remain the cornerstone of the NKBA today. “If you look back and see the goals of the NKBA 50 years ago, compared to today, you’ll see that they are essentially the same: education, consumer awareness and networking. What has changed are the tactics,” said 2013 NKBA President, John K. Morgan.

From its first meeting, Association members called for national training schools, accredited colleges, certified designers, design contests, research and public relations programs to increase consumer confidence in members. They wasted no time getting started. The first kitchen school was held six months after the Association was founded. The first conference was in 1964 in conjunction with the Mid-Atlantic Lumbermen’s Association, followed by an independent convention and trade show the next year. The first Design Competition was in 1965 and continues today. The first kitchen designer was certified in 1968.

Over the past half century, the Association — which changed its name to the National Kitchen & Bath Association in 1983 — has nurtured the growth of the entire kitchen and bath industry, bringing to life all the programs envisioned at its birth, and many more. It can claim significant achievements in education, consumer awareness and industry networking.

As the NKBA celebrates its golden anniversary, it looks forward to serving the industry in new and innovative ways, while remaining the “gold standard” for invaluable learning and networking. NKBA is rolling out its most comprehensive learning program ever this year, and is laying the groundwork for an industry mega-event, Design and Construction Week, in 2014.

In the area of education, over the past 50 years the NKBA has:

• Conducted countless kitchen and bath classes across North America and overseas
• Certified thousands of designers through four design certification programs (CKD, CBD, CMKBD, AKBD)
• Established a network of over 60 accredited and supported colleges and universities throughout North America to prepare students for industry careers
• Produced dozens of books on everything from business management to universal design, most recently through its authoritative textbooks in its Professional Resource Library, written by industry professionals and reviewed by a panel of experts. Ongoing updates and new titles are currently in development.
• Developed 31 Kitchen Planning Guidelines and 27 Bathroom Planning Guidelines, both with access standards, and available on iPhone, iPad and Android devices. These reflect the current industry environment, future trends, consumer lifestyles, latest research and new codes.
• Published regular industry trend and business reports.

The NKBA’s accomplishments in building consumer awareness include:

• Orchestrating local, regional and national promotions, from a “Happiness is a New Kitchen” campaign in 1968 to National Kitchen & Bath Month in 1988.
• Educating homeowners about the benefits of working with members, from seminars at a 1965 show to the creation of today’s Kitchen Planner and Bath Planner that generates qualified leads for members.
• Creating E-newsletters that help consumers understand more about the complexities of kitchens and baths.
• Conducting an annual Design Competition that inspires consumers and salutes members who create attractive, safe and functional rooms.
• Running active public relations and social media programs that promote NKBA professionals to consumers as the preferred resource for creating the two most important rooms in the home.

Alongside all these tangible accomplishments is the immeasurable benefit of rich friendships and invaluable networking that come with NKBA membership. “The biggest accomplishment of the Association has been connecting the industry, reaching out to all segments and communicating, sharing and learning from each other,” said Morgan. Today the Association membership embraces all segments of the industry including designers, dealers, builders/remodelers, cabinet shops, DPH showrooms, distributors, reps, manufacturers, and multi-brand retailers.

Learning remains the NKBA’s number one objective. “The need for quality education has never been greater – the Association is making significant investments in learning, KBIS conferences and other growth opportunities to build the right support for future member benefits,” said Morgan.

As a thought leader, the NKBA is helping the industry by taking a 360-degree approach to learning starting this year. It is launching its most comprehensive learning program ever, offering career paths in eight competency areas through its convenient LMS system. The focus moves beyond a single course to a structured knowledge path that includes beginner, intermediate and advanced levels.

The competency categories include Design, Talent Management, Communication, Adapt & Innovate (Change Management), Focus on the Consumer, Business Management, Leadership, and Sales & Marketing.

Starting in 2014, KBIS and the International Builders Show (IBS) will both be held at the same time in Las Vegas. This new Design and Construction Week puts the NKBA at the epicenter of one of the world’s largest gatherings focused on new ideas, products and technologies to design, build and remodel homes. Design and Construction Week 2014 is expected to draw more than 75,000 specifiers, builders, dealers and suppliers and 2,000 exhibiting brands, based on recent trends for both shows.

“A year after the Association was founded, they put together a kitchen show that was important to providing member benefits for the next 49 years,” Morgan noted. “This new grand event, Design and Construction Week, is our opportunity to support members for the next 50 years.”

To learn more about the NKBA’s 50 year history, visit NKBA.org.
Rustrations that result from trying to tightly secure paver edging have reached an end with new Edgetite™ spikes. Edgetite Products, Inc. is pleased to introduce a new paver edging spike that makes paver installations stronger.

Edgetite™ spikes help solve the separation problem that can occur when installing paver edging with common spikes. They were created from firsthand experience when Jeff Goodman, a landscape/hardscape contractor with 25 years of experience, continually encountered this problem while installing paver edging. After growing tired of seeing and repairing failed brick edging for years, he felt there had to be a way to solve this problem. Edgetite™ spikes were created with this in mind.

Edgetite™ spikes are unique because of the patent pending angled tip design. As an Edgetite™ spike is hammered into the compacted base the angled tip deflects away from the installation while the head pushes the edge restraint tightly against the brick. The angled final position of an installed Edgetite™ spike resists frost heave while adding strength and longevity to your masonry project.

When Mr. Goodman pounded in his first Edgetite™ spike, the result was amazing. The spike tip deflected away while the head firmly secured the edging to the brick. Now an old installation problem has a solution and the brick paving industry has an ally.

Ask your local Landscape Supply dealer about Edgetite™ spikes for your next project. For more information, contact jgoodman@edgetite.com or call 630-726-9125. See videos showing how Edgetite™ spikes work at their website http://www.edgetite.com/videos/
Creative New Backsplash Idea

This stunning combination of split-face granite and glass mosaic tile is made easy and possible with the Tomahawk Stone Splitter, which will turn your scrap granite into recycled gold. Look for a story next month on making your own split-face creations with the Tomahawk.

It's All About Dad

Father's Day is the day we honor dear old dad, but only if we can find him. Good places to look for:

- At the golf course – in the rough.
- On top of the house – trying to hook up the satellite dish before the game starts.
- At the hardware store, bragging to a total stranger about his kids.

Really Need a Glass of Water

Well past his bedtime, a small boy came up to his dad and meekly said, “Daddy, daddy, can I have another glass of water, please?”

His dad replied, “But I’ve given you 10 glasses of water already, son!”

The little boy then said, “I know, daddy, but my bedroom is still on fire!”

Dad’s Day One-Liners

- What is the perfect Father’s Day gift? Taking your mom far away on a vacation with you.
- By tradition, dads wear a red flower on

Talon™ Resin-Filled Dual Zero Tolerance Wheels

Use side and bottom to grind!

Talon™ Premium Resin-Filled Dual Zero Tolerance Wheels are really great for stock removal, and perfect for cleaning up bowls and preparing the stone for polishing. The design greatly reduces bounce; it’s quiet and minimizes chipping, allowing you to grind closer to the template.

The wheel also works as a Zero Tolerance Wheel and Grinding Cup Wheels at the same time. Convenient and effective when working corners of kitchen counter tops.

- Use wet or dry
- Suggested RPM 10,000

Another Braxton-Bragg Innovation!

2-in-1 and LESS expensive!

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Shop www.braxton-bragg.com for Talon Zero Tolerance Wheels
Why spend $100k for an inline machine when the Edgemate 100 will give you a PERFECT PROFILE for $6k?
And you won’t have to buy special high-priced tooling!

“Great for new employees without fabrication experience. After just two days, she was producing perfect, clean profiles on granite.”
– Brian Fansworth, Owner

Easy to Use!

Perfect Profiles
The Edgemate 100 will create perfect bullnoses, roundovers, bevels and Z shapes without the cost of expensive profile tooling. The Edgemate 100 even has pre-set stops to create a perfect 45 degree bevel. It is fast, easy and no special training is required. Setup is fast—clamp the rails and begin polishing today!

Fast and Efficient
Because you move the Edgemate 100 to the stone, you can use it on all the edges without running the risk of moving and perhaps breaking the stone. The process is fast, economical and the quality higher than you can achieve with typical CNC tooling.

Call about TRAINING, July 24-25, 2013

Economical
No need to buy special profile wheels for a CNC, router or expensive inline tooling. Talon™ Cup Wheels and Viper® Polishing Pads are all you need to produce a finish that will exceed what you can expect from high-priced machines.

Invisible Seams and Laminations
Use the Edgemate 100 to back-bevel your seams to achieve a perfect seam. Instead of re-sawing a laminated edge, simply polish it out. Less stress on the stone and on you.

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Better products! Faster service! Cheaper prices!
TENNESSEE SCULPTOR BILL RALSTON TURNS LIMESTONE BOULDER SPUD INTO GOLD

Not surprisingly, a lot of limestone was discovered under the front lawn of the Tennessee Governor’s Residence several years ago during the house’s restoration process. One very special 12-foot-long solid block of limestone weighing in at over 10,000 pounds was excavated, reclaimed and reused in the same location underground where it had lived for over 400 million years.

In the creative conservationist spirit, the limestone block was preserved upon its discovery. The boulder was nicknamed “Spud” by the folks in the Arts Commission because of its oblong shape.

“It is not uncommon for the Residence to creatively repurpose materials from restoration and renovation projects,” says Director of the Performing Arts, Hal Partlow.

The Tennessee Arts Commission suggested to the First Lady’s Office that the limestone block be converted into sculptures for the recipients of the Governor’s Arts Awards. “Throughout its history, the Governor’s Arts Awards has used an original work of art created by a prominent Tennessee artist as the take-home prize,” says Partlow.

The Arts Commission did not have to look far to find a sculptor for this project. As a Nashville native, former Tennessee state employee and well-known area artist, Bill Ralston was a perfect fit for the job. The Tennessee Department of Transportation moved “Spud” to Nashville’s Renaissance Stone Company where 20 small cubes were trimmed out of the boulder.

Ralston often works with marble, and limestone, he says, is typically not as smooth. Its amorphous and variable surface can make carving it challenging. But Ralston has been working with stone now for over 40 years, and most his work tends to feature the natural shapes of the medium at hand.

At first glance, he thought the blocks were marble. He wanted to be certain about the material because different types of stone require different care in carving. Each stone has a different fracturing point and endures different pressure levels. So Ralston consulted an expert.

“I took a sample of the stone to the state geologist and he said it was Bigby-Cannon limestone,” says Ralston. The geologist also said that the stone was approximately 455 million years old. Ralston has carefully examined this ancient specimen and found fossils, crystals and shale layers.

He spent several months working on this commissioned project. He enjoys the physical aspect of stone carving and loves “making dust” in his open-air workshop in Bell Buckle, TN. For many of his sculptures, he prefers to use hand tools, such as tooth and point chisels.

“My hand tools come straight from Italy,” he says, “same as Michelangelo and Da Vinci.”

The bird bath vessel design was a mutual agreement between Ralston and the Arts Commission.

“They knew my work and I knew what I could make multiples of,” says Ralston, “and it couldn’t be more than 25 pounds, of course.”

The final product resulted in 12 small bird baths, each topped with a bird carved from Tennessee pink marble. These pink birds are a signature of his work. Ralston says he hopes the award “induces a spirit of reflection or contemplation in those who see them.”

He took care to attach the bird with a bolt through the stone, so that it is possible to remove the bird if necessary. Each cube has free-handed blades of grass engraved on the sides. The stone is a pretty grey color that takes a high polish.

The ceremony was held on April 23 in the Conservation Hall on the Governor’s Residence (where “Spud” was originally found). Since 1971 the Governor’s Arts Awards have recognized individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the arts or cultural life of Tennessee. These awards represent Tennessee’s highest honor in the arts, celebrating the outstanding contributions of artists, arts organizations, volunteers, schools, educators, local governments, legislators and corporate citizens on the state or national level. The distinct categories are Folklife Heritage, Arts Leadership and Distinguished Artist.

Recipients are selected by a committee of the Tennessee Arts Commission comprised of the Commission’s board members and representatives from the Governor’s and First Lady’s offices.

The evening included a short, private reception with the honorees and a ceremony highlighting their careers and the creation of the award. The nine award recipients were very pleased with the award design. According to Partlow, one of the vessels will reside at the Governor’s Residence, one will stay at the Arts Commission and the location of the remaining bird bath is yet to be determined.

“Several positive comments were overheard during the reception and ceremony,” he says. One of the Folklife Heritage Awards was presented to the beloved local radio station WDVX in Knoxville, which is known for its daily live music show, The Blue Plate Special. General Manager Linda Billman, along with current and former board members and staff, excitedly accepted this high honor.

“It was a great experience for all of us,” Billman says of the ceremony. She was especially pleased for the staff of WDVX to have the opportunity to attend. Most of the crew is always behind the scenes so it was great for them to be recognized, she says.

The bird bath has taken up residence in the display case in the Knoxville Visitor’s Center for public viewing. Billman enjoyed learning the history of the award material, and found Ralston to be “quite a talented fellow.”

So what happened to the rest of the salvaged spud? Ralston was able to keep it, and will most certainly create something beautiful. He hopes to arrange an exhibition of his recent work in the upcoming months in the Nashville area.

For more information about Bill Ralston’s work, visit his website at http://williamralstonsculpture.com.
Akemi Colour Bond 2-component Cartridge Adhesives are epoxy based and can be used for bonding engineered stone, engineered marble, engineered quartz and various kinds of other composite stones.

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The Akemi Colour Bond Cartridge Adhesive is a gel-like consistency, which allows it to be applied to horizontal and vertical surfaces. It can also be applied for extremely thin and invisible bonding joints, as well as used with natural stone.

All colors are only $29.05/cartridge

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Note: Color samples show the cured state of products. Actual colors may vary due to printing alterations.

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Silicon Carbide Antiquing Brushes for Marble and Soft Stones

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Diamond Antiquing Brushes for Granite and Hard Stones

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Our Viper® Professional Antiquing Brushes come in silicon carbide for softer stones like marble, and in diamond to add beautiful texture to even the hardest granite. These brushes come in 4” and 5” diameter sizes, and allow the fabricator to produce textures quickly and easily.

While they work great for inline or radial arm machines, they can be used nearly as efficiently with any standard polisher with center water feed.

Each brush has a snail lock for easy attachment to larger machines like a Park Industries Pro-Edge® or Marmo edging machines, or a radial arm machine like the Park Industries Wizard or Fab King.

The brushes come with 5/8-11 thread for use with hand polishing tools like Flex, Makita® or Hercules®. These brushes are designed to be flexible and are durable and long-lasting even under demanding shop conditions.

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LONG TIME AGO, I USED TO BE CHIEF COOK AND BOTTLE WASH-ER AROUND GREAT NORTHERN STONE. AS TIME HAS GONE BY, I’VE HAD TO RELINQUISH SOME TASKS TO OTHERS TO ADVANCE THE COMPANY. NOW SOME CAN DO INDIVIDUAL TASKS BETTER THAN I, AND SOME NOT SO MUCH.

However, if I tried to do it all myself, we couldn’t do a great deal. The secret is in knowing your needs, and the strengths and weaknesses of those you lead.

I now focus on my “A-Team”, or if you pardon the pun, what we affectionately refer to as the “Eh-Team” (…we’re Canadian, eh?). You see, on my number one crew – the one that handles all the high profile customers – I have a Bull and a Detail Guy.

Now, my Bull is nicknamed The Jedi, because he has learned his skills well. There are few things that he cannot do with stone yet, and only because he hasn’t had the opportunity. But with the Jedi’s track record, he will master them soon.

Why do I call him a Bull, though? Because he has the skill and he also knows how to produce. He takes his tasks and pushes his crew to work faster while keeping up the standards. Sometimes, I need to slow him down because he is so motivated!

Of course, not to discourage him, but to allow others to catch up to him or to prevent a work stoppage because the customer is not ready for us to move on to the next area or project yet. And yet, when I need him to speed up to finish a job on time, he always finds a way.

Now it comes time to be a little humble. There are certain aspects of grinding, polishing and restoring stone where The Jedi has become better than the Master. And I am good with that. I need others to become skilled so that we can grow. After all, restoring stone is a trade where you can’t just jostle the local Home Depot to pick up day laborers to complete a job. You need someone with a discerning eye and hand who will embrace the semantics of natural stone and the tools employed to reveal its beauty.

Whether he does this to make me feel needed or not on purpose, but sometimes, he lets me show him a trick or two which will speed up his current task or provide better results. Either way, I’m grateful he has taken the lead like a Bull.

And now we focus on the beauty to the above beast…. The Yin to the other’s Yang. My Detail Guy. We call the Eh-Team’s detail guy Moses because… well, quite frankly, that’s his last name. Now, let me explain some background on Moses.

I met him through a business partner who had him cleaning grocery stores. I heard complaints that he did good work, but took too long. My having grown up in that industry, I knew that profit margins did not favor detail guys, but rather Bulls in cleaning. However, in the stone restoration trade, detail guys are worth their weight in gold. Not in leading the crew, however, because they have a tendency to focus on minute details that the customer will never see or notice, instead of the whole, but rather, in the presentation of a job well done!

Moses is responsible for the finished product. He has an eye for detail and the patience to do it right. I rarely, if ever have to double check his work! And I have to say with 100% conviction that he does a better job than I could ever do (or did do) on the little things. And in many ways, that attention to detail is what ensures our invoices get paid!

In my experience, Bulls have a hard time being Detail Guys. Detail Guys have a hard time being Bulls. Moses has expressed interest in becoming a Bull. So, stay tuned to see if I can create the Ultimate Stone Restorer Beautiful Beast or not, because if he is willing, I will help him reach that goal. But I told him flat-out, “You need to train your replacement to do as good a job as you do or better, for you to advance,” because after all, that’s how I did it. ;)

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 tom@greatnorthernstone.com.
Raptor makes all other rail saws obsolete!

At the Coverings 2013 show, the Raptor using a Cyclone Turbo blade cut 1040 linear feet of dark granite and the blade had about 25% of its useful life left. This works out to about 3 cents per foot!

- Cuts through even the hardest 3cm stone in one pass-no step cutting
- Cuts about as fast as the typical bridge saw, but setup is faster and easier
- Because it glides on a film of water, it is far less likely to scratch the stone and it is less fatiguing to the operator than any rail saw
- Far easier to use than any other rail saw, does not require bulky truck-ship-only rails, and weighs significantly less than typical rail saws. It can be shipped anywhere and even taken to a job site
- Runs on standard 120 volt power, no need to run 220 volt lines
- Uses a 6 inch blade, resulting in less stone waste where cut lines intersect

Use in the shop or for on-site cutting, this is the small saw that will do the job! The durable Aqua Base glides over the stone for smooth movement that produces fast, clean cuts using a standard turbo blade – the 6” Cyclone Turbo comes standard with the Raptor! The Raptor can use either a 5” blade (for 2cm stone) or a 6” blade (for 3cm) and works with any straight edge – no special rail required! Don’t spend thousands on a saw when this convenient, durable saw will deliver day after day, cut after cut!

Kit Includes:
- 6” Cyclone Turbo Blade
- Milwaukee Angle Grinder with Lock-On Paddle Switch
- Raptor saw Aqua Base

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<th>Item #</th>
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<tr>
<td>14159</td>
<td>Raptor Portable Saw/Milwaukee Angle Grinder Kit</td>
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It’s the exotics such as Carnival and Mascalero, bursting with mind-teasing collages of colors, that inspire our imagination—and the retina dazzling quartzites like Gold Macaubas, Evolution, and Fusion that offer torrents of color and inspire one-of-a-kind designs to embellish the finest upscale creature comforts on the planet.

As magnificent as these hypnotic swirls and bursts are, most seem to have one thing in common: they are of Brazilian origin. As a fabricator of 26 years, I cannot begin to tell you how many times I stood mesmerized while viewing these seductive granites and quartzites when arriving at our shop.

In the olden days the choices were simple. If you wanted a countertop with movement and character and were willing to deal with the fragile nature of a soft stone, you chose marble or one of harder serpentines. And if you wanted a stone countertop built to last with minimum maintenance, you chose one of the many homogeneous granites of that time.

In their day, these granites were the only choice for durability and set the standard for that one-of-a-kind kitchen, wet bar, or vanity used on a daily basis. Homogeneous granites were, and still are, a great combination of beauty and durability for the family on the go or the busy commercial application.

But during the mid 1990s, the popularity of these granites began to change. Brazilian quarries were busy unearthing new deposits of very durable stone that possessed all the beauty of marble with none of the maintenance.

During this time, designers wanting more options began asking for these new stones, and fabrication shops wanting a higher bottom line began stocking or importing them. As selections grew, clients were quick to accept these brilliant and durable new materials for their homes, and as salesmen offered their pen to their elated clients, the contract was easily inked.

Certainly noteworthy at this time was the fact that no one was saying goodbye to homogeneous granites of the prior decades. However, it was time to say, “Hello, new exotics!” Enter the Golden Age of Brazilian export.

Remarkably, while all of Brazil’s 27 states quarry marble, granite, slate or quartzite, it’s the stone-rich state of Espirito Santo, Brazil that seems to be the most recognized for the materials we’ve learned to love.

This small coastline state not only possesses much of the finest stone in the country, Espirito Santo also has the strategic advantage of easy container exporting to the world via the shipping ports of Vitoria and Tubarao, which lie along the South Atlantic Ocean. Espirito Santo’s neighboring states of Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and Bahia also conveniently reside within the proximity of these ports.

As a plus, the well-known Vitoria-Minas Railway is also a viable shipping option for the many containers bound for the North American markets. Truly, Brazil’s rail and ship exchanges, in relation to the locations of its many quarries and manufacturers, were the main factors for its future position as an export world leader in the coming new millennium.

It was well into this millennium and notably at this point that Brazil’s prior decade of bold marketing and sales strategies within the U.S. had finally paid off, yielding $267 million in overall stone exports by 2004, and remarkably just one year later, becoming the “world’s largest exporter” to the U.S.

Quick to follow this outstanding growth curve, these exports to the U.S. peaked in 2007 to a sales high of over $550 million, up over double from just three years before. Clearly, Brazil’s aggressive expansion strategies of the prior decade had now been fully realized—at least for a while.

By 2009, the Brazilian export economy that had seen great success was now seeing a teetering as sales fell to pre-2004 levels, and those aggressive marketing efforts of the decade before had now been rendered ineffective.

This turn of events was tough on the quarriers and manufacturers who had jumped into the game with both hands and feet by opening up new sources of stone, as well as invested in machines that produced finished materials quicker and safer.

A Renaissance of Beauty and Method

Fortunately, since 2009, production volume has rebounded, and why shouldn’t it? Brazil, which abounds with new, highly-efficient quarries mainly of open architecture, was still producing not only exquisite quartzites, but also premium, standard and commercial grade stone of all varieties.

New and also older large-scale producers in Espirito Santo such as Decolores, Tracomal, and Vitoria Stone, that had invested heavily in state-of-the-art production technology, still had high expectations, and now stood firm and ready for the future.

So, is Brazil again poised to be America’s top foreign source of stone, you ask? Well, to be honest, Brazil’s reign as top supplier to America never ended—it only slowed! Due to new marketing strategies and new materials being introduced, Brazil, just last year, exported over 500 thousand tons of cut and finished granite to the U.S., totaling a whopping 476 million in gross U.S. sales for 2012.

It’s these kind of numbers that have many experts now raising the bar of expectations to the tune of $500 million in projected sales for 2013. So it’s no wonder that many optimistic producers in Europe have thrown their hat into the mix by investing heavily in Brazilian stone production.

By the time you read this story, the Vitoria 2013 Stone Fair in Espirito Santo, Brazil will be history, and by all indications it promises to be a huge success. The old saying, “So goes Brazilian exports to America—so goes American fabrication,” still applies, and in my opinion, any rise in American imports marks the beginning of a chain of events in our market.

Brazil’s aggressive price points combined with the outstanding new colors constantly being unveiled, will help to drive this chain of events. Clearly, stone wearing the Brazilian label is here to stay. It’s also clear that it’s time for all of us to think about new tools and machines for the future.

But don’t take my opinion for what “might” be on the horizon. Talk to someone who attended the Vitoria 2013 Stone Fair for what “is” on the horizon and the state-of-our-art. Then ask yourself—“Am I ready?”

Peter J. Marcucci has over 25 years of fabrication experience in the stone industry. Send your comments to our Contacts page on the SRG website, www.slipperyrockgazette.net.
MIA Releases Stones of North America iPad App, V2
25 New Stones, Care & Maintenance Section Added

The Marble Institute of America has released Stones of North America Version 2. Stones of North America is a comprehensive iPad® app that gives design and construction professionals quick, easy access to detailed information about natural stones quarried in North America.

Version 2 of the app includes 25 new natural stones, a MAPEI care and maintenance tab, and various programming updates to ensure proper functionality with iOS6.

The app features marble, granite, and other stones from more than 90 quarries in North America. Stones of North America gives architects, builders, designers, homeowners, and others shopping for natural stone an easy way to view and select locally sourced natural stone. Users can search natural stones by type, color, intended use, location, and distance from a project. Stones are displayed in vivid color and are showcased through stunning photos of their use in commercial and/or residential applications.

Technical specifications, physical properties, and details on recommended use make it easy to specify the right stone for any project.

Sophisticated mapping technology enables users to measure the distance from the stone’s quarry and processing centers to a job site for sustainable projects.

The MAPEI Care and Maintenance tab includes a comprehensive guide for how to care for and maintain all varieties of natural stone.

“Stones of North America 2 provides a thorough update and increased functionality to an app that was already a hit,” said James A. Hieb, MIA Executive Vice President and CEO. Hieb continued, “It is an ideal resource for professionals who specify materials for residential or commercial projects. I encourage all stone companies to Facebook/Tweet their design clients about the new app.”

MAPEI, the world leader in the production of adhesives and complementary products for the installation of all types of floor and wall coverings and an MIA member company, provided support for the development of the app. “We are honored to help update this unique app,” said Diane Choate, Public Relations Specialist, MAPEI. “This is the most comprehensive, state-of-the-art stone selection resource of its kind and we’re proud to partner with MIA to showcase the beautiful stones of North America.”

The Stones of North America iPad app is available for free download on iTunes. Look for news about version 3, which will include more stones and a companion website for broader exposure, soon.

For more information visit the MIA website at http://www.marble-institute.com.

The new MIA app features marble, granite, and other stones from more than 90 quarries in North America. Stones of North America gives architects, builders, designers, homeowners, and others shopping for natural stone an easy way to view and select locally sourced natural stone. Users can search natural stones by type, color, intended use, location, and distance from a project. Stones are displayed in vivid color and are showcased through stunning photos of their use in commercial and/or residential applications.

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So easy even Bill Hiekey can install it!

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BETTER PRODUCTS! FASTER SERVICE! CHEAPER PRICES!
I have personally known Don since the Baltimore StonExpo in 2002. Since that time, he has been not only a mentor to me and others, but he has also been a great friend.

Between industry conventions, meetings, committees and some of the best steak houses in the world, we have shared knowledge and stories. Don is one of the few people I know who can quote chapter and verse out of ANSI, TCA and MIA technical manuals.

Out of Nowhere

Don got his start into the stone industry in the late 1980s. He has a background in engineering, working for the Donaldson Company in Minneapolis in their filter division. His migration to the South West came when they asked him to move to California to run the operations there. But fate had other plans for him because the company shut down the L.A. plant. You would think that sounds depressing, but there was something better in store for our protagonist.

While he was looking for work to pay the bills, Don used his engineering experience and started working with Gerry Halweg and the Tile Institute of America, building lab testing equipment. From there they did testing at the Riverbank Laboratory in Chicago of floors for UL and sound ratings. This helped them design new flooring systems.

Don was slowly becoming an expert on how floors were constructed and the limitations of the materials. Gerry then got Don involved in investigating construction defects for litigation purposes. It was then, in 1990 that Don met the Abbot to his Costello (or visa versa), Greg Mowat, in San Diego. Together they worked with lawyers who filed suits against developers doing shoddy work on behalf of home owner’s associations. The majority of the defects were always centered around either floors, counter-tops or baths.

A Light Bulb Turns On

They would investigate by doing visual inspections, taking pictures, and then writing their reports. After that, they would do intrusive testing (aka destructive testing) by peeling away layer after layer (tile, drywall, studs, etc.) to prove the defects and document them.

It was while doing this that Don found his destiny. You see, Don started seeing the same problem develop every time, no matter where he was and on what housing development. Every shower in the “modern construction” style of California had leaks. Only the one piece fiberglass installations were watertight.

Don explains it like this: “In the 1930s and ’40s, showers were made out of mortar and cement. So, if the tile or grout leaked or allowed water to seep behind, the cement would absorb it and then release it back after as it breathed, so it would just evaporate. When energy efficient homes came in with new construction methods and materials, small leaks and seepage became big problems.”

Don went on to find that installers were used to their old techniques and were not properly embracing the new technology. It was becoming apparent because virtually 100% of the failures on these installs were purely contractor and installer caused—All because they failed to read the instructions! They failed to educate themselves on how the new membranes coming out prevented this moisture issue perfectly.

Don was now in the right place at the right time. He started researching showers like no other to prove that showers see more “rainfall” than your roof. His remarkable tech article “Rainfall in Your House” goes to show that (depending on if you live in a desert or rainforest) your shower will see 2 ½ to 414 times more rain than your roof will in a year. And roofs are sloped. With shower floors, not so much, but usually, the weak link is around the edges, curbs, shower shelving and seats.

Don was finding that the majority of installers and contractors had a hard enough time understanding how gravity worked, let alone the science behind the capillary action of water and how mold develops.

Making it Work

Don started writing standards in the industry to make showers just as waterproof as a roof. He became very active at conventions, teaching seminars. I remember my first one where I met Don and everyone in attendance was given a steel ball bearing so they could test every horizontal surface in a shower to see if they sloped toward the drain or back to the wall. If they sloped toward the drain – pass, if they sloped to the wall – FAIL!

Continued on page 27
CNC & FRANKFURT BRUSH SYSTEM

Use your CNC machine or Radial Arm machine to create Brushed/Antique finished slabs and countertops. The Tenax starter package kits will create a professional factory finish

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Comes with:
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3 set Kit

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Antique Brush Starter Package 4
Comes with:
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- 4-36 Grit Diamond Brush
- 4-36, 46, 60 Filiflex Brush
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Pro-Cart AT2

The Pro-Cart AT2 is Omni Cubed’s new generation all-terrain countertop installation cart! The AT2 includes the same features as the popular AT1 model, with even more benefits.

- Collapsible clamp uprights for easy countertop removal and tilting of large stone pieces onto cabinets
- Adjustable, sliding wheel base for matching to different distances between stair treads
- The caster legs fold down for easy storage in tight spaces
- Large, 10” casters provide great all-terrain handling

Max Clamp Opening: 73mm (2.88in)
Weight Capacity: 1,000 lbs.

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Don’s best advice to anyone in the business is this: “A lot of material manufacturers offer technical schools and seminars, like Schlutter. All it costs you to attend is your time and travel. Get up to speed or miss the boat!”

“There are outstanding new grouts and membranes on the market today. You need to stay current. Today’s bigger tile needs specialized knowledge in how to install. You need to learn or you’ll die trying.

“And unlike 30 years ago, every pallet and bag has the manufacturer’s 1-800# on it, so if you are unsure – call!”

What motivates Don is that he loves what he does. He enjoys helping people. Growing up on a farm in Minnesota, he would have to analyze equipment to get it to work in the fields and that has translated into his passion of dissecting the construction of kitchens and baths so as to fix problems. He was raised with the attitude that you only want to do things once, so do them right! He also has a rewarding hobby in restoring old Model A automobiles and vintage tractors.

Most of Don’s stone-related knowledge came on the job. Like me, he wishes he had taken geology-related studies in college, but his Engineering degree has helped him. Also similar to me, he wishes he had met Greg Mowat 20 years earlier!

You Don’t Say?

On Scott’s first year serving on the board, we found out the one thing Don and I share in common is growing up in small rural communities. I remember one time he and I sharing similar stories of how people we grew up with who can’t believe how and why we make money doing what we do.

Says Don, “They’re like, ‘What? They pay you to investigate their shower? And you can afford to live in California?’ It blows their minds.”

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 tom@greatnorthernstone.com.

Do You Know a Rock Star?

If you know of any outstanding individual(s) in the stone industry you feel should be interviewed for our Rock Star column, please send us an email (http://slipperyrockgazette.net/index.cfm/m/16/Contact) letting us know who they are and why they should be featured.

Graham’s Good Grammar

British professor who specializes in cities and urban life has been convicted of damaging luxury cars with graffiti that was surprisingly polite.

Stephen Graham was found guilty of using a screwdriver to scrawl inoffensive words such as “very silly,” “really wrong” and “arbitrary” into the paintwork of vehicles including a Mercedes, an Audi, and a Volvo. Prosecutors said the spree caused 18,000 pounds ($29,000) in damage.

Graham, who teaches at Newcastle University in northeast England, pleaded guilty to criminal damage at Newcastle Crown Court.

Graham’s lawyer said the 47-year-old academic had no recollection of his August vandalism spree. Graham previously blamed a bad reaction to alcohol, antibiotics and prescription drugs for his behavior.

Judge James Gos said he would sentence Graham next month.

Facebook Trumps Parking Ticket

Israeli woman has turned to Facebook to beat a parking ticket — and expose an unscrupulous Tel Aviv road crew.

Hila Ben Baruch says she parked her car legally near her Tel Aviv home only to find it gone and replaced with a handicapped parking sign. City Hall slapped her with more than $300 in fines. Making matters worse, she says a city representative accused her of lying when she called to complain.

Determined to prove her innocence, she obtained footage from a security camera showing municipal workers painting the handicapped symbol under her car, then towing the vehicle away.

She told Channel 2 she was “shocked.” The video, put on Facebook, has gone viral. The Tel Aviv municipality has apologized and refunded the fines.

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Visit www.braxton-bragg.com for Made-in-the-USA Razor Blades
Hate to have to bring this up, but here is the blunt, awful truth: People should acquire certain manners naturally, either in the womb or shortly upon arrival into the world. Alas, some have not gotten the message.

We have in our midst a breed of social hooligans. They are ruffians, Rogues. Unwashed heathens. Call this trash what you wish, but they all have one thing in common: They don’t know nuthin’ about iced tea.

The summer season is here, and that means iced tea consumption throughout the South is about to increase. It also means, unfortunately, that amber slop passed off as “iced tea” will begin to flow as well.

In order to discuss what true, lay-your-ears-back-and-pour-it-down iced tea is about, let us start by spelling out what it ain’t.

It ain’t instant, for one thing. Instant iced tea is a culinary abomination that should be dumped into lead-lined concrete vaults, sealed, then buried like toxic waste. The people who invented instant iced tea are communists or aliens from another planet or both. In any event, they seek to disrupt life as we know it. Real iced tea is brewed. With boiling water, teapots and real tea bags.

Another thing iced tea ain’t is warm. Read the name of this beverage again. Does the word “iced” mean anything? As in cold, perhaps? Apparently it doesn’t at some of the eateries I have visited in this and other towns.

Pouring freshly brewed tea into a glass and anointing it with two slivers of shaved ice does not qualify, either. Instead, we are looking for magnum ice cubes. Clear ones. Lots of ’em. The kind of ice cubes you make in metal trays with levers on top.

Glass. That’s another ain’t to consider with real iced tea. It ain’t served in a shot glass or a juice glass or a foam coffee cup. Rather, it is served in a wide-mouthed jar, Mason brand if at all possible, or any other glass container capable of holding a minimum of 16 ounces. Twice that volume is preferable.

Something else Southern tea ain’t is plain. Plain coffee is fine. In fact, the Good Lawd Himself drinks His coffee black. But when it comes to iced tea, the Big Guy and all the heavenly hosts want it loaded with sugar and lemon.

Although it is written Ezekiel, I think (or maybe Haggai), that only pure cane sugar be administered to iced tea, it has become an accepted practice lately to do this deed artifically. We may all answer for this transgression on Judgment Day: but for now, those little blue and pink envelopes have official blessing.

However, accept no substitute when it comes to lemon. I mean it.

This recipe calls for real lemons—those sour, yellow fruits that grow on trees. “Reconstituted” lemon juice (reconstituted from what—dead polecats?) ranks second only to instant tea in Southern social disgraces. We are talking the eye-stinging, pulpy, Real McCoy.

And I don’t mean one of those paper-thin slices some cheapskate restaurant owners try to camouflage as lemons. Iced tea lemons should come in big chunks. When you squeeze them, juice should flow liberally into the tea, not simply moisten your fingertips.

So, let us review: Brewed. Lots of ice. Large glass container. Much sugar. Real lemon in big chunks. Got it?

OK, then go and sin no more.

Sam Venable is an author, stand-up comedian, and humor columnist for the Knoxville (TN) News Sentinel. He June be reached at mahv@outlook.com.

Sports Quote of the Month

“I’ve missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times, I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”

MICHAEL JORDAN (b. February 17, 1963)  
FORMER PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL PLAYER,  
ENTREPRENEUR

Jordan was one of the most effectively marketed athletes of his generation and is considered instrumental in popularizing the NBA around the world in the 1980s and 1990s. He’s still a hero to many sports fans.
After Installing Thousands of Countertops Over the Last 15 Years…

Finally, Kentucky Countertop Installer Discovers

How To Turn $44 into $400

Over and over and over again… on nearly every countertop install… even in “this economy”

Louisville, KY – It took 15 years of doing the same thing as everyone else in the industry before an inventive young man in Louisville, Kentucky found a better way… a way to add $300, $400 even $500 pure profit to nearly every countertop install… using this simple $44 “system.”

In the past, countertop installations were limited by the size and weight of the stone. You simply couldn’t create the large overhangs clients wanted without the risk of the slab breaking. But now, there is a way to greatly increase the amount of overhang on any countertop – regardless of the material being used.

This is a very, very, very profitable advance in countertop installation technology. In fact, we can now show you exactly how to use a new “system” to increase the profit on many of your countertop installation projects. I’m talking about adding $200, $300, $400 or more on each and every job while DECREASING the install time.

Imagine adding $400 per job over the course of a year… what would that be worth to you? (Just one job a week using this new system could be worth another $20,000 pure profit.) What would that mean for your business? And what if this system also increased referrals because of how happy your clients are with your new install system. And trust me, once your clients see this system in their homes, they will talk about it to their friends… and you will get referrals. But beyond that, consider…

5 More Reasons Why You Should Be Using the Revolutionary, Patent-Pending I-Brace System…

First… Sell more stone. The I-Brace system allows you to create larger overhangs than are possible with traditional wood corbels. This means you can sell more square feet of granite on every bar-top, peninsula or island counter.

Second… Up-to-date look and feel. Clients love the “floating” look of the I-Brace system – and they will pay extra for it. Now this is good news because even though your client will pay more for no corbels, the I-Brace system actually costs you less!

Third… Safety. By eliminating corbels your clients are no longer banging knees… and their toddlers are not banging their heads on those hard jagged corbels. It’s just the right thing to do for your clients.

Fourth… Saves install time. No more worrying about picking up or stocking large, expensive corbels that get scratched up—and then need to be replaced – from rolling around in the back of your jobsite truck. The I-Brace system installs quickly and easily and takes up so little room, you can keep a whole day’s supply of I-Brace systems on the truck without any problem.

Fifth… Increases usable counter space. Corbels take up valuable under-counter space and reduce the usable seating area of counters by up to 30%.

How To Get A Risk Free Trial of the I-Brace System for Just $44…

Simply call 1-800-575-4401 to speak with a product sales specialist. They will let you know which I-Brace system is right for you based on the type of counter you are installing.

To order your I-Brace System, speak to any Braxton-Bragg sales representative at 1-800-575-4401.

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<td>I-Brace Countertop Support, 13&quot; Long x 2-1/2&quot; Wide, 3/16&quot;</td>
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<td>12460</td>
<td>I-Brace XL Countertop Support, 20&quot; x 2-1/2&quot;, 3/16&quot; Thick</td>
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<td>12461</td>
<td>L-Brace Upper Bar Support, 10&quot; x 2-1/2&quot; Thick</td>
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<td>Upper Brace Upper Bar Support, 10&quot; x 2-1/2&quot;, 1/4&quot; Thick</td>
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<td>Upper Brace Upper Bar Support, 15&quot; x 2-1/2&quot;, 1/4&quot; Thick</td>
<td>$14.99</td>
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Typical breakfast bar islands use 2–4 braces per side.
**The Slippery Rock Classifieds**

**Classified Ad Guidelines**

Ads not meeting guidelines will not be published.

- $30.00 per print ad, per month. Ads may be renewed by contacting the Slippery Rock Gazette. Free ads online!
- Maximum of 70 words or less per ad
- Payment must be made at the time ad is submitted. Credit or Debit Card only.
- A Credit Authorization Form is available by fax, or download a PDF from the Slippery Rock website.

**2013 Classified Ad Deadlines**

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**Business Opportunities**

- **For Sale**
  - **FOR SALE: Steinex Used “C-frame”**
    - Hydraulic stone splitter and motorized, reinforced conveyor with high sideboards. Igloo Sherpa model 480x450 has 132 tons of splitting force, 18.9” blade length, 17.7” blade height, and a 157.48” x 39.37” loading conveyor, controlled at the splitter console. The price is $45,000.00 FOB, Whitehall, NY. Contact André @ (518) 260-2158 or email apexep@iol.com.
  - **FOR SALE: Single Phase to 3 Phase Converters**
    - I have two units used for one year to power computer controlled straight line polisher and bridge saw. Purchased new for $2,000 each – asking $1,200 each. Also have a Phase-A-Matic motor generator for non computer controlled equipment for $500. Email atxgraniteco@gmail.com.

- **For Lease**
  - **Granite Shop For Sale or Lease**
    - Everything needed for granite fabrication. New state of the art building, not a retrofit. 1-1/2 acres on heavy volume, 4 lane commuting to & from Pittsburgh, PA location. Turn Key Operation. Call for details, 412-527-5705.
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- **Excellent business opportunity in Long Island, New York.** Established Tile Store, Tiles Importers and Marble Shop. We have been in business for over 20 years. Asking price $450,000. Contact Michael 516-790-2810.

- **Home with Granite Shop for Sale.** Beautiful 2,000 sq ft home on 2.3 acres located on Maryland’s Eastern Shore in Ridgely, MD. Comes with a heated 2,000 sq ft granite shop - complete with everything needed for granite fabrication. Asking price $385,000. Call Chris for details 410-634-1312.

- **Successful, historic quarry located in Eureka Springs, Arkansas.** Ozark Southern Stone has the highest quality stone in the nation, backed up by recent studies and geologists. Experienced staff and good equipment. Other business opportunities available that enhance the quarry. The stone is plentiful. Priced right. Visit our website at: www.ozarksouthernstone.com, email inquiries to this address only: debra@667@aol.com, or call Lowell at (870) 654-3650.

- **Monument Shop For Sale.** Full service monument shop in southwestern Michigan. Established in 1923, business has an outstanding local reputation. Sale includes land, 4,000 Sq Ft. building, inventory, sandblast equipment, diamond saw, tools, computers, layout software with designs, plotter, setting truck. Located near Lake Michigan in recreational paradise, 90 miles from Chicago. Owners retiring. Call 269-925-7003.

- **Working Business Limestone Fabrication, 2 Planners, 2 Saws and 5 Lathes, with lots of misc. equipment for limestone.** For only $599, this training class teaches how to use the game-changing Polishing Pro System to remove surface scratches from natural and engineered stone. The training session was developed because of customer demand. The requests for this class have simply been overwhelming. Because of a huge rise in the need for trained professionals who can perform repair and restoration, by attending this class you will gain information and techniques that will give you a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The knowledge gained in this class will make you more profitable in two ways. First, you will now be able to repair blemishes or mistakes that might otherwise require you to discard a stone or piece of stone. Second, you will now be able to offer restoration services. This is an exciting and growing new market. This 2-day course covers:
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  - How to determine if a stone has been dyed
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  - How to remove a stain from a granite countertop
  - How to re-dye a dyed stone
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  - How to polish recycled glass
  - How to repair Engineered Stone (ES)
  - How to obtain the “snake skin” effect on Engineered Stone (ES)
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  - Proper tool selection

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**Training**

Steve’s Polishing Pro Systems Training is offered Tuesday, August 6 – Wednesday, August 7, 2013. Braxton-Bragg LLC offers two-day training classes including this hands-on workshop. Taught by Steve Anneker, the inventor, you will learn how to use the game-changing Polishing Pro System to remove surface scratches from both natural and engineered stone. For only $599, this training class includes lunches, snacks and all materials. Come dressed to work and ready to learn! This session helps pay for itself. This training session was developed because of customer demand. The requests for this class have simply been overwhelming. Because of a huge rise in the need for trained professionals who can perform repair and restoration, by attending this class you will gain information and techniques that will give you a competitive advantage in the

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Top 12 Installation Products That Help You Get It Done

In the April Slippery Rock issue we featured an in-depth look at Omni Cubed, Inc. and their superb line of products. We also featured "What Makes a Good Installation," a compilation of viewpoints from three longtime experts in fabrication.

Both stories were eye-opening and educational for me as well as many others. So, as a supplement to the overwhelming positive response to both of these features, both Publisher and Editor felt a follow-up list of Braxton-Bragg’s best installation products was in order. The following are just a few of those products.

Peter J. Marcucci
Special Contributor

Viper Elite® Turbo Diamond Saw Blades
Super fast and durable, Viper Elite® Turbo Diamond Saw Blades were born to dry cut! Accurately pre-drilled to allow EZ mounting on a flush cut adapter, these 4-1/2” and 5” blades utilize a matrix designed to efficiently release worn-out diamonds while exposing new ones. This robust segment design is also complemented by an array of strategically placed cooling holes, creating unparalleled heat dispersion, allowing them to keep their cool and their edge. When mounted to the Flex Variable Speed Right Angle Grinder above, it offers a 1-2 punch to a successful installation.

Stone Pro Carry Clamps
What can I say? In the shop or at the job site, carry clamps are also an essential tool for any installer/fabricator to have ready. Rated at 350 lbs. each, Stone Pro Carry Clamps offer the user a safe, non-slip clamp that will tackle the most difficult of circumstances with ease. And when combined with any of the installation products mentioned above, you will have every hand-carry situation under control. Stone Pro Carry Clamps are an installer’s best friend.

SME Slab Belts
Installers, how many times have you pulled up to a job site with a 3cm, full slab island only to find out that every tradesman and his brother have been there since half past dark thirty, hard at work—everywhere. Drive and walkways half done—sprinkler trenches dug—masons hard at it, and mounds of dirt everywhere else? Need I say more? And unless you’ve got a helicopter or crane on standby, it’s probably time to get out the SME Slab Belts. What?—No SME Slab Belts, you say? Time to call Braxton-Bragg and order a pair. They’ll save your back, and are also great for unloading from truck to street level.

Omni Cubed AT-2 Slab Cart
Lightweight yet strong, this award-winning cart offered by Omni Cubed is just the ticket for the day-to-day transport of slab counter tops into a client’s home or business safely and efficiently. Constructed of aluminum and utilizing pneumatic casters, the Omni Cubed AT-2 Slab Cart is engineered with safety, as well as convenience in mind and will save you time and money on installation day.

Stone Pro SR2 Vacuum Support Rail System
This innovative new SR2 Vacuum Support Rail System by Stone Pro is a lightweight, double rail, stiffening device engineered from the ground up to get any polished or textured surface counter safely to the job and onto client’s cabinet without breaking. The SR2 features eight 12 volt powered vacuum cups that slide along two 7’ aluminum rails that allow the user to adjust to any configuration or situation. An essential tool, the Stone Pro SR2 Vacuum Support Rail System will pay for itself after preventing just one needless break.

Stone Pro SR2 Vacuum Support Rail System

Makita® 9565CV Variable Speed 5” Right Angle Grinder
Be it dry cutting, grinding, polishing or core drilling, the Makita® 9565CV Variable Speed Right Angle Grinder is a handful of precision power that easily copes with the day-to-day rigors of stone work. Synonymous with quality for years, Makita® has created a safe, long-lasting, multi-use hand tool that offers speeds from 2,800-10,500 RPM and SJS anti kickback technology. Perfect for that missed polished edge or final jobsite trimming, and backed by a limited one-year factory warranty, this long-lasting tool is a great choice for your tool arsenal.

Talon™ Premium Dry Core Bits
Every year the use of reverse osmosis, garbage disposals and pop-up electrical outlets grows considerably and require the custom placement of controls during installation. Talon™ Premium Dry Core Bits are designed to run dry at 10,000 RPM and will cut their way through granites quickly with little or no chipping. Built to last, these core bits are available in 6 sizes ranging from 1” to 2”.

SME Slab Belts

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ESTLED WITHIN THE SCENIC RICH COUNTIES OF ELBERT, OGLETHORPE, MADISON, WILKES AND GREEN, LIES A SUPREMELY HARD DEPOSIT OF GRANITE 35 MILES LONG, 6 MILES WIDE AND 3 MILES DEEP KNOWN AS GEORGIA GRAY.

This deposit, composed mainly of gray feldspar, quartz and mica, has unquestionably set the benchmark for uniformity and durability while carving its way into a legacy of time-honored history, and into our hearts.

It was the late 1870s that this legacy began. The sluggish post American Civil War economy that had held a grip on the southern states for a decade was now thankfully rebounding throughout. Likewise at this time and due mainly to the newly discovered granite deposit, the rural farming community of Elberton, Georgia, was also moving forward; so far though, no one at this time knew the size of this deposit; they only knew the hard facts of the quality of the stone by what now stood unearthed and naked. The quantity of the hard gray that lay buried would continue to remain one of nature’s secrets—at least for a while longer.

In 1882, a small quarry had opened to supply the area with needed gravel for railroad construction and dimensional blocks for home construction. Within seven years later, the opening of a quarry by Dr. Nathaniel, saw the influx of craftsmen and artists to the area beginning with sculptors Arthur Beter and Peter Bertoni, who began using the gray for monument work somewhere around the turn of the 20th century.

As the quarry and manufacturing operations grew throughout the five counties, so grew the population, and by 1930 the granite rich Elberton district had also grown talent rich with American and European artisans pursuing the American dream of prosperity. The stage was set, and the Elberton district was close to accepting its destiny as “Granite Capitol Of The World.”

By 1947, an America still basking in its World War II victory was eager to get back to work. Manufacturing plants that had built tanks and guns were now building cars and construction equipment, and a country awash in new technologies was poised to burst at the seams, and according to the records, so was Elberton.

Stone quarriers and manufacturers big and small were cutting rock around the clock to keep up with consumer demand, and the previous Elberton of yesteryear, had now grown into a Mecca of quarries and manufacturers and the largest supplier of monuments and mausoleums in the world.

Now more than ever an organization was needed to keep the quarriers and manufacturers unified and productive—enter, the Elberton Granite Association (EGA).

“The EGA was established in 1951 because a lot of area quarriers and manufacturers had the foresight to realize that they had a great product and a lot of it,” said EGA Executive Vice President Doyle Johnson, explaining that cemetery memorials are 90% of what they do in the Elberton district. “They knew if they were going to realize the full potential of this area, their granite products would need to be promoted nationally as well as internationally, and that is the main reason we exist.”

In regard to why Elberton granite is so popular, Johnson said it is mainly due to the size and consistency of the deposit, and that area quarriers have barely scratched the surface, adding, “Geologists have estimated it is about 2-3 miles in depth. We’ve been quarrying this material since the 1880s, and it is now 2013, and our deepest quarry is not more that 175 feet deep. It just goes to show you that there is a seemingly endless supply.”

A seemingly endless supply, indeed! Elberton produces about a third of the memorials used in the United States as well as holding a consistent major market share internationally. To accomplish this, the EGA attends 10-11 tradeshows per year in order to represent every one of their members, even if those members are at the same show representing themselves.

The EGA also produces a quarterly magazine called the Elberton Graniteer. And as if this wasn’t enough, the EGA offers a one week monument retailers basic course where they allow industry people from Anywhere USA to improve their knowledge and techniques, and also learn about symbolism and nomenclature, and additionally the process from quarry to finished product.

During this week, visitors also get to tour a local mausoleum plant and etching studio and visit the many Elberton district supply houses and transportation companies.

“We are still the largest association in the United States,” Johnson said, “and our members are entitled to benefits such as workers’ compensation, as well as the Mine Safety and Health Administration’s (MSHA) compulsory first aid and CPR training.

“Forklift and explosive training as well as dust and noise monitoring are also services that we provide. We have 35-40 quarries operating at any given time, but some of these, believe it or not, are run by one owner and only two employees.

“Then you’ve got the larger ones that employ fifty people, but the fact of the matter is that the majority employ about 5-8 people, and when you’ve got the actual owner out there operating the crane or doing whatever, he has no time for human resource duties to interfere with his production. That’s where we come into play. The EGA provides to the smaller operator what ordinarily larger corporations’ human resources would do.”

Johnson then explained that for quarriers or manufacturers to be a considered for a voting, sustaining, or associate membership to the EGA, they must fit the following criteria: operate a store front within the Elberton district’s five counties and also produce at least 70% of their income from the district. That being said, after approval, members must keep up with all EGA requirements and obligations, including the mandatory yearly dues.

The Elberton Granite Association

"Keeping Elberton, Georgia’s World Market Position Strong and Focused Since 1951"

JUNE 2013 | 33

Photos used courtesy EGA

Above and Inset: This Cordova Creme limestone structure was fabricated by Southern Granite Company, Inc., for a scenic meditation area on a lake-island park on the grounds of the Mayo Clinic hospital in Jacksonville, Florida. The Southern Granite Co. also supplied the granite ball fountain. The lattice is approximately 17x17 foot, with the upper segments supported by three columns set on 18 inch-high, rectangular bases, one free-standing. Set on angles, no two exactly alike, it weighs 126 tons and can withstand winds up to 180 miles per hour.

The National World War II Monuments: Pages of the Elberton Graniteer feature the granite memorial supplied by EGA member Georgia Stone Industries, Inc. Eighty percent of the memorial’s paver materials was quarried in the Elberton Granite District.
There is one thing in which Varmint County excels, it’s putting on a celebration. From Civil War re-enactments to Halloween haunted high schools to the annual Fourth of July Haig-Hockmeyer free-for-all, Varmint County folk are not ones to waste an excuse for a party.

This year promises to be the biggest party of all, the 200th anniversary of the official creation of Varmint County by the families of pioneer settler Louis Lowe.

To celebrate the occasion properly, the Lower Primroy Historical & Genealogical Society initiated a search for old Louis’ nearest living descendant, to be named grand marshal and honorary chairman of the bicentennial celebration.

This proved no easy task. Nearly everybody can trace his or her lineage to Louis Lowe, but nobody actually named Lowe still resides in Varmint County.

“Old Louis had, as you know, two families,” Society chairwoman Fluvia Pinetar explained at a planning meeting. “They lived on opposite sides of the mountain and one pronounced the name Lowe as in ‘go’ while the other wife was Mrs. Louis Lowe as in ‘cow.’”

“They didn’t find out about one another until the old bird was laid to rest and for awhile the Go Lowes and Cow Lowes just ignored each other, until the state created a new county that included the territory of both clans and they all had to agree on a name,” Fluvia continued.

“Since they couldn’t agree on how to pronounce Lowe County, they compromised on Varmint County.

“The reason nobody named Lowe still lives in Varmint County is simple. The Lowe womenfolk tended to give birth to an unusually high number of females, while the few Lowe men exhibited a strong tendency for getting themselves killed, usually in gunfights or knife fights,” Fluvia pointed out.

After a few generations of intermarriage with other clans, nearly everyone in the county was descended from one of the two branches of Lowes, but the last actual surviving Lowe, Cleotis Lowe as in “cow,” was shot by bushwhackers during the “War of Northern Aggression,” as it is locally termed.

Fluvia and her fellow genealogical enthusiasts took on the challenge, however, and after extensive research declared that they had identified old Louis Lowe’s nearest descendant, none other than Archie Aslinger, pappy of the current county mayor.

“Archie’s daddy was descended from Henrietta Potts, who was the great-granddaughter of Granny Alpharetta ‘Go’ Lowe, the first Mrs. Louis Lowe. His mother was Isabelle Jass, cousin of Colonel Hugh Ray Jass and the granddaughter of Penelope Switchwood, who was the daughter of old Cleotis ‘Cow’ Lowe,” Fluvia proudly announced. “This means Archie is directly descended from both the Cow Lowes and Go Lowes on both sides of his family!”

Proclaiming Archie Aslinger—former town drunk, notorious practical joker and master poker player and pool shark—as the Grand Marshal of the Varmint County Bicentennial, does not promise to end well, but we will see as the year’s festivities play out.

An entire year of activities has been mapped out, including a kick-off this month to celebrate Varmint County’s contribution to the War of 1812, which was mostly fought during 1813 with its most famous battle not fought until 1814.

That battle is Varmint County’s link to that long-ago spat, when mountain men from Tennessee and Kentucky “packed a little bacon and packed a little beans and followed Andy Jackson way down south to New Orleans” as the song goes, more or less.

A good bit of that bacon was carried in the packs of the sons and grandsons of old Louis Lowe, always scrapping for a good fight. So many “Cow” Lowes and “Go” Lowes volunteered, in fact, that it caused mass confusion in the ranks when officers called morning roll.

“Jeremiah Lowe?” Silence.

“Private Lowe, you’re here. I see you standing right in front of me!”

“Oh, that’s Lowe, sir, pronounced like ‘go.’”

“Well, answer present, private, no matter how I pronounce it.”

“Arabian Lowe?”

“Here sir, but my name is Lowe as in ‘cow.’”

In the end, exasperated officers reorganized two companies of volunteers, separating the Go Lowes and Cow Lowes into different units. When the army finally arrived in Louisiana, a bond was forged that would forever impact the future of Varmint County. Jackson’s rag-tag army lined up to face the British army one foggy gray morning, outnumbered, outgunned and short on ammunition, when out of the mist came pirate Jean Lafitte and his band of Creole and Cajun buccaneers.

The buccaneers were eager to fight the British, who showed less leniency toward piracy than the American authorities in New Orleans, where Lafitte was a pillar of society.

One of Lafitte’s captains was François Haig, who brought along a dozen members of his clan from deep in the swamps of the Atchafalaya River delta. The Haigs were assigned to a place in the line, manning a pair of smoothbore cannons with Go Lowe rifles on one side of them and Cow Lowe rifles on the other.

The rest, as they say, is history. Jackson’s hillbilly sharpshooters and Lafitte’s Cajun cannoneers slaughtered the attacking British army, and New Orleans was saved, even if the whole battle was fought after Britain and the United States had already signed a peace treaty to end the war.

The young Haigs and Lowes of both varieties established a bond of mutual respect for their courage on the battlefield, and grew friendlier during the victory celebrations that followed.

“I’ve never seen men who could handle our Cajun rum like your boys do,” Captain François Haig told Sergeant Gabriel Lowe.

“We’re accustomed to it, Captain. Back home these boys are raised on homemade corn whiskey made from the finest mountain spring water you ever tasted, not like the sulfur smellin’ swamp water around here.”

And so an idea was planted, a dream of Haigs brewing their spirits with fresh mountain water.

“Got some pretty ladies here in New Orleans,” Abraham Lowe told his drinking companion, Honoré Haig.

“Oh, but not enough of zem. Wiz all zee ships dat dock in zis port, dere are four men for every woman here in New Orleans.”

“Shucks, you’uns need to come up our way. We got so many unattached Lowe females running around, it gets down-right tiresome.”

And so another dream was planted in the minds of the Haigs: a land of, if not milk and honey, certainly plentiful womenfolk and fresh mountain water for distilling spirits.

In the years that followed, the Haig clan and the Lowes established a trading partnership. Haigs would travel overland on the Natchez Trace, bearing bolts of calico cloth from New Orleans and homemade rum from their stills to trade for beaver pelts and homemade corn liquor, which they would haul south on flatboats down the Cumberland, Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

On each trip, a few young Haigs would also take back an occasional bride, courted from the plentiful supply of young Lowe ladies. After the Civil War, many of the Haigs, refusing to surrender to the end, were declared outlaws in Louisiana and decided to migrate to the ancestral home of their mothers and grandmothers in the mountains of Varmint County. They established themselves in Haig Hollow where they have thrived for the past century and a half.

For the current celebration of that long-ago war, the Haigs of Varmint County invited the Haigs of Louisiana up for a sumptuous feast and whiskey-tasting celebration on the grounds in Haig Hollow, inviting the rest of Varmint County to join them.

But the real observance of the role the War of 1812 had on Varmint County’s history is a bit more ambitious. Following the Haig Hollow celebration, three dozen Varmint County men and women, including fire chief Stanley the Torch Aslinger, basketball coach Penny Haig and marina operator Ike Pinetar, to name a few, are embarking on three flatboats on a river voyage to New Orleans.

Building replicas of those once used by the Haigs to haul Varmint County corn liquor to Louisiana, our intrepid explorers will pole, row and sail their craft from the base of Mud Lake Dam down to the Cumberland River, then to the Ohio and finally down the Mississippi for a riotous reunion with the Louisiana Haigs and a re- enactment of the Battle of New Orleans.

What can possibly go wrong with such an ambitious undertaking? Stay tuned next month to learn the fate of the Varmint County Bicentennial Flotilla.
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Top 12 Installation Products That Help You Get It Done

Continued from page 31

Sink Setters
Why use ugly wood or angled metal to hold that heavy cast iron sink when one of four fully adjustable Sink Setter adjustable frames will get the job done cleanly and efficiently. No painting—no shimming—no nothin’. Just simply mount a Sink Setter per the instructions and you’re done!

Dustless Technologies Wet/Dry Vacuum
If you’ve been dry cutting inside or just trying to clean up your mess from a successful installation, this 16 gallon wet/dry vacuum from Dustless Technologies is just the ticket. At a quiet 81db, this unit features a machine power needed to clean up fast! Also great at dust to 0.5 micron, while giving the user the ability to clean filters, also during use, with one quick brush system that allows operators to efficiently clean filters, also during use, with one quick turn of a handle. With efficiency at top priority, there is never a need to slow or halt workflow for filter cleaning.

Additional benefits include large filters with surface areas up to 87 sq.ft., optional HEPA filters, and Longopac® bagging systems that provide continuous bagging for easy dust disposal. Two pre-separator models are also available. What’s more, a system of aptly named parts numbers simplifies the process of pairing Lavina® Vacuums with Lavina® machines. Lavina® Vacuums offer a full range of options, with models designed for use with the smallest 7” edge grinder, to the largest 32” Lavina® 32R-S. A wide range of Horsepower and CPM allows operators to select a vacuum that is most appropriate for their machine(s) and workload.

Lavina® vacuums are now available for pre-order, with the first models available for shipment in May. For additional information about Lavina® Vacuums or Lavina® products, contact Superabrasive at (800) 987-8403, or info@superabrasive.us.

InnoTops I-Brace Floating Countertop Support
Drilled, countersunk and painted, the I-Brace by InnoTops is the easy and safe solution to support countertop overhangs on breakfast bars and center islands when corbels aren’t being used. Made in America, these powder-coated gems come in 13”, 16” and 20” lengths and are barely visible when installed. Reasonably priced, the patent-pending I-Brace by InnoTops is the perfect support solution to carry on any installation truck.

For additional information about Lavina® Vacuums or Lavina® products, contact Superabrasive at (800) 987-8403, or info@superabrasive.us.

HEAT-STROKED IN NEW MEXICO

UTHORITIES say an 85-YEAR-OLD NEW MEXICO man led Grant County sheriff’s dep-uties on a high-speed chase and was caught only after lighting a cigarette and losing control of his car.

The Silver City Sun-News reports that Silver City resident Frank Jimenez was arrested early one Wednesday following reports that he was driving erratically in the Grant County Detention Center parking lot. According to authorities, Jimenez took off from the parking lot, fled from deputies and drove up 120 miles per hour. Deputies say he even waived at other drivers he passed. When the deputies caught up to him, authorities say Jimenez was sitting in his vehicle, calmly smoking his cigarette. He is facing a number of charges.

It was unclear if he had an attorney.


This Little Piggy’s Not Yours
A former New Mexico shoe salesman accused of biting off part of his girlfriend’s toe has been arrested again, this time for allegedly stalking the woman and trying to cut off her big toe with a cigar cutter.

Santa Fe police say the incident was the third attack by 27-year-old Daniel Anaya on his now ex-girlfriend, who has moved to Albuquerque and had obtained a restraining order against him after two previous toe-bit-ing incidents.

Police say Anaya, who used to work as a shoe salesman at a department store, tracked down the woman at her new home and attacked her, but she was able to fight back with a metal fork and escape.

Anaya was arrested that evening after he returned to Santa Fe and sought emergency medical treatment.

The Toilet Pipe Bandits
Police say bandits are hitting up Albuquerque public restrooms and running off with metal pipes that automatically flush toilets.

KOBI-TV reports that Albuquerque police commander Will Roseman says authorities have seen a rash of thefts involving Flush-O-Matics. He says the toilet pipe bandits are going into restrooms and taking the metal out.

Police believe the thieves hit up businesses by posing as plumbers. According to author-ities, the pipes sell for around $30 on the black market but cost businesses about $400 to replace.

A police report says at least one Albuquerque-area recycling plant has been buying the stolen pipes.

Source: KOBI-TV, http://www.kob.com

Superabrasive Introduces Its Own Line of Lavina® Vacuums

New Commercial Vacuums Have Fully Automatic, Hands-Free Filter Cleaning

SUPERABRASIVE is adding to its ever growing Lavina® line with a new fleet of commercial vacuums, designed specifically for use with Lavina® Grinding and Polishing Machines.

This is the first vacuum fleet designed, perfected, and introduced to the market by Superabrasive – manufacturer of a now complete system for concrete grinding and polishing.

The most notable feature of the Lavina® Vacuum line is its unique pneumatic jet filter cleaning system – a fully automatic, hands free system that utilizes a compressor for continuous filter cleaning during use. This system will be available on the larger V-25L and V-32 models. All other models, designed for smaller jobs, feature an upgraded manual cleaning brush system that allows operators to efficiently clean filters, also during use, with one quick turn of a handle. With efficiency at top priority, this is the perfect choice to offer your walk-in customers.

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SUPPRESSED INDUSTRY NEWS

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WerkMaster™ Delivers One Step Prep!  
Removes Epoxy or Thinset!

The WerkMaster™ Termite XT model helps you to expand your business. Getting calls to refinish garages, basements, walkways, pools and decks? Can’t refinish them on-site? Frustrated with the time and results? You need a Termite!

Don’t be fooled by the size and weight. The Termite can tear into any surface, including tough coatings and deliver results that are simply amazing. Run it on the floor like a conventional grinder, remove the handle assembly, reposition the handle grips, and voilà – use it to get into small places and corners!

Featuring WerkMaster’s 8-head Octi-Disc™ Technology and the versatility of using standard 3” tooling, the Termite edges to 1/8” of a wall, backsplash or riser. The Termite is the perfect choice for contractors looking for versatility, speed, quality and exceptional results.

Plug into any 110 outlet and its variable frequency drive lets you to run as slow as 450 RPM, which is an excellent buffing speed, then rev it up to become a high speed burnisher while prepping, edging, grinding and polishing as fast as 1,800 RPM!

Protect your customer’s investment with our environmentally friendly and food safe UltraGuard sealer. It provides resistance to acid, coffee, mustard, ketchup, mayonnaise, vinegar, pickle juice, red wine and soda for up to 24 Hours without etching or staining!

Fast, agile, easy and fun to operate, test drive the Termite XT and see how quickly you too can improve your bottom line profits! WerkMaster – Taking it to the Wall!

**NEW!**

**REMOVE EPOXY & THINSET IN ONE STEP**

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<th>Item #</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Everyday LOW Price*</th>
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<tr>
<td>23280</td>
<td>WerkMaster™ Termite XT Grinding &amp; Polishing Floor Machine, 1.5 Hp, 110 Volt, 100 Lbs.</td>
<td>$6,495.00</td>
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We are so confident of our quality that we offer a 30-day, risk-free, money-back guarantee for our entire product offering. If you are not satisfied with your purchase, simply return it for a prompt and courteous refund.

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Visit www.slipperyrockgazette.net for more Stone & Tile industry news
COVERINGS 2013, THE TILE AND STONE INDUSTRY’S LARGEST INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION, HAS SELECTED FOUR PROJECTS AS TOP PLATINUM PROJECTS IN ITS ANNUAL PROJECT: GREEN PROGRAM.

Established to recognize outstanding achievements in sustainable design and architecture that use tile and stone as an integral element in attaining green status, the competition is judged on how tile and stone are used in the project; design aesthetics; positive environmental impact; environmental innovation; and the environmental benefits of the particular tile and stone products used.

This year the Coverings Project: Green competition is recognizing projects in four categories: Commercial Remodel, Commercial New Construction, Institutional New Construction and Residential New Construction. The following were given the ultimate accolade:

**Nature Research Center, Raleigh, North Carolina: Platinum Project for Commercial New Construction.** The children’s bathroom features fully tiled countertops with recycled content were incorporated throughout the home.

Coverings has also selected two Gold Projects for their visionary ideas with regards to sustainability and the use of tile and stone. OrganicArchitecture was cited for a Palm Springs, California condo remodeling that included extensive use of tile and stone to help maintain temperature in a warm climate along with sustainably harvested wood, EnergyStar appliances, and VOC-free finishes and sealants.

**Marc Rutenberg Homes’ Zero Energy America Castaway III Model Home, Palm Harbor, Florida: Platinum Project for Residential New Construction.**

Coverings 2013 was held April 29-May 2, at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Georgia. To learn more about Coverings 2013 Project: Green and the Gold and Platinum Projects, visit www.coverings.com.
A Prosperous Future

“Our quarry operators and manufacturers are constantly upgrading equipment to save time and produce the highest quality product for their customers. In our quarries, new diamond wire saws have been installed, which allow more rock to be extracted with less dust and noise, thereby creating a much safer environment for the employees.

“The same technology is being used in manufacturing plants, enabling manufacturers to create unique shapes and cuts for custom designs. Over the years, laser etchers have made vast improvements, and these machines get faster and the quality improves with each new model.

“Our quarry operators and manufacturers are always looking to use the newest and best equipment to not only benefit their customers by creating top notch products in a reasonable amount of time, but to also benefit their employees with safer and more efficient working conditions.”

It’s true that competing with imported cost-cut stone has been difficult for the Elberton district over the last decade, and many of the companies that were hanging on, hoping that the overall economy of the country would improve, have either fallen by the wayside or been consumed by the stronger, larger ones.

“It’s also true that in the world of business, especially the stone business, change is inevitable, and having tough skin to stay in the game is vital. The Elberton Granite Association has had that skin in the game since 1951, and out of necessity will continue to be the Elberton district’s preeminent leader by building partnerships nationally and internationally for countless years to come.

Peter J. Marcucci has over 25 years of fabrication experience in the stone industry. Send your comments to our Contacts page on the SRG website, www.slipperyrockgazette.net.

For centuries, man quarried stone using a hand-held bit which was struck with heavy hammers. With the advent of pneumatic, or air-powered tools, the channel bar drill (above) was developed which greatly sped up the broaching or cracking loose of large sections of stone. The channel bar was basically a huge jackhammer with a vertical drill support. Drill bits as long as 12 feet moved horizontally via a transversing beam mounted on A-Frame legs. The holes were drilled from four inches to six inches apart the entire length and width of the section to be freed. Then the drill was replaced by a broaching bit or core cutter with teeth and the granite between the drill holes was removed. Loosened vertically on all sides, the block was freed on the bottom by drilling horizontal “lift” holes. The holes were loaded with explosives which caused horizontal lifting when detonated. The large section was then split into smaller blocks by hand-held jackhammers.

Above and Below: The flagpole is set in a base decorated by the artwork of children whose drawings were glazed onto ceramic tiles. A serpentine row of “Wausau Red” tablets commemorates each passenger lost on Flight 93 the morning of September 11, 2001 in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. A polished stainless steel plate is fixed in each tablet at eye level to remind viewers that any one of us could have been on that flight. EGA members donated the time, work, supplies and material.

Above: Oglesby Quarry pictured in 1916. Owned by Oglesby Granite Company. Originally called “Four Mile Quarry” because it was located four miles from Elberton.

Right: Ledgeman at work in Berkeley Quarry in Madison County, GA. The ledgemen have the essential job of guiding the drills and lining up the shims and wedges at quarries.
Do You REALLY Need a CNC Machine?

The Fab King cuts sink holes, profiles edges, drills holes, polishes backsplashes, and antiques surfaces for less than $20,000!

Save Your Core Bits!
It will drill holes in seconds without wobble and extend the life of your core bits.

Offer the Latest “Leather” Surface
Without Spending Big Money
No need to inventory special slabs, with Viper® Diamond Antiquing Brushes you can offer the latest finishes without the wait and expense of specials orders.

Profile Without Tears!
Unlike radial arm machines which can deflect 3/16” when fully extended and prevent true edge polishing, the Fab King cantilevered frame design presents a square and true tooling surface. You can use all of your favorite router bits. No need for a plexiglass scratch guard.

A Back Splash Machine for Free!
A bonus application is that this is the easiest back splash polishing system yet developed. The travel head runs true horizontal to insure a flat edge polish. You can use the 3-Step Viper® Pad to obtain the fastest finish yet.

Quick Set-Up
If it’s delivered in the morning, you’ll be producing countertops by lunch. Unlike CNC machines, you don’t need long training programs and you won’t waste stone trying to figure out how it works.

Incl. $1,000 of Free Tooling!

Call Now!

The Swiss Army Knife Approach
The Fab King combines the functions of a router, a drill press, an in-line back splash polishing machine, a top polisher, and a radial arm sink cut out machine in one.

Real World Designed
Nobody knows a machine like a repairman. The designer of this machine has more than 20 years’ experience in the stone industry. Much of that time was spent trouble shooting and repairing stone equipment. 220 volt, single phase power and off the shelf components guarantee maximum uptime.

Strong Backbone
Unlike other radial arm machines, the solid frame will not flex when the motor is under load. Edge profiling requires a solid structure and the Fab King delivers it with 4” industrial strength steel square tubing.

Full-Size Bed
Unlike smaller solutions, the Fab King fabrication bed offers a full 114” of linear travel and 30” of gantry travel.

Sink Cut-Outs in 8 Minutes!
The Fab King can cut out any sink shape using a template (which means no mistakes and precise dimensions) in as little as 8 minutes.

Full-Size Bed

Save Your Core Bits!

Item # Description LOW Intro Price
14141 Fab King Work Center 19,900.00*  
F.O.B. Knoxville, TN
*Call for Equipment Financing Options

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