

The RetailObserver

April, 2008

The Monthly News Magazine with Personality

Vol.19, Issue 4

WELCOME TO THE **2008** KITCHEN AND BATH INDUSTRY SHOW –

APPLIANCE BOOTH GUIDE AND
THE NEWS OF THE INDUSTRY



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Publisher's Statement
Celebrating Our 19th Year!

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DEADLINE FOR
MAY 2008 ISSUE
IS APRIL 10, 2008



NEW LOOK... NEW FEEL... SAME OLD RAG....

By now, you will have realized that the magazine you are holding looks and feels different. You may have noticed added features and writers, new association connections as well as many new trade partners announcing product launches. We at *The Retail Observer* are determined to bring you a high quality, eco-friendly product. In sticking to our guns about Green, we have gone to a more sustainable, forest-friendly paper for the cover and interior of the magazine, as well as using a soy-based ink for you “vegetarians”.

We are now also offering a Greener way to receive the magazine via the internet. To receive your monthly copy of the electronic magazine (which you will receive earlier in the month than the printed version) go to the subscribe button on the main page of the website, fill out the form and check ‘yes’ in the online version box.

Every month you will receive a link delivered by e-mail, connecting you to the new online copy of the Retail Observer complete with page flipping/ audio enhanced/ streaming video-embedded/ web-linking/ pdf-making/ page enlarging/ e-mailable version (whew) that we just launched.

Ok... you tech geeks know what I’m talking about, but let me take a moment to explain this for the rest of you. This new version will enable you to turn the pages online just like the paper version. You’ll also have the opportunity to download articles, print the magazine or e-mail articles right from the online version of the magazine. Let’s say there was a great keynote speaker at a trade event that you missed. In our article we would place a photo of that speaker, and one click of the mouse would activate a streaming video of that speech. For those of you with PDAs, i-Phones and any other web enabled products, our website will reset itself for your screen and you will be able to read the magazine on the go (or at least at the stop sign). In fact, if you are reading this, the product is already online at www.retailobserver.com.

As we launch this magazine into the fourth chapter of its existence, we want to stop and show our appreciation to the loyal readership that has supported it over the past 38 years. Since the inception as the *Northern California Retailer* in 1970 by Charles Edmonds and the purchase by Don Martin in 1988, the tradition continued on and the magazine evolved into the *Retail Observer* in 1990 by Charles Edmonds again. We are proud to now present you with our newest version of... *The Retail Observer*.

Please enjoy and happy retailing.

Moe Lastfogel



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INDUSTRY UPDATE

REPORT SHOWS KITCHEN & BATH REMODELING REMAINS STRONG

HACKETTSTOWN, N.J. (March 7, 2008)—While the overall housing market remains very weak, kitchen and bath remodeling continues to be a source of strength in the industry, according to the 2008 Kitchen/Bath Industry Outlook (K/BIO), which is published by the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA).

The K/BIO report has identified ten factors that will continue to drive kitchen and bath remodeling throughout the country this year and beyond.

Remodeling a kitchen or bath becomes a high priority for homeowners looking to sell an existing home, creating a selling point in a sluggish market.

Homeowners not interested in selling will remodel the heart of the home to help shore up sagging real estate value, as well as make their home more livable as their circumstances change.

Lenders who have foreclosed on homes will have to enhance kitchens and bathrooms to make them attractive to potential buyers, and in some cases, will have to repair damage to those rooms done by disgruntled former occupants.

Baby boomers are aging and caring for aging parents themselves. They need to remodel their kitchens and baths to make them more usable for individuals with limited mobility.

Cocooning continues to be the dominant lifestyle trend, with consumers retreating to the privacy of their home for leisure time, which results in the rooms' functions evolving to meet these new needs. The kitchen has become the family room where members socialize, while the bath provides spa-like amenities in an intimate meeting place. Economic uncertainty will intensify the impulse to cocoon.

The number of households with two earners continues to grow, which means that bathrooms have to change to accommodate the morning preparation of two adults at the same time.

The number of adults who cook as a hobby continues to grow, spurring kitchen remodeling to accommodate more ambitious cooks.

Media attention on kitchens and baths continues to grow, with television programs, websites, magazines and books giving consumers more choices in products, materials and styling. Consumers who are aware of choices will be likely to replace what they have with more desirable items.

Nearly 18 percent of all homes in the U.S. were built between 1970 and 1979, and another 16 percent were built between 1980 and 1989. Many of these houses have yet to be remodeled and therefore have kitchens and baths in need of remodeling.

Electricity and water, mostly used by consumers in a home's kitchen and baths, will become more expensive during the coming years, driving a new need for remodeling using more efficient fixtures and appliances.

All of these factors will help make kitchen and bath remodeling popular throughout all income levels during 2008 and beyond.

A comprehensive look at the current state of the kitchen and bath market in new construction and remodeling will be found in the NKBA's 2008 Kitchen/Bath Industry Outlook. The Executive Summary can be downloaded at no charge and ordering information can be found at www.nkba.org/industry_research.aspx.

A free web-based seminar to discuss the K/BIO results and their implications will be held on April 24 at 1:00 p.m. For information on the webinar, please contact Ed Pell at (908) 813-4828 or by email at epell@nkba.org. **RO**



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81

CONFESSIONS FROM
THE KITCHEN

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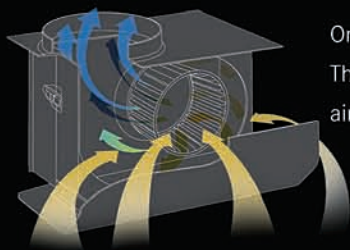
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SPEED QUEEN CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2008



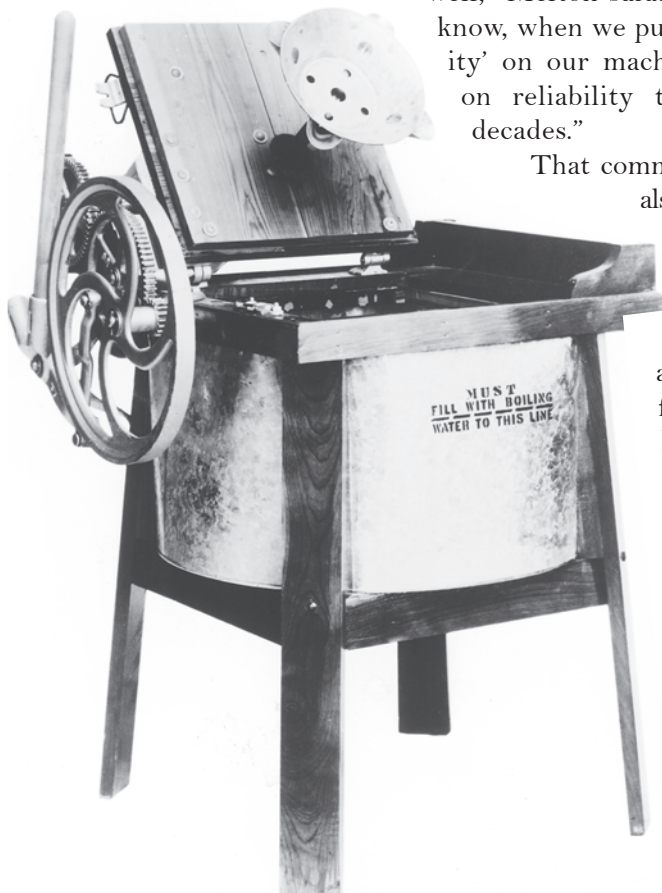
The large home appliance market is famous for seeing brands come and go. That's why Speed Queen is so proud to celebrate its 100th anniversary this year.

"This milestone is something each of us at Speed Queen is proud of," said Chuck Melton national sales manager of the brand's home laundry line. "You don't stay in this industry for a century unless your products deliver on their promise of quality."


The company got its start in 1908, when two hardware store owners in Ripon, Wis. teamed up to increase the speed of a hand-crank washer. Through the years the company grew, adding commercial products for vended and large on-premises laundries. Speed Queen's growth came through cultivating a reputation as a leader in durability.

Despite its successful development from modest beginnings, Speed Queen remains headquartered and manufactured in the same small Wisconsin town it was born in.

"Speed Queen is an example that American-made quality is alive and well," Melton said. "As our customers know, when we put 'commercial quality' on our machines you can bank on reliability that's measured in decades."



That commercial quality story also is evident in its large-capacity products you'll find at work in on-premises laundries at hotels, hospitals, fire stations, nursing homes and locker rooms of professional and collegiate sports teams, as well as vended laundries, around the world.

For more information about Speed Queen and to view a presentation on the brand's rich 100-year history, visit www.speedqueen.com. 



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NATIONWIDE AWARDED BY EPA AND DOE FOR ENERGY STAR EFFORTS SECOND YEAR IN A ROW

WINSTON-SALEM, NC, March 4, 2008— Nationwide Marketing Group (NMG) will be honored again with the ENERGY STAR award for excellence in promotion and outreach in their efforts in working towards protecting the environment and saving energy. The award comes from the ENERGY STAR team which is a partnership of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Energy (DOE) and will be given at an awards ceremony held in Washington, DC on April 1, 2008.

Nationwide, the nation's largest buying and marketing organization for independent appliance, electronics, and furniture dealers is no stranger to the green effort. Last year, NMG was honored with the same Excellence in ENERGY STAR Promotion Award for their contribution in helping Americans save \$14 billion in energy bills.

The Nationwide organization and its membership dealers have always seen the importance of energy and environmental issues and was an early partner when the ENERGY STAR program was introduced in 1992. Today, headquartered in Winston-Salem, NC, Nationwide continues to encourage its members to purchase and sell appliances that are innovative, energy efficient and ENERGY STAR qualified.

"Nationwide Marketing Group believes in the value and benefits of energy efficiency, the energy star message and the importance of sharing its benefits with our customers," said Richard Weinberg, National Merchandise Manager of Appliances at Nationwide, "In our partnership with ENERGY STAR we look for opportunities to educate consumers on how the use of ENERGY STAR products can save them money and help protect the environment. We take pride in our partnership with the EPA, DOE, the ENERGY STAR program and our efforts to make energy efficiency a fundamental part of doing business."

NMG has created its own energy efficiency trademark, SMART SAVER™, which it uses to identify the most innovative energy efficient and energy star qualified electronics and appliances, on consumer promotional materials and electronic and print advertisements of merchandise that is ENERGY STAR qualified. This highlights which products are most energy efficient and allows consumers to easily make an environmentally conscious choice when they are ready to buy.

Nationwide also sees this as an opportunity for members to educate customers on the importance of energy efficient products. NMG member dealers are able to give customers more attention and once informed, many customers do decide to buy ENERGY STAR qualified appliances. Several of Nationwide's members have been individually recognized for their ENERGY STAR marketing efforts including Western Appliance of San Jose, CA who was recently recognized by the National ENERGY STAR team and the state of California for their innovative marketing of ENERGY STAR qualified products.

| continued on page 26 |



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There are only a few brands in the world that have sustained their vision, traditions and quality for more than a century. Fewer still that can claim consistent family ownership and international brand name integrity. And only one that is recognized for creating the world's most innovative appliances. Founded in 1899 with a single promise of Immer Besser, a German phrase meaning Forever Better, Miele has dynamically grown to become the world's largest family-owned and operated appliance company with over 15,000 employees in 39 countries.

As a premium appliance brand represented on all five continents, Miele is steadfastly committed to the highest quality, performance and environmental standards. The company's innovative heritage, state-of-the-art design and engineering aesthetic have inspired comparison to other German brands synonymous with innovation: Mercedes-Benz and BMW.

Miele's range of exceptional consumer appliances includes: vacuum cleaners; laundry systems; rotary irons; dishwashers; built-in convection, speed and steam ovens; cooktops; ventilation hoods; and coffee systems. The domestic appliance product assortment will expand in the second quarter of 2008 to include refrigeration and wine storage units specifically designed to exceed the performance, design and durability expectations of the American consumer. In addition, Miele Professional offers commercial cleaning equipment such as laboratory glassware washers, industrial parts cleaning systems, dental disinfectors and commercial wet cleaning systems.

For more information, consumers and design professionals can call 800.843.7231, log on at miele.com or visit one of Miele's modern product showrooms in Beverly Hills, CA; Boca Raton, FL; Chicago, IL; Dallas, TX; Princeton, NJ; New York, NY; Wellesley, MA; San Francisco, CA; and Seattle, WA.

MIELE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Miele has a long history of environmental leadership. Every detail is considered from the production process and shipping, to household use and to the appliance's ultimate disposal. Miele's production facilities operate to strict DIN EN ISO 14001 environmental performance standards and Miele recently signed the CECED code of conduct to support human rights and environmental protection globally.

In operation, Miele constantly strives to make every product respect our natural resources. As an example, since 1990 Miele has reduced water consumption by 42.4% and electricity by 29.2% in domestic washing machines. The same environmental ingenuity has been

applied to domestic dishwashers where in the last 15 years water consumption has been reduced by 50.3% and energy use cut by 33.8%. Additionally, from 1990-2002 advancements in Miele oven technology led to a 29% reduction in energy consumption. Miele's active leadership role in global organizations like the International

Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), Energy Star® (the partnership program backed by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Department of Energy), the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM) and others demonstrate the company's serious position regarding the protection of our global environment.

An unprecedented quality pledge guides Miele to produce appliances that are designed to last for 20 years of continuous use – far longer than the average. And their high metal content and clearly marked plastic components are ready for recycling once the product's useful life is complete – reducing landfill waste and conserving raw materials for future generations.



For further information, please visit mielepressroom.com and download the Miele Sustainability Report.



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Miele

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BERTAZZONI UNVEILS NEW SUPER-WIDE 48" PROFESSIONAL SERIES GAS RANGE

STAINLESS STEEL RANGE OFFERS UNCOMPROMISING STATEMENT OF POWER AND PRESTIGE FOR ANY KITCHEN

Bertazzoni, the leading Italian manufacturer of precision-engineered kitchen lifestyle products, announces the availability of the 48-inch Professional Series model through its North American distribution channels. The model expands the line of freestanding designer pro ranges, built-in cook tops, ventilation hoods and design-coordinated accessories – already in high demand for their technologically-advanced engineering and streamlined elegance.

“Bertazzoni’s new 48-inch stainless steel Professional Series was created to uniquely combine Italian design with the generous layout of today’s kitchen,” said Paolo Bertazzoni, the company’s fifth generation president. “By incorporating all of the advanced technology and sophisticated engineering upon which Bertazzoni has built its legacy, the 48-inch Professional Series adds performance, elegance and scale to the stylish home.”

THE 48" PROFESSIONAL SERIES ADDS SCALE AND FUNCTION TO LARGER KITCHENS



The sleek 48-inch Professional Series comes complete with a main oven, featuring convection and a practical auxiliary oven with a special low temperature setting, six gas burners and a built-in electric griddle. Highlighted with Bertazzoni’s exclusive triple-ring burner, which features separately controlled flames based on a new

high-efficiency technology that generates up to 15,000 Btu; and a dedicated simmer burner for the utmost in delicate cooking—the 48-inch Professional Series offers great power and flexibility suitable for any modern kitchen.

BERTAZZONI’S 48-INCH PROFESSIONAL SERIES MODEL ALSO FEATURES:

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| *continued on page 22* |

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PERLICK SHOWCASES A FULLY-INTEGRATED LOOK AT K/BIS

MILWAUKEE, Wisc. — Staying in tune to what consumers are looking for in kitchen design, Perlick will announce the relaunch of its current Signature Series under counter refrigeration products at the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show in Chicago. Showcasing a sleek, fully integrated design, the entire Signature Series line now features full-height doors, zero-clearance hinging and an interior digital display, along with the many Perlick Exclusives consumers have come to know and love.

The models of the Perlick Signature Series— including Freezers and Refrigerators (with doors or drawers), Beverage Centers, Wine Reserves and Beer dispensers — offer an array of new features and functionality to aid both consumers and designers who demand a seamless look in their design. Each model features an industry exclusive Variable Speed Compressor and interior and exterior commercial-grade stainless steel, not plastic. The full-height door, graced by Perlick's distinctive handle, is available in solid stainless steel, insulated glass, or with a wood overlay to perfectly match surrounding cabinetry.

"We've spent a lot of time working with our distributors and designers, listening to their feedback and working hard to implement their requests into the new Signature Series", explains Jeff Wimberly, Director of Sales and Marketing – Perlick Residential Products. The new features and enhancements of the Signature Series is above and beyond what is currently on the market— consumers can now have everything they ever wanted in an under counter refrigeration product and seamless blend that into their kitchen design.

ABOUT PERLICK

Celebrating 90 years of excellence, Perlick is the leader in commercial bar and beverage refrigeration and dispensing equipment. The Perlick brand can be found in the finest restaurants, bars, stadiums, hotels and resorts in the world and is now available for those who want the ultimate entertainment suite for the home. The Perlick product line includes both indoor and outdoor under counter refrigerators, wine reserves, freezers, freezer and refrigerated drawers, clear ice makers and beer dispensers as well as countertop blender stations, cocktail centers and liquor displays. For more information about the Perlick product line, contact Perlick at (800) 558-5592 or visit www.perlick.com. **RO**



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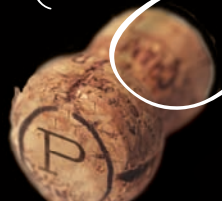
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American Range has again shattered professional cooking paradigms with the creation of the Hybrid Range™. The Hybrid Range™ an industry's first combines gas and induction cooking technology with the innovative Step-Up Range® burner configuration in a single, free-standing range. Available in 24 inch, 30 inch and 36 inch sizes the Hybrid Range™ provides commercial grade fire-power and efficiency with ergonomic functionality.

SAUTÉ INDUCTION 'FRONT' BURNERS / SEALED GAS 'ELEVATED REAR' BURNERS

High heat is required when sautéing or pan-frying. American Range has equipped the Hybrid Range™ with high-efficiency induction front burners (36" 3,000 watts, 2,800 watts and 1,800 watts) and a combination of 13,000 BTU to 9,000 BTU rear sealed burners. Induction provides safe, efficient and instantaneous heat to a sauté pan. Therein, the home chef can focus their attention on the front burners, when sautéing, while still having unrestricted access to rear gas burners for finishing or simmering. All of the sealed gas burners simmer at 140°F. We have designed the front induction burner grates to accommodate 16" diameter sauté pans or stock pots. Now, the home chef has flexibility to utilize multiple tools and cooking heat options over an expansive cooking surface.

STEP-UP RANGE® DESIGN

Most French and Italian cuisine restaurants utilize Sauté / Step-up ranges given the heavy use of sauté pans to support à la carte entrées. A Sauté / Step-up range with its elevated rear burners affords the chef easy access to sauté pans placed on the rear burners. Therein, pan handles can be positioned in same direction allowing the respective chef to orchestrate multiple entrées, sauces, mirepoix and/or mise en place.

INNOVECTION® CONVECTION OVEN TECHNOLOGY

Even, turbulent heat distribution is essential when baking, roasting, and dehydrating food. The American Range patented Innovention® Convection Oven Technology utilizes dual convection motors and louvered side panels to enhance uniform heat distribution throughout the large oven cavity. The strategic placement of the dual Innovention® convection motors, blended with the innovative louvered side panel design ensures consistent heat distribution; even when challenged with cooking the largest turkey, ham or roast. Additional value-added features include:



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- Faster pre-heat time versus standard convection

With consistent air temperature circulating inside the oven, the entire cooking cavity heats quicker, cutting baking/searing/roasting time by as much as 25 percent. The results are remarkable!

| continued on page 40 |



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ROTH RECEIVES BEST AWARD

HARTFORD, WI, March 5, 2008 – Roth Distributing, a leading distributor in the luxury appliance market with six showrooms across the Midwestern and Northwestern United States, was recently recognized for its accomplishments in 2007 with Best®, the Italian-influenced, high-end range hood line. In addition to being treated to an awards dinner, the sales team at Roth Distributing received a beautiful lead crystal “fountain and sphere” award, designed by Italian artist Mario Cioni to reflect the elegance and sophistication of the Best line. Broan-NuTone LLC and Roth Distributing representatives are pictured below. **RO**



Pictured left to right: Scott Kirkendall, vice president, retail sales, Broan-NuTone LLC; John Thielen, president, Roth Distributing; Randy Spurlock, vice president, sales & marketing, Roth Distributing; and Steve Swenerton, senior vice president, marketing & retail sales, Broan-NuTone LLC.

WESTYE EAST AWARDED

HARTFORD, WI., March 6, 2008 – The Westye Group East, Roslyn Heights, N.Y., the Best® distributor for Metro New York, was recently recognized for its efforts with the Italian-influenced, high-end range hood line in 2007. In addition to being treated to an awards dinner, the sales team at Westye also received a beautiful lead crystal “fountain and sphere” award designed by Italian artist Mario Cioni to reflect the elegance and sophistication of the Best line. Broan-NuTone LLC and Westye Group East representatives are pictured below. **RO**



Pictured left to right: Peter Cort, field sales manager, Westye Group East; Fred Rogers, director of retail sales, Broan-NuTone LLC; Jeff Moore, executive vice president, Westye Group East; Kevin McGauley, eastern regional manager, Broan-NuTone LLC; and Frank Sorrentino, director of builder sales, Westye Group East.

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ASSOCIATION NOTES

NILES' FRANK STERNS TO SERVE ON PARA BOARD

PROMINENT INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE TO HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF CONSUMER ELECTRONICS RETAILING

MIAMI, FLORIDA—Niles Audio Corporation, The First Name in Custom Installation, today announced that Frank Sterns, the company's president, has been selected to serve on the Professional Audio/Video Retailers Association (PARA) board. PARA is a membership division of the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) and represents over 250 professional audio, video, home theater and custom electronics specialty dealers and installers. Members share a common interest in continuing education, maintaining competitiveness, enhancing the marketplace and improving financial performance. Sterns' vast experience in marketing, sales and product development, along with his dedication to mentoring colleagues and dealers will reinforce PARA's status as a vitally important resource for its members. Throughout his 24-year career, Sterns has been an active figure in the consumer electronics and custom installation industries, and his participation in PARA reinforces his commitment to these disciplines.

"I look forward to working with PARA this year and hope to contribute to the growth of our industry," said Sterns. "PARA's focus on education and information sharing is an invaluable resource for dealers and installers. I have always supported the effort to develop the skill sets of our industry's dealers as a way to grow our industry."

PARA helps members enhance their business skills through continued education and fosters professional relationships with their suppliers in the manufacturing community. PARA has also been instrumental in raising awareness of the audio-video dealer channel throughout the consumer electronics industry and among consumers. The organization actively sponsors market research initiatives that address the specific needs of the specialty dealer channel community and produces an annual management conference that brings education and networking to dealers and vendor partners. PARA's initiatives range from helping retailers looking to transition into audio and video sales, assisting dealers wanting to grow their business and to supporting those building a showroom-based business. **RO**

BERTAZZONI | *continued from page 14* |

- Settings include traditional operation for gas cooking or a convection oven
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NARI ANNOUNCES NATIONAL WINNERS OF THE 2008 COTY AWARDS AND 2008 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

DES PLAINES, IL., March 17, 2008—The 2007 Evening of Excellence™ capped a weeklong event for the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) that also included its Spring Board of Directors Meeting, held at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel in St. Petersburg, Florida, March 13-15, 2008.

The Evening of Excellence™, culminating with the Contractor of the Year (COTY) Awards ceremony, is commonly regarded as the premier event of the year throughout the remodeling industry. Held Saturday, March 15, 2008, the event was attended by more than 300 of the industry's elite and was sponsored by the following NARI national member companies: Platinum Sponsors—Ferguson Enterprises Inc., Stock Building Supply, Huntwood Industries and The Home Depot; Gold Sponsors—GE Money, Lowe's and Pella Corporation; Pewter Sponsors—Moen and 20-20 Technologies; Bronze Sponsor—Hanley-Wood Remodeling Magazine; Contributing Sponsor—Qualified Remodeler.

Contractors from seven regions around the country nationwide vie for the awards on an annual basis. Most projects submitted

for judging were an improvement or an addition to an existing structure, with the exception of one category, "Residential Exterior Specialty." Otherwise, new construction projects were not eligible. In addition, competing projects were completed between July 1 of 2006 and November 30 of 2007 and were not submitted in prior NARI National contests. An impartial panel of judges, who are experts within the industry and associated fields, selected winners based on each entrant's "before and after" photography and project description. Judging was based on problem solving, functionality, aesthetics, craftsmanship, innovation, degree of difficulty and entry presentation.

Twenty-seven national COTY winners were named at this year's ceremony. To be considered, a company must be a NARI member in good standing. NARI members represent a select group from the approximately 800,000 companies and individuals in the U.S. identifying themselves as professional remodelers.

The complete list of national COTY award winners for 2008 is as follows:

RESIDENTIAL KITCHEN UNDER \$30,000

Region V South Central
Natalie Howe Design
Austin, Texas

RESIDENTIAL KITCHEN \$30,000 TO \$60,000

Region I Northeast
**Double D
Contractors, Inc.**
Hicksville, N.Y.

RESIDENTIAL KITCHEN \$60,001 TO \$100,000

Region III North Central
Silent Rivers, Inc.
Clive, Iowa

RESIDENTIAL KITCHEN OVER \$100,000

Region VI Northwest
**Olsen Homes &
Renovations, LLC**
Keizer, Ore.

RESIDENTIAL BATH UNDER \$30,000

Region III North Central
**E. Miller and
Associates, Inc.**
Cedarburg, Wis.

RESIDENTIAL BATH \$30,000 TO \$60,000

Region III North Central
New Spaces
Burnsville, Minn.

RESIDENTIAL BATH OVER \$60,000

Region V South Central
Capital Improvements
Allen, Texas

RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR \$100,000 AND UNDER

Region I Northeast
**Newbridge
Construction Co.**
Southborough, Mass.

RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR OVER \$100,000

Region III North Central
The Design Studio
Sioux Falls, S.D.

RESIDENTIAL INTERIOR SPECIALTY

Region II Southeast
**Handcrafted
Homes, Inc.**
Rosewell, Ga.



RESIDENTIAL ADDITION UNDER \$100,000

Region II Southeast
**American Design and
Build Ltd., Bel Air, Md.**

RESIDENTIAL ADDITION \$100,000 TO \$250,000

Region VII Southwest
Artisan Remodeling, Inc.
Granite Bay, Calif.

RESIDENTIAL ADDITION OVER \$250,000

Region II Southeast
Home Rebuilders, Inc.
Atlanta, Ga.

RESIDENTIAL EXTERIOR UNDER \$100,000

Region II Southeast
**Knight Construction
Design, Inc.**
Chanhasen, Minn.

RESIDENTIAL EXTERIOR \$100,000 AND OVER

Region II Southeast
Gallick Corp.
Sterling, Va.

RESIDENTIAL EXTERIOR SPECIALTY

Region IV East Central
**Neal's Design and
Remodel**
Cincinnati, Ohio

ENTIRE HOUSE UNDER \$250,000

Region I Northwest
**Neil Kelly
Design/Build
Remodeling**
Portland, Ore.

ENTIRE HOUSE \$250,000 TO \$500,000

Region II Southeast
TriplePoint

Construction, LLC

Gulfport, Fla.

ENTIRE HOUSE \$500,001 TO \$1,000,000

Region III North Central
**B & E General
Contractors, Inc.**
Glendale, Wis.

ENTIRE HOUSE OVER \$1,000,000

Region II Southeast
Glass Construction, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

RESIDENTIAL HISTORICAL RENOVATION/ RESTORATION

Region I Northeast
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with team member
Wes Carver Electrical
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RESIDENTIAL UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Region II Southeast
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COMMERCIAL INTERIOR

Region III North Central
The Design Studio
Sioux Falls, S.D.

COMMERCIAL EXTERIOR

Region IV East Central
**Murphy Home
Improvement**
Cincinnati, Ohio

COMMERCIAL SPECIALTY

Region VII Southwest
Teevan Restoration
San Francisco, Calif.

HOME THEATER & MEDIA ROOMS UNDER \$150,000

Region I Northeast
Media Rooms, Inc.
West Chester, Pa.

HOME THEATER & MEDIA ROOMS \$150,000 AND OVER

Region I Northeast
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Quakertown, Pa.

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THE NKBA APPROVES NEW POSITIONING STATEMENT ON TITLE AND PRACTICE ACTS

HACKETTSTOWN, NJ (March 18, 2008)—The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) is pleased to announce the approval of a new positioning statement on interior design licensing legislation. As the leading trade and professional organization in the kitchen and bath industry, the NKBA is committed to educating members and the public at large of the importance of retaining a professional designer's services when contemplating kitchen and/or bath projects.

Title Acts regulate the use of titles, such as Certified Interior Designer. This legislation does not prohibit the actual practice of interior design; it restricts the use of regulated titles. Practice Acts prohibit any work defined as interior design unless the person is licensed.

The NKBA has formally adopted a position to oppose Title and/or Practice Acts in general and specifically for the following reasons:

- Interior design Title and Practice Act legislation is not being advocated by the public through consumer advocacy groups, the offices of attorneys general or divisions of consumer affairs, but rather by a small segment of the interior design community in an effort to limit who may perform design services in competition with them.
- There has been no demonstration of harm to the "public health, safety or welfare" to warrant increased governmental regulation of a profession which has operated without such interference for many years. Since 1988, six state agencies have examined the need for titling and/or licensing laws for interior designers; all found no benefit to the public, concluding that consumers already possessed the means to make informed decisions about interior designers and their services.
- Existing state and local laws and codes already afford the

consumer with protection against unqualified persons performing construction and remodeling in the home. Building inspectors, code enforcement officials, licensed electricians, licensed plumbers and others all have a role in verifying that work performed by contractors meets the code and safety requirements enacted to protect the public.

- The NKBA believes that the consumer should be given a choice when retaining the services of a design professional. NKBA members wish to compete on the merits of their work and abilities through their portfolios, references, design competitions, certification and continuing education. The Association does not support efforts to limit freedom of choice among consumers by dictating whom they can and cannot hire to perform design work, with an increased cost to the consumer, which is always the result when competition is restricted.
- Regulatory enforcement of a new law does not always accurately reflect the intent of the law. Agencies charged with creating and administering the rules and procedures to approve applicants for licensure often have no state oversight and frequently interpret their requirements in the most restrictive way imaginable in an effort to limit those who may perform interior design services and compete for their work. The result is costly litigation and an uncertain outcome.

The NKBA has partnered with various other trade and professional organizations such as the American Institute of Architects, the Interior Design Society and retail associations to oppose interior design licensing throughout the country. For more information, please visit www.capwiz.com/nkba or contact Edward S. Nagorsky, NKBA General Counsel and Director of Legislative Affairs, at (800) THE-NKBA x4863. **RO**

NATIONWIDE AWARDED | *continued from page 10* |

This November, the EPA will increase ENERGY STAR qualifications and standards for televisions. Models that meet the new ENERGY STAR qualifications will use up to 30% less energy than those without an ENERGY STAR label. Nationwide will continue to support these new initiatives. NMG views their partnership with ENERGY STAR as a win-win situation for manufacturing vendors, member dealers,

consumers and the environment.

Nationwide Marketing Group has a combined \$11 billion in annual sales with 2,800 members and more than 7,500 storefronts in the United State. NMG offers a unique portfolio of services designed to support its members and strengthen their position in the marketplace. Visit www.nationwidegroup.org to learn more. **RO**

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SHOW PREVIEW

PCBC 2008

PCBC 2008 UNVEILS CONFERENCE PROGRAM AND SPEAKERS

PROMINENT EXPERTS TO ADDRESS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN HOMEBUILDING MARKET

PCBC, the largest West Coast builders' tradeshow, today announced its preliminary conference program, which already includes more than 45 educational programs and keynotes led by inspiring thought-leaders and prominent industry experts.

"We have a history of bringing in great speakers who have arrived or are on the cusp of national and global prominence. This year's PCBC demonstrates our commitment to offering speakers and solutions focused on helping homebuilders succeed despite today's tough market conditions and help prepare to capitalize on tomorrow's opportunities when the upswing arrives," said Kent Aden, a San Diego-area developer and this year's PCBC Chair. "PCBC brings together the best thinking, creativity and innovation in the industry to benefit our exhibitors and the homebuilding community."

PCBC PROGRAM SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The main conference programs are broken into six areas, including Business Strategy and Leadership; Construction and Operations; Product and Neighborhood Design; Green Building; Sales and Marketing; and Land Acquisition, Development and Entitlement. For a complete list of conference programs, visit: <http://www.pcbc.com/main.aspx?websiteid=07PCBC&mainsectionid=2&pageid=357>.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

As in the past, PCBC this year will feature a distinguished group of diverse guest speakers, including:

Carly Fiorina, former chairman and CEO of Hewlett-Packard, strategic advisor to government, business and nonprofit organizations and author of the international bestselling memoir, *Tough Choices*, will talk about how she repeatedly defied the odds and blazed new trails, while doubling revenue and achieving the highest rate of innovation in company history.

Todd Buchholz, former White House director of economic policy, former managing director of the Tiger hedge fund, and award-winning economics teacher at Harvard University, will share his business strategy outlook based on the current global economy.

Malcolm Gladwell, named one of the 100 Most Influential People by Time Magazine and author of two New York Times bestsellers, has a gift for interpreting groundbreaking research and applying it to business in a way that prompts a change in perspective.

Gary Hamel, hailed by The Economist as "the world's reigning strategy guru," will reveal how unconventional management practices generate breakthrough results, and describe the steps companies can take to implement these principles.

J. Walker Smith, president of Yankelovich, a leading research firm,

| *continued on page 46* |

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PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT

METALLO ARTS TO UNVEIL ULTRA-CUSTOM PRODUCTS BEYOND BELIEF AT K/BIS 2008

GLENVILLE, PA: January 28, 2008—Metallo Arts, now one year old and exceeding all expectations, will be debuting several new designs of our classic range hoods as well as quite a few of our fine art-driven works of art at the 2008 Kitchen and Bath Industry Show (K/BIS). Metallo Arts first introduced its product line at K/BIS 2007, where we showed the appliance industry that true customization can be achieved in a production scale, offering online design tools with over 2.5 million options before charging for custom work.

Metallo Arts was founded in 2006 as the collaboration of entrepreneur Sheldon Gruber and fine artist Christopher Plummer. Successful businessmen in their own rights, they combine years of business experience with an artistic approach to range hood design to offer a product unlike any other. We are unique in the field that we are truly a company of artists, bringing our diverse artistic backgrounds to bear on every project we take on.

More works of art than kitchen appliances, our high concept range hoods are produced using ornamental

pressed metal that is hand painted in our classic finishes. As a company that stands behind its products, we offer a lifetime guarantee on all of our workmanship. We initially anticipated sales of 300 units per year, and we are now looking at completing well over 1200 range hoods and placement in over 200 kitchen design showrooms.

We will be debuting several new hood styles at K/BIS, including two of the most expensive production range hoods ever manufactured: a hood inspired by Andy Warhol's Pop Art Campbells soup can series, and a hood taken directly from the '57 Chevy Bel Air. We will also be showing our new Kitchens by Metallo line of cabinetry and appliances, which will hit the market by the end of 2008.

Proud of our achievements, we are looking to the future and plan to show the industry how artistic inspiration, design excellence, and client satisfaction can build a company.

Visit our K/BIS booth, number N8758, and be amazed! **RO**



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2008 APPLIANCE BOOTH GUIDE

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S3648 S3647 S3642

S3549 S3547 S3544 S3542
S3449 S3447 S3444 S3442

S3349 S3347 S3342
S3249 S3247 S3244 S3242

S3148 S3144
S3147 S3145 S3142
S3047 S3044 S3042

CHINA PAVILION

S2809 S2802
S2609 S2605 S2602
S2409 S2405 S2402

CHINA PAVILION

S1723 S1717
S1523 S1517
S1323 S1317
S1123 S1117

FOOD COURT

SFC100



LAKESIDE HALL

Airking L11029
Kuppersbusch L11519

SOUTH HALL

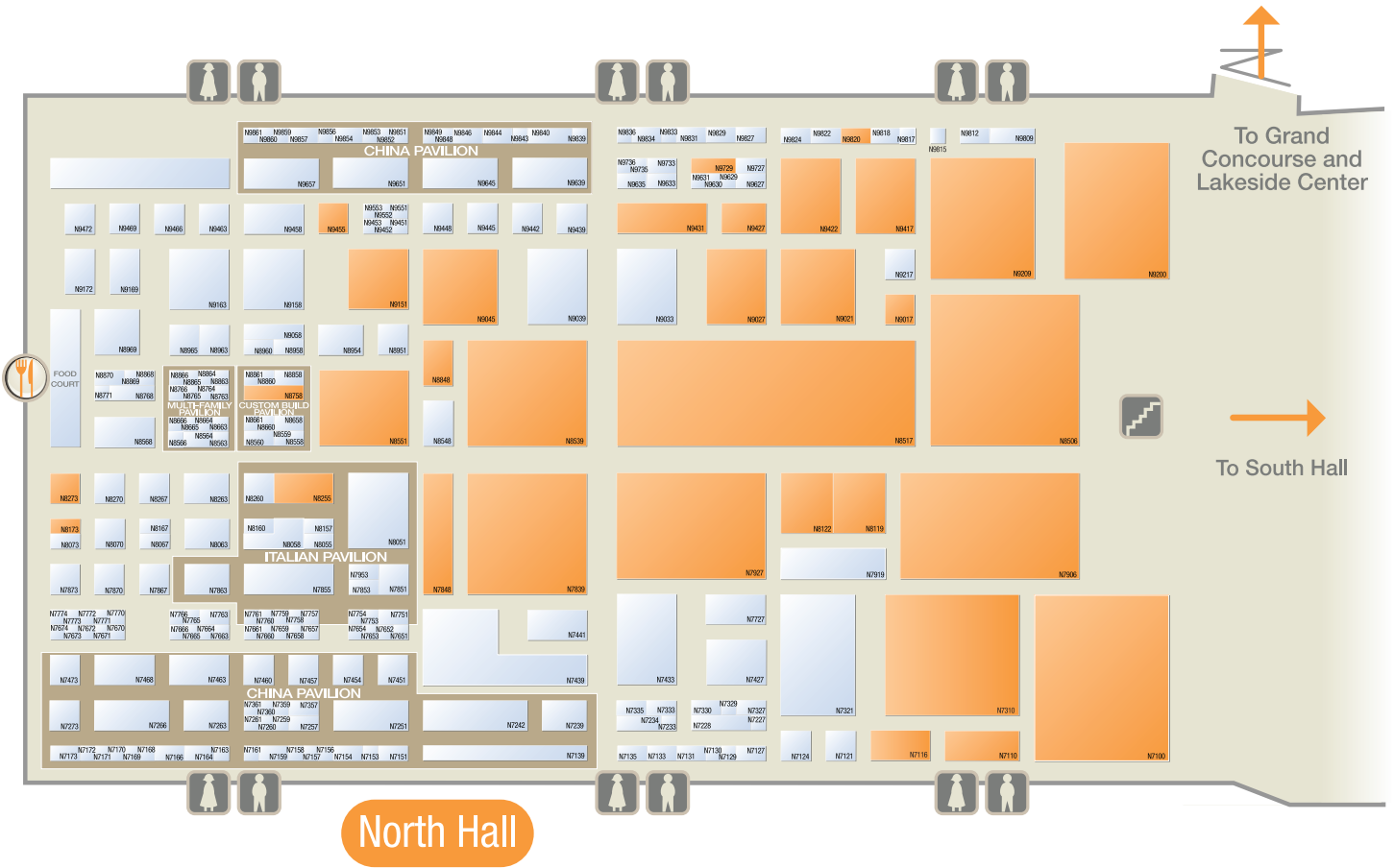
Capitol Cooking S2079
Everpure S2121
Frigo S2193
Marvel/Northland S2356
Dacor S2581
Scotsman Ice Systems S2879
Atlantis Outdoor Cabinetry S3642
Nkba S4058
Viking S4082
Windcrest S4478
Frigidaire/Electrolux S4860
Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet S4934
Ventahood S6064
Uline S6053
American Range S6170

NORTH HALL

GE Consumer N7100
Avanti Products N7110
Fisher & Paykel N7310
Haier America N7839
Smeg USA N7848
Thermador/Bosch/
Gaggenau/Siemans N7906
Broan/Best N7927
La Cornue/Purcell Murray N8119
Bertazzoni N8122
Evo N8173
Fratelli-Onofri N8255
Lynx Professional Grills N8273
Sub-Zero/Wolf N8506
LG Electronics N8517
Turbochef N8539
Zephyr N8551

Metallo Arts N8758
Sirius Range Hoods N8848
Fivestar Professional
Cooking Equipment N9017
Asko N9021
Perlick N9027
Sharp Electronics N9045
Faber N9151
Franke N9200
Miele N9209
Liebherr N9417
Danby Products N9422
Kobe N9427
Fagor N9431
The Retail Observer N9455
Woodstone N9729
Brew Express By Lance Larkin N9820

Pull Here to Remove



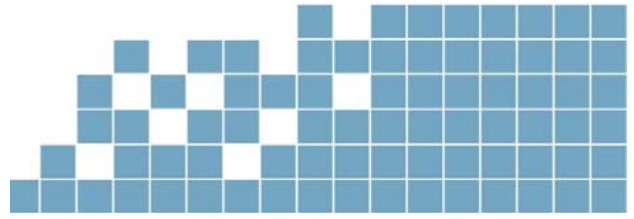
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PRIMETIME! BY NATIONWIDE CONTINUES TO BREAK ATTENDANCE RECORDS

On March 2-5, 2008 over 3,500 people attended PrimeTime! at the Hilton Anatole Hotel in Dallas, Texas. While other industry organizations such as CES and Home Builder Show were struggling to meet attendance quotas, Nationwide PrimeTime!, a vendor exhibition and buying show for member dealers and vendors of appliance, electronics and furniture, increased their attendance by 17 % from last year's event.

Speakers Dr. Nido R. Qubein opened the PrimeTime! Kickoff on Sunday night with a motivational speech. Dr. Qubein, president of High Point University, spoke about the importance of thinking out of the box in today's business climate. Inspirational painter, Michael Israel, astounded the audience with his interpretation of the statue of liberty, a New York firefighter and a special painting of the Nationwide Marketing Group logo. By the end of the night, the audience was on their feet, some were in tears and many ready to start taking advantage of what PrimeTime! had to offer.

The next morning, over 1,800 member dealers participated in 12 on-site training courses through PrimeTime! University. Time is Money and Explode Your Sales were two of the courses offered at the event. Other members attended group meetings and lectures by well-known industry veterans such as Bud Gates, Master Franchiser for Easy Home. Members also took advantage of PrimeTime! Cash Back Now exclusive show savings. Participating vendors offered millions of dollars off merchandise purchased on the exhibition floor and members received checks totaling their savings at the event.

New technology and partnerships were introduced and used at PrimeTime! For the first time, CONTACT PLUS chips, a new contact management and lead retrieval program, were placed on nametags worn by members and vendors during the conference to count attendance.

Nationwide announced the addition of Samsung Electronics to its vendor partners. "We are very pleased to

welcome Samsung Electronics, the number one ranked brand in LCDs, to the large assortment of electronics brands Nationwide Members have access to," says Robert Weisner, Executive Vice President of Merchandising and Member Services. Now members have access to over 40 fulfillment warehouses with a 48 hour delivery time guarantee on power brands such as Toshiba, LG, Mitsubishi, Pioneer, Hitachi, Sharp, JVC, RCA, Samsung and Panasonic Pro. Hitachi displayed their 1.5" Ultra Thin HDTV on the showroom floor. While, the Nationwide Design Center showcased their Video Kiosk, a multipurpose display with Virtual Greeter. According to Albert Turick of Nationwide Design Center, in the near future innovations in MemberNet TV will soon make it possible to run customized commercials and messages on the Video Kiosks in every department within our 8,000 storefronts.

Nationwide hosted a member and vendor dinner at the famous Gilley's Dallas. Many enjoyed networking over a Texas style BBQ, bull riding and two stepping on the dance floor. At the PrimeTime! closing reception, prizes were given away including a 2008 Ford F-150 truck.

The next PrimeTime! will be held at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas on August 17-20, 2008. Visit www.nationwide-group.org to learn more.

ABOUT NATIONWIDE MARKETING GROUP

Nationwide Marketing Group (NMG), headquartered in Winston-Salem, NC, is the nation's largest buying and marketing organization for independent appliance, electronics, and furniture dealers. Larger than all competing groups combined, NMG has approximately 2,800 members throughout the United States—independent dealers with more than 8,000 storefronts and a combined \$11 billion in annual sales. Nationwide Marketing Group, the parent organization of RentDirect-Nationwide and Specialty Electronics-Nationwide, offers a unique portfolio of services designed to support its members and strengthen their position in the marketplace. **RO**



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NATIONAL KITCHEN & BATH ASSOCIATION SEES BRIGHT FORECAST FOR MEMBERSHIP GROWTH AND REMODELING

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE USHERS IN MANAGEMENT CHANGE AT ASSOCIATION'S HEADQUARTERS

HACKETTSTOWN, N.J. (March 11, 2008)—Despite a volatile economy, the nation's largest professional association focused exclusively on kitchens and bathrooms concluded its annual planning meeting in Albuquerque, N.M. predicting a brighter outlook than expected for 2008.

"I am very pleased to announce that we are continuing to enjoy steady growth in membership this year," said Sara Ann Busby, 2008 President of the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA). "An increase in membership is a positive indicator of the NKBA's strength in the professional education and other benefits we offer to our more than 41,000 members."

Ms. Busby noted that recently released findings of a study of more than 3,000 homeowners and industry professionals conducted by Kitchen + Bath Business (K+BB) magazine point to modest growth in kitchen and bath remodeling in 2008. "Although new housing starts are predicted to be flat at best, in some areas of the country, we expect to see some growth," said Ms. Busby. "The study shows while the overall outlook is flat, certain geographic pockets are likely to see some expansion in new construction."

The annual planning meeting included NKBA member volunteers from around the country. Ms. Busby said the tone they expressed was upbeat and optimistic. "It was truly gratifying to hear favorable reports about the number of new remodeling

projects in particular," she said. "I was pleased to hear the volunteers' predictions of growth and their positive outlook for the second and third quarters."

Anticipation about the NKBA's 2008 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show & Conference (K/BIS®) is continuing to mount as the April 10 - 13 event at Chicago's McCormick Place draws near. Attendee registrations are continuing at the same pace as they have for the past two years. Also, more than 900 exhibitors are scheduled to participate in the world's largest annual event for professionals in the kitchen and bath industry.

To continue to foster expansion of the Association, Michael P. Kelly, the NKBA's Chief Executive Officer, has stepped down. "We are grateful for Mike Kelly's contributions to the NKBA and we wish him the best of success in the future," said Ms. Busby. She noted that the Executive Committee is actively searching for a qualified replacement for Mr. Kelly. She said the Association does not anticipate further management changes at this time.

Readers interested in learning more about the National Kitchen & Bath Association are encouraged to visit www.nkba.org.

For complete descriptions of events and speakers at the 2008 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show & Conference held at Chicago's McCormick Place from April 10-13, please visit www.kbis.com. **RO**

CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN TO ADDRESS K/BIS® ATTENDEES AS OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The National Kitchen & Bath Association is proud to announce Christine Todd Whitman as the Opening Keynote speaker for the 2008 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show & Conference. Whitman, who has a strong environmental background, will address attendees regarding sustainability and the effects it has on the kitchen and bath, housing and shelter industries in a global community. She'll also touch on the challenges she faced to help create such an important movement both politically and economically.

Christine Todd Whitman was elected as New Jersey's 50th Governor in November, 1993 and was appointed by current President, George W. Bush, as Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in January, 2001. As Governor of New Jersey, Whitman developed a strong environmental record. Under her environmental

leadership, New Jersey's air became significantly cleaner.

The state's waterways, coasts and ocean waters also became significantly cleaner. Beach closings reached a record low and the state earned recognition by the Natural Resources Defense Council for instituting the most comprehensive beach monitoring system in the nation. Whitman won voter approval for a plan to break a long-standing impasse over dredging the state's ports that is both environmentally acceptable and economical. She established a new watershed management program. New Jersey now leads the nation in opening shellfish beds for harvesting.

Whitman's keynote address will be Friday, April 11th at 8:00 a.m. in Arie Crown Theater in Lakeside Center. The presentation is open to all K/BIS attendees. **RO**

Kitchen designed by
Marcy Adler Wells, CKD
NKBA Design Competition Winner

Erik Nelson




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Great talent is recognized and remembered because it has left its mark. At the National Kitchen & Bath Association, we bring our members the opportunity to leave their own mark. **Our education courses are the industry's gold-standard** and cover topics from design to business management, all tailored to help you become a name in your own time. Contact us today for more information on course offerings and schedules.



www.nkba.org 800-THE-NKBA

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ALMO EXPANDS SPECIALTY APPLIANCE DIVISION WITH NEW WEST COAST DISTRIBUTION CENTER

NEW LOS ANGELES AREA LUXURY APPLIANCE DISTRIBUTION CENTER INCREASES ALMO'S SERVICE LEVEL IN THE SOUTHWEST UNITED STATES

Philadelphia, PA, March 13, 2008—America's leading independent appliance & electronics distributor today announced the opening of a new West Coast Distribution Center focused solely on the luxury appliance brands offered by the company's specialty appliance division. Located in the Los Angeles area, this new facility will support the Liebherr product line throughout the Southwest region.

"We continue to see tremendous success and growth in the luxury appliance market with Liebherr which has been our flagship luxury appliance line. Liebherr's European styling and green technology are in demand for the U.S. gourmet kitchen," stated Warren Chaiken, Almo President and COO. "With the recent addition of the 36" model and increased market demand, this new distribution center will ensure that we maintain our service standards throughout the Southwest region."

Liebherr recently introduced a 36" French door refrigerator designed specifically to fit standard U.S. kitchen dimensions. Additional 36" models will be debuted at KBIS in Chicago, April 11-13th at McCormick Place Convention Center. See the Liebherr products by visiting booth #N9417. **RO**

INNOVATIVE DESIGN | *continued from page 18* |

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At 5.6 cu ft, American Range's oven cavity is the largest currently available in its respective class. The technology and design is taken from our commercial baking ovens, which are currently utilized in acclaimed kitchens as Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, Fraiche, Los Angeles, Fiamma NYC and Grayz NYC. The vast oven cavity design is able to accommodate (2) 40-pound turkeys at once. The amazingly large oven cavity will make quick work of the largest dinner party entrées.

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For more information, visit www.americanrange.com or contact the following American Range representative:

Christopher Thompson—Vice President and General Manager

cthompson@americanrange.com / Cell # 714- 414-6789 / Fax # 818- 897-1670 **RO**



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Unique LED light columns and LED drawer lights illuminate 20 cubic feet of storage capacity. The dual refrigeration system, with two separate variable speed compressors, provides superior and consistent cooling in the most energy efficient manner possible. And the eloquent French doors coupled with double freezer drawers make it a kitchen showpiece.



HC 2062 fully integrated model shown.

Visit us at K/BIS – Booth N9417
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LIEBHERR

THE WESTYE GROUP MIDWEST REVEALS 2007/2008 KITCHEN DESIGN CONTEST REGIONAL WINNERS

AREA'S TOP DESIGNERS HONORED AT LOCAL EVENT

GLENDALE HEIGHTS, Ill. (February 20, 2008) – The Westye Group-Midwest, LLC. recently announced regional winners of the prestigious Sub-Zero/Wolf 2007/2008 Kitchen Design Contest. Every two years, Sub-Zero Freezer Company, the leading manufacturer of residential refrigeration, and Wolf Appliance Company, a leading manufacturer of professional cooking instruments, invite interior designers, architects, builders, and specifiers to showcase their best work in and outside the home using these luxury appliances.

The announcement took place at a celebration event on February 13 at The Westye Group-Midwest Living Kitchen Showroom. The evening featured a violin trio who greeted guests as they entered, while Sub-Zero and Wolf Professional Chefs Pete Trusiak and Joel Chesebro enthralled all with their delectable cooking. A hand-carved ice sculpture and flowing chocolate fountain married the elegance of evening to honor the prestigious designers.

“We are privileged to honor such a talented group who utilize our products in their exceptional designs,” said Dan Heyn, President of the Westye Group-Midwest. “Sub-Zero and Wolf not only exceed in performance, but also as this contest demonstrates, these products offer flexibility for designers to let their talents shine.”

THE MIDWEST REGIONAL WINNERS INCLUDE:

- **James Fraerman** of Fraerman Associates Architecture
- **Jennifer Nowak** of Colleen Horner Kitchen, Bath Tile & Stone, Inc.,
- **Jean Stoffer** of Jean Stoffer Design
- **Robert Neylan** of Robert J. Neylan Architects, Ltd.,
- **Lesley Hayman Sager** of Architectural Building Arts,
- **Doug Durbin** of NuHaus

This year's Sub-Zero/Wolf Kitchen Design contest received hundreds of entries from the Midwest region (Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, and western Michigan). The contest entry is free and the rules are simple: all designs and construction needed to be completed within the timeframe of January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2007. The contest categories include: Best use of Sub-Zero and Wolf in the Kitchen, Best use of Integrated refrigeration (700 series) outside the kitchen, Best use of wine storage (400 series) in a unique location, Best use of Sub-Zero and/or Wolf in an outdoor kitchen, Best dealer showroom, Best International and Best Student category. Recognized leaders in the design community performed as judges for the contest. Each judge represented a section of the design and architecture field.

The first place winners received an all-expense-paid trip for two to the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort and Spa at Gainey Ranch for an exciting three-day celebration March 27-20, 2008, while the 2nd place winner received an undercounter wine storage unit and the 3rd place winner received a weekend for two at the Park Hyatt-Chicago gift certificate. Combined throughout each region, the contest will grant the winners more than \$110,000 worth of prizes.

| continued on page 46 |



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For more information or to become a Subzero/Wolf dealer,
contact your local distributor



ASSOCIATION NOTES



THE SEARCH FOR WORK IS AN EARLY 2008 TREND

STEVENS POINT, WI, USA—A spike in web based activity at www.narms.com is giving NARMS International evidence of exceptional post-holiday job recruitment activity. The trade association utilizes a combination of JobBank, The Recruiter and Career Connection as web tools to meet company member and non-member recruitment and individual job seeker needs in the retail services industry.

Web-search visits to NARMS' JobBank totaled some 618,670 in January, up from a solid monthly average in 2007 in excess of 266,000. For the calendar year in 2007, JobBank searches totaled 3,196,484 at the retail services recruitment activity site.

"Jobs are there and job seekers seem to be there as well," notes Dan Borschke, NARMS CEO/President. "The JobBank continues as a vital connection between companies with open field positions in the retail services industry and personnel seeking employment. January's traffic pattern at well over twice the monthly average last year continues the pattern of people seeking work during the post-holiday season."

Member companies of NARMS International invest \$80 per listing for a 30-day posting of jobs with non-member companies able to use the service at a \$150 per listing fee in NARMS JobBank.

The JobBank features field positions; while NARMS also offers a special listing of non-in store positions within the professional merchandising service industry in The Career Connection which also offers 30-day listings on a fee schedule. JobBank searches have grown ten fold since NARMS began its web-based recruiting functions in August, 2001.

"Yesterday, some 96,783 job opportunities were posted to reps registered in The Recruiter," notes Borschke. More than 140,000 rep profiles now exist at The Recruiter in a searchable database of field personnel who perform merchandising and marketing projects at retail.

NARMS member companies are further encouraged to utilize "expanded listing" opportunities that offer both recruiting and marketing features. Member participants gain unlimited search capability within The Recruiter while the marketing advantage results from direct linkage to their company website with a "bridge page" that contains a company profile and logo along with key contact information.

ABOUT NARMS

NARMS is actively involved in providing our members with quality education, research, networking, and member programs. NARMS is an association of people helping people.

Conceived in 1995 by five individuals with vision and leadership, the National Association for Merchandising Services (NARMS) was formally organized in 1996 with 40 merchandising service company (MSO) members. The association is headquartered in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Our official website, www.narms.com was launched in August 1996.

The Recruiter debuted in 2002 providing members two recruitment areas on the NARMS website; The Recruiter and the JobBank. The Recruiter is a searchable database of field reps available for work. | *continued on page 54*



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will share research and insights about what consumers are willing to pay more for in a marketplace where value is rapidly shifting and evolving.

Andrew Zolli, founder of Z + Partners, a leading think tank that helps organizations understand emerging futures, invent breakthrough ideas, position for new opportunities, and design innovations, will discuss the trends of technology, sustainability and global society that are shaping the future.

Tom Peters, credited with launching the business management industry, and best-known for co-writing the classic book, *In Search of Excellence*, will address how to solve business problems and empower decision-makers at multiple levels of a company.

For a complete list of confirmed speakers and bios, please visit: <http://www.pcbc.com/main.aspx?websiteid=07PCBC&mainsectionid=2&pageid=381>.

ABOUT PCBC

PCBC is the largest regional builders' show in the nation with attendance of nearly 30,000. Held annually at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, PCBC features an extensive display of product innovations from more than 600 of the industry's leading manufacturers and suppliers and a four-day educational conference with more than 60 keynotes, seminars and workshops in fields ranging from business strategies to marketing to product design to applied technology. PCBC 2008 will be held June 24-27 and registration is now under way. For more information, visit www.pcbc.com, or call 800-956-SHOW. 


WESTYE GROUP MIDWEST | continued from page 42 |

"All designers who use Sub-Zero and Wolf instantly become fans of our products," said Zachary Gasiorowski, Marketing Coordinator of the Westye Group-Midwest. "Since each contestant is such an enormous supporter of our brands, we wanted to return the favor by honoring everyone who participated in the contest with a special evening."

To learn more about the Sub-Zero Kitchen Design Contest, Sub-Zero refrigeration and Wolf cooking equipment, visit www.subzero.com and www.wolfappliance.com.

ABOUT THE WESTYE GROUP-MIDWEST

The Westye Group-Midwest, LLC. is the exclusive distributor of Sub-Zero, Wolf, and Best by Broan products for the following states: Illinois, Wisconsin, NW Indiana, eastern Iowa and the upper peninsula of Michigan.

The name "Westye" pays tribute to the founder of Sub-Zero Freezer Company, Westye F. Bakke. In 1943, Westye F. Bakke built the first free-standing freezer in the basement of his Madison, Wis., home. A businessman with a keen ability to anticipate post-World War II refrigeration trends, he founded Sub-Zero Freezer Company just two years later in an old two-car garage. From its modest beginnings, Sub-Zero has become what is today: the recognized leading manufacturer of premium built-in home refrigerators. For more information, visit www.thewestyegroup.com or call 630-872-5100. 



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THE DIVA 365 INDUCTION RANGE

Diva de Provence breaks new ground with the Diva 365, a revolutionary new induction range. This 36-inch stainless steel professional range is an industry first, successfully combining an all-electric convection self-cleaning oven with a five burner induction cooktop.

This new professionally-styled range features five cooking zones on the induction cooktop including an auto-expandable 11" double coil with two 6" and two 9" coils. The 11" coil is rated at 4,000W or 27,300 BTUs. The 6" coils are rated at 1200W or 8,200 BTUs and the 9" coils are rated at 3,000W or 20,500 BTUs. Each pair of 6" and 9" coils use a unique power-sharing technology which allows for a transfer of power from 100% to 50% depending on the amount of power required by the other shared coil. The "capacitive" touch controls are located at the front of the cooktop itself and not on the oven control panel.

The DIVA 365's octagonal oven cell's stylish design is a platform for efficiency, reliability, and serviceability. This 4.7 cubic foot octagonal oven cell delivers five professional sized oven rack positions capable of 28 square feet of cooking surface. That's a lot of cookies! The octagonal oven cell design is not just for style. The angled corners, flat surfaces, and beveled edges allow for a smooth air flow pattern and minimal air turbulence that's not normally generated with hard 90° wall angles.

An additional benefit and special feature of our octagonal oven cell is the newly designed and developed Four Corners™ Halogen Interior Lighting System. For the first time, halogen lighting has been taken to a higher level. Actually, it has been taken all the way to the top...

Our Bake & Broil Elements are 3500 watts, three seconds to hot, and producing temperatures above 1800°F. Our range sails to 350° in just under 8 minutes and comfortably maintains a temperature swing of only +/- 2°F. The elements' design ensures steaks broiled or cookies baked on the edge of the oven rack surface are cooked to perfection and finished at the same time as those in the center. Each element is protected by a high infra-red transparency ceramic glass shield that allows energy to pass from the elements to the food with very little loss.

The Convection System incorporates the very same high infra-red transparency glass ceramic shield used with the bake and broil elements and has specially designed air deflectors that double as protection from any potential oven rack impact. Convection air flows through the machined aperture centered on the convection system's glass, heated by a 2200 watt circular element, and passed left and right through the platinum coated catalytic converters. The catalytic converters straighten the air flow and destroy any smoke or odors at low temperatures before sending the heated air past the air deflectors and through the octagonal cell —resulting in uniform temperatures from top to bottom and side to side.

An ergonomically angled front panel holds detailed graphics and an easy to read large button electronic display and control right-centered on the unit. The range has a custom designed and easy to use electronic control with the following features and functions: BROIL – BAKE – CONVECTION BAKE – WARM – SELF CLEAN. The control also offers a TIMER – LIGHT – CLOCK and LOCK feature.

For more information, call toll-free 888-852-8604 or visit us online at www.divainduction.com. 



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TRADE GROUPS URGE MEMBERS TO WRITE GOVERNORS FOR EQUITABLE ENFORCEMENT OF SALES TAX LAWS

Recently seven independent trade groups, including NARDA, followed up with officials from the 13 states that responded to, or acknowledged, the groups' letter from December calling for the equitable enforcement of sales tax laws. Thus far, states responding to the groups' initial letter are California, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Washington, West Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming. The trade groups also sent a second letter to the governors in the remaining 31 states with sales tax that had not yet responded to the groups' initial letter.

NARDA continues to urge members in the remaining 31 states to write their governors to call for the equitable enforcement of existing sales tax laws. To help in this important outreach, NARDA has prepared a template letter that members can adapt and send and we are asking NARDA members to write letters to their governors so that state officials understand the urgency of this issue for business owners in their state.

To have the greatest impact, please mail a hardcopy of the letter on store letterhead to your governor's office. Go to <http://www.narda.com/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4092> to access a letter that you customize and then forward to the governor in your state.

CEA'S CE MARKET RESEARCH AVAILABLE FOR NARDA MEMBERS

Would you like to better understand the demographics of consumers who shop for electronics in-person versus online?

As part NARDA's partnership with the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA), NARDA members have access to CEA's Market Research, an online resource that provides valuable data to help you keep on top of the trends in the CE industry.

With more than 500 reports created each year, CEA Research is recognized as the authoritative source for consumer electronics market data. CEA

provides ongoing, primary research into consumer buying patterns, awareness of new technologies, interest in product features and a host of other issues. CEA Research conducts approximately 20 unique consumer studies each year. The reports contain executive summaries and analysis of the survey data, top-line results and detailed data cross-tabulated by demographic categories, as well as lifestyle variables such as Internet access.

REGIONAL SERVICE TRAINING SEMINARS

SERVICE USA REGIONAL SERVICE MEETINGS DRAW OVER 450 ATTENDEES IN 2007

Over 400 attendees participated in regional service meeting and took advantage of technical and service management training in 2007.

Sponsors and partners included: AP Wagner, Automatic Parts, Brand Source Service, Cashwells Parts, Dey Parts Distributing, Direct Energy, Reliable Parts, Inc., Tribles Part and 1st Source Servall.

Thanks to instructors Dean Landers, Mike Staats (aka Captain Toolhead, James Dolbeare and Paul MacDonald and participating manufacturers General Electric, Electrolux, Fisher&Paykel and Whirlpool.

SERVICE MANAGEMENT & TECHNICAL TRAINING SEMINARS

SALINA, KS—TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15-16, 2008

Brand Source Service, a division of Brand Source, will offer business management and technical training seminars in association with Service USA, a division of North American Retail Dealers Association (NARDA) in Salina, KS on April 15 and 16, 2008.

Business management training will be provided by select members of Service USA's expert faculty of speakers. Technical training will be provided on select products of the Whirlpool and Fisher & Paykel family of brands.

Co-sponsors include Marcone, Direct Energy, Fisher & Paykel and Whirlpool. **RO**

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THINK GREEN, LIVE EFFICIENT WITH FAGOR AMERICA'S EFFICIENT NEW APPLIANCES AT KBIS 2008 SHOW

FAGOR AMERICA DEBUTS NEW STYLISH APPLIANCES

Fagor, a leader in built-in induction cooktops, is adding new models to their induction cooktop line. The line will feature a 12" induction cooktop with a stainless steel trim and a 30" and 36" induction cooktop with a beveled front (no trim). The new 30" and 36" additions have a new space saving casing that provides more storage space. The 12" induction cooktop presents the opportunity to mix and match technologies such as induction and gas to offer maximum versatility. Fagor's induction cooktop provides an efficient, fast and safe cooking experience. It uses 90% of the energy produced. The cooktop recognizes the base of the cookware and heats only the diameter of the pot, wasting little energy. Heating and temperature adjustments are immediate, saving 50% of the cooking time compared to traditional methods. The safety features are numerous: no open flames, gas emissions or heating elements; cool to the touch surface; and an exceptional 7-point safety system. The flat and smooth surface is easy to clean since spills do not stick to the surface. The self adjust burners detect the size of the cookware and automatically adjust energy. It has 12 cooking settings and 3 quick launch settings.

Fagor has also added two new convection ovens to their product line: a 30" oven and 24" side opening ovens. The new 24" convection side-opening oven provides better access to the interior of the oven due to left and right side opening doors. The spacious interior of the 30" oven is big enough to roast a 32lb. turkey. The preheat Booster function reaches 400°F in less than 5 minutes for dishes that require the oven to be pre-heated. The third heating element that surrounds the two-speed fan at the back of the ovens circulates pre-heated air for more even distribution of heat and faster cooking. Both feature a Stainless Steel finish with retractable controls, several cooking programs, a digital display panel, a ventilated steam outlet and child safety lock.

Fagor has launched a new refrigerator with a reflective finish, offering any kitchen a new artistic touch. Considered the healthiest refrigerator in the market, it is a perfect for condos and apartments in urban areas or anywhere kitchen space may be limited. It features a unique built-in BIO Filter that retains mold and bacteria from the circulating air, eliminates odors and preserves food longer. Its antibacterial drum prevents micro-bacteria from growing in the refrigerator. The independent Multi Fresh and Double Fresh drawers allow for two unique environments within the refrigerator, ideal for keeping vegetables crisp while meats and seafood can simultaneously be stored at their ideal level of moisture. Fagor's exclusive No-Frost System is different from any other competitive product available in the marketplace for it distributes itself throughout the entire refrigerator, not just the freezer. The unit is also highly energy efficient because of its ability to evenly circulate air throughout.

A brand new addition to the Fagor line of products is a built-in coffee machine that brings the rich authentic flavors of espresso coffee to your home. Select from weak, medium or strong coffee for the perfect cup every time. It prepares two cups at a time and generates steam for cappuccino. It regulates the temperature of water and steam, the amount of water and how finely the coffee is ground. Installation of the coffee machine can be directly connected to the water main supply or to the built-in water tank. It has a 0.66 gallon water tank capacity and holds 10.5 ounces of coffee.

A new 36" island range hood and a new 30" wall mounted | *continued on page 54*



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FUEGO NORTH AMERICA WINS CHICAGO ATHENAEUM GOOD DESIGN AWARD SECOND YEAR IN A ROW

FUEGO MODULAR CONTINUES ACCLAIM OF FUEGO PRODUCT LINE

SAN FRANCISCO, Mar. 13, 2008—Fuego North America captured the attention and respect of the judges of the 2007 Chicago Athenaeum Good Design Award with the Fuego Modular. For the second year in a row, Fuego has been recognized for its ability to challenge the status quo of outdoor entertaining with products of high design integrity.

“We are honored to be recognized for a second year by one of the most esteemed design competitions in the world,” says Alex Siow, Fuego CEO. “To be included in the company of some of the world’s most innovative design leaders, such as Apple Computer, 3M and Boeing, solidifies our position as design innovators and trend setters.”



This is the first design award for the Fuego Modular. Its sleek and revolutionary design was created by award-winning industrial designer Robert Brunner, co-founder of Fuego with Siow. The Fuego Modular brings the kitchen outdoors complete with a sink, cooling and warming units, dining bar and shade tent. Unlike traditional outdoor kitchens that become permanent fixtures in the backyard, the Fuego Modular can be disassembled and moved when the homeowner moves.

Fuego continues to receive international recognition for the inaugural product of the Fuego line, the Fuego 01. Winner of

the 2006 Chicago Athenaeum Good Design Award, the Fuego 01 also received the International Forum Product Design Award, and the IDEA (International Design Excellence Award) sponsored by the Industrial Designers Society of America.

Fuego North America designs and manufactures products that challenge the status quo in outdoor entertaining. The company has created a modernist rethink of the grilling experience, providing the best in functionality, technology and style. With pioneering designs that are original, innovative and bold, Fuego offers products that create the ultimate outdoor social hub. For more information about Fuego 01, 02, Modular, the company, and its people, contact Fuego North America at 888.88.FUEGO, or visit www.fuegoliving.com.

The Chicago Athenaeum’s Good Design Award was established in 1950 by Edgar J. Kaufman, Jr., and is one of the world’s oldest and most celebrated awards programs. The program recognizes designers and manufacturers for advancing new and innovative product concepts that push the envelope beyond what is considered standard product and consumer design. Entries from more than 33 countries were submitted this year, adding to the prestige of the Fuego Modular’s award recognition. **RO**

NARMS | *continued from page 44* |

In 2003 the Field Marketing Services Association (FMSA), representing in-store promotions and demonstration companies, merged with NARMS. Independent food brokers joined NARMS in 2004.

In 2003 the National Association for Merchandising Services changed its name to the National Association for Retail Marketing Services (NARMSSM). NARMS is the only legal forum that brings together all facets of the retail services industry—retailer, manufacturer, and retail service company—to network, and to discuss common issues and common solutions.

NARMS membership is currently 515 companies and includes merchandising service organizations; event marketing, mystery shopping and demonstration companies; professional installation companies; independent food brokers, consumer goods manufacturers, retailers and associates.

NARMS members gather each year at two conferences. The spring conference and annual meeting is held in April and the IFBA Top-to-Top Conference convenes in May.

NARMS member companies perform nearly \$3 billion in

merchandising services, sales marketing, event marketing, demonstration and other retail services annually. The association promotes and establishes industry standards and provides critical industry research and educational information about the industry with member companies servicing such classes of trade as: grocery, drug, mass, department, home & building centers, computer and office supply, electronic, value retailers, specialty and convenience retailers. **RO**

FAGOR | *continued from page 52* |

range hood join the New Fagor product line. Fagor Range Hoods are equipped with touch controls, and are elegantly styled with an enduring brushed stainless steel finish. They are powerful, yet extremely quiet resulting in a cleaner and more pleasant atmosphere. The filters are easily removable, dishwasher safe and are equipped with a wash indicator.

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PERSONNEL CHANGES



ASKO Appliances, Inc. is excited to announce Gary Plowman as the new Vice President of Customer Service. Gary brings over 30 years of appliance industry management experience to ASKO, ranging from finance, branch operations, and serving as National Service Manager for Amana Appliances. Most recently, Plowman was Manager of Customer Service for AGA commercial products. Steve Piro, President of ASKO Appliances, Inc. is “pleased to have Gary join our company and provide leadership to our customer services team as we continue to grow our sales and brand offerings.”

Plowman is in the process of relocating to the Dallas Metro area and “is thrilled to join the leadership team at ASKO Appliances, Inc. and assist others in supporting our preeminent service strategy with our ASKO Distributors, Authorized Service locations and customers.”

In addition to Gary joining the ASKO team, there have been various other personnel changes. Jamie Bird has been named the Vice President of ASKO Direct. Jamie has been with ASKO Appliances since May 1998, most recently as the Vice President of Marketing. Jamie “is looking forward to expanding the ASKO Direct organization to serve and support our valued customers in the marketplace.”

Don Prevette has been named the Vice President of Marketing. He has been with ASKO since March 2001, most recently as the Vice President of Eurotech Sales and Distribution. Don has over 34 years of experience in the home appliance industry. He brings an energetic outlook to various ASKO Appliances, Inc. marketing initiatives “and is looking forward to working with our business partners to increase Asko Appliances, Inc. brand awareness through various methods of creative communication practices.”

Brittany Musacchio has been named the Public Relations Coordinator for ASKO Appliances, Inc. She has been with ASKO since August 2005, serving as the Marketing Assistant. Brittany “is looking forward to expanding the ASKO name in the marketplace while building and maintaining complete industry coverage of ASKO Appliances, Inc.” Don Prevette, Vice-President of ASKO Marketing is excited about the level of enthusiasm and brand building commitment Brittany will bring to this new position.”

ASKO appliances have been marketed throughout North America by ASKO Appliances, Inc. for over 20 years. AM Appliance Group is now a division of the Antonio Merloni Group of Italy. As an Energy Star Partner, ASKO is a leader in developing innovative appliances that save water and energy, while providing superior performance. **RO**



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COMING EVENTS

CALENDAR 2008

MARCH/APRIL-2008

30-2 NARDA Service and Retail Convention (SRC)-Flamingo Hotel, Las Vegas, NV

APRIL-2008

- 9 CKD/CBD Design Exam-KBIS Chicago
- 10 NKBA Chapter Officer's Forum-KBIS/Chicago
- 10 NKBA Ambassadors' Club Luncheon-KBIS/Chicago
- 10 NKBA Board of Directors' Gala-Union Station/Chicago
- 11-13 KBIS-McCormick Center-Chicago, IL
- 24 NKBA Northern CA Meeting-The Gene Schick Co-Viking-Hayward CA

MAY-2008

- 13-14 Almo Expo- Philadelphia, PA
- 15 NKBA Northern CA Meeting-How to Win a Nat'l Design Competition-Riggs Distributing, Inc-Burlingame CA

JUNE-2008

- 18 NKBA Northern CA Meeting-University Electric/GE-Santa Clara CA
- 24-28 PCBC 2008(Pacific Coast Builders Conference)-Moscone Center SF CA

JULY-2008

- 23-24 Almo Expo- St. Louis, MO

AUGUST-2008

- 7 Almo Expo -Cincinnati, OH
- 11-12 Almo Expo- Verona, New York
- 14 Almo Expo-Bloomington, MN
- 17-20 Nationwide Primetime Fall-Mandalay Bay Resort, Las Vegas, NV

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NOTE: Attention Buying Groups, NKBA and NARI Chapters, Distributors and Manufacturers: Please submit your meeting schedules to info@retailobserver.com ASAP so they may be included in our Coming Events Column. If you would like to receive the Retail Observer please go to www.retailobserver.com to subscribe.



COMING EVENTS

CALENDAR 2008

- 21 NKBA Northern CA Meeting-Sierra Select Distributors-San Francisco CA
24-28 Brandsource National Convention- Paris Casino and Resort, Las Vegas, NV

SEPTEMBER-2008

- 7-11 NARI Fall BOD Meeting-TBD, Baltimore, MD
9-12 The Remodeling Show-Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, MD
18- NKBA Northern CA -CCRE Prep Course-Dacor- South SF CA
20 NKBA Northern CA-CKD/CBD Exam-San Francisco Bay Area

OCTOBER-2008

- 22-25 Bath & Kitchen Buying Group Fall -Westin Boston Waterfront, Boston, MA
23 NKBA Northern CA Meeting-European Kitchens-Palo Alto CA

DECEMBER-2008

- 12 NKBA Northern CA Holiday Party-The St. Francis Yacht Club-SF CA

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YOUR MONEY DOCTORS

In keeping with our overview of the Four Pillars of Financial Stability we finish up with the Education Pillar. Education is possibly the most important pillar of financial stability. And not just education in terms of what you learn about the world, but in terms of what you learn about yourself... and what you do with that knowledge.

Many fabulous books exist out there – and we often suggest a number of them to our clients – but they typically won't have much of an effect until you have figured out how best you will use the information they present. In other words, you need to educate yourself about yourself, and this is done without books at all. You must learn to ask yourself hard questions, and go deep inside to answer them. If this seems metaphysical or hocus-pocus, relax. take a deep breath, chant your mantra of choice, and keep reading.

At the end of every week, conduct a personal assessment; look at the past seven days and ask yourself whether you have stuck to the principles of the Four Pillars. Have you been true to your Values? Have your Behaviors been beneficial or detrimental? Have you fulfilled your Organizational priorities? Are you being held Accountable – by yourself, by your accountability partner? In what areas do you need to make adjustments so you can do better in the upcoming week?

This type of personal assessment should take a reasonable amount of time. It is doubtful that such an evaluation can be accomplished in less than fifteen minutes, and for many it may take up to a full hour. If you fly through this as a trivial task it will be worthless.

Keep a journal, and write down what you discover about yourself every week in your assessment. Then review each entry every week from the beginning, through the most recent. This process – assessment, writing, reviewing, and reflection – helps you determine what problems are recurring and which need special attention. And with each reading, you will once again encounter the powerful insights you have had along the way.

You are the key to your success. Financial stability is a many-layered proposition, and it starts with understand-

ing the key things we have covered to this point. That understanding comes from within.

We don't tell our clients what to do, we help them discover the answers. Those answers are within them – and they are also within you. If instead of telling you what to do, we help you uncover why and how you do harm to your financial future (often without knowing it), that new knowledge will affect your life. That knowledge becomes part of everything you do in finances thereafter because you uncovered it, you can't ignore it, and you now know what to look for to avoid future trouble.

Now it's time to learn how to take control of your financial future, and put the Four Pillars of Financial Stability into practice.

With 16 years of management experience, Greg has developed a sharp eye for identifying inefficiencies, cross-purposes and miscommunication—and for how quickly they can affect wealth. Utilizing the tools of the Four Pillars of Financial Stability and project management, he empathetically helps individuals and businesses set priorities and create the balance they need for their financial health.

*Greg is an active member of the National Association of Credit Counselors and the Project Management Institute®. He has spoken to many organizations including the New Mexico Mortgage Lenders Association, New Mexico Association of Mortgage Brokers, community workshops, and seminars. He is co-author of the forthcoming book *The Four Pillars of Financial Stability: How to Succeed in Finances by Changing the Way You Think!* and is highly skilled in organization methodologies, developing a wide range of custom databases, websites and internal controls to increase effectiveness and profitability.*

*His passion is to help others and he uses his talents and experience to help them change the way they perceive money. **RO***



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POLITICS AND THE BREAD MAKER



First of all —there is no recession! Not yet, but maybe soon. There is definitely a deteriorating economic slowdown because of the sub-prime mortgage mess plus the high cost of gas plus what the consumer perceives as recessionary indicators. Housing and home construction is down, way down in the toilet. BUT other sectors of

the economy are filling the void and the consumer is hanging in there—just barely—in most areas. Rising exports and declining imports have helped the USA from sinking into a complete recession. Real economic news shows the economy dead in the water but not sinking. Real consumer spending rose just slightly last year and business fixed investment is rolling along with real growth and government spending is increasing at a steady rate of 2.5%. Company earnings seem solid (except for the big investment banks with their sub-prime mortgages). What I am worried about is the rise in energy and the decline of the dollar in world-wide markets. Oil prices are inching up with no relief in sight. A big increase in oil prices could create a recession situation.

The Federal Reserve is not forecasting a recession and they recently enacted rebates for the consumer plus tax breaks for business and this should help to keep the economy from going into a complete tailspin.

Writing in a recent issue of Forbes magazine, Rich Kalgaard, the publisher, makes this statement and I believe he is absolutely on the mark. "How big a problem is the sub prime mortgage mess? No one really knows but so far banks have written off about \$150 billion in bad loans. "Now \$150 billions sounds huge. But it is only 1% of the market capitalization of US stocks. In any volatile trading day U.S. stocks gain or lose \$150 billion every hour. How often does one hear these figures?"

LOOKING AHEAD

As I write this near the end of February it looks like Obama may overtake Hillary and become the front runner for the president in the next election. A lot depends on what happens now that Hilary has won in Texas and Ohio. I'm betting that the so-called super-delegates will go with Hilary and she will clinch the nomination.

If Obama becomes the front runner against McCain I feel sure he will lose. The American voter is not always as stupid as the politicians believe. Despite his great orations down

deep there is a lack of real life experience that a president needs to make the difficult decisions in the years ahead. Obama is doing great and no doubt he is one fine gentleman but you can't disregard experience when you go to the polls.

Of all the presidential campaigns I have seen or read about this is one of the most compelling. The Democratic race is dramatic and the amount of money that has been spent is staggering. The Democrats are stressing how bad the economy is and this is in line with previous presidential campaigns. The party that's on the outside always blames the in-party for the economy.

Remember Bill Clinton's campaign —"It's the economy, stupid." In 1980 Ronald Reagan asked Americans if they were better off than they had been four years earlier.

COOKING

Since my beautiful wife, Ruth, has become an invalid I am cooking breakfast and dinner. Luncheon is prepared by one of Ruth's caregivers and usually is far better than my breakfasts or dinner.

My problem is that I don't know how to cook but I am learning the hard way. I have about \$500 worth of cookbooks and I leaf thru them constantly looking for simple recipes that I can understand.

I also have begun to watch cooking shows and they are very interesting. Rachael Ray is not only a great teacher but a real live personality. She has a show that absolutely astounds me with her depth of perception in making meals and her ability to have good time with her guests. I also watch Emeril once in a while and a couple of other programs when I feel depressed and my latest culinary creation has flopped.

Last night I tried to make bread! I bought a bread making machine and carefully measured the flour and water and other stuff into the machine and turned it on and went to bed.

I thought it would make a nice loaf of white bread and when I awoke I would find it ready to eat. Guess what—I opened the machine in the morning and found a three inch solid piece of concrete and had to take a hammer and chisel to get the dead remains out of the machine.

Oh well—live and learn. Further adventures of Edmonds, the culinary artist, will be revealed in this column in the future.

Charles Edmonds

Charles Edmonds



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