

The **RetailObserver**

June, 2008

The Monthly News Magazine with Personality

Vol.19, Issue 6

2008 KBIS DELIVERS

MANUFACTURERS OPTIMISTIC AND
UPBEAT ABOUT INDUSTRY FUTURE

SEE INSIDE FOR THE SHOW WRAP-UP STARTING ON PG. 4



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Publisher's Statement
Celebrating Our 19th Year!

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DEADLINE FOR
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HEY DAD... REMEMBER THIS?

Do you remember all the things your dad would say,
the words that made your life this way?
His thoughts, his stories and his words for you
they seemed so scary, they seemed so true.

The master sculptor, over the years,
chipped away as you heard him say
phrases and words that helped shape you,
teach you, guide you to think things through.

We're older now and it's much more clear,
that his love for you was truly dear.
Do you remember how deep the lesson,
hidden in his favorite expression?

My own dad at the end of the day
would still come up to me and say,
"No matter where you go or what you do,
I will always be here and still love you."

Do you remember him saying.....

Don't ask me, ask your mother.
Who said life was supposed to be fair? The fair is in October.
When I was your age... I treated MY father with respect.
If your friend jumped off a bridge would you?
You're only young once.
Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.
When you feel good about yourself, others will feel good about you, too.
You're gonna do it, whether you like it or not!
The early bird gets the worm.
Don't look at me in that tone of voice!
Dream as if you'll live forever, live as if you'll die tomorrow.
We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.
As long as you tried your hardest, that's all that matters.
If I catch you doing that one more time, I'll...
No, we're not there yet.

Your wit and wisdom, laughter and tears
will be remembered well over the years.

Your tenderness and patience for a job well done
will be obvious for generations to come.

So here's to our childhood memories.... and the things that dads may say.
You might hear some of them come from *your* kids someday.

Happy Father's Day to all.

Moe Lastfogel



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DESPITE ECONOMY, MANUFACTURERS OPTIMISTIC AT K/BIS

BY CHRISTOPHER THIEDE



CHICAGO—With all the talk about a slowing economy and dismal housing news, you would think the Kitchen & Bath Industry would have been a ghost town.

But the show did not disappoint, and manufacturers seemed upbeat about the future.

The show floor buzzed with activity and manufacturers showcased cutting-edge products and trends. Manufacturers were decidedly upbeat about the future of the industry.

NEW PLAYERS STILL GROWING

As the American housing market grew, several companies from Europe and Asia have entered the market to try to gain a foothold. Also, new American companies have been formed for the same reason. Although boom times are over, many of these companies are still seeing growth.

“We’re so new to the appliance category; we haven’t noticed any downturn yet. We are still growing. Our company is known for cookware, and KBIS has allowed us to showcase our capabilities in appliances.”

—*Sara de la Hera, VP Marketing & Sales, Fagor America, Inc.*

“Smeg is new to the US market, and so we have not been affected by the housing downturn. The Kitchen & Bath Show has been positive has been a good experience; we signed up several distributors. Time will tell in terms of sales, but feedback has been positive.”

—*Sonja Dettori, US Operations Manager, Smeg USA, Inc.*

“We are in a niche market. We started in grills for the RV and boat market, but have seen our business expand to the condo

market and other residential areas. It has been very successful. We just closed a record quarter.”

—*Michael Reischman, President, Kenyon International, Inc.*

“Haier America has the good fortune to be growing its dealer representation and market share in the United States, and sales reflect substantial increases. Beginning from a small base in major appliances in 2007, our business has grown substantially year-over-year.”

—*Warren Mann, Senior Vice President, Major Appliances, Haier America*

UNIQUE PRODUCTS

Companies that offer cutting edge-design or innovative products also seem to be insulated from the market downturn. By offering unique products, companies have been able to maintain interest from consumers and set themselves apart from the competition.

“Sharp’s appliance business continues to be strong because our products provide unique solutions to kitchen design dilemmas. All of our appliances are designed for easy accessibility for any cook in the home, which is a key reason the design community embraces Sharp appliances.”

—*Christine Lewis, Associate Vice President of Appliance Marketing, Sharp Electronics*

“The high value, high feature content merchandise Haier produces happens to be particularly well suited to today’s difficult retail climate, allowing the company to grow its volume in a difficult market.”

—*Mann*

| *continued on page 6* |





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“Our unique product offering has enabled us to continue our growth. We offer a complete line of outdoor kitchen products, including an outdoor freezer and wine reserve. We’ve also introduced a number of products that give consumers personalization and custom configuration capabilities.”

—*Chaya Chang, marketing manager, Perlick*

“Our products are in the medium- to high-end, but they are unlike anything else seen in the market. The show traffic at KBIS was excellent. We are very excited about the future in this category.”

—*de la Hera*

“Our products are more about lifestyle than about economics. Our products are on the luxury end of the market. People who buy our products do so because they are very unique and visually stunning. Like our 36-inch dishwasher – there is nothing else like it on the market.”

—*Dettori*

“Introductions usually get planned so far in advance that twists and turns in the marketplace have little impact. Haier tries to speed production of well-received merchandise, like our new French Door counter-depth refrigerator.”

—*Mann*

A STRONG SHOW

Overall, exhibitors were very happy with the show traffic at K/BIS. But it was more than just volume, the quality of traffic was good and companies felt it was a productive use of their resources.

“Show traffic at KBIS was double what we’ve experienced in the past. The show has been great for us.”

—*Tamra Nelson, Woodstone Corporation*

“This has been the best KBIS that we have ever had, just by sheer volume of traffic. Going in, we didn’t know what to expect, but we were swamped. We have already reserved a bigger space for next year, increasing it by 50 percent.”

—*Reichman*

“K/BIS started slow, perhaps due to air travel challenges, but became better attended as the first day unfolded and was very busy until late afternoon the second day. Haier’s brisk traffic in our new, larger booth reflected the breadth of product offerings and serious dealer interest. Our expectations were high and mostly achieved.”

—*Mann*

“We were very happy with K/BIS. Traffic in our booth was strong, about the same as last year. Interest in Sharp’s appliance offerings continues to grow because we are offering unique, space-saving products that answer common kitchen design questions, such as where to place the microwave.”

—*Lewis* **RO**



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IT'S A WRAP: 2008 K•BIS®

STAR-STUDED 2008 KITCHEN/BATH INDUSTRY SHOW AND CONFERENCE TOOK THE WINDY CITY BY STORM

Filling three halls of McCormick Place for the first time, the annual Kitchen/Bath Industry Show & Conference (K/BIS®) brought some of the biggest names in the kitchen and bath industry to Chicago from April 10-13, 2008 for its annual showcase of the newest products, appliances, design trends, and cutting-edge industry information. As the largest yearly gathering of kitchen and bath professionals from around the world, K/BIS is the leading destination for the latest advancements in the kitchen and bath industry.

Owned by the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), the four-day conference and expo featured must-see new products, innovative design ideas and the latest trends in kitchens and baths. K/BIS brought together nearly a thousand exhibitors and more than 45,000 attendees, the show's largest-ever turnout.

"Attendance at this year's K/BIS continued to be strong," said Sara Ann Busby, CKD, President of the NKBA. "The increase in attendance supports what we have been saying all year – kitchen and bath professionals are still thriving, and the optimism and strength of the industry was tangible in Chicago."

A complete range of professionals representing the kitchen and bath industry visited the show, including dealers, designers, architects, distributors, and retailers, helping to make this the largest K/BIS yet, and attendees packed the show floor to get a preview of this year's product and design innovations. Big-name exhibitors included Sears, Kohler, BSH (Bosch, Siemens, Thermador, and Gaggenau), LG Electronics, Sub-Zero/Wolf, Moen, GE Appliances, Viking Range, Broan-Nutone, Grohe, Dacor, Haier America, Electrolux, and many other well-known brands in the kitchen and bath industry.

"We came to K/BIS to showcase the latest innovations from

all top eight brands available at Sears," said Larry Costello, PR Director at Sears Holdings. "The approach we took is 'this is the auto show for appliances, so let's treat it as such,' and the response was terrific."

"This has been an extraordinary year for the kitchen and bath industry," said Brian Pagel, Vice President of the Kitchen and Bath Group, the unit within the Nielsen Company that produces K/BIS. "Exhibitors and attendees all come to K/BIS to be in the thick of what's new and exciting in kitchens and baths, and the show continuously delivers the latest information, trends and products."

Each year, exhibitors from around the world come to K/BIS to debut the latest in kitchen and bath innovations, and attendees flock to the show floor to preview the newest products for the homes and projects of tomorrow. From green and high-end to futuristic and budget-friendly, K/BIS is the ultimate destination for the latest product introductions and advancements.

"This is our first year at K/BIS, and we specifically came to the show looking for new products and ideas. Because there are so many different exhibitors and most booths display the manufacturer's entire lines, there are literally millions of options here," said Keith Lindsey of Kindred Kitchens and Lindsey Construction in East Moline, Ill.

"K/BIS is the premier venue for our dynamic industry to launch new appliance innovations for the coming year," said John Weinstock, Vice President of Marketing for LG Electronics USA. "The 2008 show was particularly successful for us as a launch pad for new products and place to meet with our key retail partners."

"The show is an extremely effective platform to interact with the designers and builders that help influence the kitchen and bath industry and shape the consumer's purchasing decisions,"

said Nancy Wulf, Vice President and General Manager of Water Products at InSinkErator.

New products could be found at exhibitor booths and in one-stop, must-see destinations on the show floor, including the NKBA/Meredith Design Idea Center (DIC) and the New Product Pavilion. The 10,000 square-foot Design Idea Center presented interpretations of the theme, “Your Kitchen. Your Bath. Your Way. Designs for Every Lifestyle and Life Stage,” presented by five of Meredith’s most popular consumer brands – Kitchen and Bath Ideas® “Hostess Extraordinaire,” Better Homes and Gardens® “Organizer-in-Chief,” Traditional Home® “Savvy Young Professional,” Country Home® “Mother Starting Out,” and Midwest Living® “Future Thinker.”

“K/BIS continues to set the tone for kitchen and bath design, and the show’s unique and comprehensive presentation of the newest products, trends and design ideas keeps the excitement and enthusiasm of this industry going strong,” said Don Sciolaro, the newly-appointed CEO of the NKBA.

The New Product Pavilion, a dedicated area for the most recent product introductions gave attendees the opportunity to view the show’s hottest products and vote for their favorites. Attendee-selected winners in both the kitchen and bath categories were announced live at the K+BB booth; Brew Express by Lance Larkin won “Best Kitchen Product” and Designer Rods won “Best Bath Product.”

Other K/BIS award winners were announced at the NKBA’s Board of Directors’ Gala & Cocktail Reception at Union Station, a 1920s Beaux-Arts building in Chicago. Hundreds of guests were welcomed to this year’s gala and enjoyed a night of dining, dancing, and networking. The ceremony included the announcement of the 2008 NKBA Design Competition Pinnacle Award Winner, Joan DesCombes, CKD, as well as this year’s Hall of Fame inductees, David Newton, CMKBD, Kenneth S. Rohl and Eliot Sefrin.

The 2008 NKBA Design Competition also awarded honors in ten categories, including small kitchens, medium kitchens, large kitchens, open plan kitchens, powder rooms, small bathrooms, large bathrooms, master suite bathrooms, showrooms, and other rooms. This year, the NKBA Design Competition received a record number of entries, with 579 projects. Recognizing excellence in design and the true art of the industry, winners were revealed during the NKBA Design Competition Luncheon. Top prizes were awarded to Peter Ross Salerno, CMKBD for Best Overall Kitchen; Siri Evju,

CKBD for Best Overall Bathroom; Marcio Decker for Smartest Hot Water; and Beverly Staal, CKBD for Best Before & After.

In addition to the new products and designs being displayed and honored, the biggest and most talked-about trends were on display in manufacturer’s product lines and in the NKBA’s conference sessions. The conferences offered attendees many educational opportunities to keep up to date on emerging trends in design, business leadership, and technology, and one of the most buzzed about topics at K/BIS was “going green.”

“One of the conference sessions discussed the broad-based (and very appropriate and timely) trend of green. The session encouraged discussion about what it really means to be green—products need to be considered from an environmental, economic and social perspective to be considered truly sustainable,” said Bill Mullineaux of Quality Custom Cabinetry Incorporated (QCCI) in New Holland, Penn.

The courses covered everything from residential green, universal design and healthy designing to color trend forecasting, advanced lighting technology, and new materials for countertops. This year’s NKBA opening keynote speaker, Christine Todd Whitman, former Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and New Jersey’s first and only female governor, discussed sustainability and environmentally-friendly kitchen and bath design from an environmental, social and political perspective.

“Christine Todd Whitman’s keynote speech covering the present and future of green design was incredibly relevant and though-provoking. Social environmentalism is something that kitchen and bath professionals are catching up to on a larger scale,” said Michelle Bridges of Bridges Design Services in Lakeland, Minn. “The government and other organizations are providing the tools needed to move green along, and designers and manufacturers are now seeking it out to provide better, more sustainable products and services to consumers.”

“We are excited by the continued success of K/BIS,” said Suzie Williford, President Elect of the NKBA. “We look forward to seeing everyone at next year’s show in Atlanta.” K/BIS 2009 will be held at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta from May 1–May 3.

For more information on the exhibits, seminars and events at this year’s K/BIS, please visit the show’s web site at KBIS.com or the NKBA’s official Web site at NKBA.org. **RO**



RETAILERS OBSERVED

SEEN AT KBIS



Bosch's display kitchen at KBIS 2008



Display kitchen from Gaggenau



Display kitchen from Siemens



Thermador's display kitchen at KBIS



Elica Booth



Danby - Steve Atkinson, Seana Rollo and Herbie Aldrich



Purcell Murray - La Cornue Booth



Bill Spencer of Brew express receives from Cory Smith of Nielsen Business Media the Best New Kitchen Product Award



G.E. Consumer & Industrial—Tom Kuntz, Jim Rich, Kelly Lum, Steve Anderson, Matt Becker and Scott Maddox



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Candice Olson of HGTV Divine Design speaks to one of the largest conference crowds at KBIS



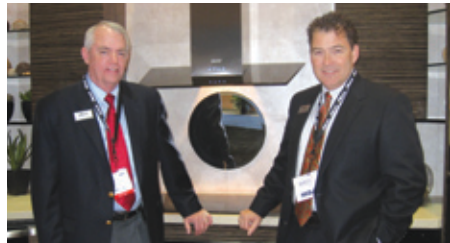
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Marni Omer at U-Line



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The SMEG KBIS booth displays some of the manufacturer's colorful product line



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The Retail Observer Booth — Maira Kahn and Mary Clare Spidell hosting the Nintendo Wii Golf Tournament



SMEG 36 inch under-counter dishwasher



Ty Pennington assists a chef demonstration at the Turbochef booth on the KBIS show floor



FABER - Marci Dew, Linda Sullivan, Kate Parker and Matthew Avery



Lindy Hatcher, winner of *The Retail Observer* "Win a Wii" Golf Tournament, retailer's division



Zephyr - Arcadio Lainez



Marni Hale (BSH), winner in the manufacturer's division of *The Retail Observer* Wii Golf Tournament



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ASSOCIATION NEWS

MARCONE APPLIANCE PARTS CENTERS PRESENTS THE 2008 MSA CONVENTION IN LAS VEGAS

Marcone Servicers Association will be holding its annual convention September 28th – October 1st at Harrah's Las Vegas Hotel & Casino. Appliance servicer training classes, business classes and break out sessions will be held every day of the convention and many different vendors will be present with booths and giveaways. MSA members and non-members alike are welcome to attend.

The MSA Convention is truly the service industry training event of the year. You do not want to miss it! For more information, please contact Marcone Member Services at (800) 482-6022.



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SAMSUNG ANNOUNCES INDEPENDENT DEALER CHANNEL DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM FOR HOME APPLIANCES

ALMO CORPORATION AND CLIMATIC CORPORATION CONTRACTED BY SAMSUNG AS U.S. DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS FOR THE INDEPENDENT APPLIANCE DEALER CHANNEL.

Samsung Electronics, a global leader in consumer electronics and home appliances, today announced the appointment of two new distribution partners, Almo Corporation and Climatic Corporation, for Samsung branded home appliance products. This new distribution program will enable independent U.S. appliance dealers to source Samsung branded appliances from two highly-experienced appliance distributors.

"Partnering with the two industry-leading appliance distributors will give Samsung the ability to reach an entirely new customer base," stated James Politeski, vice president of Home Appliance Sales & Marketing at Samsung Electronics America. "Our strategic move to now encompass the independent dealer channel is a significant event for Samsung. We look forward to a very successful and mutually fruitful partnership."

Climatic Corporation, based in South Carolina, is one of the largest regional appliance distributors in the U.S. With 5 major distribution centers, they will serve seven Southeast states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi. Almo Corporation, based in Philadelphia, is the nation's largest appliance distributor. Almo will serve the balance of the United States with their nationwide network of 12 distribution centers. Their extensive distribution network enables them to reach 99% of the nation in 1-2 days ground shipping which is unprecedented in the appliance industry.

"This partnership is a great opportunity for our independent dealers to add a sought-after premium brand to their offering," stated Warren Chaiken, President and COO of Almo Corporation. "We're very excited that this program with Samsung, Climatic and Almo will be a boon to the independent appliance channel."

"We join our customers and Samsung in saying this is a major step in our mutual growth and ability to serve the Southeast. The respect of the Samsung brand in conjunction with Climatic Corporation position in the market place promises to be a big win for all involved. Our companies' values are very closely aligned and this will be a thriving partnership," stated Gilly Bailey, President of Climatic Home Products division.

Independent dealers interested in carrying Samsung branded appliances can call 1-866-9Samsung for more information.

ABOUT SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS AMERICA, INC.

Headquartered in Ridgefield Park, NJ, Samsung Electronics America, Inc. (SEA), a wholly owned subsidiary of Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd., markets a broad range of award-winning, digital consumer electronics and home appliance products, including HDTV's, home theater systems, MP3 players, digital imaging products, refrigerators and washing machines. A recognized innovation leader in consumer electronics design and technology, Samsung is the HDTV market leader in the U.S. Please visit www.samsung.com for more information.

ABOUT ALMO CORPORATION

Almo Corporation is the nation's leading independent distributor of Consumer Electronics and Major Appliances. Almo distributes over 40 of the industries top brand names of Major Appliances, Consumer Electronics, Mobile and Professional Audio/Visual Equipment, Professional Residential Kitchen and Outdoor Appliances and Industrial Wire and Cable Products. Founded in 1946,

Almo is headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and operates 11 regional distribution facilities with over 1 million square feet of warehousing throughout the United States. More information on Almo is available by contacting the company directly or at Almo's web site located at www.almo.com.

ABOUT CLIMATIC CORPORATION

Based in Columbia, SC, The Climatic Corporation has diversified holdings throughout the Southeast. Climatic Home Products continues to offer only quality products to retailers via multiple warehouses and sophisticated logistics. Focusing on residential customer's needs allows CHP to fully understand the best ways to support the retailer.

The history of the company goes back four generations and today represents nearly a dozen diverse, yet closely related businesses. There are currently twenty one locations is seven states to serve our customers. You may contact us at 1-800-845-4994 or visit us at www.climaticcorp.com Corporate or www.climatichomeproducts.com to browse our B2B website. **RO**



DISTRIBUTOR DOINGS

WATER, INC. HIRES NEW REGIONAL SALES MANAGER

JAMES P. HAGGERTY TO DRAW ON DECADES OF EXPERIENCE TO LEAD SALES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

CARSON, Calif., April 22, 2008—Water, Inc.—a premier distributor of luxury water products, decorative plumbing, and high-end appliances for the home—is proud to welcome James P. Haggerty, regional sales manager, to the sales team.

With more than 30 years of sales experience, Haggerty will be responsible for Water, Inc.'s sales growth and maintenance in Southern California. His territory will include San Diego, Orange County and Long Beach.

Before joining Water, Inc., Haggerty served as key account manager for Maytag®. In that role, he was responsible for the sale of Maytag, Jenn-Air®, Amana® and Magic Chef® products throughout Southern California.

“Water, Inc. is thrilled to have Jim as part of the sales team,” said Major Avignon, president of Water, Inc. “With his extensive sales experience, we are confident that Jim will be a very effective regional sales manager.”

Haggerty earned a bachelor's degree in business from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. He lives in Encinitas, Calif., with his wife and enjoys surfing and exercising in his free time. **RO**

ASSOCIATION NEWS

NATIONAL KITCHEN & BATH ASSOCIATION AWARDS TOP SCHOOLS

For the third year, the National Kitchen & Bath Association has awarded “Most Outstanding Annual Requirements” trophies to those NKBA-accredited schools that have demonstrated the highest standards of kitchen and bath instruction. Each NKBA-accredited school submitted two of their students' kitchen design projects, which followed the requirements of the 2007/2008 NKBA Student Design Competition, sponsored by American Woodmark and Sub Zero/Wolf.

Student work samples included a floor plan, elevation, construction plan, and mechanical plan. The kitchen work samples were assessed on their compliance with the NKBA Planning Guidelines and adherence to NKBA Graphic and Presentation Standards.

The top entries from among all the schools that submitted student projects this year were announced at the Educators' Forum held during the NKBA's 2008 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show & Conference (K/BIS®) in Chicago. This year, the NKBA recognized seven schools for achieving excellence in kitchen design. These schools met the NKBA's challenging goal of earning average scores of at least 93 out of a possible 100 on the projects designed by their students.

Each of this year's top seven schools, along with their kitchen design program coordinators, received a trophy of recognition at the Educators' Forum.

The winning schools and their coordinators are:

Alexandria Technical College; Alexandria, MN—*Betty Ravnik, CKD, CBD*

Araphahoe Community College; Littleton, CO—*Dawn Viola*

Brigham Young University—Idaho; Rexburg, Idaho—*Wendy Harris, CKE*

East Carolina University; Greenville, NC—*Yaprak Savut, CKE*

Seminole Community College; Sanford, FL—*Jill D. Smith* | *continued on page 20*

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PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT

KENYON CUSTOM "GREEN" GALLEY GUIDE TO CERAMIC COOK TOPS



In a state known traditionally for brass and insurance, and more recently for casinos and highway congestion, there lies in Clinton a small manufacturer who, for the past 77 years, has been cooking up a leadership position in the specialty appliance market. Manufacturing compact ceramic electric cook tops for the residential, hospitality, institutional, academic, military, marine and mobile segments, Kenyon Custom recently received an innovation award for the new patent pending All Seasons Grill series.

Kenyon International, Inc. founded in 1931 by Ted Kenyon, began as a small manufacturer of precision instruments for aviation and navigation. As business developed in the marine marketplace, the product line expanded to include wind and speed instruments, rigging spars and hardware, refrigeration systems, and finally marine stoves fueled by gas. Concerned about safety at sea, Kenyon led the way with the breakthrough development of ceramic electric cook tops for the high seas. The immense popularity of the ceramic cook tops led to consumer requests for shore side models for the home. Soon thereafter, kitchenettes coast-to-coast were cooking with Kenyon Custom! Recent trends in green building practices have paved the way for Energy Star rated appliances and LEED certified products. And while cooking appliances are not yet rated according to a uniform standard, Kenyon Custom ceramic electric cook tops are considered "green" and energy efficient compared to many competitive products as they provide a uniform surface with spring-loaded burners underneath the glass that provide for maximum efficiency of heat transfer. Compared with gas cooking with average efficiencies of 50%, cooking with smooth top ceramic cook tops is 75-80% efficient (by contrast coil cook tops are about 65% energy efficient and induction is nearly 90%). Plus the absence of replacement and maintenance parts translates into cost and landfill savings—green from cradle-to-grave. We thank you for this opportunity to introduce our company and hope we may have the opportunity to "build" on our reputation and proudly manufacture a Kenyon Custom specialty ceramic cook top or All Seasons Grill for your enjoyment and pleasure... Enjoy the company you keep!

For more information contact:

*Kenyon International, Inc. P.O. Box 925, Clinton, CT 06413
tel:860-664-4906 fax:860-664-4907 e-mail:sales@kenyonappliances.com*

NKBA AWARDS | *continued from page 18* |

University of Nebraska at Kearny, Kearny, NE—*Phyllis A. Markussen, CKE, CBE*
Weber State University*, Ogden, UT—*Jan Slabaugh*

**One of the student projects submitted from Weber State University received a perfect score of 100.*

Accredited Programs, created by the NKBA to serve the professional needs of the industry and to ensure consistent, quality education for students striving to become kitchen and bath design professionals, currently recognizes more than 50 schools across the United States and Canada that teach kitchen and bath curriculum. NKBA Accredited Programs are evaluated with respect to mission, administration, curriculum, faculty, and resources to determine eligibility and the ability to fulfill the Association's minimum student competencies. **RO**



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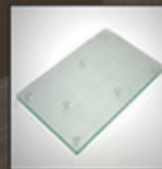
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LIEBHERR CONTINUES TO SET THE INDUSTRY PACE IN RESPONSIBLE MANUFACTURING

The list of green achievements by Liebherr, the worldwide leader in premium refrigeration is a long one, and to best summarize Liebherr's proactive stance, the German manufacturer has announced its ActiveGreen initiative. "We wanted to create a concept that best described our commitment to finding greener ways to produce quality products," says Marc Perez, Vice President of Liebherr North America. "Since we never stop improving our methods and our products, we felt that ActiveGreen was a strong and appropriate statement."

ActiveGreen is a corporate mission to achieve the highest ENERGY STAR® rating, to set the example and encourage other North American manufacturers to be RoHS compliant as Liebherr did in mid-2007, and to have the least damaging effect on the environment through responsible manufacturing practices.

The first example of the ActiveGreen initiative is immediate as the new ENERGY STAR® rating requirements came effect this month (April 2008). The company is pleased to announce that its entire product line of indoor refrigeration meets and exceeds the new guidelines for ENERGY STAR®, making Liebherr the only brand in the North American marketplace to achieve these standards. "Competitive products have select models that meet ENERGY STAR® requirements, but no one else can say that 100% of their indoor refrigeration is ENERGY STAR® rated," adds Perez.

The second key element of ActiveGreen is Liebherr's RoHS compliance. As of summer of 2007, all Liebherr appliances in North America met RoHS compliance making Liebherr the FIRST refrigeration manufacturer to comply with this practise worldwide. RoHS stands for the "Restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment" and eliminates the use of major hazardous substances in the production of Liebherr products such as lead (Pb), mercury (Hg), cadmium (Cd) and certain types of chrome and biphenyl. Lastly, and importantly is, Liebherr's longstanding list of responsible production initiatives. For example:

- Liebherr was the first appliance manufacturer worldwide to remove CFC's completely from the production process in 1993
- Since 2000, Liebherr's considerable investment to ensure environmental compatibility has resulted in the reduced use of chemicals, solvents and energy consumption
- Liebherr has established central waste and resource collection stations at their manufacturing facilities
- The packaging materials on all products are 100% recyclable
- The water used in the production process is purified and pollution-free
- The energy released during production is recovered and utilized again in heating the manufacturing environments.

"We're excited to be an industry leader, and we will use ActiveGreen as a symbol for our responsible practises. We've invested in the research and development necessary to be so proactive and I know that we're making a difference," says Perez.

General product information is available at www.liebherr-appliances.com. **RO**



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Reinventing the 36" refrigerator.

This is what happens when you leave Liebherr engineers and designers alone in a room with a fridge. Leading design and innovation now exists in the 36" size category with the introduction of the new 2062 Series of high performance refrigerators available in freestanding and integrated models.

Unique LED light columns and LED drawer lights illuminate almost 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 elegant French doors coupled with double freezer drawers make it a kitchen showpiece.



www.liebherr-appliances.com

LIEBHERR

EASTERN MARKETING CORPORATION THANKS THEIR DEALERS WITH 2008 GOLF CLASSIC AT CRESTMONT COUNTRY CLUB

(West Orange, NJ) October 2nd, 2007— Eastern Marketing Corporation, exclusive distributors of luxury appliance brands from Maine to Virginia, recently held their 2008 Golf Classic Event at Crestmont Country Club in West Orange, NJ for a group of 64 dealers and 8 manufacturers. The golf event included lunch, golf, hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, and a barbecue dinner on the Lynx grill on the patio.

The golf course at the private Crestmont Country Club is a Donald Ross designed course. This world famous golf architect began his career at St. Andrews Golf Club in Scotland and has designed over 400 golf courses.

Eastern Marketing Corp. distributes Bertazzoni gas ranges, Marvel, Vent A Hood, Lynx grills, Blomberg dishwashers & refrigerators, AGA, Diva, and Waste King to 500+ dealers. **RO**



Sergio Varela, Anaheim Manufacturing [Waste King]; Paolo Consiglio, Bertazzoni, SpA; Bret Hadley, CEO, Lynx Professional Grills; Craig & Marty Friedman, Eastern Marketing Corporation; Amir Girgis, Diva De Provence; James Adams, Vent A Hood; Brad Michael, AGA at the 2008 Golf Classic



Dealers at dinner at the patio at Crestmont Country Club for Eastern Marketing Corporation golf outing



Fred Moyer & Troy Freed, Woodmode; James Adams, Vent A Hood; Marty Mg Gillow & Marty Friedman, President, Eastern Marketing Corporation at the 2008 Golf Classic



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FAGOR AMERICA INTRODUCES NEW BUILT-IN COFFEE MACHINE AT KBIS 2008 SHOW

Fagor America is introducing new appliance to its North America line: a built-in coffee machine. The new coffee machine was showcased at the KBIS 2008 Show.

The new addition to the Fagor line of products brings the rich authentic flavors of coffee to your home. Impress your friends with delicious European style espresso or cappuccino. Even the most finicky coffee connoisseur will be impressed for you can select from weak, medium or strong coffee for the perfect cup every time. It prepares two cups at a time and generates steam allowing you to quickly heat milk to give your coffee that exquisite creamy texture. For those of us with a tea palate, the hot water dispenser provides all the hot water needed to prepare delicious hot teas. It regulates the temperature of water and steam, the amount of water and how finely the coffee is ground. It also has a 0.66 gallon water tank capacity and holds 10.5 ounces of coffee.

The display panel allows you to select from 5 different languages: English, Spanish, Italian, German and French. The electronic programming makes the operation of the coffee machine very easy. In addition, it warns you when the water tank or coffee container is empty. It is also equipped with an energy saving sleep mode.

Since it can be fitted into column-style kitchen units, it can be placed a more visible and accessible height for programming and operation. The installation of the coffee machine has two options: a direct connection to the water main supply or to the built-in water tank. Suggested retail price for the new coffee machine is \$2499.00 USD.

Fagor has also 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 new 36" island range hood and a new 30" wall mounted 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.

For more information, please visit: www.fagoramerica.com, or call 201.804.3900 **RO**



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SLEEK REFRIGERATORS COMPLEMENT OUTDOOR GRILL AND WARMING DRAWER OFFERING

Dacor®, a market leader in luxury kitchen appliance design, manufacturing and distribution, announced the launch of the Epicure Indoor/Outdoor Refrigerator to complement the brand's growing collection of high-performing outdoor appliances. The new Epicure Indoor/Outdoor Refrigerator adds both convenience and style to outdoor living spaces, as traditional backyards continue to evolve into areas meant for more than the occasional barbecue. Today, backyards often resemble indoor living rooms with full-size furniture and complete kitchen amenities. It's only natural that these al fresco kitchens include a refrigerator designed to withstand ambient temperatures. "Dacor's ultimate goal is to improve life in the kitchen for consumers who are as passionate about the details of cooking as we are," said Elaine Chaney, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Sales at Dacor. "We know that having the right tools for the right task is extremely important, regardless of whether you're hosting a wine and cheese tasting for several dozen business associates or cooking hotdogs and hamburgers for a handful of 10-year-olds. Our appliance offering continues to provide consumers with all of the tools necessary for their indoor and outdoor kitchens and the Epicure Indoor/Outdoor Refrigerator was a natural addition to our outdoor product assortment."

THE COOL DETAILS OF OUTDOOR LIVING

Designed to fit neatly under any counter in an outdoor patio or kitchen layout, the unit stands at 33" tall and 24" wide and will easily slide into standard cabinetry openings. An innovative digital electronic control panel allows users to adjust the temperature with the simple touch of a button, a charcoal filter removes unwanted odors, keeping contents pure and the unit boasts quiet storage due to a robust vibration-free compressor. Available with a stainless steel door with left- or right-hand door swing options, the refrigerator is built to withstand temperatures from 50 degrees to 109 degrees Fahrenheit, is more efficient at maintaining internal temperatures than competitors' models and can be used to store milk and fresh food storage in addition to beverages. The refrigerator is the ideal accessory for any bar or entertainment area and has the capacity to hold 124 cans or 50 bottles.

The Epicure Indoor/Outdoor Refrigerator is an extension to Dacor's long-standing line of high-performing Epicure Outdoor Grills. Available in 52" and 36" widths, the models feature brighter halogen lighting, which illuminates the cooking surface so the barbecue can continue long after the sun goes down. A patent-pending, optional ceramic sear burner, placed inside the firebox, offers high intensity cooking for perfect searing and brilliant Illumina™ Burner Control Knobs glow blue when the grill is on, for greater safety and aesthetic appeal. A redesigned premium canopy hood is lighter and more user-friendly than previous grill models.

Three U-shaped stainless steel burners operate at 20,000 BTU on grill models without the optional ceramic sear burner. | *continued on page 52*



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PERLICK'S 15-INCH REFRIGERATOR DRAWERS WIN PRESTIGIOUS PLATINUM ADEX AWARD MILWAUKEE

Perlick Corporation, a leader in luxury residential undercounter refrigeration products, has received a platinum-level award in the 2007-2008 Awards for Design Excellence (ADEX) competition—the highest award level given by design professionals on the judging committee—for its world's first 15-inch Signature Series refrigerator drawers. "Perlick is proud to be recognized for the fourth consecutive year for its superior design and innovation," notes Jeff Wimberly, director of sales and marketing for Perlick residential products. "Perlick is respected for its innovative designs and we are truly honored to be the first to introduce the 15-inch refrigerator drawers."

Perlick's 15-inch refrigerator drawers is joined by a refrigerator, beverage center, wine reserve and world's first beer dispenser to round out the entire 15-inch Signature Series line up. These models look as luxurious as their wider Perlick brandmates with stainless steel interiors and full-extension shelves. The 15-inch line offers Perlick-quality performance, with an outstanding 700 Btu compressor and a digital control hidden inside to keep the exterior lines clean and unbroken. Each model features a full-height door (on the non-drawer models) available in stainless steel, UV-protected insulated glass, or with a fully-integrated wood overlay to seamlessly blend with surrounding cabinetry.

ADEX is the largest and most prestigious awards program for product design of furniture, fixtures and finishes marketed to the design trade. *Design Journal*, the international trade publication for interior designers, architects and facility managers, sponsors the ADEX Awards. Judging is conducted by an anonymous panel of professionals, who judge entries in their respective areas of expertise.

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 undercounter refrigerators, wine cabinets, 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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Come drive the dialogue. You want to hear what the top authorities are saying; you also want a forum to voice your own views and have plenty of time to brainstorm with colleagues. Dialogue can reignite your passion. And dialogue is the driving force behind PCBC 2008. We have the power. Our entire industry is surrounded by challenges, more profound and perplexing than ever before. Some are cyclical, but many are not. Long after the turnaround, we'll still be challenged by the environment, affordability, shifting generations, changing lifestyles, land scarcity, and entitlement barriers. PCBC® 2008 has the leaders to address these challenges.

We have the power to move forward. PCBC® 2008 will open your eyes to new paradigms, innovative solutions, and cutting-edge ideas with a stimulating array of headliners, trendspotters, and provocateurs. Involve yourself and expand your insights by attending educational conferences from business strategy to operations, and everything in-between. Experience the latest in tools, techniques, and products from more than 650 of the nation's leading manufacturers and suppliers. Concentrate your interests at our specialized workshops—the full-day Builder-to-Builder Green Forum and two-day Multifamily Trends Conference.

We have the power to move forward and sustain. PCBC® 2008 will show you how to drive the dialogue: how to turn complacency into a culture of innovation; how to become a better decision-maker; how to use green to your advantage; how to profit from word-of-mouth marketing; how to create public/private structures to address water shortage issues; how to fight costs with value engineering; how to survive and flourish in these uncertain times. And, as you absorb and assimilate the strategies and skills you need for the challenges ahead, don't forget to take advantage of the lighter side of PCBC. This is, after all, San Francisco!

A great program is set, a wonderful venue is ready, and the best vendors are geared up. The success of your PCBC now rests with your involvement. Come drive the dialogue.

Let's talk!
Kent Aden
Chairman, PCBC® 2008

RetailObserver

APPLIANCE INDUSTRY BOOTH GUIDE 4 PAGE PULL-OUT SECTION



SHOW INFORMATION

PCBC® 2008

Tuesday - Friday | June 24 - 27

PCBC is one of the largest tradeshows in the nation, ranking in the top 120 nationwide according to Tradeshow Week magazine's annual survey. The Show is also the largest regional homebuilding industry tradeshow in the nation. This year, 25,000 people are expected to attend PCBC, which will also feature more than 600 exhibitors and more than 230,000 net square feet of exhibit space.

MULTIFAMILY TRENDS CONFERENCE

Monday - Tuesday | June 23 - 24

For the sixth straight year, PCBC is partnering with the Urban Land Institute to host the Multifamily Trends Conference in conjunction with the Show. The Conference has become a "must-attend" event for builders and designers of for-sale and rental multifamily housing.

BUILDER-TO-BUILDER GREEN FORUM

Tuesday | June 24

Held as a counterpart to PCBC, the Builder-to-Builder Green Forum cultivates the creation of strong alliances between the builders and developers who deliver greener, and more profitable projects. The forum upholds a focus on sustainable community development and how to create a resilient business model with economic, environmental and social returns

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Monday, June 23 | Pre-Conference Events

1:30pm-5:30pm Leader-to-Leader Forum (Invitation only)
3:00pm-6:30pm Multifamily Trends Conference
6:00pm-9:00pm Leader-to-Leader Forum Welcome Reception and Dinner (Invitation only)

Tuesday, June 24 | Pre-Conference Events

8:00am-5:30pm Multifamily Trends Conference
8:30am-5:00pm Bay Area Housing Tour:
The Green Machine
8:30am-5:00pm Bay Area Housing Tour:
The Wild Wine Country
8:30am-5:00pm Bay Area Housing Tour: Urban Living
and Landscapes
8:30am-5:30pm Leader-to-Leader Forum (Invitation only)
9:00am-5:15pm Builder-to-Builder Green Forum
10:00am-5:00pm Sales & Marketing Boot Camp for a New Era:
Competing for Today's Elusive Buyers
10:00am-3:30pm The Lean Building Machine: Preserving
Margins in the Toughest Market in 30 Years
6:00pm-9:00pm Hall of Fame Dinner (Westin St. Francis Hotel)

Wednesday, June 25 | Conference & Exhibits

8:00am-10:00am Opening Breakfast with Carly Fiorina
10:00am-5:00pm Exhibit Halls Open
10:30am-11:30am Conference Programs
10:30am-12:30pm Mission Bay Walking Tour

11:45am-1:15pm Economic Forecast Lunch with Todd Buchholz
1:30pm-2:30pm Conference Programs
2:00pm-5:00pm Meet The Money
3:00pm-4:00pm Conference Programs
4:15pm-5:15pm General Session Keynote with
Malcolm Gladwell (Open to all attendees)

Thursday, June 26 | Conference & Exhibits

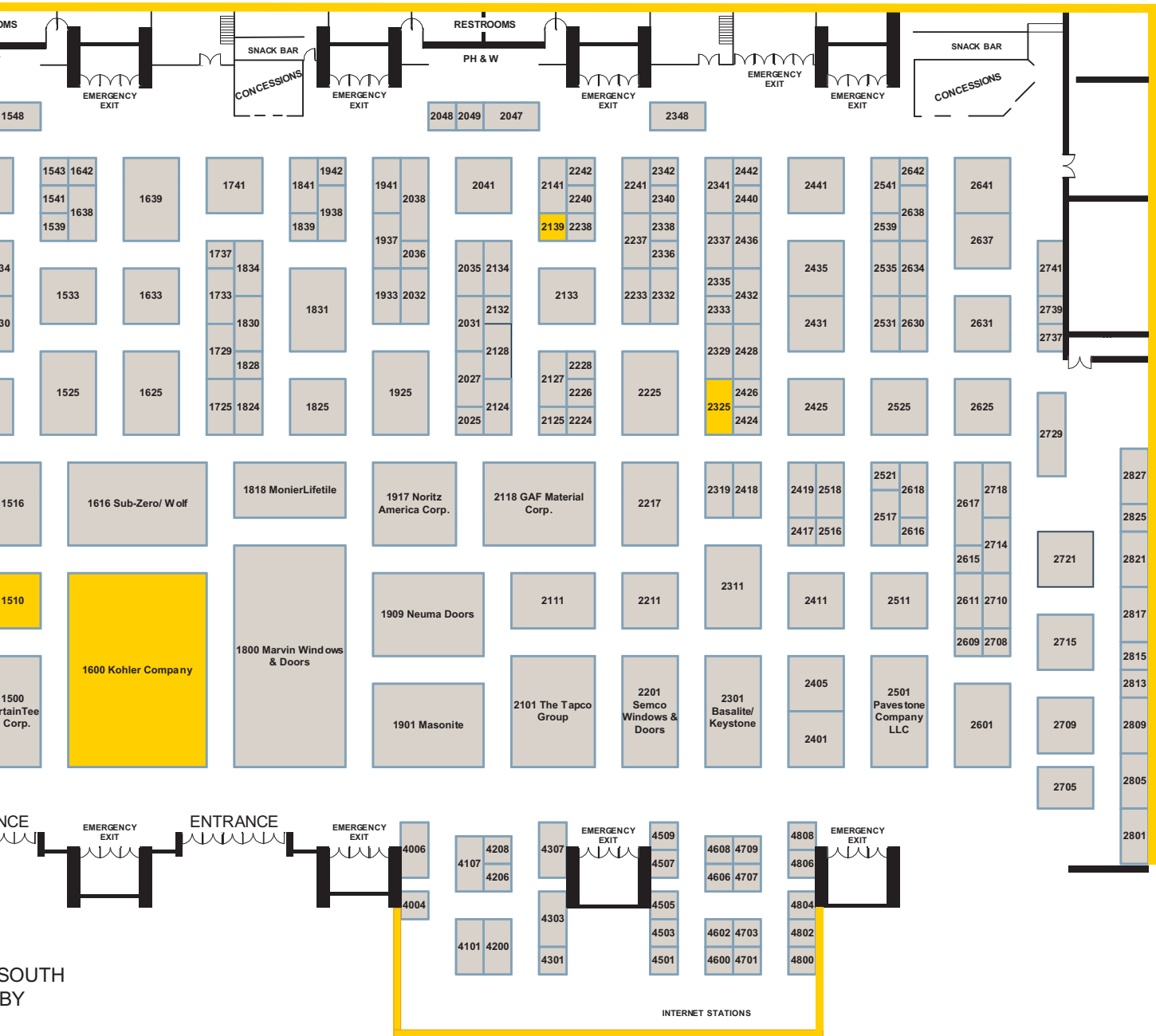
8:00am-10:00am Trends Breakfast with Gary Hamel
9:00am-4:00pm CFO Roundtable (Invitation only)
10:00am-5:00pm Exhibit Halls Open
10:30am-11:30am Conference Programs
10:30am-2:00pm Downtown Living Walking Tour
10:30am-2:30pm San Francisco Design Center Tour
11:45am-1:15pm Consumer Trends Lunch with J. Walker Smith
1:30pm-2:30pm Conference Programs
3:00pm-4:00pm Conference Programs
4:15pm-5:15pm General Session Keynote with Andrew Zoll
(Open to all attendees)
4:30pm-8:30pm Gold Nugget Awards

Friday, June 27 | Conference & Exhibits

9:00am-3:00pm Exhibit Halls Open
9:00am-4:00pm Frontline Training: Sales Agents
10:00am-11:00am Closing Keynote with Tom Peters
(Open to all attendees)



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PCBC® 2008

WHY PCBC, AND WHY NOW?

ATTENDEES AND EXHIBITORS LOOK TO PCBC FOR ANSWERS—PARTICULARLY IN A DOWN MARKET

BY MICHAEL CASTILLO

With the housing market experiencing a 180 degree turn-around from the boom earlier this decade, and with homebuilding companies implementing cost cutting measures across the board, the question on the minds of many in the industry may be: Can I afford to attend PCBC® 2008? What they should be asking themselves is: Can I afford not to?

With program titles like “What’s Next: A Housing Market Overview,” “How to Sell Homes in a Down Market,” and “Quality Management Strategies for Survival, Success and Profitability,” PCBC is gearing seminars and programs toward those who are looking for solutions in a troubled market. The programs at PCBC will cover everything from market analysis and branding and marketing, to fighting costs and how to develop cost effective green building standards. Exhibitors will also be on the floor to display their latest and most advanced products to the vast array of attendees that come to the Show every year.

Zoe Miller, director of operations at Computer Presentation Systems, which specializes in computer software for homebuilders, has been exhibiting at PCBC for more than 17 years and says she attends the Show to gather feedback from both current and prospective clients as well as to introduce new products. “Traditionally, builders take time when the market isn’t too busy to take a look at the tools needed to support and grow their business,” Miller says. “Homebuilders like to attend because of the venue, wide range of participants and excellent programming so, whatever the market conditions, exhibiting is a ‘must’ in our marketing program.”

Miller says they will be exhibiting in both the North and South Halls this year as opposed to only having one booth in the HomeTech Connect section of the floor. “Our latest product, SalesTouch, reaches beyond the traditional ‘tech’ marketplace, so we wanted to position ourselves for the larger, general market as well,” she says. “It’s a stretch, as we’ll need additional booth personnel and more setup time, but we think the additional exposure will make it a worthwhile decision.”

In addition to the products and programs going on this year at PCBC, one of the main topics of discussion will be “green.” While PCBC offers a variety of green building programs in the main conference schedule,

such as “Green Building for Dummies” and “Cost Effective Measures for Building Green and Sustainable Homes,” the Builder-to-Builder Green Forum is an all-day event that will focus exclusively on green building. Slated for Tuesday, June 24, green building peers, industry experts, and leaders will convene and engage the audience in an open and frank dialogue and move beyond healthy homes to encompass broader issues of sustainable communities.

Derek Hansen, vice president of development construction at The Towbes Group and a PCBC attendee for more than 10 years, says he’s particularly interested in learning more about green building practices at this year’s Show, and believes that the state of the market should not determine whether people attend PCBC. “The market has never really been a driving reason for deciding to attend PCBC,” Hansen says. “If it is, you’re kind of missing the boat.”

Rather than just sending one or two people, the Towbes Group has signed up for the High Five Team Discount Full Conference Pass, which gets five people into the full conference for the price of three. Hansen says his company might even register a few more people to attend, as PCBC provides such a wide variety of programs and products that there’s something to offer for every portion of the industry. “It’s more about continuing education,” he says. “Our company strives to be up on the latest products and happenings in the industry to determine where we’re going and where we want to be five years from now. We need to get out there and figure out new ways to approach our business, especially when the market is down. “If you’re waiting for the sun to come out from behind these dark clouds, then you’re going to be waiting a long time while the rest of us, who take advantage of opportunities like PCBC, continue to move forward,” he says.

Tim Sullivan, president of Sullivan Group Real Estate Advisors and this year’s Program Chair for PCBC, agrees. “PCBC is a lifeline to maintaining relationships and uncovering new business opportunities,” he says. “It’s a positive place to reconnect with people and generate new and great ideas, and we’ve really tried to design this year’s programs to do just that.” To register for PCBC® 2008, visit www.pcbc.com or call (800) 956-SHOW.

Michael Castillo may be reached at mcastillo@cbia.org. **RO**

BLUESTAR LAUNCHES 'WHITE GLOVE SERVICE' PROGRAM

BlueStar™, the manufacturer of high-performance gas ranges and cooktops for the residential market, today launched its elite White Glove Service. The service allows any BlueStar customer who purchases an RNB range or cooktop—retroactive to April 14, 2008—the opportunity to schedule complimentary “fine tuning” of their BlueStar product, following installation.

“BlueStar is widely considered the best performing cooking line available for the home. With the White Glove Service program we can ensure that every BlueStar customer is able to cook at their optimum level,” said Mike Trapp, BlueStar’s Vice President of Operations. “In addition to having their BlueStar product fine-tuned for optimal performance by a trained BlueStar service agent, the customer will also receive an automatic upgrade from a standard one-year limited warranty to a two-year limited warranty.”

Originally a manufacturer of high-powered commercial ranges, BlueStar now markets exclusively to the residential market. The hand-assembled quality of BlueStar products has caught the attention of cooking enthusiasts, from professional chefs to amateur cooks, who demand uncompromised quality in their appliances. What sets BlueStar ranges apart from other premium ranges is their performance. Trapp explains that BlueStar ranges are built with restaurant specifications in mind, which give users professional-quality results. The ranges are stacked with features generally restricted to professional chefs, but designed for the home kitchen. BlueStar’s unique 22,000 BTU open burner system is the most powerful open burner on the market. The ability to custom order a BlueStar range with a choice of 190 colors opens up amazing new possibilities for kitchen makeovers.

“Every company wants to create brand loyalty in its customers, but very few can develop the type of passion and devotion that BlueStar generates,” said Trapp. “BlueStar’s line of kitchen appliances has inspired a strong following among people who are passionate about cooking.”

HOW TO SCHEDULE WHITE GLOVE SERVICE

To schedule White Glove Service, BlueStar customers must contact the company’s service line at (800)449-8691 within 10 days of having their product installed. BlueStar will then schedule an authorized service agent to the customer’s residence within 10 days. The service agent will perform a comprehensive diagnostic of the product, including a review of the air shutter and burner setting, top burners’ ignition, oven burner efficiency, griddle and charbroiler temperatures, oven lights and switch performance, and fit and finish.

The service will also extend to purchases of the company’s upcoming wall ovens and drop-in cooktops. White Glove Service is only available in the continental United States. For more information, please visit www.bluestarcooking.com.

ABOUT BLUESTAR

BlueStar™—The Only Genuine Restaurant Range for the Home™—manufactures high-performance gas ranges and cooktops for the residential market. The company’s unique open burner system produces 22,000 BTU of cooking power, resulting in shorter cooking times and an even simmer. Each BlueStar range is hand-crafted in Reading, Pennsylvania and features burners that can be custom configured at the time of order. Most BlueStar models are available in 190 colors, at no extra charge. Please visit www.bluestarcooking.com. **RO**



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According to the Home Ventilating Institute (HVI), kitchens can be a main source of pollution in the home. The best way to exhaust pollutants (moisture, odors, smoke and vapors) is with a range hood ducted to the outdoors. Best® offers many options for kitchen ventilation solutions.

The newest addition to the Best line of kitchen ventilation products, the IP29 series of professional island range hoods, offers an elegant combination of form and function that sets this model apart from the typical professional style range hood, according to Brian Wellnitz, marketing manager, kitchen ventilation, Broan-NuTone.

“The Best IP29 series offers features to satisfy the discriminating needs of any homeowner,” says Wellnitz. “Designed for use indoors, the IP29 series features a seamless welded design which creates a flawless appearance and a professional grade stainless steel finish which gives it lasting quality. Flexible design allows installation with an optional stainless steel flue or custom soffit design.”

The IP29 series offers several internal and exterior blower options, all of which are certified by HVI to perform at the stated CFM level. The IP29 series features a powerful 600 or 1,200 CFM internal blower. For customers who want the ultimate in quiet and power, the IP29 series allows the choice of four in-line and four exterior blower options up to 1,500 CFM.

“The IP29 series is the first range hood to offer the LinkLogic™ System. LinkLogic uses the INSTEON™ platform to allow homeowners to communicate with other enabled products in the home,” says Wellnitz. “With LinkLogic, homeowners also have the option of a remote control device to operate the range hood. This option is great for those who have difficulty reaching the control panel on the hood. And since simplicity is so important, the technology requires no special wiring and allows the use of common wiring that already exists in the home.”

Another recent breakthrough that is included in the IP29 is the Automatic Sensor Control (ASC) feature. This sensor technology provides convenience and efficiency for the homeowner. ASC detects the vapors from cooking activity and will control the hood automatically to achieve the exact level of exhaust, for exactly the correct amount of time. No more; no less. In effect, the act of cooking becomes the ON-OFF switch for the hood operation. This frees the user from thinking about the hood operation while at the same time maximizing good IAQ and minimizing energy consumption. For those who want to take direct control of the hood, the IP29 series features an advanced LCD display electronic pushbutton control that provides many capabilities including last setting memory so it remembers your favorite blower speed, air-refresh setting that silently removes stale air, and multiple speed and light settings to meet the exact needs of the user. And because lighting is so important, the IP29 comes with six to eight halogen lamps that light your cooking creations brilliantly. As with all Best range hoods, this series comes with the exclusive Heat Sentry™ system that automatically detects excessive heat and turns the blower on until the heat reduces.

The IP29 is available in 42-inch and 54-inch widths and is 32 inches deep. A drywall trim kit is available for custom design of flue extension, allowing homeowners to create their own unique signature on their kitchen's centerpiece. **RO**

BROAN

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ALONG WITH THE INDUSTRY'S FIRST DOWNDRAFT RECIRCULATION MODULE
FOR DIFFICULT-TO-VENT HOMES

Furthering its seven decades heritage of fulfilling culinary passions, Thermador is launching a number of industry firsts at the 2008 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show that offer functional solutions and beautiful design for any kitchen space. Thermador's sleek new electric cooktops boast infrared sensor technology that accurately maintains precise cooking temperatures to help consumers save time and effort. Redesigned gas cooktops feature the exclusive, next generation Star Burner®, and now includes the most powerful 30" five burner gas cooktop, among leading manufacturers. Additionally, Thermador is unveiling new ventilation products that perfectly complement the brand's redesigned family of chiseled appliances, as well as the first downdraft recirculation module that solves the problem in difficult-to-vent kitchens. "Thermador's modern interpretation of bold, classic American style has resulted in a full range of chiseled new appliances that further our distinction as America's iconic cooking brand," said Franz J. Bosshard, president and CEO. "Now consumers can build a custom dream kitchen in both traditional and contemporary styles, further opening up the design possibilities with Thermador's Masterpiece and Professional Series appliances."

ELECTRIC COOKTOPS

Unlike anything on the market today, Thermador's new electric cooktops feature exclusive infrared sensor technology called Sensor Dome™, available in the 30" and 36" Masterpiece™ Deluxe Series. With this retractable sensor dial, an infrared beam continuously measures the heat from the cookware, then automatically shuts the burner off and cycles it on and off to maintain the precise temperature needed and avoid boil over. The end result is time savings combined with superior cooking performance—without the guesswork or the need to constantly adjust the temperature. Additionally, Sensor Dome is a powerful ally to the CookSmart™ program, new to Thermador's cooktops and currently available on the advanced Masterpiece wall ovens. Designed to save consumers time and effort, CookSmart offers nine pre-programmed temperature modes to perfectly prepare a variety of common recipes, including pasta, potatoes and vegetables, as well as assist with deep frying. Again, the automatic shut-off timer and cycling of the element eliminates the need for constant power adjustment.

VENTILATION

Thermador's exclusive downdraft recirculation module is the perfect solution for difficult to-duct situations, such as in high-rise buildings, cement slab foundation homes or high ceiling kitchens that cannot accommodate an overhead hood. The easy-to-install module sits in the cabinetry below the cooking surface and simultaneously cleans and vents the air through two charcoal filters to remove virtually all odor and moisture. It joins the new companion Masterpiece downdraft ventilation, which features a 14" rise—the highest in the industry. It also offers a push-button mechanical control, smooth and quiet movement when it is raised or lowered from the cooktop surface, and a | *continued on page 52* |

Thermador®

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LICENSEES HEAR ADVICE ON MANY PHASES OF RETAIL POSITIONING FROM PITCH TO PACKAGING TO IN-STORE MERCHANDISING

ATLANTA—Speakers at the third annual Licensing Summit held March 18-19 and hosted by The Weather Channel shared ideas for success. Ira Mayer, president of EPM Communications and publisher of The Licensing Letter, pointed out that licensing is more than permission to use a brand name. He defined licensing as a “lease agreement in which the licensee rents the right to leverage the emotion engendered by the intellectual property to boost sales.”

The speaking program was made up of consultants in packaging, retailing for mid-level stores and for mass merchandisers. At the panel discussion moderated by Mayer, they covered topics that included trends, branding, the impact of the “green” movement, and new directions in marketing such as a plan by one broadcast network to promote its programs on TV monitors visible at the pumps of gasoline stations.

Providing perspective from the packaging side of business was Ted Mininni, president/creative director, Design Force, Inc., a New Jersey-based brand design consultant to consumer product companies. Based on his firm’s expertise in emotionally connecting consumers to brands, he said that packaging should engage prospective buyers and move them to make a purchase out of love and the promise of self-fulfillment and self-actualization. A brand that fills desires rather than just needs can help build that relationship with the consumer.

“Why are products on the shelves so unremarkable? Research shows that shoppers ignore one-third of products due to shelf clutter. Packaging should be meaningful and provocative. It should align the product in a manner that elicits emotional response. You have only one chance to make a first impression,” he said.

Mininni named several ways of doing this. Manufacturers can leverage lifestyle assets of the brand or use an appeal that is aspirational, promising a significant impact on the consumer’s life. Examples he gave of brands that have a strong resonance for consumers were Harley-Davidson, Apple and MTV.

“Packaging should be engaging through color, fun, nostalgia and cues to connect in an elemental way. It should also be iconic and offer a clear choice. It should speak to the buyer, visit their lifestyles and reach them in an emotive manner. If it isn’t compelling on the shelf, the manufacturer has not given them a reason to purchase,” he said.

Dana Kierce, a sales broker with Atlanta-based Russell Athletic Corp., provided perspective from inside the retail market and spoke about what it takes to get in the door with mid-level retailers such as Target. “They are looking for unique products that differentiate them in the marketplace, products that they can charge a little more for so they don’t have to compete head-to-head with mass marketers.”

She recommended having a strong story and selling proposition by branding the identity of the product and knowing that it fits the store’s customer profile.

| continued on page 46|



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“Don’t confuse the buyer. Be clear with the message,” she said.

Kierce said that on the backend, the manufacturer must manage the sale even after the product is in the store. “Control the inventory so that you are hitting the metrics whether they are gross margins, deductions, sale percentages, or turnover.” She emphasized the importance of managing expectations, of being analytical and using proven successes in the pitch. “Spend money to monitor and provide metrics on how the product is performing and provide recommendations for sales people to try to do whatever works best,” she advised.

Carmin Iosue, founder of Iosue Associates, a Chicago-based company that has 5,000 representatives working in retail stores every day, shared his observations about managing the retail environment, especially in mass market stores. “Retailers know what sells and are looking for return on space. When you know retailers’ needs and deliver great products and great merchandising, you’ll get more space and more products in the store,” he said. He gave tips on how to use sampling, displays and other merchandising tools to maximize sales.

“Retailers today don’t want to just be sold on a product. They want vendors to bring them imaginative ideas on how to market the product. With more outsourcing, they are demanding more support from vendors. They are making demands on vendors to do the work that the retailers themselves used to do. Vendors must become category managers,” Iosue said.

He pointed out that licensors can have very strong results from “bundling” in the stores, putting together multipacks such as a five-item package of flashlights. A retailer such as Cosco is always looking for something a little different, something new and unique. They are known for offering a value that consumers can rely on. “They like to delight and surprise their customers and The Weather Channel as a brand affords that opportunity,” he said.

Iosue said that retailers welcome having manufacturers’ representatives in the stores to explain new products, especially in the area of consumer electronics where technology changes so rapidly. He said his own firm is installing 37-inch TV sets on the end caps of stores. The content will be changed monthly to keep up with the changes in HDTV, computers, cameras and other electronic equipment sold in the stores. “The days of the end cap that stays the same for a year are over,” he said.

Among the companies represented at the summit were: La Crosse Technology Ltd., La Crosse, WI; L.L.Bean, Freeport, ME; ShedRain Corp, Portland OR; Michell’s, Grand Rapids, MI; and Amarr of Winston-Salem, NC, Midas Records of Nashville, TN, Madacy Entertainment of Montreal, Canada; and Consortium Music Group of Nashville, TN.

The guests were welcomed by The Weather Channel Companies President Debora Wilson, followed by presentations by company executives. “In addition to the obvious benefits of the universal power of our brand name, our licensees have the added advantage of a licensing arrangement where we work side-by-side with them to increase their exposure, distribution and profitability. The annual summit is one of the ways we put that into practice,” said Lynn Brindell, executive vice president, The Weather Channel.

As part of presentation, Mayer presented The Licensing Letter’s most recent findings about retail sales of licensed merchandise. The results showed that the trademarks/brand category, the sports category and the entertainment/characters category are the top three highest categories in retail sales. **RO**



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NATIONWIDE MARKETING GROUP CONTINUES TO SUPPORT ENERGY STAR INITIATIVES

Nationwide Marketing Group (NMG) was honored the second year in a row with the ENERGY STAR award for excellence in promotion and outreach recognizing their efforts in working towards protecting the environment and saving energy. The award came from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Energy (DOE) and was given at a ceremony held in Washington, DC on April 1, 2008.

“NMG will continue to do all of the things we have been doing and more,” said Richard Weinberg, National Merchandise Manager of Appliances for Nationwide, “We are currently involved in several new energy projects, things are in motion and we are already seeing real results.”

According to ENERGY STAR, Nationwide was one of 21 organizations who were recognized for their outstanding work in promoting energy efficiency through promotions and outreach campaigns. In 2007, these organizations assisted in saving over 16 billion in energy costs and preventing 40 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions—equivalent to the annual emission of 27 million vehicles.

This November, the EPA established new ENERGY STAR criteria for flat panel televisions. Models that meet the new ENERGY STAR qualifications will use up to 30% less energy than those without an ENERGY STAR label. NMG has already taken this opportunity to enhance its energy intuitive in 2008.

“By working closely with energy efficiency program sponsors throughout the country, we are strengthening the message to our member dealers of the consumer and environmental benefits associated with the presentation and sale of ENERGY STAR qualified products,” explained Weinberg.

Nationwide Marketing Group continues to support ENERGY STAR programs including making members aware of the current “Change the World, Start with ENERGY STAR” campaign that began on Earth Day.

“We have made sure that all of our member dealers have access to the most current ENERGY STAR information all year round,” said Weinberg, “We view our partnership with ENERGY STAR as a win-win-win for our manufacturing partners, member dealers, consumers and the environment.”

REGISTRATION FOR PRIMETIME! BY NATIONWIDE BEGINS

Members get an all access pass to countless opportunities in one big show—online registration has begun for the next big buying show, PrimeTime! by Nationwide Marketing Group at Mandalay Bay Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada on August 17-20.

“PrimeTime! in Vegas is a must see this year,” said Ed Kelly President of Nationwide Marketing Group, “We are expecting a huge turnout from our vendors, who will be offering bigger savings on a larger selection of brand new product lines.”

During this Primetime! attendees will be given an all access pass to vendor one-on-ones, group meetings, presentations from industry leaders as well as an opportunity to attend PrimeTime! University (PTU). PTU are educational seminars held at the show on industry-focused topics tailored specifically for the independent retail dealer.

One of the most popular draws to PrimeTime! is Cash Back Now. Cash Back is an opportunity to save millions of dollars off merchandise priced exclusively for PrimeTime! All Cash Back rebates can be redeemed at the show—no waiting, no long lines, no hassle.

We get stronger, bigger and better with every show and Vegas will be no exception. Everyone who attends PrimeTime! has an All Access Pass to the tools needed to compete in the marketplace—if members need it, you can be sure that PrimeTime! will have it.”

PrimeTime! is held twice a year and is the largest buying group show for independent electronic, appliance and furniture member dealers. This PrimeTime! will fill 250,000 square feet of showroom floor space in the premiere Mandalay Bay Resort event center, recognized for numerous convention awards.

PRIMETIME! ALL ACCESS PASS TO COUNTLESS OPPORTUNITIES

- See thousands of **new products** on a 250,000 sq. ft. showroom floor
- Buy and instantly receive **cash back now** savings on exclusive rebate offers at the show
- Learn how to prepare, plan and build your business through **PrimeTime! University** courses
- Attend **group meetings** and network with other independent retailers
- Let **industry leaders** tell you what works in today's marketplace
- Schedule **one-on-one meetings** and build relationships with brand name vendors

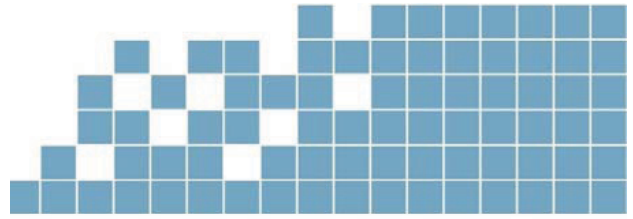
“We are looking forward to taking advantage of this premier location. PrimeTime! by Nationwide is growing and a larger space was needed to welcome bigger crowds.”

For more information on PrimeTime! and to keep up to date on the latest news leading up to the show visit www.nationwideprimetime.com. For information on membership, call Nationwide Marketing Group at (336) 722-4681 or email inquiries to info@nationwidegroup.org. **RO**



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CEA SLATES NEW LEADERSHIP TO THE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COUNCIL—Top Industry Executives from Google, Motorola, Kodak to Serve as Volunteer Leaders for CEA Policy Efforts

The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA)[®] today announced a new slate of volunteer industry leaders on its Government Affairs Council (GAC). As the leading trade association dedicated to public policy advocacy for the consumer electronics and technology industries, CEA plays a key leadership role in a wide range of technology policy issues.

“As CEA has grown to become one of the 15 largest trade associations, encompassing more than 2,200 of the nation’s most innovative technology companies, our policy advocacy is consistently ranked by these companies as a top benefit of CEA membership,” said Michael Petricone, senior vice president, Government Affairs for CEA. “The diversity of industry segments represented by CEA’s volunteer leaders—including wireless, in-vehicle technology, broadband, retailers, next-generation networks, and content—demonstrates that CEA truly is the hub of technology industry policy advocacy.”

CEA’s Government Affairs Council will be chaired by Derek Khlopin of Nokia Inc. and the following industry leaders will chair working groups within the GAC: Environmental Policy Committee, Mark Sharp of Panasonic Corp. of North America; Energy Efficiency, Theresa Jordan of Motorola; Spectrum Policy, Paul Schomburg of Panasonic and Cecily Cohen of Nokia; Product Safety, Jeff Howell of Toshiba; Telecommunications, Jim Morgan of Sony Electronics Inc.; Trade and Logistics, Brendan Harrington of Eastman Kodak Co.; Intellectual Property, Johanna Shelton of Google Inc.

“We focus on policy issues that have a critical impact on our members’ businesses, from trade to broadband, from energy and the environment to intellectual property and the DTV transition,” Petricone continued. “The volunteer leaders of CEA are strong advocates in the fight for consumer freedom to enjoy digital technologies.”

CEA’S “CONVERT YOUR MOM” CAMPAIGN OFFERS FREE GUIDE TO DTV TRANSITION—“Digital Tips” from America’s Favorite TV Mom Helps Seniors Get Ready for All-Digital TV Broadcasting

Over-the-air analog TV viewers now have a new, free, all-in-one resource at their fingertips to help prepare for February 17, 2009, when all full-power TV stations in the U.S. will broadcast exclusively in digital. The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA)[®] today announced the publication of “Florence Henderson’s Digital Tips,” a

brochure available for free by mail, as well as online, that explains in simple terms why the digital television transition is happening and what options and assistance are available for viewers. The brochure is part of CEA’s ongoing “Convert Your Mom” public education effort featuring entertainer Florence Henderson, best known for her role as Carol Brady on TV’s “The Brady Bunch.”

The full-color tri-fold brochure features three simple, illustrated steps to install and use a digital converter box to receive free digital TV broadcasts on an older analog TV set. It also directs consumers to the federal coupon program which provides up to two \$40 coupons per household to offset the cost of certified converter boxes.

Viewers can obtain “Florence Henderson’s Digital Tips” by sending a Self-Addressed, Stamped Envelope to “Digital Tips,” P.O. Box 73, Fanwood, NJ 07023, or easily download and print a copy online at www.DigitalTips.org.

“CEA and its member companies are doing everything possible to make sure that viewers make well-informed decisions and continue to enjoy their favorite channels after February 17, 2009,” said Gary Shapiro, CEA’s president and CEO. “We are rolling out several public awareness initiatives over the course of this year, and this brochure provides important information presented clearly and attractively to a targeted audience.”

CONTEST HUNTS FOR RABBIT EARS PIONEERS

CEA’s “Convert Your Mom” public education effort also features a nationwide contest in partnership with the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). The “Rabbit Ears Pioneers” competition, launched May 1, seeks the most interesting stories, memories and anecdotes from individuals who receive over-the-air broadcast TV signals using an antenna on an older analog television set. The contest is designed to encourage “Pioneers” to get ready for the digital conversion.

Winners chosen in June, August, September and October will receive a digital converter box and digital reception antenna so they can continue using an existing TV set, as well as be entered into the grand prize competition. The grand prize winner will receive a home entertainment center including a flat screen high-definition TV, an HD Blu-ray disc player and a surround sound audio system. The grand prize winning entry will be announced in November to mark the 100-day countdown to the transition date.

More details on the Rabbit Ears Pioneers contest can be found at www.antennaweb.org. **RO**



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DACOR | *continued from page 28* |

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Optional accessories are available including a 16" side unit with two 18,000 BTU burners, continuous grates and stainless steel cover for outdoor chefs who wish to stir-fry vegetables or boil a large pot of lobsters. Additionally, a 24" indoor/outdoor warming oven, with safely concealed controls and a four-hour timer, promises to keep grilled items sizzling until ready to serve and provides a gentle heat ranging from 100° to 200°. **RO**

THERMADOR | *continued from page 42* |

highly efficient dishwasher-safe filter and combined splatter shield. Joining this signature product is Thermador's stylish new 36" Easy Lift Chimney Hood. Beautiful and highly functional, it comes with electronic touch controls, a 600 CFM blower, and is distinguished by a pivoting glass canopy. This unique and customizable design means that it can be lowered to ensure that it is positioned effectively to clear the smoke above the cooking surface, as well as lifted for more headroom or ease during cleaning.

Thermador's full-line of appliances featuring its new modern design platform will be showcased at K/BIS 2008, including the Masterpiece and Professional Series wall ovens; Pro Grand® and Pro Harmony™ Ranges, including the latest Pro Harmony 48" Dual Fuel Range; Professional Series cooktops; silver-mirrored induction cooktops; Freedom® Collection™ refrigeration and wine columns; dishwashers and more. **RO**



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And action! Cast: David Cornell, director/husband; Mea Argentieri, sommelier/wife; Clancey and Ella Cornell, equestrians/daughters.

Wide shot reveals cast preparing a meal in their California kitchen.

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BRAND BUILDING

BE OPPORTUNISTIC ABOUT BUILDING GOODWILL

One of the best ways to gain awareness for your company, and build your brand, is to generate goodwill in your community.

There are countless ways to do this – from sponsoring Little League teams to contributing to local charities. In addition to the regular, ongoing things you do, you should always be on the lookout for unexpected philanthropic opportunities, as they can often have a huge impact and generate immeasurable goodwill.

An example of this recently occurred where I live in Milwaukee. A thief had brazenly stolen a large flat-screen television from the local veterans' nursing home.

The way in which he did it caused a sensation in the local media—he simply disguised himself as a repairman—complete with uniform and name patch – and walked into the nursing home in the middle of the day, and wheeled the TV out on a dolly. No one questioned him because he looked official.

Personally, I cannot think of many lower crimes than stealing from our aging war heroes. But when bad things like this happen, it often brings out the best in people.

That was certainly the case with Michael Costigan, who runs Waukesha Home Design Center in Menomonee Falls, Wis., a suburb of Milwaukee.

Upon hearing the news of the theft, Costigan decided to make the donation. "I was just absolutely disgusted," he was quoted as saying in an article by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. "In general, (the theft) upset me, but just the fact that it was the VA itself, I thought, 'That was just wrong.'"

So Costigan donated a new, 52-inch LG LCD television to the VA nursing home.

News of Costigan's generosity spread quickly, and soon he was featured in the newspaper, on the television news and on the radio. By simply donating a TV with a purchase price of around \$1,000, Costigan gained brand awareness worth tens of thousands of dollars, maybe more.

Once an obscure store in an outlying suburb, Costigan's company was instantly known all over the metro area as being a company that cared about the community and that shared the same values of the residents. The goodwill he created is something that cannot easily be bought.

So what is the brand-building lesson? It's that generating goodwill in the community is an outstanding way to get noticed by potential customers. But it requires that you be ready to act quickly and not be afraid to take credit.

ACT FAST

Costigan's actions demonstrate the importance of being

ready to act when an opportunity to build goodwill presents itself.

Obviously, something like what happened at the VA in Milwaukee cannot be predicted. Also, the lifespan of news stories is short.

Costigan took decisive action while the story was still fresh in the minds of the media and the public. Had he waited just a couple days, the news cycle would have been over, and another retailer would probably have beaten him to it, anyway.

Part of acting fast is to have a plan in place. Having a list of reporters and journalists' e-mail addresses and phone numbers will help you expedite the process of getting the word out.

USE YOUR HEART

The other thing that made Costigan's move so successful was that it was sincere. He was truly genuine in his desire to help in a way in which he was uniquely qualified. He was not trying to artificially insert himself into the situation for his own personal gain.

When companies are not sincere about their philanthropic efforts, they are very often perceived to be simply taking advantage of a situation. All you need to do is be sincere.

People will know.

TAKE CREDIT

It may sound cynical to think of it that way, but being a good corporate citizen and doing something good for your community doesn't mean you shouldn't take credit for it.

People like buying from people. Telling the world about the good deeds your company does gives your company personality. It makes you likable.

You should be proud of the good work you do and not think twice about sharing the news. If doing good deeds gets you recognized, it could lead to more customers. More customers will allow you to give more back to the community.

It's a winning proposition for everyone.

Christopher Thiede owns BUILD Communications, a branding and PR firm. He can be reached at chris@buildcommunications.com.



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THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

A recent trip to Cuba has given me reason to re-think some of my own ideas about entrepreneurship.

The "nature vs. nurture" debate has long been used in discussions about innate qualities and personality traits. Is it the environment in which one is brought up or one's genetic make-up that determines his IQ, language facility or any other personality characteristic?

We all live on a risk vs. reward continuum. I've had a number of discussions about whether or not the drive toward owning one's own business is influenced by the environment. I find that in families with a long history of corporate or government jobs—those with a fair amount of security, good benefits and solid retirement plans—there is a great reluctance to assume much risk.

When talking about expansion or increased borrowing, my retail clients often tell me about the fears expressed to them by their spouses who may be teachers or whose parents were career government employees.

I recently spoke with a friend who was frustrated about the jobs his children had taken. He felt the positions—although secure—were far below the kids' education and capabilities. He noted that perhaps his own career with a national not-for-profit didn't foster an example of scrambling up the ladder to get ahead.

Which brings me back to Cuba. Since the revolution, Cubans have had their basics covered by the government. They have free housing, education, and medical care. The nationally-issued ration card affords all citizens subsistence-level food staples. Since most businesses were nationalized, everyone earned nearly the same salary.

Yet despite an environment with few incentives, entrepreneurship, creativity and hustle are evident throughout the country. Socialism is giving way to a rapidly-growing middle class. More than half the population has access to foreign currency either from families abroad or from tips or tourism.

Street vendors hawking peanuts and souvenirs had well-honed sales pitches. For a fee, colorfully festooned young ladies would let you photograph them in front of some of the best sites in Old Havana. Others had lines of tourists taking pictures of them with their costumed dogs and cats.

Cuba has a thriving underground economy leading well-educated engineers to take jobs in hotels and restaurants, forgoing salaries for tips.

Some of the best food in Cuba is found in paladares—

privately-owned restaurants that people run in their homes. Small and intimate, families work to bring local flavor to their customers. Walking up to the third floor La Guarida, I past laundry hanging to dry in what was once probably a large living room, a window into a boy's bedroom and a number of building residents lounging on the wide marble stairway.

I was in Cuba the first week Raul Castro allowed his people to purchase DVD players, cell phones and a host of small appliances. The lines to get into the stores reminded me of the times when we sold the first VCRs or big screens.

The first weekend Cubans were allowed to stay in tourist hotels, local families struggled to get their prunelooking children out of the swimming pools to go to dinner. The kids seemed to prefer room service and HBO to the hotel's restaurants.

When it comes to entrepreneurship, I'm beginning to think that it's something innate in all people. If people who have struggled to survive during nearly 60 years of communist rule instantly understand the advantages of tilling their own farms instead of those owned by the government, there must be some driving force within us that pushes us forward. Maybe it's the independence that compels people to take the riskier path.

Since my father was an entrepreneur, I guess my own case doesn't answer the nature or nurture question, but I seem to be deeply rooted in the risk, challenges and rewards that private enterprise affords me.

There have been times when I thought that a cushy government job with great benefits and a slew of vacation days might be enticing.

In the end, though, I'm glad I'm my own boss. I like forging my own course and creating my own success. Sure, the constant marketing gets tedious and I've invested time and energy into projects that never panned out. But like the Cubans are just beginning to learn, I love the challenge of the game and the thrill of victory.

*Elly Valas is an author, retail consultant and speaker. She is the co-author of *Guerrilla Retailing*. She can be contacted at elly@ellyvalas.com or visit her website www.ellyvalas.com.*





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COMING EVENTS

CALENDAR 2008

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
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
-

JANUARY-2009

- 20-23 International Builders Show-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.



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YOUR MONEY DOCTOR

The economic “gloom and doom” prophecies still persist through the media as I prepare to write this article. USA Today reports that foreclosures are up 65% from this time last year. They go on to say that over one million foreclosures are estimated for 2008. Banks trying to recoup losses will most likely attempt to sell these homes at lower prices, further lowering home values in particular areas. This is a startling prediction considering the majority of our readers deal primarily with homes.

To further compound the problem consumer revolving debt is growing by 7.9% per annum. It has now reached a record high of \$957.2 billion! I don’t know about you but these figures make me nervous! Well, not really. This is not a new story. We have all heard that the sky is falling before and sadly, bad news is good news when it comes to the media. So what is one supposed to do in the midst of all of this panic?

The first thing to do is RELAX. This is easier said than done. The worse thing a company or individual can do when faced with uncertainty is to panic. Not only does this cause additional stress it also can lead to very bad decisions. Think back to a time when you entertained a worst case scenario. Was the outcome as you predicted? Most likely it did not turn out as you thought and all of the stress and energy spent preparing for what didn’t happen was wasted. Deal only with what is in your control.

RE-EXAMINE. Look at the facts, what does cash flow really look like, what expenditures are not helping you reach your goals, does the \$80k Mercedes really make you look “cool”. After taking a serious look at these things you will undoubtedly find that many expenditures can be cut or dropped altogether. It is important to separate the wants from the needs. To do this objectively, find someone you trust to help you deconstruct the justifications.

PLAN. Flying by the seat of your pants can work if you are on vacation or working in the back yard, but utilizing this method with your finances is disastrous. It is time

consuming and considered torture to some but planning and budgeting is critical in times of economic uncertainty. Most people would not go on a trip without some way of navigating to their destination, yet very few individuals and small businesses utilize budgeting in the right way to navigate their financial future.

Using these simple techniques along with the Four Pillars of Financial Stability will not only help you through these rough times but will also help you come out the other side more successful than before.

¹Rajan, Ashish. March Debt. *CardTrak.com*. [Online] CardTrak LLC, May 9, 2008. www.cardtrak.com.

²Alex Veiga, AP Business Writer. Foreclosure filings surge 85% in April; mortgage rates dip. *USA Today*. [Online] May 14, 2007. www.usatoday.com

With 17 years of management experience, Gregory Hedges has developed a sharp eye for identifying inefficiencies, cross-purposes and miscommunication—and for how quickly they can affect an individual's personal wealth. Utilizing the tools of the Four Pillars of Financial Stability and project management, he empathetically helps individuals and families set priorities and create the balance they need for their financial health. Greg holds certifications in credit counseling and project management. He is an active member of the Project Management Institute®, National Association of Credit Counselors and an Affiliate Member of the American Psychological Association. 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 highly skilled in organization methodologies, developing a wide range of custom databases, websites and internal controls to increase effectiveness and profitability.

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TRUCKING THRU LIFE AND POLITICS



I have just received a horrible E-mail from an old acquaintance who is definitely not a liberal and is a (no-holds barred) conservative and believes that we are suffering from illegal immigration. He wrote, "Let's ship all those illegal Mexicans back to their country. Why should we pay welfare, child support, education, and health

benefits for people that aren't citizens?"

He is so totally wrong. Sending eleven million Mexicans back to Mexico would cost almost as much as the war in Iraq. Furthermore they would most likely be right back across the border the next day, week or month.

Without those non-citizens, many who hold low paying jobs in agricultural and the service industry our economy would come to a standstill. Who is going to do our laundry, gardening, food service, janitorial work and other occupations that require hard work and pay minimum wages or less? In addition he forgets that many of these people have applied for citizenship, own property, and pay taxes. I happen to like the Mexican people. I have found most of them to be honest and hard working.

At the end of World War II I purchased a used 4 x 4 Army truck and went into the trucking business. Why? It was the only business I knew. My father was an early day pioneer in the long-haul trucking business and he owned a truck line that hauled cargo between Denver and Salt Lake City. One truck led to another and soon I owned several trucks and was busy hauling freight around Southern California and to various Northern California cities. But finding reliable help was difficult. The military was discharging GI's who came home expecting high-paying and glamorous jobs and most of them didn't want "grunt and groan" jobs.

Into my trucking business one day came a guy named Miguel. Miguel said, "Are you hiring?" I said, "Absolutely." I hired him and Miguel asked me, "Do you need more workers? I said, "I need drivers. Do you know any?" Miguel said yes and promptly I was surrounded by applicants all clamoring to be hired as drivers. Most of them were related directly or indirectly to Miguel.

I was proud of them—they worked hard, I never lost any cargo even when we hauled expensive food or goods. My customers, at first, were somewhat prejudiced, but in time they discovered, as I had, that these guys were OK.

Fortunately, the memory of their songs and dances, their spirit and love of life, love of their fellow man, plus their great desire to assimilate into our society will be with me forever. Today, my wife is an invalid and she has two caregivers—both Mexican, both citizens of this country. They are absolutely wonderful in their devotion to her and, not surprisingly, they show up on time, work hard, and are good citizens.

UPDATE ON THE ELECTION

Clint Reilly, writing in the Mercury News in San Jose, Ca. stated a real truth that many of us have forgotten.

Traditional political consultants—the image makers—continue to craft poll-tested homilies that echo voter concern but side step unpopular solutions."

How true—we are being assaulted on all sides by rhetoric from both the Obama, the Clinton campaign and John McCain, but very few of their outbursts offer practical solutions to the problems our country is facing. It seems to me that we have several pressing problems but health is one of the most important. The costs of social services and healthcare are sky-rocketing and who is going to pay for the estimated \$44 trillion in costs for social services and the estimated \$50 billion in costs for health care. We are spending twice as much as other nations on health care with no appreciable differences in the quality of that health care or no promise of longevity.

Ultimate truth—a shrinking number of Americans who actually pay income tax is very small. With a shrinking minority of citizens paying most of our governments bills the majority who pay nothing at all are resenting those with higher incomes.

This must be changed. But I have serious doubts if Clinton, Obama, or McCain will make serious changes. I am totally afraid that no matter who I vote for, the status quo will remain the same and nothing will change. As I have remarked in years past, the decision to vote for someone for president seems to become a decision of which is the lesser evil! However, I remain committed to this statement:

If the choice is between Obama and McCain I will vote for McCain. If the choice is between McCain and Hillary I will vote for Hillary.

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