

BBB operations director gives customer relations tips

A large crowd of 40 Miami Valley NARI members and several prospective members turned out for the March 26 meeting, which was not only the first dinner meeting of the year but also the first meeting at Neil's Heritage House.

Guest speaker for the evening was Steven Popp, director of operations, for the Dayton Better Business Bureau. Steve's presentation focused on dealing with "problem" customers. He acknowledged what all contractors know: "The customer isn't always right." Dealing with customers who are partially or totally in the wrong is one of the greatest challenges for contractors.

He offered several possible explanations for unreasonable behavior by customers:

- They feel attacked by the contractor or an employee.

- They assume the contractor won't deal with them reasonably and believe they must take an extreme position.
- They don't know how to interact appropriately with people.
- They are hurt and feel pain.
- They are fearful or insecure.



Steve Popp, director of operations, Dayton Better Business Bureau, was the guest speaker at the March dinner meeting of Miami Valley NARI.

He outlined a ten step process for dealing with customer complaints:

- Listen to the complaint.
- Keep your cool. Stay calm.
- Re-state the problem to be sure you understand the customer's position.
- Validate the customer. In other words, make sure he or she knows you understand there may be a problem and want to resolve it.
- Ask questions to expand your understanding of the situation.
- Apologize and offer solutions when it's apparent that the customer has a valid complaint.
- Be politely powerful when the customer is in error.

- Deliver a solution.
- Be polite, but assertive, with unreasonable customers.
- Thank the customer, and keep in touch.

Marty Williams, Williams Brothers Roofing & Siding, won the attendance lotto drawing, and would have pocketed \$75. Unfortunately, he was not present, so the April lotto jackpot will increase to \$100. Mike Calim, Dayton Daily News, a guest and prospective member, won an unusually large split-the-pot drawing. Chuck McKenny, RSVP Postcard Advertising, held the winning ticket for a free lunch or dinner at a future meeting.

April meeting will focus on key legal concerns

Shawn M. Blatt, an attorney with the Dayton law firm Freund, Freeze and Arnold, will discuss "Legal Concerns of the Small Business Owner" at the April meeting of Miami Valley NARI.

The meeting will be at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, April 23, at Neil's Heritage House, Schantz Ave. at South Patterson Blvd. Lunch and the program will be completed by 1:00 p.m.

To make reservations for the meeting call the MVNARI office at 937-222-NARI or send e-mail to dayton@naripro.org

April Events

April Lunch Meeting Date & Time

Wednesday, April 23
11:00 a.m.

Program

Shawn M. Blatt
Freund, Freeze and Arnold
"Legal Concerns of the
Small Business Owner"

Location

Neil's Heritage House

Cost

\$20 for NARI members

\$25 for nonmembers

Call the MVNARI office at
937-222-NARI or send e-mail to
dayton@naripro.org to make
reservations for this meeting.

Remember!
**The April meeting is a
lunch meeting
starting at 11 a.m.**

Dinner meeting draws big crowd

by Bill Bilbrey, CR

W. E. Bilbrey & Sons

Our first dinner meeting in more than a year proved to be a success in several ways. We heard a great presentation on dealing effectively with "difficult" customers by Steve Popp, from the Dayton Better Business Bureau, and a great crowd of about 40 NARI members and prospective members packed the private dining area at Neil's Heritage House.

This month's meeting will be a lunch event at Neil's. We will continue alternating lunch and dinner meetings for the remainder of the year. As I said in last month's column, now no one has a good excuse for not coming to at least a few NARI

meetings this year!

There are several other upcoming events you shouldn't miss either. On June 5 and 6 there will be a NARI Region IV meeting in suburban Cleveland. June 5 will be an all-day educational conference organized by the Greater Cleveland Chapter. They have put together a very good program at a bargain price.

It's also time for you to plan to participate in the 2003 MVNARI Golf Classic. This event is now definitely set for Monday, August 5, at Sebastian Hills. We would like to see at least 25 foursomes on the course near Xenia in August.

Education conference to be held on June 5

The Greater Cleveland Chapter of NARI will hold an all day educational conference on June 5 from 8:00 a.m. until 4:15 p.m. at the Hilton South in Independence. The event is scheduled in conjunction with a regional NARI meeting on Friday, June 6. Members of all NARI chapters in Region IV are invited.

The conference will have Business Management, Law, and Sales tracks, and will feature several dynamic speakers. Most of the speakers are well known in the remodeling industry. Below is a partial list of scheduled presentations.

Business Management Track

"Developing a Company Culture for Your Business," and "Determining Your Real Labor Costs: Are You Really Charging Enough?" by Shawn McCadden, CR, CLC, Residential Design/Build Institute

"Find the Right Customers - Target Marketing for the Small Business Owner," by Norma J. Rist, president of Norma J. Rist CEO Consulting

Sales Track

"Using Design/Build With a Professional Sales System," and "Client Retention as a Sales Base," by Joe Dellano, Residential Design/Build Institute

Legal Track

"Avoiding the High Cost of Residential Construction Disputes," by Robert E. Soles, Jr.; Black, McCuskey, Souers & Arbaugh

"ADR in Action: A Mock Arbitration," by Sharon Obert and an American Arbitration Association

Paul Deffenbaugh will deliver the keynote speech, "The Future of Remodeling."

The day will end with a Lolly the

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The mission of MVNARI is:

1 To establish and maintain the association's firm commitment to developing and sustaining programs that expand and unite the remodeling industry, as well as ensure the industry's growth and security.

2 To encourage ethical conduct, sound business practices, and professionalism in the remodeling industry.

3 To present NARI as the recognized authority in the remodeling industry.

This mission is carried out by:

1 Promoting the common business interests of those engaged in the industry.

2 Sponsoring educational programs and activities for members.

3 Enlightening consumers to the needs and advantages of home remodeling and maintenance, thereby improving the nation's housing inventory.

4 Recommending legislative and regulatory action which safeguards and preserves the remodeling industry and stimulates the marketplace.

Trolley tour of Cleveland and dinner with a show in the Warehouse District.

The program has been approved for credit toward CR, CRS, and/or CLC re-certification.

The cost for the full day of business and professional remodeling education is only \$79 for NARI members. This includes a continental breakfast, lunch, coffee breaks, a T-shirt, and all the educational sessions. Put the June 5 educational conference and the June 6 NARI Region IV meeting in your PDA today, and look for a conference brochure in the mail soon.

Boomers remodeling their empty nests

Rather than moving to Florida or converting children's vacated rooms into hobby centers, empty nesters are undertaking upscale remodeling projects. Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies reports that baby boomers accounted for 56% of the \$131.5 billion spent on remodeling in 2001.

"People used to retire, go to Florida and get the apartment on the 39th floor with the killer view," remarks "House to Ourselves" co-author Todd Larson, quoted in *USA Today*. "Now boomers are a force that's making things happen in the building industry."

A number of baby boomers are spending upwards of \$40,000 or more to upgrade their kitchens, master bedrooms and bathrooms. Matthew Schoenherr, a Westport, CT, architect, has seen them pay \$60,000 to \$1 million to give their less costly, post-World War II homes the quality and detail of older dwellings. Others are moving from the family home to one that better fits their needs and interests. In every case, it adds up to more business for America's remodelers.

OBOA invites participation in residential code development

The 2003 code development cycle for the OBOA Ohio Residential Code begins this month.

Building code writing isn't limited to building officials. Individuals, professionals, and organizations, along with Ohio code officials, are invited to participate in the process to modify the 2003 IRC, the International Residential Code for Ohio. The resulting Ohio Residential Code will be ready for local adoption in 2004.

The Ohio Residential Code addresses the building code requirements for one, two, and three family dwellings. Participation in the code development process can be in the form of submittals for changes and testifying before the OBOA Code Change Panel at two public hearings.

The calendar below lists the deadlines and dates of the code hearings. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposed changes using the OBOA.org website. Submissions may also be made using email or paper.

Information on the process and how to purchase copies of the 2003 IRC can be found at OBOA.org. Proposed changes, hearing results, and challenges will also be available on the website.

The 1999 Ohio Residential Code for One, Two and Three Family Dwellings modified (or Ohio-ized) the 1998 International One- and Two-Family Dwelling Code. Those modifications will be submitted in this cycle by the OBOA Code Change Committee for adoption.

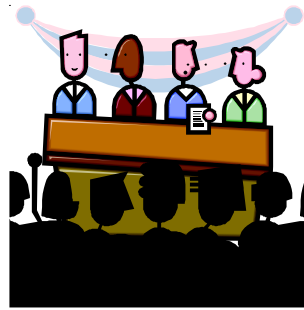
The International Codes, commonly known as "The I-codes," are

model codes developed under the auspices of the International Code Council, a national organization of building officials and allied professionals and associations. The historic regional building officials organizations BOCA, SBCCI, and ICBO merged into the ICC earlier this year.

Comments and questions can be sent to the committee at OBOA@hamilton-co.org, by phone at 513-946-4550, or by fax at 513-946-4511.

2003 OBOA Code Change Calendar

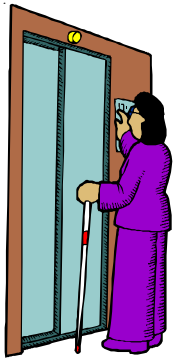
April 28	Deadline to propose changes by mail or fax
May 12	Deadline to propose changes by website or email
June 30	Distribution of proposed changes
July 29	First hearing for proposed changes at Columbus
August 21	Distribution of committee recommendations
Sept. 25	Deadline to submit challenges to committee recommendations
Oct. 23	Distribution of challenges
Nov. 18	Final hearing and vote for adoption of changes at Columbus
Dec. 31	Submit draft to publisher
2004	OBOA Residential Building Code available for distribution and adoption



Home elevator demand grows with aging

In-home elevators used to be purchased only by individuals with physical disabilities, but an increasing number of home owners are installing elevators to help them age in place as well as move luggage, furniture and other heavy items to

the upper floors of their residence.



According to the Los Angeles Times, industry experts say only about a quarter of residential elevators are installed by home owners with long-term disabilities.

Three out of four home owners with elevators have them simply for convenience.

While many hide the elevators behind closet doors or bookcases, others incorporate unique designs and use them to enhance the home's architecture. Upscale elevators can cost as much as \$125,000 and feature stone floors, cherry paneling, cloud ceilings, chandeliers, paintings, mirrors, and stained glass, among other touches.

Not surprisingly, elevators are more popular among luxury home owners as well as among residents of beach and mountain communities, where the high cost of land and small size of lots makes multi-story design the most efficient use of acreage. The starting price for a standard elevator model in a new home is \$15,000, but adding one to an existing property can double the costs and take months to install.

The elevators are fairly quiet; powered by electricity; and include locking gates, brakes, alarms, a phone and battery backup. Elevator sales are expected to rise due to the popularity of multi-story homes and the anticipated surge in the elderly population to 70 million over the

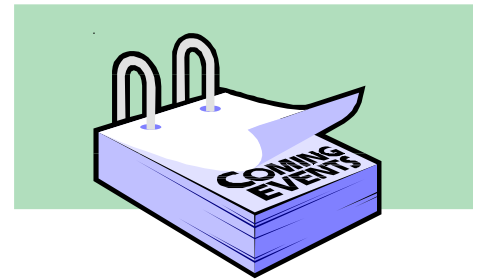
next three decades.

A residential elevator might be a good optional project upgrade to suggest to older clients who intend to do an extensive home remodeling or addition project. It's something they might not think of on their own.

Forget that luxury bath laundry rooms are "in"

With an increasing number of home owners finding refuge in their residences, laundry rooms are being transformed from small basement spaces and alcoves to multipurpose rooms equipped with upscale appliances, televisions, sound systems, play areas, doghouses, home offices, guest quarters and craft stations.

Eastern Kentucky University cultural studies professor Mike Marsden, quoted in *Time*, calls them "gourmet laundry rooms," which provide spacious areas for centralizing activities usually scattered throughout the entire house. For home owners with limited space, large closets are being tapped to create multifunctional laundry centers. Laundry appliances are being upgraded with space-saving, energy-efficient, front-loading washers.



Dinner May 28
"Benchmarks for Small Businesses"
Phil Parker
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce

June 5-6
NARI Region IV Meeting
Independence, Ohio

July 30
Supplier Night
Requarth Lumber
Open House and Dragons game

August 5
MVNARI Golf Classic
Sebastian Hills GC, Xenia

Lunch August 27
"Home Show Participation Is for Everyone"
Bill Bilbrey/Ray Bell/Jeff Hurst

September 24
Supplier Night
Mueller Roofing Distributors

Lunch October 22
"Worker's Compensation"
Lloyd Markley
Frank Gates Service Company

MIAMI VALLEY NARI
136 S KEOWEE ST
DAYTON, OH 45402