ARTISAN ADDENDA

Artisan

SPRING 1991

Issue #11

- 4TH & 99 -

It's great being the boss . . . I get to make - "executive decisions" - *with no one to challenge my authority (at least not in front of my face). I'm just like a cross between an old sea captain and a new World League football coach. (Funny though, as I get older I realize that bosses are not always smarter - just luckier and louder.) But just like that old sea salt, sometimes we can make that decision that weathers the storm with crafty maneuvering and time tested skills.*

Sometimes (very, very rarely) we may flounder and hit the rocks, sometimes we can make that big play and score and sometimes (I can't remember the last time I had to) we just have to punt . . . . .

Decisions are always easy for a boss to make - we hear all the arguments, weigh all the facts, delve deep into our treasure chest of vast knowledge, summon the spirits of successful owners . . . and flip a coin - and there it is! (As of late, I have also resorted to much more advanced systems, I also use darts, dice, etc.).

I can still remember my very first 'executive' decision. I was to choose a company car; one that would be the vanguard of our automobile fleet. The car I chose would represent our reliability and our strength.

(I wonder what ever happened to that old Edsel?)

Every executive decision maker should also have a mentor . . . an old sage who can advise you in your decision making - like mine, you know, that General Contractor, the one who gives us all of his work - you know, the one who's been around for 50 years, yes - the one who just went Chapter 11.

Well I guess it's time to get back to that game we call work, to once again make those decisions that will score the big one! But then - maybe it's time to punt - because it's 4th and 99 again . . . . .

(Now, where did I put that Ouija Board? I've got another executive decision to make!)

DISCLAIMER: The opinions expressed above are those solely of John J. Sekora and do Not reflect the Corporate Policies of Artisan Tile and Marble Company of New Jersey, Inc.

The Younger Management

(P.S. What's a Ouija Board?)

In Remembrance . . . . .

My brother Bob died a few months ago.
He had cancer. He was 45.

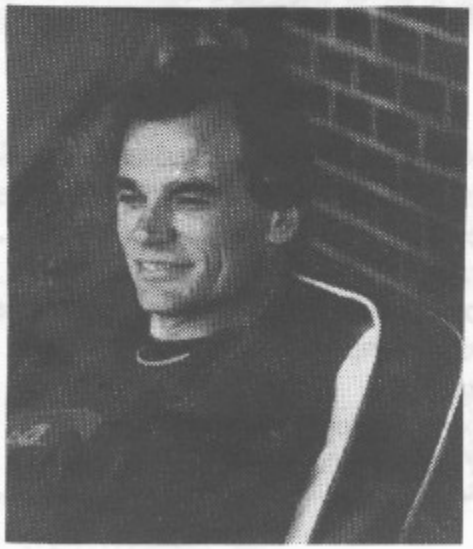
Robert Sekora was born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland but came to work at Artisan six years ago - just as a "patch man" for Al, then as liaison between our office staff and our General Contractors' job sites and finally as ATM's Vice President of Sales. Robert was responsible for many of the contracts that ATM is presently doing.

It was often said by many, that after knowing Bob for just a short time you felt you knew him for your entire life. Bob's greatest attribute was certainly his gift of gab, we often joked that his initials suited him (B.S.).

Different people will remember my brother in different ways: A Damon Runyon character with a dry wit - a big man with a big smile and a big heart - a man who enjoyed simple things - like steamed crabs, Al Jolson, manual labor, partying, a mountain top.

I'll remember Bob as one who loved ATM, his New Jersey and Baltimore families - a man who loved life . . . . .

Thanks, little brother, for reminding me to stop and enjoy the sunsets and to smell the roses.



Love,
John

On behalf of my brother Bob and his families, many thanks for all the calls, cards, gifts and support - especially the many donations to his favorite charity, St. Jude's Childrens Hospital, Memphis, Tenn.

THE "ART" IN ARTISAN

Our Fantastic tile mechanics and helpers have been working on the following projects:

Tommy Burns & Jimmy Bollentin - from Biehn's J.P. Stevens School, to Fitzpatrick's Rutgers Job, to Soldo's Ocean County Juvenile to, Henderson's Convatec and Ortho, they just keep moving on.

Danny Cordasco & Nicky Zakashefski - presently doing another Artisan job at Biehn's Stevens project after finishing Howell's Environmental Lab and Hoag, Hayman & Koechel's The Nature Company in Woodbridge.

Al Ewington & Jim McArthur - star performances at names like Kilmer, Meridian's Glatt Air, Gilbane's Squibb and Henderson's Ortho.

Bill Gesang & Joe Covello - doing Landmark work at Malcolm's Landmark II, Hampton East's Whiteweld and Miller's Trust jobs.

Tommy Johnson & Nick Loffredo plus John Wassmann & Vinnie Wassmann as well as Patsy Cordasco & Tommy Morelli - are enjoying the view from their "Ivory Tower by the Hundson" working away on Northeast's Newport Office Tower.

Ralph Walker & John Salerno - meeting our stamp of approval on Turner's Kilmer Post Office, Gilbane's McCarter Theatre and S.C.K.'s Ultimate Corp.

Richie Strunk & Bob Weyrick - now working at Otto's Mendham after critically acclaimed jobs at Torcon's St. Barnabas and Schmidt's UPS.

Jack Sweezey & Richie Morelli - let the record show they've been doing a super job at Muscarelle's THE RECORD, Rockaway, Sharp's Post Office and Trademark's Anna Klein School.

Frank Zampese & Pat Matturi - from a school in Mendham for Paul Otto to a hospital in Paterson for Blanchard to a UPS job in Mahwah, they are the "tile men".

Kaz Kupiec & Marc Kupiec - as diversified as the projects they've been on, Epic's Lehn & Fink, Sordoni's Novotel Hotel, Hoag, Hayman & Koechel's Nature Company in Paramus, S.M.I.'s Annie Sez, Watchung and Tormee's South Brunswick Housing.

Skip Faynor & Ken Dillon - from malls to Miller's T.P.I. to Fitz's pool to a job well done.

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡ STILL MORE ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

Russ Westendorf & Bobby Conkling - if you're in Chester look for these experts at Otto's Morris High School - after just finishing a great job at Brown & Matthews' Safety-Kleen.

Ray Glover & Gary Weyrick - an old friend doing the new Chester School for Mr. Otto.

Ron Barile & Dominick Barile - doing a fantastic job at S.M.I.'s Annie Sez in the Bronx.

Ilhan Alici & Mike Minervini - worked at both Northeast and Whiteweld.

Dale Sabato & Al Roncaioli; Joe DelMonte, Jack Sartor and Richie Miedema - were delivering the work at Schmidt's U.P.S.

Kerry Dillon & Bob Letts - got an "A+" at Garlatti's Teaching Theatre.

Bill Lardiere & Timothy Fee along with Angelo Rosado & Joe Rosado- were all decked out at Fitzpatrick's Rutgers pool.

Steve Nebesne & Paul Nebesne - cleaning up at P.K.F.'s Sayreville Sludge.

Jim Pyanoe - doing the finishing touches at the Freehold Raceway Mall for Wilmorite.

Walter Rutkowski - finished a "stint down the aisle" - Walt just got married! Congratulations to both you and Dena!!!!

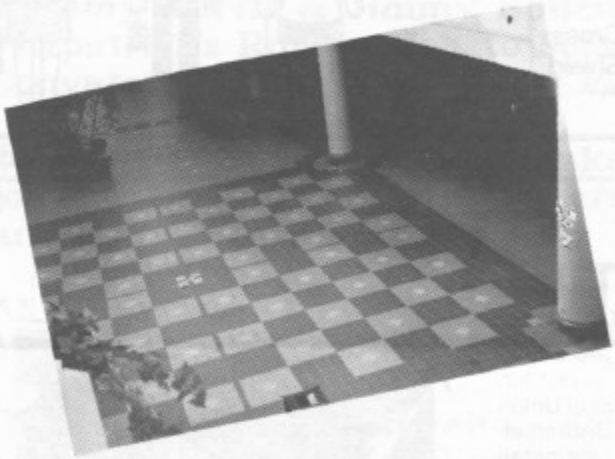
NEW JOBS

Blanchard - Hunterdon Med., Flemington
Myco - Merck Bldg., #121 in Rahway
Municipal Associates - Belleville Public Safety Building
Miller - T.P.I., Jersey City
Barrett - Warwick Town Hall
MAI - Hanover Community Center
Bari - Desmares School, Flemington
Soldo - Marine Lab, Sandy Hook
Henderson - Roure Bertrand Dupont
Trimech - Hoffman LaRoche, Totowa
Mahony/Troast - Prudential GIB Lab
Structure Tone - Donington LeRoe, Edison
Vanas Constr. - Knowlton Delaware Elem.
Raimondo - Little Ferry Treatment Plant
Meridian - Glatt Air, Ramsey
Fromkin - Holiday Inn, Fort Lee
Patock - Count Basie Theatre, Red Bank

I try to take just
ONE DAY AT A TIME...

but lately several days
have attacked me at once.

ARTISAN ACCOLADES



WILMORITE'S
- FREEHOLD RACEWAY MALL -

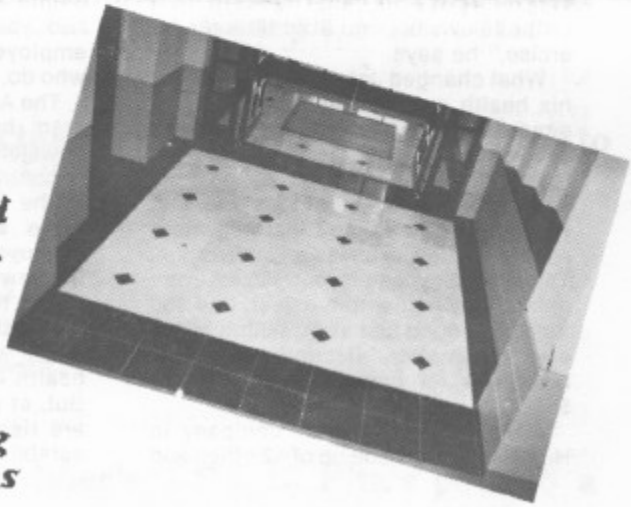
This 2-story mall consists of 200,000/SF of 8x8 Crossville Tile in seven different colors and three different sizes. Included in the floor pattern are hand-made dots and clipped corners forming diagonal diamonds and geometric designs. Warm and pleasing shades of burgundy, rose, mayberry and sand create a pleasurable shopping atmosphere. Highlighting the center court is a grand display of 1,000/SF of 2x2 Fountain Blue Ceramic Mosaic tiles, which encircle an array of cascading water.

A-T-M proudly announces we have been awarded FIRST PLACE HONORS in both the Ceramic Tile & Marble categories by the 8th Annual NJ Masonry Awards Program.

Fourth Consecutive Year!

- MATRIX -

Interchange Plaza features 1000/SF of 12x12 Creme Marfill Field Marble bordered with 12x12 Verde Pacifico Marble in the Lobby Areas. This most unique design was achieved by allowing the Verde Pacifico to "frame" and offset the field marble by its use of contrasting color. To enhance its depth, handmade dots, diamonds and clipped corners were set on a diagonal and beautifully accentedwith brass inlay strips. Also included in the 3-story office building are vanity tops and Pocketbook Ledges formed from 3/4" Marble Slabs.



Labor News

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Jersey

Published by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Jersey October/November 1990

Wellness Works at Artisan Tile

If John Sekora had his ideal office it would include a rocking chair, mood music and a fireplace. As president and owner of the Artisan Tile and Marble Company, and a management trustee for Tile Helpers Local 77 Welfare Fund, he could probably have anything he wants in his office. That is, if he had an office.

What a strange way to manage a business. The president doesn't have an office, or even a desk, to call his own. Instead, he goes wherever his staff needs him, solving problems in the estimating, billing, sales or warehouse areas.

Unusual perhaps, but shedding an inflexible work environment for a more productive one is part of John's corporate philosophy that places a high priority on wellness and a low one on stress. His fresh approach to business, John believes, saved his life.

"Three years ago, I was 45 years old and weighed over 300 pounds. The gradual weight gain happened because of a sedentary lifestyle that included long hours at work, large meals in front of the television, and little time for exercise," he says.

What changed John's attitude about his health was the sudden deaths of several young, close business associates whose lifestyles closely resembled his. "I started a medically supervised liquid weight-loss diet, lost 70 pounds and started learning more about nutrition, exercise and relaxation. Then, I paid my employees $25 for every pound they lost within a year, and $50 for every pound lost and maintained for a year thereafter." Recently, he proudly admits, "I paid them a total of $5,050."

Artisan Tile is a small company in Highland Park, made up of 12 office and 100 union employees. "We are a subcontracting company," John says, "hiring members of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen from Locals 8, 52, and 77, to install ceramic tile and marble in large commercial properties. We recently completed the Newport Shopping Center in Jersey City, and now we're working on a mall in Freehold."

Not satisfied with encouraging his employees to only lose weight, John wanted to also help them manage stress. "I have always been aware of the stress factor associated with construction work," John remarks. "So, when I met a professional masseur a few years ago, I brought him into the company to do in-house massages. Now, he comes in once or twice a week and does either a Shiatsu massage by setting up a chair next to an employee's desk, or if we are not too busy and time permits, we will close down an office and he sets up his futon and does 30-minute massages. Office employees have been getting massages, which focus on pressure points and stretching techniques, for two years, and they love it. Not all employees participate, but for those who do, it relieves tension and stress."

The Artisan Company's wellness program has since grown to include a newsletter. **Artisan Addenda** is geared to contractors, architects and suppliers in the field and focuses on company news and health tips. John says employees are sending in health tips for the newsletter and that means they are taking the wellness program seriously.

Whether there is a correlation between wellness programs and lower health care costs, John is uncertain. But, at a time when health care costs are rising, the return he's seeing by establishing a corporate wellness program is paying off with less employees absent due to illness. As a result, employees no longer contribute to the cost of their health care premiums.

As for John, he's still committed to his fitness program. "When I told my colleagues I was going to leave work everyday at 3:30 p.m. and go to the gym and work out they laughed. They said, 'You can't maintain a growing, profitable business by leaving early.' So far, we've proved them wrong. Artisan Tile, and its employees, are alive and healthy."

Artisan Tile's wellness program pays off. John Yavorski (right), controller, is 15 pounds lighter and $ 375 richer as he receives a bonus check from John Sekora, company president and management trustee. To encourage employees to lose weight, Sekora offered to pay them $25 to $50 for each pound lost. He issued checks totaling $5,050.

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– TRIVIA CONTEST –

Who are these "pool hunks", where are they working? Why do they have their Artisan shirts on backwards?

(Nebesne family members and all other Caribbean vacationers are ineligible.) *No, this is not a photo of Ray 'Crash' in St. Croix.

- JOB OF THE MONTH -

G/C - Northeast Constructors a Joint Venture of Huber, Hunt & Nichols & Torcon.
Owner: Melvin Simon Associates.
Architect: Ehrenkrantz, Eckstut & Whitelaw

JOB - Newport Office Tower, Jersey City, NJ

DESCRIPTION - 36 Story high-rise consisting of large typical toilet areas.

MATERIALS - 20,000/SF 2" x 2" thin set Black floor tiles
20,000/SF adhesive set 4-1/4" scored White wall tiles
All tile by Dal Tile.
All setting and grouting materials by Mapei

- - - JUST DO IT - - -

The best time to exercise ? Studies are still making a case for mornings vs. evenings, with no definite conclusion.

Most studies do agree against exercising within two hours of a meal. The best argument I read, stated that if you've been exercising for forty-five minutes or longer, your body is metabolizing fat - which is what you want. But, if you eat immediately after exercising, your body switches to metabolizing carbohydrates instead.

So hold off eating a while and get the full benefits of your workout!

MORE THOUGHTS TO PONDER . . . . .

How much better we would all be if we could just – quit smoking, wear our seat belts more; exercise both our body and mind more; cry more; laugh more; hug more; walk more/drive less; reward ourselves more; drink more water; drink less alcohol, coffee, etc.; write more; phone more; socialize more; worry less; plan more; slow down and smell more roses . . . . . Enjoy more!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR OWN JOHN J. SEKORA FOR BEING RE-ELECTED PRESIDENT AND TREASURER OF THE NEW JERSEY TILE CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN NEW JERSEY.

? ? ? CONFUSED ? ? ?

For those of you who are, the picture of John on Page 6. was prior to his "adventures in shaving". Please update your Post Office (and/or dartboard) photos.

SOUND ADVICE

You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.
You cannot help small men by tearing down big men.
You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.
You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer.
You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income.
You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatreds.
You cannot establish security on borrowed money.
You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence.
You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

---ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THE artisan
Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen District Council Reporter

Funny how a good name gets around. A newsletter published by the Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen of Eastern Massachusetts seems to be copying our "ADDENDA". Good job guys.

A GOOD REASON TO RECYCLE

IT TAKES ONE MONTH FOR PAPER TO DECOMPOSE IN A LANDFILL AND 500 YEARS FOR GLASS AND ALUMINUM
PLEASE RECYCLE

recycled paper