9300 CONTRACTOR

March 2007

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Pursuit of Excellence

John J. Sekora
Artisan Tile & Marble Co. of NJ, Inc.

There are no prizes for being ordinary…….no glory for just going through the motions. So those who care, aspire to achieve success through the **pursuit of excellence.**

I know that excellence is not a skill, nor an act, nor an achievement. Excellence isn't bestowed or bought, it's earned – a gradual result of always striving to do better. It starts with enthusiasm and continues with trying to be the best.

Excellence means being better tomorrow than you were yesterday. It's an attitude, a habit, and an art; it is found in the details – it means continuous improvement.

It is written that excellence can be attained if you: care more than others think is wise; risk more than others think is safe; dream more than others think is practical; expect more than others think is possible.

You strive for excellence by training, by learning; by doing ordinary things extraordinarily well; by doing common things in an uncommon way.

Confucius is quoted around 500 B.C as saying: "Excellence is the unlimited ability to improve the quality of what you have to offer." Over the years, this has been my company's goal. At Artisan, our Mission Statement says, "It is our objective to set ourselves apart from our competition by providing our customers with superior service and craftsmanship, maintaining a professional atmosphere, and consistently exceeding the expectations of others through a partnership with our suppliers and general contractors."

To attain this goal my plan was simple: personal and corporate development acquired through education and experience. I wanted to set a foundation to build on by absorbing everything I could about my industry. I wanted to be the first to examine new products, new procedures. I needed to be on the cutting edge of technology.

And what better way to be motivated by continuing education, than through the TCAA's seminars, and the IMI's Contractor College offered at all of the TCAA's conventions.

How many times have I heard a fellow tile contractor say he wasn't going to a seminar because "there's nothing new to learn": or boast "I'm bigger than he is, what could he teach me?" or, use as an excuse for not learning something new like - "my dad did it this way for over 30 years"……

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MESSAGE
FROM THE PRESIDENT

2007 TCAA President
Michael Maiuri

Dear Members,

I hope by now, spring is on its way, bringing much warmer - and better - weather to you.

Last week I received my Contractor College Transcript that outlines the IMI Contractors College sessions I have attended. In review of the courses I have not yet completed, I see there are many interesting sessions I want and plan to attend.

In conjunction with IMI, the TCAA has incorporated IMI Contractor College as a component of the learning and education sessions during our annual convention for the past 4 years. Although you may not intend to be a graduate of Contractor College, these sessions are geared not only to primary owners, but also to the management team you employ.

Personally, I find Contractor College sessions interesting as they relate to our day-to-day operations. I always enjoy the opportunity to listen and share in the experiences of others in attendance.
I can write myself notes if there is something our company should or should not be doing. At a minimum, questions can be raised or better yet, answered.

I want to encourage you to contact your regional IMI office and review the courses they have to offer. Perhaps for some reason you have not been able to take the opportunity to sit in on regional Contractor College session classes. If so, you also can count on IMI Contractor College being offered at our 2007 convention this fall in Las Vegas.

Sincerely,

Michael Maiuri
TCAA President

2007 CESERY AWARD

Ray Byrne

TCAA is pleased to announce that Raymond Byrne, who has truly lived the spirit of Carl V. Cesery, is the 2007 recipient of this prestigious award. Ray has a most distinguished resume'. He has served as Vice President of Grazzini Brothers & Company of Minnesota for over 20 years.

Ray has served as Trustee on the Tile Setters Health and Welfare Fund, the Tile Setters Retirement and Pension Fund for many years. He is a Past President of TCAA and Past President of the St. Paul Builders Exchange. He has also served for many years as Secretary/Treasurer of the Minnesota Ceramic Tile Contractors Association.

According to Gene Grazzini, Jr. CEO, "*Grazzini Brothers would not be the healthy and vibrant company it is today without Ray's leadership. We have worked together through thick and thin, and always Ray has been there to help, way above the call of duty*".

We salute this outstanding individual and we hope you will join us in recognizing Ray's achievements at the Cesery Award Luncheon during TCAA's 2007 Annual Convention November 3-7 in Las Vegas.

NEWS FROM BAC AND IMI

National Training Center Opening This Spring

The embodiment of the BAC/IMI national training system will soon be open for business this spring, with completion of the National Training Center (NTC) in Bowie, Maryland. The two-building complex will showcase masonry materials including tile, terrazzo, brick, block, stone, plaster and concrete, plus the quality training behind them.

In tile, for example, IMI's pre-job tile course covers traditional cement (mud) methods and contemporary applications, plus specialized layout and safety and health. Beyond apprentices, IMI classes will be offered for journey-level upgrade, cross-craft, specialty products and applications, instructors, foremen and supervisors.

But the new, 25-acre campus represents a lot more than craft training. It will bring together all the other distinctive programs that IMI offers the union masonry industry, such as new product testing and certifications, while allowing a richer menu of educational programs for the design and building professions, as well as union contractors.

The 60,500-square foot training center features a versatile, open bay training floor, plus offices, classrooms and design studios. The 45,500-square foot dormitory building includes a cafeteria, recreation facilities, meeting rooms and dorm rooms for 108 students. The center can accommodate over 2,000 students annually. It is midway between Washington, DC and Annapolis, and is accessible to area airports.

Opening year promises to be a busy one, in addition to regular classes. June will bring Masonry Camp, the hands-on exposure to crafts and collaboration for intern architects and apprentice craftworkers. In September, the NTC hosts the International Apprentice Contest. In October, participants in the annual Instructor Certification Program (ICP) will get an in-depth experience of the facility.

From attracting new apprentices to enlightening designers and increasing work opportunities for union contractors, the new campus "represents a lot of possibilities for us all," says BAC President and IMI Co-Chair John J. Flynn.

Contributed by,
Hazel Bradford
Director of Communications
International Masonry Institute

Excellence

(continued from page 1)

Have these contractors forgotten that our product is not just tile and stone? – it is service. In order to satisfy our customers we MUST strive for excellence. With each passing year we MUST grow, we MUST learn, and we MUST change.

Excellence is more than an abstract concept: it is a state of being and doing, characterized by a continual commitment to accomplishment**.** It means applying one's self and working to one's highest level of potential, and exceeding the bounds of what one has already attained. And it absolutely requires the investment and continual support on the part of both the individual and fellow coworkers if that potential is to be realized.

Pearl S. Buck wrote, "The secret of joy in work is contained in one word – excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it."

Enjoy……..John

John J. Sekora has been in the tile business for nearly 50 years. His Artisan Tile & Marble Co. of NJ, Inc. is the first and only tile company to achieve both certification through the IMI's Contractor College and the TCAA's Trowel of Excellence. John is a Cesery recipient and has received an ALEX award from the National Alliance for Excellence. He and his family were selected as the NJ Family Business of the Year in 2000. John is also a TCAA past president and the author of their centennial book, Ceramic Tile in 20th Century America.

THANK YOU

We would like to give a special thanks to Tim Bolby and Crossville, Inc. for supplying the new Ansi books to our contractor members. Tim can be reached at:

Tim Bolby • Director Technical Services • Crossville Incorporated • (931)-484-2110 • FAX (931)-484-8418
tbolby@crossvilleinc.com

Committee Updates

Trowel of Excellence
Committee Report

Submitted by Vincent DeLazzero, II
Port Morris Tile & Marble

Hello Everyone:

I hope you all are enjoying good health and wealth in the Tile Industry as well as your personal lives.

The Trowel of Excellence program needs your help. Here in New York, I have presented my TOE credentials to architects, contractors and owners. They were received well and at the very least, I awakened their consciousness to compare my qualifications to that of my competitors.

The goal however is to make TCAA Members synonymous with the finest standards of our industry. In order to accomplish this, every year we must add TOE certified TCAA members.

I cannot urge you enough to complete your applications. If there is a problem call me. Here are my numbers, and feel free to give me a ring a ding at home: 914-636-5153, or the office: 718-378-6100. I guarantee that I will convince you that receiving your TOE certification will make money for your company and additionally, how impressive it will be to state to your customers that you are a part of an elite group of contractors that are the most qualified contractors in the world.

I am about to attend the BAC/IMI meeting in Bal Harbor, FL. They want to help us market this program and I am going to see to it they do. With your help I can have a more powerful voice. Keep those cards and letters coming.

Your friend, second generation past president and proud member of TCAA and TOE Certified Tile Contactor.

Vinny

Member Information Update:

Please note the new company information for Marble Restoration, Inc.

Marble Restoration, d/b/a Decorative Flooring Services
6539 Weatherfield Court
Maumee, OH 43537
419-865-9000
Fax: 419-865-9005
E-mail: john@dfs-flooring.com

Technical
Committee Report

Submitted by Ron Schwartz
Selectile of California, Inc.

Just a note about Backer Boards……..

As a lot of us contractors know, there are a variety of Backer Boards made for use with tile and stone out on the market these days. What you may not be aware is that there are just as many limitations and installation procedures associated with the varying types. Even the same type of backer board from the same manufacturer may come in different thicknesses and therefore may have different limitations.

It has become very important to check the literature or to check with the manufacturer as to the selected products installation procedures and limitations. There may be issues as to its location for installation as well as the limitations in both size and weight of the tile or stone being applied.

For instance, there are some backer boards that have a minimal tile size for floor installations. Some product manufacturers may recommend if using a waterproof membrane, that a membrane be placed on both sides of the backer board whereas another product manufacturer may only recommend the membrane only on one side.

Bottom line is to be safe and double check that the backer board you choose to use meets with the installation procedure and materials you use with it.

9300 Contractor is a quarterly publication of the Tile Contractors' Association of America, Inc. To submit an article or story idea, contact us by phone, fax or e-mail. TCAA is a membership-based organization serving the needs of the Ceramic Tile industry since 1903. Annual membership dues for active contractors and suppliers are $900, $75 for retired suppliers, and $25 for retired contractors.

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Membership
Committee Report

Submitted by Jerry Leva
Eugene G. Sackett Co.

2006 was a year not too much different from previous years as far as over-all membership. We have lost a few members and gained several new ones. Always disappointing to lose members, but very exciting to have new companies join our organization.

We would like to ask all our members, if the opportunity presents itself to put forth a special effort to reach out to these companies, both past members and especially our newest members listed below.

I also ask that each member make a sincere effort to solicit a new member, contractor or supplier. It will benefit us all and as Vinny says, and I certainly agree, TCAA represents the best in the industry!

Thanks—I look forward to seeing you all in Las Vegas in November.

New Memberships 2007

Blackhawk Tile & Stone, Inc.
Steve Harrison
1850 121st St. East, Suite 103
Burnsville, MN 55337
(952) 224-1915
Fax: (952) 224-1918
Email:
BrendaT@blackhawktileandstone.com

Forever Floors, Inc.
Dave Kirsch
5407 Green Bay Road
Kenosha, WI 53144
(262) 654-6311
Fax: (262) 654-6371
Email: Dkirsch@foreverfloors.com

J. Colavin & Son, Inc.
Deborah Lamb
5323 Alhambra Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90032
323-225-8212
Fax: 323-225-3488
Email: debbie@colavin.com

Superior Tile & Stone
Jerry D. Riggs
PO Box 2106
Oakland, CA 94621
(510) 895-2700
Fax: (510) 895-8760

Committee Updates

Labor
Committee Report

Submitted by John Trendell
Marble Restoration, d/b/a Decorative Flooring Services

TCAA Participates in IUBAC Winter Meetings

TCAA Contractors were represented at the most recent Labor/Management meetings held in Bal Harbor, Florida, February 20th and 21st. Vinny DeLazzero, co-chair of the Tile, Marble, Terrazzo (TMT) committee, Les Lippert, Grace Gebhardt, Dan Grant, new owner of Marble Restoration, and I, all participated in a full slate of meetings.

The first day was a combined session of the different Labor/Management committees including Stone and TMT. Subjects included: a captive insurance program for more competitive workers' compensation rates, an IMI update on training and marketing successes and Helmets to Hardhats, an employment program to bring highly competent and motivated people from the military into the construction industry.

The second day, groups met individually. John Mason, TMT co-chair, and Vinny DeLazzero led a discussion regarding an industry "Code of Conduct". An interesting aspect for me were the findings from the research that helped develop the Code. The three most important characteristics for project success were, site logistics, leadership, and respect. Regarding site logistics, how many times have we all been forced to work on jobs which were poorly coordinated? Leadership was defined as effectively establishing and communicating common goals. Also, the consistent enforcement of work rules. Respect of every individual involved in a project, from owner to contractor to craftworker, should be an obvious consideration. Quality, safety and productivity are all dependent on these characteristics in order to complete a successful project.

TCAA looks to these type of meetings as a great way to communicate with labor regarding our concerns and common goals.

TCAA WEBSITE

Keep up-to-date on all current TCAA and industry news and happenings by visiting our website at www.tcaainc.org

Members, check out your company's listing and please send us an email if new information needs to be listed.