



Golden Rule Family News

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Winter 2008



From the President

After being in business for 20 years, I'm still learning daily how to serve our clientele more effectively by the **Golden Rule**. Quality, service, value, integrity and attention to detail are still the "spokes of the wheel" that distinguish Golden Rule Builders from the competition. While I no longer work on the job sites, we use our Vision Statement, training and highly qualified personnel to provide the same (hopefully higher) level of quality and service on our projects. Rather than contracting our carpentry work to trade contractors, we staff our own high quality carpenters. Employees are our greatest assets and you are our greatest fans! Thank you for the many referrals you have sent our way!

The building industry is an exciting, challenging and intense business that requires Golden Rule Builders to stay on "top of their game". Dennis, Mark, Anthony and I will be attending the **International Builders Show** again this year in Orlando. The show boasts over a million square feet of displays more than 300 seminar options and an attendance of 100,000 from around the nation and the world. This has been an annual training opportunity that we have absorbed for many years and have found it to be a great way to learn about new products, analyze strategy and improve our level of service to our customers. We then take our foremen to the annual **Remodeler's Show** to continually improve their skills in customer service and managing employees. As a member of **Remodeler's Advantage**, I am also regularly stretched by the facilitator and peer review at the roundtables program. This includes builders and remodelers from all over the country who meet together to evaluate and critique each company's business management, practices and integrity. I also serve as president of the Fauquier Chapter of the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association (**NVBIA**).

My family continues to bring me much joy and fulfillment as they grow and mature. My wife Patty is excellent in balancing the responsibilities as wife, mother and home schooling Blyss (13), Dawn (11), Devin (9), Victoria (7) and Charity (5). Our family enjoys the new barn that houses the horses and a few cattle and the pets, including a cat, dog and rabbits. I am constantly challenged to provide not only for the physical needs that are evident but also for the family's spiritual wellbeing.

Interested in giving to a worthwhile charity? I serve on the **New Horizons Ministry board** in Colorado where we care for the young children whose mother's are incarcerated. We provide daily care for these precious little ones and take them for monthly bonding visits with the mothers. The goal of the ministry is to reunite the family and re-integrate them successfully into society. NHM also operates a Thrift Store to support the ministry. There is a local "drop trailer" in Catlett where you can donate nice household furnishings or clothes that we send out to sell at the store. The "east" typically has a higher quality of merchandise to offer and we see a distinct rise in sales after they receive our shipments. Please check out New Horizons Ministry at www.newhorizonsministries.net.

To all of you valued clients, Thank You for entrusting us with your projects, friendship and love! We trust you have gained a higher quality lifestyle because you contracted with Golden Rule Builders, where Quality and Service Count!

May God bless all of you!

To your success,
Joel Barkman, President



Feature Homeowners

Interview with the Saunders Family Major Remodeling Customers



New Master Shower with specialty tile

Q: How did you first hear of Golden Rule?

A: We learned of Golden Rule Builders when one of our neighbors was having some work done on their house, and they were really pleased with the results. We also had heard of the name Golden Rule Builders as they are local builders serving Fauquier county where we have lived for a long time.

Q: Why did you decide to select Golden Rule Builders for you renovation project?

A: We looked at several other companies and none of the others gave us the feeling of confidence and professionalism. We really felt like they heard what our vision was for our home.

Q: What area or areas have you contracted with Golden Rule to renovate?

A: This is a very large project. Our house was built in 1985 and we were really looking to modernize and up grade everything. Our house has been completely gutted—we're looking for a complete remodel. There may be a few windows and doors that have stayed intact, but that's about it, we're even replacing old appliances and light switches.

Q: Can you describe some of the "process" of working with Golden Rule Builders on your renovation project?

A: We started working with Golden Rule back in June of 2007 and actually signed the contract in September, we spent those 3 months really fine tuning all the details of contract before any work was started. Since then, we've been really impressed with their system of utilizing all of their talented staff on our project, i.e. we're not just working with a carpenter or an electrician we're also working with the office staff as well helping us make informed design decisions. We have on-going weekly meetings to review the status of our project, this is when we can voice any concerns we may have and really stay informed on the process of the renovation.

Q: How about things like deadlines and budget, how they have performed?

A: We've really been pleased with both of these aspects of the project, they have honored deadlines, and we've had no "surprise" fees.

Q: Having a renovation project of this size would certainly make living in your home during the process challenging to say the least. How has Golden Rule worked to reduce the "chaos"?

A: All of their employees have really tried to be clean regarding their work space, most importantly trying to keep the dust to a minimum!

Q: What advise would you give other home owners considering a large renovation project such as yours?

A: Several things—it's probably best to try and remodel when you don't have young children around and conversely the elderly as well. The dust and disarray does create challenges. I would also suggest doing it in phases so that there are some areas of your home that remain livable during the process. In addition, you must really plan, plan and then plan some more and really be clear about all the details in the contract. And finally be realistic—problems are going to occur, the question is how will your contractor handle them? Golden Rule Builders is indeed that "high quality builder" that strives to really "hear" what the home owner's are looking to achieve in a finished product, and will use all their resources to make it happen.



Custom Cabinets and Fireplace in progress.



Employee Focus

Patrick Mooney

by Karin Geurtsen
Office Manager & Design Consultation

It's the "WOW moments" that keep GRB Job Foreman Patrick Mooney going. With Golden Rule for nearly four years now, Patrick explains that he finds the most satisfaction in leaving a job. This is because he knows that the end product is making his homeowners happy, and he has experienced numerous WOW moments throughout the course of a remodeling project.

Patrick's dad worked for Tailor Made Landscapes (a former division) for a time, and that was how Patrick made his way to GRB in May 2004. He had previous experience in metal roofing, concrete, and auto mechanics including two years in diesel mechanics. Explaining that he changed direction when he realized that he "didn't love" mechanical work, Patrick became interested in construction and started out as a carpenter's helper. He has worked his way up within GRB and was promoted to Job Foreman over a year ago. Patrick states that his current responsibility for the Saunders remodel-

ing project is very challenging. This is because the owners are living in the house "while we are destroying and rebuilding." Since the renovations affect so many areas of the home, and impact the Saunders' daily lives, Patrick says that he pays particular attention to cleaning up thoroughly at the end of each day.

Patrick is known for raving about the "Little Giant Ladder," his favorite tool. Why? Because 1) it's very well made; 2) he can't think of any way to improve it, and 3) it has gotten him out of many

tough situations. The Little Giant is handy and quick – Patrick describes the easy set-up as simply "giving it a push and a shove!"

Married to Michelle for three years, Patrick and Michelle both have family in southern Maryland. Asked what he enjoys in his free time, Patrick is quick to respond, -- "What do I NOT like to do?!" He plays volleyball, tennis and softball, but also swims, snowboards, and rides horses. Going rock climbing and taking trips to the beach are high on his list, -- along with bull riding in the annual Twisted K Pro Bull Riding event held at Great Meadow, in The Plains, VA. Painting and watching movies are two favorite activities that involve slightly less energy and athleticism...

According to VP Dennis Reitz, Patrick is a real asset to GRB and to the clients he serves with his great organizational skills, attention to detail and the ability to figure out the complex issues that typically arise on a remodeling project.



Patrick Mooney and the Little Giant



Traditional Details

by Anthony Palladino
Design/Estimating



Shutter "dog" detail



Shutters with S hooks and strap hinges.

When designing your new home or remodeling project I look to the traditional details that can be found on many of our historic and period homes. Exterior details such as well proportioned porch columns, window trim, and shutters. Many traditional homes used shutters as protection against wind and rain or the heat of summer and the chill of winter. Today we use shutters almost strictly as a decorative element. If you are considering shutters or shutter accessories for your house, you will find that many low maintenance options are available in a range of standard and custom sizes and colors. Most common shutter styles are paneled and louvered shutters. In the "old days," louvered shutters were used to allow airflow while the shutter was in the closed position – pretty smart!

These days we thankfully enjoy insulated windows and modern HVAC; opening and closing your shutters, although charming, is a thing of the past. However, to have the best of today while honoring the charm of yesterday we can make use of decorative hardware that emulates the look of the forged and beaten iron straps, hinges, pulls, and holdbacks found on many operable shutters. While operable shutters with working hardware are expensive and maintenance prone (albeit appropriate for some projects), today's homeowner will realize the most benefit from a pair of elegant "S" hooks and a set of decorative strap hinges. These ornamental features will add interest, depth, and a sense of authenticity to your new or existing home.

And as a way of saying,

"Thanks To Our Valued Customers..."

we invite our past clients to call or stop by to order enough complimentary "S" hooks and strap hinges to decorate each shutter on your house! It's a great way to add beauty and value to your home and you can do it yourself! Simple how-to instructions will be made available at the time your new hardware is available to pick-up at the GRB office. See you soon!



Tips For Homeowners

Energy Conservation Tips

by VP Dennis Reitz

You hear a lot about energy conservation these days and when you get your winter utility bills, I'm sure there are times you tell yourself, "There's got to be some way to reduce these fuel bills!" You may have even gone so far as to check some of the most obvious sources of energy loss like your windows & doors. Are all your **windows closed tight and locked**? Locking the window, whether it is a double hung or casement style, ensures that the sash is fully seated into the weather stripping and prevents the top sash from drifting down ever so slightly, leaving a gap for the warm air in your home to go rushing outside.

A similar principle applies with your **exterior doors**. Check to make sure the strike plate is adjusted correctly so that the door seats tightly into the weather strip all the way around the door. A strike plate that is adjusted too far towards the inside of the jamb will allow the door to only lightly touch the weather strip and when the wind kicks up it can push its way past and on into the house.

But there are other sources of heat loss from your home that you may not have considered. For example, when you flip the **exhaust fan** on in your bathroom or over your stove you are not only removing humidity or odors, you're pumping heat out of the house. Think about it this way: if you have a 2500

– 3000 square foot home and leave an exhaust fan on for 4 hours, you have effectively removed all the heated air from the house. Make sure the fan is turned off as soon as the air is cleared of the humidity or odors and, please, never leave that fan running when you head off for work!

An option you might consider for the bathroom is to install an **exhaust fan with a built-in sensor** for humidity. That way when you leave the bathroom after a shower you have the peace of mind knowing that when the moisture in the air has been evacuated the fan will turn itself off and leave the rest of your heat in the house where it belongs.

Another source of heat loss in a home is the **recessed lights on the uppermost floor**. Even when there is proper insulation in the attic around the light fixture there can be a "chimney effect" generated by the light. This is especially true if you use a standard incandescent bulb in your recessed light. The intense heat from the bulb heats up the can, then the insulation and, as it continues to rise, pulls a draft from the house up through the can, through the insulation and into the attic. Obviously, what goes out must come in, so the negative pressure then pulls cold air in someplace else in the house. One of the things you can do to at least minimize this effect is to use

one of the **new compact fluorescent bulbs** in your recessed fixtures. Because they operate at a much lower temperature they do not create as intense of a "chimney effect" through the light fixture. In addition, they use less energy than an incandescent bulb, so you save in two ways. Do remember, however, that you will not be able to dim your fixtures in which you've used compact fluorescents.

If you are going to have to pay for the fuel anyway then at least make sure you are getting maximum efficiency out of your furnace as it burns. One of the simplest things you can do to ensure maximum efficiency is to **keep a clean filter** in the unit. You should be changing a standard filter at least every 3 months, but if conditions in your home are generating more dust than usual then checking and changing the filter more frequently is in order. A clean filter maximizes air flow which allows the most efficient transfer of the heat from the furnace to the air in your home.

These are just a few simple steps you can take to maintain your investment and keep your energy costs down during the winter months.



Good News Corner



Gentleman of the Year Award
Steve Klein



Employee of the Year
Hannah Beahm



Recognition Award
Steve Miller



Excellence Award
Dennis Reitz

Thank you to Fred & Lori Marotta for opening their beautiful new custom home to prospective clients recently.

Please join us in congratulating the following employees!

- Congratulations to Steve Klein, winner of the first annual GRB Gentleman of the Year Award. Selected by his colleagues as the employee who “best portrays the professional image of GRB in the field,” Steve demonstrated his professionalism throughout the year through his interactions with clients, trade professionals, vendors, fellow employees and the general public. This is reflected in his conduct, appearance, speech, attitudes, work ethic, workmanship, desire to improve his skills and contributions to the company.
- Kudos to GRB’s VP Dennis Reitz, awarded an Excellence Award by Joel, in recognition of his commitment to the highest standards of excellence in the pursuit of GRB goals.
- Steve Miller received a special Recognition Award, for his extraordinary skills and dedication to our company’s goals.
- Honor Roll Employees for 2007: Hannah Beahm, Mark McCormack, Steve Miller, and Dennis Reitz. These employees achieved a perfect score in 6 categories and were rewarded with 2 bonus vacation days and a full year-end bonus.
- Our GRB Employee of the Year for 2007 was Hannah Beahm, in recognition for her dedication and contribution to the fulfillment of GRB goals. We appreciate you, Hannah!



All in the Family

Christmas Festivities

GRB employees and their families gathered at McMahon's Irish Pub & Restaurant in Warrenton this year for our annual Christmas Party. A December tradition, we look forward to spending this relaxed time together, -- chatting with family members, marveling at the children, and sharing good food and fun. The buffet was great, complete with McMahon's famous scones and plenty of desserts.

Our entertainment for the evening began with a humorous GRB take on the song "The 12 Days of Christmas," in which everyone in the crowd took part. Joel's solo lines "Five bonus checks" (and variations thereof) were particularly memorable. Mark McCormack filled the role of Master of Ceremonies splendidly of course, sporting an

oversize white top hat and mustache. We surprised the boss and employees with a rousing game of "GRB Bingo," -- many thanks to the Catlett Fire Department for loaning us their old Bingo spinner! Employees took turns pantomiming Bingo actions (swinging a sledge hammer, fishing like Anthony, filling out a time card, and much more) and winners shouted out "GRB, Baby!"

We're blessed with a variety of talent in this company, and were treated to Christmas music performed by Fred McGee, Steve Klein, and Mark McCormack. These three wise men all play the guitar and sing beautifully. Following his annual "State of GRB" speech, Joel presented a number of employee awards (please see "Good

News Corner" for details). The employees then concluded the evening with a special gift for Joel and Patty: a framed Vision Statement, in honor of GRB's 20th year.



The Vision



Master of Ceremonies



Musical Trio



Professional Development

Viva Las Vegas?

A Remodeling Convention Journal

by Mark McCormack,

Project Manager

One of the most invigorating benefits that we enjoy at GRB are yearly trips to the Remodeling Show. From October 9 through 12, the 2007 Remodeling Show was held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The itinerary is not for the timid. For instance, this year we awoke somewhere between 3 and 4 am to catch an early flight, then switched flights in Chicago. It's not a pretty sight to see Joel, Dennis, Patrick, Steve, and Tim at 4 in the morning. Imagine what they had to endure! We hit the Show floor running at about 9 am, enough time for a little browsing of new products at the multitude of vendor displays before my first training session. After learning how to identify, properly dispose of, and prevent mold infiltration, I stopped for a bite to eat -- but decided to go hungry: \$6.50 for a hot dog or slice of pizza was too much even for an indulgent muncher like me.

While perusing the show floor, your mind is sparked by everything from the latest countertop materials to quality control software. We examine it and ask if it can make us more efficient or thorough, in order to serve our customers better. The afternoon was spent learning how to make our relationships with our trade specialists go smoothly, to streamline the construction process. Communication, scheduling, communication, the bidding process, and communication were some of the key topics covered.

The Exhibit Floor closes daily at about 5:30 pm, after which we search for a place to eat and discuss the various seminars and products. These talks are always useful in solidifying what will work for GRB and how to implement it. (Interesting to see the appetites after a strenuous day at the Show!) Those buffets didn't have a chance against us: I didn't know that crab legs could pile so high! On the topic of epicurean delights,

it would be inexcusable to neglect mention of Tim's handiwork at the breakfast table. He generously rose before us and prepared feasts suited to royalty. He topped it off on our final day with his famous omelet which would be at home in any five star restaurant.

So it went for four days: seminars on everything from using Microsoft Excel in construction applications to scheduling and job costing. Products from vehicles to insulated block forms for concrete walls. And tools enough to make a grown man cry.

Although the Show leaves little time to sight-see, we managed to get out and experience some of the extensive architecture used by casinos to charm visitors into spending their money. Under the sections of square miles that are Caesar's Palace, there's a ceiling painted like the sky. It's very impressive along with the Roman style statues and decorations. And the drone of the "one armed bandits" wherever you go is like an army on the move, millions of individual slots spinning to make one great noise, dedicated to one purpose.



2007 Remodeling Show attendees from GRB (L to R): Mark McCormack, Steve Miller, Tim Ovington, and Patrick Mooney. Not Pictured: Joel Barkman and Dennis Reitz.



Caesar's Palace

We did get out to one show, "Stomp!" which was a lively fusion of dance and rhythm using common items found in a warehouse. Brooms, boxes, keys, tubes all sang unique tones and beats in the talented hands of the performers. While a non-speaking performance, many humorous story lines were communicated in mime. Tim was sad that he couldn't get comfortable enough to take a nap during the performance.

On a personal note, I thought Las Vegas fell far short of all the hype. You'll note that most of the mountains that surround the city are so spectacular that the noise and neon trying to grab you fall short of their goal. It's interesting to see the familiar lights of Las Vegas from scenes in movies, but when the sun is rising or setting, the glittering towers that have been raised seem lifeless compared to vibrant expression of the Creator.

All in all, the annual Remodeling Show is non-stop learning, walking, and fun. Though we tried to summarize on the flight back, our synapses short-circuit from overload. We were distracted by the sun dropping behind a layer of clouds, singing a song of color and praise to remind us of the gift of life we've been given and the Source from which it comes.



Favorite Links

Re Joel Barkman's community & ministry involvement:

- **Allegro School of Music**

Joel serves on the Board of Directors for Allegro.

www.allegromusicschool.org

- **New Horizons Ministries**

Joel serves on the Board of Director for this ministry to the children of incarcerated women in Colorado.

www.newhorizonsministries.net

- **Dayspring Mennonite Church**

President/CEO Joel Barkman and Vice President Dennis Reitz and their families are members of this Mennonite church in Midland, Virginia.

www.dayspringmennonite.org

- **Northern Virginia Building Industry Association (NVBIA)**

Joel is the current president of the Fauquier Chapter of NVBIA.

www.nvbial.com

General for homeowners:

- **National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)**

Trade Association based in Washington, D.C., known as "the voice of the housing industry. Click on FOR CONSUMERS; variety of topics including a section on Home Maintenance. Also information on latest housing trends and economics of the industry;NAHB is the sponsor of the annual International Builders Show.

www.nahb.org

- **Custom Builders Council (CBC)**

Golden Rule Builders, Inc. is a member of this group of specialized builders in northern Virginia.

www.custombuilderscouncil.com

- **EnergyStar information for consumers**

Includes information on tax credits for consumers

www.energystar.gov