

# Loose Screws

October 21, 2009

## Upcoming Ohio Valley NARI Events

**Save the Date: November 5<sup>th</sup> 8am:** *Quick Fix* - A Tile workshop for NARI Friends and Baths Plus Employees! Start your day with education; wrap it up at the Green Diamond Gallery with a baseball and audio experience hosted by Viewings Audio & Video Automation!

**Setting Tile in Today's Building Environment:** This workshop will cover the basics of thin-set mortars and applications for different sized tiles and formats. We will cover the different sizes of notched trowels and the applications they are suitable for or not, as well as show the proper troweling technique and hydration of absorbent substrates. We will also show the proper coverage required for tile installations and review the ANSI specification for coverage on floors, exterior applications and wet areas.

Other topics will include the various grouts that are now available to the market and their properties. A demonstration of the proper techniques for mixing, spreading and dressing grout joints will also be included.

With the overwhelming use of porcelain bodied tile in the market, we will discuss the issues with regard to modified and un-modified mortars with porcelain and their use in wet and dry areas and with large size format tile as well as small glass mosaics.

The estimated time for this workshop is approximately one and a half to two hours.  
*Where: Baths Plus Inc., 8711 Reading Road, 45215 **RSVP (513) 821-7464***

**Save the Date:** November 5, 2009- 6:00pm., Viewings would like to present to Ohio Valley NARI members the trends they see in the world of automation and "going green". The program will be held in the beautiful Green Diamond Gallery, located in Montgomery. There we will experience one of the largest privately-owned collections of baseball memorabilia in the United States. Your friends at Viewings will provide the food; the drink and a GREAT raffle (it's a secret)! We are sure to enjoy a night of education that will further distinguish NARI as the premiere association of remodeling experts. Visit [www.naricincinnati.org](http://www.naricincinnati.org) to register or call 1-800-498-NARI and RSVP Today!

**Special Seminar:** February 10, 2010, Ohio Valley NARI along with Roth & Associates will be presenting a Sandler Sales Training Program. Highlights: Why salespeople fail... and what to do about it. • How traditional sales practices turn salespeople into unpaid consultants. • How to get to the real decision maker. • How to touch 100% of your desirable opportunities, 100% of the time. • Why everyone looks busy, but sales remain low. • Do your salespeople have what it takes to succeed in today's volatile economy and

marketplace? • Is your sales management strategy and structure optimized to produce the results YOU need to succeed? For more information or visit [www.naricincinnati.org](http://www.naricincinnati.org).

### **October Kitchen Bath and Remodeling Show**

We want to extend a heartfelt thanks to those of you who donating your valuable time to volunteer and staff our Ohio Valley NARI booth. The best way to promote our fine association is to speak with the members who are active and motivated to continually grow and strengthen our efforts. The economy is challenging and people are busier than ever trying to achieve their goals, finding time to volunteer is certainly a little tougher than usual. For those of you who were able... ***Thank You!***

### **The Good, the Bad and the Ugly - Straight Talk from Homeowner Panels**

*By Morgan Zenner*

The North Bay NARI Builder's Roundtable offered its members a chance to hear homeowners discuss individual experiences with remodelers at their latest chapter meeting. The three panelists represented each perspective when it comes to remodeling: the good, the bad and the ugly.

Gregory Neil, founder and executive director of North Bay NARI and president of Gregory Neil Associates, organized the homeowner panel as a way to bridge the gaps of miscommunication that contractors and homeowners commonly experience.

"There is a huge misunderstanding between homeowners and contractors that I have come to know very well over the last 20 years," Neil says. These blind spots are what motivated the panel discussions and creates better understanding for both sides of the equation.

Neil found the three homeowners via outreach to the chapter's board members, colleagues and other committee members. Those homeowners interested in participating were asked to submit an outline of their story and discussed the details with Neil prior to the event.

The panelists were randomly selected and all parties described were kept anonymous out of respect for both sides.

The event focused on each panelist individually, with each given just under 10 minutes to tell his/her story and answer questions. A moderator was in charge of keeping time and facilitating the answer and question portion.

Beryn Hammil, owner of Beryn Hammil Designs and marketing committee director for North Bay NARI, was in attendance that evening.

"As professionals, we heard what works and what doesn't work," Hammil says. She also says that oftentimes, remodelers never have a chance to hear the truth from clients.

The meeting started out with a homeowner who had a positive experience.

"He bid the project and selected the remodeler who fulfilled his criteria for how he preferred to work through his project," Hammil says. This homeowner's experience is a little bit

unusual, as he insisted on conducting his own product purchases and he requested a separate time and material bid.

Looking back, all agreed that the homeowner's hands-on experience was probably what led to his satisfaction. His heavy involvement in the day-to-day progress of the project made it easier for him to adapt to changes.

"The homeowner appreciated the education he received from the contractor about what he goes through on a daily basis," Hammil says. She is referring to the day the homeowner shadowed the contractor out in the field to understand how much work is completed in a day.

On the other hand, the bad experiences were examined more closely by the panelists and the audience to determine what went wrong.

The first bad experience originated from a contractor's poor recommendation of an engineer who was needed to complete the project.

"Even though the engineer's work was not passing inspections, the blame fell on the contractor because he recommended the engineer," Hammil says.

The ugly experience was the result of an unforeseen change in remodeling contractors after the contractor who was originally chosen was injured and had to step down from the job. The injured contractor recommended a replacement contractor who was unethical.

"The homeowner admitted that he went with the flow, when he should have re-evaluated the situation once the chosen contractor became unavailable," Hammil says.

The audience asked the panel a lot of questions about the thoroughness of the background checking or what homeowners would have done differently. In most instances, the remodelers were able to identify whether they had processes in place within their companies to avoid mishaps.

Hammil noticed similar themes throughout the evening, for both the homeowners and remodelers.

Everyone agreed that good communication between the homeowner and the remodeler was the key to success. This was especially true in regards to identifying and solving problems, which, all agreed, were a natural part of the remodeling process and need to be addressed through communication.

"The main point was that contractors cannot walk away and think that the issue will go away by itself," Hammil says.

Another theme among remodelers was the importance in saying no to clients if they are not a good fit. "It is empowering for remodelers to say no to clients when they don't feel right about something," Hammil says.

Intuition was mentioned several times as being a powerful indicator of a bad fit for both the

homeowners and remodelers and the importance of listening to one's internal barometer.

Neil sees a future for panel meetings at North Bay, not only because panel meetings are better attended than regular meetings but the takeaway value is great.

"I am constantly thinking about what members need," Neil says. "I'm not saying there is a quick fix to anything, but we can definitely reduce the friction and pain that contractors and homeowners go through."

*Business tip: Homeowner panels are not just for chapters! Invite past clients to an advisory dinner and have the group discuss certain aspects of their remodeling experience with your company.*

### **Ladder Institute Unveils New Training**

The American Ladder Institute (ALI) has introduced a comprehensive, new Multimedia Training Program that is free to all users.

Training focuses on proper selection, use and care of ladders and allows access to a variety of modules. A certificate of completion is available once the post-training test has been completed and passed satisfactorily.

ALI, the national trade association representing the North American ladder industry, will exhibit the program Oct. 26-28 at the National Safety Council Expo in Orlando.

"This quality training program can be adopted by small and large companies, unions, and contractors," said Janet Rapp, ALI Executive Director. "Free of charge, it will allow comprehensive training to be accessed online for real-time instruction. Companies without training budgets or research & development resources can simply log in and train staff to maximize safety."

The training program follows the recent introduction of ALI's new web site, [www.laddersafety.org](http://www.laddersafety.org), designed to provide ladder safety information by ladder type. The information is provided in a user-friendly, less-technical manner but is based on ladder safety standards, of which ALI is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approved developer.

**CotY<sup>™</sup> 2010  
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