

The *Retail Observer*

January, 2008

The Monthly News Magazine With Personality

Vol.19, Issue 1



**WHERE ENTERTAINMENT, TECHNOLOGY
AND BUSINESS CONVERGE**

PRODUCED BY  CEA®

By Moe Lastfogel

OK, OK... I know you all want to hear about what happened in Vegas. It's been all over the news. I had friends call to ask if I had seen this or that gadget they had just seen on C/Net. Technology is marking time so fast these days; it's hard to keep up with it all. Our TVs are getting bigger, our phones are getting smaller and technology is running

amuck. We all know by now that the new televisions are so big that they take up the entire length of the delivery trucks and to get them delivered inside your customer's home, you have to practically open up a wall to get them inside. And where would we be without our cell phones? The Bluetooth® market is exploding with new phones,

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Our 19th Year!

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DEADLINE FOR
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 IS JANUARY 10, 2008



Why Associate?

Happy New Year and thanks for being associated with the *Retail Observer*. So, I gotta ask you, what does it mean to be associated? And what does an association do for you? Associate—by definition: joined in some kind of relationship such as a colleague or ally or companion etc. As readers, we are defined as “associated”. What is our bond you may ask? Well, this is how I see it... We all have the goal of bettering ourselves, our families and our lives. We look to each other for help, knowledge, friendship and cooperation. Huh? You say, that’s not a word! What is cooperation (co-op-a-ti-tion)? As a dear friend of mine puts it, it’s cooperation between competitors. Through our associations and affiliations, we can implement change in an industry through the power in our numbers.

Today around 12,000 copies of the *Retail Observer* are distributed through-out North America and over seas, as far away as Puerto Rico and Guam. If each location it goes to have 10 people reading this one issue of the magazine, that would equate to readership of over 120,000 people. Just think, you belong to that large group of individuals that have similar goals in mind as you do. That goal stated, is to move boxes (product).

Eliana and I just did a 5 day whirlwind tour of CES. With our press badges in hand we walked the pre-show floor still under construction. Eliana pointed to a new digital device on display, but I seemed to look right past it. What I did notice was an all-in-one washer/dryer in a box underneath it. When I mentioned the washer dryer unit, she had no idea what I was talking about because it was still in the box and not on display so she did not see it! (Too many past inventories and box moving are still giving me nightmares).

So the question becomes what is the best way to move these boxes and what is being associated have to do with anything? As you look at our masthead to the left of this column, you will find we have affiliated our magazine with many of the top associations and buying groups in this industry, with more affiliations coming down the road. We’ve done this to help you, our readers, move more boxes. You know that the more of those boxes you move, the more profit you make (thanks to VRs).

Over the course of 2008, we will bring you new sections in the magazine, from financial columns to business education. We are working within our industry to bring you stories of successes and lessons from failures. We will help you to find seminars and educational opportunities to assist not only you but your employees to further their skills in this ever changing marketplace. We will also be building other new sections to include Decorative Plumbing and Consumer Electronics as it relates to you, the retailer. We will look for value added opportunities through our advertisers to bring you products and services to help move boxes and increase your bottom line. What’s new, what’s hot and who’s who will still be the main part of what we do. We will even add some new surprises along the way. So let’s enjoy the possibilities of this New Year and may you turn your inventory often.

Moe Lastfogel



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U-LINE
CORPORATION



Sharp's 108 inch Aquos LCD television

computers, conference speakers and even memory cards. WiFi was in everything you could think of. There were new innovations in robotics, race cars, and memory devices like the Eye-Fi 2G wireless SD card—winner of the last gadget standing award and hottest gadget nominee: the Tornado—the newest, fastest and easiest way to transfer files between computers. My personal favorite was from MyVu, a company that makes glasses with built in HD screens that you can plug into your i-pod, X-Box, Playstation, Wii or other media players. I could go on and on about all the “stuff” we saw at the convention, but I think it’s interesting to know, who actually puts this behemoth show on? That’s right, the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA®) is the preeminent trade association promoting growth in the U.S. consumer technology industry through technology policy, events, research, promotion and the fostering of business and strategic relationships. CEA represents more than 2,100 corporate members involved in the design, development, manufacturing, distribution and integration of audio, video, mobile electronics, wireless and landline communications, information technology, digital imaging, home networking, multimedia and accessory products, as well as related services that are sold through consumer channels. CEA’s resources are available online at www.CE.org, the definitive source for information about the consumer electronics industry.

TOPLINE INDUSTRY STATISTICS

According to CEA projections, total factory sales of consumer electronics reached \$148 billion in 2006 and are expected to reach \$160 billion by the end of 2007. The average U.S. household owns approximately 25 CE products and the average U.S. adult spends \$1200 each year acquiring more products and services. CEA Market Research is the most comprehensive source of sales data, forecasts, consumer research and historical trends for the consumer electronics industry. Consumer survey reports are free to CEA members and are available for purchase for non-members at <http://www.eBrain.org/>. On Capitol Hill and in statehouses across the U.S., CEA represents the consumer electronics industry, monitors state and federal legislation as well as federal regulations and assesses the potential effects on the CE industry. By bringing together engineers from the consumer technology industry, CEA’s ANSI-accredited Technology & Standards department facilitates industry standards to guide how companies develop, manufacture and interconnect their products. Through CEA training programs like the Mobile Electronics Certified Professional (MECP) and www.CEknowhow.com, CE professionals can obtain certification or increase their field of knowledge. CEA works in partnership with its member companies to promote new technologies and trends such as digital television, multi-room audio, digital imaging and home networking.

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- www.CE.org**..... Official website of the Consumer Electronics Association.
- www.CESweb.org**..... Official website of the International CES.
- www.CEknowhow.com**..... CEA's web-based educational program to help retail managers and sales personnel sell technology products.
- www.digitaltips.org** This CEA consumer website offers a wealth of information on products such as digital television (DTV), digital imaging and MP3 players. The content also is featured on AOL's Digital Lifestyle Channel.
- www.eBrain.org** eBrain Market Research is the custom research provider for CEA; This site contains consumer and market research studies for purchase.
- www.GreatAudio.com**..... Offers information and tips for consumers on how to evaluate and purchase quality audio systems. A dealer locator also assists consumers in finding local retailers to assist them with audio demonstrations and purchases.
- www.AntennaWeb.org** Interactive consumer-based site designed to aid in choosing the best type of television antennas for a specific location.
- www.CEAconnections.com** Interactive resource designed to help consumers better understand how to connect their audio and video products.
- www.TechHome.com**..... Complete source for consumers looking for information on integrated home solutions, installers and related products.
- www.DigitalDriver.org**..... Educates consumers about best practices for use and installation of in-vehicle technology.
- www.YourRideYourWay.org** This CEA initiative advocates improved consumer choice and continued vehicle access.
- www.myGreenElectronics.com** Educates consumers about responsible use, reuse and recycling of electronics, while providing insight into the industry's energy and material conservation efforts.
- www.digitalfreedom.org** The Digital Freedom Campaign works to maximize digital opportunities for artists while ensuring that consumers, innovators and content creators are treated fairly.
- www.MECP.com**..... MECP certification increases mobile electronics installation technician confidence and ensures customer satisfaction.



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Our Columns Stand Alone

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Your clients expect value, performance and choice. Deliver all three with Northland column refrigerators and freezers. Northland offers more choices, more capacity and more features in construction than competing models. And, it's easy to find the right fit, no matter how large or small the kitchen design. With widths of 18, 24, 30 and 36 inches, Northland offers the widest selection in both refrigerator and freezer columns.

Value also comes from making the most of every inch of kitchen space, and Northland delivers here, too. Northland refrigerators and freezers have up to 20% more storage capacity than competitive models with the same footprint.

To learn more about how Northland can add value to your designs, visit our web site at www.northlandnka.com or call our customer care team at **800- 223-3900**.

Beautifully Simple, Simply Beautiful



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An AGA Company

Nevada has a Winter Blast

The new Sierra Nevada Chapter of the NKBA based in Reno, Nevada, enjoyed their first annual Christmas party at the Montreux Country Club in Reno. The evening's festivities enjoyed by members, sponsors and guests, included cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, sit-down dinner, dancing to the Colin Ross Band, and on site professional photos. The chapter is very grateful to its generous sponsors, which included Dacor, Western Nevada Supply/American Standard, Ferguson/Kohler, Purcell Murray,

SubZero/Wolf, Kitchenaid, Viking, Zephyr, and Cooper Lighting. Some out of town guests stayed in downtown Reno at the Siena Hotel. Sierra Nevada appreciates The Siena Hotel extending a special rate to our guests. Thanks also to Bell Limo for providing transportation to and from Montreux Country Club. The Chapter is very thankful to Montreux's event coordinator, executive chef, staff and attendees for making our event an evening to remember. **RO**



Dinner, country club style



Standards of Excellence Reno manager Laurie Ballew cutting a rug



Murray Thompson, Bob Pence, Rick Tate



Board Members (l to r): Norin Mack - VP Treasurer, Diana Foley - VP Communications, Roxane Wilson - VP Endorsed Programs, Russell Hahn - President, Jan Agnew - VP Programs, Bob Pence - Chapter Representative, Laurie Ballew - VP Secretary



© Northland 2007

You want your kitchen designs to flow efficiently, liberated from product constraints. It may make sense to place a refrigerator here, a freezer there – or both together with a totally integrated look. The choice is entirely yours, and Northland gives you the power to do all this and more. With widths of 18, 24, 30 and 36 inches, Northland offers the widest selection in both refrigerator and freezers.

Combine these sizes and Northland provides the largest capacity units on the market today. Personalize your design to each client's taste and needs. Enhance lifestyle while providing beautiful, performance-rich refrigeration – only with Northland!

To learn more about how Northland can add flexibility to your designs, visit our web site at www.northlandnka.com or call our customer care team at **800-223-3900**.

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Ok, let's get back to the show. Produced for more than 40 years, the International CES is the world's largest consumer technology tradeshow. The first CES took place in New York City in June of 1967, with 250 exhibitors and 17,500 attendees. Since then, the International CES has grown more than eight-fold. For the 2007 International CES, more than 2,700 exhibitors filling more than 1.8 million net square feet of exhibit space showcased their latest products and services to more than 140,000 attendees. CES covers the breadth and depth of the CE industry and serves as the launch pad for tens of thousands of new products each year. Let me give those of you who haven't been to CES a little insight. Most people think TVs, stereos and computers when they think CES. Here are the categories of what was there to give you a better idea.

- Accessories
- Audio Hardware & Software
- Blank Media
- Bluetooth Technology
- Broadband Technology
- Car Audio
- Computer Hardware & Software
- Digital Car
- Digital Entertainment
- Digital TV/HDTV
- E-Commerce
- Electronic Gaming
- Global Positioning Systems
- Handheld Information Devices
- High-Performance Audio & Home Theater
- Home Appliances
- Home/Personal Healthcare
- Home Security & Automation
- Home Theater & Custom Installation
- Internet Applications & Services
- Mobile Electronics
- MP3/Internet Audio
- Personal Electronics
- Photography/Digital Imaging
- Retail Resources
- Robotics
- Satellite Systems
- Small Office/Home Office
- Speech Technology
- Telematics & Vehicle Navigation
- Telephony Equipment
- Video Hardware & Software
- Wi-Fi Technology
- Wireless/Mobile Communications

The show seemed to have even more than what is listed here. Now let's put that into perspective. By a show of hands, who went to KBIS last year? Great, so did I. CES took up almost 4 times the floor space with the entire Las Vegas Convention Center, the Hilton Convention Center next door, the Las Vegas Convention Center parking lot, the lot across the street (BMW built a track there), as well as taking up a portion of the Sands/Venetian Convention Center. At the Sands the high end home audio was being shown in many of the Venetian's luxury suites as well. It was like walking thru a live museum of sound. In one room was an Italian speaking manufacturer and the next was a company from Germany showing integrated home technologies at work. The main floor at the Sands was covered with every accessory that you would ever need for a phone, camera or pda. They even had Rex the Robotic Dog, the same size as a real life bulldog. Digital photo frames were everywhere, integrated into key chains, cordless phones and even refrigerators! Whirlpool is plugging digital photo frames onto their refrigerators, displaying images and providing weather and news updates to the end user, creating a centralized digital information hub of the home. An internal Wi-Fi adapter allows users to send pictures wirelessly to the digital photo frame and this is just the start as its refrigerators will soon play music from MP4 players or satellite radios, among other devices.

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The GD5VVAXT refrigerator is available for \$1,999 which will put it into a nice pricing category. Phone manufacturers are putting digital photo frames on their products to work with caller id. And speaking of phones, who remembers the old days of Dick Tracy and the watch he used that could call his boss showing his face on a small video screen? Well, it's here and will soon be available for sale.

It boggles the mind how large this show really is and what it takes to put it on and make it happen. If you ever have the chance to go, all I can say is by all means do so... go. If you go next year, bring an extra suitcase for all the freebies that many of the vendors hand out. It is an amazing show and CES far exceeded my expectations. Gary Shapiro and all his staff at CEA did an incredible job. See you there again next year!! **RO**

CES PRODUCT DEBUTS

SOME OF THE PRODUCTS THROUGH THE YEARS THAT HAVE MADE THEIR DEBUT AT THE CES SHOW

Videocassette Recorder (VCR).....1970	Hard-disc VCR (PVR).....1999
Laserdisc Player1974	Satellite Radio2000
Camcorder.....1981	Microsoft Xbox2001
Compact Disc Player1981	Plasma TV2001
Digital Audio Technology.....1990	Home Media Server.....2002
Compact Disc - Interactive.....1991	Blu-ray DVD.....2003
Digital Satellite System (DSS).....1994	HDTV DVR.....2003
Digital Versatile Disc (DVD).....1996	HD Radio2004
High Definition Television (HDTV).....1998	IPTV2005



Dolby's transforming guard



Eye-Fi wireless card



Rex the robotic bulldog



Panasonic 150 inch television



BMW and Intel shared technology FI formula car at trackside

2008 CES Fun Facts

1. The International CES is the **world's largest** consumer technology tradeshow.
2. Exhibit space for CES covers more than **1.8 million** net square feet of space — equivalent to **35** football fields.
3. It would take **2.5** years to meet individually with each of CES' **2,700** exhibitors outside of the show.
4. CES is the global meeting place for top international government officials and technology executives from **140** countries, representing nearly **75%** of all United Nations member states.
5. There are **25,000** international attendees — **10** times the number of athletes who competed in the 2006 Winter Olympic Games.
6. The number of slot machines in Las Vegas' Clark County is equal to the number of CES attendees — more than **140,000**.
7. **12,000** content and entertainment executives come to the show, which is more than two years worth of **feature film releases** in theaters worldwide.
8. CESweb.org gets an average of **100,000** visitors per day during the week of CES — three times the population of Monaco.
9. **32,320** hamburgers were consumed at the 2007 International CES, enough to feed one person a burger a day for more than **88** years.
10. The average U.S household has **25** consumer electronic products in it and U.S. consumer electronics sales should exceed **\$160 billion** in 2007.





Announcing the 2008 NKBA Executive Committee

The National Kitchen & Bath Association is pleased to announce the election of the 2008 NKBA Executive Committee as follows:

President – Sara Ann Busby, CKD

Busby has owned and operated Sara Busby Design, a residential kitchen and bath showroom in Elk Ridge, Michigan, for over 20 years, where she specializes in resort properties. She holds a Michigan State Residential Contractors License and was involved in the NKBA Northern Michigan Chapter's formation.

President-Elect – Suzie Williford

Williford has served the Decorative Hardware and Plumbing industry in Texas since 1975. She is the Manager of Luxury Products at Kiva Kitchen and Bath in Houston, Texas and has held a position on the NKBA Board of Directors since 2001.

Vice President – Mark Karas, CMKBD

Karas has been in the kitchen and bath industry for over 30 years and is the General Manager of Adams Kitchens, Inc., in Stoneham, Massachusetts. Karas has been involved with the NKBA for over 20 years serving the Northern New England Chapter.

Secretary – Dave Alderman, CKD

Alderman is the President and Owner of Dave's Cabinet, Inc., a design-build kitchen and bath business located in Chesapeake, Virginia. An NKBA member since 1984, Alderman has served the Virginia State Chapter in various positions, serving on the national level for nine years.

Treasurer – Maria Martina, CKD, CBD

Martina is a custom appliance consultant at Reno's Appliance, Inc. in Fairfield, New Jersey. Martina was previously President of the Northern New Jersey NKBA chapter and has participated on the national level for six years, including serving on the Board of Directors.

Immediate Past President – Bob Garner, CMKBD

Garner is the National Training and Education Manager for Medallion Cabinetry, Inc. in Waconia, Minnesota. Garner has served the NKBA on the national level for 10 years, including the Board of Directors and the Finance Committee, along with the National Executive Committee. **RO**



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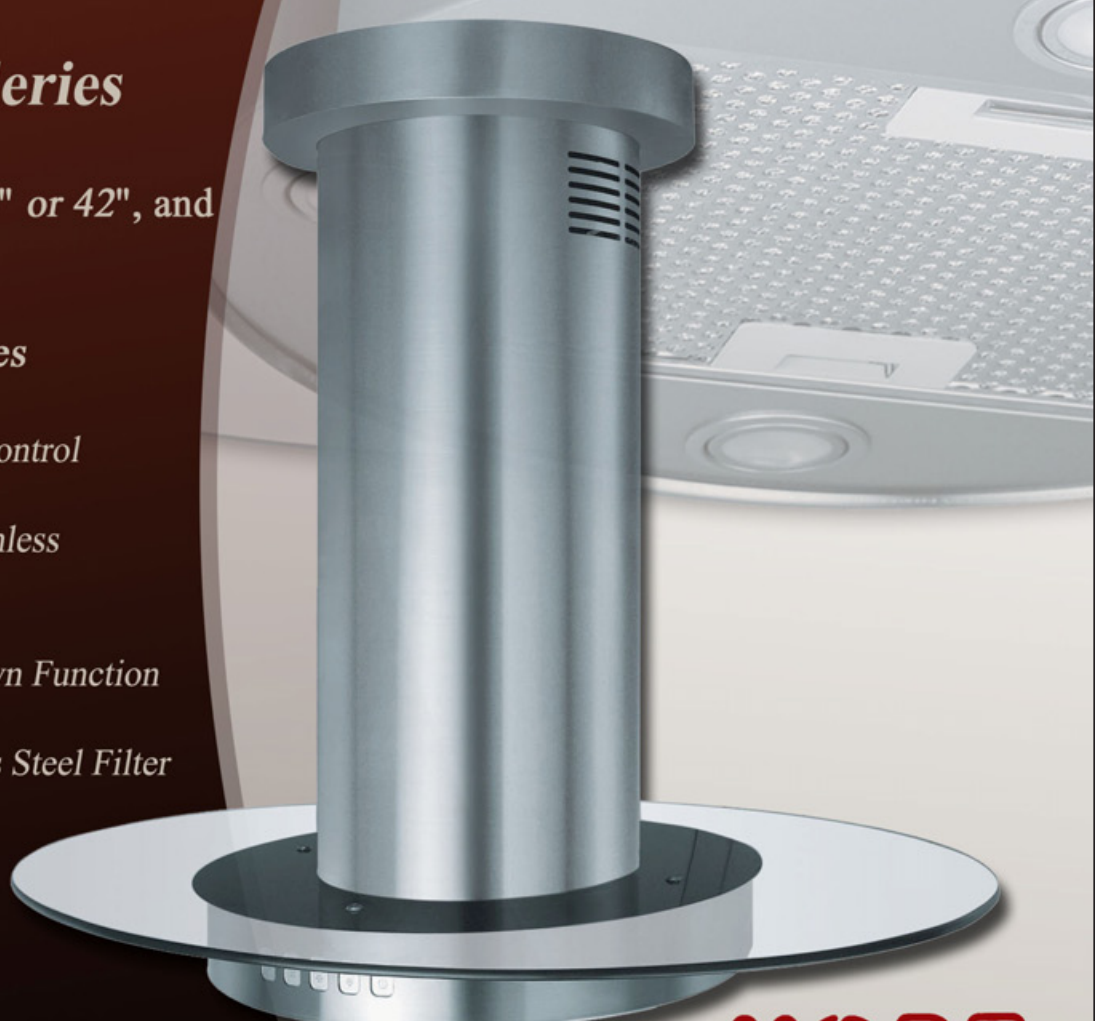
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Whirlpool Corporation Moves Holiday Rush Full Steam Ahead

Latest Trend Steams Up Laundry Rooms and Kitchens

BENTON HARBOR, Mich., Nov. 30, PRNewswire-FirstCall—Whirlpool Corporation (NYSE: WHR), the global appliance leader, declares steam this holiday season's hottest appliance trend. As consumers consider their big-ticket purchases, Whirlpool provides a look at steam-enabled products that can help get it all done this holiday season.

Steam has been around since the earth met the sun. It's completely natural, highly versatile and 100 percent biodegradable. Today, Whirlpool® steam products, which include washers, dryers, dishwashers and ovens, harness the power of steam to do everything from cleaning and cooking to sanitizing and shining.

"Whirlpool Corporation's new home-wide steam offerings are about solving the top problems consumers turn to their appliances for. During the holiday rush, those problems and appliance needs certainly are tested," said John Alexander, VP and GM Brand Management, Whirlpool Corporation. "We are committed to being the first appliance manufacturer to truly bring home the benefits of steam. Consumers have already accepted and believe in the power of steam, and the company's new approach will help them improve efficiencies by saving time and relying less upon chemicals."

Steam Cycles in the Laundry Room

In the laundry room, Whirlpool utilizes steam to sanitize, break up tough stains, release wrinkles and remove odors. Whirlpool brand, which brought high-capacity front-load laundry to the U.S., was the first in Whirlpool Corporation's brand portfolio to introduce the benefits of steam to the laundry room with the October 2007 launch of the Duet® Steam pair. This will lead the way for more brand introductions that help consumers get more done through



KitchenAid double oven with steam



Maytag JetClean® II dishwasher with steam option

the seamless marriage of steam, style and eco-efficiency.

Whirlpool brand: The Duet® Steam pair is available at national retailers in Aspen green and white with an MSRP of \$1,499-1,599 for the washer and \$1,199-1,299 for the dryer. Visit www.whirlpool.com for more information.

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Maytag: The new industry-leading Maytag brand dishwashers with SteamClean option get glassware clean the first time, every time. They have a suggested retail price of \$849 to \$949 and are available at appliance centers and home improvement stores. Visit www.maytag.com to learn more.

Jenn-Air: The SteamClean dishwasher is available in Euro-Style stainless steel and black and white finishes for suggested retail price ranging from \$899 to \$1,049. The dishwasher features an integrated, electronic touch control panel for a sleek, seamless exterior look, a stainless steel interior, an Ultra-Clean wash system and start/delay options. Visit www.jenn-air.com to learn more.

KitchenAid: KitchenAid is the only manufacturer to offer steam assist and convection technology in full size built-in convection wall ovens and full size dual fuel convection ranges. Suggested retail prices range from \$2,699 to \$4,299 and \$4,249 to \$6,449, respectively. Visit www.kitchenaid.com to learn more. **RO**



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*Compared to conventional washers manufactured before 2004, using the Normal cycle. Shows with optional Laundry 1-2-3™ worksurface and pedestals. ®Registered trademark/™Trademark of Whirlpool, U.S.A. ©2007 Whirlpool Corporation. All rights reserved.

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Holiday Party Goes Green

BY MOE LASTFOGEL

The National Association of the Remodeling Industry, Silicon Valley Chapter, Inc. held their annual META awards at the Double Tree Hotel in San Jose, CA on December 12th 2007. The event was sponsored by IMC insurance, Standards of Excellence Appliances and Decorative Plumbing and University Electric. With almost 200 guests in attendance, you could feel the anticipation in the air as the event got started. The MC for the evening was local ABC TV personality Lisa Quinn who hosts local home design based shows. With an understanding of the industry, she was able to announce the winners to the group with a great appreciation for all the work that went into their projects. This year produced a new award, the Judges Choice Green Award. This was received by Daniel Mackey Construction, Inc., University Electric, Viking Door & R.J. Leonard Painting for their team entry. It was given for best use of "Green" in a project. Platinum awards went out to Harrell Remodeling Inc., IKB, Mackey Construction and Talmadge Construction Inc. For a complete list of all the winners go to www.narisj.org. The evening was capped of with dancing to the sounds of long time ex-Doobie Brother Danny Hull and his band. **RO**



Chapter President Debbie Mackay and MC Lisa Quinn



Dan Mackey Receiving Judges Choice Award



Opal Macallister, Eliana Lastfogel and Theresa Donatelli



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NKBA Northern California Chapter Honors Purcell Murray

BY MOE LASTFOGEL

On December 5th, 2007 at the St. Francis Yacht Club on the Marina in San Francisco, the NKBA Northern California Chapter held their annual Holiday and Awards Ceremony titled "ROCK THE BOAT". After the busy pre-dinner meet and mingle, the group of over 100 were treated to a wonderful dinner on the water. The chapter thanked all of 2007s sponsors for their generous support: *Artistic Tile & Stone, CaesarStone, Dacor, Fox Marble & Granite, GE Consumers and Industrial, Miele, Purcell Murray, Segale Bros, Standards of Excellence Appliances and Decorative Plumbing, Sub Zero Wolf, Viking Corporation, The Gene Schick Company, The Westye Group West, University Electric Home Appliance Center, and the Whirlpool Corporation.*

The highlight of the event was the induction of Tim Murray and Larry Purcell into their 2007 Hall of Fame. Through the years working as a team, added to their many contributions, together they have helped to grow this chapter into one of the largest in the nation. They have been a strong influence in shaping the entire appliance industry and distribution system, which has not gone unrewarded. Both Tim and Larry's sons, who are following in their footsteps, joined in the evening festivities honoring their fathers through shared stories as well as some of the knowledge that has been passed on to them, insuring the family legacy would continue on. The evening was ended with some great music and fun, dancing the night away to the rhythms of Black Market Jazz. **RO**



Tim and Elaine Murray



M.r and Mrs. Larry Purcell and Futung Cheng



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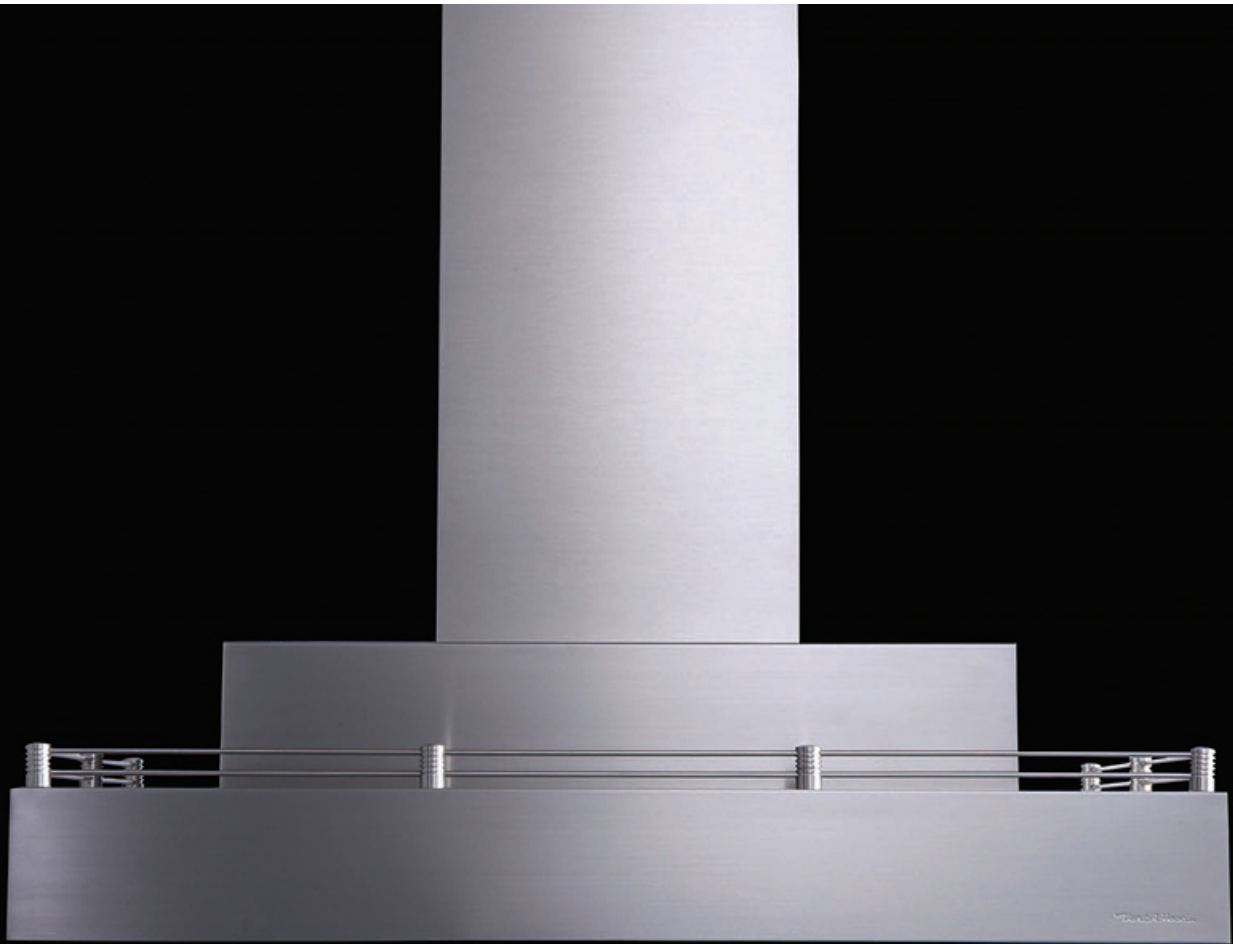
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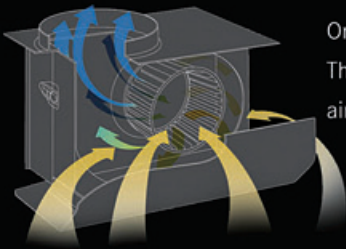
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NKBA SOCAL Annual Holiday Party

Submitted by the Southern California Chapter, NKBA

The Southern California Chapter of the NKBA held its annual holiday party December 4th, 2007. The venue was the beautiful Summit house in Fullerton and a great time was had by all. The theme for the evening was Monte Carlo and the gambling was fast and furious. Jennifer Schibetta of Kiva Kitchen and Bath had a hot hand at the craps table while others, especially Melody Thornhill, enjoyed themselves dancing the night away. There were prizes for the gambling winners and wonderful meal with wine. All in all, it was one of the best events in years. If you weren't there, you really missed out.

And, of course, no event like this is even possible without sponsors. The Board of Directors for the Southern California Chapter of the NKBA would like to thank those companies whose contributions helped to make this a great event. Our very sincere gratitude goes out to: Dacor, Daltile, Jenn-Air, Kiva Kitchen and Bath, Moen, Pacific Stone Designs, Rohl Corporation, Syndecrete, VAH Marketing, & Water, Inc. **RO**



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An AGA Company

Liebherr Confirms New Product Release— 36" Luxury Refrigerator



BURLINGTON, Ontario—As dealers, distributors and consumers learn about Liebherr's new product—the 36" refrigerator available in freestanding, fully integrated and stainless integrated models—Liebherr has decided to confirm timing, availability, and answer some of the questions that are swirling around the industry. The 36" size is brand new for Liebherr and marks the first time the German manufacturer has created a platform specifically designed for the North American market. "The 36 inch is not a common size in Europe, yet it is the most popular size in the luxury category here in North America," states Marc Perez, Vice President, Liebherr North America. "We've been working diligently to offer this size in our North American product line, and I'm confident that this product will exceed all expectations," adds Perez. Liebherr had not planned to release any information until February in time for a May product launch, but the "buzz" that the product is generating is significant. "We are getting emails daily from consumers, who have been waiting for an alternative in the 36" size – especially in the fully integrated category for custom kitchens. They are literally planning their kitchen construction around this product launch. And, dealers are planning their displays months in advance, which is always a good sign," notes Perez.



Product highlights include:

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SBS 2415 – 5 Climate Zone

Water, Inc. Adds Brew Express™ to Its Luxury Lineup

CARSON, Calif. December 20, 2007—WATER, INC. is proud to add the exciting Brew Express built-in coffee system to its line of luxury products. The Brew Express is a built-in, fully plumbed coffee system that brews coffee at the optimum temperature, making it the perfect complement to the WATER, INC. line, as it combines style, convenience and gourmet flavor in one beautifully designed in-wall unit. Available in a patented twelve-cup design, the Brew Express is appropriate for installation in homes, yachts, motor homes, offices and more. The Brew Express mounts within the wall atop a counter, saving counter space, and rather than monopolizing an electrical outlet, it actually adds two. Because the Brew Express is plumbed directly to a water supply (whose quality can also be improved by different filtration systems offered by WATER, INC.) it also eliminates the need to try and fill a messy carafe. The self-filling Brew Express automatically lays down an even spread of hot water over the ground coffee beans at the perfect temperature. To make a great cup of java with the Brew Express, all you need to do is add ground coffee. Featuring elegantly sculpted lines of stainless steel and a stainless carafe that keeps coffee tasting great for hours, the Brew Express is as stylish as it is functional. Unlike traditional coffee makers, the carafe in the Brew Express sits atop a cool (not heated) pad, eliminating a potential source of burns. It is simple to program the Brew Express for anywhere from a single cup up to a full pot and with a clever “Pause & Brew” feature and there’s even an automatic shutoff to prevent mishaps if the carafe is not replaced. At an MSRP of only \$449.00, the Brew Express is an affordable luxury. **RO**



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Perlick's 15-inch Line—Small in Size, Big on Style



MILWAUKEE, Wisconsin December 6, 2007—They say good things come in small packages, and Perlick Corporation is poised to prove this with a line of luxury undercounter refrigeration that is a mere 15-inches wide. The new 15-Inch Line from Perlick features the world's first 15-inch Beer Dispenser and the world's first 15-inch Refrigerated Drawers.

Perlick has already leveraged its professional experience in restaurants, hotels, bars, stadiums, arenas and resorts to create an unprecedented line of products for elegant home entertaining, including models that are 24-, 48-, and the industry-leading 72-inches wide. Now, Perlick conquers the other end of the spectrum,

with its 15-inch Wine Reserve, Refrigerator, Refrigerated Drawers, Beverage Center, and Beer Dispenser.

These new models look as luxurious as their wider Perlick brandmates with stainless steel interiors and full-extension shelves and also include design upgrades such as a sleek, designer handle. The 15-Inch Line offers Perlick-quality performance, with an outstanding 700 Btu compressor and a digital control hidden inside to keep the exterior lines clean and unbroken.

Each model features a full-height door (on the non-drawer models) available in stainless steel, UV-protected insulated glass, or a wood overlay kit to seamlessly blend with surrounding cabinetry. "Perlick has always prided itself on its superior line of products," notes Jeff Wimberly, director of sales and marketing for Perlick's Residential Division. "This smaller, 15-inch width offers an entirely new design option for the home."

Celebrating 90 years of excellence, Perlick is the leader in commercial bar and beverage refrigeration and dispensing equipment. The Perlick brand can be found in the finest restaurants, bars, stadiums, hotels and resorts in the world and is now available for those who want the ultimate entertainment suite for the home. The Perlick product line includes both indoor and outdoor undercounter refrigerators, wine cabinets, freezers, freezer and refrigerated drawers, clear ice makers and beer dispensers as well as countertop blender stations, cocktail centers and liquor displays. For more information about the Perlick product line, contact Perlick at (800) 558-5592 or visit www.perlick.com. **RO**



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Bosch Dishwashers Earn Highest Ranking for Second Consecutive Year

J.D. Power and Associates' Major Home Appliance Customer Satisfaction Study

(HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA – December 10, 2007)—Bosch home appliances, a leader in high quality and energy-efficient appliances, announced today that its dishwashers have been ranked highest in customer satisfaction for the second consecutive year by J.D. Power and Associates in its 2007 Major Home Appliance Study. Bosch dishwashers earned the highest ranking based on overall customer satisfaction with operational performance, including energy efficiency and product quietness, as well as product design and ease of use.

“Bosch prizes the long term satisfaction of its customers and is honored that our dishwashers have again achieved the top spot in the J.D. Power and Associates major appliance study, which demonstrates how highly consumers value quality and performance,” said Franz J. Bosshard, president and CEO of Bosch home appliances. “We are very proud of this distinction and will continue to develop products that offer our customers the best in quietness, efficiency and safety.”

Bosch dishwashers are some of the quietest and most efficient in the industry, with premium models boasting a 42dBA sound level, virtually undetectable while running, while also leading the way in energy and water efficiency. Every Bosch dishwasher is ENERGY STAR® qualified and exceeds the stringent 2007 federal energy standards. The entire collection features the ECOSENSE Wash Management System™, which examines the soil level in water via an infrared light beam and customizes the wash cycle accordingly with 48 different options. Bosch's ECOACTION™ feature on select models takes energy efficiency to the next level by reducing energy consumption by up to an additional 25%—with just the simple push of a button. These systems, along with other efficiency advancements, ensure that Bosch dishwashers use as little as 1.8 gallons of water per cycle while guaranteeing optimal wash results. In addition, the entire lineup also offers the Bosch exclusive AQUASTOP® system, a superior leak protection system that automatically shuts the dishwasher off should it detect water in the base of the unit.

About J.D. Power and Associates

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power and Associates is an ISO 9001-registered global marketing information services firm operating in key business sectors including market research, forecasting, performance improvement, training and customer satisfaction. The firm's quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. For more information on car reviews and ratings, car insurance, health insurance, cell phone ratings, and more, please visit JDPower.com. J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies. **RO**

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CERC Members Certified In NTIA TV Converter Box Coupon Program



WASHINGTON, December 11, 2007—The Consumer Electronics Retailers Coalition (CERC) today welcomed the announcement by National Telecommunications and Information Agency Acting Administrator Meredith Baker that all of CERC's storefront retail members and affiliates—Best Buy, Circuit City, K-Mart, RadioShack, Sams Club, Sears, Target, and Wal-Mart—have been accepted as “certified” in the NTIA's TV Converter Box Coupon Program, and that more than 100 retailers, overall, have been certified. CERC's Executive Director Marc Pearl said of Secretary Baker's announcement today that all of CERC's storefront members, and many other retailers, have been certified in the TV Converter Box Coupon Program speaks well for the hard work and dedication of the NTIA team, the IBM Team, and the retailers involved. This is an important milestone on the way

to getting the “Coupons” to consumers, and the TV Converter Boxes into widespread retail distribution, on the schedule announced by Secretary Baker today. We applaud this hard work and will continue to work with the NTIA, the FCC, and the Congress to keep this program, and the Transition, on track.

Pearl pledged CERC's continued cooperation, as well, as a Steering Committee member of the DTV Transition Coalition, in working with the NTIA, the FCC, and the Congress in making the TV Converter Box Coupon Program and other elements of the DTV Transition a success.

About CERC: The Consumer Electronics Retailers Coalition is a public policy issue organization consisting of the major specialty retailers of consumer electronics products and retail associations. CERC members include Amazon.com, Best Buy, Circuit City, RadioShack, Sears, Target, Wal-Mart, and the leading retail industry trade associations—NRF, NARDA, and RILA. More information is available at www.ceretailers.org.

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Mark Your Calendars— NARDA University's Finance Lab, March 29 and 30

NARDA University offers intensive study in a small-class setting on key areas of business management. The Finance Lab is a combination of interactive class room time and lab time. Classroom time includes instruction and interactive attendee participation. Discussion will cover financial issues and questions, goal setting, understanding of ratios, creating an action plan to improve weak financial areas, cash flow review of 2006, and managing cash flow. Lab time will result in the owner creating their own projections and action plans with instructor guidance. Lab time also includes; analysis of key 2006 numbers in the areas of net profit, expenses, and income and then creating 2008 projections for sales, expense, net profit and cash flow.

The Finance Lab will offered will be held immediately before the 2008 SRC in Las Vegas on March 29 and 30, 2008 at the Flamingo Hotel, Las Vegas, NV. Registration begins in January. For more information call Natalie at 847-375-4831.

NARDA Members Profiled in Future of Independent Retailing

"Challenges of the Future" is a new white paper offering strategies for the future survival and growth of independent retailers, as demonstrated through expert interviews and a series of case studies with successful independents in a variety of merchandise lines around the country. The paper outlines major trends impacting independent retailers and significant challenges and obstacles to doing business as it has been done in the past by independents. A detailed list of resources (websites, publications, organizations, consultants and other information) is also online. The project was underwritten by the George H. Baum Community Charitable Trust, the Illinois Retail Merchants Association and NRF Foundation

and includes profiles for NARDA members: Allen and Peterson Cooking and Appliance Center, Barons Major Brands, Schaefer's TV & Appliance Center and Urner's. Access the report at: <http://www.retail-revival.com/home.htm>

The NARDA Cost of Doing Business Report

The Cost of Doing Business Report is a valuable business management tool. Compare your company's Fiscal Year data to the data in this report to assess your financial health. NARDA members receive a free copy of the report which sells for \$199. For more information visit www.narda.com or call Natalie at 847-375-4831.

NARDA's Service Division, Service USA Draws More Than 450 to Regional Seminars in 2007

Over 440 attendees participated in Service USA regional service meetings and took advantage of technical and service management training in 2008. Sponsors and partners included: AP Wagner, Automatic Parts, Brand Source Service, Cashwells Parts, Dey Parts Distributing, Direct Energy, Reliable Parts, Inc., Tribles Part and 1st Source Servall Plans for an expanded schedule RSM's during 2008 will be announced in January. Thanks to instructors Dean Landers, Mike Staats, James Dolbeare and Paul MacDonald and participating manufacturers: General Electric, Fisher Paykal, Electrolux and Whirlpool.

APDA Member List Available Online

For contact information and a list of members of the Appliance Parts Distributors Association (APDA), visit www.apda.com. The Appliance Parts Distributors Association is an association of independent businesses that aspire to provide the highest level of quality, service, support and information to its customers and suppliers. NARDA provides management services to the APDA. **RO**

PRESS RELEASE

Whirlpool Corporation and Elica Strengthen Partnership to Grow Air Ventilation Business Globally

COMERIO, Italy and BENTON HARBOR, MI, Dec. 10, PR Newswire-FirstCall—Whirlpool Corporation (NYSE: WHR), today announced that it has strengthened its business relationship with Elica Group S.p.A., the global leader in air

ventilation, by purchasing a minority stake in the company.

The new business relationship enables Whirlpool to expand its presence in the global air ventilation market through access to Elica's innovation throughout the world. **RO**

PRESS RELEASE

Viking Range Corporation Announces New Vice President-Engineering

GREENWOOD, Mississippi (December 12, 2007)—Viking Range Corporation, the originator of commercial-type appliances for the home, is pleased to announce the promotion of Dan Lyvers to Vice President-Engineering. As Vice President-Engineering, Lyvers will supervise engineering functions associated with cooking, ventilation, refrigeration, and dishwashing products.



Dan Lyvers is a native of Mishawaka, Indiana. He graduated from Purdue University with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and completed the University's Cooperative Education Program in Engineering. He graduated Cum Laude with a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Notre Dame.

In his 6 years with Viking, Dan has served in various engineering roles, including Chief Refrigeration Engineer, Director of Refrigeration Engineering and Director of Engineering.

While at Viking, Dan has received two patents with others pending. Dan is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the American Society of Materials. He has served on the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers taskforce for the creation of the refrigerator energy standard, HRF-1 2004 and served as a board member for the Insulation Technical Advisory Committee.

Dan and his wife Lisa live in Greenwood with their two daughters. **RO**

PRESS RELEASE

Former Albertson's CEO Resigns from Home Depot Board

ASSOCIATED PRESS Published 12/17/07—Lawrence R. Johnston, former chairman and chief executive of Albertson's Inc., has resigned from the board of directors of Home Depot.

Johnston, a member of the board since 2004, told the Atlanta-based home improvement chain on Thursday that he was resigning because of increasing demands on his time, Home Depot said in a Securities and Exchange Commission filing. The company had nothing more to say about the resignation, other than that Johnston "did not cite any disagreement on any matter relating to the company's operations, policies or practices."

Before leading Albertson's, a food and drug retailer, from April 2001 to June 2006, Johnston, 59, was president and chief executive of GE Appliances. **RO**



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COMING EVENTS

CALENDAR 2008

FEBRUARY 2008

- 13-16 **International Builders Show**- Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL
 19 **NKBA Phoenix**- Kaiser Tile, Phoenix, AZ

MARCH 2008

- 2-5 **Nationwide Primetime Spring**-Hilton Anatole, Dallas, TX
 5-8 **Bath & Kitchen Buying Group Spring**- Arizona Grand Resort, Phoenix, AZ
 12-15 **NARI Spring BOD Meeting**-Hilton St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, FL
 15 **NARI Evening of Excellence**- Hilton St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, FL
 15-19 **Brandsource "The Summit"**- Hilton Anatole, Dallas, TX
 18 **NKBA Phoenix**- Stonenet, Phoenix, AZ

MARCH/APRIL 2008

- 30-2 **NARDA Service and Retail Convention (SRC)**-Flamingo Hotel, Las Vegas, NV

APRIL 2008

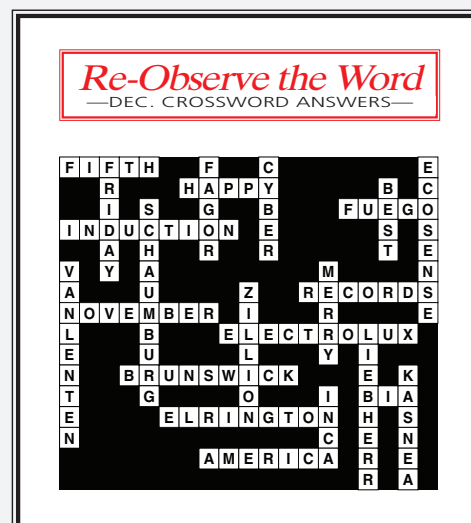
- 11-13 **KBIS**-Chicago, IL

AUGUST 2008

- 17-20 **Nationwide Primetime Fall**-Mandalay Bay Resort, Las Vegas, NV
 24-28 **Brandsource National Convention**- Paris Casino and Resort, Las Vegas, NV

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NOTE: Attention Buying Groups, NKBA and NARI Chapters, Distributors and Manufacturers: Please submit your meeting schedules to info@retailobserver.com ASAP so they may be included in our Coming Events Column. If you would like to receive the Retail Observer please go to www.retailobserver.com to subscribe.



COMING EVENTS

CALENDAR 2007-2008

SEPTEMBER 2008

7-11 NARI Fall BOD Meeting-TBD, Baltimore, MD

9-12 The Remodeling Show-Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, MD

OCTOBER 2008

22-25 Bath & Kitchen Buying Group Fall - Westin Boston Waterfront, Boston, MA

CLASSIFIEDS

POSITION—OUTSIDE SALES

Company: Premium Appliance Distributor

Position located: Southern California

Experience: Required sales experience in major appliance industry. Sales experience in outdoor grills a definite plus.

Job description: Outside sales rep for Southern California territory. Will work with existing dealers to improve sales, offer training and support, come up with marketing plans to expand market share. Sales rep will also be challenged with prospecting for potential new dealers within specific geographic region. Must be organized, have excellent communication and people skills, sales and training skills with proven track record.

Compensation: Base salary, plus commission, plus benefits.

To apply for this position, please email:

- Cover letter
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- Salary history

To: jobslistings@gmail.com

EXPERIENCED SALES PROFESSIONAL WANTED

Tri State Distributors has an opening for an experienced sales professional in the Oregon market. Send inquiries/resume to sales@tristatedistributors.com

POSITION #1—OUTSIDE SALES PERSON

Company: (Name Withheld) Premium appliance distributor covering southeast USA and Caribbean

Description: Seeking to fill sales positions in:

Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina area

Charlotte, North Carolina area

Columbia, South Carolina area

Atlanta, Georgia area

Fort Lauderdale-Miami, Florida area

Experience: Three or more years of major appliance sales experience is required. Experience with servicing local and regional retailers, builders, etc. is helpful.

Compensation: Salary plus commission/ full benefits.

To Apply: Please email cover letter, salary history and resume to: Personnel901@gmail.com

(All responses will be held in strictest confidence.)

POSITION #2— SOUTHEASTERN SALES MANAGER

Company: (Name withheld) Premium appliance distributor covering southeast USA and Caribbean

Description: Sales manager for 10 southeastern states and the Caribbean. Position is available immediately. Candidate will be involved in all aspects of sales and sales management. Preferred location for position is Southeastern Florida. However, we are open to the right candidate living near a major airport in Georgia, Florida or the Carolinas.

Experience: Five or more years of major appliance sales and sales management experience is required. Experience with a major appliance manufacturer or a major appliance distributor is preferred.

Compensation: Salary plus commission/full benefits.

Relocation: Will be considered for the right candidate.

To Apply: Please email cover letter, salary history and resume to: Personnel901@gmail.com

(All responses will be held in strictest confidence.)

YOUR MONEY DOCTORS



Four Pillars of Financial Stability

BY GREGORY HEDGES

Owning a small business is tough, especially in today's economy. According to Discover, economic confidence among small business owners has dropped more than 24% since March 2007. Tellingly, 65% of small business owners feel the economy is going to get worse (*Source: CardTrak.com*).

How can a business owner stave off what most feel is going to be another rough year? The answer is simple, but not easy. First, evaluate what is working and what is not. Basically, revisit your business plan. Is the business where it was projected to be? If the answer is no, don't panic—it's just time to refocus. An easy way to do this is to apply four basic concepts to how you are doing business: Behavior, Accountability, Organization and Education—the Four Pillars of Financial Stability. By applying these pillars a business can weed out the areas impeding success.

Behavior is the trickiest of the four. It represents all the activities related to how you perceive money itself, and the business. This can be exemplified by whether you want to be seen driving a Hummer or a Ford Contour. This applies across the board: If your focus is on appearance rather than substance, your business will only go so far.

Accountability makes sure that everyone takes responsibility for his or her actions. As a business owner, are you confident that your lawyer, financial planner and insurance agent are all on the same page regarding your business's future? If not, it is time to get them working together.

Organization is the most tangible area, where financial tracking, budgeting and time management come in. Many small businesses don't work from a budget; instead, they work from cash flow which can cause serious issues if not handled properly. And inefficiencies in workflow not only eat away at your money but slowly erode morale as well.

Education is what ties everything together. It's about refining your understanding of the other three pillars by understanding behavior better, finding ways to improve organization, and making sure you have the right people on your team. The temptation is often to try to do it all; through education you'll learn to surround yourself with experts, and you can focus instead on moving your business in the right direction.

Before you let rumors of a shaky economy and all its negative hype take its toll, consider that change is possible. With the Four Pillars, you're well on your way to financial stability.

With 16 years of management experience, Greg has developed a sharp eye for identifying inefficiencies, cross-purposes and miscommunication - and for how quickly they can affect an individual's personal wealth. Utilizing the tools of the Four Pillars of Financial Stability and project management, he empathetically helps individuals and families set priorities and create the balance they need for their financial health.

*Greg holds certifications in credit counseling and project management. He is an active member of the National Association of Credit Counselors and the Project Management Institute®. He has spoken to many organizations including the New Mexico Mortgage Lenders Association, New Mexico Association of Mortgage Brokers, community workshops, and seminars. He is co-author of the forthcoming book *The Four Pillars of Financial Stability: How to Succeed in Finances by Changing the Way You Think!* and is highly skilled in organization methodologies, developing a wide range of custom databases, websites and internal controls to increase effectiveness and profitability.*

*His passion is to help others and he uses his talents and experience to help them change the way they perceive money. **RO***



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A New Year's Wish

BY CHUCK EDMONDS



It's about time to start making those ridiculous, sometimes extreme, always foolish, usually stupid New Year's resolutions. We make them about Christmas time and forget them about the first week of January. For many years when I was a small boy my mother would say

to me, about a week before Christmas. "Now Charles, it might be a good idea to think about New Year and consider what you should be doing to make this a better year!" I would give this a lot of consideration—meaning that I would let my mother think that I was really going to change the world, change my behavior, change my life, change this and change that—all for the good of me!!! I never could figure out why mother wanted me to change for the better. I was quite content with my life—I enjoyed swearing and smoking (not around Mother, of course) riding my bicycle recklessly and especially biking into downtown Denver traffic. I belonged to an informal gang of like-minded young Hooligans and we'd do the most atrocious things on Halloween. Turning over garbage cans, leaving debris on someone's doorstep, throwing rotten tomatoes at picture windows— you name it, we did it. One New Year's Eve someone (me!) got the bright idea to let the air out of all the tires parked on our street. When the police came you can't believe how innocent we were. There were

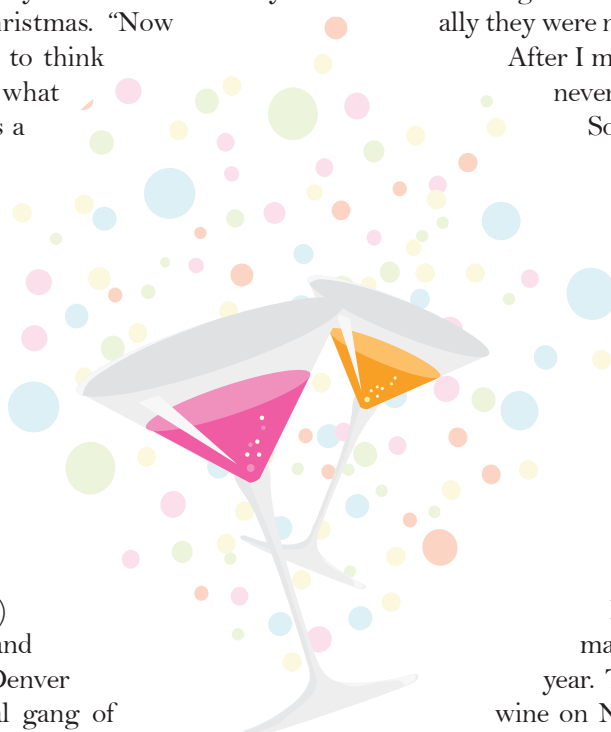
three of us and we were eating cookies and drinking milk and the policeman merely asked if we had seen any unfamiliar faces in the neighborhood. So to please Mother I would draw up a list of resolutions for the New Year. I would give the list to her and she would compliment me and then hang the list on the refrigerator door. For the first few after the New Year I would be most careful about following the resolutions. But gradually I would forget them and eventually they were nothing but an unpleasant memory.

After I married Ruth, we had children and I never asked them to make resolutions.

Sometimes they would, usually at the urging of their school teachers. But these resolutions were mostly the beneficial and I tried very hard to make the children understand that they should always be on good terms with their church and their God but also to keep on the neighborly terms with the Devil! I've forgotten the history of New Year's resolutions. I imagine that somewhere

in antiquity, some God-fearing Pilgrim or Saint got the idea that mankind needed a fresh start each year. They (he or she) drank too much wine on New Years Eve and woke up with a King-size headache and vowed, "Never Again". I

know the feeling, well. In my younger years I would attend parties and try to drink the old year under the table. Now at my old age I do not imbibe heavily on New Year's Eve—as a matter of fact I'm usually in bed before midnight. So— here's to you my good friends. May the New Year be fruitful and profitable and may all your dreams come true! **RO**



NEWS FROM ALL OVER

Leon's Furniture Acquires Appliance Canada

Jan 03, 2008—Leon's Furniture, a retailer of home furnishings, has completed its purchase of the assets of Appliance Canada and retained the services of its management and employees.

Toronto-based Leon's, which sells appliances and electronics in its 35 corporate stores and 28 franchised locations, said it plans to operate Appliance Canada as

a separate division focused on retail sales of higher-end appliances and serving as a wholesale distribution arm for sales to builders and apartment building owners.

The announcement said Leon's will retain Appliance Canada's management and employees. Appliance Canada's Web site lists retail locations in Toronto and Vancouver. **RO**

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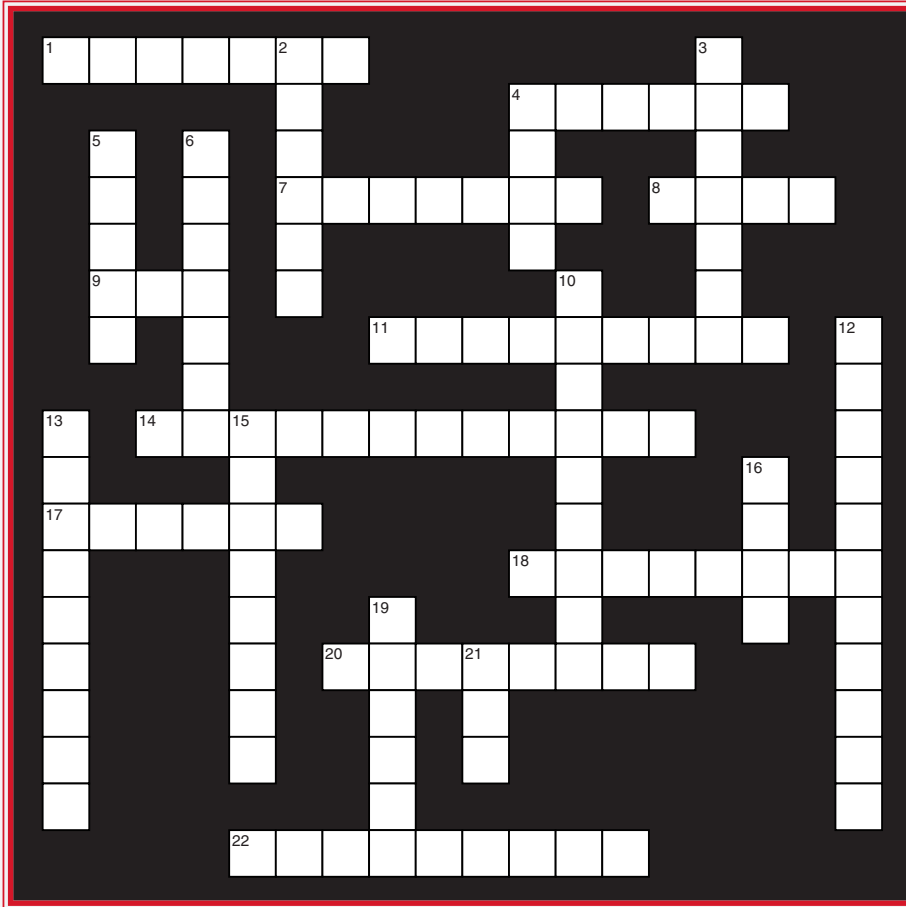

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Re-Observe the Word

—JANUARY CROSSWORD—

(PUZZLE ANSWERS ARE FOUND IN THE EDITORIAL AND AD PAGES OF EACH ISSUE OF THE RETAIL OBSERVER.)



ACROSS

- 1 HAS NEW 15" REFRIGERATION
- 4 YOUR MONEY DOCTOR
- 7 ALSO HONORED AT NKBA NORTH LARRY _____
- 8 MAKER OF HD GLASSES
- 9 PRODUCE CES
- 11 NEW VIKING VP'S HOME TOWN
- 14 MORE ORGANIZED THAN SHOE CLOSET GE'S
- 17 NKBA NORTH HONORED TIM _____
- 18 SIERRA CHAPTERS COUNTRY CLUB
- 20 RELEASED NEW 36" FRENCH DOOR
- 22 ENJOYED DANCING IN SOCAL

DOWN

- 2 CONVERTER BOX _____
- 3 FIRST LOCATION OF CES
- 4 EX-DOOBIE BROTHER DANNY _____
- 5 HIGHEST-RANKED DISHWASHER BY J.D. POWERS
- 6 NARDA'S LAB
- 10 THE REMODELING SHOW'S LOCATION
- 12 WATER INC'S NEW PRODUCT
- 13 INTRODUCED IN 1981 AT CES
- 15 SRC TO BE HELD AT THE _____ HOTEL
- 16 ROBOT DOG
- 19 CHUCK GREW UP IN _____
- 21 BUILT A RACE TRACK AT CES

(LOOK FOR THIS MONTH'S PUZZLE SOLUTION IN THE UPCOMING FEBRUARY ISSUE)

PRIZE PUZZLE

Test your power of observation

The online functionality of the crossword has been delayed, so starting soon in 2008, you will be able to go on-line to complete the crossword for submission. The first 50 puzzles submitted through the online process will be entered into a drawing for the sponsored product that month. For this month, please enjoy the reading, and we'll see you soon for the prize puzzle on-line at www.retailobserver.com. A test puzzle is available at: <http://www.MyCrosswords.com/549/RetailObserver/ReobserveTheWord.html>

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