

The Brillo Pad

Jan/Feb/Mar 2007
First Quarter Issue



Brillo Looks Back at 30 Years

It was 1977. Carter was President, Oakland beat Minnesota in the Super Bowl, the median household income was \$13,572 and the movie "Rocky" won an Academy Award for Best Picture. Elvis also died that year.

But there was more...a young man right out of high school started a small roofing company that year. It didn't take long for two of Bob Quigley's friends (Mike Bovee and Guy Lipovsek) that he'd known since the third grade to join him.

The first years were rough...it's hard to make ends meet during a recession when the economy's down and the cost of fuel and roof products is up. We tried to become more "full season" as time went on. First, we took on aluminum siding, trim and storm window replacement. Then we began to renovate home exteriors including the replacement of windows and doors, which made for a natural transition into interior renovations such as kitchen and bath remodels, additions, basements, etc.

We will be the first ones to tell you...we couldn't have done it without our faithful, key employees who between them possess almost 150 years of Brillo experience! Our three salespeople are "home-grown". Currently, we have 10 guys in the field daily with 5 lead carpenters who are overseen by Scott Gretzon. The three of us mainly now deal with the day-to-day functions of running our business.

Late last summer, an interior designer joined our team. Melissa Paulson holds a degree from WCTC and specializes in kitchen and bath design. She's very knowledgeable in cabinetry specification and other finish selections.

In October, Maggie Uravich came on board. She brings with her over 15 years of office experience in different industries. Her responsibilities include managing our accounting, communication and organizational systems.

Even with the recent additions to our staff, Brillo maintains the same attitude. We just want to stay with the same program and continue to do what we do best. Brillo will continue to outsource architectural services because we believe in the overall value and benefit to our clients. Currently, three architects service Brillo clients on a regular basis.

It's hard to believe that we've been in operation at our "new" location for six years. It was just last spring that the addition of our garage was completed. Currently, it houses the truck fleet and serves as a small warehouse for the Holiday Kitchens custom cabinetry line.

As we begin the third decade of our small business adventure, the company mission statement remains the same...we *continue* to design to your ideas.

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NARI Certification...What Does It Mean to You?

Did you know that Brillo has six NARI Certified Remodelers on staff? If you did (or even if you didn't), you may not know the meaning behind the NARI certification. Here's a crash course...



“Working with NARI Certified Remodelers is a guarantee of excellence.”

The certification of a remodeling contractor under the certification program of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) is the association's recognition that the contractor has met certain criteria for experience, commitment to ethical conduct, and professionalism.

The designation is similar to the CKD acronym (Certified Kitchen Designer) and CLU (Certified Life Underwriter) in the insurance industry.

The individual who is certified has met various requirements including:

- Continuous full-time employment in the remodeling business for at least five years and currently employed by a firm that operates under the Code of Ethics adopted by NARI and its Certification Board.
- Demonstrated the knowledge and ability required to perform the remodeling functions directly related to the particular certification class.
- Showed competence in writing or directing the writing of job specifications in accordance with standards approved by the Certification Board and local codes.
- Satisfactorily completed written examinations on the

basics of general remodeling contracting or have had these examinations waived based on continuous experience.

- Complied with all requests for documentation of experience and competence as well as adherence to NARI's Code of Ethics.

There are now five certification designations:

CR	Certified Remodeler
CKBR	Certified Kitchen & Bath Remodeler
CLC	Certified Lead Carpenter
CRA	Certified Remodeler Associate
CRS	Certified Remodeler Specialist

All NARI Certifications require the same high standards of performance and go through the same testing procedure. Working with NARI Certified Remodelers is a guarantee of excellence. Only truly experienced and dedicated professionals are able to earn the distinction of calling themselves Certified Remodelers. Milwaukee's chapter of NARI is proud to have the best and brightest individuals in the remodeling industry.

From product-specific seminars to home improvement industry software applications, Brillo believes in having a well-educated staff; it's one of the things that sets us apart from the rest.

BBB's Top Ten of 2006

The Better Business Bureau of Wisconsin publishes a Top Ten List annually. However, this is not a list of the elite, the famous or the beautiful. This list is quite the opposite, featuring the worst BBB offenders and in this year's review of the worst, Contractor Fraud came in sixth place. Here is what the BBB had to say...

The Wisconsin BBB received 1,233 complaints in 2006 against home improvement contractors. The worst contractors will take your money and you'll never see them again, or they'll overcharge you or take advantage of you if your furnace breaks on a cold day. Many of these complaints could be avoided if consumers checked with the Wisconsin BBB first and stayed away from companies who had an "unsatisfactory" rating.

What else can you do? The BBB recommends that you get at least two written estimates, get a detailed, written contract, never pay more than one-third of the balance up-front, and pay with a credit card instead of cash.

As a home improvement company and longtime member of the Better Business Bureau, we're obviously disappointed when we hear this type of news. We can only hope that this negative publicity doesn't affect the way would-be clients look at us; and that is exactly why we strongly urge all of our potential clients to investigate the backgrounds of contractors quoting their home improvement needs. Visit www.wisconsin.bbb.org for more information or call them at (800) 273-1002.



**Member
Wisconsin**

*Brillo Home
Improvements is a
member of the Better
Business Bureau of
Milwaukee.*

WRA/NARI AWARDS

The Milwaukee Chapter of NARI (National Association of the Remodeling Industry) recognizes Wisconsin Remodelers every year. This year Brillo won our second "Readers Choice Award" for a kitchen (in the \$60,000 to \$100,000 range) we remodeled in Mequon. Mary Anne and Bob were very excited to hear that their kitchen was in the running for this prestigious award but were even more excited when they found out that it had won the award.

Brillo also took home five silver awards and one bronze in the following categories:

- Kitchen: \$60,000 to \$100,000
- Bathroom: \$30,000 to \$60,000
- Bathroom: Over \$60,000
- Lower Level: Over \$50,000

- Residential Addition: \$60,000 to \$100,000
- Residential Addition: \$100,000 to \$250,000

The Residential Addition: \$100,000 to \$250,000 project also won our first ever 2007 NARI Regional CotY (Contractor of the Year) award. The award presentation will be held in Austin, Texas on March 24th. At that time, we will find out if we won the National CotY Award for this project.

To view projects entered in the local NARI awards competition visit www.milwaukeevari.com and click on WISCONSIN REMODELERS AWARDS. To view projects entered in the National NARI competition, visit www.nari.org.

Stay tuned to more award information in future issues.

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See us at the 45th annual Milwaukee/ NARI Home Improvement Show! Feb. 8 - Feb. 11, at the WI Expo Center at State Fair Park.



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We Design to Your Ideas.

We're on the Web!
www.brillohomeimprovements.com

Thank You, Thank You

A few months ago, we audited our records to see how our clients are hearing about us. We were curious to see if the advertising dollars we were investing on magazine advertising, website links, etc. were working for us.

This little project turned into a huge eye-opening experience. Over half of our clients initially found out about us through friends, previous clients or subcontractors we work with! We learned, first hand, that the power of "word-of-mouth" is a very strong one.

So to those of you who refer us to your family, friends, co-workers, and anyone else you know, a huge thank you! Being a small business is hard enough, but knowing that your clients have faith enough in

you to pass on a kind word makes us feel good about who we are, the business we conduct and the work that we do.

Thanks again! To another 30 years...

Bob Quigley

Mike Bovee

Guy Lipovsek

Congratulations

Congratulations to clients Tim & Kelly on the birth of their beautiful daughter, Quin. Tim, Kelly and Quin survived the construction of a second story addition during Kelly's pregnancy. Congrats!