

News From the Crew

Don Ellingson is all baseball as the spring moves quickly into summer. He is now coaching his younger son's team. There will surely be a camping trip after the baseball season.

Mark Feldman has earned the nickname "Shakespeare" as he refines his winter beard. He is continuing with his Latin studies which he needs to pass before he writes his master's thesis on Lutheranism. Mark is from Beach, North Dakota, the last town in western North Dakota, just inside the Montana border.

Heidi Lehrke has been busy with her son's Eagle Scout Award Ceremony and Graduation Party. Her daughter also gets confirmed this year. She hung up her bat and glove this year with her old lady league due to a sports injury but continues to be the team's biggest fan and attends the "post game re-caps."

Gregg Hanson keeps busy with Twins games, Estate Sales and 5-year-old T-Ball. Thanks to his poor bare-handed catching skills and a nice baseball shaped bruise on his knee, he said, "I will never again forget to bring my glove to batting practice."

Donella Olson is again defending her kickball team's title this summer with a rigorous training schedule. Hmm... She is also getting her "green" office transportation—her scooter—ready to go for the summer.

Craig Windle spends his free time at his sons' spring baseball games. One is a pitcher and the other a catcher. As the season winds down, there is always summer hockey.

Kate Post and her family graciously opened their home up for the Mpls/St.Paul Home Tour. They are now spending time at the cabin

between summer softball and soccer games. Kate is planning a camping trip to the Grand Tetons this August.

Lisa Heyer is looking forward to the warm summer months on the upper St. Croix River as well as her annual trip in July to Ely, MN with her family – visiting Duluth and the North Shore, hiking, fishing, water-skiing, and fun in the sun or the rain.

Jason Gustafson worked steadily through the winter and is now working for his dad outside of Silver Bay, Minnesota.

Chris Peters has recovered from his surgery this past winter and is ready to jump into a new project.

Les Anderson has been dusting off the golf clubs, painting and getting everything ready for Brit's high school graduation. He continues to chase down work to fund his winter snowmobile racing hobby.



John Sylvestre can see the finish line on the cabin, it's just a bit hazy. Cabinets are now installed as well as a recycled fir floor. After a 120-mile bike ride to the cabin this spring, John has a few adventures scheduled for this summer, including a canoe trip back to Woodland Caribou Park. ☒

TBG on the Sutton River.

To see more examples of our work: Click on "Our Work/Before and After Gallery" at www.sylvestreconstruction.com.

We love referrals! If you know someone who is thinking about remodeling, please tell them to call us at 612-861-0188.

☒ www.sylvestreconstruction.com

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John Sylvestre's Words of Wisdom:

Is It a Good Time to Remodel?

As a remodeling contractor, the answer to the question "Is it a great time to remodel?" is always an emphatic YES! Even with the current instability in the market, there are many reasons to take advantage of the current economy and invest in a project that not only improves your home's value but will better fit your current lifestyle.

With all the negativity and dour news we receive daily, your home needs to be your refuge — crafted to better fit your current needs, and anticipated future needs.

Your lifestyle may involve a new family member, the need for more space or a better, more organized space. Maybe you want more convenience as you move your groceries from the car to the kitchen. Perhaps you have decided to stay in your home rather than moving and need to add an elevator, a more accessible bath, a bath on the first floor or space to accommodate a family member or older parent. All of these things can make remodeling your current home a good idea.

Is now a good time? An article in the 12/3/08 *Wall Street Journal* entitled "Deals abound, but which offer Lasting Delight?" cites home remodeling as a good investment not only in the financial sense but because we need to take some pleasure out of life right now. Most of us get great joy out of interactions with family and friends. What better place to share this than in our homes. Now. ☒



Newly completed fireplace for Jim and Bev Sylvestre.

Start Your Home Remodeling Projects Now to Cash In On the Economic Recovery Act



New Michel and Midelfort addition.

Most of you have heard about the Economic Recovery Act passed in early February. But do you know how much it can save you on your remodeling plans?

The Act includes a list of tax credits available for qualified energy-efficient home improvements. That list that has been expanded and the deadline for applying for the credits has been extended until the end of 2010. Originally, the tax credits had been limited to 10% of the cost of each product with a lifetime cap of \$500.00, but the new stimulus package may offer up to \$1500.00 in savings for qualified improvements.

The best source of information for all available savings is the web site www.energystar.gov. The list includes a variety of qualifying improvements such as windows, doors, insulation, sealing and some solar installations (check the website for specific details). To qualify, most products have to be 15-20% more energy efficient than the standard model (which can add up to big heating and cooling savings). If you are thinking of replacing windows, upgrading insulation or even installing solar energy, this should be a big financial incentive.

In addition to the Federal policy, Centerpoint Energy is offering its Minnesota gas customers a \$50.00-\$100.00 rebate for high-efficiency gas storage water heaters and high efficiency furnaces. Check out www.centerpointenergy.com for their programs.

We can help you take advantage of the many rebates and Economic Recovery Act tax credits and make the most of your home remodeling dollars. Talk to us soon, before these unique limited-time opportunities expire. ☒



Five Things You Probably Didn't Know About Paint

1. Water-based paint outsold oil-based paint by 500 million gallons (628 million gallons vs. 126 million gallons) in 2006, the most recent reporting year available from the U.S. Census Bureau.
2. Americans buy twice as much interior paint as exterior paint
3. Lead was an important component of paint before it was banned by the Federal government in 1978. According to the National Paint and Coatings Association, older paint formulations contained as much as 55% lead and could weigh as much as 40 lbs. per gallon.
4. According to the Paint Quality Institute, most of the cost of painting a house is labor. On a \$5000 professional house painting tab, most of the cost would be labor. So you want to paint less often using a longer lasting, top-quality paint rather than a economy brand. Spending \$700 on top-quality paint instead of \$400 on an economy brand, for example, would actually reduce the cost per year of service life from \$1350 to \$570.
5. Most of our manufactured goods are now outsourced to factories in China and elsewhere. But not paint. Transportation and distribution issues have apparently been enough to keep the U.S. paint factories firmly on U.S. soil. ☒

Source: Scott Gibson, *Fine Homebuilding Magazine*

Coming Soon to a Location Near You!

We are just starting a kitchen and bathroom remodeling project for **Hank and Chris Shea** on their Wayzata home, updating their kitchen and baths. Work is ready to commence on a bathroom remodeling project for returning clients **Ned and Marlene Bixby**. This project will update their late 1970's bath that has a vintage orange sink. We have numerous other interesting projects on the drawing boards that cover garage structure, additions and kitchens. Give us a call to get on the list! ☒

Under Construction

Work is nearing completion on the basement and master bathroom remodeling project for **Jeff and Patsy Mogush**. After rebuilding the main bearing wall in the basement (including new footings), we replaced the basement floor and added in-floor heat as well as a colored concrete finish. The new space is much more efficient with a laundry, half-bath and wine cellar. Construction is almost complete on a project for **Jim and Bev Sylvestre**, which includes a new fireplace, remodeled master bathroom and custom interior woodwork. The detail work of all the interior beams and finish really transformed the space. We're in the middle of a first floor remodeling for **Charlie Sawyer** on his home in Maple Plain. We found some hand-hewn beams



Pouring the concrete over the in-floor heat. Cozy days ahead in the Mogush basement

from the late 1800's and installed them in the family room, removed and replaced the brick on a fireplace with stone and replaced the kitchen cabinets to transform the space into a more friendly, workable kitchen. Work is underway on a bathroom remodeling project for **John and Bette DeMars**. The remodeled bath will change a vintage 1940 space into a new and much more efficient, workable and spacious bath. We're midway into the kitchen remodeling for **Martin and Sheila Rubin**. New quarter-sawn oak cabinets bring back the look of a craftsman kitchen of the 1920's. We have also incorporated a glass storage wall between the kitchen and the dining room space. ☒



Michel and Midelfort kitchen and breakfast nook.

Newly Remodeled

With the summer comes road construction and more remodeling. The following projects were completed this spring, in time for the homeowners to enjoy the summer weather. **Paul and Sue Puerzer's** new family room and office /mudroom addition and new round deck are finished and ready for summer entertaining. It looks great! For much of the spring, **John Michel and Berit Midelfort's** exterior addition was encased in a plastic tent and the neighbors had to guess what was happening. The project is now unveiled and the end result is a beautifully crafted addition and a new kitchen complete with a coffee nook that blends seamlessly with the rest of the 1920's home. ☒



The late 1800s hand-hewn beams, new stone on the fireplace, and cabinets for Charlie Sawyer.



Newly completed family room for Paul and Sue Puerzer.

Bits & Pieces

Sylvestre Construction recently received a **Regional Chrysalis Award** for the Baskin Kitchen remodeling project we completed last summer. We worked in conjunction with Tom DeAngelo, FAIA, on the design .

Send us your Email addresses and we will put you on the mailing list for our **new monthly Email update** full of tips and bits about how to keep your home in shape, what is happening and trends in the home remodeling industry.

John recently attended a **Remodelors Advantage Roundtable** meeting in Richmond, Virginia. This is a national group of remodeling contractors that get together twice a year to review the remodeling business and strategies for success.

John's band, **Naritones**, formed with members of the local NARI trade association, continues to play during the cocktail hour of our monthly trade association meetings. Their repertoire consists of classic jazz, blues, old rock favorites and everything in between.

Thanks again to **Kate and Jeff Post** and their family for opening their home for the **Minneapolis/St. Paul Home Tour**. Over 450 people attended the two-day event.

John recently completed a **30-minute recording for NARI National**, which they are using as a podcast about remodeling and the current economic stimulus package. More details and air-time are coming.

Punch Lists – Do you have a “Honey-Do” list that just isn't getting done. Give us a call and let us help you get the list completed. ☒

Thanks a ~~BILLION~~ \$100 Program

Thanks to everyone for referring your friends and acquaintances to us during the past few months. Here is the winner of our \$100 Visa card drawing:

First Quarter 2009 Winner-Kathy Klohs

We appreciate all the referrals and business we receive from our past clients and friends. Our business and success has been based on these connections. To thank you for all of your referrals, we are continuing our quarterly drawings through 2009. If we receive a lead or referral from you, we will enter your name in a drawing for that quarter and you could win a \$100.00 Visa check card. Again, we thank you for your many referrals. ☒

Eco Friendly Kitchens On a Budget

Remodeling a kitchen is an expensive process and it is sometimes a challenge to find environmentally friendly products on a tight budget. There are many luxury options, but there are also many less expensive options that can offer the same environmental benefits.

Three areas to consider are:

1. **Materials:** Is the product made with recycled or renewable materials?
2. **Emissions:** Does the product contain harmful volatile organic compounds (VOC's)?
3. **Energy:** Does the product help reduce water or energy usage in the home?

Here are some pointers and resources to help you in your decision making process.

Cabinets are a tough product to bring under budget as you try to balance FSC certified wood and particleboards that have low VOC's. A list of certified cabinet companies can be found on the Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association's Environmental Stewardship Program website at www.kcma.org. There are a number of local cabinet shops that do a good job at finding a balance between cost and materials.

Countertops: One of the least expensive countertops is a recycled particleboard laminate sealed with a water based sealant. Ask us about it.

Flooring: Good old-fashioned linoleum rates high as an environmental friendly product. Manufactured from linseed oil, a renewable resource, linoleum now comes in many different and “modern” patterns.

Plumbing: Keep it simple. Today's stainless steel sinks contain 50% to 80% recycled steel. And be sure to think about an aerator to cut down on water usage.

Appliances: The Energy Star rating is the key item to look for in appliances. The web site (www.energystar.gov) lists appliances and their savings. ☒

Source: K+BB November 2008, www.kbbonline.com