MINNESOTA LATH & PLASTER BUREAU

ONtheWALL

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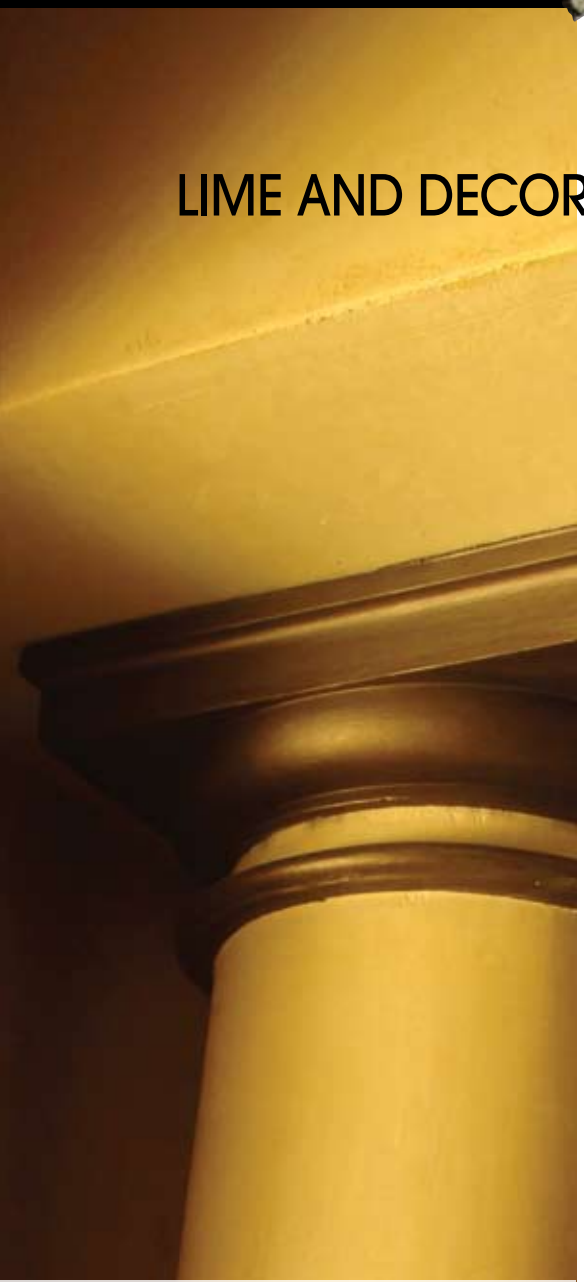


Veni Vidi Venetian

LIME AND DECORATIVE PLASTER THROUGH THE MILLENNIUMS

It was history before time. 7000 years before Christ walked the earth, a settlement of villagers in what is now northeast Jordan, smeared a concoction of lime-plaster on the floors, walls and ceilings of their simple mud huts. The result was pleasant, with a starch white finish that made the room much more livable. The knowledge was passed down through the generations. How the technology was derived remains a mystery.

During the Bronze Age (5600 BC) the early Greeks became more proficient at the task of mining quarries of limestone that they had discovered and placing the rocks in large fire pits. At nearly 2200°F this broke down the limestone rock (Calcium Carbonate) into its basic component parts, through the release of carbon dioxide and steam, leaving behind lumps of calcium oxide. This remaining crumbly, friable material was allowed to cool, then it was pulverized. This material now known as "quick-lime" or "lump lime," was recombined with water in a process now referred to as "slaking" to make the basic binder or "lime putty" for the plaster. This chemical (exothermic) reaction creates a violent liberation of heat which dissipates over time. For this reason the slaked lime, which took on the consistency of heavy cream, was stored and covered in a pit and aged for months or even years. This also prevented the lime from being exposed to air, at which time it would begin to cure back into calcium carbonate by a process known as carbonation, in which the lime putty sequesters carbon dioxide back from the atmosphere.

VITRUVIOUS

At the time of the first Roman Empire, Caesar Augustus entrusted the charge of codifying building laws and principles of the Greek and Roman civilizations to one of his senior military engineers, Marcus Vitruvious Pollio. Astute in the workings of the great army's artillery such as the Ballistae, Catapult and Trebuchet, Vitruvious shared Augustus' passion for ensuring that knowledge that had been gained through the ages, was not lost. By Augustus's directive, Vitruvious engaged in writing a great treatise that encompassed the disposition of ten books on the science of building. It is in Vitruvious' second book on materials that he elaborates on the principles of producing a finished wall. Here are some of his words from over 2000 years ago:

- "…when the lime is rich and properly slaked, it will stick to the tool like glue, proving that it has been completely tempered."
- "…apply a very rough rendering coat to the walls…when it gets pretty dry, spread on a second coat, then a third."
- "When not less than three coats of sand mortar, less the rendering coat have been laid on, we must make the mixture for the layers of powdered marble."
- "After this powdered marble has been spread on and gets dry, lay on a second medium coat. When that has been applied and well rubbed down, spread on a finer coat."
- "These colours, when they are carefully laid on stucco still wet, do not fade but are permanent."
- "…owing to the solid foundation given by thorough working with polishing instruments, and the smoothness of it , due to the hard and dazzling white marble, will bring out the brilliant splendor the colors which are laid on at the same time with polishing."[1]

(cont. on page 2)

CURRENT ARTICLES

(cont. from page 1)
In effect Vitruvious was identifying a seven step process which included: a dash coat, a scratch and brown coat; the application of three coats of finish plaster and final polishing. The Romans referred to the finish as *Marmoratum Opus* meaning "marble capable of taking a high polish."

As might be expected, polished plaster was seen as an unnecessary step for most common utilitarian uses. While lime-based plaster flourished through the ages in creating wall planes that were monolithic, clean and vermin proof, the processes of creating beautiful polished plaster walls became forgotten over the centuries.

THE REBIRTH OF POLISHED PLASTER

The Renaissance spirited in an age of enlightenment. The re-discovery of ancient classical authors such as Plato, Cicero and of course Vitruvious ushered in a new found awareness in the "antiquities" as they were known. In 1414 Vitruvious's *Ten books on Architecture* reintroduced the processes of creating polished plaster to the Renaissance world. Many involved in the medium today attribute polished Plaster's rebirth to Renaissance architect "Palladio" who described the process as "Pietra d' Istria,"[2] which loosely translated refers to the resemblance of the plaster to natural stone formations of marble, granite and travertine that surround the region of Venice. To the untrained eye, much of Palladio's work appears to be stone, but look closer and you will find that they are actually of brick and stucco (lime-based). The first layer of coarse plaster was referred to as *arricio*, this was followed by several layers of lime putty with powdered marble pigmented integrally or a *fresco* (plaster still wet) to give a smooth surface or *intonaco*.[3] Marmoratum opus became transcribed to the Italian *Marmorino* or "little marble" by virtue of the marble dust that was added to the lime putty to impart the polished stone look of the plaster.

Much like what happened as a result of the fall of the Roman Empire before, polished plaster's popularity waned as the Renaissance transitioned to the Baroque period. In the 1950's Venetian architect Carlo Scarpa is largely attributed as the person who was most influential in reviving the craft of *Marmorino* in many of his contemporary designs. Scarpa not only looked to those processes identified by Vitruvious and translated by Palladio, he innovated in coming up with modern compositions that included animal hide glues and later acrylic resins.[4]

VENETIAN PLASTER

You may have noticed in reading this article to this point that with the exception of the title the term "Venetian" Plaster has generally been avoided. That is because the term in actuality is a distinctly modern American name that invokes the image of "old world" decorative plastering technique. By and large it recognizes the processes described by Vitruvious so long ago, but it also encompasses a variety of newer techniques that emulate the look of leather, suede, honed stone or sandstone. Polished plaster in the vein of old world methods is probably better described by calling it Marmorino or even Pietra d' Istria as coined by Palladio.

VENETIAN PLASTER APPLICATIONS

Interior: While there are today many derivative products that aspire to the look of Marmorino, there are also many purists that insist on the true descendancy of the ancient Roman compositions and methods. However even the purists are resigned to the fact that the economy of Venetian Plasters are best suited to drywall applications. In this respect, most manufacturers require a level 3–5 drywall finish. Typically, per modern methods a sanded (marble dust) acrylic primer or bonding agent is applied to the prepared drywall to provide some "tooth" to the surface. The finish plaster coat is then troweled on in typically three applications and burnished with a steel trowel for the polished effect. In some cases an additional wax coat is applied to further bring out the sheen of the polished plaster and to impart better wear and durability.

Exterior: Some manufacturers allow for their products to be installed over a base of portland cement plaster (stucco), cement board, properly prepared masonry or even EIFS (Exterior Insulation Finish System). The manufacturer of the Venetian plaster product should be consulted to determine whether an application is viable for the climate conditions in which it is intended and whether any warranty for any other related product may be affected by its application.

Features and Benefits: Traditional Lime Based (Marmorino) Venetian Plaster

- Venetian plasters are naturally less prone to cracking than other plaster materials.
- Lime-based Venetian plasters have been known to go through a process known as autogenous healing where small cracks actually fill in over time.
- Venetian plasters are vapor permeable.
- Venetian plasters perform well in wet climates.
- Because of their higher alkalinity level (above neutral pH) lime-based Venetian plaster is a natural mold inhibitor.
- Time tested, in millenniums: Lime-based plasters have witnessed and survived the rise and fall of the Greek, Egyptian and Roman empires.
- Many Venetian plasters are based in natural and abundant occurring minerals of lime and marble.
- Venetian plasters actually attract and sequester carbon dioxide in a process known as "carbonation."

ADVANCES

Without question, Marmorino is the most recognized of the Venetian plaster names, however different regions of Italy have inspired yet further formulations that are closely guarded by generations of craftsman. Some of these formulations may also include quartz, kaolin or other pulverized minerals in their makeup. Similarly these visages have spawned modern polymer formulations that emulate or have creatively challenged some of these more traditional methods. Venetian plaster, it should be understood, encompasses not only Marmorino, but many old and new decorative plastering materials and techniques.

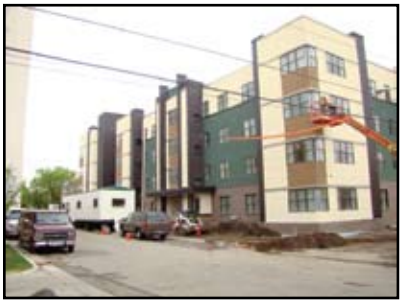
(1) Vitruvious Pollio, translated by Morris Hicky Morgan and Herbert Langford Warren, The Ten Books on Architecture
(2) James Gloria, Venetian Plaster, Period Homes Magazine
(3) Paul Johnson, The Renaissance, A Short History, 2000.
(4) James Gloria, Venetian Plaster, Period Homes Magazine

FINISHING THINGS UP

Van Cleve Development

Located next to the old Bunge Grain elevator site near 13th Avenue SE and Como, is the recent redevelopment by PPL (Project for Pride in Living). Since 1972, PPL has helped thousands of Minneapolis low-income and homeless people to grow and succeed. The current redevelopment project is Phase II of the site which will support a total of 236 units. 85 of which will be rental and 151 for sale. Stucco on the current phase of the project was completed by Stucco 1 mostly under tenting and heating with Spec-Mix pre-blended stucco during the last few cold months. The Dryvit finishes of subtle dark green, cream and brown color combination compliments nicely with Phase I of the project, previously finished in cream, peach and brown tones.

Process of stuccoing is complicated by cold weather. Stucco 1's capable crew provided plastic sheeting and heat to scaffolding of Phase II of the Van Cleve project.



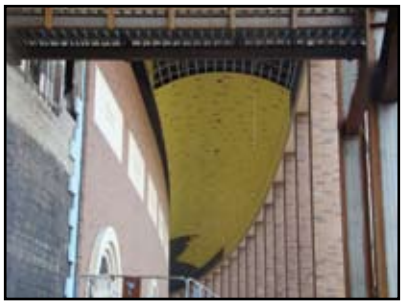
Scaffolding and tenting comes down to reveal the nice finishing work by Stucco 1's plasterers.

Phase II in the foreground with Phase I in the background. The Bunge Grain Elevator sits to the right.

A job well done.

TCF Stadium

My how time flies! It doesn't seem too long ago now, that we were witnessing pilings being driven into the site for the new Gophers Stadium. Now it is only months away from its first home game on September 12. The Bureau had a wonderful opportunity some time ago to get a personal tour of the stadium with Brian Mulcahy, Vice President of Sales for Mulcahy Inc., who was largely responsible for much of the drywall and fireproofing, as well as the plastering on the massive barrel vault soffit that covers the outside colonnade of the stadium.



Barrel vault soffit that curves around the colonnade perimeter of the stadium was sheathed with fiberglass matte faced gypsum sheathing.

Staging was supported by hex lifts that brought the Mulcahy crew right up to the work area fifty feet above the colonnade.

A shot of the finished soffit completed in a direct application of Parex mesh reinforced base coat and acrylic finish.

Mulcahy crew fireproofing the underside of the stadium deck.

AN OPEN LETTER TO MNLPB ON MOISTURE INTRUSION

Dear Steve,

I want to dispel this thought in the construction industry that stucco is a problem.

The problems are from flashing issues—i.e., kickout flashings. We at Christians, Inc. repair every era-built building [residential/commercial] and the lack of kickout flashing has been a problem on every building with every type of siding product for decades and decades. It wasn't until November 1999 that the State of Minnesota required kickout flashings in stucco applications (I have a memo from the State of Minnesota Administrator instructing all building officials in Minnesota on kickout flashings in stucco). The most recent code (The Minnesota 2007 Building Code July 10, 2007) has that language as part of the code (this is a good thing)—kickout flashings have to be installed for all sidings!*

We are currently working on a home that is 100% fiber cement board siding, fiber cement board shake siding, and fiber cement board sheet siding. We are removing it all! There is no masonry product anywhere on the exterior. All the windows have to be removed and reinstalled (lack of pan flashing and wrap of the window and door openings, no kickout flashings, and deck flashing is short at the ends). Approximately 960 SF of exterior wall sheathing is going to be replaced because of moisture intrusion damage. This home was built in 2005! This was a legal case that went to arbitration. The arbitrators (three of them) ruled in favor of the homeowner and he was awarded the repair estimate, expert and attorney fees. This is the home I discuss about a lot because there was NO stucco on this home, and the home was built no different than all other homes of today, they just didn't pay attention to detail.

Another repair we are doing is at a home in a golf community: the home was built in 1998 and has a wood beveled siding, and again NO stucco or other masonry products, we also have a home in an adjacent community we are repairing that was built in 1989. Again, all wood beveled siding with a little brick veneer at the front. Both of these projects are being repaired due to major fire damage, and both of the interiors were gutted down to the framing…lo and behold all the moisture intrusion was discovered. The damage is the same and at the same locations as in our stucco, brick, and stone homes for lack of kickout flashings, deck flashings, window and door openings' panning and wrap. The floor joist band locations and the fireplace chases have severe structural damage. The homeowners in both of these homes have to pay out-of-pocket to repair the rotted sheathing and framing. Their homeowner insurance won't pay because it wasn't damaged due to the fire. I find this all the time with every siding product, i.e., vinyl, steel, wood, aluminum, stucco, brick, stone, fiber cement, and hardboard—it just doesn't matter. This is why I've been so vocal that stucco is not the problem or any of the other sidings! It is just that stucco has received the stories in the news papers, and TV news stories, so everyone is checking their stucco, but no one is checking the other sidings. So, when something happens to their home and it is discovered, then it is too late to try to recover funds.

We have repaired homes in Woodbury for moisture intrusion, fire and storm damage and have discovered all the same type damage as I discussed above and with all the same results. I work every day with forensic and structural engineers, and attorneys on moisture intrusion cases all over the Twin Cities and western Wisconsin. I testify as an expert all the time at trials, arbitration and mediation cases. What happens in the mediation and arbitration, and somewhat at trial, is that the defense has a repair estimate that is usually a fraction of the actual repair cost; so a lot of these homeowners have no other choice but to hire these contractors to repair their homes. I've been getting involved in quite a few cases that have already been repaired once already and some twice (incredible). The problem is that they again didn't pay attention to detail and, ironic as it may seem, the local building inspectors are passing the same inferior workmanship and code violations as original…so, here we go again. The other problem is a lot of those contractors are not in business anymore! Why? I wonder. The homeowners have a very difficult time trying to get financial recovery from those contractors; if, at all, they find themselves going after the contractor recovery fund. However, if that contractor has other claims against them (they usually do) they may not get a penny. Some of the homes that need repair again have stucco, stone, and fiber cement type claddings. Like I informed you in prior conversations, back in 2001, when I was out looking at moisture intrusion homes in the Woodbury area, I witnessed some of these homes being repaired by well known contractors (most of which are no longer in business) and was disgusted by what I was seeing. I did call into the inspections office and gave the addresses of these homes and informed the person who took my call that I was not trying to horn in on someone else's project, but instead I just wanted the repairs to be done correctly! [To protect the industry and to protect the homeowners.]

I was, and still am, chastised by contractors for reporting what I see to local inspections departments! I feel that I'm doing my part to protect our industry and the homeowners, and I will continue to do so. I don't hear or see anyone else being proactive. I find that very sad for our industry. I've been in construction my entire life and have worked for several contractors in my career. I know the only way that most—yes, most carpenters and contractors—learn and change is by the local building inspector. When he or she tags the building with a correction notice, then they make sure they don't do the same type work again. [Everyone knows this is the truth! I'm the only one honest enough to say it. By denying it is foolish]. If the building inspector doesn't tag, then change doesn't occur as expediently, or even at all. We, as an industry, have started educating contractors and I have gone to most of the courses offered by the state and others. There is not enough discussion on these critical items; they make a quick pass over it and move on. This problem is not going to go away until the industry gets serious about it and really discusses it at the continuing education courses.

I have had discussions with you in the past where I have taken the position that a rain screen is a good thing to incorporate behind stucco, stone veneers, and brick. We at Christians, Inc., in fact, do spec a rain screen behind those products and we install the rain screen ourselves. That way the subcontractor cannot try to skip doing it.** I just read in the national trade magazine (your four page column) about applying EIFS. You described in great detail how to trowel the adhesive in a vertical application only, to create a continuous drainage to the weep screed location. I felt it was a very good column, and read it with great interest, as you probably know I would. I shared that column with everyone at Christians, Inc. I've been told and have overheard from the construction industry, forensic science field, law firms, insurance companies, moisture testing firms and some building inspection departments to "talk to Ernie Swan over at Christians, Inc." on how to correctly repair these homes and to oversee contractors as they attempt to repair these homes because Christians, Inc. are the experts, the leaders, and teachers in this field. I'm very flattered by all those comments and referrals for just doing our job!

Steve, I refer individuals to you and have referred hundreds of people to articles authored by you about stucco and the proper methods of installing stucco and other products. You have been a great resource of knowledge to the industry and myself over the years, and I hold your opinions with the highest degree of respect.

I'd be more than happy to discuss further with anyone about moisture intrusion issues in buildings. I've now been involved with and inspected over 5,000 (and counting) single- and multi-family homes with moisture intrusion.

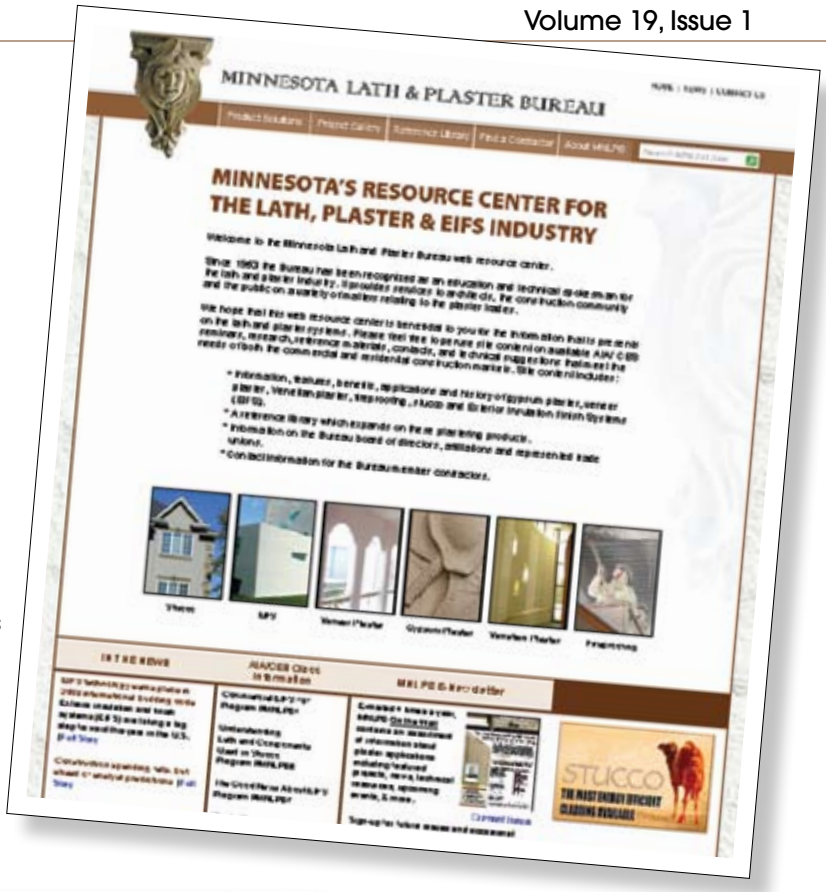
Sincerely,
Ernie Swan
Christians Incorporated

**The Minnesota Lath and Plaster Bureau authored and proposed this rule change for the Minnesota State Building Code IRC Sections R703.8 and 903.2.2.*

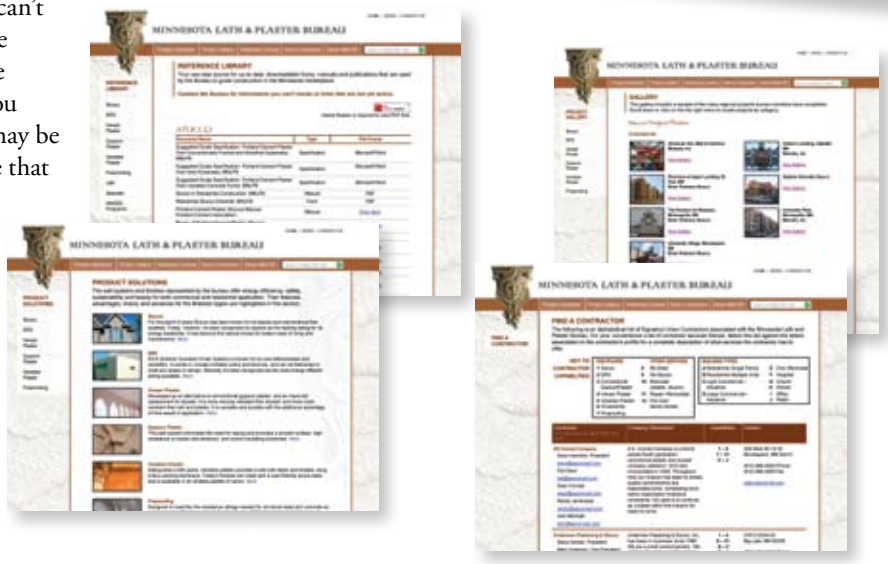
***The use of rainscreens or drainage planes continues to be debated. Questions remain as to: how large the air gap must be, what is the most effective type of rainscreen; what is the appropriate water-resistive barrier to use in conjunction, if and how they should be vented; whether such products compromise the stucco installation; and how these products might contribute to a fire event. These are just some of the reasons the MNLPB does not specifically endorse these products at the present time.*

NEW LOOK — NEW WEBSITE

The Minnesota Lath and Plaster Bureau is pleased to announce that our new professionally designed website is now up and running. After one year in the making, we hope that our new "Resource Center" fulfills the needs of architects, specifiers, building officials and the public as a one stop shop for all information on plaster applications. Once you get past the main page, you will quickly see that the site is broken up by six plastering disciplines. These are: Stucco, EIFS, Veneer Plaster, Gypsum Plaster, Venetian Plaster and Fireproofing. Extensive information has been conceived and developed to help better understand these products, their history, their features and benefits and their various applications. Don't stop looking there though, because you will also find information about how the Bureau works, It's history and ties to union locals, it's board members; as well as a reference library, a picture gallery of our contractor member's work, as well as their contact information and links to their websites.



We are especially pleased with the reference library in terms of its usefulness to anyone seeking out specific information about plastering products. It is here that you will find Bureau suggested guide specifications, publications, bulletins and links to other websites that might be helpful in information research. This is really the on-line version of the MNLPB Reference Manual that many architectural offices still carry in their libraries. Don't be put off if you can't immediately access information directly from the site. The reference library will be a living document that we will be continually updating. Please just give us a phone call, if you desire a specific item that may not yet be available. That may be the motivation we need to get that information up on-line that much sooner.



Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Market to Market (MTM) Advertising for their creative support in making our new website a reality. Most especially we would like to give accolades to Ladd Conrad for coordinating and mastering what message and style we wanted to convey; Susan Conrad, for her creative flair and Bill Martin for taking our content and formatting it into its now useful form.

Bruce Pottle Memorial Golf Tourney 2009

Believe it or not, but on June 15 we will honor the memory of Bruce Pottle for the tenth time at our annual golf outing. After careful consideration and unanimous vote, we will once again be holding our outing at the beautiful and private Indian Hills Golf Club in Stillwater. As per years past we are asking Bureau members, Distributors and Product Representatives to sponsor an architect or specifier for their green fees and dinner. This is an exceptional way to thank these professionals for thinking about the industry when it comes time to designing and specifying plaster products. If you need help deciding who to sponsor, please give the Bureau a call. I am sure we can pair you up with a design professional that will be happy to spend a beautiful June day with you out on the links.

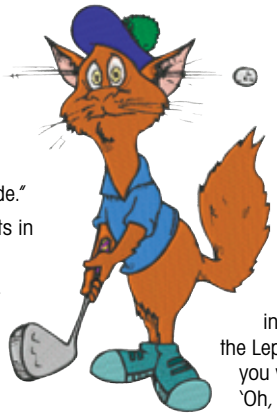
Indian Hills Golf Club is located 7 miles west of Stillwater and 4 miles east of North St. Paul on Keats Avenue just north of Highway 36.

SCHEDULE OF DAY'S EVENTS:

11:30 am–1:00 pm	Sign-in and BBQ Lunch
1:00 pm	Shotgun Start
5:00 pm	The 19th Hole Cocktail Reception
5:30 pm	Dinner and Door Prizes

CLUTTER ON THE STREETS

Those Fine Furry Felines



- Yes my friends, a group of cats is referred to as a "clutter." But they also have been called a "clowder, kinder, comfort and a pounce" of cats. Unless you are talking about big cats: Lions of course are known as a "pride."
- There are more than 500 million domestic cats in the world, with 33 different breeds.
- If your cat is near you, and its tail is quivering, this is the greatest expression of love your cat can give you.
- Cats can "read" your moods. If you're sad or under stress, you may also notice a difference in your cat's behavior.
- The domestic cat is the only cat species able to hold its tail vertically while walking. All wild cats hold their tails horizontally or tucked between their legs.
- During her productive life, one female cat could have more than 100 kittens.
- In 1952, a Texas Tabby named Dusty set the record by having more than 420 kittens before having her last litter at age 18.
- A cat will almost never "meow" at another cat. This sound is reserved for humans.
- The record for the greatest number of mice kills by a cat is held by Towser, a tabby in charge of rodent control in Scotland who killed 28,899 mice in her 21 years. This is about four mice per day, every day, for 21 years.
- What you heard is true: A falling cat will always right itself in a precise order. First the head will rotate, then the spine will twist and the rear legs will align, then the cat will arch its back to lessen the impact of the landing.
- It is believed that a white cat sitting on your doorstep just before a wedding is a sign of lasting happiness.
- The superstition of black cats causing bad luck started in Europe. In other parts of the world particularly Japan, a black cat crossing your path is considered good luck, and in Ireland, killing a cat of any color was thought to bring seventeen years of bad luck.
- Cats spend 16 hours of each day sleeping: A seven year old cat has only been awake for two years of its life!
- According to the Guiness Book of World Records, the heaviest cat on record was Himmy, an Australian cat, who weighed 46 pounds, 15.25 ounces.
- Egyptians shaved their eyebrows as a sign of mourning when they lost a beloved cat.
- Hebrew folklore believes that cats came about because Noah was afraid that rats might eat all the food on the ark.

The Irish Golfer

A golfer playing in Ireland hooked his drive into the woods. Looking for his ball, he found a little Leprechaun flat on his back, a big bump on his head and the golfer's ball beside him. Horrified, the golfer got his water bottle from the cart and poured it over the little guy, reviving him. 'Arrgh! What happened?' the Leprechaun asked. 'I'm afraid I hit you with my golf ball,' the golfer says. 'Oh, I see. Well, ye got me fair and square. Ye get three wishes, so whad dya want?' 'Thank God, you're all right!' the golfer answers in relief. 'I don't want anything, I'm just glad you're OK, and I apologize.' And the golfer walks off. 'What a nice guy,' the Leprechaun says to himself. 'I have to do something for him. I'll give him the three things I would want... a great golf game, all the money he ever needs, and a fantastic sex life.' A year goes by and the golfer is back. On the same hole, he again hits a bad drive into the woods and the Leprechaun is there waiting for him. 'Twas me that made ye hit the ball here,' the little guy says. 'I just want to ask ye, how's yer golf game?' 'My game is fantastic!' the golfer answers. I'm an internationally famous golfer now.' He adds, 'By the way, it's good to see you're all right.' 'Oh, I'm fine now, thank ye. I did that fer yer golf game, you know. And tell me, how's yer money situation?' 'Why, it's just wonderful!' the golfer states. 'When I need cash, I just reach in my pocket and pull out $100 bills I didn't even know were there!' 'I did that fer ye also. And tell me, how's yer sex life?' The golfer blushes, turns his head away in embarrassment, and says shyly, 'It's OK.' 'C'mon, c'mon now,' urged the Leprechaun, 'I'm wanting to know if I did a good job. How many times a week?' Blushing even more, the golfer looks around then whispers, 'Once, sometimes twice a week.' What??' responds the Leprechaun in shock. 'That's all? Only once or twice a week?' 'Well,' says the golfer, 'I figure that's not bad for a Catholic priest in a small parish.'

What Number?

- How many arms are on a squid?
- How many legs are on lobsters and crabs?
- How many marbles per player are there in Chinese checkers?
- How many provinces are there in Canada?
- How many inkblots are there in Rorschach test?
- What is the record number of World Series Games won by Hall of Fame pitcher Whitey Ford for the NY Yankees?

If you said eight to all of these questions you are right.

Cliff Clavinisms

CHEERS/NBC/1982–93, John Ratzenberger played the verbose know-it-all postal worker Cliff Claven. Some examples of Cliff's veritable cornucopia of wisdom:

- They did a study comparing postal workers to chimpanzees. They proved chimps were 32% slower. Of course, they were better with public relations.
- It's a little-known fact that the smartest animal is the pig. Scientists say if pigs had thumbs and a language, they could be trained to do simple manual labor. They give you 20 to 30 years of loyal service, and at their retirement dinner, you can eat them.
- Due to the shape of the North American elk's esophagus, even if it could speak, it could not pronounce the word lasagna.
- Basketball was invented by the Celtics. Interestingly enough, so was the parquet floor.
- It's a little known fact that cows were domesticated in Mesopotamia and were also used in China as guard animals for the Forbidden City.
- A Freudian slip is saying one thing and meaning a mother.
- I wonder if you know that the harp is a predecessor of the modern day guitar. Early minstrels were much larger people. In fact, they had hands the size of small dogs.
- Everyone in the Swiss Army owns a Swiss Army Knife. That's why no one messes with Switzerland.
- If you were to go back in history and list every president, you'll find that the numerical value of each letter in their name was equally divisible into the year in which they were elected. By my calculations, our next president has to be named Yellnick McWawa.
- It's a little known fact that the tan became popular in what is known as the Bronze Age.
- A herd of buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo. And when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first. This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the whole group keeps improving by the regular killing of the weakest members.""In much the same way, the human brain can only operate as fast as the slowest brain cells. Excessive intake of alcohol, as we all know, kills brain cells, but naturally it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first. In this way, regular consumption of beer eliminates the weaker brain cells, making the brain a faster and more efficient machine. That's why you always feel smarter after a few beers."

PILOT TO CONTROL TOWER

These are actual exchanges between pilots and control towers

- Tower: "Delta 351, you have traffic at 10 o'clock, 6 miles."
  Delta 351: "Give us another hint! We have digital watches."
- Tower: "TWA 2341, for noise abatement turn right 45 degrees."
  TWA 2341: "Center, we are at 35,000 feet. How much noise can we make up here?"
  Tower: "Sir, have you ever heard the noise a 747 makes when it hits a 727?"
- Tower: "United 329 heavy, your traffic is a Fokker at one o'clock, three miles, Eastbound."
  United 329: "Approach, I've always wanted to say this… I've got the little Fokker in sight."
- The pilot of a small private plane was told to hold short of an active runway while a DC-8 landed. As the larger plane came in, turned around and taxied past the private plane, a quick witted comedian in the bigger plane got on the radio and said, "What a cute little plane. Did you make it all by yourself?" To which the owner of the private plane could not let the insult go by without responding: "I made it out of DC-8 parts. Another landing like that and I'll have enough parts for another one."

Tom Panek Retires from MNLPB Board

It was back in November when Tom Panek made his intentions known at a meeting of the Minnesota Lath and Plaster Bureau that he was stepping down as a board director. In February however the Directors and Advisors for the Bureau got together at one of his favorite restaurants, Sunsets in Woodbury to honor Tom for his twenty-five years of service to the Bureau. Tom was a bit surprised but did not mind seeing his colleagues all together once again to reminisce.

Tom cited the fact that he was a bit over extended with other responsibilities as his reason for retiring from the board. If running a successful, plastering, drywall and steel framing enterprise was not enough, Tom has sat on the board of the Minnesota Drywall and Plasters Association for twenty years and was also Chairman for the HealthEast Foundation for the past four years. HealthEast, if you were not aware, has raised and contributed more than $30 million for philanthropic programs that elevate the services and quality care at St. Joseph Hospital, St. John's Hospital, Woodwinds Hospital and the Bethesda Rehabilitation Hospital.

We thought it was only fitting that we also acknowledge Tom in this newsletter. Tom was a welcome addition to our group of directors. He never was bashful in expressing his views and has held the mantle of President of the Bureau several times over his tenure. We will miss his leadership. Per Tom's wishes he is succeeded on the board by Joel Ofsthun, Executive Vice President of Minuti-Ogle Inc.

PLASTER? DO THEY DO THAT ANYMORE?

We are pleased to report that we have registered a new AIA/ CES program offering worth one HSW credit entitled "Plastering? Do they do that anymore?" This is kind of a play on words, however it's based upon the fact that people still ask the question. The fact is Plastering is alive and well thank you. What is not realized is that plastering is much more than that stuff you see oozing out between wooden laths. The reality is that we have not done that type of plastering for over a hundred years.

We begin with a retrospective of what plastering was and end with what plastering now is. Starting in 9000 BC and journeying through the time of the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Renaissance, early America, the last century and finally, today; the program culminates in a discussion of modern applications, including veneer, stucco, fire suppression, suspended ceiling systems, decorative plasters and exterior insulation systems. We suggest participation from both old timers who have forgotten about how great plaster systems are and newbies who probably never knew any of this stuff existed. We hope to inspire your creativity with this insightful and thought provoking presentation.

Give us a call or drop us an e-mail. We'll bring the lunch.

GETTING WHAT YOU PAID FOR?

Here is another example of why accepting the lowest bid is not always the best option. Maybe the plastering contractor for this EIFS installation forgot basecoat in his bid? Or perhaps he left out the reinforcing mesh? Or maybe he just left out both in an effort to undercut legitimate bids. Regardless, the coatings were applied way too thin, resulting in a phenomenon known as pillowing. This is where the expanded polystyrene board joints shadow through the coatings to reveal their exact position on the wall plane.

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