



Across the Fence

A Visit with Our Remodeling Family

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Spring 2020

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MBR's 40TH
ANNIVERSARY!

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MILITARY APPRECIATION
MONTH



Miller Building & Remodeling turns 40 this year! Where have the years gone? In this special edition of our newsletter we pause to acknowledge this milestone remembering how we started, how we have grown, and how many kind people helped us along the way. We appreciate our great staff and our wonderful customers, and we celebrate each of them and the many friendships gathered over the years.

So in the spirit of all celebrations, we invite you to enjoy a piece of cake and a cup of coffee as we take a minute to reminisce.

If you ask David Miller about the history of his just-turned-forty Miller Building & Remodeling, he instantly steers the conversation to the people who inspired him, educated him, had confidence in him, and cheered for him through those early challenging years. In January 1980, he took a huge deep breath and started

his then one-man operation by constructing a 20' by 20' foot deck eight feet above ground – alone. He laughs about it now and readily admits that it was one of the hardest projects he ever did. Shortly after, he convinced his brother Rodney to work with him in the business.

Technically, the building industry for David was quite a long love affair. As a child he would observe houses in construction phases sometimes sneaking onto the sites once the workers had gone home just to study

what they had done. He was curious and excited as the structure grew in front of his very eyes. Then weeks or months



later, the house became a home. He liked that part, too.

Later tapping into his carpentry talents (possibly from his gifted carpenter grandfather), he helped at construction sites under the guidance of Ben Childers, his personal mentor. This experience stood him in good stead when he reached high school and enrolled in the technical curriculum of study – masonry, carpentry and automotive technology. He genuinely liked all three, but he just couldn't get that construction bug out of his system. Upon graduation in 1974, and after other work options, he was offered a job with Ben's construction company. When Ben left the industry in 1979, the door swung open for David to found his own business.

But just establishing a business does not guarantee a happily-ever-after ending. David watched his friends sign on with

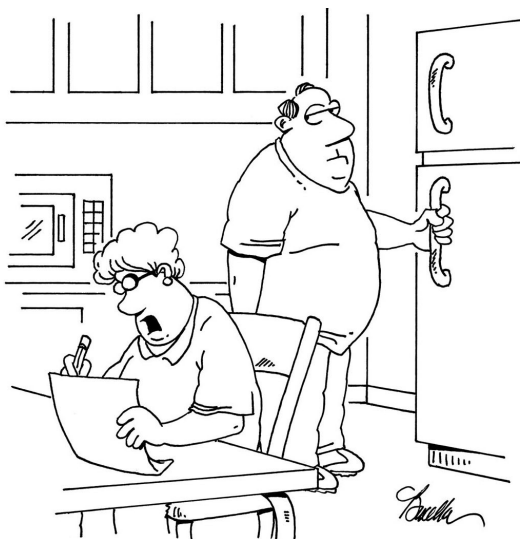
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NOT JUST ANOTHER DAY IN MAY

So many calendar days in today's world are devoted to one cause or another – so many that often we forget if it's Columbus Day or Flag Day or National Pie Day. Yet calendar days exist that should never be overlooked – those devoted to citizens who strive to better the country or the community or both. During May, the United States extends appreciation to the military and those in public service because without these people, we just wouldn't be able to live as we do.

The recognitions actually begin on the first day of May with Loyalty Day, established in 1921 for citizens to affirm their loyalty to our nation and remember their heritage. It is a legal holiday but not a federal one. Then the first full week of May is designated Public Service Recognition Week to honor every individual serving in any level of government. Yes, everyone. Think of all the people in courthouses, in government offices, political positions – everyone. It's their turn to be appreciated. On May 8, we celebrate Victory in Europe Day, the day Germany unconditionally surrendered ending World War II. (Back in 1945, this day brought wild celebrations across the world and rightfully so.) One of the most deserving observations comes the Friday before Mother's Day with Military Spouse Appreciation Day, set by Ronald Reagan in 1984. It recognizes the devotion and commitment of those married to military personnel and their

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"The way I figure it, we can reach our goal of 10,000 steps a day by moving the refrigerator to the far wall."

Famous Quote

*Men with good intentions make promises.
Men with good character keep them.*

~ Unknown

Vermont Griddle Cakes

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 C plain flour | 1 egg, well beaten |
| 2 Tbls sugar | 1 Tsp vanilla |
| 1 Tbls baking powder | 1 C milk |
| 1/2 Tsp salt | 4 Tbls melted butter |



Mix together dry ingredients; Add egg, milk, and butter, stirring gently to blend. Batter may have a few lumps but should not be too stiff. Can add milk as needed. Pre-heat pan or griddle. Place a few drops of water on the pan surface. If they dance across the surface it is ready. (If they quickly sizzle away the pan is too hot.) Lightly grease with oil of choice wiping excess off with a paper towel. Pour batter onto pan and add fruit or chocolate chips if desired. When bubbles begin to form around edges and bottom is golden, gently flip pancakes and cook until set and golden. Serve with maple syrup. Makes 12-16 depending on size. These are grandkid approved, even with gluten-free flour.

Shared by Terri Miller

Trivia Challenge

The total years of construction experience of the eight craftsmen and management team at MBR is...

- A. 85
- B. 128
- C. 197
- D. 245

Send your answer by e-mail to

info@remodelwithmiller.com, or call 336- 998-2140. A trivia prize winner will be drawn from the correct answers received within one week of the newsletter mailing.

LAST ISSUE'S TRIVIA WINNER

Miller Building & Remodeling is pleased to announce the winner of our last Trivia Challenge...Keely Richardson of W-S was drawn from all those answering this question correctly:

The most popular street name in North Carolina is...

- D. Dogwood

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large companies and occasionally questioned his decision. He wondered if he should have gone to Mortuary School, another interest. With faith in the Lord, he realized that the path he had chosen (or was led to) was the right one for him. He started in both building and remodeling because in the early 80s, remodeling wasn't booming. People wanted new homes. A few years passed and he shifted all efforts to remodeling. About that time, people began buying older homes with the intention of updating them. That's not to say the first five to six years weren't tough because they were. Terri remembers that David started working for himself the same month they moved into the house that they had just finished building with their own hands (well, mostly David's), and made their first mortgage payment with an interest rate in the teens. Sometimes it was pay the bills and keep going. It was one project at a time, one month at a time. And here they are.

Wonderful things also happened in those first years –

David and his wife, Terri (who has handled all administrative issues for MBR since 1990), had a son Alan and then several years later a daughter Sara.

When he could, David took his son on customer calls. Alan also helped out on job sites and worked around the shop. That young man, now armed with degrees from NC State University, is in charge of production management for MBR, and



also handles many general management responsibilities. His business acumen, developed from an early age, has matured exponentially as he keeps abreast of new techniques and products. Fortunately, Alan also knows when it is best to use time-tested practices to give the customer the best possible outcome. His suggestions for projects are based on solid industry knowledge coupled with current styles. With his low-key sales approach and his ability to assess what each project requires, Alan is as committed as his parents are to the business. As David puts it, he personally "clears the trees" and Alan "landscapes." Alan himself sees potentially more and different avenues for MBR, but for the time being, they are staying the course. Those early customer father-son calls started another career much as those childhood construction site visits did for David.

The talents of one man – or two – can open the doors for a business, but it takes the right personnel to meet the needs of each project. With 10-12 jobs going simultaneously (weather permitting), MBR has to have the perfect combination of talents and personalities on their teams. Most of their craftsmen come to MBR through networking, and most decide to stay after the 90-day probationary period. It's more than just expertise that is required with a small remodeling company. Each individual must have the ability to positively interact with customers (and each other) to make the whole venture work. Obviously, it is working well for MBR most likely because of their personnel policy – train your teams like you want them to start their own businesses, but treat them like you want them to stay. That means recognition for work well done and benefits. Averaging 250 projects a year with a stellar reputation,

the MBR staff and craftsmen have served thousands of clients through several thousand projects large and small.

If you ask David to recall a couple of the more unique remodels, he smiles and shakes his head. "There was the one about the basement," he says. It seems a family really wanted a basement – but their house was built on a crawlspace. With much thought and planning, MBR embarked on giving them what they wanted. Using a small excavator, shovels, wheelbarrows, and ingenuity, the team finished the basement complete with a putting green, pool table area, wet bar, and lots of usable space. "And then there was the lady who tore out her own bathroom," he adds. She had been watching HGTV and decided her bathroom needed some updating. That evening she basically demolished the bathroom thinking MBR would be able to give her a new bath in the same amount of time that HGTV finished their projects – about an hour. MBR appreciates every new client -- including the HGTV fans, but David clarifies that projects take weeks not minutes. (She did get her bathroom remodel.)

Forty years in the building industry has allowed MBR to experience amazing changes: new products, new techniques, varying economies, and so much technology. Some progress they have wholeheartedly embraced, like ordering hard-to-come-by products online, but they have never lost sight of using local vendors. They have attended trade shows and seminars to better their products and talents. Sometimes after evaluating a new technique, they opt to stay with the tried and true for quality and sustainability purposes. That's part of the beauty of a small business – decisions are made with the client's project in mind, not corporate policy.

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Spring 2020

THANK YOU FOR THE KIND WORDS!

"We could not be more pleased with the results. Excellent craftsmen, quality work and a fair price. We would not hesitate recommending to anyone."


The Dixons, Advance, NC

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contributions to keeping us safe. Celebrated the third Saturday in May is Armed Forces Day honoring Americans currently serving in the military. Their

readiness to protect us and to sacrifice for their country is monumental. May closes with – of course – Memorial Day. It is always the final Monday in May. Established after the Civil War to honor those who had fallen on both sides, it grew to commemorate all Americans who have died in service to their country.

With the spring and the anticipation of summer fun, take a moment to acknowledge your friends and neighbors, and even those you have never met, for their courageous actions on behalf of the US. It really wouldn't be the same without them. 

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For MBR, it truly is all about the client. From those one-man operation days filled with hope and trepidation to a full team of dedicated and talented craftsmen, the entire Miller Building & Remodeling business has depended upon clients who always end as friends. And as for David – he loves what he does, and with gratitude to the Lord, would do it all again. 