

# WESTERN WALL & CEILING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

# THE RIGHT ANGLE



Winners listed clockwise starting at Top Left, Mowery Thomason : Category: Interior Commercial (Renovation), Martin Bros : Category: Interior Institutional Raymond Southern Ca. : Category: Exterior Commerical /Interior Commercial, Berger Bros. : Category:Exterior Commerical (Renovation) / Exterior Institutional

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CALENDAR AND EVENTS

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# Remembered



Farewell Mr. Downtown Brown. Kurt Brown of Anaheim passed away December 28, 2008 after a long battle with cancer. He will be missed by all whose lives he touched.

Kurt's "14 Karat smile" as one friend expressed, is what Kurt will be remembered most by, that and his "humor, zest for life, charm, and courage during his battle with cancer". "Every day is Christmas and every night is New Years Eve." was Kurt's apothegm and he lived each day he had to it's fullest.

Kurt worked as a Sales Representative for National Gypsum for 17 years and won the top salesman award in 2006 and all of the sales contests for that year.

A celebration of Kurt's life was held Jan. 09, 2009 at Anaheim Hills Golf Course. Family, friends and colleagues gathered to remember "Mr. Downtown Brown" telling stories of his warmth, caring nature and ability to make even a dark day bright. Donations can be made in Kurt's name to: [www.pacificshoresfoundation.org](http://www.pacificshoresfoundation.org)

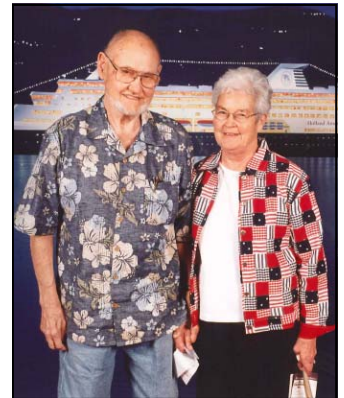
**Our Merle "The Pearl" Swanson** Long time, hard working, dedicated husband and Fun loving father of 6 children started out in the Construction Industry with USG, then on to L.A. Building Material, over to Flintkote and ended his career with Hamilton in Orange with all his friends.

If you were a friend of Merle's than you experienced him remembering your birthdays and anniversaries and those donuts he would bring, along with his cheery smile. The Pearl certainly left his mark. Our Merle fought in World War II. Met and Married Dolores and raised his wonderful family in the City of Orange, CA. For those of you who didn't know, his wife Dolores, passed away suddenly last November.

"Merle the Pearle" just 86 yrs. young passed away peacefully on Thursday Feb. 26, 2009. He will truly be missed by his family and friends and the entire construction industry.

Services: Riverside National Cemetery  
215 Fwy. & Van Buren  
March Arb, CA 92518  
9:30 A.M.  
Friday, March 20, 2009

Reception: The Villa Banquet Room  
510 E. Katella Ave.  
Orange, CA 92867  
12 noon



# January Meeting Recap March Meeting

The January membership was a tribute to the late Walter F Pruter. "Walt", as we all knew him, was industry standard in his own right. A video presentation was given recounting his life and service to our industry. Many people shared stories of Walt and how much he meant to them. Carol Pruter, Walt's widow, was deeply touched by how the industry respected him and loved him.

The meeting was also the first annual project of the year award ceremony. Appropriately and adeptly named the WALTER F PRUTER project of the year awards was a nice start to hopefully a long tradition of showcasing the amazing projects the WWCCA contractors and affiliates do around Southern California. Recipients of the award received a handsome plaque suitable to display at their office. All WWCCA members are encouraged to be thinking of jobs that they want to enter for next years awards.

March 17, 2009

Guest Speakers: John Rapaport - John Lord Component West BIM

What is BIM?  
Building Information Modeling

It is not just a software product. It is not just data. It is not just an "internal" process. BIM is a design software that creates 3-D models of what is to be placed in the built environment. It is information related to the models and the powerfully intelligent "object oriented" structures within the designs. it really is a change on how we as an industry collaborate, build trust and create transparency from owners to lenders, architects to engineers, general contractors to subcontractors, etc. At this meeting we will demonstrate where the wall and ceiling industry fits into the BIM processes, both from a modeling and an information perspective.

<b>TUESDAY – MARCH 17, 2009</b>	
COCKTAILS RECEPTION	3 : P.M.
SPEAKER/BUSINESS	4: PM
APPETIZERS	5: P.M.

**PHOENIX CLUB**

1340 S. SANDERSON AVE.  
ANAHEIM, CA 92806  
714-563-4161

# Nevada "Labor Night" Annual Meeting

In December WWCCA-Nevada held its traditional end of year "Labor Night" meeting at the Panevino Restaurant. This was the sixth such meeting where each labor organization was invited to share its "state of the union" with the contractor and affiliate membership. Approximately 75 were in attendance to learn more about labor's activities, challenges and goals for the 2009 calendar year. Our thanks go out to the following labor organizations and speakers for their generous time.

Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters - Frank Hawk, Finishing Contractors Association - Tony Darkangelo, International Union of Painters and Allied Trades - Jack Mallory, Operative Plasterers and Cement Masons - Marc Leavitt, Marvin Gebers.



## Can One Man Make A Difference?

by Mark Fowler



As it turns out, yes he can. Meet Victor Picena proud member and Apprentice of the Carpenters Union. Victor was born in Los Angeles and life was not particularly good for him at first. Victor found himself in a gang and doing everything wrong to be successful and get ahead. Victor was told by a friend that Union construction work would be a good path, he could make good money, benefits and have a real life. Victor gave it a shot. He decided to join the Carpenters Apprenticeship program.

What Victor found was instructors that not only taught the basic and advanced skills of the Carpenters trade, but men that were mentors to

him. These Apprenticeship instructors saw that Victor wanted to succeed and went out of their way to help, guide and mentor him. They certainly taught him the trade, but it was more than that, as Victor puts it " they were my guides in life, they cared". Victor cleaned up his act and went to work on living the rest of his life.

As a fourth period apprentice, Victor felt he owed something back to the Union and to the mentors that helped him. Victor decided that not enough people with clout , in particular political clout, knew what great things happen at these Union apprenticeship schools. He decided he could make a difference. On his days off, Victor went to city hall and sat in a city councilman's office until they agreed to tour the apprenticeship facility with him. Victor has been persistent and successful.

In January, Victor arranged for Los Angeles councilman Bernard Parks to tour the Whittier Apprenticeship facility. Victor explained to council-

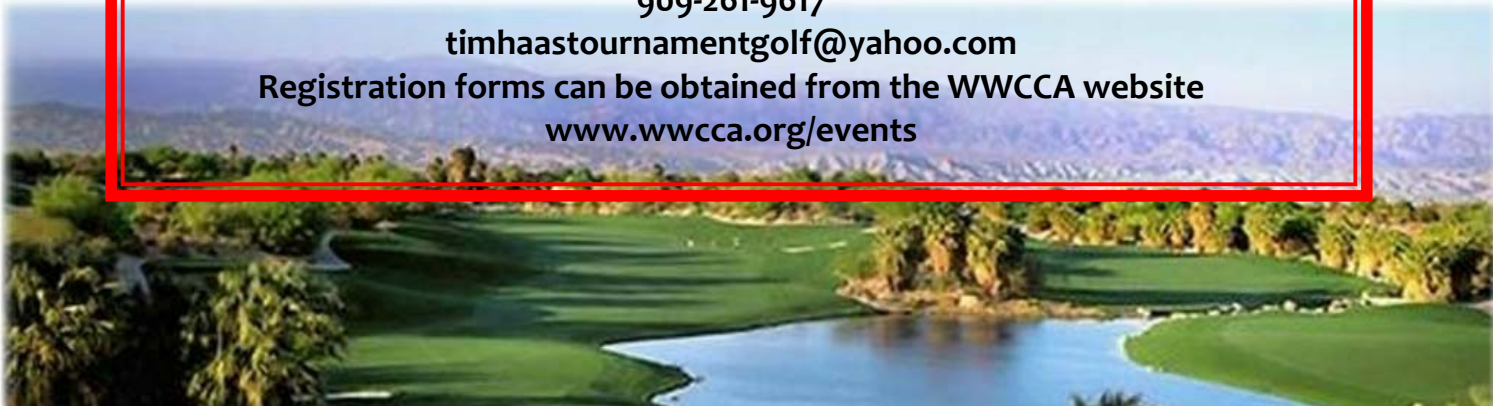
man Parks that these instructors are more than teachers, they are life coaches to young men and women who need guidance and that the city needs to support the efforts of these programs.

As it turns out councilman Parks is no stranger to hard work. His father was a Union Lather and he himself started out as a Plaster Tender when he was young. He informed the group it was the hardest work he had ever done in his life and inspired him to continue his college education. Councilman Parks had an uncanny knowledge of construction practices and obviously had experience. His construction knowledge was a bit dated as he asked about using "button Board", but he did impress the tour group.

So one man can make a difference. But who is that man, Victor Picena, Bernard Parks or the apprentice instructor who takes a trouble youth under his wing and puts him on the right path?



**Hotel Accommodations at  
 Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa—800-228-9290  
 Check In 4:00pm—Check Out 11:00am  
 Questions and information for golf  
 Contact our Event Coordinator  
 Tim Haas—Tournament Golf & Travel  
 909-261-9617  
 timhaastournamentgolf@yahoo.com  
 Registration forms can be obtained from the WWCCA website  
 www.wwcca.org/events**



# WWCCA Contractors Receive National Attention



featured as the cover shot for Construction Dimensions in December. Pelican Hill is a first class resort destination with a championship golf course.

Then Berger Bros. was featured on the cover of Walls and Ceilings magazine for the stunning and creative work done on the USC campus in Los Angeles. The USC Cinematic Art School is a state of the film school where the future film directors will be educated, inspired and certainly to create new movie genre for generations to come.

The southwest construction industry have known about the work of WWCCA contractors, now the rest of the Nation is finding out what makes the WWCCA and TSIB so special. All in a span of a few months, WWCCA contractors have made the covers of both the national wall and ceiling magazines. First it was The Raymond Group, with the amazing project at Pelican Hill along the south coast of Orange County. The project was fea-

Too often news about the construction industry is only negative, it is important that we let the world know the quality work we do, the buildings we build and take pride in our accomplishments. This national recognition is important to acknowledge and earns the respect these contractors deserve. Both are award winning projects and all the manufacturers and dealers should feel equally proud to be featured in these magazines.

# Union Apprenticeship Training Programs ~ A Never Ending Career Path by Albert Carrillo

An example of a true Union trade craftsman is one where an individual begins to learn his/her craft or trade through structured training, then perfects their trade skills, and subsequently mentors the next generation of skilled workers. In the non-structured construction environment, where I learned my trade, learning is done through the passing down of knowledge from the "older guys". It is in the action of mentoring and passing of knowledge where secrets, tricks and shortcuts learned over the years can lead to a variety of "that's the way we always did it" habits. A structured training program is one that will pass the test of time and give the contractor a true trained workforce.

I started out in the Tucson lath and plaster trade as a laborer/hoddy. My very first day, on my very first job, I was shown a sand pile, a mixer, stacks of lime and cement and a hod and stand set-up. My buddy who got me the job gave me my first lesson. He showed me how to mix stucco, pour it into a wheel barrow, wheel it to a hod stand, fill the hod, carry it up a special hod ladder and dump it on a mud board. This training session was for one batch and no further training took place. A few months later in my career I was introduced to a stucco pump. Given my vast knowledge of stucco "mixology" the then pump hoddy gave me a quick run down on the machine and how it works and worked with me in the sand pile for the day. My pump training was completed. After another six months into my career I was given the chance to move to the wall as a stucco floater. I, in turn, gave my replacement his crash course in stucco pump training and was off to the wall. By my second year in the trade I was considered a "journeyman" plasterer. I was never a Union member and worked my entire stucco career in the non-Union sector.

My plastering career scenario played out much like it plays out for many today. The knowledge of the plastering industry was passed on to me from the older guys and fellow workers. Most of it was right on but some fell into that "that's the way we always did it" category. It wasn't until I became a Dryvit Field Service Manager that I saw first hand and understood the difference between "passed" knowledge and industry approved "learned" knowledge. I had a vast knowledge of the plastering industry and thought I knew most of what I needed to be an expert in the field. As a technical representative for Dryvit I was soon humbled. I ended up learning a lot of new information about EIFS and stucco. (By the way it's pronounced eefs not efus.) I got an advanced education from my Regional Sales Manager, some industry experts,

chemists, engineers and a lawyer or two. In fact, I'm still learning.

Now as Manager for the WWCCA in AZ I see first hand, the excellence of trade training that is available through the Union apprentice program. Through an apprentice training program an individual can learn all aspects of a given trade. This learned knowledge is what is approved and recognized by the construction industry and is in fact a "true" knowledge. The program starts off with a basic knowledge of materials and methods. This includes specific material selection, proper mix ratios and which tools are required to become a trade craftsman. It then progresses into a very comprehensive training program of application and procedures. A new apprentice isn't thrown into the fire and asked to figure it out, rather he/she is given a proper learning path only advancing to the next step after completing the former. Along with the comprehensive trade training is a safety training program. My safety training was the statement "don't ever stick your hands into the mixer". No duh! As I witnessed through my Dryvit years, the trained workforce of the Union Contractor was visibly more educated in proper application methods, and safety, than the non-union contractor.

The beauty of an established training program provided by a Union, is that it is a never ending career path. An Apprentice can move up through the various stages and pay grades to Journeyman status. Here he/she is then recognized as a trade professional craftsman. But the learning doesn't necessarily stop there. One can take foreman and leadership in training, first-aid/CPR and a variety of other advanced trade knowledge training to further a career. Safety training is always an ongoing part of career learning too. No one goes through one training class and becomes for-ever-schooled on safety. From these programs come the next generation of skilled contractor ensuring the successful, and safe, continuation of the construction industry. I have personally witnessed guy's who have moved from job Superintendent all the way up to Company Branch President.

In my position as the Arizona Manager for the WWCCA, I see this commitment to training by the various Union Conferences, as a saving grace for the construction industry. A professionally trained, safe and confident construction worker gives the best chance for economic success in the construction industry.

# Hands on versus hard drives by Michael Logue

When was the last time you opened the hood of your car or truck and fixed something that was not working properly? How about a household appliance, ever open up a drier, or a dishwasher and trouble shoot a problem? I won't even get into electronics, who's got the bravado to pull the cover off a DVD or the back off your old tube style TV (assuming you still have one).

In our industry, we live and die by the hand. We rely on craftsmen that can plan, provide, construct and, oh make a profit while they're at it. Even in our hands-on industry, were becoming almost totally reliant on electronic program based tools to manage work. Our topic for the March 17 WWCCA meeting is a fine example. BIM, or Building Information Modeling, is an approach to get design/data modeling shared by the Architect, CM, GC and trades. The idea is to mitigate sequencing and space problems in a software driven model, provide an alternative and allow everyone to work in harmony – sounds too good to be true? One thing's for sure, it doesn't come easy!

BIM has been primarily used by mechanical electrical plumbing trades, in conjunction with a CM or GC to develop the CPM schedule for the project. Due to their complexity, high cost and long lead times, it is vital that all the MEP systems go in as designed with the least amount of deviation from plan to accommodate jobsite conditions. Wall and ceiling trades, which historically account for about 10% of the project value, were thought to be relatively inexpensive and easily modified to accommodate the MEP's. Not anymore! Done an OSHPD lately? How easy did your request to change that suspended ceiling to a joisted ceiling (to clear the interstitial space) fly through the OSHPD plan department? How about that top of wall that landed on the bottom of a beam, and now the beam is part of the fire rated assembly – didn't seem like much on the plans, but would have popped out on a 3 D BIM. With head-of-wall systems costing a fortune, and re-

jected wall assemblies holding up entire wings of progress, hospital and institutional work in general are ripe for a chance to join the BIM game with the MEP boys.

Perhaps in the old school, where a boot wearing, grizzled old superintendant who knew how to horse trade and could get a weeks worth of paperwork snuffed with a quick phone call from his smoke filled trailer, trade coordination was less an issue, it simply worked itself out by several seasoned vets who could make decisions on the spot. Today, issues run deep. It takes a month of coordination meetings, filled with high priced consultants, inexperienced junior architects, fresh out of school PM's and tongue biting (for fear of taking design ownership) subcontractors. I say, "BIM, bring it on"! Why not get wall and ceiling contractors into the room when the CPM is still a draft. Give us a chance bring down all our drywall corridors before HVAC, get all those rooms topped out before copper, emt, and all the other MEP components get stubbed in – who wants to cut around those things.

Sounds good, but at what cost? Well, it's not going to be a simple transition. Remember, MEP trades have mechanical and electrical engineers cranking out shop drawings – these folks are all well versed in AutoCAD, BIM software is like the Barry Bonds version of AutoCAD, but they can stomach it. Lath, Plaster and Drywall contractors are not always staffed with persons versed in these disciplines. Furthermore, with tough times, few traditional lath, plaster and drywall shops can afford to keep these specialized staff on their payroll. So where does this leave us. You can't stick your head in the sand and hope this phase called technology will just pass and go out of style, like so much American flash-in-the-pan hype – it won't. Face it, our planet may still spin at just over 1,037 mph, just as it's always done, but it sure seems like the days go by faster. With so much information available, we do things at light speed.



Getting left in the dust today means you may never be able to catch up.

What if we simply go back to the old, hands on way of life? A time when things were easier you say?. You could actually pop the hood on your car, see something that you recognized, trouble shoot the problem, buy the parts and be back up running before Carson was on. I grew up in the 70's when everybody used their hands, as an extension of their brains. My next door neighbor, Raleigh, was a paint salesman for Rust-oleum. He spent the better part of 4 years taking a trashed early 1960's Cessna 172 back from ruins to a working aircraft. He did it all in his back yard garage and he taught me to fly it, at 12 years old. Or another neighbor, Dennis (also a pilot), who was so talented a Mercedes Benz mechanic that he had two stalls, did twice the work and got twice the pay. In his spare time, he reworked the 2 stroke engines of all our dirtbikes, remodeled his house, built custom firearms, and taught us all to scuba dive in his pool. And of course the drywall / plaster guy up the street who took a dilapidated 2 bedroom house, added enough room to raise 3 kids, totally remodeled it from top to bottom, coached and played baseball, built competitive race boats, dirt bikes, RC planes, CB's and still had time to crack a 6 ounce beer for the neighborhood kids who just finished helping him trim his trees. Hands on, yup, that was a good time.

# Leadership ~ You Just A'int That Good By Mark Breslin

I just “a'int that good” as a leader and manager. The difference between me and most leaders in this business, is that I know it. Not only do I know it, but I know exactly what “I'm not” and I'm working on fixing it. All the time. For more than fifteen years. Because this is what I owe my employees and the members.

How did this happen? A couple of decades of my personal leadership challenges. Eight years of all my staffers giving me annual anonymous 360 performance evaluations. Tons of hard questions I've asked my mentors and harder answers I received. Like a lot of you reading this, I used to think because I was in charge that I was good. I easily put my own opinion of me before the opinions of those that followed. I substituted drive and determination for effective leadership, strategy and maturity. I evaluated my leadership solely on business results instead of including people results. I could have rationalized any and all of it. But I'd be no further ahead now than I was ten or fifteen years ago.

Leaders are funny in that way. Most guys I know are focused on improving everything and everyone around them – except themselves. They stride the world confidently and arrogantly mostly blind to their own upside. Power, authority, status or wealth substitutes for a clear-eyed view of their strengths and deficiencies. Most guys spend more time playing golf each year than improving themselves. And their partners and senior managers do the same. And as a result they could be better. A lot better. And so could their business results.

I recall a discussion I had with a member some fifteen years ago that sums this up. This guy was doing maybe fifteen million a year and making a very good living. But he just wasn't that good. And it showed in his organization. And I told him so. The exact words I used were, “you run your company for shit.” After he calmed down we had a very detailed conversation where I made my case. I not only convinced him, but provoked him into a very intense personal and organizational development effort. He was honest enough and secure enough to take that “tough love” knowing I was not being judgmental but just blunt as hell. Ten years later I was awful proud of him when they hit a highly profitable eighty million. And he doesn't need to be there for the organization to succeed anymore. What's the point? That without brutal personal and organizational self-evaluation, you are unlikely to reach your personal leadership potential and thus your organization will underperform. Who better to tell you the truth than yourself?

## Self Knowledge and Mastery: The Alpha Foundation

Self-knowledge and management is the foundation to successful long term leadership capability. Learning the external tips and tactics to manage others is fine. Getting your MBA is a plus. Officially becoming the foreman is terrific. But ultimately those are external enhancements to leadership capability right now. You have to look at leadership development as a long term personal evolution, rather than a one time event (a promotion) or entitlement. Self knowledge would include the following;

- What are my main motivations good and bad?
- What are my main strengths and weaknesses in dealing with people?
- What is my fatal flaw and how does it impact people around me?
- What level of intuition do I bring to motivating others?
- What is my blind spot?
- Can I take brutally honest feedback in service of my advancement?
- Am I secure enough in myself to lead well?
- How do I generally behave under extreme stress?

What am I going to do with this information and what resources or strategies am I going to use to improve my personal and organizational performance?

I have seen many leaders fall short of their potential because they would not or could not be honest with themselves. They make enough money. They are tired. They don't need it. They've heard it all before; been there and done that. They've paid their dues. But just as likely, they were simply unwilling to dig into the challenge of self knowledge and self development. And that is understandable. We often find more things we don't like about ourselves or our performance when we do it, WHICH IS PRECISELY WHY WE NEED TO DO IT. The polite term is self-deception. The true description is bullshitting yourself.

Tough markets usually provide the shock to the system necessary to re-evaluate people, procedures, markets and strategies. The same should apply to you and your leadership team. No matter what else you do, your organization will not reach it's profitability or growth potential until you put the money and effort into leadership development. Make this a priority for 2009. What got you here won't get you to where you want to be. And take it from one who knows. You just a'int that good. Yet.

