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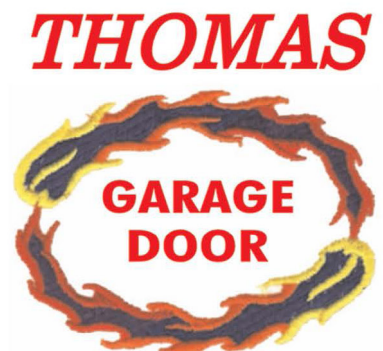
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For Local Information Contact:

themetropolitanbuilder@yahoo.com

832-317-4505

www.themetropolitanbuilder.com

5161 San Felipe St. #320

Houston, Texas 77056

832-317-4505

Owner/Publisher

Giselle Bernard

Editor

Kathy Stolz

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Pamela Larson

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

**Giselle Bernard**  
*Publisher*

Dear Readers:

Daylight saving time is here. We've all set our clocks ahead one hour, extending our daylight hours. I'm sure that this time change has confused many Houstonians. I know that it takes me a while to adjust.

Did you know that Congress passed the law on daylight saving time to extend time in order to coincide with its new energy bill years ago? And that daylight saving time is not universally observed by all U.S. states and countries of the world and rejected by many? Or that Arizona and Hawaii are the only two states that presently don't observe daylight saving time? Amazing!

However, just recently State Representative Jason Isaac and State Senator Jose Menendez have filed bills

in both chambers of the Texas legislature that would eliminate the practice of springing forward every March throughout the state. It would take effect Nov. 5, 2017, coinciding with the end of daylight saving time for 2017.

Although ending daylight saving time appeals to me, not everyone would think so. After all, we Texans would cease to be in sync with the rest of the U.S. with the exception of Hawaii and Arizona. Regardless of what I think, daylight saving time is here and more daylight means more time to build beautiful homes. Just a thought.

Enjoy this month's issue.

Giselle Bernard, *Owner/Publisher*



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# Riverway Development's Al-Banna Simplifies Building Process for Clients

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Over his 30+ years as a builder, Amad Al-Banna of Riverway Development has learned that the building process can be very stressful for a homebuyer. He knows of some couples who have even divorced while building a home because of the stress.

His remedy is to make building a home as simple as possible, figuratively holding the hands of his clients as he walks them through the process. He said he is in constant contact with his clients, communicating directly with them during the process. "Some builders don't want to talk to their customers. That's not me. I will even accompany them to the design center."

One way that he allays the homeowners' stress is by taking them to their houses during each stage of the building process to sit down and gaze at the unfinished house around them. He wants to find out if they're satisfied with the many little touches, such as where the electrical outlets are placed, that will allow them to enjoy the house for many years.

All of this is because Al-Banna wants to make sure that his clients achieve their unique dream home. "I build a solid house. I never cut corners. I pay attention to detail, attention to quality, and attention to the materials we use." Some of his clients are so happy with their custom

homes that they cry because he was able to fulfill their dreams, he said.

"Their dream home is probably the biggest expense of their lives. They will save money and borrow money to build it. They deserve it," he said.

Although some of his customers consider him to be a dream maker, Al-Banna thinks of himself not just as a builder/developer but as an entrepreneur; he prides himself on operating his business like a machine. He said he is always thinking outside of the box, adapting to the changing trends and markets over the years.

He reckons that he has built through three or four generations of trends. He said he used to build a lot of homes with Mediterranean influences, using red tiles roofs and stucco with an orange hue, followed by requests for Country French homes. He's now finding that homebuyers want kitchens to be in cool colors with white and gray granite surfaces.

Nowadays homebuyers also desire "smart" houses, incorporating technology to make their homes more functional by implementing their phones' applications or remote controls. These homeowners enjoy being able to sit on the couch and manage their home's exterior



security and interior comfort after a busy day.

One of the best changes over the years that he's been building is the availability of improved insulation materials, Al-Banna noted. He said spraying a home with foam insulation cuts the cost of air conditioning and heat by about half, although the initial costs are more than other forms of insulation.

His ability to adapt started in his youth. Al-Banna wanted to be an architect while he was growing up, but when he applied to architectural school, all of the slots were filled. He chose electrical engineering instead and worked in the field for an international company which primarily built hospitals.

Amad came to Houston to work as an electrical engineer for a company that specialized in building medical centers. He absorbed many elements of building from his work as an engineer before becoming a builder/developer in the late 1970s. "As an engineer I used to visit projects from ground zero all the way up. I learned a lot about building from participating in the process."

He said his engineering training and background is especially helpful when it comes to dealing with the myriad of details that go into building and in dealing with banks and financing his projects. "I am able to sit

*Continued on page 8*



Discover Excellence.





# Elkay Offers Everything and the Kitchen Sink

When remodeling the kitchen, the heart of any home, the sink quickly becomes a staple centerpiece. It's a necessity, but also a focal design element that stands to complement or create contrast with other elements within the space.

For designers or builders, having the freedom to customize this central design piece allows for an unparalleled effect for each home's look and the homeowners' specific needs. Top kitchen sink brands, like Elkay, find that offering custom stainless steel sink and countertop options are crucial to allowing homeowners the flexibility and creativity they crave.

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homeowners the ability to create everything from an extra-large chef style sink to a unique bar sink to a deep laundry room sink.

Homeowners even have the option of adding a custom stainless steel countertop to surround their custom sink. Rave-worthy sinks are not limited to residential homeowners, but also can be integrated into commercial spaces, including additional options to customize the stainless-steel countertops that surround them. Great for larger culinary spaces and businesses, these countertops create a modern look and elevate each experience with their superb form and function.

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*Continued from page 5*

down and look at a problem, always finding a way to solve it.”

That ability to solve problems served him well when the Houston housing market tanked in the 1980s. Rather than declare bankruptcy as many other builders were forced to do, he relocated his business, first to California and then to Nashville, Tenn., before landing in Atlanta. As the economy improved in the late 1980s and early 1990s, he returned to Texas and re-entered the Houston housing market. “I survived the storm. I kept my nose above water. And I learned a lot,” Amad chuckled.

As the housing market changed over the years, Al-Banna adapted his business and made it grow. He originally built tract homes and multi-family homes, then condominiums and mid-rise and high-rise projects. At one time in the 1990s he was a real estate consultant, helping to dispose of open lots. At the same time he and two partners were building more than 400 homes in the \$300,000- to \$400,000-range each year.

He sold his share in that business in 2005 and has since focused on building commercial projects, town homes usually in The Heights and mid-town areas of Houston, and large custom homes in the \$1- to \$8-million range in the Memorial Villages, Tanglewood, River Oaks and Briar Park areas. Building a house of 12,000 square feet



is not unusual for Riverway Development.

Nowadays custom home and town home building are responsible for about 60 percent of the company's income, with commercial building and land development contributing about 20 percent each. Riverway Development keeps about three big custom houses, 12 town house units and five other projects underway at one time. Location is paramount for each of his projects.

Al-Banna epitomizes being a hands-on builder. "I visit the project once, twice, three times a day," although he also uses a construction manager to oversee all projects. "I keep an eye on all of our construction from the beginning. I take care of problems at that time. I use only well-experienced, well-mannered and well-organized subcontractors. I have yet to get a call from a homeowner complaining of a problem."

Despite his years of experience, Amad said he's not ready to retire just yet. He still has plenty of passion for designing and building. And he continues to love the challenge of creating a dream home for his clients. There's no doubt he will adapt and change as his clients' tastes evolve.

---

*For more information you may contact Riverway Development, Inc., at 2420 Washington Ave., Houston, TX 77007 or at 281-831-2254 or [amad@riverwaydevelopment.com](mailto:amad@riverwaydevelopment.com).*



# Sunbelt Builders Show™ On the Move

Make your summer plans and be sure to include the 2017 Sunbelt Builders Show™ on your list of events. Mark your calendars and reserve your hotel room from August 1 – August 4, 2017 at the newly renovated Hilton Anatole in Dallas' Design District. During that week, Texas Association of Builders will host one of the largest residential construction industry events in North America, the Sunbelt Builders Show™ along with the HOMEPAC FUNdango and Statewide Washers Championship, the Young Professionals Get Together, the Texas Star Awards, and the TAB Summer Board of Directors meetings.

The Hilton Anatole is a new venue for the Sunbelt Builders Show™. The Anatole is a Dallas icon which spans 45 lush acres, just north of downtown. You think you know the Hilton Anatole, and you might have even stayed at the Hilton Anatole in the past, however it has been given a property lift. The hotel has added JadeWaters resort pool complex to their seven-acre backyard – which includes a leisure pool with swim-up bar, beach-entry family pool, a lazy river, luxury cabanas and a splash zone with two 180-foot slides. The JadeWaters resort pool complex is an exclusive amenity for Hilton Anatole guests. In addition



to the waterpark, it has both indoor and outdoor facilities including V Spa and Verandah Health Club and is home to a valuable fine art collection of more than 1,000 pieces. The hotel offers excellent dining options at The Terrace for breakfast, 24-hour grab-n'-go counter offer; lunch, dinner and late night at Media Grill & Bar; succulent steaks and seafood, along with the best panoramic views of the Dallas skyline, in SER Steak & Spirits and there is always the ultra-chic Gossip Bar for early morning coffee and/or an



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Besides being located next to the Dallas Design District, the Anatole is located within a six-mile radius of many

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# Tips to Build By

By **Kathy Anderson**  
Principal Designer/Owner, Ekliktik Interiors



Spring has sprung! It is time to get outside and enjoy the best seasons of the year. Fortunately for us living in the greater Houston area, we can take advantage of living “outdoor” more than most of the country. In design, we are always talking about bringing the “outside in,” but the trend now is becoming more about “bringing the inside out.”

Homeowners are demanding outdoor living spaces are in high demand because they greatly increase the appeal and value of a home. They provide and create an atmosphere of relaxation and beauty. If planned correctly, outdoor living spaces can be the difference in selling a home. Everyone wants a place outside to cook, entertain, chill and LIVE!

Whether it be new construction or remodeling, if you are going to include an outdoor living area, do not go

too small or you might as well not bother. Make sure the area is large enough for activities such as cooking, eating, relaxing and entertaining. The space doesn’t have to be overly large; it just needs to be well thought out.

One of my biggest concerns of outdoor living is its location in proximity to the sun’s path. Let’s face it, we are entertaining in the afternoon/evening most of the time. If at all possible, protect the living spaces from the afternoon sun and heat. Cover the area with either a structure or plantings for shade to accomplish that goal.

Along that same note, here in Houston we can sit outdoors even in the heat of summer as long as the air is moving. Air flow makes a considerable difference in enjoying your outdoor living space all year round. I am a huge fan of the Haiku fan by Big Ass Fan Company. These fans effectively move the air and create a

comfortable outdoor area even in the intense Houston heat. The Haiku fan is an item that every outdoor area should have. The quality, durability and style of these fans make them a necessary element of every outdoor design.

The flow of traffic from indoor to outdoor also is crucial. The two areas need to transition easily from one to the other. Moveable walls are in high demand. Although expensive, they do provide a dramatic look and create a seamless transition. If they just aren't in the budget, multiple door/windows can give a similar effect, with doors that open being strategically placed to allow for furniture placement and flow of traffic in both areas.

Positioning a cooking area that doesn't interfere with the sitting space needs to be considered. You don't want the smoke to become a problem when entertaining. Think of how the wind may blow if you don't have a vent hood above the cooking area. If possible, put the cooking area to the outer edge of the space to allow smoke and smells to escape easily. Consider too the view from the inside of the house. The cooking area is typically not the most attractive, especially long term. Try to locate it in an area that is not predominantly in line of sight from your inside entertaining areas.

My staff at Eliktik Interiors has found that adding just that one single element can change the complete makeup of the exterior and made the home more desirable. An example is a fire pit. Fire pits can be fun and easier to congregate around than fireplaces for conversation and roasting marshmallows. Fire pits can be easily added to the outside yard area without any structural change to the main building/home. Fireplaces are a nice touch, although in Houston, they really aren't used that much.

So set yourself apart by creating a memorable outdoor area that invites resort living at home. Think strategically. Think outside the box. Think "extraordinary living!"

---

*Kathy Anderson, principal designer and owner of Eklektik Interiors, brings a broad perspective and exclusiveness to her interior designs. Inspired by her world travels, Kathy focuses on creating a personal design that is timeless. With extensive residential as well as commercial experience, Kathy has found that a vital key to truly successful interior design projects is communication. She believes the design process should be an enjoyable one. By helping her clients better understand the process, the experience becomes less intimidating for them. Her ability to read her clients is a strength that helps her to create that "signature" environment for each space. Kathy received a degree in interior design from Brigham Young University and is a licensed and registered interior designer.*





# Houston Showroom Brings Big Ass Fans to Texas

Despite the funny name, no one takes air flow as seriously as Big Ass Solutions. The Kentucky-based company — which has been selling its signature Big Ass Fans in Texas for nearly two decades — recently chose Houston as the location for its flagship showroom. The upscale space opened in September 2016 and houses a range of products from Big Ass Solutions’ three brands: Big Ass Fans, Big Ass Light and Haiku Home.

Big Ass Solutions Houston is located at 1224 North Post Oak Road, Suite 120, near Yellow Rose Distilling. It is the ideal location for the business, as Texas has long been considered Big Ass Fans’ second home. The company has sold more fans there than any other state and would not have experienced the success it has without early support from Texans.

Founded in 1999, Big Ass Solutions — originally called the HVLS Fan Company — sold massive fans to dairy farmers and for non-air-conditioned industrial spaces. The name was changed to Big Ass Fans after customers kept forgetting the name of the company, calling and asking, “Are you the guys that make those big-ass fans?”

After more than a decade of creating innovative products, Big Ass Solutions branched into the residential

sector with the Haiku ceiling fan. This award-winning fan was the world’s first-ever smart ceiling fan, containing a suite of technology that allowed the fan to operate automatically. More importantly, it marked the first major redesign of the ceiling fan since it was invented 125 years ago, drawing praise from designers, architects and award-program judges the world over for its sleek, modern lines.

“The Haiku brand is all about creating an unparalleled customer experience and delivering quality products,” said Jon Bostock, chief operating officer. “The showroom allows us to accomplish both. Customers are greeted by a sleekly designed, welcoming space and knowledgeable sales staff. And they’ll be able to test all our products prior to purchasing, allowing them to experience the comfort and convenience our fans and lights provide.”

At the flagship showroom builders and interior designers can get hands-on with Big Ass Solutions’ fans and lights and their innovative controls, as well as have clients try out Haiku products for their homes. A Big Ass Solutions representative is always available to talk through building plans, make recommendations or answer any product-specific questions. While orders can be placed directly through the showroom, Big Ass Solutions keeps



a select inventory of popular products, making Houston the only market where Haiku customers can receive their products the same day.

Additionally, the Haiku Home showroom portion of the business doubles as educational and event space. The company routinely hosts events, such as continuing education marathons and networking mixers, just for members of the trade. Interested designers and builders are also invited to join the company's trade program, which provides a number of exclusive benefits. Members receive special pricing, personal design support and free drop shipping anywhere in the United States.

Over the past 18 years, Big Ass Solutions has become known for its innovative, direct-sales approach to doing business. By dealing directly with purchasers, Big Ass Solutions cuts out middlemen and distributor markups and ensures the quality of its products. The company is excited to bring its customer-centric brand of business to local builders and designers and is eager to deliver energy-efficient cooling and lighting to the Houston area.

*For more information on the Haiku Home by Big Ass Solutions Houston Showroom, visit [haikuhome.com/houston](http://haikuhome.com/houston) or call 1-855-651-3061.*



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# Tri-Colored Kitchens Provide Versatility



Attempting a three-toned kitchen may seem overwhelming at first, but step inside this Neapolitan design and assurance is quickly achieved. From conception of this kitchen design, the variety in cabinetry is meant to grab your attention. Considering the diverse finishes, door styles and wood species, this kitchen truly wrote the playbook on how to brilliantly mix design techniques while achieving an eclectic feel.

This contemporary design by Wellborn Cabinet, Inc., combines asymmetrical features with aesthetics and clean sleek lines. The top cabinetry features the Messina full overlay door style in hickory with a cloud stain and slate glaze finish, while the bottom cabinets were constructed with Davenport Square inset hickory doors with concealed hinges in the new Nature Collection paint, tensile. The island showcases the Davenport Square full overlay slab drawer front in oak with the new Nature Collection stain, tungsten.

The Nature Collection by Wellborn Cabinet Inc., features a variety of gray stains and paints, most of which are highlighted throughout this set. The bottom cabinetry features a tensile-painted finish while the island and wood backsplash were united using a tungsten-stained finish. A jolt in color was added to the island to help break-up the gray tones on the lower third of the kitchen design.

Functionality sets any design apart. A kitchen design must be beautiful while remaining practical and functional. This kitchen features endless options of style and functionality. The knife drawer, a slotted wood



drawer with full extension soft-close slides, is the perfect solution to securely hold each knife while helping to prevent dull blades and cut fingers.

The soft-close walnut drawer organizer was fitted with the wrap holder organizer insert, which provides the perfect space for foils and wraps. The drawer was also outfitted with the container organizer insert, which perfectly holds and organizes the glass jar containers.

This wooden pull-out cabinet with full extension soft-close slides will make “wasted space” a thing of the past! This cabinet holds three small, one medium and three large containers. The quart containers are included with this canister organizer when ordered from Wellborn Cabinet Inc.

Lastly, the you-draw-it hood design, which features the tungsten finish, allows the hood to fade into the background to ensure it was not the focus of this stunning kitchen design.



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*Continued from page 11*

museums, the Dallas World Aquarium, the Dallas Zoo, Deep Ellum, Trinity Groves and walking distance to the Rodeo Goat-Ice House, which will host TAB's Young Professionals event on August 2. The hotel is situated about 15 minutes from Dallas/Love Field Airport and 30 minutes from DFW International Airport.

The award-winning Show draws thousands of residential construction industry professionals from across Texas and the Southwest to come together and network, exchange ideas, learn about new products, meet more than 200 exhibiting companies, see excellent keynote speakers, attend quality educational sessions and simply enjoy being together and learning from other professionals in their industry.

“As a builder, the Sunbelt Builders Show™ offers me an excellent opportunity to get face-to-face time with my vendors that I’m doing business with and meet potential new ones,” said Sunbelt Co-Chair Donnie Evans. “The Show gives me the opportunities to check-out new products and services, get updated on new codes and government regulations and network with other builders from across the state; all in one convenient and time-saving location. I’m truly amazed at all that I can get accomplished within a few days at the Sunbelt Builders Show™.”

“As an associate, I find it imperative to support the industry that supports your product or service,” commented Tiffany Acree, three-time Sunbelt Co-Chair. “This industry is relationship driven and Sunbelt opens the door to helping you build those relationships. The Show has been a major contributor to the growth and success that StrucSure Home Warranty has had in Texas over the years. If you are selling to builders or in the housing industry in Texas, this is a must attend event. It’s the best money you’ll invest all year long.”

Go ahead; make your summer plans now and be sure to include the Sunbelt Builders Show™ at the Hilton Anatole Dallas. To make your hotel reservations, register or purchase a booth for the Show visit SunbeltBuildersShow.com.

Continued from page 7

This stainless steel finish also maintains a sleek, polished look. A Lustertone finish, like that from Elkay, can further add a layer of chic durability, naturally blending any light scratches that develop over time into the sink's finish.

### Functionality beyond Custom

Innovation and practicality are possible outside of custom sink designs as well, with brands like Elkay offering a vast portfolio to fit homeowners' needs. Elkay's Perfect Drain design provides ease and convenience down to the basin of the kitchen sink. With no edges, this convenient innovation eliminates any gaps where food and debris traditionally get stuck. This feature provides a cleaner sink and maintains a modern, minimalistic appeal that complements design features throughout the entire home.

Trend watchers expect alternative materials like quartz and fireclay to continue their growth in 2017. Brands continue to stylishly tackle these consumer demands with fresh concepts like the bold maraschino red Elkay Quartz Luxe sink or a variety of crisp white, apron front fireclay styles.

For more information about Elkay's custom kitchen centerpieces and innovative designs, visit [www.elkay.com/custom](http://www.elkay.com/custom) or at [www.elkay.com](http://www.elkay.com)



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2014 Pinnacle Award Winner



# Stop Having Meetings That Stink: Four Ways to Leave 'em Wanting More

By Burk Moreland



Meetings can be the bane of many companies. They are usually long, arduous and many times, useless. Few attendees leave with any really good information, and fewer still leave wanting more meetings, many times complaining about how bad they were. Here are some ways to improve your meetings from “stink” status to “awesome” status.

## Humanize the Leaders

At a recent client meeting, the president and vice president dressed up as Davey Crockett and Jim Bowie from the Alamo (the meeting was in San Antonio), complete with musket, coonskin cap and fringed buckskin outfits. The team loved it. They saw their leaders being fun and loose instead of tight and reserved. The president and vp took a chance by putting themselves in a vulnerable position, open to criticism; instead they were met with cheers. A “receiving line” was formed where they took individual pictures with each member of the team. That meeting will be talked about for years.

## Have an Agenda

All of us like to plan our time. None of us feel like we have enough of it. Give your team an exact idea of when things will start and finish and follow that schedule. You don't have to tell the team members every detail, but giving them a rough outline so they can plan is imperative. It lets them know you not only honor your time, but theirs as well.

## Get Rid of Distractions

Electronics have become an addiction for too many of us. Phones, tablets, laptops, and more are ruling our lives due to the beeps, vibrations, flashes and damn-near pokes of notifications from the numerous apps, programs and communication portals. Depending on the length of your meeting, have everyone leave their phones on a table or in a box away from the meeting table so everyone can concentrate.

If you have a meeting longer than a few hours, give the attendees extended breaks to check calls and emails. Have them put an out-of-office message on their email and their voicemail, and have them tell whoever may need to reach them (family, support staff, co-workers.)

that they will be away from their phones. The team will focus better on the topics at hand, and the meeting may even take less time.

## Add a Team-building Aspect

We're all moving fast these days, and even though we work alongside someone, there may be little time to really get to know them. During a meeting ask everyone to answer questions such as the following:

- What is the most unusual food you have ever eaten?
- Who was the most influential person in your life and why?

Have the participants share their answers and vote on the most interesting one. They will laugh together and get to know each other better. A team that is tight knit will conquer challenges and overcome barriers. Make the team stronger by adding some enjoyment to your time together.

These are just a few of many ideas. Try some. Break free from the norm and help your team see new angles and perspectives.

Meetings should end with everyone fired up and ready to take on the world. Make sure the information you are sharing is beneficial and useful to everyone and add some other components to the meeting that will foster the company culture you want. “Awesome, fun, supportive, helpful, sharing, respectful.” These are words you want your team to use for your next meeting.

Now go make it happen.

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*An accomplished executive, entrepreneur, author, speaker and trainer, Burk Moreland gets results. If pushing your people and organization to new heights is a goal, then you need a rainmaker with decades of experience in the construction industry to drive you towards it. Burk will help you map out the course, attack the goals and, most importantly, enjoy the ride. For more information regarding how he can help you, contact us today at [burk@burkmoreland.com](mailto:burk@burkmoreland.com) or 832-356-4585.*



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