THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER Great them.

113

Greater Houston Edition



Complete Customer Satisfaction Drives QCB Custom Homes

QCB Custom Homes| Houston, Texas



CUSTOM BUILDERS' FIRST CHOICE FOR HIGH QUALITY LUMBER... FAST! NEXT DAY DELIVERY ON FRAME PACKAGES, SAME DAY ON FILL-IN ORDERS

NEED IT VESTERDAY? FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED FOR SIX GENERATIONS





SCHOLL LUMBER | 6202 N HOUSTON ROSSLYN ROAD | HOUSTON, TX 77091 | SCHOLLLUMBER.COM

KITCHEN | BATH | LIGHTING

Houston 6867 Wynnwood Lane 713.861.2343

7071 Southwest Freeway 713.781.2222

expressionshomegallery.com

KitchenAid



a Morrison Supply Showroom

Discover Excellence.

Our Morrison Showroom located at 6867 Wynnwood Lane is now rebranded to Expressions Home Gallery; Morrison's premier showroom brand.

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

An Industry Trade Publication | August 2017



Feature Builder Story

- **04** Complete Customer Satisfaction Drives QCB Custom Homes By Kathy Bowen Stolz
- **03** NIA Directory
- **06** Tiles and Barbie Kennedy Designs Create 'Artful Spaces'
- **09** What It Takes To Be An Italian Marble Purist
- **10** Tips to Build By: Let's Shine a New Light on It By Kathy Anderson
- 12 The Action Coach Team Work: Building Better Communication By Doug Winnie
- 14 Ransomware: Internet Terrorism on the Loose By Eric Flores
- 20 Advertiser Index

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

Magazine Layout & Design Pamela Larson

Website www.themetropolitanbuilder.com

Printed in the USA Chas. P. Young Co. an RR Donnelley Company 1616 McGowen Houston, Texas 77004 713.209.8129

The Metropolitan Builder is a local trade publication published monthly in an informative and positive manner. Copies are mailed, free of charge, to building professionals throughout the greater Houston area. The opinions and facts expressed in The Metropolitan Builder magazine are those of the authors or columnist and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher, nor do they constitute an endorsement of products or services herein. The Metropolitan Builder strives to ensure the accuracy of the magazine's contents. However, should inaccuracies or omissions occur, we do not assume responsibility. The Metropolitan Builder reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. This publication may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without the expressed prior written permission of the publisher.

Proud member of the GHBA, the Texas Association of Builders and the NAHB.



PUBLISHER'S NOTE Giselle Bernard

Dear Readers:

As you all know, I've invested in an awesome networking franchise – Network in Action, Uptown District (NIA). Just like my objective in running the magazine, my networking business is building relationships with the sole purpose of building business. board as advertisers, all of the NIA team members that I refer to you have been interviewed and vetted. However, in addition to my personally interviewing each team member of my networking group, a background check has been done to assure you that you are working with an upstanding individual of integrity who has the utmost values.

As with the builders I feature and the vendors I bring on

Publisher

Giselle Bernard *Publisher*



NIA brings together a coalition of like-minded individuals who understand the power of building business. All professionals are known personally and professionally for their integrity and outstanding work ethic. They will help you realizing your own professional success.

Catering & Private Dining	Title Agency
The Palm Restaurant	Solutions Title Agency
Lauren Liermann, Sales Manager	Jermaine Williams, Business Development Executive
713-977-8180	713-998-6162
Iliermann@thepalm.com	jwilliams@soltionstitle.com
Certified Public Accountant Carl J. Herms, CPA, CGMA Consulting Business Management, Taxes,Construction, Real Estate, Associations 832-767-4297 cjherms@gmail.com	Mortgage Company All Source Funding Firm
Property, Casual & Life Insurance	Digital Marketing, Web & App Development
State Farm	Click & Create
Angela M. Henry, Agent	James Walters, Principal
832-448-0150	281-206-2631
angela@angelahenryinsurance.com	james@clickandcreate.us
Residential - Real Estate Specialist Veranda Realty Group Waukita Ray-Swales, Certified Luxury Homes Specialist 713-628-6801 waukita@brgtx.com	Internet Security Consultants Safebit Solutions Eric Flores, IT Sales Manager eflores@safebitsolutions.com
Printing, Marketing, Digital Media	Interior Design
Omni Media Partners	Eklektik Interiors
Kim Flood, Principal	Kathy Anderson, RD, Principal Designer
713-376-1112	713-398-8596
kim@omnimediapartners.com	kathy@eklektikinteriors.com
Custom Home Builder	Business Coaching Consultants
Sabo Custom Builders	ActionCOACH
Ed Sabo, Principal	Lydia Navo, Leads Trainer & Manager
713-498-2050	713-936-3814
ed@sabocustombuilders.com	N3marketing@actioncoach.com
Commercial Electric Provider Consultant GeoVend International Peter Carrico, Electric Power Consultant 281-513-4681 peter.carrico@geovendinternational.com	



By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Quatro Brooks, owner of QCB Custom Homes, has a passion for building custom homes. He believes his clients deserve a "one-of-a-kind" building experience and a builder dedicated to their best interests.

Quatro is in his truck by 5 A.M. every morning, stopping at each job site, directly supervising and instructing the subcontractors who are constructing the homes. "One thing



that sets me apart from other builders is that I build all my own homes. That's over 400 houses that I've personally built in the 18 years since I became a builder."

Unlike many other small business owners, Quatro doesn't want to grow his company too much. "I am committed to a high-quality, low-volume business model with an emphasis on integrity." If he expanded beyond the five or six houses he builds each year, he'd have to hire field superintendents. "With my direct supervision, the end product is better, the process is better, and our clients get more value than they bargained for," he noted.

"A lot of builders discourage changes. I expect changes. In fact, I welcome changes. The last thing I want is for customers to get into a brand new home, their dream home, and regret not asking for something different. I want everybody to be happy and proud of their home." He added, "Most of my referral letters mention how easy I am to work with and how easy it is to make changes."

QCB Custom Homes does not have a particular niche in the Houston market. Its homes range from \$400,000 to \$4 million and from 3,000 sq. ft. to 18,000 sq. ft. – and everything in between. He's built three-story town homes with a zero lot line, starter homes for younger couples, retirement homes for older couples and lakeside retreats for families. He's built homes in the styles of English Manor, Hill Country, Victorian, Tuscan, French Country, German Farm House and Mediterranean.

"By building just a few homes a year, we are able to be completely involved with our clients throughout construction and make our customer's vision our vision. We create a building environment that welcomes and encourages our clients to be fully engaged in the entire process." Quatro said he creates a truly unique custom building experience that is centered on communication, organization, and customer needs. He wants the homebuyers to be completely informed during all phases of construction. At the beginning of construction, Quatro gives his homebuyers an "extremely detailed Selection Book – roughly an inch-and-a-half thick" – outlining the schedule and selections for every element of the build. It's a way to manage expectations but also a way to educate and expose customers to options that will make the home uniquely theirs.

"Communication and a simplified process are key to a successful relationship during the construction of a home. With today's technology I have contracts, specifications, plans, engineering, selections, past meeting notes and all customer requests right there on my phone."

And he takes photos and videos of the home's progress and texts or emails those photos instantly to his customers, a process which is especially handy when the customer lives far from the build site.

"Everything goes faster, smoother, more efficiently now [than when he started building]. It makes for a happier customer," he acknowledged.

But as much as he appreciates how technology has sped up the communication process, Quatro can still be "old school." Whenever he gets out of his truck, he always has his phone, his tape measure and his laptop in hand. He jokingly calls his yellow legal pad his "laptop." He said he is very detailed and makes note of scheduling and items of importance to communicate to his customers, suppliers and subcontractors. His customers have even caught on and ask him to make sure items are written in his "laptop."

As the one who handles the sales, budget and estimating of each home, Quatro said the advantage to his onestop-shop approach is that his customers don't get passed around from sales to superintendent to warranty departments when they have questions or concerns. He doesn't have a formal customer service process, just instant, constant contact. "I give everybody my cell phone number. They can call me in the middle of the night if necessary."

He is assisted by Nickie, who handles the bookkeeping, permitting and some warranty issues for QCB Custom Homes. She has excellent organizational skills, an unmatched, meticulous approach and great pride in QCB homes, according to Quatro. Previously Quatro's wife Kimberly handled the administrative side of the business until their third son was born. "Even before we were

Continued on page 16







Tiles and Barbie Kennedy Designs Create 'Artful Spaces'

The tile industry is a living, dynamic branch of creative design that changes with the ebbs and flows of life.

Although the rectangular shape has been the shining star of the tile industry for years, the square tile is making a comeback. Most people are gravitating to larger formatted tiles. A desire for less grout is moving people away from the mosaic look. Grey and white have ruled the roost, but slight variations of crème and white and tone-on-tone now are coming into their own. Blue tones are still riding high as a color trend, but green tones are joining the party as a close second.

As color and shape control our eyes when shopping for anything from fashion to home décor, choices abound when it comes to selecting finishes to create a unique space.

Tile designer Barbie Kennedy of Barbie Kennedy Designs is using her artistic skills to launch a highly personal,

hand-designed collection of extraordinary surfaces to help designers, builders and homeowners to create those unique spaces.

Growing up in the family tile business, Barbie developed a passion for art and design. After graduating from a design school, she then worked with a leading interior design firm before launching her own business. She has spent the last decade combining her love of title and design to source and purchase some of the most beautiful tile and stones from around the world, according to the company website, www. barbiekennedydesigns.com.

Barbie is a mixologist infusing unexpected materials in expected shapes and patterns. She believes that every home is a personal canvas and should have "artful surfaces" that represent a person from the inside out. Combining any pattern and material from Barbie Kennedy Designs will





create its own "artful surface."

Located in Palm City, Fla., Kennedy is constantly searching for new inspirations, which often come from architecture, nature and her travels. Her compelling designs are based on the patterns she observes everywhere she goes. Whether inspired by a series of retro circles in a 60s concrete wall or by a bouncing wave pattern while walking by a river, Barbie is constantly imagining how to interpret shapes and patterns into her designs, according to the website.

The company offers four collections: Heritage, based on her family's love and passion for life; Essence, created for small-scale or large-scale projects; Boardwalk, handmade cement tiles for residential or commercial use; and Engraved, patterned to create the illusion of a mosaic.

Offering engineered wood, stone, metal and mirror tiles in the beginning, this year Barbie Kennedy Designs added glass and porcelain options and will launch printed, colored wood in the near future.

For more information visit www.barbiekennedydesigns.com or the local showroom, Designer Floors of Houston, 4245 Richmond Ave., Suite 400, Houston, TX 77027, or call 713-355-7500.





Call or stop by our showroom today for more information Central Vacs with Retractable Hose Systems are the Ultimate Cleaning Convenience!







GET COMFORTABLE WITH OUR FAMILY!

Goodman, as an organization, is extremely focused on the residential new home and renovation market and we strive to develop products and programs that result in long-term relationships. Goodman[®] and Amana[®] brand systems feature outstanding limited warranties^{*}, products with legendary performance, offering high-effciency systems up to 18 SEER. Whether you build two or 200 plus homes per year Goodman has systems and builder programs that can help you grow your business. Builders can qualify for one of two builder programs when using Goodman or Amana brand HVAC systems. And one of the best things is that both Goodman and Amana brand products are proudly designed, engineered and assembled in the United States.

Goodman

Air Conditioning & Heating





What It Takes To Be An Italian Marble Purist

Dimitri Menin, Owner of Carrara Italian Marble Imports, leaves every person he meets with a strong, indelible impression of heart-felt passion, blended with accessible professionalism. His valuable right-hand, Valeria Perez, also known as the company's Showroom Manager, speaks about Dimitri and the company with the highest respect. "We have a total of 7 staff members who work together really well; we are a positive team. We won't have it any other way." The group consists of 4 sales people, a manager, a warehouse worker and hands-on owner, Dimitri. "When anyone walks into our building, they see our energy right away. We are all positive and clients see it in our faces and in the way we work together." The team at Carrara fully understands the importance of the initial negative or positive impact a group of professionals can have on individuals within minutes of walking into their showroom and interacting with staff members. Valeria added, "We all feel the same way-we want every visitor to have the best experience they can have with each one of us. We make sure they leave with a smile, knowing without a doubt that they are important to us."

The genesis of Carrara Italian Marble is a story worth telling. "In the late summer of 2016, while on a French beach, I spoke with a businessman, who owns a stone company. He told me all about the industry and then invited me to the city of Carrara and the mountains of Italy to see the stone quarries," explained Dimitri. The businessman described in detail how the process works. Dimitri was very impressed by his friend's knowledge and enthusiasm. "I was already familiar with the Italian stone called Carrara, and I knew it to be the best marble anywhere. The mountains caught my attention; I was intrigued and wanted to know more about the stones." As soon as he arrived to Carrara and absorbed the beauty of the city and the scenery, he fell in love with all of it. "I am originally from Israel, but my home is in Houston now, along with the company, which was named after the city of Carrara." That experience was the birth of an exceptional company providing Grade a marble to Texans.

Carrara Italian Marble import is the first source of authentic grade A Marble, a natural mountain stone imported directly from the city of Carrara, located in the northern most tip of Tuscany. Most companies offer grades b and c, but this company deals solely with grade a. They have special machinery, manufactured in Italy, which allows them to customize the size of the marble to meet the specific needs of each customer. Because they work directly with an Italian quarry, slab sizes include 24x24, 18x18 and 6x12 feet. The stones are transported from the quarry to the seaport of Verona, then on to the Port of Houston by ship. Dimitri explained that the main reason his company can provide the absolute best marble and granite for an excellent price is the elimination of middle men. "We oversee the process from start to finish and are able to certify the authenticity of every stone." This

Continued on page 18



Tips to Build By

By Kathy Anderson Principal Designer/Owner, Ekliktik Interiors

Let's Shine a New Light on It

Ok, I will admit it. I may be a "lighting snob!" I've been called that before, but I may have been called worse, too! I personally don't think I am a lighting snob, although I do have very strong opinions about lighting.

I believe lighting can make and/or break a home; it's the detail that speaks to the homeowner. Just one fabulous fixture in one area can set the home apart from everything else. That's not to say that is has to be "over the top," but it is a very important element that contributes greatly to the overall ambiance of a home. Consider it the home's "jewelry."

Conversely, it can also be the one component that says to the homeowner/potential client that the builder cuts corners. If it looks like it was bought at Home Depot, then the potential buyer will think all other aspects of the home are just as low budget and mediocre.

I am still amazed that I can walk into a new construction townhome or any home selling in excess of \$500K, for



that matter, and find a fan with a light in a bedroom. Really??? Fans weren't meant to have a light kit on them. That is so 1970! Come on, guys, is it really that much more money to put in four recessed can lights? I promise you, given the option, the homeowner will pay more. I have never heard one say he or she would prefer a fan with a light kit.

I just returned from California to help my nephew make selections on his semicustom home in a new development. Nice, but definitely not over the top. There was a base price and then there were options he could choose at an extra cost. Recessed can lights in the rooms were one of those options. I asked the specification specialist how many homebuyers choose the recessed can option over the ceiling fan/light kit. Wait for it ... 100 percent! (Yes, my nephew chose to pay the extra cost too.)

I have only seen one fan with a light kit that was remotely attractive. If you must go that route, make sure the light kit is flush to the fan. Unfortunately, most of them that are flush to the fan do not give out enough light.

The Haiku fan with light kit is a great light. It gives high quality illumination and "disappears" unless it is turned on. No, I don't get anything from the Haiku company when I plug their product. I just believe in their fans. They aren't

the cheapest, but for what they do, they are the best. One thing you will come to know about me, I will always tell it like it is.

Now, on to the dreaded "boob light" (or lights one or two bulbs covered by rounded glass and a protruding, decorative screw that hang from the ceiling). Please, do not use these lights! They don't give great light, and they make the home look cheap. Again, I recommend a recessed



can or a flat-faced light if you need a flush mount.

LED lighting is here to stay, and that is a good thing. LED lights should be a selling feature for your home. They are more efficient, give better lighting, create minimal, if any

heat, and last for years.

Yes, LED lights are a bit more money. They're one of those things that "you can pay more now or pay more later." According to the industry, homeowners will recoup their cost in a few years with the savings on electric and air conditioning bills.

Don't forget to use this as a selling feature too. Even if you need to do an upgrade/charge, homebuyers will understand. If the house has recessed cans two stories high, the homebuyer will pay extra for sure. No one wants to change those bulbs!

When buying LED bulbs, you must realize that not all LED bulbs are created equal. Make sure that their color temperature is the same. There's nothing worse than going in a beautiful room and seeing different colors of light everywhere. The ones sold at the big box/home improvement stores do not all have the same color. I prefer a 3000 Kelvin. It is not yellow, and it is not white. It allows color to be true in the room.

There are some great places online and suppliers in Houston that will ensure that your bulbs are first quality and have the same color temperature.

I also recommend under-counter lighting with LED. I like the ones without the plugs, so there are no outlets on the backsplash. If you must put an outlet on the backsplash, place it horizontal and just above the counter. That placement just looks cleaner and doesn't put a blemish in the pretty, decorative tile. Homebuyers will notice that small detail. Details will set you apart!

A few words about decorative lighting: I strongly believe it



is better to have a few fabulous lights than a lot of ordinary lights. Think outside the box. Instead of one large fixture over a dining table, two smaller ones can be more dramatic, different and more cost effective.

I could say a lot more about lighting, and I will in future articles. These are a few ideas to "illuminate" your mind to start to think differently about lighting.

Removing a large, very expensive light fixture and replacing it with "crystal stars" not only is more dramatic but is substantially less expensive.





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.



The Action Coach Team Work: Building Better Communication

Custom home builders, interior designers, and architects all work in teams. In fact, their success depends on it! They plan out projects and coordinate with each other to ensure that the project gets completed correctly.

Working in groups, however, tends to cause issues more often than not. Project managers assume that individuals in a group will work well together. However, this is far from the truth since individual differences can cause major rifts in group cooperation. It's important to be aware that not everyone thinks and behaves similarly.

DISC is a simple question and answer tool that measures observable behaviors and emotions to identify individual differences and promote great communication. DISC stands for the four communication styles that individuals tend to exhibit: Dominance, Influence, Steady and Conscientious.

Ds, who are decisive decision makers with a take-charge attitude, are fast-paced doers who love to take control and have little time for feelings.



Is, who are social butterflies, enjoy interacting with others. They are dreamers and get bored with repetitive tasks.

Ss are supportive team players who care about the team more than themselves. They love a stable environment and don't respond well to change.

Cs are detail-oriented individuals that need time to think things through before making decisions. Facts and figures are very important to them.

These are brief descriptors that you can use to spot individuals that exhibit these traits, but it's important that you don't pigeonhole people. You can use DISC to kick start a conversation or begin to understand others, but people can change depending on the situation and environment.

With this information, you can also use DISC in order to foster good team interactions by allowing each style to use his/her strengths.

Ds tend to be great at keeping the team on task and setting the agenda for the team.

Is are more social, so they help the team get through strife by cracking jokes. They're also great at brainstorming ideas.

Ss tend to be the peacekeepers that help resolve conflicts and compromise, so every team member feels his/her ideas are heard.

Cs ensure that the team is producing accurate work, paying attention to all the details and catching mistakes and opportunities that others might miss.

Since working as part of a team is so integral in the fields of architecture, interior design and custom home building, it's important to use whatever tools you can in order to relate to one another better. Effective communication is achieved by understanding yourself and adapting your communication to match someone of a different style. Real communication may be challenging and take time, but it's better to work through your differences so that you can be wildly successful.

Doug Winnie, owner of ActionCOACH Business Coaching, is an international public speaker, profit strategist and award-winning business and executive coach.

For more information on how Doug can help you build a better business, contact him at n3marketing@ actioncoach.com or 713-936-3814





CERTIFIED PLANTS

HOUSTON (281) 873-9500 DALLAS/FORT WORTH (817) 529-9500

> Serving Our Customers Since 2001 www.builderspt.com



"BPT is Customer Service"

BUILDERS POST-TENSION is an American owned and operated full service concrete reinforcement materials supply company founded in 2001. We have 2 offices in the Houston and Dallas/Fort Worth areas serving the great state of Texas and the entire USA. Our management team has well over 150+ years experience in the Post-Tension Industry and can service all our Customers various needs.



BPT HOUSTON (281) 873-9500 or email mmcnall@builderspt.comBPT DFW(817) 529 -9500 or email jgraves@builderspt.com

- PTI Certified Plants
- Standard and Encapsulated PT Systems
- Slab on Ground and Elevated Projects
- Servicing Home Builders, Contractors and Turnkey Concrete Contractors
- Single Family and Multi Family Foundations
- Tennis Courts
- Bulk Rebar and PT Material Sales
- Post-Tension System Repairs
- Engineering Coordination
- Turnkey Concrete Contractors Referrals Available
- CPU's and Walk In Customers are Always Welcome!

American Owned





Ransomware: Internet Terrorism on the Loose By Eric Flores, Manager, IT Sales, Safebit Solutions, Inc.

In the heightened internet security climate, the majority of people I speak with are unaware of the looming danger of a new type of global terrorism – ransomware.

Ransomware is a type of malicious software designed to block access to a computer system until a sum of money is paid. In the past ransomware was usually aimed at individuals, but in recent years attacks have shifted to businesses.

In most cases, individuals and companies hear about unleashed ransomware threats as news alerts, but the threat doesn't resonate with them because they consider themselves unlikely to be victims of data kidnapping. I believe we are all targets.

At Safebit Solutions, we take all cyber threats seriously because we understand the consequences of data kidnapping. We protect ourselves, clients and partners alike.

On June 17, 2017, and in the wake of the Ransomware virus WannaCry, our president and CEO Faraz Hussain requested that I send out an important link with warnings about Ransomware.

See that link below:

http://money.cnn.com/2017/06/13/technology/microsoftcyber-attacks-windows-wannacry-updates/index. html?iid=ob_homepage_tech_pool_

The link was to an article that explained why Microsoft issued new releases of several critical security updates to protect against widespread hacking. The Microsoft patches could help prevent another global ransomware outbreak like WannaCry, which targeted and attacked hundreds of thousands of machines globally. Data kidnapping victims could not access their data until they paid the demanded ransom.

Why are Microsoft patch releases held with such importance? Microsoft's market share footprint supersedes all other operating systems (OS) combined, making their OS and application suites most desirable to cyber terrorism because a virus released through Microsoft OS is sure to spread rapidly and globally to every type of potential victim. My first thought was to simply send the link, and then it occurred to me that I needed to inform our audience. After all, prevention through education is the basis to our security suite USAFE, which enables end-user knowledge in combination with our technical expertise to ward off Ransomware attacks. The newsletter which SafeBit sent to our audience was well received and appreciated.

The following images are disturbing and at times unbelievable.

The first screenshot image (Image: 1) is a phishing email sent to an individual trying to trick the target into believing Chase Bank has sent the target an encrypted zip file message pertaining to a personal bank account.

[Phishing is an e-mail fraud method in which the criminal sends out legitimate-looking email in an attempt to gather personal and financial information from recipients.]

See In the second secon	Reply All Forward	Print Delete	Prev	93° C	oen ri
rom:)ate: 'o: iubject:	JPMorganChase.Manage 28 May 2015 16:00 ben.yo	er@ y Com		Ransom	ben That Linki De emails are
ttach:	W You have a new encrypted message from JPMorgan Chase & CO1.rar (2.75 KB,				
Open the	attachment and foll-	ow the instruction	15.		
Open the	attachment and foll-	ow the instructior	15.		

Unfortunately, the second screenshot image (Image: 2) is the result of opening an attachment such as the first email.



The perpetrator is informing that target that he/she is in violation of U.S. copyrights and must pay a fine to unlock his/her computer via MoneyPak. MoneyPak, similar to a Visa gift card, is available at many retail stores across the country and world.

Why are computer users such easy targets? Well, if they are like me, then they are in the crosshairs of cyber-criminals constantly. When I wake up, the first thing I do is reach over for my smart phone and check for emails I might have received overnight. During breakfast, I catch up on current events via a tablet or laptop. Whenever I have downtime at work, I often check my bank account online and make any necessary transactions. When I get home, I fire up my laptop and surf the web for a few hours while streaming movies from my smart TV. Imagine my daily routine multiplied by millions of people!

Most recently a new threat has arisen; its name is "Petya Ransomware." The new Ransomware attack began to be discussed broadly in the press on June 27, 2017; it was determined to be causing a large volume of infections in as many as 64 countries. It's our opinion at SafeBit that the new strain will be even more dangerous than the WannaCry attack. It's an interesting world we live in!

Continued on page 20



OUSTON PLUMB. & HARDWARE SHOWROOM: 4205 RICHMOND AVI HOUSTON, TX 77027 I 713.599.1536

> THE WOODLANDS: 255 ED ENGLISH DR. SHENANDOAH, TX 77385 I 936.271.2335

www.lightinginc.com



Trey Magee South Texas Brick & Stone, LLC cell (713) 299-8893 office (281) 759-3100 fax (281) 759-3101 tmagee8@comcast.net

> 14110 Katy Freeway Houston, Texas 77079-1032 Showroom 8715 A Katy Freeway

www.SouthTexasBrick.com





Hellen Collins

10020 Sussex Houston, TX 77041

Cell: (281) 989-8576 Office: (713) 462-0704 Fax: (713) 462-7130 Toll Free: 1-866-445-5230



WWW.CKILOCK.COM











Continued from page 5

married, Kimberly was instrumental in developing the company. We even had our first office in the loft of her townhouse while we were still dating! There was no way I could have created or maintained this company without her."

But Quatro was not a builder originally. After graduation from Sam Houston State University Quatro was a high school football and baseball coach and taught biology. "But I always wanted to build homes. I remember as a kid wanting to build. I can remember dragging my grandpa, mom and aunt and uncle out to look at my fort or tree house that I had built." Even as a kid, he was proud of his finished product, he said.

"I loved going to work with my uncle and grandfather who were in construction. My uncle built his own house. I thought everyone did; I thought that's just what you did. I couldn't wait to grow up so I could build my house."

Quatro and Kimberly enjoy church activities, hunting and spending time with their family. Their lives are centered on their three boys – Cash, Bodie and Duke –

and "chasing those boys around from sport to sport," whether it's golf, t-ball, baseball or flag football. And Quatro is right in the mix, coaching once again.

For more information on QCB Custom Homes, visit www.qcbcustomhomes.com or email quatro@qcbcustomhomes.com or call 281-330-5725. The office is located at 30230 Tudor Way, Magnolia, TX 77355.









Continued from page 9

is vital information to know, due to the unfortunate fact that there are companies attempting to offer substandard products to unsuspecting potential customers. "I deal with homeowners, interior designers, builders, realtors and fabricators. They all know and trust in the high quality of our stones." His customers have complete assurance that all of his products are genuine. "Original Carrara is only Italian. Others might use the Carrara name, but those stones are not authentic if they are from somewhere else."

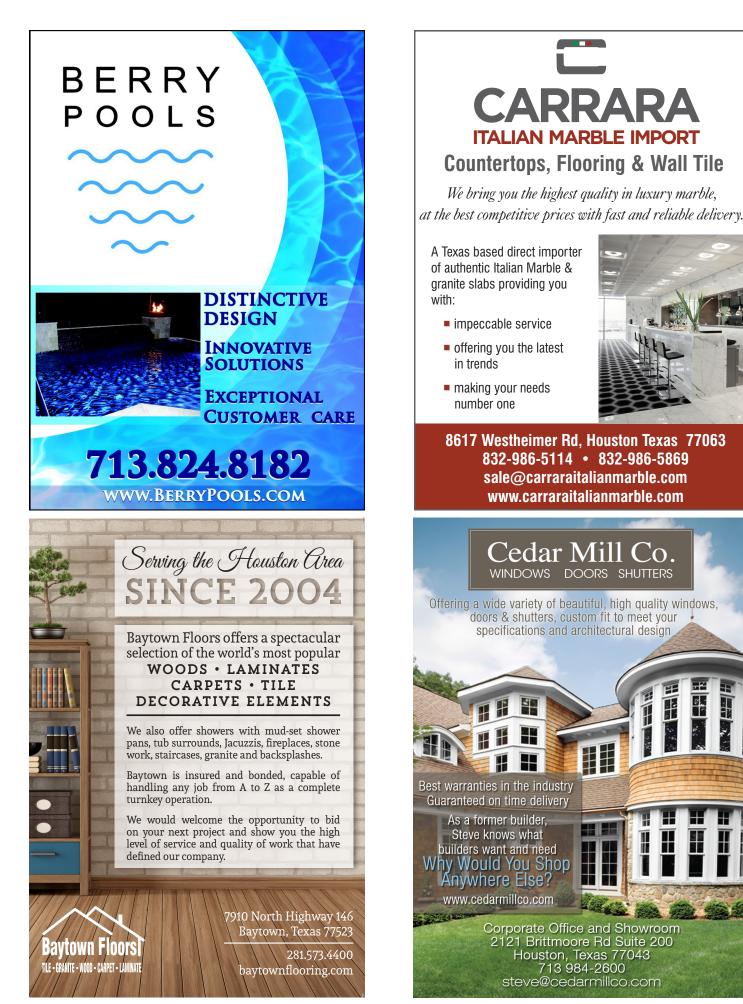
The company's 2,500 square-foot showroom, along with a 7,000 square-foot yard, is conveniently situated in Houston on a popular street commonly known to a large percentage of Houstonians. The building and parking lot are easily accessible with a huge sign that is visible from a distance. Once a person steps into the extensive showroom, each



one has the reaction of feeling instantly awestruck by the luxury of every product on display, catering to highend design and building. Visitors who are familiar with marble immediately recognize and admire the exceptional quality of every piece. The stones are heavy, durable and beautiful-characteristics indicative of real Carrara marble. The clients who are drawn to the showroom displays are those with a particular taste and sense of style. There are also potential clients who may arrive as skeptics, not fully convinced of the long-term value of investing in these particular products. However, each one becomes a believer by the time they leave. Visitors are encouraged to walk around, ask questions and touch the silky smooth stones. "We have poured a lot into our showroom designs so that customers may see exactly what they will be placing in their homes," stated Valeria. The highly enjoyable experience begins with a bathtub made entirely from marble. "This was designed exclusively for our showroom, along with a full stand-up shower made from a very unique type of marble called Calacatta Paonazzo." Offering unique stones like the Calacatta and Carrara C honed marble, allows clients to feel special, like they "hit the lottery" by receiving the absolute best product at the best price, which is not necessarily common in today's market.

Right now, Carrara Italian Marble Imports is a newer company in the infancy stage, with a goal to make every customer happy, by giving them exactly what they want. However, with a yard fully stocked with hundreds of slabs of natural mountain stones of Marble, Quartz and Granite ready for one-day delivery to clients, it will not be long before they are in a perfect position to expand and grow. Currently, Houston real estate is booming and Dimitri Menin and his staff members are carefully building relationships with a network of industry clients, acquired through social media advertising and, more importantly, through word of mouth. Although the company name not be on the lips of every single person in search of stone products at this moment in time, loyal, satisfied customers are in no doubt that Carrara is the company to watch. It is a rising star with unlimited potential to become the "go to" company for natural stone products in Texas.





THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

In order to protect your investment, you must select the right team for the job. When choosing a team of building professionals, keep in mind that a noteworthy indicator of professionalism is reflected through the eyes of one's peers.

Windows Doors & Shutters, Cedar Mill Company

Stephen Blalock, Principal 713-539-5162 steve@cedarmillco.com

Custom Countertops W.R. Watson, Inc. Wade Watson, President 281-495-2800 wwatson@wrwatson.com

Central Vacuum Systems Airline Central Vacuum Systems King Tieken, Owner

281-252-0021 sales@airlinevacuum.com

Italian Marble Carrara Italian Marble Import

Dimitri Menin 619-718-1455 sales@carraraitalianmarble.com

Custom Pools

Berry Pools John Berry, President 713-824-8182 john@berrypools.com

Continued from page 11

Malware Unpacks & Executes

How Does Ransomware Attack?

Command & Control Server Command & Control Communication TOR Hacker send a Phishing Email Download Public Key User Communcation TOR 29:34 8 Send Private Key **Bit** Coin Received Files gets encrypted and user gets ransomware screen

The Solution? Safebit Solutions' USAFE Layered IT Security

Dealing with the aftermath of ransomware attacks is like

yes of one's peers. I proudly introduce the following: Lumber Scholl Forest Industries

Ward Scholl, Managing Partner 713-682-2400 wscholl@schollforest.com

Flooring, Countertops & Supplies Baytown Floors Helmi Abboushi 832-768-7575 info@baytownfloors.com

Kitchen Bath Lighting & Hardware Expressions Home Gallery Chris Sligh, Builder Sales Manager 713-861-2343 scsligh@morsco.com

Lighting & Accessories Lighting Inc.

Gary Steele 713-545-7014 garysteele@lightinginc.com

Custom Garage Doors

Thomas Garage Doors John Thomas 713-725-8737 jthomasdoor@hotmail.com

Foundations & Concrete Work Builders Post Tension

Greg Tomlinson, President 281-932-3744 gtomlinson@builderspt.com

Hardware CKI

The building professionals found below have been referred

by their peers and share the same outstanding values, business

ethics and integrity. As the owner of The Metropolitan Builder,

Helen Collins 281-989-8576 hcollins2@ckilock.com

A/C & Heating

Goodman Manufacturing Edward Neumann, General Accounts Manager 832-799-2956 edward.neumann@goodmanmfg.com

Bricks Stone & Accessories South Texas Brick & Stone Trey Magee 713-299-8893 tmagee@comcast.net

Garage Door Specialist Nationserve

Al Tolentino, General Manager 713-447-8924 atolentino@wayne-dalton.com

Russian roulette, where submitting the ransom might be the sole option for recovering locked data. In many cases, paying the perpetrator sometimes does not recover the target's locked data; instead it's locked forever.

The unknowns are precisely why Safebit Solutions' USAFE approach focuses on prevention as the only judicious approach to adopt and live by.

Our five-step program illustrates how SafeBit protects our clients' valuable data from ransomware attacks:

- 1. User Knowledge
- 2. Network Application & Content Filtering
- 3. Endpoint Protection
- 4. Auditing
- 5. Reporting

For more information, visit www.safebitsolutions.com or call 281-097-9800 or contact Eric Flores directly at eflores@safebitsolutions.com or 281-987-9800, ext. 108.

DOORS THAT SUIT YOUR DESIGN STYLE. HOUSTON'S FINEST HOMES CHOOSE THOMAS GARAGE DOOR.



Building or Remodeling? Choose a Custom Door.

Get the Strength of Steel & the beauty of wood handcrafted from the finest cedar, cypress or redwood. Smooth & rough finishes available. Custom doors made to fit your home with over 30 years of experience. It's an affordable way to update your curb appeal.





Short Lead Times Great Pricing Professional Installation

(We don't buy 'em, we BUILD 'em!)

Handcrafted in Houston by the **Master Door Maker** John Thomas

713-725-8787 FREE ESTIMATES



Visit our photo gallery & shop door styles at: www.jthomasdoor.com | jthomasdoor@hotmail.com The Metropolitan Builder 5161 San Felipe Street #320 Houston, Texas 77056

PRESORTED STANDARD US POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 144 N. HOUSTON, TEXAS

KITCHEN | BATH | LIGHTING

Houston 6867 Wynnwood Lane 713.861.2343

7071 Southwest Freeway 713.781.2222

expressionshomegallery.com



Discover Excellence.



Our Morrison Showroom located at 6867 Wynnwood Lane is now rebranded to Expressions Home Gallery; Morrison's premier showroom brand.