

Community Corner

Ray Buhrt: Construction casts shadow over area

By MARK HUFFMAN
Staff Writer

The labor of Ray Buhrt's work can be seen throughout the town of Syracuse and beyond, in the form of houses, which Buhrt has cast a shadow over for the last 39 years.

Having done cabinetry work in various homes with the aid of a brother, before World War II, it seemed inevitable that he choose the construction field as a career after the war ended.

"I always excelled in industrial arts at school and enjoyed constructing various things," said Buhrt, who's coarsed hands give proof to that addiction.

Profile

Studying under George Ralston at Milford High School, whom Buhrt calls "the best industrial arts teacher who ever lived," helped him in honing his skills, until Ralston's death during his senior year, at which time the protegee began exploring on his own.

"I found it a challenge to be creative in design, and enjoyed the actual physical part of construction — it's something you can look at and be pleased with after completing," said Buhrt, who's evidently pleased many customers as well, having become popular for the construction of several Lakeland area homes.

While high priced housing has become a specialty for Buhrt, years of cabinet making and laboring in the war era preceded the more favorable line of work. "I worked with the CB (Navy construction workers) during the war, building gun placements," the WW II veteran said, adding, "After the war everything seemed to become more modern, taking a precision type look."

That look soon changed too, with earth pressed bricking taking the place of sharp cut outline bricking, according to Buhrt. "We're in an period where the 'natural' look is popular, lending to a better design."

Buhrt's experience in the woodworking and masonry trade, acquired mainly during the post-war era, when other materials weren't available, helped him in forming the expertise he was to use on the higher priced housing in latter years.

"The high priced houses require more skill than any other construction, with a lot of the building being done in small shops," he said, referring to the parts of a house done separately from the shell. "The owners also often have their own plans written out, leaving the builder little to go on."

While Buhrt has employed architects and sub-contractors to help with much of the work during the past 12 years, he can remember a time when there was little that the construction worker was not called on to do. "I started out on my own, eventually hiring one employee, and electricity and plumbing were the only jobs we sublet out."

That staff of two eventually grew to the company's current number of nine employees, which includes five builders. "We are now the general contractors on homes, and sublet various interior jobs to other contractors," Buhrt commented.

Having retired January 1, Buhrt still uses "we" when referring to the company he has worked for so long, revealing his unsevered ties to the building which has housed construction personnel he's served the bulk of his life with. "At one time 'we' had over 150 years combined experience," he boasted.

Much of that experience has come on the heels of his son, Mike, who has taken over the administering duties of the company, changing the name from Ray Buhrt General Contractors to Buhrt Builders. However, the name is likely to be the only change for the company, as a second generation of Buhrts attempt to uphold the quality of service Ray Buhrt has instilled.

"Mike will do a good job, he's used to hard work," the elder Buhrt said, remembering the days his son hauled and loaded lumber for the company he owned in the 1960s.

"At the time he said he wanted nothing to do with

construction," Buhrt laughed, looking around the office his son now occupies.

Another son, Dennis, also abandoned an initial misconception about construction, opening Buhrt Construction and Engineering in Warsaw after college. A daughter, Joan, another product of Buhrt's 41 years of marriage to wife, Leona, lives in Doyle's Town, Pa.

Buhrt also entertains thoughts of his eight grandchildren becoming involved in the construction business. "Wouldn't it be nice to have three generations of Buhrts in the business?" he mused.

In the meantime Buhrt will spend some time at the house he built for his family in 1970 doing some gardening and "playing a lot of golf." It's also a safe bet to assume a shadow will remain over Buhrt Builders for a long time, as the company continues to produce the quality housing that a man began building four decades earlier.



'LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON?' — Mike Buhrt, left, has taken over the reins at Ray Buhrt General Contractors, changing the name to Buhrt Builders, since his father's (Ray) retirement Jan. 1.

The elder Buhrt estimates that he's been involved in the construction of more than 80 homes and the remodeling of twice that number since entering the business in 1947. (Photo by Sandy Buhrt)

Here's what's cooking

TEX-MEX OMELET

1 can or jar (7½ to 8 oz.)
taco sauce
1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen mixed
vegetables
Water
8 eggs
2 T butter or margarine
mixture in center; fold over. Top
with remaining vegetable mix-
ture. Makes 4 servings.

CONFETTI RELISH

1 medium onion, coarsely
chopped
1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen mixed
vegetables, thawed
½ cup cider vinegar
½ cup water
3 T sugar
½ tsp. each mustard seed
and salt
1/8 tsp. hot pepper sauce
In 2-cup jar or small bowl mix
onion and vegetables; set aside.
In small saucepan bring to boil
vinegar, water, sugar, mustard
seed, salt and hot pepper sauce.
Reduce heat; simmer 5 minutes.
Pour over vegetables. Cover;
refrigerate at least 2 hours.
Makes four ½ cup servings.

GARDEN SCALLOP

1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen mixed
vegetables
1 cup milk
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 cup cornflake crumbs,
divided
¾ tsp. each salt and basil
¼ tsp. pepper, or to taste
2 T butter or margarine,
softened
In 1-quart rangitop and oven-
proof casserole bring vegetables
and milk to boil. Stir a small
amount hot milk into beaten egg;
stir into vegetable mixture. Add
½ cup crumbs, the salt, basil and
pepper; mix well. In small bowl
mix butter and remaining ½ cup
crumbs until well blended;
sprinkle over top.
Bake in preheated 350 degree
oven 20 minutes or until firm.
Makes 4 side-dish servings.



FACILITIES DESCRIBED — Sherwood Durkee, right, an administrator for Grace Village, Winona Lake, described the facility to the Lakeland Kiwanis Club, North Webster, on the morning of Jan. 6.

Rev. Hazen Sparks, center, a former Kiwanian, and Kiwanis president Dean McFadden join Durkee after the presentation.

Grace Village is located on an 18½-acre site, east of Grace College and Seminary. It includes an independent retirement living center, of which Sparks is a resident, and a health care center. There are 120 apartments in the three enjoined buildings.

Durkee pointed out that there are currently 150 residents in the independent retirement living center and 30 people in the health care center. Both centers have waiting lists of prospective residents who wish to be considered for the facility.

A full-time registered nurse and doctor join 75 employees operating on an annual 1.7 million dollar budget. Many activities are arranged for the residents, according to Durkee.

An expansion project is also slated for the facility this spring, with three independent living units comprised of four apartments each being planned as ground floor additions. An 11-acre lot east of the present facility has been targeted for the construction.



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Michelle Polston weds Craig Ostendorf Nov. 1

Michelle Erlene Polston, daughter of LeRoy Polston and Mrs. Frank (Tanya) Heath, Warsaw, became the bride of Craig Allen Ostendorf in a November 1 ceremony.

Parents of the groom are Mike Ostendorf of Leesburg and Mrs. Mike (Loretta) Minnix of Milford.

A reception for the newlyweds was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Heath on November

10. Serving at the reception were Sally Kuhn and Cheryl Phillips, aunts of the bride.

The bride is employed at Jennie's and the groom is employed at Barth, both located in Milford, where the couple is presently residing.



MR. AND MRS.

CRAIG A. OSTENDORF

Marcy Wolf engaged to Barry Cannon

Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Wolf of Milford, wish to announce the engagement of their daughter, Marcy, to Barry Cannon, also of Milford. Barry is the son of Bernard Cannon of Milford and the late Sharon Cannon.

The future bride is a graduate of Wawasee High School and is employed at Lakeland Loving Care Center of Milford. Her husband-to-be attended NorthWood High School in Nappanee and works for Dean Speicher Auto Salvage in Milford.

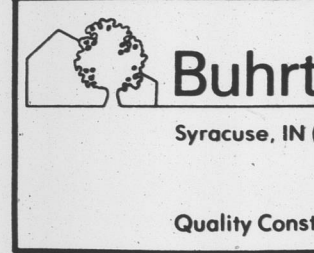
An August wedding is being planned by the couple.

Try copper tubing for curtain rods

If you are using copper accessories or appliances in your kitchen, use rigid copper tubing for your curtain rods.

On U.S. divorce

WASHINGTON — Government statistics show that America's divorces have declined for a second consecutive year, following 20 years of increases. There were 1,158,000 divorces in the United States in 1983, 12,000 fewer than 1982.



Fred Walls
Associate Minister

Faith has to do with the basis, the ground on which we stand. Hope is reaching out for something to come. Love is just being there and acting. — Emil Brunner

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RETIREMENT SEMINAR — Kenney Retirement Community, Ligonier, will sponsor a Retirement Seminar on Tuesday, Jan. 28, at 1 p.m. Professionals will present topics of interest to retired and soon-to-be retired persons. A question and answer period will follow each presentation. Free blood pressure screening will be conducted and refreshments will be served.

Seminar topics will include: "Estate Planning Considerations" by Howard Heckner, attorney, Heckner and Kirsch; "Maximizing Retirement Income," by Fred Lambie, trust officer of American State Bank; "Preparing to Sell Your Home," by Dee Kryder, realtor with Able Realty Company; "Patients' Rights and You," by Robert C. Stone, M.D.; and "Spiritual Needs in Later Years" by Rev. Melvin Harrell.

Kenney is a new continuing care retirement community consisting of 25 one and two bedroom apartments designed for independent living. Located directly on the premises is Kenney Healthcare Center which offers 24 hour skilled and intermediate nursing care for short and long term needs.

Advanced registration is required for the Retirement Seminar which is free of charge. Register by calling Kenney Retirement Community, 200 Kenney Circle Dr., Ligonier, off of Lincolnway West.

Shown in the photo is Carol Reed, executive director, of Kenney Retirement Community.



KIWANIS SPEAKER — Dr. Charles Hassel, center, poses with Curt Jordan, left, program chairman for the Lakeland Kiwanis, North Webster, and Dean McFarland, president of the club, after a presentation, Monday, Jan. 20, concerning his recent trip to Washington, D.C.

Hassel was part of a leadership group, led by Congressman John Hiler, which toured the nation's capital. Hassel's presentation covered three major topics of concern to the government at the present time, and was heard by guests from Goshen and North Manchester.

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