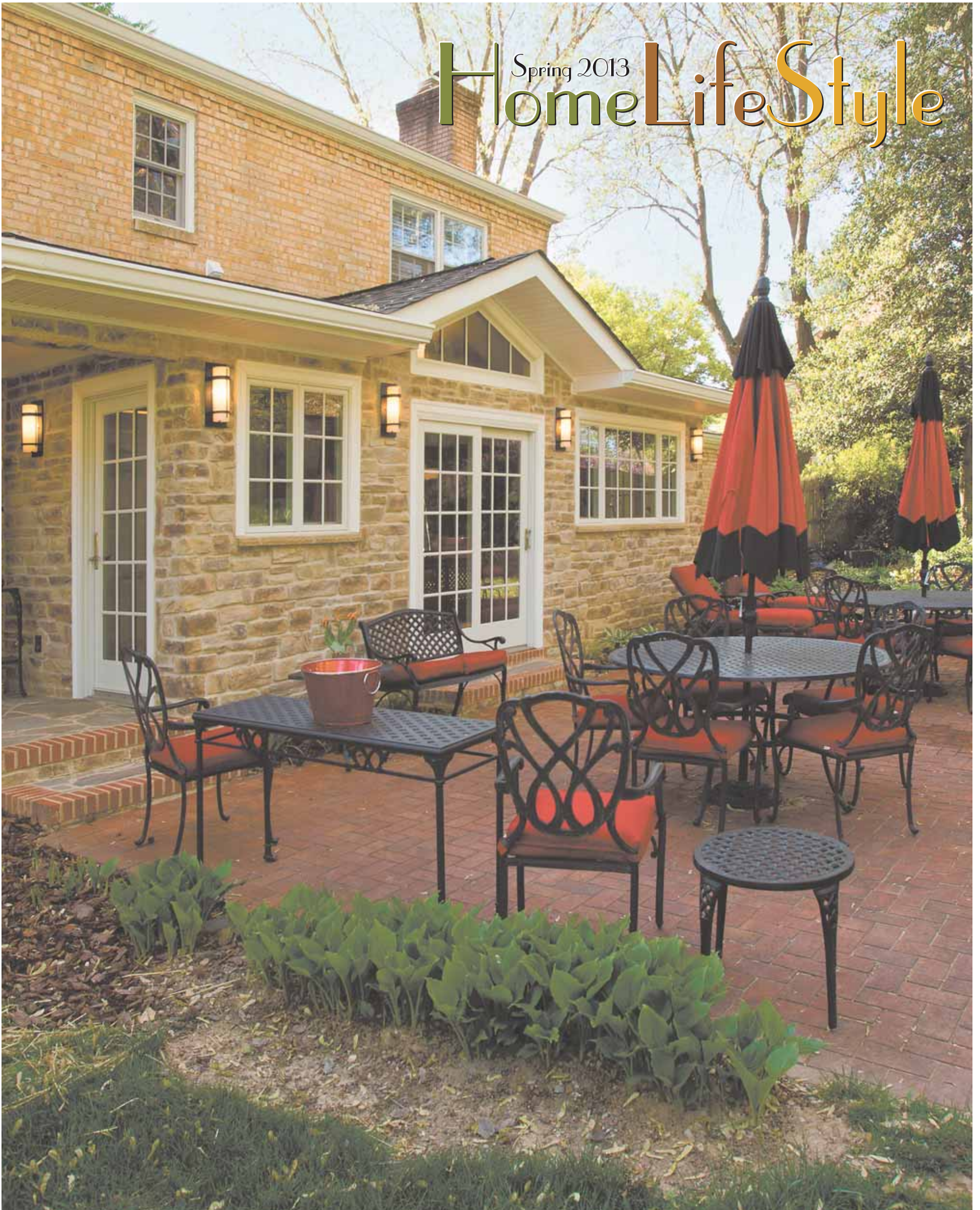


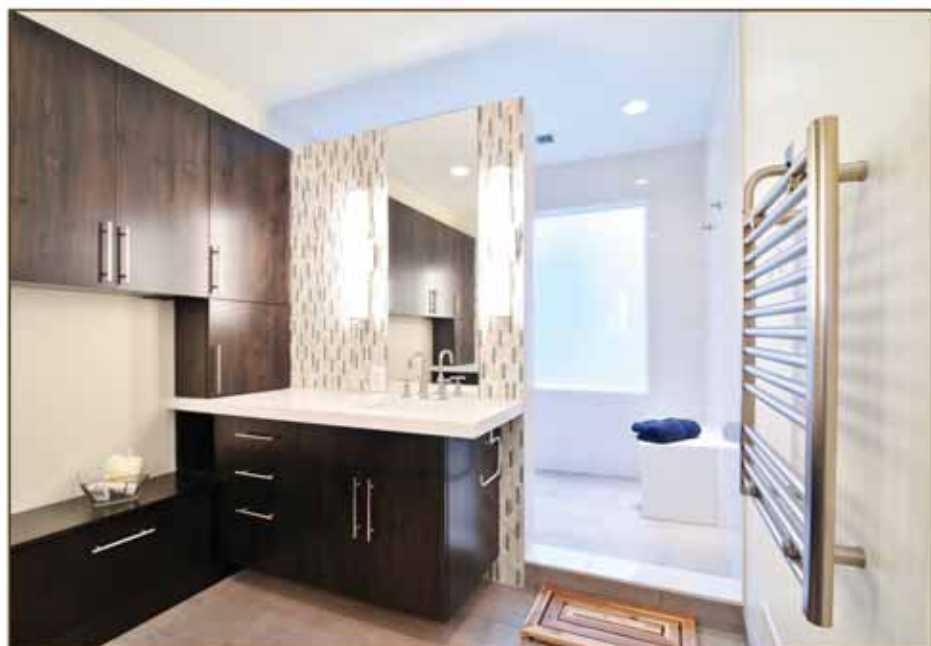
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PHOTO COURTESY OF NARI

This McLean kitchen by BOWA took top honors in the “Residential Kitchen Over \$120,000” category. The homeowners wanted to create a free-flowing, light-filled space.

80th Historic Garden Week, April 20-27

Historic Garden Week 2013 will feature approximately 200 private homes and gardens open on 32 separate tours throughout the state of Virginia over eight consecutive days. It is the largest ongoing volunteer effort in Virginia and represents the coordinated efforts of 3,400 club members. One hundred percent of tour proceeds are used to enhance Virginia’s landscape. For 80 years, the grounds of the Commonwealth’s most cherished historic landmarks have been restored or preserved with help from proceeds from Historic Garden Week including Mount Vernon, Monticello and the grounds of the Executive Mansion in Richmond. In addition to the amazing interiors and gardens on display, Garden Club of Virginia volunteers will create more than 2,000 spectacular floral arrangements to decorate the rooms. Visit www.vagardenweek.org.

SATURDAY APRIL 20, 2013

Old Town Alexandria
Sponsored by the Hunting Creek Garden Club and the Garden Club of Alexandria
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All eight private properties on the historic Old Town Alexandria tour are within an easy walk of each other, allowing visitors to enjoy strolling the quaint streets lined with charming townhouses and intimate walled gardens. The full tour ticket includes free admission to George Washington’s Mount Vernon Estate (entrance is normally \$15 per person), as well as six other notable historic sites in Alexandria on the day of the tour. Refreshments are offered from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the historic Lloyd House

SEE VIRGINIA GARDEN, PAGE 5

The Region’s Best Home Designs

Local contractors get top honors for remodeling projects.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

From designing a kitchen with a concave glass tile backsplash to creating a backyard with a fire place and pool, some local home remodelers were honored recently with the National Association of the Remodeling Industry’s (NARI) 2013 Regional Contractor of the Year awards for design acumen. Winning projects ran the gamut from historic preservation projects to environmentally conscious conceptions.

A MCLEAN KITCHEN by BOWA took top honors in the “Residential Kitchen Over \$120,000” category. The homeowners were looking to create a free-flowing, light-filled space.

“Their kitchen was not as open as they would have liked,” said Josh Baker, founder and co-chairman of BOWA. “They wanted to make it more integrated and useful for the family.”

To accommodate a larger kitchen, the design team, which included BOWA’s George Hodges-Fulton, built an addition and added a sitting room, screened porch

and additional windows to allow an abundance of natural light to stream into the space. The new kitchen also included a butler’s pantry and a family dining area.

What is the key to turning one’s home into an award-winning, showcase house? Baker, who founded BOWA with his college friend Larry Weinberg, says an open dialogue is essential to a successful remodeling project. “The key is finding a person or company that you communicate very, very well with and whose process is in line with how you like to do business,” he said. “This is a customer service business. It is not just a construction business. The entire process is important, not just the end result.”

FAIRFAX-BASED FIRM RJK Construction, Inc. received top honors in the category of “Residential Addition \$100,000 to \$250,000” for a home in the Mantua area of Fairfax County. Company president Robert Kalmin says the homeowners’ goal was to blend their interior and exterior spaces. “They wanted to make their exterior landscaping a visual point because they entertain a lot,” he said. “The windows act as murals to the exterior landscaping bring the outdoors in and the indoors out.”

The owners requested an open floor plan that allowed guests to move freely between the kitchen and the backyard. “They were very specific about how they wanted people to meander from the outside to the inside,” Kalmin said. “We had to relocate the powder room so that people are able to use the

restroom without having to go anywhere else.”

An abundance of windows allows natural light to flow throughout the home. “The kitchen has red oak flooring and other colors and finishes that compliment the natural scenery outside,” said Kalmin.

HARRY BRASWELL of Harry Braswell, Inc. in Alexandria, was named Contractor of the Year in the “Entire House \$500,001 to \$1,000,000” category for the renovation of a home that had not been updated since the 1950s. “The house was outdated, too small for the family’s needs,” he said.

The renovation included a kitchen outfitted with cabinet-front appliances and porcelain sinks including an apron farm sink and an island sink in a pale aqua. “That color is carried throughout the house,” said project manager Gretchen Brown.

A concave glass tile backsplash surrounds the durable, brown-toned quartzite counter. “Quartzite doesn’t stain easily,” said Brown. “It is strong like granite, but is more expensive.”

The Braswell team also got a nod for energy efficiency for this project, which was named “NARI Green Project.” Brown noted that the team installed energy efficiency lighting and energy star appliances.

“The homeowners had specific criteria about wanting to meet [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design] certifica-

SEE DESIGNS, PAGE 4



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GARDEN CLUB OF FAIRFAX

This home in the Vienna/Oakton area is featured on Virginia’s 80th annual Historic Garden Week tour in Fairfax County.

The Region's Best Home Designs

FROM PAGE 3

tion because they are dedicated to protecting the environment," said Braswell.

CABIN JOHN, MD., BASED firm Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Inc. received kudos in the "Residential Exterior, \$100,000 and Over" category for a backyard space that includes a pool and fireplace. "The homeowner wanted four separate living spaces in the backyard," said company spokeswoman Danielle Frye. "He wanted a dining room, a living room with a heat source, a place to sunbathe near his pool and a place to play cricket on his lawn."

Frye said the Wilder team, which included architect George R. Bott and lead designer Anthony Wilder, developed a backyard plan that replaced overgrown grass with flagstone and a badly worn fence with foliage to create a sense of privacy. "There is a sundeck and spaces for a sofa and dining table, but the fireplace is the focal point," said Frye. "We used really tall bamboo to shield the view from the hotel across the street."

A BETHESDA HOME ADDITION garnered a top prize in the "Residential Addition Over \$250,000" category for A.R.T Design Build Inc. with team member Grossmueller's Design Consultants, Inc.

"The client wanted to expand their one story house to have a separate area for [bedrooms] and create a more functional first floor with more communal spaces, the kitchen, family room [and] dining room," said Cindy G. McClure of Grossmueller's Design Consultants, Inc.

The design team added a new second floor to the home, which accommodates a laundry room, a master suite, two additional bedrooms and a bathroom. A stair tower and cathedral foyer cre-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MORGAN HOWARTH

This backyard oasis, designed by Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Inc., won a Contractor of the Year Award in the "Residential Exterior, \$100,000 and Over" category. The homeowner wanted a backyard space with a place to sunbathe near the pool, a dining room, a living room with a heat source and a place to play cricket.

ate an open floor plan and connect the first and second levels.

"Elements of the old house, like the wide

chimney on the front and the contemporary 1960 style were played upon and accentuated," said McClure. "The result is a

functional home that meets the needs of today's family, remained within budget and was completed on time."

"The key to a successful project is finding a person or company that you communicate very, very well with and whose process is in line with how you like to do business."

— Josh Baker, founder and co-chairman of BOWA



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NARI

Harry Brawell of Harry Braswell, Inc. in Alexandria, was named Contractor of the Year in the "Entire House \$500,001 to \$1,000,000" category for renovating a home that had not been updated since the 1950s.



This kitchen, designed by Grossmueller's Design Consultants, Inc. and A.R.T Design Build in Bethesda, Md., was part of a remodeling project that earned a 2013 Contractor of the Year award. The homeowner's goal was to create a free-flowing kitchen, dining and family room space.

Virginia Garden Week to Feature NoVa Gardens

FROM PAGE 3

and garden. Adding further convenience for tour visitors is the free King Street Trolley that travels from the Metro station down our main commercial street to the Potomac River every 15 minutes.

Tickets are \$40 and available at the Ramsey House Visitors Center at the corner of King Street and North Fairfax Street on the day of the tour. For advance tickets contact Mrs. Donald Rocen Virginia.rocen@comcast.net 703-684-3876. For more information, please contact Tour Chairmen Mason Bavin at mbavin@mcenearney.com, Twig Murray attwig@twigweb.com or Catherine Bolton at 4boltons@comcast.net

TUESDAY APRIL 23, 2013

Fairfax: Oakton/Vienna Sponsored by The Garden Club of Fairfax 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Fairfax County communities of Oakton and Vienna have emerged from small rural towns into thriving family-oriented neighborhoods with homes and gardens reflecting a wide range of

architectural and personal style. Ticket price includes admission to the Cosby Home, the Unger Home and Garden, the Buster Home and Garden, the Kampa Home and Garden, the Rosenthal Home and Garden and Meadowlark Botanical Gardens.

Advance tickets are \$20 through April 9. Contact Marty Whipple at mwhip155@aol.com. For more information about the tour, contact Bonnie Rekemeyer at chezdarbon@aol.com.

ALL AROUND VIRGINIA

Saturday, April 20

Ashland/Elmont – The Ashland Garden Club

Old Town Alexandria – The Hunting Creek Garden Club and The Garden Club of Alexandria

Smithfield – Elizabeth River and Nansmond River Garden Clubs

Augusta County/Staunton – Augusta Garden Club

Orange County/Somerseset – Dolley Madison Garden Club

Sunday, April 21

Nelson County/Albemarle – The Charlottesville, Albemarle and Rivanna Garden Clubs

Chatham – Chatham Garden Club

Monday, April 22

Nelson County/Albemarle – The Charlottesville, Albemarle and Rivanna Garden Clubs

Waterford – The Leesburg Garden Club and the Fauquier-Loudoun Garden Club

Tuesday, April 23

Oakton/Vienna – The Garden Club of Fairfax

Fredericksburg – The Rappahannock Valley Garden Club

Lynchburg – Hillside and Lynchburg Garden Clubs

Richmond – Chatham Hills/Windsor-on-the-James – The Boxwood, James River and Three Chopt Garden Clubs and

The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton

Williamsburg - Kingsmill Resort and the Colonial Area – The Williamsburg Garden Club

Petersburg – The Petersburg Garden Club

Wednesday, April 24

Harrisonburg – The Spotswood Garden Club

Martinsville – The Garden Club Study and the Martinsville Garden Club

Hampton-Newport News – The Huntington and the Hampton Roads Garden Clubs

Northern Neck/Northernumberland County – The Garden Club of the Northern Neck

Richmond – Laburnum Park – co-sponsored by The Council of Historic Richmond Foundation and

The Boxwood, James River and Three Chopt Garden Clubs and The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton

Virginia Beach – The Princess Anne and Virginia Beach Garden Clubs

Warrenton – The Warrenton Garden Club

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HomeLifeStyle

Demand for Incremental Improvements

Over time, some owners makeover the entire house — one phase at a time.

By JOHN BYRD

If you compare the current home remodeling market to 2007, it's clear that homeowners are less likely to execute a top-to-bottom makeover in a single stroke than they were five years ago.

Home resales are rising again, but the belief that every dollar spent on a Northern Virginia home will be quickly recovered has been suspended — if only temporarily — as homeowners reassess.

For most local homeowners, a house is an asset of enormous personal appeal: an expression of identity and aspiration, periodically adapted to life's changes.

While the scale of the average project may be smaller, it's evident that many homeowners middle age or older have come to see the home as a long-term — even lifelong — work in progress, one that they take up passionately, and at regular intervals.

calls these homeowners "incremental" improvers, and has come to see them as the primary focus of a home improvement enterprise he started 30 years ago.

As president of Foster Remodeling Solutions in Lorton, Foster regularly coaches his team on the importance of understanding what these homeowners need, what they are expecting and how to articulate their best options with clarity.

"Providing an experience that the homeowner will value unequivocally is probably our most important marketing activity," Foster said. "Our core belief is that there are many homeowners who will make a notable home improvement every two to five years, so we place a high priority on earning that person's trust. In this sense, there is nothing more important than outperforming expectation."

WHILE THERE MAY BE many reasons why a homeowner will remodel in stages, Foster observes that the typical incremental im-

prover has a pay-as-you-go orientation — often driven by evolving family requirements.

Vienna resident Kelly Grems, for instance, has executed four remodeling projects with Foster starting with a kitchen addition in 2003.

"We bought the house in 1995 when I was pregnant," Grems said. "My husband [Ed] and I had been living in a much smaller house in Maryland, but envisioned a traditional home that would offer our growing family lots of useful activity areas."

A kitchen with a sizable breakfast room was the first item on the "wish list," an assignment complicated by the fact that home's rear elevation backs into a woodland set-aside and a notably precipitous drop.

"The ground level decking was already in place," Grems said. "But David showed us a plan for an elevated breakfast room extension built on pilings that wouldn't require a ground level foundation. Turns out, this solution created a

welcome canopy for the ground level patio. And it was also a more sensible, economical choice for us at the time."

Grems says her first step was handing Foster a file of articles on kitchen interiors she had clipped from Southern Living; the Foster Remodeling design staff then took over, helping the couple visualize design ideas with the aid of a CAD computer program. The team also provided an array of relevant finish work choices, mostly pointing to readily available considerations on display in the company's showroom.

"The selection and pricing process was transparent, and really anticipated what we needed," Grems said. "When you're as busy as we are, you appreciate this quality of support."

Apart from budget considerations, Grems said taking a pause between projects allowed the couple to pay more attention to how the family is actually using the house, and to develop ideas that



PHOTOS BY DIMITRI CANVAS

The Pipers' new powder room includes a Mediterranean-style foot bath ringed in glass and mosaic tiling.

work for everyone.

The recently completed family room upgrade didn't become an



The plans for a kitchen remodel were complicated by the fact that the home's rear elevation backs into a woodland set-aside and a notably precipitous drop.

immediate action plan, for instance, because the family design process was fomenting slowly — again starting with magazine articles and other sources.

"We're particular; we let the look come to us piece by piece," she said.

In the end, Foster Remodeling designers created interior eleva-

tions that bear no resemblance to the original.

The half-brick floor-to-ceiling backwall was replaced by perfectly symmetrical built-ins, crown molding and an elevated hearth with a marble surround and Edwardian-style mantle.

"It's an entirely different mood from the sun room," Grems says,

"and perfectly satisfies another dimension of our lifestyle."

ON A SIMILAR NOTE, Sandy Nusbaum, of south Alexandria, attributes her periodic home upgrade inclinations to a gradual but decisive recognition that the four bed-

SEE PIECE BY PIECE. PAGE 11



The existing half-brick floor-to-ceiling backwall was replaced by perfectly symmetrical built-ins, crown molding and an elevated hearth with a marble surround and Edwardian-style mantle.



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PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

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3 11391 Amber Hills Court, Fairfax — \$1,160,928



5 3871 Lewiston Place, Fairfax — \$1,025,000



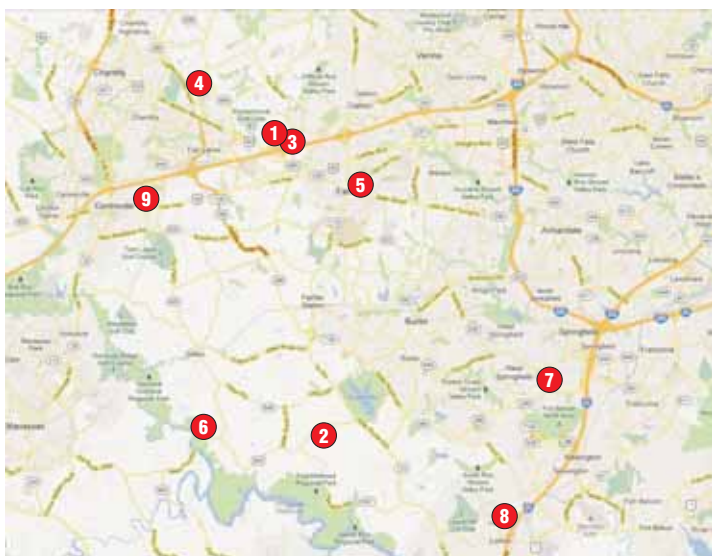
9 13509 Lamium Lane, Centreville — \$781,000



6 12606 Clifton Hunt Lane, Clifton — \$920,000



7 7438 Spring Summit Road, Springfield — \$800,000



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2 10817 WINDERMERE LN	4	3	1	FAIRFAX STATION		\$1,275,000	Detached	11.01	22039	THE ENGLISH HILLS ESTATE	01/31/13
3 11391 AMBER HILLS CT	4	4	1	FAIRFAX		\$1,160,928	Detached	0.83	22033	ESTATES AT FAIR OAKS	01/31/13
4 3510 ROSE CREST LN	5	4	1	FAIRFAX		\$1,087,500	Detached	0.83	22033	OAK HILL ESTATES	01/30/13
5 3871 LEWISTON PL	3	5	0	FAIRFAX		\$1,025,000	Townhouse	0.09	22030	FARRCROFT	01/23/13
6 12606 CLIFTON HUNT LN	5	4	1	CLIFTON		\$920,000	Detached	5.31	20124	CLIFTON HUNT	01/31/13
7 7438 SPRING SUMMIT RD	4	4	1	SPRINGFIELD		\$800,000	Detached	0.44	22150	WESTHAMPTON	01/31/13
8 8086 PAPER BIRCH DR	5	4	1	LORTON		\$790,000	Detached	0.21	22079	LAUREL HILL LANDBAY	01/16/13
9 13509 LAMIUM LN	4	4	1	CENTREVILLE		\$781,000	Detached	0.25	20120	FAIRCREST SOUTH	01/04/13

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Recycle, Reuse, Remodel

BY JOSHUA BAKER
BOWA



Remodeling often affords an opportunity to re-purpose existing materials by donating to those less fortunate. Ask your remodeler if there is a plan or policy for saving materials for re-use rather than sending it to a land fill. Every project is different. And some materials are more easily removed and saved than others. Here are a couple of organizations that accepted used materials.

A WIDER CIRCLE

This organization provides basic-need items to families transitioning out of shelters and those living without life's necessities. A Wider Circle furnishes the homes of more than 1,000 children and adults each month. If you wish to donate furniture and other home essentials that are in good condition (no rips or stains), you can drop off items at their Center for Community Service in Silver Spring, Md. You can also schedule a pickup in most areas throughout greater Washington, D.C. Refer to their website for a full list of accepted items and their "wish list" of the most needed items at www.awidercircle.org. Some impressive 2011 stats:

- ❖ 13,000: Number of homes furnished
- ❖ 1,500,000: Pounds of furniture and home goods recycled
- ❖ 10,000: Number of volunteers who assisted

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY - RESTORE

ReStore is a resale business that sells new and used building materials and home items to the general public. All donations are tax deductible and donated by individuals, local retailers, building contractors and suppliers. Donated items are then sold at 50-90 percent off the retail price, with all proceeds benefiting Habitat for Humanity, an organization that provides safe and affordable housing to low-income families. ReStore accepts appliances, furniture, cabinets, roofing and flooring materials, exercise equipment, countertops, electronics, lighting and plumbing fixtures, among many others. All materials and items must be in good and working condition. Items may be dropped off at ReStore locations during their business hours or for larger donations you may schedule a pickup. For store hours and locations and for the complete list of acceptable items you can check out the following websites:

- ❖ Northern Virginia: Stores in Alexandria and Chantilly - www.restorenova.org
- ❖ Montgomery County: Store location in Gaithersburg - www.habitat-mc.org
- ❖ Loudoun County: Store in Purcellville - www.loudounhabitat.org/restore
- ❖ Fauquier County: Store in Warrenton - www.fauquierhabitat.org

GOODWILL

Founded in 1902, Goodwill accepts gently used clothing, furniture, housewares, working electronics, and other household items. These items are then sold at their retail locations, with the proceeds used to fund employment, job training, and placement services for the disadvantaged and those with disabilities. To view their full list of goods accepted, and for the list of donation centers and stores, visit www.dcgoodwill.org. You may also schedule a pickup online for larger items or multiple items you don't have the resources to transport.

SALVATION ARMY

Although the Salvation Army is involved in many community programs, proceeds from items donated to their stores will benefit their Adult Rehabilitation Centers, which help those who have lost the ability to cope with their problems and are unable to provide for themselves. Each rehabilitation center offers residential housing and work, along with individual and group therapy. This enables many to be reunited with their families and resume a normal life. Items commonly donated include appliances, clothing, furniture, and household goods. For more information on their donation program, please visit www.satruck.org.

BOWA HOME CLEANUP DAYS

As a thank you to the neighbors in the communities in which we work, from time to time BOWA hosts Home Cleanup Days. Home Cleanup Day is a great opportunity to donate and recycle gently used household items, toys and clothing, and dispose of any debris or other unwanted clutter. A BOWA employee will help folks unload their items and a Goodwill representative will be on hand to accept donations and provide receipts.

To find a BOWA Home Cleanup Day in your area, please visit our <http://info.bowa.com/communityblog/>.

Josh Baker is founder of BOWA, learn more at www.bowa.com.

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World's Fanciest Rummage Sale Coming April 7

Rumor has it that the "world's fanciest" rummag sale will feature some of the crystal light fixtures and other items recently replaced in the remodeling of the Ritz-Carlton Tysons.

Make your spring cleaning count this year. Donations are needed for the World's Fanciest Rummage Sale, benefiting the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington, Fairfax Region. Small items and clothing drop-offs can be brought to the front of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Tysons Corner and left with the Bell Staff. Please indicate that the items are for the Boys and Girls Clubs Rummage Sale. Donation receipts will be available at drop-off.

Have a really big item to donate? Contact Helen Kruger 703-748-4068 to make pick-up arrangements.

The sale will feature upscale, new or like-new items, including designer clothing and shoes, furniture, and home goods at ridiculously low prices.

In addition to bargains, the price of admission

includes a live DJ, delicious food and opportunities to purchase raffle tickets for prizes ranging from hotel stays, luxury dining experiences to spa packages, dinner with a celebrity, gift certificates, and more.

Sunday, April 7th, 12-4pm
The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd, McLean, VA 22102
Admission: \$5 per Person
Members of the Military FREE with Military ID
<http://www.fairfaxbgcgw.org/index.php/rummage-sale>

Suggested donations: Women's Purses, Shoes, Designer Apparel and Accessories, Jewelry, Outerwear, Men's Ties, Bicycles and Cycling, Ski Equipment, Golf Equipment, Exercise Equipment, Pool Tables, Table Tennis, Pinball, Darts, Foosball, Art, Pictures/Paintings, Small Appliances, Wines, Houseware, China/Serving Pieces, Decorative Accessories, Rugs, Furniture, Antiques

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THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

Home LifeStyle

All in the Family

BY JOHN BYRD
FOR THE CONNECTION

With solid planning and skillful remodeling, seniors convert personal residence into a multi-generational household.

Challenging times demand creative thinking — so you don't have to look far to find homeowners executing remodeling projects with far-reaching objectives.

Take, for instance, the case of Mary and Harry Warren of Mount Vernon, both in their mid-70s.

Scrolling back a few years, the Warrens were weighing various retirement options when they learned that their daughter and three grandchildren would be moving back to Virginia from the midwest and might be amenable to participating in a three-generation household.

"There was really a lot for us to consider," said Mary Warren. "Harry and I thought that if we expanded the house to incorporate the extended family, we could eventually pass it on to the next generation. We could also make some changes that would help us to move around as we get older."

On the other hand: the more the Warrens scrutinized the existing property, the more they wondered if their vision was even feasible.

FOR STARTERS, at 1,500 sq. ft., the three-bedroom split-level the couple had occupied since 1994 was neatly centered on a small lot in a neighborhood with strictly observed set-back requirements.

To provide all three generations with the necessary space and privacy, the Warrens figured they would have to increase usable living space by 40 percent or more.

A carefully planned addition along the property's western side offered promising possibilities. But even if you could find the needed lot space, the floorplan configuration that would satisfy everyone's privacy requirements remained elusive.

It was at this juncture that the Warrens turned to Craig Durosko, founder and principal of Sun Design Remodeling.

"The program was certainly tricky," Durosko said. "The Warrens wanted a functionally independent suite that would include a luxury bath, lots of custom built-



The multi-generational solution introduced by Sun Design Remodeling includes a one level seniors wing supplemented by a sitting area that exits through French doors to the newly formed courtyard. Hallways and doors in the new section are wheelchair friendly.

PHOTOS BY BRYAN BURRIS PHOTOGRAPHY



Initially, the Warrens were not sure if the existing three-bedroom split level could be converted to a larger home accommodating their new plans.

ins and interior design improvements. Our thought was: if we could satisfy this requirement from the ground up, Meg and the grandchildren could take over half of the existing house as their own wing."

"We particularly liked the consideration to everyone's privacy needs," Mary Warren

said. "Their plan allows for independence where you want it."

Thus, stripped to its essentials, Durosko's solution called for converting the three-bedroom split-level into a five bedroom two-level structure that provides the Warrens with private quarters, yet also incorporates

More

Sun Design Remodeling frequently sponsors workshops on specific remodeling topics as well as tours of recently remodeled homes. Headquartered in Burke, the firm recently opened a second office in McLean. Call 703-425-5588 or visit www.SunDesignInc.com.

transitional zones suitable for easy everyday interaction.

TO ACCOMMODATE the elder Warrens, Durosko and team designed a 650 sq. ft. wing adjacent to a newly formed rear courtyard. The perfectly-integrated one-level addition features two large bedrooms, a master bath and large reach-in closets. A former family room now serves as the couple's sitting room.

By extension, Meg and the grandchildren inherit sleeping quarters in the existing bedroom wing — a configuration of rooms that affords everyone with the sufficient convenience and living space. Both families share the newly upgraded kitchen.

The makeover also allowed the Warrens to introduce a number of Universal Design features. Hallway widths in the new wing have been expanded to 44"; doors are 34" wide — compliant with American Disabilities Act requirements. The rear entrance has, likewise, been designed to accommodate a ramp, should a wheelchair be required in the future.

"We're just thinking ahead," Mary Warren said.

More recently, Mindy Mitchell — Sun Design's certified Aging-In-Place Specialist — followed Universal Design principals in renovating the original circa 1960s kitchen. Revisions included removing unneeded walls, widening doors and hallways and introducing roll-out cabinets with drawer pulls. There's also task lighting, easily maneuvered faucets and a multi-level island suitable for standing or sitting.

"The new kitchen feels significantly expanded, yet it's very efficiently designed — a great solution for a family like ours," said Mary Warren. "The changes have made life easier for everyone."

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Renovating Everything, Piece by Piece

FROM PAGE 7

room colonial she has occupied for 28 years with husband Mike is the last single family residence the couple will ever own.

“We raised three children here, and when the last of them moved away, we looked at other houses in the area and even a retirement village in North Carolina,” Nusbaum said. “That’s when I renewed my appreciation for the many advantages of this house. I recognized that everything we wanted was already here; we just needed a few pointed improvements to take us into the foreseeable future.”

Initially that meant introducing an open, “kitchen-centric” plan in the back half of the house, and creating an outdoor component — in the form of a 16-by-16-foot back screen porch — that allows for easy warm-weather circulation.

Replacing a wall between kitchen and dining room with a three-stool dining counter proved an effective starting point to delineating a more interactive entertainment space. The new surface is also well-positioned as a serving station for al fresco porch dining.

Although the needed structural changes were relatively minor, a new shelled-in niche for the refrigerator allows for additional storage. Maple cabinets with a Barton door style and honey-spice stain evoke a clean linear look within a softly lit ambiance. Likewise, the Silestone quartz surfaces in ebony pearl provide a tonal and textural contrast.

With a better rationalized kitchen in place, a few years later the Nusbaums began planning a follow-on phase: an extension of the rear family room, an open-air grilling deck and a layout that permits children, grandchildren and many guests to circulate freely through a now wide-ranging entertainment suite.

Then, just last year, the largely unused lower level was converted into a multi-purpose suite that serves as both an exercise room and guest accommodation.

“The built-ins include closets on either side of a new Murphy bed— one exclusively for guest use,” Nusbaum said. “We also made the laundry room more functional and added a full bath with handicapped access.”

Meanwhile, Nusbaum uses the re-made lower level for her daily

treadmill workouts: “It’s a luxury having so many useful things exactly where you want them.”

OF COURSE, CONSIDERATIONS to functional and aesthetic improvements aside, the long term remodeler also may venture into non-essential, even quite personal, “tweaks” to the existing property from time to time.

After comprehensive upgrades to their kitchen and master bath, for instance, Alexandrians Steve and Diane Piper decided that their eclectically re-designed powder room should include a Mediterranean-style foot bath ringed in glass and mosaic tiling.

The artfully-executed first floor facility — planned with an assist from Foster Remodeling Solutions’ designer Sarah Wolf — includes a vessel basin with exposed copper piping, marble floors and a cfered ceiling with concealed lights.

The Pipers — who often travel internationally — say the foot bath is a pleasant convenience in the summer when they are often wearing sandals.

“I wouldn’t say a footbath adds anything to re-sale value,” Diane Piper said, “but we do plan to be in this house for at least another 10 years.”

And speaking of personal vision: after re-doing the front elevation — and before remodeling the kitchen — the Baldinos of Springfield had Foster design a screen porch with a floor-to-ceiling stone hearth. The porch is closed on three sides and features a 15-foot cathedral ceiling with an overhead rotating fan. The project included an extensive flagstone patio, a privacy fence, a retaining wall and landscaping.

“We wanted space that brings us into the outdoors, and the fireplace keeps the porch surprisingly comfortable in cooler weather,” said Nancy Baldino. “It’s a great place to watch the game.”


The Baldinos, who have lived in their circa-1970s split-level for 24 years, say that their four remodeling projects have always been focused and budgetable.


“We love the neighborhood, so the improvements are just a natural result of efforts to make the house feel even more like home.”

Staff at Foster Remodeling Solutions periodically offer workshops on home improvement topics at the Lorton showroom. Call 703-550-1371 or visit www.FosterRemodeling.com.

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