



# 9300 CONTRACTOR

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Submitted by: Les Lippert, Immediate Past President,  
on behalf of the Committee

With the run-up to the convention in Puerto Rico in high gear, the time to implement our largest strategic initiatives is drawing nigh.



### Point 1:

At our meetings at the El Conquistador next month, we will continue the development of our "curriculum" in our sessions, panel discussions, and Contractor College classes that form the backbone of the **TCAA Trowel of Excellence** certification program.

Our program consists of Contractor College courses in time management, and verbal and written communication. There will be a continuation of the sound control session given at the convention in Olympic Valley last year, a very technical aspect of our trade that must be understood well to do properly. Given the changes in grout technology of late, the causes, prevention, and repairs of grout discoloration will be discussed at yet another session.

And, very importantly, there will be sessions detailing the changes in the new Tile Council of North America Handbook, the installation methods resource for the architectural, specifying, and contractor communities. You need to be very familiar with this manual.

All of these "classes" are for credit towards certification by TCAA. This certification program is being heavily supported and promoted by Scott Conwell and IMI to the industry and the architectural community. We will also seek to promote the skills and integrity of our certified members to AIA. We want to be their best resource for highly qualified firms and craft workers.

### Point 2:

Strategically speaking, the **changes in organized labor and the conditions of unionized construction market share** are of great significance to our members. This, our most common concern, will be the

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## NEWS FROM BAC AND IMI

By Scott Conwell, International Masonry Institute

### *Marketing Through Certification*

During the past several months, IMI and BAC have been working very closely with the TCAA board of directors in preparing to make a major industry announcement: The Trowel of Excellence. After nearly a year of fine-tuning the program, it's exciting that in a few short weeks it will finally be available to you. From the perspectives of IMI and BAC, Trowel of Excellence represents tremendous opportunity to the union tile industry.

BAC has represented union tile setters for over eighty years, and IMI has delivered exhaustive training programs for apprentice and journeyman tile setters for over thirty years. We've always said that IMI-trained craftworkers are uniquely equipped with the superior work skills necessary to make their employers competitive in the marketplace. Indeed, IMI's mission is to create the most skilled, most valuable craftworkers through our training programs, for the benefit of the union contractor. Trowel of Excellence will require that a contractor be in good standing with BAC and IMI, and it will ultimately create a demand for the union TCAA contractor.

According to its mission statement, "Trowel of Excellence status will have substance." It will not be easy to achieve or to maintain. One requirement is for continuing education. We are pleased that TCAA has recognized IMI's Contractor College, Supervisor Certification, and Tile Marble Terrazzo Expos as accredited sources for continuing education. IMI has made a commitment to continue to offer these programs to TCAA members.

The branding of Trowel of Excellence is an important aspect of the program. Creating an identity for the best tile contractors sparked the design of a simple logo as one way to graphically communicate the distinction.

At the coming convention, the logo will be unveiled. The concept is that only certified contractors will be

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT



**D**ear Ladies and Gentlemen:

I hope everyone is as excited as I am about our historical event "happening" convention at El Conquistador. Why do you ask is this particular convention historical? It is, because we are introducing "The Trowel of Excellence" and we are making history baby!

Break your plans if you not planning to come. At least make sure you jump aboard something that is sure to make you rich and famous. I believe this convention will be the best ever and I am not just saying that because I am President.

Fun and games and lots of knowledge to make your company better. When you're there say hello and make sure you wear your thinking cap, which will also prevent you from getting sunburned, Hmm.

Buen Viaje... y nos vemos en Puerto Rico!!

Vincent P. DeLazzeri, II  
Second Generation President

## PROJECT OF THE YEAR WINNERS TO BE HONORED

**E**ach year TCAA honors outstanding commercial and residential tile projects. Entries are reviewed by an independent panel of judges and scored on technical quality, artistic merit and installation challenges overcome.

This year's winners will be honored at the upcoming convention in Puerto Rico. They are:

### First Place - Commercial Project

Mexican Consulate - Chicago, Illinois  
G.M. Sloan Mosaic & Tile Co.  
Elk Grove Village, IL  
Dan Kotel, President

### First Place - Residential Project

Vicara Model Complex - Irvine, California  
Selectile of California, Inc.  
Ron Schwartz, President

### Second Place - Commercial Project

The Cheesecake Factory - White Plains, New York  
Port Morris Tile & Marble Corp.  
Vincent P. DeLazzeri, II, President

### Second Place - Residential Project

The Metropolitan - New York, New York  
G. M. Crocetti, Inc.  
Arthur Cavazzi, President  
Jim Anastasi, Vice President

## NEWS FROM BAC AND IMI

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permitted to use the logo on their business cards and stationery, and wear it on their lapels.

Our marketing campaign will ask architects, owners, and general contractors to look for the logo, to look for the certification when they select a tile contractor.

Trowel of Excellence will make a huge impact on the industry. The program will be successful when it causes certified contractors to be specified and sought after. Our associations have much to gain, as the demand for certified contractors will increase our membership rolls and further empower our influence on the industry. In the end everyone wins, because the focus will be on quality tile jobs done by TCAA-certified BAC tile contractors.

*For contractors with a particular training need, whether it involves implementing a program from scratch or upgrading existing training, all it takes is one call: 800-JOBS-IMI.*

*TCAA members and designers working with them should direct technical inquiries to IMI at our website ([www.imiweb.org](http://www.imiweb.org)) or by calling 1-800-IMI-0988*

## In Memory

It is with great sorrow that we announce the death of Louis A. Conti, who passed away on September 7 at the age of 78. Louis retired last year from Venice Terrazzo & Tile in Rockford, IL after 55 years of service. He is survived by his wife Mary, sons Steve, Charles and Michael, daughters Linda, Cathy, Margaret and Joanne, and stepson Steven Brader.

*9300 Contractor is a bi-monthly publication of the Tile Contractors' Association of America, Inc. To submit an article or story idea, contact us by phone, fax or e-mail. TCAA is a membership-based organization serving the needs of the Ceramic Tile industry since 1903. Annual membership dues for active contractors and suppliers are \$800 (payable in quarterly installments of \$200), \$75 for retired suppliers, and \$25 for retired contractors.*

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## STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

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focus of a special meeting of the membership. This is a time for all of us to clear the air as to our experiences and problems, share the stories of difficulties and successes, and come out of the meeting with a better understanding of where we fit in and what we can do to stabilize our markets. The TCAA Board of Directors, our representative on the ICE Board of Directors (me), and our other members in a variety of capacities that place them in proximity to the union are your mouthpieces. Your input on these topics is crucial to our ability to follow through on the job you have elected us to do – to be your advocates to the various organizations that affect our industry.

Whether you are at the meetings in Puerto Rico or not, we need to hear from as to your experiences, market conditions, and challenges at home. We strongly encourage you to drop us a line via email at the Association address ([info@tcaainc.org](mailto:info@tcaainc.org)) at your earliest possible convenience. There are meetings coming up with the TCAA Board of Directors, the ICE Board of Directors, the Trowel of Excellence Committee & BAC/IMI, and TCAA strategic planning. To do our best work on your behalf, we need to know what you need us to concentrate on.

### Point 3:

Finally, the **TCAA Scholarship Fund** will be formally launched at the convention. This is our great legacy to the industry as we sow the seeds for excellence in the architectural community with two more architectural students, and in our TCAA “family” with one more TCAA member winner. Both architectural students will be in Puerto Rico to accept their awards, display their portfolios, and tell us about their future plans.

So far, TCAA has given 14 scholarships to exceptional students. In order for this to continue, TCAA has established a dedicated scholarship fund through the Truman Heartland Foundation in Kansas City, Missouri. In the near future, the TCAA Scholarship Committee will be undertaking a fund raising initiative soliciting tax deductible donations. We hope this investment in the future of our industry is well and widely supported.

### Point 4:

Never before has the TCAA had so much to offer, our industry had so much at stake, or have our own firms so great an opportunity to benefit from the solidarity and expertise represented by this organization. We need your active involvement.

Best regards, as always.

Les Lippert  
Immediate Past President

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

TCAA welcomes the following new members

### CONTRACTORS

Art Mosaic & Tile Co., Inc.  
Gary V. Lovisa  
844 Rush Street • P.O. Box 569  
South Bend, IN 46624-0569  
(574) 287-8131 • Fax: (574) 287-4863  
E-Mail: [ARTGVL@aol.com](mailto:ARTGVL@aol.com)

Lowery Tile Company  
Joseph Lowery, President  
12335 S. Keeler Ave.  
Alsip, IL 60803  
(708) 389-9200 • Fax: (708) 389-9209  
E-Mail: [info@lowerytile.com](mailto:info@lowerytile.com)

Northern Illinois Terrazzo & Tile Co.  
Louis D'Agnoles  
1125 North Second Street  
Rockford, IL 61107  
(815) 964-8541 • Fax: (815) 965-5515

### SUPPLIERS

Amorim Industrial Solutions - AccoustiCORK  
Larry Lyons  
26112 110<sup>th</sup> Street  
Trevor, WI 53179  
(800) 255 2675  
E-Mail: [llyons@AmorimSolutions.com](mailto:llyons@AmorimSolutions.com)  
Website: [www.acousticorkusa.com](http://www.acousticorkusa.com)

EGS Easy Heat  
Kathleen Scranton  
2 Connecticut South Drive  
East Granby, CT 06026  
(860) 653-1609 • Fax: (860) 653-4938  
E-Mail: [kathleen.scranton@egseg.com](mailto:kathleen.scranton@egseg.com)  
Website: [www.easyheat.com](http://www.easyheat.com)

Esquire - Florim USA  
Mandy Schwall  
395 John R • Milford, MI 48381  
(248) 505-8268 • Fax: (248) 676-0403  
E-Mail: [Mandyschwall@comcast.net](mailto:Mandyschwall@comcast.net)

## Share the Good News!

Did your company recently win an award? Or did you figure out a new way to meet a technical installation challenge? Maybe you have a new product or service you want to promote.

We'll help you share the good news with our readers. Send your news - photos, too - to [info@tcaainc.org](mailto:info@tcaainc.org) or fax it to us at (816) 966-1027. We'll get the word out in this newsletter.

## **TCAA Briefs**

### **Ceramic Tile in 20<sup>th</sup> Century America**

This stunning picture-packed book celebrates the heritage of ceramic tile as it traces 100 years of growth, accomplishments and individuals spanning a broad range of tiles, topics and traditions. An excellent gift for your customers or incentive for your employees. **Call TCAA at 800-655-TILE to order your copy.**

### **Need Additional Newsletters?**

If you would like to receive additional copies of 9300 Contractor for your company, call the TCAA offices at (800) 655-8453. We'll add your extra company representatives to our mailing list.

### **Share the Benefits**

Do you know a contractor or supplier who could benefit from TCAA membership? If so, forward contact information for your prospective member to our staff. They'll follow up with your referral to "seal the deal".

### **Ceramic Tile Care Maintenance Instruction Sheets**

Ceramic Tile Care Maintenance instruction sheets are available, **free of charge, for all TCAA members.** If you would like to receive instruction sheets to pass on to your customers, please contact the TCAA office at 800-655-TILE (8453) or email your request to: [info@tcaainc.org](mailto:info@tcaainc.org).