



CANADIAN

CONSTRUCTION JOURNAL

Interviews & Projects

**Georgie Awards
Spotlight:**

**ALAIR
HOMES**

**Interactive
Construction**

&

**Helmets to
Hardhats'**

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Continuing Coverage of the CHBA BC Georgie Awards

Cover Photo: The foyer of Alair Homes' "Back to the Future." Martin Knowles Photo/Media.



Photo: Washroom of Alair Homes' "Back to the Future." Martin Knowles Photo/Media

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Editor's Note

Paul Harrison



This issue, we are joined by award-winning builders from Alair Homes in White Rock, British Columbia, and Interactive Construction in Victoria. While still maintaining our extensive coverage of CHBA BC members, this issue also looks ahead to Remembrance Day with a new spotlight on Helmets to Hardhats (H2H). Over the past year, H2H has forged a strong partnership with the Millwright Regional Council - Canada (MRC) and the Association of Millwrighting Contractors of Ontario (AMCO) to offer Veterans a path into the millwrighting field through a scholarship program.

Of course, we are far from done with our coverage of British Columbia. In the coming issues, will we will continue with coverage of more CHBA BC members and Georgie-winners, and add a few big surprises from the Pacific coast along the way.

In sharing this issue you help promote a number of charitable causes, including Yo Bro Yo Girl Youth Initiative. YBYG "runs a series of strength-based programs in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. YBYG cultivates resiliency in at-risk youth and empowers them with tools to avoid the perils of drugs, gangs, crime and violence."

We at the Canadian Construction Journal are proud to partner with YBYG. Over the course of the coming issues, we will feature a series of articles on YBYG's work. Stay tuned for our forthcoming November/December issue, which will delve deep in YBYG's history as well as their future initiatives.

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In this Issue

This month we present an interesting dual showcase; on the one hand, we bookend this issue with two superb British Columbia builders: Alair Homes in White Rock, and Interactive Construction in Victoria. The former is a 2023 Georgie finalist and HAVAN winner, and the latter is a 2022 Georgie winner. On the other hand, in celebration of our first Helmets to Hardhats spotlight in November 2022, we catch up with the team at H2H.

Christopher Stiles and his crew at Alair Homes in White Rock have been up to great things. Christopher talks to us about his life, his commitment to the Rotary Club, and of course, his projects at Alair. Our focus is on his HAVAN-winning 2023 project, Back to the Future. Not only is this home beautiful, it was completed under a tight schedule, which is a testament to Christopher's masterful project management skills.

Some of Christopher Stiles' subcontractors and suppliers join us to discuss the Back to the Future project further. Jakub Branda from Branda Contracting outlines his company's history and explains how his intricate training in tiling and slab installation in central Europe and the UK prepared him for major North American projects. Kevin Faizi from Hippo Plumbing & Heating further develops the spotlight on Alair's project as he shares his history and work ethic with us. Finally, Jason Witwicki from Inline Glasscraft explains how his family's history in glass glazing and installation prepared him for his career. He walks us through the founding and growth of Inline, and shares some of his astounding work with us - including the work he did on the Back to the Future project.

In May 2023, Joe Maloney retired as Executive Director of H2H, and Jim Hogarth has now picked up the reigns. We chat with Joe and Jim about the transition of power and the future plans of H2H.

Building on the future of H2H, we focus on one of their newest initiatives: a scholarship program for Veterans to enter the Millwrighting trade. To understand this initiative, we speak with Patricia Penney-Rouzes, Executive Director of the Association of Millwrighting Contractors of Ontario (AMCO) and Andrew Bredin, Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations for the Millwright Regional Council - Canada (MRC). Patricia and Andrew talk to us about what the millwrighting trade entails, and what benefits there are to joining this rewarding and lucrative trade at this time. The demand for skilled tradespeople in general is astronomical, but millwrights in particular are a hot commodity these days. To fill this demand, H2H is incentivizing Veterans to enter the millwrighting field; many Veterans already have mechanical knowledge from their time in the military, so knowledge of the trade is often already established. But even if Veterans come with no prior millwrighting knowledge or experience, they bring a high level of discipline to their endeavours, and thus make perfect candidates for this complex and vital trade. H2H, AMCO and the MRC have joined together to facilitate the transition from soldering to millwrighting.

Finally, Russ Barry from Interactive Construction walks us through his 2022 Georgie Award-winning Gonzales project. Russ also talks to us about the certification process for passive house builds and the work that Interactive has done in this field.

All this and more inside!

Paul Harrison,
Editor-in-Chief



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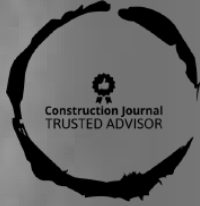
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By: Paul Harrison

Working Wonders in White Rock, B.C.

An Interview with Christopher Stiles from Alair Homes



History

In February of 2018, Christopher Stiles started his Alair Homes' office in White Rock/Surrey, B.C. He became associated with Alair Homes through another Alair partner with whom he had worked prior to his own involvement with the company. This partner knew Christopher to have a high professional standard and knew his personable character to be of the quality suitable to work for Alair Homes. Christopher was referred, and after three months of strict vetting, he was awarded an office with Alair .



Before joining on with Alair , Christopher had acquired an extensive background in many aspects of the construction industry and sub-trades including roofing, siding, finishing, and tiling. Today, Christopher is not only the owner of Alair Homes in White Rock/Surrey but is also the project manager. To Christopher, being heavily involved and overseeing the job site goes a long way towards creating trust with the clients and the trades.

Flawless Project Management

Christopher is an extremely efficient project manager. In 2021 he received a call from clients asking to renovate three bathrooms. Since the clients traveled for work and were away from home much of the time, Christopher asked them if they wanted to consider updating the entire house, in addition to renovating the three bathrooms. The clients agreed and Christopher put together a second feasibility plan, which encompassed the entire 3500 sq. ft. house. The plan entailed changing the finishes, but nothing too involved, such as moving walls. The clients were out of the continent and were concerned the project might not be completed by the time they returned, but Christopher was able to finish the job in just 120 days. With his solid relationships with the trades and an intimate knowledge of the entire construction process, Christopher was able to execute the entire job flawlessly; what could have taken 6-8 months to complete, took only 4 months.



2023 Georgie Nominations

Alair White Rock's work has recently been recognized for its excellence with a Georgie Award nomination in 2023: the project, "Back to the Future," was nominated for Best Master Suite – Up to \$125,000. In addition to this, it won a HAVAN Award for Housing Excellence – Excellence in Products and Technology. The suite on "Back to the Future" project is a perfect example of Alair's quality craftsmanship.



It features a bright bathroom, lit by natural skylights and modern lighting fixtures, which together accentuate the marbled tiling. Dual sinks and faucets, as well as dual shower heads, ensure that peace and tranquility reign for even the most quarrelsome of couples. A large, luxurious bathtub offers relaxation after a long day of enjoying the fresh air at White Rock's famous pier. The bedroom's large walk-in closets meet the spatial needs of even the most sartorial-minded collectors. In short, the suite showcases Alair's ability to harmonize both form and function in the family home.

On top of this, the entire house features solid oak throughout; flooring, railings, vanities, office desks, the entertainment stand and kitchen nook bench (with a hidden compartment for storage) are all oak. As such, these features help to create a united motif from room to room.

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Partnerships

It is difficult to put the spotlight on one particular contractor over another since the trades who work with Christopher are of such high quality and hold high standards. Branda Contracting Inc. was responsible for creating large format tiles for the above-mentioned project. They designed 8 x 4-foot tiles for a walk-in shower with rain shower heads. The imagination and creativity of Allison Evans of Evans Design Corp., as well as her associate Annie, brought the project to life. Custom Design Cabinets provided pure oak at a time when it was very difficult to obtain. ACL Electrical took care of the electrical and The Lighting Warehouse provided all the electrical fixtures. Hippo Plumbing and Heating took care of the plumbing and Emco Ensuite supplied all the plumbing fixtures. Countertops were provided by Burnaby Granite Countertop. Trail Appliances provided the appliances at a time when they were in short supply.



JB Home Staging got the house ready for photos, which were taken by Martin Knowles Photo/Media, and they prepared the house for when the clients returned home. Other notable businesses involved in the project were Inline Glasscraft Ltd., Starline Windows, Dick's Lumber, Al Doors, and Home Art Flooring Ltd.

Alair White Rock's Process

“ We essentially build an entire project on paper and have it signed off on before we enter construction. ”

Christopher does not look for deals when it comes to the trades; he uses the people he knows have the best quality and with whom he has a good working relationship. It is the relationship and the trust which are the most important things to Christopher when he is considering hiring trades for a particular job.

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Alair White Rock's Process Cont'd

"My rule of thumb is if I can't invite them to my house for a family dinner, then I don't use them on my job sites. What separates us from other builders is we enter a very detailed and extensive planning stage. When we first look at a project, we create a feasibility overview. We look at past projects, similar projects, look at our best experiences, make a few phone calls, check for permits or other unforeseen things that may crop up, and then we give them a range. From there, if they are comfortable moving forward, we enter the planning stage. We have all the trades come to the site or look at the plans and get an extremely detailed and secured quote from them. We have them sign a subcontractor agreement, we build a detailed schedule, we have notice of project from compensation, the insurance taken care of, asbestos abatement reports taken care of, anything structural regarding permits taken care of. We essentially build an entire project on paper and have it signed off on before we enter construction," says Christopher.

This level of detail is provided not because it is part of a sales pitch but because Alair believes in presenting clients with the complete picture. Christopher believes in educating the client through this process; it is an education, not sales. The client can decide after this if they want to use Christopher.



Building Homes and Building Relationships

"I'm invested in it. I didn't just sign a contract with them; I began a relationship. That's an important distinction. It's not a sales tactic, but it's me being authentic [...] I love working and building relationships with people." At the core of any project is the contractor/client relationship. These relationships last six months, a year, and maybe even longer. To look beyond cost as the only metric for choosing a homebuilder is the key to finding the right match between client and contractor, for cost alone does not reveal the personality of the builder.



Christopher offers some advice to homeowners looking to build or renovate: "Do your due diligence before hiring a contractor. Think about the relationship you are about to enter; what does it look like and how does it make you feel? Understand the importance of planning out your project prior to construction. Detailed planning that outlines the entire schedule and how much it will cost are other factors to consider. Does the company provide that service?"



Building Homes and Building Relationships Cont'd



ALAIR
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Currently, Christopher has been hired to create a huge wet room and a walk-in closet in addition to a master bedroom in a 1940s era Vancouver City apartment. The project requires a mechanical engineer as it involves the expansion of the current space into a section of the lobby. It is a smaller project, but it is exciting because of the involved complications. Christopher maintains the outcome will be impressive as it will increase the original apartment square footage by 200 feet.



For more information on Alair Homes in White Rock, B.C., visit <https://www.alairhomes.ca/white-rock/>

Proceeds from this article were generously donated to B.C. and Alberta Guide Dogs. <https://bcandalbertaguidedogs.com/>



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AN INTERVIEW WITH JAKUB BRANDA

Branda Contracting Inc.

By: Paul Harrison

How long has your company been in operation? How did it get started? What led you to found/join the company?

Branda Contracting's roots go back to London, England, where, in 2005, I first started my tiling business. My family had been running a tiling business in the heart of Europe for over three decades, so I grew up learning the trade to the highest European standards. I moved to the UK in 2006, and shortly thereafter, I was successfully operating my own business. I did this for four years.

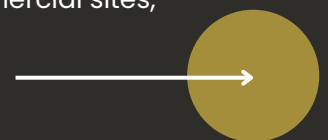
But at that time, I felt I needed a change in life; I wanted to be close to beautiful nature, so I decided to move to British Columbia in 2010. It took me six years to get my residency, and I could not start a business without first having residency. As such, I worked as a foreman/project manager for another tiling company between 2010-2016. We worked in B.C. and Alberta, and did some major projects, such as the Canada Place Building for the Vancouver Olympics, a new airport in Fort McMurray, the national swimming stadium in Bermuda, multiple aquatic centres, and countless high-end residences on the West Coast.

In 2016, I "restarted" Branda Contracting Inc. on Canadian soil, and quickly established my name. Within no time, I was promoting the highest quality of installations; I was soon backed with five-star customer service as I deliver quality in the required timeline set out by my clients.

Tell us about what your company does in general?

We provide custom tile installations across B.C. We have a large crew that provides the finest installation for difficult, detailed projects, using any tile. We do everything from seal hand-made mosaic to large-format porcelain slabs. We also do a lot of tiling for hot tubs, swimming pools, steam rooms and so on.

Besides residential projects, we have a team of installers working on commercial sites, such as high-rise buildings, public amenities, aquatic centres, and the like.



Branda Contracting Inc.

What is the nature of the work you do for Alair Homes? Did you work with Chris on either of his 2023 Georgie finalist projects – either Home at the Harbour or Back to the Future?

We started working with Alair Homes about three years ago. They had had a bad experience working with some other tile contractors, so they contacted us to come in and fix things. We took over some of their projects that had the highest requirement on detail realization: things that combine multiple different types and layouts within projects and so on.

ALAIR HOMES



We built a strong relationship together, based on the services we provide. Both Alair's and our goal is to always keep raising the bar of quality on our finished products and services; this makes our partnership easy and successful.

We worked together on the Back to the Future project last year, where we did all the tile installations, including prep work. This was all done with the Schluter system for waterproofing and anti-fracture membranes on all the accessories.

The master bathroom was very large, containing a shower and free-standing bathtub. There was detailed work within the shower stall, which had a bench, a pony wall, a shower curb, and such. The large format tile we used turned out very neat and modern-looking.



Branda Contracting Inc.

Are there any key vendors, suppliers, subcontractors, or partners who help you with your work?

For suppliers, we use the whole shower system from Schluter as their certified installers; their products are always my first choice for their quality, customer service, and extended warranties.

We also use their mortars, which are very easy to work with and provide a strong bond. Grouts were supplied by Daltile - Prism grout from Custom Building Products is also a great product.

All of my installers have been working with me for years and we don't subcontract our projects to other contractors.

Without giving away any vital information, where do you source some of your materials? I know that with stone and tile, the provenance of the materials is often a point of pride.

We work closely with some of the major suppliers in B.C., such as Daltile, Ames Tile, Stone Tile, Julian Tile, and others. The variety of porcelain, ceramic, and natural materials we install is endless; some of materials are coming from Italy & Spain, the US, Mexico, and even Asia.



ALAIR HOMES



Branda Contracting Inc.

Walk us through the process you go through when a builder calls you. How do you go from the consultation to the design, through to the delivery and installation?

If a client, like Alair Homes, calls us, we start with the documents available for the project, such as drawings and tile specifications. This gives us a better idea what to prepare for before going to the site meeting. Then, we would generally meet with Alair Homes and the designer, and eventually the client. We meet on the site and go over the tile selection to make sure the selected types of tiles are going to work for such an installation. We would measure up the space and confirm the layouts, details around the niche, bench, or such. Once tiles and layouts are confirmed, I would calculate the tile quantity we need and order the tile. Once the tile arrives, we deliver them to the site and as soon as the work area is ready, I get my team onto the site to set up with our equipment, such as a wet saw, systems for large format slabs, and whatever else we need.

We would then start with the surface preparation, including self-leveling, wall leveling, anti-fracture membranes, and waterproofing systems. Finally, we mark the surface for the approved layout and start with installations.



ALAIR HOMES



Do you have any exciting new projects on the horizon, or any others that you might have just wrapped up?

We do have multiple ongoing and upcoming projects that are very interesting. One ongoing project is at Chancellor Blvd in Vancouver. It is a high-end residence over three levels. We are dealing with a number of transitions / combinations of quartz and tile: accent tiles that are framed in with stone / quartz, combining various marble mosaics with large format tiles. There is also a large steam room, which is almost commercial size; every wall has a different tile finish; it has a comfy bench along the entire wall and very interesting tile details around the accent patterns.

Next month, we are starting another high-end residence at Blenheim St, Vancouver. The entire main floor will be done with 2' x 4' marble tiles. The 17-foot-tall fireplace will be done with porcelain slabs, and there are a number of bathrooms that are each unique in their choice of tile.

Besides this, we have a couple of commercial projects starting in July, such as swimming pool renovations and the like.

We have built our reputation on quality of work and customer service; that goes a long way in this industry. As such, we are not forced to do pretty much any marketing as we have clients calling us every week, based on the recommendations from happy clients that we have had a chance to work with over the years.



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The **Canadian Construction Journal** has proudly chosen **Yo Bro Yo Girl Youth Initiative** as the **Official 2023 Community Charity Of Choice**. The CCJ will be supporting YBYG via monthly updates in the magazine. Proceeds from our advertising revenue will be donated to this great BC organization. Please stay tuned for interviews, success stories, and community awareness updates.



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AN INTERVIEW WITH KEVIN FAIZI

From Hippo Plumbing and Heating



By: Paul Harrison

How long has your company been in operation? How did it get started? What led you to found/join the company?

Hippo Plumbing and Heating was established in 2019. It all started after I my wedding, when I thought I had to step up and try to go out on my own. Since that day, I never looked back.

Tell us about what your company does in general?

We specialize in commercial and residential plumbing and heating. My background is in new construction. I have been doing new construction (plumbing and heating) for about six years with British Properties.



Alair Homes



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Hippo Plumbing and Plumbing

What is the nature of the work you do for Alair Homes?

I recently worked with Chris Stiles from Alair on a house on 29th Avenue, Surrey.

Alair Homes



Are there any keys vendors, suppliers, subcontractors, or partners who help you with your work?

Our favourite vendor is Emco Corp. – especially their location in Port Coquitlam (David is manager there).

Walk us through the process you go through when a builder calls you. How do you go from the consultation to the design, through to the delivery and installation, whether that is for plumbing, heating, or gas?

In most cases, our builders or renovators have a design in place when they call us. But besides design, I like to tell my clients to make sure your kitchen or bathrooms are comfortable for them to use. Design is great, but functionality is the most important thing.

Do you have any exciting new projects on the horizon, or any others that you might have just wrapped up?

One beautiful project we did recently was in north Vancouver – our client just won a HAVAN Award for this project. At the moment, we are also working on a project in an apartment where we are adding a whole new four-piece bathroom; this is not a very easy job to do.

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Inline Glasscraft Ltd.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JASON WITWICKI

Director of Inline Glasscraft Ltd

By: Paul Harrison



Introduction

In 30 to 60 seconds could you please state your name, your company's name, your job title and tell us what your company does and what you do there?

My name is Jason Witwicki. I am the Director of Inline Glasscraft Ltd. We've been in business for 18 years. We are a supplier and installer of high-end glass for the residential and commercial market. My role is day-to-day management, measuring and co-ordination of projects.



INLINE GLASSCRAFT

Inline Glasscraft Ltd.

How long has your company been in operation? How did it get started? What led you to found/join the company?

I come from a Glazing family. My Dad, Dennis, was a Glazier for his entire career, and all three of his sons followed in his footsteps. I received my Red Seal ticket for Glazing at BCIT in 1996 and had been working for a company doing high-rise work for a number of years. There wasn't much opportunity for growth in that company, so I chose to move on.

After moving around to a couple of different companies, I wound up working for a rapidly growing company that did a totally different type of glass work. I actually felt really challenged and learned a lot from some really great co-workers. After several years I just felt that owning and running my own business was something I would like to do. With the support of, and a push from, my wife, Jodi, we founded our own business in 2005.

For the first few years it was just the two of us, with the help of my Dad and Brother. Over the years, we've added office staff and installers as required, and we've settled in with a really good core of people, who are really committed to the business and their own craft. Dennis retired and my brother, Clay, moved to the interior (of British Columbia) a few years ago. Now Viktor, Linda, Ryan, and Ron are our solid group. A few of them have even become partners in the business. They are all committed to providing attentive, personal service with exceptional quality in their day-to-day work. We really wouldn't be where we are without them.

Tell us about what your company does in general?

Inline Glasscraft specializes in architectural glass in the residential and commercial sectors. We mainly focus on Frameless Showers, Glass Guardrail, Back-painted Glass for Backsplash and Feature Walls, Glass Doors & Office Partition. We really focus on good communication with our clients and quality of work on our projects.



Inline Glasscraft Ltd.

What is the nature of the work you do for Alair Homes? Did you work with Chris on either of his 2023 Georgie finalist projects – either Home at the Harbour or Back to the Future?

We do quite a bit of work for Chris at Alair Homes. We typically do his showers and mirrors, but we have also done some guardrail for him in the past. He is a very meticulous guy and really puts the customer first. We were a part of his Back to the Future project. It consisted of a large shower in the primary ensuite, with custom hardware and a sliding shower door in a secondary ensuite.



Are there any keys vendors, suppliers, subcontractors, or partners who help you with your work?

We have a few companies that have really helped us along the way. Garibaldi Glass and Oldcastle Glass are our two tempered glass suppliers that we use all the time. They are always willing to help us out with custom or odd requests, as well as our day-to-day orders. MX Glass is where we get all our mirrors and annealed glass products. They do really great work with custom sizes and shapes for mirrors and tabletops. Metallica Manufacturing always provides great service and exceptional work when it comes to custom metal fabrication. They supply us with all our custom welded handrails and guardrail top cap. They do really top-notch work. A good solid core of suppliers and subs really makes it easier to focus on what we need to give our customers the best service and product that we can.

INLINE GLASSCRAFT

Inline Glasscraft Ltd.

You have a large portfolio of work under your belt. What are some of your favourite jobs you've done? Were there any pieces you created that really stood out? What are some of the most difficult installations you've had to do?

We've done so many fun and rewarding projects over the years. Everything from full interior / exterior house packages, multi unit projects, and right down to jobs as small as a single mirror. I really enjoy working with our customers and I love making people happy. Workwise, I find challenging, intricate projects my favourite type of work: things that look and work equally amazing.

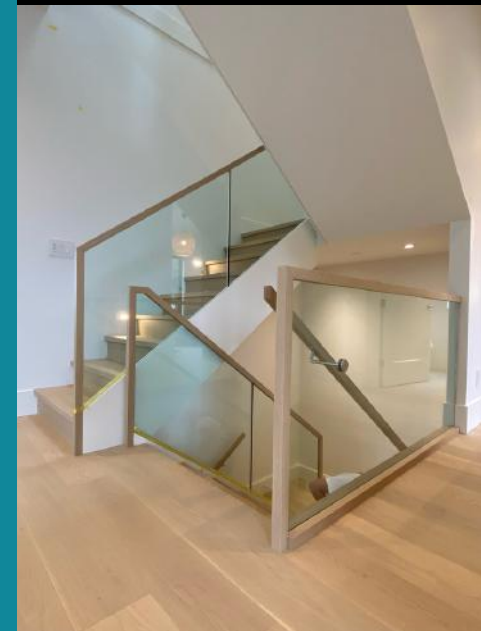
Last year we completed a full house project for a client in Vancouver that included a full-framed office enclosure in their home, as well as three floors of elevator enclosure, with the same frame and glass. It was very intricate work and totally custom. It truly turned out amazing and the clients could not have been happier. That was probably one of my favourite projects.

I really enjoy the unusual projects: things that not everyone can do. If it's too complicated for the average glass company, that's what I like best.

Do you have any exciting new projects on the horizon, or any others that you might have just wrapped up?

We take everything day-by-day and are looking forward to working with all the great contractors and designers that have been supporting us for years. It really is a pleasure to work with our customers and see their visions come to reality.

We have a couple of interesting projects coming this year. We have a fairly large back painted glass project at the YVR Customs Hall. It consists of a large feature wall with a custom colour back painted glass. Another project we are excited about is a whole house package in Pemberton. It's a private residence which includes glass railings, showers, mirrors, and custom tinted sauna glass.



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Helmet to Hardhats' Millwrighting Scholarship Program **SPECIAL INSERT**





Part 1 with Helmets to Hardhats

Passing of the Torch:

An Interview with Joe Maloney & James Hogarth

By: C. Ross Harrison

Changing of the Guard

For the past 10 years Helmets to Hardhats (H2H) has been at the forefront of serving both Canada's Building Trades Unions and Canada's Veterans by helping place former military personnel in a wide variety of unionized construction jobs. This mutually beneficial relationship has been maintained for the past 5 years through the tireless efforts of H2H Canada founder and executive director, Joe Maloney. While Maloney's tenure has seen numerous successes and continued growth for the organization, there comes a time when every hero must ride off into the sunset and pass the torch to a new champion; for Helmets to Hardhats that champion is none other than James (Jim) Hogarth, a steamfitter by trade, UA member of 42 years and current President of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario.

Jim recounts some of his extensive background in the skilled trades and how it ultimately prepared him for his new role as H2H's Executive Director. "I have a long history with the UA, going back to 1980 starting as an apprentice. I'm a third-generation union member and proud of it. Over the years I worked my way up through the ranks within the union and became a business rep. I was the business manager of the Toronto Local for close to a decade, then moved on to the provincial level with the pipe trades. Over the last ten years, I've been the President of the Ontario Building Trades (Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario or PBCTCO). So, my time within the construction industry has been long and fruitful and I've made a lot of connections over the years."



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Jim Hogarth Comes Aboard

One of those connections was, of course, with another prominent figure within the unionized construction industry, Joe Maloney, who was already involved with Helmets to Hardhats' United States branch. "I first heard of H2H," Jim recalls, "when it started up in the US when Joe was down there. I'd known Joe for a number of years and when he came back to Canada, he brought Helmets to Hardhats here. I was the business manager of the Ontario Pipe Trades Council at the time, and I followed H2H's development and the UA's involvement with it. As I was transitioning out of the pipe trades, I was fortunate to discover that Joe was looking for someone to take over H2H. So, we spoke at a couple of meetings back in December and January, and here we are today (in the Spring of 2023)."

"It was perfect timing for Helmets to Hardhats," Joe Maloney recalls, "because as Jim was transitioning out of the Ontario Pipe Trades Council, I had been considering "hanging it up." But at Helmets to Hardhats, most of the staff are military people; they have military backgrounds, so they know that world inside out. They don't, however, always understand how the unionized construction industry works, at least not to the extent that a guy like Jim would. That's why Jim is the perfect fit for this, and that's why when I talked to Jim about replacing me and he said 'yes.' I was thrilled.

"The United Association (UA) is a terrific trade and has been supporting Helmets to Hardhats, both in the United States and in Canada, from day one and I didn't have to coax them into it," Joe jokes. "Back in the day President Hite in the U.S gave his support one hundred percent from the beginning as did the Canadian Director, John Telford. Jim has continued that tradition. So, when he agreed to become the Executive Director, I was overjoyed to leave H2H Canada in his very capable hands."

Hogarth agrees with Joe that his background with unions has prepared him for his role as Executive Director, but also points to the relevance of some of his other experiences. "The past 25 years in leadership roles within the labour movement have given me a lot of relevant experience for this role. But so has my development of relationships with the employer community as well as with labour relations and with all levels of government. This is not just here in Ontario, but across Canada. So, the outreach that I have within the skilled trades is extensive."

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Visions of the Future

While Joe's well-deserved retirement is looming on the horizon, he is still intimately aware of the changes that are coming in the following years and how H2H will likely adapt to them. "I'm sure Jim's going to be coming up with his own ideas going forward but as I see the next ten years playing out, there is so much activity going on in the construction industry. The baby boomers are moving on and new infrastructure and homes are being built for all the newcomers arriving in Canada. This will require the updating of all our roads and bridges and hospitals as well as our energy sector. So, there will be tons of opportunities for construction workers and there's lots of room for Veterans to contribute."



Joe acknowledges that the future will not only lead to changes in society at large but within H2H itself. "We are also looking to increase our number of board members. Currently, we have ten members and Jim is looking at bringing more from different regions of the country. That way there will be more awareness and H2H will continue to be a truly national program. We also want to focus more on management training. There are a lot of Veterans who tell us that, while they were in the military, they trained in a supervisory position and that they'd like to continue in these roles. So, right now, we're doing entry-level management courses that get them started. This way, when they go with a company, they can easily enter into managerial roles."

2022–2023: Great Year at H2H

Even in the last year of Joe's service as director, a lot of developments have occurred within H2H. "Over the last year we've been extremely busy," Joe muses. "We've increased awareness quite dramatically across all fronts: with governments, industry, and the trade unions. In 2022 alone, we had a record year of referrals with 361 Veterans that we referred to the various trades across the country. Just last month alone we referred 43 Veterans, so it's going quite well." Joe also tells us that 2022 saw an increase in female Veterans becoming more involved in H2H, an achievement he attributes to H2H's outreach advisors, who have done so much to grow and manage the organization.

He also takes time to acknowledge all the help provided by H2H's partners within the government. "A lot of this was only possible with support from the Ontario government and Labour Minister, Monte McNaughton, who has been a tremendous supporter of the program. Also, Minister McCauley at Veterans Affairs, at the federal level, has been an amazing supporter too. We meet him two or three times a year and update him on the program. He's very happy with the way it's going. So, those two government officials have supported us from day one and continue to do so."

Widening Their Reach in Canada

With all the growth of the past year, it's clear that Joe Maloney is still as enthusiastic about H2H as when he first started. For his own part, Jim Hogarth is equally excited about the future of H2H and the role that he will play in it. "It's an exciting time for me to take what Joe has developed and try and improve upon it. There's so much more that can be done by reaching out to the broader construction industry; there's a huge opportunity there." Jim states that he is particularly excited about Minister McNaughton's recent announcement that military reservists will be guaranteed job protection. This will allow them to return to their civilian job positions whenever they return from their obligatory military service once or twice a year.

Developments like this leave Jim hopeful about the organization's future. "Young men and women going into the service will see that there are opportunities for them when they come back out. So, I can only see H2H growing more and more over the next ten years. I hope Joe looks back in five or ten years and can say that he made the right decision in picking me, which I'm pretty sure he's going to be able to do," Jim jokes.

Retirement Plans

"Hopefully I'll be able to look back in 30 years," chuckles Joe. Of course, before he can look that far back, a lot of time will have to pass. That raises the topic of what exactly Joe Maloney plans to do with his retirement. "My plan is to lay low," Joe says with a smile. "I started my trade when I was 17 years old and I'll be 67 this year, so that's 50 years! It's been a great run. I've enjoyed it. I've been able to meet some terrific people, both throughout Canada and in the United States, and in various parts of the world. This job has taken me to many places in many different capacities. There's been a lot of bumps along the road, but overall, it's been a very successful career and a very happy one. I'm just looking forward to spending more time with family and laying back a little bit." When asked if he's planning on working on his golf swing, Maloney states that while he doesn't play the game himself, his grandson is trying to get him to take it up. "But so far when we've been out, I've only been the caddie in a one-on-one game," he laughs.



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Proudest Accomplishment

When asked about his proudest accomplishment as Executive Director, Joe thinks for a moment before responding. "I think my proudest accomplishment is that the program is still running successfully, both in the United States and in Canada. It's grown as an everyday program within the building trades community. There are 15 building trade unions in the United States and 14 in Canada and every one of them participated in H2H. They've all embraced it and they really respect our Veterans and the Vets themselves fit well within the construction industry."

Joe recalls that starting H2H in Canada was at first a struggle since the military initially thought the organization was trying to poach their soldiers. When they, however, came to realize the program was only trying to help find jobs for service people, who had already decided to leave active duty, they eventually came to support it enthusiastically.

Overcoming this early institutional skepticism and forming a partnership that has helped so many Vets are obviously great points of pride for Joe. "It's very rewarding to be able to assist a Veteran in starting a second career and I'm very proud of those accomplishments. I'm also very proud of the staff at Helmets to Hardhats. Some of them have been with us from day one, and others joined more recently. It is, however, in all their hearts and is more than a job to them. This is something they believe in and something they work diligently at every day. I'm just very happy that it's lasted this long, and I hope it's going to last for many years to come."

Parting Advice

Asked if he has any parting advice for Jim, Maloney states that his main concern is that most Canadians tend to only think of Veterans on Remembrance Day. H2H needs to be there constantly to remind people of the amazing work Vets do and to advocate on their behalf. "We tell governments all the time that Veterans are an underrepresented group when it comes to post-military employment opportunities. We need more Veterans in the trades, and we continually have to knock on people's doors every day and push that idea. I think Jim is more than capable of delivering those messages. I'm very comfortable with the direction things are going and I have every faith in Jim and the staff to continue on. So, it's now time to hand the torch over."



“We need more Veterans in trades...”

Jim Hogarth at Queen's Park

VETERANS HAVE A LOT TO OFFER THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



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Developing Initiatives at H2H

One of the first major initiatives that Jim Hogarth is spearheading at H2H is a targeted program with the Millwrights' Regional Council of Canada. In Ontario, the province has a critical need to get more people into this highly complex trade, and given their training with advanced machinery, Veterans will be a great fit for this line of work. Helmets to Hardhats is currently offering a scholarship opportunity for Veterans to return to an Ontario college to peruse a 1-year certificate program in the Millwrighting trade.

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Stay tuned for interviews with Patricia Penney-Rouzes, Executive Director of the Association of Millwrighting Contractors of Ontario (AMCO) and Andrew Bredin, Director of Communications & Stakeholder Relations at the Millwright Regional Council of Canada, for more information on this new initiative at H2H.

Further information on Helmets to Hardhats is available at <https://helmetstohardhats.ca/>

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Part 2 Millwrighting & Helmets to Hardhats



An Interview with Patricia Penney-Rouzes,
Executive Director of the
Association of Millwrighting Contractors of Ontario (AMCO)

By: Greg Akeson

Introduction

The executive director of The Association of Millwrighting Contractors of Ontario (AMCO) is Patricia Penney-Rouzes. AMCO is the employer bargaining agency (EBA) for the ICI millwright collective agreement in Ontario, representing the interests of all signatory contractors in the negotiation process. AMCO also provides contractors with industry-relevant information as it arises, such as government legislative changes and updates, along with other issues that may affect the industry.

What is Millwrighting?

What is millwrighting? It is not always an easy trade to define. In short, millwrights are highly skilled and specialized workers. They install, maintain, diagnose, and repair precision machinery. Millwrights can be found on construction sites, as well as in the energy, automotive, aerospace, food processing, and pharmaceutical industries. Their work also encompasses and overlaps with other trades. It is true that millwrights themselves often have difficulty defining the true scope of their work due to its complexity.

AMCO and Millwrights Region Council Negotiations

Constant and open communication is fundamental in the labour relations industry. This communication is important to AMCO members as well as to their industry as a whole. AMCO's job is to ensure that its contractors continue to be successful in the marketplace – to remain competitive against non-union and alternative union contractors.

As part of that responsibility, the millwright group has formed an Industry Committee with four representatives from the union, and four from the association. They meet quarterly to talk about issues, concerns, and challenges: things that work well and things that don't. Current issues can be addressed together in between negotiation years, and as well, preparations made for the next round of negotiations, so that they are not entered into blindly and waste valuable time and resources for all involved.



Image courtesy of
Aecon Industries



AMCO and Millwrights Region Council Negotiations Cont'd

The current atmosphere between the association and the millwright union is one of partnership. While many trades struggled through the last round of bargaining, the millwrights had a very productive round. They tried to have a mutual respect for each other. If one side said "no", the question "why" was asked to fully understand the reasoning behind it. It's important to understand where each side is coming from, and in the end, while they still may not have agreed with the reasoning, at least they had a better understanding of why it could not be done from their perspective. They also both understand that a lot of the industry work is cyclical, and while the economy was booming during the time of negotiations, they knew that may not be the case by the next round of bargaining. They wanted to ensure that they didn't price themselves out of the future marketplace. Those discussions were as important as what was happening at that current time. This again shows the importance of that working relationship between the two parties.

Working Alongside Other Associations



AMCO Board of Directors, Left to Right:

Spencer Fox, Secretary/Treasurer; Jeff Snyder, President; Andrew Sinclair, Vice President; Russ Straus, Director; Patricia Penney-Rouzes, Executive Director; Larry Brokenshire, Director; Arthur Matthews, Director

In keeping with its responsibilities to its members, AMCO is also involved with several other construction associations. While each trade is represented by their own individual organizations such as AMCO, under the umbrella of other group associations, they collaborate. It is important to work together toward common goals and challenges as a stronger voice for the industry. Representing AMCO, Patricia is a Board member of the Council of Ontario Construction Associations (COCA), an Executive Committee member of the Construction Employers Coordinating Council of Ontario (CECCO), a Board member of the Ontario Construction Secretariat (OCS), a member of the Infrastructure Health and Safety's (IHSA) Construction Section 21 Committee, a member of the Millwright Health and Safety Committee, a Board member of the DeNovo Treatment Centre and a Trustee on the millwrights pension and benefit plan trusts.

Working Alongside Other Associations Cont'd

As mentioned, AMCO is a member of the Construction Employers Coordinating Council of Ontario (CECCO). During negotiations, CECCO members would meet to share the things that they had learned throughout their bargaining process, as well as challenges and successes. The relationship between unions and contractors is, for the most part, getting better. The old-school mentality of being out to get one another is slowly disappearing – but unfortunately does still exist to some extent.

As part of this new relationship building, CECCO is in regular communication with the Ontario Provincial Building Trades as well as the Ministry of Labour. Having a good relationship between the unions and the employers is an important building block to the success of the unionized construction industry. Just as each trade association and union must work together to identify and address issues that may exist in their trade, CECCO and the Provincial Building Trades working together better aligns all unionized trades. As a member of CECCO's Executive Committee, Patricia sees first-hand how well this relationship is currently working and is optimistic about its continued success.

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Training Millwrights

Another area that AMCO is involved in is helping to identify training needs and requirements for millwrights. Local unions work with local contractor groups to develop the necessary training for apprentices and journeymen in specific areas. And while AMCO does not coordinate training, they do play a role in the types of training offered by the union. As well, every two years, the millwrights hold a convention at their training facility in Las Vegas. The local unions invite many contractors to this event. Contractors get to see the training center and experience the different training programs being developed and are able to provide feedback and input on these programs. Some contractors get involved in the apprenticeship training programs by becoming panel members. It is the unions who puts together the training and the materials as the needs are defined in particular areas.

Each year, AMCO also hosts an Annual Meeting & Conference for its members. They bring in speakers to talk about industry relevant topics, host events to allow networking opportunities for their contractors, as well as invite union representatives to speak and socialize with them. Allowing the employers the opportunity to socialize with union representatives in a more relaxed and social environment generally creates a much better working relationship. Sometimes just putting a face to a name helps; they become much more than an 'email' or a 'voice' behind a phone call.

Helmet to Hardhats

Before the last round of negotiations, AMCO was contacted by Helmet to Hardhats (H2H) to ask if they would consider financially contributing to H2H. It was decided at that time to discuss the request during negotiations. And although it was brought up during the negotiation process, with all the issues that had to be addressed between the two parties, it was decided that it was best to put it on the sidelines to discuss afterwards.

Following negotiations, the millwright Executive Secretary/ Treasurer, Mark Beardsworth, had some discussions with H2H on how they could collaborate. H2H had provided a few options/suggestions on how they could work together and that's where the idea of a scholarship program came from. Mark then reached out to Patricia, who in turn reached out to AMCO's Board of Directors. All parties felt that this was a great way to start the collaborative partnership. Patricia elaborates: "Veterans who apply to the scholarship program would have their training paid for – a one-year millwright training program – and would come into the millwright industry with some knowledge acquired through that program. Along with H2H, the Millwright Regional Council and AMCO would be involved in interviewing the candidates. This way, you can get a feeling for the individual instead of having someone sent directly to you." The H2H Millwright program is still new, but Patricia believes it will bear fruit, providing the industry with workers and Veterans with good civilian jobs.



Left to Right:

Duncan McIntosh, MRC; Mark Beardsworth, MRC; Joe Maloney, H2H;
Darryl Cathcart, RPE; Patricia Penney-Rouzes, AMCO; Drew Chittenden, MRC

Helmet to Hardhats Cont'd



Like most trades and skilled labour industries, millwrighting is cyclical, and it is always challenging. Patricia explains: "We all have made an effort to attract apprentices over the years, but the work wasn't always there to keep them. They would be on a waitlist to be called but would decide to move on to other things due to lack of work. The challenge we have now is that we have all this work, and we need more journeypersons and apprentices to fill it, but the people we get do not always have the necessary training or skillsets." The Veterans that H2H will send to the Millwrights' Union will be a big step in helping to assist with that challenge, adding new people to the industry.

This story continues with our interview with Andrew Bredin from the Millwrights' Regional Council.



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Part 3 Millwrighting & Helmets to Hardhats



An Interview with **Andrew Bredin**

Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations at the Millwright Regional Council Canada



By: Greg Akeson

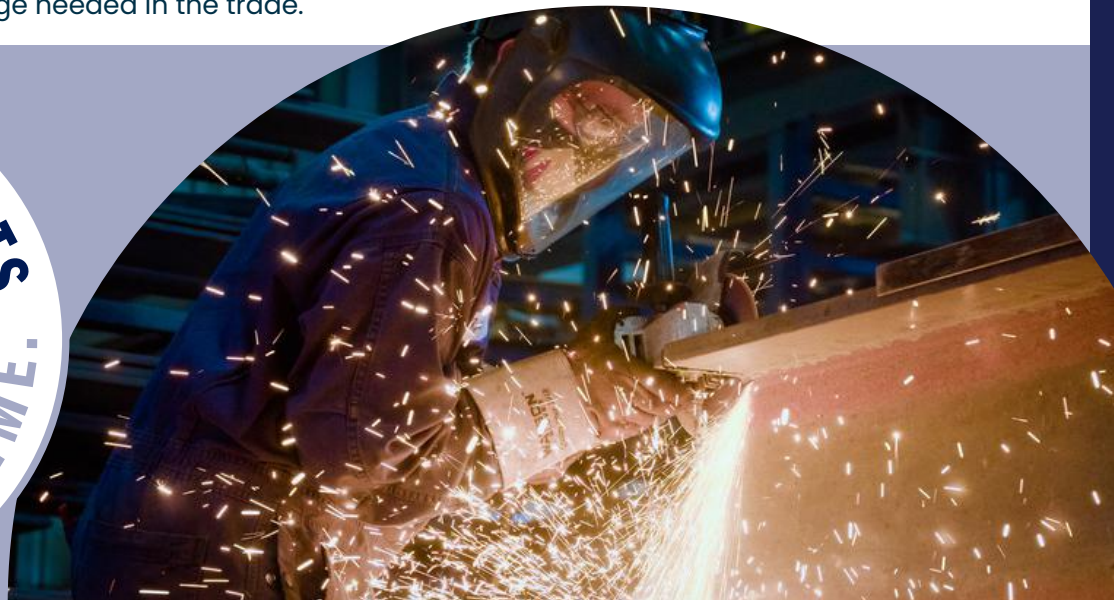
Introduction

Andrew Bredin, a millwright by trade, is the current Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations for the Millwright Regional Council – Canada (MRC). The MRC is part of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners (UBC MILLWRIGHTS). There are five districts and over 55,000 millwrights across North America and Canada is represented by the Canadian District. There is a vice president and also regional councils in each district. There are three different regional councils in Canada. One of those regional councils is the Millwright Regional Council – Canada, which represents all UBC Millwrights from Quebec to British Columbia. There are just over 10,000 skilled union members working with the UBC Millwrights in Canada.

What is a Millwright?

A millwright is a highly skilled mechanic who works on any moving machinery. They can be found in the automotive industry, oil and gas, food processing, mechatronics, all the power sectors (including nuclear), and many other areas. Andrew explains: “We build these projects and also maintain them afterwards. If you have a moving part, like a compressor, a turbine, motors down to the bearings – whatever it is, you’ll find a millwright working on it. This is a very specialized trade. One day you could be working on a conveyor system that moves groceries through a warehouse, and the next day, you could be learning to rebuild a nuclear reactor. It involves a broad skill set.”

Although millwrights are on the cutting edge of new technology, such as Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and ION Battery Plants, some of the machinery serviced by millwrights can be upwards of a hundred years old. So, when a part needs replacing, it is up to the millwright to replace or even rebuild the part; this can include machining a new part as a replacement because old machinery parts are hard to come by. It takes an average of four years to complete an apprenticeship, but ten years to become a well-rounded millwright due to the broad amount of knowledge needed in the trade.



What is a Millwright? (Cont'd)

Millwrights are employed by major contractors and companies in each province. In Ontario, for example, Ontario Power Generation is a well-known employer of millwrights. Moreover, automotive plants, food manufacturing plants, and steel producers frequently employ millwrights. They will even be found working along the St. Lawrence Seaway as their expertise is needed to service the lock systems. From east to west, UBC Millwrights can be found in the major industries of our country: pulp and paper, nuclear power, car battery plants, potash, oil sands, and hydro power. The UBC Millwrights partner with over 250 contractors across the country. As Andrew so aptly puts it, "we keep industry moving," and as such, millwrights will be in demand for decades to come.



The Union is set up in such a way as to take care of workers who decide to enter the trade. Each hour a millwright works, the contractors contribute to training funds. Those funds are used by the MRC to train the workers to prepare them, so they are a professional, safe, and reliable workforce. In addition, they have a very healthy Scholarship Program and some of the best benefits and pension plans available. Safety is also paramount, and millwrights are trained in all aspects of safe workplaces.

Helmets to Hardhats

MRC's recent partnership with Helmets to Hardhats (H2H) has been incredibly successful. Anyone coming through the H2H program, whether a Veteran, reservist, or family member of a Veteran, is introduced to the trades via H2H and millwrighting is one of those trades. Each Local in the MRC participates in the program, thus there are several programs across the country. The Millwrights provide training programs to make sure each candidate is up to speed in order to get into the Scholarship Program. A marine engineering technician is a trade that is recognized in Ontario to be 100% transferable to the millwright trade. In these cases, the ministry allows these candidates to write their certificate of qualification to be Red Seal Industrial Millwrights. They still have to write and pass the test, but the ministry recognizes these candidates to have worked the equivalent hours as an apprentice in order to challenge the test. A number of candidates enter the trade as journeymen right out of the military and this Red Seal Qualification is recognized across Canada.

For Veterans who do not possess the transferable hands-on skills, they still possess soft skills such as leadership, organization, and drive. "It's really incredible when you see these Veterans come into the trade and fit right in with us. They are not afraid of hard work. They have very good mental capacity, they work well with others, and they really understand the bigger picture. They learned this in the military: to recognize the importance of teamwork, leadership, and chain of command. These skills are highly transferable to our industry. H2H has allowed us to reach a bigger group of highly skilled candidates." Veterans fulfill a huge need in the skilled trades, particularly in the millwright trade. Veterans fill these positions at a high skill level and, therefore, hit the ground running, without exception.



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Future of the MRC

The biggest initiative for the MRC at present is the alignment of our Millwright Locals across the country into one council. "Working together from Quebec to British Columbia as a Regional Council and closely with our Locals in Eastern Canada has made a huge difference for us when providing exceptional service for our partner Contractors and Owners. Then we start looking at programs like H2H, running the program Canada-wide, and how our very successful indigenous programs such as Introduction to Millwrighting in Ontario has displayed how working together benefits our members, our industry, and the communities we work in".



For more information on the UBC Millwrights
and the Millwright Regional Council - Canada,

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We are also proud to announce our
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Greater Ottawa Homebuilders' Association.



CANADIAN
CONSTRUCTION JOURNAL

**INTERACTIVE
CONSTRUCTION INC.**



**REDEFINING
WHAT IT
MEANS TO
LIVE IN A
HOME**



BY: GREG AKESON & PAUL HARRISON

INTERACTIVE CONSTRUCTION INC.

**The Canadian Construction Journal
would like to congratulate Interactive
Construction on their 10th anniversary in
business.**



AN INTERVIEW WITH RUSS BARRY OF INTERACTIVE CONSTRUCTION

History

Founded in 2013 during a lean time in the construction industry by lifelong carpenter, Russ Barry, Interactive Construction is a custom home builder in Victoria, B.C. The company specializes in high-end custom homes, complex and unique builds, energy efficient construction, and traditional builds and renovations – all with an emphasis on quality. With recent advances in environmentally friendly home building techniques, they have been at the forefront of building certified passive houses regularly since 2016. They also build to a variety of other high-performance standards, such as Step 5, Living Building, and Net Zero.



Since a lot of very talented people were out of work during the 2008 slump, Russ decided to capitalize on the opportunity and put a team together: a core group of skilled individuals who have known each other for decades. Russ explains: "Interactive is now a decade old – June 2023 is our ten-year anniversary. We were founded after that 2008 market crash when the industry was still recovering. I knew a lot of really talented people who were looking for work – very different from the situation we all find ourselves in today. But we all go way back; we had spent years working together prior to founding the company."

Passive Homes



It was in 2015 when an old friend approached Russ to say he was about to build himself a house and had been reading about passive homebuilding. At the time, Russ was only vaguely familiar with the passive home concept. His friend filled Russ in on the concept and asked if he would be interested in taking on the project. Russ agreed and thus began Interactive Construction's journey to becoming a leader in building custom homes that meet or exceed step code certification requirements, or passive house certification requirements.

The team at Interactive has undergone the training in order to provide these certified builds. Russ explains: "We sent our project manager for special training on a ten-day course. I took a number of these courses as well. We were working with architects who took passive house training too. Looking back, I would say we probably overprepared. Realistically, the energy advisors and building-envelop consultants and architects really have the complicated calculations to do. And then realistically, they're doing a lot of that heavy lifting and figuring out how it needs to come together. So, we really need to focus on the team and how to make sure everything is coming together in a very controlled process. You can't skip steps or assume things are good enough. They have to go to a very high level of precision."

Georgie Winning Project

Interactive Construction is a Georgie Award winning company. They were awarded a Georgie in 2022 for the Gonzales project for Best Multi-Family Townhouse Development (Infill). Russ recalls the unique circumstances of the project:

“Our client on the Gonzales project had been planning things for years prior to our involvement. Hitting that passive house target was part of their dream, along with reusing as much of the existing old house that was on the site as they could in the new build. So, we actually de-constructed that building and used as much of the wood as we could in the new building. They had spoken with several excellent local builders before us – so we’re really honored they went with us. They came to us with the passive house target; this was really important to them. So, our involvement began at the preliminary design stage. There was some planning already in place and we were working collaboratively with architects, structural engineering, consulting and advisory and helping to bring all that detail together into a buildable strategy.”

Reflecting further on the Gonzales project, and passive housework in general, Russ states: “We found it takes a really close-knit team to build passive houses especially. That’s kind of the secret to it: you can’t work in single compartments on your own. With these more complicated, energy efficient builds, you really have to bring everything together, and make sure your structural requirements aren’t conflicting with your energy requirements and vice versa. Then all of it can kind of go together in a logical way.”



The Future: Living Buildings



Interactive have been keeping busy with a wide array of projects. Russ shares the details of some of his current and future work: "We've successfully taken on some pretty unique challenges that showcase our team's versatility, such as the Brewery Malting plant and recently a mass timber building. We're both proud and excited for the opportunity to work on such interesting and amazing projects." Interactive has also been working on targeting the Living Building House "petal" certification, which, as Russ explains, is "possibly one of the highest and most comprehensive building targets we've ever seen."



The Future: Living Buildings Cont'd

Russ adds: "Living Buildings try to encompass not only energy efficiency standards, but also the types of materials that are going into the building. You have to avoid environmentally damaging products. But there is much more to consider: there's water conservation elements. There are energy efficiency elements. There's connectivity from the inside to the outside. There are design aspects that have to be hidden as well. So, it's a really broad, sprawling target."

"The clients also wanted a house that would sustain a serious earthquake. We used seismic structuring at a level just below hospital buildings. The level of structural steel and concrete is astounding. Doubling up on structure is particularly complex because of the special requirements of Living Buildings; giant steel beams shooting through the house are very much in conflict with the energy efficiency. And we've got the Living Building Challenge that requires we don't put toxic foam in the house. It becomes very interesting to figure out how you're going to get all those details to come together and head off those targets. So certainly, it's been an enjoyable challenge."



INTERACTIVE
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**For more information on
Interactive Construction, visit
www.interactiveconstruction.ca/**



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