

A Great Analogy?

By Michael Menn AIA, CGR, CAPS

I would like to start the New Year by wishing all of you a healthy and prosperous year.

I want to preface this column by saying that in no way am I intending to demean the process of childbearing in any way. I cannot imagine what a woman experiences when she goes through pregnancy.

Having said that, though, my partner and I believe — and our spouses agree to a point — that having your home renovated is like giving birth. Follow along with the analogy, and see if you agree.

The childbirth process starts with the woman finding out she is pregnant. The initial emotions are joy and excitement; something new and wonderful is about to happen. Time is spent talking and making plans. If not shopping for “baby stuff,” you are at least window shopping. This is one of the most enjoyable parts of the experience.

So too with a renovation project. Something new and wonderful is going to happen. You plan; you pick out the items that are going to be part of the renovation. It’s exciting.

Then comes the first trimester, or the beginning of the job. Reality sets in. The woman’s feet swell. She has morning sickness. She starts getting uncomfortable. Not fun. In a renovation, the exciting design work has been completed. Now you are in the middle of demolition. Dirt and dust are everywhere.

Not fun . . . at all.

In the second trimester, my wife says, women like to nest. My wife used this time to look for cribs, furniture, worked on decorating the nursery, etc. My wife’s demeanor had changed drastically; she was more relaxed about the pregnancy and life in general.

Think of the period right after demolition as the second

trimester of the renovation project. You are establishing the backbone of the job; rough carpentry, electrical, plumbing and HVAC are being worked on. Additionally, you should be buttoning up the last of any open design decisions. Your clients are now more relaxed with us working in their personal environment as well.

Well, then it’s time for the last trimester. What does a pregnant woman experience? Discomfort . . . misery . . . frustration. “I just want this thing out of me.” The emotions undoubtedly are warranted.

Your clients are experiencing similar emotions as the remodeling job nears completion. At DCC, we call it the E.J.S. (end-of-job-syndrome). It’s the time our clients are sick and tired of waking up every day and seeing Bob the carpenter in their house. “I just want you out of my house,” they seem to be saying with every passing day.

But then . . . one last sharp, intense, mind-blowing burst of pain. And then you are looking at the most beautiful and precious thing in the world . . . your new baby. The swollen feet, the weight gain, the lack of sleep — they are all distant memories.

Now, the joy of seeing a beautifully remodeled home

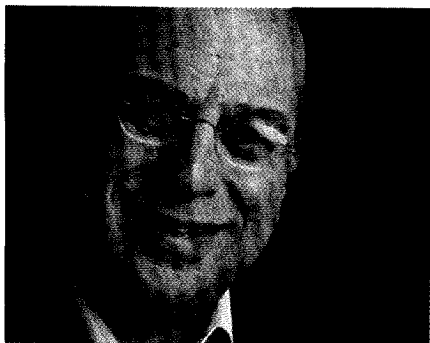
cannot compare to the miracle of childbirth. But, similarly when your clients see their beautifully renovated home, chances are they will have forgotten about the dust and demolition, and even Bob the carpenter.

The moral: Keep reminding your clients that the remodeling project — just like pregnancy — is a process. It’s a process that unfortunately has some pain to it. And our job — just like the job of the husband or partner — is to be sympathetic to the pain. And to gently remind our clients to keep focusing on the end result.

I would like to tell you that I have expanded my role with *Qualified Remodeler* and will now have the added responsibility for all architectural design matters as they relate to the Master Design Awards. I am looking forward to making the awards the best in the industry and would like to reach out to other architects, interior designers and kitchen designers to enter and become involved with both the remodeling industry and specifically with the Master Design Awards.

Once again, I hope that 2007 is prosperous for you.

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