

William P. Draper

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Community Connections

Two Top DBS Dealers Sponsor Unique Home Tours to Benefit Local Charities

Cornerstone USA, Ltd. — Preserving Historical Sites

By Brenda Lange

More than 100 years ago, when farmers in Moorestown, NJ, gathered, they met in the town's "Grange Hall." Debates over fertilizers, crops, and supplies mixed with discussions over how to best meet the needs of their growing community. Today that former meeting place has been preserved and renovated and is home to Cornerstone USA, Ltd. a high-end design studio.

Ken Strainic and Fernando Guerra formed Cornerstone in 1993, which now works with a focus on historical renovations. "We took a historic building and created a new use for it while maintaining the integrity of the original building," says Strainic of the former "Grange Hall." "When designing for a space, it's important to fit it into the building architecturally."

Finding just the right fit architecturally is what Cornerstone specializes in, both in their kitchen design work and through their efforts on behalf of the Moorestown Historical Society.

"The Historical Society in Moorestown has a strong interest in restoring and retaining historic structures in town that are integral to the architecture and character of this old Quaker town," says Strainic of the town founded in the 1600s.

Strainic and Cornerstone have helped raise funds for the society for the past five years, and he has served on the board for the past year. About \$40,000 has been

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William P. Draper is an outstanding Bucks County, Pennsylvania cabinetmaker, artisan, inventor, sculptor and artist of this time. Many recognize the signature of his artistry by the uniqueness of his finishes, patina, colorations and style. Through exploration and creation of new visions, his cabinet designs reinvent style. His work gives designers new, exciting opportunity to create important living spaces. Simply put, his purpose is to create and express an enlightened living experience that transcends the limits of time.

Masterwork Kitchens — Sampling Kitchens and Cuisines

By Brenda Lange

After years of providing his clients with unique and beautiful kitchens, Joe Matta decided on a unique approach to marketing his business—Masterwork Kitchens of Goshen, New York. Bring potential clients together with past clients and let the finished products speak for themselves through an annual event he calls "Chef's Domain".

Matta and his wife, Theo, who manages the showroom and provides customer service, pick seven homes in which they have installed kitchens during the past year. Then they print up programs with each kitchen's floor plan, background, and maps. The program serves as a guidebook

for this self-guided tour. Tickets are sold, publicity goes out, and the Mattas get ready for 200 to 250 visitors—some who have turned the day into a permanent part of their annual calendar.

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Masterwork Kitchens

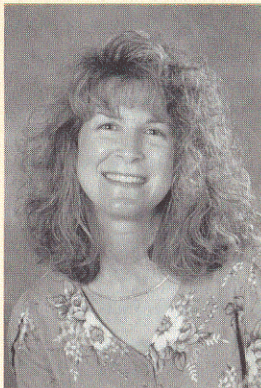


Illuminatus is published to provide information about the important work of DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc. and to give interested people a personal glimpse of the focus and mission of William Draper and his company. Illuminatus means "enlightenment."

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Personnel Glimpse

By Brenda Lange



Enthusiasm and commitment: the first things one notices when talking to Renée Ludwig about her work for DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc. "We want the client to be as awestruck with the finished product as we are," says Renée. For the past two years, she has worked for DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc., as a PDM—Project Design Manager—which can accurately be called a challenging and complex position.

Renée is responsible for processing orders from half the dealers in Draper's national dealer network. Each order is unique and must be carefully reviewed and broken down into a variety of individual parts while maintaining the integrity of the designer's vision.

"I receive written orders, floor plans, and elevations; all of which must be interpreted and checked for

accuracy. Then I enter them into DBS's own computer software program which provides a list of materials that, once finalized, will be used by our production staff to build the actual product."

Within five working days, Renée returns a draft order to the dealer for initial review. Accurate communication between her office and the dealers and designers is crucial to the success of each kitchen. "Every order is different. Every order is unique," she says. "And sometimes to get it right requires repeated back and forth communication."

All written orders, plans, and sketches are turned into a final order for the shop and yet Renée's job isn't done. "Even as the shop cuts and assembles the pieces, questions can come up and I serve as the dealer's liaison to see that all details are followed through."

It's a meticulous process requiring the PDMs to be analytical and detail oriented. Renée likes the technical aspect of the job but she really enjoys the interaction with customers and her colleagues at DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc., "There is great integrity and teamwork here at Draper. The care, commitment, and dedication are what transform this product into the rich experience we strive to provide to our customers."

Renée holds a BA degree in Psychology from Moravian College in Bethlehem, PA, and lives in Sellersville with her husband and 12-year old son. Before joining DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc., she worked for 11 years as a kitchen and bath sales administrator and kitchen designer. In her free time, she enjoys playing the piano and reading.

Walker Evans, photographer — James Agee, writer

DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc. was proud to sponsor Walker Evans and James Agee: *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, an exhibition of more than 76 of Evans's photographs and selected prose from Agee, at the James A. Michener Art Museum in Doylestown, PA from July to Oct. 2002.



In the early 1930s, when photography was beginning to be seen as an art form, along came Walker Evans, a photographer and artist who had the unique ability to capture images that spoke to the viewer. Yet, without Evans's subtle manipulation of the camera, these images might never have found voice.

Walker Evans was born in 1903 and raised in a well-to-do household. He studied literature in college and lived for a time in Paris, planning to become a writer. Back in New York, he experimented with photography for the first time in 1928, and by 1930 had published his first images of the Brooklyn Bridge and a variety of 19th century American homes. He advanced quickly in his new vocation, working with The Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1935 and then for *Fortune* magazine where he met the writer James Agee.

Born in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1909, James Agee graduated from Harvard and went on to write for *Fortune* magazine. He was also a movie critic for *Time* and *The Nation* as well as a scriptwriter. His Pulitzer-prize winning novel, *A Death in the Family*, the account of the impact a man's death had on his wife and family, was published in 1957, two years after his death.

In the summer of 1936, the two men collaborated to document the life of an "average white" sharecropper family in Hale County, Alabama. Although assigned by *Fortune*, the article was never published there, and the photos became government property, as Evans was working for the Farm Security Administration at the time. The text and photos were published in 1941 in the book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, which became a landmark representation of American cultural history and the art of observation. It was expanded and republished in 1960. Evans went on to publish his photos in *Time* and other publications and to mount exhibitions at prestigious institutions, establishing himself as a master photographic artist with his powerful and enduring images. Walker Evans died in 1975.

In their book Evans and Agee captured the reality of post-Depression America by spending three weeks with and photographing three poor southern families. The images they recorded—both photographic and narrative—came to epitomize life at

that time for so many. When we think of the stark, black and white photographs of the late 1930s, it is more often than not Evans's realistic images with their exacting detail that come to mind. Look into the eyes of his subjects—the unshaven farmer in the torn shirt, the sad-eyed children and the worn-out wife and mother—and somehow, they still reflect pride and determination.

Evans's images appear seemingly without conscious construction, allowing the viewer to make his or her own judgment. An accomplished talent, Evans had the ability to view his subject, whether careworn, Alabama sharecropper at the end of a hard day, or city workers crammed into a New York City subway, with objectivity.

Evans and Agee were able to approach their assignment in a spirit of impartial observation, maintaining the dignity of the individual, thereby providing an honest glimpse into the life of some of the poorest people in America.





Ken Strainic (left) and friends

“With restoration work, you have to be realistic and find ways to fit the materials into today’s world.”
— Ken Strainic

raised to date through kitchen tours to help the society restore local historic properties. The Smith-Cadbury Mansion, the current home of the Historical Society, was its first beneficiary.

Careful planning of these events is key to their success. First, Strainic identifies several kitchens

around town in which Cornerstone has done work. A black tie affair is held on a Saturday night to kick off the event. The next day, the owners open their homes to the public. Cornerstone’s showroom is also open and serves as a central staging area.

A small, wood frame house on Main Street in Moorestown was one of the first homes featured on the Kitchen Tour. The 1680 Bondsman’s House contains a kitchen created by DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc. Antique materials were removed from other old homes slated for demolition and used to give this home authenticity.

“We pulled out floors, stairs, and windows and got hand-hewn timber and doors from other historic houses in Maryland,”

Strainic explains. The kitchen is rustic, with pots hanging from swinging arms in its huge fireplace. “With restoration work, you have to be realistic and find ways to fit the materials into today’s world.” That means that while the fireplace may be a beautiful conversation piece, one hardly expects today’s families to cook in it. So, space is created for a stove and oven.

The pine kitchen cabinets are finished in a combination of honey stain and dark green paint, both having standard Draper distressing which allows them to fit well with both the authentic materials and the modern need for convenience. The worktops are honed limestone and include a Belfast sink from England.

“There are a lot of ways to find uses for historic houses rather than raze them,” he adds. “I worked with a timber-framer from Vermont to put on a sympathetic addition that looks original.” (A sympathetic addition fits with the original structure and blends true to the original design of the house.)

Cornerstone is currently working with Laurel Construction, who is saving a significant residential structure in town. It was part of the Underground Railroad,

which helped slaves travel north to freedom. Known as The Tallman House, this important contributor to America’s heritage is being totally renovated and will be the Historical Society’s first show house. According to Strainic, HGTV will air a special in October featuring the house.

Strainic has carried products by DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc. for the past eight years or so, and appreciates the product for its adaptability in historic homes. “DBS product works in a lot of older houses because of the craftsmanship; the hand-planing, the joinery, and the hand-scrubbed finishes. It is built in the tradition of American craftsmanship prior to 1840, when machines began manufacturing furniture. You get a different flavor when things are hand made; it just fits better into the older homes in the region.”

The Designer Show House is scheduled for October 2002 and the Kitchen Tour will be held again in the spring of 2003. For information, contact Ken Strainic at Cornerstone USA, Ltd. At 856/234-0066 or the Moorestown Historical Society by calling 856/335-0353. The society is located at 12 High Street, Moorestown, NJ 08057.

Masterwork Kitchens continued from page 1

Not only do people flock out to these show houses to see the kitchens, they come out to see what can be done in them. Matta lines up seven of the best chefs in the area, and stations them in the homes where they spend the day cooking up some wonderful dishes.

“We have five food houses and two dessert houses, a pretty diverse menu,” Matta explains. Chefs vie for the chance to be involved and some come with pretty impressive portfolios. “We have one who we’ve used from the beginning, who used to be the pastry chef at LaBernadin in New York City,” he says with pride.

Chef’s Domain has turned into a much-anticipated event in Goshen.

“A good portion of those who take the tour are planning kitchen projects, but we now have kind of a cult following of a group of women who always go because they want to see the differences from year to year,” he adds.

In the kitchen business for 20 years, Joe held the first Chef’s Domain event almost ten years ago. “It says a lot about what your clients think of you,” he says. “We ask people to open up their homes and we’ve found that they really get into it, including some who aren’t easily moved. We did a quarter million dollars worth of work in one house last year, and the owners just hung out and talked to everybody.”

Chef’s Domain brings in a lot of potential clients for Masterwork Kitchens, but it is not purely a marketing scheme. Early on Matta turned this event into a way to give something back to the community, besides, as he says, it takes a lot of hands to put on an event like this one. So he approached the Junior League—a well-organized group of community minded women—and the Mental Health Association of Orange County, and both agreed to help out.

These two organizations provide three to four people for each home to act as guides and ensure that nothing goes wrong. The proceeds from the event are split 50/50 between the two, with each agency realizing nearly \$10,000 annually.

Matta has added sponsorships to the mix as well. For \$1,000 local businesses, banks, vendors, and allied industries, such as a lighting manufacturer, get a full-page ad in the program book and signage at each home.

Chef’s Domain was formerly held in the spring, but was moved to the fall last year because the showroom at Masterwork Kitchens had undergone a major renovation, with 16 of its 24 displays re-done. “The building was finished in 1995 and it was just time to change. The industry has changed so much in six years.”

According to Theo something truly special is planned for this year’s 10th anniversary. About 25 miles from Goshen, Tuxedo Park, one of the country’s

original gated communities is full of magnificent homes, seven of which will open their doors to Chef’s Domain in a few short weeks.

As beautiful as the displays are in the showroom, viewing the cabinetry in a real home setting where they are then put to use, provides a different perspective to which clients and potential clients respond well.

Masterwork Kitchens employs a staff of eight and is situated in a 5,000 square foot building about 25 miles from West Point. Matta has worked with DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc. for about 15 years. The main display at Masterwork Kitchens features the new Biedermeier door style. Another displays the Kiva design in white oak with mahogany trim. And yet another display includes a Country French kitchen island of heavily distressed pine surrounded by Avignon-Grande cabinetry, another of Draper’s new additions.

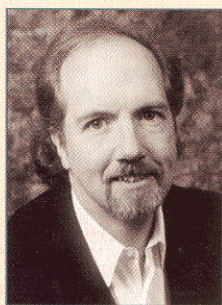
What initially began as a means to attract clients quickly turned into a community service project with a twist. “Chef’s Domain is definitely the best marketing we’ve ever done,” says Matta. “It has helped our business grow, enhanced our reputation for being a leader in the field locally, and parallels our philosophy while at the same time helping the community. Everyone, from the homeowner on down, enjoys the day.”

*"It now seems
to me that even
striving for
expression in a
work of art is
harmful to art.
Art is ... as
inexplicable as
life ... I know
only how I do it;
I know only my
material, from
which I derive
to what end
I know not."
—Kurt Schwitters*

Translated from "Merz," *Der Ararat*, 2 Munich, Goltzverlag, 1921, p. 5.

Mission Statement

DRAPER♦DBS,™ Inc. will provide an experience, through the finest cabinet making and finishing, to forever thrill and surprise the most discriminating customer. We create this experience through the utmost concern for meticulous detail and the highest standards of quality, courtesy and service.



Dead Bees Society Meeting VI

The problem with history is that it happens while we're watching, but we don't see it until it's gone. This makes foretelling the future so much more difficult. We can barely see what's about to have been and then often rely on others to tell us what that was. And that's a shabby database to use for figuring out what's going to happen next.

In the design biz the relative elements of past, present, and future are the tools of the trade. Knowledge and ability to shape one's work with these, relative to the values of your viewer or customer, determines success. But failing that, there's always Marketing and Advertising. I suppose a generation obsessed with food would pick "sandwich" as one of its labels, but I think the filling has largely become baloney.

I build furniture, architectural interiors, and kitchens, but it's the kitchen that fascinates me most as a social icon/cultural form. And this is mostly because of the inevitable demise of the form. It will go the way of the "den," the "parlor," the "living room," and finally, be no more. It will be no more a part of the family environment than the laundry room. It's a lot of space and expense to take up for one or two people, a microwave, and a coffeemaker. This is the "...happens while we're watching..." part. The kitchen is a form struggling to remain usable and alive. Two camps of design provide the intravenous stimulation: mass quantities of machine carved ornament or mass

quantities of industrial steel and concrete. It doesn't matter. This will not be life support because the kitchen no longer supports life. I can hear the protests already. "But what of the all the beautiful woodwork." "We need space! Storage!" "But everyone hangs out there!"

Let's review. Space. Storage. Let's look at our closets, attics, garages, and basements. Let's face it; unless you've got squatters living there, you're the person managing those spaces! By what miracle will the kitchen be the one place our managing and input has rendered efficient? And why stop with the cereals, 6 months supply of sixteen types of gourmet crackers, sixty-five designer mustards, seventeen exotic vinegars which are the necessary stocks for the foodies' generation? Let's get the Christmas decorations in there too right behind the fourteen special recipe cranberry sauces you might even use for this year's Thanksgiving dinner so you can reach the holiday ornaments.

The truth is, if you live in a country that has our level of civilization, I think we can be pretty confident the stores will not run out of food. And even if disaster should cause that, twenty-three bottles of souvenir chutney and preserves with doily caps will not pass inspection by the Department of Home Security!

The point is: store the stuff somewhere else! Not in the space that's central to your home life. This is not the place to have a warehouse. Establish a food museum (maybe in the "den" if your house is old enough to have one) where you can commune with your truffles and visit your latest Williams-Sonoma collection.

But if storage is the priority, heck, then let's get the car in there, too. Better yet, why not a drive-up window?

That might at least bring the kids home occasionally. (Three burgers and a shake? Your total is one lawn mowed and the trash out. Please pay at the garage. Have a nice day.)

Get the pantry out of a prime living space! Which begs the question, how did the pantry get into the kitchen anyway? I think... the butler did it... as in: "Get your own crumpets, I've got class barriers to break."

Around 1650, give or take a century, people huddled in the great room, risking suffocation in front of the 18th century answer to the microwave, the 9' x 6', smoking pit, forest denuding, cauldron bubbling colonial hearth. Huddled for warmth mostly because the room drafts induced by this glowering inferno meant special chairs were needed to bury your head between wings to keep the wind from whistling in your ears. Family time in this living area lasted just long enough to eat and throw a bed warming iron in the fire. This iron would keep the sheets from cracking as your feet hit the comforter (or vice versa). Yes, there were a few storage cabinets, now often quaintly referred to as jelly cupboards. Apparently, the quest to hoard exotic preserves goes back centuries. So one wonders if this was the vision in mind when the "Great Room" was reinvented as a social architectural feature in the mid 1980's? Was this to connect us to this more elemental and desirable vision of "Home"? Was there any reality to this vision at all? And what is this space all about anyway?

To be continued: The Polenta Generation, Church of the Holy Grain, Work Triangle vs. Ménage a Triangle.

William Draper