

# HOME BUILDER MAGAZINE

**SAHBA**

the community builder

Southern Arizona Home Builders Association

**Greg Miedema:**  
Not your  
Typical Type "A"  
Ambassador

**TSIC Teaches  
Life in the Real  
Work World**

**2006 Events,  
Sponsorship  
Opportunities**



PRST STD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Tucson, AZ  
Permit No. 571

# Not your Typical “Type A” Ambassador

## Miedema Leads 2006 Board

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ROGER YOHEM

**T**he lack of a Remodelers Council prompted Greg Miedema to join SAHBA in 1994. Through his builder network, he found a strong demand for someone to organize one in Southern Arizona.

Miedema approached SAHBA's leadership with a proposal: if he became a member, would the Association sponsor his efforts to fill the void? Greg even offered to do the paperwork.

In 1995, the SAHBA Remodelers Council became a reality with 18 members. Director Keith Franklin (Vista Restoration) was a Co-chair with Greg the first year. But for the next nine years, the Council was Greg's baby and he nurtured it into a high-profile troupe.

Along the way, he got involved with the Membership Committee. Greg thrived like a wildfire, becoming one of SAHBA's chief ambassadors.

“Just like that old baseball cliché: SAHBA been good to me! I give SAHBA all the credit, along with NAHB's experts, for what I have learned,” said Miedema, Owner of Dakota Builders, Inc. (DBI).

“I can't take from any organization without giving back. Look at all the personal friends and business relations I have made. Yet, I still feel like I'm not putting enough back.”



For SAHBA, Miedema positioned remodelers as a key part of the building industry by doing seminars for the BBB, TAR and Fair Housing Commission. For consumers, he taught Aging in Place Awareness and Remodeling 101.

### Goodbye Snow

As a teen in his hometown Springfield, South Dakota, the challenge of working with his hands drew Greg into construction. He was a “brainiac,” having earned a full scholarship to study pre-medicine at a private college.

“Academics were not work for me,” he said. “But it bothered me that the worst grades I ever got were in Shop class.”

At the last minute, he put off college to

try carpentry for a year.

Between Springfield's 1,300 residents and the 400 people in nearby Avon, Greg nailed down every job he could. But family pressure pushed him back to academics, where he again excelled. Two of his five pre-med courses were Honors classes, he continued to work 30 hours a week, his daughter was born... and he scored a perfect 4.0 grade point average.

“It was too easy,” said Miedema, who



Around SAHBA, Miedema is known for three things: his offbeat humor, addiction to Diet Coke, and love of rock music. His unknown obsession is collecting dinosaur models, artifacts and related kitsch.

moved to Avon “to get back to the challenge.”

Quickly, he found his groove again. He wanted year-round work but the chilling Dakota snows put a freeze on his obsession. Greg had an uncle in Tucson so he came here in 1985.

Again, family and friends intervened. They pressured him to go back to school so this time he enrolled at UA’s College of Architecture. That venture didn’t stick, so he returned to painting and home repair. That led to apartment complex maintenance and small remodels.

### Coma Changed His Life

Over the years, he began to master the “hands on” challenge. His customer base grew, as did the size of the projects. But it all came to a crashing halt in 1990 when a serious auto accident put him in the hospital.

“I was under the steering wheel in my pickup truck. Couldn’t breathe. Ended up in a coma for four days and rehab for 30 days due to the head injury,” he said. “In hindsight, it’s the best thing that ever happened to me. It changed my life, I had to start over.”

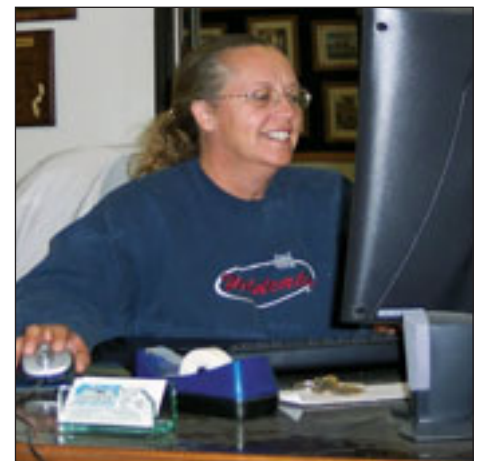
The wreck settled the inner conflict between his hands and brainiac mind. His future, he reasoned, was “to work with my mind, to no longer depend on my hands. I would sell and manage projects, and employ trades to do the work.”

Today, DBI has eight field employees who all work as Lead Carpenters (see side bar). He wants at least two more to meet consumer demand.

In remodeling, versatility rules. Nothing is typical. DBI projects range from a \$3,500 window re-do; to a \$15,000 laundry room build-out; and two master suites at \$200,000 and \$300,000 a pop.

“I will never walk away from small jobs. If I espouse consumers to use professional, licensed contractors and then no one will do the work, it hurts our credibility,” he said. “I look at it as an opportunity for a bigger job. I’ve had a \$1,500 drywall job lead to a \$50,000 remodel. There are only three sure things in life: death, taxes, and you will remodel!”

That business philosophy keeps DBI in the small-job arena, such as installing bathroom grab bars for a few hundred



Cindy Miedema is Greg’s wife and business partner. Greg said she brings him “reinforcing encouragement and the strength to make difficult decisions. She is a gift to me.”

dollars. As an Aging in Place Specialist, “I have to be willing to do it,” he said.

To prospect for clients, Miedema uses two key marketing tools: DBI’s award-winning newsletter and the SAHBA Home Show.

“The Home Show is a mystery to me. Why don’t more members take advantage of it? Sometimes I’m alone in the

# GREG AT A GLANCE

In 1987, Miedema started DBI as a one-carpenter company. Today, it is a design-build team of 10, plus consultants, organized around the Lead Carpenter System. Each is an on-site, veteran contractor with at least 10 years of experience.

Lead Carpenters have a great deal of self-direction and independence. They manage projects per the contracts put together by Greg. They do not do all the work, as trade partners help with large electrical, plumbing and mechanical projects.

"If I have to go to a job site often, I don't have the right guy out there," said Greg.

## At A Glance, Greg's Bio Covers: Professional

- Benchmark Market Leader
- Certified Graduate Builder (CGB)
- Certified Graduate Remodelor (CGR)
- CGR National Instructor
- Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS)
- Best Newsletter Award: Professional Remodelor Magazine

## NAHB

- National Board of Directors
- Remodelors Council Board of Trustees
- Past Chair: Remodelors Council Public Affairs
- Remodelors CADRE Award
- CGR Board of Governors
- CAPS Board of Governors
- Seniors Housing Advisory Council
- Nation's Building News guest columnist

## SAHBA

- Board of Directors Chairman
- Board Executive Committee
- PAC Trustee
- Remodelor's Council Co-founder
- Remodelor of the Year
- Remodelor's Council Chair
- Membership, Home Show and Safety committees

## Community Service

- Past Chair: Rebuilding Together
- Salvation Army Facilities Advisory Committee
- St. Augustine Chapel restoration
- Board, Editorial Advisor of Professional Remodelor Magazine

Remodelor's booth, meeting 20 or 25 people and getting six or eight solid leads. And it's free," he said. "People call a year later with a project, simply because I answered a few questions at the Show."

## Changing Chairs

When Miedema became Board Chairman this month, he turned his Remodelor's gavel over to John Unrein of T.J. Bednar & Company. During Greg's tenure, the Council grew to 33 members, an 83% increase.

Greg educated the Council and consumers. He became a Certified Graduate Remodelor and certificated instructor for NAHB. He raised public awareness by starting an advertising program.

He preached community service as a core value, leading the Council through numerous projects for the elderly, poor and handicapped. He urged them to participate willingly—the appreciation and recognition would come from hearts of the recipients.

## First Remodelor

SAHBA leadership recognized Greg's talents and put him on a track to the top. He has the distinction of being our longest-serving committee Chair, and the first remodelor to be named Chairman of the Board.

Sticking to his strengths, Greg plans to focus on members and membership. He chooses not to be "the pivotal decision maker" on major development issues, opting for direction from President Ed Taczanowsky.

"Ed does issues. PR does news. Government Affairs does regulations. I will do what I know. I know how to network, recruit and build relationships. I will tell everyone about SAHBA, I will be the ambassador," he said.

It peeves Greg that many business people are riding SAHBA's coattails to success. These non-members, "are along for the free ride, skipping out on their fair share."

"We can't use guilt to make them join, they have to see member benefits. See our business services. Know that regulation can hurt them. They have to value education. I want all this to be a major focus," he said.

He enjoys recruiting and wants to install it as part of SAHBA's corporate culture.

"Like any business, it has to start with the CEO in the Board Room," he said. "I will lead by example, then move it down the organization."

It will take preparation to succeed. For the first time ever, a Strategic Planning Retreat will be held for the Directors and committee chairs. That assembly will set the tone for 2006.

Greg knows there will be pressure to perform, to uphold the standards of Chairman. SAHBA



SAHBA's only 4-time Remodelor of the Year winner.



The SAHBA-Acosta Job Corps effort to help restore the St. Augustine Chapel was led by Miedema.



Membership Chair Jessica Bloom welcomes Greg's support. He has personally recruited over 100 SAHBA members.

faces many serious issues, so his trademark humor should help him tackle those tasks.

"I don't want to offend or disrespect anyone in the Association, but I intend to have fun along the way," Miedema said. "It might sound unusual, but if I can't have fun being Chairman, then it is not worth doing. If that was the way I lived my life, I'd still be in med school." •