

Building Scene

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Builders' association honors top members

Glieberman: builder of year

By Doug Funke
staff writer

Bernard Gliberman, who has spent virtually his entire life in the property management and building arenas, said he can't imagine doing anything else to earn a living.

"This is a great business," he said. "A builder takes the land, develops the land, builds the house and markets it to an end user. There's not many businesses where you take it from raw right to the end."

Glieberman, 52, a West Bloomfield resident and president of Crosswinds Communities, has been selected Builder of the Year by the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan. He was chosen for promoting the interests of the home building industry and the association.

Glieberman, who estimates that he's built some 8,000 residential units in the last 20 years, has acquired a reputation recently for building houses priced at less than \$100,000. And his efforts toward providing affordable housing helped him earn the builder of the year award.

He said his Millpoint development in Westland — 332 lots with four models carrying base prices of \$76,000-\$92,000 — is about half sold out.

Charter Oak Homes, a 140-unit development in Royal Oak Township with models carrying base prices of \$69,000-\$79,000, just opened.

\$115,000-\$130,000 range in Greenpoint at Copper Creek in Farmington Hills, he said.

Glieberman also has developed Northville Trails, an 84-lot residential subdivision in Northville Township that he will open to other builders.

Glieberman conceded that not many builders concentrate in the under-\$100,000 market nowadays.

The keys, he said, are finding relatively cheap land, obtaining savings by both preparing the land and building units there, and accepting a smaller profit margin on individual sales while producing in volume.

"It's fun and a challenge to provide housing for people, especially affordable," Gliberman said. "It really gives you a great feeling seeing people who have struggled and lived in apartments saying, 'I never thought I could afford this.' They're very appreciative."

"To me, affordable is when I can sell a house to someone who otherwise would have to rent," Gliberman said. Nearly 70 percent of the Millpoint buyers and 50 percent in the Greenpoint developments are first-time owners, he said.

GIEBERMAN THRUST himself into the property management business at the age of 17 upon the death of his father. "When he passed away, I went to the office to work with his partners and run errands. I learned how to buy, sell, fix up existing real estate."



ART EMANUEL/staff photographer

Bernard S. Gliberman was named Builder of the Year by the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan.

ONLY A FEW units remain in the

Please turn to Page 2

Burton: young builder

By Doug Funke
staff writer

To whom much is given, much is expected.

Peter Burton, 37, co-owner of a Birmingham development/building/property management company, subscribes to that philosophy.

And that's a major reason why the Bloomfield Township resident was selected Young Builder of the Year by the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan.

His company, Burton-Share-Katzman, is currently building the Winwood Condominiums in Walled Lake and developing underground work on

a couple of thousand acres in Farmington Hills, Troy, West Bloomfield and Brighton.

The company also owns and manages more than four million square feet of commercial office properties including Arboretum Office Park in Farmington Hills and Bingham Office Park.

"I've always liked building, putting things together," Burton said. "In young adulthood, I frequently found jobs to support myself in the building trades, painting houses and making small improvements."

"When I was in Los Angeles, I did odds and ends, maintenance jobs,

that gradually grew into a contracting business," he said. Burton, a third-generation builder, has teamed with Robert Katzman for six years.

"WE CONSIDER ourselves to be extremely environmentally sensitive," Burton said. "We don't approach a situation to make the most money. We want to do it right, the best we can as economically as we can."

Burton has been instrumental in efforts to build temporary housing for displaced families — Pontiac Area Transitional Housing — work at the Judson Center in Southfield for at-risk children and fund-raising for the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

"If successful people don't take the time and energy (to contribute), our social structure will eventually collapse," he said. "It's the obligation of successful people to keep civilization alive."

Friends, associates and family members mention Burton's non-business successes when giving testimonials.

"Peter is very concerned not just about his business but service to the community," said Irvin H. Yackness, executive vice president of the association. "Peter is very communicative, easy to talk to, and he's willing to share his knowledge about the building business with others."

"PETER'S INTEREST in charity makes me proud of him," said his dad, Lester. "I can't tell you how much he's given away. I'm pleased he's successful. I'm proud of the way he conducts himself."

James Bonadeo, president of the association, described Burton as a giving person.

"He's involved in housing for the homeless in Pontiac," Bonadeo said. "He's donated a lot of time, a lot of labor, a lot of funds."

"He's a young man who comes from a well-to-do family and he's gone out and made his own niche," Bonadeo added. "Lester is a prince of a guy. Peter is just as nice."

Burton serves on the association's board of directors and on the building board for the state department of licensing and regulation. Burton and wife, Sandy, live in Bloomfield Township. They have a son, Christopher.

"It was nice of the association to consider me for the award," Burton said. "There's a lot of fine builders out there. I don't know that I'm any better, but I certainly appreciate the thought."



Hall of Fame honors went to Irving Levine.

Levine: hall of fame

By Doug Funke
staff writer

Irving Levine has built a couple of thousand houses in Detroit, Oak Park, Southfield, Livonia and Farmington Hills during a career that started in 1939.

But more memorable to him were efforts he and the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan spearheaded in the 1950s to extend utilities and change school expansion laws. As a result, residential construction continued to the fringes of Detroit and into the suburbs.

"That was a dynamic time," Levine recalled. "The industry had to push forward in uncharted areas."

Levine, 73, a Farmington Hills resident, has been selected for induction into the BASM Hall of Fame, the highest honor association members can receive. The designation is conferred for leadership and devotion to the housing industry and the association.

"I never sought it, never gave it any thought," Levine said. "My wife, Ruth, knew two months before I

did. I feel very honored. I gave up trying to seek awards. It's not that I'm not interested, but let the young guys get 'em."

LEVINE LEARNED basic construction skills from his father, Sam, and studied economics in college for 3½ years. Both turned out to be useful.

Levine, strongly encouraged by his father to go it alone after serving in the tank corps during World War II, subsequently went into business as Irvine Home Builders and Burt Construction.

"It's a much more complicated business today," Levine said. "Every six, seven, eight years, the business gets knocked on its rear because of financing and other things going on. It's happening too often."

"Peoples' attitude toward housing is different," he said. "People buy ahead of income and now income is not keeping up."

"Appetite has changed tremendously. Today, a starter home is 2,000 square feet. You have to offer people a whole beek of a lot of varie-

ty. That's hard to gauge in advance. "The last 10 years things have become murderous processing paperwork," he added.

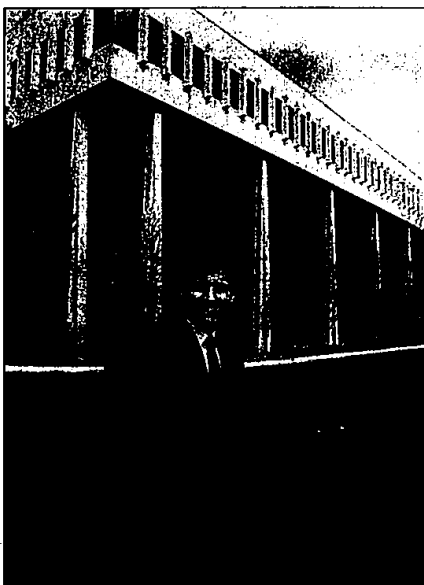
LEVINE, BASM president in 1960, currently serves as an association director. He also serves on the carpenters health and welfare board and stays active in the business as a consultant to The Irvine Group. Levine is highly respected in the industry.

"He's a very honorable gentleman," said Robert Halperin, a broker with Ralph Emanuel Associates. "We've had joint ventures. I've never seen anything in any way, shape or form that would discredit him."

"He's a very bright man, perceptive. Sometimes he's impatient because he's so quick."

"He's not driven to accumulate great wealth. He prefers to succeed at levels he sets and it's not based on money. His projects have a beginning and an end," Halperin said.

Please turn to Page 2



Peter Burton, a third-generation builder, was selected as BASM's young builder.