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& SPA**

NEWS

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Industry Remembers Pioneer Jules Field

By Rebecca Robledo Jules Field, *Pool & Spa News'* former owner and publisher, died Feb. 9 of pneumonia in Laguna Hills, Calif. He was 92.

Field purchased the magazine, then called *Pool News*, in 1961, shortly after its inception. He was publisher until June 2001, when his company, Leisure Publications, sold *Pool & Spa News* to Hanley Wood.

"Jules was an incredible person who cared about his magazines long after they were sold. While highly knowledgeable about the pool and spa industry, he was also a publishing expert who built his magazines into dominant national brands. All of us at Hanley Wood will certainly miss him," said Dick Coleman, publisher of *Pool & Spa News* and *Aquatics International*.

Cited by many as a pioneer, Field was known for his deep commitment to the industry.

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Entrapment Language Kept in IRC


By Rebecca Robledo In the first of two hearings this year, the International Code Council refused to change the entrapment-prevention language in the model codes it produces.

Current codes require a safety vacuum release system, atmospheric vent or gravity drain system on all new pools.

At a Feb. 21 meeting, an ICC committee decided to continue requiring these devices on new residential pools. A few days later, another committee retained the language for commercial installations.

The committees encouraged industry opponents to

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Retailers are embracing eco-friendly business practices they hope will pay off in the long run

By Katherine Wang Growing consumer awareness about global warming has prompted several leading retailers to rethink their sales strategies.

Just look at the big-box stores: Wal-Mart and The Home Depot have begun promoting energy-saving fluorescent light bulbs, despite the fact incandescent bulbs are more profitable. Others, such as Lowe's, Target and Timberland, now offer organic goods.

Meanwhile, Office Depot has reduced its stores' energy consumption through a number of eco-friendly initiatives, cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 10 percent. But retail giants aren't alone in shifting the paradigm from profits to preservation.

The rising cost of fuel, power and materials has prompted company owners across the spectrum to embrace an environmentally conscious approach to their businesses. Some are cutting back on energy use, while others are recycling, or reducing their consumption of paper goods. Still others are offering a wider selection of sustainable products.

Heating and cooling

Little more than a year ago, Henry Gruber unveiled plans for a new, energy-efficient retail space for his pool and sauna business. He moved his business to a new space that is 200 square feet less than the former St. Cloud, Minn., location.

The owner of Hank's Häuser in White Park, Minn., had to consider the climate in his area: bone-chilling cold in wintertime; triple digits in summer. In fact, the previous

PHOTO BY NERE ANTONI

July saw temperatures reach 90 degrees — inside the store.

So Gruber added insulation to the roof, and placed new heating and air-conditioning ducts inside the retail showroom. Installing the ducts in the store helped him maximize

10 degrees — and his furnace was turned off — enough sunlight had entered through the windows to raise the temperature inside.

Savings on electricity have been significant, Gruber notes. His first electric bill was \$180 less than at his old store.

Paradise Pools & Spas has saved approximately \$100 a month since 'greening' its store.

energy conservation because air leakage is no longer as much a problem as when ductwork is located in the attic. Gruber's insulation is protected by a vapor barrier, and the store ducts are painted a deep, muted green to blend with the ceiling.

By placing ductwork inside their buildings, retailers have found they can save money because the stores require smaller furnaces and air conditioners.

One morning, about a month after the remodel, Gruber discovered his thermostat had climbed three degrees overnight. Though the thermometer outside read a frosty

Retailer Paradise Pools & Spas is saving on utilities, too — approximately \$100 a month since "greening" its Goose Creek, S.C., store. Renovations included removing the tiles and racks of the old suspended ceiling, and adding new plaster along with 8 inches of insulation.

All that is not to say there are no complications. For starters, the retailer usually must own the building before any significant upgrades can be made. Also, the task may be hindered by age because retrofitting an older building could prove too daunting and cost-prohibitive.

Lighting

When it comes to lighting, energy savings can be realized in a number of ways. Some retailers, such as Aqua Pool & Spa in Manteca, Calif., allow natural light to illuminate their stores whenever possible. When the room needs cooling, forget about cranking up the AC. Instead, attach shades or sunscreens to the windows that receive the most direct sunlight.

"When it's bright [outside], it doesn't make a difference if [only] half the lights are on," says Gregg Whitley, vice president of Aqua Pool & Spa, which also is a Pool & Spa News Top Builder.

Among other eco-friendly adaptations, compact fluorescent light bulbs are replacing their incandescent counterparts. In addition to a longer life span, today's fluorescent lights use electronic ballasts, which turn on almost instantly, as opposed to traditional magnetic ones.

In Melbourne, Fla., Bruce Rothschild replaced the incandescent bulbs in his mood room with slow color-changing LED lights.



Saving green: The fluorescent fixtures and spiral ductwork not only look attractive, they also save on heating and cooling costs.

Most lighting alternatives tend to be expensive. Long-term savings often make up the difference for energy-efficient lighting fixtures.

The owner of Your Backyard Superstore says the colors look brighter and the LED does not emit heat like incandescent or halogen.

In addition, Rothchild says, lighting costs have dropped nearly 50 percent since the switch was made.

It's important to note that fluorescent bulbs carry unique safety requirements. Broken bulbs, for example, may release hazardous mercury vapors. Rather than just vacuuming up the pieces, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends opening windows to allow the room to ventilate for at least 15 minutes. Officials also suggest wearing protective gloves before handling broken pieces, and disposing of any waste in double plastic bags.

Unfortunately, most lighting alternatives tend toward the expensive. Fluorescent bulbs

cost three to 10 times more than incandescents. Long-term savings often make up the difference, though. The life span of fluorescents is usually eight to 10 times longer.

Recycling

In a typical month, Paradise Pools & Spas accumulates up to 4 tons of wooden pallets, which it uses to ship pool chemicals and equipment. Before, employees had to load the pallets onto a truck, drive to the local landfill



Agreeable alternatives: The faux finishes of recycled plastic furniture and decking (above and below) look so much like the real thing that some retailers are choosing them over wood products.



Selling sustainability

Advertising everything from energy-efficient pumps to solar heaters to LED lights, retailers are embracing "green" marketing like never before.

Mary Tampe of retailer Paradise Pools & Spas in Goose Creek, S.C., sends a flier to existing customers with tips on how to make their pools more eco-friendly.

"This year will be a challenge with the slower economy," she concedes. "[so] we're going to hit that higher-end market with the 'green' concept."

Aqua Pool & Spa, a Manteca, Calif.-based builder, recycles and reuses everything it can, from concrete to wires, plumbing, rebar and plaster, as well as decking and concrete on

pool renovations. It's helped the company save money on new supplies, as well as disposing of old material. The staff even carpools to job sites to save gas.

Aqua Pools has preached — and practiced — sustainability for 70 years.

But only recently has it become one of the firm's signature trademarks.

"It helps show consumers that we are [not only] concerned about customer service,

the finished quality and safety, but also environment," says Gregg Whitley, vice president.

"This method gives them the peace of mind they are looking for in a pool builder."

In fact, last year Aqua Pools unveiled a new logo, aquagreen, which now appears on its Web site, as well as on all company literature.

—KW



and pay (usually about \$40 per ton) to have them turned into mulch.

Today, that same retailer contracts with a local recycling service that comes to the store and picks up any undamaged pallets at no cost.

The recycler then resells the pallets within its own network of shipping companies.

Paradise Pools & Spas follows a similar routine for cardboard, outsourcing its paper-waste pickups. More effort is involved here,

"One of the biggest questions is, 'What do I do with all these boxes?'" Whitley says.

He directs his staff to reuse as many as possible by packing larger purchase items for customers. The retailer arranges for a local recycling plant to pick up any remaining boxes.

Of course, breaking down piles of cardboard can be time-consuming. And the labor required, Whitley notes, may even cut into profits.

"But not everything a business does has to be profitable," he says. "You do it because it's the right thing to do."

That's also why Rothschild encourages his employees to recycle in the workplace, whether it's cans, paper, cardboard or plastic. The approach seems to be paying dividends.

"I noticed that attitudes have really changed around here," he says. "Now they all recycle at home. I'm happy to hear that."

Green goods

Sustainable materials have burst onto the mainstream scene. Look no further than HGTV's Green Home Giveaway, a TV program that gives away a "green" home and

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showcases new, eco-friendly products.

Much of the "green" furniture in today's marketplace leans toward the high end. It's built out of everything from reclaimed wood to poly board to composites made from recycled plastics, pulp and resins.

Teak has emerged as a popular wood for backyard furniture, says Michael Galica, owner, president and CEO of Marin Outdoor Living in Greenbrae, Calif. But you must be aware of its source, he warns. Old growth or reclaimed teak is a very hard, durable wood. But the plantation variety that's being exported largely from Indonesia and South America is a monoculture, which means it's young and porous, and doesn't withstand the elements as well.

Galica makes sure all his wood has been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, an international organization that promotes responsible management of the world's forests. In fact, he acquires all the reclaimed teak in his furniture direct from the FSC.

He also carries the denser, heavier Brazilian Ipe and Machiche, a dark wood from



its time will come. Though "green" tables and chairs are selling well, some products, such as this colorful line of recycled plastic dinnerware, are taking a little longer to catch on with consumers.

Guatemala whose cost is comparable to plantation teak. A set of table and four chairs made of the material runs about \$700.

The pieces have sold so well over the past two years that Galica is currently designing a signature line of stainless steel

and reclaimed teak products from Indonesia and Costa Rica.

Rothschild, too, is branching out. He started carrying a refined polymer from the California Design Group, an Akron, Ohio-based company that creates spa steps and bars, planters and storage units from recycled milk cartons.

Because manufacturing composites is more labor-intensive, the end result is typically not cheap, which is another potential problem for retailers. Richlite Co. of Tacoma, Wash., makes its furniture from resins and recycled paper pulp at a plant in Los Angeles. The company sells dining table sets from \$5,000 to \$6,000.

In other cases, the market simply may not be ready for sustainable goods. Two years ago, retailer/builder Aqua Quip began carrying a line of recycled plastic dinnerware. The move has yet to pay off.

"[We're] not sure why it has not sold," says Kathleen Carlson, senior vice president of sales and marketing at the Renton, Wash.-based Pool & Spa News Top Builder. "[Management] really loved it. But we brought it in and it has sat at the stores." ■