

INSIDE CORNER ::



MyGreenBuildings' prototype "green rebuild."

The Anti-McMansion

Tired of tear-down homes replaced by McMansions, the two-story, boxy structures that tower over more modest, older homes? Steve Ellis and Grant Castilow are. The two feel it's "clearly cool to build smaller and smarter than go for size."

"Everyone is building McMansions, but we feel that our generation really needs to be more fascinated by the concept of conservation," says Ellis, 43, co-founder of Sarasota-based MyGreenBuildings, LLC (www.mygreenbuildings.com).

Preserving the existing architecture and look of neighborhoods throughout Sarasota County is what Ellis and Castilow are all about. The two joined forces to start a company focused on rebuilding existing homes according to "green" standards and practices. That means using sustainable, renewable materials and energy efficient design.

The company is now building a new home on Lido Key in "Sarasota School Style," or, mid-century modern architecture. Construction of the 2,000-square-foot home will incorporate various sustainable methods and techniques, Ellis says.

Other projects include gutting and rebuilding a home on Siesta Key

Dr. of Diversity

This month we welcome Roy Kaplan, Ph.D., to our line-up of columnists (see page 13). Kaplan is an expert in corporate diversity – what it means, what it encompasses and how to achieve it.

He's received numerous awards and has written three books, a slew of articles, and has racked up more than 250 radio and television appearances, including the Today Show, Good Morning America and Prime Time Live. Kaplan is former executive director of the Tampa Bay Chapter of the National Conference for Community and Justice and currently is adjunct professor in the Department of Africana Studies at the University of South Florida.

He's passionate about dispelling myths – that diversity can be achieved in a two-hour training class or that it's all about quotas, affirmative action and stereotypes. His quarterly columns should help business owners and executives understand why a diverse workplace is a profitable workplace.

that's plagued with mold, and turning a 1,000-square-foot, postwar home into a 2,000-square-foot energy efficient home. The latter (see photo, above left) was ranked as the second highest-rated sustainable home in Florida by the Florida Green Building Coalition.

"It's about working with the existing infrastructure," says Ellis, "instead of tearing it all down."

For more about residential real estate, see page 15.

The Place to Do Time?

The folks at Manatee County Jail are serious about saving money. Their minimum-risk inmates raise cattle, grow crops, gather the eggs of some 3,000 chickens, dabble in hydroponic crops and raise tilapia fish. Their meat processing plant even accepts wild hogs from area trappers. And what's raised or grown at the jail stays at the jail, going straight from the fields to the cafeteria.

"We're saving money by using their labor, but what we want is to give them something they can take back and use," says Randy Warren, assistant public information officer for the jail.

Imagemakers :: Ah ha ha ha! Ah ha ha ha!

Those three crouching, laughing, orange-shirted Bay City Plywood guys seen in local TV commercials may be changing – just a bit – in the months ahead. The happy trio has signed on Palm Harbor's CMSA Advertising & Public Relations to create a new marketing campaign. CMSA vice president Mary Devine says the men will be tweaked, but not silenced.

"We're never going to abandon the laughing guys," she says. "We're going to take the laughing guys to new places, and do lots



of fun things."

First up is getting the public to realize the Tampa-based company – with five stores in the bay area – is really about kitchen and bath cabinets, not just plywood. Look

for new billboards, TV and radio spots starting this month, Devine says, with the new name Bay City Plywood & Cabinets.

"That's stage one," says Devine. "We have such exciting plans." So are those three owners always so jolly? "Part of you expects them to break out into the laugh anytime," she says.