

Select
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EDITORIAL:

Is A "Clique" Running Your Monument Dealer Association?

Do you believe that your state or local monument dealer association is run by a "clique"? This is a charge commonly heard in many state associations. If you believe that your association is run by a "clique" there is only one thing to do — join it!

If you join your association you will find that it is easy to gain admission to the "inner circle." All you have to do is to regularly attend meetings . . . work hard to get new members . . . be interested in your association activities . . . volunteer for committees and really do a job. Soon you will see that "clique" is just a name for a respected group of truly devoted members of your monument dealer's association.

There is a growing number of state monument dealer associations that can point with some pride to significant accomplishments they have made for their members. They have been successful because a group of dealers have diligently worked to create programs that provide practical assistance to traditional memorialization on the state and local level.

Recently Albert R. Kates, Editor of The American Cemetery Magazine (who's attended hundreds of conventions) made a comment that should hit home to every state program chairman in the monument industry. Mr. Kates said:

"It seems to us that what the vast majority of convention goers want is a program geared entirely to the problems involved in their every day work; practical information that will help them do a better job — information that they cannot get elsewhere."

These words apply to the monument industry. The main reason why the Barre Granite Association has worked to develop its one-day Monument Dealer Business Conference is to provide practical information that will help dealers do a better job — information that they cannot get elsewhere, even at a dealer convention. In other words, we believe there needs to be less drinking and more thinking when convention time is at hand.

There are many monument dealers who have excellent information and advice to give their fellow dealers at a convention. These are the people that should be speaking — not outsiders from the insurance business or the brokerage field. Our own traditional memorialists possess the knowledge that can help all of us improve our skills, brighten our image and raise our profits as monument manufacturers and retailers.

Milt Lyndes

BGA General Manager

About Our Cover Picture

This tiny child's memorial was recently noticed by your photographer in Hope Cemetery, Barre, Vermont. This is one of hundreds of examples of the originality and imagination shown by Barre's famed artisans over the years. The memorial is simple in design, almost humble in execution. Yet, it creates a poignant and moving expression as meaningful today as it was 49 years ago when the monument was erected.



Huge Statue of Champlain Beginning to Take Shape



The last issue of the Select Barre Newsletter revealed plans for a huge Barre Granite statue of Samuel de Champlain to be carved at the World Exposition in Montreal called Expo '67.

The 70,000 pound block was lifted from the quarry and was recently sawn by the largest wire saw in the Barre District, located at the famous Wells-Lamson Quarry Saw Plant, under the direction of Morris Leventhal, Plant Manager.

The sculptor, Ferdinand Weber of Barre, has laid out his patterns on the huge block and will shortly begin to remove more excess granite and rough out the statue prior to its being transported to the Vermont Pavilion at Expo '67.



Ferdinand Weber, second from left, is shown laying out a large paper pattern on the block of Barre granite recently lifted from one of the Rock of Ages quarries. By outlining the pattern Weber provides guidelines for the Wells-Lamson Saw Plant personnel in setting up the huge block under the wire saw.

TIPS ON MONUMENT SELLING

If you are a pessimist, you probably don't do a top job as a retail monument salesman. A good monument salesman (or any other kind of salesman) is an optimist. He knows that an optimist's positive personality will impress the customer and help sell the merchandise.

Every star salesman has his black moments — a depressive period when things just don't go right. But these periods do not occur during the face-to-face confrontation between the salesman and his customer.

The salesman who talks too much will talk himself right out of the sale. If you find yourself working hard — making a lot of calls — but winding up with too few monument sales, perhaps you are talking too much. If you analyze the situation you may find there are two reasons for this. First, you may lack a sensitivity for the monument prospect's feelings; second, you may not understand the nature of the selling process. The monument prospect will buy your product only when he is convinced it will help him to get something he wants. How can you be sure what he wants unless you ask questions and listen keenly to his comments? If the monument salesman feels a compulsion to keep on talking this may reveal his insecurity and lack of confidence in himself and/or his product.

Don't be afraid of a moment of silence during the selling situation. This may be a good way to force your

prospect to open up and say something. You will listen your way into a lot more sales than you will ever talk your way into.

Another way of determining whether you as a memorial salesman are an optimist is to analyze how you react to objections. The optimist never considers the customer's objections as anything but opportunities and challenges. An objection, after all, may very well be a sign of interest. A disinterested person won't even bother to raise an objection. After you get over the hurdle of the objection then you are in an excellent position to close the sale.

We all know that some objections are convenient excuses to postpone action. Other objections are "smoke screens" to cover up the real objection that the prospect does not want to mention. The good salesman is clever enough to find out why objections are made. This may require questions and additional conversation.

The easiest type of objection to overcome is when your monument prospect simply has a lack of understanding of the facts. Here all you have to do is to clarify and explain the facts. And, if you don't have the facts, whose fault is it? Yours, maybe?

Here is a helpful tactic for you to use when your monument prospect raises an objection. First, assume that his objection is the reason for not buying. You must answer this objection. If he raises another objection, answer that one too *and then try and close the sale.*

If he raises still another objection, call a halt and face the issue squarely. Tell him frankly that you have answered his objections but that you feel that he has not given you the real reasons for not buying. Ask him to tell you the real reason so that you can provide him with a proper answer. This should break the ice and put you in a better position to close the sale.

Never treat an objection as a "no" answer. To the good monument salesman an objection simply means "not yet."

After observing hundreds and hundreds of monument salesmen throughout the country we have noticed that the better salesmen are not inclined to complain about their competition. It is more usually the less capable monument salesman that complains about price competition and all the other "ills" of the industry.

Ohio Dealers Give "Salesman of the Year" Honors to Barre Representative

The Monument Builders of Ohio held their convention this Fall — one of the best on record. This year they made an award to the "Salesman of the Year." It was not difficult for them to choose Gus Pepin, Regional Sales Manager for Jones Brothers Company of Barre, Vermont.

Gus Pepin's winning personality and genuine helpfulness to his customers and to the Ohio dealer organization make him one of the more popular wholesale representatives in the Midwestern Area. Jones Brothers Company is a member of the Barre Granite Association, and its Sales and Advertising Manager is Dick McBride who served last year as the President of the BGA.



Gus Pepin



The huge Barre granite block stands on its base. Approximately 10 tons of excess granite have been removed by the giant Wells-Lamson Saw. Ferdinand Weber, the sculptor, is making preparations to remove additional excess granite by channeling. Weber is one of nearly 40 sculptors employed in the Greater Barre Area. He will perform most of his work on the statue within the Vermont Pavilion Expo '67 in Montreal where four million visitors will view his efforts.

Good Apprentices are the Backbone of Barre's Craftsmanship



Jim Gray, Shop Instructor, for Barre's Apprentice School, helps an apprentice lay out a slant marker. Granite is contributed by the member-companies of the Barre Granite Association.

The Barre granite industry continues to refine its Apprentice Training Program in order to provide skilled craftsmen to carry on the great traditions of Barre's memorial art.

Over the years two major factors have helped Barre to create the type of craftsman that is needed to live up to the standards demanded by Barre customers. These factors are: (1) manufacturers and skilled arti-

sans who were willing to devote their time toward training new people and training them in the best possible way; (2) the selection and use of a single Apprentice Training Plant where full and complete attention could be devoted toward the basic training of granite cutter apprentices.

An Apprentice Training School is another of the many "firsts" credited to Barre granite manufacturers. No other granite producing area has its own training plant.

Craig White, BGA Manager of Member Services, has primary responsibility for administrating the Apprentice Training Program in the Barre Area. Jim Gray, former owner of the South End Polishing Mill teaches apprentice granite cutters the rudiments of their skills. No better teacher could be found than Barre's own Jim Gray.

John Watt, formerly a partner in the American Granite Co., is charged with the classroom training of granite apprentices. John's many excellent years of experience in the field of design and manufacturing makes it possible for students to learn those essentials that they cannot learn in the plant.

"Training for Excellence" is the watchword in the Vermont granite industry. Its benefits are evident in the thousands of fine memorials that are shipped to dealers throughout the country.



These men play key roles in Barre's Apprentice Training. Beginning at left are Craig White, Manager of Member Services of the Barre Granite Association. Next is Paul Nutter, Director of Vocational Training in the Barre Public Schools, and at the far right is John Watt, Instructor of Related Training for Granite Apprentices. This picture was taken in Barre's Apprentice Training School. In the foreground an apprentice is learning the use of simple drawing instruments.



These men were once apprentices. Over a period of many years they learned the use of tools of their trade and eventually became sculptors and carvers. Today these men are part of Barre's famous team of artisans.

Two Barre Granite Dealers Receive Scholarships to Institute

Frank R. Vincent of Galena, Illinois, and Fred L. Arnet, II, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, were the lucky dealers to receive full scholarships to courses sponsored by the Monument Industry Educational Foundation in Evanston, Illinois.

The Barre Granite Association offered two full scholarships to retail monument dealers purchasing at least \$3,000 worth of product during the past year. A drawing was held and the lucky winners were Frank Vincent and Fred L. Arnet, II.

Your Barre friends would like to thank the hundreds of dealers who applied for this scholarship.