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DI GIACOMO

HOMES & RENOVATION, INC.

MN DESIGN/BUILD REVIEW

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Welcome!

This month's e-newsletter covers all things summer -- ideas for backyard living space, facts and figures about solar electricity, and an upcoming decorating event that will get you outside!

DREAM ABOUT IT : OUTDOOR SPACE



S'mores in the Backyard!

Golden Valley homeowners, Joe and Kristi Druskin, hired us to create a space where they could relax, share meals, and entertain -- outside. "We really want this space to feel like a room," Kristi told us during design consults. "But we don't want a screened in porch."



The Druskin's new outdoor space is a marriage of patio design and landscape architecture. In order to create the room-like features that Kristi wanted, we constructed a "floor" of permeable stone pavers and then added "walls" and a "ceiling" using stone planters filled with perennials and a pergola.

The room's gathering point is a fire pit where evenings are spent with family and friends. "As soon as our neighbors see the smoke from our firepit, they come right over," says Joe with a smile. "Fortunately, they bring wine." S'mores-making supplies, too, are always close at hand. (We're told Kristi makes amazing [smore-cruste apples](#). YUM!)



The majority of surfaces were constructed of maintenance-free materials such as white Azak trim (no pairing required - ever) and natural stone. The white trim and NY Bluestone also serve an aesthetic purpose; they lend an air of quality and sophistication to the Druskins' otherwise humble rambler facade. Visit our [project gallery](#) to learn more about this charming patio which won the 2010 Contractor of the Year Award for "Best Exterior."

LEARN ABOUT IT : NEW PRODUCTS, TECHNOLOGIES

Net ZERO Energy Part I: Harvesting Electricity & Utility Credits from the Sun

For a home to achieve Zero-Energy it is not enough to conserve through exceptional energy efficiencies; the home must also generate its own power. This is where photovoltaics (PV) comes into play. (PV is the generation of electricity from the sun.)

Solar panels harvest electricity from the sun all year long - but they really go to work during summer months - when the sun is high and the days are long. The [Sharp](#) brand 22 panel solar-array, installed by [Innovative Power Systems](#) at our Green Dream Home in Golden Valley, is a 5kW (five thousand watt) system - enough to off-set the electrical usage of a typical Minnesota home that is heated using natural gas (the largest energy user of a home).



However, the Green Dream Home is heated and cooled using an electric-powered geothermal heating and cooling system. Geothermal eliminates natural gas usage in the home but does add to its electric load. We conservatively estimate that the 5kW PV system will offset 70% - 75% of the Green Dream Home's *total energy* usage - bringing us close to our goal of using net zero energy!

State law requires "[Net-Metering](#)" meaning the home's electric meter is able to run forward *and backward*. (No batteries or other complicated/expensive equipment is required.) During overcast months, when the home does not generate enough electricity to cover its full usage, the home's owners will be able to purchase what's needed at the all-electric home rate of about \$0.06/watt. During sunny months, when the panels produce more than needed, the home gets a paycheck - at green rates: \$0.13/watt. **Don't rent your energy. Own it.**

[Contact us](#) if you're interested in solar as a retrofit or for your new home.

GET OUT AND SEE IT : EVENT



Furnishing and Accessory Ideas for Outdoor Spaces

Gabberts' Associate Designer, Mark Nunemacher, will share design ideas for furnishing and decorating your outdoor spaces -- patios, porches, and screen rooms. Grab a friend, head for coffee or dinner at the Galleria, and then get ready to enjoy an hour of design



Make [reservations](#) for this event, *Moving Out(doors)*, through Gabberts Design Studio.

When: Tuesday, June 21st, 6:30 - 7:30 pm.
Where: Gabberts Design Studio, [3501 Galleria](#), in Edina.
Cost: Free.

CONTACT US

DiGiacomo Homes & Renovation, Inc. is an [award-winning](#), husband and wife, [design/build firm](#) that is honored to bring timeless beauty, value and sustainability to neighborhoods throughout the Twin Cities. For more than 20 years we have been invited by our clients to remodel existing homes and to build new in beloved neighborhoods such as Tyrol Hills, Linden Hills, Bell Oaks and many others. Our services include **architectural design + interior finish selection + construction**. [Contact us](#) with questions or to begin creating the home you want in the neighborhood you love!

Sincerely,

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Enjoy Cooking in Your New Kitchen with MN Grown Produce

What better way to enjoy your new kitchen than with a box of freshly harvested, organic fruits and vegetables delivered to your door each week? When you choose DiGiacomo Homes & Renovation to remodel your kitchen (kitchen remodels begin at \$40K), we will purchase a half share CSA membership in your name from [Food For Thought CSA](#).

Offer Applies to Kitchen Remodel Contracts Signed: June 15 - August 15, 2011. CSA share may be applied this season or in 2012.

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