

# On Friendship

**R**alph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "I do not wish to treat friendships daintily, but with roughest courage. When they are real, they are not glass threads or frost work, but the solidest thing we know."

Following our annual conference and awards presentations in Chicago, such thoughts have come to me frequently. Each year, as I spend time with builders, designers, manufacturers and their families, our bonds deepen. We share a recognition of the transient nature of the homebuilding business, of our own personal goals.

Every year, we receive the same feedback about our educational programs: "More roundtables, please." In this business, I have come to realize, personal relationships mean the difference between success and failure.

Want a template for success? Let me introduce you to some of my friends: John Barrows, Greg McCaffery, Ray Tonjes, Reed and Melody Fry, Stan Gaskins, John Swider, Mary Schreuder, Mike Bercutt, Susan Edwards, Fred Parker, Alan Gelet, Roy Dalene. What do they have in common?



Almost nothing. But ask for help, and help will be given. Expect

great things, and expectations will be exceeded. Promises will be kept, even when they cause inconvenience and great personal expense. Commitments will be honored. In these uncertain times (and when have they not been uncertain?) the solidarity of friendship is a rare and valued thing. Thanks—and cheers.



Above: CB's editor-in-chief presents the 1998 Custom Builder of the Year Grand Award to Richard Menard (at left) and Steve Koenig.

Right: Dave Hill of AMX Corp. regaled us with his quick wit, while presenting the first AMX "Forerunner Award."

Below: Roy Dalene (at left) and Sony's Jeff Goldstein made the most of our Sony-sponsored blues party at a local Chicago pub.

Bottom: John Barrows and Susan Edwards chat with journalist Denis Sheahan of Long Island, NY.

Left: Long-time friend Stan Gaskins finds a comfortable spot at the downtown blues party.



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