

Design/build is now

BY RON HALL / Editor in Chief

In a pre-dawn winter drizzle I'm sliding pavers out of the back the wife, Vicky's 10-year-old Chevy Blazer. It's filled with 5-lb. pavers, 258 to be exact, the last of more than two tons of pavers that we've purchased the previous several days. I carry the red, brick-sized blocks, stacked five high, in gloved hands. In the rain I arrange them in neat rectangular rows on the turfgrass and mud (now mostly mud) behind our 85-year-old, white, two-story frame home.

I'm not happy. My aged Eagle Summit won't start. Predictably. That means I'm driving the Blazer to the office. I want to drive an "empty" Blazer.

You've probably guessed what's coming next — Vicky has decided she *will* have a decorative stone patio complete with fireplace. By summer she *will* have it. My orders are clear — to remove the 18-year-old deck that we rarely use anymore and begin the task of laying pavers in spring.

Plans carefully drawn and redrawn, Vicky (even in the leafless gray of winter) envisions clinking wine glasses, friends and soft conversation on warm summer nights. She hears soft music and feels the warmth of a crackling fire as lightning bugs wink in the moon glow of her nearby flower garden. It's frightening.

Does that sound familiar, from some of your clients, I mean?

Outdoor home entertaining is not a trend; it's a phenomenon. Patios. Stone walkways. Outdoor kitchens. Water features. Pergolas. Formal gardens.

Homeowners get it. They appreciate that their properties are not there just to mow and fuss over. They realize that their outdoor properties should add

pleasure to their lives. They want to enjoy their properties. Landscape design/build is hot, hot, hot.

That's why you'll be seeing expanded coverage of design/build topics in this and upcoming issues of *Landscape Management*. Coverage will include features that you enjoyed in sister publication *Landscape Design/Build*. They're now a regular part of this magazine.

Why are we integrating LDB into LM? Partly for practical reasons. In the publishing trade they're known as production, printing and postage.

We also realized (admittedly later than we should have) that many readers of LM didn't receive LDB. Even if most of you are maintenance contractors, we feel you will eventually offer clients design/build/installation services. It's a natural progression. Why shouldn't you be getting valuable design/build information, too?

Are we excited about featuring fantastic landscapes in the pages of LM along with the great business and operations management we've been delivering for decades — you better believe it.

And from purely selfish reasons, LM's expanded coverage gives me a better chance of finding someone in the industry to give me pointers on building a decorative patio. I figure I've got about three months.

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