

The Joys of Making Good Better

By Ingrid Kidd Goldfarb, President, Trojan Professional Services, Inc.

When my husband and I moved into our “dream home,” I declared I would never move again. They could take me out in a pine box. Moving was that stressful.

It wasn't long before we realized our dream was not as perfect as we'd thought. We had a swimming pool and to get from it to the bathroom you had to walk through the living room and dining room—more than inconvenient for grandchildren who inevitably needed to “go” after they were in the pool. I was constantly cleaning up a trail of wet footprints. The laundry room was upstairs so I was schlepping wet towels and robes through the house and up the stairs. The solution seemed clear. We would add a bathroom/laundry room by the pool.

Sound simple? It wasn't. I found myself dealing with contractors, building permits, inspectors, homeowners association rules, and delays because products we had chosen were not available for shipping. Adding a simple, functional, 12' x 9' room to the back of our house took six and a half months and cost more than the first house I owned.

I enjoyed Michael Unthank and Geri True's article about remodeling or moving for this edition of *Trojan Today*. We have moved the Trojan offices twice and re-built a few times in the last 30 years as our needs have changed. Here is what I would add to their article, from both my personal and business experience:

- **Interview and check references of contractors before you hire anyone.** Choose the contractor you can trust and work well with, who may or may not provide the lowest bid. Ideally go with someone referred to you by someone who had a good experience with the contractor. Make sure the contractor will make your project their primary focus. Delay start of the project until they can commit to staying on the project every day until it is completed.
- **Put your most organized and detail oriented staff member in charge of the project.** After you have set the budget and basic needs, give the authority to make decisions. That person will be the project manager and need to have daily contact with the contractor.

- **Plan for every contingency.** Make sure every material needed is ready before you begin. Get permits and schedule inspections. It almost always costs more and takes longer than you anticipate, so build those considerations into your expectations.
- **Throw a party.** When everything is completed, have an open house and invite your patients, families of staff, and surrounding businesses. Show off your new digs or redecorated space and ENJOY.

