



## HELLO FRIENDS!

Hope this finds you enjoying spring and happily busy. My team is happily busy designing and building away this spring!

As always, there's a lot happening in the business of remodeling to keep us on our toes. **A recent study by Harvard Remodeling Futures concluded that more home improvement products were introduced in the last 3 years than the previous 100 years combined!** WOW! Daunting and no surprise if, as you think about your remodel project, you feel confused, overwhelmed or even discouraged to simply begin the process.

It's true - with technologies developing and improving, choices have exploded. Daily when opening my inbox I can count on several new product intros showing up. Launching this newsletter is my attempt to help you sort through the myriad of choices. First, I'll take on countertops as there is a lot to talk about and the discussion will continue for another issue or two. Then I'll move on to ventilation, flooring, appliances; the list goes on and on...

Please pass this on to your friends, family, acquaintances that can make use of the information. And have them call me if they would like a complimentary consultation on their remodel project. I'm continually grateful for the repeat and referral business that comes my way.

**Karen Richmond,**  
CMKBD, CAPS, CGP  
Design Consultant  
503.335.9283  
[karen.richmond@neilkelly.com](mailto:karen.richmond@neilkelly.com)

## NEIL KELLY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Albina Rotary Club developed the Neil Kelly Memorial Scholarship fund as a way to honor and memorialize charter member Neil Kelly when he passed in 1997.

A fitting memorial it is as Kelly was a self-made man who respected education and community service above all. The first year, a \$1,000 scholarship was funded for one student; this year, from a field of thirty-four well deserving applicants, four will be awarded a \$2,000

## Sorting Through The Choices, Part One: *COOL* COUNTERTOP DESIGN

According to Kim Berndtson of *Kitchen & Bath Design News*:

"In today's home, countertops are much more than just a work surface. They also serve as an integral part of the design, and often as a focal point for the space.

The growing number of countertop materials offered by manufacturers makes it easier, and in many cases more fun, to design with countertops that command attention. Consider the opportunities provided with materials that range from natural stone and quartz, solid surface and wood to glass, metal, recycled materials and more. Add a bit of creativity with interesting angles, mixed materials and LED lighting, and every client can have a unique statement piece designed specifically for them."

I couldn't agree more! Here's a kitchen my team recently completed that features "cool countertop design."

### NORTHEAST PORTLAND HOME

**Goal:** Open the kitchen from the small box it was to the rest of the house for light and ease in entertaining.



Before Remodel

**Materials Used:** Copper Meteorite Granite with a satin finish and Oregon Walnut for bookshelf top/room divider.

**Desired Look:** Lighten the space making it fun and playful. This family is all about fun, family and friends and these natural stone counters create a perfect background for the lively colors in the kitchen. The "brushed" satin finish on this Copper Meteorite granite creates a slightly dimpled and matte surface cutting down on the glare and shine of typical highly polished granite. Oregon black walnut on the bookcase was selected for the warm, rich glow it offers as a contrast to the liveliness of the kitchen.



After Remodel

annual scholarship, renewable for four years.

I've been pleased to be involved in the selection process over the past few years; it's a challenge but also very rewarding at the Rotary luncheon to see the winners' faces. They have worked hard and deserve it.

If you have an interest in attending the award luncheon on Friday, May 29th at 11:30am, please let me know and we'll make room for you at our table. Or if you might like to make a donation to the fund, also let me know.

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### SEE KAREN'S COUNTERTOP IDEAS IN PRINT!



This Old House Magazine quoted me in an April 2015 article titled "[How the Pros Cut Costs \(Not Corners\).](#)" Here's my #1 tip:

"Check out lower-grade granite slabs when shopping for countertops. Fall in love with a top-tier stone? Often there's one that's nearly identical at a lower price. You may find essentially the same look that a high-priced Group D slab has in Group C for \$2,000 to \$3,000 less. 'There's nothing inferior about the quality of a lower-grade stone,' says Karen Richmond, a kitchen designer in Portland, Oregon. "It's likely from a quarry in South Dakota instead of Brazil."

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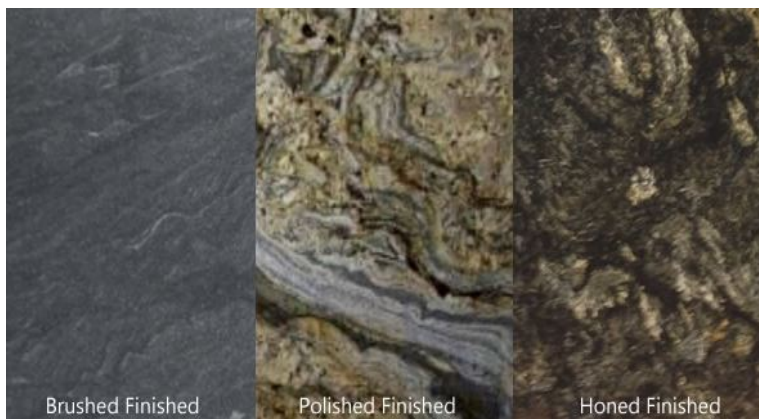


Satin or Brushed Finish

**A word about Granite and Natural Stone Countertops:** Natural stones provide the most unique of countertop materials as each piece boasts its own pattern and color that won't be found in man-made materials. Most granite is hard and durable, but not indestructible as they can chip, scratch and stain. Penetrating sealers help in preserving the counter when first installed, although the user will still want to exert care with oils and acids (think oil and vinegar). Oils can stain deeply and acids can etch the surface.

Typically granite is used for kitchen applications as it is harder than marble, limestone and travertine which are more commonly used in bathrooms.

We are using interesting finishes beyond the typical polished variety (see photos below).



With a honed finish, the polishing process ends before buffing to create a matte or low-gloss sheen that lacks the highly reflective, mirror-like look of traditional granite. This softer honed finish is particularly popular among clients wanting an aged or casual look. Keep in mind that it is, contrary to what you may think, actually more absorbent than polished and requires more effort to keep clean as it is susceptible to finger prints and watermarks. Also without a light reflecting glossy finish to distract the eye, the natural imperfections of granite are more visible with a honed finish.

To create a brushed finish, manufacturers gently brush the granite's surface until it becomes textured and appear worn-in. Because of the brushing process, granite countertops with this finish are more porous in comparison to glossy polished granite. And the color will become a bit diluted, as happens with the honing process also.



**A word about Wood Countertops:** Best used as accent pieces outside of the work area, wood can provide a wonderful texture and color contrast. Of course, you may choose to install a butcher block counter as a good workhorse if you are OK with the inevitable cut and patina surface that results. There are many sources of reclaimed wood including storm damaged trees, sinker logs, old beams, old barn wood, etc. and lesser known species such as Madrone. All make stunning one-of-a-kind counters.

**STAY TUNED! In my next newsletter I'll tackle Glass and Wood Countertops.**

**GET INSPIRED AND GET STARTED WITH KAREN RICHMOND AND NEIL KELLY!**

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Neil Kelly | 804 N. Alberta St. | Portland | OR | 97217