

# EAGA Business Builder

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## Today's speaker was Phillip Menicucci—Paramount Custom Cabinets



Mr. Menicucci grew up in Albuquerque as part of a somewhat large family. He was the sixth of six children. It is likely that youngster Phil had a good selection of hand-me-downs, but trailing through the schools behind five other siblings was more than a little disconcerting. The school teachers and staff that were educating Phil were primarily that same folks that were there when his older brothers and sisters moved through the classrooms. As a result, Phil felt that he didn't have a record of his own. He was regularly being compared to one or another of his older sibling's intelligence or athletic skills. Being compared to one older brother would be troubling, but tolerable, however when there are five options for comparison, things can get a bit overwhelming. Up to middle school, the system of choice had been the Catholic Schools. At that point, Phil's parents decided that perhaps, a change to the public school system would be best. Phil jumped at the chance. It wasn't that he was disenchanted with the Catholic system. He was very interested in going to a school where his new teachers hadn't had any experience with his older brothers or sisters, and, therefore, no basis for comparison with them. And an added benefit...Phil's mother had signed him up for a wood shop class. That turned out to be one of the best benefits of the switch. He really liked the Jefferson Middle School version of the public school system. Phil continued that path even as he progressed to Highland High School. He really liked that school too. To be more specific, Phil was delighted with the shop classes at Highland. By the time he was a Junior, the class was 2 hours long and had only 15 to 18 students. A great format for actually learning various aspects of the trades. When Phil was a senior (really only 1 year later) the class had expanded to be 3 hours long. An excellent program for learning, as far as Mr. Menicucci was concerned. It was sad to hear that only a few years later, the APS administration tapped their amazing analytical capabilities and decided that a 3 hour block of time was too long to allocate to one class, and only 15 to 18 students was definitely too few for efficiency. The classes were changed, and future students will not be able to benefit from the same positive learning environment that Phil and his classmates had experienced. After High School, Menicucci child number 6 moved on to UNM. He hadn't yet completely scoped out his life long career dreams, or just what degree to pursue. But after the first two semesters, Phil did figure out that the university was not offering a formal degree for his primary interests at the time—drinking and partying. Maybe he should fall back to one of his other primary interests. Phil decided to leave the wild world of college and enter the wild world of working for a living. Over time, he found a job at a couple of small cabinet shops. Then, at age 20, the adventurous Mr. Menicucci started buying apartments. (After the presentation, one of those older siblings noted that Phil had ingeniously funded his purchase of properties by using credit card cash advances that he then paid off in a relatively short time with revenues generated by the purchased properties). In 1984, Phil started his own cabinet shop. His first place of operation was a small 1,800 sq ft building with a 7 foot ceiling and a long and narrow (9 foot wide) work area. Phil had to open the garage door so that he could go out to turn around a long board on which he was working. Then, about 6 years later, at age 30 years old, Phil's shop went out of business. He took a job working for Sears Home Improvement Center, but he didn't keep it for too long. The work just wasn't one of the more exciting things he was looking to do forever. Maybe a complete change of scenery would shed some light on a long term future career. As we have discovered, Phil is not just any ordinary thinking guy. To him, it appears that a change in scenery meant a change in everything. At age 32, Phil headed to Calcutta to do missionary work with Mother Theresa. It sounds like it was indeed an amazing experience. Hands on, every day work in a leprosarium; personal conversations with Mother Theresa; trying to keep flies out of the operating room; and assisting with surgical procedures. Not on the bucket list of very many folks, but a very admirable experience none the less. After completing that unique experience, Phil decided to take the long way home. He returned to the USA with brief stopovers in Kathmandu, Bangkok, and Singapore. Then back to Albuquerque to give his woodworking shop another go. Moving forward a couple of years to 2001 when Phil's accountant suspected that Mr. Menicucci was sort of just muddling through life. He (the accountant) stepped in and arranged Phil's next life altering event - a singles cruise. The accountant made the right call. Phil met Susan on that trip, and in 2003, a Jewish girl from New York married a Catholic boy from New Mexico. Over the years, they have adopted two boys from Guatemala, and Samuel and Noah, teenagers now, are growing up to be pretty darn good youngsters. Phil's cabinet shop, Paramount Custom cabinets, is also doing well. Mr. Menicucci and his three to five person team, create fabulous products, primarily for commercial customers. Paramount has, however, also won awards for work that they have done for residential clients too. Phil still dabbles in the real estate world as well. He noted a warehouse that he has owned in Rio Rancho for a number of years. It has always been occupied, even through the 2008, 2009 economic down turn. He purchased a relatively adjacent property with the intent of building another warehouse there. The estimated 1 year project has taken 3 years so far. Changes in Rio Rancho regulations have certainly prolonged the process for this type of project. The recent surge in commercial lumber has not yet been a problem for Phil's work because the increases have not yet affected the hardwoods category, which is the type primarily used for cabinetry. If you would like to have some fine cabinets made for your business (or, your home if you catch Phil on a good day) give him a call at 505-842-5678. He may also be coerced into telling amazing stories of experiences in Calcutta, or interesting adventures about travels through the Far East, or he may even be willing to admit how little he was bullied in his younger days because of dedicated overwatch by his five older, smarter, and more athletic siblings.

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- ◆ We are sad to announce the passing of Bernie Butterfield. He was a well known member of our community and a long time member of EAGA. His funeral will be held at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church, 4020 Lomas Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM on May 25, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. (masks required). More information, and information regarding family preference for memorial gifts can be found at the Albuquerque Journal obituary column: <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/abqjournal/obituary.aspx?n=ernest-butterfield&pid=198761780&fhid=7154>
- ◆ Tuesday meetings continue at Rio Bravo Brewing. The next one—May 25th - 7:00 am. Mask requirements are at the guidance of the governor’s latest proclamations, so you be the judge of whether or not you need to wear one.
- ◆ Mario has arranged for extra tables at breakfast this coming Tuesday for Gary Sanchez’s presentation. We want to make sure that there is appropriate space available, so please contact Mario right away if you intend to bring a guest. His contact information is at the bottom of this page.
- ◆ **There will not be a meeting on June 1st because of the Memorial Day Holiday.**
- ◆ At our June 8th meeting, we will have election for available board membership slots. If you are interested in becoming a board member, please contact Steven Douglas (steve@theprintingguynm.com or 505-238-9896) as soon as possible.
- ◆ The 2021 Summer Bash will be Saturday, July 10th. Sign up sheets will be available at the next few Tuesday morning meetings. Please check your calendar and make plans to attend the event. The Bash is always a very fun event. There will be games, food, and a general good time. The Bash is free for EAGA members and their spouse/significant other.
- ◆ Upcoming speakers:

May 25th	Gary Sanchez—The Why Institute
<b>June 1st</b>	<b>Memorial Day Holiday</b>
June 8th	<i>Available Business Promotion Opportunity slot</i>
June 15th	<i>Available Business Promotion Opportunity slot</i>
June 22nd	<i>Available Business Promotion Opportunity slot</i>
June 29th	<i>Available Business Promotion Opportunity slot</i>
- ◆ Please consider signing up to be a speaker at one of our upcoming meetings. At this point, you can choose any meeting after June 1st. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.
- ◆ First announcement for a prospective new member:

Acme Iron and Metal, Inc  
Representative: Paul F Wynn Jr.  
Category: Metal Recycling  
Sponsors: Scott Wilson and Kevin Lorenzen

If you have an objection this company becoming a member, or if you have information that you feel should be considered during the review process, please contact Membership Committee Chairman, Jack Zipper (jzipper@comcast.net or via phone at 505-259-5959) as soon as possible.

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