

News from the State

Jon Chandler

Another couple of changes at OHBA

One starting: We have another new staff member starting at OHBA! Ginger Harville is joining us as our new Director of Membership Services, taking the place of Carol Myers (who is retiring – more on that below).

Ginger brings us a strong background in working with members, volunteers, government agencies and the public; she's also got good experience in training and conference planning as well as marketing and business development. We're excited to have her on board, and believe she'll be a great addition to our team and will allow us to be even more effective in providing service to both the membership and to our local HBAs.

You can reach her at gharville@oregonhba.com, or at 503-378-9066, but please give her a few days to figure out what she's gotten herself into, please and thank you. Welcome, Ginger!

And one moving on: Transitions and change are, of course, one of the constants of life, but some are easier to deal with than others. Having someone like Carol Myers hang up her dancing shoes is one of the hard ones.

Carol started with us, way back in 1990, when she came to work for the Builders Insurance Agency, which was a wholly owned subsidiary of the Oregon State Home Builders Association, which is what we were called back then. In fact, she has been around just a bit longer than I have, since she started in April of 1990 and I didn't sign on with the Portland HBA until August of the same year...of course, she was only about 14 when she started, making her

much younger than I. From BIA to OSHBA to OBIA (Oregon Building Industry Association, another name of the state association) to now OHBA, Carol has been a key part of our operations for over 26 years.

Many of you might not know Carol in person, but if you've ever read one of our articles or visited our website or opened a piece of OHBA mail or attended a meeting or even called our office, you've encountered her work. Literally, in the case of calling us, since it's Carol's voice on our automated phone answering gizmo. When you joined or renewed your membership, the paperwork went across her desk; if you registered for one of our events or classes, Carol was involved in that also. Read our blog or articles on the website? She wrote most of those. Remember our old printed newsletter? That was Carol. Remember our legislative memos which became faxes which became emails? That was her. Remember that time you came to a banquet and got prime rib instead of halibut? That was Carol, too, but she feels bad about it.

She helped us track legislation every session. She keeps us out of jail by making sure our PAC filings are up to date and done accurately. She does the paperwork for several of our smaller local HBAs. She's an exceptional write and editor. She...oh, you get the point.

There is no way to adequately convey how central Carol has been to OHBA, not only because of the importance of the work she's done – which is considerable (after all, during the lean years, we were down to basically a two-person show for a while and she pretty much kept things afloat) – but mostly because of the spirit and joy she brought to it. Not because she always found the

work inherently joyous, mind you, and not because she always agreed with the political positions we took or the bills we ran or that she didn't occasionally roll her eyes at various members, but because that's just who she is. She's funny as hell, appropriately inappropriate, kind, thoughtful and generally the sort of co-worker all of you should be so blessed to have a chance to work with at some point in your career.

This wasn't a total surprise, of course, as Carol had intended to retire last fall but got clobbered by a personal tragedy...and now she's going through with it and actually retiring, dammit.

She'll be missed – by the association, by our staff, by me personally. 26 years is a long time...a lot of institutional memory, a lot of association history, a lot of knowledge of details large and small, a lot of where things are kept and why, all of that is about to go hiking and running and gardening and generally enjoying not working.

Thanks, Carol. Here's to a delightfully eventful and celebratory next chapter!

Green Building

Howard Asch

Good building methods prevent cancer?

There are some interesting studies that show the way we build can significantly raise the risk of cancer. It's not exactly the house that is the problem, but the indoor air pollution which too many houses are not designed to address. The good news is we know how to reduce these risks with some simple changes.

Let's look at results of some studies of indoor air and health risks:

- An EPA survey concluded that indoor air was 3 to 70 times more polluted than outdoor air.
- Another EPA study stated that the toxic chemicals in the air from

household cleaners are 3 times more likely to cause cancer than outdoor air.

- The National Cancer Association results of a 15-year study concluded that women who work in the home are at a 54% higher risk of developing cancer than women who work outside the home.
- The National Academy of Sciences has estimated that 15% of the population suffers from chemical sensitivities.
- The American Lung Association directly links Indoor Air Quality to the increase in asthma. Asthma has increased by 600% since 1980.

Part of the problem is the ever increasing amounts of man-made chemicals in our home environment, many of which have never been fully tested for toxicity. Common household cleaners such as bleach have been linked to increases in breast cancer.

The other part of the problem is that our houses often lack adequate air changes to remove those chemicals. That's something we can fix with good design. Providing adequate ventilation and providing it correctly can reduce the risks significantly. Planning at the design phase to bring in the right amount fresh air and distribute it through all parts of the house can drastically reduce effects of household air pollution and give our customers a healthier house.

Shouldn't we be offering our customers the option of a healthier home along with granite countertops and premium plumbing fixtures?

Contact your HVAC contractor to find out how you can build a healthier home.

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