

SEPTEMBER 2011

Volume 3 • Number 10

**Next Meeting is
Tuesday,
September 27, 2011
at 7:00 P.M.**

**Associates Hours
Begins at 6:00 PM**

**The Associate Hour
Speaker:**

Topic: ASHI® Standards, Reporting Techniques. Presented by Serge DelHoyo, ACI

The Meeting's Speaker:

Our guest speaker will be Mike Crow- nationally known marketing guru. The topic will be BUSINESS CARD MAKE-OVER. Learn how to make your Business Card more effective and get more business!!

Meeting Location:

@

NVRC Offices
3951 Pender Drive
Suite 130
Fairfax, Virginia
ADC Map
Page 13 Grid E8

President's Notes:



Another action packed year for NOVA-ASHI members! Please go to our new web site to see the upcoming events. Mike Crow, nationally known speaker, will be at our Sept. 27th meeting.

VARIE meeting Sat. Oct 1st- car pooling likely

NVAR Trade Show Tues. Oct 11th- check with Fernando Barrientos or Jerry Schwartz for available time slots

PEER Review Friday Oct 28th- details to follow

Seminar Sat. Oct 29th- Best Western Fairfax- details from Dave Rushton to follow

ASHI Leadership Training Conference Oct 20-21st- 3 representatives from our NOVA ASHI Chapter will attend

I look forward to greeting all of you at our kick off meeting on Tuesday Sept. 27th. We should have a great 'Hall of Shame' to be followed by Mike Crow and his valuable presentation. Hope you had an outstanding summer!

Pete

Jim Thompson's 5-Minute Seminar

Conflict Resolution 101

I have made my share of mistakes...OK, MORE than my share. For those of you who experience that nerve wracking complaint phone call from a customer, here is my advice to how to handle and get past those gut-wrenching moments. There are no tricks and the point of this piece is not to offer advice as how to escape responsibility. If you are responsible, own up to it. If not, being defensive or unavailable will only make matters worse.

When Your Customer Calls:

Rule Number One: Always return your customer's call ASAP. No Exceptions. BUT, it is very important that you review the inspection report first and take a few minutes to try to remember your client. You will be amazed at how much you remember. You may often anticipate the reason for the call.

Be polite and Listen. Really LISTEN to what they're saying. They may tell you that the heat pump isn't working now or there is water coming into their child's bedroom...those things can be relatively easily figured out. The fact is they are stressed beyond belief, angry and more likely than not, scared. We do this job not simply to earn a living but to help people. Be helpful and

sympathize but be careful not to patronize the caller. Make sure at some point you completely repeat back to them their complaint. By doing this they internalize the fact that you are truly listening to them and understand their problem. You may know whether or not you screwed up or that the problem was outside the envelope of those defects detectable during the inspection at that point (Be honest in your self-evaluation...if you didn't look at something that your peers will say you should have and there is a problem there...you own it...DO NOT LIE). Honesty is always the best policy. Ask them when it is convenient to go back out to see the problem and try to schedule the visit as soon as possible. Offer advice of those steps they can take now to limit the damage or prevent further damage or injury. Don't ask them to do anything that would be dangerous. You may have to suggest they call a contractor out before you can get out there so as to correct the problem ASAP. The customer's quality of life is what is of most importance in this instance.

For those of you with E&O insurance, your carrier will have a specific protocol which you are required to follow. Save those claims for the really high ticket complaints. You will initially be out your deductible and you will

have less control over your reputation if the carrier pays a claim you vehemently disagree with. Then you have to worry about increased premium payments of cancellation of your insurance. I have never carried E&O and I figure I've saved a hair under \$50,000.00 in premium payments and have probably paid out \$1500.00 to satisfy claims over the last 22 years. I'm not suggesting that carrying E&O is a bad idea...it's a business decision. It's hard to put a price on peace of mind.

Ultimately, your customer wants reassurance and to feel that you not only care but exude a genuine empathy in their misery, they want a friend. GIVE IT TO THEM. We all have experienced similar problems...draw on those feelings. I offer to go back to the house as soon as they can accommodate me to re-evaluate the problem. My survival instinct tells me to take the phone off the hook and take up poodle grooming as a new line of employment but going back is ALWAYS the right thing to do.

Besides doing the most thorough inspection you can do, it is important to converse with your customer during the inspection and not just relate the defects you find. Invite them to help with your inspection. By

Conflict Resolution 101

continued

doing this you establish a rapport and they become invested in the process; the responsibility for finding the defects goes from “I” to “WE”.

You have now politely and with a genuine concern acknowledged your customer’s problems and have gone back to the house to evaluate the situation. Thank them again for allowing you the opportunity to come back and let them know you are truly concerned about their problem. After looking carefully at the problem, if you determine that the defect was not one you could be reasonably responsible for finding, explain this gently to the customer and offer advice as how they should proceed in rectifying the situation.

If after evaluating the problem you determine that you should have noticed the defect, say so and apologize. Give them advice as to how they should proceed in rectifying the problem and offer them compensation for help with the costs of repair. You may limit the compensation to the amount of your fee. That may not be reasonable if the cost of repair is significantly more. Use your judgment.

Offering them monetary compensation when you are in the wrong is the Right thing to do. Of-

fering compensation to your customer even if you could not have been reasonably responsible for finding the defect is sometimes the best way to go. Consider it the price of doing business. One “wronged” customer will cost you ten-fold in new inspections...do the math. If you treat that complaining customer right, you will get a tremendous return in good word of mouth advertising. As an example, I inspected a house where there was a bunch of windows with broken hermetic seals. I didn’t notice that the large Living room picture window pane likewise had its seal broken. In my defense, the sun film on the window prevented me from noticing it from the outside and the furniture and closed curtains prevented access to the pane from the inside. I apologized and paid \$500.00 for a replacement pane. It was more than my inspection fee...and it hurt financially. But I have received two referrals from that customer and have gotten 7 more inspections from their real estate agent. In another instant, an 80% efficient furnace in a 4 year old townhouse had not seen maintenance and there was evidence of furnace condensate leaking into the vestibule. I recommended service. The inspection was for informational purposes only and my customer did nothing. That fall the furnace stopped working as conden-

sate dripped into the computer board and the customer was convinced by the service tech that he needed a new furnace which he then had installed. My customer contacted me and told me I owed him \$2800.00 for the new furnace because of my negligence. I politely explained that I had noted the problem and that his failure to act in a timely manner was the reason for the computer board failure and that he only needed a new board, not a new furnace. He wasn’t happy but right is right, from both sides of the relationship. I haven’t seen that agent again but the fact that he was throwing me under the bus told me that agent was not someone I wished to associate with further.

We have so many responsibilities as home inspectors. In the instance of a complaint, our primary responsibility is to our customer and to ourselves. We also share a community responsibility to our fellow ASHI inspectors. By responding in a timely, concerned and reasoned manner to a complaint, you are maintaining the high level of professionalism we as ASHI Inspectors work hard to project.

Keep it up!

Jim

ASHI School Corner

ASHI School questions by Fred Heppner:

1. A bedroom egress window should open at least
2. A/C units should have the disconnect
 - A. Directly behind the unit
 - B. At least 2' off the ground
 - C. Wiring sized per the NEC
 - D. Within sight of the unit
3. An accumulator is usually found on
 - A. An air conditioning unit
 - B. On a gas hot air furnace
 - C. On a gas boiler
 - D. On a heat pump
4. The clearance to combustibles around the front of a masonry fireplace should be at least:
 - A. 6 inches
 - B. 12 inches
 - C. 10 inches
 - D. 2 inches

VAREI Annual Conference 2011

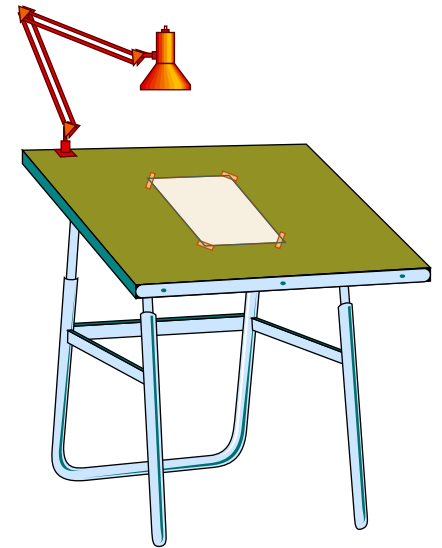
Please read the conference information on the following pages 5-7 in this newsletter. We encourage our members to JOIN and go to the meeting Sat. Oct 1st.

TWO of our Chapter members (and VAREI Board members- Fernando and Dave) will be guest speakers!!

FISBO

Announcing the start of a new area in the newsletter called FISBO.

This is where members in the chapter can advertise tools, books, office equipment, etc... for sale. Just provide a picture of the item, a brief de-



scription of what it is and its condition, your name and a contact number and/or



email address and submit it to:

JFUNKHOUSR@aol.com

VAREI Annual Conference 2011

WHEN:

Saturday, October 1, 2011

WHERE:

Cultural Arts Center
2880 Mountain Road,
Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

REGISTRATION:

7:30- 8:00am

CONFERENCE:

8:00am-4:00

COST:

\$140.00, which includes annual membership, a listing and personal profile on the high-ranked VAREI Website, lunch, and continuing education credits.

Fellow Home Inspectors,

It's time to renew memberships. The annual conference is included in your dues and provides members with a chance to get together, compare notes, tell war stories, and find out what's going on in home inspection across the state. There will be a brief membership meeting that includes officer reports and the election of new officers and Board of Directors members. This year we will host 5 guest speakers to provide us with an opportunity for continuing education and bring us up-to-date on regulation and political activities that are important to home inspectors.

John Hudgins - "Fundamentals of Fuel Gas": John has been performing inspections for the Chesterfield County Building Inspections Department since 2005. He is one of three Plumbing/Mechanical/Gas Lead Inspectors in that Department due to his knowledge and experience in these trades. He has been actively involved in the Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning trades since 1972. John often speaks at monthly meetings of the Chesterfield County Building Inspections Department. He provides training for other County Inspectors on various topics relevant to his expertise in the Plumbing, Mechanical and Gas fields.

Fernando Barrientos and David Rushton - "Electrical Inspections from the Grounds Up": David Rushton is a VA Master Electrician and a VA licensed contractor with Building and Electrical classifications. He holds a BSAD degree in Architectural Design and Construction Technology from The Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is on the VAREI board of directors, Vice President of the NOVA ASHI chapter and ASHI certified since 1996. He is currently certified/licensed to perform inspections in Virginia, Maryland and West Virginia. He is giving this same presentation at this year's ASHI National

Conference.

Fernando attended the IBEW's National Electrical Academy for Residential, Commercial and Industrial Electrical Construction. He is specialized in Industrial process controls and implementation and has performed work for companies such as IBM, AT&T, UPS and the FBI Academy at Quantico. He is on the Board of VAREI as well as ASHI and State certified. Fernando has over 25 years experience as a Journeyman Wireman.

David Dick - VDPOR, Board of Asbestos, Lead, Mold and Home Inspectors: David will bring us up-to-date on the changes in the requirements for certified home inspectors

Mark Singer - Advocates of Virginia: Mark is our Virginia Legislature liaison. He keeps the Board of Directors notified of any proposed legislation in the General Assembly that may affect home inspectors. He also provides valuable political guidance and assistance. Mark presents VAREI's concerns and recommendations directly to legislators.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

7:30 - 8:00 Sign in/Registration

8:00 - 8:10 JB Crist- Message from the President

VAREI Annual Conference 2011

8:10 - 9:00 David Dick - VD-POR, Presentation of the regulatory changes governing Home Inspectors

9:00 - 10:45
John Hudgins- Fundamentals of Fuel Gas

10:45 - 11:00 Break

11:00 - 11:45
John Hudgins

11:45 - 12:15
VAREI Business Meeting/Election of Officers

12:15 - 1:00 Lunch

1:00 - 1:30
Mark Singer- Advocates of Virginia VAREI Lobbyist and Legislative Monitor

1:30 - 3:00
Fernando Barrientos and David Rushton "Electrical Inspections from the Grounds Up"

3:00 - 3:15 Break

3:15 - 4:00
Fernando Barrientos and David Rushton

4:00 - 4:30
Vendor presentations and drawing for door prizes.

CE Certificates will be handed out at the end of the meeting
VAREI Board meeting to follow

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL AND BRINGING IN NEW MEMBERS

Renewals and new members are vital to VAREI. Membership has dropped over the past two years. However, the good news is that we have gained seven members since the last conference. VAREI has to grow, and the only way to do that is with membership.

We were told at previous conferences that the Virginia Association of Realtors (VAR) intends to push the General Assembly to require home inspector licensing at some time. We don't know when but feel certain it will come up at some point in the future. When the issue comes to the forefront, VAREI will need to fund the extended services of our legislative liaison.

The last time VAR attempted forcing home inspector licensing, it wasn't organized and didn't have an answer for the subcommittee question, "Why is licensing needed?" Thankfully, "Because" wasn't an acceptable reason. They will be ready the next time with a multitude of horror stories about how people were harmed because of a bad home inspection. As individuals, there isn't much we can do to fight a VAR licensing effort. It takes an organization to have any sway over the process.

Do you know an inspector who says they don't want to join or renew? Ask them, "Have you thought about this?"

1. Do you like performing home inspections your way?
2. Do you want to continue to use your reporting method or change it if you wish?
3. Do you want to report deficiencies as you see them?
4. Do you want to be forced to pay for Errors and Omissions Insurance?
5. Would you like to be required to take hundreds of hours of inspection courses paid from your own pocket?

If you answered, "YES" to questions 1,2, and 3 or "NO" to #4 or #5 any of the questions, then just sit back and see what happens when the VAR controls home inspector licensing.

When a licensing bill is initiated, VAREI will be there to fight for your independence and interest. ASHI, INACHI, and NAHI won't be in Richmond, the committee hearings or visiting delegates.

VAREI does not advocate home inspector licensing. But if licensing has to be, let it be guided and established in collaboration with Home Inspectors not VAR.

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION New Members and Renewals

Please take a moment to fill out the renewal form and mail the completed form and a check payable to VAREI for \$140.00 by September 26th to:

VAREI Treasurer
11203 Carriage House Court
Fredericksburg, VA 22408

OR use PayPal to pay online through our website:
<http://www.varei.org/Register2/DuesPayment.shtml>

IF YOU GO THROUGH PAYPAL, please fax the completed form to (540) 898-0594 or scan it into a file and attach it to an email to treasurer@varei.org

Please note, PayPal charges VAREI \$4.36 for every online renewal. The convenience is provided but depositing a check costs us nothing.

PLEASE PROVIDE ALL CONTACT INFORMATION WHAT WE HAVE ON FILE MAY BE INCORRECT OR MISSING

Name:
Company Name:
Mailing Address:
Office Phone:
Mobile Phone:
EMAIL:
WEBSITE:

This following question is important - the Board of Directors needs a fairly accurate count of how many will be attending.

** I PLAN TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON OCTOBER 1st
 Yes No Maybe

The following information is for record only. Certification or affiliation is not required for VAREI membership.

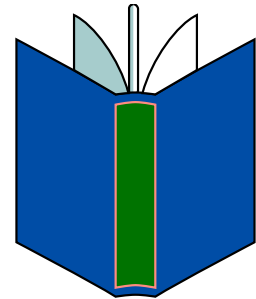
Virginia Certified HI: Yes No
Affiliation (for CEUs): ASHI NAHI InterNACHI

NOVA ASHI

Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs and Representatives for 2010 - 2011

PRESIDENT: Pete Jung
VICE PRESIDENT: Dave Rushton
SECRETARY: Rick Henry
TREASURER: Scott Del Monte
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Jim Funkhouser
DIRECTOR: Seth Hurlbert
DIRECTOR: Jerry Schwartz
DIRECTOR: William Gorgoroso
DIRECTOR: Serge Del Hoyo
WEBSITE COMM: Jim Funkhouser
TECHNICAL COMM: Jim Funkhouser
MEMBERSHIP COMM: David Rushton
EDUCATION COMM: Pete Jung
BY-LAWS COMM: Dave Drewry
LIBRARY: Bil Greg
LEGISLATIVE: Fred Heppner
COR REP.: Pete Jung
COR REP.: Fernando Barrientos
ASHI DIRECTOR: Mark Londner
ASHI EDUCATION COMM: Pete Jung and Jim Funkhouser

The NOVA ASHI Library



Our lending library is available for all of you as a benefit of chapter membership. Amongst other items, we have the ASHI @ Home series; a \$2000.00 set of reference and learning materials, at your disposal. We need to know who has what materials out. Please see Jim Kasterko, Bil Greg or myself if you have library materials checked out or wish to check out materials.

Take your time off to hone those killer inspection skills!

