



APRIL/MAY 2019

Review



COMING UP

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

May 8; 8:30 am - 9:30 am
OABR Boardroom

YPN COMMITTEE

May 9; 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm
OABR Boardroom

AFFILIATES COUNCIL

May 21; 9:00 am - 10:00 am
OABR Education Center

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

May 21; 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
OABR Boardroom

WAKE UP YPN!

May 22; 8:00 am - 9:00 am
OABR Boardroom

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

May 22; 10:00 am - 11:00 am
OABR Boardroom

MLS DIRECTORS

May 28; 10:45 am - 11:45 am
OABR Boardroom

OABR DIRECTORS

May 29; 10:00 am - 11:00 am
OABR Boardroom

APPRAISER SAYS... WHAT?

May 30; 9:00 am - 10:30 am
OABR Education Center

REALTORS® Make a Difference for Landlord Registry

Perre Neilan, Governmental Affairs Director

Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert brought the public discussion of a landlord registry and mandatory inspections to a close with her surprising announcement that she would sign the ordinance that was passed by the City Council (4-3) just days before. She had initially stated she intended to veto the measure.

Although we were surprised by her action because the final ordinance did not include the exact provisions we were suggesting, it's instructive to review the process that led to the end result.

There are several positive takeaways from this exercise:



1. OABR had existing public policy to guide our actions which were directly on point to the issue at hand (omaharealtors.com/govt-affairs-advocacy). Leadership and staff had clear direction on the position of the association and could react immediately.

2. OABR used every tool available to us from the National Association of REALTORS® including:

- **Member Call For Action** responses sent to each city council member and the mayor making the REALTOR® position known;
- **Land Use Initiative** that analyzed the different ordinances under consideration and provided recommendations for best practices of similar laws; and
- **Issues Mobilization** that got the general electorate involved through digital media marketing and patch through phone calls to targeted officials

3. REALTORS® inserted themselves in the public debate about private property rights, thereby reminding elected officials that this is our area of expertise and passion.

Continued on Page 9.

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Read the REview online!

OmahaREALTORS.com/review-newsletter



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DIRECTORY

2019 Board of Directors

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Directors Crystal Archer Megan Bengtson Herb Freeman Lindsey Krenk Annali Leach Angie Podoll Jessica Sawyer
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Omaha Area Board of REALTORS®
11830 Nicholas Street
Omaha, NE 68154
402-619-5555 tel



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Doug Dohse, 2019 President



WE 'R' MORE THAN AN AGENT

The Nebraska REALTORS® Association and the Home Buyer's Assistance Foundation have partnered with the REALTORS® Relief Foundation to help with mortgage payment assistance or rental cost due to displacement for up to \$1000 for those affected by the Nebraska flood. We have a \$500,000 grant of which less than \$150,000 has been used. Please help us get out the word! The application can be found at NebraskaREALTORS.com

That's Who We "R"

Great, new ads have been created by NAR to help get out the word about REALTORS®. While many people know that a REALTOR® helps buy and sell homes, what they may not know is that only a REALTOR® is a member of the National Association of REALTORS® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics. It's the REALTOR® Code of Ethics that inspired the association's powerful new "That's Who We R" campaign, which launched recently. The campaign aims to reinforce the value of REALTORS® as advocates for property owners, engaged community members, and trusted advisors with in-depth knowledge of the industry. Visit <https://www.nar.realtor/thats-who-we-r> to discover the new campaigns and how you can use it in your business.

REALTOR® Safety

Our local task force has made several enhancements to the "Safety" link at OmahaREALTORS.com. Please read the materials and stay safe when showing houses, holding open houses, and meeting clients. If you ever feel you are in immediate danger, don't hesitate, call 911 first!

REALTORS® > AGENTS
REALTORS® are members of the National Association of REALTORS®

THAT'S WHO WE R

Real·tor
[rē(ə)ltər] noun
1 of 1.3 million strong
who abide by a Code
of Ethics that always
puts you first.

**AN APP RUNS ON CODE,
A REALTOR® LIVES
BY ONE.**

THAT'S WHO WE R

FIND A REALTOR®

THAT'S WHO WE R

REALTORS® FLOOD RELIEF!

Over a month has passed since Nebraska and Iowa were hit with flooding, yet many are still recovering and trying to get back to home.

The REALTOR® Relief Foundation (RRF) has partnered with Nebraska REALTORS® Association and the Home Buyers Assistance Foundation (HBAF) to support those affected by the flooding by contributing to their mortgage or rental costs.

Donations have come into this relief fundraiser from the Omaha Area Board of REALTORS®, REALTOR® Association of Lincoln, Women's Council Omaha, many local and state associations across the country, and many individual donors like you! With matching funds from the National Association of REALTORS® RRF, over \$500,000 total was available to be distributed across Nebraska to individuals affected by the flooding.

These efforts have reached over 120 families so far, but there are still many more homeowners and renters who are eligible to apply! Each applicant can receive up to \$1,000 to help with mortgage/rent, simply by filling out the online application.

How can you help?

Share this grant with anyone you may know who has been affected by the floods. Share this grant on your social media page. Share this grant by adding it to your email signature. Whichever way you choose, share share share!

The deadline for the application is June 15. More information and the application can be found at NebraskaREALTORS.com.



Equitable Bank

10855 West Dodge Road, Omaha
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www.equitableonline.com/jdobrovolny



Joe Dobrovolny
V.P. Mortgage Lender
NMLS #445889

An advertisement for Celebrity Homes. At the top, the text "CELEBRITY HOMES" is written in large, bold, white letters, with "HOMES" in a slightly smaller font below it. Below this, in a smaller white font, are the words "Homes • Villas • Townhomes". The background of the top half shows a modern, two-story house with a grey shingle roof, a grey garage door, and light-colored stone pillars supporting a porch. The bottom half of the ad shows a close-up portrait of a woman with blonde hair, smiling. To the right of the portrait, the text "Monica Lang" is in bold, followed by "Your Celebrity Connection. Representing Celebrity Homes for over 20 years." Below this, in a smaller font, is "For information on ALL Celebrity Homes & Townhomes listings in ALL locations! One call does it all!"

REcharge!

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

SHERATON OMAHA HOTEL

(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)



(5)



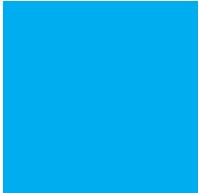
(1) The house was packed with of REALTORS® ready to get REcharged! **(2)** National Association of REALTORS® Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, Dr. Lawrence Yun, shared his market projections for the country and Omaha. **(3)** National Association of REALTORS® Director of Member Engagement, Nobu Hata was a true crowd-pleaser! **(4)** Billy Riggs gave a huge power boost with his hilarious and high-energy motivational session. **(5)** The Hot Circuit reception left everyone fully charged!

BINGO NIGHT



THURSDAY, MARCH 28

HOT SHOPS ART CENTER



REALTORS® and Affiliates of all ages showed their support of young professionals.



Caricatures by Connie will also be at our summer Fun Plex event!



OMAHA AREA BOARD OF REALTORS®

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS APPLICATION

The Omaha Area Board of REALTORS® Nominating Task Force seeks REALTOR® volunteers to serve on the 2020 Board of Directors, filling the open positions indicated below.

The officers of the Board include the offices of President, President-Elect and Secretary/Treasurer. These offices are elected for one-year terms except the President-Elect automatically becomes President at the end of the term. Each of the seven elected directors serves a three-year term, with staggered start dates.

Current bylaws require all Officer Candidates to have previously served as an OABR Director for at least two years. All officer candidates must be from different companies.

Current bylaws require all Elected Director Candidates to have been an OABR member for at least four years. No more than two of the elected directors shall be from the same company.

The elective years for all terms of office coincide with OABR's fiscal year, September 1 through August 31.

Interested REALTOR® members should submit the application located at www.OABRdocs.com/DirectorApplication.pdf prior to May 15, 2019

2020 OABR Board of Directors

<u>Officers*</u>	President	Susan Clark , PJ Morgan Company
	President-Elect	_____
	Secretary-Treasurer	_____
 <u>Elected Directors</u>	Director 2020	Megan Bengtson , Nebraska Realty
	Director 2020	Jessica Sawyer , Nebraska Realty
	Director 2021	Crystal Archer , PJ Morgan Company
	Director 2021	Herb Freeman , NP Dodge RE Sales Inc
	Director 2021	Annali Leach , BHHS Ambassador Real Estate
	Director 2022	_____
	Director 2022	_____
 <u>Other Directors</u>	Immediate Past President	Doug Dohse BHHS Ambassador Real Estate
	GPRMLS, Inc.** Chair	Herb Freeman , NP Dodge RE Sales Inc
	Affiliate Council Chair	Jan Eggenberg SureHome Inspection Co***
	Women's Council President	Ashley Livengood , Burrows Tracts Real Estate***

*Traditionally the Secretary/Treasurer has advanced to the President-Elect position but is subject to the Nominating and Election process. Bill Swanson currently serves as the 2019 Secretary/Treasurer.

**GPRMLS, Inc. is the parent/partner corporation of Great Plains Regional MLS, LLC.

***Currently serve as 2019 Vice-Chair/President-Elect. Subject to confirmation.



**PROMPT, PROFESSIONAL AND
RELIABLE REAL ESTATE
VALUATION AND
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Realcorp is a full service real estate appraisal firm. From our offices in Omaha and Nebraska City we serve the entire Midwest region.



Realcorp was established in 1995 and our appraisers have over 100 years combined appraisal experience.

Realcorp's professional team offers a comprehensive package of services that can be tailored to your specific needs. We are experts in residential valuation whether it be for a mortgage, tax appeal, relocation or to establish an optimal selling price.



Our commercial division can provide the analysis and documentation required for reliable real estate valuations.

We are also experienced in litigation support and expert witness testimony. Our clients include individuals, attorneys, government agencies, financial institutions, and accounting firms.

realcorp@realcorpinc.net
268 North 115 Street
Omaha, NE 68154
402-330-3626



SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Do you have a family member pursuing a degree in **Business Administration** or **Construction Management**? Are they a student at **UNK**, **UNL** or **UNO**? Are they a junior or senior in good standing or a post-graduate student in good standing seeking an advanced degree? If so, they are eligible to apply for the **Nebraska REALTORS® Association Past President's Scholarship**!

Past Presidents' Scholarship Qualification Criteria

The applicant must be:

- A college junior or senior in good standing for the academic year scholarship is received. - or - A post-graduate student in good standing seeking an advanced degree.
- If a college junior or senior undergraduate: Enrolled as a full-time student at one of the University of Nebraska campuses.
- Working toward a degree in Business Administration or Construction Management.

Additionally, all finalists are required to attend a personal interview as part of the selection process.

Application must be turned in by May 31, 2019!

Women's Council of REALTORS®

We Are

- We are a network of successful REALTORS®, advancing women as business leaders in the industry and the communities we serve.
- The premier source for the development of leaders.
- Members who support each other and work together to achieve personal growth and business success.
- Career professionals who operate based on a shared value system of integrity and respect.

Open to Men & Women - Join Us!

www.WCROmaha.com

www.facebook.com/groups/wcromaha



LANDLORD REGISTRATION

Continued from Page 1

4. We solidified who our friends are at city hall. A few city council members were very forthright in giving us insight into the process and what direction the discussion was moving. We didn't need to wait to read about it in the Omaha World Herald.

5. Most importantly, we improved the final product.

- One time registry with no fee instead of annual registration and fee of \$50 per unit
- Properties inspected every 10 years instead of annually
- Addition of an education component
- Addition of fourth amendment protections allowing the tenant to decline the inspection with no penalty to the owner

In sales, REALTORS® know about competition and wanting to win. The same goes for policy making. But not having the final say or not getting everything you want doesn't mean you lost. The Omaha Area Board of REALTORS® was successful for these reasons.

Many thanks to President Doug Dohse for his many hours of volunteer service meeting with elected officials and sitting through multiple city council meetings.



Mary Sladek Agency

Phone: (402) 991-6688

3930 S 147th Street, Suite 104
Omaha, NE 68144

www.MyInsuranceOmaha.com



APPRAISER SAYS...

WHAT?

#9999T



Anticipating issues and understanding possible resolutions to avoid getting into a pickle

Find out how houses are appraising when the contract price comes in higher than the listing price. What exactly are the differences in the appraisal reports for the same repairs on a conventional, FHA and VA loans.

APPRaiser PANEL
BETH ANDERSON
JOHN BREDEMAYER, SRA
LARYY SAXTON

**EARN 1 HOUR OF
COMMISSION APPROVED TRAINING!**
Pending!

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2019
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM
BONUS! Q & A @ 10:30 AM

OABR EDUCATION CENTER
11830 NICHOLAS STREET
OMAHA, NE 68154

Register online at www.ims.oabr.com

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

JOIN US!

SECOND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH
8:30 AM - 9:30 AM
OABR BOARDROOM

OmahaREALTORS.com/education-training



DESIGNATIONS

Congratulations on earning your professional designation!

ABR (Accredited Buyer Representative)

Christina Hacker with Keller Williams Greater Omaha

CRS (Certified Residential Specialist)

David Smith with RE/MAX Real Estate Group
Leanne Sotak with BHHS Ambassador Real Estate

SRS (Seller Representative Specialists)

Julie Hayes with NP Dodge Real Estate
Tammy English with BHHS Ambassador Real Estate

CERTIFICATIONS

Congratulations on earning your professional certification!

EPRO

Crystal Archer with PJ Morgan Real Estate

MRP (Military Relocation Professional)

Kathy Betts with P J Morgan Real Estate
Lynette Dole with BHHS Ambassador Real Estate
Mark Hanner with BHHS Ambassador Real Estate
Andrew Kozycz with Better Homes and Gardens RE

PSA (Pricing Strategy Advisor)

Brandon Frans with eXp Realty LLC



Brent Rasmussen

CMC, CRMS, CDLP, CVLS / NMLS #5918
President and Owner

8420 W Dodge Rd Ste 113
Omaha, NE 68114

brent@mtg-specialists.com
w 402-991-5153 / c 402-578-0008

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

See the full membership report at:
OmahaREALTORS.com/membership-report

MARCH ACTIVITY	MO.	YTD
New REALTOR® Members	30	72
Reinstated REALTOR® Members	10	16
Resignations	13	70

OABR - Mar 1	2019	2018
Designated REALTORS®	198	205
REALTOR®	2551	2492
REALTOR® Emeritus	67	49
TOTAL REALTORS®	2816	2746
Institute Affiliate	67	66
Affiliate	365	428

THANK YOU!

April Orientation Sponsors

Katie Lieffers – Veterans United Home Loans
Jan Eggenberg – SureHome Inspection Company

May Orientation Sponsors

Bridget Vacha – Home Standards Inspection Company
Melanie Doeschot – Ambassador Title Services

PERSONALS

Congratulations to **Roger Morrissey** of Realcorp on being inducted into the CRE Summit Hall of Fame.

Condolences to **the family of Maggie Kirby** of BHHS Ambassador Real Estate, who recently passed away.

Condolences to **the family of Jim Acuff** with RE/MAX Real Estate Group, who recently passed away.

Condolences to **Dave Kennedy** with Nebraska Realty on the recent loss of his son.



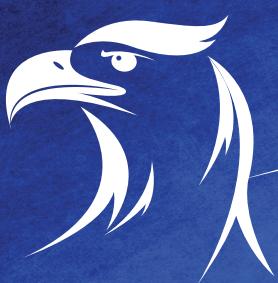
WHAT'S NEW?

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Send your news to:
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The number-one market analytics tool. FastStats and InfoSparks make you the expert with personalized reports and dynamic graphics.

IDX Smartframing with rDesk, a property search-tool for broker and agent websites.



Homesnap Pro – the mobile app version of the live MLS. Allows you to connect, and stay connected with your customers.



www.GPRMLS.com

REALTOR® SAFETY

KEEP IT LIGHT!

Show properties before dark. If you are going to be working after hours, advise your associate or first-line supervisor of your schedule. If you must show a property after dark, turn on all lights as you go through, and don't lower any shades or draw curtains or blinds.

REALTOR® SAFETY REMINDER

If you ever feel you are in immediate danger, call 911. Agents should NEVER meet unknown customers alone.

***Work together,
stay safe!***



METRO OMAHA PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

We make successful landlords, so you can help them buy & sell more property.



www.MOPOA.COM

DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

CONGRATULATIONS, ANGEL THOMAS

The OABR Diversity Committee works hard to heighten awareness and increase diversity in the real estate profession. They have the privilege to offer an Ethnic Minority Outreach Scholarship to qualified candidates and help mentor them during their classes, exams, and into their OABR membership.

The Committee has a vision that REALTORS® will be the leaders in a culturally diverse real estate market. REALTORS® who are able to effectively reach out to all diverse groups in their community are not only positioned for success but can take pride in knowing that they have participated in the expansion of homeownership to all Americans. The Diversity Committee would like to share with you a past recipient who has made a commitment to be successful; Angel Thomas of BHHS Ambassador Real Estate.



Angel Thomas

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Washington, DC. I grew up a military dependent with the Navy. I joined the Air Force in the early 2000's and was stationed at Offutt Air Force Base. I am now a military veteran and current military spouse stationed at Offutt Air Force Base, once again.

What did you do before you became a REALTOR®?

Administrative and clerical work mostly.

When did you get your real estate license and what inspired you to become a REALTOR®?

I received my license in late February 2019. I've always been fascinated with real estate - I got that from my mom. We would spend hours just scrolling through real estate listings and researching market trends.

What is the most rewarding part of your job as a REALTOR®?

The most rewarding part of being a REALTOR® is meeting different people and knowing that I am a part of bringing their real estate needs and dreams to fruition.

What else would you like us to know about you?

I'm a proud mother of four children ranging in age from 21 to 6. I love to travel and dabble in photography!

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

JOIN US!

SECOND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
OABR BOARDROOM

OmahaREALTORS.com/diversity-fair-housing



School - Park - Walking Trails

New Homes \$300,000 - \$450,000

Our Quality & Experienced Builders

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Lifetime Structures
McCauley Homes
Nelson Builders
Proline Custom Homes
Regency Homes
Scottsdale Step-Free Homes
Shamrock Builders
Sudbeck Homes
Sundown Homes
Titan Homes
Urban Spark Construction



MOPAC TRAIL NEARBY

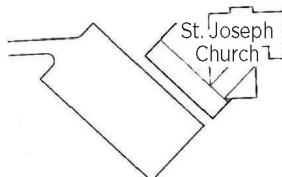
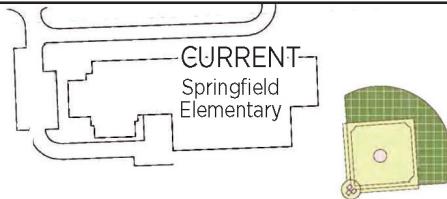
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Introducing Omaha's First Bank Mortgage Team! We may be new to the neighborhood, but we've been helping families for over 100 years.



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NMLS ID: 13447



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402-540-7178
NMLS ID: 1341248



Carlene Zabawa
402-312-6683
NMLS ID: 457132



Michele Ringsdorf
402-934-4281
NMLS ID: 457136



Scott Bonow
402-720-3172
NMLS ID: 745948



Scott Miller
402-657-3295
NMLS ID: 1244063



Brenda Carlson
402-672-6785
NMLS ID: 457159



Jeff Gillespie
402-281-0677
NMLS ID: 400300



Lisa Miers
402-659-5624
NMLS ID: 472827



John Major
402-212-0149
NMLS ID: 1393750



Member FDIC

Loan Production Offices:

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Omaha NE 68164
- 304 Olson Dr., Suite 203
Papillion NE 68046

FHA vs Conventional Loans: What's the Difference?

BY BRENT RASMUSSEN, MORTGAGE SPECIALISTS



It has been a long winter and with warmer weather right around the corner, the Omaha housing market is about to swing into overdrive. In preparation for all of the long days and nights helping your clients find and sell their homes, I wanted to take some time to talk about the differences between FHA and conventional loans - and why it's important to understand the difference.

But, before I delve into why the type of loan your client has or chooses to accept in an offer on their home matters, I want to give you a broad understanding of both conventional and FHA loans.

FHA Loans

FHA loans are government-insured. They are typically easier to qualify for, with lower down payment and credit score requirements, making them a perfect solution for those that can't qualify for a conventional loan. They also generally have lower closing costs than conventional loans. All of these factors combined make FHA loans an ideal choice for first-time homebuyers.

While they do offer borrowers more flexibility, they have more expensive mortgage insurance than their conventional counterparts and many times that insurance can last the life of the loan.

Conventional Loans

Conventional loans are generally more difficult to qualify for than FHA loans. People that usually qualify for a conventional mortgage possess three qualities: great credit, steady income, and funds for a down payment.

It is possible to qualify for a conventional loan without putting 20% down. However, lenders generally require those borrowers to purchase Private Mortgage Insurance in case the borrower defaults.

So, why does it matter what loan type a buyer has?

It all comes down to which loan is more appealing to sellers, especially in a hot market. While FHA loans are wonderful because they allow more buyers to qualify for loans, some sellers don't like to accept offers from buyers with FHA loans for various reasons.

One common reason sellers choose not to accept offers with FHA loans has to do with the appraisal. If the home is appraised for less than the agreed-upon price, the seller must reduce the selling price to match the appraised price or decide not to sell to that buyer. With a conventional loan, if the appraised value is less than the agreed-upon price, the buyer has an opportunity to negotiate the price or come up with the difference. That means the seller may still be able to sell at the agreed-upon price or a price close to it. With FHA loans, their hands are tied – they either lower the price or list the home again. If they do decide to list the home again, the appraisal stays with the property for 120 days.

Another major reason some sellers don't like FHA loans is because the guidelines require appraisers to look for certain defects that could pose habitability concerns or health, safety, or security risks. If any defects are found, the seller must repair them prior to the sale.

Some of the most common defects, include:

- Homes built prior to 1978 need to have all peeling or chipping paint on the property scraped and repainted.
- Safety handrails must be installed in open staircases with 3 or more stairs.
- Large cracks or trip hazards in the concrete must be fixed.
- Windows cannot be broken and must function properly.
- The property must have running water and working heating and cooling systems, depending on the region.

As you can see, both conventional and FHA loans have their pros and cons. And while not all sellers dislike FHA loans, it's important to know that some do.



Brent Rasmussen
President & Owner
Mortgage Specialists
402-991-5153
brent@mtg-specialists.com

Local ASHI Chapter Donates \$1000 to Flood Relief



Thank you to the people at NP Dodge for helping to build awareness for the needed flood relief and passing on our donation to the Salvation Army.

PICTURED (Left to Right): Steve Vacha, Mark Byrd, Jon Vacha, Brent Simmerman, Les Wallace, Paul Pachunka, John Eggenberg



GO-ASHI Greater Omaha Chapter American Society of Home Inspectors

The Mission of ASHI is to set and promote standards for property inspections and to provide the educational programs needed to achieve excellence in the profession. The members of GO-ASHI promote this mission through continued education provided at our monthly meetings.

CURRENT CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

Jon Vacha ACI (President) - Home Standards Inspection Services
Tim Kraf ACI (Vice President) - Home Standards Inspection Services
Steve Marten ACI (Treasurer) - Homespec Property Inspections
Mike Frerichs ACI (Secretary) - Home Buyers Protection Co
Chad Ahlvers ACI - Cornerstone Property Inspections
Mark Byrd ACI - Accurate Building Inspection
Rick Crnkovich ACI - Heritage Home Services, Inc
Steve Duckett - Midwest Inspection & Testing, LLC
John Eggenberg ACI - Surehome Inspection Services
Jessie Fisher - Home Standards Inspection Services
Paul Pachunka - Home Standards Inspection Services
Bret Petersen ACI - Home Buyers Protection Co
Forrest Ruel - Home Standards Inspection Services
Dave Six ACI - Home Standards Inspection Services
Brent Simmerman ACI - Midlands Home Inspections, Inc
Steve Vacha ACI - Home Standards Inspection Services
Les Wallace - Advanced Building Inspections
(ACI denotes ASHI Certified Inspector)

Check out our website! www.ASHIomaha.com



Friday, June 14
3:00 pm - 8:00 pm

\$15/Person (Ages 2 & Under are Free)
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- Face Painting
- Magician
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- Caricatures by Connie

Rain Cancellation Policy: If the event is cancelled due to inclement weather, those who registered will be able to redeem their OABR ticket for a different day of their choice for the remainder of the summer.

Register by May 15th
for chance to win 2 Fun Plex season passes!

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Wednesday, May 22

8:00 am - 8:45 am

OABR Education Center

11830 Nicholas St

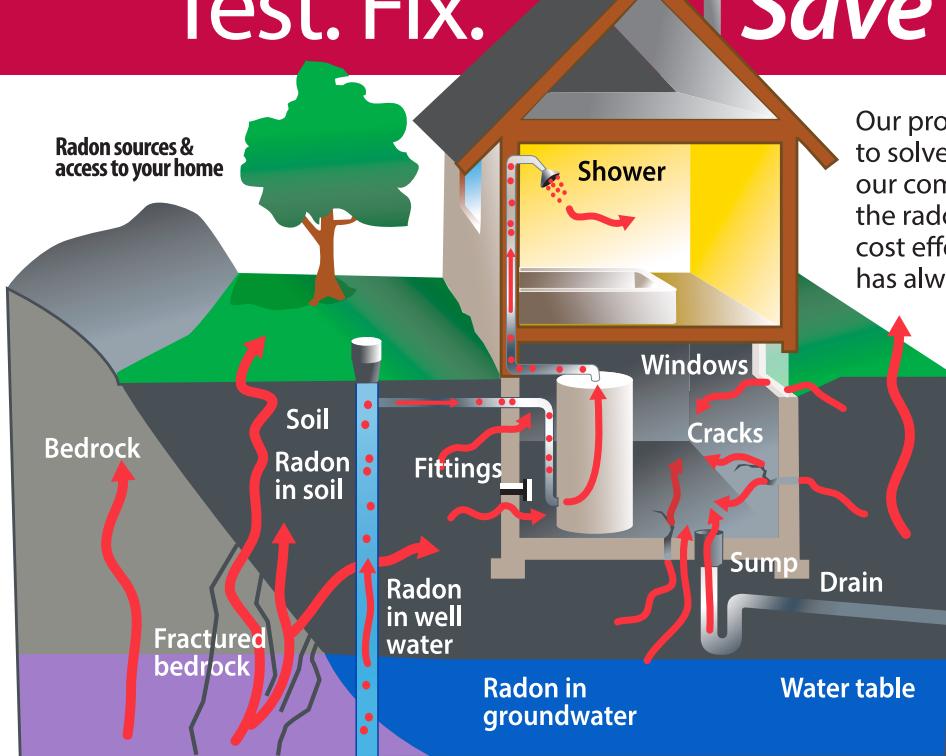
Special Guest Speakers:

Amy Dritley, John Vant Hul
Andrea Lane

**Save the Date for the next
Wake Up YPN!**

Wednesday, August 29
8:00 am - 8:45 am

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Steps of Biblical Proportions



By Steve Vacha
President

My wife recently came home from a Bible study and shared with me something she thought my home inspector brain would find interesting. The steps to a prominent Jewish Temple in Jerusalem are not uniform in height. They were purposely laid out in an irregular pattern to emphasize to the ascending pilgrim that they should be mindful on their journey up to the Temple.

Many homes we inspect also have steps of biblical proportions. Unfortunately, most people's state of mind is not often that of a religious pilgrim. Home owners may have grown used to an irregularity or weakness in a set of stairs, but a visitor might not

recognize the problem and can trip or fall.

When we start ascending a set of stairs our brains register how far we have lifted our feet for the first few risers so that we start to unconsciously lift our feet a certain height for each subsequent step. That is why we tend to trip on stairs that have irregular riser heights. In new construction a city building inspector can fail a set of stairs with riser heights that are irregular by more than $\frac{1}{4}$ ".

Non-uniform riser heights are often found at the concrete stairs to a front stoop. A stoop has footings and will not settle, but the stairs typically do not have footings and will settle with the earth near the foundation.

Most at-home injuries occur due to tripping and falling from short distances. For many people a fall can be of great concern and a major life changer.



A home inspection points out safety concerns that can very often be easily remedied. One simple fix for concrete stairs that have settled is mud jacking. Mud jacking can lift a set of concrete stairs back to where they belong, eliminating irregular riser heights. We all know someone who has fallen and been injured. Let's all work to identify safety concerns and fix them to help decrease at-home injuries.



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