



The WAHI Inspector

Editor: Nick Petrie



Keep an eye out for the 2015 WAHI Spring Training Seminar
March 13-14 Baraboo, WI
More details soon!



From the President:



2014 WAHI WRAP-UP AND HOLIDAY WISHES

Happy Holidays All!

The end of the year is a time for reflection and to express gratitude. There are so many reasons to be grateful, both personally and professionally. Our WAHI community is truly remarkable and that was exhibited at our recent WAHI Fall Seminar - our attendance was awesome, thank you to all who participated! A special thank you to Wausau Homes for providing a fantastic, well-organized tour on Friday, as well as a delicious lunch! I would also like to extend a thank you to all who attended and volunteered at the Education House later that afternoon. Habitat for Humanity was the sponsor of the Education House this year and to express our appreciation for use of the home, WAHI made a donation of \$250 to the Wausau Chapter of Habitat for Humanity.

The Saturday session was also excellent! The speakers provided well-prepared and organized education and insight on challenging topics. I would like to give a special shout out to Tom Kruse and Pete Saltness for their efforts, and, of course, Julie Arnstein for her hard work and efforts, which are often behind the scenes and go unnoticed. Thanks to all of you!

The 2015 WAHI Spring Seminar in Baraboo is shaping up to be another great one; we're finalizing speakers right now. Registration information will be available within the next few weeks and will be posted on the website as soon as all of the details are finalized.

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CHAPTER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

See chapter meeting details in this newsletter or check with chapter leadership for information regarding your chapter and December meetings. Not all chapters meet in December – some meet, but with a more social/holiday “agenda” rather than educational and some will meet conducting business as usual.



Our November speaker was Phil Borchardt, a City of Wausau Building Inspector.

NEXT MEETING:
Wednesday, December 17
Social at 6:00 p.m.
Dinner/Meeting at 6:30 p.m.
Palms Supper Club Steak House
5912 Business Hwy 51, Schofield
Speaker: Master Plumber



Our November speaker David Ring of Modern Heating & Cooling explained what we should look for as we perform furnace inspections and addressed heat exchanger issues. He displayed examples of various types of heat exchangers. In addition, he shared information on “orphaned” water heaters and the requirement to reline chimney flues when a furnace has been removed from it, which has been required since 1994. The only exception is when the original flue liner is 6” diameter (round).

NEXT MEETING :
Tuesday, December 16
Social at 6:00 p.m., Meeting/Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
Stone Toad, 1109 S. Oneida St., Menasha
Speakers: **Our Affiliate Chapter Members** will be presenting, allowing them an opportunity to educate us about their services and capabilities. In addition, the featured menu will be “upscale” and there will be prize drawings!



Bill Pozarski from Pozarski Enterprises presented and spoke about block foundations, repair systems for foundation walls and general foundation conditions and causes. The presentation was followed by a photo session and discussion.

NEXT MEETING:
Wednesday, December 3
Buffet dinner at 5:30 p.m., Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
Jade Garden Restaurant
3620 Gateway Dr., Eau Claire
Speaker: **Matt Schuebel** from Brack Thermal Systems. Brack Thermal is an asbestos abatement contractor in Eau Claire. Matt will be giving a presentation on types of asbestos materials and conditions. We encourage all members to bring photos to present.



The Madison Chapter meets in January, February, April, May, September and October.

NEXT MEETING:
Thursday, January 15, 2015
Roundtable at 6:00 p.m.
Meeting/Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
Rocky Rococo’s Pizza
1753 Thierer Rd., Madison

THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY CHAPTER WILL ALSO BE CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS! MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

HOLIDAY PARTY:
Wednesday, January 24
Happy Hour from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
Fanny Hill Supper Club
3919 Crescent Ave., Eau Claire



The Milwaukee Chapter will not be meeting in December.

NEXT MEETING:
Tuesday, January 13, 2015
Social at 6:00 p.m.,
Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
Klemmer’s Banquet Center
10401 W. Oklahoma Ave., West Allis

WAHI WEBSITE AND PRES. - CONT'D

Outgoing Emails Through the



WAHI Website

As you know, WAHI has a new website!

The new WAHI website has the capability to send out mass emails, (emails to a large number of recipients), and this is great because we can reach all of you at once!

However, some mass emails get rejected by email accounts because they believe them to be spam. In order to make sure you receive your WAHI emails in your inbox, and they don't return as undeliverable or filter to your junk/spam folders, **the WAHI Website Committee is asking all members to please add wahinews@wahigroup.com to their email address book or contact list.**

Taking time to do this one easy step, tells your email account to recognize any emails from WAHI as legitimate/safe. Thank you for your cooperation on this matter.



(President continued from page 1)

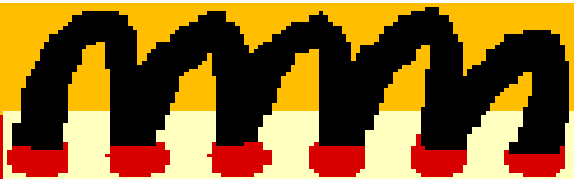
Through our NEW website you can now sign-up for seminars and renew your membership, as well as read and receive WAHI news and communications. Please login to the new website as soon as you can; it is a great tool for you as a member!

Finally, during this hectic time of year it's important to spend as much time as possible with family and friends and to enjoy your freedom, as an American. When I was a kid I was reminded often how lucky I was to be free and have a close family. The holidays are a good time to remember the many wonderful people who lost their lives serving the United States of America. Their service allows you the freedom and the rights you enjoy on a daily basis. Take time to appreciate what you have; love your family and friends.

To all of you – Have a great and safe holiday season!

Kent Schwanke

MEMBER TIDBITS



Chapter Secretaries –

You are reminded to include upcoming speakers and topic information when you submit monthly meeting minutes to

*Julie Arnstein at:
julie@wahigroup.com.*

*The information will be included in the newsletter and will also be posted on our website at
www.wahigroup.com*

SMALL SPACES

Longtime Milwaukee Chapter member and Embassy Homes architectural designer, Andrew Risch, is involved in the Special Spaces organization.

Special spaces, is a non-profit that creates dream bedrooms for children with life threatening illnesses.

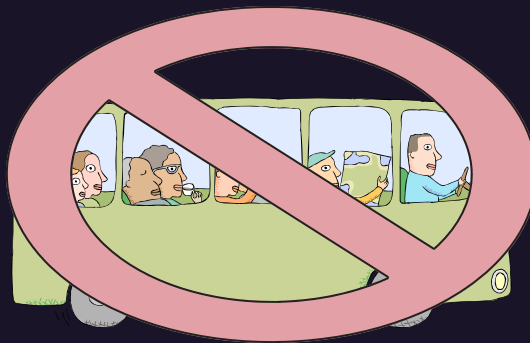
The program is always looking for volunteers. If you would like to give of your time and talents, please contact Andrew at 262-841-8510 x111 or Andrew@embassyhomes.com

specialspacesmilwaukee.org



WAHI Ride Along

The WAHI Board of Directors has decided to discontinue the Ride Along Program, effective immediately. This was, and remains, a valuable learning opportunity for new inspectors. However, concern has been raised regarding liability issues that come into play with a WAHI program of this nature. Members who wish to offer this to a fellow member on a personal level may certainly do so but it would not be WAHI sanctioned. Our thanks to all of the WAHI members who have offered their time and experience to a new member!



We want to stay in touch with YOU!



We want members to be able to contact you or provide a potential client your current and correct contact information.



We also send interesting, timely and important announcements from our website, using the email you provided. If it is incorrect, you may miss out!

Moving?
Get a new phone number?
Change your email address?

Please contact **Julie** to provide updates: julie@wahigroup.com

LIGHTEN THE MOOD

A contractor walks into his neighborhood bar and says to the bartender, "Hey Joe, you know how I'm always having to get rid of critters when I do crawl jobs?"

The bartender smiles, "You complain about it all the time, Bob."

"Well, if I show you something really cool, will you give me a free drink?" The bartender considers it, then agrees. The contractor reaches into his pocket and pulls out a tiny rat. "Check this out!" he says. "I found him last week while I was fixing Mrs. Jones' ductwork." He reaches into his other pocket and pulls out a tiny piano. The rat stretches, cracks his knuckles, and proceeds to play the blues.

The bartender is amazed, and pours Bob a beer. After Bob finishes his drink, he asks the bartender, "If I show you an even cooler trick, will you give me free beers for the rest of the evening?" The bartender agrees, thinking that no trick could possibly be better than the first.

The contractor reaches into his pocket and pulls out the tiny rat again. He reaches into his other pocket and pulls out the tiny piano. The rat stretches, cracks his knuckles, and proceeds to play the blues. The contractor reaches into another pocket and pulls out a small bullfrog, who begins to sing along with the rat's music.

Number after number, the frog sings his head off. Everyone in the bar is amazed.

While the contractor is enjoying his beers, a stranger walks up to him and offers him \$100,000 for the bullfrog. "Sorry," the contractor replies, "he's not for sale." The stranger increases the offer to \$250,000 cash up front. "No," he insists, "he's not for sale." The stranger again increases the offer, this time to \$500,000 cash. The contractor finally agrees, and turns the frog over to the stranger in exchange for the money.

"Are you insane?" the bartender demanded. "That frog could have been worth millions to you, and you let him go for a mere \$500,000!"

"Don't worry about it," the contractor answered. "The frog was really nothing special. You see, the rat's a ventriloquist."

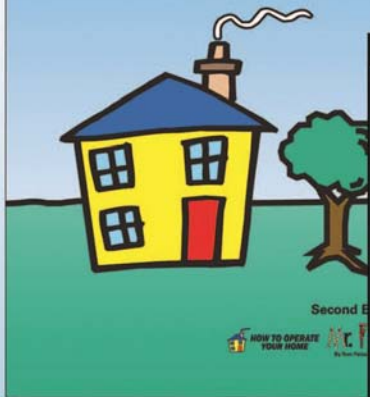


WATCH YOUR STEP!



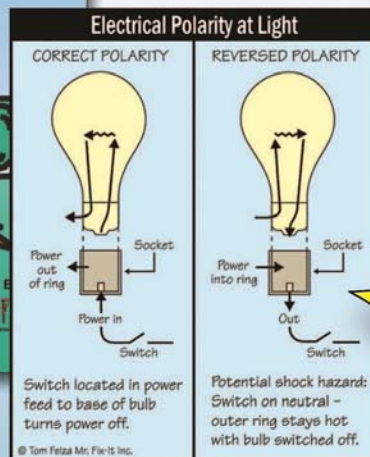
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EDUCATION COMMITTEE LETTER

Wausau & WAHI

By Tom Kruse
Co-Chair, Education Committee

The goal of your education team is to empower you, WAHI members, with current, accurate, and useful information you can take back into the field to educate your customers and stand out as leaders in your field. I did not personally recruit any of the speakers for this year's fall educational seminar, nor set up the test house or the Wausau Homes tour, but I did attend all the events and reviewed the surveys filled out by my fellow attendees.

The surveys are a helpful tool for your Education Committee, because the results give us useful feedback and help us make decisions about future seminars. I can confidently say, according to our surveys, this year's WAHI Fall Seminar was a resounding success.

Wausau Homes did a great job helping us learn more about their product – and they fed us well, too. Some survey responders noted it was difficult to hear on the factory floor, and I agree. I also agree that it would've been helpful to have Wausau Homes give us some background on past problem areas and what they did to fix them. As home inspectors we always want the history. The folks at Wausau Homes are obviously very proud of their product, and they should be; I believe they have come a long way and continue to improve. Thanks again to Wausau Homes for a very nice lunch and tour.

A crucial survey area is your suggestions for future topics and speakers. Inspectors wanted to hear more about marketing, energy-efficient technologies and health hazards, including asbestos and other carcinogens. As consumer advocates, especially in regards to safety, we want to be as accurate as possible. I have made calls and inquiries for our WAHI Spring Seminar in Baraboo.

Some survey respondents discussed the usability of presenters' handouts. Members mentioned handouts that are simply re-creations of PowerPoint presentations can sometimes be difficult to read. I agree with this comment as well. If I cannot read it, it will likely hit the circular file. These are insightful comments that your education team will use and share with future speakers. We are constantly looking to enhance the message, increase multi-sense learning, and improve the value of WAHI.

There were a number of comments regarding septic systems, considering it a wasted topic because our industry does not inspect septic systems. I must disagree with this perspective. Why? As standards-based home inspectors, we analyze readily visible conditions without using intrusive testing or measuring. We are generalists, not plumbers or electricians or furnace technicians. We are also self-employed with backgrounds and experiences that make us stand out, or not stand out. However, when you compare yourself to your competition, if you could take away some useful tidbit of information and share it with your customers, wouldn't that help you stand out as a leader in your area?

When I was WAHI President, I used that time to talk constantly about being forever curious. Just because a topic area falls outside the standards, it doesn't mean we shouldn't be curious and learn. I also said that if you lose that curiosity or desire to learn, it might be time for you to get out of the industry. Continuous learning is a crucial component to being a great inspector, whether it directly applies to State Standards or not. Home inspectors who feel they don't need to keep learning aren't applying the core values of this great industry.

Here's an example of how learning about septic systems can affect the daily practice of your business. You are reviewing a vacant home in the country with your client. You look in the backyard and notice a depression, a low spot in the yard.

(continued on page 7)

EDUCATION COMMITTEE LETTER - CONT'D

This particular home is a foreclosure and the buyer is getting it "as is". They will have no recourse for repairs. Is it possible that the septic tank is disintegrating? Would you make note of this condition in your report and recommend further action? Would you take a picture of it? Would you walk around the site carefully and ascertain what possibly could be going on?

I have a three foot long metal pointy thing – a highly-technical term for one of the highly-technical tools of our trade. If I were on site, I would use my pointy thing and probe the ground for the tank. We can tell pretty much where tanks are located, there are usually visual cues. We should understand the basic layout of a system too. It may not be part of our inspection, but remember we should be curious about our customer's homes.

If it was January, this condition may not be visible, especially if the home is vacant, and there's a lot of snow. If the home is occupied, warm water would be constantly introduced into the system, the snow often will melt and this curious depression may be visible. I have spoken with plumbers who also say mound systems are more susceptible to problems when not continually used. Conventional systems seem to tolerate lack of use better. What about laterals, especially in January in a vacant home? I received a call one Saturday night from a frantic customer who moved into a vacant home with a conventional septic system. Water was backing up in the basement floor and the main level bath tub. In my inspection report I noted that the toilet was running slightly. Apparently water had frozen slowly in the lateral line to the tank. This was January of this year, a very hard winter. Because of the prolonged cold, where water lines were freezing 8 feet underground in some towns, the lateral was slowly freezing up from the slightly running toilet. I had seen this same issue before in a different home that I inspected several months before. The home was occupied, except for 2 to 3 weeks in January before the customer moved in. None of this was visible. I learned all of this by following up with a great plumber.

I always remind my clients that a home inspection is never a guarantee, and that some areas are not covered by what we do. We always flush copious amounts of water down the pipes, especially in a vacant home, but this is no guarantee that the system will actually work. But these clients, through my past homework and curiosity and dedication to customer service, even in a non-visible nonstandard area of work, were thankful for my effort, trusted me, and will refer my company to their friends.

This is the primary value of education and how we as leaders in this industry should view education every day. WAHI views education this way.

One last note: I went to WAHI's new website to update my profile. Of course, I forgot my password. The new system is so simple and well-designed that it only took me 15 to 30 seconds to update my password and modify my profile. I added a handsome picture of myself too (My wife makes fun of my picture, comparing it to the TV show "I Dream of Jeannie"). I want to stand out as a leader in my industry. The WAHI website helps me do this. I encourage you to do the same with your own profile. It is what you pay for as a member of WAHI. The website is your responsibility to update, not anyone else's. Thanks again to Doug Hoerth, our Vice-Prez, for his exceptional work. We are lucky to have him!

Hope you all had a great Thanksgiving and enjoy the upcoming holidays!

~ **Tom Kruse** - Co-Chair, Education Committee

	<p>Add a Photo to the WAHI Website and Link to Your Site WAHI's website member database has a new and improved multi-choice search option. Submit photo and/or company web addresses to: info@wahigroup.com</p>	
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Q: How to make one Masonry Fireplace into two?

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Our page gives you the perfect opportunity to make chapter announcements, post minutes or meeting changes or just see what your fellow members have been up to.

Please contact Bob Turicik with questions at: 920-892-7654 or homeview@wi.rr.com.



With a new website comes a new email address!

Effective immediately! Executive Director, Julie Arnstein has a new email address: julie@wahigroup.com

Please update your address book/contact list; however, emails sent to juliewahi@gmail.com will still be received for several months.

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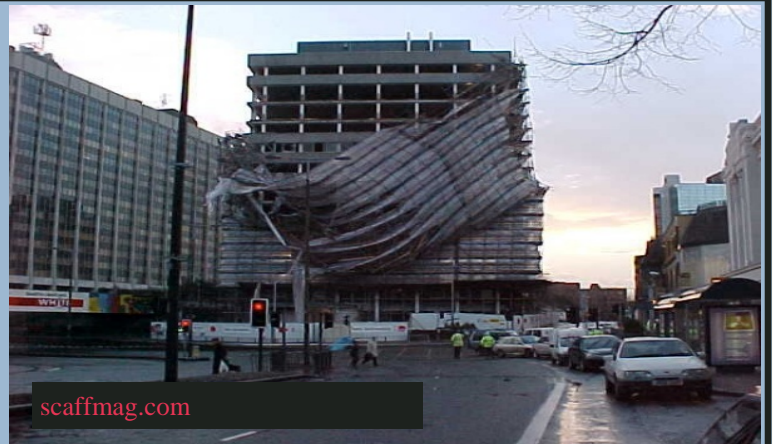
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LOBBYING UPDATE

Election Recap



By Kathi Kilgore
of Swandby/Kilgore Associates, Inc.

Election Recap

While it may be a little late for Thanksgiving, there is one thing that I am sure everyone is thankful for – the elections are finally over and so are all of the TV and radio ads and robo-calls to your home or cell phone!

Historically, the incumbent U.S. President’s party struggles in “midterm” elections and the 2014 elections were no exception as Republican incumbents and candidates had a very good night in Wisconsin on November 4th. Governor Scott Walker won his third election in four years and Republicans widened their majorities in the Assembly and the Senate.

These Fall Elections will bring many new faces to the State Legislature. There will be seven new State Senators and 25 new State Representatives that take office on January 5, 2015. Twenty-nine of the new legislators were elected in open seats where the incumbent legislators chose to run for a different elected office or retired. Only three of the new legislators defeated an incumbent legislator to take office. The three incumbents who were defeated are: State Representative Amy Sue Vruwink (D-Milladore), Stephen Smith (D-Shell Lake) and Mandy Wright (D-Wausau).

Assembly Republicans’ Legislative Agenda

Assembly Republicans have already released their legislative agenda for the 2015-2016 Legislative Session, and one of their top priorities is to continue their efforts to review all administrative rules and eliminate unnecessary or overly-burdensome regulations. They also hope to “put other checks on bureaucracy and unnecessary government regulations.”

One of the ideas floated by Assembly Republicans is the implementation of an ongoing process to examine all occupational licensing requirements, including fees, tests and certifications. If requirements are found to be unnecessarily burdensome, they would be revised. I will be watching on WAHI’s behalf to see if the Legislature and/or the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) begin this review process, and if they do, find out when a review of home inspector licensing requirements will be conducted.

Expansion of the Sales Tax to Services

In early October, the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute (WPRI), a conservative think tank that advocated for “free market” economics, released a report that suggested that reducing property and income taxes while expanding the range of goods and services covered by the sales tax can boost the state's economy. The study did not spell out a particular tax mix, but focuses mainly on scenarios that would expand the sales tax to goods and services that are now exempt, such as food, legal fees and other services, while cutting income and property taxes. Home inspections are not mentioned in the study, but it is a service that is currently sales tax exempt.

(continued on page 12)

LOBBYING UPDATE - CONT'D

In the 2000s, as the state faced huge state budget deficits, the issue of expanding the sales tax to services was discussed as a possible “solution” to the deficit. With talk of a budget deficit for the 2015-2017 Biennial State Budget, someone could bring the idea up again. This will be another issue that WAHI will be keeping tabs on over the next few months.

State Transportation Budget Proposal

One of the issues that will receive much attention during the Biennial State Budget debate is the State Transportation Budget. In mid-November, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) released its state budget request that proposed more than \$750 million in tax and fee increases to fill a projected Transportation Fund shortfall of \$600 million. The DOT proposal, among other things, would create a fee for new cars, add a new variable gas tax, raise taxes on diesel fuel and increase fees on electric and hybrid vehicles.

Governor Walker and legislative leaders have been noncommittal on the DOT’s budget request, but it will spark a lengthy debate on how to solve the projected Transportation budget deficit over the next few months. Since your vehicles are truly your “mobile office”, if some of these tax and fee increases become law, it will have an impact on your business’ bottom line.

Questions or Concerns

As always, feel free to contact me about any issues related to legislation, laws or rules that may affect you as a home inspector. I can be reached at 608.286.9599 or at Kilgore@swandby.com.



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2014 - 2015 WAHI MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

By now you have heard about our new, very user-friendly, web-based Membership Management Program! This program exceeds all past WAHI website database systems!

As a result, the WAHI Board of Directors has decided to forgo posting a printable 2014-2015 membership roster at this time.





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If you have any further questions, please contact

Julie at juile@wahigroup.com



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MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS & TIDBITS

WAHI Legal Support



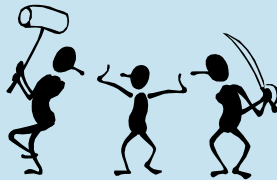
Attorney Roy Wagner of von Briesen and Roper continues to offer risk-free initial counseling to members with legal concerns. If further legal assistance is requested, the cost of the initial consultation will be included in the bill.

Contact Roy at (414) 287-1250 or rwagner@vonbriesen.com.

WAHI Arbitration Program

Not every homeowner/inspector interaction goes smoothly. Although all members are encouraged to make every effort to resolve disputes on their own, we know that is not always successful.

WAHI's Dispute Resolution Program is here for you during those difficult times.



The process begins when the complainant (homeowner) contacts the Program Administrator at Resolute Systems by one of the following ways:

Mail: 1550 N. Prospect Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53020

Email: info@ResoluteSystems.com

Website: www.resolutesystems.com

For more information, please contact Arbitration Committee Chair, **Dave Strandberg** at (608) 255-3966 or dstrand8@tds.net.

COMMUNICATION

All member-to-member or member-to-association disputes must go through the Membership Committee. A member going public, with disputes of these types, risks disciplinary action.

The Membership Committee will implement this policy.

Contact Doug Hoerth at 920-375-0723 or email him at finallookinspectionservices@yahoo.com.

WAHI Spring Seminar

Mark your calendars for our next training event – March 13- 14, 2015 in Baraboo.

Watch for further details soon.



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