

# CAHI MONTHLY NEWS



## Presidents Corner

January 2017 Volume 10, Issue 1

Welcome 2017. I hope that everyone is off to a running start for this new year. I for one have spent some time this month getting my ducks in a row for my accountant and Uncle Sam. I like to get that stuff out of the way as soon as I can.

I was talking with a colleague the other day, and the conversation turned to how we measure success in our profession. That is an interesting question. Is it the number of inspections that one does per year? Or is it how much you have earned? Or perhaps it is the reputation you have built for yourself? In reality, all these things should kind of go hand in hand. However, in our profession they do not.

In my opinion success must be measured by the individual and what he or she hopes to have achieved when all is said and done and they are sipping a beverage on a beach or mountainside somewhere enjoying their retirement. I would like to think that a person would like to feel that they left it all on the playing field so to speak, developing a reputation that tells a tale of someone who was knowledgeable, helpful, fair and trustworthy. You do not need to perform 400 inspections a year or make a zillion dollars to have that type of reputation. You just need to have integrity and honesty and give people a good days work for a good days pay. Do not forget, the quality of our work is not realized the day we perform it. An inspector can put on a good show on inspection day but it takes some time to see if they did their job properly. Then your reputation is determined.

*continued on Page 2*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Presidents Corner .....1
- Law Seminar Update .....2
- Airtight New Homes -Problems.....4
- Inspector Advisor-Digital Camera...7
- Replacing a Rotted Rim Joist.....10
- Inspector-Pro Newsletter .....13
- Tiling a Shower Niche.....14
- Home Inspector Education..... 16

## Meeting Dates!

**January 25th**

*Top Ten Roofing Mistakes*

Presented by:

GAF Roofing

.....

**February 22nd**

*Chimneys, Vents and Flues*

Presented by:

**Jim Jaffe**

Connecticut Chimney and Vent LLC

### MONTHLY MEETINGS – Details & Info

CAHI's regular monthly meetings are held at the Best Western located at 201 Washington Ave (RT 5), North Haven. Meetings are free to members. Most meetings are on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 7-9pm. Guests are always welcome! Guests may attend 2 free monthly meetings to experience our presentations, meet our members, and receive a CE attendance certificate.

Joining CAHI may be done at anytime of the year through our Membership Page

## Presidents Corner *continued*

This profession will get tougher and tougher as time goes on and there may be some hurdles coming down the pike this year. We will take them head on and defend our profession as best we can. You know the old saying it takes a village to raise a child...well that can be applied to a certain degree to a profession. The more people that are involved in the developmental process the stronger the profession becomes. Sometimes you have to rally the troops, gather the masses to make things happen. Sitting back and "letting it happen" does not build integrity or success and ultimately leaves you at the mercy of those who do take charge. I just hope all in our profession want to better it, get involved to shape it and develop that reputation that lives on forever.

Let's have a successful 2017 for all.

"Try not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value."

— Albert Einstein

Stan

# CAHI Law Seminar 2017 Update

## ***Big Success!***

On 17 January 2017, CAHI conducted the annual Law Seminar. Held in North Haven, approximately 100 members and guests were in attendance. The presenter was Attorney Kent Mawhinney; back by popular demand. Buffet dinner was served, legal information was provided and discussion was lively. There were a lot of great ideas to help us improve and protect our businesses. An informal polling of attendees indicated a high level of satisfaction.

*Thanks to Scott Monforte for setting up the event.*

CAHI members enjoying dinner and discussions at the 2017 law seminar event.





BY MATT BOWERS

## Airtight New Homes: Top Trouble Spots

**The company I work for**, Airtight Services, is a full-service home-performance contractor in upstate New York ([airtightservicesinc.com](http://airtightservicesinc.com)). We do energy auditing, home-performance contracting, insulation, and third-party verification. Last month in this space, I described how we use a blower door in combination with an infrared camera to identify and fix air leaks in old, existing homes. This month, I want to take a look at new construction.

In our market, builders face a big new challenge this year: New York has just begun to implement the 2015 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), which requires blower-door testing of all new homes. To pass, a house has to meet a standard of 3 air changes per hour at 50 pascals of negative pressure (3 ACH50).

This requirement is so new here that we haven't even tested any new homes for compliance yet. But we know it's going to be tough sledding at first. For years, we've done third-party verification for Energy Star and Green Building incentive programs and helped builders achieve the required airtightness. The challenge of

meeting the new code is sure to involve the same typical trouble spots.

**Blower-door diagnostics.** For existing homes, as I explained last month, an inspection using a blower door coupled with an infrared camera is a great way to identify leaks. For a new house under construction, however, the infrared camera is almost irrelevant. In order for the infrared camera to work, you need a big temperature difference between the indoors and the outdoors. If the house isn't conditioned to be either warmer or colder than the outdoors, you're not going to see much. So with a new house, quality control is really about identifying what your air barrier is before you start to build, and then implementing that air barrier effectively in the field.

To verify compliance with the code (and also identify and fix air leaks), we need to be able to depressurize the house to -50 pascals. In typical new construction, that's only possible very late in the game. It would be good to test the house after insulation, but before dry-wall. But in our market, the ceiling air barrier is the



Where foundations meet floor framing, seal sealer alone (above left) isn't enough: Builders need to carefully address the band joist area also. The author recommends spray foam on the band joist (above right)—or, alternatively, rigid foam cut and fit to the band joist and installed with a compatible foam sealant.

Photos by Matt Bowers



In typical production building in the author's market, the most practical way to air-seal around windows is with gun foam. To achieve a good seal at the outer skin of the building, it's helpful if the builder leaves a sufficient gap between the window and the rough opening for the gun's applicator tip to reach all the way into the crack.

drywall. Before the drywall is up, there's no air barrier and we can't depressurize the house. So in practice, we get only one chance to test the house, and it comes after many leaks are buried. So builders are going to need a good game plan right from the start.

**The "red line exercise."** One of our services for builders is a print review. We sit down with them, look at their plans, and identify potential air-leakage problem areas. The point we like to stress is, "Sure, you can build a tight basement, you can build a tight wall, and you can build a tight ceiling—but how do you connect all those tight things to each other? That's tying the air barrier together."

So we try to focus on the transitions between all those elements. A builder should be able to put a red pen down on his blueprint and draw a line around the entire house without lifting the pen, to identify the air barrier. This "red line exercise" isn't required—but it's very helpful for achieving the required airtightness. It helps our clients envision a workable strategy.

**Basements and floor systems.** Starting at the bottom, the first miss for many builders is that they don't connect the poly vapor barrier under their slab with the foundation wall (a good idea, even though that's not usually a huge air infiltration

point). Leaks at the rim joist, also a common miss, can be more significant. Here, builders will need to achieve a good seal: sill sealer under the treated-wood mud sill, as well as careful attention to the rim joist area itself.

Spray-applied foam works well for the rim joist. You only need about an inch for a good seal; after that, you can install batt insulation for additional R-value.

My company is a damp-spray-cellulose-insulation installer, but not a spray-foam installer. So at the rim joist, our preferred method is to cut squares of 2-inch rigid foam to fit in between the joists, and to seal those pieces in place using low-volume two-part foam—the kind that comes in canister tanks with a gun applicator. If a builder wanted to do this job himself, his crew could easily cut and fit the rigid foam, and seal it in place with off-the-shelf gun foam.

Most foundations in our market are made with concrete masonry block, and the cores in the block are a major pathway into the building for soil gases. So we seal those cores with foam: We stuff fiberglass into the cores, and then spray foam over that.

**Walls.** When I sit down with builders to define the air barrier, most builders choose the exterior sheathing (with taped housewrap) as their red line, rather than



Can lights (above left) and bath fans (above right) should be sealed before insulation. But in the author's market, this step is often missed because of the local construction sequence: Insulators typically side-staple batts to trusses from below, sandwiching these components between drywall and insulation without sealing them.

the drywall plane. They don't want to deal with airtight electrical boxes and other details that go along with the airtight drywall approach.

The main penetrations in the wall are the windows and doors. A lot of builders in our market are still stuffing the gaps between the windows and the rough openings with fiberglass. That's not good enough anymore: We're recommending that the insulators foam those gaps with gun foam.

When a window has a factory-applied extension jamb, the joint between the window frame and the extension jamb can be a leak point. I emphasize to our builders that they should leave us a half-inch gap between the window and the rough opening, so we can get all the way into the crack and seal the main body of the window right to the sheathing, keeping that extension-jamb crack inboard of the air barrier.

Fire doors between the house and the garage are often missed—probably because the drywall on the garage may not be up when the insulators come through. We often catch that on a final blower-door test.

**Wall-to-ceiling junctures.** Builders who can build an airtight lid and an airtight wall don't always think about how to connect the two—even though that joint can be leaky. Fortunately, common prac-

tice isn't too bad in our market. Builders tape the housewrap at the top of the wall to seal that edge. Drywall is usually glued to studs and nailers. So on the gable end on the inside, the drywall will be glued to a nailer on the top plate, forming a seal there. On the bearing walls, there's no nailer; but the wall drywall is glued to the plate, and the taped drywall joint at the top of the wall is a decent seal.

It helps, though, to flop a piece of housewrap across the top plate before setting the trusses. That can be taped on the outside, and stapled up to the truss undersides on the inside, and the ceiling drywall can be caulked to it for a better seal.

**Ceiling penetrations.** The insulators usually seal up any holes for wiring and plumbing in wall-framing top plates, using foam in a can. But in our area—where insulators usually install ceiling batts (side-stapled) before drywall is hung, then come back later to blow the attic—can lights and bath fans are typically missed. My company often has to come back after a failed test, pull back insulation, and seal those boxes with gun foam.

*Certified Passive House Consultant and HERS rater Matt Bowers works for Airtight Services, in Marion, N.Y.*

**“SURE, YOU CAN BUILD A TIGHT BASEMENT, A TIGHT WALL, AND A TIGHT CEILING—BUT HOW DO YOU CONNECT THOSE THINGS TOGETHER?”**

# Inspector Advisor: Digital Cameras

By Jerry Peck, InspectorAdvisor.com

**Every home inspector today should carry a good, reliable digital camera for taking photos of what they are inspecting. Here's why.**

Today's digital cameras have a much higher resolution and larger storage capacity than those dinosaur digital cameras had when they were first introduced. Today's cameras have so much storage capacity for photos that there is no reason not to take a photo of... everything and anything. Taking photos of everything allows you to document everything, which allows you to go back and remember what you inspected more accurately. You then get to decide which photos to include in the report and which to not include. It's a good idea to retain all of the photos in case you ever need documentation.

## **DOs**

- Do take wide, overall-view photos showing the area around what you want to show as the main focus. A wide angle photo shows context and may save your butt someday when you are questioned whether the photo is in fact from that inspection of that particular home. The surrounding items and area will show "where" the photo was taken (i.e., in the house in question in the basement) as well as "what" the subject of the photo is (i.e., the water heater, for example). A wide angle photo is more conclusive about the setting.
- Do take close-up photos of things such as nameplates and other information: multiple taps, input ratings, manufacturer names, model and serial numbers etc.
- Do start with a wide photo of the area where the item is (water heater), then a closer photo of the entire water heater, followed by a photo of the nameplate and its information, with additional photos of related items (T&P relief valve and discharge line, pan and drain, electrical/gas connection, etc.).
- Do get into the habit of taking photos of everything. You will use the photos to help remember what you saw and also to show what was there, and what wasn't, should you be questioned later about something on the inspection. For example, a seller may change out an appliance after the inspection with an older and/or cheaper appliance... sellers do this more often than you might think and, without a photo, you have no proof of what was there at the time of your inspection.

## **DON'Ts**

- Don't take photos of personal items – no one wants a photo of their bed, clothes, jewelry, safe, etc, in your photos. If such an item is in a photo which shows something else you would like to use in the report, use a graphics program to pixelate the personal item or distort/cover it in some way so it is not viewable in the photo.
- Don't include addresses or names on your photos. It is not professional and it is not necessary. The photos are in the report, anyone who is reading the report already knows the names and address. Anyone who sees the photos outside of the report (photos can be extracted from reports) has no business knowing the address or names. It is not good practice as it can increase your liability. Unintended persons may see the address and names and then if something happens, you are the party responsible for providing that information to them.
- Don't upload photos with names or addresses to the Internet. The best way to avoid doing that is to avoid putting names and/ or addresses on the photos in the first place. If you do use a name or address in the file name (which I highly discourage), it is best practice to and you **MUST** ensure that file names are changed before posting to the Internet.
- Don't insert a photo into a report without looking at it to make sure that it shows what you are referring to in sufficient detail for your client to understand. Use arrows, circles or some other method to show what you are referring to in a photo; just because you know what you are referring to does not mean your client will know, unless you point it out. And most importantly, make sure the photo does not show something you missed writing up in the report. Review the photo first as it is your last chance to add something to the report that you did not see before.

## **Best Practices**

Look over each photo in your report and write a notation below it of what is being shown. If there is something in the photo that wasn't noticed before, add it to the report right then. Some inspectors include a photo in the report at particular sections; other inspectors include the photos at the end of the report. I included photos at the end of the report – to me, putting all photos at the end makes the report cleaner and easier to read and often one photo leads to the next and so on. I included this statement in the written section: "This report includes both the written section and the photo section. The two sections together make the entire report. **DO NOT USE ONLY** the 'written section' or the 'photo section' by itself, as some items may only be shown in the written section or photo section and some items may not be shown in both sections." Include the same wording in the photo section. That wording ties the two sections together as being "the report."

Remember, there is no such thing as "taking too many photos." While many believe that "too many

photos” in a report is distracting, “too few photos” in the report can expose you to calls, complaints, and lawsuits. Those calls and complaints could have been avoided had the photo showing that item been included in the report, and receiving calls and complaints is not good for business. It is far better to “show and tell” in the report than to have to “explain why you did not” to a judge. Remember the old adage – “a photo is worth a thousand words”; use photos to write those words for you.

The photos you include in your report illustrate what you are pointing out to your client. Save all of the photos you took in a computer file; you never know if or when you may want or need to refer to a photo from a previous inspection. It probably doesn’t need to be said but it’s helpful to create a file folder for each inspection and within that folder create a “Photos” subfolder to put all the photo files in. That makes it easy to reference the photos for that inspection.

We’ve touched on why it is not wise to include identifying information in the names of the photos you include in the report or post to the Internet. I used a macro to insert the photos into a table at the end of the report. I used a file renaming program to rename the files ‘image0001.jpg’ with each successive image being named ‘0002.jpg,’ ‘0003.jpg’ etc. After renaming the files, I clicked the macro and it sequentially inserted each photo into its proper place in the table. The macro saved me from having to insert the photos one by one.

### **About the Author**

*Jerry Peck has been in construction since 1972, first as a contractor then as an inspector; he has been inspecting since 1991. He is the owner of Construction Litigation Consultants, LLC and does construction consulting, construction defect litigation consulting, and personal injury litigation consulting relating to construction of new and existing buildings. He has consulted with clients across the state of Florida and throughout the Southeast, as well as having had cases from Arizona, Kentucky, Oregon, Montana, New Jersey, and more. Jerry is a licensed General Contractor, Plans Examiner, and Code Inspector in Florida. He also does code consulting related to the Florida Building Codes and the International Building Codes, along with various state codes based on the International Building Codes. Peck answers your questions at [InspectorAdvisor.com](http://InspectorAdvisor.com).*

BY ROBERT MIGNOGNA



## Replacing a Rotted Rim Joist Behind Brick

**My home-improvement company,** Professional Building and Renovations, works closely with Bill Franklin, a Realtor with Long and Foster Real Estate, in the Baltimore/Washington Metro area. We are frequently called upon to provide a wide range of remodeling services, from painting and drywall to concrete and structural repairs. In June 2016, I received a call from Franklin to provide an estimate to repair termite damage that was discovered during a home inspection prior to the home's sale. The residence was a modest three-story Colonial built in the mid-1990s with a two-car garage, partially finished basement, and brick façade. The seller had the home treated for termite infestation a few years earlier upon discovering that the little pests had dined on a small section of wood trim on the home's front porch.

After receiving an "all clear" from the exterminator and repairing some very minor wood damage, the

homeowners breathed a collective sigh of relief and went about their daily lives, never really giving much thought to the matter again. That is, until they decided to sell the home and received the report from the buyer's home inspector, just weeks before the scheduled closing date. He had found extensive damage to the rim joist on the right side of the home. The inspector's report also recommended that all necessary repairs be made before the home was sold. This is easier said than done with a home that has a brick façade.

### EXTENT OF DAMAGE

The damage was not readily apparent nor was it easily accessible. The floor above the suspected area was solid and the homeowners never noticed so much as a squeak in the floor or mud tunnels on the exterior wall, a sure sign of subterranean termite activity. I began my inspection by removing obstructions above

Photos by Robert Mignogna



To repair the termite-damaged joist ends, the author needed to sister-on new joists. To simplify getting these new joists between the sill plate and the floor, he first rip-beveled one edge for the length of the joist (1). He then applied construction adhesive to the old joists (2). After threading the new joists past the temporary support and into position, he rolled the new joists into place against the old ones (3).

the sill plate at the top of the poured concrete foundation walls. I checked all along the front exterior wall until I observed the first signs of trouble on the right side of the house. The rim joist in this area was covered with a white powdery substance and evidenced signs of previous moisture damage, but otherwise the wood appeared to be solid—until I pressed on it with my finger.

The rim joist completely crumpled, the surface being paper thin while the rest of the material had been hollowed out by termites. It was bad. I estimated that approximately 10 feet of rim joist and as many as five floor-joist ends had been completely destroyed. To make matters worse, this area was near the home's 200-amp panel box and all of the wiring to the home ran through the damaged floor joists. I took copious

notes and pictures and went back to the office to come up with a game plan.

### HOW MUCH BRICK CAN BE REMOVED?

My first call was to architect Steve O'Neill. We concluded that the best way to repair this situation was to remove the rim joist from outside, by gaining access through the brick wall. I would need to support the floor joists in the basement with Lally columns and sister new 2x8 joists to the existing ones. This would strengthen the damaged floor-joist ends, while providing a solid nailing point for the new rim joist. We surmised that it would be nearly impossible to fit one continuous rim joist in place, but it would be easy to install two equal-length boards, no matter what the

length. Now the only remaining problem was how to remove enough brick to complete the repair while maintaining the wall's structural integrity.

For that, I sought the advice of stonemason Brad Nicholson, of Other Brother Masonry. Nicholson estimated that he could remove four courses of brick up to 8 feet in length, as long as he left one brick pier in the wall for support. This, he believed, would give me enough room to remove the old rim joist and install the new one without the wall falling on my head.

Of course, the goal on this project, as on every project, was to complete the project on time, on budget, and with as little inconvenience to the homeowner as possible. With all the trades involved, we would need to schedule each in successive order and stay in



The termite damage was isolated to one section of the house. The mason had to remove four courses of brick to expose the entire rim joist, which was cut back until only undamaged wood was exposed (4). With all the new sister-joists in place, the author nailed on a new rim joist (5). Before the finish brick was replaced (7), the author applied a flashing membrane to the new rim joist (6) and tucked it up behind the existing weather-resistive barrier that covered the sheathing behind the brick.

close touch as the project progressed so we wouldn't burn time if something went awry or at a different pace than predicted.

### SISTERING TO ROT

Upon receiving the homeowner's approval to complete the work, Nicholson and his crew started first. They cut out a section of brick with a gas-powered concrete saw and a small rotary demo hammer with the precision of surgeons. With the brick out of the way, we were able to confirm that the damage to the rim joist was extensive.

The following day, we arrived along with two electricians from Professional Electric, a local electrical contractor with whom I work. While they labeled and removed all the wiring from the floor joists, we installed a post and Lally columns un-

der the suspect floor joists for support.

After removing the damaged rim joist, we cut our new floor joists so they could be sistered to the existing ones. Given the tight quarters and the fact that the new joists had to rest on top of the sill plate, we cut the inside edge off of each joist. This simple step permitted us to set the new joists on the sill plate and simply roll them into place with minimal prodding from a hammer. Prior to installation, we applied construction adhesive followed by clamps to insure a good marriage between old and new work, and then nailed the two joists together in a staggered nailing pattern.

After the floor joists were in place, we had a solid surface on which to install the new rim joist. This was accomplished by maneuvering two 6-foot sections of 2x8 into

place behind the brick support pier. The rim joist was nailed in place with four nails at each floor joist. The splice in the rim joists was secured with a Simpson plate connector and screws for added strength.

Following that, the electricians returned and began to re-install all of the wiring runs that had been removed. While they worked on that, we covered the entire rim joist with Grace Vycor. Nicholson and his crew returned the following day and completed the brickwork, and after an acid wash a week later, the job was completed. All of the interested parties, including the inspector, were pleased with the final product, and the sale of the home continued without further delay.

*Robert Mignogna owns Professional Building and Renovations, in Bowie, Md.*

# InspectorPro Newsletter

December 2016

We appreciate everyone's feedback on the newsletter and loved hearing your thoughts on our first issue!

Dear Monty's article that we featured last month was so popular that we're excited to announce a partnership between Dear Monty and InspectorPro. To learn more about Monty, please check out his bio [here](#).

We welcome you to email your inspection related questions to [dearmonty@inspectorproinsurance.com](mailto:dearmonty@inspectorproinsurance.com). Monty will publish one of your questions along with his answer next month and we will feature it in the newsletter! All of your questions will be anonymized so no need to worry about having your personal details out there.

Questions can be about anything from dealing with real estate agents, to marketing & websites, to unusual situations and how to handle them.

We look forward to seeing what you come up with!

Ryan Osborne  
Program Director, InspectorPro Insurance

## **Selling the Value of a Pre-Inspection**

Not all home inspections need to be requested by home buyers. There's a lot of potential value you can add to your business by promoting pre-inspection services to home sellers. Read this article to see how you can get started!

## **When a Home Inspection is Not Enough**

Dear Monty answers a reader's question about how they could have spotted very poor foundation work on their home before they bought it. This is a great example of how home inspectors can add value to their clients.

## **5 Most Common Types of Inspector Insurance Claims**

Home buyers rely heavily on inspectors during one of the biggest purchases of their lives. Read about the 5 most common types of claims we get.

## **Home Inspection Nightmares**

What inspector doesn't run into crazy DIY "improvements" during the course of their work? Here is collection of home inspection nightmares ranging from a shocking shower to a ceiling cat.

## **Holiday Winter & Fire Safety**

The holidays bring a whole new set of fire hazards to our homes. Pillar To Post provides a quick rundown of what to look for in order to keep a home safe.

## **Dirk Stephens**

InspectorPro Insurance  
826 East State Road, Suite 100  
American Fork, UT 84003  
801-610-2753

BY TOM MEEHAN



## Tiling a Shower Niche

**Shampoo niches are common** in most tiled showers and tub enclosures these days. Some of my builder friends think they're doing me a favor by framing out the niche ahead of time. While I appreciate their wanting to help, it would be miraculous—or very lucky—for that niche to line up with the tile layout. Instead, I prefer to cut and frame the opening myself, so all I need is the rough location of the niche.

### LAY OUT THE OPENING

My goal for the layout is twofold: Make the niche easy to install and as aesthetically pleasing as possible. To that end, I try to lay out the niche so that full-tile pieces land on all sides of it.

I lay out the tile for the niche wall from the center to avoid having small pieces along the edges. Keeping the niche in mind, if there is plumbing, electrical, or framing

that may be in the way, I adjust the layout accordingly.

I install the tile on the niche wall, running the courses up to within a foot or so of where the bottom of the niche will be. With those courses done, I can plot the exact location of the niche. I simply plumb up from the tile below so that the edge of the niche lines up with joints between the tiles (1). To find the top and bottom of the niche, I either measure up for the horizontal lines using the courses below, or level over from the tile courses on an adjacent wall (2).

After drawing the outline, I double-check the layout for the tile I'm using. Usually, I cut the backerboard to the exact edge of the layout line, planning for the niche tile to bullnose over the edge of the wall tile. But if I'm installing tile like stone tile, for which I bullnose my own edges, I lap the wall tile over the niche tile for a cleaner look and make the opening wider by the thickness of a

Photos by Roe Osborn

## On the Job / Tiling a Shower Niche



tile. Another option is installing a finish strip around the perimeter of the niche.

### CUTTING OUT AND FRAMING THE NICHE

Before I start cutting, I double-check for any wires or pipes in the wall. Then I cut through the cement board with a reciprocating saw (3), running the saw blade slightly inside the layout line to allow for slight adjustments. I use a saw instead of a grinder to generate less dust.

Framing the inside of the niche is slightly different every time. The horizontal framing pieces are cut out of 2-by stock that matches the depth of the wall framing. I cut these pieces so that they fit loosely between the wall studs. I spread latex-modified thinset on the inside of the wallboard where the framing pieces will be located, as well as on edges of the pieces themselves (4).

After tapping those pieces into place, I drive screws through the cement board and into the framing. For the vertical framing, I

cut and install 2-by pieces to fit between the horizontal pieces I just installed. If I'm lucky, the opening lands on a stud, so I only need to add framing along one side. If I need less than the thickness of a 2-by, I build out the stud with latex-modified thinset or strips of backerboard. When the framing is done, I drive screws into all sides of the niche (5).

### WATERPROOFING

To waterproof the niche, I install a membrane like Schluter System's Kerdi membrane. After measuring and cutting the membrane, I dry-fit it in the framed cutout, slicing the bottom corners where the membrane will overlap. Then I spread a layer of thinset over the whole niche with a 1/8-inch V-notched trowel (6) and press the fabric carefully into the cavity. At the bottom where the membrane overlaps, I apply thinset between the layers to bond and set the corners (7).

With the membrane in place, I flatten it and squeeze out any excess thinset with a

putty knife, which also pushes out any air bubbles (8). At that point, I can spread thinset over the niche and start tiling or wait a day. Either way is fine.

### TILING

When tiling a niche, I make sure the trowel I use has the right-size notches. It's important that the tiles on the back and side walls of the niche line up with the walls of the main shower (9).

Most of the time, I install a solid piece of stone or some other solid product for the bottom shelf, pitched outward slightly for drainage. I often install a second shelf, which I only cut into the side walls of the niche unless the shelf is very fragile. This shelf doesn't need to be pitched because water can simply drain behind the shelf and down the tiled back wall of the niche.

*Tom Meehan, co-author of Working with Tile, is a second-generation tile installer who lives and works in Harwich, Mass.*

# Home Inspector Education

*We as Home Inspectors are blessed with a really great profession. We only work when we want to and we get paid well compared to others. And for me, nobody is trying to kill me. I talk to a lot of young guys trying to get into our business. Most do not expect the cost involved in getting a home inspection license and starting a home inspection business. Most do not have financial assets to help them get licensed or support their families during this process. They think they can get paid while training as is common in many other professions. Most of my novices do not get past the financial barriers and maybe that is a good thing.*

*Those that make it past the entry level training seem to be most satisfied with the InterNACHI and AHIT training programs. Students of other programs are less satisfied or not. From these two organizations, costs are reasonable and the training resources are awesome. But here in CT they still need to come to a licensed inspector for their internship. This is an important mechanism that allows licensed home inspectors to provide quality control for our limited population of home inspectors.*

*Other than my son, I expect to be paid for the training and supervision I provide. Those that have tried to not pay did not get to play. Do I feel bad or greedy; absolutely not! If you have friends that are trying to get in the business, check out the article below. Here is a way for them to save money on entry level training so they can pay you or me for the internships. I hate to quote realtors but .... "your referrals are always welcome"*



## **AHIT Training is now GI Bill Eligible!**

AHIT is pleased to announce that the Wisconsin State Approving Agency (SAA) has approved our live Home Inspection Start-up Course for enrollment of those eligible to receive GI Bill Educational benefits.\*

The GI Bill may cover your full tuition and housing costs for this live class in Brookfield, WI. Travel to Wisconsin to attend the course is required.

AHIT provides you with real-life experience, including field inspections and classroom lab work with our instructors who are experts in the profession. Our step-by-step process makes it easy for you to understand all of the important concepts and to get your inspection business started. With our course, you will be taught every technical and operational aspect of home inspection, including:



**February 4 - 10**

Brookfield, WI

AHIT Training Center

**Ready to get started?**

Call **877.204.0696** to enroll!

Or, please pass this on to anyone you know  
that may have GI Bill eligibility.

\*Travel to Wisconsin is required. Anyone with G.I. Bill educational benefits in the following states may enroll in this live class: Alabama, Alaska, California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

**American Home Inspectors Training**  
20225 Water Tower Blvd. 4th Floor  
Brookfield, WI 53045



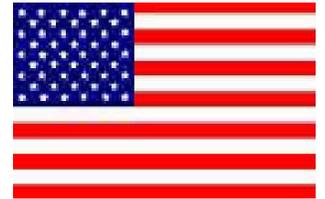
**800.441.9411**

Contact CAHI c/o  
 Scott Monforte  
 39 Baker St.  
 Milford, CT. 06461

Email: [info@ctinspectors.com](mailto:info@ctinspectors.com)

Web: [www.ctinspectors.com](http://www.ctinspectors.com)

*Articles published in CAHI Monthly are the sole opinion of the author. CAHI does not endorse or state a position for or against the content of said articles.*



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<b>Director</b>	Dan Kristiansen 203-257-0912	Pete Petrino	<p><b>The Licensing Board meetings are held at 9:30 am</b>  <b>Dept of Consumer Protection</b>  <b>165 Capitol Avenue. Hartford</b>  <b>The public is always welcome.</b></p>	
<b>Director</b>	Woody Dawson 203-272-7400	Dwight Uffer		
<b>Director</b>	Al Dingfelder 203-376-8452	They have served as our primary leaders and in other capacities since 1992.		
<b>Director</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	Please thank them for their service when you have a chance.		

**Published by:** Larry Ruddy  
 Larryhp@cox.net