

This column highlights promotions, transfers, hirings, awards won and other key personnel moves within the suburban real estate community. Send a brief biographical summary — including the towns of residence and employment and a black-and-white photo. If desired, send to: Movers & Shakers, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Our fax number is (313) 591-7279.

**Mann gets certified**



**Sheridan Mann**, a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Schweitzer Real Estate in Birmingham, has achieved the professional designation Buyer Representative from the Real Estate Training Institute of Charlotte, N.C. Buyer representation is an emerging national trend.

**Tackett promoted**



**Amanda W. Tackett** has been promoted to the position of senior account executive for CAM Magazine, published by the Construction Association of Michigan headquartered in Troy. She will assume responsibility for advertising sales and reader promotion for the monthly publication. Her duties also will include generating new advertisers and expanding readership. Tackett graduated from Oakland University and has more than 10 years experience in advertising sales.

**Harley promoted**



**Robert W. Harley** has been promoted to account executive for CAM Magazine where he will be responsible for customer service and advertising. Harley, a Livonia resident, graduated from Eastern Michigan University. He began his career with CAM as a reporter in the construction project news division.

**Kittredge honored**

**Linda Kittredge**, a Realtor with Quality Real Estate NW/Better Homes & Gardens in Livonia, has been recognized by national headquarters for generating referral business for network members. "We are proud of her expertise in helping homeowners in western Wayne/Oakland counties initiate successful moves outside the market," said Allen Sabbag, president, Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate Service.

# REAL ESTATE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1995 • PAGE 1 SECTION E



Giving advice: Barbi Krass, owner of a design studio, presides over a seminar on Building and Remodeling Without Losing Your Mind.

## Preplanning is key to remodeling

**There's a lot to think about before you actually get down to renovating the homestead or building new. The more items you can plan in advance, the easier the process will go.**

By Doreen Fumke  
Staff Writer

Pre-planning and personal involvement every step of the way, whether you're remodeling the house or building from the ground up, determine the success of any construction project.

That was the message delivered by Barbi Krass, owner of Colorworks design studio in Farmington Hills, to a couple dozen people during a recent seminar, Building and Remodeling Without Losing Your Mind.

"Think how you live on a daily basis," Krass said. "Do you live a casual lifestyle or more formal? Do you lead a lifestyle around children or adults? Do you entertain for business, pleasure or both?"

"There are tons of questions. You need to do a mental walk-thru," she said.

Krass and other speakers, including Michael Wolk, a Troy architect, advised attendees over and over again to take an active role throughout the process.

Start early and negotiate extras before the actual construction begins to save money and get the job done right.

"We can ask you the right questions so you can give yourself the answers," Wolk said. "You want to get as close to right as possible the first time."

Krass ran through a pre-planning top 10 list of little things that can make a big difference further down the production line.

Notching out a wall where a family room and kitchen/eating nook connect, platform angles in closet corners and mirrors with radius edges will be more functional and make decorating easier, she said.

"Don't put in a window for the sake of a window," Krass said. "Make sure you have a view. Pay attention to the way doorways open and which way doors swing. Think about where the toilet paper is going to go."

Some builders and architects specialize in renovations, others brand new, Wolk advised.

His advice: get the usual recommendations from family, neighbors and friends.

"Have builders show work they've done," Wolk said. "For architects, ask about their fee structure. There will be quite a range. You don't have to buy full service."

"Most, certainly, will come out and talk, see the situation. It doesn't cost money to interview and pick his brain while he's there."

Check with local building codes to make sure there's enough room to make additions, Wolk said.

"It's happened too many times. Somebody comes up with a wonderful idea that can't be built. It's a real pit-fall. Not that you can't get a variance, but you never know."

It also makes sense to get cost estimates at several steps along the process.

"Estimates are estimates," Wolk emphasized. "Unfortunately, we can't guarantee. When you get more of a guarantee is get a builder upfront and work with him right along."

Marilyn Slatin, a Colorworks designer, and Krass touched on the fun part of decorating.

"You want your house to reflect your personality, how you live," Slatin said. "Rhythm as you move through, some continuity. Emphasis on a focal point in rooms. Furniture, colors, texture work together."

Furniture specially made to order can be as cost effective as ready made pieces, Slatin said. There are also many kinds of synthetic and natural materials from which to choose for people with allergies.

"It's easier if you organize selections," Krass said. "Don't make them all at once. This day, you'll look at plumbing. This day, at electrical."

The final walk-thru before taking possession of a new house or major renovation also is important.

"Don't sell it short," Krass said. "We

encourage you to take a design professional or architect with you before you sign off. Some builders don't like that, but you can do a pre-walk-thru."

"Test all your mechanicals. Make sure the lights work. Run the disposal, flush every toilet, run every faucet. Operate all the doors. Make sure the drawers line up."

"Then do an aesthetic walk-thru," Krass said. "Spot the paint and use drafting tape and put little stickers over places that need to be touched up."

Seminar attendees said they picked up useful information.

"We just did some remodeling and found out we can get carpeting in different weight, the same color, the same look," said Mina Feldman.

Al Frommer, who's planning to build new and isn't in a hurry, said he was comforted by Wolk's advice that he'd wait until spring, if possible, rather than start building in winter.

"That was good to know," Frommer said.

Bobbie Miller, an associate broker with Re/Max in the hills, said she firmly believes in the cooperative, team approach.

"I did learn some things I could take back to my clients — how they can very simply define a room and hints on designing closets," she added.

## Problems arise when managers act as lawyers

REAL ESTATE  
QUESTIONS



ROBERT M.  
MEISNER

A. In a recent edition of the Common Ground magazine published by the Community Associations Institute, there was an article which noted that the State Bar of Florida, as requested by the Committee on the Unlicensed Practice of Law, was asked to look into a variety of managerial responsibilities such as completing the Secretary of State annual corporation report and other government forms. It also is in the process of examining activities

such as drafting a certificate of assessments, claim of lien, election ballots and an annual meeting agenda.

Apparently the Florida Legislative Alliance and the Coalition of Community Association Manager's Organization agreed to testify at the State Bar hearing. It will be bringing to the forefront the underlying issues as to what management companies can and should perform as managers, as opposed to lawyers.

Also, managers should be cognizant of the fact that their errors and omissions policy will no doubt not cover what is considered to be legal malpractice, neither here nor in most other jurisdictions.

Q. I have heard of something called a "conservation easement" and am wondering if you can give me any details of what it means as to how it might affect my property.

A. A conservation easement is the right to preserve the natural habitat of the property owner's property. The real property owner holds a bundle of rights. One of those rights is the right to build structures on the property.

Under a conservation easement, selected sticks from an owner's bundle of rights are transferred to a

conservancy. The transferred rights may include the right to protect the property's biological integrity. The conservancy or land trust becomes the protector of this right.

The entity to which the property is transferred is, typically a charitable IRC Section 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. The property owner continues to retain all other rights to the property, including the right to exclude trespassers, to sell, bequeath, and to engage in any activities consistent with the easement.

The Michigan Legislature has sanctioned easements in the Conservation and Historic Preservation Easement Act to protect conservation easements and to enable the donor and the community to maintain respect for the natural landscape, open spaces, natural habitats, ecologically significant land and wildlife.

Robert M. Meisner is an Oakland County area attorney concentrating his practice in the areas of condominiums, real estate, corporate law and litigation. You are invited to submit topics which you would like to see discussed in this column, including questions about condominiums, by writing Robert M. Meisner, 30900 Telegraph Road, Suite 467, Bingham Farms, Michigan 48025.



## Classified Ad Index

CLASSIFICATION, NUMBER, SECTION

■ Autos (500-504)

■ Employment (500-524)

■ Help Wanted (500-524)

■ Insurance (500-524)

■ Merchandise for Sale (500-524)

■ Real Estate (500-524)

■ Services (500-524)

■ Miscellaneous (500-524)

■ Classified Ad Index