

PRESIDENTS' INTERVIEW



LIZ KOVACH
SHEPLEY WOOD
PRODUCTS



ROB PADGETT
PADGETT BUILDERS



**PETER
POLHEMUS**
POLHEMUS SAVERY
DASILVA ARCHITECTS
BUILDERS



ROB MCPHEE
MCPHEE ASSOCIATES
OF CAPE COD, INC.



RICH BRYANT
CAPE ASSOCIATES, INC.



MIKE DUFFANY
M. DUFFANY
BUILDERS

Mike Duffany, current president of the Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Cape Cod, hosted a group of recent association presidents, including himself, for a dynamic roundtable looking back and to the future during this 65th anniversary year of the HB&RACC. Beginning here and continuing through the magazine, the presidents share their knowledge and views.

Building Homes ... and Community

Q Since you entered the industry, what have been the major advancements and achievements in home building and remodeling?

LIZ KOVACH: Engineered wood has been revolutionary. It is more stable than new wood, doesn't shrink as much and is highly versatile. Its structure also has facilitated building homes that feature more open space.

Another major improvement involves heating and cooling systems. They have come a long way in terms of efficiency, contributing to a much more comfortable house, while inhibiting dampness and potential mold. Another area of vast improvement is kitchen appliances. They have become much more sophisticated and are being designed to meld into the overall interior of open plans.

ROB PADGETT: It's not that many years ago that I would have to run a land-based telephone line to call into a project. Today, we can communicate and collaborate not only by cell phone, but tablets. We can have virtual meetings and bring in our

clients any time and anywhere. That's time saved, dollars saved and happier clients.

ROB MCPHEE: One of the most productive innovations of recent years is 3D design. Now when we meet with a client to discuss a new home construction, remodel or addition, we can share a virtual three-dimensional, precise depiction of their project. Software technology has changed the way we design, collaborate and communicate. This sea change gives us unprecedented flexibility in developing a project, while incorporating the client's ideas and reactions at every stage. The software lets us visualize precisely every angle of the project, from its elevations to how a particular window will draw in the sun or maximize the view.

PETER POLHEMUS: The most significant change in the industry is in regards to communication technology. The ability to communicate with clients around the globe via GoToMeeting or Face Time. The ability to communicate with our construction managers in the field via laptops and smart phones is probably more significant than any of the changes in building

technology in regards to impact on the industry.

Cloud-based integrated project management software allows our design and construction teams to be on the same page. Equally important, the client can log on to the project at any time and see its every aspect, including the selections which they need to make, the dates when those are due and the associated costs of the items which they have selected. Instead of e-mails flying back and forth among the numerous players, there is one venue where all communication takes place.

MIKE DUFFANY: Constant R&D has vastly improved performance of products, and it is ongoing. It's a very competitive environment for manufacturers.

MCPHEE: Digital cameras have really helped through the years. They are used regularly to gather job site photos and share them with customers on a regular basis so they can see the progress of their home. I notice some suppliers will use them to document what has been delivered to a job site.

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Q How have the actual styles and trends of homes during your careers changed and evolved? What is your favorite style and why?

DUFFANY: Styles have become much more detailed, cut-up and rambling. We used to joke about one of the unique aspects of a Cape Cod home, its charm from all their additions over time. Now, they are designed that way from the start. There are not many “cookie-cutters” any more. My personal preference is the rambling Cape with wings, hip-roofed additions dormers and farmer’s porches.

KOVACH: When I began building in the 1980s, homes on the Cape were classic and not very large. Since then, they have grown by square footage and become more open. Even empty nesters were seeking larger homes to accommodate family visits in the summer and holidays.

Now, we are seeing a gradual return to somewhat smaller homes, but with significant amenities, especially custom fine finishing and lots of personalization. New clients are not compromising on quality as they downsize a bit. With less and less land available for new home construction, clients now are tearing down and rebuilding. This, however, requires more regulatory review, time spent and costs rising.

MCPHEE: We have found many customers are still partial to the Cape-style homes, ones with lots of angles and roof breaks. In the old days, the Cape style home tended to be smaller and simpler. As more space was needed, the homes were added onto and became rambling - which is a look many people enjoy.

We have found the exteriors have become more detailed; and for the interiors, people seem to enjoy the open-floor plan concept. The days of having individual rooms for each event are gone, and the homes are set up for entertaining family and friends in larger more open rooms.

POLHEMUS: The architecture of homes on Cape Cod and other high-end areas of the country has come to play a more significant role in what people build. Previously, people would build Capes and variations of Capes. Buyers are more

sophisticated now and they want architecture that is well done, integrated and better fits their site and their lifestyle.

Q What are your customers asking for in a home today compared with 20 years ago?

DUFFANY: Most are looking for longer-lasting materials, energy efficiencies, radiant-heated floors and items that other homes don’t have to personalize their homes.

PADGETT: The customers on Cape Cod are unique. They bring extraordinary passion to their new homes because they are located on Cape Cod. This is a dream location for them, whether as a second home or retirement residence. It’s their Nirvana.

POLHEMUS: We work with many very busy executives. They don’t necessarily want a big statement house. Their home here is to get away, to be anonymous. They are not necessarily into McMansions. But they want the highest-quality construction and amenities.

Q When you meet with a customer, what are the reasons they give you for wanting to own a home specifically on Cape Cod?

DUFFANY: They love the charm, warmth of community, beaches, and plenty to do year round.

BRYANT: Most have been part-time residents over the years and they have always planned to live here permanently to enjoy the Cape for all it has to offer - beaches, the National Seashore.

Q What are the unique challenges of home building and remodeling on Cape Cod compared with elsewhere in Massachusetts?

DUFFANY: Dealing with wind-borne debris and 110-m.p.h. code issues. Then you have historical, conservation commission and ZBA issues that are much more restrictive than in the past. There are few good building lots remaining across the Cape. All the best ones have been built

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Rob Padgett

on, leaving the future to take downs for rebuilding. This, in turn, triggers many negative reactions from neighbors who don’t want growth or change.

BRYANT: Wind-zone requirements, strict zoning and conservation regulations.

POLHEMUS: Most clients come from off Cape and do not live here on a regular basis. Their primary residence can be anywhere from Boston to New York to Hong Kong. The challenge is to be able to connect with them both personally and then through technology to provide an experience that not only yields a beautifully designed, exceptionally crafted home, but also the process of designing and constructing their home as a relatively hassle free experience for them.

Q What home building regulations and codes most benefit homeowners, and how?

DUFFANY: I feel smoke detectors and maybe CO2 detectors benefit the homeowner directly, as does the efficiency of heating apparatus, which are code driven.

BRYANT: Energy-related codes that may cost more up front, but can realize quicker paybacks in the long run.

Q What home building regulations and codes adversely impact homeowners, and how?

DUFFANY: There are excessive tie-downs, sheer walls, massive foundations that are not really necessary once you get away from the shore. But they are required, and they are costly. Energy has become more regulated than ever. Choice is being taken away from folks, and the cost for some

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mandates is over the top.

BRYANT: High wind-zone requirements, flood-zone maps and potentially the promulgation of sprinkler systems in residential homes. These are costs a homeowner will likely never recoup.

MCPHEE: There are many codes that start out with good intentions, but they end up having a negative effect and driving up the cost of home ownership. The state building codes used to be the base for minimum requirements, not maximum. Over the years the codes have evolved and become so stringent and raised the bar so high that the cost for homeownership in the new construction world is very expensive compared to the resale market.

The change in flood zones and the re-mapping has a huge impact on so many people here on Cape Cod; and some people are not aware of how this has a negative effect on the value of their property - as well as limitations for work they might want to do to the home in the future.

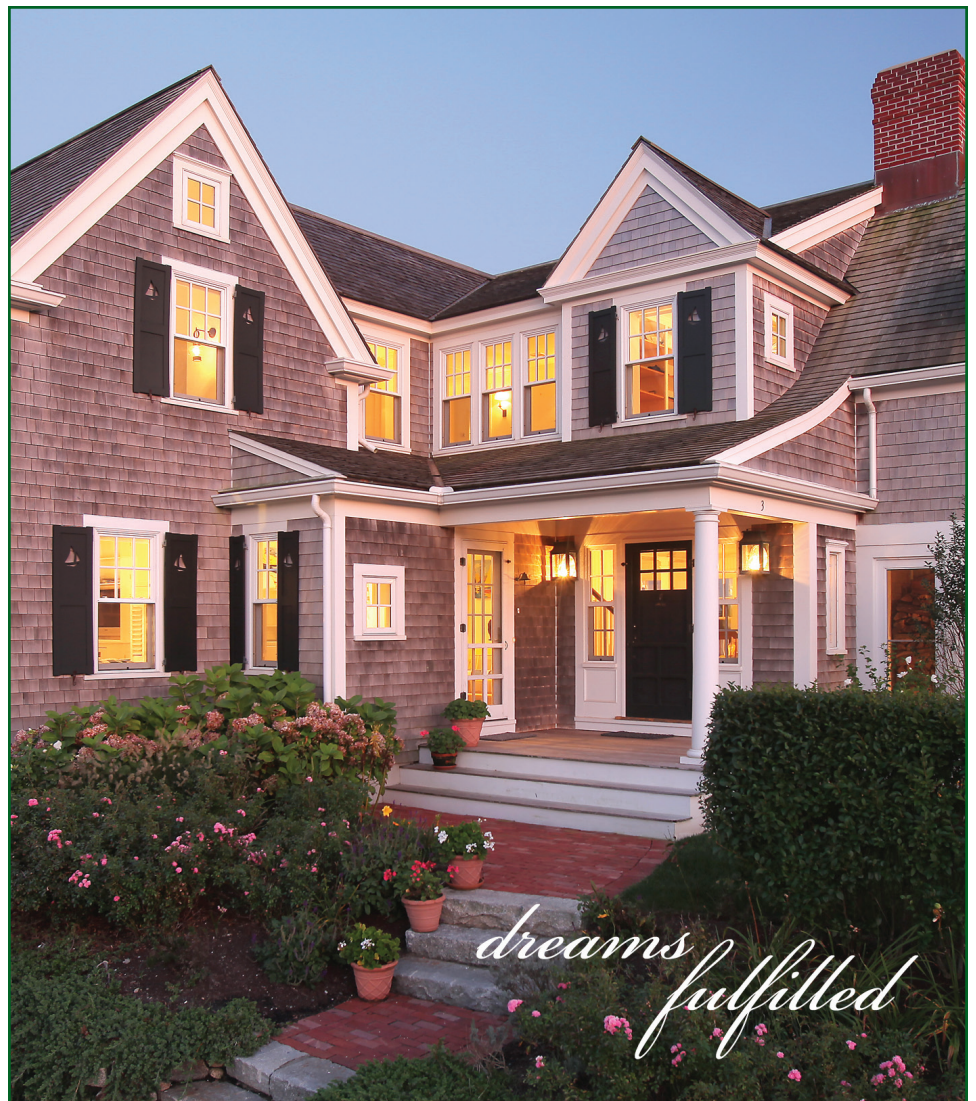
The availability of skilled labor is the biggest challenge we face. Good, reliable, competent help is becoming more challenging all the time.

Mike Duffany

Q What are the greatest challenges facing the Cape's home building industry?

DUFFANY: Even though the codes are challenging us more each year, the availability of skilled labor is the biggest challenge we face. Good, reliable, competent help is becoming more challenging all the time. Also, resources: clean water, affordable electricity, natural gas limitations are looming and need to be addressed.

BRYANT: The non-uniformity of enforcing the state building codes across town borders and continued over-regulation.



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The change in flood zones and the re-mapping of the Cape has a huge impact on so many people here, and some people are not aware of how this has a negative effect on the value of their property.

Rob McPhee

KOVACH: Being able to build housing for young adults and families to keep communities diverse and retain our work force. To do this, we have to stay on top of regulations that add too much costs to housing. We want to build safe, efficient homes, but at what cost? There has to be a rational balance.

MCPHEE: Cost of homeownership and lack of affordable housing to keep skilled trades here on the Cape. We need to be addressing the sewerage challenges and coming up with a plan that can be put into place for moving forward.



What are the best opportunities for the Cape's home building industry?

DUFFANY: Working with agencies that regulate to sustain our building economy; addressing zoning initiatives to build in downtown areas where growth can be achieved - infrastructure is in place and mass transportation is more affordable. We need to connect even more with town building inspectors so we continue to better understand each other's priorities and responsibilities. It's healthiest if we all are on the same page.

I find that inspectors respect those builders who are knowledgeable and professional about codes. If you can present your case then, they are more inclined to agree with you.

KOVACH: We have aging housing on the one hand and diminishing open building lots on the other hand. This means we will be engaged in rebuilding the Cape moving forward. This also will require an intensified look at higher-density housing in our village and town centers.

MCPHEE: We need to work with the various towns and state agencies to review zoning challenges and come up with a more current system that will stimulate housing growth. With the skills and expertise of the many builders and various trades here on Cape Cod we have a huge opportunity to participate in the future of Cape Cod. ●

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This continues the roundtable discussion among recent previous presidents of the Home Builders & Remodelers Association hosted by its current president, Mike Duffany.

The HB&RACC – Housing's leading edge

Q How does the Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Cape Cod contribute to the economy and quality of life of Cape Cod?

MICHAEL DUFFANY: We are the constant “watchdog” for tracking challenges facing builders, suppliers and homeowners. We hold our members to a high standard. We also hold the regulatory community to a standard that blends affordability, safety and integrity into our homes that bring a “quality of life” unsurpassed anywhere in the country. We keep our members informed of upcoming changes, licensing requirements, opportunities to learn and grow and forums to give your input. The list goes on and on.

RICH BRYANT: Our industry on the Cape is arguably one of the top employers, some say second only to healthcare. We contribute immediate and long-term money into the local economies.

CHRISTINE DUREN: In a typical year, per residential building permit activity, an average of 4,320 building & remodeling permits are issued, totaling an average of over \$400 million pumped into our local economy every year. The employment effects of new home construction and remodeling extend far beyond the physical structure. About half of the jobs created by building new homes are in construction.

The rest are in housing-related industries that produce building materials and provide services to both home builders and home buyers. The economic ripple effect is significant.

ROB MCPHEE: The association promotes the home building industry and all of the

talent here on the Cape. They educate the trades as well as the consumers with their At Home on Cape Cod publication. Housing affects the entire economy on Cape Cod, and a lot of money is spent on housing throughout the Cape annually - making its way back into the communities we all live in.

PETER POLHEMUS: The HB&RACC first of all sets a high bar in regards to industry ethics and professionalism. The association does a great job of connecting builders, who are busy making a living. They also make them aware of important issues that affect their livelihoods. The association provides seminars on critical code issues and regulation.

Q Why should a Cape business involved in the home building industry be a member of the association?

DUFFANY: To become a part of a building community that really cares for its members and clients. To be a business that stands up for what's right and is not afraid to challenge authority in the best interest of the larger picture. We hold ourselves to the highest standards of workmanship and professionalism. Every member of the association ascribes to a specific code of ethics.

BRYANT: Many companies are directly or indirectly related to the products our membership offers. We have always preached “doing business with a member.” It's a great way to network and help contribute to a local industry that keeps so many people employed who are seeking a future here on the Cape.

LIZ KOVACH: Our association helps lead the way for the entire state's housing in-

dustry. Despite the Cape's relatively small population in Massachusetts, our association has the third highest membership. We will actually register 300 members during 2015, our 65th anniversary year. Our membership has grown close to 60 percent over the past 4 years.

POLHEMUS: The HB&RACC plays a critical role keeping businesses that are involved in the homebuilding industry informed as to issues that affect them. It takes an active role in advocating for the homebuilding industry, standing against overregulation which creates additional costs and barriers to the homebuilding industry.

Q What accomplishment during your presidency gives you the most pride and satisfaction? Why?

DUFFANY: I am dedicated to bringing inspectors and builders closer together so that we are interpreting the codes and laws mutually and not working as adversaries. Also, working with government officials to streamline processes, alleviate unnecessary regulation and growing membership of quality companies.

BRYANT: Recruiting our current executive officer, Christine Duren, and expanding the office's role and responsibilities; helping to launch the BRICC Awards, celebrating the very best in building and remodeling among our members; establishing the first-ever association-sponsored Housing Summit to place a spotlight on critical issues of housing and our economy, and – most importantly, working with others to enhance our association's credibility and relevance. ●