

Introducing the GVHBA

BY PETER SIMPSON

THE Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association is celebrating its 30th year as the voice of the residential construction industry in the Lower Mainland.

Incorporated as a B.C. society in 1974, the GVHBA has grown into one of Canada's most prominent and influential home builders' associations. GVHBA's membership is comprised of developers, builders, renovators, suppliers, sub trades and professionals. More than 465 companies are members, from family-run businesses to high-volume, multi-family developers.

Actually, GVHBA operated under a variety of names prior to incorporation and we salute the individuals who were involved during those times. Larry Bourne was 1974 president and he has obviously witnessed both the turbulent times and heady days of the housing

market over the years. Pearce Development, Larry Bourne of Prime Properties and Dave Deighton of Dick's Lumber & Building Supplies. Their contributions to the growth of GVHBA have been invaluable.

According to long-time members, when it comes to municipal liaison, the more things change, the more they remain the same. GVHBA is still working diligently to mitigate impediments to home ownership. We conduct ongoing liaison with elected officials and senior staff in 19 Lower Mainland municipalities, a critical function to ensure that housing affordability and choice are taken into consideration when new bylaws, regulations and policies are approved by municipal councils.

Access to current trends and technologies provides a competitive edge, so education and training programs are

What's New in Homebuilding seminar is quite popular. Held four times a year, this full-day seminar benefits people contemplating the construction of a custom home.

Everyone loves a parade. GVHBA presents parades of new homes in the spring and fall of each year, and a parade of renovated homes each spring, when people can tour recently renovated homes.

The GVHBA leadership and members believe strongly in outreach activities, which assist charitable and community-based organizations. We sponsor a scholarship for exceptional construction management students at BCIT and support a carpentry skills course in two Surrey high schools. Our members generously participate in our annual Coats for Kids campaign and Christmas toy drive.

GVHBA is an active group of committed volunteers who strive for excellence and professionalism in their business pursuits. Our members regularly receive a host of provincial and national awards. This year they led the country in national awards. Provincially, our members won 34 of 38 Georgie Awards for excellence in residential design, construction, technology and marketing.

It's been a great 30 years, and we look forward to the future with great pride and anticipation. **CB**

Peter Simpson is chief executive officer of the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association.



COURTESY OF GVHBA

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market over the years.

Eight current members have been along for the entire 30-year journey — the Canadian Plywood Association, Columbia Concrete Products, Dick's Lumber & Building Supplies, Lafarge Construction Materials, Owens Corning Canada Inc., Pacific Pre-hung Doors, Pearce Developments Ltd. and Select Home Designs. Their loyalty is appreciated very much by the GVHBA leadership.

The GVHBA Hall of Fame is home to six distinguished members. Al Koehli, Doug McLean, Ken Sawatsky, Gary Santini, George Thew and Bill Strain will

be important to our members. We provide a variety of seminars, workshops and forums, including such topics as economic forecasts, construction law, project management, how to mitigate the high cost of construction, and interpreting the complexities of building-envelope science.

When it comes to consumer education, GVHBA is at the head of the class. Each spring we present North America's largest seminar for first-time home buyers. More than 800 young people attended our 10th annual seminar last April. Twice a year we offer evening seminars for homeowners eager to renovate their homes, and our

Past President

Larry Bourne, one of the GVHBA's first presidents, reflects on the good old days.

LARRY BOURNE, president of Prime Projects development company in Langley, was one of the first presidents of the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association in 1977-78. Now 73, Bourne reflects on the days when the association was in its infancy and he was at the helm.

The purpose of the association was to give

home builders a way to communicate with the government, and to belong to the national Canadian Home Builders' Association. The association went through several name changes, including Vancouver Home Builders' Association

continued on page 18



PAUL BURN

Larry Bourne, one of the first GVHBA presidents (1977-78).

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LARGEST INVENTORY OF EQUIPMENT IN THE BUSINESS

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and Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada (HUDAC). The association then changed its name to the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association and was incorporated in 1974, 30 years ago.

Bourne put together a company with 21 builder members of the GVHBA called Sur Del Builders to develop land. "As far as I'm concerned, without the association, I would never have been able to form Sur Del Builders," Bourne says now.

"It was a great time, the association was a big part of the reason why we were able to do what we did. People who didn't belong to the association, I used to say, 'Look, if you don't belong to the association, how can you find out what's going on? You can't do anything for yourself or for the association unless you belong to it.'"

Bourne describes the GVHBA as a "dynamic group," then and now. And he's not surprised that membership has grown considerably since he first became involved: the current number of member companies has surpassed the 400 mark. "It's pretty hard to deal with government on your own," says Bourne. "You've got to

"[The association] helped to bring a lot of the builders together who never would have been together...We used to bring people in and try to work with them to improve their situation."

have something like that to be involved in some of the things that are happening. The whole construction industry is under a blanket of government policy in regards to the building code."

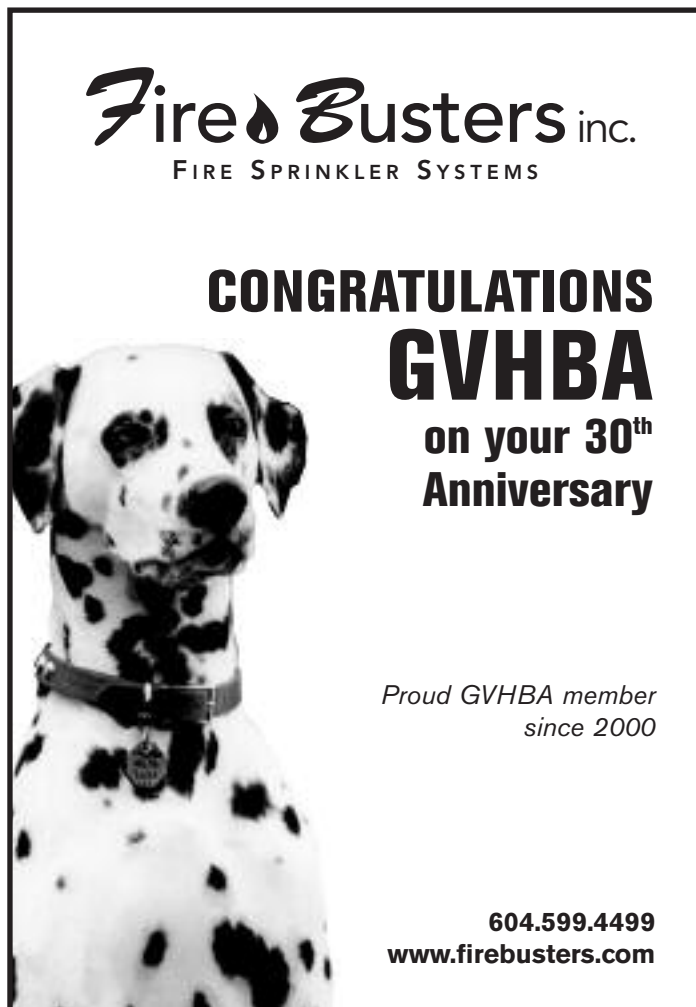
"[The association] helped to bring a lot of the builders together who never would have been together. At one time, you'd walk down the street and if you saw a builder coming you'd probably go on the other side of the street, that's how bad it was. People are people. We used to bring people in and try to work with them to improve their situation. Because if they weren't a very good builder we were better off to bring them in and work with them to try to bring them up and give them advice

if they wanted it. That's still going on."

"I can't say enough about the association in terms of the reasons it's there and why it's stuck."

His best memory? "We when first started the camaraderie of the people was really something else. We had dances, we did everything we possibly could to raise money and keep the association going. It brought people together."

"People knew each other and they helped each other. They enjoyed being together. When things get bigger, it's harder to do that. Back then it was like a community." **CB**




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Veteran Members

To mark the 30th Anniversary of the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association, we talked to representatives from some of the association's founding member companies about the benefits of joining — and sticking with — the GVHBA.

BY JENNIFER PATTERSON



Tom Burke, senior inspector, conducting an Insitu veneer thickness measurement test.

CAMARADERIE, networking, industry support. Those were just some of the reasons why long-term members of the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association have stayed with the organization for so many years, some since the association was incorporated in 1974. As the association marks its 30th anniversary in 2004, the GVHBA's longevity serves as a testament to the association's strength and ability to fulfill its very important role as "the voice of the residential construction industry."

At this year's 30th anniversary gala on Friday, Nov. 5, 2004, the GVHBA is honouring its eight founding members, who have been with the association for its entire 30 years since incorporation. We asked them to describe in their own words what has been the best aspect or benefit of membership with the GVHBA over the years. Here's what they said:

We asked James Prince, general manager, western hub, Lafarge North America, why the GVHBA is so important to his company. "Networking is very important to our business. The association has provided the tools and forum to increase networking," he says.

To Prince, the association's 30th anniversary signifies its "stability in the industry and the desire to go forward with a consistent approach to improve and provide top quality products and services."

What does he believe are the benefits of membership? "The association has allowed us to show off our value-added products and market concrete to purchasers and specifiers. The introduction of new and improved products to the market is made easier through the association."

When asked to describe an event or anecdote, which he thinks captures the true spirit, camaraderie and support offered by the association, Prince says: "The concrete house that was built in B.C.

COURTESY OF THE CANADIAN PLYWOOD ASSOCIATION



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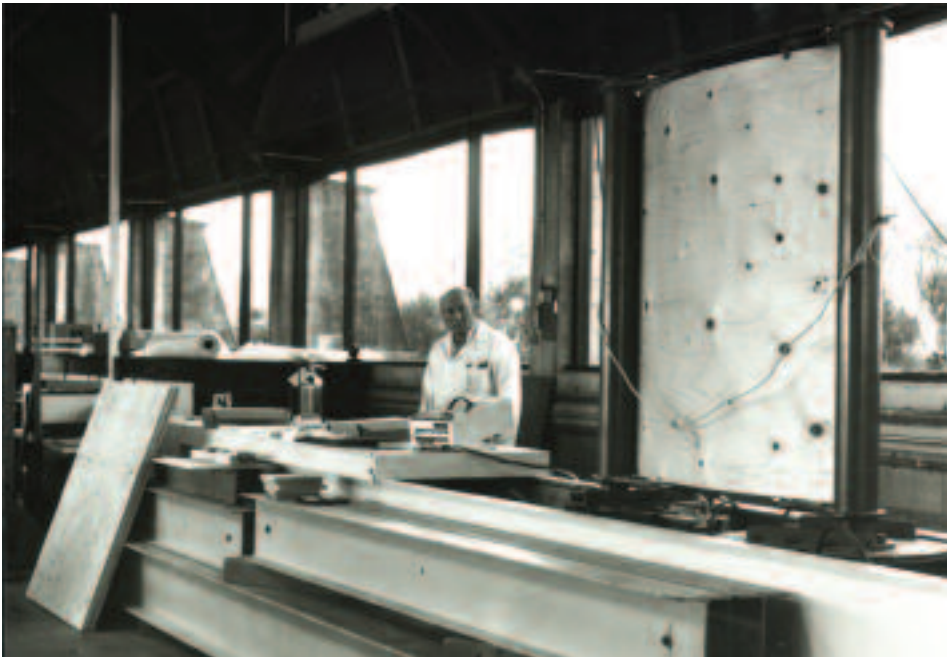
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A picture taken in the early 1970s of the Post Flexure Machine, which is used to check the stiffness and strength in bending. It was designed and constructed by the Plywood Manufacturers Association of B.C. in 1964.

COURTESY OF THE CANADIAN PLYWOOD ASSOCIATION

Place was a magnificent joint effort by all parties involved.”

As his final word to the association, Prince says, “we appreciate all the work that goes into running an association and we applaud all the efforts of the staff. The members’ strong commitment and active participation is what’s required to sustain the association.”

Stephen Molnar is British Columbia sales manager for Owens Corning Canada Inc., fabricators of roofing, insulation, acoustic and exterior systems for houses, and the creators of fibreglas “pink” insulation.


Molnar has been with Owens Corning for six years and

specializes in acoustical and sound-control products.

“[Membership] has brought us increased awareness on our ‘Fiberglas pink’ insulation and ‘Celfort’ rigid insulation product,” says Molnar. “It has also helped us in launching the introduction of our fibreglas roofing shingles into Canada in 2004 by starting in the Vancouver market.

For Molnar, the fact that the association is celebrating its 30th anniversary proves its “long-term commitment to the Greater Vancouver market.”

When asked what are the benefits of membership with the



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GVHBA, Dave Deighton, sales representative for Dick's Lumber, says, without hesitation, "Everything."

"There's no expertise in our business and an organization like the Greater Vancouver Home Builders, gives you expertise. Right now there are too many people building who don't know what they're doing. If everybody went to the association and said, 'I need proper builders and proper carpenters,' there would be a lot fewer problems. But obviously not everybody can become a member. When you go to have a membership, you have to be pre-qualified, which proves that you're a credible builder, or you're credible in whatever business you're in. And they do

checks on you to make sure what you've told them is correct. And it goes up before a board for a review and they say this guy is good or bad, or whatever. And if the guy's bad they put it out to three or four more people, to double check and triple check. And they go from there."

In terms of lobbying government on issues relating to the housing market, Deighton says the GVHBA provides a voice for "everything and anything in the building industry. You've got to have that backing behind you."

"We have liaison committees on all different levels of government to help out. Sometimes the government listens sometimes



An aerial photograph of the Canadian Plywood Association head office and technical centre. The building was officially opened in 1962 and is still pleasing to the eye over 40 years later! Its dramatic roof line is faceted with 86 triangular and trapezoidal panels of plywood.

COURTESY OF THE CANADIAN PLYWOOD ASSOCIATION

Congratulations GVHBA on your 30th Anniversary

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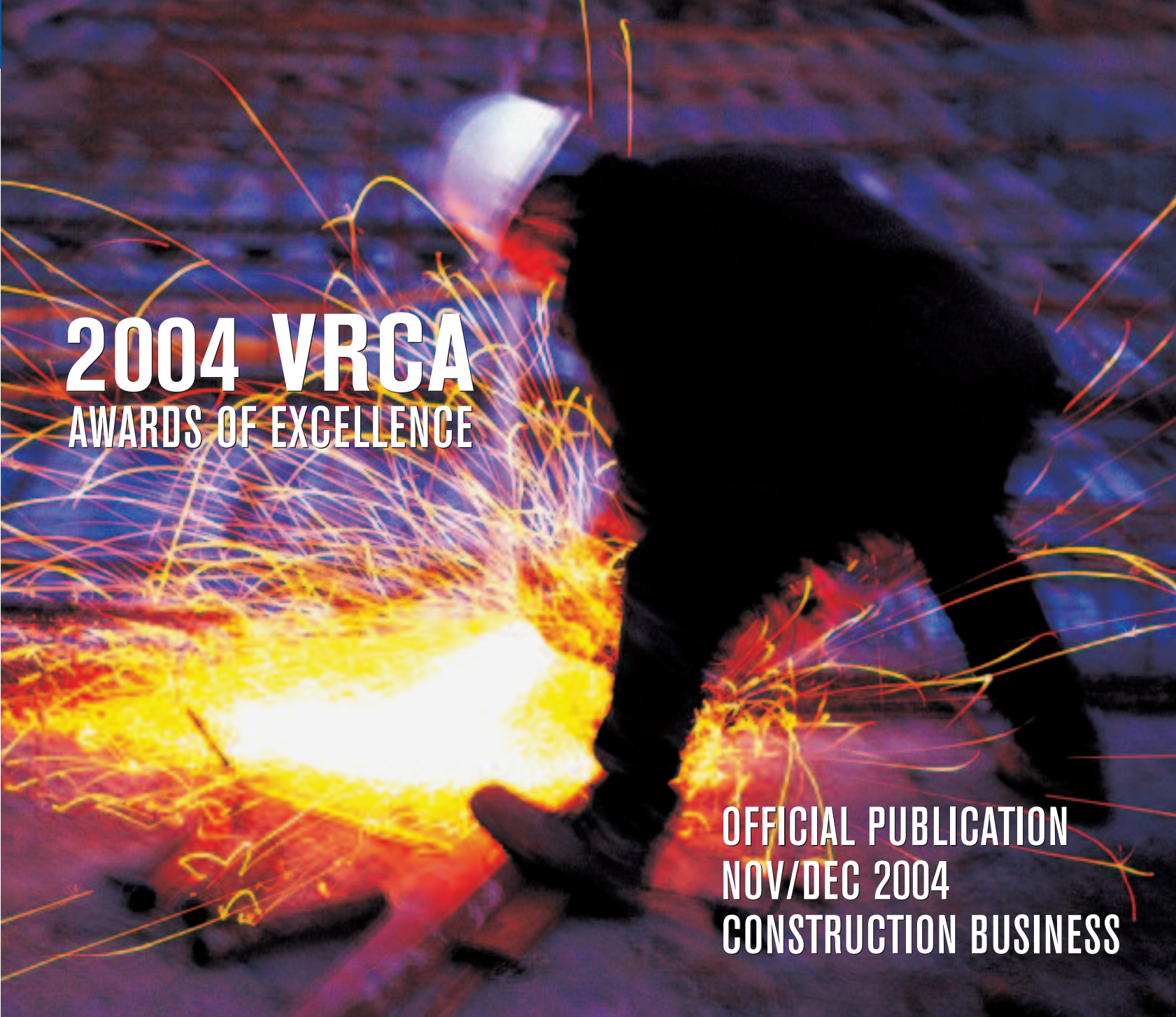
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Viewing plans of a show home in 1991.

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they don't, but we put our two cents worth in. Certain things that the government pushes in aren't very good for builders. They add extra costs that we can't recover. So we put our two cents worth in on that."

As for the alliances he's made over the years, "ninety per cent of them are all best friends now," he chuckles. "It starts off that you join because you're in that business and you want that expertise from people. Then as you learn and go along, they start to use you for the expertise. We try and help everybody, no matter what. Whether it's exporting out of the country, we do a lot of shipments all over the world.

People who want to get into it and don't know how to, phone me for expertise on that."

With 230 employees, Dick's Lumber is one of the largest independent lumber yards in Canada. It has three outlets, a head office in Burnaby, and satellite yards in North Vancouver and Surrey.

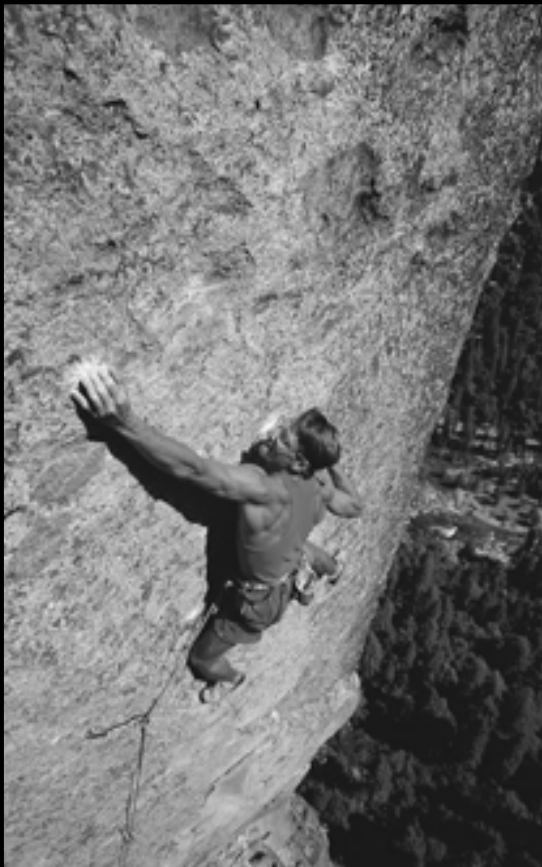
"Become a member," Deighton advises any non-members. "Help yourself out."

Allan Pearce, owner/president, Pearce Developments Ltd., considers the benefits of GVHBA membership to be the contacts and support. "I've met a lot of good people and have developed relationships which created opportunities. [It] gives you a way to keep in contact with your peers in the industry. The association gives us a voice as well, when certain issues arise, challenges certain housing policies, taxation issues, land-use issues, things that would be of use to builders. They do go to bat for us in that regard."

Allan is a second-generation member of the GVHBA, following in his father Denny's footsteps. His father first joined the GVHBA 30 years ago and Allan has been a member for the past 15 years.

Pearce Developments is a home builder and land developer, specializing in multi-unit and single-family dwellings. Notable projects

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Members of the 1986 board of the GVHBA.

COURTESY OF THE GVHBA

include Hawkwood Estates in Coquitlam, Citadel Heights in Port Coquitlam and custom-built homes in Coquitlam and Anmore.

His advice to non-members? “There are a lot of benefits in getting to know people in the industry and having a collective voice when issues arise. There’s strength in numbers. If you’re going to be a home builder, I think you’ve got to be a member of the home builders’ association. It’s the place to be.”

Andy Dolan is sales and marketing manager for Columbia Concrete Products. While the company has been involved with GVHBA for 30 years, Dolan joined Columbia Concrete 11 years ago. During that time, Dolan has been “intimately involved with the GVHBA.”

“I think one of the main benefits [of the GVHBA] is clarity and professional information, whether it be to the home owner or the builder or an industry professional. It’s stable, it’s non-biased and it gives professional representation to our industry.”

Dolan’s predecessor, Chris Jones, was involved with GVHBA and its fledgling organization before that. “It’s obviously changed and continues to reinvent itself as it grows, but it’s been an association that we’ve been very happy to be involved with,” says Dolan.

Chris Jones, former sales and marketing manager, Columbia Concrete Products, served as a director of the GVHBA for about three years, and sat on the Home Show Committee, the New Product Development Committee and the Technical Committee.

Jones first joined the GVHBA while

A show home under construction in B.C. Place.



COURTESY OF THE GVHBA



ABOVE: One of the earlier GVHBA show homes that was sold or given away in a lottery. **TOP RIGHT:** Inside the Burnaby store of Dick's Lumber & Building Supplies, one of the eight 30-year members of the GVHBA. **RIGHT:** A play-house designed by GVHBA member company Select Home Designs.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE GVHBA

working for Select Home Designs. He joined Columbia Concrete Products in 1980 and has been Columbia's technical advisor for the past six years.

Jones' best memory was the camaraderie of the fellow members and the information available. "I used to give seminars for the GVHBA."

"I can remember, we really had some great conventions," says Jones, describing one in Vernon that was held in a big old barn and turned into a hootenanny. For entertainment, Jones played guitar, while another fellow played banjo and a third played a tea kettle.

As part of the Home Show Committee, Jones was part of a team responsible for designing the Street of Dreams. "We had a lot of fun putting concrete-tile-roofed houses into B.C. Place Stadium. They had to be designed so they would segmentally come apart so they could get through the doors and then they were installed inside the dome.

Then they put a concrete-tile roof on top of it."

"The work that went on behind the scenes to do the Home Shows was huge," Jones recalls. "People did not realize."

"The object of being a member was to hear about what the industry has to say, hear what their needs are, hear the projections of what's happening through all spheres of the construction — from financing right through to the guy that's pouring the concrete. [GVHBA] keeps your finger on the pulse on the whole industry."

Jones believes the 30th anniversary of the GVHBA and Columbia Concrete Products' 30-year membership signifies that both the association and the company have stood up to the test of time, and are respected and have secured their place in the construction industry.

"GVHBA is the voice of the industry." **CB**