

July 31, 2005

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Dear [REDACTED]:

First of all, I want to thank you for advising your readers to get a house inspected before purchasing it. That is the same advice, which I have given to my family and friends for 20 years and before realtors even began advising their customers to do that. Also I advise the young, good looking women in my life to also have their used cars inspected by an independent and trusted mechanic before purchasing it. Sometimes car salesmen get away with telling trusting and naïve young women that the car has already been inspected by their mechanics.

But the main purpose of this letter is to let you know that ASHI is not the only home inspector professional organization. And I would appreciate you making your readers aware of this in any future articles on this subject.

I apologize for not giving my name. And also, I cannot give you as much detail as I would like for fear of being identified. Unfortunately, I have to be able to live in this town and make a living. Making enemies with even one person can cause one a lot of problems. I've been there, done that. People can go out and lie about you, and you may never know about it. And there may be no way for you to defend yourself.

ASHI or the American Society of Home Inspectors is a membership driven organization. In other words, they were formed by their membership, and they exist because of membership dues. However, professional organizations are just like the government. Fairly soon the leaders forget for whom they are working, and they start raising the dues. And the staff is as uncooperative and hateful to its members as the government workers are to the citizens, when they need help. That's why I oppose most government regulation. Once these people get a little power, they turn into little tyrants. And if you stand up to them, they will just find ways to make your life difficult. It would be preferable not to have to belong to and depend on professional organizations such as ASHI.

However, ASHI's one (and only) strength is the marketing of its name. You may or may not be aware of the significance of brand names or labeling. A couple of decades ago, people just didn't buy office equipment unless it was IBM. It didn't matter, if there were cheaper or better product choices. A few years ago in Georgia, when national ASHI significantly raised its dues as it just has again, a lot of the members left and formed a new organization, GAHI or the Georgia Association of Home Inspectors.

In Florida in order to belong to the local ASHI group, one first has to join the national ASHI at \$455 a year. Then it is \$300 a year to join the local ASHI.

ASHI and its members are mostly arrogant and unfriendly to attendees of their chapter meetings. They act like they are doing you a favor to take your money.

Because of their arrogance, a single individual who got angry with ASHI started his own competing organization, NACHI – National Association of Certified Home Inspectors, which has taken off with leaps and bounds. He had first been a realtor, which is from whom most home inspectors get their business. Quite frankly, it would be hard to survive as a home inspector unless realtors referred their potential buyers to you. Some of these realtors realize their power and can be overbearing with home inspectors. Some realtors even expect kickbacks and get them. I was told that one realtor off of ██████████ in ██████████ gets a \$50 “rebate.” Some real estate agents even do home inspections. That certainly sounds like a conflict of interest.

It only costs \$300 a year to belong to NACHI. And they actually try to help their members. They will link my website to their national website in order to send me referrals. They will send me referral business based on my submittal of 20 zip codes. And I have learned more at their educational conventions/seminars than I have at ASHI's similar programs.

There are other professional memberships, such as: ICC – International Code Council (pass four tests based on new construction building code – ASHI and the others are for existing home inspections), FAPHI – Florida Association of Professional Home Inspectors, FACHI – Florida Association of Certified Home Inspectors, North West Florida Home Inspectors, FABI – Florida Association of Building Inspectors, and others.

You should consider advising your readers to have their new homes or homes less than a year old inspected by ICC – “code certified” inspectors or contractors/inspectors. Don't rely on the builder's inspectors. Also, if the builder refuses to allow you to pick your own inspector, then you should tell the builder that you will just hire that inspector to do the one-year warranty inspection. The inspector and home buyer will get their revenge then. A warranty inspection may discover problems that have arisen over the year and while they are still under warranty – the builder's responsibility.

Home inspection is fairly standardized. We all look at and for the same things. But just like in school, some people consistently make in the 90's and others consistently make in the 70's. Every house is different, and every inspection is just like a test. Most checklists are about 30 pages long. It's hard to make a 100 on any one inspection. Things are going to be missed on site, and things will be overlooked when getting them onto the finished report.

Also, different home inspectors have different backgrounds. Some inspectors have been contractors and have actually built houses. Some have simply been nail drivers and others have been engineers. Then you have the people who know nothing about construction, but they still inspect houses.

One inspector in Atlanta bragged about doing inspections in 45 minutes. Some people try to do four inspections a day. There are others who do two inspections a day. Two inspections a day is reasonable depending on the size of the home. Then there are those who only do one inspection a day. You don't have to worry about them arriving late

from their previous inspection. Also, if you're his first inspection of the day, you don't have to worry about getting shortchanged on your inspection, because the inspector is in a hurry to get to his next inspection.

A small condo or house (1000 square feet) inspection is going to take about the same amount of time of even slightly larger homes, because the inspector still has to look at all the same components. 1000 sq. ft. to 2000 sq. ft. home inspections should run about three to four hours on site, if the inspector is looking at everything at which he is supposed to look.

ASHI does publish a flyer, which specifies what an inspector inspects and what he or she does not inspect. This is also spelled out in the contract between the inspector and customer and is sometimes in the report. However, most customers never take the time to read it. And a lot of home inspectors get into trouble, because they don't know what they are supposed to and not supposed to inspect. I see it all the time even with successful inspectors who have been in the business for a long time.

Just about all home inspector professional organizations use the same standards for doing home inspections as ASHI.

When a realtor asks one inspector if he is ASHI (ah she), he tells them, "No. I'm a he (ah he)."

I hope that you have found this informative. And you can judge for yourself, if you think that I know what I am talking about without divulging my credentials.