

BOAT Bulletin

A publication by the
Building Officials
Association of Texas.
Building A Stronger Texas.

Fall, 2013



Mark Your Calendar

BPI Houston

February 10 - 13, 2014
Doubtree by Hilton
Houston

BPI Arlington

May 19-23, 2014
UT at Arlington
Arlington

2014 Annual Conference

August 5-8, 2014
Granbury

President's Message



Let me start off by saying Happy Holidays to all of our BOAT family and friends.

There is a lot of work happening behind the scenes as we keep the momentum moving forward with training and education. The first Central Texas Building Professional Institute (BPI) was a success! We had a tremendous amount of support from the Cities of Amarillo, Austin, Beeville, Big Lake, Bryan, Cedar Park, Cibolo, Conroe, Corsicana, Galveston, Georgetown, Hereford, Jonestown, Kerrville, Killen, Kyle, Lamesa, Leander, McGregor, Midland, Oak Ridge North, Perryton, Pharr, Robinson, Round Rock, San Antonio, San Marcos, Sequin, Sherman, South Padre Island, Universal City, Waco, Waxahachie, and West Lake Hills. I hope I did not forget anybody; thank you all and I hope we fulfilled your training

Urging Care to Prevent Tree Fires

The National Safety Council offers some safety tips to make sure a mishap doesn't spoil your holiday season.



Continued

needs. A special thanks goes to our moderators and those that helped, to Dan McNabb, and his right hand Julie with the City of Austin for all her work.

The week of November 11, our Past President and Education Ambassador Lawrence Crow traveled to the South and hosted the first Rio Grande Valley BPI. Over 175 people attended. We need the support of all to get the word out so we can make all of the coming trainings a success.

As we prepare for the future, we're going to try and stay ahead of the curve and get information to our membership well enough in advance so you can plan your time away from work. With that said, mark your calendars now! The 2014

BOAT Annual Conference will be held in Granbury on August 5-8. Get ready for great training and educational tracks. You may also want to plan to bring your family and stay for the weekend. There is a lot to do in Granbury and the surrounding area. We'll post more in early spring.

Don't forget the upcoming 2014 BPI's — Houston BPI is February 10-13 at the Double Tree by Hilton at the Houston Hobby Airport. Arlington BPI will be May 19-23.

The 2015 BOAT Annual Conference will be held in Texarkana on August 11-14. In Texarkana, we hope to get members of Region X involved in the training and education, which will create a lot of

opportunities to network with new cities.

You can keep track of future events by checking the BOAT website at www.boatx.org. We can't do any of this without the membership, so please help us get the word out and let's make all our training and educational events successful for BOAT and all who participate. We need your help.

As we wind a year down and get ready for a New Year, let us all take time to tell those who are dear to us we love them and prepare for a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas for all!

Kurt Kasson, CBO
President

Building the Disaster Response Team



It seems we are finally getting the word out that BOAT needs your help in building a disaster response team. We had almost 70 students attend the "When Disaster Strikes" class in Waco at the BOAT Annual Conference in August. There were more than 200 in attendance at the "Lessons Learned from West and Other Recent Disasters" session at the Texas Municipal League Annual Conference in Austin in October. The International Code Council held another two-day session in Dallas on November 14-15 also titled "When Disaster Strikes." The same class will be held at the Houston Building Professional Institute (BPI) in February 2014 and the Arlington BPI in May, 2014.

Our goal is to have several hundred certified Disaster Response Inspectors in the State of Texas. The more folks who certified, the easier it will be to respond to disasters in the future. Not everyone is able to respond at the drop of a hat, so it is essential to have the biggest pool possible of qualified individuals to draw from. No other state has the potential for more types of disasters than we do here in Texas. If we have this large pool of folks who are spread throughout the state, then we will have resources to touch the lives of those impacted.

The BOAT Board is formulating a plan that will provide centrally located equipment, forms, and

supplies around the state, so that we can quickly respond to a disaster in any part of Texas — but this plan cannot succeed without volunteers willing to step up and help out when needed. I encourage everyone to attend the training sessions and obtain the certification. You can still help without the certification but the learning curve is eliminated if those responding are already trained. Please feel free to contact me should you need any additional information at jim.olk@farmersbranchtx.gov.

Jim Olk, CBO

Simplified Bracing Method Eases Wall Bracing for Builders and Code Officials

Wall bracing requirements in building code have gotten complicated, but there is now a simpler approach that is being adopted by states and jurisdictions across the country that doesn't require significant changes in construction practices. In the 2012 International Residential Code (IRC), the International Code Council (ICC) introduced a simplified wall bracing method that made great strides in easing builders' and code officials' understanding of this complicated section of code. Now APA-The Engineered Wood Association has expanded on that effort to make the approach even more valuable.

APA recently developed System Report SR-102, an alternative simplified method for bracing walls of single-family houses in areas of low wind and seismicity, while providing more flexibility for building design and construction. By modifying the 2012 IRC Simplified Bracing Method, SR-102 increases its applicability as much as 60% for house plans, including those with multiple window and door openings on the front and rear elevations.

Simplified Wall Bracing Benefits

In developing the System Report, APA's technical staff enhanced the 2012 IRC simplified wall bracing provisions (Section R601.12) to increase their applicability to a larger percentage of home designs while making the process easier to understand. Determining wall bracing is reduced to four simple steps, which are outlined in SR-102 available at www.apawood.org.

APA's Simplified Wall Bracing Method calls for continuously sheathed wood structural panel bracing, which corresponds with how most of today's houses are built. The APA Simplified Wall Bracing method simply requires the wood structural panel sheathing to have minimum thickness of 7/16" (instead of the code minimum 3/8") and a closer

(4 inches o.c.) perimeter nailing schedule.

The APA approach successfully addresses the challenge of finding enough room for wall bracing segments on the first story of a house—where the number of window and door openings are often maximized. Due to the strength increase from the additional nails and the slightly thicker sheathing, the existing plywood and oriented strand board (OSB) wall sheathing segments are often enough to satisfy the bracing requirements of the code on front and back elevations, without making design changes or incorporating engineered solutions.

APA's new method is prescriptive and extracts more of the inherent strength of OSB and plywood than what is recognized in the code, primarily due to the increased nailing schedule. According to APA's Senior Engineer Ed Keith, P.E., it also permits designers to take advantage of the strength found in shorter wall sheathing segments and count them as bracing segments. "Intuitively we know that a 20" plywood or OSB section on a continuously sheathed wall counts for something, but the IRC doesn't permit you to take credit for that segment. Through testing we were able to determine how much of those shorter segments could be counted toward the required amount of wall bracing," said Keith.

The APA Simplified Wall Bracing Method greatly reduces the complexity of wall bracing at the cost of the some extra nails, and it is founded on years of testing and research in the design of shear walls and diaphragms by APA.

As energy-saving techniques such as advanced framing become more popular, this bracing method works for stud spacings up to

24" on center, while most other bracing materials are limited to studs 16" on center.

For code officials, the new method eases both plan review and building inspection, both by requiring fewer steps and by making the process more approachable for builders. During plan review, verifying proper bracing is drastically simplified, requiring verification across one or two tables and only four wall lines, with no concern about interior wall lines.

The Simplified Bracing Method has only been available for code adoption for a few months, but is already undergoing adoption in seven states, with more expected soon.

To recognize the Simplified Bracing Method for use in your jurisdiction, visit www.performancewalls.org and download document SR-102. Or contact the APA Help Desk at 253-620-7400 or help@apawood.org with questions.

Tom Kositzky, Director of Field Services, APA-The Engineered Wood Association



APA's Simplified Bracing Method permits designers to take advantage of the strength found in shorter wall sheathing segments and count them as bracing segments.



Breaking The Way Things Work

The Role for Building Officials

The balancing act between all working departments of a city in relationship to the development community can be complex at times, to say the least. Planning, fire codes, health, public works, and building inspection all play a vital role in development. The challenge is to keep development moving without sacrificing our goal of life safety and protection of property. When things are going well, common sense naturally tells us to leave everything alone. But in a changing world, a shift away from “that’s the way we’ve always done it” is sometimes required.

Soon after I was appointed Building Official for the City of Mesquite, our director strongly encouraged me to read a book authored by Robert J. Kriegel and Louis Patler entitled, *If it ain't broke...BREAK IT!* As the title would imply, the book encourages overcoming the fear of change to improve old

systems and processes. Besides being responsible for the enforcement of codes that are set up to preserve life and protection of property, we as Building Code Professionals are also responsible for the promotion of development.

Working through the many facets of our governments can be frustrating for some developers with a project that spans from planning to the final Certificate of Occupancy issued by the Building Official. I would like to stress the last part — “issued by the Building Official.” Too often everyone wants to take charge of the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. Granted, we must work with all departments to complete a project. Each aspect is important, but the bottom line is that we will be the responsible party for the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy. When a project is completed, the last experience is the one people will remember.

But who really suffers the most in the somewhat confusing system? Our citizens, developers, and property owners are the ones most affected. We should be the leaders in making a change in all aspects of our development process, even if a complete overhaul is necessary. We are here to promote life safety and protection of property to the **built environment**. We all know that when something goes wrong, people have the tendency to look at us and ask, “What just happened?” So if we are the responsible party, we should be the leaders in making any changes or adjustments necessary to make the development process better, even if a complete overhaul is necessary.

Like all organizations, a leader is required and we are the Building Code Professionals. Remember, that sometimes, even if it ain't broke...you may have to break it.

Keith Smith, CBO



Portable Generators and Safety

Hurricanes, tornadoes, hail storms, wind storms, and floods are not uncommon occurrences here in the Lone Star State. Unfortunately, to make matters worse, when these incidents occur they often result in temporary electrical power outages.

Some homeowners will often attempt to utilize portable generators to provide power for their critical needs such as refrigerators, freezers, water pumps, and lighting. Relatively inexpensive portable generators can be a great alternative approach to costly, permanently installed systems and are very capable of supplying most of these basic critical electrical needs. However, if these portable generators are not interconnected to the electrical system in a safe code compliant manner, they create a number of extremely dangerous conditions to the homeowner, their electrical system, and potentially the electrical utility workers who may be trying to restore power to the house.

The easiest and intrinsically safest approach is to simply run the portable generator in a well-ventilated area, using extension cords to connect appliances, pumps, and other devices that you want to be able to use — but, this approach is not the most practical. It requires multiple extensions cords to be rolled out through

the house, hard to reach equipment moved to connect it, and does not allow the use of any fixed appliances without a cord and plug hookup (such as an electric water heater). In an effort to avoid these problems, some homeowners will attempt to back feed the generator into the electrical system by using modified extension cords, plugging the generator into a house receptacle (a 220 volt dryer receptacle, for example), and turning the main electrical circuit breaker off. While this will energize and restore electricity, it is a violation of the National Electrical Code (NEC) and is very dangerous if the main circuit breaker is not turned off.

If the main circuit breaker is not in the open (turned off) position, power is back fed by the generator through the main circuit breaker to the utility step down transformer. This can cause the transformer to step up capacity and energize, with a high current in lines that should not be energized (dead), shocking or killing a utility worker who is trying to repair them. In addition, when the utility power is restored not only will this pose a hazard to the owner and his family, but the back fed generator will likely burn up and the house wiring and connected equipment could be damaged.

For these reasons the NEC prohibits this type of installation

and generally requires the use of a transfer switch. Transfer switches isolate the utility power from the generator and typically require you to identify which circuits you wish to utilize for emergency power, then relocates these circuits and installs a new dedicated emergency electrical panel or combination transfer panel. The cost of this type of installation is substantial and can be prohibitive.

There is another safe, code compliant, far less expensive, and quicker method with the use of a simple interlock device (NEC article 702). When the interlock device is installed on the existing electrical panel there is no need to install any new panels or relocate any circuits. In addition to the interlock device, you will need to install one new emergency generator power circuit which can be plugged into the generator. All of the new components need to be listed, installed per the requirements of the NEC, and of course, permits and inspections obtained from the local authority having jurisdiction, to insure the installation was performed safely.

These interlocking devices (listed to UL 67) utilize a sliding mechanism which is attached to the outside of the panel that prevents the new generator emergency power circuit breaker from being closed (turned on) unless the main circuit breaker is opened (turned off) first. When this system is used, the

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entire electrical system in your house will be connected to your generator and the utility power lines safely locked out via the interlock device. You still need to use a generator with sufficient watts capacity to provide the load you plan on running and follow all normal safety precautions and manufacturer's recommendations. To limit the load to your generator's capacity, make sure high amperage circuits (i.e. such as dryers, air conditioners, electric stoves, etc.) are turned off.

In the Houston, Texas, area these simple interlocking devices first came about as a response to Hurricane Katrina. They were a safe, quick, and inexpensive method that allowed electrical panels to be energized by vehicle mounted or portable generators where existing emergency power provision was needed but did not exist. A prime example of this was at service gas stations that had gasoline in their underground tanks, but no onsite emergency generators or provisions to safely interconnect portable generators.

When emergencies happen, and power goes out, a portable generator can be a valuable asset to have. However, unless you want to simply use extension cords, a safe method to interconnect to your house electrical system needs to already be in place. If your need is infrequent a simple interlock system might be the best option for you.

Thomas J. Hosey, CBO, CASp

LIFE



Life is a journey that takes us in many different directions. Oftentimes, the journey can become so filled with events and responsibilities that we forget to stop and enjoy it. We can easily take things for granted and procrastinate because, "We can do it later" or "I don't have time right now."

I'll give you an example that is near and dear to my heart; a life event that I will probably deal with for the rest of my life. In November 2009, I and another man—whom I came to call a dear friend—were hired by the same company. We had numerous conversations about life, politics, guns, movies, and hunting. We worked together on quite a few projects. We talked about each other's families, how they were doing, and the arrival of my daughter.

On a warm September night, my dear friend took his own life. He left a loving wife and two grown daughters behind. From that day, the same thought keeps running through my head... WHY?! WHY?! WHY?! Day after day I asked the question and I

still do to this day. The day he took his life, he had motioned to me earlier to come see him. I told him to "give me a minute I need to finish something up." I never did get back to him. I often wonder if he just needed to talk to get his mind off of his final plans.

We as Building Officials, Code Enforcement Officers, and Directors often get so caught up in our daily jobs that we never really NOTICE our employees. When they have an issue, we pass it off.

The other day, a good friend sent me an email. The email had a story and a question—something we should ask *ourselves* and team members. It went like this:

William James, over a century ago, said, "The greatest discovery of this generation is that a human being can alter their life by altering their attitude." I believe this with all my heart, and over the years have seen it happen countless times. What most people fail to realize is that your attitude not only impacts your happiness and your

success, it also can impact the happiness and success of all the people around you... your family, your friends, and your peers at work. Attitudes truly are contagious, and from time to time we need to ask ourselves... "Is mine worth catching?"

It is important to take time out of our busy schedules and see how people are doing. As supervisors and team leaders, we should keep a look out for any unusual behavior or change in habits. It may be nothing, but it could be that one hand reaching out that they need. In closing, I live by these three little words. It's what gets me thru the day during these hard times.

LIVE your life to the fullest,

LAUGH at all the things that don't matter,

LOVE with all you have and more.

Michael "MO" Olson, CFM

The Importance of a thorough inspection process:

This article provides a reminder of why code officials do what we do; **SILENT DEFENDERS, FIRST PREVENTERS!**

City inspectors find potential hazards following roofing repairs

Posted: Oct 03, 2013 10:48 PM CDT Updated: Oct 04, 2013 8:52 AM CDT

Amarillo, TX - A deadly gas could be leaking in the homes of a number of Amarillo residents following recent roofing repairs.

Fourteen thousand roofing permits have been issued in Amarillo since May's hailstorm causing a lot of roofing racket in recent months. But city inspectors are discovering something even more disturbing than all that banging, something that could be deadly.

"We've inspected about 40 percent of the permits that we've issued and in inspecting those, one out of every three has a serious deficiency," said Scott McDonald, Building Official with the City of Amarillo.

Deficiencies such as ventilation pipes from hot water heaters and furnaces that have been bumped, bent or even broken. Broken pipes that could potentially allow carbon monoxide to leak into several thousand homes. "Carbon monoxide is odorless, colorless, typically makes people ill," explained McDonald.

"They want to lay down which can create larger problems like brain damage and even death." Roofing companies aren't actually required to go inside and check the vents themselves, that's why the city does its own inspections.

However, as it's become a growing problem more companies are taking it upon themselves to do it anyway. "Yes, we take it very seriously and we check the hot water heater and the heater vents on every job," said Chris Andrus, president of Andrus Brothers Roofing. Andrus said this particular problem isn't necessarily caused by negligence by a roofing company and because it can happen to anyone, he said it's long been his company's policy to double check

just in case. "The negligence would be not checking," added Andrus.

"Doing your responsibility and looking and making sure that it's still properly ventilated after the work is done." Because even one overlooked, misplaced pipe can turn a roofing repair into an irreversible nightmare. "We just don't want any accidents happening," said Andrus.

"But if you're not checking them and you don't know, it only takes once." "We want to make sure our citizens are protected," added McDonald.

There have been no reports of fatal carbon monoxide poisoning as a result of recent roofing repairs, only a few illnesses.

If you'd like more information on the City of Amarillo inspections or on the code regarding carbon monoxide alarms, just visit their web site at amarillo.gov/roofing.

REPRINT: News Channel 10 story: <http://www.newschannel10.com/story/23606735/city-inspectors-find-potential-hazards-following-roofing-repairs>

Please keep in mind that the simplest of inspections can have the greatest impact. Code officials may take a simple roof inspection as nothing; many communities do not even require a permit to perform roofing or reroofing operations. This is a mistake; the importance of inspecting reroofing cannot be stressed enough. This article should provide communities with a wakeup call to evaluate reevaluate inspection processes. Please recognize there is not one section of the code which is not a life safety matter.

Scott McDonald, CBO





INSPECTORS - THE GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

So what is your perception?

“With great power comes great responsibility!” Do you remember this catchphrase popularized by the 2002 Spider-Man movie? In 1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt said “great power involves great responsibility.” And even earlier than that, Theodore Roosevelt wrote in a 1908 letter that “responsibility should go with power.”

Inspectors have authority over an inspection process and ultimately the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. This however should not be confused or conceived of as power. It is merely a part of the construction process. I think respect and responsibility are what an inspector should more correctly identify with.

How do we gain respect as building inspectors? We are an important part of the construction industry. Even though our job is to protect the lives, health, and safety of people in buildings through our cities and towns, our role is often misunderstood. Instead, the public develops a perception of an inspector that is many times based on news stories or reports of improprieties and criminal behavior concerning inspectors. This is an

individual situation that does not represent our industry and the profession as a whole, however, people remember their last impression.

Perception becomes reality. You’ve heard this before. So what is your perception? When you are out there performing your job, you know that you’re representing your city or town, but also in a larger scope, you are representing the profession of inspectors everywhere. Did you know that? What you do today is a reflection of what all of us will be viewed as or perceived of tomorrow.

Have you ever thought it was that important? You should!

I remember working on job sites many years ago and seeing inspectors that were appreciated because they treated others with respect. It seemed so simple. I kept that in mind when I became an inspector myself and would like to share some tips or thoughts along those same lines.

- Show a genuine interest in your assigned projects and listen to any questions or concerns. Have an answer that is code correct and

moves the project forward.

- Provide options if possible. Present them as choices instead of mandates. It’s all in the delivery. Be tactful. Be professional. Be nice.
- It’s ok if you don’t have an answer every time. Let the job superintendent know; give him your card and get back to him ASAP!
- Use the plans on site and code sections to explain issues in the field. This is important because it becomes building science instead of something you just want them to do.
- Do you know everything? Swallow your pride. New building practices and innovations in the field happen occasionally. Be open to learning more and listening. Maybe their new idea doesn’t work, but explore and find out why.
- You are a fresh set of eyes on the job. Any problems detected early will benefit any project in the future. Contractors are people too and can be receptive to helpful comments if you

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- present them in a positive frame of mind.
- Keep the emotions out of it. Sometimes this is difficult but quiet confidence is better than loud and arrogant demands.
- Of course, be consistent. We all hear this one a lot. It's fair. We should all make the same call along with our fellow inspectors. Have team meetings to discuss anything that's an issue.

- Attitude. Decide to have a good one. It's the only thing you are in total control of everyday.

There are many good contractors out there. If we don't want them to have misconceived perceptions about us, we should do the same in return. There are many working parts on a construction job and we inspectors are one of the most important parts.

Each job should be viewed as an inspector/contractor partnership.

The protection of life, health, and property is a solemn responsibility of the highest order. As "Inspectors with great responsibility" let's do our best to help build a safer community.

Selso Mata, AIA, CBO

Leadership Attitudes



The leadership style someone has is developed from their competence, how they get work done, and their attitude towards people. Some supervisors believe that being interested in getting work done and in people are contradictory concepts. Therefore, some supervisors focus their attention and effort on production alone. These people tend to view workers as mere tools for getting the job done. They tend to believe that if they had "better" people they could get more and better work done. They are the "tough, driving" supervisor.

Then there are supervisors who assume that all people are dedicated and hardworking and that the supervisor's task is to take care of employees and to try to keep them happy. They focus their attention and effort on creating and maintaining a "happy family" relationship among their subordinates. These supervisors also believe that concern with work and people are in conflict. This is the

"sweetheart" supervisor.

Another type of supervisor has a low level of motivation. This type does not think of themselves as supervisors at all, but rather as more experienced building inspectors. They too believe that concern for work and people are contradictory and do not focus attention and effort either on production or on people. This person is the "indifferent" supervisor.

Still other supervisors, while believing that concern for work and people are in conflict, try to balance the two. They try to find a compromise between the needs of the organization and those of the workers. These "balancer" supervisors may attempt to spend half their time on work and the other half on people. Some supervisors of this type manage by crisis. They focus on production when the work is behind schedule or when there are no serious problems involving people. But as soon as they believe that significant

problems are developing with people, they tend to forget about work responsibilities and to concentrate on people. While they do this, the work may again fall behind, thereby producing another crisis.

The effective leader-supervisor does not see a conflict between work and people. He or she does not believe that workers are lazy and must therefore be pushed and driven. Nor does this type of supervisor believe that everyone will work hard if the supervisor leaves them alone or makes them happy. Effective leader-supervisors think that it is possible to blend concern for work and concern for people. They feel that if work is made more interesting and meaningful, and if workers can satisfy their own personal needs through their job, then a lot of high-quality work will be done.

Chris Haver, CBO



Urging Care to Prevent Tree Fires

A dry tree is a serious fire hazard. A burning tree can fill a room with fire and deadly gas in just a few seconds. I urge all Texans to focus on safety first. It can make the difference between a joyous season and a tragic one.

Christmas Tree Safety

For many people, decorating the Christmas tree is a favorite part of the holiday. The National Safety Council offers some safety tips to make sure a mishap doesn't spoil your holiday season.

Christmas Trees

A real tree can add to the spirit of Christmas by filling your home with beauty and the scent of pine. But a real tree can also pose a fire hazard. Each year, more than 400 residential fires involve Christmas trees and tragically nearly 40 deaths and 100 injuries result from those fires.

- Try to select a fresh tree by looking for one that is green. The needles of pines and spruces should bend and not break and should be hard to pull off the branches. On fir species, a needle pulled from a fresh tree will snap when bent, much like a fresh carrot. Also, look for a trunk sticky with sap.

- Cut off about two inches of the trunk and put the tree in a sturdy, water-holding stand. Keep the stand filled with water so the tree does not dry out quickly.

- Stand your tree away from fireplaces, radiators, and other heat sources. Make sure the tree does not block foot traffic or doorways.

- If you use an artificial tree, choose one that is tested and labeled as fire resistant. Artificial trees with built-in electrical systems should have the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label.

Tree Lights

- Only use indoor lights indoors and use outdoor lights outdoors. Look for the UL label. Check lights for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Replace or repair any damaged light sets.

- Use no more than three light sets on any one extension cord. Extension cords should be placed against the wall to avoid tripping hazards, but do not run cords under rugs.

- Turn off all lights on trees and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.

Tree Ornaments

- Always use the proper step stool or ladder to reach high places.

- Read labels before you use materials that come in jars, cans, and spray cans.

- Never place lighted candles on a tree or near any flammable materials.

- Avoid placing breakable tree ornaments or ones with small, detachable parts on lower branches where small children or pets can reach them.

- Do not hang popcorn chains and candy canes on the tree when small children are present. They may think that other tree ornaments are also edible.

Kurt Kasson, CBO
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2013-2014 BOAT Board of Directors



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