

# THE GRADUATE

By  
Bob Buckland, ASCTT

*Frank Durante, R.B.O.*



**A game of golf, Left to Right: Frank with colleagues Peter Sweeney, Beverly Endersby, and George Humphrey.**

I'm always in search for prospective column individuals among those Building Officials who have either retired from their career, or may be retiring in the near future; and also who might be interested in helping me compose a GRADUATE column about their life and career experiences for a coming edition of a BOABC (Building Officials Association of British Columbia) Newsletter. In this regard I was fortunate to speak recently with Frank Durante who may be retiring in the near future from the City of New Westminster, Development Services, Building Division, where he is presently the Manager of Building Inspections. Frank kindly agreed to provide me with information to compose a Graduate column.

I have known Frank since the 1990's when he worked for the City of Vancouver and we were both attending Lower Mainland Technical Meetings.

Frank resided with his wife and family of a daughter and son in the Municipality of Maple Ridge for many years. Unfortunately Frank's wife passed away some time ago, thus Frank became a widower. Presently, his grown son and daughter, each have 2-sons, thus Frank has 4-grandsons.

One of Frank's leisure activities is scouting and he is a member of Scouts Canada as a Scout Leader. He is also past President of the Whonnock Scouts group.

Frank has been working on an addition to the family home for 22-years; the work thereon has been governed by 5-succeeding Building Codes. He says this work is one of those hate/love activities, and he would love to finish it to completion (and so would the municipality), but he hates working on it. One advantage to completing this work gradually is that by the time drywall was completed there is no concern for wood frame shrinkage.

Frank was born in Vancouver, May 21, 1954. He completed his elementary and secondary education there, and went on to attend 2-years at Simon Fraser University with a major in history, and a minor in Kinesiology. About this time he got married and had to find a job to support his marriage. In the years to follow he completed a carpentry apprenticeship thus receiving a journeyman's ticket, an Interprovincial Red Sea Ticket (Journeyman recognized throughout all provinces and territories of Canada, and involves training and exams that exceed those required for a journeyman), a carpentry instructors Diploma from UBC, and a City of Vancouver Managers Diploma, also qualified for a Registered Building Official. (RBO). His earliest employment was in Fort McMurray in the late 1970's where he took part in the building of the Syncrude refinery there. Going there in the Fall, working through the winter, along with experiencing a boom town ambiance with the gambling, drinking, and then

spending his first pay cheque to buy warm work clothing, was definitely a real eye opener. However, he did gain experience and enjoyed his time teaching students in the carpentry trade.

Frank began his municipal career in November 1990 with the City of Vancouver. Over his 18-year career with the City where he began as suite inspector, and ended as a Supervisor/Training Coordinator (Quality Control Coordinator) of the City's building inspectors. While employed by the City of Vancouver Frank supervised 22-building inspectors, and was 1 of 2-inspectors who were involved with the City's coordinated enforcement team known as the (NIST). In January 2008, Frank joined the City of New Westminister as Manager of Building and Plumbing Inspections Department, and remains as such to the present date. Currently, he is in charge of the City's Building and Plumbing Inspections, is the City's Chief Building Official (CBO), and oversees a department staff of 12. He is also a member of the City's 2IC Committee (Second in Command Committee) which deals with policies and procedures on a City wide basis; and is also a member of a 6-person Task Force, which is charged to oversee the need for changes, and eventual massive alterations to New Westminister City Hall.



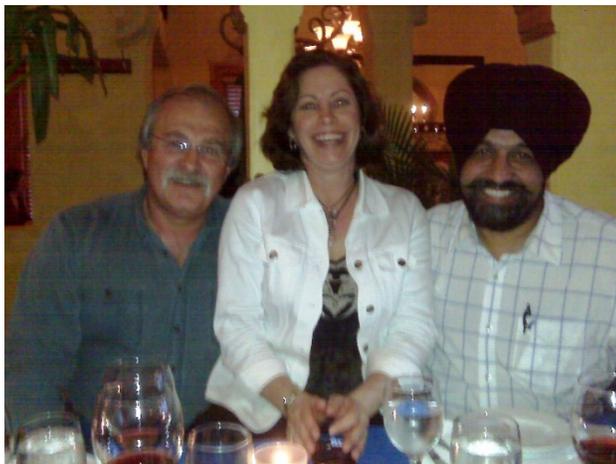
**Good times in Vancouver.**

### **Advancements in Career**

- Began as Union carpenter apprentice obtaining trade ticket and Interprovincial Red Seal. Formed a general contracting company in Alberta.
- Returned to BC in 1982 at which time he became a Carpentry Apprentice Instructor at Pacific Vocational Institute (PVI) which later amalgamated with BCIT.
- Returned to work in the field as a Union Tower Foreman for Van Construction and advanced to Tower Foreman for Canna/Foundation.
- 1990 began career as a Building Inspector for the City of Vancouver.
- 2008 City of New Westminister, currently holds position of Manager of Building Inspectors and the City's Chief Building Official.

### **BOABC:**

- Became a member in 1991, so far in good standing.
- Lower Mainland Zone Representative for 4-years.
- Became an RBO (Registered Building Official) in 1999-2000.



**Frank Durante, Beverly Endersby, and Manjit Sohi at the BOABC Annual General Meeting in Nanaimo.**

## Related Activities:

- Member of BC BEC, (Building Envelope Consultants) since 1999 to present.
- Frank gave a presentation at a Fall Educational Seminar regarding Alternate Solutions, specifically on the role and responsibilities of the Building Official.
- Hosted several Zone meetings where BOABC members were given Building Code education.
- While working for the City of Vancouver a large portion of his responsibility was Building Code Training for City Building Inspectors and Fire Wardens.
- Active Member of Lower Mainland Technical Committee.
- Member of Regional Permits and Licensing Committee.
- Member of BC Building Envelope Committee (BC BEC).



**Frank Durante, retirement, vacation, and fun stuff.**

Thank you Frank,  
Bob Buckland

## Comments from Frank:

In my life and career there have been ups and downs as most of us experience and I can truthfully say I have no regrets as it seems when one door closed another door would open to something better.

I respect my colleagues as I hope they respect me. I always try to look at the positive side of circumstances and I'm not above laughing at myself, I just join in when others do so. I believe life should be enjoyable in both private and working life.

One of my fondest memories is playing Golf with Peter Sweeney, George Humphrey, and Beverly Endersby just prior to Peter's passing. I'm sure it was my golfing ability that kept Peter laughing through what must have been a very difficult time for him; it was a good time with good friends. In summation...."I hope when my last chapter is written those reading it will have a smile on their faces."

