

BAY AREA BUSINESS WOMAN

Your Trusted Source for News, Trends & Lifestyle Issues

Vol. 17 No. 1 NOVEMBER 2008

November Highlights



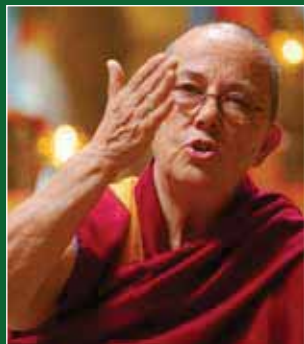
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Abundant opportunities for women in green construction

By Heather Cassell

It is often said that home is where the heart is — whether it's gathering around the stove in the kitchen, nestled by the fireplace or enjoying the garden. But in recent years people have begun to notice that their homes might not be the healthy heart as they once believed it was.

More than 90 percent of poison exposures occur in the home, according to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. People's consciousness has been raised. Everything from mold, mildew and lead-based paint, to asbestos and pesticides are making people mentally and physically sick.

The rise of green building could in fact bring homes back to a healthy state.

A large percentage of the consumers of green building products are married women ages 35 to 45 with children, according to Brian Gitt, executive director of Build It Green (BIG). BIG is a nonprofit organization that promotes healthy energy and resource efficient building processes in California.

Some women are entering the green building industry through the Green Point Rater Program of BIG says Tenaya A san. She estimates there are about 20 percent women. A s program manager at BIG, she's a building expert with 30 years experience as a contractor and construction defect analyst, and now a 'green builder.'

A san sees most women in the building industry hold white-collar positions, such as supervisor production builders, architects and engineers. But more recently, she's seeing more women in blue-collar positions such as home performance contractors, and they really enjoy it. "They just have a lot of passion about it," says A san. "It's not that the men don't, but it's a different kind of passion."

And with the interest in green building escalating she doesn't expect the passion to wear off. "It's definitely increased within the last five years," A san said, "but the last year there has been a huge boom."

Getting into the trades

The construction industry is the



Iris Harrell founder and CEO of Harrell Remodeling
PHOTO COURTESY OF HARRELLREMODELING

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Shyamala Littlefield with her companion Mansur, wearing the turquoise necklace she made for him

Using recycled products, biodegradable hemp, and gems that are ethically mined are just some of the ways that local women jewelers are

helping to protect the earth and to heal us and our pets at the same time.

We are fortunate to be living in the Bay Area where entrepreneurs are greatly concerned about not impacting the planet in a negative way as they pursue their dreams. All of these women see their works as gifts from Mother Earth and have found that doing business in a way that works in harmony with nature is healing for all involved.

C5 Fine Jewelry

Old car parts contain platinum and when they are refined, they become like virgin metal. But who would have thought that beautiful jewelry could be made from discarded automobile parts!

Jewelry maker Meghan Connolly Haupt saw the op

JEWELRY WITH A CONSCIENCE:

Discovering the healing powers within

By Lynne Perry

Your platinum ring could be made of scrap car parts, the beads you wear around your womb can restore your health, crystals can help give you strength, and even your puppy can benefit by wearing healing stones in her collar!

opportunities there. Starting up her new business earlier this year, Haupt had an unwavering commitment to protecting the future of the earth. She knew this would be a key component of her jewelry business.

Every business creates a persona from its name, and this one had to reflect the values of the owner.

"Gems typically are valued by cut, carat, clarity and color," says Haupt about the well-known four C's of gem purchasing. "I added Consciousness, and so 'C5,' the name of my business, was born."

Her consciousness extends into every aspect of her jewelry business. Instead of being ripped from the earth, the diamonds she uses in her jewelry are made in labora

tories from carbon. "It takes scientific testing to tell the difference," Haupt explains.

The other gems she uses are ethically mined, and no child labor is tolerated.

In addition Haupt has designed her own jewelry boxes in order to have as little environmental impact as possible. Those boxes are made in India from recycled paper and printed in soy ink.

See www.C5company.com.

Believe Beads

As a recovering alcoholic, A lli Heaney discovered the healing power of crystals which helped her through the difficult times.

"Mother Earth embodied these crystals and gems with healing power," says Heaney.

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PAPER OR PLASTIC?

How about a “Clean Conscience” bag instead

By Debra Costner

The long-term environmental cost of the damage from plastics is virtually unknown. Although plastics make up only 12 percent of our total garbage, much of it is indestructible and full of toxic substances. Currently only about 6 percent of our plastic garbage is recycled, leaving huge amounts to rot in landfills and leach into our waterways for hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

In the United States, each citizen creates 10 times as much disposable waste as the average person does who lives in China, and 30 times as much waste as someone who lives in India. And although we are recycling more than ever before, it still is not enough.

According to Green Headquarters, which tracks recycling, in 1980 Americans recycled only 10 percent of our garbage. And although that had risen to 32 percent 25 years later, the problem is that the amount of garbage we create has increased by 60 percent over the same period, meaning the amount of garbage that winds up in landfills has increased dramatically!

In 2008 San Francisco passed an ordinance banning plastic bags in grocery stores and drug stores. Early this year Fairfax also passed an ordinance banning the use of plastic bags in all retail stores, but the town dropped the ordinance after plastic bag manufacturers threatened to sue.

Patty Garbarino is president of Marin Sanitary Service in San Rafael, which does much of Marin's recycling. The business doesn't recycle plastic bags because it is not cost-effective. "It would cost you about \$500 a ton to process the material," Garbarino said, adding that "the current going rate that the plastic industry is willing to pay is \$32."

So it's no wonder that consumers are purchasing "reusable" bags in record numbers. Virtually every store now manufactures its own bags selling for between 50 cents and \$3.99, depending on the quality and durability of the bags. But are these mass-produced bags a good alternative? AA H H AA ! Founder Corie Thornton doesn't think so.

"The cheap bags that are being sold in grocery stores are misleading the American consumer because they are still a form of plastic bag, they are not as durable as its cotton canvas counterpart, and therefore will still end up in our landfills after a few times of use," says Thornton. "They are supposed to be a greener substitute for plastic bags when in fact they are still made from the same plastic raw material – petroleum."

She has now made it her mission to educate the public. "Unbeknownst to most consumers, using more petroleum for making these bags, and fuel for transporting these to

the US translates into more oil consumption that contributes to pollution and increased depletion of a valuable resource," says Thornton.

Educated as a chemist, and with a work background as a finance executive, she saw an opportunity to create a product that could serve the community and be environmentally friendly. She started her Marin based company AA H H AA ! so named as the idea came to her in a flash, to fill an urgent need in the marketplace. And educating consumers is a key component of her company's mission.

Since there are as of yet no regulations for "eco" or "green" labeling of manufactured products, she has her work cut out for her. Fortunately, she and her husband Jerry, as parents and grandparents, take their environmentalism seriously. It's important that consumers understand the difference of some commonly used labels such as:

Recycled: Products that have been processed and converted into new and useable product, and knowing what percent of a product's content comes from recycled sources.

Postconsumer waste: Products that are recycled from used and discarded products such as bottles, paper/plastic containers and packaging.

Pre-consumer or industrial waste: Products or waste that come from manufacturing excesses.

Recyclable: Means that the product can be reprocessed into new and usable goods as long as a recycling collection facility is available.

To be a conscientious consumer, before buying any product that is labeled recycled or recyclable, find out where it was recycled from and where it goes to get recycled in the future.

Thornton has developed a trademarked line of products for AA H H AA ! called "Clean Conscience." These products are made from 100 percent postconsumer recycled plastic bottles.

"We believe in creating



Corie Thornton owner of AAH HAA! displays her products at a recent Women Workin' It networking event

products that will make it easily accessible and affordable to the American consumer," says Thornton.

Additionally, all her products are made in the United States from American resources and labor. As she says, "We also focus our company to products that use American-made materials and resources in order to help our economy

keep a 'green' pocketbook."

AA H H AA ! is particularly targeting its products to reach mass consumers, for business promotional products and events where so many companies have developed a policy of sustainability. "As business owners, our mission is to give consumers a better choice. Simplicity, functionality, practicality and eco-sus-

tainability are the basis of our product ideas."

At a time when everyone seems to be moving in the direction of concern about the environment, Thornton is proud to be making a difference. "As consumers, we at AA H H AA ! believe that we have the power to lead the change in the way we live, even in small and simple ways." ☐

Some important details of reusable bags popular retail stores are offering:

CVS: Nonwoven polypropylene bags are made in China from materials that are recyclable and decompose without contaminating groundwater.

Target: Nonwoven polypropylene bags are made in China and expected to last about five years.

Trader Joe's: It offers several options from 99 cents to \$3.99, some from recycled plastic and others (more durable) made from recycled cotton. It only uses paper bags in its stores.

Wal-Mart: It has a new 50-cent bag that has less recycled content than its older \$1 reusable bag; both are made in China.

Whole Foods: Made from 80 percent recycled plastic, and it has eliminated disposable plastic bags from all stores.