

# On Certificates of Occupancy

**Q.** We have a difficult situation and need advice. We bought a house 12 years ago and now want to sell, but our bank wants a certificate of occupancy, and we have some items, such as a deck and pool, that need a C.O. Our city says we have to get a permit for not just the deck and pool but also some inside walls we removed and a plumbing permit for our washing machine. Then they told us we need to apply for a variance for our garage, which was made smaller to make a laundry. We don't mind parking our car on the street, so why is this necessary now? We just want to sell. How long could this take, and aren't we grandfathered in, since the walls we removed were all taken care of with beams our contractor put in? This is all so complicated!

## Ask The Architect



**MONTE LEEPER**

**A.** There's a segment of our population that always makes me wonder. When I reach an intersection with a four-way stop, should I just drive right through? Should I slow down, check to see if everyone else stopped, then just keep going? Decisions, decisions. A client with a similar problem smiled sheepishly and told me he'd "rather ask for forgiveness than ask for permission." When we're exchanging insurance information at that intersection (I think to myself) I'll try to remember that.

So zoning boards and building departments are loaded up with a schedule of people asking for forgiveness, and I wonder how many people really didn't know that you need to follow rules — or that you needed a building permit to do the work to your home. I also wonder how many people understand what a permit is for or respect why one is needed. Then I heard the best one in a while: The contractor who did the illegal work knows the inspector and did work on the inspector's home, so it should be no problem getting a C of O without even a permit, because the inspector owes the contractor one.

So it really isn't what you know, but who you know! Try explaining that to a graduating class at their commencement or a judge as your case is heard. There are two separate realities, two separate societies: the one that follows the rules so things can hum along, and the one that breaks the rules, causing everything to come to a halt. In any given week I am regularly in homes where the ceilings are sagging from under-structured beams put in by people "just trying to make a living," yards with pools with no fences to protect small children from drowning, and water-damaged spaces where mold is growing because no waterproofing was used. Permits came about because someone, actually a large group of reactionaries, decided we needed rules to protect the unwary from one another. As the entire city of Chicago burned to the ground ... to be continued next week.

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Readers are encouraged to send questions to yourhousedr@aol.com, with "Herald question" in the subject line, or to Herald Homes, 2 Endo Blvd., Garden City, NY 11530, Attn: Monte Leeper, architect.

HC2  
6/30

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# HERALD Crossword Puzzle

## King Crossword

**ACROSS**

- 1 Apiece
- 4 Hot tubs
- 8 Vail gear
- 12 Expert
- 13 Ancient Briton
- 14 Flirtatious look
- 15 Review
- 17 Roddick or Rooney
- 18 Popular logic puzzle
- 19 Nonstick spray
- 21 Teensy
- 22 Unrivaled
- 26 Tatter
- 29 Mole, e.g.
- 30 Off-chanted letters
- 31 Revolutionary period?
- 32 They're between mis and sols
- 33 Architect -- van der Rohe
- 34 A Bobbsey twin
- 35 Aviate
- 36 In one's cups
- 37 In-group
- 39 Ger. neighbor
- 40 Actress
- 41 "Doonesbury" journalist Hedley
- 45 Arp's style
- 48 Chic shop
- 50 Tidy
- 51 Bancroft or

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- 7 Increases
- 8 Pundit
- 9 Family
- 10 Third-party abbr.
- 11 Firmament
- 16 Eiffel's masonry
- 20 Whatever amount
- 23 Witticism
- 24 Works with
- 25 Uncomplicated
- 26 Harmonization
- 27 Get better
- 28 Hindu process
- 29 Express
- 32 Sleazy hotel
- 33 -- Vanilli
- 35 "Fee fi fo --!"
- 36 Person with a horn?
- 38 Production number?
- 39 Lop
- 42 Blue hue
- 43 Crazy
- 44 Profound
- 45 "CSI" evidence
- 46 Moray or conger
- 47 Taxi
- 49 Yoko of music