

Julie Gaver

Professional Speaking & Corporate Training, LLC

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Happy New Year!



I have always loved old homes. If you listen very closely, they tell a story. For the past 25 years, I have lived in a 150 year old house and it has been a labor of love.

It is the place where we raised our sons, and one might say that

I grew up there as well. Every room holds so many memories that it is hard for us to imagine ever leaving the safety and comfort of that place. But someday, when the time is right, I know we will.

I can show you the traditional site in my back yard where every first-day-of-school photo was taken. I will always remember the laughter which flowed easily from my kitchen during family dinners and gatherings. I can still see my 6"1' *baby* stooping each time he passed through the back hallway which was obviously constructed when people were much shorter. The weathered marble stone at my back doorstep is evidence that many lives have passed through this place I call home.

Across the street where I live is another old *home* with a story to tell. For the past 14 + years, an electrical construction firm called MEC, Inc. has been my neighbor. I imagine that, for President Skip Staggers, life there has also been a labor of love. One thing I do know is that his *family* has grown immensely which is testimony to the fact that his business was built on a firm foundation.

Like my house, the MEC home has character. Originally built as the Myersville Bank, it houses a large vault downstairs which is used today for file storage. Every nook and cranny is filled to capacity in order to accommodate the staff and resources needed for a burgeoning company. The scenic trek through the narrow hallways to the offices upstairs is not for the weak at heart. The small garage/stock room, which may appear limiting, simply prompted creative alternatives to inventory storage. But within those old walls major contracts were won, a reputation was born, and whenever you cross the weathered marble stone of their threshold, you meet a committed and proud team of professionals.

The time has come for MEC to move on. Soon they will vacate the place where they "grew up" for a new Washington County location with room to breathe and expand. I suspect that for Skip and the MEC team, that move will be bittersweet. It has been said that "*home is where your story begins*". A new chapter is waiting to be written! Good luck in your new location, MEC. Myersville will miss you!



My will shall shape the future. Whether I fail or succeed shall be no man's doing but my own. I am the force; I can clear any obstacle before me or I can be lost in the maze. My choice; my responsibility; win or lose, only I hold the key to my destiny. Elaine Maxwell

Maxwell

PO Box 51 Myersville, MD 21773
(301) 293-4195, Julie@juliegaver.com
www.juliegaver.com



What does your office space say about you?

In sales training, we are told that we can learn a lot about a client by noticing what they keep in their office.

This past year my home office had an “extreme makeover.” I now jokingly refer to it as “my happy place” but there is some truth to it. The sage green walls instill a sense of calm in my high energy personality. My favorite quote is stenciled on the wall that faces my desk. The floor-to-ceiling bookcases cradle my favorite things: an extensive collection of books, an eclectic mix of music CDs, and an endless parade of photos depicting the important people in my life. My office is my sanctuary and it is the place where I feel the most creative.

Studies show that adults spend approximately 75% of their life at work so shouldn't our offices feel like home? Does your office space allow you to feel productive and creative? Do you feel uplifted by your surroundings or are you distracted by clutter and uninspired by its blandness? This year strive to create a haven which inspires you to make your work time a rich and rewarding experience!

Recommended Reading



Oprah isn't the only one with a book club! This past year I joined forces with a few of my fellow HR/Training professional colleagues who share a passion for reading and continuous growth. The books we select must address some aspect of organizational development, human resources, business management, or leadership.

Our most recent pick was *The Corporate Mystic: A Guidebook for Visionaries with Their Feet on the Ground*, by Hendricks & Ludeman.

The book detailed twelve important characteristics of 21st century leaders and offered a more in-depth look at three important leadership qualities: integrity, vision, and intuition. It also offered a

series of exercises designed to help the reader develop enhanced mastery in these three key areas.

I found the book to be slightly esoteric at times but definitely an enjoyable read.

Auld Lang Syne

Ideas for capturing your company's history



- Find a volunteer in your organization to serve as the company “historian.” (*Someone who enjoys scrapbooking would be perfect!*). Create a scrapbook each year which highlights the firm's achievements, projects, and company functions. Include pictures, newspaper clippings, and commentary re: significant events for your firm. Incorporate a section highlighting important clients served.
- Designate someone to take pictures or video at company events and create your own Power Point slide show for future events. It makes great entertainment and creates a sense of camaraderie among employees! At the 10th annual women's conference for *Brethren Mutual Insurance*, the committee created a slide show depicting scenes from the past 10 years and it was very well received!
- If your firm produces a company newsletter, interview some of the more senior members of your organization and write a “*through the years*”- style article. Highlight how the firm has grown and the positive changes they have witnessed. Use this as an opportunity to give recognition to those who have been long term, loyal employees.

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