

# RPA CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS 'A DECADE OF RADIANT'



Ellen Rohr



Hot Rod Rohr

*Editor's note: Husband and wife duo, Hot Rod and Ellen Rohr, will both present a keynote address, "A Decade Of Radiant," Oct. 13 at the RPA's convention marking, in part, the 10th anniversary of the trade group.*

*We asked Ellen to interview Hot Rod on some thoughts they will both discuss during the keynote address:*

**Mr. Rohr, I understand you are the president of the Radiant Panel Association. I'm a reporter with Plumbing & Mechanical. Do you have a few minutes? Our readers**

And, John has developed a lot of great technical training for the RPA and has been instrumental in crafting our tech standards.

***Congratulations on the 10th anniversary of the RPA. How did the RPA get started?***

Radiant heat has been around since the sun warmed the first rock. But the industry's manufacturers, suppliers and contractors have always been highly fragmented. In the early 1990s, there were lots of interesting developments in boilers, pipes, pumps, controls and software. European low-emission requirements really jump-started the modern radiant movement. But you had to really search to find out what was new and good and what worked and what didn't.

Ten years ago, three forward thinking guys — **John Fantauzzi, Mike Chiles** and **Griff Hawkins** — got together and decided that the radiant industry would be well

in the mainstream now. The RPA has helped bring radiant out of the closet.

***Out of the closet?***

Well, out of the basement.

***What about the next 10 years? What's ahead for the RPA and its members?***

For the RPA to be of service to each member, we have to answer this question: What can we accomplish together that we can't on our own?

In July of 2000, the RPA board created a strategic plan. Our big, audacious goal: Radiant is the default choice globally for consumers and the construction industry. Currently, 97 percent of all homes in the United States use forced-air heating and cooling. Radiant systems account for only 3 percent. Our biggest challenge and our greatest opportunity is to increase market share. That's what we have in common. That's what we could better accomplish together than individually.

**Rich Trethewey** does a great job

***HVAC Industry. Are they gangs? Like the Jets and the Sharks in "West Side Story"?***

As an industry, the HVAC guys are better marketers. The best HVAC contractors know how to systematically generate new customers and adopt them like family. Radiant contractors can learn a lot from the forced air and AC folks.

When it comes to comfortable systems, radiant has the edge. On the midnight trip to the bathroom, nothing beats a warm tile floor on bare feet. The HVAC purists can't touch that.

Our customers are best served when we drop the gang colors. Radiant purists would be wise to introduce nifty HVAC components to their systems. You can do some really hip things by partnering radiant with air handlers, air filters, humidifiers and air conditioning. I used to be a radiant snob. That's because I love the piping and the pumps. But if you are looking out for your customer's ultimate comfort, you'll come up with hybrid systems.