

Green and golden on Maui

By **TOM BLACKBURN-RODRIGUEZ**
For The Maui News

In his poem *Fern Hill*, the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas wrote of a life in which he was “green and golden,” in the “sun that is young once only.” For Realtor Meghan Clair and energy consultant and project manager John Bendon that green life is not one that belongs only in poetry, they believe it is one that is within the reach of everyone and easier to achieve than most might think possible.

Today, in the words of Andres Duany, a recognized advocate for small sustainable towns and a founding member of the School of New Urbanism — an architectural movement that rejects dependence on the automobile and the suburban development model — green has become “cool.”

In a talk recorded for a Time/Life environmental podcast Duany notes this development and questions if cool is enough. Not according to Bendon, A LEED Accredited Professional and one of the only people on Maui that is

considered to be a green rater for LEED for Homes.

LEED stands for “Leader in Energy and Environmental

Design” and is a nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and oper-

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TOM BLACKBURN-RODRIGUEZ photo

This Halama Street home in Kihei advertises its green features and energy efficiencies including all appliances, heating, ventilation and air conditioning. Other features include water conserving toilets, showers, and dishwasher and clothes washer. The home has solar hot water heating, reduced water landscaping and a passive solar design with southern exposure.

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ation of high performance green buildings. LEED was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

While some people respond to the hot new thing, Bendon says "that it has to be financially feasible to be green," something he thinks is happening more rapidly now.

If Bendon talks green construction, Megan Clair, with Windermere Real Estate Wailea, LLC is talking sales and a green market that she sees becoming a dominant force over the next few years. Clair is the first female EcoBroker on Maui and one of only four in the state.

According to Clair, "an EcoBroker is a real estate pro-

fessional that has taken the time to get an extra designation focusing on environmental preservation and implementing green building into current and new developments." EcoBroker's seek to promote healthier, cost-effective and green practices in real estate.

Recently, Clair and Bendon teamed up and organized the "Houses That Work Green Building Seminar," held on March 20, at Maui Community College (MCC) and hosted by the Energy and Environmental Building Association (EEBA). Other sponsors included Maui Electric Company (MECO), MCC, the Sustainable Living Institute of Maui (SLIM), Green Building LLC, Premiere Mortgage, *Homes & Land* magazine and Windermere Real Estate Wailea, LLC.

The half-day conference was the first of its kind on Maui and was divided into two parts. The morning session was entitled "Houses that Work" and detailed the building science principles behind green building.

The afternoon session was billed as a "Sales Session." This session focused on the wider spectrum of the benefits of green building and how to explain those benefits to clients.

For both Benson, Clair and other similarly involved development and real estate professionals the green future is now. Bill Frampton, Olowalu Town LLC, describes his proposed small town project as part of an effort to take green building to a higher level on Maui by integrating the principles of smart growth and green building into a sustainable project with the goal of becoming a certified USGBC LEED Neighborhood Development.

"Houses That Work" conference sponsor Tricia Morris of Premiere Mortgage points out that green building is critical to our quality of life. "Maui's beauty is the foundation of our economy and our livelihoods. We can't afford to continue to take from the earth without regard to our futures," she said.

That green future involves



TOM BLACKBURN-RODRIGUEZ photo

Meghan Clair, Windermere Real Estate Wailea, LLC is Maui's first female certified EcoBroker. The nylon Chico-Bags bags in front of her are her business cards. They open to become a reusable bag that can carry up to 20 pounds of purchases.

all income demographics and is not necessarily based on high tech said Benson and Clair. "The Demographic is all over the board," said Benson. "You've got your people in Huelo in houses that are completely off the grid and on the other side of the spectrum you have the people that are buying Dowling's Maluaka project in South Maui, that's going for Gold and Silver LEED cer-

tification, you've got both ends of the spectrum and right in the middle."

Clair believes that green is not only for high-end luxury homes. "That's actually not the case," she said. "New technology is developed every year that is making it easier and easier to actually implement green features into homes. Some things seem expensive like photovoltaic cells for an entire home, but there are simple things like passive solar, which is setting up the direction that the sun hits your home and having longer awnings on your roof top, energy efficient windows, extra shading from specific landscaping placed in certain spots, insulation, water efficient fixtures and landscaping, using Energy Star appliances and CFL bulbs, there are literally hundreds of options and they are becoming more and more affordable."

As lenders see that the energy savings of a green building can translate into a higher cash flow for borrowers, the potential for "green mortgages" that allow for the incorporation of energy saving property improvements into a mortgage loan at the time of purchase is expected to grow.

"Let's make it happen that all developments that come in the next decade on Maui have to be green. Let's do this right, right from the beginning," said Clair. □