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Founder's Message: Happy 56th Birthday New England Real Estate Journal - by Roland Hopkins

January 18, 2019 - Founders Message

The Journal recently celebrated its 56th birthday. Our first issue was twelve pages, dated January 17, 1963. I remember it like it was yesterday, five novices struggling to put together twelve pages – something none of us knew anything about. The newspaper was suggested by a real estate agent, Herb Siegal. He said, “Every business has a trade magazine or newspaper. Why not commercial real estate?” I was an out of work radio disc jockey and I said, “Great idea.” I phoned my college roommate George Cleveland in Minnesota and asked him if he had \$10,000, and if he would like to be the publisher of a weekly newspaper. He had gotten married that week, but surprisingly he said yes. He had also just inherited some money from a deceased aunt.

I decided to do some homework and visited some real estate people who might have some commercial real estate knowledge. First I called on Ray Hoffard, the president of the Greater Boston Real Estate Board. Hoffard said, “Forget it.” There is only one shopping mall located in Framingham, one industrial park in Newton and only one skyscraper built in the last 25 years and it is 25-stories in Boston. I then visited a banker who said the same thing, “There is no commercial real estate. Maybe wait ten years.”

As we were going broke and Cleveland took his wife back to Minnesota, an out of work salesman named Bob Lewis walked into the office and asked for a job. He was the greatest salesman I ever met. He said, “Pick an ad out of the newspaper and I will show you how to sell an ad.” We found a real estate ad and cut it out of the Boston Herald. Lewis phoned the number, asked for the name on the ad and proceeded to sell him. Lewis then introduced me to a record called “Success Motivated” by Earl Nightingale. He was the number one success motivator in the country. I listened to the record dozens of times and Lewis and I became a team of very good salesmen.

Luckily for us, within the next year commercial real estate blossomed. Shopping centers were built, Prudential Center was built, all the small New England cities and towns opened a special office to promote the town. Nursing homes were built. Condos were invented. Commercial real estate was born and we were there to nurse it.

Please allow me to dedicate this article to Bob Lewis, the greatest salesman I ever met. Congratulations to the new owners of NEREJ; Larry, Moe and Curly. Oops, I mean David Sullivan, David Denelle and John Picard. By the way, congrats to the two greatest sales women I ever met, Patty Stone-Colman and Karen Dowell. Now that I have the time to relax and read the NEREJ every week, I am thrilled at what a great job these people do. The paper looks great.

Happy 56th Birthday. May you have at least 56 more.

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