

The BNH Book Review

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER
OF THE BOOKWORM SEZ



“Scam Me If You Can”
by Frank W. Abagnale
2019, Portfolio/ Penguin
\$19/337 pages

You’ve heard the horror stories: people scammed out of their life savings, businesses targeted by ransomware, computers hijacked with malware. It makes you wonder if you’re doing enough to avoid becoming a victim of technology thieves.

The answer to that is “no,” according to “Scam Me If You Can” by Frank W. Abagnale, who was a scammer himself for part of his life. Boiler-room thieves are constantly looking for ways to get around technology blocks, firewalls, and the like. They know exactly how to find your personal information online (it’s easy). Chances are, you’re already an open book on some database. Scammers know how to suss out information better than you know how to hide it. In fact, more than 16 million Americans in 2017 were victims of fraud.

So what can you do? Never let your guard down when talking to strangers. In public, watch your belongings. Don’t become complacent. If a stranger makes you feel pressured, walk away or hang up. Question fees, especially anything you’re asked to pay up front. Never give personal information to someone who calls you with a “deal.”

Abagnale recommends lightening your wallet by carrying only what you need. Invest in the right kind of shredder and shred everything. Know how to hire a trustworthy banker, accountant, IT person and other related service providers. Learn what you can do to protect your small business from hacking and ransomware. Don’t answer an unrecognized phone call or press “2” to be taken off a list. Doing either is a mistake, as you’ll learn inside this informative, important book.

“Scam Me If You Can” is the kind of book you’ll want to buy multiple copies: one for you, one for your parents and one for the office and for anybody who holds your information.

Yankee Barn Homes Builds on 50-Year History



Above: The Yankee Barn mode home. Below: Paul Marinelli, chairman and CEO

Yankee Barn Homes in Grantham has survived a volatile housing market, changes in design trends and at least two recessions. Now they are celebrating 50 years in business. Founded in 1969 by Emil Hanslin, the company moved from Massachusetts to NH in 1972.

Hanslin’s desire to bring the outdoors inside with a “barn home” exploded and put the company on a national stage. The exposed post-and-beam styling, reminiscent of a large New England barn, and plentiful windows helped to fuel the popularity of open-concept homes.

Paul Marinelli, chairman and CEO, says even as open-concept is waning, barn style remains popular, particularly in the Hamptons of New York. When Hanslin died in 1998, his son took over and grew the business to a peak of \$10 million in annual sales (building about 40 houses a year) in 2006. “But when the economy turned bad in 2008, Yankee Barn’s business fell way off,” he says.

By 2011, the company was losing money and creditors were closing in. “I went directly to the bank, struck a deal to buy it and kept it running without interruption. Today we are twice what we were in 2012, our first full year [of] owning the business.”

The company has 20 employees and builds 16 to 18 homes per year. The in-house design team, led by creative director and co-owner Jeffrey Rosen, stays up on all the current building standards and run their designs through an engineering firm to ensure that ev-



erything is compliant with standards and codes, which can vary by community.

Beyond the aesthetics, Marinelli says consistent quality is another hallmark. Their homes are manufactured in climate-controlled environments rather than stick-frame built in the elements.

While it competes in a limited market, Yankee Barn Homes is doing well, he says. “We don’t own the niche but we are a significant player in the northeast.”

At an open house in July, the company invited Yankee Barn home owners to view the current model developed for the Eastman Community development that straddles Grantham and Springfield. The event drew Yankee Barn homeowners representing each decade of the company’s history. “The loyalty to the brand from all these people was just incredible,” says Marinelli. For more information, visit yankeebarnhomes.com.