

Sustainable Building Coalition

P.O. Box 49381
Austin, TX 78767-9381

Next Meeting:

**Wednesday
July 28, 2004
7:00 pm
Casa de Luz
1701 Toomey Road**



In This Issue:

- Selwyn Polit and the July 28th SBC Meeting
- Strawlocator.com – New website
- Renewable Energy Roundup Planning with the Clipboard Lady

Announcements:

* Deadline for articles and events for the next newsletter is September 1st. Email to Chris at cdgaines@yahoo.com

* Check out the SBC calendar on the website for upcoming workshops and events!!
www.greenbuilder.com/sbc/events

Upcoming Workshops:

- Earth Plaster Workshop, Saturday, July 31.
- Solar Electric Power Systems Workshop, August 29 - 31

Website Resources:

www.casadeluz.org

www.strawlocator.com

www.theroundup.org

www.womenandtheirwork.org

www.thangmaker.com

www.austinprogressivecalendar.com/permaculture.htm

July 28th Meeting: Permaculture and Sustainable Building

By Chris Maxwell-Gaines

For the July 28th member meeting, we will be joined by Selwyn Polit who will be presenting this month's topic and discussion on Permaculture and the role of sustainable building within it.

Permaculture is a design system for creating ecologically sound ways to live our lives in harmony with nature. It covers a wide range of topics, including edible landscapes, integrating animals, organic growing, herb spirals, ponds, natural and green building, maximizing food production with small-scale intensive growing and designing self-maintaining landscapes.

Please join Selwyn to learn more about permaculture and the role of sustainable building within it. SBC meets the 4th Wednesday of every other month (next meeting will be July 28th) at 7 pm at Casa de Luz (<http://www.casadeluz.org/>), 1701 Toomey Road in the Cielo Room. You're also welcome to join us at Casa de Luz for a wonderful holistic meal beginning at 6 pm.

Permaculture Workshops

Dick Pierce and Selwyn Polit will also be presenting a class entitled "Introduction to Permaculture: Practical principles and tools for living in alignment with nature". These free one-hour courses will be presented on the following dates: August 4th, 18th, and 25th at 7pm-8:30 pm at Habitat Suites Hotel Meeting room, 500 East Highland Mall Boulevard (512-467-6000).

Join them to learn more about permaculture's practical principles and tools for sustainability and living in alignment with nature. These workshops are free and all are welcome. Please contact Selwyn Polit at Selwyn@austintx.com, or Dick Pierce, dpierce@ail.org, with questions.*

New website: StrawLocator.com

By Bill Christensen

I'm happy to announce <http://www.StrawLocator.com>, a new website to connect builders and straw suppliers with each other. It's essentially a classified ads site. We're running this on a tip/donation basis; if you make a deal to sell or buy straw through the site, please make a donation in support. The suggested donation is 1% of sale price.

As with many of the projects we've launched to support sustainable building (the Straw Bale Building Registry, the Sustainable Building Calendar, etc) we'll be relying on YOU, the folks in the field, to spread the word. If you have bought bales from good sources in the past, let those farmers know about this new resource. If they're not online, go ahead and enter the listing for them. Small farmers need all the help they can get these days! *

"The coalition exists to facilitate the organization and education of the building and design communities and the general public to foster: healthy and ecologically sound built environments + sustainable resource use + responsible and healthy businesses."

Local Happenings



The ClipBoard Lady wants YOU!

Join SBC/SBAT/SASBC (Sustainable Building Coalition, StrawBale Association of Texas and San Antonio Sustainable Building Coalition) at The Renewable Energy Roundup & Green Living Fair!

When? September 24-26, 2004

Where? In the Market Platz (Market Square) in the middle of historic Fredericksburg!

SBC, in collaboration with SBAT and SASBC, has built a booth at this event since its inception 4 years ago. We keep returning cuz it's good, clean fun! And YOU can be there, too!

At A Great place - the Market Platz

With Good company - SBCers, booth visitors, other exhibitors, presenters, and more
Eating Good Food - at the Roundup and in restaurants in Fredericksburg

A Few Ideas of How We Need Your Help:

- Share 4 or more hours of your time during The Roundup;
- Design our booth, assemble and haul materials, and break it down;
- Decide which building materials examples and literature to display and how to display them;
- Make informational signs, posters, photos, etc., for display;
- Plan, coordinate, and conduct a demonstration about sustainable building.

What happens at the SBC booth, you may ask?

We have fun talking with booth visitors, with other exhibitors, with each other - inform and educate visitors about SBC and the concepts we embody, listen to their stories, answer questions, define terms used in sustainable building, hand out literature, sell books, and more! SBC/SBAT/SASBC members are invited to hand out business cards and literature at the booth.

If you are curious and want to talk about this, call Yvonne, The ClipBoard Lady @ 512-693-0293. She will be at the next SBC meeting with her clipboard so you can actually sign up!

What else?

Volunteer for The Roundup! For each four-hour shift, you will get these darn good goodies:

- A \$5 food coupon
- An original Roundup T-shirt, and
- A 3-day pass to this fine event

Sign up NOW! Go to www.theroundup.org for more information and to sign up online for the day and job you want.

Also . . . Enjoy Fredericksburg, attend the various presentations, hear what guest speakers have to say, visit other exhibitors, participate in family activities, network with others interested in green living, listen to musicians and see other entertainers, collect information, and much more.

SBC will reserve a suite that can accommodate perhaps six people. If you intend to volunteer, let us know ASAP. Other accommodations, including hotels and campsites, are also available to those who act quickly. See www.fredericksburg-texas.com. *

Upcoming Sustainable Building Events

SBC Straw Bale Home Tour: The Home Place, Saturday, July 31, 2004, 9:15 am -12:00 pm

SBC will be hosting a tour of The Home Place. Please arrive at about 9:15 am for the tour. Though children are welcome, the tour is not a child-oriented tour.

The tour will begin at the main house, which is post & beam on pier & beam where we'll discuss the choices we made (some of brilliance, some of colossal blunders). We'll continue on to the load-bearing cabin that was stacked for an episode of DREAM BUILDERS on HGTV. We'll end up at the barn, a hybrid, and discuss why we believe this is the most reliable way to stack a straw bale building. Cameras, etc are permitted, but we ask guest to please stay with the group and not wander off.

For directions to this home, see the SBC calendar on the website at www.greenbuilder.com/sbc/events. For more info, contact home_place@juno.com or visit <http://www.the-home-place.com>. *

Earth Plaster Workshop, Saturday, July 31, 2004

We will be conducting a small, informal workshop on earthen plaster in the Deep Eddy area (west Austin near Lake Austin Blvd.). We will be applying the scratch coat (base coat) of natural earth plaster to my cast earth (silty, sandy soil stabilized with gypsum) garden wall. The wall is 18" thick and 6" high, built on a rubble trench foundation, and will receive one coat of earthen plaster and two coats of lime plaster. The workshop will be limited to 6 people, but there will be future opportunities for more earth and lime plaster workshops on the wall and the upcoming cob studio. There will be no fee for SBC members.

Contact Gayle Borst at 512-478-9033 or at gayle@StewardshipArchitecture.com for reservations. *

Solar Electric Power Systems Workshop (NABCEP-based), August 29 - 31, 2004. Austin, Texas

This workshop has been rescheduled from June 27 - 29 to August 29 - 31! Choose all three-days to learn how to design and build a grid-connected full-scale solar electric system or choose only the first day to learn a decision process for selecting, scoping, and justifying a solar project. Also, learn about the dynamics of the world market, the history and future of the technology, and the solar incentives including the new Austin solar rebates! The workshop is sponsored by the Texas State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) and Austin Energy and developed and presented by the Conservation Services Group (CSG) and Imagine Solar Int'l. *

Women & Their Work and SBC presents Frank Meyer, July 29, 2004, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Women & Their Work, in cooperation with SBC, presents Frank Meyer, singer/songwriter and straw bale house builder, playing all original songs on Thursday, July 29, 7-9 pm at 1710 Lavaca St. Free to the public, but donations are encouraged.

Direct from the heart to the funny bone, Frank's music is good medicine. Frank Meyer and his backup band play his original songs on July 29 at Women & Their Work, 1710 Lavaca Street in downtown Austin. Putting a musician-straw bale builder in an indoor hay bale art installation-amphitheatre just seems to go together like cold beer and fireworks.

Yes, the man who wrote and recorded "Savage of Salvage," "Mike the Headless Chicken," and "Coffee-makin' Woman" is playing for free, one night only, alongside his slide-projector-full of gorgeous pictures of straw bale, cob, and other sustainably-constructed buildings. Books and handouts on natural building will be available for sale and perusal. *

National Sustainable Building News

Developers Divided about Greening Affordable Housing

The New York Times, 6 May 2004, p D1, by Motoko Rich

Green design is making its way into affordable housing projects, but some developers still don't think the green measures are worth it. "If the developer is not going to live there or benefit from the lowered operating costs, then sometimes it is harder to persuade them to make the investment," said Peter R. Smith, president of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, which pays developers \$500 for each affordable unit to install high-efficiency appliances. Many government agencies offer subsidies to developers who install energy-saving measures. Illinois pays \$600 to \$2,500 a unit for energy-saving insulation, heating and double-paned windows. New Jersey offers builders up to \$7,500. Although these subsidies have existed for six years, only 5 percent of all affordable housing built in this period included green features, according to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. But some developers believe the benefits to their community outweigh the costs. In Harlem, Carlton Brown is building 93 subsidized condominiums with geothermal heating and cooling wells and high-efficiency appliances, which he predicts will save residents about \$1,000 a year. He

is also installing air filters on ducts and kitchen cupboards that don't emit volatile organic compounds, which the Environmental Protection Agency has warned can exacerbate conditions like asthma. *

New Report Provides Emissions Data on Recycled Content Products
Environmental Building News, Feb 2004, p 4, by Nadav Malin

A recently released study carried out by the California Department of Health Services, the "Building Materials Emissions Study," tested 77 products for emissions that might affect indoor air quality. The categories of products studied were acoustical ceiling panels, carpet, fiberboard, gypsum board, paint, particleboard, plastic laminates, resilient flooring, tackable wall panels, thermal insulation, and wall base. Thirty-four products were identified as "standard" materials and 43 as "alternative" (in most cases the alternative material had high recycled content). A few interesting findings worth noting:

Recycled-content products seem to perform about the same as standard products in terms of indoor emissions. Both linoleum products tested emitted acetaldehyde – a respiratory irritant and probable carcinogen - at levels that resulted in concentrations about five times higher than the California standard threshold.

Of the three samples of fiberglass batt insulation tested, two exceeded the office building case threshold for formaldehyde, including one marketed as formaldehyde free. *

Coordinators:

Programs: Katie Jensen (512-663-2927)

Community Outreach:

Brandi Clark (512-477-3311)

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Education: Paul McCutchen

If you would like to contact anyone of us by email, visit the contact form on the Greenbuilder website at:

<http://www.greenbuilder.com/sbc/contact/>

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING COALITION

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