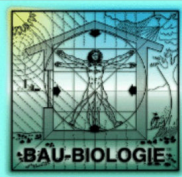


August 2009



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With your help we can change the environment. Join for 2009.

Become an IBE Member

- Student member \$25
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- Lifetime Member \$1000*

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[IBE Membership](#)

* Membership dues above \$65 include a subscription to Natural Life Magazine

Thank you

Volunteers upon volunteers – so many of you have stepped up to the plate to volunteer your time. We thank you, and the world thanks you.

With your commitment and donations we have the tools to make it easy for everyone to get the information they need to live, work and play in the healthiest environment possible.

2010 International Institute for Bau-Biologie & Ecology Conference: Need of Volunteers

Planning for the 2010 IBE conference is well under way and volunteers are needed to partake in the planning. Some decision making such as location, dates, and hotel are finalized. Main areas to be addressed are speakers, sponsors, vendors, and attendees, and of course the fine details which pull every thing together.

Those interested in joining the committee team hesitate no longer for your help is needed and will be much appreciated.

Contact directly committee chairperson Charisse Marei-Ronnermann at 610.505.8695 or idcharm@comcast.net to discuss further.

Building Healthy in Today's World

IBE is once again collaborating with the West Coast Green Conference to present: [“Bau-Biologie Principles in Practice - Going Beyond Green”](#).

This Pre-Conference Workshop for the West Coast Green Conference is Wednesday, September 30 from 9am - 5pm at the Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA for a cost of \$175. Continuing Education: 7 AIA Units, HSW 8 hours AmIAQ.

Topics for this workshop include:

- Bau-Biologie principles and building culture
- Biologically-sound building materials and methods
- Pollutant source identification and avoidance - air, water and electromagnetics

This session will include demonstrations and exercises using Bau-Biologie evaluation protocols and scientific instrumentation to assess products and processes.

The seminar benefits home dwellers, architects, interior designers and other building professionals.

Looking for certification as a [Building Biology Practitioner \(BBP\)](#) ? This Pre-Conference Workshop meets the requirements for 20 hours of the BPP program. Additional requirements for BBP Certification are the successful completion of the [IBE 101](#) self-study course and an additional 30 hours of on-line course material.

[West Coast Green](#) will be held at the Fort Mason Center in San Francisco, CA from October 1 - 3, 2009 with Pre-Conference Workshops. To register call (800) 772-4880 or log on to [West Coast Green](#).

Calendar of Events

Aug 20 – 24, 2009

IBE 212 – Electromagnetic Seminar,
Clearwater, FL

September 30, 2009

[Pre-Conference Workshop - Bau-Biology Principles in Practice - Going Beyond Green](#)

October 1 - 3, 2000

[West Coast Green](#)

December 3-7, 2009

IBE 213 – Natural Healthy Building,
Clearwater, FL

Stay tuned for other events including programs in your area by approved providers.

Each month IBE will provide excerpts from their well-researched course material to empower you to take control of your indoor environment and building.

Inside Scoop: V-O-C Is Not Another Grunge Band

*By Thomas Hirsch
BungalowBuilders of Northern Michigan, Inc.
Thomas@bungalowbuilders.org*

Hey! Yo! V-O-C's causes S-B-S and gives you M-C-S...a huh, a huh.

No, V-O-C (or VOC for short) is not another Seattle Grunge Band. It is just another acronym in our acronym rich society. This one pertains to the quality of our air, particularly indoor air.

Since we spend most of our time indoors, perhaps we ought to learn a little bit more about this one.

Volatile Organic Compounds or VOC'S are substances that readily release vapors at room temperature.

This evaporation of Volatile compounds contained in solid material is called outgassing and results in the slow release of chemicals into the air.

I'm finding some confusion in the field about what exactly VOC's are and what the environmental and health impacts are.

From some I get cynicism stating they have used a particular product or method for years with no apparent ill effects. Others in the building industry claim their projects are "green" simply because they are using low-VOC paint or other products. Yes, that is a start.

What may confuse us somewhat is the fact that VOC contains the word "organic". This sounds somewhat benign doesn't it? After all, we are encouraged to grow and eat organic food. Since we have a language consisting of words that can have multiple meanings, we are being asked to stretch a bit.

- One meaning of the word organic is relating to or containing carbon compounds.
- Organic compounds are chemicals that contain carbon-hydrogen bonds at the molecular level.
- Organic compounds can exist in the form of gas, liquid or solid particles.

Right now we are concerned with those substances that readily release vapors at room temperature. These substances can occur naturally or be synthetically derived from petrochemicals like oil, gas or coal.

Naturally occurring VOC's from wood resins, plant oils and waxes are less harmful and decompose readily in nature's cycle. Still, some chemically

sensitive individuals may react to these compounds and should test before using.

It is the synthetically derived substances which produce VOCS that pose a significant health risk.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), at present, about 80,000 synthetic organic compounds are commercially available and thousands more are produced annually by the chemical industry.

VOC's constitute a major source of toxic over load and can threaten individual health. Any organ of the body can be affected.

Some of the more common complaints include rashes, headaches, eye irritation, chronic cough, chronic sinus infections, joint and muscle pain, memory loss, inability to concentrate, irritability, fatigue, anxiety, depression and allergies.

The worst and most prevalent VOC's in our homes are:

- formaldehyde - acts as a sensitizer that can lower the threshold of allergic reactions (in products such as carpeting, fabrics, cosmetics and engineered wood products)
- organochlorines - quite toxic and potential carcinogens (usually found in pesticides, solvents, cleaning fluids, PVC and PCBs)
- phenolic compounds

Fortunately there are safe alternatives for common households products, furnishings and building materials.

For more information on creating a healthy indoor environment, visit The Institute for Building Biology and Ecology at www.buildingbiology.net.

For more information on
Building Biology
 and
**The International Institute for
 Bau-Biologie & Ecology**
 please visit our website
<http://www.buildingbiology.net/>

Health Challenges and Dangers in Today's Indoor Environmental Climate - Part 2

(Part 1 appeared in the July 2009 issue of
EcoDwell)

by Stephen Chu, BBEC
 Wilmington, NC
fengshui8889@yahoo.com

VOCs (volatile organic compounds) contribute greatly to illness and negative health conditions so much so that it is in just about every organ in the human body.

They can easily evaporate at room temperature and enter the atmosphere under normal conditions as a gas.

The most common pathway into the body is through inhalation. Exposure can also be from ingested food, water supplies and through skin absorption.

- They can be your dry cleaning solvents, fire retardants in new cars interiors seating as well as all the plastics and vinyl's and carpet padding to name a few.
- In your shower when you are running it hot produces chloroform because of the chlorine treated water.
- Synthetic carpets and carpet pads all off gas styrene, formaldehyde (a probable human carcinogen) and other Voss.
- Then there are the aerosols sprays that use trichloroethane as propellants and dry cleaned

clothes that out gas tetrachloroethylene or perchloroethene and methane and other sewer gases.

- Your entire household cleaning supplies, the air fresheners, cosmetics and perfumes.
- Then there are the PVCs with approximately 58% of this being in use by the construction industry, plumbing pipes, vinyl blinds, doors, and window frames.
- DEHP is added to plastics to allow flexibility like your shower curtains, garden hoses, packaging film, medical tubing and toys just to name a few.
- Pesticides, paint strippers, paints, thinners and others all out gas.

As you can see there are numerous avenues, where VOCs can come from in a home but in an office, you can have just as many similar VOCs.

- The office machines, from copiers to printers, give off xylene, dimethyl benzene, and ozone.
- Then you have acetone from some of the cleaners, furniture polishes and correction fluids.
- Not to mention new office furniture, the building structure, the new man made carpeting and it is under pads.

These will continue to outgas.

When you combine all of these issues, you can create some serious symptoms.

They include headaches, mild respiratory problems, asthma, memory and concentration problems, birth defects, cancer, multiple chemical sensitivities, estrogen mimicking, and a host of others.

There are many issues to look at:

- The simplest solutions and the easiest would be through ventilation and increased air exchange for dilution.
- Removal of the offending material is another option. Replacing materials with many

natural alternative materials can improve your living space.

- Seal leaky pipes and vents.
- Remove and store cleaners and paints in the garage away from the living space.
- Reduce or remove personal perfumes and sprays and use alternatives.
- Install a shower filter.
- Consider steam cleaning the new carpet with baking soda or hot water rinse as well as new up.
- Purchase and use recycled new used office furniture.
- Increase the exchange of air per person.
- Open windows where possible.
- Consider alternative and environmentally friendly inks in your machines.

Above all, consider the three R's, **reduce, reuse, and recycle.**

Please submit articles to
outreach@buildingbiology.net
 for future issues.

Reader's Corner

Featured Course: [*IBE 101 Natural Healthy Bldg](#)

Suggested Book:
[Designer Poisons: How to Protect Your Health & Home from Toxic Pesticides](#)
 by Marion Moses, M.D.

Suggested Website:
 Science & Environmental Health Network - www.sehn.org

Featured Conference:
[West Coast Green](#)
 Pre-Conference Workshop, Sept. 30, 2009. Conference Oct. 1 - 3, 2009. San Francisco, CA