



Wholesome Resources

The *Healthy House Catalog* by Environmental Health Watch and Housing Resource Center. Environmental Health Watch, 4115 Bridge St., Cleveland, OH 44113; 1988; 112 pages; 81/2x11; \$15 perfect bound.

The 1988 edition of *The Healthy House Catalog* consists of three color-coded sections: "Conference Information" (blue, this edition apparently was produced for a get-together on the subject); "Articles and Annual Award" (white); and "Product and Services Listings and Advertising" (yellow). The articles are brief, easy to digest, and deal specifically with various topics. This first reprint is a general overview of indoor air pollutants by a Maine state agency. It includes a good chart describing sources, symptoms, and control for common pollutants, plus an extensive glossary for those who don't know the difference between aldehydes and formaldehyde.

Also included are three papers by Environmental Health Watch on asbestos and radon and an informative excerpt from the *Old House Journal* on "Restoration Health Hazards."

The bulk of the *Catalog* is the Product/Services "Yellow Pages." here you'll find listings in 15 categories, ranging from "Building Materials" and "HVAC-filtration" to "Pollutants-lead" and "Worker Protection." While potentially very valuable, a quick skim through the directory revealed some limitations. First, as in its cousin, the phone book, free listings are available to anyone who submits their name, address, phone, and a contact person, plus a brief quote (apparently provided by the listees themselves) describing their product and service. In addition, paid ads appear for some firms, usually giving more detailed, but hardly unbiased information.

Under "Professional Services" I found architects, engineers, doctors, laboratories, and consultants, but I had no idea about the competence or experience of any of them. Under formaldehyde in the "Pollutants" section, there were only two names of suppliers of air monitors, while radon was burgeoning with over 90 testing/mitigation resources.

"HVAC-heating" listed one service and 12 products. Among the products were TESS fireplaces, Yukon condensing-gas furnaces (though some in the field consistently argue against incorporating any kind of combustion burners in "nontoxic" houses), Infloor radiant floors (which don't circulate dust or allergens), and the Fireless Furnace, which uses domestic hot water to warm forced air. The latter claims not to "dehumidify the air," but some think sensitive people have problems with dust and other allergens in forced-air systems. The criteria used by the compilers of the *Catalog* were not terribly apparent to me, but given its low price and the potential usefulness of some products/services listings, plus the inclusion of numerous useful phone numbers, books, and organizations, *The Healthy House Catalog* is probably a worthwhile investment despite its limitations. The publishers promise an expanded

1990 version that may overcome the first edition's skimpiness in some areas.

Home Clips

Home, published monthly by Home Magazine Publishing Corp., Box 10050, Des Moines, IA 50340; 12 issues for \$18.00.

I subscribe to *Home* magazine, but I rarely read any of the editorial features, which are generally homeowner-oriented and often deal with trendy decorating topics. The reason I continue my subscription is for the dozens of color photos that illustrate the articles. For me, *Home* is a great source for my clipping file, and that's what I use it for.

The May '89 issue, which arrived as I write, includes features on home office deductions/inspections/foreclosures (Q&A format), home service franchises, a San Francisco Bay Area remodel (featuring an elegantly curved ash banister), upscale showers, herb gardens, a kitchen reno, rooms with "an outside edge," and an artsy New Orleans lighting supplier, along with the usual editorial, letters, an occasional how-to feature, and regular columns. In the latter I found licensed reproductions of Frank Lloyd Wright's art glass windows (\$800 to \$10,000), a blurb on Maravin's new curved glass line, a stand-alone, fold-out ironing board cabinet, and some lovely modern sconce-type wall/floor lamps. Trendy, glitzy, designed to appeal to high-end yuppies, and not terribly meaty, but usually visually exciting. Take a peek if you see it on a newsstand.

—Paul Hanke

Free & Cheap

The Scoop on Insulating: *The NAHB Guide to Insulation* is an 11-page guide describing how insulation performance is evaluated, what materials are available, and how they should be used and installed. Also discussed are federal, state, and utility standards, the NAHB Thermal Performance Guidelines, and the Federal Trade Commission Home Insulation Rule. Product specifications and a brief reference listing conclude the guide. To obtain a copy, send \$2.50 to National Association of Home Builders, Technology & Codes Department, 15th & M Streets, NW, Washington, DC 20005; 202/822-0200.

Raid on Radon: Available from the Environmental Protection Agency is *Radon Reduction in New Construction*, An Interim Guide, a free, 9-page brochure designed to inform builders and homeowners on methods of minimizing radon entry in new homes, and facilitating removal after construction. The introduction covers basic facts about radon, new construction principles, and techniques for site evaluation; Methods for minimizing entry and radon removal are accompanied by diagrams and illustrations, and regional EPA office locations and addresses are listed. To order via a local EPA office, contact Radon Division (ANR-464), Office of Radiation Programs, U.S. EPA, Washington, DC 20460.

Btu Meters—What They Are and How To Use Them: *The Btu Meter Engineering Catalog* is a free 19-page reference guide from ISTA Energy Systems Corp. The 19-page catalog describes what a Btu meter is, and gives dimensions, installation procedures, and technical specifications for various ISTA models, including illustrations and diagrams.

Common applications of the Btu meter are given, as well. Also available from ISTA is Automatic Temperature Control Valves, This 14-page booklet explains the principle of Thermostatic Controls, and provides dimensions, installation procedures, technical specifications, and trouble-shooting guidelines for ISTA hot water and low-pressure steam system control valves. For either guide, write to ISTA Energy Systems Corporation, 407 Hope Avenue, Roselle, NJ 07203; 201/241-8880.

Choosy Builders Choose...Which Window? *Selecting The Right Glass*—PPG Helps With the Process, is a 40-page free brochure that addresses the selection of glass for both commercial and residential use according to design intent, with emphasis on commercial purposes. Color, light characteristics, thermal performance, strength, and cost are all considered within tables, charts, and color illustrations. To obtain a copy, write to Commercial Products Dept., PPG Industries, Inc., 1 PPG Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15272; 412/434-3131.

Striving for Quality: *Guidelines For Specifying and Performing Infrared Inspections*, is a 22-page free brochure from the Infrappection Institute that defines practices and guidelines for specifying and performing quality infrared inspections. General guidelines are given, as well as specific guidelines for roof moisture, electrical, and building envelope inspections. Responsibilities of both the thermographer and client are covered, as well as factors such as equipment, contractual agreements, and documentation. To order, contact the Infrappection Institute, 33 Juniper Ridge, Shelburne, VT 05482; 802/985-2500. ■