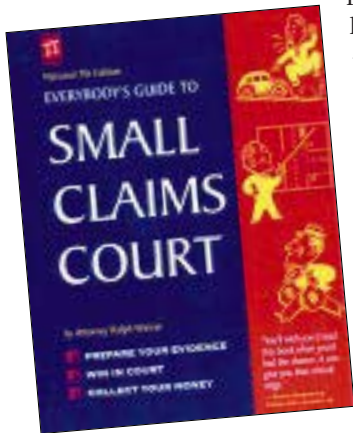


Legal Self-Help

by Pete Young

First published in 1980, *Everybody's Guide to Small Claims Court* (\$18.95 from Nolo Press, 950 Parker St., Berkeley, CA 94710; 800/992-6656; www.nolo.com) is an informative and easy-to-use legal resource. This seventh edition incor-



porates recent legal changes throughout the U.S. and Canada. Written by a legal aid lawyer turned self-help legal advocate and publisher, the

Guide shows

how to determine if you have a viable case; how much to sue for and how to collect; how to settle a case before it goes to court; how to file and serve papers; how to prepare and present a case in court, and many other common scenarios. Several chapters cover general categories, such as motor vehicle purchase, accident and repair cases, bad debts, landlord-tenant conflicts, and contract disputes. The chapter dealing with small businesses is of particular interest to residential contractors, who commonly enter into a variety of agreements with customers, subcontractors, and suppliers.

The *Guide* also explains how to defend yourself in small claims court, including options such as claiming technicalities, transferring the case to formal court, mediation and compromise, and other strategies. In addition, the author presents various ways to collect money awarded in a case, including placing liens on property, and levying wages, bank accounts, business assets, and real property. He also describes follow-up

procedures for cases that are not successfully resolved. An appendix explains specific rules for small claims court in particular states.

Passive Solar Revisited

Back in 1981, the Department of Energy teamed up with several industry associations to sponsor publication of the popular *Passive Solar Construction Handbook*. Now, Steven Winter Associates, the contract writer of the original book, has updated and revised the material to reflect advances in building technology, including improved window technologies, high-performance collectors, and new finishes. This revamped edition, under the title *The Passive Solar Design and Construction Handbook* (\$65 from John Wiley & Sons, 605 Third Ave., New York, NY 10158; 800/225-5945; www.wiley.com), is national in scope but also covers regional issues, focusing on the construction of passive solar residential buildings.

Lots of good illustrations highlight a "whole house" approach that joins energy efficiency and home comfort with good design and construction principles. Instructions on how to choose one of several passive solar systems and then specify its particular components are based on economic and energy-saving analysis. The prescribed construction methods adapt standard building practices to passive solar applications.



Free & Cheap

Span Guide

An updated edition of the *Maximum Spans Guide for Joists and Rafters* includes 47 tables of spans under different loading conditions. Published by the Southern Pine Council, the booklet treats 11 grades of Southern pine — including Visually Graded, MSR (Machine Stress Rated), and MEL (Machine Evaluated Lumber) — with simple graphics and information boxes. The guide also contains a list of other useful publications relating to the uses of Southern pine lumber. To order, send \$3 for Publication #202 to Southern Pine Council, Box 641700, Kenner, LA 70064.

Designing for Lateral Loads

The Engineered Wood Association offers the 20-page *Introduction to Lateral Design* as part of its Wood Design Concepts series. With the help of straightforward drawings, the booklet treats wind and seismic loads in relation to specific structural components, such as shear walls and diaphragms, that can be designed to withstand episodes of lateral loading. Other lateral design issues covered include shear wall perforations, drag struts, nailing techniques, and wall bracing. The publication is free from APA - The Engineered Wood Association (P.O. Box 11700, Tacoma, WA 98411-0700; 253/565-6600; www.apawood.org). A publication index is also available.



All About Hardwood

The Book Behind the Look is a free, 30-page collection of interesting facts and practical advice about the use of North American hardwoods. Part of a ten-part Tips & Techniques series, the booklet covers issues ranging from availability and cost to job-site acclimation and installation tips. A series of bulleted lists covers plain, quarter, and rift sawing techniques as well as the expansion/contraction rates of different species, optimal dimensions, and lumber grades. The entire ten-part series is available for \$8.25 from the Hardwood Council (P.O. Box 525, Oakmont, PA 15139; 412/281-4980; www.hardwoodcouncil.com).

