

The CHRONICLES Newsletter

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Please email all articles, letters to the editor, subscription enquires etc. to thechronicles@shaw.ca



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The Reporters
Ron Wilkes
Ron Wilkes
Monica Dascavich
Editor



A BELATED HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM US HERE AT THE CHRONICLES!

1. APPOINTMENT

Robert Eyford, Rae Tech Investigations Inc.
Ron Wilkes, Integral Property Loss Consultants

As most of you know we lost our Executive Editor a few months ago, and we have searched high and low for a replacement. The reporters, Robert and Ron, are proud to announce by popular demand the appointment of our new editor Walking Dog although some of you refer to him as “Dog Walking”. Walking Dog received an awesome approval from you our readers this past couple of months, when he first appeared in November. Our email has been flooded with requests to see more of him, so your request is our command.

P.S. We didn’t realize that so many of you company people had flash on your office computers. Times they are a changing, we can remember when company cars did not have a back seat let alone a radio, but that’s another story.

2. ANNOUNCEMENT

Ron Wilkes, Integral Property Loss Consultants

Effective this year, because of the demand and size of our readership, the Chronicles will publish twice monthly, on the 15th and end of the month, effective immediately. It is now impossible to get it 100 % out for a Friday. Thank you for your overwhelming endorsement of our newsletter.

3. UNIQUE HOMES – Straw Baled

Ron Wilkes, Integral Property Loss Consultants

The old adage applies here; “what is old is new again” or what goes around comes around” or “if it isn’t broke, don’t fix it”. We have now come full circle from century ago when straw baled construction was pretty normal. However in those days construction was usually confined to a couple of floors depending upon the quality of workmanship. With the availability and price of lumber today, this type of



construction is becoming ever more popular throughout this country. There are chat boards and homeowner associations springing up in the east on this subject.

CONSTRUCTION

These homes can be constructed simply by tightly compacting bales of straw together, then placing them on a solid stone or concrete pad, and hold them together with wire rods. Or they can be as elaborate as having a standard wood frame built then have the bales placed the same way on the exterior of partition walls which can be somewhat compared to laying blocks. The exterior would receive a normal coat of stucco applied to it while the interior would receive a normal coat of plaster applied to that side.

This product which was once thought of as agricultural waste and was burned off the fields every fall has now become a resource for comfort living.

COMFORT

These homes have an excellent indoor air quality because the product itself is non toxic. By using bales of straw, no vapour barrier is used or necessary because these bales are usually 18 inches wide or better, thus allowing a slow transfer of air through the wall.

These residences enjoy low heating costs, and are sound resistant to the outside noise.

The R factor for an 18 inch bale of straw is R48. This is unheard of in conventional construction which results in a very energy efficient home.



HEALTH RISKS

While individual stocks of straw will burn, when condensed into bales, oxygen is squeezed out. Thus resulting in a fire resistive material that test results indicate a 2 hour fire rating.

All the nutritional benefit has been taken out of hay once it becomes straw therefore vermin are not attracted to it as a food source. The bales are too tightly compacted to entice them to live there as well.

The same applies for insects because the bales are too tightly compacted.

Moisture can accumulate in the form of liquid in the bales of straw which would result in the bales rotting over a period of time. However this is much more of a concern with conventional construction today that can and does result in moisture problems in a fair number of homes.

ENVIRONMENT

Even the environment benefits from this development by reducing the use of fossil fuels and CO2 emissions that normally escapes into the air which results in a haze forming in large urban areas commonly referred to as pollution.

With these homes a radiant hot water radiant system can be built into the roof structure down through the floor system, all powered by the sun.

Pollution is also evident when the farmers burn off their fields which they no long will have to do with this new technology.



AGE

Building codes that are being developed today for this type of construction will result in these homes lasting like the old wooden frame residences that were built between 1910 and 1930 do today. These codes require a proper foundation, roof structure, and exterior plastered finishes to the bales of straw. Ontario is currently in the process of producing a set of building codes for this construction.



COST

The cost of construction for a straw baled home is less than half the cost of a conventionally built home.



Every home you saw on your right hand side is the new generation of straw baled homes!

OK UNDERWRITERS IT'S NOW UP TO YOU TO MAKE YOUR MAGIC!

4. THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Monica Dascavich – AXA Pacific Insurance

Thought for the week

Is it "if you want something "Don" or something "done"?"

Monica

5. WE LEAVE YOU WITH THIS THOUGHT

“If you chase a butterfly, you’ll never catch it. If you remain still and quiet, it will come softly and sit on your shoulder.”

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