

# GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

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## GIHN Member Announcements

Please join me in welcoming our two newest members.

**Ian Cull** lives in Chicago, Illinois. He is the President of Indoor Sciences, Inc., and he performs IAQ assessments and training. He is also the Technical Director for the IAQA (Indoor Air Quality Association) and is a member of AIHA, ASHRAE and ISIAQ. Many of his colleagues are members of GIHN, and he is always interested in learning more about the indoor environment.

**Joya Jeffries** lives in Bronx, New York. Her name is Joya, but she goes by Thulani. She and her children are sick because of mold in their apartment. She is joining GIHN to connect with other people who have been exposed to mold and to help spread the word.

Welcome Ian and Thulani.

## Marines Fighting Mold Problem at Parris Island

A mold outbreak over the summer at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., destroyed thousands of dollars' worth of Marines' personal property, and those with rooms in the affected barracks say problems persist despite abatement efforts.

Trouble surfaced in July after work crews completed a months-long project to install new air conditioning at barracks buildings 929, 930 and 931, which were built in 1975 and now house 104 Marines, according to Marine officials at Parris Island and the Pentagon, which issued a joint response to questions about the mold outbreak. Some pipes weren't properly insulated, causing condensation to form, and because fan settings weren't properly calibrated, rooms cooled too quickly without sufficiently clearing the air of moisture.

Mold took root on walls, doors, ceilings and inside lockers, according to three drill instructors with rooms in the barracks. They spoke to Marine Corps Times on the condition of anonymity as they are not authorized to speak to the media. Photos reviewed by Marine Corps Times support their claims.

Mold ruined several uniform items, the Marines said, and at least one piece of furniture, an upholstered La-Z-Boy reclining chair. Residents have cleaned the mold repeatedly, but it keeps growing back, they said

Other DIs point out the intense demands of their job — most workdays span 17 hours from the time they wake up to the time they come home at night — and say, quite simply, that they deserve better. One put it this way: "It is not suitable living conditions for anybody, but, especially not for the level of activity that the job that we do requires. To get off work and have to come home and go into something like this, it just adds to the stress ... you already have to deal with."

[Marines Fighting Mold Problem at Parris Island](#)

See *Family Must Move out of Military Housing* on page 2

## Family Must Move Out of Lincoln Military Housing for Renovations

After NewsChannel 3 took action against dangerous mold inside military homes, changes are now being made by Lincoln Military Housing and the Navy. But now these changes are making things even more difficult for some during the holidays.

Three days before Christmas, Meagan Sulligan moved her family into a room at the Candlewood Suites where they will stay for almost a month.

Without a permanent home, that means no Santa coming down the chimney for their three little girls.

"We had to do our Christmas yesterday--take our tree down, move everything out, and everything is up in the air," says Megan.

Meagan and her husband George live in Lincoln Military Housing, and they are one of the families who paid for their own mold test. It showed heavy levels of stachybotrys in their downstairs bathroom and air handler.

According to the Navy, Lincoln has inspected 610 of the almost 4,400 homes they own in Hampton Roads. Those maintenance checks have resulted in 184 requests for third party mold tests.

Many families said that Lincoln has temporarily stopped these inspections so their workers could go home for the holidays. This is a luxury the Sulligan's don't have.

"They're still not doing what they should be doing, have their 8-step action plan. But I don't have a house, don't have a safe house," says Megan.

Even though their situation isn't ideal, the Sulligan's have at least one thing to be thankful for this Christmas.

"Clean air, I can go to sleep and not look at air vents knowing there is mold there my children are breathing in," says Megan.

[Family Must Move Out of Lincoln Military Housing for Renovations](#)



*Picture of mold in the Sulligan family's house in Lincoln Military Housing in the Hampton Roads area in Virginia*

## Parents at White Haven High School Worried About Mold Problem

Parents want the mold in Whitehaven High School cleaned up. They believe the mold may be making their children sick.

The school system says the area with mold has been sectioned off.

"What's on the wall is mold. It's greenish and brown mold," says Beverly Davis, who is President of the Whitehaven High School PTA. "The water is just draining down. It's sitting in holes. The floors are buckling."

The parents showed us pictures but they say that's just the half of it.

"Oh, the smell. It gets in your nose, your clothes. How they are staying in there all day, we just don't know," says Davis.

And these parents believe it's making their children sick.

"She comes home every day saying she is nauseated, got headaches. I am trying to figure out what's wrong with her. Now I know," says Davis.

Several parents met at Whitehaven this week. What they heard made them even more angry.

They say they were told the school system doesn't have the money to fix the problem.

[Parents at White Haven High School Worried About Mold Problem](#)

See *Industry Objects to Green-Gov Standards* on page 3

## Industry Objects to Green-Gov Standards

The Obama administration's effort to make government buildings more eco-friendly is drawing fire from Congress.

The recently passed 2012 Defense Authorization Act bars the Defense Department from certifying new buildings as meeting LEED Gold or Platinum status. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold and Platinum are the two highest ratings given by the U.S. Green Building Council to recognize environmentally sustainable construction. The Defense Department and other agencies typically strive to attain LEED status for all new facilities as part of the administration's green government initiative.

The 2012 Defense Authorization Act — which President Obama signed into law Dec. 31 — also requires DoD to submit a report to Congress analyzing the cost-effectiveness of LEED certifications.

At issue: wood. Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., argues the Defense Department's allegiance to LEED standards discourages the use of domestic lumber.

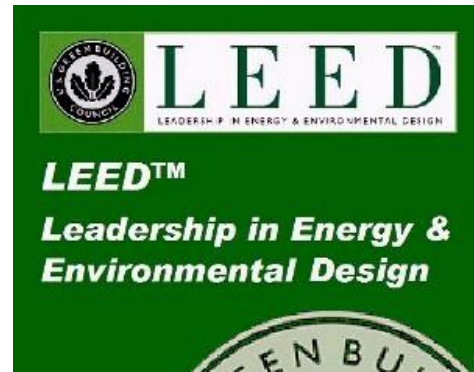
"After completing this study, the Department of Defense should use credible standards that more accurately assess U.S. wood products," Wicker said in an email.

Critics of LEED say it favors the use of steel and concrete over sustainable wood in construction and renovation projects. LEED ratings award up to 100 points for locally sourced materials, energy use, indoor air quality and other categories. Use of sustainable wood earns only two points — and only for furniture. Any wood used must also be certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, which certifies wood from more than 50 countries.

In 2010, 79 lawmakers sent a letter to the Green Building Council objecting to what they said was the exclusion of domestic sources of wood from the LEED rating system.

There are other eco-friendly construction standards besides LEED. One is called Green Globes — created by the Green Buildings Initiative (GBI) in 2005 — that appears more favorable to the use of wood products.

But many agencies have already locked themselves into using the LEED rating system, said Erin Schaffer, vice president for federal outreach at GBI.



*LEED building standards*

## Industry Objects to Green-Gov Standards

Bryan Howard, legislative director for the Green Building Council, said the LEED funding prohibition in the Defense Authorization Act is "irrational and misguided at best" because it puts up needless obstacles to pursuing energy-efficient buildings.

The federal government has 641 LEED-certified buildings and 3,954 in the certification process, according to the Green Building Council. Government buildings make up 27 percent of all LEED projects.

That's compared to about 200 federal buildings that have been rated using Green Globes.

Despite the funding prohibition, the Navy is moving ahead with its plan to certify all of its buildings as LEED Gold by the end of fiscal 2013. The Navy said it can do that because the law does not prevent it from certifying buildings as meeting basic LEED standards, and there would be no additional cost to certify them at the Gold or Platinum level. The Navy also argues it gets a positive return on its investment in energy-efficient buildings. "These buildings are no more expensive to the government and are far more efficient," according to a Navy statement.

The Green Building Council's Howard said he expects there to be further challenges to the LEED rating system as outside groups try to influence the process.

To read the entire article:

[Industry Objects to Green-Gov Standards](#)

See *Member Profile: Ruby Cox* on page 4

## Member Profile: Ruby Cox

I was exposed to toxic mold in my apartment in December, 2005. Prior to that time, I enjoyed perfect health. I also enjoyed running, tennis, swimming, jumping rope, gardening, etc. My health has been sorely affected, and my activities are now limited.

I was born in a small rural community in Birmingham, Alabama. I married early, and I was a young mother. By age twenty-six, I was the mother of four bright and beautiful children. My husband and I agreed I would be a stay-at-home mother until our youngest was school age. Later, I became a single parent. I got my first job and decided to go to college. Those were tough times, but my children did very well. All four graduated from high school. All four went to college, three graduated, two went on to graduate school, and one is getting her Ph.D. this year. In addition to spending time with my children and six grandchildren, I also tutor.

On December 7, 2005, I moved into a three-bedroom ground level HUD-assisted apartment in downtown Birmingham. Two days later, I discovered standing water in my bedroom. I reported it immediately. Two men with a vacuum and a fan were dispatched. They rolled back carpet and padding, moved furniture around, vacuumed up most of the water, turned on the fan and instructed me to let the fan run for 24 to 48 hours. That was it!

On December 11, I was admitted to the University of Alabama (UAB) Hospital Emergency Unit for a perceived heart attack with chest discomfort and difficulty breathing. On December 22, I went for a follow-up visit at the UAB Clinic where I reported acute allergic reactions--severe swelling of forehead, lips, tongue, face, hands, fingers, wrists, and soles of feet. On December 26, I found standing water in a second bedroom with black mold around walls, baseboards and unpacked boxes..

In early February of 2006, three members of the landlord's team paid me a visit. They inspected the mold infestation in the three areas and took lots of pictures. On February 21, 2006, I was admitted to the emergency room again for the same symptoms. I saw the same ER doctor as in December 2005. I told him of the mold problems in my apartment. He told me to get out and never to go back there. After he released me, I went straight to the leasing office and relayed the doctor's order to me. The manager paid for me to stay in a hotel for two nights. While I was away, she had movers take my belongings to a two-bedroom unit without my knowledge or my consent with all the contaminated stuff. My condition worsened, and a third move took place.

There were many additional details over the next few years. Management had verbally promised to pay \$10,000 to cover my medical expenses and moving costs. However, they kept



*Birmingham,  
Alabama*

stalling, so I filed a small claim in district court. The judge ruled in the defendant's favor stating I could not prove my damages. I appealed to the Circuit Court demanding a jury trial. My case stayed on the docket for nearly three years. On May 23, 2011, it went to trial. The judge chose a bench trial. I had no jury, and he chose an *ore tenus* proceeding (without my knowledge or consent). I never had a status conference for discovery scheduling or scheduling orders. The judge ruled in the defendant's favor stating I had no expert witnesses to prove my injuries or damages.

In December of 2010, I had a chemical hygienist check my apartment for mold. In January, 2011, the tests confirmed several molds were present in the apartment. In May of 2011, I had an allergist test me for mold allergies. The tests showed I was allergic to some of the molds found in my apartment. The doctor and hygienist ordered me to get rid of everything that came from the water-damaged unit. I lost everything! When the landlord found out, their lawyer stuck a letter in my door informing me that my lease would not be renewed and I had until September 30, 2011, to vacate the premises and turn in the keys. I wrote Secretary of HUD, Mr. Donovan, with a copy to the President. In less than a week, I got the results: President Obama called Mr. Donovan and had him call HUD in Birmingham and had HUD in Birmingham call the landlords and had the landlords instruct their attorney to rescind that letter. They had no reason not to renew my lease. Their attorney and the appellate clerk played with my mail. I wrote Attorney General Eric Holder--sending him proof of the matter. The game playing ceased.

I appealed to the Circuit Court of Appeals. I researched and wrote briefs, but the court ruled: "AFFIRMED. NO OPINION." During this seven-year period, I contacted dozens of lawyers. Many said that my case had merits, but they could not take it. On December 14, 2011, I appealed to the Alabama Supreme Court. There will be much work for me to do.

At this time, I want to thank my new found family: GIHN. You have been heaven sent, especially Marcie and Cheryl. I could not have found you at a more perfect time. Thank you for your concern, your encouragement, and the wealth of information you have provided me about contaminants in water-damaged buildings.

See *Chelsea Hotel Residents Air Grievances* on page 5



## Chelsea Hotel Residents Air Grievances

The beleaguered residents of the Chelsea Hotel marked their first Housing Court victory on Friday, December 16 when Judge Peter Wendt ruled that the new owner must provide measures to ensure their health and safety during major renovations and construction of the iconic landmark's interior. Judge Wendt directed that the landlord, Joseph Chetrit, adhere to a tenant safety plan and follow all applicable state and local laws and regulations regarding construction and demolition. The so ordered stipulation also required that he agree to provide heat and hot water as required by law.

"It was very successful for the first day in court because the landlord is now under order to provide these services and comply with all the laws," stated attorney Janet Ray Kalson of the firm Himmelstein, McConnell, Gribben, Donoghue & Joseph — who, along with associate Ron Languedoc, is representing the Chelsea Hotel Tenants Association. She explained that during construction and demolition, workers were opening windows to get rid of the dust. "Our clients recorded temperatures in the 40s and 50s, not in the entire building, but areas where the construction was happening."

One of the biggest problems is mold, so the tenants are going to get contractor estimates for cleaning it up. They will give the estimates to the landlord — who, if he agrees, will pay for the mold to be remediated. "Hopefully, we will have an agreement about the mold and other hazardous conditions at the premises. There are also issues with silica, lead and large amounts of dust and concerns about asbestos," Kalson reported.

"Theoretically, the landlord provides safeguards, so tenants can safely occupy their apartments. **In practice, we have often found when landlords do construction, they do it in total disregard for the health, safety and welfare of the tenants,**" she added.

The Chetrit Group and junior partner Clipper Equities took over ownership of the hotel on August 1, 2011.

"The new owners never said hello, never said their plans, did not accept many of our first month's rent, then started eviction proceedings, and the next thing we know, they are coming in and demolishing the building around us," declared Rose, an artist and widow of African-American artist Herbert Gentry.



*Chelsea Hotel, New York*

## Chelsea Hotel Residents Air Grievances (cont'd)

As a response to the owners' actions, the tenants organized and formed the Chelsea Hotel Tenants Association on October 7, 2011.

On the environmental conditions, the first step taken by the association (on the advice of counsel) was to get an environmental assessment. They hired Olmsted Environmental Services, Inc., out of Garrison, NY. The resultant comprehensive report (including pages of test analyses and photos of glaring violations), dated November 2, 2011, a copy of which Chelsea Now obtained, was based on measurements taken during gut renovations of apartments as well as common areas, including the demolishing of half of the seventh floor.

"Our guy came around 5:30pm, when they weren't cleaning. The specialist went inside around 25 apartments. Some had the same issues. He discovered all types of mold, and lead was 40 times what it should be."

Workers had also broken a pipe on the seventh floor, which ran into an association member's downstairs apartment all weekend. She was out of town and when she came home, there was mold everywhere. "She tried to live there but got sick and her doctor forbade her to do so. She still can't," said Rose.

The report stated, "No effort was made by the construction contractor or landlord to aggressively dry the sixth floor water damaged apartments [following standard industry practice]. This [particular] apartment...is uninhabitable."

## [Chelsea Hotel Residents Air Grievances](#)

See *Toxic Fumes Lead to School's Closure* on page 6

## Toxic Fumes Lead to School's Closure

A public high school in Pasay City suspended all classes on Monday morning after its students, teachers and employees experienced difficulty in breathing due to what a fire official described as a suspected chemical leak coming from either the airport or an industrial facility.

"Our team of arson investigators is still analyzing the potential source of the scent," Pasay fire marshal, Chief Inspector Douglas Guiyab, said in a phone interview.

"What we are certain about the case is that the [fumes came] to the school through the air that blows from the northwest," he added.

Guiyab described the scent as being similar to "freshly laid asphalt."

Jerean Lee, an emergency medical technician from the city government's rescue team, was among the first to rush to Kalayaan National High School in Barangay (village) 201 after receiving calls for assistance.

She said she attended to more than 60 students and teachers whose chief complaint was difficulty in breathing.

According to Lee, a noxious odor permeated the five-story building, which made it hard for everyone to breathe.

Asked about the potential sources of the chemical leak, Guiyab said investigators were looking into two possibilities—a nearby tobacco facility operated by La Suerte Cigars or the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Guiyab said that they would only be able to determine the type of chemical once they trace the source of the noxious fumes.

[Toxic Fumes Lead to School's Closure](#)

[Next Newsletter: Friday, January 27, 2012](#)



## East Point Residents Say Mold is Making Them Sick (Canada)

Managers at an apartment complex agree to relocate residents from moldy apartments after CBS Atlanta asks tough questions.

A small fire last week in a top-floor unit of the Village Highlands Apartments activated the sprinklers in that unit and the two below it, forcing those residents to evacuate.

Resident Sheena Bennett told CBS Atlanta News that the Red Cross offered her assistance, providing hotel vouchers for a few days. She said property managers promised to clean and dry the apartments while they were gone.

But when she came back, mold was everywhere.

"Everything in here from the back room to the front is molded," Bennett said.

Bennett wore a mask as she pointed to mold and mildew growing on her windows, walls and floors.

[East Point Residents Say Mold Is Making Them Sick](#)

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### Quick Links:

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