

# GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

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## GIHN Announcements

Please join me in welcoming our newest member.

**Sheryl Hay** lives in Lenexa, Kansas. She is a retired registered nurse (BSN) with more than 25 years of experience.

## Victims of Insurer's Bad Faith to Get Big Award for Mold and Water Damage Claim

An insurer acted in bad faith by refusing to cover mold and water damage to the home of a Wisconsin couple, the 7th Circuit ruled. U.S. District Judge William Callahan Jr. awarded the family more than \$485,000 in damages.

"Allowing an insurer to take premiums and then deny liability based on an exclusion of which the insured was not aware because the insurance company had not informed him of the exclusion or given him the means to ascertain its existence would be unjust," Judge John Tinder wrote for a three-member panel.

[Victims of Insurer's Bad Faith to Get Big Award](#)

## Nine Out of 10 Children in Damp Dublin Housing Complex Have Missed School Due to Sickness

More than nine out of 10 children living in a damp and mould-infested social housing complex have missed school this year due to sickness.

A survey of living conditions in Dolphin House, Dublin (Ireland) found more than half the residents have suffered respiratory problems, stomach upsets or nausea - all of which have been linked to the poor conditions in the flats. The complex is owned by Dublin City Council.

One child living with his family in the Dolphin's Barn community has missed 26 days of school since January, due to sickness believed to be caused by mould growing up the walls of his home.

His mother, Sinead Martin, said she is at her wits' end trying to cope with the damp, mould and sewage problems that have plagued her family since they moved into Dolphin House seven years ago.

"It's just horrific to live like this, watching your children getting sick and not being able to do anything about," said Ms. Martin. "My son Noel has missed 26 days of school because he's been so sick."

"And my youngest has started speaking through his nose because it's always so blocked. I get a note home from his school most days saying he can't stop coughing. It's just heart-breaking."

Residents have complained of breathing difficulties, diarrhea, skin rashes and depression due to the poor conditions in the flats.

Most disturbing is the impact of the poor living conditions on children's school attendance," she said.

[Nine Out of 10 Children in Damp Dublin Housing Complex Have Missed School Due to Sickness](#)

See *Union Carbide Held Responsible* on page 2

## Los Angeles Jury Holds Asbestos Maker Union Carbide Responsible

A Los Angeles jury has awarded \$48 million to a California man and his wife after he was diagnosed with mesothelioma attributed to his exposure to asbestos while working on construction sites in Los Angeles during the 1960s and 1970s.

The verdict, awarded in two phases earlier this month, was the largest in the nation so far this year, according to an attorney at Baron & Budd who represented the plaintiffs, Bobbie and Helen Izell.

John Langdoc, a partner at Dallas-based Baron & Budd, said the verdict includes \$18 million in punitive damages against Union Carbide and sends a message.

**"The punitive damages don't have anything to do with anybody else in the asbestos litigation, but it does say something about the severity of the corporate conduct with respect to Union Carbide," he said.**

Hundreds of asbestos cases were coordinated late last year in Los Angeles in a special proceeding designed to streamline an increasing flood of litigation in that state's courts. The situation has been particularly acute in Los Angeles because plaintiffs firms specializing in asbestos litigation, lured by the prospect of juries known to render large verdicts, have opened offices there. Most of the cases involve mesothelioma or lung cancer, as opposed to less life-threatening diseases.

Izell, 86, was an independent general contractor who built houses and other buildings from 1950 through 1994, according to Langdoc. Between 1964 and 1979, Izell was exposed to products containing asbestos while working as a cement contractor, he said. "He was at work sites where people were using asbestos-containing products."

Izell was diagnosed with mesothelioma on July 7, 2011, Langdoc said. On Sept. 19, he sued more than 20 companies involved in construction at the time, including those that supplied joint compounds used in drywall and stucco. He also sued asbestos maker Union Carbide.

[\\$48 Million Asbestos Verdict is the Largest this Year](#)



*Union Carbide held responsible for Bobbie Izell's illness (jury verdict includes \$18 million in punitive damages)*

## EPA Advises Schools to Protect Indoor Air Quality

Smart summer shutdown is essential for maintaining [healthy indoor environments in schools](#). During these warmer months, school or district staff can take preventative and proactive actions to protect indoor air quality and save energy costs. The [Maine DOE School Facilities](#) team is sharing the following tips from the U.S. EPA on summer shutdown of buildings.

**While it's easy to see significant energy savings from shutting down buildings completely during the summer months, the impact of not monitoring and adjusting for indoor temperature and humidity can be costly. Fluctuations in the indoor environment can have a negative effect on the building itself in the form of mold and dust mites, and on the building contents (such as books, files, sensitive musical instruments or pieces of artwork).**

Mold and moisture problems during summer months can be caused by several factors including: higher humidity in the outdoor air; lack of cooling system operation because school is out; and extra indoor moisture due to special activities, such as deep cleaning of carpets and painting. Checking for moisture and mold growth in your school buildings and taking [preventive measures](#), such as cycling the cooling system to keep relative humidity below 60 percent, can help keep your buildings mold-free this summer.

Use the summer break to [establish or re-evaluate your IAQ management practices](#) to ensure a healthy indoor learning environment at your school come fall.

[EPA Advises Schools to Protect Indoor Air Quality](#)

See *Apartment is a Moldy Mess* on page 3

## Lantana Woman Says Apartment is a Moldy Mess

Imagine going home to mold where you eat, sleep, and watch TV. Mold so bad that it makes you sick. One local grandmother says that's her everyday reality, and she and her family are at a breaking point.

It's a moldy mystery at one local apartment complex. So far no one is taking responsibility for it. A grandmother says it's getting so bad she had to go to the hospital with nasty breathing problems.

For this local grandmother, the painful coughing just doesn't quit. She says her home is making her sick, and with every deep breath it gets worse.

Arlene Wilson says mold is taking over her mother's Marina Bay apartment in Lantana. When Arlene visits, she puts on a face mask.

Arlene Wilson, daughter: You feel like somebody is sitting on your chest.

Arlene's mother has lived in the apartment for two years. But has gotten so sick recently, she even has a doctor's letter telling her to leave. Inside we saw mold growing on the furniture, walls, and even the car seats for the grandchildren. It's unclear why the mold is growing and who's to blame.

When we first tried to speak to the property manager, she kicked us out of the office and locked the door. A few knocks and 15 minutes later, she was ready to speak with us. Apparently she knew the answer, the tenant had reported the mold problem months ago.

Ivelisse Rivera/Property Manager: We received her complaint and we're working on that. But she says there's no way the mold is making the tenant sick. Then she walked away from our cameras again.

Arlene Wilson, daughter: And I'm not going to let you do this to her. Not going to sit down, lie down and take it. That's why channel 12 is here and I will call everybody to that I have to call to make them aware of what's going on here.

[Lantana Woman Says Apartment is a Moldy Mess](#)



## Mold and Fungi Inhalation lead to Personal Injury Suit Against Building Owners

A St. Louis man claims he suffered from asthma and pneumonia after inhaling mold and fungi on a daily basis in his office.

Yan Shifrin filed a lawsuit June 11 in St. Clair County Circuit Court against Associated Banc Corp doing business as First Financial Corporation, Associated Bank doing business as First Financial Bank, Associated Investment Services, First Financial Bank and the unknown owners of the premises.

In his complaint, Shifrin alleges he worked for Bric, an engineering service company that leased space from the defendants, from March 31, 2009, through Jan. 4, 2011. During that time, Shifrin inhaled mold, fungi and bacteria, which caused him to develop asthma and pneumonia, according to the complaint.

On his doctor's advice, Shifrin filed his current lawsuit, saying he experienced pain, suffering, loss of a normal life and disabilities and incurred medical costs because of his exposure to the harmful materials. In addition, he suffered physical impairment and was unable to continue work at his job, the suit states.

Shifrin names the varying banks as defendants, saying Bric leased the premises at 100 East Washington St. in Belleville from them.

He says the defendants negligently failed to eliminate the mold and fungi from the premises, failed to provide a safe place for employment, failed to inspect the property to make sure that it was in a safe condition and failed to warn of the dangerous condition of the property.

[Mold and Fungi Inhalation Lead to Personal Injury Suit Against Building Owners](#)

See *Member Profile: Wane A. Baker* on page 4

### Member Profile: Wane A. Baker, P.E., CIH

Wane A. Baker is a Senior Consultant and Division Manager with Michaels Engineering, Inc., a multi-disciplinary engineering and environmental consulting firm of more than 50 dedicated professionals with offices across the upper Midwest.

Beginning his post-secondary studies in the University of Minnesota's pre-med program (biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics), Wane completed his undergrad in Mechanical Engineering through the U of M's Institute of Technology in 1982, with an emphasis in aerosol science, thermochemistry and environmental engineering. He is a licensed Professional Engineer (P.E.) and a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) with more than 35 years of experience in the operation, maintenance and analysis of various building types. His graduate studies have included hundreds of hours of continuing education in microbiology, toxicology and organic chemistry.

Wane's professional career includes 30 years in environmental consulting, industrial hygiene, construction and energy conservation. He has worked as an industrial hygienist and indoor environmental professional on a full-time basis for more than 20 years, providing his clients with a unique combination of education and experience as a forensic engineer, building scientist and occupational hygienist.

From 1,000 square foot homes to a 1,000,000 square foot technical college, he has managed or personally conducted thousands of IAQ assessments in residential, commercial, institutional, industrial and healthcare settings. He regularly performs forensic investigations of building failures and provides expert testimony on the building physics aspects, underlying causes, sampling methods and interpretation, management and remediation of water damage and associated microbial amplification, and their impacts on occupant health.

His forte has become large and complex projects that demand a cross-disciplinary approach and creative technical solutions. Some of his more interesting recent assignments have involved microbial remediation projects that have somehow "gone wrong", typically through an over-reliance or misapplication of sanitizers, disinfectants, sterilants and/or fungicidal coatings.



Wane A. Baker, P.E., CIH

### Member Profile: Wane Baker, P.E., CIH (cont'd)

Wane is an active member of the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), the Indoor Air Quality Association (IAQA), and the International Society of Indoor Air Quality and Climate (ISIAQ). He currently serves as Chair of the AIHA's Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) Committee, and is in his second three-year term as a voting member of the ASHRAE Environmental Health Committee. He was elected to the IAQA Board of Directors in 2007, served as the association's First Vice-President in 2009-2010, and remains the Director of the Milwaukee Chapter of the IAQA. He also serves on the IESO Consensus Body, and as Co-Chair of that group's HEPA Air Filtration Device Standard Committee.

A nationally recognized speaker, Wane organized and led a forum at the 2011 Indoor Air conference in Austin, Texas, on the topic "The Professional Practice of IEQ Consulting: What Does it Mean?" (see: <http://tinyurl.com/6mjtf25>). Wane has also authored or edited more than three dozen "IAQ Briefs" covering a broad array of topics on Indoor Air Quality (see: <http://tinyurl.com/7r6jqdc>).

And for the last 10 years, he has served as a peer reviewer for the *Journal of ASTM International* and the *ASHRAE Journal*.

Wane lives with his wife of 20 years, two teenagers, two dogs, two cats and an assortment of wildlife in the bluffs outside of La Crosse, Wisconsin. You can reach him with questions or to retain his services for assignments across the country by calling 608-785-1900, or via email ([WAB@MichaelsEngineering.com](mailto:WAB@MichaelsEngineering.com)).

See *Stronger Controls on Toxic Chemicals* on page 5



## Protect Health with Stronger Controls on Toxic Chemicals

As a nurse, I empathize with the strong desire to find a cure for many of today's medical problems: cancer, infertility, immune disorders and learning and developmental disabilities. They all have profound and devastating effects on American individuals and families.

But as a nurse, I recognize that even more important than finding a cure is preventing these health problems before they start. Even with all the advances in medical science, we have seen the rates of many diseases rise over the past 40 years. Every decade since the passage of the first Toxic Substance Control Act of 1976, scientists have learned more and more regarding the dangerous effects toxic chemicals have on infants, children and adults.

But without better regulation, this knowledge has gone unheeded. The effects of toxic chemicals found in our homes, the environment and our workplaces can be seen in the increase in neurodevelopmental disorders, cancers and chronic diseases. Childhood cancers have increased 20% since 1975, breast cancer rose by 40% between 1973 and 1998, and infertility affected 40% more women in 2002 than in 1982.

While Americans are living longer, we are sicker while we're alive. What can account for the rise in these health trends?

Peer-reviewed science shows alarming links between toxic chemicals, to which Americans are routinely exposed, and many of the negative health trends we're currently experiencing today. Since the 1950s, the use of and exposure to chemicals in this country have risen exponentially.

Under federal law, chemicals are virtually unregulated for their health effects. The result is that every day we are exposed to toxic chemicals found in our homes, workplaces and schools.

Most people think of "environments" as existing outdoors, but as a nurse who works every day with premature infants, I know that our first environment, the womb, is critical to developing healthy children and adults later in life.



## Protect Health with Stronger Controls on Toxic Chemicals (continued)

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the majority of pregnant women in America have toxic chemicals in their bodies, and these chemicals are being found in the umbilical cord blood of babies at birth.

How can we allow this to take place? How can we allow children to be born already exposed to toxic chemicals during such a critical window of development and before they even take their first breath?

A bill currently in Congress, called the Safe Chemicals Act, would take enormous steps forward to protect public health. We know that not all chemicals are bad, but under our current federal system, we have no way of distinguishing the safe from the unsafe chemicals.

Even more encouraging, the bill shows that we don't have to make a false choice between protecting our families from harmful chemicals and a vibrant economy. The act would simultaneously reduce our exposure to toxic chemicals in our homes and workplaces while encouraging the production of safer chemicals. We have the chance to reinvigorate our chemical industry at a time when we need new manufacturing and job opportunities.

As a nurse, I am dedicated to preventing disease before it occurs. We have the opportunity to do just that, and I hope we seize it.

*Joyce Stein, BSN, RN, has more than 30 years of clinical experience at the University of Michigan Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. She is a board member of the Michigan Nurses Association and a member of the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments.*

[Protect Health with Stronger Controls on Toxic Chemicals](#)

See *Home with Mold Torn Down* on page 6

## Bettendorf Home with Mold Problems Torn Down

A Bettendorf, Iowa, home with a history of mold problems and other alleged deficiencies was torn down Thursday, only seven years after it was built.

William and Shelly Wood took out a \$400,000 mortgage in June 2005 to buy the home at 6275 Eagle Ridge Road, according to property records. The 2012 assessed value for the two-story home with 5,015 square feet of living space and the 0.59 acre lot was listed at \$155,070, according to the Scott County Assessor's Office.

The Woods subsequently filed two lawsuits in Scott County District Court against contractor Mark McManus and McManus Development.

One lawsuit claimed several problems with the home's construction, including doors, windows and flooring that were not properly installed, heating and cooling problems, granite that was cut incorrectly and "excessive moisture levels in the interior walls and window areas on the west wall."

The second lawsuit claimed that excessive moisture in the home had resulted in a mold problem that caused or aggravated allergy problems for the Woods' two sons.

Douglas Houston, owner of the Steamatic mold remediation business in Bettendorf, said that in his 15 years in the business, he has never heard of a home being torn down because of a mold problem, but there have been homes where the mold was so pervasive he had to strip the home down to just the wooden frame.

He said if the home had such a serious moisture problem that the mold could not be prevented from coming back, it could be necessary to tear the entire home down.

[Bettendorf Home with Mold Problems Torn Down](#)

**[Next Newsletter: August 1, 2012](#)**



## Tenants in Singapore Have No Legal Rights?

My wife and I have lived here for more than three-and-a-half years with no issues in regard to tenancy agreements. But since we moved last year into another condominium, we have had nothing but trouble in regard to the air-conditioning and mould in the kitchen, to name a few of the issues.

We engaged a professional, who found five different kinds of mould, two of which could cause severe health issues. So far, the response has been one of pure ignorance from the agent and owners. As we have an eight-month-old daughter, we are worried about what could happen and how to find a workable solution. As we see it, we have no rights, with 10 months left of the contract.

Could it be true, in a developed society like Singapore, that greed and a lack of regulation allows owners not to care about their tenants and, in this case, to put them in potential danger? The only advice we got was to get a lawyer. But if this is the only way, then a sad future lies ahead for Singapore and its tenants, local and foreigners.

[Tenants in Singapore Have No Legal Rights?](#)

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### Quick Links:

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