

Green Homes from the ground up

By Michael Peaden

As you are visiting the homes during this year's annual Green Home Tour (Free tour open to the public May 3-4 and 10-11, noon until 5 p.m.), imagine walking around the house barefoot on a cold winter morning. How does that floor feel—is it warm? In your newly built certified Green Home, it should be warm. The slabs are insulated and crawl spaces are generally sealed and conditioned in Green Homes so it improves comfort, energy efficiency, and indoor air quality.

This is one of the many green features you'll see when touring the builder's homes on the Green Home Tour. The 9th annual Green Home Tour is presented by the Green Home Builders of the Triangle, joint council of the Home Builders Associations of Durham, Orange, Chatham & Wake Counties. This Tour provides an incredible opportunity for potential buyers, or homeowners considering building or remodeling, to tour a variety of homes that have been designed, built and certified to meet the rigorous requirements of the National Green Building Standard (NGBS). Builders must meet certain requirements and select options to achieve points in qualifying the home to become Green Certified. It's not just a matter of meeting building and energy codes, or doing just a few "green" features, but rather a systematic approach to ensure the "whole house" is Green Built. Let's start from the ground up prior to you touring the homes.

WHY BUILD A HOUSE ON AN INSULATED SLAB?

North Carolina Code requires slabs to be insulated in Zone 4, which includes Durham, Orange and Chatham Counties, but not in Zone 3, to the south and east. Even when building in Climate Zone 3, slabs should still be insulated. Insulating slabs saves money, makes floors more comfortable and qualifies the home for builder Utilities rebates.

WHAT IS CONDITIONED CRAWL SPACE?

When building a house, a conditioned crawl space is best. Built without vents and without insulating the floor, a conditioned crawl space has R-10 insulation board installed on the walls. Installing moisture resistant insulation while covering and sealing the crawl from the ground helps control the humidity levels in the crawl space. Conditioning the crawl space lowers energy bills, improves indoor air quality of the home and keeps the humidity level of crawl spaces in check.

HOW TO IMPROVE A BASEMENT FOUNDATION?

Basement foundation walls should be insulated even when not conditioning the space to control temperature and moisture levels. Moisture resistant insulation can be installed on the outside of the foundation or installed on the inside of the basement. There are precast foundation walls available that incorporate continuous insulation into the wall. A home is only as good as the foundation it rests on. If that foundation is not insulated, under-insulated or leaky, it's a missed opportunity



Sealed crawl spaces improve indoor air quality and keep humidity in check.

to be energy efficient, comfortable, and healthy for years. Codes are becoming more and more stringent every year so make sure the home you dream of is built by an experienced Green Builder. Come visit a wide variety of different homes on this year's Green Home Tour and learn about other Green features. Tour magazines are available at area Harris Teeters, in Triangle REALTOR® offices, HBA offices and various other locations. Download the mobile App at www.TriangleGreenHomeTour.com or call Lynn Nacewicz at 919.493.8899 for more information.

Michael Peaden of The Dow Chemical Company wrote this article on behalf of the Green Home Builders of the Triangle Building as the Building Science Co-Chair.

BRIEFS

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devout Muslim who follows his religion's rules, rules that sometimes seem "unnecessarily harsh," to Krista.

Bremer, author of a new book, "My Accidental Jihad," will be the speaker at the Chatham County Literacy Council's Spring for Literacy Luncheon **May 6** at Galloway Ridge at Ferrington.

The culture clash that Krista and Ismail live is writ large in the U.S. today as Americans deal with their feelings about Islam.

What sustains the couple are the passions that unite them: travel, running, music, poetry, and especially, good food.

"Ismail is an amazing cook," Bremer says. The couple lives in Carrboro with their two children.

Ramadan, the month-long Muslim observance, is "when our differences seem the most stark," Bremer has written. It's not just Ismail's required fasting: He can't even kiss her. She questions the rules, then wonders: "Is love an endless feast, or is it what people manage to serve each other when their cupboards are bare?"

Tickets are \$50 (\$29 tax deductible) and may be purchased online at www.chathamliteracy.org. Sign in begins at 11. Proceeds go to help Chatham County adults learn to read and write English. More information: 919.542.6424.

Silk Hope Spring Celebration May 17

After the opening ceremonies, the Farm Heritage Kids Fun Run will kick off at 9:10 a.m., 9:30 a.m. Farm Heritage 5-K Cross Country Run.

There are an assortment of vendors; artists, craftspeople, farmers' produce and plants, jewelry designer's services, businesses, family entertainment, musicians, food and lots of fun.

Heritage Culinary and Wellness Series: 10:30 a.m. Traci Phillips from Wellness of Chatham, 11 a.m. Dr. Millie Hinkle from Camel Milk USA, noon-4 p.m. (no times yet on these) Canning and Preserving, Artisan Breadmaking, Pizza crust with Aidan's Pizza, Homemade Pasta; Heritage Building Series: 10 am: Mixing and Building with Cob, Bob Schmidt,

11 a.m.: Straw Bale Construction with Logan Parker from Heirloom Builders.

Rest of the day: DIY Solar Projects with Greg Schmidt from Carolina House Company and Carter Bosquet from Progress Solar Solutions, Greywater Plumbing with Bob Schmidt from Applied Power and Water, and tentatively, Lasagna Gardening and Shitake Mushroom cultivation.



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