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The eNewsletter of the Sustainable Building Coalition  
P.O. Box 49381, Austin, TX 78765-9381 [www.greenbuilder.com/sbc](http://www.greenbuilder.com/sbc)

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### SBC Calendar:

#### October 18

**Shelter—Animal, Human, Historical, Aboriginal, Alternate, Earth-Friendly, Modern.**  
By Dick Pierce

#### November 15

**Straw Bales Under Fire: The straw bale fire test & implications for insurance and mortgages.**

By Bill Christiansen and Ben Obregon

#### December Holiday Party!

Date and venue to be announced.

No Monthly Meeting.

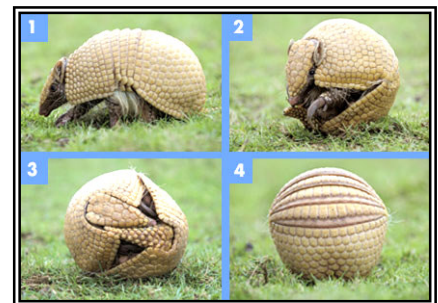
### October 18 SBC Monthly Meeting: **Shelter: Animal, Human, Historical, Aboriginal, Alternate, Earth-Friendly, Modern** By Dick Pierce

Permaculturist Dick Pierce will take us on a tour of shelters built by various species, historically and today. We will explore human and animal dwellings in their context of the natural world, from the creations of Andy Goldsworthy and mud daubers to the structures of Native Americans and hornets.

It's all about origins, practicality, beauty, sustainability, low impact/local resources, and energy efficiency. This month's presentation is meant to be light, refreshing, inspiring, intriguing, and fun while sprinkling in some messages for sustainable building and living with the local resources and the conditions of Central Texas. Of course, Dick's presentation will relate to Green Building and Permaculture.

Dick Pierce is a native of New England with 30 years in corporate America in the Northeast and Southeast. He spent five years with an American Indian education non-profit in Boulder, Colorado, before coming to Austin in 1998. He completed a Permaculture Design Course with Australian, Geoff Lawton, in the Highlands of Guatemala in 1996 and then coordinated classes at the Pueblos in NM and Pine Ridge Reservation in SD. Dick started teaching Permaculture in Central Texas after completing Master Naturalist, Master Gardener, and Citizen Forester training in Austin. He has a Certificate in Landscape Design from ACC and teaches 2-day Permaculture Introduction and 10-day Design Courses in the Austin area. Dick has had the honor of representing the Young People of Casa Verde Builders and the Environmental Corps at American YouthWorks for the last 7 years. These award-winning programs are at the forefront of both Green Building and a more sustainable environment for Austin, Texas. Contact Dick at [dpierce@ail.org](mailto:dpierce@ail.org) or 512-695-3425.

SBC meets every 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Casa de Luz, 1701 Toomey Road in the Cielo Room. You are welcome to join us before the meeting at 6:00 p.m. for a wonderful macrobiotic meal at Casa de Luz. [www.casadeluz.org](http://www.casadeluz.org)



### **Sustainable Tip of the Month**

#### **A Not-So-Inconvenient Truth: Recycling Reduces Global Warming**

Every 10,000 people who start recycling can collectively reduce CO2 emissions by 42,000 tons a year. In addition, recycling reduces pollution and conserves natural resources, including trees that absorb CO2. Whether you are currently a recycler or one who is ready to start, check out [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org) to see how you can recycle various items in your area. Also, find and pass along free items through [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org), shop for recycled office furniture and office supplies at TOPS (<http://topstexas.com/>), and learn about the recycling opportunities at Austin's Ecology Action ([www.ecology-action.org](http://www.ecology-action.org)). Recycling is just one not-so-inconvenient way to be green.



## Materials: Rainwater by Megan Clarke



The folks at SBC have been talking about finding building solutions that are closer and closer to home, and this month's topic, rainwater catchment, couldn't get much closer. Unless you've replaced your lawn with stones and succulents, you've been waiting all summer long for rain to fall on withering grasses and thirsty plants. Many of us resort to using precious water from the outdoor tap to help restore life and color to our yards, but what about those smart folks who've started using collected rainwater instead? How do they do it?

One of the most basic means of rainwater catchment is a barrel or bucket set just under the downspout. This lonely bucket, however, is vulnerable to leaves and build-up of other debris, is not conducive to water distribution, and may not be large enough to hold the volume of water that you require.

To get on the right track:

- Choose a container whose volume matches your needs. In general, barrels available for catchment are between 50 and 75 gallons in size, and are sufficient to supplement landscaping applications.
- Choose an opaque container with a narrow opening to prevent the growth of algae and other organisms stimulated by sunlight.
- Cover the opening with fine mesh or screening to block debris of all sizes. If you're using a pipe to connect the downspout to the barrel be sure that it's easily removable for cleaning.
- Choose a container with a spigot near the bottom for direct drainage and hose hook-up. The placement of the spigot facilitates water pressure through gravity, though the location and height of the barrel in relation to the destination plays an equally important role.

This arrangement will suit you well if you're just looking to water plants by the front door and the occasional bush, but if your aim is to cover a greater area, or a wider range of applications, there are some additional features you should consider:

- a. Purchase a larger container, or a series of barrels that maximize the amount of water available from your roof. Start by calculating the volume that is likely to run off of your roof, then determine how much of this you are likely to use, and at what time of year. Tips on how to make better sense of this can be found at [www.twdb.state.tx.us/publications/reports/RainwaterHarvestingManual\\_3rdedition.pdf](http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/publications/reports/RainwaterHarvestingManual_3rdedition.pdf).

- b. Install a pipe at the top of the primary barrel to distribute excess water to subsequent barrels. By placing the pipe at the top, the secondary barrel will receive water only once the primary barrel is full.
- c. Install a short vertical pipe between the downspout and the barrel to capture accumulated debris during the first few minutes of rainfall. Once the vertical pipe is full, and the dirty run-off diverted, the water running into the barrel will be markedly cleaner.

Now that you're acquainted with the basic steps, and we've agreed that rain is indeed a local product, let's think a bit more on the barrels themselves. Although a new rainwater barrel is not a local product, in that the materials are neither harvested nor manufactured in Austin, the polyethylene barrels proffered by the city ([www.ci.austin.tx.us/watercon/](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/watercon/)) come equipped with standard parts and fittings for a reasonable \$60. There are *reused* barrels available at Austin's own Eco-Wise ([www.ecowise.com](http://www.ecowise.com)) and Innovative Water Solutions, LLC. ([www.watercache.com/](http://www.watercache.com/)), all of which had "first lives" carrying food products or non-toxic dry goods. Eco-Wise's unpainted barrels run at \$55, while IWS' versions range between \$75 for unpainted barrels and \$150 for "Texas Edition" barrels bearing the State flag. And for the brave and dexterous, it is even possible to fashion a rain barrel on your own. Check out this link from University of Florida for detailed instructions: <http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu/Hort/Pubs/Rainbarrel.htm>.

Once you start catching rainwater for landscaping, it's likely you won't want to stop there. The possibilities range from gardens to washing machines to toilets, and, with the proper filtration, to the kitchen tap. To learn more about why rainwater harvesting is a great idea and other ways it can be used, head to the Texas Rainwater Harvesting link offered above or check out this article in the *Austin Chronicle* [www.austinchronicle.com/issues/spec/greenbuild/rainwater.html](http://www.austinchronicle.com/issues/spec/greenbuild/rainwater.html). It's never too late to start catching water!

*Already know about it? Want to hear about other topics? Please send your suggestions, corrections and comments to me @ [meganann@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:meganann@mail.utexas.edu). Thank You!*



**estimated gallons per year** = [ [average rainfall (feet)x roof footprint (feet<sup>2</sup>) ] x 7.5 (gallons)] x surface coefficient (%)  
*Where:*

The Austin average yearly rainfall is 2.6-2.8 ft. ([www.srh.noaa.gov/ewx/html/cli/ausnorm.htm](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/ewx/html/cli/ausnorm.htm)); the *roof footprint* is the area projected up from the roof boundary, as if onto a flat surface; and, the *surface coefficient of friction* is between 80 and 90%, based on the roughness of the roof surface; the rougher the surface, the lower the coefficient.

## SBC Notes



Many thanks to those of you who came by the SBC booth at this year's Roundup. Though Friday and Sunday were busy with visitors as every year, Saturday was a blow-out as Fredericksburg's MarketPlatz saw a new attendance record set at the Seventh Annual Renewable Energy Roundup and Green Living Fair (about 6,500 gate entries over the three days). We were *packed* with people all day long seeking information on building techniques and available materials as well as the names of reliable builders and designers. The 2006 edition of the Austin Environmental Directory was a popular item, as well as the SBC bookmarks we've handed out for years. Special thanks, as always, go to our friends from San Antonio's Sustainable Building Coalition, who helped provide reference and perspective to many interested patrons.

We noticed a trend this year: a significant number of those who dropped by reported that in the last year or two, they had worked on or completed green-built projects and efficiency enhancements that were inspired by, or created with, resources discovered at

the Roundup. It's really encouraging to hear so many people refer to our website, meetings and/or members when they elaborate on the positive changes in their homes and businesses. Even the Rain Spirits smiled on us at the end of that day, and a special surprise Sunday was Mina's husband Robert, who entertained the crowds with his fiddle and some wonderful tunes!

—Submitted by Ken McKenzie-Grant



### Donate your mismatched tableware to SBC!

SBC is looking for durable plates and bowls, mugs, flatware, and cloth napkins (can be home-made, bandanas, etc.) to serve 12-20 participants at our workshops. Please bring your extras to an SBC meeting or contact Gayle Borst [gayle@StewardshipArchitecture.com](mailto:gayle@StewardshipArchitecture.com) for other drop-off options. Thank you!



### Downed Backyard Trees = Lumber!

Overheard on a neighborhood listserv (and used here with permission)...

"A while ago somebody asked about having backyard trees turned into lumber. I wanted to let you know that I found a place in east Austin—**Vintage Material Supply** (<http://www.vintagematerialsupply.com/>) that will buy trees from you and turn them into lumber. It is so expensive to take down a tree in a yard that what they pay you won't even come close to covering the cost of cutting down the tree, but it is a good way to recycle. They are only looking for particular species, mostly pecan, walnut, mesquite, plum oak (?), and something else I didn't recognize. Vintage also has a cabinet shop, so if you have to cut down a tree to add on to your house, you could give them the log and they could turn it into a piece of furniture for you. They would probably do that with any species. I'm not associated with them other than they just turned the hackberry in my front yard into lumber that is now drying in my backyard. I hate to see trees come down and this is a way to alleviate my guilt. ;-)"

## Local Workshops

**Learn how to make an earthen oven in one day and get dirty doing it!**

**Saturday October 21, 2006 Starting time: 9:00 a.m.**

Cost: \$50.00 (snacks and lunch included)

**Lisa Orr Pottery Studio**

**1502 Alta Vista Dr. Austin, Texas**

**512-445-0279**

[lko@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lko@sbcglobal.net)

We will mix cob (a mixture of sand, clay and straw) the old fashion way (with bare feet) and using a sand form we will sculpt an earthen oven for baking pizzas, breads and you-name-its. This ancient tried and true method of nearly forgotten technology is enjoying a revival around the world. Come enjoy this work of beauty with us.

### **2006 Permaculture Design Course October 21 to November 2, 2006**

**What and Where:** A 72-hour intensive Permaculture Design Certification Course to be held at Quiet Valley Ranch, home of the Kerrville Folk Festival in the heart of the Texas Hill Country.

**Who:** The organizers of the course, Kirby Fry, Rick Wright, Jenny Nazak and, in memoriam, Tom Smith, have organized the course to create a hands-on curriculum in conjunction with the classroom commitment. Several well-known local Permaculture designers, instructors and consultants will share years of practical experience and knowledge to make this a valuable and comprehensive experience.

**What Else:** The course was originated to create a master plan for the Ranch, addressing edible landscapes, green building, erosion control and water catchment. It has the intention and the ability to elevate the presence and availability of Permaculture nationwide by giving festival participants an on-going resource center and model of sustainability. With a core of certified Permies to work on continuing and periodic projects, more principles of sustainable design and thought will pass on through the volunteers who make it all happen.

- The course offers a superior Permaculture faculty.
- Site visits show the ultimate in comprehensive Permaculture design.
- 80-page course outline provided.
- This course is the most affordable certification course available and the only intensive training available in Texas for the past four years.
- Musicians and Kerrstaff are especially welcome.
- 3 meals a day will include vegetarian options.
- Dry floorspace for bedrolls or cots and hot showers are included in the cost.
- Campsites or RV hookups are available and hotel arrangements can be specially arranged in Kerrville 9 miles away. Kerrville is on the Guadalupe River and Interstate 10, north of San Antonio.

Cost : \$900, \$800 by October 6th. Pro-rated partial attendance and some partial scholarships will be considered.

Contacts:

Kirby Fry 512/663-9538 (Austin-area)

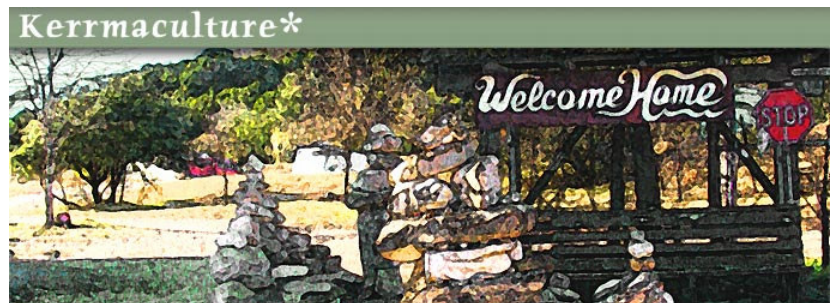
Rick Wright 830/377-3253 (on site at the Ranch)

Jenny Nazak 512/619-5363 (cellular in Austin)

[kerrmaculture@yahoo.com](mailto:kerrmaculture@yahoo.com)

[www.kerrmaculture.org](http://www.kerrmaculture.org)

**Special Note to past graduates of the Kerrville Permaculture Design course:** We are having a special event on the weekend of Oct 28 – 29. Guest speakers will give talks and practical applications experience on a number of topics. We are asking all of our past graduates to come visit and share their experiences and frustrations with us at a pot-luck dinner on Saturday night and Brunch on Sunday.



## Local Workshops

### Green Building Program • Green by Design Workshop

Saturday, November 4, 2006

9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.

The Commons Center, 10100 Burnet Road, Austin, Texas

Registration: \$35.00 [www.austinenergy.com/go/greenbuilding](http://www.austinenergy.com/go/greenbuilding)

Learn how to improve energy and water efficiency, increase comfort and reduce maintenance. The \$35.00 per person cost pays for a full day of instruction with the Green Building Program staff, continental breakfast, lunch and the award-winning CD-ROM and workbook "Green by Design." There will also be opportunities to win cool door prizes like native plants, energy-efficient lighting, hygrometers, and an overnight stay at Austin's only green hotel, the Habitat Suites.



### South Austin Straw Bale Wall Raising

Saturday, November 18, 2006.

Contact Ben Obregon at [sd1@austin.rr.com](mailto:sd1@austin.rr.com) for details

## Local Events

### November 14, 2006 Austin Orientation: Introductions to Living Well in Austin

Tuesday, 6:00-8:30 p.m.

(6:00 p.m. Registration, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Presentation, Q&A 8:00-8:30 p.m. Mingle)

Tons of information, Appetizers, Take Home Materials & Door Prizes

**Learn** highlights of Austin's geography and natural features, local and green enterprises, history, culture, civics, music, publications, resource numbers and much more.

**Discover** how to live, shop, eat and recreate in ways that celebrate and support our local culture, economy and environment.

**Depart** with your questions answered, tons of information, and the feeling that you are "plugged in."

**Coordinates:** Austin Java - 1608 Barton Springs Rd. (on north side of Barton Springs, along restaurant row, between Lamar and Zilker Park <http://www.austinjava.com>)

**Tickets:** Available at the door, by mail or online <http://www.austinunique.com/orientation.htm> .

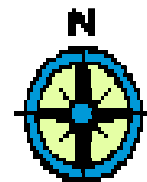
\$20 per person \$30 per couple (or any 2 who carpool) \$36 per family (well-behaved kids and teens welcome)

Discounts for students and seniors.

**Guide:** Brandi Clark 512-736-8567 [brandi@AustinOrientation.com](mailto:brandi@AustinOrientation.com)

This event cosponsored by Austin Unique [www.austinunique.com](http://www.austinunique.com)

Can't make it this month? It will be offered again on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month. Mark your calendar!



For local, national, and international events, check the postings on the calendar at [www.greenbuilder.com](http://www.greenbuilder.com), or even post your own event.



*Conserve. Preserve. Protect.*

## Texas Environmental Excellence Awards

### Applicants Sought for Texas Environmental Excellence Awards

*Commission seeks to honor those who protect, preserve, and conserve Texas' environment*

**What:** Prestigious, public recognition for outstanding environmental service to Texas

**Who can apply?** Students (K-12, college, graduate schools), schools, ranchers, businesses, government agencies, non-profits, and individuals. Individuals and groups may also nominate others for this prestigious recognition.

**How:** The application is free and can be filled out online at [www.teea.org](http://www.teea.org).

**Who is sponsoring the program?** Sponsor since 1993 is the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

**When: DEADLINE is Nov. 3, 2006.** Winners will be publicly honored at a May 2007 banquet, hosted by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and open to members of the media. Winners also receive a network-quality video about their projects and a certificate by acclaimed artist Jaime Cervantes. The awards recognize outstanding, innovative environmental programs in 10 diverse categories: Agriculture, Civic/Nonprofit, Education, Government, Small Business, Large Business/Nontechnical, Large Business/Technical, Innovative Technology, Individual, and Youth. Texas Environmental Excellence Awards have honored more than 150 successful environmental projects and efforts since 1993. **Questions about the application?** Contact Dana Macomb at 512/239-4745 or [dmacomb@tceq.state.tx.us](mailto:dmacomb@tceq.state.tx.us).

## Workshops in Other Places

### Texas Bioneers

October 20, 21 & 22, 2006

University of Houston - Main Campus

"The Bioneers speakers literally brought

tears to my eyes - tears of inspiration; see-

ing example after example of what other or-

ordinary people are doing with their lives, improving the world one day at a time. This helped me to look at my own life, what's working and what's not working, encouraging me to change and to be more daring, to look at how I might do my part. Bioneers caused the spark that changed my life - I have now dedicated myself fully to science and outdoor education."—Dr. David Heroy

Deep down in our gut, I think we each sense that great change is imminent for this world of ours...as it appears that the major challenges\* facing us all may also be converging together. We each wonder what the future holds....for ourselves and for our families....for our friends and for the world....and what we can personally do about it. Well, Bioneers is THE grassroots effort for transforming our world into a better place to live...so; Texas Bioneers is the place to be this October.

Experience hope for the future with Texas Bioneers—our own local heroes along with plenary speakers via satellite from the national conference.

#### Local speakers include:

Richie Ahuja • Jim Blackburn • Brandi Clark • Shib Nath • Gwen Foster, ND • David Heroy, PhD • Madalene Hill • Kenneth Knezick • Jennifer Lorenz • Natalie Marquis • Reverend Jeremy Rutledge • LaVerne Williams, AIA

#### National Speakers include:

Carl Anthony • Spencer Beebe • Tzaporah Berman • Sarah Crowell • Maria Elena Durazo • Lois Gibbs • Amy Goodman • Paul Hawken • James Hillman • Thomas Linzey • Michael Pollan • Sofia Quintero • Rachel Naomi Remen, MD • Paul Stamets • Clayton Thomas-Muller

Obtain more information and sign-up online at: [www.texasbioneers.org](http://www.texasbioneers.org)



### November 3-5, 2006. Adobe Vault Workshop Presidio, Texas

Learn to build an adobe vault by hand under the instruction of maestro adobera Jesusita Jimenez, adobero Efen Rodriguez and Simone Swan, adobe designer-builder and founder of the Adobe Alliance. They will also demonstrate the construction of an adobe brick wall with keyed corners and how to mix and apply a sturdy, waterproof earth plaster enhanced with cactus juice.

Vaults and domes built in exquisite equilibrium without supporting wood forms are the least expensive and the most climatically comfortable adobe roofs. Simone Swan learned the engineering technique in Egypt from the late architect Hassan Fathy.

Early registration fee is \$300. Scholarships available. For further info email [swan@adobealliance.org](mailto:swan@adobealliance.org) or visit [www.adobealliance.org](http://www.adobealliance.org).



**Light straw-clay events** presented by Robert Laporte and/or Paula Baker-Laporte in **Santa Fe, NM:**

Contact: [info@econest.com](mailto:info@econest.com) or [www.econest.com/calendar](http://www.econest.com/calendar). Robert Laporte conducts straw/clay workshops of various durations, usually in New Mexico. Look here and see stunning homes from "tiny" to normal size. No nails. Robert uses Japanese-style joinery and you will learn how to do this, too.

**The Last Straw Journal** lists diverse natural building workshops in the **Northwest and Canada**. Go to [www.thelaststraw.org](http://www.thelaststraw.org) for complete information.

**Barefoot Builder.** Cob workshops in Tennessee.

This site also contains a link to a listing of additional workshops around the country. [www.barefootbuilder.com](http://www.barefootbuilder.com)

**Kleiwerks** is an international Natural Building non-profit organization, teaching people how to build appropriately designed earth and straw shelters with affordable and indigenous materials. For more information about Kleiwerks visit [www.kleiwerks.org/index.php](http://www.kleiwerks.org/index.php)

# SUSTAINABLE BUILDING COALITION

P.O. Box 49381 Austin, TX 78765-9381

## **Sustainable Building Coalition Coordinators Committee**

Programs and site visits: Gayle Borst  
Membership: Frieda Rinehart  
Community Outreach: Yvonne Hansen  
Website Development: Shirley Allaway

Treasurer & Book Sales: Frieda Rinehart  
Nonprofit 501(c)(3) Committee: Ken McKenzie  
Newsletter Columnists: Megan Clark and others  
Newsletter Publication: Mina Loomis

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All SBC Coordinators are volunteers. If you would like to contact anyone of us by email, visit the contact form on the Greenbuilder website at: <http://www.greenbuilder.com/sbc/contact>

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## **SBC Membership and Renewals**

**Sustainable Building Coalition membership** is open to builders, architects and anyone desiring to learn about and support sustainable building and development in all of its aspects. Dues are \$35 business member, \$25 paper newsletter member, and \$15 email newsletter members. Members receive the monthly newsletter, great book discounts, and admission to all regularly scheduled SBC meetings and site visits. Visit [www.greenbuilder.com/sbc](http://www.greenbuilder.com/sbc) to learn about additional perks for business members. Find a membership application at [www.greenbuilder.com/sbc/memberapp.pdf](http://www.greenbuilder.com/sbc/memberapp.pdf).

**Mail applications, dues, and renewals to:**

**The Sustainable Building Coalition, P.O. Box 49381, Austin, TX 78765-9381  
or bring to a SBC monthly meeting or event.**

*"The coalition exists to facilitate the organization and education of the building and design communities and the general public to foster: healthy and ecologically sound built environments - sustainable resource use - responsible and healthy businesses."*

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