



Alban Offers New Service - Multiplex Allergen Testing

Indoor air quality should be on every home buyer and homeowner's minds. Excessive mold, radon and carbon monoxide are serious health and life threats. At the January 2010 ASHI InspectionWorld, an internationally renowned laboratory specializing in allergy testing announced a new screening test available to home inspectors for the eight most common allergens. The new testing protocol, named MARIA, for Multiplex Array for Indoor Allergens, can test for dust mites, cat, dog, mouse, rat and cockroach borne allergens, along with alternaria mold and pollen.

There are two major advantages of MARIA. Because all of these allergens can be measured simultaneously and quickly, we are able to offer clients in need of an allergen investigation a several day turnaround time for a reasonable price. What used to take weeks is now available in days, so it

is possible to fit an allergen screen within the home inspection contingency time frame.

The new analysis technique was not offered publicly until an extensive third-party validation using nine laboratories in the United States and Europe verified the accuracy of the method. Our home inspectors, trained by the laboratory director last month, use a hand held vacuum to collect dust and debris from flooring, bedding and other household materials for laboratory analysis.

Alban home inspection clients can now receive a much broader picture of the potential for allergy and indoor air issues associated with their homes. Alban is pleased to add this professional service, along with the other indoor air quality testing available, to offer our clients a better understanding of the health related issues in their homes.

FROM THE DESK OF ARTHUR S. LAZEROW

THINK SAFETY - MAY IS DECK SAFETY MONTH

Several weeks ago, friends of mine in Atlanta were sitting on their screened-in rear deck when suddenly their three-year old granddaughter fell through the deck railing onto the macadam drive 10 feet below. Fortunately, she was shaken up but not badly injured. The point is that my friends never gave thought to the safety of their widely spaced deck rails.

How about your deck? Don Bender, director of Wood Materials and Engineering Laboratory at Washington State University writes "Decks cause more injuries and loss of life than any other part of the home structure. Except for hurricanes and tornadoes, more injuries may be connected to deck failures than all other wood building components and loading cases combined."

The North American Deck and Railing Association recommends a certified ASHI home inspector or a knowledgeable deck builder for an inspection of any deck that has not been recently built or inspected during a pre-settlement home inspection. Be safe, get a professional deck inspection.

ALBAN STAFF

Marty Blackwood, ASHI Certified Inspector and Alban Chief Inspector
Cell: 240.463.1400

Rodney Shull, ASHI Certified Inspector and Director, Customer Relations
Cell: 540.270.0520

Joe Dempsey, ASHI Associate Home Inspector with Logo Privileges
Cell: 202.577.8047

Robert Montiel, ASHI Associate Home Inspector and bilingual in Spanish
Cell: 240.559.0906

Lee Eyler, ASHI Certified Inspector
Cell: 301.674.2199

Quintin Satterfield, Chief Lead-Paint Inspector
Cell: 301.807.2122

Arthur S. Lazerow, ASHI Certified Inspector and President of Alban
Cell: 301.807.9022

Sandra Watkins, Director, Lead-Paint Division and Alban General Manager

Terry Toms, Bookkeeping And Finance

Tina Yarborough, Inspection Scheduling



HOME ENERGY MATTERS

HomeStar Soon to be a Reality

With the big box stores solidly behind the legislation and both Republicans and Democrats understanding the need for jobs legislation, HomeStar will provide six billion dollars of retrofit money nationwide. The HomeStar legislation was passed by the House of Representatives and should be on the Senate's agenda when you read this.

The retrofit money will be available on a 50%-50% split between the customer and the federal subsidy. Six billion dollars will energize manufacturing and contracting to the tune of twelve billion dollars. Retrofit of homes will lessen the need for foreign oil, as homes utilize less and less utilities. Also, the majority of energy retrofit products, such as insulation, caulk, windows and appliances,

are American made, so the money stays at home.

Known affectionately as "Cash for Caulkers," there are three parts to HomeStar. SilverStar provides money for purchase of energy efficient products. GoldStar starts with an energy audit. Upon completion of the recommended work, a final test will determine the savings and the total subsidy for the home owner. The final part of HomeStar provides funds for quality control testing by an independent energy auditor.

HomeStar will jump start the home energy efficiency industry, making homes more comfortable, reducing utility bills and helping to improve the environment. A win-win-win, for sure.

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