



# MONTHLY

News and Views from the Connecticut Association of Home Inspectors, Inc.

April 2005

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## Liquid Siding

By Dwight Uffer

**I** am writing this article, not as an expert on this subject, but as a Home Inspector who expects that in the future our industry will find more and more homes that we inspect having this material applied.

In performing a routine home inspection in West Hartford, CT a couple of months ago, I noticed, as I approached the home to meet with my client, that the finish on the home had bumps or small blisters visible on the wood siding. I briefly discussed this condition with my client and we proceeded to the interior of the home where I began my inspection as it was a snowy day and I didn't want to track in snow by doing the exterior of the building first. We started in the basement of the home and everything proceeded as normal and I noted that the basement was damp which was common in this neighborhood. The homeowner had a dehumidifier operating in the winter which was another sign, and there were two sump pumps installed with battery back-ups. I explained to the client that the basement had a definite water infiltration concern and, if he was considering finishing the basement, he should consult with a professional waterproofing company.

The remainder of the inspection went as well as could be expected until we reached the exterior of the home. The real estate agent was "hyping" the fact that the owner had a contractor apply this revolutionary "Liquid Siding" that will last 25-30 years without ever having to paint the structure. This is the first home that I have inspected where this material had been applied. As I inspected the siding which was red cedar with a 7" exposure, I noted that the finish had small bumps over the south and west exposure. As I wiped my hand over the siding, it was apparent that these were moisture sacs that contained water vapor which could not escape through the thick coating. As I walked around the home, it was also apparent that the chimney was also "blistering" but the fluid had frozen due to the northern exposure.

I explained to my client that this was not a normal occurrence and that the newly applied coating had trapped water vapor which would be the

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## Meeting Dates

- Apr 27** *Underground Storage Tanks & Septic Systems* - Brad Korth, Korth Engineering
- May 25** *Insulation* - Bill Hulstrunk, National Fiber
- Jun 22** *Roofing* - Dan Horton, IKO Roofing Products

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## President's Corner

Dwight Uffer

**W**ell it appears that we have had our last snow fall for this year and, as I speak, the weather report is that we will have a sunny 60 degree day. That sounds like spring is finally here and we can once again view those roofs that have been covered with snow all winter.

In speaking with numerous Realtors around the state, most have told me that the market is beginning to warm up just like the weather. However, interest rates are also going up along with inventory of existing homes. This is a sign that home sales in Connecticut may not be as vibrant as in the past 10 years or so and all of us should realize that all markets change from time to time. Those of you who have been in business for over ten years have benefited from the good years and those of you entering the home inspection business will have to work harder to market yourselves as competition increases to attract home buyers. With close to 400 home inspectors in Connecticut (not counting interns), we have doubled the competition that was prevalent in the late 1990's. With a down turn in the market, we will see a decline in real estate agents and also those peripheral occupations associated with the real estate market, i.e. appraisers, mortgage brokers and home inspectors. Those of us that will survive will have a business and marketing plan in effect to compensate for a down-turn as well extra capital to carry us through. I suggest that all of you plan for the future so that you will be one of the survivors, when the down-turn is upon us.

On a happier note, I hope that those of you who attended the JLC Convention in Providence had a good time and were made aware of all of the new products that are available in the construction industry. This is another good reason to belong to CAHI, as the cost of transportation and the entry to the coliseum was sponsored by your dues. Those of you that didn't attend, we invite you to all of our special seminars, that's why we pay dues.

### April Keynote Speaker

**T**his month's meeting topic is

**CT Septic System Design, Inspections and Rejuvenation**

**&**

**Underground Storage Tank Remediation Programs**

Our meeting will feature Brad Korth as the speaker. Brad is from Korth Engineering, Marlborough, CT and will deliver a short seminar on underground storage tank remediation programs and removal, and a longer presentation on septic system design, inspections and rejuvenation. Brad has over 20 years of program and project management engineering experience. He holds a bachelor's degree in Petroleum Engineering and a master's degree in Environmental Engineering along with a master's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Environmental Management.

2 hours of Continuing Education Credits.

cause of potential wood decay and mold. As would be expected, the agent did not like my finding and explained that the finish was guaranteed and the company that applied it was very reputable.

My client asked to have a copy of the warranty for the application of this material, and if he could meet with the seller of the home and the company that applied the finish. He also asked if I could attend this meeting so that I could explain my findings to the seller and contractor.

About two weeks passed and I finally received a call from my client in which he informed me that the contractor had not returned the seller's phone calls and the seller had asked his attorney to handle a warranty claim as my client had decided not to purchase this home with this condition hanging over his head.

My research in the past few weeks has found that this is a common problem with the material that is sprayed on the home. (It is viscous material and, when cured, leaves a film of about 20 mils. vs. 3-4 mils for a normal paint job.) If there is any moisture problems within the home or a lack of proper vapor barriers, this material tends to trap the moisture. The material is also very dependent on having a secure sub-surface and all openings (i.e. cracks, joints and terminations) properly sealed and caulked prior to a priming application. If applied on masonry, the moisture content cannot be over 12%, and all cracks and other openings need to be sealed prior to the application of this material.

In closing, I feel that all of you as home inspectors be astute in finding out if this material has been applied to the homes that you are inspecting. If you notice any

discrepancies or deterioration, report it to your clients in detail as this can be extremely costly to remove and you do not want to bear the costs. Typically it costs between \$9 - \$15,000 to paint a typical home with this material. If any of you have inspected homes with this material applied and have noticed problems or concerns, I believe that the membership of the Association would like to hear from you.

I should also state, I was in contact with the seller of this home prior to writing this article and he sold his home with the stipulation that he remove the siding and replace it with new cedar clapboards at a cost of \$41,000. He is presently in litigation with the contractor and manufacturer of the product.

*Articles published in the CAHI Monthly are the sole opinion of the author. CAHI does not endorse or state a position for or against the content of said articles.*

# REWARD



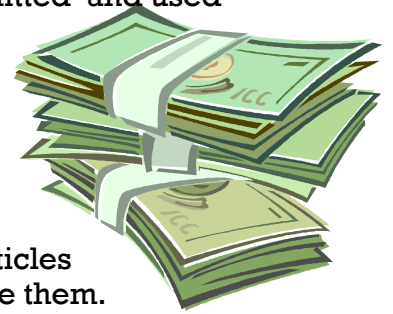
**\$25.00**

**for any article  
used in the newsletter**

CAHI will pay members \$25.00 for any article that is submitted and used in the monthly newsletter.

The article must be e-mailed to Rich Kobylenski [rkoblenski023@earthlink.net](mailto:rkoblenski023@earthlink.net). Articles should be a PDF or Word document.

Articles should pertain to our industry. We will review articles for content and reserve the right to edit, use and/or refuse them.



## Contact Us

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### Executive Board

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The Licensing Board meetings are held at 9:30 am, Department of Consumer Protection, Room 117, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford.

*The public is always welcome.*

E-mail Bernie Caliendo for the latest meeting schedule at [bsurehomeinspect@juno.com](mailto:bsurehomeinspect@juno.com)

