



transparent fibreglass, sealed, and thus converted into an air-heating solar collector. The solar wall works, is inexpensive, and can be quickly made, using hand tools, from components that are readily available and easy for one man and a helper to lift.

Another NRC contract has led to the preparation, by the Brace Research Institute and its collaborators, of a design guide for homeowners who would like to supplement their heat sources by building a solarium. The most elaborate — and expensive — kind of solarium is a greenhouse, attached to a home; not the traditional “glass-box” greenhouse, which in winter loses more heat than it gains, but rather something built as carefully as an aquarium (oriented to catch the sun, double-glazed, insulated, sealed, and with heat storage) — a solar collector, in short, in which one can both live and grow food. Solaria are ancient, but are suddenly enjoying a surge of popularity after being ignored for centuries. The range of possible designs, from the elaborate kind described above to simple conversions of a balcony or porch, are described in *The Solarium Workbook*, which also includes detailed information on design procedures, and worksheets — somewhat like income tax forms — for estimating costs and energy efficiency. The document is a typical Brace tool; it encourages self-reliance — not, as is usually the case, in the countries of the Third World, but in the people of Canada. □

**Séan McCutcheon**

*Séan McCutcheon is a freelance writer working in Montreal.*