

# LETTERS



## On the Holding Power of Nails

To the Editor:

I appreciated Harris Hyman's informative article on nail power (*Practical Engineering*, 2/94), but I question the assumption of the superiority of joist hangers over toe-nailing.

Long before joists hangers were in popular use, a carpenter (who in my 19 years of experience I still regard as the finest I ever met) taught me to toe-nail joists and rafters to headers and ridge beams by stitching both sides of the joist or rafter with 8d sinkers about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch apart and staggered. We'd blunt the point before it was driven. It made for dainty work; no rigging axes or even waffle heads on John's jobs, thank you.

Years later, a change order drove the lesson home. The order called for me to relocate a stairwell opening I had framed. To test the effectiveness of a toe-nailed connection, I propped one end of an 8-foot-long double 2x10 header as I tore out the double joist on that end. When I removed the prop, the header, which was still toed to the double joist at its other end, did not budge — not a sixteenth.

I think the value of the technique is that the narrow shank of the 8d does not split the two-by. (John would run anyone off who tried to toe-nail with a 16d.) Also, the pitch of a toe-nail draws the member tight up against what it's being fastened to.

I don't know how you would quantify my argument ... but that header was Doug fir, by gosh!

Alan Abrams  
Abrams Residential Construction  
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

Harris Hyman's essay on nails was okay, but I think he misses the boat by not calling for hot-dipped galvanized nails. I am a one-horse general

contractor, doing mostly remodeling and additions. I'm really happy when the building that I'm working on is framed with "sinkers." They come apart very easily — in fact, they fall apart. In older houses, these nails are often rusted partway through. I always use HDG nails for framing. I'll bet they have twice the holding power of sinkers and smooth nails and they don't rust in green framing lumber.

Jim Haskins  
Eureka, Calif.

## Foam Form Bracing Reduces Costs

To the Editor:

Your article "Foam Foundation Forms" (12/93) covers a great deal of information in a short amount of space. What struck me about the article was that while you refer to R-Forms Building Systems' bracing requirements as "extreme," you failed to mention the underlying reasons for this approach: to minimize the cost to the builder.

We space our components relatively far apart when compared with walls that are so full of foam or plastic ties that they require special engineering. The bracing required for our jobs not only ensures that the walls are straight, plumb, and will not blow over in the wind, but actually minimizes the in-place cost of the finished wall. When referring to our bracing as extreme, you overlooked the fact that a builder can reuse this standard-sized bracing lumber for interior partition walls or simply move it to his next job. Other more costly systems may require less bracing, but more of their components remain in the wall forever, resulting in a higher in-place cost to the builder.

Christopher Lang  
R-Forms Inc.  
West Palm Beach, Fla.

## Another Eaves Membrane

To the Editor:

In your article "Leakproof Details for Shallow Roofs" (5/94), you missed at least one manufacturer of bituminous membranes: Protecto Wrap Co., 2255 S. Delaware St., Denver, CO 80223; 303/777-3001.

Protecto's Rain Proof/Ice & Water Guard (which we commonly refer to as "Jiffy Seal"), has one feature to recommend it above similar products — a zip strip. The plastic release film is designed to permit removal of a 2-inch strip at the top or bottom of the roll as you unroll. This allows precise alignment before removing the rest of the backing. If you've ever worked with any of these products on a hot or windy day, you'll fall in love with Jiffy Seal — no sudden embrace by a sticky black monster while on the roof!

Felix Marti  
Marti Construction  
Ridgway, Colo.

## Southern Pine Table

To the Editor:

I enjoyed Paul Fisette's article "How To Use Span Tables" (4/94). I would like your readers to know that the Southern Pine Marketing Council also publishes a span table, the "Southern Pine Maximum Spans for Joists and Rafters." You can order a free copy from SPMC, P.O. Box 641700, Kenner, LA 70065; 504/443-4464.

Frank B. Lesniewski  
Northeast Market Mgr.  
Southern Forest Products Assoc.

## Can't Find Washers

To the Editor:

I read with interest your article on concrete connections ("Contractor's Guide to Concrete Anchors," 7/93). I'm an engineer with a company that builds



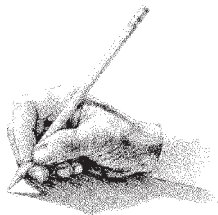
timber frame homes and we have been installing heavy hold-downs on our posts for several years. We use Simpson HPAHD-22s everywhere, and gear up with the heavier hold-downs when necessary for seismic considerations. Your article is of great practical help to us easterners as to how to find and install the hardware.

I was struck by the photo of the hold-down attached with the heavy cast-iron washers (see photo above). I've collected a lot of those washers from old beams that we reclaim and reuse. I have also found them in covered bridges where I have done restoration work. I have been unsuccessful, however, in locating a source for new washers like these. Can you tell me where I can find these washers?

Robert L. Brungraber, P.E.  
Benson Woodworking Co., Inc.  
Alstead Center, N.H.

*The washers you're referring to are called "malleable iron washers," or sometimes "bridge washers." They are available from Peninsula Building Materials, 1175 Aster Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086; 408/246-0550. You can order with a charge card and they'll ship them to you.*

*— The Editors*



Keep 'em coming! We welcome letters, but they must be signed and include the writer's address. The *Journal of Light Construction* reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to JLC, RR 2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477.