LETTERS

Truss Bracing

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to the article "Setting Trusses: Tips from the Tracts" (4/95). Although a generally fine article, there is a point I would like to address. The truss erection operation described by Mr. Currie makes no mention of temporary bracing, and the photographs accompanying the article do not show temporary bracing. I did note that the front cover of this issue shows a workman actually installing temporary bracing on a truss system and Mr. Currie does mention temporary bracing elsewhere in the article. However, proper temporary bracing is critical and should be emphasized.

The article states that the trusses are stood up one at a time, the truss ends are blocked and nailed along the entire run, and then the ridge blocks are secured. Without proper bracing, this is potentially a very dangerous procedure. If proper temporary bracing of the system is not installed *as the trusses are erected*, a progressive "domino" collapse of the truss system can occur. I have witnessed the results of this type of accident, which included hospitalization of one workman and considerable damage to the structure.

John McClancy, P.E.
Cary, N.C.

Mark Currie responds:

I will have to beg John McClancy's pardon, but the article does mention bracing and the photographs do show bracing. In the section subtitled "Framing," the text describes securing a gable truss with "a pair of long, very straight 2x4s set on edge against and nailed heavily into the gable-end wall." Part of the confusion is that Figure 2 is not showing an exterior end wall, but an interior end wall, which in this case also gets a gable end truss (firewall). Nonetheless, it is clearly braced.

With smaller trusses, such as those in Figures 2 and 3, the blocks at the plates and ridge lock the trusses against the end truss, and are sufficient to brace the trusses until the permanent braces and sheathing are installed. With large trusses, I'll add temporary diagonals as necessary.

By the way, that's me on the ridge in Figure 3; I wouldn't be up there if I weren't sure the trusses were secure. However, I would never have an inexperienced worker do that task; he couldn't assess the situation as well.

As for the truss operation on the cover, this is what you'd call "old school:" Nailing 500 linear feet of 2x4 to the top of the trusses, so that you can pull them off when you sheathe, is something a true stacker never does. The only time this makes sense is when the design has no ridge blocks.

Frost & Grade Beams

To the Editor:

Regarding Robert Randall's letter and Robert Hatch's response ("When Jack Frost Heaves," *Letters*, 5/95): Another measure which will minimize, if not eliminate, frost heave problems with grade beams is to create a void between the bottom of the grade beam and the soil, so the lifting soil never contacts the beam. When pouring a cast-in-place concrete grade beam, use a carton or box form to create this void. These forms are made from cardboard strong enough to support the wet concrete. After the concrete cures, the cardboard decomposes and the void is formed.

Carton forms are available from concrete specialty suppliers.

Craig A. Hess, Architect
St. Cloud, Minn.

PT Wood: ACQ vs. CCA

To the Editor:

In May's *On the House* column, John Wagner addresses the safety of treated wood choices. It appears he has put more credence in claims for ACQ than in 60 years of CCA performance.

For instance, he states, "It's also dangerous to touch or breath [CCA] sawdust," but fails to note that sawdust should not be inhaled whether it comes from CCA-treated wood or ACQ-treated wood. In fact, the OSHA precaution for sawdust from CCA-treated wood is not one word different from the precaution for dust from untreated wood.

Children have been harmed by untreated wood structures that failed due to rot, and some 200,000 children go to hospitals every year because of playground accidents, but none is known to have been harmed by CCA-treated wood — not one child anywhere in 60 years.

Huck DeVenzio
Hickson Timber Protection
Smyrna, Ga.

To the Editor:

I read with interest the question-and-answer column on "Safer Treated Wood" (*On the House*, 5/95). It's true that southern pine, western hemlock, and the true firs (the most commonly treated wood species) tend toward the low end of dimensional stability, which can contribute to the performance problems you mention.

One of the benefits of ACQ treating is that it allows for effective treatment of Douglas fir (not a true fir). As most builders know, Douglas fir has more strength, stiffness, and dimensional stability than the commonly treated wood species. ACQ-treated Douglas fir provides an alternative to all-heart redwood for decking and other outdoor uses.

Timm Locke
Western Wood Products Assn.
Portland, Ore.

Keep 'em coming! Letters 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; or e-mail to 76176.2053@compuserve.com.