

Not Generosity

To the Editor:

Your December issue carried an item in the *In the News* section (page 20) that is, at best, misleading. You presented a report that first appeared in the *Durham Herald-Sun* to the effect that some developers were “voluntarily” donating land and money to Durham Public Schools. Voluntarily, in the preceding sentence would be used in the same sense as “Saddam Hussein voluntarily offered to negotiate when he met some U.S. soldiers.”

The approval process for land use in our community has become a bargaining session, and the arm twisting that is done should never be confused with agreement as to the appropriateness of taking money from one small group (new home buyers) to benefit the larger community.

I was asked about this article by a staff person at NAHB who was about to run it in their newsletter as a marvelous example of generosity. It is not. It is the price of poker in our town, and, as with most other places, it is cheaper to ante up and play than it is to call the double-dealer who controls the game.

Nicholas J. Tennyson

Executive Vice President

HBA of Durham & Orange Counties
Durham, N.C.

Mold the Result of Bad Technique

To the Editor:

Even though OSB is prone to mold, I believe most of the problem is the result of poor building techniques. The general public, building officials, and insurance companies are all in a panic. We need to address this by educating builders with training regarding proper techniques. If this is not dealt with, the result will be that homes will become

more costly, which eventually will affect our trade.

I really enjoy your magazine and share info with my subcontractors.

Calvin L. Kemp
Gaylord, Mich.

Don't Leave Off Building Paper

To the Editor:

In the article “Fixing the Holes Where the Air Gets In” (1/04), the author mentions that he just tapes the seams of the plywood wall sheathing and does not install housewrap because he doesn't believe that air travels through plywood. That may be so, but there are other reasons for installing housewrap or tar paper over the wall sheathing. Housewrap or tar paper protects the sheathing from moisture that finds its way behind the siding, especially in vinyl or brick applications. I also find it hard to believe that the tape will still be stuck to bare wood after ten years or so.

I can't understand how a respectable builder would ever build a home with no wall or roof sheathing underlayment protection. I have seen this done in big subdivisions that go up quickly. But people still buy the homes, probably not really knowing what's going on underneath the cosmetics of siding and roofing. This is poor building practice and should never be done.

Jeff Paquette

Paquette Construction, LLC
Soo, Mich.

A Good Idea

To the Editor:

Our firm was asked to be “point man” for the correction of a sticky asbestos and mold situation here in Columbus, Ohio. The abatement con-

tractor submitted a quote for their trade. Buried in the text was the disclaimer that they were not to be held responsible for repairs to casing around doors and windows they had to seal off while protecting the affected area. They apparently used a combination of duct tape and spray adhesive to ensure tight seals when their blowers were turned on to create negative pressure. I called the guy in charge of the project and requested a meeting to define *which* doorways he planned to seal and on which side. He asked why, and I responded that we'd anticipated painting walls and ceilings but not existing door trim. I told him I planned to “clad” the affected doorway with either green or blue painter's (low-tack) tape *prior* to his guys coming on board with their duct tape and spray adhesive to seal up openings.

He got real quiet. About 30 seconds later, he said, “Why didn't that occur to me?” It seems that in the pursuit of safety and sealing off door openings, they had a history of stripping the finish off casing as they were removing their protection. This idea was great news to this contractor. He said it would allow him to eliminate the disclaimer from his contract and set his firm apart from other abatement companies.

Steve Thomas
Columbus, Ohio

Flashlight Favorite

To the Editor:

In this month's issue, you state that Maglites are good flashlights (*Toolbox*, 10/03). Have you ever reviewed Streamlight products? I have owned both, and Streamlights are far superior for a variety of reasons. The UltraStinger is their newest innovation. It has an adjustable beam, has 75,000

candle power, and weighs little. As a home inspector, I have been using Streamlights for the past 20 years.

J.D. Grewell
Silver Spring, Md.

A Few More Favorites

To the Editor:

Hello from central Oregon! Thank you for a great magazine with genuine helpful information. I am happy to be a second-generation hands-on builder and sole proprietor since 1972.

Something came over me this holiday season, reminiscent of my teen poetry-writing days. When I sang my version of "My Favorite Things" for the family Christmas morning, it was apparent I needed to share it with you and your readers. Enjoy!

R.D. Steigman, Builder
Bend, Ore.

Rick's Favorite Things

*Pickets on porches and sharp bits on routers
2x12 stair jacks with no splits or gouges
Brown paper on subfloors, untangled string
These are a few of my favorite things*

*Straightly dug ditches, jaw buckets on tractors
Square corners for cabinets with flat level counters
A cell phone that vibrates, a hammer that sings
These are a few of my favorite things*

*When the truck's late
When the screw breaks
When I'm feeling sad
I simply remember my favorite things
And then I don't feel so bad*

*Diamond dust wet stones and warm toes in winter
Speed squares and wormdrives, a day with no splinter
Good help with trusses, a nice day in spring
These are a few of my favorite things*

*Concrete truck drivers with smooth careful motions
End of the day, my workin' hands lotion
Finish-grade lumber with no dents or dings
These are a few of my favorite things*

*When the form blows
When the sub's slow
When I'm feeling had
I simply remember my favorite things
And then I don't feel so bad*

*Light jam-free nail guns, quick rewind chalk lines
Square flat foundations, a shade tree at lunch time
Inspectors so happy, they whistle and sing
These are a few of my favorite things*

*Wood-handled hammers and big old brass
plumb bobs
Flip tips on spray guns for one-color paint jobs
Little blue buildings that smell fresh and clean
These are a few of my favorite things*

*If the roof leaks
When the floor squeaks
When I'm feeling mad
I simply remember my favorite things
And then I don't feel so bad*