

Letters

New Look, Same Book



What's going on, you're asking? Not much — a nominal change, really. As in, we're giving the magazine the nickname that most everyone already calls it (say Journal of Light Construction three times fast and you'll know why).

We've been discussing this for years, but I decided the time had come while manning the editors' booth at a recent JLC Live show. An attendee walked up, talking about what a great show it was, never been to anything like it, and so on; then he read our banner and said, "Journal of Light Construction? Huh. What's that?" Looking around at all the JLC Live signs everywhere, I explained the magazine's connection to the show, thinking it would be nice if it were a little more obvious.

We were also overdue for a redesign on the inside. The goal was "clean and simple," and it has been masterfully executed by art director Barb Nevins. Still, even though the presentation is different, you'll find that most of the content is exactly the same.

We have introduced one new column. Called *On the Job*, it's a place where we hope you'll share tricks and techniques that make your work go better. The range of topics is wide open — pretty much anything from excavation to punch list, with a focus on time savers and solutions to common production problems. The explosion in digital-camera technology has made keeping a job-site record easier than ever, and if your camera has a resolution of at least 3 megapixels, chances are good your photographs will be publishable. You can submit by mail, or e-mail me or any of the other editors on the masthead. We will pay for items we publish.

Thanks for your continued support of JLC; as always, we look forward to hearing from you.

Don Jackson
JLC Editor

Nice Ice Advice

Contrary to the advice in the story "Retreating Snows Leave Legacy of Roof-Ice Repairs" (*In the News*, 4/05), you should never put ice-melting chemicals on a roof with ice backup problems. The reason the ice gets attention in the first place is that water has intruded into the house. Adding salt will exacerbate the problem, is difficult to remove, and can cause

permanent damage to interior surfaces. (Been there, done that, a long time ago!)

A more practical approach is to wrap heat tape around 1½-inch-diameter thin-walled pipes and lay them perpendicular to the dam. In 24 hours, the heat will generate a channel 3 to 5 inches wide, letting the water run off the roof. We've been using this method for a long time with positive results. If you leave the pipe on the roof for the season, the internal thermostat will regulate the heat and keep an open channel until you can rip the shingles up and cover the sheathing with ice and water shield.

Ted Newman Jr.
Lakes Region Remodeling Co.
Center Tuftonboro, N.H.

KEEP 'EM COMING!

Letters must be signed and include the writer's address. JLC reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail to JLC, 186 Allen Brook Lane, Williston, VT 05495; or e-mail to jlc-editorial@hanleywood.com.



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Hiding Vent Holes in Eaves Blocks

In the item on ventilation and eaves blocking in seismic zones (Q&A, 3/05), the author discusses shear issues and the relative lateral strengths of two different venting details. I didn't run the numbers, but it seems that if someone wanted the high shear value of the diaphragm nailing detail and the look of the hidden vent-screen detail, they could just combine the strengths of each. For venting, instead of cutting the diaphragm short, why not continue the diaphragm blocking to the roof sheathing but cut ventilation holes at intermittent distances? Then attach the vertical spaces on the outside and cover with a decorative fascia piece. This would accomplish a high load, yet retain the look of the hidden vent.

Kelly Hamm

Manhattan Beach, Calif.

NAHB Opposes ICC Energy Code Amendments

Your readers have good reason to be concerned about a proposed change to the ICC energy code ("DOE Study Criticizes Energy Code Amendments," *In the News*, 4/05), because the new insulation requirement changes conventional construction practices. Builders would have three options for complying with the new code: moving from 2x4 to 2x6 construction; using a costly, high-density fiberglass product; or attaching additional insulation to the outside face of exterior walls.

All three options have drawbacks and add between \$600 and \$1,000 to the cost of an average new home. NAHB does not believe that home builders or home buyers should bear the burden of expensive new code requirements that provide negligible energy savings.

David F. Wilson
NAHB President

Setting the Record Straight

Without knowing me or my business, Mr. Kenneth Benson (*Letters*, 4/05) accuses me of locking out minorities. For the record, two of my three primary subcontractors are black and my best helper is a woman. I pay 30 percent more than the going rate to keep them.

My comments referred solely to a continuing discussion of the Hispanic labor market.

George Gritmon

Lonestar Home Improvement
Little River, S.C.

The Missing Page

I enjoyed Leland Stone's "A Handyman's Guide to Self-Preservation" (*Business*, 3/05). I run a small contracting business in the Seattle area and found his insights applicable to my business. He has found answers to many of the communication snags that come up with homeowners — an area where contractors often run into problems. I was glad you printed the contract form he uses, but would have liked to have been able to read the back, which was partially obscured.

William Harris

Straight-A Remodel & Repair
Seattle