

# Letters

## Be Part of the Solution

Having read *JLC* since it was in newspaper format, I now find the articles less relevant with regard to the housing crisis in our country. Virtually all the articles are about high-end home building and additions, and many of the ideas are not too practical.

Presently there are tens of thousands of foreclosed and abandoned homes falling into disrepair, while the banks who fueled the malaise dither and do nothing. Likewise, there are thousands of industrial and commercial properties standing vacant and deteriorating. Given the current economic meltdown, why are there no articles addressing this problem from a contracting viewpoint — articles that could help us solve this housing crisis for perhaps millions of American families?

Our families — urban and rural, low and moderate income — need housing now. With the skill and ingenuity of the American construction trades (and possibly government help in relaxing entrenched and arcane rules and regulations), the problem can be solved — without relaxing energy requirements and product longevity. Housing is in dire straits: Be a part of the solution, please!

**Harvey Marron**  
New Bern, N.C.

## Code Approval for Roll-In Showers

Reading the letter “Barrier-Free Showers vs. Code” (11/09), about the accessible shower that failed plumbing inspection because it didn’t have 2 inches of drop between the curb and the drain, I wondered: Don’t accessibility codes trump the plumbing code? We built an ADA-compliant shower a year ago without any hassle from the inspector. It had a 1/2-inch-high threshold and no more than a 2 percent slope in the shower. We are currently bidding a retirement home with three such showers on the plans.

The whole point of accessibility codes is to provide access for the disabled. I would think that you can get a

state-level ADA code official to straighten out this interpretation. There must be someone who can bring pressure to bear.

**Gerret Wikoff**  
Los Angeles

*Thank you for your letter. Rich Kogelschatz, the author of the original article (“Building Zero-Step Entries,” 9/09) also told JLC that his accessible showers had always passed code inspections. Many codes now include an exception to the plumbing code, typically referring to ANSI A117.1-03 accessibility standards, which include guidelines for roll-in and transfer showers. Where the plumbing inspector is a stickler for the curb height restrictions, another approach might be to use a waterproofing membrane across the entire bathroom floor and install a floor drain. — The Editors*

## A Livable Wage?

I am writing in response to the letter “Weatherization Wage Too Low?” (12/09). Is this guy serious? He really thinks that \$18 an hour is not a living wage for a U.S. family? Maybe he should take a look around the country, or watch the news, or maybe look up the unemployment rate. To the guy working at the fast-food joint because he lost his factory job, \$18 an hour is something to be desired. Likewise for the skilled tradesman who is scraping by with half his usual work load because fewer people can afford his services — I bet he wouldn’t mind spraying some insulation for \$18 an hour. And, yes, I understand that the wage rate includes benefits, but that’s better than working with no benefits, as I currently am, for less than \$18 an hour.

**Dave Collins**  
via e-mail

## No Back-Priming Required

In answer to your reader’s question about back-priming HardiePlank boards (Q&A, 12/09): James Hardie does not require back-priming or back-sealing of any of its siding products prior to installation in the field. Best-practice guides for our products are available at our Web site.

**Chad Diercks and December Cowen**  
Technical Service  
James Hardie Building Products  
Mission Viejo, Calif.

### 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](mailto:jlc-editorial@hanleywood.com).

