

# Products

by Leland Stone

## Slip Slidin' Away

Every carpenter who has spilled a pickup load of doors and casings onto a busy freeway off-ramp will recognize the value of the *Save-A-Load* cargo bar. The 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-square aluminum tubing adjusts to fit truck bed widths between 47 and 75 inches. To install, fit the bar to rough length, then take up the slack with the built-in hydraulic pump; a limiting switch keeps the bar from overextending and bowing the sides of the truck. The lightweight restraint sells for \$69.95 and is perfect for securing air compressors, tool stands, and other bulky gear.

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*Contact:* Save-A-Load Inc., 307 Suite Q, W. Tremont Ave., Charlotte, NC 28203; 800/728-5623.



## Simplified Shower Plumbing

One reason it's expensive to plumb tubs and showers is the large number of connections that have to be made. The *Shower Tower* simplifies the process by combining preplumbed copper tubing with standard fittings in a fiberglass shell that mounts on a new or existing tub surround. The single-handle mixing valve, showerhead, and tub spout require only a pair of supply lines to connect, so installation is fast and easy. The four available models list for between \$330 and \$484.

*Contact:* The Swan Corporation, One City Center, Suite 2300, St. Louis, MO 63101; 314/231-8148.



## Prefab Wainscoting

Installing traditional wainscoting can be a serious drain on both a carpenter's patience and the client's checkbook. The *Raised Panel Wall System* eliminates much of the drudgery and expense by replacing solid wooden pieces with panels, rails, and cap-and-base moldings made of fiber or particle cores wrapped in wood veneer. This wainscoting is nearly impossible to distinguish from the real thing, but the pieces won't split or warp with changes in humidity. The manufacturer claims the cores are so stable that back-priming is unnecessary.

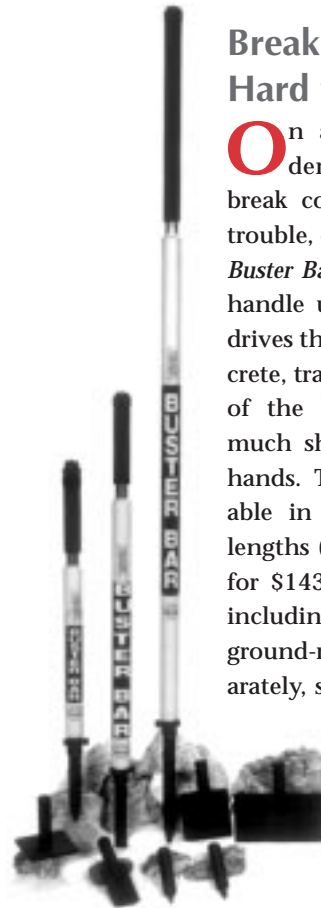
The panels come in standard widths of 6, 9, and 12 inches and heights of 32 and 36 inches. Because panels can't be cut to width or height without ruining the raised-panel edge profile, your layout will need to include several 3-inch-wide fillers. The cost is about \$11 per square foot in oak, less for paint grade — about a third the cost of custom wainscoting. A free video and \$5 sample kit are also available.

*Contact:* New England Classic Interiors, 100 Middle St., Portland, ME 04101; 888/880-6324.

## Breaking Up Ain't So Hard to Do

On a small job, renting a demolition hammer to break concrete isn't worth the trouble, especially if you've got a *Buster Bar*. Sliding the weighted handle up and down the shaft drives the tool's bit into the concrete, transferring all of the force of the blow without creating much shock to your arms and hands. The Buster Bar is available in 24-, 32-, and 58-inch lengths (the 24-inch model sells for \$143); interchangeable bits, including tampers, scrapers, and ground-rod drivers, are sold separately, starting at \$40.

*Contact:* Atlanta Specialty Products, 4N944 LaFox Rd., Wasco, IL 60183; 800/327-3552.



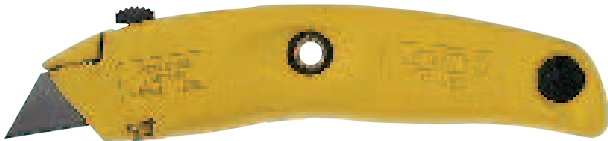
## Nice Slice

**N**ext to a hammer and tape measure, a utility knife is probably the most frequently used tool in your pouch. Of course, that means the blade is probably dull, because changing it is such a nuisance.

The *Swivel-Lock Retractable Utility Knife* offers a new spin on blade replacement. With the blade fully extended, pushing a button at the back of the knife allows the halves of the handle to swivel open. Replacing a blade takes only a few seconds, and you won't need a screwdriver to do it.

This knife has an ergonomic design that makes it comfortable to use, and the bright yellow color makes the knife really tough to misplace. The nosepiece interlocks around the blade, so it can't spread and lose its grip. The only downside is the minor slippage between handle halves when they're locked in place. You'll spend about \$8 on this tool down at the lumberyard.

*Contact:* Stanley Tools, 600 Myrtle St., New Britain, CT 06052; 860/225-5111.



## All-Terrain Ladder Stabilizer

**I**f you've ever had to level a ladder by blocking up one of its legs, you'll appreciate the *Shur-Foot Stabilizer*. It consists of heavy aluminum legs and brackets that bolt to the bottom of your extension ladder. The legs have 11 inches of vertical travel within the brackets and are held in position by metal pins that



pop into a series of index holes. A foot on the bottom of each leg pivots to adjust to uneven ground, and steel pins on the underside of the feet keep the ladder from sliding. According to the manufacturer, a pair of \$90 standard-duty stabilizers will support 2,900 pounds.

*Contact:* W. Taylor Products Company, P.O. Box 3402, Windsor Locks, CT 06096; 888/748-7366.

