



THE JOURNAL OF LIGHT CONSTRUCTION

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JLC's

Letters

Adjustable Truss Braces

To the Editor:

I am interested in the adjustable wall braces mentioned in the article "Installing Gable Roof Trusses" (12/98). Could you direct me to a supplier?

Mike Hunsicker
via e-mail

Author Mike Guertin responds: The braces we use aren't actually intended for framing, but we've adapted them from Rick's sideline: concrete foundation forming. The braces are like turnbuckles welded to a plate on one end with a 16-inch length of steel angle on the other end. Ordinarily they're used to brace and straighten concrete forms, but we use them for wall stringing, beam straightening, and truss adjusting. The 16-inch steel angle is drilled with a series of holes for nailing on 2x4s of any length, making them quite versatile.

We buy these braces at supply companies specializing in commercial concrete construction. They're referred to as "form aligners." The ones we most recently purchased were distributed to our supplier by Dayton. Locally they cost \$12 to \$20 each — much cheaper than some of the available specialized wall braces.

Likes Housewrap Article

To the Editor:

Kudos to Paul Fiset for his characteristically insightful, analytical, and objective look at housewrap ("Housewrap vs. Felt," 11/98). In a housing industry driven more and more by design hypotheticals, computer models, and mass-marketing-induced consumer whimsy, it is refreshing to read about actual product performance by a person of Paul's professional status.

I personally avoid the use of housewrap and vapor/moisture retarders.

Based on observations made in the course of my work on vintage structures, my belief is that the skill of the carpenter counts above all else in producing a weather-resistant building. Some of Paul's comments reflect this contention.

Following that thought line, I question the propriety of the clapboard installation in the illustration at the top of page 52 — nails appear to penetrate the top edge of the lower claps, due to nailing too low on the bottom edge of exposed siding. Fastened as shown, natural expansion, contractions, and building movement will tend to cause splitting, laying the groundwork for moisture penetration. Although redwood and cedar are somewhat less prone to this problem, my experiences with southern yellow pine and bald cypress show that improper nailing can cause significant problems as time takes its toll.

Proper nailing technique — above the tops of each underlying course of clapboard — is essential in promoting long siding life, good paint adhesion, and enhanced weather resistance.

Mike Shannahan
LaPorte, Texas

Suggestion for Improved Tape Measures

To the Editor:

A pet peeve of mine is tape rules that are (a) too narrow, and (b) have digits that can be read from one side only. It would seem easy to print tapes so that they could be read from either edge, depending from which direction a measurement was being taken. Often, measurements must be taken from only one side of an object, requiring the tape to be read upside-down in some cases. If the tape was

printed with two rows of duplicate digits off-center down the middle of the tape, one string of numbers right-side-up, the opposite string upside-down, then the tape could be easily read regardless of where the measurement was being taken from.

Bob Cumming
via e-mail

Inspecting the Four-Day Bath Remodel

To the Editor:

In the article "The Four-Day Bath Remodel" (11/98), one of the most important aspects of the article was omitted: Was there ever a permit pulled? Also, what about rough plumbing, electrical, drywall nailing, and a final inspection? Unfortunately, those of us who follow the rules and regulations within the jurisdiction where we are working could never compete.

Jim McCarthy
McCarthy General Building
San Mateo, Calif.

Oil vs. Propane

To the Editor:

A lot of good work and experience went into the article "Trouble-Free Forced-Air Heat" (12/98). I compliment Gary Bailey. I would add that his comments under the paragraph headings "Fuel Choices" and "Oil Venting" demonstrate his personal preferences. Oil in north central Pennsylvania is 50¢ per therm, and while its price does vary from year to

year and season to season, so does the price of propane.

Propane in my neighborhood costs \$1.25 per therm. Using a gas furnace with an AFUE of 92% and fueling it with propane will result in a heating bill that is twice what it would cost using oil. If you live in a heating climate, the difference in heating costs will pay for a lot of chimney repairs, tank replacements and maintenance in the next 15 to 20 years.

Old gas furnaces were very simple and usually ran for years with very little attention. It is a fallacy to assume that the new generation of gas-fired equipment will not need maintenance or that it will last as long as the equipment it replaces.

I doubt that an oil-heat customer that was encouraged to switch to propane will feel any better about the switch just because there is a new condensing unit in the basement that has all the latest high-tech bells and whistles, when the fuel bill doubles.

Steve McCarthy
Starbright Energy Services
Wellsboro, Pa.

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