

# LETTERS



## Point Missed on Drug Testing

To the Editor:

In your March '94 issue you write that "according to two Congressionally chartered think tanks ... there is little evidence that drug testing improves overall worker productivity" ("From What We Gather," *Eight-Penny News*).

Someone is missing the point in a major way if they expected productivity to increase as a result of drug testing. Silly me, but I was under the impression that drug testing was to promote and ensure safety.

My previous employer had mandatory drug screening for all new hires, as well as the right to request unannounced tests for all employees as a condition of employment. The logic behind this should be crystal clear: We did not want zonked-out guys building scaffolding for subsequent crews, operating fully loaded trucks on public highways, operating power tools or cement mixers, etc.

This was not an inexpensive endeavor for the company, and its payback may be impossible to gauge. But I find the policy commendable: It shows a responsible attitude toward all employees, as it tends to weed out those who might bring new problems to an already hazardous field — construction. Productivity — the desire to be productive — comes from within the individual.

Steve Thomas  
Columbus Coal & Lime  
Columbus, Ohio

## Not Business as Usual

To the Editor:

I retired from the New York City Fire Department in 1984 and became a home inspector. My concern is that some veteran home inspectors lack an ethical standard. The home inspection industry policy of marketing directly to real estate offices is the cause of the problem. Realtors may have "favorites" who

receive preference in their referrals. This is terrible for the home buying public.

We advertise in the local yellow pages — stating openly that we do not solicit, nor want, referrals from realtors. I hope that veteran or new inspectors reading this will join me in a new way of doing business. Marketing directly to the general public is more difficult, but is the only honest way to do business. The home buying public will recognize and appreciate your honesty.

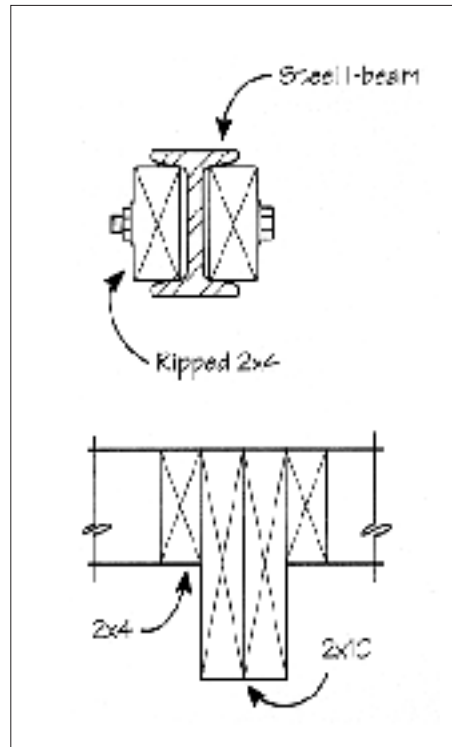
Edward P. FitzGerald  
Hallmark Home Inspections  
Tappan, N.Y.

## More Tall Wall Solutions

To the Editor:

Regarding your article "Building Two-Story Window Walls" (11/93), I have three suggestions:

1. An S-4 x 9.5 I-beam makes a good post. Ripping a 2x4 enough to go in the channels and bolting through from each side will give you nailing for jamps and headers (top drawing).



2. I've used a double 2x10 post on occasion, allowing the excess thickness to stick outside. It would then be wrapped and finished as a design element (bottom drawing).

3. If your wall is higher than it is wide, consider running your stiffest element horizontally, thereby reducing the wall's vertical "span."

Thanks for a great publication.

Robert Countryman  
Countryman Homes  
Ranger, Ga.

## Free Fertilizer

To the Editor:

Your article "Drywall on the Cob, Anyone?" (*Eight-Penny News*, 10/93) refers to use of gypsum-based drywall as a soil additive. Our company does plastering; for a number of years I have used leftover gypsum plaster and hydrated lime as soil additives around my yard. Since we have a slightly acid soil here, there is a constant need to apply lime to lawns and gardens. Other soils, such as clays, benefit from the addition of gypsum. Since gypsum is slightly acidic, I add this in small quantities to the soil surrounding acid-loving plants (azaleas, rhododendrons, etc.). This saves disposal fees (3 1/2¢ per pound at the landfill) and has been beneficial to my gardens. The local garden center charges \$3.99 for a five-pound bag of gypsum (a 100-pound bag of gypsum plaster costs about \$20!). So I win all around.

Dean M. Russell  
Mattituck, N.Y.

Keep 'em coming .... We welcome letters, but they must be signed and include the writer's address. The *Journal of Light Construction* reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to JLC, RR#2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477.