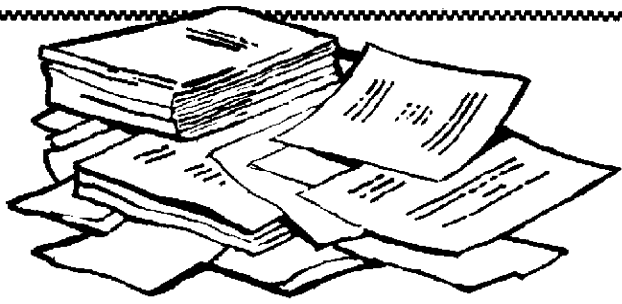


Letters



Fiberglass Shingles Not for North

To the Editor:

I would like to respond to Henry Spies' request for information on problems with fiberglass shingles [NEB 10/87].

As a manufacturer of both organic and fiberglass shingles, it is our opinion that the introduction of fiberglass shingle came about, not due to the lack of availability and quality of the organic felt that is used to make traditional asphalt shingles, but rather due to the fact that escalating oil prices in the late 1970s and early 1980s necessitated the use of fiberglass as an alternative to organic felt in roofing. Fiberglass shingles contain much less asphalt than organic shingles, thus are substantially cheaper to produce.

In addition, when fiberglass was first introduced, many of the roofing mills in the United States were over 30 years old and outdated. These mills found that a large portion of their down-time was due to breaks in the saturator, the section of the roofing machine that saturates the organic felt with asphalt. Since fiberglass mat does not require saturation, this process could be bypassed, thus reducing down-time on the roofing machine and increasing efficiency.

As a manufacturer of organic felt, we agree rag material is now unavailable due to the high percentage of synthetic fibers in today's clothing market. IKO has always manufactured organic felt without rag content. We use a blend of cellulose fibers and wood chips that are readily available. These materials produce a very high tensile-strength organic felt which easily accepts the asphalt saturant. IKO plans to continue to produce and use this organic felt in all of its organic roofing products.

Looking back at the problems fiberglass shingles have had with blow-off complaints, you are correct in saying that this problem has been reduced since the manufacturers increased the amount of self-sealing adhesive on each shingle. We still find, however, that in the colder climates, fiberglass shingles have more reported non-sealing and blow-off complaints than organic shingles. IKO feels that this can be attributed to the stiff or brittle characteristics of fiberglass shingles in cold weather and to their overall lighter weight. Organic shingles are heavier and more flexible in cold weather. Organic shingles seal down and stay sealed through the range of cold climate elements (winds, extreme cold, ice, snow accumulations) with greater success.

Although fiberglass shingles have not always performed satisfactorily in the colder northern climates, they are highly effective in the hot southern

and western climates. We have seen fiberglass shingles handle the consistently hot climates of the Sun belt and West with the same high success rate that organic shingles boast in the climates of the Northeast and Midwest.

We appreciate this opportunity to present our ideas on this topic. We feel that, being a manufacturer of both fiberglass and organic shingles, we can be more objective about the pros and cons of these products.

James E. Oster, Marketing Mgr.
IKO
Wilmington, Del.

Bored with Briefcase Builders

To the Editor:

I like the cross-talk that your magazine encourages. I want to hear from and about people who get their hands and shoes dirty. I'm not much interested in briefcase builder stories or developer stories. I get a surfeit of that information from *Builder Magazine*.

I would by far rather hear about good work and how it was done. That's why I subscribed in the first place.

I am pleased to receive *New England Builder* and read it all. Thank you for your efforts.

Frank McMichael
W. Ukiah, Calif.

Imperfect Stairs

To the Editor:

I can't help but be surprised at the asymmetric placement of the first baluster on each side at the head of the stairs (Cover, October 1987). The workmanship is obviously superior in all other respects.

D. W. Hein
Darien, Conn.

Cover Your Errors and Omissions

To the Editor:

A word of caution regarding Chuck Moriarty's advice in the January issue, "Diversification and the Small Builder," encouraging builders to develop a home-inspection business on the side.

Our national experience over the years indicates an absolute need for both errors-and-omissions insurance and general liability insurance, or the novice home inspector will find that he will not be able to do enough \$200 inspections to cover the cost of lawsuits. In our litigious society, it is foolish to risk both company and personal assets by not maintaining adequate liability insurance.

Kenneth T. Austin
HouseMaster
Bound Brook, N. J.

Ad Unfair to Tradeswomen

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to the advertisement which appeared in the February 1988 issue of *New England Builder* for Unijoint International (p. 24). I was very distressed to see an ad of this nature in a newspaper which has promoted positive images of tradeswomen in the past. This ad portrays women as being less competent than men, using language such as "I'm 'only' a woman." The message implied here is, if a (stupid) woman can do a job, just imagine what a man could be capable of.

At a time when tradeswomen are struggling to overcome the incredible barriers they face entering the skills trades, this portrayal of women as less capable and intelligent than men reinforces the many negative images already held.

The reality is that many women are excellent tradeswomen, despite their lack of exposure to the trades growing up. The reasons adult women have to struggle to compete has nothing to do with lack of ability or intelligence but with lack of encouragement, sex-role stereotypes, isolation on the job, sexual harassment, and withholding of information and training by male co-workers.

I believe UNIJoint International's intention of using a woman in their ad was positive. However, the implied put down made it more detrimental than beneficial.

I believe *New England Builder* can do better than this.

Lynda Siegel
Northern New England Tradeswomen
Burlington, Vt.

Robert Rydeen, CEO of UNIJoint, responds:

Hopefully, we can put Ms. Siegel's complaints in proper perspective. To begin, the word 'only' was accented for a reason—pure unadulterated sarcasm.

The whole point of our current advertising program is to play on stereotypes and then destroy them. As a totally new type of building system, we have been subject to far more problems predicated on stereotypes: If its components are built in a factory it must be factory housing, not a high quality building system. And because of that fact, I can assure that nobody wants to destroy them more than we do.

As for Sue Gunther, she is an extremely competent individual who has jumped into, and is doing well in what has been traditionally known as a 'man's industry' (please note the accent marks). Anyone that knows Sue or UNIJoint, knows that we are people and results oriented, not man or woman oriented. We have employed women in full-status positions since we were building our first prototype—and still do.

If our advertisement was misunderstood, we apologize. We do not however, apologize for its intent.

Job Well Done

To the Editor:

I have read and reread my latest issue (January 1988) of *New England Builder*. This magazine is by far the most informative magazine presented to the building industry. We receive several publications and read yours the most thoroughly. Thank you for a job well done.

Michael Opulskas
Opulskas & Son General Contracting
Berrien Springs, Mich.

Roofing Felt Defended

To the Editor:

Among the letters to the editor several issues ago [1/88] was a letter by Robert G. Wiedenman, a building contractor from Wallingford, Conn., who recommended against the use of roofing felt. My reaction was one of concern. To be sure I had my facts straight, I contacted Gary Ingram at D. J. Roofing, one of Senco's authorized dealers well versed in the on-site construction market.

Gary stated that approximately 95 percent of all roofers apply roofing felt. On a 7/12 pitch roof and under, most state codes require a shingle felt. Most of our customers recommend against #15 felt, preferring shingle felt that contains less asphalt. It is lighter, causing less buckling.

The best and most economical installation is to felt just ahead of the shingle, according to Wyman. Most shingle-manufacturer specifications call for felt. A roof without it can void the manufacturer's warranty.

Dick Biedinger, Marketing Manager
Senco Products
Cincinnati, Ohio

Safety is Important

To the Editor:

Your article on safety "Protecting Ears, Eyes & Lungs," [NEB 12/87] is very important. You should do more such articles to get the point across. Safety is much more important than people realize.

Greg Pennyroyal
Franklin, N.Y.



Keep 'em coming... We welcome letters, but they must be signed and include the writer's address. *New England Builder* reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to NEB, P.O. Box 5059, Burlington, VT 05402.