

Storage in the Round

by Sal Alfano



I would have traded all of the coffee cans and cardboard inventory boxes I used as a builder to store nails, pipe fittings, and spare hardware for one *Drop-in-the-Bucket*. This storage system uses a standard five-gallon plastic pail (like the ones joint compound comes in) to house up to five stackable interlocking trays. Each tray is 2⁵/₈ inches deep and 10¹/₈ inches in diameter and is divided into four compartments. A convenient molded handle at the center makes the tray easy to remove and carry around. Unlike the cover on a drywall pail, the lid on the *Drop-in-the-Bucket* is made of a softer material so it's easier to open and close. I can't think of a better way to keep small building supplies dry and ready to hand. The complete system — a bucket with five trays — costs \$22.95 (plus \$3.75 shipping); the five trays purchased separately cost \$19.95 (plus \$3.50 shipping). Order directly from Journeyman Products, P.O. Box 4472, Annapolis, MD 21403; 800/248-8707.

Simple Shell



An innovative timber-frame shell package uses premilled timbers and stress-skin panels in a unique configuration that speeds installation, according to the manufacturer. Instead of erecting the wood frame first and then wrapping it with insulated panels, a

time-consuming process that often requires a crane, the timbers and panels in the *UniHome* system interlock and are installed sequentially. After the initial post is braced in place at one corner, the edges of the OSB panels that sandwich the EPS foam slide into two lengthwise grooves in the post and are sealed in place with butyl caulk. Installation proceeds sequentially, alternating between a post and a stress skin panel, until the entire shell is constructed. This includes the roof system, where joints between rafters or joists and carrying timbers are secured with aluminum dowels and concealed metal connectors. The shell kits contain only 250 parts (including timbers, panels, joists, and decking), and *UniHome* claims that this, coupled with the sequential erection method, significantly reduces erection time and construction costs. For more information, contact *UniHome Corp.*, Iron Horse Park, North Billerica, MA 01862; 800/282-3267.

Deck Hardware



Building a bench and railing is often as expensive and time-consuming as building the deck itself, but

help is on the way. *Better Built Deck Seat Brackets* are made of welded steel coated with matte-black vinyl-based paint (a hot-dipped galvanized version is also available). The brackets come complete with the carriage bolts and locking nuts needed to install them. A template (purchased separately) aligns the brackets, which can be used with 5/4 or 2x deck boards and are predrilled for railing and seat boards. When used with 1x6 or 1x8 railing boards, the 36-inch-high brackets meet code for both 6-inch and 4-inch spacing. The railing is angled at 19 degrees for comfort, and when installed at intervals of 32 inches,

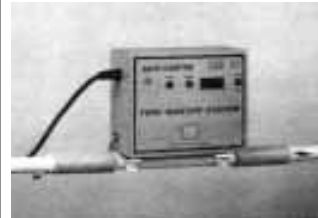
the system can support more than 500 pounds per linear foot, according to the manufacturer. Each bracket costs \$29.99. A set of three corner braces costs about \$8, and the template costs \$7.50. To find a supplier, contact Orion Marketing and Sales, 50 Main St., North Reading, MA 01864; 800/727-6327.

Pavement on a Roll



A do-it-yourself driveway repair product may help you answer your customers' questions about how to deal with small cracks in asphalt paving. *Driveway Medic* is a self-adhesive repair system made of double-coated, non-woven polypropylene fabric saturated with rubberized asphalt. To make a repair, cut a piece from the 6-inch x 9-foot roll, peel off the backing paper, and press the fabric onto the pavement. You can walk on or drive over the patch immediately, and optional application of a seal coat on the whole driveway will help the patch blend with the surrounding surface, according to the manufacturer. The material is said to act like a big bandage, keeping water and salt from getting into small cracks and preventing damage from both freeze-thaw cycling and summer heat. Larger rolls of *Driveway Medic* are also available from *Co-Fair Corp.*, 6600 No. Lincoln Ave., Suite 310, Lincolnwood, IL 60645; 800/333-6700.

Plug-In Decalcifier



The calcium in tap water can leave deposits on valves and faucets and build up scale that reduces the efficiency of water heaters and boilers. The manufacturer of the *Twin Master System* claims it not only prevents build up, but it also breaks up scale that has already formed. The system consists of a small box, which clips to the surface of water pipe up to one inch in diameter. When the unit is plugged

into a standard 120v receptacle, a magnet in contact with the pipe at the bottom produces impulses that, when combined with the electromagnetic fields created by two wires coiled around the pipe, creates calcium crystals that are non-adherent and flow away with the water. Existing deposits also break down because the precipitation of the calcium crystals causes a chemical reaction that softens and slowly erodes the scale. The *Twin Master* is not yet distributed in this country, but you can purchase one for about \$445 directly from the manufacturer, *Rauh Sarl of Ville d'Avray, France*. For more information, contact the *French Technology Press Office*, 401 No. Michigan Ave., Suite 1760, Chicago, IL 60611; 312/222-1235.

Standing Tall



Builders and designers plan kitchens and baths to suit the needs of their customers — their adult customers, that is. But kids have trouble reaching countertops and tall cabinets. A new step stool called the *Doorstep* makes it easier for children to use spaces designed for grownups. Made of solid poplar, the step has a non-skid mat on the tread for sure footing and comes completely preassembled. To install the *Doorstep*, simply position it using the double-stick tape supplied, and screw it directly to the inside of the cabinet door (hardware is provided). Lockwashers at all of the hinge points keep it snugly in the open or closed position, and the four legs keep it stable and take the stress off the cabinet door. The large 9¹/₈ x 15-inch step is designed for kitchen cabinets and sells to the trade for \$57. A smaller 8 x 13¹/₂-inch step fits vanity cabinets and sells for \$54. Order directly from *Hafele America*, P.O. Box 4000, Archdale, NC 27263; 800/842-3345. ■